LEARNING TO LEAVE: 
THE IRONY OF SCHOOLING IN A COASTAL COMMUNITY

by

MICHAEL JOHN CORBETT

B.A. (hons.), Acadia University, 1981
B.Ed., Acadia University, 1983
M.A., Acadia University, 1990
M.Ed., Mount Saint Vincent University, 1994

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Educational Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

November 2000

© Michael John Corbett, 2000
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of **Educational Studies**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 10 Nov., 2000.

DE-6 (2/88)
Abstract

The connection between education and migration from rural areas is one that has been made since Western democracies began keeping statistics. While there has been considerable work done on the migration experiences of rural Canadians, there has been little research done on how the educational experience of rural people actually figures in migration decisions and experience. Education is typically understood as a modernising and a disembedding force facilitating the transition of societies and individuals from rural to urban communities, but there is as yet, little evidence about how this process is understood and enacted by the people who experience the process. The study combines quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the both the broad contours and lived experience of the problem of learning and leaving in an Atlantic Canadian coastal community. The purpose of this work is to investigate the contours of the question: how do some young people in coastal communities come to learn, in the course of their schooling, that the places in which they have been raised are best abandoned and forgotten. In other words, how do many rural youth learn to leave? Conversely, the study also investigates the dynamics of the decision to stay on in the community and make a life there, foregoing, if not resisting formal education. The study is an investigation of educational and work history data from more than 750 individuals who left grade 6 in an elementary school serving nine fishing villages on Digby Neck, Nova Scotia between 1957 and 1992. The study includes an analysis of out-migration patterns historically from the early 1960s until the late 1990s, as well as a series of ethnographic educational and work history interviews drawn from samples of educators, “stayers” and “leavers.”
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii

Table of Contents ................................................................................................... iii

List of Tables .......................................................................................................... vi

List of Figures ......................................................................................................... viii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. ix

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The problem ...................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Migration and regional dependency ................................................................. 7
1.3 The migration imperative in rural education ..................................................... 12
1.4 Challenges to the migration imperative in rural schooling ............................... 16
1.5 Why would young people stay? ....................................................................... 22
1.6 Schooling and Migration in Atlantic Canada ................................................... 27
1.7 Structure of the study ....................................................................................... 31

Chapter 2 A protracted struggle: An analysis of rural resistance and normalization in Canadian educational history ......................................................... 32

2.1 Normalisation .................................................................................................. 33
2.2 Resistance in historical analysis of Canadian rural schools ............................... 35
2.3 Rurality in resistance ....................................................................................... 37
2.4 Rurality as resistance
   2.4.1 Canada West/Ontario: The establishment of public schooling ............... 40
   2.4.2 British Columbia: Agricultural education and "the rural problem" in the early decades of the 20th century ............................................ 44
   2.4.3 Quebec and co-integration and Newfoundland and the fishing economy: Societies in transition, 1930-1970 ................................. 48
2.5. Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 54

Chapter 3 Reconceptualising resistance: Habitus, discourse and place

3.1 Resistance theory in the sociology of education .............................................. 57
3.2 Bourdieu's logic of practice ......................................................................... 60
3.3 Poststructural resistance theory .................................................................... 67
3.4 Resistance and place ...................................................................................... 72
3.5 The organised rural community as a resistant site ........................................ 78
3.6 Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 85
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>Study area and methodological concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Digby Neck .................................................. 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Schooling and the Atlantic Coastal Community .................................................. 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Methodology .................................................. 103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>Participant observation .................................................. 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2</td>
<td>The Basic Data Bank and the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey .................................................. 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3</td>
<td>Ethnographic interviews .................................................. 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Integrated validity .................................................. 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Max Van Manen's Researching Lived Experience .................................................. 116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
<th>Who stays, who goes, and where: Education and migration on Digby Neck 1963-1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Education and migration: Demographics .................................................. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>The nature of the Digby Neck economy .................................................. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Educational levels on Digby Neck .................................................. 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>Mobility on Digby Neck .................................................. 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4</td>
<td>The education-mobility connection .................................................. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Summary .................................................. 140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
<th>There was lots of work: The classes of 1963-1974 .................. 146</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Family and work: Learning to stay .................................................. 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The hand on the shoulder: socialisation for leaving .................................................. 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Education and mobility: Learning to leave in the 1960s and early 1970s .................................................. 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Multiple practical skills: The construction of intelligence and identity in a coastal community .................................................. 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>They wanted me to go to school: Schooling, identity and family .................................................. 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Homsickness, security and survival .................................................. 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>I didn’t want to end up .................................................. 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Shovels around the root: The contemporary community and the crisis in the fishery .................................................. 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Conclusion .................................................. 195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7</th>
<th>The boom years: The classes of 1975-1986 .................. 203</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Gender, work and schooling on Digby Neck, 1975-1986 .................................................. 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Defining security: Education, identity and work .................................................. 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>What’s that going to get you?: The educational tunnel .................................................. 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Family/class .................................................. 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>The mobile family .................................................. 239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>The privilege of becoming a stranger .................................................. 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Conclusion .................................................. 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Surviving the crisis: the classes of 1987-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>There’s nothing for the younger ones ... is there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Quitting in the 1990s: Finding something to do when there’s nothing to do...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>The new reserve army of labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Getting out: Class, gender and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Survival and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Back to the future: Surviving in the new economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Conclusion: The mobile discourse of schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Resistant rural spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Mobility and ambivalence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Resistances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>So what?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References** 333

**Appendices** 353

- **Appendix A** Community, Schooling and Migration: Stayers’ Interview Schedule and Consent Form 353
- **Appendix B** Community, Schooling and Migration: Leavers’ Interview Schedule 356
- **Appendix C** Educators’ Interview Schedule 359
- **Appendix D** Community, Schooling and Migration Survey 361
List of tables

Table 1 Pre-1951 census counts for Digby Neck communities ........................................... 93
Table 2 Population of Digby Neck communities - 1951-1991 ........................................... 94
Table 3 Sample composition: Community, Schooling and Migration survey ......................... 108
Table 4 Interview subjects by place of current residence and gender .................................. 109
Table 5 Interview subjects by community of origin and cohort ........................................... 110
Table 6 Interview subjects by year of potential graduation ................................................ 111
Table 7 Percentage of labour force working in fishing and trapping, 1996 .......................... 120
Table 8 Principal occupations of Digby Neck “stayers” by gender, Community, Schooling and Migration survey ...................................................... 121
Table 9 Income levels (in dollars) for Canada, Nova Scotia and the Municipality of Digby, 1971-1996 .......................................................... 123
Table 10 Unemployment rates, Census Canada microdata 1996 ......................................... 124
Table 11 Average family income as a percentage of the Canadian average, 1996 ............... 125
Table 12 Average income by sex, Census Canada microdata, 1996 .................................... 126
Table 13 Highest degree achieved expressed as a percentage of the population 15+ for Canada, Nova Scotia and Digby Neck census enumeration areas, 1996 .... 127
Table 14 Historic Graduates of DNCS Remaining on Digby Neck by percentage, Basic Data Bank ................................................................. 130
Table 15 Out-migration rates from Digby Neck by cohort and destination, potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank .................. 130
Table 16: Out-migration from Digby Neck by cohort, community of origin and present location, potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank ....... 131
Table 17: Out-migration rates from Digby Neck by gender and present location potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank .............. 132
Table 18: Highest level of educational attainment and out-migration from Digby Neck, “stayers” and “away” migrants, Community Schooling and Migration Survey ........................................... 135

Table 19: Highest level of educational attainment by present location and gender, Community Schooling and Migration Survey ................................. 136

Table 20: Highest level of educational attainment by age cohort and gender, Community Schooling and Migration Survey ........................................ 137

Table 21: Highest level of educational attainment by age cohort, and gender for “stayers” and “around here,” Community Schooling and Migration Survey .......... 139

Table 22: Highest level of educational attainment by age cohort, and gender for “not far” and “away migrants,” Community Schooling and Migration Survey .......... 139

Table 23: Migration by gender, age cohort and present location ........................................ 143
List of figures

Figure 1  Map of Nova Scotia and the Bay of Fundy ........................................... 88
Figure 2  Map showing Digby Neck and southwest Nova Scotia .......................... 89
Figure 3  Map of the communities of Digby Neck ................................................. 90
Figure 4  Ferry landing in East Ferry with Long Island in the background ............. 90
Figure 5  Three generations of men from one Digby Neck family setting traps  
on the first day of the lobster season, 1999 .................................................. 91
Figure 6  A cape island boat on the slip at Whale Cove ..................................... 92
Figure 7  Father and son fishing partnerships are common on Digby Neck ............ 93
Figure 8  One of the few remaining fisherman-operated small farms on Digby Neck .... 95
Figure 9  The village of Sandy Cove looking toward St. Mary’s Bay ..................... 97
Figure 10  The future?: An aquaculture salmon hatchery in Mink Cove ............... 99
Acknowledgements

A project like this one involves the hard work of a lot of people, most of them friends who volunteered to help me gather and organise the information necessary to complete this study. Undoubtedly I will miss many of those who have contributed to this work in some way and for this I apologise. Because I must protect their anonymity, I can not mention by name the more than fifty informants who agreed to formal interviews for this project. I owe these people a great debt; their words form the framework for Chapters 6, 7 and 8. In the end, this is a story I am telling about a way of life and the way formal education has meshed with that life, but without the input, cooperation, trust and friendship of a great many Digby Neck people, this project could never have been completed. I hope I have represented us all in a way that challenges some assumptions and contributes to positive change.

In the early stages of the project a number of people assisted with the Basic Data Bank Survey reported in Chapter 5. Elizabeth McCullough and Margaret Titus generously gave me access to their personal archives and school records. Deanna Frost, Donna Tidd, Susan O’Neil and Pam Frost did a great deal of legwork which facilitated the project immensely. Karen Mosher also worked with me as a research assistant on the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey. Mark Pease and Noelle Lucas provided technical assistance in a timely fashion.

A number of people read drafts of different versions of the chapters in this dissertation. My colleague Tony Kelly offered critical feedback from the very early stages of the project. Tony’s insights are always fresh, humorous and critical. More than anyone else Tony helps me understand the limitations of this (or any) research. Arthur and Ruth Bull, Fred Horner, Donna Tidd, Cindy Graham also read sections of this work as it neared its final form. Discussions with Stephane Levesque, Martin Bailey, Tam Donnelly and Cliff Falk also helped me make sense of the ideas I was working with.

While their feedback is not reflected in this text, I would also like to mention the contribution of university examiners Ralph Matthews and Brian Elliot. They helped to make the stressful experience of the thesis defence a pleasurable and productive critical conversation. External reader Dianne Looker contributed to this conversation with a careful analysis of the text and critical commentary. Their contributions will be important when I take sections of this work to publication.

My supervisory committee provided me with outstanding support, wisdom and encouragement throughout the entire process of my doctoral work. This support continued when I left UBC to undertake fieldwork in Nova Scotia and I appreciate it greatly. Kjell Rubenson’s insight, good fellowship, unflagging encouragement and sense of humour helped to keep me afloat in the dark days in the middle of this project. Don Wilson’s in-depth and careful reading of this text was critical to its readability and Chapter 2 developed directly out of our formal and informal conversations in 1997 and 1998. My advisor Don Fisher’s careful guidance forced me, from the earliest stages of the project, to think clearly about the research question. Without Don’s gentle good humour, kindness, and consistent critical support I can not imagine how I would have survived this ordeal. I also hope I have been able to maintained the standard of academic rigour Don demands.

My research was also supported by the a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada doctoral fellowship, a University of British Columbia university graduate fellowship and by a research grant from Nova Scotia Teacher’s Union. I would also like to acknowledge the Southwest Regional School Board for granting me sabbatical leave to help complete this project.

My family have had to live with me throughout this project. Suffice it to say that I realise that this has not always been easy. Perhaps this is an understatement. My thanks and my love to Audrey, Nathan, Jenny, Kathleen. Thanks also to Helen, Axel and Galen for their hospitality in Victoria.
Chapter 1
Introduction

On the first day of May the boats raced out as they had always done, laden down almost to the gunwales with their heavy cargoes of traps. They were almost like living things as they plunged through the waters of the spring and manoeuvred between the still floating icebergs of crystal white and emerald green on their way to the traditional grounds that they sought out every May. And those of us who sat that day in the high school on the hill, discussing the water imagery in Tennyson, watched them as they passed back and forth beneath us until by afternoon the piles of traps which had been stacked on the wharf were no longer visible but were spread about the bottom of the sea. And the spring wore on and the summer came and school ended in the third week of June and the lobster season on July first and I wished that the two things I loved so dearly did not exclude each other in a manner that was so blunt and too clear (MacLeod, 1976: 143-145).

In the spring they can’t wait to go fishing. They can’t wait to be out on the water. They’re all down there on the wharf... in their pickup trucks, and they’re just on needles and pins. They’re that excited. Maybe it’s in their blood (David Weale in Bruce, 1988: 138).

The problem

Paul Willis' (1977) ethnographic study of working class life and schooling in an English industrial city is introduced with the direct and poignant subtitle: "how working class kids get working class jobs." Indeed, one of the central questions for the sociology of education has been, and continues to be, the role that schools play in reproducing class structure. Willis' question is central to understanding the relationship between schooling and class in urban communities. A similar yet seldom analysed problem confronts rural educational researchers. Alistair MacLeod’s fiction (cited above) works with similar kinds of questions. If Willis' “lads” learned to enact a working

---

1 Questions of schooling and class have a long history in the sociology of education in Britain. Stuart Hall and his colleagues (Hall & Jefferson, 1976) also used ethnographic methods to investigate the lived experience of class and schooling in urban Britain inspiring many similar studies throughout Europe and North America.
class identity which rubs hard against the urban, middle class norms of school, Nova Scotia rural
novelist Alistair MacLeod's male characters wrestle with both how and where to construct their
identities. In rural communities school serves a number of functions including the reproduction of
labour in traditional local industries, and paradoxically, migration away from life in the
communities to urban centres. This study is an attempt to understand and explain how it is that
certain people remain in Atlantic Canadian coastal communities while others leave. In other
words, how do some rural youth “learn to leave,” while others “learn to stay?”

A central theme in the sociology of education in Atlantic Canada is geographic mobility. This
theme articulates with larger problems of the development of the Canadian state and the
underdevelopment of Atlantic Canada. Mobility is very often presented as the solution to the
region's problems (George, 1970; Courchene, 1974). But coastal communities in Nova Scotia not
only have a history of sustainable resource extraction, they remain attractive to a large number of
rural youth. These people are typically cast as the losers in the educational drama; they are the
"drop-outs," the ones who cannot read the “writing on the wall,” and make the “obvious” choice
which is to use one's education as the social capital needed to buy the passage to sustainable
places. Post-secondary education presents most rural youth with a choice between community and
elsewhere, usually an urban environment, or a small town in a more prosperous region of the
country.2

Like Willis' “lads,” many rural youth resist formal education. Whether the "resistance" of rural
students to the project of education represents what Willis called a "penetration" of the false
promise of the educational system is an interesting question in this project. The fact that resistance
exists is well established, but what it means to those rural youth who enact it has not been well
explored. Indeed, the idea of resistance assumes the hegemony of a particular set of values. Rural
life itself may simply be resistant to the juggernaut of industrialisation and urbanisation, an

2 Referring to the work of Father Jimmy Tompkins one of the founders of the Antigonish Movement Lotz and
Welton write:

His own university Saint FX, took the brightest of the local youth, educated them in traditional
academic ways, and gave them credentials, then saw many of them leave the region. This out-
migration increased as times became tougher in eastern Nova Scotia after the first world war.
Father Jimmie believed that educated ordinary people who stay were the key to revitalising the
region and creating prosperity for all (1997: 6).
experiential base for resistance to modernity and to a set of “rational” values (Bonner, 1997; Creed and Cheng, 1997; Theobald, 1997). I wish to investigate how economic opportunity, place attachment and local culture in a rural coastal community in Nova Scotia may itself constitute the basis for resistance to extended formal schooling.

In order to exploit fish stocks “efficiently” capital has required a flexible and relatively immobile work force in coastal communities, a work force sufficiently adaptable and responsive to survive boom and bust in the industry and respond to the ebb and flow of fish stocks in particular areas. Educational decisions are always made in a context. The industrialization of the fishery after World War Two provided youth with certain community-based opportunities which stood beside opportunities offered individuals by formal education. The decision to continue an education and move out of the community is significantly more problematic than simple “choice.” Many frustrated teachers and guidance counsellors in coastal communities and other rural places are community "outsiders, "cultural bridge" workers and “gatekeepers,” who have adopted placeless urban values (DeYoung, 1995; Haas and Nachtigal, 1998). The nature of professionalism among teachers has tended to privilege placeless, generic and technocratic ideas about what counts as education. If education is to be democratic, then it must be generic so the story goes. The nature of place attachment and the influence of the local economy on schooling in rural communities has been precisely what many rural educators struggle to subvert in the interests of democracy, and what is often called “broadening the horizons” of rural children and youth. Any analysis of schooling in Atlantic Canadian coastal communities must be situated within the context of the economy and the sociology of the fishery.

In the case of Digby Neck, place attachment has related to a concentrated, labour intensive fishery and the support services often provided by unpaid family members (notably women and children) which undergirded it. Rural Nova Scotians forged their identities and honed multiple skills and strength working in the industrialization and capitalist development of the fishing industry which has slowly but surely undermined the viability of coastal communities. This is not an idyllic Helen Creighton folk song. As Ian MacKay argues, contrary to the “folk” stereotypes of the slow moving primitive rustic, Nova Scotians survived through, “(G)eographic mobility (moving from place to place in search of waged work or better access to fish stocks), occupational pluralism, and from the mid-nineteenth century on, widespread out-migration to cope with diminishing
opportunities in the region ...” (1994: 28). The connection between formal education and this migration is by now iconic and enshrined in 20th century Atlantic Canadian literature (Kristiensen, 1995). Atlantic Canadian coastal communities are places that people learned to leave.

Foucault’s concept of normalisation (1979), opens up an analysis of schooling as part of the coordinated, professionally mediated regime of truth. In this analysis, schooling is part of a larger state project of social control designed to create self monitoring social agents. Educational historians have documented the rise of the state and its growth out of urban centres and into the rural periphery. The historical process of normalisation has been much more troublesome to the state in rural areas and institutional practices like schooling fit more readily into urban routines in the productive industrial spaces of the city or large town. In remote areas like the northern parts of most Canadian provinces or in coastal fishing communities, rural economies were based upon resource extraction, and communities were, for many years, relatively insulated from both mechanised industrial production and the institutional “tutelary complex” of modern society (Donzelot, 1979). On the rural margins, the evidence is that the routines of secondary schooling were not effectively established until at least the Post-World War Two period, despite the establishment of free schools in Nova Scotia in 1865 and mandatory schooling in 1882 (Axelrod, 1997: 35-36). In rural Canada, a complex structure of opportunity existed and patterns of informal education and direct socialisation to adult roles stood in opposition to the school and the training it offered (Davey, 1978; Gaffield, 1987; McCann, 1982; Wilson and Stortz, 1993). Additionally, rural communities offered active, systematic and sustained resistance to early efforts to impose the normalising regime of schooling upon its children (Curtis, 1988).

Very often the practical contingencies of work in rural communities, and complex apprenticeship style socialisation of youth made the establishment of formal schooling as locus of training problematic and resistance to schooling remained prominent. Community itself is a discourse space into which competing and supplementary discourses must be introduced. This way of

---

3 For a survey of Atlantic Canadian fiction see Kristiensen, 1993 and Kulyk-Keefer, 1987. In both of these accounts the idea of leaving plays a significant role. Specific sources include: Bruce, 1954, 1959; Day, 1928/1989; Raddall, 1954; Coady, 1997; Barnes, 1997; Buckler, 1952; McLennan, 1951; MacLeod, 1976, 1999; deFreitas, 1997. Virtually the entire corpus of Nova Scotian folk music of the last two generations has had as a central theme the decision to stay in the province or leave for uncertain and typically alienating prospects in other parts of the country. Nostalgic nonfiction accounts of staying and leaving are also common (cf., Bruce, 1988; Burrill, 1992).
looking at rural schools should help to explain why they are often such conflicted spaces. The institutional discourse of formal education continually meets the practical discourse of life in the community and the world it enjoins them to imagine is typically a shadow of the local places in which these rural children live out their lives. Lucas' (1971) work contains the most detailed ethnographic and quantitative analysis of the connection between education and migration I have found in the literature. Lucas' general conclusion is that education is one of the principal and "easiest" exit routes from single industry communities. He writes: "one of the easiest ways to emigration is to continue along the education lines that link the community to the outside world" (1971: 366). The educational system represents an established bridge into other places and other lives, a series of "well marked routes ... for the fortunate who persist in school" (1971: 368). In his review of several quantitative studies of migration from Canadian single industry communities he found that around sixty percent of youth migrate, and that a high percentage of those who do have the highest levels of education in their age cohorts. In his own survey of 817 students over a twenty-three year period in a single industry community Lucas found what he termed a, "remarkable connection between grade completed and location of occupation" (1971: 382). For instance, one hundred out of one hundred and twenty-six people who attained less than grade ten remained in the community, while only 18% of high school graduates stayed. In summary Lucas asserted that: "all respondents in all communities agreed that youth very quickly educated themselves out of the jobs offered in the community and out of the community itself" (1971: 363).

By supplying symbols of qualification, the educational institution has great power over the pupil and his occupational orientation. In a community of single industry it provides the youth not only with upward mobility, but also with one of the most useful emigration routes from the community (Lucas, 1971: 302).

Lucas also showed how work opportunities in single industry communities were not universally
available but were distributed on the basis of social class and gender particularly.  

How the strain between informal work socialisation and formal schooling has played out in coastal communities is unknown. No one has yet studied ordinary people's experience of schooling in fishing villages, or how the lure of work, ready money, the land and the ocean were counterpoised by the uncertain promise of school. In the uneven development of the Canadian economy, Atlantic Canada remains a “hinterland” region behind the central sphere of Canadian capitalist development. This relationship has become complicated by globalisation but the theme stays the same. Uneven development has distorted the Atlantic economy and the region remains peripheral to economic influences in Central Canada, ambiguous social class formations, and what Marxist analysts call semi-proletarian household-focussed forms of production (MacDonald and Connelly, 1989; Kearney, 1993; Brym and Sacouman, 1977). The persistence of these economic forms has consequences for education (Ricker, 1978b).

Dropping out of school, or not continuing with education into and beyond the secondary level available close to home, can be constructed as the positive decision to drop-in to community life and to reject the denigration of that life implicit in the educational message. This is effectively what many ethnographies of working class resistance have shown (Hall, et. al, 1976, Corrigan, 1979; McLaren, 1980; Willis, 1979; McRobbie, 1991; Wexler, 1992; Gaskell, 1992; LeBlanc, 1999). In Willis' study, the "lads" resisted school only to find at the end of the process, an alienating factory routine, but they seem to have found integration into a customary way of life. In Nova Scotian coastal communities “the boys” also seem to find integration into a culture which, although it contains significant elements of hardship, exploitation, alienation, sexism and racism, is experienced not as oppression, but rather as an accepted and familiar way of living grounded in

---

4 With respect to class Lucas writes:

The world opened for a young man depends on whether his father has knowledge of a few or many occupations ... it is mainly in connection with the occupations of his father and his father's friends that the child is likely to receive occupational models (1971: 287).

This is also a piece of gendered discourse given the way girls are left out of the picture. With respect to gender and education, Lucas cites a teacher who sees schooling as a feminine pursuit which explains the much better academic performance (and subsequent higher rates of out-migration)of young women in single industry communities.

School is a feminine world in the vocational sense. It prepares the girls academically for their careers in the work world ... for the boys it's otherwise ... there seem to be few places where skills learned by boys in school, even in vocational school, can be applied to a specific job (1971: 299).
community and regional culture (Kelly, 1993). The fishery also provided at least some young men petit bourgeois opportunities in the loosely regulated fishery that remained alive until the 1970s. What women may have found is less clear.

While the limited scholarly literature and fiction on Atlantic Canadian postulate a link between education and migration: 1) there is no detailed quantitative evidence of migration patterns out of particular Atlantic Canadian coastal communities; 2) there has been no qualitative exploration of the experience of schooling with respect to the way it influences the migration decision of young adults; and 3) there has been no detailed analysis of the historic relationship between community based opportunities in resource extraction industries and the opportunities presented by education and out-migration. The extensive quantitative literature on both internal migration in Canada and international migration shows a strong link between education and the propensity to migrate. This literature does not, however, investigate the character of the decision-making which underpins the decision to leave a rural area. This study works in these research gaps in the migration research. The central question driving this study is: how do some young people learn to stay in coastal communities while others learn to leave.

Migration and regional dependency

A suggestion to provide ‘generous assistance’ to those people who might wish to move to other parts of Canada where, ‘there may be better opportunity’ was met with derision. Obviously decades of out-migration had not served the region very well as a development strategy (Conrad, 1993: 410).

Atlantic Canadian folklore routinely associates migration and education. The idea of “brain drain” is a central notion used by both academic and non-academic commentators who discuss the educational scene. The story is by now a very familiar rural tale, and one which is often told about Atlantic Canada in the context of regional inequality. Educational institutions operating in regions which are less economically vibrant, tend to educate young people for employment opportunities which exist elsewhere. As individuals, most people are forced to leave rural areas where there are few opportunities available for them. But is this an accurate picture? Do residents of coastal communities facing declining fisheries migrate en masse? How do they decide whether to stay or leave? Where do they go? And what role, if any, does formal education play in this drama?
The quantitative literature which explores the connection between migration and education generally supports the brain drain hypothesis.\(^5\) It does appear from large scale Canadian and international quantitative analysis that more highly educated individuals are more mobile than other less educated segments of a given population (Afsar, 1996; Amit-Talai, 1993; Banerjee, 1996; Braio-Ureta, et. al., 1996; Dasgupta, 1988; Dublin, 1998; Frey, 1995; Gibbs, 1994; Liaw, 1990; Michalos, 1997; Moomis, 1990; Newbold and Liaw, 1994; Newbold, 1996; Tolnay, 1998; Goldscheider et. al, 1999). In fact, the positive correlation between education levels and migration rates has been so well established and so often repeated that it is simply assumed that more educated people are more mobile. Dasgupta writes:

> A positive association between education and propensity to migration is often assumed by sociologists. Mobility is increased as members of the labour force acquire superior skills, professional training and education of all kinds (1988: 37).

Yet, Dasgupta argues that the lack of formal education can also be seen as a “push” factor stimulating migration. Two studies of internal migration in Canada conducted in the 1960s found higher rates of out-migration among those people who had lower than average levels of educational attainment (Levitt, 1960; Stone, 1969). In his classic analysis of historical census data, Stone commented that:

> The general expectation would probably have been that a purely economic model of migration would give better results for a more highly educated group than for persons with only elementary schooling. The results of this case study indicate that the reverse may be the case (1969: 196).

Stone went on to raise questions about the “economic model of migration” that underpinned his research because he found that less educated people in fact tended to be more mobile than more educated individuals. While farming areas were indeed losing population, Stone found a rural non-farm population that was very stable, actually gaining population in Canada, and in Nova

\(^5\) The relationship between out-migration and economic development has been the subject of considerable controversy for years. Analysing historical migration patterns from Atlantic Canada between 1871 and 1921, Thornton argued that large scale outmigration can be seen as a cause of underdevelopment rather than an effect.

> It may be suggested that massive and sustained net losses of about fifteen percent of the region’s population per decade must have seriously jeopardised the potential of the region to complete its industrial transformation (1985: 8).
Scotia between 1956 and 1961 (1969: 56). Levitt was also unable to find the clear link she expected to find between education and migration in Atlantic Canada (1960). These studies both deal with data from pre 1961, but the findings they contain do raise questions about the link between migration and education.

The connection between education and migration in Atlantic Canada is both an emotional and a political issue. From the point of view of conservative economic theory, migration is an "adjustment mechanism" through which the market moves (pushes and pulls) labour into places where it is needed (George, 1970; Courchene, 1974). As Pierre Trudeau retorted in the late 1970s when confronted by Maritimers who complained about unemployment in the region, "why don't you just get off your asses," and move to a place where there is employment. From the point of view of a Marxist perspective, the migration problem is a manifestation of the needs of capital to maintain a "reserve army" of labour waiting on the periphery to be deployed in the metropolis in times of capital expansion or "boom" (Veltmeyer, 1979; Sacouman, 1980). There has been significant debate about both the Marxist and conservative economic visions of the state of social and economic life in Atlantic Canada. Matthews has consistently argued, that the neo-conservative economic analysis of migration and regional dependency is demeaning and dismissive of Atlantic Canadians and largely ignorant of the history of economic development in the region (1983, 1993). Following Doug House, Southcott also argues in a recent article that the structural Marxist analysis of regional dependency in Atlantic Canada in the 1970s and 1980s effectively sapped energy for research in this area because it presented such a hopeless, dismal picture of the role of human agency and community (1999). Both of these critiques call for a more focussed research programme which actually investigates the experience of underdevelopment with the objective of

---

6 DeVries and McNab-DeVries make a similar argument when they document their methodological migration from an approach to the problems of rural Cape Breton informed by political economy to a more culturally sensitive postmodern ethnographic approach to research (1991). These researchers became interested in ethnography as a way of avoiding the problem of reducing people's lives to the effects of structural (capitalist) forces.
mobilising local understandings toward generating positive policy decisions and social change.\textsuperscript{7}

With respect to migration, both neo-conservative and political economic analyses effectively agree that individuals respond to structural forces over which they have little control. Both also seem to agree that educated individuals are drawn out of "peripheral" regions to serve the needs of "the market" or of "capital," and neither offers much immediate hope for the region. According to Papastergiadis, both of these perspectives rely on what he calls the, "water pump model" of migration theorising where people are seen as being driven to and fro by the needs of capital (2000). He argues that neither conservative nor radical structural models of development, nor the migration analysis contained within them, actually stand up in the face of less predictable human agency and culture.

Marxist theories of dependency and Weberian theories of modernisation both tended to relegate cultural differences to a sign of underdevelopment that would be overtaken by a progressive movement of modernity. Cultural differences have proved to be both more resilient and contradictory (Papastergiadis, 2000: 94).

In sociological studies of migration and of education, the conundrum is to find a way between analyses which track the broad structural contours of a problem, and studies which are so focussed and particular that they are not generalisable. Studies of migration informed by political economy are said to lack cultural sensitivity and to be driven by apriori theory that explains population movement entirely in terms of the ebb and flow of the "needs"of capitalism (if the account is Marxist), or of society (if the account is functionalist). One is positive, the other is negative, but they amount to the same thing. How the pursuit of higher education impacts on the lives of individuals, and how it contributes to the stress and ambivalence found by educational sociologists in rural schools, is not well understood. There is clearly something deeply problematic about leaving home and pursuing higher education for many youth from rural communities. Looker and

\textsuperscript{7} Examples of this kind of research are not yet common. However, two recent Social Sciences and Humanities Council Canada Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) grants that deal with coastal communities and issues of sustainability have recently been undertaken by academics interested in understanding local realities in the context of larger structural developments. A research team headed by Anthony Davis and John Kearney at Saint Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia will be attempting to teach fisheries organisations how to conduct their own social research in order to enhance their ability to represent themselves in social and economic struggles as well as in fisheries management decisions (Davis, et. at 1999). Another research team from UBC in Vancouver under the leadership of Ralph Matthews and Brian Elliot will be studying a variety of Pacific coastal communities in an attempt to understand better which kinds of social conditions seem to result in the kinds of cohesion which lead to economic and social "resilience" (Matthews, et. al., 1999).
her colleagues’ work on rural youth’s aspirations does recognize the problematic nature of leaving home (Looker, 1993; Looker and Dwyer, 1998; Looker and Andres, 1998).

The rural youth were more tied to their communities, were more concerned about family relationships, but they were also more likely to leave. They perceived few, if any, options if they remained. The respondents planning to stay were those for whom family and community ties were more important than occupational advancement (Looker, 1993: 59).

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, Looker found that this leaving problematic has a significant impact on rural youth participation and outcomes in higher education and far fewer rural youth either start or finish post secondary programs (Looker, 1993; Looker and Andres, 1998.; Looker and Dwyer, 1998). How rural living and educational and migration decision making interact is beyond the scope of these studies. Looker and Andres suggest Bourdieu’s theory of practice as a way of framing the problem (1998), but most work of this sort contains little theoretical direction.

Gill Jones (1995, 1999a, 1999b) qualitative work in Scotland investigates the migration decisions of rural youth. Jones investigated how young people develop what she calls “socio-spatial identities” or how they came to forge identity with respect to place. Jones’ work responds to migration studies which ignore the role of agency and thus operate at the level of gauging the relative “rationality” of the migration decision making process in large populations. Most migration studies investigate the extent to which people leave areas of relatively low wages and low levels of employment and move to places where wages are higher and jobs are more plentiful. Jones is interested in how individuals living in rural communities interpret the field of options before them and how they go about making migration decisions in the context of their lives.

Jones (1999a) found that intracommunity dynamics played a powerful role in the migration decisions of the individuals she studied. Using the theoretical work of Giddens and Bauman, Jones draws a continuum of community attachment from traditional, place-bound identity, through Giddens’ modernist notion of the self as a “project,” to Bauman’s transient postmodern idea of a kind of floating identity which avoids all ties to place. Jones finds elements of all three kinds of socio-spatial identity at play in the responses of her sample population. Her central finding is that those individuals whose identity is rooted in place and which is situated at the “traditional” end of
her socio-spatial identity continuum are least likely to migrate. Those most likely to migrate from rural communities are children of in-migrant parents, who because of their family mobility experience, have developed more modern or post-modern identity structures which have fewer and weaker linkages to the rural communities in which they were raised.

Jones work investigates migration as a decision making process in which agency is the central feature. She does not, however, analyse the role of schooling and formal educational trajectories in the migration decision. The education-migration connection is well supported in the quantitative literature on migration, and implied in the sociological literature on educational decision making, but it is not well understood at the level of particular communities. An additional problem is that most sociological studies of educational decision making are not longitudinal and so the dimension of the historical transformation of rural economies is not connected to the decision making of individuals through time.

The Migration Imperative in Rural Education

It is a great error to assume that people are rendered stupid by remaining always in the same place.
-William Cobbett, 1830

Such winds as scatters young men through the world to seek their fortunes further than at home where small experience grows.
-Shakespeare

From the point of view of neoclassical economics, migration is driven by rational economic calculation on the part of individuals and groups, and by the “natural” evolution of markets at the macro level. People simply move from areas where there is little economic opportunity to areas

8 Exceptions to this problem are some of Looker’s work which is longitudinal, and the work of Shanahan, Meirck and Elder (1998) who use longitudinal analysis of census and OCS survey data to track historic educational attainment levels in the United States. McCann (1994) has also done historical work which is longitudinal in nature charting the funding of the educational system in Newfoundland against the backdrop of the fluctuating economics of the fishery. There are no Canadian longitudinal studies of migration and education. Dublin has recently combined an analysis of historical census data with ethnographic analysis of the migration experiences of rural residents of Pennsylvania (1998). Using high school enrolment data as the basis for his sampling, he found that only 30% of graduates of the classes of 1946-1960 currently reside in the communities of origin. Those who completed high school were much more likely to migrate and the more post-secondary education was positively correlated with outmigration. Dublin that higher education has become a prerequisite for out migration from rural communities.
where there is an abundance. In addition to the scholarly literature on the problem of schooling and migration in rural areas of Nova Scotia (Looker, 1993; Looker and Dwyer, 1998; Looker and Andres, 1998), there is a wealth of fictional material which explores migration and some of it deals with the role that education plays in re-placing individuals in a social and psychic landscape larger than that of the rural Nova Scotian community and local attachments (cf. Bruce, 1954, 1959; Raddall, 1957; MacLennan, 1951; MacLeod, 1976, 1999; Coady, 1998; Barnes, 1997; Kulyk-Keefer, 1987; Kristiensen, 1995). This re-placing is also infused with a fundamental rejection of home (the rural community). In the Atlantic rural fiction of Alistair MacLeod, Earnest Buckler, Charles Bruce, Lynn Coady and Connie Barnes, to stay in school, beyond secondary education particularly, may amount to a decision to drop-out of the community. Schooling in suburban and urban environments carries no such implication. Thus, continued schooling in rural communities is a different order of decision for the young people who live there and typically represents taking the first steps toward severing important ties to place, community and family.

A large number of studies in the sociology of rural education have also identified the strong connection between learning and leaving - and the ambivalence about schooling this equation generates - in rural communities. The decision to stay or leave the home community is a significant and traumatic milestone for rural youth (Donaldson, 1986; Gibbs, 1995; Theobald, 1997; Beggs et. al., 1996; Ley, et. al., 1996; Pollard, et. al., 1990; Hektner, 1995; Ovando, 1984; Hawley, Harmond & Leopold, 1996; DeYoung, 1995; Elder, King & Conger, 1996; Seyfrit & Danner, 1999; Jones, 1995; 1999a, 1999b; Looker, 1993; Looker and Dwyer, 1998; Looker & Theissen, 1995; Looker & Andres, 1998). Either of these decisions have significant implications, both for the individual and for the communities (Theobald, 1997). This difficulty contributes to lower participation rates for rural students in post-secondary education and elevated high school

---

9 From the point of view of human capital theory the mistaken assumption is that a social investment in education will result in a workforce better able to produce, as well as attract and generate investment. Eric Ricker points out, though, that human capital theory is not particularly sensitive to geography and where educated individuals will end up living and working (1978b: 8). For many individuals, the departure is permanent and in human capital terms there is simply an enormous loss to the "donor" region. On the other hand, Mountford argues that a "brain drain" can be positive for the "source" economy because the exodus and relative good economic fortune of highly educated out-migrants raises the status and perceived utility of formal education raising human capital value in the source as well as in the receptor region. Mountford writes that: "brain drain can change the dynamics of the 'class' formation so that an undereducated class fails to develop" (1997: 288). Others argue that migration is the principal source of cultural diffusion and is effectively the well spring of all human capital and intellectual vitality which creates truly vibrant contemporary cultures (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1993; Kasabarian, 1996; Sowell, 1996).
drop-out rates. These lower rates of participation and high school completion are not new. The "rural school problem" has been discussed for at least the past hundred years in both Canada and the United States. At least part of this problem is that education may be presented to, and perceived by rural students as training for elsewhere. For some students this perception is liberating, for others unthinkable, and for most it is problematic and conflicted (Hektner, 1995; Elder, King & Conger, 1996).

Several American studies investigate place attachment and the weighty decision to leave rural communities associated with school completion. Elder, King and Conger (1996) found in their large scale quantitative study (part of the Iowa Youth and Family Project) of rural adolescents' psychological wellbeing, that the period at the end of a rural student's high school career is typically fraught with intrapersonal conflict, feelings of depression and unhappiness. Those youth who had made the firm decision to leave their home communities to further education or to work, experienced higher levels of personal distress and less of a sense of control over their lives. To quote the study: "Leave oriented adolescents are most apt to believe that life is not going well... stayers ... the boys in particular, have a relatively positive view of self and life, whatever the future may hold" (Elder, King and Conger, 1996: 416). Elder, King and Conger also discovered that once adolescents committed to staying in the community, their perceptions of employment prospects in the community became more positive (1996). By committing themselves to remain in their communities, rural students actually came to see their prospects, and those of their community, in a more positive light.

Hekter found that rural children expressed greater prevalence of conflict between the perceived importance of staying close to their parents and home and moving away from the local area (1995). In this study rural youth expressed higher levels of desire both to "get away" and to "live close to parents and relatives" than did urban youth (Hekter, 1995: 8). These strong contradictory desires led to higher levels of personal distress, particularly for rural males. Heckter also found high levels of conflict between leaving and staying to be positively associated with lower educational aspirations. Those students who experience the most ambivalence about moving away from home tended to want less post-secondary education. As Heckter puts it: "Given two mutually incompatible wishes, whatever decision a conflicted adolescent makes may not be without
emotional costs" (1995: 12). Unlike their rural counterparts the decision to pursue post-secondary education for most urban and suburban youth will not necessarily involve separation from home.

Drawing on the High School and Beyond study, Ley, Nelson and Beltyukova (1996) investigated educational aspirations of rural youth, specifically the interaction of youth, parental and teacher aspirations. This study attempted to understand how migration was offered to rural students as a means of personal advancement and how the pursuit of opportunities "elsewhere" fit with concerns for the long term sustainability of declining rural communities. The hypothesis was that rural community members would see youth as the future of their communities and would understand education as a key strategic point for inculcating values of stewardship, community leadership and activism. On the contrary, the study found that parents, youth themselves, and particularly teachers, placed "traditional community values" of mutual aid, caring and sharing at the bottom of their list of factors they considered important for successful adulthood. While they may have been committed to building sustainable communities, no one saw the school as a significant factor in the process. Instead, these rural residents held highly individualistic visions of school as a personal opportunity for individual rural youth. In a study of an Alaskan high school, Ovando also found that teachers are the principal promoters of school as a mechanism for personal as opposed to social advancement in rural communities (1984).

Theobald (1997) argues that contemporary schools are fundamentally liberal institutions, concerned primarily with the promotion of individualism at all costs. For Theobald, the

10 Commenting on the role of teachers or "guru" in rural Malaysia, Ong writes:

In almost daily contact with students, teachers (guru) are highly regarded for their learning, their kerajaan (shorthand for government employment) stamp, and orientation to Malay society. They set local standards for aspiring kampung boys and girls, the majority of whom seek career paths out of agricultural work. Guru not only display the accoutrements of urban lifestyle such as cars, plastic sheathed furniture, electronic gadgets, and expensive clothes, but they also speak in authoritative tones about Malay problems, sprinkling their speeches with technical terms and English phrases. As the varied representatives of a rural intelligentsia, teachers, policemen, office clerks and party functionaries furnish rural folk with workaday knowledge of the wider society, a bureaucratic elaboration of the increasing diet of Televeshen Malaysia and popular magazines eagerly consumed by village families. Situated in government offices and public institutions, guru and officials are strategic nodes in the bureaucratic system linking rural Malays to the national society (1987: 79).

In this study Ong explains the periodic resistance of normally docile female workers in Malay electronics plants. She argues that institutions like the school are designed to promote conformity and capitalist work discipline, but that this project has never been entirely successful as the resistance she documents demonstrates.
dissolution of community is an unintended consequence of this orientation and so is massive rural out-migration. Rural teachers and school administrators are very often highly committed to the ideals of providing what they consider to be a “modern education” which has involved promoting school closures, consolidation and out-migration (Cuban, 1995; DeYoung, 1995; Theobald, 1997; Wotherspoon, 1998). Ley, Nelson and Beltyukova comment that: "those who hold those positions often fail to see the bleak future it offers for rural communities. When rural youth migrate from their home towns, rural communities are deprived of talent and vitality that contribute to the development of a desirable future for these communities” (1996: 133).

Ironically, there is evidence that as more money is funnelled into rural schools, communities do not necessarily prosper as a result. Again using the High School and Beyond data base Pollard, Oltare and Berg (1990) found that as a community's per pupil high school expenditure increased, so too did the probability of out-migration among rural youth. Rather than contributing to community stability, this research suggests that well funded rural schools have actually contributed to rural decline. Rural schools tend to float above the communities in which they operate, apparently doing their job which is ushering certain “successful” individuals out of increasingly destitute rural areas.

Challenges to the migration imperative in rural schooling

If there is any law that has been consistently operative in American history, it is that the members of any established people or group or community sooner or later become “redskins”- that is, they become the designated victims of an utterly ruthless, officially sanctioned and subsidised exploitation. The colonists who drove off the Indians came to be intolerably exploited by their imperial governments...

...The only escape from victimisation has been to “succeed”- that is to “make it” into the class of exploiters, and then to remain so specialized and so “mobile” as to be unconscious of one’s life or one’s livelihood (Berry, 1977: 4-5).

... in a predominantly urban society, education in rural areas has been a marginal activity (Bell and Sigsworth, 1987: 251).

If one imagines the impact of formal education from the point of view of a community and its members, the young person who is retained in the community strengthens the way of life there, while the child who is lost contributes to its demise. American educational historian Paul Theobald (1997) sees this paradox, the dual-edged sword of liberal education which serves to present
individual rural youth with access to “opportunity” but which simultaneously erodes community. Theobald critiques this problem by claiming that contemporary American education is predicated upon a vision of the autonomous "self." For Theobald: "A self has come to be defined as someone who acts upon the world to achieve individual ends and desires ... Constructing life as an individual enterprise, as modern liberal thinking does, necessitates a government based on rights, an economy based on accumulation, and an educational system that reifies the notion that life is an individual enterprise" (1997: 31).

Theobald opposes this autonomous individualism with a communitarian vision of individuals with interdependent connections to people and places and a model of education predicated upon service and responsibility to others. The consequences for particular places, particularly rural places, are irrelevant because schools serve individuals. In fact, Theobald goes on to make the claim that this conception of education contributes inevitably to the crippling of rural communities. Following Wendell Berry, he writes: "When a society openly embraces political, economic, and educational theory that hinges on an individualistic and anthropocentric conception of human nature, community disintegration is logical and predictable" (Theobald, 1997: 66).

This is the irony of the contemporary rural school, the sometimes articulated, but typically implicit and unintended sabotage of the community it serves. Wotherspoon argues that assumptions and priorities which are established, normal and even effective in urban schools need to be examined critically in the context of the rural school (1998). Ultimately Wotherspoon concludes that educational agendas, which are becoming more “global” in scope, ought to be formulated in connection with, “strategies that promote the sustainability of local places in rural areas” (1998: 140). Wotherspoon sees at the heart of contemporary education the inherent mobility imperative which effectively shunts rural youth to urban centres.

Ironically, escalating demands for educational credentials and the integration of formal education into global realignment have created conditions in which educational success means that youth must leave their communities in order to pursue opportunities for higher education and meaningful employment. Consequently, the institution that communities look to as a guarantor of their future is, in fact, the gateway that channels valuable human resources out of these communities and into urban centres (1998: 138).

Wotherspoon calls for educational research that tries to sort out what kinds of educational
outcomes rural people want when they lend what he calls “strong support” to their schools. Rural parents are notoriously supportive of their community schools, but are they supporting the currently ascendant notion of schooling as preparation for global “market driven vocational and educational plans,” or conversely, “local concerns that focus upon the rebuilding and sustainability of communities” (Wotherspoon: 1998: 140). A good example of this kind of concern is contained in the comments made by rural residents across Canada in a series of workshops conducted in 1998 by the then newly constituted Canadian Rural Secretariat (1999). Participants in these workshops consistently resisted the idea that children in rural communities must and should use higher education to move to urban areas.

... many young people in rural areas are leaving in order to find jobs or to go to school. The shrinking population of young people in many rural communities was identified as a key challenge ... Many rural youth must leave their communities or travel for long periods of time in order to access post-secondary and sometimes even high school ... young people do not feel they had (sic) a future within their rural communities. (Government of Canada, 1999: 9)

Not all rural children want to “escape,” nor do their families and communities necessarily support their exodus. A common theme in studies of rural schooling is that rural students, and very often their parents too, continue to resist the individualising imperative of the contemporary school. As Porter discovered in her ethnography of a rural Appalachian high school, parents support and desire schools which, from a bureaucratic perspective, are dismal failures. A fifty percent drop-out rate, as Porter discovered, means that at least half of the students stay in rural mountain communities served by the school. This fact, in the context of a deep sense of loss, is not particularly problematic.

In Hickory County there is a poignant sense of accelerating loss of both land and close family ties. At the same time residents expressed the desire to reassert their distinctiveness and to preserve their mountain spaces, especially their schools as belonging to them, as vehicles for them to transmit valued cultural ways of being and relating to one another. In this process, they are actively engaged in constructing definable and bounded "imagined communities", deeply rooted communities that offer alternatives to the (mainstream) values of transience, consumption, individualism and material measures of success (Porter, 1996: 109).

Which schools “work” or are “effective” is a matter of perspective. Those schools which "work" from the point of view of bureaucratic efficiency and urban norms are those which effectively ease the rural student's transition out of the community. From the point of view of many rural communities, however, schools that work are those which provide opportunity but which do not
exacerbate de-population and out-migration.

In a study of what they called "bright rednecks," students attending a specially developed school for gifted rural Appalachian students in West Virginia, Hawley, Harmond and Leopold found that many of the most able students chose to use their abilities to establish a rural lifestyle foregoing better occupational and economic possibilities available to them in cities (1996). These students simply had a definition of the "good life" which rested on rural values of community, family, close contact with nature and personal autonomy, values these students thought they would be unable to realise in urban environments. Gibbs also suggests that "educated" rural students who stay in their communities may be making a conscious decision to forego income in order to be closer to their families. Gibbs concludes that family ties and employment opportunities are the principal influences constraining post-secondary participation among rural youth (1995). He also discovered that approximately 65 percent of rural youth who leave for post-secondary training return to their communities of origin. Drop-outs and those high school graduates who pursued no post-secondary training, "comprise a much larger share of young people who stayed in rural areas than those lost to urban areas" (Gibbs, 1995: 40).

Brandau and Collins found that many Appalachian rural working class youth choose community life and integration into "unskilled" or "semiskilled" marginal employment and social assistance over migration to more stable and lucrative urban opportunities (1994). They investigated the tenuous relationship between work in the adult world and the socialisation available to rural children in school. This study was motivated by a concern that national and state level educational initiatives failed to consider the complexity of the relationship between school and work in rural communities. The interplay of what school offers and what working life demands is more problematic than the simplistic "stay-in-school" and "effectiveness" rhetoric imagine.

Brandau and Collins reject theories commonly used to explain the alienation of many rural students. They claim that reproduction, resistance and mismatch (a variant of Bernstein's linguistic codes and culture of poverty theory) are inadequate arguing that teachers and students often understand one another's position; they simply reject each other's agenda. Brandau and Collins surmise that rural students often consciously exchange the promise of prosperity and
alleged comfort offered to those who conform in school for the relative autonomy that comes with irregular employment and the outdoor life of the rural community. These students understand they are sacrificing stable employment and career possibilities. Brandau and Collins write: "Rather than being prepared by school for routinized jobs with little autonomy, many male Appalachian youth sidestep school and enter into menial work that allows considerable autonomy in the broad margins of the so-called informal economy" (1994: 120). They go on to claim that resistance is an inappropriate concept for understanding the kind of withdrawal from academic participation this entails: "we do not analyse this as resistance aimed at transforming school (or society). Rather, we analyse it as skepticism (emphasis in original), rooted in a particular class culture and a choosing of local life over education based social mobility” (1994: 120).

In one of the few such studies of rural schools in the literature, an ethnographic approach allowed Collins and Brandau to gain a clearer understanding of the dynamics of the choice of coherent life paths in particular communities. The decision to stay in rural places is not irrational but represents what is seen as a normal socialisation pattern, integration into community habitus, and following in one's parent's footsteps. The highly visible lives of parents who spend much of their time hunting and fishing, riding in the back country on “four-wheelers,” and who love camping-out and living a physical life serve as primary role models to the children they raise, offering a vision of an interesting and autonomous future. The urban industrial work routine demanded in school grates against the structure of work in the rural community which is predicated on complex social contacts, flexibility of skills, and control over work time (Lofty, 1992; Cochrane 1987).

These results are not unlike those in various historical studies of nineteenth and twentieth century rural resistance to schooling, or in contemporary anthropological and sociological literature (Blythe, 1969; Weber, 1976; Wylie, 1977; Reed-Danahay, 1987; Demerath, 1999; Deyhle &

11 See Porter, 1996; Reed-Danahay, 1987; Lofty, 1992; and Ovando, 1984 for other examples.

12 Looker and Andres (1998) also use Bourdieu’s conceptual apparatus to understand aspirations of rural students. They argue that community level “habitus” must be considered in order to understand the educational and occupational decision making of rural youth. Jentsch and Dey (2000) critique the Scottish rural youth policy agenda for providing “good jobs” to rural youth in their home communities arguing that the policy, however well intentioned, misses the complex nature of kinship and community structure which offer differently placed rural youth different levels of access to community work. The key argument Jentsch and Day make is that the interests of communities and individual rural youth are often conflated resulting in insensitive and ineffective policy.
Margonis, 1995). For example, Reed-Danahay (1987) describes how children in rural France quietly balance the demands of teachers and curriculum which focus on the child as, "an individual learner and encourages middle class/urban values and modes of conduct," and the community values of, "the perpetuation of the family farm as both a kinship and an economic unit" (1987: 85). Robert Critchfield, echoing anthropologist Robert Redfield in fact argues that there is something common in the rural experience that cuts across culture and historical time representing a view of the "good life" which is intimately connected to place (1994: 19). In the same vein but in a radically different locale Deyhle and Margonis (1995) describe how young Navajo women find their way into the cultural space of their communities assuming adult roles that preclude and/or render formal education useless.13

All of these studies of rural schooling demonstrate how the call of authentic adult experience is strong and powerful. In rural communities that experience often includes marginal employment, multiple work and social skills, friendship networks, outdoor living, traditional gendered subjectivities and deep kinship roots. These studies also demonstrate the limited penetration of the institution of schooling into the social fabric of many rural communities. One hundred and fifty years of normalisation (including the project of public schooling) and industrialisation have not yet entirely infiltrated the rural community.

13 McRobbie (1991) also found that many young women dismiss school in favour of traditional women's roles in the home and in the community. She writes: "They found little in school with which to identify actively. The ideas and values they preferred to identify with were those of their mothers and other female members of the family" (1991: 58). Gaskell (1992) found similar patterns with young urban women. Trying to understand how young working class women who were educated "alongside men" came to have different educational outcomes Gaskell concluded that: "most of the young women believed their choices arose not out of unequal giftedness, but out of a quite sensible inability to tolerate the pointlessness and childishness of school ... they did not think that what they could learn there was useful." (1992: 43). School appeared to these women as an irrelevant waste of time in meaningless pursuit of "irrelevant academic information" (Gaskell, 1992: 44). Even watching other people's children and doing menial domestic labour proved more "real" and engaging for these young women than school.
Why would young people stay?

Once upon a time, before progress robbed us of our innocence, life was full of content. People were truly individuals. They were happy then. They lived in balance with nature on an island outside history. Everyone was, as Livesay says, of an equality, they lived beautiful and simple lives, as their ancestors had done before them, never questioning their place in the world, never troubled by the politics of an uncertain age. They still live this way, pure and unspotted in a troubled and difficult world. (MacKay, 1988: 41).

Tourists consume what they think is Atlantic Canadian resistance to modernity and find in it a manufactured reassurance that community exists and time stands still (MacKay, 1988, 1993, 1994). While this vision of resistance is a cultural construction to be sold to tourists, Atlantic Canadian coastal communities and the people in them do resist becoming just like any other place. The resilience of coastal communities in Atlantic Canada has been something of a puzzle for state normalisers and academic theorists alike. Against the consolidating logic of corporate capitalism, petty capitalism and "peripheral" places have survived and evolving out of the colonial dependency relationships that established many Atlantic Canadian coastal communities. The steady march of capital concentration ought to have by now "rationalised" the Atlantic fishery, and as yet it has not (Brym and Sacouman, 1977; Clement, 1986). Explicit state policy designed to "modernise" the Atlantic fishery and create a small cadre of, "professional fishers" has been in place since the late 1940s (Matthews, 1993; Davis, 1991; Blades, 1995; Apostle and Barrett, 1990; Kearney, 1993; Rogers, 1995). This policy has supported such initiatives as: controlled and limited licensing systems ensuring that the number of people fishing is restricted; transferable licenses which have facilitated concentration of allowable catch in the hands of increasingly fewer fishermen; low interest and no interest loans for capital expansion in the industrial fishery allowing some fishermen access to the capital necessary to invest in intensive and high tech harvesting technologies; and most recently massive "adjustment" packages designed to ease people living in coastal communities out of the fishery.

Yet in Atlantic coastal villages and small towns, life is made up of a network of long term, largely

14 See Blakie for an analysis of how coastal communities are constructed in British tourism and retirement literature as nostalgic vestiges of an older communitarian and harmonious moral order (1997). Of course, Williams' The Country and the City (1973) contains the quintessential treatment of the rural idyll in British culture. For an analysis of the commodification of culture on a global scale in the context of international tourism see Tilley (1997).
face-to-face commitments. The small boat fishery persists and people continue to inhabit the villages and small towns which have virtually no economic reason for existing other than the fishery. Despite several generations of "development" efforts, these places remain classic Canadian one industry towns as Lucas described them (1971). To be sure, there is concern, even a kind of panic about the future, but there is also resistance to what is presented as the historic inevitability of the demise of the Atlantic coastal community. Indeed this alleged demise is hotly contested by ongoing struggles between local and state forces characterised best by small nascent fishermen's organisation, and community defence groups and bureaucratic agencies like the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and corporate fish companies (Clement, 1986; Kearney, 1993). The case of Newfoundland outports is instructive because they were the first Atlantic communities to have been explicitly declared redundant. Matthews has studied the resettlement initiative and the resistance to resettlement carried out by many communities whose residents decided forcefully to defend their homes, declaring, "there's no better place than here" (Matthews, 1976). Matthews comments on the definition of success and failure in the communities he studied, definitions of the situation which appear strangely quaint to a mobile middle class ear.

Failure for them would mean moving their families to live permanently in Toronto, St. John's or Corner Brook. Success on the other hand, has come to be associated with the ability to supplement traditional sources of income with outside seasonal employment, so that one's family can live in the rural community throughout the year (Matthews, 1976: 24).

If the logic of capital demands a transcendence of what Marx called the feudalistic bondage and "idiocy" of rural life, remaining rural people were passed by in the evolutionary march of the history of capitalism, like Foucault's "determined inhabitants of space" standing their ground in resistance to the "pious descendants of time" (1986:20).

Matthews has followed up his early work with another series of community studies that found similar levels of attachment to place and a traditional life supplemented by periodic migration and government assistance (1993). Life in the rural community continues to be a rational choice and one which is favoured if circumstances, resourcefulness and family connections allow it to be made. Rural economies are also hybrid constructions linked intimately to production and consumption, to the state and to global capitalism. As a Digby Neck dragger fisherman told me in conversation, "make no mistake, fishing isn't a guy in a little boat, fishing is big business."

23
Despite the fact that it only employs a small proportion of the labour force (see Table 3 in Chapter 5), fishing remains the single most important resource industry in Nova Scotia in terms of export dollars (Davis et. al., 1999: 2). Fishing is indeed big business, but it is also small business, wage labour, and a way of life. The independent "little guy" in his own boat, another less privileged "little guy" who works as wage labour or on a share on an offshore dragger, his captain, the guy who owns the company, his shareholders clipping coupons, the woman who cuts fish and who does the books for her husband, the kid who wants a place on the boat, the First Nations man who does not require a license to fish are also players in the contemporary Atlantic fishery.

Contemporary fishing is a complex web of class, family, ethnic and gender relationships (see Clement, 1986; Durrenberger, 1997; Kearney, 1993; MacDonald and Connelly, 1990a, 1990b; Sinclair, 1992).

But why would youth remain in "dying" coastal communities dominated by an industry as troubled as the Atlantic fishery? In other studies of Newfoundland communities O'Grady (1996) and Felt and Sinclair (1992, 1995) found that for young people in remote regions which offered few employment prospects, migration was still not a particularly desirable option. While he found considerable personal distress among unemployed youth in the northern peninsula of Newfoundland, O'Grady also found a strong sense of place attachment. This place attachment was not rooted in an ignorance of other places in which work and educational opportunity are better, but rather, in a knowledge of the high cost of living and social isolation in urban areas. To quote one of O'Grady's informants:

I was living in a one-bedroom apartment in Scarborough over a store in an old strip mall for $600 a month. Even though I had a full time job as a fork lift operator in a chewing gum factory, I was no better off than I am here. Although work is hard to find, at least I don't have to pay rent living with my parents. And all me buddies are here (1996: 41).

This young man offers what seems to be a rational assessment of his life situation. Like him, O'Grady's other informants were interested in becoming independent and self-reliant, they simply did not see out-migration and marginal urban employment as a sensible way to achieve these values. Felt and Sinclair also found that for many Newfoundland youth, migration was not a very attractive proposition because of the investment it involved, one which typically brought very poor returns. They argue that migrants expect to find a lifestyle that is in most respects more difficult.
and generally inferior to the one they are presently living at home (1995). The economic returns which served as a “pull” factor in times past now appear to be considerably less attractive. Additionally, these young people had low levels of formal education and understood that in order to access reasonable wages in the 1990s, one needs "an education." Urban areas have also been producing an indigenous "reserve army" of labour (Willis, 1986, Weis, 1990), an underclass of unemployed youth who are available to fill marginal service positions and move into the full-time labour force in times of capital expansion usurping the traditional role of flexible, multiskilled Atlantic Canadian migrant labour.\textsuperscript{15}

The Newfoundland studies cited above seem to suggest that the "lure" of education and migration is far less seductive in modern rural and coastal communities than theories of modernisation, brain drain speculation, and a generation of "goin down the road" fictional literature might have predicted. Since education has traditionally been seen as a ticket out of rural places it is not surprising that O'Grady found a preponderance of youth with low levels of formal education in the communities he studied (1996: 41). Could it be that rural resistance to formal education can be understood as resistance to what one might call the migration imperative, the mobility ideology of liberal schooling? Kincheloe and Pinar suggest that the placeless liberal ideology of schooling is at the heart of Southern (U.S.) resistance to formal education because this form of learning is not sensitive to any particular place or the particular complex of practical skills needed to thrive there (1991: 152).

The other side of this coin might be that acceptance of educational challenges and opportunities offered through formal schooling amounts to rejecting a powerful and well known community based habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), its own hegemonic and economic power to define reality. It might be an act of resistance (for instance) for a young man to walk away from a fishing boat and the strong expectation that he would follow his father in the family fishing tradition. He would need to resist economic enticement as well as community ideological pressure. For a young women the choice may appear less problematic. While she too might have to resist certain

\textsuperscript{15} It can be argued that the traditional Atlantic Canadian migrant is precisely the kind of worker being demanded by neoliberal, post-Fordist employers. Atlantic Canadians have been providing just-in-time, multiskilled, flexible service to Canadian and international capital for at least a century and a half. This history is documented in a variety of places. Brookes' pioneering study of migration from the Maritimes is a basic source (1976, 1981), as are Thornton (1985) and the Forbes and Muise survey of Atlantic Canadian history (1995). Burrill uses oral history to document the working lives of more recent Maritime out-migrants.
pressure to follow her mother’s example, the community habitus may appear more as a default option, or the result of early sexual experience drawing her into community life in lieu of other visible options.¹⁶

But few people are simply “reproduced” in terms of a family/class tradition. As Bauman points out, choice is the inevitable chronic feature of modernity, and that, "whether we like it or not we are doomed to choose, to go on choosing and to justify our choices and to be painfully aware that choosing and being pressed to prove ourselves right is our fate" (1999: 134). And it is in school that choice is presented and managed, fretted over and contemplated. Choice assumes mobility, in single industry and rural communities. For urban youth, confronting an unpredictable array of options and to be fated to choose is a normal condition. In the coastal community the “norm” is to stay, and leaving is moving into a foreign space where outcomes are unknown, a space where the habitus cannot map the future.

A range of social forces including globalisation, the traditional interface between the town and the country, the deindustrialisation of the urban landscape, massive youth unemployment all converge on youth in both urban and rural communities. Are rural schools any longer perceived as a cultural bridge out of those resistant places that cling to the map for no apparent reason as DeYoung (1995) and Theobald (1997) suggest? Do rural schools in coastal communities of Nova Scotia continue to play their traditional role of moving educated individuals out to greener urban pastures (Lotz and Welton, 1997: 6-12). Could it be that in the current uncertainty and persistently high levels of youth unemployment in urban areas have created the conditions in which marginal, sporadic employment in coastal communities and family networks actually do provide

¹⁶ In his anthropological analysis of space and place in a Newfoundland village Pocius discusses the different kinds of gendered space that men and women learn to negotiate (1991). The male space is outside the house and its immediate environs, the bush, the shed, and on the water. Pocius shows how men and women both learn how to negotiate these different geographies. This gendered concept of space is linked to kinship and the economy of the fishing village because fishing operations and licenses are handed on to males in the family. Thus, men tend to remain working in the same places as their fathers. Women on the other hand will have to move to different communities upon marriage because in small coastal communities the restrictions of consanguinity restrict the availability of "marriageable" men. Pocius argues that because of this temporary attachment to particular landscapes and local geography, women are socialised to learn how to construct the interior geography of the house, a geography which can be found in any community (1991: 99). Similarly, gendered structures of opportunity in the Atlantic fishery have been analysed by other sociologists (MacDonald and Connelly, 1990a, 1990b, Connelly and MacDonald, 1983, Porter, 1985).
many youth with their best chance for a decent life (O'Grady, 1996)?

A sociological focus on place as a location for identity has challenged visions of both working class revolution and functional notions of social mobility in an ossified industrial heartland. As Orun writes (echoing a host of others): "Many people have shifted their efforts to reconstruct the world of their neighbourhoods, their communities, their places" (1998: 8). At the same time the modern state is reaching in to the "community" as a new and more efficient site of governance (Rose, 1997, Valverde, 1997) with a variety of grassroots community development initiatives aimed at constructing and governing rural subjectivities. Two strong disciplinary forces in the modernisation of rural people and places have been education and migration. It has been in educational institutions that rural people are shown their alterity and the importance of places other than their own (Popkewitz, 1998; Theobald, 1997; Haas and Nachtigal, 1998). In school rural youth are offered a stepping stone out of their communities through access to higher education. A part of rural governance strategies aimed at developing communities is the notion that globalization and the "information economy" present new high-tech options for rural communities. But rural dwellers understand that the high tech world is in the city. For rural youth, the naive "community development" rhetoric of the "high tech" future in their remote fishing villages is a dubious prospect. If they want to become computer programmers, they know that they must leave. If they want to fish or work in most available, close-to-home jobs, higher education will be of little obvious value to them.

Schooling and Migration in Atlantic Canada

If rural development is to flourish, for example, the education system must be changed so as to train people for rural living. Unwittingly, schooling in Newfoundland since Confederation has been essentially training to get people out of the outports. The brightest and most highly motivated have been trained to leave, while those who aspire to a rural lifestyle have found little meaning in what school has to offer (House, 1988: 114)

I have suggested that definitions of "success" current among contemporary school promoters may be at odds with those found in traditional coastal communities. Community success stories are often school failures; drop-outs typically stay and contribute to the community. The way these
categories (success and failure) are constructed in terms of allegiance to place is seldom considered. This 1992 exchange between veteran Digby Neck teacher Laura Tidd and lobsterman Fred Horner at a planning session for a community-based curriculum project at Digby Neck Consolidated School illustrates the ambiguous position of schooling and the gulf between community and school, between life's curriculum and formal pedagogy.17

Laura: These kids have got to have a good education so that they have some choices when they get out of here.

Fred: I agree, they need a good education, but they need to learn some responsibility and respect for work. You know they got to get out of bed in the morning and go and get after something like I done. The problem is there ain't nothing to do any more for a lot of em.

Laura: And that's because you're stuck. Maybe you wouldn't be if you had kept on. My son wanted to quit school when he was in grade 10 and I told him OK, but pack your things while you're at it. Well, of course, he stayed and that's why he's got his engineer's papers and landed that job in Yarmouth.

Fred: Well, you know I quit school in grade 9 to go fishing. I haven't had any use for anything but math, that's the only thing I wish I had'a learned because it stopped me from getting my navigation papers. That's all. The rest of it I never would have used; I never even used what I had much.

Laura: And your choices are limited by that. If you wanted to change jobs right now or if you had to, you wouldn't be able to do it very easily.

Fred: What me and Conrad (another fisherman sitting beside Fred) got is an education from life. We learned how to work and how to fish. We're educated people, it's just that we're not educated according to (pause) in the eyes of school. In fact, I can turn my hand to a lot of things. Look ask him (pointing to male teacher Tony Kelly), ask him if he could find a job easy if something happened to this one.

Tony: No I don't think I could easily.

Fred: And he's got his education and I've got mine.

For young men, resistance to school is simultaneously resistance to migration and to a construction of manhood which stands in opposition to one which is valued in the community. In a study of male labourers in the inter-war years in England, Hussey (1997) discovered that manliness and the self-worth of a rural working man was in the ability to turn one's hand to many things. Multiple skills are learned through extensive socialisation and informal apprenticeship in a number

17 I am using the names of these individuals with permission. The context of the discussion was an ongoing series of school-community planning meetings at Digby Neck Consolidated School. This excerpt was transcribed from videotape. Thanks to Laura and Fred for allowing me to use this excerpt.
of skills in the company of established and respected experts and teachers in the fishery. Ferland and Wright (1996) also comment on the tendency in historical studies of the working class to ignore the uniqueness of labour patterns in rural communities. They use the examples of “remote” resource extraction areas as prototypical examples of situations in which workers have tended to be multiskilled and highly flexible. A similar pattern is evident in Atlantic coastal communities both historically and in the modern context (Matthews, 1976, 1993; McCann, 1994; Burrill, 1994).

In coastal communities, as Matthews' work shows, useful everyday skills, supplemented by social benefits, community barter, reciprocity and family interdependence allow people to survive in rural coastal communities, and often far better than they might in urban environments (1976, 1993). Such a life represents an escape from the migration imperative and the need to venture into the uncertain waters of cities and higher education. Leaving school is not necessarily opting for an impoverished or a less complex life experience. As one of my informants claimed in Dropping Out in Digby (Corbett, 1991), young people do not stay in school because they are “smart,” they do so because they are not considered particularly gifted by community standards and can not handle a complex and difficult life of entrepreneurial risk-taking, raising a family on limited resources, physical toil and manual skills in adult life in the “real world” of the community and on the water. Those “forced” to rely on school may also lack connections to employment networks necessary for finding work in rural areas. The formally educated person, in many respects, may appear stupid and isolated in rural community terms because s/he typically lacks the variety of skills, connections and experience which are seen as constituting a proper practical education for competent living.18

When the rural community is considered in educational discourse it is typically presented as a problem, the "rural problem,*19 a vaguely defined sense of retrogressive life associated with the

---

18 This is precisely the problem which motivated a series of curriculum reform projects in North American schools in the early decades of the twentieth century. Influenced by Dewey's pragmatism and responding to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of Canadian and American society variants of "progressive" education sought to introduce less academic practical subjects into the school curriculum including agricultural education (Jones, 1978; 1979; Norman, 1986), domestic science (Riley, 1992), commercial and vocational education (Anstead & Goodson, 1993), , and physical education (Mott, 1986). These movements represented early attempts to integrate the formal curriculum of school with the pragmatic socialisation of life.

19 Marx contributed perhaps the classic formulation of the “rural problem” writing in the Communist Manifesto about the demise of rural regions. “The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life” (cited in Berger and Mohr, 1976: 36).
countryside. Canada’s “rural problem” has been featured in educational discourse for at least a century and it is slowly being solved by urbanisation, out-migration and the consolidation of schools. The link between the implicit migration, escape message embedded in schooling routines and curriculum and the decline of rural communities is sometimes even made explicit. In a 1952 ethnography of coastal communities in Digby County, Hughes et. al (1960) identified the idea that "people must migrate if they are to make anything of themselves" as a key community sentiment. They go on to elaborate:

Such is the almost unanimous sentiment regarding chances for youth in the village. The main purpose of education as now conceived is to prepare the student for the possibility of a successful position somewhere away from the island. The minimal meaning of a successful career is a white collar job and the fullest hopes are for a professional position. For years Fairhavensers have been proud of their record of supplying a large number of teachers, clergymen and other professionals to the outside ... Fishing is seen as a satisfying occupation for those who are already in it but the evaluation is quite different for young men. For them there is only one course: leave the island. This applied to all young men and young women and is based on an apprehension of Fairhaven's future. If there is no diversity of occupations in the village, and if the only resource is dwindling, then what alternative is there but to leave? ... Nevertheless, migration from Fairhaven is attended by strong feelings. Parents hate to see their children go away, and the young people themselves find the prospect of moving to a strange city disturbing whether to finish their education or to seek employment (Hughes et. al., 1960: 222).

The “rural problem” in contemporary educational theorising is a discourse which effectively constructs the rural community itself as a problem. So rather than the "rural problem" we now see emerging the rural as problem. Individuals living in “backward” places are potentially functional, so long as they can be turned into modern tourist promoters, small scale entrepreneurs, or moved to “places that work.” I suggest that a central part of the specialised governance in rural areas is a migration curriculum for the young ensuring that backward spaces are not reproduced but transformed. The simplest and most “efficient” means of transformation in Atlantic Canada has always been out-migration.

Yet, community allegiances and place attachment remain, notwithstanding modernity. For this reason Ralph Matthew’s informants in rural Newfoundland (1976, 1993) or the respondents in the Stirling County Study interviewed in Digby County in the 1950s (Hughes et. al., 1960) could hold the seemingly contradictory view that the community was a wonderful place in which to live but that it held nothing for their children. In each of these cases, education was seen to be the passport
out of the trouble facing the community. As Matthews quips, "the road to school leads out of
town" (1993). In neither of these cases was education seen as having anything to do with
confronting the problems faced by the community, but rather as a rocket in which the "motivated"
individual might escape the gravitational pull of local ties.

Structure of the study

This study is organised into nine chapters. The first chapter is this introduction. In Chapter 2 the
history of Canadian rural education is reconceptualised in terms of poststructuralism and resistance
theory drawing on poststructuralism and particularly the work of Bruce Curtis. In Chapter 3,
various treatments of resistance theory in the sociology of education are reviewed in connection
with the place of education in Atlantic Canadian coastal communities. Chapter 4 describes the
research setting and methodology. Chapter 5 introduces a quantitative analysis of migration
patterns and educational achievement data for Digby Neck 1963-1998. Chapters 6 through 8 deal
with the ethnographic and interview data looking separately at the experience of three cohorts
within the overall study period, i.e., 1963-1974; 1975-1986; 1987-1998. Chapter 9 concludes the
study drawing together and analysing findings. I begin with an analysis of the history of
resistance to schooling in rural areas of Canada in order to lay the groundwork for a more detailed
analysis of contemporary resistance to schooling in a coastal community.
Chapter 2

A protracted struggle: An analysis of rural resistance and normalization in Canadian educational history

‘Good for you,’ said Grandpa as I stood with my mortar board and gown, clutching my various awards and diplomas ... ‘Good for you,’ ‘ille bhig ruaidh. This means that you will never have to work again.’ What he meant was that I would not spend my life pulling the end of a bucksaw or pushing the boat off the Calum Ruadh’s Point in freezing water up to my waist.” (MacLeod, 1999: 107).

Canadian rural historians Ferland and Wright (1996), Bouchard (1997) and Sandwell (1994) argue forcefully that Canadian historiography is characterised by a fundamental urban bias. Each claims in different ways that rural history in Canada has been simplified and presented as a backdrop for the “real” history of the development of an urban, industrial nation. These historians argue for an analysis of the “continued importance of this numerically dominant rural population after industrialization” (Sandwell, 1994: 5). Canadian educational historiography is in a similar position. While much of its subject matter is set in a rural context, or at least in a context in which rural life is the dominant mode of living, the differences between urban and rural schooling are often obscured. Rather than a straightforward and uniform process of school promotion and state normalisation, I wish to show that the history of rural education is as diverse as the various rural economies that span Canadian geography. Formal education only penetrated rural communities significantly when these communities ceased to be labour intensive, subsistence or semi-proletarian production sites. This transformation took place as early as the middle of the 19th Century in southern Ontario but as recently as the latter decades of the 20th Century in parts of rural, northern and coastal communities. In order to understand the contemporary relationship between formal schooling and coastal and rural communities it is necessary to consider the development of schooling in Canada, not as a unity so much as a complex of multiple practices in differently structured economic and social locations.

In all Canadian communities, the routines of schooling are now well established and rural children board the school bus at the age of five like all Canadian children. But how has this situation come to be normal, routine, the kind of thing virtually everyone does without giving it a thought? Now
there is an additional expectation that all young Canadians will stay in school until they have graduated from high school, even though universal secondary schooling itself is a relative historical novelty in many rural communities.

The development of the Canadian educational state extends back to the 1830s (Wilson, Stamp & Audet, 1970; Curtis, 1988; Axelrod, 1997). Curtis draws on the work of Michel Foucault to reconceptualise educational history in a way that is different from the traditional humanistic story of linear progress. The traditional version of the story is a tale of "forward looking" reformers, committed to the establishment of an institution we now see as crucial to the "proper" treatment of children. In this version, schools provide necessary training for life in a complex society and a humane alternative to putting young people to work as soon as they were able to carry a bucket of water. More recent historical analysis has challenged this narrative. In Curtis's poststructural history, the aim of the educational project (which he calls the Canadian educational state) was to equalise and individualise, to shape children individually and collectively into uniform social subjects in the face of the rapid social change brought about by industrialisation. Curtis documents how schooling was a central component of what he termed "state formation."

Normalisation

The 19th century dream of educational reformers and school promoters (Prentice, 1977) which emerges from Curtis' analysis is one of a managed social utopia constituted in schools by the administration of a normalising gaze which would, "strengthen the individual's focus and structure them such that 'reason' and 'intelligence' rather than 'passion' and 'impulse' would be dominant" (Curtis, 1988: 102). Passion, "impulse," and tradition were the stuff of the premodern age, the historic nether world which existed in the days of preindustrial power relationships. Passions needed the systematic regulation described by Foucault in his analysis of punishment in the Classical Age at the beginning of Discipline and Punish (1979). As a frontier society, Canada exhibited elements of this untamed nature and by the 1840s, the state began making disciplinary inroads via institutions like newly established common schools, jails and asylums. The rebellions of the 1830s had shown the dangers associated with an uncontrolled populace in turbulent times
(Axelrod, 1997: 21). Schools would become laboratories for social engineering, where students would be fitted for "roles" in "society," itself a novel 19th century idea born in part out of revolutionary movements that had broken traditional power relationships and patterns of living. The newly emancipated subject, the citizen/individual would need to be taught to recognise this freedom as well as its nature and scope. For Curtis: "Political conflicts were to be remade in the educational state, through the remaking of political subjectivities. What is at work here is the making of (modern) social identities" (Curtis, 1988: 13).

Thus began the long process of civilising and regulating the ostensibly free subject in the context of developing capitalism. A new kind of power became necessary in this space, one which would focus not on overt coercion, but rather upon a protracted training, against the backdrop of a rational, normative social curriculum which would inculcate appropriate perceptions and behaviour deep within the consciousness of the subject.

The Normal is established as a principle of coercion in teaching with the introduction of a standardised education and the establishment of the écoles normales (teachers' training colleges); it is established in the effort to organise a national medical profession and a hospital system capable of operating general norms of health; it is established in the standardisation of industrial processes and products. Like surveillance with it normalisation becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age... In a sense the power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them into one another. It is easy to see how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual difference (Foucault, 1979: 184).

The end result is the docile self-regulating subject, who participates actively in his/her own subjugation; indeed for the early Foucault, little else is possible (Butler, 1997). The trouble with

---

1 Axelrod (1997: 24-29) notes that in Canada West the educational state was supported by both the Reformers and the Tories albeit for different reasons. For the Reformers it was a question of an "educated" democratic citizenship capable of making the kind of choices a free people need to make in the political and social arena. The promise of education might also teach the poor to be otherwise, contributing to social levelling, and class harmony. From the perspective of the establishment, schooling would provide the discipline necessary for a controlled kind of progress. Furthermore, the young could simultaneously be indoctrinated in British Imperial ideology in the schools.

2 Postmodern sociological theorist Zygmunt Bauman argues that the nature of global capitalism has shifted from a primary emphasis on production and the creation of a "productive" subject, to an emerging emphasis on the production of "consumers" who make efficient and intelligent "choices" (1991, 1992, 1995, 1999). I take up this transformation in later phases of this analysis.
Foucault's early work perhaps best represented by *Discipline and Punish* is that it paints too neat a picture of the process of normalisation. This problem has been pointed out by various critics both sympathetic and hostile to Foucault's poststructural reevaluation of historical studies and social analysis. For instance, Judith Butler analyses the seeming paradox of the subject whose will is self-formed, tracing the idea of subjection from Hegel, through Nietzsche and Freud, to Althusser and Foucault.

Resistence in the historical analysis of Canadian rural schools

At the heart of the various critiques of Foucault, is a general thread of resistance. Things do not always turn out as neatly and as predictably as the normalisation project (particularly in Foucault's early books) seem to imagine. Totalizing theory, and the social practice and institutional work that accompanies it, always generates resistance. Foucault's studies were typically concerned with mapping the local intricacies of resistance to normalisation in concrete historical studies while at the same time documenting its formation. Following Foucault, much of Curtis' analysis is taken up with documenting popular and institutional (often community and church led) resistance to the Canadian educational state. Curtis maintains that rural resistance to schooling cannot be attributed exclusively to the structural differences between the task-oriented rhythms of agricultural and

---

3 Social theorist Anthony Giddens simply dismisses the idea that normalising surveillance and meticulous subjection actually accomplishes all that Foucault claims for it (1981, 1995). In Giddens' words, "The 'docile bodies' which Foucault says discipline produces turn out very often to be not so docile after all" (1981: 172). Jurgen Habermas likewise advances the claim that had Foucault engaged in an analysis of the modern state (a striking absence in Foucault's work also noted by Giddens [1995: 267-68]), he would have been forced to drop his notions of totalizing subjection in the face of advances in personal liberty, civil rights and legal security which are difficult to deny (Habermas, 1996/1987: 290). This is an interesting bit of speculation on Habermas' part. It could also be that Foucault would continue to ignore the state which continues to "wither" as a force in the lives of Westerners. Devolution of bureaucracies, new forms of community-based governance (Rose, 1997), and the hegemony of consumerism (Bauman, 1999), all point to the declining importance of the state.

4 In fact, the entire notion of resistance is problematic in Foucault's terms because any resistance is yet another form of discourse vying for our hearts and our heads and more importantly, for the right to define reality and consequently to generate constitutive power. The debate between Noam Chomsky and Foucault demonstrates this conundrum in Foucault's writing and the persistent calls for him to make more explicit the politics of resistance his thought clearly stimulates and encourages. In the context of a debate around the constitution of just laws and resistance to unjust state law on the basis of a democratic theory of justice Foucault suggests to Chomsky that his basis for challenging the state with higher order principles is yet another discourse struggling for hegemony (Achbar, 1994).
resource-based economies and the factory model work routines of the school. Resistance is a
more complex phenomenon. The work of Wilson and Stortz (1993) also demonstrates the
complexity of the school-community relationship in frontier schools in British Columbia in the first
decades of the 20th century, the historical point at which compulsory schooling is being
established. These authors suggest a tenuous and multi-faceted relationship between school and
community influenced by transient labour, the teacher's ability to understand and play local
political games, student family hardship, the need for child labour, among other factors,
contributed local school support.

The transition to the routines of school in these rural places did not go so smoothly. While the
stories told by educators in Phillip McCann's (1982) collection of accounts of the establishment of
the habits of schooling posit the intimate connection between community based resource extraction
activity and school attendance, McCann (1994) finds a less predictable relationship between school
enrolment/attendance and economic activity. What does remain clear through these studies of
schooling in Newfoundland is that life in the fishery imposes significant obstacles to the
normalisation of school routines, particularly in coastal communities. In the frontier and resource
based economies of early 20th Century Newfoundland (McCann 1982, 1994) and British
Wilson, 1989, 1995; Wilson and Stortz, 1993, 1995;) and in the emerging industrial society of
mid to late 19th Century Canada West/Ontario (Gaffield, 1985; Curtis, 1988; Davey, 1978;
Axelrod, 1997), the project of compulsory schooling as a modernising state imperative has been
significantly resisted, particularly in rural regions.

Curtis' analysis of state formation presents the construction of schooling as part of an institutional
apparatus designed to inculcate and routinize work discipline and habits in a uniform social subject
which might be "useful," compliant and self-regulating in the integrated and rationally organised
industrial economy. However, as Wilson and Stortz have shown, rurality embodies difference
and variability which persist in the face of feeble, typically unsuccessful, and even misguided
normalisation efforts (i.e. "rural mindedness," progressivism and the ideology of practicality,
agricultural education, normal and summer school training for in-service and prospective teachers).
These efforts were easily stymied in remote rural schools staffed by isolated and inexperienced

36
young teachers. For instance, British Columbia's Putman Weir Commission imagined the "rural minded" teacher as an instrument of state leverage and a purveyor of "civilisation" and social "improvement." This project failed because the teachers themselves were usually forced to adapt to community realities or perish. Thus, while Victoria, or St. John's had, by the early part of the twentieth century, a well developed articulation of institutions which were charged with the work of subjectification, remote areas were still very much independent, "untamed," immersed in the localised resource extraction economy, resistant to "outside interference," and state intervention in general. Local elites often blocked the progress of school promotion against the will of working class parents in the interests of maintaining a compliant and immobile work force (Bouchard, 1997).

While rural resistance to the normalising process of state schooling is by no means universal, one aspect of the "rural school problem" was (and continues to be) real or perceived irrelevance of the institution and urban bias within it. Operating from within the framework of Curtis' Foucauldian analysis of schooling as a part of the emerging "tutelary complex" (the configuration of state institutions designed to shape subjectivity; see Donzelot, 1978), I propose to review a range of sources focusing on the problem of resistance in rural schools. In my view, resistance takes two general forms: 1) the rural subject stood in opposition to schooling on the grounds that it was/is an irrelevant urban/outside imposition (rurality in resistance); and, 2) structural resistance in the sense that the rural region and its typical economic activities are at odds with the structure of schooling (rurality as resistance).

Rurality in Resistance

School burning, according to Curtis has not been well documented, but in his analysis of the formation of the Canadian educational state he gives several examples of the burning of schools as demonstrations of community resistance to the idea of school in the period prior to the establishment of compulsory schooling legislation in Ontario in 1871. School burnings were perhaps the most extreme form of disruptive resistance typically organised but also typically
supported by significant parts of communities. In what can only be interpreted as at least tacit support for a campaign of organised juvenile violence against schools and their teachers, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Toronto (on pain of excommunication) urged resistance to the establishment of common nondenominational schools (Curtis, 1988: 150, 153-156). For Curtis: "in cases where students had the support of other community members, opposition may be seen as resistance in the face of political initiatives directed against popular character and popular culture" (1988: 156). Curtis argues that resistance to schooling cannot be interpreted as the deviant actions of individuals isolated from the moral standards of the community at large. Rather, what develops through the decades leading up to compulsory attendance legislation (and even after) is a struggle over the contested territory, that is, the school, the territory of subject formation and economic necessity in a predominantly rural society. The normally nonproblematic and linear history of progress, the history of the development of an "appreciation" for the worth of "modern" institutions like the public school as it is presently constituted is challenged by Curtis. He focusses on the nature of the political struggle between the school promoters and communities which resisted for a complex of reasons which were not at all irrational.

For Curtis, the normalising school project met with resistance both at the level of attendance (simply getting the children into the school) and at the level of what happened inside school. The task of school promoters in the last half of the 19th century was to lay the groundwork for habits and the kind of regularised social practices which would later emerge with the advent of urbanisation and industrialisation and take the form of the contemporary public school which is now taken for granted as a "natural" part of youth experience. Regularity of attendance, mirrored a discipline of character in a population still attuned to the rhythms of seasons and resource-based productive activity, the caprice of weather, and requirements of families for the labour of children (Gaffield, 1987; Davey, 1978). Curtis speaks of this emphasis in terms of Durkheim's "moral constancy," claiming that school attendance was basic to the rest of the enterprise of moral regulation represented by schooling. According to Curtis, "Regularity in school attendance was to produce regularity and stability in more general behaviour patterns, particularly in political

5 Among a variety of examples of more or less violent resistance to school documented by Curtis are: beatings and terrorising of teachers, running them out of communities, vandalising school houses in an imaginative variety of ways, and resistance to the teacher's authority to discipline children both inside and outside the schoolhouse walls (Curtis, 1988: 150-173).
behaviour" (1988: 183). Attendance itself became the focus of moral training as opposed to older forms of community controlled education which were, "a locally controlled convenience adapted both to community needs and community desire" (Curtis, 1988: 199). Still, Curtis does recognise the incompatibility of schooling and work routines and contingencies in Canada West/Ontario, as well as the resistance this incompatibility generated. There is a wealth of literature which suggests that not only the rhythms of work, but also the very structure of everyday life in preindustrial communities found in Canada West and Ontario (see Curtis, Gaffield and Davey), in rural Quebec (Bouchard, 1997) and in Newfoundland (McCann, 1994) does militate against the formal structure and processes of schooling and the level and kind of regulation which the school project introduced into the lifeworld of these communities. Most oral histories of rural schools and schooling from the first half of the 20th Century contain similar stories of community and student resistance (Smith, 1996; McCann, 1982; Patterson, 1986; Wilson, 1995; Stephenson, 1995;).

Curtis argues that the literature on the structural conflict between rural labour and schooling (i.e. how school’s uniform work time is opposed to "task orientation" in rural communities and on farms) ignores how resistance might have been directed toward the content and practices of schooling (1988: 187). This "resistance" amounted to answering the call of everyday, out-of-school life which, when available to rural students, has proved hard to resist despite the earnest, projects of social normalisation. By remaining in school their pockets remained empty, and their dependent, childish status was prolonged and a sense of independence postponed indefinitely.

Many students furthermore, existed as full fledged and largely independent members of the local community: actively engaged in labour processes as soon as their physical capacities permitted. The reality of schooling, by contrast, was one in which they appeared as 'children' to be governed by an alien 'necessity,' determined by anonymous other and imposed on them for their 'own good' (Curtis, 1988: 199).

This is a crucial point for Curtis' argument because it is only when parents "voluntarily" consent to the process of public schooling that it can succeed. For Foucault, the real source of power comes not at the point of application and reception of coercion, but on the contrary, at the point where coercion is no longer necessary because the subject has consented to become part of the process. Only at this point does disciplinary power do its work. For this reason school discipline must be made gentle, or in the absence of gentle discipline, the desire for gentle training must be present.
and violence itself must be normalised and subject to specifications which limit and regulate its use (Curtis, 1988: 357). In other words, violent forms of discipline must be made to seem "reasonable" and couched in the kind of language that ensures the diminution of the need for its use. The overt presence of force undermines the key element of consent, for, "Only if parents consented to act in concert with the school in the subordination of 'children,' only if scholars consented to becoming 'school children' and accepted the process of training would schooling entirely succeed" (Curtis, 1988: 342).

Rurality as Resistance

*Canada West/Ontario: The establishment of public schooling*

Curtis's analysis of the development of the Canadian educational state provides a theoretical framework within which resistance to schooling might be understood. Yet, his account is problematic. While most of the accounts in his book are drawn from rural areas, Curtis does not significantly problematise rurality. His account details the conflict between administrators and school promoters and the often resistant ordinary individuals and groups upon whom their normalising vision was bestowed. Curtis comes close to dismissing those analysts who see the character of rural communities and rural life as the motor of resistance to the schooling project.

A critical problem with Curtis' urban bias is that the development of industrial capitalism is not just concerned with the internal colonisation of the subject, but that it is also about the colonisation of space. Urbanisation as a process is intimately connected to the development of both capitalism and the state itself. As Giddens writes, "without cities, there are no classes and no state" (1981: 144), and further that, "the administrative order of the state in class-divided societies never penetrates the traditional organisation of local agrarian communities in the same manner as occurs subsequent to the development of capitalism" (1981: 145). Drawing upon what he sees as an undeveloped strand in Marx's thinking about the development of capitalism, Giddens turns his attention to the sense in which the geography of capitalism is a progressive, "urbanisation of the
countryside" (1981: 148) designed to "disembed" locally oriented subjects, to draw into the ambit of capitalism increasingly wider spaces by extending the commodification of space out of the city and into the country. The problem here is that large parts of Canadian geography were not significantly penetrated by institutions of normalization until the latter part of the 20th Century. And indeed, the penetration continues, and is resisted. Protests and roadblocks in British Columbia's old growth forests are but one example. Furthermore, that penetration which did occur often remains ineffective at the level of subject formation simply because "residual" forms of labour like independent petty producers are sufficiently efficient in the context of unavoidable rural isolation. In parts of Northern British Columbia, Northern Ontario, and in coastal fishing communities of Atlantic Canada for example, this "isolation" is experienced as a "world unto itself" generating and supporting the development of unique local culture and highly exploitative and profitable capitalist work relations at the same time. Wayne Johnston writes:

Their homes were worlds unto themselves. The fishermen were not nationalists of any sort, defined themselves as neither Newfoundlanders nor colonials, but residents of chthonic origin, sprung from the earth of whatever little island or cove they had grown up in. (1998: 454)

This localised culture is the object of the attention of the rural school promoter. As capitalist social relations began to penetrate and transform a subsistence economy, space as well as people needed to be managed. Curtis’ work as well as that of other historians of Canadian education as diverse as Strong-Boag, Wilson, Davey and McCann contain accounts of the role rural schools play in the vanguard of the process of capitalist modernisation of "backward" places, and the people who live in them. Both capital and culture need to be considered concurrently.7

The normalising process of schooling operates more effectively in the context of urban spaces which are already "colonised" by the structures of work and routinization. Rural areas, simply by

---

6 By the term "disembedding, Giddens is referring to the general process of severing attachments to particular places, or "locales" as he prefers to call them. He sees this spatial reorganisation at the heart of the development of capitalist modernity (1990, 1991).

7 In a major study of the fishery in the regions of Clare, Digby Neck and the Islands, John Kearney (1993) also highlights the difference between cultural practices and the development of capitalism, and how material and cultural conditions need to be understood in tandem. Neither culture nor economics determines the development of these rural coastal communities; they are neither self-directing nor are they directed by abstract market forces. Kearney's Marxist analysis demonstrates a persistent concentration of resources and access to resources in the fisheries surrounding these communities and he documents how people living in these regions have both complied with and resisted this concentration of capital and the class formation it brings.
the extent of their resistance to becoming managed, "created spaces," became sites for the development of localised identities, community, and personalised forms of resistance to the project of schooling. Finally, in rural communities with relatively simple divisions of labour where many workers perform similar if not the same kind of work, and particularly, where this work is connected closely to the land and resource extraction, the productive activity itself may require a certain "freedom" which generates resistance to formal state normalisation represented by school.\textsuperscript{8}

Curtis fails to adequately understand how emerging rural capitalist productive relations contained a foundation for resistance to schooling. Once frontier farms got established there was less pressing work for young children outside of peak periods like planting and the harvest (Davey, 1978; Gaffield, 1987; Darroch, 1998). Axelrod presents farmers as generally supportive of the project of schooling for their children when such support was "practical." This might suggest a distinction between rural communities established on the basis of agriculture and those in which mobile resource extraction is carried out. Pastoralists remain in a single place to exploit a resource, while fishers, miners and loggers for instance must move. In the early part of the twentieth century, farm mechanisation also became a factor in reducing the use of child labour on Canadian farms in the west. In Atlantic Canada, however, mechanisation in farming, fishing and logging occurred widely only following World War 2.\textsuperscript{9}

Davey's ground-breaking study of attendance records in the schools of Canada West between 1851 and 1871 illustrates this problem (1978). Davey demonstrates that while there was an apparent acceptance of the idea of the common school in the period he analysed (as shown by enrolment statistics), the actual practice of school attendance remains extremely low. In Davey's analysis, this problem is best explained by the pressing need for families to work (and to move about in order to do so in many cases) and to survive in difficult conditions of boom and bust. Schooling, in this context of trade depressions, crop failures, transient work patterns and seasonal

\textsuperscript{8} It can also be argued that because rural spaces often need to remain wild to remain productive, the notion of the created or managed space takes on a different form in rural environments. For example, Pocius argues that socio-spatial identity formation in Newfoundland coastal communities has been crucial to exploitation of resources on land and sea (1991). In his ethnographic analysis of life in a coastal village a large part of the education of young men and women is taken up in the development of intimate knowledge of gendered productive local spaces. Because they have acquired this knowledge, Pocius shows that people are much less likely to leave the village or engage in formal education which is focussed on other kinds of spaces in other (urban) places.

\textsuperscript{9} In the case of the fishery, mechanisation created a period of high demand for labour that lasted until stocks began to collapse in the 1980s and 1990s.

42
employment was a virtual impossibility even for those parents who sincerely wanted their children in school, but whose lives were made chaotic by virtue of their vulnerable position on the erratic, rural working surface of expanding staples capitalism. This contradicts the traditional view of the school promoters who blamed a general want of discipline and "shiftlessness" among labouring people for the poor attendance of their children in the common schools of the period. The schoolmen bemoaned, "(T)he migratory 'habits' of the working class (which) were perceived as part of their general want of discipline along with their impunctuality, irregular work habits, affection for alcohol and inability to save money" (Davey, 1978: 233).

Davey also advances the claim that the seasonal nature of working life in both urban and rural areas contributed to irregular school attendance. In urban areas the problems of unstable employment were compounded by the scarcity of work during the seasonal times of greatest hardship, the winter months, when children's labour would be most needed and when sickness, lack of proper clothing and snow would present additional impediments to school attendance. In rural areas the situation was typically reversed; in winter there was little to do on the farm so school attendance rose. Indeed, during those times when there was seasonally urgent work to do, "farmers' reliance on their children's labour was almost universal," particularly for older children (Davey, 1978: 239). For the children themselves, Davey hypothesises that there was a fundamental contradiction between the experience of seeing people prosper by "muscle and cunning" and the hollow promise of freedom from toil that schooling offered (1978: 245). Notoriously poor school attendance, in Davey's analysis stimulated middle class agitation for compulsory school attendance laws for Ontario in the 1860s resulting in legislation in 1871.

Gaffield (1987) presents a similar picture for settlers in Prescott County in Eastern Ontario, a situation in which children played an important economic part in family life. Gaffield argues that as the Ottawa Valley lost its frontier character which represented, "a labour intensive attempt to achieve survival and security ... School was simply not important ... most Francophone children were simply producers not pupils" (1987: 110). By the 1880s there was less pressing work particularly for the younger children of the family, and as a whole, "the local economy offered less productive opportunity for children" (1987: 93). This is not to say that attachment to the land and to the family as the principal social unit did not remain strong as the, "systeme agro-forestier
functioned in part as a collection of family economies that sought full participation from every family member. Therefore the experience of childhood involved integration into productive activity" (Gaffield, 1987: 97). At particular times of the year even in “post-frontier” 19th Century rural communities, all hands were employed and few children attended school. In this poetic pastoral vignette Gaffield describes spring planting in Prescott County.

Spring, for example, was a hectic time. Streams became rivers, the little village bustled, families were reunited (presumably with fathers and brothers returning from the lumber woods), flowers bloomed. In the countryside not a moment could be lost as the soil was turned, seeds positioned, fences mended. The activity encaptured everyone ... School was forgotten (Gaffield, 1987: 109).

Schools did operate full-time through this period and they would have had some permanent students, typically, the children of business owners, skilled craftsmen and professionals. For the majority, school remained as something to do when not working. Gaffield argues that schooling flourished only when communities and farms became sufficiently established to spare the children's labour, and only then until they grew strong enough to find work of their own. In reality, it is the absence of manual work which leads to the idea that school is important. For people living on the uncertain margins in rural subsistence poverty, this day has never really arrived with any degree of finality.

*British Columbia: Agricultural education and the rural problem in the early decades of the 20th century*

As agricultural society develops and eventually becomes mechanised, the land no longer provides either the opportunity or the necessity for the labour of children. Nonetheless, in rural areas and in the developing urban metropolis, country life was considered to be nourishing and "natural" in a way that city life could never be. David Jones’ documents the progress of agricultural education in British Columbia through the first three decades of the 20th century. Based upon nostalgic memories of 19th Century manual farming, this movement was doomed to failure (Jones, 1978, 1979). In the agricultural education movement we see the convergence of the normalising project of schooling and the community grounded agricultural experience. Jones asserts in the introduction of his work that schooling, "actively worsened the rural problem by facilitating movement from the land" (1978: iii). The vision of the agricultural education movement reached
its apex with the introduction of the federal Agricultural Instruction Act in 1913. The Act was designed to promote school agricultural programs as a way to valorise the rural experience in the eyes of country children and to purify the lives of urban children who were living amidst the dirty, unnatural bustle of the emerging urban industrial landscape.

The stated purpose of the Agricultural Instruction Act was to strengthen rural communities, but it was not always perceived, or received, in this way. For Jones, agricultural education failed because farmers tended not to trust either teachers or the entire dubious project of modern education. They feared, with what Jones termed an, "ingrained but seldom articulated distrust," that, "school educated their children away from the land by filling their minds with culture and motivating them for professional life" (1978: 201). Farmers then saw in school, even in initiatives which ostensibly catered to a rurally oriented curriculum, the seeds of community and family disintegration. Agricultural education, combined as it was in British Columbia with a broadly conceived program of "progressive" experientially based practical pedagogy, and a concurrent administrative move to consolidate many rural schools on the grounds of "efficiency," exposed a fatal contradiction. This led rural parents to conclude that the promoters of agricultural education really wanted to destroy their way of life rather than enhance it. In the end, large scale consolidation initiatives in the 1920s failed along with agricultural education. Rural British Columbia parents resisted local school closures and consolidation moves forcefully and effectively until the Second World War (Wilson, 1995).

Somewhat ironically, Jones makes the claim that part of this resistance developed because agricultural education played into the social and economic stigma against agriculture. Many parents saw schools as, "theoretical places" and were more concerned with seeing their children taught the 3Rs rather than things they could learn from life without any formal instruction. As Jones suggests, "not everyone was pleased with the notion that schools and community ought to be doing the same things" (Jones, 1978: 333). Still, this sentiment does support the conclusion

10 In Nova Scotia for instance the chief promoter of agricultural education was the province's prototypical progressive educator Loran Arthur Dewolfe. Biographer Jane Norman explicitly links Dewolfe's interest in Dewey's progressivism and experientially based education with the project of school agriculture for, "in the hands of the skilful teacher, the school garden is the connecting link between the school and the real world" (Dewolfe in Norman, 1989: 52). For another description of progressive education in Nova Scotia see Harris' biography of rural teacher Elizabeth Murray (1998).
that rural inhabitants saw the school as separate from life in the community, and perhaps also, that in its separateness, the school was claiming a higher ground onto which the student might be "elevated." This view and the reality it represents in the form of refined and "alien" urban teachers with their, "aura of mystery and sophistication" (Wilson and Stortz, 1993: 286) has considerable credence. One could hardly expect such strange, exotic urban transients to inculcate much of a sense of "rural mindedness" in country students or show them much about the working land. What they could teach children about was life in other places.11

Following the First World War, the influence of progressivism led British Columbia school administrators to give special consideration to what they termed the "rural school problem" (Wilson and Stortz, 1995). In response to dismal conditions in rural schools, the Putman Weir Commission of 1924 accelerated the process. Addressing the rural school problem directly, British Columbia administrators embarked in the 1920s on the first systematic effort to extend the project of state education to far flung areas by: training and placing progressive "rural minded" teachers in remote communities; attempting to retain teachers in communities for longer periods; and providing better pay for rural teachers (Wilson and Stortz, 1995: 216-227). The Putman Weir Commission supported Deweyan educational theory exhorting teachers to begin with the experience of the child. In rural schools this meant that teachers and curriculum workers would be forced to pay attention to the place in which student experience happened, the rural community. They were enlisted to provide a form of specialized governance in rural communities. The rural teacher was expected to become, "a socialising agent," in the community, a civilising force, the representative of the educational state in remote areas (Wilson and Stortz, 1995: 212). What these teachers found were rustic frontier communities where attendance was sporadic. Rural teachers typically became pawns in local power games and not the community leaders they were supposed to be. Wilson and Stortz write that, "(W)hile Victoria expected teachers to serve as a community leader, at the local level she tended to be looked on as a community servant" (1993: 282). The project was considered by Wilson and Stortz to have been entirely ill conceived, "fundamentally misguided" (1993: 286), immensely ignorant of rural realities, and the teachers inadequately trained and poorly paid for what was being asked of them.

11 I began my teaching career in northern Manitoba in the early 1980s. In response to a progressive education initiative that would have Northern Cree students study First Nations culture in the school, one trapper responded, "I'll teach my kids to read tracks in the snow, you teach them to read tracks on paper."
British Columbia frontier communities varied in how they received teachers and the schooling project. Some were openly hostile, one to the point of driving a young woman teacher to suicide in the 1920s (Wilson, 1995). Other oral history accounts describe more or less hospitable communities (Patterson, 1986; Smith, 1996; Stephenson, 1995). The general picture of the teacher's task was one of a difficult struggle to operate a school in the midst of considerable social and economic duress. Stephenson's analysis of teaching in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia in the 1920s pays particular attention to accounts of teachers themselves in an attempt to construct a history in which usually silenced perspectives of women teachers may be heard (1995). Stephenson reaffirms the necessity of the economic contribution of children to the family economy (1995: 243-44) throughout the period leading to sporadic attendance as did the transient nature of parental employment in railway tie and lumber camps (Wilson and Stortz, 1993: 277). Stephenson also depicts teachers struggling against large social problems which were largely out of their control.

In virtual isolation, inexperienced young teachers were typically faced with everything from a lack of school resources, to poverty and lack of food and clothing for children, to second language difficulties, to hostile communities, to disease, to cooking for and hosting community parties, to playing off competing interests in the community and negotiating social space between rival families, to children more interested in what the local farmers were doing than getting to school. A former teacher recalls that: "I asked the other pupils about this boy's 'punctuality', or lack of it, to which they replied that they could not remember when he had arrived on time. He loved to chat and visit farmers at work in the fields and would often ride on the tractor with them" (Smith, 1996: 74). Life beckoned, for many children in rural communities. Wilson and Stortz comment that although compulsory schooling to age fifteen was legislated in British Columbia in 1921, it had little effect in frontier communities in the remote North Central region of the province (1993: 277).  

12 Rural sociologists have made similar claims in the 1990s arguing that much of the literature in educational sociology is urban-biased presenting a picture of Canadian society which ignores the fundamentally different structure of opportunities and forms of cultural capital available to rural youth. See Looker (1993) and Looker and Dwyer (1998) for a discussion of this problem with respect to the sociology of educational aspirations and attainment. Gill Jones provides a similar analysis in her investigation of migration and educational decision-making of rural youth in England (1999a, 1999b). Seyfrit and her colleagues have also analysed similar questions in Alaska and in coastal Virginia (Seyfrit, 1998; Seyfrit and Hamilton, 1997; Seyfrit and Danner, 1999).
Neil Sutherland found a similar pattern of child labour and sporadic school attendance in more modern frontier communities established as recently as in the late 1950s (1995a). On the basis of oral history interviews, Sutherland describes a childhood filled with incessant toil of the sort that undoubtedly represents an experience similar to that of pioneer children in frontier situations throughout most of modern Canadian history. Children were generally considered "useful" at eight years of age and capable of doing adult work by the age of sixteen (Sutherland, 1995a: 139). Children's free labour in large part built many homesteads. Despite a brutal regimen of work in, "a community in the throes of creating itself" (Sutherland, 1995a: 125) and the obvious tension between the need for a child's labour and the demands of schooling, Sutherland found that by 1921 attendance in elementary schools had stabilised at around 90 percent provincially where it would remain until into World War Two. By 1939-40 average provincial attendance in high schools had reached 90 percent (Sutherland, 1995a: 127). In frontier communities, according to Sutherland's informants, students still stayed out of school during labour intensive key times, but otherwise balanced an onerous work study routine according to Sutherland's informants. Sutherland (1995a) makes the important point that work on the land actually provided young people with an important informal education for the kind of lives most of them ended up living in communities on the northern agricultural fringe. However, Sutherland's analysis does not differentiate between rural and urban attendance statistics.

Quebec and co-integration and Newfoundland and the fishing economy: Societies in transition, 1930-1970

Southcott has argued that the study of regional inequality outside Quebec has been stalled by an inability to get around accounts of Canadian rural development that stem from theoretical debates between modernisation and dependency theory (1999). The result has been overly theoretical, 

13 In urban areas Sutherland finds a similar, if less pronounced, relationship between school, work and community life. Confronting the assumption that the problem of child labour was eliminated with industrialisation and child labour legislation, and at the same time suggesting that historians reappraise the place of work done by children in their socialisation and broad education, Sutherland suggests that work played a significant part of childhood experience in Vancouver until at least the 1960s, often competing with school (1990). Work, both in and outside the home, remains central in the lives of children in the industrial age, and it is not until the 1960s that significant structural changes occur to free children from the necessity of helping their families economically and physically with menial work now done mainly by labour saving devices and replaced by automatic heating sources like gas, oil and electricity. However, Sutherland claims that the vast majority of children regularly attended school between the ages of 5 and 16 from the 1920s (1986). Sutherland does recognise the importance of children's after-school labour (1990, 1991, 1995a).
abstract analysis which ignores questions of identity and culture as well as practical questions of what to do about the problems of regional disparity. Because identity and culture have always been a central preoccupation of Quebecois intellectuals, a similar impasse has not developed to as great an extent in their sociological and historical studies. For Bouchard, there are significant problems in historical studies which investigate the development of rural Quebec (1997). Neither the liberal analysis of industrialization displacing rural community, nor the Marxist dependency model of uneven development explain rural development in Quebec because both assign the rural economy a marginal status. Bouchard argues that most historical accounts document allegedly important changes in the urban metropolis and assume rural areas follow apace, or are relegated to stereotypical country backwaters.

From the long history of social and economic transformation in Canada, Canadian historians have developed a notion of rational agribusiness as the pinnacle of a normal kind of rural development in the context of what Bouchard calls the “ideal type of capitalism” (1997: 32). This stereotype of rational capitalist development sits in opposition to the community-based, backward, pre-capitalist farmer. Both of these constructions obscure the complexity of rural economies and the lives of people who have lived in historic rural and urban communities. He calls for a critical review of, “the historiography of the English Canadian, and more particularly, the Ontario farming economy” (1997: 32).

Bouchard looks carefully at the historical development of the Saguenay region finding a slowly emerging and complex relationship between rural communities and family agricultural operations that predominated in these communities. Thus, Bouchard investigates how rural communities develop in terms of the strategies used by rural dwellers to maintain family autonomy and prosperity, while at the same time realising the benefits from capitalist social relations and wider forms of trade. Bouchard documents the transition from a traditional rural economy to what he calls co-integration with the modern economy. Schooling did not play a significant part in the development of the traditional rural economy for the majority of people and compulsory schooling was not enforced by law in Quebec until 1944 (Audet, 1970), but Bouchard cites the entrenchment of compulsory schooling between 1930 and 1950 among the chief factors in the demise of the co-integrated community. Bouchard found strong support for schooling in rural Quebec dating at
least from the 1930s, “when the construction of a school was hailed with the same enthusiasm as a new road or even a hospital” (1997: 30).

Through the period of transition from co-integration to full-scale industrialization, a generation was “lost” (Bouchard, 1997: 30). Lacking the access to land that allowed success in the co-integrated economy, or the education that was necessary in modern industrial labour markets, this “lost generation” was a major force propelling social change. Because they themselves were “trapped” in a social and economic transformation, they saw the importance of education for their own children with a particular acuity. According to Bouchard, Quebec’s rural poor understood the change that was taking place and pressured the elites to provide decent schooling, while at the same time pushing their own children to take advantage of its benefits. By supporting formal education these lost generation parents effectively pushed their children toward urban areas and opportunities in the integrated urban communities that were developing rapidly in Quebec after World War Two. If there was resistance to the expansion of educational opportunity in Quebec society between 1930 and the 1950s, it came from the entrenched elite, and significantly from the Roman Catholic church which vigorously opposed state intervention in public education through the early decades of the twentieth century (Audet, 1970, Axelrod, 1997). This transitional generation was:

... a major force for modernisation. It is that generation that suffered most from the minimal education that had been the norm up until then ... the changes brought about by the Quiet Revolution were long desired by the grass roots; it was precisely at the top of society that there was resistance (Bouchard, 1997: 30).

What Bouchard’s work does not attempt to explain is what happened once the school was built in rural areas. How did the institution of school fit with the routines of life on the farm or in the single industry community? Bouchard suggests that fishing communities could also be analysed in terms of co-integration.14 This is essentially the approach taken by McCann (1994) in his analysis of the slow development of the entrenchment of schooling in Newfoundland. In many respects Newfoundland has been, until quite recently, a frontier society despite a long history of settlement. Wayne Johnson’s Colony of Unrequited Dreams (1998) can be read as a fictional

14 Bouchard writes: “In fishing areas the sea plays quite the same role as fallow land, as an apparently unlimited pool of resources; there is often the same seasonal employment pattern, the same multi-activity and so forth” (1997: 34).
account of the problematic and nonlinear history of modernisation in the province. The task of building the educational state in Newfoundland is just beginning according to McCann (1994). For instance, various commentators interviewed in his oral history project describe what amounts to a virtual “fisher-folk” society outside St. John’s and the industrial communities which developed after World War Two (McCann, 1982). This society of fishing people lived outside the reach of the state in isolated villages until the 1950s. This history has resulted in an education system which is arcane in structure (with church-controlled education which continues in modified form today) and which compares poorly with more established jurisdictions in Canada.

Analysis of Newfoundland educational problems in the media is shallow (McCann, 1994). The implicit connection between economic conditions and the state of the schools is often strangely constructed on the assumption that it is the children of the province and the education system which are largely responsible for persistent problems of economic productivity. McCann writes that, “the character traits of the workforce and deficiencies of the educational system rather than any failings of the socioeconomic system, structure of society or the policies (or lack of policy) of governments are seen as largely responsible for Newfoundland’s poor performance” (1994: 235).

Yet, instead of finding a “direct correlation” between the progress of the economy and schooling, McCann documents a more complex picture of the interaction of economics, religion and politics all serving to shape Newfoundland’s public educational experience. In the nineteenth century, Newfoundland was a colonial society from which a significant proportion of surplus capital was being drained, leaving low levels of public funds available for schools (McCann, 1994: 244). Additionally the internal colonialism in Newfoundland society itself created the conditions for dramatic inequalities in terms of access to “good” education. The children of what Wallace Clement (1978) has called the indigenous “comprador elite” and the middle class in Saint John’s received an education far different from that available in fishing communities. Geographic isolation and subsistence living also contributed to both the quality of the available schooling as

15 Sawyer’s autobiographical account of his teaching experience in a Newfoundland outport community in the early 1970s documents the transition of a fishing society and the problematic role of education in that transition (1979).
16 Johnson has written a rollicking fictional account of a St John’s private school in his Colony of Unrequited Dreams (1998).
well as the perceived necessity of a formal education augmenting what McCann characterises as a huge contrast between rural and urban schools (McCann, 1994: 247).

What emerges is a consistent pattern of government neglect of education which lasted until Confederation in 1949. In Newfoundland, the state simply did not appear to be interested in the project of normalisation and the development of modernising institutions like schools.

Governments suffered from an apparent inability to perceive the advantages of a literate and educated population as a foundation of personal development, social innovation, energetic intellectual debate and invigoration of economic and political life, or as an element in the development of a ‘nationally imagined community’ (McCann, 1994: 248).

In rural areas, the problems of the pre-industrial character of the fishery through the early decades of the current century, and the devastating impact of the Great Depression and World War Two, left Newfoundland schools in the 1940s little better than they were in the early part of the century (or even in the latter part of the nineteenth century). McCann’s analysis of attendance figures is startling in this respect. Average attendance in 1886 stood at 66.7 percent. By 1921 this had actually fallen to 60.8 percent and in 1941 stood at 68 percent (McCann, 1994: 196-197). Large numbers of rural children did not attending school to any significant degree. In some areas children did not to go to school, “until after the potatoes were picked [in October]” (McCann, 1982: 65). Referring specifically to the pre World War One period, McCann comments, “education for its own sake - as might be expected in a society in which a living from the sea had to be wrested by hard work- was less valued than a belief in the importance of practicality in everyday life” (1994: 250). Little in McCann’s analysis suggests that this had changed substantially in rural areas by the 1950s.

The call of everyday life, following declining fish prices and a contraction in the size of the fishery in the first four decades of the twentieth century was replaced by other resource extraction opportunities in the mines, in the woods, and in the mills. Following Confederation in 1949, foreign owned companies established in Newfoundland to exploit land based resources (McCann, 1994: 186). This development created economic incentives to pull more young people out of school and into manual labour while at the same time exacerbating educational inequality as schools in “company towns” were better supported than in traditional coastal communities. In this
context, Newfoundland children, particularly rural children, scored lowest in the nation on just about every form of standardised testing according to McCann. The abysmal overall condition of the schools in the 1940s necessitated a massive infusion of capital to bring school physical plants up to the most basic standards. McCann speculates that the long, twisted road toward educational reform in Newfoundland only began in earnest in the 1990s.

The process of building the education state (see Curtis, 1987) did not begin in Newfoundland until the 1950s when as Charles Goodyear, longtime high school administrator in Grand Falls commented, “attitudes improved” (McCann, 1982: 170). Reflecting on a career in education from the 1940s to the 1970s, Paul Kirby commented that many youngsters left school, “as soon as they were able to haul in a handline” (McCann, 1982: 144). Senator F. W. Rowe, Minister of Education between 1956 and 1959 and then again between 1967 and 1971, provided a stark description.

Traditionally we always had to ram education down the throats of large numbers of Newfoundland people. They were concerned with the fish, they were concerned with the firewood, they were concerned with berrypicking, with killing seals, with the extractive industries; as soon as a boy became big enough to get out on the flake or to get down on the stage, or to help his father in this way or that way with the vegetables, with anything else, he would be gone. (McCann, 1982: 48)

Community life stood in opposition to the life offered by schools. According to Rowe, the project of establishing state education articulated with the project of outport depopulation undertaken by the Smallwood government in the 1960s. Rowe claims this resettlement initiative was supported (in the end) by large numbers of people who did not enjoy the rigours of outport life. On the other hand, Matthews (1976) found that in many outport communities inhabitants claimed that, “there’s no better place than here,” resisting resettlement vehemently, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Rowe’s comments do present the popular conception of community as “the problem,” a problem which could ultimately only be solved by its elimination. But communities do not die easily.
Conclusion

It is possible for an organism to become too finely tuned to a given environment to be able to survive in the face of changing environmental conditions. The same possibility may exist for remote regions that have become heavily dependent on, or closely adapted to, large scale extraction industries (Frickel and Freudenburg, 1996: 447).

Fishing is only one example of an industry that could not survive its own diligence and was obliged to sacrifice its own (deFreitas, 1997:99).

McCann's work places us in East Coast fishing villages immediately after World War Two. Much had changed. Newfoundland had joined Canada and its education system was in the process of modernising. By 1952, compulsory schooling was finally established in the province. In Nova Scotia the fishery was being modernised with state support as federal dollars poured into the production and purchase of offshore draggers and longliners (Apostle and Barrett, 1992: 169-172). The days of the quaint isolated village at the end of a dirt road, with schooners and men in dories were coming to a close. But work in the fishery would remain constant for many people for many years to come and there would be a boom in the 1970s and 1980s drawing young people to the scallop and fish draggers, longliners, and into the fish plants. Teenage boys in southwest Nova Scotia could make as much as a school teacher shucking scallops. Huge catches and new markets expanded fish plant opportunities for both young men and young women processing groundfish or cutting roe out of herring for the Japanese market. In Nova Scotia's Digby County, deck hands on draggers could make six figure incomes in the 1980s while select captains in the inshore fleet became millionaires. Through it all, the small boats remained, albeit in dwindling number. Independent operators, the "little guys," resisted big capital and the lure of the money a fisherman could make on the large offshore boats crewing for another man. And many of them remain fishing off the southwest coast of Nova Scotia today. If the structural conflict between rural labour and schooling is a significant generator of resistance to school, as educational historians suggest, then McCann is perhaps correct to suggest that the history of schooling in coastal communities is just beginning.

Historically, Canadians have lived in communion with a vast and harsh land and as Margaret Atwood and Northrop Frye have maintained, we are a people much shaped by this geography. The quintessential Canadian identity question for Frye is not, "who are we," but rather, "where is
here?” Contemporary Canadian historical scholarship has begun to explore the richness of life which operates beneath the surface of Frye’s comment. As a nation, Canada has been and continues to be, “addicted to staples export” (Ferland and Wright, 1996); life on the land and on the water remains a significant part of Canadian experience for a great many people. As a consequence the development of the institutions of social normalisation outlined by Curtis have spread out unevenly across the Canadian landscape. While education came to be firmly established in much of Canada as early as the first decades of this century, social and economic conditions did not permit schooling to penetrate very deeply into community life in many marginal places like the northern interior of British Columbia or Atlantic fishing communities. As late as the 1960s frontier settlements in Western Canada provided children and their parents with a world that was not entirely unlike the one experienced by early 19th century settlers in Ontario. The same was true in some coastal communities. As a consequence, the ability of most rural children to attend school on a regular basis was limited both by practical necessity and by active resistance to what school implied. Likewise the lure of adult roles in the community available in a co-integrated economy (and perhaps in rural industrial economies as well) continued, and probably still continues, to pull many young people out of school and generate a “cocky” yet experientially grounded resistance to the idea that school is necessary for success.

School remains peripheral for many residents of Atlantic coastal communities, and large numbers of these people, particularly men, have still not been brought into the disciplinary nexus of the Canadian educational state for better and for worse. As Eugen Weber pointed out in his analysis of the development of rural France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is only when schooling is viewed as having practical usefulness that rural people start taking it seriously (1976). As transportation and communication systems broke down the isolation of rural villages creating a more fluid movement to other places schooling also became useful because mobility was finally a practical possibility.

Historical geography is in large part the tale of men struggling against space, and the efforts to leave space by creating ever more efficient, reliable means of communication. In the beginning, space was the master; its distances run wild, overwhelming man (Weber, 1976: 195).

For Harold Innis it was not simply the conquest of space that makes the difference. In a multitude of ways, roads and radio waves bring other places into the village perhaps inhibiting and perhaps
facilitating the desire to move.

The recent crisis in the fishery has created a new set of social and economic conditions which have changed common perceptions of the value of school for ordinary working people, because there is a real fear that fishing as a way of life is over. As a man from Centreville said in Anthony Davis' study of the fishing industry on Digby Neck, "Around her ya either fish, work with fish or hang around and throw rocks at gulls. That's all there is" (1991: 15). School and upgrading are becoming for many people, young and not so young, the alternative to throwing rocks at gulls. The implications of the modernisation of the east coast fishery undoubtedly changed the landscape of rural Nova Scotia, just as state-financed draggers altered dramatically the state of the sea bed and the fish stocks. Here historical questions about the development of schooling in the context of the economy mingle with sociological and policy questions about appropriate contemporary education in the face of environmental degradation and the destruction of historic communities.
Chapter 3
Reconceptualising resistance: Habitus, discourse, and place

Space, no less than identity will always therefore offer the potential for tactical refusal and resistance (Natter and Jones, 1997: 150).

Je suis l'espace ou je suis. (Noel Artaud in Bachelard, 1969: 137)

Resistance theory in the sociology of education

The existence of distinguishable and irreconcilable social groups upon which the mode of production depends also means that each group can and will create cultural forms and life-worlds which are based upon different definitions of reality and relationships with the material world ... We need to be able to decide, for example, whether those pupils who passively accept the label 'educational failure' and their placement low down in the educational and occupational hierarchy do so as a response to the message of schooling, or alternatively, as a response to communication which has little to do with education and its directives and signals, and may well contradict them (Meighan, 1981: 251).

The previous chapter explored the utility of the idea of resistance for explaining the relatively weak historic penetration of the modernist project of schooling into rural areas in Canada. I am suggesting a place-based theory of rural resistance to formal education. The idea of resistance though is more commonly associated with the sociology of education, particularly with Paul Willis' critical ethnographic work (1978) and educational resistance theorising most notably and voluminously represented in the ouvre of Henry Giroux (1981, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1994; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985) and the work of Peter McLaren (1980, 1986, 1989). This body of work was designed to critique the simplistic "correspondence" theory of class reproduction developed by Marxist sociologists of education in the 1970s (cf. Bowles and Gintis, 1976, Apple, 1979). The general thrust of this work is that some students, at some level, come to understand their class exploitation and the way that institutions of formal education function to serve interests contrary to their own. Out of this realisation come forms of consciousness and behaviour which

1 In addition to Willis' study which is the most thoroughly researched and theoretically sophisticated of its genre, there is a similar body of British ethnographically informed resistance analysis and theory dating from the late 1970s (Hall et. al., 1976; Corrigan, 1979; McRobbie, 1991).
not only push against hegemony, but which contain the seeds for creating a more just social order. Resistance theorists were interested in mapping the inventive nature of defiance and through the use of ethnographic methods they were often able to present intimate accounts of the logic of working class youth resistance.

Willis' *Learning to Labour* is probably the exemplary study in the resistance theory tradition. Over a period of more than two years, Willis conducted an ethnography that probed the intricacies of the school and out-of-school lives of a group of working class boys on the cusp of leaving school for work. Willis then followed them into their employment placements for six months developing a very comprehensive picture of the school-to-work transition of these youth. *Learning to Labour* is an account of misbehaviour, defiance, sexism, academic self-sabotage and yet Willis finds among his informants and odd sort of insight into class oppression which he takes to contain emancipatory potential. Willis' working class "lads" resist the limited opportunities available to them in a class segregated society, the logic of which they see through or, to use a term particularly provocative to feminist critics, "penetrate." Despite its theoretical and empirical contributions to the sociology of education, resistance theory has been subject to significant critique in the 1980s and 1990s.

Many critics question the extent to which these youth "penetrate" class exploitation; in fact, they seem to be strikingly ignorant of how their own agency positions them. Additionally damaging is the suggestion that adolescent play, trendy folly, simple rudeness, violence and destructiveness are very often taken to represent valid resistance. For Rikowski, a "dangerous romanticism" and a vagueness of definition lurks beneath the surface of resistance theory and research in which, "actions ranging from students day dreaming, picking their noses in class, through to fighting and staging a strike fail to mark 'resistance' out as a specific phenomenon" (1997: 561). Rikowski goes on to wonder how illiterate, violent, sexist, racist figures like Willis's lads (and the host of other miscreants other ethnographers have discovered) can be seen as a vanguard leading the charge against social injustice. This critique is neither new nor unique. Roman and Christian-

---

2 Giroux does take some pains to distinguish between legitimate resistance and irrelevant and conservative forms of oppositional behaviour (1983: 107-111). However, the distinctions he argues for simply seem to intensify problems of essentialism and presumptuousness. What indeed are the criteria for making the distinction between what Giroux sees as resistance and what defiant students themselves define as resistance?
Smith (1988) as well as Kelly (1997) have had similar misgivings, as have curriculum theorists William Pinar and his associates in a survey of a century of curriculum theorising (Pinar et. al., 1995). Dale has also argued that resistance is a poor concept incorporating an often unrelated variety of behaviours into a general "rag-bag" (1989).

In a more sympathetic critique, Gibson adds that the anti-intellectualism inherent in the resistance found in Willis' study effectively erases the possibility of emancipation which is supposed to be the key motivation of his Marxist ethnography. Gibson writes: "Resistance without knowledge merely strengthens the status quo" (1986: 60). Ethnographies which attempt a less ideological analysis of the complex, nuanced relationships between school knowledge and what Roman and Christian-Smith call the, "knowledge and meanings acquired outside school in other institutional and informal contexts" (1988: 21), find richer and more ambiguous and meaningful accounts than those found in resistance theory. Resistance theory as it is presented by Willis, McLaren and Giroux, presumes to interpret meaning in advance, to know better than the informant what s/he is saying and doing, and to have the benefit of a deeper level of consciousness as opposed to a different theoretical framework for interpretation. As Ellsworth showed convincingly, the results can be oppressive and alienating (1989).

Willis' study (along with many of those which have followed) does deliver unfortunate testimony to the way marginal youth actively reproduce their own subordination. The "lads" are not being shifted into a disadvantaged place in the class structure, they rebelliously and joyously seize it, apparently of their own volition. They enthusiastically support and actively facilitate their own subordination and realise only too late that they have been seduced into engineering their own passage into exploitative work relations. While his analysis is rich in ethnographic detail, Willis' Learning to Labour is a qualitative analysis of class with a predictable correspondence theory determined conclusion. Willis' lads are trapped by a social class system operating behind their backs. By shifting emphasis from the theoretical abstractions of Marxist and quantitative functionalist analyses of working class "oppression," Willis, and others who used the techniques of ethnography to explore schooling in Western societies shifted the political emphasis away from
accounts of domination to accounts of resistance to that domination (Game, 1990: 29-30).\(^3\) However, the results remained the same and these ethnographic accounts of schooling were faced, in the end, with explaining how oppression is grounded in resistance to oppression, an apparent contradiction. Game and others have argued that resistance theory is insufficiently attuned to the way that resistant identities are discursively produced.

Despite these problems, I believe the concept of resistance has value. A wide variety of students resist formal education in a lot of ways for many reasons. Resistance needs to be understood in the context of particular locations. As an attempt to consider location, McLaren and Giroux have each argued in different ways that popular culture is a "site of resistance" in the face of the hegemonic power of schooling. It seems rather obvious that both schooling and popular culture are different and often complementary hegemonic sites, the latter being probably the most powerful and entrenched set of ideological levers currently available to contemporary capitalists and normalisers alike. As critics suggest, Giroux and McLaren seem caught in their own ideological meta-narrative of class reproduction.

**Bourdieu's logic of practice**

I came to understand that school leaving was a fundamental part of schooling in low income communities, not an aberration (Fine, 1996: xii)

Bourdieu's idea of the logic of practice and particularly what he calls *habitus* can be used to explain the way individuals are reproduced in particular social class positions through the practices they encountered in the course of their schooling. Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus is dynamic and agency-focussed, investing creative interaction of ordinary, “objectively” positioned social actors within the context of a field of limited possibilities. Given the primarily social class based habitus

---

\(^3\) Game argues that the growing use of ethnographic methods by urban sociologists in Western societies has created what she terms a "slide" from studies of, "cultural 'production' to political resistance" (1990: 29). What she seems to mean by this is that studies of schooling influenced by the work of Willis and Hall have focussed on agents' accounts which understandably present not a picture of domination, but one of resistance to it. Game suggests that this slide is a discursive one and the shift from studies of dominance to studies of resistance are generated primarily by the techniques and concepts used by the sociologists who employ them.

The inversion from oppression to resistance is effected through a particular approach to research: lived experience has become the object, with the assumption that experience is more authentic than either the abstractions of Marxist theorising or the numbers of quantitative sociology (Game, 1990: 29).
of particularly positioned Digby Neckers, individuals would have differential access to education. Bourdieu writes:

Through the *habitus* (italics in original), the structure of which it is the product, governs practice, not along paths of a mechanical determinism, but rather within the constraints and limits set on its invention. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antimonies ... of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, conscious and unconscious, or the individual and society. (1991: 55).

What Bourdieu calls, the “logic of practice” is the situated decision making that operates grounded in particular circumstances. Individuals make the decisions they do on the basis of a practical assessment of their life chances and “reasonable” options. Bourdieu takes care to distinguish practical logic from formal logic, just as he draws the line between practical and scientific reasoning. Scientific reasoning arrives on the scene after the fact, once the action is past and it attempts to categorise and theorise around what has happened. The logic of practice, the reasoning that social actors use when they make ordinary life decisions, affords no such luxury. This practical logic operates in the middle of the action and is the context of real social constraints, not theoretical possibilities. People choose on the basis of what they understand to be their array of “sensible” options. They tend to choose sensibly in that they tend to select for themselves what Bourdieu calls “coherent” and “convenient” options (1991: 86). The structures and history that render certain kinds of options coherent and convenient are understood by agents only at the level of practice; they are the tacit understandings which ethnomethodologists argue organise everyday life and commonsense (Garfinkle, 1967; Smith, 1987). The logic of practice is no abstraction; it “understands only in order to act” (Bourdieu, 1991: 91), and, “can only be grasped in action” (1991: 92). Therefore, in order to understand how Bourdieu’s practical logic works, educational researchers are required to understand clearly the context in which action happens as well as the creative way that agents “play their cards” given the affordances of that context.

Decisions, in the end, are made on the basis of an assessment of an individual’s resources or access to various kinds of what Bourdieu calls capital. For Bourdieu there are many forms of capital. Some of these are tangible and materially based, but other forms of capital are symbolic and, generally speaking, linguistically based. Symbolic capital appears in the form of taste and manners, privileged experiences and dispositions. In terms of formal education, Bourdieu
describes the way that symbolic capital is constructed as a method of inclusion and exclusion; since it is the language and subject matter of the privileged classes for the most part, symbolic capital reflects economic capital. Those excluded from privileged circles by a lack of symbolic capital are subtly constructed as losers in educational institutions. However, they may also have symbolic capital that connects them to particular locales where their more place specific symbolic capital is useful for profit and identity construction “around here.” This local, non-academically certified symbolic capital has its own value in its own spaces.

Bourdieu’s notion of the logic of practice and the habitus are essentially structuralist, though, despite their dynamic aspects. The general scheme within which the action happens is a structural frame of constraint and enablement. Agents make “logical” choices only within the ambit of the reasonable set out by entrenched structural and embedded habits. But where in the system of oppositions, are there alternatives? Bourdieu’s logical social action frame posits that sensible choices are dictated by the logic of a particular social position, and a particular set of what he calls “objective” social conditions. Social actors however draw their action orientations from a number of places simultaneously, an array of what people perceive to be “objective conditions.” Are there not competing, multiple “logics” of practice which are often more or less incompatible, inconsistent and in conflict with one another? In Bourdieu’s scheme both choice and resistance seem difficult to conceive because the habitus is so tight and powerful. If people resist the habitus, where are the “alternative,” “opposing” or even “oppositional” modes of discourse that allow them to do so?

This, I think, is where the Foucauldian notion of multiple discourse spaces and the play of resistances in power relations I described in Chapter 2 can add to Bourdieu’s conceptual scheme. The school, which is one of Bourdieu’s chief research locations, is a clear example of this kind of contested terrain (at least in North America) where competing forms of the habitus come together

---

4 Bourdieu himself is clearly committed to supporting various kinds of “resistant” social causes, at least in recent years. A recent collection of his conference interventions, addresses and political writings demonstrate a strong activist stance that supports strong questioning of the political orthodoxy of neoliberalism (1998). Bourdieu has always maintained that his studies of reproduction have political implications in that they show a kind of benign institutional social control that needs to be recognised and identified in order to be countered. Perhaps Bourdieu is responding to the critique that his work, in the end, presents a depressing, over-determined view of human agency which is so tightly controlled by the articulation of institutional and cognitive repression that it ends up stifling the democratic oppositional potential (Ranciere, 1991, 1995). This critique is powerful, because it argues that it is the very agency of subordinate classes that closes off their ability to resist. Without the ability to resist we are left with a hollow and politically impoverished account of the world.
and where competing logics of practice mesh, negotiate and clash as Giroux and others have often pointed out (eg. Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). These multiple logics present themselves in the form of more or less resistant identity formations carried into school by children from different “backgrounds.” But even this is problematic because it imagines children growing up in a particular neighbourhood or a particular community as unified subjects. Virtually from the moment of birth, children have been subjected to a variety of influences which now include a plethora of crosscurrents. For example, some youth from fishing backgrounds “resist” their interpellation into a way of life and a social class position that provides them with “coherent and convenient” roads into manual work, and in no small part because they are actively recruited to do so by an academic habitus. In this case, school may offer an alternative sort of coherence and convenience framed in a discourse that presents coastal communities and life in the fishery as a premodern vestige. The scope of choice is not as tightly bound to social class and familial habitus as Bourdieu suggests; rather this habitus is one among many competing and overlapping discourses. In fact the particular habitus of any given family may contain significant elements of academically valuable symbolic capital as well as locally valuable symbolic capital.

Bourdieu shows, in a vivid and powerful way, how structural imperatives are made all the more powerful because they are not mechanistic abstractions, but rather, because individual social actors have a personalised sense of social structure which is incorporated into their practical reasoning. Social behaviour becomes habitual, and appears as a contingent, “series of irreversible choices, made under pressure and often involving heavy stakes ... in response to other choices obeying the same logic” (1991: 101). Still, social actors have certain degrees of freedom and the ability to engage in political agency that is not predictable in terms of the logic of the habitus, a field within which boundaries are permeable. These acts are resistant. Bourdieu uses chess or ballet as examples of formal systems within which creativity is not only possible, it is actively valorised, however rare it may be. So there is a range of performance, a set of limits and standards which are embodied in, “ways of using the body or the gaze ... in the automatisms of language and thought through which a man asserts himself as a real, manly man” (1991: 103). These understandings Bourdieu describes are buried in consciousness even though they are enacted, and they may not be discursively available as Giddens points out (1979). They represent practical knowledge, the ability to “go on” as Wittgenstein suggested, the commonsense “know-how” out of which a life is
fashioned. The habitat is the field of practice and the habitus is its enactment, playing the game, construction and reconstructing it in time, and through time, changing everything subtly and incrementally. However, Wittgenstein spoke not of a single language game, but of multiple language games or discourses. Any given habitus is pervaded by “outside” or alternative cultural influences, in the context of economic globalization and international mass media, the unified or “traditional” habitus is challenged but more importantly, it is transformed and exploded by the changes introduced into it.

Indeed it does appear that many of the informants in this study did learn to play social life games that are rooted in habit, tradition and which are supported and buttressed by the force of history. People on Digby Neck do seem to be creatures of habit, they often seem to write themselves off as suitable subjects for extended formal education and fit into the habitus which tends to, “generate all the ‘reasonable,’ ‘common sense’ behaviours,” which, “without violence, art or argument tend to exclude all ‘extravagances’ (‘not for the likes of us’)” (Bourdieu, 1991: 55-56). Bourdieu’s work shows how the educational system works as a regulatory agency in the reproduction of the habitus effectively supporting community routines and norms and “teaching” variously positioned individuals what they can expect to achieve for themselves in a subtle non-violent (symbolically violent) and ostensibly “objective” manner. On the one hand we see the community habitus that draws youth into the orbit of the kinds of practice which are routine and to be expected by and for “people like us,” while on the other hand there is the habitus of the school with it’s own set of routines and expectations for “people like them.” Each of these two competing habiti stand in resistance to one another, each creates its own criteria of intelligence and legitimate (“real”) work and each sets up its “own” as the people who have the “natural gifts” to do the work that is done by “people like us” because each is considered to be “naturally” suited to a particular habitat. Just as it is said that only those “born into” fishing can become truly successful fishermen, it is also understood that the children of teachers and doctors have other “natural” gifts that allow them to succeed in school. Bourdieu’s great contribution has been to help us understand how these alleged “gifts” are not at all natural, but derived form the social position of individuals who possess them by virtue of the luck of their birth.
... the educational system helps to provide the dominant class with a ‘theodicy of its own privilege’ ... by making—under the overt connection that it guarantees, between qualifications and jobs—the relationship which it surreptitiously records under cover of formal equality, between qualifications obtained and inherited cultural capital (1991: 133).

In another place Bourdieu calls this “le racism de l’intelligence” (1984). By this he means that schools create an allegedly generic (but actually class based) notion of intellectual merit out of the cultural practices of the dominant class and then encode it “objectively” in formal curriculum and testing regimes. Then this knowledge—which is differentially available on the basis of social class position—is presented as the essence of intelligence or “natural gifts” of the girl who always felt at home in school and who “took to” the work given her there. The same process is carried out in the male dominated community habitus by my informants when they speak of fishing being “in a boy’s blood.” The extension of this discourse is the notion that the only people who can fish effectively, authentically, or well are those men who have been born in coastal communities and who have spent a life-time acquiring the complex and subtle skills and intuition necessary to become a successful fisherman. This intuition is sometimes thought to be an inherited characteristic as the notion of “blood” implies, but more often it is conceived as a gift which is acquired through years of observation and having been exposed to the industry at a very early age.

Both the habitus of school and the habitus of the community have very specific mobility implications for young men on Digby Neck. If one is to be a fisherman, one must resist the temptation to stay in school, to accept its discourse and its “rational” admonition that the fishery is in irreversible decline, and finally to secure a “steady” job, one which requires little physical exertion and no local knowledge. On the other hand, if one is to enter into the habitus of the school and particularly higher education, then the local knowledge which is crucial to becoming “gifted” in the context of the fishery becomes irrelevant. It may even be that the school and its personnel sympathise with the plight of fishing families and fishing communities, but, as one educator asserted, the “hard truth is these people need to face the fact that things have changed, sad as it is for some of them; they need their education” (field notes). The two differing contexts stand in opposition to one another, particularly in the context of the older cohorts in this study. Yet, the narratives of decline and survival still sit opposite one another, often in open contradiction. Nevertheless, this conflict seldom surfaces because Digby Neckers are both committed to their
communities and families and "realistic" at the same time.

This study is an account of the slow, uncertain rise of a school-based middle class habitus and the transformation of the community based habitus of work in the fishery. As the fishery industrialised in the decades between the early 1960s and the late 1990s there have been significant changes in the structure of opportunity in the fishery, the class relations that distribute the resource and harvesting capacity, the technology used to do the work, the changing state regulatory function through this period, the commodification of fishing licenses and the imposition of quotas have all had an impact on the way life is lived by individuals in the community. This is less so for women than it is for men. Women have always been much more likely to leave; fishing is not their business and fishing privileges are passed on from father to son. The nonacademic educational or socialisation system that formed the heart of the small boat, community-based fishery had seen its importance diminish relative to the importance of the academic educational system. Now everyone seems to want schooling even if they “hate it,” prolonged schooling is now seen as a practical necessity and a moral imperative. Young people are drawn into formal education for longer periods as the years have passed and the results have been particularly problematic for young men caught in this transition between constructions of masculinity requiring little formal education and the emerging new narratives of manhood that include the acquisition of formal education credentials.

The clash of the habitus of community and the habitus of formal schooling creates a play of resistances that set up specialized disciplinary regimens in rural schools. The school is the “ladder,” the “bridge,” the “gate,” the “stepping stone,” and all of the mobile analogies, while the community is “static,” and “dying.” The discourse of rural education contains strong elements of a discourse of despair, decline, and even death invoked in the image of the “dying community.” This discourse is mediated only by a shifting “community development” discourse about vague entrepreneurial high-tech information industries, or tourism. Youth are not convinced and in the absence of better alternatives young people are remaining “around here” not because they see exciting new opportunities, but because it is a known space and one in which they can negotiate a livelihood and survive. As people are quick to point out, there are no homeless people on Digby Neck. There is family, there is shared work and there is access to known resources, and there is
caring and tradition. This contrasts with the competitive structures and routines of schooling where, as one informant put it, "it's every man for himself, clawing and scratching for every mark he can get to try and crawl over the next person for a spot in a community college" (field notes). Many Digby Neckers understood higher education to be the road out of the community into world that appears more unstable and uncertain every day.

Poststructural resistance theory

Moreover, the final world on power is that resistance comes first, to the extent that power relations operate completely within the diagram, while resistances necessarily operate in a direct relations with the outside from which the diagrams emerge. This means that the social field offers more resistance than strategies, and the thought of the outside is a thought of resistance (Deleuze, 1986: 89-90: emphasis in the original).

Bourdieu's idea of the habitus and the logic of practice turns the attention of educational ethnographers away from trying to understand how agency resists structural domination, toward looking at how agency is enacted "logically" in the context of particular social circumstances. While the logic of practice is a powerful tool for understanding social actors' life choices, Bourdieu's general conceptual apparatus seems too monolithic. As Foucault's work shows, agents are not positioned in a coherent and unified habitus, but rather in multiple "habiti," responding to multiple discourses which act as frames within which language games are played. Bourdieu's habitus is, it seems to me, a metanarrative which, like Giroux' Marxist metanarrative, ends up envisioning a dominated subject (Ranciere, 1995).

In the turn away from metanarratives which has followed from the postmodern/poststructural and feminist critiques of both critical and functionalist theory, we have an emergent vision of the social. This vision presents a more or less organised or conflicted interface of smaller narratives, voices, micropowers, response and counter-response. Sociologists struggle to make sense of societies in which power is bound up tightly with desire and where formerly powerful core ideas as "basic" to the discipline as "society" seem to have been passed by in the mobile, shifting space of contemporary globalism (Urry, 2000). Ironically perhaps, this body of dense theorising has opened the door of academic legitimacy to a plethora of representation and intellectual work. A space has been opened up in which grand theory no longer sits at the centre with a variety of
resistant influences scratching at margins. Power is produced and reproduced not from the centre in large sovereign institutional or legal gestures, rather, it is produced and reproduced in everyday events by ordinary social actors within multiple discourse spaces. Various social and identity politics movements have been quick to seize the opportunity opened up by anti-essentialism, pushing the hegemony of grand theory even harder against the wall.

This poststructural idea of power (and perhaps any notion of power) has been difficult for educators and even educational theorists to embrace, partly because it is often thought to offer a rather dismal vision, and one which appears to fly in the face of the emancipatory values at the core of public education in liberal democracies. This is unfortunate. Poststructural theory demands an analysis of both multilayered power and its other (i.e. resistances), as well as an analysis of how the two articulate in practice. Poststructural theory can provide a basis for a positive view of teaching. Why indeed does an understanding that power is produced discursively lead to the dismal conclusion that there is "no way out?" Why not just the opposite? Foucault commented in an interview toward the end of his life: "I am sometimes asked: 'But if power is everywhere, there is no freedom.' I answer that if there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere" Foucault in Rabinow, 1997: 292). In fact, Foucault's interest in what he came to term governmentality was precisely a concern with how freedom was enacted, countered and enacted again in a continual relationship of the constitution of power and resistance.

What remains problematic for critical theorists interested in the emancipatory possibilities contained in poststructuralism is the vague and problematic nature of resistance this theory suggests. While Foucault constructed an intriguing and formidable picture of the workings of power in contemporary societies, he did not significantly elaborate what to do about it in terms of emancipatory strategy. For Foucault, power is always contested in discourse rather than out of the machination of structures of domination. Because power is discursive, it can therefore be resisted.

5 In fact, as Deleuze has asserted, it is essentialist discourses of knowledge which are static and repressive (i.e. freedom, man, and life) but which are continuously and necessarily resisted by what he calls "life." When the human sciences for instance sought to categorise and administer life itself, it is the very substance of life which resists. Deleuze writes:

Life becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object ...Is not the force that comes from outside a certain idea of Life, a certain vitalism, in which Foucault's thought culminated? Is not life this capacity to resist force? (1988:92-93).
discursively, which indeed it is and must be. This resistance, of course, sets off a counter response and power relations are produced and reproduced anew. Foucault saw resistance as central to the operation of power. Resistance is simply one face of a multifaceted and constantly shifting power struggle; indeed, there is little else but opposing resistances, or as Foucault wrote, "where there is power, there is resistance" (1990: 95). Thus, power and resistance are everywhere. In fact, resistance is crucial to the very constitution of the power relations Foucault found at the heart of social life.

You see, if there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience ... So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with resistance. So I think resistance is the main word, the key word in this dynamic (Foucault in Rabinow: 167; emphasis in original).

Resistance drives power relations and gives them their form. Conversely, Giroux, McLaren, Willis and other 1980s resistance theorists see resistance as a by-product of dominance, as something driven and given shape by power, and as such they are only able to see "true" resistance as opposition to large forces that bear down on dominated individuals whose consciousness is formed by a largely unseen hegemony that exploits them. Foucault's conception of resistance is that it is the play of difference that shapes institutional power. Difference is controlled principally through the generation of a knowledge about its character and through charting a strategic response to its alterity. Since difference can never be mapped in its entirety, and because its character is constantly shifting, power is a dance between strategic knowledge and ever resistant tactics (deCerteau, 1984).

Resistance has continued to engage poststructurally oriented theorists and researchers. DeCerteau developed an analysis of resistance out of Foucault's work arguing that everyday life is a skilled accomplishment in which ordinary social actors accommodate and resist the kind of disciplinary regime Foucault described in his earlier books (1984). While Foucault was most interested in mapping the contours of the regime of truth, deCerteau was interested in the small scale tactical resistances which grew up in response to what he called the "cancerous growth" of strategic vision. His central idea was that the "victims" or "targets" of disciplinary strategy make use of the ideas that are presented to them as moral guideposts by powerful agents, but what follows from this is an unpredictable creative act of what deCerteau calls, "poesis." DeCerteau writes:
The presence and circulation of a representation (taught by preachers, educators and popularisers as the key to socioeconomic advancement) tells us nothing of what it is to its users. We must first analyse its manipulation by users who are not its makers (1984: xiii).

DeCerteau argues that this pragmatic usage of disciplinary ideas by the very people at whom they are aimed (i.e. Foucault's "docile bodies") often runs counter to the strategic intent of cultural transmission, resulting in tactics, resistances, compensations and deflections which results in what he calls "antidisciplines." DeCerteau uses the image of the social actor as "reader" claiming that the meaning of power strategies is never fixed and that each social agent reinvents disciplinary strategy in the constructive act of reading normative directives. Given a careful analysis of the practice of everyday life, social analysis which is grounded in a particular context can unravel the interplay of structure and agency, of discipline and the response of its object. Resistance, in deCerteau's sense, is the symphony of all those disparate acts which are unpredictable from the point of view of discipline, and which confound theory in their everyday complexity. Resistance is the tactical response to discipline by individuals who have no space of their own and so are forced to respond in the terms of power itself. Resistance is thus, the:

Innumerable ways of playing and foiling other games, that is, the space instituted by others, (which) characterise the subtle stubborn, resistant activity of groups which since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations (deCerteau, 1984: 18).

An example of this sort of resistance is bell hooks' account of her childhood resistance to her father's violence, her mother's capitulation and to the reproductive work done to institutionalise the patriarchal family (1994). Through experiences of powerlessness and oppression in her educational biography, hooks came to theory, as she puts it, out of a kind of desperate necessity. Theory allowed hooks to see the play of oppositions and locate her own pain within larger struggles. Without the discursive tools of theory, her resistance, and challenges would remain personal problems experienced by a person who does not understand the context in which she lives, much like Willis' lads.

---

6 DeCerteau used the concept of tactics in opposition to the idea of strategy (1984). For deCerteau, strategy is the operative planning of those who hold social power. Tactics, on the other hand, are the less coordinated responses of less organised agents who are the objects of strategy.
Unlike the pantheon of spectacularly resistant (typically male) "heroes" found in most critical ethnographies of schooling, hooks found intellectual work to be liberating. By learning to think differently, hooks could confront the assimilationist thrust of her education and learn to work in, instead of against schools, universities and other institutional sites which make rural, working class, Black students and women feel uncomfortable and pressured to assimilate into the mainstream by learning to: "change speech patterns, points of reference, and drop any habit that might reveal them to be from a non-materially privileged background" (hooks, 1994: 181). In other words, hooks was able to use the disciplinary apparatus of the academy to cut out a space for herself that did not have the predicted assimilatory consequences. An understanding that the whole academic enterprise rests on discursive pillars allowed hooks to understand that she could use theory itself to affirm her roots and ties to home and resist the pressure on working class students to reject the place from which they come by incorporating a hybrid discourse. Theory and an understanding of power allowed her to see through class-biased territoriality in the academy.

It was assumed that any student coming from a poor or working class background would willingly surrender all values and habits being associated with this background ... During my student years, and now as a professor, I see many students from "undesirable" class backgrounds become unable to complete their studies because the contradictions between the behaviour necessary to "make it" in the academy and those that allowed them to be comfortable at home, with their families are just too great (hooks, 1994: 182).

Hooks' survival strategy, both for herself and for her working class students, is discursive. She urges them to become comfortable in both circumstances, to "cross borders" and not renounce one for the other categorically, but rather, to seek a space in between and revel in the tension. Just as importantly, hooks' biography serves as one narrative example of resistance, the story of a subject who was not predictably socialised into "her place." Unlike Marxist resistance theory that comes with an apriori oppositional matrix, hooks' resistance operates at the multiple levels of biography and social structure, race, class and gender, and thus, it is more nuanced than most educational resistance writing. Hooks' resistance operated on a number of levels and it continues to provide grounding in her present teaching practice which continues on as a resistant struggle.

Foucault used the plural to speak of resistance (i.e. resistances). A single grand meta-resistance imagines that a wide variety of disparate activity will be folded into a single categorical resistance to the logic of dominance. Resistance here means standing up against the determining monolithic
thrust of social reproduction. The conception of multiple resistances brings into view a different panorama of active contestation operative on a number of fronts, each of them specific locales. Foucault writes: "One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present day polemics oppose the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space" (1986: 22). This place then becomes a locus of resistance. Schooling is clearly an important part of this governance.

**Resistance and place**

... the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without place, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea ... In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates (Foucault, 1986: 27).

Bell hooks uses the idea of place to inform her resistance theory. Hooks resists being placed, preferring to cut out her own hybrid location "in between" home place and the academy. In doing so she resisted the seductive invitation to leave home. In his classic treatment of resistance to schooling, Stuart Hall also understood the importance of place in relation to oppositional behaviour in British working class neighbourhoods (1976). The post World War Two capitalist development and the nascent post-industrial development Hall and his colleagues saw emerging in urban Britain in the 1970s was also a systematic destruction of working class neighbourhoods and communal spaces (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Hall writes that, "what was destroyed was a concrete set of relations, a network of knowledge, things, experiences - the supports of a class culture" (1976: 37). The decline of the working class cultural space in urban Britain was facilitated by consumerism and by the expansion of public institutions of normalization like the school. These "developments" substituted what Hall calls a "mobility matrix" which came to characterise working class culture and working class space as places from which youth ought to escape. Hall writes that post-war development depopulated working class neighbourhood and broke up old family and neighbourhood patterns narrowing family and friendly attachments, families cut adrift in this way were drawn into the mobility matrix either, "upward into the ranks of the new suburban working class elite or downward into the lumpen" (1976: 31).
The hegemonic power of "development" can be seen in the common-sense acceptance of a "better life" in Hall's suburban growth areas. Urban working class residents in decaying industrial cities understandably fled their declining neighbourhoods, encouraged formal education for their children, and effectively facilitated the dissolution of their solidarity and communities in favour of a mobile ethic. Likewise, the rural community-based, kinship/friendship network had to be smashed by its own hand. This destruction must be presented as evolution and as the only option. The schools figure in this coaxing, slow process of ideological formation. The hegemonic message of the leadership class is: you had better prepare your children for a life that was different from your own, a life which will be lived in other places. This insistence on flexibility and mobility calls into play a multi-faceted and often unconscious resistance as urban and rural people resist the incursion of capital into those spaces they consider their own. As they defend their spaces, rural dwellers, like those displaced from urban settings defend their "right" to remain. Hall writes: "(T)hese are 'rights' not of ownership or force, but of territorial and cultural possession, the customary occupation of the sitting tenant" (1976: 43).

Hall described the school as an institution that used "double binding," both "horizontal binding" of people to localities in community, but also "vertical binding" of people to, "those structures which tie them to dominant institutions and cultures" (1976: 43). This makes the local school a key point of intersection between two disconnected cultures, that of the dominant society and that of the street and of the working class neighbourhood and family. Because of this, school becomes a "theatre of struggle" into which working class youth bring, "a repertoire of strategies and responses - ways of coping as well as resisting" (Hall, 1976: 44). This resistance is situated within a community context of inter-generational conflict infused with a vision of the appropriateness of staying or leaving. Hall claims that generational consciousness:

... is likely to be strong among those sections of youth which are upwardly and outwardly mobile from the working class ... the upward path, through education, leads to a special focussing on the school and the education system as the main mechanism of advancement: it is this which 'makes the difference' between parents who stay where they are and children who move on and up. It involves the young person valuing the dominant culture positively, and sacrificing the 'parent' culture even when this is accompanied by a distinct sense of cultural disorientation. His experience and self identity will be based around mobility (Hall, 1976: 51).

To resist schooling is therefore, to resist mobility, or at least to grasp the multiple problems
mobility entails if one is working class.

Working from within postcolonial theory, it is Homi Bhabha's (1994) view that what he calls the "zone of the political," exists in the, "often unconscious affective area 'in between' the dominant and subordinate cultures" (Gilbert, 1997: 130). This gap is a shifting negotiated "third" space. Each side harbours ambivalence and continuously changes in response to the other. In this gap, the space of the political, Bhabha theorises two forms of resistance: transitive and intransitive. While he suggests a number of strategies for transitive or active resistance ranging from mimicry to psychological guerrilla warfare, Bhabha suggests in his notion of intransitive resistance that there are certain features inherent in the colonial relationship in which resistance is immanent. In colonial relationships, surveillance and domination are on the surface. Surveillance systems incite resistance by creating an awareness that one is being watched. This is the problem of alterity, the knowledge that one is someone else's other. Secondly, since surveillance is in large part linguistically based, its condition is fundamentally unfixed allowing for a playful space in which resistance can arise. Thirdly, the gaze of the coloniser is always troubled because it relies on a colonial other who is always potentially hostile. The colonial situation is for Bhabha fundamentally unstable and thus it is open to resistance and replacement. Resistance is a byproduct of unequally structured relationships.7

Bhabha stresses "infiltration" of the dominant symbolic orders and systems rather than the more traditional oppositional language of resistance which is explicitly aimed at reversing the dominant order. Indeed, almost nobody seriously entertains the possibility of a return to preindustrial times before the routine interaction of cultures, regardless of the consequences of industrialisation. Bhabha suggests that we playfully resist by developing new language and new power strategies and resistant tactics which fit neither the subordinate nor the dominant discourse space created in the colonial relationship. His analysis and resistance strategy here is similar to that of Said's (1993) migrant intellectual or to that suggested by Giroux' border pedagogue. In the gap, the "third space," the interval, we might think differently, and thus, resist. Indeed, Said has argued

7 Of course, there arises the question of whether or not unequally structured social relationships can ever be transcended. Theorists like Noam Chomsky who retain faith in emancipatory values at the heart of both classical liberalism (cf. Achbar, 1994) and critical theorists like Jurgen Habermas (1987/96) argue that such transcendence is not only possible, it is an ethical responsibility for intellectuals.
forcefully that the intermediate position of the migrant intellectual is the model for a kind of consciousness that breaks out of fixed identity positions and theoretical binaries, subsequently breaking new ground for social theory. Referring to Said's work Papastergiadis writes: "(R)epeatedly he stresses that it is those who fight against the opposition between the fixed and the homeless, the centre and the periphery, that will open a new consciousness for our age" (2000: 119). This is a hybrid identity which resists being placed either here or there and which is at home nowhere.

The powerful logic of capitalism, state control and rational managerial bureaucratic discourse and practice, along with the highly competitive nature of the global new world order should by now have smashed local resistance; instead we find the hybridity Bhabha describes (1994), "modular" spaces and selves (Bauman, 1999), migrant multi-spatial identities (Said, 1993; Papastergiadis, 2000), and robust local/global identity politics (Luke, 1997). What has emerged is a struggle between local discourse and structural discourse raising persistent questions about: "a) the relationship between the power relations evidenced in the local 'micropolitics' of everyday statements and 'macro' systemic social formations, and b) the relationship between change in discourse statements and practices and material, social and economic change" (Luke, 1997: 345). Luke goes on to argue for a committed theory/practice that investigates the gap between the structural and the local, the site of the political identified by Bhabha.

What Luke is describing is the rise of identity politics in Western societies. While there has been a great deal of attention paid in recent years to the explosion of identity politics, as Creed and Cheng point out, remarkably little of this attention has addressed what they call the "rural urban axis" (1997: 3). They argue that "rusticity" which is a rooted rural identity and connected to particular geographic locations, operates as a form of resistance to the placeless, urban values that characterise contemporary cultural and social theory. They also point out that education plays a crucial role in creating character structure which articulates with urbanism.

---

8 Day and Murdoch write that social theory developed from the essential idea that place does not make much difference (1993). They argue that social theory has aimed at generality and the production of knowledge that holds true across places and across time. Giddens' work has been an attempt to address this among other problems in social theory which he found to be developed on a nineteenth century philosophical base which is inadequate for dealing with the both the complexity and dynamism of social life (1971, 1976, 1979, 1981) and the specific problems of modernity (1990, 1991, 1995, 1996). Referring to his own work with sociologists on Digby Neck, one of my informants calls this placelessness in sociological thinking, "the view from nowhere." (FN)
In the West, few intellectuals have deep rural roots, and for those who do, education often severs those connections. The traditional pedagogical agenda, with its emphasis on enlightenment through the liberal arts, has long been opposed to the supposed essence of rusticity—lack of cultural sophistication and a preference for practical know-how over erudition... education (is described) as tantamount to an urbanisation of the mind (Creed and Cheng, 1997: 10).

"Rustics" are deviant precisely because of their attachment to particular places and their apparent unwillingness to engage the contemporary, the urbane and the global, the urban and the sophisticated. Rustics resist modernity and confound educationalists in no small part because they refuse to move from the country.

Kieran Bonner has found something similar in his analysis of a rural community in Alberta (1997). Developing a contemporary analysis of the rural urban debate that animated the development of North American sociology in the early 20th Century, Bonner examined the mundane notion that rural communities are seen by their residents as, "a great place to raise kids." His analysis of what this commonsense rural notion actually means leads to the conclusion that rural living is resistant to "the pluralisation of life worlds that makes the practice of consumerism seem reasonable" (1997: 178). Bonner argues that attachment to any particular place is, in the face of post-modernity, a form of resistance. Drawing on Bauman and Giddens, Bonner identifies radical mobility or the form of phenomenological homelessness described by Berger et al. (1973) as a central feature of contemporary life. The development of modernity was marked by a displacement and mass migration of rural people to urban environments. People who had formerly been tied by tradition to the land were forced into the new industrial urban landscape as industrial labourers. Bonner argues, drawing on the work of a variety of classical and contemporary theorists, that postmodernity is now marked by its preoccupation with consumption rather than production. A key part of this shift is the idea that place has, along with everything else, become commodified. In the bargain, the roving consumer of place must be mobile in order to be open to a variety of consumption and place choices constructed in contemporary society. Bonner argues that attachment in his community of "Prairie Edge" Alberta represents a form of resistance to the mobility imperative implied by postmodernity. But the kind of resistance he finds is hybrid, it is not a simple throwback to a relatively "immobile" traditional society. This resistance itself is also postmodern and rooted in the enhanced ability of rural individuals to visualise and move through space to carry out surveillance both of their own families (especially, but not exclusively their own
dependent children) and on the community at large. The key part of Bonner's account is the idea of place-based resistance, or more precisely, an attachment to place which forms the basis of a resistance against the drive to total mobility and consumerism.\(^9\)

The analysis of mobility as a chronic feature and a central problematic in the development of contemporary capitalism is also prominent in Richard Sennett's (1999) recent revisitation of the core ideas in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (Sennett and Cobb, 1973). Sennett describes the differences between the working class men he interviewed in Boston in the early 1970s and the lives led by their children in the late 1990s (1999). Sennett finds a highly mobile, unsatisfied restlessness in the latter generation. While education for their children was the dream of Sennett and Cobb's 1970s informants, the irony is that this very education has created a new kind of alienation in the present generation. Education plays a key role in the character formation of the mobile, flexible individual. Describing the career trajectory of his key informant, Sennett claims, "school prepared the young couple to move and change jobs frequently, and they've done so" (1999: 18). More particularly he argues that the right wing, conservative values expressed by this informant are a reaction to their immersion in the flexible, mobile, short-term, instrumental ethical environment of the modern "efficient" corporation.

This new form of alienation is rooted in the sense that nothing is permanent, neither values, nor kinship networks, nor attachment to any particular place. Sennett's young informant and his family have moved a total of four times in fourteen years since university graduation. Bauman writes that late modernity is characterised by what he calls "modular" forms of identity. Identity, work, personal relations and indeed the total environment are fragmented to the point where, "(I)nstead of alienation we should better speak these days of 'unsettlement' or 'unhomliness'\(^9\)

---

\(^9\) In his analysis of the development of the classical sociological tradition, Bonner hypothesises that the analysis of modernity found in Weber, Marx and Tonnies particularly and later developed by Wirth and the Chicago School can be read as a protracted argument in support of the notion that rural communities were doomed, if not to die, to become urbanised and indistinguishable from their hegemonic urban counterparts. As this theme is developed into contemporary and postmodern social theory the relevance of rurality becomes even less significant, a point made equally forcefully by Creed and Cheng (1997); Berry (1977) and Theobald (1997). Bonner cites the work of contemporary Marxist Frederic Jamieson and critical geographer Edward Soja to make this point. This disappearance of the rural thus represents the, "disappearance of resistance to the dominance of capital" (1997: 32). His point seems to be that rurality may well be the last bastion of potential resistance to this dominance. Ching and Creed also make the point that what they call "rusticity" is a fundamentally resistant identity choice in the face of urban-centric capitalist development (1997).
(1999: 160). This is precisely the kind of consciousness Sennett describes. Sennett's informants find ways to resist this unsettlement by supporting simplistic values and political agendas which appear to them to resist the erosion of long-term commitments and enduring values. In the process, Sennett finds character corrodes and they become static and petty because they cannot come to grips with a world in which everything is in motion.

The organised rural community as a resistant site

She knew what they wanted most was for her to stay. None of their ideas about what she should do with her life involved her leaving. (Coady, 1998: 149)

Recognising the vulnerability of the commitment, and confronting the emptiness of materialism and the consequences of rootlessness in a world made increasingly homogeneous by mass production and modern communication, we must stress the many good humanitarian and social reasons for maintaining communities in which people can reap the emotional benefits of belonging and know the satisfaction of meaningful employment (Wynn, 1988: 51).

Raymond Williams was interested in the conditions under which people become "massified" and central to this is communications. Mass communications construct a plane of understanding which transcends the face-to-face, experiential world of locale. Williams wrote: "The old rural culture, which is so widely and sometimes sentimentally admired, rested on generations of experience within a general continuity of common condition" (1958: 311). The importance of this local community is subverted by the mass media and in the communication practices embodied in the public school and mass education. Williams continued: "It is now becoming clear that, from all kinds of evidence, that society can, if it chooses, train its members in almost any direction, with only an occasional failure" (1958: 312). However, the creation and maintenance of a mass is a continual struggle, one which is persistently resisted by community and local experience. Mass communication then is a prototypical domination technique, a subtle one, a manipulation of ideas. But transmission must be connected with reception at the concrete points to which it descends in order to be effective (Williams, 1958: 314). At multiple local points of reception mass communication must connect and this is why it never really dominates. Again in Williams words: "mass communication ... has failed and will continue to fail when its transmissions encounter not a confused uncertainty, but a considered and formulated experience" (1958: 313). Williams imagined organised communities as sites of resistance to the mass normalisation project
of popular media and perhaps the tutelary complex as well. He was politically committed to articulating a vision of society in which communal values confronted those of atomistic individualism. Williams understood that communities represent an obstacle to normalisation because, particularly when they are organised, they represent experiential grounding in a functioning habitus against which mass communication chafes, but never entirely conquers. In this sense, communities are resistance to what Williams calls “massification” and what Foucault calls normalisation (1979).

Anticipating Foucault’s idea of power/knowledge Williams saw the conception of mass society as useful to elites who can now (through mechanisms like opinion polls and market research) use distancing and objectification to understand the tastes and preferences of large numbers of consumers. "The 'masses' exert their influence on the direction of society, not by participation, but by expressing a pattern of demands and preferences ... and this for the elites is a starting point: to be carefully studied and then worked on" (Williams, 1961: 110). Education works in a similar way serving to impart a curriculum of "fixed knowledge" which includes "social character training" (Williams, 1961: 126), but also to provide a social laboratory in which children might be studied, understood and improved. But against this project, local community stands in resistance illustrating by practical example the range of alternate social characters and unique knowledges from which the child might choose. For Williams: "children while at school, learn from their whole social environment as well as from the particular curriculum, to say nothing of the fact that when they leave school they have to compare what they learned with the actual practices of their society" (1961: 120).

Community itself is a discourse space into which competing and supplementary discourses must be introduced. Schools mobilise a normalising discourse and thus become one of the central locations of modern governance. This way of looking at rural schools should help to explain why they are very often such contested and ambiguous spaces. The institutional discourse of formal education continually meets the practical discourse of life in the community, and the world it enjoins children to imagine typically operates as a shadow of the local place in which these real children live out their lives. Yet in rural communities, locale is important and I think it continues to stand in opposition to the massification project and mobilization project represented by modern schooling.
In fact, community is now a discursive governance tool. Deploying Foucault's concept of governmentality, Rose (1997) suggests that the metaphor of locality and community has emerged out of the ashes of the state. Rose maintains that the "social" (in Donzelot's [1979] sense) is no longer the principal zone of governance having been replaced by the "community." Rose calls the community, "a new spatialization of governance: heterogeneous, plural, linking individuals, families and others in contesting cultural assemblies of identities and allegiances" (1997: 327). In the modern "advanced liberal" state, community is invoked as a friendly site for the generation of activity and the mobilisation of publics. Decentralisation is the order of the day as neoliberal nation states devolve functions once centralised in bureaucracy to local initiatives controlled by the "grass roots." Rose writes:

The social and the economic are now seen as antagonistic, and the former is to be fragmented in order to transform the moral and psychological obligations of economic citizenship in the direction of active self-advancement. Simultaneously, government of a whole range of previously social apparatuses is to be restructured according to a particular image of the economic - the market. Economic government is to be de-socialized in the name of maximising the entrepreneurial comportment of the individual (1997: 340).

In the interests of creating self-governing agents imbued with the appropriate market values, the community is mobilised to provide the cultural context for an interconnected yet unique economic network of self-regulating consumption and production. Anti-communities which lack the social cohesion to be trusted to steer their own affairs come to be colonised by, "a plethora of quasi autonomous agencies working within the 'savage spaces,' in the 'anti-communities' on the margins ... in the huge and murky industry of 'training' unemployment is reproblematised as a matter of the lack of individual and marketable skills among the unemployed themselves to be countered by a multitude of training organisations that are private and compete in the market for public contracts" (Rose, 1997: 347).

Rural communities (and I think Atlantic coastal communities stand as good examples) are often cast as dysfunctional or backward spaces. Their schools, operating as they do within "savage spaces" as Rose calls them, are typically perceived as dysfunctional educational sites. Popkewitz' Struggle for the Soul (1998) focuses on the discursive production of educationally problematic spaces. Popkewitz’ book is an ethnographic analysis of the “Teach for America” program (TFA), an educational reform program initiated in 1990 under the Bush administration. TFA mobilised
some 500 of the “best and brightest” of the national university graduating class of that year by training them outside “bureaucratic” university based teacher education programs to teach, “urban and rural” children and then sending them into selected communities to work what he calls, “pedagogical alchemy” affecting changes in target populations. Unlike most ethnographies, Popkewitz’ study is openly filtered through a priori theory. Popkewitz uses Foucault’s ideas about power/knowledge, normalization and governmentality to examine the way that these neophyte teachers did the normalization work cut out for them in the moral enterprise of the TFA program. Specifically Popkewitz is interested in how “urban and rural” is constructed as a unified category of children placed in a position of educational alterity as, “historical discourses about the capabilities of children are mobilised ... [and] function to place the urban and rural child outside reason” (1998: 48). Urban in this context is code for “inner city” or suburban poor, while rural is code for country backwater. In this construction the urban and rural child is conjured as a deficient stereotype against the absent presence of the “normal” middle class child living in advantaged affluent environments. This absent presence is the “successful” child juxtaposed against the deficient, incompetent and unsuccessful urban/rural child. Success, in this cosmology, is having one’s life set in middle class conditions.

The successful child is one who can sleep at proper hours, study, and who is allowed to develop self-motivation and responsibility ... The lack of English language skills stand within the grid of ideas whose normalization testified to the child’s lack of competence and achievement. The students are positioned as anthropological “others” who stand against reason- they “can’t study,” are “just so disruptive” and are “pressed not to learn.” The children occupy an oppositional space to what is “normal.” The nonsuccess of the child is embodied in the normalised capacities of “being” which the child in school lacks. (Popkewitz, 1998: 37).

In this matrix, schooling becomes a focus for governing spaces and “rescuing” or “saving” rural and urban children from the social decay in which they are ensnared by virtue of an accident of birth. Urban and rural become code words for marginal spaces populated by non-middle class, non-white, non-affluent children in need of specialised forms of governance in order to, “discriminate, distinguish and normalise what the child is and is to become” (Popkewitz, 1998: 22).

The TFA program as Popkewitz describes it is a quasi-religious crusade shot through with missionary language of pastoral care, othering and potential salvation combined with the
psychologised discourse of both progressive and traditional pedagogy. Popkewitz maintains that it is this very process that constructs and defines the rural and urban child “outside reason.” This discourse both fuels the redemptive mission of the teachers involved in the program and at the same time dooms them and the children they teach to an “internment” in the very backward spaces into which they are defined by the discourse itself. Popkewitz writes: “the discourses of salvation make the child and individual who is not reasonable, capable and competent but who - with the proper care and nurturance - can be saved” (1998: 25). Like all power/knowledge strategies encapsulated in contemporary school reform movements on both the left and the right, “the spatial politics of constructing identities remains unscrutinised” (Popkewitz, 1998: 120). Never does anyone ask hard questions about what it is that children are being saved from and how the salvation techniques and the concepts that give them meaning actually work to construct the shape of the problem.

... unscrutinised are the norms that differentiate children and make it possible to identify children who ‘lack’ important qualities, or who have a ‘limited fund of knowledge’ to learn what is prescribed in schooling (Popkewitz, 1998: 115).

The power of discourse facilitates the simple, unquestioned foundational assumption that urban and rural places are environments in which children cannot grow and learn properly. The solution is to change not the environments, but the children living in them. But the irony is that they cannot be changed; they are deficient and incompetent because they are part of a population that inhabits a deficient space. All that can be accomplished in such schools is to convince the children to "renounce" their homes and their identities.

Within this space the best these children can hope for is to become like the normal (emphasis in original) person ... they learn to renounce a set of populational characteristics ascribed to them as personal psychological characteristics (Popkewitz, 1998: 68).

The discourses of salvation, redemption and rescue are translated in “practical” terms of pedagogical strategy in what Popkewitz calls a “psychological register” individualising both problems and solutions. Normalization practices can do little more than this and their historic focus has always been upon finding the right set of technologies to effectively transform deviant children. As Popkewitz comments, “the rules of power remain the same as those of the last century” (1998: 115). The only difference is the quality and character of danger. The present
danger is constructed in terms of the potentially dangerous, streetwise, unchanneled, unredeemed urban hood. Predictably, the young missionary teachers are hardly up to the challenge. What results is a lot of teacher frustration and a retreat into compensatory and remedial pedagogical strategies from those tried and true normalization technologies: behaviourism and Deweyan progressivism.

In the end, Popkewitz describes and analyses how the young teachers in TFA learn to create, “space normalised for the ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ child” (1998: 86). He concludes that this spatialization is a moral order in which the foundation of pedagogy is not school subjects or the transmission of content knowledge, but rather the inculcation of a set of perceptions about the self and about the urban and rural spaces in which children live. This inculcation is represented by the very presence and self-governing agency of teacher as, “the social space of the urban and rural teacher produces a moral order. The moral order establishes not only ‘the good’ but its opposite” (Popkewitz, 1998: 97). The teacher and the space s/he inhabits become a normalising space inside the child’s lifeworld, sitting there, setting example, but not really transforming either the child or the world, but rather, both containing (“interning” in Popkewitz’ language) and helping the child to see how problematic his/her own space really is.

The program was intended to help the child develop a knowledge of the ‘self.’ That knowledge inscribed global behavioural characteristics in the children's homes and communities as dysfunctional (Popkewitz, 1998: 70).

While he criticises both left and right wing reform programs because of their similar missionary normalization focus on, “governing and saving the soul through the construction of individuality” (1998: 120), Popkewitz offers little in the way of a reform agenda. He argues that educators and policy makers need to go deeper and question the way discursive categories are used to sort out educational practice, spatialize deviance, generate individualistic solutions and create binaries and oppositions which provide a space for governance. In other words, we need to look carefully at the way we shape and construct the very problems we propose to be addressing. For Popkewitz, there seem to be no more or less desirable or progressive forms of governance, only different structures of power/knowledge that struggle to supplant one another in the position of moral authority to define the regime of truth of the moment. Because of the importance of this process of describing the “architecture that disciplines, interns and encloses the individual”, Popkewitz
professes little interest in resistance which he sees as caught in what he calls a sovereign notion of power (1998: 131).

Unfortunately, his ethnography privileges the voices and experiences of the TFA teachers who lamented the resistance of the rural and urban youth they were charged with teaching. Had he focussed instead on the response of the students themselves, Popkewitz would undoubtedly have been forced to pay more attention to how they resisted discursive pigeonholing. As Game (1990) suggests, this is a methodological issue. Popkewitz was interested in how the discourse of the ‘urban and rural’ child and his/her deficiencies was constructed in the TFA program and thus his ethnography had to attend to the constructions of the “definers” as opposed to the “defined.” In the ethnographic section of this work I am equally interested in the perceptions of the definers (educators) and the defined (students). At the same time I am also interested in how students defined the work of their teachers and the institution in which they worked.

The idea of the backward community is heard increasingly in the discourse about education and development in Atlantic Canada. And it is in the resistant and backward space that specialized normalisation work needs to be done. Social rehabilitation programs abound and “life skills” (a ubiquitous educational concept striking if only because of its arrogance) and various types of “retraining” for the “information economy” are being “delivered” to adult learners on every street corner. For the individuals who live in them, backward rural spaces are defined as doomed places to be left behind as soon as one is able, to move on to their antithesis: progressive spaces, urban spaces where one can be useful, productive and a burden to no one.10 Such prospects are largely a joke for the current generation of fisheries workers deprived of their livelihood. But the children of these people staying in school longer, acquiring portable credentials? Are rural schools doing their part and facilitating the migration which will ultimately spell the end for many coastal communities as working settlements?

10 Marxist theorists have used the language of the “needs” of capital and the idea of the reserve army of labour to describe this phenomenon (Veltmeyer, 1979, 1990). The difference here is that the reserve army now requires specialized training for mobility just as immobile stayers now need to be educated to both leave and stay.
Conclusion

It is the power which the children have to resist everybody and everything outside the village... I've come to the conclusion that this strangeness I am trying to describe has nothing to do with this (insularity). The village children aren't jealous - on the contrary, they are convinced that they have something which none of the newcomers can ever have, some kind of mysterious life which is so perfect that it is a waste of time to search for anything else. I used to wonder at their slowness at absorbing things but now I am beginning to realise that they know form an early age that they don't need to take in what I am teaching them... They will do anything you tell them but never that little extra original thing (Village teacher quoted in Blythe, 1969: 177).

Resistance theory as it was presented in the 1970s and 80s is inadequate for explaining the complexity of response of working class youth to the experience of schooling. Giroux commented in a seminal work from this tradition (1983) that in order to separate real acts of resistance from false ones, resistance theory needs to isolate those acts that are useful to what he (or some enlightened/privileged observer) considers to be legitimate political struggle.

Thus, central to analysing any act of resistance would be a concern with uncovering the degree to which it speaks to a form of refusal that highlights, either implicitly or explicitly, the need to struggle against the social nexus of domination and submission. In other words, resistance must have a revealing function, one that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and for struggle in the interest of self-emancipation and social emancipation (1983: 108-109).

This, I think, is precisely what is wrong with this version of resistance theory. When the idea of resistance is removed from the context in which it occurs, and when its motivation is written into a political/theoretical account that assesses its meaning and its worth, then resistance is relegated to any ideological division between legitimate resistance and false consciousness. Giroux uses the term "function" to describe what he sees as the role of resistance because in this formulation it is a tool in a larger political struggle. This emphasis on evaluating and sorting different forms of opposition also removes them from their context, from the place where they happen because location is irrelevant in the larger play of political emancipation.11

11 A recent study of resistance in an elementary classroom demonstrates that the idea of resistance can be utilised for behavioural control of children (Spaulding, 2000). Drawing on the work of Ball (1987) which uses the notion of "micropolitics," Spaulding uses the idea of resistance theory to analyse the oppositional behaviour of young children. Her intent is to provide teachers and teachers in training particularly with the social control skills necessary to counter student resistance. Another more critical study of student resistance using post-structural theory is briefly described in a research note in the Canadian Journal of Education (Field and Olafson, 1999).
More recent studies of both resistance and the importance of place have shown that resistance needs to be understood first of all in the context in which it occurs and against the backdrop of its other, the set of disciplinary procedures which attempt to shape behaviour in particular directions in particular locations. Foucault discussed power in terms of "structures of domination" and micro power relations (Foucault in Rabinow, 1997: 291-293). The question often arose in his interviews as to why he seemed to have so little to say about these larger structures of domination in his own epoch (i.e. class, gender and race), structures that most theories of power take to be of primary importance. His response was that in societies like those in which he lived his life (including Nazi occupied rural France where he spent part of his early youth), there was a great ambit of possibility for action despite the obvious weight of structures of domination. We can, of course, imagine societies in which there are relatively few options, but in such spaces or situations, power is effectively absent, or as Foucault put it, "the game is already over," and, "if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation), there would be no power relations at all" (Foucault in Rabinow, 1997: 292). For Foucault, it is precisely the possibility of resistances that creates the space for power relations. To really understand how structures of domination get and keep power relations moving in a particular direction, one needs to understand what "they" encourage us to do, or the intricate ethnomethodological micropolitics of what Dorothy Smith calls the "everyday world as problematic" (1987).

For instance, Pocius' (1991) study of place attachment in rural Newfoundland, Berger and Mohr's photo essay of migrant workers in the 1970s (1977), Sennett's mobile contemporary corporate employees (1999), and Burrill's oral history of a generation of Maritime migrants in New England, Ontario and Alberta (1992), each represents different forms of resistance and capitulation to the generic, disembedded, placeless, homeless, mobile urban world of modernity described theoretically by Berger et. al. (1973); Giddens (1990, 1991); Bauman (1995, 1999); Urry (2000); and Papastergiadis (2000). Resistance to the invocation to move takes many forms, some of which may be "emancipatory" via-a-vis particular kinds of dominance. Only a detailed and nuanced analysis of particular forms of resistance in particular places at particular times can explain this order of problem. In the particular case of this study, I am interested not so much in the way that resistant behaviour supports or disables emancipation, but rather, what indeed is being
resisted, how, where, and particularly, with what results. A clearer understanding of these issues are perhaps even more likely to lead to emancipatory ends because it is probable that the social agents involved may be better able to see their own struggles and the forces against which they are struggling in a more place-specific analysis of their resistance.

Commenting on his rural boyhood, Wallace Stegner wrote, "I was educated for the wrong place" (Stegner quoted in Creed and Cheng, 1997). What he meant was that his education did not prepare him for staying in the place where he was educated and migration was an implicit and hidden, but well understood curriculum. The story is a common rural variant of Pygmalion and it has been a staple of Western fiction as Raymond Williams has shown in his scholarly work (1958, 1961, 1973), and in his novels.

It was really as if, oppressed by an enemy, a people had conceived of its own liberation as training its sons for enemy service. And they would even boast how well they were doing and how much the enemy thought of them (Williams, 1964: 137-138).

Foucault's vision of power locates resistance in all social relations. Bhabha's idea of intransitive resistance helps us understand how opposition can be immanent and not necessarily intended within unequal power relations (1994). Bell hooks (1994) teaches us that home place is a location for educational resistance and a point from which agents can form a hybrid, migrant, border crossing identity. Rural sociologists Matthews (1976, 1993), Bonner (1997) and Creed and Cheng (1997), as well as rural educational theorists Theobald (1992, 1997), Haas and Nachtigal (1998) and DeYoung (1995), all demonstrate how rurality itself can be a site of resistance. Contemporary social theory recognises the central place of migration and mobility in late modernity (Bauman, 1991, 1999; Urrey, 2000; Papastergiadis, 2000). Some people in coastal communities become mobile while others resist and remain rooted. By analysing the stories of both stayers and out-migrants from a single Atlantic Canadian coastal community we can begin to try and understand the nature of this migration imperative and variants of resistance to it.
Chapter 4

Study area and methodology

Digby Neck

Digby Neck is a 30 km long, narrow peninsula jutting into the Bay of Fundy in southwestern Nova Scotia. Never exceeding 5 kilometres in width, bounded on the North by the Bay of Fundy and on the south by St. Mary's Bay. To the west are a narrow passage and two small islands and to the north are several small villages and the town of Digby. "The Neck" as it is known is comprised of nine villages which extend from the head of St Mary's Bay in the east to East Ferry (so named from the point of view of the island joined from the east to the mainland by this ferry) at
the western extremity. I refer to this collection of villages as a community because the discrete settlements that comprise the Neck are generally seen as belonging to the larger collective. Older residents remember the time, dating back to the mid 1950s before school consolidation and the paving of the highway when each village on Digby Neck had more of its own identity, but these days the "community" is generally meant to refer to the nine villages that comprise Digby Neck. These villages are similar in that they were all settled in the early to mid-nineteenth century to access the rich fishery on both St. Mary's and the Bay of Fundy.
began (See Tables 1 and 2). While the enumeration areas used by Census Canada and the
Dominion Bureau of Statistics changed over the years, the overall population of the communities of
Digby Neck fluctuated approximately 20 percent between 1871 and 1981 as the population peaked
at 1593 in 1901 and fell as low as 1234 in 1961. By 1991 the population had risen to 1366, its
highest point since 1941, but fell dramatically to 1055 just five year later in the 1996 census.
Generally the population has shifted “down the Neck” with numbers remaining far more stable in
the western as opposed to the eastern part of Digby Neck. This is probably due to the decline of
the small boat hook and line fishery and the rise of the small boat dragger fleet which has been
documented by other studies of the area (Hughes et. al., 1960, Davis, 1991, Kearney, 1993). This
population movement is also reflected in the state of wharves in the communities along the Neck.
The further west one travels, generally the better the state of the community wharves.

| Table 2: Population of Digby Neck Communities-1951-1991 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Roxville        | na     | na     | na     | 23     | 52     | 64     | 29     |
| Rossway         | 237    | 214    | 127    | 137    | 117    | 142    | 137    |
| Gulliver's Cove | na     | na     | 65     | 89     | 93     | 94     | 91     |
| Waterford       | 94     | 87     | 87     | 74     | 62     | 68     | 72     |
| Centreville     | 293    | 297    | 304    | 278    | 266    | 257    | 206    |
| Lake Midway     | na     | na     | na     | na     | 35     | 33     | na     |
| Sandy Cove      | 210    | 178    | 169    | 176    | 170    | 173    | 129    |
| Mink Cove       | 63     | 66     | 82     | 82     | 86     | 84     | 56     |
| Little River    | 213    | 197    | 182    | 202    | 210    | 210    | 190    |
| Whale Cove      | na     | na     | na     | na     | na     | 33     | 29     |
| Tiddville       | 121    | 75     | 87     | 95     | 106    | 105    | 83     |
| East Ferry      | 129    | 117    | 131    | 131    | 123    | 111    | 129    |
| Digby Neck      | 1360   | 1318   | 1234   | 1287   | 1285   | 1366   | 1055   |

exclusively a small boat, family-based fishery. Residents comment that the lobster fishery is the principal remaining viable fishery. Both traditional and modern methods of fishing for groundfish have been in decline on Digby Neck for at least the past decade and both remain a shadow of their former economic and social importance. Many lobster fishermen fish with handline and/or gill net ("fixed gear") for ground fish from the end of the lobster season at the end of May until the late fall when lobstering opens again. Recently these fisheries have been so poor that many multiple license holders, "don't even bother" handlining and gill netting. Other small boat fishermen who do not have lobster licenses also fish using traditional "fixed gear" (hand lines and gill nets mainly) during the spring, summer and fall. Small boats used in this fishery can be seen tied up at any of the seven operational government wharves on Digby Neck but these are declining in number as a combination of regulation, license buy-back programs and a scarcity of fish all combine to induce small boat fishermen to "sell out." The two large government wharves in Sandy Cove and Little River also serve as home for a mostly offshore dragger fleet ("mobile gear") which continues to operate on a limited basis despite restrictive government quotas and dwindling stocks. Several fisheries are also emerging in formerly ignored species such as, herring roe or diving for sea urchins sold mainly on the Japanese market.

Each community on Digby Neck has at least one church. The population is predominantly Baptist with significant minority of evangelical Protestants and a few Roma Catholic families. Many churches continue to be active on Digby Neck although it is clear that in most cases their membership is aging. Ethnically, people on the Neck are almost exclusively of English extraction (via New England) and long ago assimilated Acadians (Bull, 1978). The English descendants emigrated to Digby Neck as part of the Planter migration following the deportation of the Acadians in 1760. These settlers established fishing settlements around family land grants in sheltered coves and these settlements grew slowly into villages. By the middle of the nineteenth

3 Fixed gear is the type of fishing gear normally associated with the small boat fishery. In fixed gear fisheries, nets, hooks and lines do not move through the water pulled by the power of a motorised boat. Fish, therefore, come to the bait in a fixed gear fishery. Mobile gear, on the other hand is pulled through the water trapping fish in catchment nets or bottom raking apparatus. The distinction is somewhat arbitrary and does not always serve to distinguish between small and large boats and between more or less "technological" fisheries. For instance, longliners fishing offshore for swordfish are as large, powerful and have as much catching potential as large offshore fish draggers.

4 Although it should be noted that Hughes et al., (1960) commenting on data from 1952 made the same observation.
A handful of small village convenience stores and one small general store currently operate on Digby Neck replacing the community general stores which supplied virtually all community needs until the paving of the Highway 217 in the mid-1950s. Recently a gasoline outlet has been opened midway between East Ferry and the "head of the Bay" which marks the eastern end of geographic Digby Neck. Several fish plants can still be found on the Neck, but most of these are either out of business or operate for only very limited periods. Most of the local fish processing is now done on Long and Brier Islands to the west, or in the Acadian District of Clare across St. Mary’s Bay. These plants are owned by local “fishtocrats” who have been relentlessly expanding their operations buying gear and licenses and controlling an increasing share of fish production in the area particularly since the establishment of quotas and regulatory regimes in the mid-1970s. In the mid-1990s, a salmon hatchery opened in Mink Cove to supply the growing fish farming industry in the Annapolis Basin to the east.

Digby Neck has been a tourist destination for more than a century, and older residents remember several hotels and summer camps operating on Digby Neck to cater to tourists in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. Tourism is now often promoted by community activists, local development authorities and state bureaucrats as an industry with unexplored and unexploited potential. An expanding modern tourist trade is developing, particularly during the warm months of May-October. Obvious examples of this modern ecotourism development are successful whale watching and bird cruise operations that have opened up since the early 1990s. The Neck also has a provincially operated tourist park.

In many ways, the local elementary school, Digby Neck Consolidated, is the focal point of the Digby Neck community. The school is the single institutional forum where all of the children of Digby Neck meet for at least a brief period of their lives and residents of Digby Neck and staff of Digby Neck Consolidated unanimously oppose any hint of school closure. School closure is a persistent threat because the student population has declined rapidly from peak enrolments of more than 200 students in the mid-1960s to the current student population of less than 70. This decline reflects lower birth rates, and out-migration of young people of child bearing age, particularly since the 1980s. The school serves students from grades primary to six. Beyond this the students are bussed to Digby or to Islands Consolidated School in Freeport on nearby Long Island. A number of community projects operate out of the school including an association of small boat, fixed gear
Schooling and the Atlantic Coastal Community

Long after she had left him to sleep, Alan thought about what she had said. It was the first time he had ever heard her talk about going to some other place. At school the teacher had told them about boys from Cape Breton who had gone away from home to the States and become famous. But Alan did not want to go away from home (MacLennan, 1951: 168).

One finds in Atlantic fiction a strong sense of place and community, counterpoised against the project of schooling. School sits in an ambivalent position in coastal communities. For more than ten years I have been driving Highway 217 from its eastern terminus in Digby to the village of Sandy Cove to teach at Digby Neck Consolidated School. Most people understand that not everyone can stay on the Neck, and that formal schooling is a preparation for life and opportunities elsewhere. Migration is very often linked directly with schooling in popular perceptions and it is commonly said that the ones who do well in school, leave.

The political economic context within which the migration imperative functions is crucial. Since the Second World War it has been explicit Canadian government policy to create a modern "efficient" Atlantic fishery (Barrett and Apostle, 1990; Matthews, 1993, 1995; Davis, 1991; Blades, 1995; Sinclair, 1995). This has meant supporting heavy capitalisation of the fishery and moving to fewer boats using increasingly intrusive high-tech gear. This policy created an environmental crisis which peaked in the cod moratorium in the late 1980s on the Grand Banks. While no local fisheries have been closed, the impact on the fishery and the people of Digby Neck has been drastic. Many inshore fishermen on Digby Neck as well as former dragger fishermen bemoan the devastation they claim has been done by widespread and persistent fish and scallop dragging. A further bone of contention for inshore small operators is the Individual Transferable Quota system (ITQ) which is said to have allowed major corporate fishing concerns to buy out desperate small boat fishermen.
and corral quotas and access to the resource. As one fisherman put it, "them 'fullers' own fish swimming in the water." This situation flies in the face of the traditional common property notions which have widespread support on Digby Neck among small boat inshore fishermen and their families. In the most recent incarnation of this policy the federal state is in the process of "retraining" fisheries workers in the Atlantic Fishery in the totally ineffective federal Groundfish Adjustment Strategy (TAGS). Those left running the high-tech capital intensive fishery are a small cadre of what are called "professional fishers." Yet, through the fifty-year development of the present state of affairs, the small boat fishery has persisted and it continues to function, albeit in reduced circumstances. Some analysts contend that the very persistence of this fishery represents resistance to the logic of capital concentration (Brym and Sacouman, 1979; Kearney, 1993; Durrenberger, 1997).

Coastal communities in Atlantic Canada have been depopulated at an alarming rate, particularly since the heavy industrialisation of the fishery begun in the 1970s (Grady and Sacouman, 1990; Barrett and Apostle, 1990; Davis, 1991; Matthews, 1976, 1993, 1995). A Digby Neck resident suggested cryptically, "not everyone can stay." In my view, the school, as a normalising arm of the state, has supported the consistent and persistent policy of rationalisation of the fishery by working to ensure that surplus labour is given the appropriate preparation for migration. As an increasingly large proportion of the youth population become surplus to commercial fishing, the pressure has intensified to educate and mobilise more youth in coastal communities. Along with the development of what the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is calling a "professional fishery" the Canadian state has supported the development of a mobile rural work force and the schools are charged with a primary the responsibility for shaping that work force and preparing it

---

5 Individual transferable quotas (ITQs) assigned quotas of fish to individuals on the basis of their historic catch between 1986 and 1993. Those with high catch histories were thus, given larger shares of catchable fish in particular areas. These ITQs may be bought and sold and so small operators who caught little fish historically were easily enticed to sell off their small quotas to larger operators. As large operators have grown it has become increasingly difficult for small scale fishermen to compete leading to still more consolidation. In this way it is generally recognised that the ITQ has played (and continues to play) an important role in the the creation of the DFO's concentrated "professional fishery" with fewer fishermen chasing more fish. The obvious implication of this policy is that depopulation of coastal communities will follow as hundreds of "part time" or "non-core" fishers will no longer be able to "catch a few fish" and then fall back on social assistance. This policy rests on classical economic assumptions that people placed in this position will migrate to more prosperous areas. However, many displaced fisheries workers actually stay and move onto full time social assistance choosing to remain in their communities no matter what. My point is that the real battle will not be fought for the hearts and minds of displaced fisheries workers, but for those of their children, and the battle will be waged in significant measure in schools.

101
to leave. Formidable forces are aligned against coastal communities and many of those residents who want to remain. Yet coastal communities remain, and in them remain people who are committed to staying and passing on a local legacy to their children and grandchildren.

If state policy from the 1970s and particularly into the 1980s and 1990s has been designed to create a professional fishery, large numbers of traditional small boat and part-time fishers, fish plant workers and those who provide support services in and around coastal communities must be removed from the rural parts of Atlantic Canada. The massive federal TAGS program is the latest in a series of consolidation strategies which began in the 1970s and 1980s with low interest loans for capital expansion and "modernisation," and the institution of ITQs issued on the basis of individual fishermens' catch history. But this is not simply a problem created by those already established in the small boat fishery. Young people aspiring to this way of life need also to be dissuaded from remaining in communities which have been effectively rendered dysfunctional by state policy. In this political matrix, school takes on an important role, a role which has been central for decades: helping to moving people elsewhere.6

With the downturn of the Atlantic ground fishery and Bay of Fundy scallop fishery in the early 1990s and the simultaneously instituted federal Stay in School Initiative, the link between schooling and migration became all too clear in Atlantic coastal communities. While studies of coastal communities in Atlantic Canada are not uncommon, there are no studies of schooling in such communities. Digby Neck is a typical example of an Atlantic Canada coastal community and so findings from this study are, I believe, generalisable to many other similar communities caught in the shift from a co-integrated fishing economy, to a modernised rural industrial economy. The "booming" industrial fishery was sustained for a relatively short length of time (at best equivalent to a single working life of forty or fifty years), and we now see emerging the discourse around a post-industrial fishing, service and tourism based economy. In fact, Sinclair has identified Digby Neck as having similar economic and social characteristics to Newfoundland coastal communities caught in a similar transition (1995).

---

6 For an annotated bibliography of American literature on rural education and industrialization see Haas and Nachtigal (1998). In many of these sources the idea of depopulation and outmigration figures prominently.
Methodology

Let us return briefly to the research question set out in the first section of this study: how do some young people learn to stay in coastal communities while others learn to leave? I propose four basic methods for framing and answering this question: historical/documentary analysis; participant analysis of community life and the place of schooling in that life; a migration survey using school records; and, semi-structured interviews with a sample of migrant (leavers) and non-migrant Digby Neck natives (stayers).

As the crisis in the fishery has developed, gained complexity and deepened, the people of Digby Neck have come to talk about education differently. Most now recognise that their ability to make a substantial living requires not only hard physical work, but hard intellectual work as well. State regulation and complex negotiations between the various interest groups lobbying for influence in fisheries policy have traditionally worked against unorganised, individualistic, hard-working fishing families in Atlantic coastal communities. Without organisation and collective voice, small boat fishermen have often been “out of the loop” of policy discussion. And as a result, their interests have been poorly served. Most small boat fishermen on Digby Neck now understand clearly the importance of organisation, dialogue, negotiation and establishing a common front, and as a result, a number of new organisations have arisen in the 1990s. As fishermen meet and negotiate, it has become more apparent to them that education is crucial to the process of influencing state policy. As one fisherman said, “you have to be a lawyer to go fishing today.” Community survival which has always been a core value is now being linked with formal education in a way that is significantly new. My own interest in this project has arisen, in part, from fishermen approaching me with questions about how the school where I have worked can be “used” to support the struggle for community survival, and indeed, how my own education and that of others like me can be mobilised in that struggle. I have been in a sense recruited by some Digby Neckers concerned about their children’s future and the future of their way of life and it is these individuals who have been my chief informants. As a result, I have been educated by Digby Neckers about the precarious position they and their communities are in at the present moment.

While Digby Neck is a typical, single industry, fisheries focussed Atlantic coastal community, this community was chosen for study because it is where I have worked since 1990, and it is where I
continue to work. In my thirteen years of professional practice as a teacher in coastal communities it it obvious to me that significant levels of resistance to schooling continue to exist. On Digby Neck, community based fisheries opportunities for young men persisted until the late 1980s. As the fishery industrialised, an immobile labour force was necessary for periodic employment in peak periods. But a political economic analysis is by itself insufficient to explain the complex relationships between education and out-migration in coastal communities. The kind of "resistance" to which I am referring here is not necessarily opposition to the logic of capitalism or a "penetration" of how "the system" works to exclude rural youth. In fact, resistance to school seems to be an accommodation of individuals to the need for labour (in the case of working class youth), or opportunities for significant incomes (in the case of privileged youth whose families control licenses and in fish dragging quotas) in the industrialising fishery of the 1970s and 80s. In my view, place attachment is also at the root of resistance to school in local communities and it represents the incompatibility of integration into local culture and the migration imperative in rural schools. The decision to leave school and remain in the rural community amounts to the choice of a known, integrated rural subjectivity, one which is systematically demeaned and devalued in school (Creed and Cheng, 1997; Brandau and Collins, 1994; Porter, 1997).

To carry out this analysis I have employed multiple methods. In this study I have used participant observation, a survey and a series of detailed ethnographic interviews to gather data.

**Participant observation**

There is no way we can escape the social world in order to study it; nor, fortunately, is that necessary. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1981: 15).

In addition to my years of teaching service on Digby Neck, I carried out participant observation in the community between August of 1998 and April 2000. This participant observation involved taking part in community activities of a wider variety including both formal and informal social functions, school related events, home visits, conversations in stores, post offices, kitchens, fish sheds and on wharves. I also participated in several commercial fishing trips on both small inshore boats and larger mid-shore vessels. These trips ranged from a few hours to a five-day voyage. I have been and continue to be in regular contact with many residents of Digby Neck both as a part of this project and as a normal feature of my personal and professional life. This participant
observation might be described as what Stenhouse (1975) calls teacher-research, or the systematic, critical investigation of one's professional practice. But I think it is more than that, there is more than my professional self in play here. My life both overlaps and interweaves with this research in a variety of ways. For example, while I am a participant observer, I may also at the same time be a teacher giving advice about a child’s reading or personal problem, or planning strategy with my informants/colleagues/friends about how to keep the school open in the face of declining enrolment, helping to formulate and coordinate a response to the provincial budget, or helping to clean up after a community supper. I might also be baiting traps on a lobster boat, or shucking scallops on a 65 foot dragger, playing music at a social function, sharing coffee and conversation in a country kitchen, building a greenhouse with a group of children and their parents, or giving advice in the community computer centre. These kinds of activities have both contributed to my growing understanding of community issues, ongoing and changing fisheries struggles, educational problems, and the generalised social context within which all of these interconnected currents take place.

Throughout field work I used my field diary as a source of data, conceptual development and refinement, and as a forum for reflexive monitoring of my own understandings of both the community in general and of the connection between schooling and migration. These data were recorded through the study period following time spent on Digby Neck fishing, conversing with teachers and former students, at coffee shops, taverns and other gathering places “in town” (mostly in shopping places in Digby), or wherever else I found people to talk to. Most of these conversations were held with men in the oldest of the three cohorts. Because of my own social position as a middle-aged man, these informants were my most “natural” conversational partners. However, I also recorded numerous conversations with women mainly in Cohorts 1 and 2 who are parents of my present and former students. The location of many informal conversations with men were held in “male spaces” like fishing boats, wharves, and around fish sheds “down to the shore.” Conversations with women typically occurred in “womens’ spaces” such as the local elementary school, in kitchens which are the social hub of most families on the Neck, and in and around stores and coffee shops on the Neck or “in town” (Digby).

In this fieldwork, the reflexive character of the project became very apparent to me. My own observations blended in with my attempts at reconstructing conversations and the field diary
became both a source of insight into the social circumstances I was investigating, but also into my own position in the community. I was constantly astonished at how my multiple roles as a fisherman, a teacher, a musician, a mentor, a friend, a tutor, a supposed “expert” on ideas and information technologies, were all integrated into the conversations I had with people. Indeed, it often occurred to me that I was playing the role of “informant” as much as that of “observer” as I continually explained my research, my work as a teacher and my own life history most of which unfolded in other places out of sight of my informants. Just as I was attempting to “place” my informants, I was being placed by them. Informants were intrigued by my interest in them and they wondered openly why I would bother paying attention to their mundane lives. But despite my alterity and the strange nature of my project, I also “fit” into the community because of my established and long-standing position as a teacher in the local elementary school, and to a lesser extent as a part-time fisherman’s helper and community volunteer. My social position as a teacher provided a ready-made explanation for both why I was “in the field” and why I was interested in educational questions. So my research integrated with other activities normally associated with my identity. Teachers of course, go to university and study things and it only makes sense that they study things about school. Thus, my conversations with informants were in many respects “natural” conversations that one would expect to engage with a teacher.

I recorded my impressions, those bits of conversation I could reconstruct, and my sense of how all of this was being understood by my informants. Many field diary entries were in the form of narrative reconstructions and I have included excerpts from this material in chapters 6 - 8, and particularly in the chapter that documents the experience of Cohort 1 (Chapter 6). More than a source of data, the field diary served as a venue for developing my own sense of the problems I was trying to come to grips with and for verifying and refining the ideas I was using. For the actual constructions of the accounts presented in chapters 6 - 8, I wanted to preserve, as much as possible, the concrete statements of my informants. Therefore, the bulk of detailed illustrative quotes I used are verbatim quotes from the series of tape recorded ethnographic interviews I describe below.

Following Hammersley and Atkinson (1981), Carr and Kemmis (1986), St. Pierre (1997a, 1997b), Lather (1986), Czerny, Swift and Clarke (1995) and Van Manen (1990) I recognise and embrace my own reflexive involvement in the research setting. I am not an “objective” observer, not do I claim to be generating an unbiased account of the problems I have been investigating. Indeed these
research problems are my practical professional quandaries and the line between working on them and doing this inquiry is very vague. My interest in the connection between schooling and out-migration in rural communities is a proverbial “stone in the shoe,” a central problem in my own teaching practice which spans nearly two decades of work in Canadian rural schools (more than half of it in Atlantic coastal communities). My field diaries are descriptions of people, places, situations and conversations, but they are also an ongoing exploration of educational questions about “what I think I’m doing” when I work as a teacher on Digby Neck. The field diaries have been a particularly focussed component of a long term conversation I have been having with parents and students in rural communities, and with myself. Through my field work, I have shared this conversation with several key informants checking my own perceptions and definitions of the situation against their understandings, and recording my evolving conception of the research questions.

The Basic Data Bank and the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey

To establish actual patterns of migration I have surveyed historic Grade 6 students who left Digby Neck Consolidated School (DNCS) between 1957 and 1992. I obtained school records from former administrators and teachers as well as from the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives in order to establish the target population. From these records I generated a list of all students who completed Grade 6 on Digby Neck between 1957 and 1992. These classes correspond with the potential high school graduating classes of 1963-1998, a 36 year period. In 1999, the individuals in this population range in age between 19 and 56. Using key community informants I then tracked each student in the sample to his or her present location, either on Digby Neck or elsewhere. I was able to locate 749 of the 756 students for whom I could find Grade 6 attendance records. Of this number 35 were removed from the sample because they are deceased, leaving a revised total of 714. This group represents 99 % of the total population or 714 out of a possible total of 721 individuals. This data is reported in Chapter 5 as the Basic Data Bank and it contains information on present location of the 714 individuals and their village of origin allowing for a clear analysis of general out-migration patterns from Digby from the early 1960s to the late 1990s.

A simple telephone survey was conducted which investigated work and educational histories for as many members of this population as possible given time constraints. The interviews were very
brief consisting of 7 questions and focussing mainly on the level of education and current employment of respondents (see Appendix D). The data from this survey are reported in Chapter 5 and are based on 326 telephone interviews conducted between November 1998 and April 2000. Because respondents to this survey were often members of large families they were often able to provide information on other family members. Because of this, data were collected on 511 individuals from the target population. This represents a response rate of 71.6 percent of the total population. Through the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey, basic educational and work history data were gathered on 269 women representing 75.6 percent of the total female population, and 242 men, representing 67.6 percent of the total male population (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Sample composition: Community, Schooling and Migration Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1 (1963-1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2 (1975-1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3 (1987-1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since this dissertation is attempting to establish and understand the connection between education and migration, this survey was designed to gauge the extent of the migration/education connection. From this data I established migration rates and correlate these rates with key variables such as high school completion, gender, and village of origin. The results of this migration analysis are reported in Chapter 5. One of the central purposes of the survey was to establish a sample from which to draw interview subjects for the ethnographic interviews which take up the greater part of this study in Chapters 6 - 8.

**Ethnographic Interviews**

In the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey respondents were asked if they would consent to taking part in more in-depth conversations about their educational, migration and work histories.
An availability-based sample of thirty-six individuals was thus drawn from those who responded positively and who were identified by key informants as people who would “probably talk to me.” These ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) probed the experience of coming of age on Digby Neck investigating the central question concerning the relationship between formal schooling and migration in the coastal community (see Appendices A and B). The sample was purposively selected for current place of residence (i.e. leaver or stayer), gender, age cohort, and village of origin. In total eighteen men and eighteen women were interviewed, one half of whom had stayed on Digby Neck, the other half of whom were living further than 250 kilometres from Digby Neck at the time of the interview (see Table 4). I chose these groups because they were the clearest cases of “stayers” and “leavers.” While there was some question among my key informants about whether or not a person who had moved 50 or 100 km distant was a “migrant,” everybody agreed that people who were living beyond Halifax (approximately 250 kilometres from Digby Neck) had moved “away.” Likewise, there was disagreement about the status of people living in the nearby town of Digby or in villages within a short drive of Digby Neck. Some informants claimed for instance that a person living in Digby could still be considered a Digby Necker. But everyone agreed that a person who had remained living on the Neck was a Digby Necker. The distance of 250 km was chosen as a result of conversations from participant observation about “what counts as away.” Respondents saw Digby Neck as “here,” and the area within approximately 50 km as “around here.” The area between “around here” and the nearest major urban centre, Halifax, was considered to be “not far.” This area encompasses Southwestern Nova Scotia and the Annapolis Valley as well as metro Halifax and any part of it can be reached from Digby Neck in under three hours driving. People who have moved into this region are not considered to have moved very far, although they are beyond the range of casual visiting and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Interview subjects by place of current residence and gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dropping in for tea on a regular basis. Those who had moved beyond Halifax were considered to be “away” because it would take more than a comfortable afternoon’s drive to see them or for them to visit “home.”

In terms of village of origin, I used Census Canada Enumeration Area designations which break Digby Neck into three regions which I call Eastern, Central and Western Digby Neck. Twelve informants were chosen for interviews from each of these three regions. In depth interviews were thus conducted with approximately five percent of the total sample (thirty-six individuals) or twelve individuals (i.e. six stayers and six leavers) from each of the three cohorts mentioned in the introduction: Cohort 1- 1963-1974; Cohort 2-1975-1986; and Cohort 3-1987-1998). These three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Digby Neck</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Digby Neck</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Digby Neck</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

periods roughly encompass three transitions in community life and in the fishery. The first period spanning 1963 to 1974 represents the end of the first period of the modernisation of the fishery which occurred following World War Two. Through these years the dragger fleet developed slowly while the small boat inshore fishery remained vibrant (Clement, 1986; Davis, 1991, Blades, 1995; Apostle and Barrett, 1992; Kearney, 1993; Sinclair, 1995). The second period spans 1975 to 1986 and represents what is considered locally to have been the “boom” period in the fishery lasting into the late 1980s. This period is characterised by heavy industrialisation of the fishery and most notably the state sponsored expansion of the small boat dragger fleet as well as the beginning of the decline of the small boat inshore fishery with the exception of lobstering. The final period comprising 1987 to 1998 represents what is known locally as a period of declining opportunities
in all fisheries except lobstering and a few previously undeveloped fisheries.\textsuperscript{7} To identify individuals by their time period (or age) I use the year of potential, on-time graduation throughout this study. Table 6 shows the distribution of interview subjects in terms of age indicated by year of potential high school graduation.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Cohort 1 & Cohort 2 & Cohort 3 \\
\hline
1963 & 1977 & 1987 \\
1965 & 1977 & 1988 \\
1967 & 1977 & 1988 \\
1969 & 1979 & 1989 \\
1969 & 1980 & 1990 \\
1971 & 1982 & 1995 \\
1971 & 1984 & 1996 \\
1973 & 1984 & 1997 \\
1974 & 1986 & 1998 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Interview subjects by year of potential graduation}
\end{table}

In addition, I interviewed an availability sample of twelve key educators who have served the people of Digby Neck through the period of study. This sample included both elementary and secondary school teachers and school and system level administrators and guidance counsellors. The sample of educators included six current or former administrators (three of whom were also full time teaching principals at Digby Neck Consolidated elementary school), three current or former guidance counsellors and three long-serving teachers. The interview schedule used in these interviews is found in Appendix C. Among the sample of educators, five of the twelve interviewees are currently working in the educational system, seven are retired, all but two within the last ten years.

\textsuperscript{7} The categories I used were developed in my field work which coincided with the more structured interviews I began in the fall of 1998. As I did interviews through 1998, 1999 and into early 2000 the pattern identified by my early informants seemed to suggest that the twelve year groupings made considerable sense in terms of the experience of Digby Neckers. While these cohort divisions were based originally on subjective perceptions of informants, I also found in my quantitative analysis that distinct similarities in educational and migration experience were associated with these three periods further reinforcing the validity of the three cohort divisions I made. It could be argued though that by entering into the majority of the interviews with the three cohorts in mind that these divisions biased my analysis and inquiry. I would argue though that this is not the case because these analytic divisions came originally out of my fieldwork and conversations with informants.
years. Nine of the twelve interviewees are women. The eldest among them began teaching in the mid 1940s, while the youngest began their teaching careers in the 1980s. The combined experience of these twelve educators is nearly 350 years, most of it spent either teaching on Digby Neck in the consolidated elementary school (and its one or two room community school predecessors before 1957), or in the regional high school which serves both children from Digby Neck as well as those from other parts of the immediate area surrounding Digby town.

The educators whose views are represented in this chapter are connected to the former students of Digby Neck Consolidated School in different ways. Half of the educators interviewed have worked in the consolidated elementary school, and thus, have experience with former students at the first part of their school careers. All but one of these six interviewees have lived full-time in the community virtually throughout their lives. All but one are retired. The majority of these educators have watched children professionally in their elementary school careers, but have also been a part of the communities in which these people lived out their early lives. The other half of this sample of educators is drawn mainly from the regional high school where the majority of Digby Neck students go to attend secondary school. Two of these six informants are presently retired from active service. All but one of these individuals have spent significant parts of their respective careers in school or system administration and/or counselling. These informants have experience with students from Digby Neck through their secondary school experience and are particularly well placed in the secondary school system to comment on the career and academic decisions made by high school students from Digby Neck.

All 48 interviews were conducted between November 1998 and March 2000. Informants were contacted initially by letter with the consent form included in Appendix A. The interviews were supplemented by follow-up interviews with key informants and further formal and informal conversations on fishing boats, in fish shacks, in kitchens, in meetings of various types, at the community school and at various community functions. The tape recorded portion of the interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and focussed on the five general themes: work, community, family, schooling and mobility. Follow-up conversations ranged in length from a few

---

8 Four of the educators interviewed currently reside in the community, and of these three raised children who attended Digby Neck Consolidated School. Therefore, some of these interviews document experience as professional educators as well as experience as parents and community elders. In fact, the two roles played by these women seemed to blend in during their conversations with me. For this reason, some comments quoted in this section refer directly to these womens' own children.
minutes to several hours and in frequency from one to six separate discussions. Virtually all 'stayer' interviews were conducted in the homes of informants. Only one was conducted in a local restaurant. Typically the informant was alone with me during the live interviews, but on nine occasions a spouse, child, friend or extended family member was also present, though these people rarely spoke during the formal part of the interview process. Interviews with leavers were conducted via telephone. Virtually all face-to-face and telephone interviews were followed by extended general follow-up conversation (often lasting several hours) about educational, economic and social issues on Digby Neck among other things. Accounts of these discussions were recorded in my field diary. The interviews with educators were held in a variety of locations such as school offices, the home of the interviewee or in coffee shops and restaurants. In every case the interviewee was alone with me throughout the tape recorded and non-recorded follow-up conversation(s). The tape-recorded part of all interviews was transcribed and coded for analysis. Copies of transcribed interviews were offered to informants for verification. Only in one instance were any changes made to the text as a result of the verification process.

**Integrated validity**

An ethnography is a written representation of a culture (or selected aspects of a culture). It carries quite serious intellectual and moral responsibilities, for the images of others inscribed in writing are most assuredly not neutral (J. VanManen, 1988: 1).

For an existential insider a place is richly significant, even though its valued position is assumed and rarely expressed. Most commonly, existential insiders become aware of their strong attachment to place when it is disrupted and they begin to reflect on what their homes, neighbourhoods and neighbouring friends mean to them (Cochrane, 1987: 7).

It has become almost commonplace to describe social research as a political act. I do not claim to be a disinterested party. Nor do I claim to be testing a series of standard indicators. Whether or not this study is generalisable to other similar sorts of community is of secondary importance to me. I have a pragmatic interest in understanding and responding to educational issues on Digby Neck, and as I have indicated above, this research project is a reflexive inquiry into my own practice. I have worked on Digby Neck for the past decade as a teacher, a school administrator, and as a consultant. The genesis for this project is my own dissatisfaction with my understanding of the impact of schooling in the community where I continue to work. With my colleagues I have
challenged and attempted to understand the difficult, complex and often problematic relationship between community and school on Digby Neck. The questions that drive this research are the result of sustained reflection and conversations with educators who work on Digby Neck and people who live there.

Having located myself in this research, I believe that the study has validity. Digby Neck is a fairly typical Atlantic Coastal community. The most important test of validity for me has been the validation given by my informants themselves in preliminary and follow-up conversations before and after the interviews. I have also taken pains to secure the validity of this research by triangulating several methods and by taking care that I collect and record data as carefully as possible. Data from census records are combined with data from my own survey results to provide a detailed statistical picture of both the socioeconomic character of Digby Neck, out-migration patterns from Digby Neck, and data concerning the relationship between education and migration in the target population of historic graduates of DNCS. These data are based upon either 99% of the target population in the case of the Basic Data Bank, or 70% of the target population in the case of the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey. This data provides a background and support for participant observation and interviewing which have taken up the bulk of this project.

More importantly for me, though, key questions of research validity are caught up in the response of my “informants,” who are also colleagues and friends engaged in an ongoing struggle to make school make sense on Digby Neck in the larger social and economic context of the broader society. The statistical data and interview transcripts have served as the focus for discussions about education and its impact on Digby Neck, and these are questions which have had and will continue to have implications in my own practice as a teacher and, hopefully, in the general character of the community’s response to the challenges it faces.

I grew up in an Atlantic Canadian community, which I was actively encouraged (particularly in school) to see as a dying place, a nostalgic site of things that happened in the past, a marginal place whose dismal future was being dictated by developments elsewhere. Ursula Kelly writes that she remembers watching Hockey Night in Canada with her father on Saturday nights in Newfoundland and coming to understand through this experience that nation meant “somewhere else” (1993:57). Kelly goes on to argue the purpose of curriculum is placing Newfoundland students on a larger
spatial landscape by presenting the concrete places in which they live as uninteresting, culturally backward and economically marginal. This phenomenon is not new and it has been expressed in anthropological literature (Gans, 1982; Hughes et. al., 1960), as well as by contemporary social theorists like Bauman and Giddens who argue that there is something important about the way space and place are rearranged in modern (or postmodern) societies. Despite their differences, these and other theorists from Foucault and his followers and Raymond Williams have argued that key institutions in contemporary societies work to "disembed" (to use Giddens' phrasing) individuals, drawing them into larger political landscapes and the discourses that sustain these "massified" or "global" spaces.

While the process of "re-placement" is never complete, it is well under way. As one longstanding former teacher put it: "well I would imagine that the ones that have done well are someplace else, what would they do here with an education?" Virtually all teachers and community members with whom I have spoken about the connection between education and migration leap immediately to the conclusion that (formal) educationally successful Digby Neckers have moved away. The few notable exceptions are returnees who have taken post-secondary training, and/or who have lived in other places and returned to the Neck to work mainly as entrepreneurs, professionals or tradespeople. I am deeply troubled by the realisation that my own teaching practice and the largely unconscious values embedded in that practice and even the routines and values of the institution I represent might be a key component in the demise of the very community they are supposed to serve. I am seeking (in part) in this research to come to know better the impact that my colleagues and I are having in the community we serve, while at the same time coming to know people in that community better and to work with them in their own struggle for community survival and an

9 Gans writes:

... young people are often forced to choose between their talents and their peers ... On the other hand, representatives of the outside world, such as teachers and settlement house workers, do offer incentives. They encourage the young person to develop his talent and provide opportunities for proper training. At the same time, these caretakers also make special efforts to draw gifted West Enders out of the peer group society. (1982: 267)

10 In an anthropological investigation of life in Digby County based on fieldwork done in the early to mid 1950s Hughes et. al. write:

People must migrate if they are to make anything of themselves. Such is the almost unanimous sentiment regarding chances for youth in the village. The main purpose of education as now conceived is to prepare students for the possibility of a successful position somewhere away from the island (1960: 222).

115
understandable future for their children. At one level this study is an attempt to understand and attempt to establish solidarity, recognising the conflicted nature of my own social position as a community school teacher. At another level, it is part of an ongoing conversation with professional colleagues and community friends about educational and community development questions and the all important problem: what to do.

Given my position in the study and in the community, I am not an “objective researcher.” There is no “outside” position from which I can look at questions about schooling on Digby Neck. My interest in the role of the school and schooling in community was not seen by my informants as a passing or a disconnected interest, and they were generally anxious to “help out” a project that concerns the community school. Using Hammersley and Atkinson’s typology of the range of roles available to ethnographers ranging from pure observation to pure participation, my position is, no doubt, closer to participation. I disagree with Hammersley and Atkinson’s claim that feeling, “at home is a danger signal” (1983: 102), and that some level of estrangement, and what they call, “social and intellectual distance” are necessary for good field research. My approach is closer to the kind of reflexive, practical and thoroughly “interested” practice described by Max Van Manen (1990), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Lather (1986, 1992, 1997), and St. Pierre (1997a, 1997b). Each of these researchers describe forms of educational research that rise out of personal, professional and political challenges of ongoing social life. My identity also has elements of physical work, teaching and community development practice that have a history and which will have a future. This research deals with genuine questions which have arisen out of my ongoing professional practice and my life with people on Digby Neck.

Max Van Manen’s Researching Lived Experience

Van Manen’s sense of social and educational research is admittedly and openly value laden, its purpose is to allow the practitioner, the person directly involved in developing a given practice in a given social situation, the ability to use research as a way to improve that practice (1990). Van Manen’s is a conception of action research aimed primarily at teachers drawing in part on the teacher as researcher movement (Stenhouse, 1975; Carr and Kemmis, 1986). The phenomenological stance taken by Van Manen is to meld the work of coming to know the social
world with the practical work of being in the world, so that the research act itself is a “process of becoming” (Van Manen, 1990: 5). Van Manen is addressing teachers who are interested in becoming more skilled practitioners and who wish to develop a thoughtful, self-reflective stance aimed at improving practice. Drawing on Dewey, Van Manen imagines a practice that precedes theory inverting the typical equation which places theory in advance of practice (Van Manen, 1990: 15). We can only “know” in abstract following immersion in the lifeworld by assuming the “natural attitude” which is an attempt to see the world without preconceptions, and then thoughtfully reflecting upon what we find there (Van Manen, 1990: 9-12). The ultimate goal of the kind of action research Van Manen suggests is a return to practice with new and deeper understanding; thus, practice comes to be transformed into a theoretically informed “praxis” (Van Manen, 1990: 128). This inverts the usual model which sees theory preceding and directing practice.

But the theory/practice inversion is not the only problem. Van Manen claims that another general problem with educational research is that it is out of touch with the lifeworld of schools and trapped in modes of analysis derived from other disciplines (Van Manen, 1990: 135). Education has been a both a profession and an academic discipline on the make, and so it has borrowed techniques and procedures from high status disciplines (notably the natural sciences and conceptions of the social sciences which rely upon natural science methods) in hope of securing legitimacy and power. The unfortunate result of this drift has been a loss of a clear sense that schools are about children and the relationships that children have with adults in coming to know the world. To cite Van Manen, “In modern forms of human science research in education, children may once again be noticeably present; however, their representation often betrays a lack of true pedagogic commitment to them” (Van Manen, 1990: 139). Van Manen actually invokes concepts unfamiliar and uncomfortable to educational research speaking throughout the text of deep relationships and deep understanding of the bond of love and a relationship of hope which forms a foundation like the parent-child bond, and which by extension, ought to form the basis for the pedagogic relationship between teacher and child. The absence of this kind of deep connectedness and caring is for Van Manen symptomatic of the analytic distance demanded by the “objective” researcher or the “professional.”

Van Manen argues that this way of conceiving the relationship between students and teachers purges the notion of hope from the discourse around schooling replacing it with a nervous, clinical
and technocratic language of what amounts to professional responsibility and not the kind of bond of responsibility that encompasses a genuine concern with the growth of a specific and unique individual in one’s care. In Van Manen’s terms, “The problem is that in an age in which the administrative and technological influences have penetrated into the very blood of our lifeworld, teachers and even parents seem to have forgotten a certain kind of understanding: what it means to bear children, to hope for children entrusted to their care” (Van Manen, 1990: 123). Only in a retreat from the narrow technical language embodied in the carefully “aimed” objectivist educational discourse of “administrative convenience,” and the empirical research enterprise which supports and accompanies it can we recapture something of the lifeworld of schools and begin to think about the kind of profound responsibilities implicated in nurturing children.

For Van Manen, the retreat from empirical methods does not signal a slide into the irrational, the capricious and the purely subjective. Rationality indeed must be maintained on the grounds that its rejection would amount to the destruction of the basis for common understandings which are at the root of what it is to be a social agent (Van Manen, 1990: 16). Following Gadamer, Van Manen suggests that the idea of rationality needs to be broadened so that it might be of use in the human sciences. As such rationality needs to be expanded beyond the narrow scope given it in the natural sciences. Thus, Van Manen accepts the possibility of rational discourse, but not of a singular, monolithic rational discourse. There are infinite ways of making sense, as many ways as there are people to make it. This presents a problem in terms of the traditional social research preoccupation with reliability, the idea that an objective scientist ought to be able to replicate a study such as this one. I am not convinced that any piece of social research is “replicable,” but I am quite certain that this one is not, at least not without significant investment of time, engagement and energy in a particular community. My past and my future have allowed me to frame questions the way I have and to be able to access the informants I have found. Just as importantly too, the sense that I have a future in the community and particularly in connection with the school has shaped the kinds of conversations I have had with the informants whose words support this research. This research is my story, a narrative told and organised form my perspective and sense of what is important and the methods I have employed could only be carried out by and “insider.” Replicability of most parts of this study would require an intimate familiarity with a community like Digby Neck because my data was essentially given to me as a gift, and as information that people hope might be used to “help the school.” I had access to community conversations because of my identity as a teacher,
and the way material was presented to me reflected local perceptions of what one says to a teacher. Another researcher whose identity is different would quite probably find a different discourse. This was often made explicit to me in interviews and people told that they were willing to talk to me because they believed I would not "twist" their words or misrepresent their community because I too am part of that community. The key informants who helped me to "track down" former students did so because they know who I am and because they trusted that I would handle the information with sensitivity. And this trust has forced me to think carefully about how I am to represent this community and these people who are my friends, colleagues, former students, and indeed my professional "clientele." This is indeed, a bias I cannot escape. I will not be leaving the field, I remain there as an engaged participant in the social circumstances I describe here.

Van Manen’s “human science” research is an engaged practice, indeed it can only be carried out by practitioners and must be rooted in action, an action which is transformed by research and as a result of considered judgment and reflection upon life in the world. “Phenomenological engagement is always personal engagement” (Van Manen, 1990: 156). Research is practice is research is practice. Following Patti Lather (1986, 1991, 1997) and Elizabeth St. Pierre (1997a, 1997b) I propose that my work as an educator is intimately connected to the research envisioned in this project. In this sense I am proposing what St. Pierre calls "homework," research among familiar people, in familiar places where I have longstanding commitments and day to day accountability. My colleagues and I are committed to the political work of community revitalisation which has led us to think and act in ways that attempt to make explicit the link between rural education and community development. My research is a direct result of this reflective practice and questions about community and schooling raised therein. If schooling is finally about learning to leave the community, then I think we would all be better served by understanding this migration imperative and its implications, how it works and how it is resisted. In this way we might begin to connect this piece of sociological research back into practice rather than watching it used as a policy instrument. As Bauman writes, reflecting C. Wright Mills (1959), this has always been sociology’s best hope.

Freed from the backlash of legislative reason, sociology may concentrate on the task for which - due to the nature of its inquiry - it has always been best prepared. It may ... openly become what it was destined to be all along: the informed, systematic commentary on the knowledge of daily life, a commentary that expands that knowledge while being fed into it and itself transformed in the process (1992: 144).
Chapter 5
Who stays, who goes and where:
Education and migration on Digby Neck 1963-1998

Education and migration: Demographics

They are great observers. They will walk and see everything. They didn’t move far so their eyes are trained to see the fine detail of a small place ... The old men can describe how the ploughing turns over in a particular field. They recognise a beauty and it is this which they really worship. Not with words - with their eyes. Will these boys be like this when they are old? I’m not sure. Nobody is trying to bring it out in them. Nobody says to them, ‘This is heritage.’ Somebody should be saying to them, ‘Let’s go and look ...’ (Emphasis in original: Blythe, 1969: 72)

The Nature of the Digby Neck Economy

It is difficult to understand clearly the “rationality” of migration decision making without understanding the nature of the economy migrants leave behind. The nature of the economy on Digby Neck is very different from that found in most other parts of Canada, or even in Nova Scotia. Table 7 demonstrates the heavy concentration of the Digby Neck labour force in fishing occupations.

Table 7: Percentage of labour force working in fishing and trapping occupations, 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Labour Force</th>
<th>Percentage in Primary Industries</th>
<th>Percentage in fishing and trapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14,812,700</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>438,970</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digby County</td>
<td>9,540</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digby Municipality</td>
<td>4,015</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Digby Neck</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Digby Neck</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Digby Neck*</td>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1996 Canadian Census Micro data.

*This census enumeration area includes the communities on Digby Neck west of Little River and Tiverton and Central Grove on Long Island.
and trapping related industries. In addition to the concentration that this table shows, the majority of other occupational categories which one finds on Digby Neck are in industries which support the fishery or distribute its products. For example, Digby Neck people listed in census data as working in processing and manufacturing, for the most part (if not exclusively) work in fish plants; those listed in transportation mostly haul fish. The Community, Schooling and Migration Survey shows that the majority (71.3%) of male “stayers” work directly in the fishing industry. This percentage includes the 58.1% of males who fish, the 7.8% who work in fish plants and the 5.8% who work in other fishing related occupations like trucking fish or aquaculture (see Table 8). Female “stayers” work almost exclusively as home makers and in service industries. A considerable number of respondents worked at a variety of different occupations and had some difficulty declaring a “principal” occupation. In a 1965 study of the economic base of Digby County, Harvey noted difficulties involved in investigating an economy dominated by a few

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>75 (58.1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Plant</td>
<td>10 (07.8)</td>
<td>3 (05.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fishing Related</td>
<td>7 (05.4)</td>
<td>1 (01.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24 (44.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector service</td>
<td>15 (11.6)</td>
<td>14 (25.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector service</td>
<td>7 (05.4)</td>
<td>7 (13.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15 (11.6)</td>
<td>5 (09.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129 (99.9)</td>
<td>54 (100.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

resource industries (which makes things simpler), but where many residents engage in more than one occupation in the course of the year (which makes things more difficult). Available statistics continue to operate on the assumption that individuals have a particular unified “occupation.”
More research is needed into the way residents of coastal communities combine a variety of occupations to make a living. Nevertheless, most of the work men do on Digby Neck is firmly rooted in the fishery. This is obvious to anyone living in the area. Referring to Digby Neck in the mid-1960s Harvey commented that:

fishing is of considerably greater importance to Digby Neck than to the rest of the county. In fact, fishing is practically the only source of income for Digby Neck if fish processing is also included (1965: 10).

As Davis found in his 1991 study, this concentration on the fishery remains consistent on Digby Neck. Tables 7 and 8 provide updated statistical support for the centrality of the fishery in the area. Table 7 also shows that a large segment of Digby Neck women define themselves as “housewives.” Approximately one-in-four of these women work outside the home and outside family fishing operations in the private sector service industry. Most of these women commute to Digby to work in the private service sector.

While the economy of Digby Neck is still dominated by the fishery, Table 9 shows an increasing reliance on government transfer payments as well as how Digby area incomes compare to those of other Canadians. There are two sorts of local myth surrounding this question. One myth is that fishermen earn a great deal of money although the income is sporadic and uncertain. The other is that fishing is a poorly paid occupation and most of the people working in the fishery are economically marginal. The reality is that the fishery contains its own class structure that has extremes like a few wealthy “fishtocrats” (who manage fleets of boats, large fish quotas, bait and processing facilities as well as trucking operations), and fish plant workers who struggle to find enough work to, “get their stamps” (qualify for Employment Insurance). Historical census data allows comparison of the Municipality of Digby (the municipal district in which Digby Neck lies), Nova Scotia and Canada. Table 9 shows that average incomes, both individual and family for the Municipality of Digby have been approximately one-third less than the national average and approximately 20% less than the provincial average since the early 1970s. In 1970, men in the municipality of Digby reported incomes above the provincial average and 87% of the national average. Women in the municipality earned less than half the provincial average and only about 40% of the national average income for women. By 1980, Digby area women saw their wages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>27,328</td>
<td>37,877</td>
<td>51,342</td>
<td>54,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6,538</td>
<td>16,918</td>
<td>23,265</td>
<td>30,205</td>
<td>31,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2,883</td>
<td>8,414</td>
<td>12,615</td>
<td>17,577</td>
<td>19,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% low income</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of income from transfers</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nova Scotia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>7,858</td>
<td>21,872</td>
<td>32,938</td>
<td>44,001</td>
<td>46,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5,388</td>
<td>13,918</td>
<td>20,492</td>
<td>26,406</td>
<td>27,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>6,998</td>
<td>11,017</td>
<td>15,005</td>
<td>16,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% low income</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of income from transfers</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Digby</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>6,360</td>
<td>17,823</td>
<td>26,551</td>
<td>35,466</td>
<td>35,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5,720</td>
<td>11,279</td>
<td>16,383</td>
<td>21,326</td>
<td>21,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>5,438</td>
<td>9,100</td>
<td>11,676</td>
<td>12,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% low income</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of income from transfers</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

rise relative to provincial and national averages, while mens’ earnings decreased in relative terms. Since the 1970s, Digby area mens’ wages have remained fairly stable at around 70% of the national average and 80% of the provincial average. In the municipality, womens’ wages peaked between 1981 and 1986 and have hovered at around 75% of the provincial average and 65% of the national average for women.

Table 9 also shows that while in recent years the percentage of low income earners in the municipality has fluctuated, the percentage of income derived from government transfer payments was more than double the national average between 1986 and 1996. Many residents of the municipality are heavily dependent on government transfers. Census Canada micro data allow a closer look at Digby Neck itself. Table 10 shows unemployment rates for Digby Neck relative to regional, provincial and national rates. Unemployment rates are extremely high for women running at two to three times the national average and at least double the provincial average. As Davis (1991) points out, while the value of landed fish has been increasing fairly steadily since the mid-1970s, the development of a class structure on Digby Neck and nearby Long and Brier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Nova</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Digby Neck</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Digby Neck</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Digby Neck*</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This census enumeration area includes the communities on Digby Neck west of Little River and Tiverton and Central Grove on Long Island.

Islands (see Figure 1) has led to income disparity. This class structure has been created by the growth of the small boat dragger fleet situated mainly in the western end of Digby Neck. Average family income figures from the 1996 census micro data confirm this hypothesis. As Table 11
shows, average family income increases from east to west along Digby Neck. Still, even the wealthiest area of the Neck 1995 average incomes are significantly below the Nova Scotian and Canadian averages, but slightly above Digby Municipality averages. Eastern and Central parts of Digby Neck are relatively very poor, reporting family incomes of little more than half the Canadian average in the eastern region of the Neck.

The picture is similar regarding individual income for residents of Digby Neck. Table 12 shows personal income data broken down by gender. For men, total income increases moving east to west along Digby Neck. For women, the pattern is different with women living in the eastern part of the Neck earning significantly more than other Digby Neck women, and indeed, more than men in all but the western region. This phenomenon is probably explained by the proximity of this area to the town of Digby and to service and professional jobs. Again personal income figures, like family income figures are well below provincial and national levels with the exception of men in western Digby Neck and women in Eastern Digby Neck.

Given 1996 income and employment figures for women on Digby Neck one would expect their
Table 12: Income by Sex, Canada Census micro data, 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>26,474</td>
<td>31,917</td>
<td>20,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>21,940</td>
<td>26,701</td>
<td>16,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Nova</td>
<td>20,662</td>
<td>26,007</td>
<td>13,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digby County</td>
<td>7,828</td>
<td>22,517</td>
<td>12,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digby Municipality</td>
<td>16,932</td>
<td>21,642</td>
<td>12,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digby Town</td>
<td>16,418</td>
<td>20,833</td>
<td>12,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Digby Neck</td>
<td>15,345</td>
<td>13,732</td>
<td>17,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Digby Neck</td>
<td>14,013</td>
<td>16,187</td>
<td>10,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Digby Neck*</td>
<td>18,648</td>
<td>24,098</td>
<td>11,391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*West Digby Neck includes the villages of Tiverton and Central Grove on Long Island.

Outmigration rates to be high. For men the picture is less clear. Men in the western part of Digby Neck may actually have little to gain economically through migration, particularly short range migration. Digby Neck is a case of a one industry community where most available employment opportunities have been tied directly to the fishery. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest, that for men particularly, formal education had (and may continue to have) limited relevance and economic value.

Educational levels on Digby Neck

Local lore suggests that education is not necessary for income security if one is going to stay on Digby Neck. Census Canada micro data also show educational levels for the Digby Neck enumeration areas seem to confirm this notion (see Table 13). Over seventy percent of the total population fifteen years of age and over living in the western section of Digby Neck reported no
degree or diploma as of 1996.\textsuperscript{1} This is nearly twice the national average of 36.8\% (Table 13).

| Highest degree achieved expressed as a percentage of the population 15+ for Canada, Nova Scotia, and Digby Neck Census Enumeration Areas, 1996. |
|-------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|Canada | Nova Scotia | East Digby Neck | Central Digby Neck | West Digby Neck |
| No degree/diploma | 36.8 | 41.0 | 58.7 | 50.8 | 70.4 |
| Grade 12 diploma | 23.1 | 17.2 | 10.9 | 18.6 | 14.8 |
| Trade certificate/dip. | 10.5 | 13.9 | 10.9 | 9.8 | 12.2 |
| Other non-univ/cert. | 14.1 | 13.2 | 17.4 | 13.1 | 1.7 |
| Some university | 2.3 | 2.4 | 4.3 | 3.3 | * |
| Bachelor's degree | 8.7 | 8.2 | * | * | * |
| Above bachelor | 3.1 | 3.2 | * | * | * |
| Total pop. 15+ | 22,678,925 | 719,975 | 230 | 305 | 575 |

*Fewer than 10 persons. Data massaged to protect identities of individuals.

Yet western Digby Neck reported the highest average male income and the highest average family incomes in 1995, out pacing other areas of Digby Neck by thirty to forty percent. In other words, the part of Digby Neck which has the lowest rate of high school completion, men and families have the highest incomes by a significant margin.

This finding is consistent with the results of a recent analysis of the relationship between education and income in rural communities using 1981 and 1991 Canadian census data (Bollman, 1999). Bollman found a negative relationship between education and income in rural communities supporting the idea that there is a lower “payoff” for formal education in rural communities. Bollman also found that the more “rural,” the community, the lower the average educational levels. For those who wish to remain in their rural communities, the decision to forego higher education

\textsuperscript{1} This designation includes a high school leaving certificate as a “diploma.” Those in this category have not completed high school or any other form of certified post secondary education.
actually appears to be economically “rational.” Pittman et. al. (1999) also found something similar in their analysis of the relationship between education and income in rural areas using 1940-1990 United States census data. They found positive correlation between education and 1998 income, but one which was much weaker in rural as opposed to urban areas. Pittman et. al conclude that, “rural educators and citizens should treat as doubtful, claims that educational improvement will lead to improvement in rural economies” (1999: 29).

Other international studies confirm the tenuous link between education and income in rural areas. Jolliffe was also able to establish a similar negative quantitative relationship between schooling and income in rural Ghana (1998), and through fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Demerath investigated the dubious “value” modern rural villagers are attaching to education as a way to give their children better lives (1999). Banerjee found that in rural India, higher levels of formal education were related to higher incomes only for those who migrated to urban areas (1996). Rothstein argues that this disconnection of education and income is a recent phenomenon which is linked in the West to the fiscal crisis of the state (1996). Using the example of Mexico, Rothstein claims that the 1980s and 1990s have seen more youth out of school and forced into the productive economy as compared to the 1950s to 1970s period which saw significant state investment in raising educational levels. The result is a discourse which questions the value of education.

Whereas in the 1970s, the [rural Mexican] community was centred on increasing the education of their children, today the attitude toward education is less positive. People talk about unemployed professionals and comment on how some of the better off members of the community do not have much schooling (Rothstein, 1996: 369).

While education and income may be related in larger populations (for instance at the level of province or nation), the relationship may be one which “works” considerably better in urban areas. For those individuals who wish to remain in the rural regions, the link between learning and earning may not be as simple as simplistic propaganda suggests. Men in coastal communities seem to have been correct when they claimed that those who wished to stay, “didn’t need education” for economic success. When this sentiment and the economic reality it reflects is presented to young men in coastal communities it undoubtedly has clear consequences for school performance. And when these factors are compounded by the retreat of the state from funding the public schools and a general decline in public sector employment and the opportunity to access
“government jobs,” it follows that higher education has not been seen as a high priority. In rural communities, particularly those with relatively limited occupational diversity, the strength of public sector employment is very often the basis of rationalising higher education. The question perhaps is not so much whether education is beneficial to people in coastal communities, but rather, what are its benefits for differently placed individuals? It may be true that education is very important for those who wish to migrate, and for women, but not necessarily for those men who remain. In this context, pro-educational discourse may paradoxically be read as an attempt to subvert the economic prospects of a young man and lure him away into an uncertain future away from known world of the community.

**Mobility on Digby Neck**

Given relatively low incomes, high unemployment rates and a heavy dependence on a single “declining” industry, Digby Neck ought to be a prime example of a community which is losing population to out-migration. Yet, in his analysis of national level 1996 Canadian census data, Finnie found that the smaller the community and the more rural it is, the less mobile are its residents (1998). But this data measures mobility in five year segments. It does not help understand the long term migration behaviour of people who may have left coastal communities never having lived as adults on Digby Neck for instance. My survey of migration from Digby Neck explores a somewhat different form of mobility data. The Community, Schooling and Migration Survey and Basic Data Bank tracked the long-term migration behaviour of all individuals ranging in age from approximately 20 through to 56 who originated on Digby Neck. Thus, we see a snapshot of the migration results for 36 years of students who reached grade 6 in the local elementary school, that is, virtually everyone who grew up on Digby Neck (see Tables 14 and 15). The population does indeed appear to be becoming slightly less mobile through the 36 year period this survey covers; an average of less than 30% of people who grew up on Digby Neck still remain there in 1999. Rather than becoming more likely to emigrate from Digby Neck in times of economic downturn, this data shows the opposite effect. Both the “boom” of the 1980s and the “bust” of the 1990s are accompanied by lower rates of out-migration (see Tables 14 and 15). This would also seem to support Finnie’s analysis of the Canadian Census data (1998). However, with a more than seventy percent out-migration rate, this does appear to be a highly mobile population.
The Canadian Census mobility data and the data presented here are not directly comparable. My data show a longer term of mobility than does the Census Canada data. People left Digby Neck over the years and settled in various parts of the country, therefore, become residents of their destinations if they remain five years in terms of Census Canada classifications. Census mobility measures gauge mobility at five year intervals and do not track long term migration patterns. My data show long term out-migration from a particular place. The brain drain hypothesis and both Marxist and conservative economic analysis would contend that the majority of these individuals should have migrated to central or western Canada where economic opportunities exist if they are "rational" economic migrants. Table 15 shows the present location of out-migrants from Digby Neck. Destinations are organised by four categories: "stayers” which includes those still living on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 1 (63-74)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Deceased or unknown</th>
<th>N Revised</th>
<th>Digby Neck 1999</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2 (75-86)</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3 (87-98)</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (1963-98)</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N Revised</th>
<th>Stayers &amp; Around here</th>
<th>Not far</th>
<th>Away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>155 (55.2%)</td>
<td>62 (22.1%)</td>
<td>64 (22.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>144 (64.3%)</td>
<td>53 (23.7%)</td>
<td>27 (12.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>137 (65.6%)</td>
<td>39 (18.7%)</td>
<td>33 (15.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>436 (61.1%)</td>
<td>154 (21.6%)</td>
<td>124 (17.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Historic graduates of DNCS remaining on Digby Neck by percentage, Basic Data Bank (99 % data).

Table 15: Out-migration from Digby Neck by cohort and destination, potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank (99 % data)
geographic Digby Neck; "around here" which includes those who have stayed on Digby Neck or within 50 kilometres of Digby Neck; "not far" - those who have moved farther than 50 kilometres from Digby Neck but not more than 250 kilometres; and "away" - those who have moved farther than 250 kilometres from Digby Neck. Because key informants often made no distinction between "stayers" and those who remained "around here," and because (as later tables will show) the educational profiles of these two groups are similar, I have combined these two categories. This data show that over the 36 years of the study reported here, that Digby Neckers are indeed becoming less mobile. The largest proportion of the population, more than 60% through the study period, remains in the local area (i.e. within 50 kilometres). More than 80 percent (82.7%) remain inside the "not far" region or closer, i.e. within two hundred and fifty kilometres of the Neck. So while the population is "mobile," the range of mobility is not great.

Some communities on Digby Neck also appear to have been more mobile than others. The most mobile community, Sandy Cove, is a part-time home to a mostly transient summer population and

<p>| Table 16: Outmigration from Digby Neck by community of origin and present location, potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank (99 % data: percentages in parentheses). |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stayers &amp; Around Here</th>
<th>Not far</th>
<th>Away</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>25 (53.2)</td>
<td>10 (21.3)</td>
<td>12 (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centreville</td>
<td>133 (69.3)</td>
<td>38 (19.8)</td>
<td>21 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Midway</td>
<td>19 (61.2)</td>
<td>6 (20.0)</td>
<td>6 (16.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Cove</td>
<td>32 (41.0)</td>
<td>21 (28.2)</td>
<td>25 (30.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink Cove</td>
<td>41 (69.5)</td>
<td>6 (10.2)</td>
<td>12 (20.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little River</td>
<td>71 (54.2)</td>
<td>35 (26.7)</td>
<td>25 (19.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale Cove</td>
<td>11 (73.3)</td>
<td>1 (0.67)</td>
<td>3 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiddville</td>
<td>50 (58.1)</td>
<td>21 (24.4)</td>
<td>10 (10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Ferry</td>
<td>54 (68.4)</td>
<td>16 (20.2)</td>
<td>9 (11.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Digby Neck</td>
<td>436 (61.1)</td>
<td>154 (21.5)</td>
<td>124 (17.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 This figure was calculated by subtracting the "away" percentage (17.4%, i.e. those living farther than 250 km from Digby Neck) from the total percentage.
their presence appears to have influenced those who grew up there (See Table 16). The community of Waterford is situated at the eastern extreme of the DNCS elementary school catchment area, closest to the regional service centre of Digby. The other community with a relatively high “not far” and “away” migration rate is Little River which is one of the principal homes of the small boat dragger fleet and relatively higher incomes. Again one finds, contrary to economic rationality arguments about out-migration from Atlantic Canadian coastal communities, that the wealthier communities tend to produce the most mobile populations.

Given that the fishery presents a gendered structure of opportunity, it might be expected that women would have higher rates of migration. On the other hand, this gendered structure of labour and social relations in the community may also result in women being less mobile and less able to break out of gendered role expectations. In her focus group discussions with young rural Nova Scotian women Day actually found these women aspire less than young men to leave their communities despite the dismal future prospects they saw in these communities (1990). Table 17 shows that men were far more likely than women to stay on Digby Neck, but also that women showed a much greater propensity to migrate short distances in the “around here” and “not far regions.” As one school administrator put it: “the girls around here see that the pool of local guys is pretty small, but when they go to Digby or Weymouth there are guys there that look and act like their guys (i.e. the boys from Digby Neck).” The decision to move into the “away” region was taken by roughly similar proportions of each gender (18.4% of men and 16.2% of women).

Table 17: Outmigration rates from Digby Neck by gender and present location, potential graduating classes of 1963-1998, Basic Data Bank (99 % data: percentages in parentheses).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stayers</td>
<td>145 (40.5)</td>
<td>60 (16.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around here</td>
<td>101 (28.2)</td>
<td>130 (36.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not far</td>
<td>46 (12.8)</td>
<td>108 (30.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away</td>
<td>66 (18.4)</td>
<td>58 (16.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>358 (99.9)</td>
<td>356 (99.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The education/mobility connection

As work like The Master's Wife reveals, 'escape' has been for ambitious young Maritimers what 'success' was for Richler's Duddy Kravitz - escape not merely from the drudgery of the family farm or fishing boat, but also from the inevitable constrictions of Maritime society. Three avenues of escape have traditionally been open: running away to sea; finding work in New England factories or western cities; or getting an education and going not on, but out to university (Kulyk-Keefer, 1987: 211).

The results I report above are very similar to those found by Dublin in mining communities in the Pennsylvania anthracite region in the United States, where he found that only 15% of the high school classes of 1946-1960, "migrated beyond this narrow band reaching roughly 100-150 miles from Panther Valley" (1998:45). He also found that since the 1960s out-migration has stabilised and the bulk of the population have chosen to remain in the region despite declining economic fortunes. Residents of Dublin's Panther Valley chose to reject opportunities available through out-migration in order to stay close to family and community networks. Even though they "persisted" in the region, Dublin reports that his study group, now presumably in their late 50s and 60s, encouraged their own children to migrate and pursue formal education.

Choosing to accept the limited economic opportunity available in the anthracite region, persisters indicated the value they placed on family and community networks as opposed to more strictly economic considerations. Still, even as they made these particular choices for themselves, persisters typically encouraged their children to gain an education and leave the area (Dublin, 1998: 52-3).

But Dublin also found that education was proving to be a dubious strategy for the children of his study group. While the relatively strong social safety net protected persisters through the 1980s, it became more "porous and unreliable" in the 1990s. The irony is that migration was also becoming a "less promising strategy" at the same time as recession constricted the economy and job opportunities in urban areas as well.

In the case of Digby Neck a similar pattern can be seen at work. Relatively more Digby Neckers migrated in the 1960s and early 1970s compared to the 1980s and 1990s. The 1960s and early 1970s was a period of transition in the fishery, but not necessarily one in which employment opportunities were significantly less than in previous decades. The population of the Neck was relatively stable and fish landings were on the rise (Davis, 1991). The introduction of the small
boat dragger fishery and its consolidation in the 1960s led to increased work in fish plants, fishing support work and crewing on boats. Through the 1970s and 1980s the dragger fishery expanded as did fish landings and processing activity and the population remained stable with out-migration rates actually declining. However, when the fishery began its downturn in the early 1990s, the population of young adults does not appear to be significantly more mobile than were previous cohorts, especially when mobility is defined as moving out beyond the "around here" area. It is quite probable that declining opportunities elsewhere for unskilled labour created this situation exacerbated by cuts to social programs which made it more difficult for marginal young workers to sustain themselves independently away from their families and communities.

Out-migration is not simply leaving poor economic fortunes, it is also moving toward some form of "better" opportunity. It is also possible that education is becoming a prerequisite for migration to urban jobs, and without it, one is destined to remain in place in the coastal community. Without a family habitus that included prolonged secondary and post-secondary experience, young Digby Neckers (especially young men) from non-elite fishing families developed locally-focussed socio-spatial identities (Jones, 1999a) in which formal education played little part. At the same time, many young people, especially young men, on Digby Neck see the weak or even negative relationship between earnings and education. Added to this experiential knowledge was widespread exposure via cable television to popular media of the 1980s and 1990s which was highly critical of the formal education system in terms of its ability to give students "marketable skills" even to highly educated youth.

Tables 19-21 document the relationship between educational attainment and the propensity to migrate. The data for these tables was compiled from the Community, Migration and Schooling Survey. While the foregoing analysis shows some of the contours of the economic, educational and mobility profile of Digby Neck in comparison to trends regionally, provincially and nationally, the central problem for this work is the link between education and migration. Less than one-fifth of the population of Digby Neck has gone "away." The rest remain within an afternoon’s drive of the Neck. The majority, both male and female, remain within what amounts to not more than a 30-

---

3 Many informants commented on how one was "always hearing" how even educated youth struggled to make a living in urban places. These stories came to Digby Neck largely through mass media, but also through the first-hand accounts of out-migrants who return to visit or to stay.
minute drive from the Neck. Is it true that these people who have stayed closer to home have obtained less formal education than their counterparts who migrated “away?”

Comparing the two populations most easily defined as “stayers” and “leavers,” i.e. those still living on Digby Neck and those who have migrated to the “away” region, Table 19 confirms this basic hypothesis. On average, stayers have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than leavers. As anticipated, education is strongly linked with out-migration, particularly at the university level. Out-migrants who moved to the “away” region were more than eight times as likely to have attended university and thirty percent more likely to have graduated high school.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stayers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Away</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than grade 10</td>
<td>40 (23.8%)</td>
<td>5 (05.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>59 (35.1%)</td>
<td>20 (23.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduation</td>
<td>62 (36.9%)</td>
<td>33 (37.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>7 (04.1%)</td>
<td>29 (33.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>168 (99.9%)</td>
<td>87 (99.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Away” migrants were also four to five times less likely than “stayers” to be in the lowest educational group never having entered high school. When the same data are analysed by gender the differences between male stayers and leavers becomes even more stark (see Table 20). Male stayers are represented far more pervasively in the lowest educational category (less than Grade 10).5 Both male and female migrants have acquired considerably more high school and higher educational credentials than their stayer counterparts. The differences are particularly acute among

---

4 This claim is supported using Table 19 by combining the university group (which necessarily graduated high school) with the group whose highest educational attainment is high school graduation. Forty-one percent of “stayers” and 71.1% of “away” migrants fall into this category.

5 This cutoff point was chosen rather than the Grade 9 division used by Census Canada because in Nova Scotia high school begins with Grade 10.
males where high school completion rates for the "stayer" and "around here" populations were 32.8 and 33.8% respectively. By contrast, more than 60% of women in all migration groups have completed at least high school. Also striking is the similarity of educational profiles between stayers and those remaining in the immediate local "around here" region (Table 20). This similarity holds for both men and women.

Table 19: Highest level of education achieved by migration status and gender, Community, Migration and Education Survey (70% data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stayers</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Around here</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 (30.2)</td>
<td>4 (08.2)</td>
<td>22 (32.3)</td>
<td>10 (10.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23 (37.0)</td>
<td>15 (30.6)</td>
<td>23 (33.8)</td>
<td>17 (17.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34 (28.6)</td>
<td>28 (57.1)</td>
<td>19 (27.9)</td>
<td>62 (63.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 (04.2)</td>
<td>2 (04.2)</td>
<td>4 (05.9)</td>
<td>8 (08.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>119 (99.9)</td>
<td>49 (100.1)</td>
<td>68 (99.9)</td>
<td>97 (99.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not far</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1 (04.3)</td>
<td>4 (05.9)</td>
<td>5 (12.2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 (21.7)</td>
<td>10 (14.7)</td>
<td>13 (31.7)</td>
<td>7 (15.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9 (39.1)</td>
<td>33 (48.5)</td>
<td>9 (22.0)</td>
<td>24 (52.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
<td>21 (30.9)</td>
<td>14 (34.1)</td>
<td>15 (32.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23 (99.9)</td>
<td>68 (100.1)</td>
<td>41 (100)</td>
<td>46 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Males who migrate into the local area actually tend to be slightly more likely to have very low levels of formal education than men who stayed on Digby Neck, although they were also slightly more likely to have graduated high school. Women who moved into this same area had also acquired marginally more educational credentials than their stayer counterparts. In other words, 6

6 High school completion rates are calculated by combining university and high school graduate groups.
this data show the limited utility of formal education for both stayers and for those who migrate but remain "around here." Those who migrated further into the "not far" and "away" regions were much more likely to have acquired higher level credentials.

One might speculate that educational levels will have changed significantly through the three age cohorts in this study. Table 21 shows a consistent rise in levels of formal education for women across the three age cohorts. High school graduation rates for women have increased from just under 70% in Cohort 1 to slightly over 90% in Cohort 3. The only anomaly in generally increasingly levels of educational attainment is the unexpectedly high percentage of women in Cohort 2 with less than grade 10. This is perhaps explained by the high availability of fish plant work for young women through the boom period. By the mid 1970s women were "getting into the fish" (i.e. fish plant work) more than in previous or subsequent generations. With increased demand for this work which required few formal educational credentials, a greater number of women dropped out before entering high school.

Men as a group remain well behind women in terms of all educational credentials except in the Cohort 1 university group where they nearly matched women's participation rates. While Digby Neck men too have been acquiring more formal educational credentials, fewer than half of all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Gr. 10</td>
<td>31 (33.3)</td>
<td>5 (05.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some H.S.</td>
<td>29 (31.2)</td>
<td>25 (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. grad</td>
<td>21 (22.6)</td>
<td>54 (55.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>12 (12.9)</td>
<td>14 (14.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93 (100)</td>
<td>98 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
males in any cohort have graduated high school. For males, generally increasing levels of formal education are broken by an anomaly. Males in Cohort 2 are significantly less well represented in the university group reflecting lucrative fisheries opportunities for young men from elite fishing families who might otherwise have accessed university education.

Previous analysis has shown that those individuals in the “around here” area have educational profiles similar to those who stayed on Digby Neck. Those who moved into the “not far” region were also found to have educational profiles similar to those who migrated to the “away” region. When the three age cohorts are broken down by migration group the picture is more complex (see Tables 22 and 23). Table 22 shows that educational levels for women “stayers” and “around here” have generally risen. The striking anomaly in data for women in this migration group is the high percentage of women in the university group for Cohort 2. This seems to show that young women in elite fishing families were able to use family resources to access higher education, and that a considerable number of them were able to return to the local area to find employment in the expanding public service sector in nearby Digby. An alternate explanation is that these women acquired educational credentials and returned to the local area to traditional gendered occupations and family roles. The data in Tables 22 and 23 also further explain the anomaly for Cohort 2 noted in Table 21 with men continuing to be under-represented in the university level group. Table 22 also shows a relatively very high percentage of women in Cohort 2 who completed less than grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Grade 10</td>
<td>26 (41.9)</td>
<td>15 (27.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some H.S.</td>
<td>18 (29.0)</td>
<td>29 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S grad</td>
<td>15 (24.2)</td>
<td>11 (19.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3 (04.8)</td>
<td>3 (05.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62 (99.9)</td>
<td>58 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 live in the "around here" region. In fact, this entire population are still within 50 kilometres of Digby Neck.

Men in the "around here" group demonstrate consistently increasing levels of formal education. Through time, significantly higher proportions of men are staying in school into high school and graduating high school, but only about half as many males as females graduate high school in the "stayer" and "around here" population. The principal anomaly in this data is the very low male graduation rate for Cohort 2. Apparently the "boom" period in the fishery was accompanied by a "bust" in educational credentials for young men of that cohort and graduation rates actually fell below those for men in Cohort 1.

Table 22: Highest level of educational achievement by age cohort and gender for "not far" and "away" migrants, Community, Migration and Education survey (percentages in parentheses, 70% data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Grade 10</td>
<td>5 (16.1)</td>
<td>2 (04.2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some H.S.</td>
<td>11 (35.5)</td>
<td>7 (14.6)</td>
<td>6 (31.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S grad</td>
<td>6 (19.4)</td>
<td>27 (56.3)</td>
<td>6 (31.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>9 (29.0)</td>
<td>12 (25.0)</td>
<td>7 (36.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31 (100)</td>
<td>48 (100.1)</td>
<td>19 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23 shows consistently increasing rates of education for migrants who have left the "around here" region. Those who migrated to the "not far" and "away" regions have acquired more educational credentials at all levels than their stayer counterparts. In Cohorts 2 and 3 virtually all members of this groups have graduated high school and approximately four in ten have attended university. It appears as though the basic hypothesis is confirmed, secondary and post secondary education is quite clearly goes hand in hand with out-migration from Digby Neck. This also demonstrates a strong elite segment of the population accessing post secondary education and settling outside the local area. the "gender effect" noted in the stayer and around here populations
is attenuated considerably in the “not far” and “away” population (see Table 23). With the exception of Cohort 1 (which faced very different employment and migration prospects than either Cohorts 2 or 3), male graduation rates fell only approximately ten percent below female rates. In other words, mobile males seem to require and acquire nearly as much higher education as their female peers. If one goes, education is important regardless of one’s gender; but if one stays, then it is a different story and masculinity has its privileges in terms of the amount of schooling one needs to endure.

Summary

Perhaps the most striking finding from this survey is that out-migration flows from Digby Neck have remained stable through the thirty-six years of this investigation. Out-migration rates have actually decreased slightly from the early 1960s to the 1990s on Digby Neck. This seems to support Dublin’s finding that rural communities act as havens during economic hard times, as well as the Marxist “reserve army” hypothesis. But since the out-migration rate remains remarkably stable throughout fluctuations in the economy of the fishery, it would seem as though economic explanations alone are not adequate and that we must take into account social and cultural factors. Both “good” and “bad” times seem to generate conditions conducive to staying for significant numbers of youth “born and bred” on Digby Neck. The Basic Data Bank data show that most who “migrate,” move only short distances to areas that are culturally and economically similar to Digby Neck. Women are also more mobile than men in terms of settling off Digby Neck. So while the large numbers of women who migrate to the “around here” region do not marry and settle on Digby Neck, they do tend to marry and settle in nearby communities much like those of Digby Neck.

Given the area “around here” is in many respects, a macrocosm of Digby Neck, these data suggest that short range migrations may not really represent movement into a significantly different cultural space. While the “village” no longer exists as an economic and social entity that holds many individuals (particularly women), the local area “around here” does. Short range migrations are not considered by most Digby Neckers to be migrations at all, and indeed, the educational profiles
of short range migrants are similar to those who stay on Digby Neck. Nearly two-thirds of the population studied here remained within the “around here” area, within 50 kilometres of Digby Neck. This shows that a majority of Digby Neckers remain within easy reach of their communities of origin, suggesting that this coastal community remains resilient, albeit in a slightly larger geographic space. Digby Neckers are mobile, but at the same time they manage to retain communal bonds from a short distance. As several informants put it: “I didn’t want to go too far.” This phenomenon may itself be a product of an increasingly mobile society. Improved highway travel and communication technology in the past several decades allows individuals to remain connected to their “home” communities while living closer to services, employment and recreational opportunities for their children.

What I am describing above may be part of the fundamental changes in coastal communities which are now organised around small, remote “service centres.” The small town of Digby is the case in point. This community of slightly more than 2000 residents offers a wide and expanding array of services and large retail outlets which service surrounding villages which themselves are simultaneously losing infrastructure, but not necessarily “dying.” Fast food franchises and major grocery chains have noticed the potential for consumer business in Digby and through the decade of the 1990s have set up in the community. If postmodern social theorists are correct and contemporary culture is organised around consumption rather than production, then what I am describing here may be the incursion of consumerism into the rural margins. Digby Neckers are quick to point out that they can now, “get anything” one could find in a city in the town of Digby. Indeed, not all urban consumers can access a full range of shopping services within a half hour of their homes. By the late 1990s, it had become as easy to be a consumer on Digby Neck as in many parts of suburbia. Further expansion of the service sector in the Digby area created new (albeit marginal) working class opportunities.

While women in the sample are better educated as a group, they are not necessarily in a better economic position, particularly if they stayed on Digby Neck. With the exception of women living in the eastern part of the Neck, all women earn significantly less than their male counterparts despite having much higher levels of formal education. This fact serves to illustrate the tenuous

---

7 For an analysis of the transformation of a rural village in Digby County in the face of industrialization, resource depletion and technological change, see Hornsby, 1996.
connection between formal education and income in this coastal community. Women “do well” in school and acquire many more of virtually every kind of educational credential, and yet their incomes remain significantly below those of their male counterparts who have comparatively little formal education. From a “practical” point of view, this negative relationship between education and income demonstrates support for the local (male) knowledge which argues that, “you didn’t need a good education to be successful if you stayed on Digby Neck.” Women’s success in school and relative economic and social disadvantage in life may have actually reinforced the idea that formal education is counterproductive in terms of making a living on Digby Neck. Additionally, a man who takes school too seriously might lose out on the critical informal education required to become a successful fisherman, an education that begins in early adolescence for most young men, if not before.

Conversely, those bound for places beyond the “around here” area have a very clear need for education. The commonsense perception that education is necessary for life and work in other places is confirmed, particularly in the two most recent cohorts. While educational levels actually dipped for the segments of the “boom” Cohort 2 group of stayers and “around here” migrants, they rose sharply for “not far” and “away” migrants of this same cohort. It certainly appears that in this coastal community out-migrant young people did learn to leave through the course of their formal education. Corollary evidence confirms that those who decided to stay “learned” that formal schooling was of limited value to men particularly, and they resisted the idea that they ought to acquire significant formal education credentials. Many young men were drawn out of school and into, if not lucrative, at least “active” work in the fishery. The intensification of this “pull” is mirrored by high male dropout rates among stayers. What is perhaps surprising in this data is the high rate of high school completion levels among stayer women.

Why are younger Digby Neckers less mobile than their predecessors? This contradicts the notion that coastal communities which were once relatively “stable” in terms of population and out-migration, have now come to be characterised by a mass exodus. The population of Digby Neck for both genders has become consistently less mobile across the three age cohorts studied here. Table 24 shows that greater numbers of both men and women are remaining within the “around here” region and that this trend is particularly strong for men. By the time members of Cohort 3
were coming of age (i.e. the 1990s), more than three out of four Digby Neck men were remaining within the fifty kilometre “around here” circle.

Table 23: Migration by gender, age cohort and present location, Basic Data Bank (99 % data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Here &amp; Around here</td>
<td>Not far &amp; Away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
<td>87 (59.2)</td>
<td>60 (40.8)</td>
<td>147 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>83 (74.1)</td>
<td>29 (25.9)</td>
<td>112 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>76 (76.8)</td>
<td>23 (23.2)</td>
<td>99 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Here &amp; Around here</td>
<td>Not far &amp; Away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
<td>68 (50.7)</td>
<td>66 (49.3)</td>
<td>134 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>61 (54.5)</td>
<td>51 (45.5)</td>
<td>112 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>61 (55.5)</td>
<td>49 (44.5)</td>
<td>110 (100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Digby Neck is a classic example of a community that can provided only limited opportunities for its youth, out-migration appears to have become consistently more difficult from the early 1960s to the late 1990s. How can we explain this phenomenon? First of all the erosion of work in industrial centres for “unskilled” youth with low levels of formal education creates a climate of diminished opportunity for many Digby Neck youth who might otherwise migrate. While plentiful service sector work may be available in urban centres, the work is very often part-time and wage levels are insufficient to support a young person from a rural community who will probably need to “set up housekeeping” independently. In order to survive in a marginal part-time job, a young person generally needs to live at home. The option of working at an urban “McJob” and living at home does not exist for Digby Neck youth, unless they have strong family
connections in urban areas. Secondly, the community does contain its own McJobs. Some of these are in the fishery, but increasingly they are found in the expanding service sector “around here,” particularly in the town of Digby. These jobs typically do not require significant levels of formal education although more and more of these sorts of employers demand secondary completion from potential workers. These jobs are “marginal” and often part-time, but they are seen as a kind of “opportunity” for rural youth to remain in their communities whether to “buy time” for future mobility and/or education, or to “settle down” more permanently. Thirdly, the ability to be mobile is increasingly connected to the possession of higher education credentials. In Cohorts 1 and 2, Digby Neckers who had relatively little formal education had the opportunity to move their work related skills to Ontario or to Alberta in industrial, clerical or secretarial applications. These jobs were very often stable and well paid and the out-migrant could not only establish roots and a home, s/he could also look forward to a future that contained “steady” work. If they exist at all, these kinds of opportunities outside the “around here” area now exist primarily for individuals with post-secondary credentials. In other words, one now needs an education to move more than ever before. 8 This problem is particularly acute for young men. Even though they have higher educational levels than their predecessors in Cohorts 1 and 2, more than 50% of men and 10% of women in Cohort 3 have not completed secondary education. Without higher education, Digby Neckers appear virtually unable to migrate whether or not they want to.

Fourthly, the high percentage of youth currently living in the area creates a community of stayers. This may create a youth “subculture,” ether on the Neck or in nearby communities that has the support not only of immediate and extended family, and also of other members of one’s age cohort living “around here.”

As a result, the “community” remains remarkably stable despite transformations in its economic base. Slightly less than two-in-three Digby Neckers through the thirty-six years that this study covers have remained within 50 kilometres of “home.” The “community” has expanded out of the frame of individual villages with relatively complete infrastructures, to the “around here” area. Limited mobility allows Digby Neckers to access work and services relatively close to home in an environment that remains similar to Digby Neck in cultural terms. This data also show that higher education continues to be economically unnecessary for “survival around here,” particularly for

---

8 Given the growth in local McJobs, Digby Neck youth may still not perceive education as necessary in order to stay.
men, many of whom seem able to make a living with very little in the way of formal educational credentials. Contrary to expectations and rhetoric about the importance of “getting your grade twelve” and higher education, this trend has continued into the late 1990s. Indeed, it could be argued that as the service sector in Digby expands, greater numbers of immobile individuals will be required by capital in the emerging economy of the “around here” service sector. This trend has been consistent and it appears to intensify as the traditional resource based economy continues to mechanise and constrict, as mobility becomes the prerogative of the privileged few who are able to access higher education. Could this be a kind of postmodern renaissance and transformation of coastal communities fuelled by a strange mix of globalisation, resource exploitation, consumerism, tradition and social networks, and marginal employment. As time passes the “around here” area seems increasingly to represent community for Digby Neckers, the place where life is lived, jobs are found and identity isforged. AsBauman writes, the contemporary world represents “globalization for some and localisation for others” (in Beilharz, 2001: 298).
Chapter 6

There was lots of work: The classes of 1963-1974

This place here is one of the most beautiful places in the world. You can go out here anywhere and cut a truckload of wood. We can go down to the beach and pick penny winkles1 and mussels, we can go down to the wharf and catch a few fish for supper and run in the woods and shoot rabbits. We've got lots of land there to put a little garden in for a few vegetables. You can go in and get enough blackberries and other stuff to make enough jam to meet the whole community's needs. All the bait, we got it all. What more would you want? And all these beautiful people. I've never locked a door in my home. I've never took a key out of a vehicle in my life around here. You know they come from the city and tell about how they got to chain everything up to bolts in the ground. (KS-MS-71)2

And it's a shame they just stay there because the world is so beautiful. I'm just not one to be stagnant, there's just too much out there and life is too short. I'd hate to just sit here and think, gee, I didn't really accomplish anything with my life? I want to be able to look back and say I had a great life. I don't want to say, well ya, I had 15 kids and now 1 got 99 grandchildren or something. That's just not enough, that's wonderful thing and I'm not knocking it, but that's just not enough. (FE-FL-73)

By 1963 the dragger fishery was established and the traditional fixed gear small boat fishery was stable and expanding in two of the three Digby Neck communities analysed by Davis (1991: 55). Davis' shows a marked rise in the value of the fishery on Digby Neck beginning in the mid 1970s (1991: 53). Despite yearly fluctuations, catches remained relatively stable overall, average price per pound (unadjusted for inflation) increased more than five-fold between 1963 and 1983. More than three-quarters of this increase occurred after 1974 (Davis, 1991: 53). In the 1960s, policy thinking around the Atlantic fishery was dominated by the view that the fishery needed to be modernised by transforming the seasonally employed multi-occupational fishermen into full-time “professionals.” Writing specifically about the fishery in Digby County in the early 1960s, Harvey argued that:

---

1 This is the colloquial term for periwinkles.

2 Informants are identified by pseudonym, gender, migration status and the year of potential high school graduation (which serves as a rough approximation of age). For instance, KS-MS-71 is informant “KS,” a male stayer who was a potential graduate of the class of 1971. FE-FL-73 is informant “FE,” a female leaver who was a potential graduate of the class of 1973. Educators are identified by a pseudonym and by gender. For example, CD-ME is informant “CD,” a male educator.
In order to achieve full benefit from the fishing industry, the county must make an effort to reduce seasonality, even though it cannot be eliminated, a change in attitudes and a reorganisation toward larger boats able to operate year round, providing a more continuous flow of fish to the fish plants would be positive steps. In addition, such moves would tend to upgrade the labour force by drawing workers with an occasional interest in fishing and fish processing and would enable them to work more efficiently by channelling their effort in one direction rather than in several. (1965: 17).

Davis also shows that the small boat fishery continued to dominate through this period with the number of this kind of vessel actually increasing through the period.

Elementary school consolidation was complete in 1957 with the opening of Digby Neck Consolidated School (DNCS) in Sandy Cove. The eldest members of the 1963-1974 cohort took their early elementary schooling in one or two room village schoolhouses, finishing their elementary school careers at DNCS. By 1963, the usual school trajectory was the completion of at least a few years of secondary schooling. By 1968, a regional vocational school opened in Middleton (approximately 100 kilometres from Digby Neck in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley) offering trades training. Well established paths of work in the fishery and in the home were now juxtaposed against life strategies that involved formal education and mobility, at least in theory. In the 1960s and early 1970s, there was also ample work opportunity for "unskilled" labour in central and western Canada, particularly for young men. Many young women also able took secretarial training at the regional high school in Digby.

Community members define these years as a time of great change and one of great opportunity. The paved Highway 217 was completed in 1956 allowing for improved transportation, communication and the ready availability of mass produced goods and services including fresh "store bought" foods. The eldest informants in the sample (born in the mid to late 1940s) can remember the farmer-fisherman and remnants of the kind of multi-occupational co-integrated economy described by Bouchard (1997) and Johnson (1999).

They had a few dairy cows and they would sell milk and cream. And they all had a few vegetables to sell in the fall. But it was mostly subsistence farming. I used to help Joe hay in the summer. I worked with him most of the summer. And then I used to help dad set lobster traps at the first of the season, and then bring 'em in at the end of the season. Most of the kids there did it. (IS-ML-63)
Informants born in the mid to late 1950s have memories of a working community nearly exclusively focused on the fishery. The value of landed fish rose steadily with average prices for cod and lobster nearly tripling between 1963 and 1974 (Davis, 1991: 53). In addition, government remittances, particularly in the form of unemployment insurance, played an important role in the broad social change that swept coastal communities beginning in the 1950s facilitating a transition to an ever more specialised and concentrated fishing economy (Davis 1991; Kearney, 1993; Johnson, 1999: 69-71; Schrank, 1997: 69). As unemployment insurance and other forms of social assistance became widespread, the persistence of small farming and logging as well as trading in traditional crafts became both less necessary for household income and too poorly rewarded relative to better returns in the fishery or in wage work now within commuting distance.

Family and work: learning to stay

It wasn't hard to find work around here in them days. There were 6, 7, 8 fish plants going, boats going everywhere. When I got out of school they was fish draggin and they was just starting to get into it good in the early 60s. (FN)

I heard that daily from women around here, that we want them (children) here. We don't like it that they've gone away to so and so. So we go visit them every month. They've never left home! Even when they have (pause) well I said that my husband's sisters never left home. I think the mother must have known the night they conceived their own children, the grandchildren, you know. I used to say to him, they've never left home no matter where they are. I've seen that all the time here, holding on to them. Holding on to them. (OI-FE)

Through the 1960s and into the early 1970s there was abundant paid work for young men, and to a lesser extent for young women in the villages along Digby Neck. Young men were expected to engage in fisheries work as a matter of course. In a labour intensive fishery, the work of young people was essential, unlike education which was often perceived as something that had dubious value to the community.

It was a natural thing. If you weren't working, you were lazy or you had to go somewhere to hide because there was work to do. Christ if you wanted the day off you had to go hide 'cause somebody would see you standing there and say to you: 'you doin' nothing? Come here, I've got something for you to do.' That's the way it was. School was different, you just didn't seem to be doing anything. (GG-MS-71)

Through this period most fishing operations were family-based. Young women, were expected to
do fisheries support work as well as domestic work. This work was done with and for family in support of the work of male relatives employed in the fishery. Women were also largely responsible for maintaining domestic and social relationships which make small communities viable. This finding is consistent with Porter’s findings in Newfoundland communities regarding the gendered structure of labour in coastal communities (1993). Young men were expected to watch their fathers and learn from them and describe having been drawn to life in the family-based fishery and into the larger circle of life in the fishery. While most young men were seen as working their way into more permanent and lucrative positions in the fishery, usually on the deck of a boat in some capacity, many young women were working in fisheries support work on land doing particular gender and age segregated jobs.

You know the whole family knit (lobster trap) heads, all the kids helped knit heads. By the time you were six years old you could knit a head. So everybody knit heads and did bait bags and did whatever was required. Of course the TV wasn’t big back then in the 50s and early 60s. So you went in the kitchen and you had an eye hook under the counter and you sat there in the chair and you knit heads. (IS-ML-63)

The discourse is distinctly different around what male and female children were doing when they worked baiting trawl for longliners or baiting bags and knitting heads for lobstermen. The boys were “learning to fish,” while the girls and women were seen as “helping.”

Oh we helped out from time to time. Nothing too serious, just when they needed some help because they were behind. (EF-FS-74)

Uh, but it wasn’t hard to find something to do and people got a sense of the value of work and they went out and had a chance to earn a few dollars. Sometimes you might start out, and OK, you’re not really old enough to hire on full time but we got a little job for you to do. One of the first things I got to do was load a truck with salt fish one Saturday afternoon. The men were tired out so they’d get some of the boys around to do that little bit of work. And maybe next year, well, you can gut fish, start at the bottom and work your way up. OK, and maybe a little bit later on you’ll get a chance to get the knife in your hands and filet. It’s rewarded by your experience and your abilities. (SS-MS-71)

3 “Baiting trawl” is the process of placing bait on hooks for a long line fishing operation. The hooks are baited and coiled into a bait barrel so that the line will play out without snagging when it is set out. This work has traditionally been done by women and youth on shore and it provides them a significant part-time income. “Baiting bags” is filling mesh bags with lobster bait. The bait is scooped out of large barrels which are usually kept in bait sheds or in large covered outdoor vats. The bags are then secured on a spike inside the lobster trap. Most lobster fishermen pull and check their traps, at least every two or three days if the weather allows, but less often in winter months when lobsters are said to “slow down” and move further off shore. The demand for baiting bags is great during December and in the late spring between mid April and the end of May when the lobster season ends on Digby Neck. Knitting heads is repairing the netting in the lobster trap head which is prone to damage because this is the part through which the spiny bodied lobsters crawl.
Young men wishing to stay in the fishery had to establish a reputation as a capable and knowledgeable person around fisheries related skills. One had to be willing to work hard. Work on the margins of the fishery was an invitation to the craft of fishing and the young apprentice was given opportunity to prove himself worthy of increasingly heavy and responsible work. The quote below comes from a man who eventually went onto co-own a fish and scallop dragger. He began his career by demonstrating his ability to work at shore based tasks in the fishery.

My first job was for my father pitching fish at night. I done that from probably from when I was 15 to when I was 18. And that's how my name kind of got around down the shore that I would do that. And that's what I done. I just went every night and pitched my father's fish out. You had to get your name around. That was very important. And that was a good way. Well, then my father was selling his fish to the plant and so they seen me and they said, 'well why don't you stay and pitch our boats?' And so I used to stay and pitch fish for them. I'd go anytime and so that helped. It got my name around good. (FN)

From an early immersion in shore based fisheries work and fishing trips aboard father’s and grandfather’s boats, young men became immersed in the working culture of the coastal community. They learned to deal with seasickness, long hours, all weather, and working aboard a floating factory with a floor that tilted up to twenty or twenty-five degrees. Some educators recognised this “alternative” educational system that trained boys for the fishery while others did not.

You’re not going to learn it in school, not what you want to know. You’ve got to drop out to get it. To go to this college [informal apprenticeship in the fishery] you’ve got to drop out of this one [school]. And why not, there’s a good livelihood there, you’re doing what you want to do. (ES-FE)

Just on the job training, and they probably knew all the skills they needed to know already. How to take a rock out of a scallop drag or how to pick a scallop out of rocks. But I mean they were already becoming versed in those skills at a very early age. (SF-ME)

It came as no surprise that not every boy wanted to do this work. People routinely commented, a lot of young men, “just didn’t have the interest,” or “didn’t want to go fishing for the rest of their lives.” On Digby Neck very few women went to sea. Women worked on gear and supported the fishermen in a number of ways, and their work was always seen as essential, but the central activity in the fishery was the “men’s work” of getting aboard the boat and going out to catch fish. Young women were more typically seen as, “earning some spending money” by working in the fishery. For a young woman who needed to work, it was equally important to establish a good
reputation as a reliable and hard worker.

I did house work for a disabled lady and I had baby sitting places that I would go and they would sometimes want ironing done or just light housekeeping. I carried the mail for some senior people who couldn't get to the post office. If you want to work they would come and give you a call to help them do something. If you were a dependable reliable person and they could entrust their children with you then baby sitting jobs were no problem at all. (DL-FS-69)

Education was not seen as important for success and prosperity in the fishery of the 1960s and 1970s particularly for young men.

There's this whole sort of boy-girl thing anyway. Girls seem to have fit in to school better than boys. And it just goes to the next level for kids who come with the kind of background and attitude and say that this is sissy stuff and I hate it. And I've got some really good alternatives, I've just got to wait till I can get them. And so they hang on until 15, 16, 17 years of age. (SF-ME)

Informants look back on the situation differently today and encourage their children to stay in school more forcefully than their parents had with them. Yet, male informants in this sample were typically content with their career and educational choices. Fisheries work is seen as interesting, engaging and lucrative, particularly for those who own their own boats and licenses. Many Digby Neck families have this level of "direct" entrepreneurial connection to the fishery. A "direct" connection to the fishery meant having a father and/or extended family who were established, license-holding fishermen. The only informant from this era who expressed significant regret about his life course, has a less "direct" connection to the fishery and works as a mate on other people's rigs.

I hated school. I went to work just as soon as I could. You know, thinking back now, I would have had more chances if I had stayed on. Now you have to take what comes. And what comes is a lot of hard old days on that Bay. I applied for a job once and after I read the application I was too scared to go back (pause) you know that's where you wish you had just a little bit of education. But when it gets scary is when you get older. You know if you get sick or something you ain't got nothing to fall back on, no benefits there, not like a government job or something like that. No security. When you're young you don't think about that, but when you get a little older and you think (pause) well what would happen? (FN)

In the class structure of the small boat dragger fishery young men were given different opportunities depending on their family connections. In license holding families with few boys, male children could inherit petit bourgeois resource production capacity in the form of boats and
gear. They could also access the readily available local cultural capital necessary to be a successful fisherman. Unlike the informant quoted above, the more typical response is to reflect on fishing as a choice well taken. Socialisation to work in the fishery presented the young men of this cohort with incremental responsibility and a slow but steady advancement in responsibility and rewards. The community offered these male informants an apprenticeship into a highly visible industry, the feeling of adult responsibility, and of being a part of a working enterprise. On the other hand, school was seen by male stayers as an infantilizing, disconnected, disempowering experience.

You just felt like a little kid in school. I just sat there and stared out the window a lot of the time. I was working around the shore and making pretty good money for the time. That schoolhouse⁴ (pause) well the work wasn’t like (pause) it just seemed like elementary school all over again, sitting in desks and a lot of talk. You know, the math was a little different, it was harder. But the rest of it seemed like a rehash of elementary school. You set and listened most of the time, just like a little kid. I couldn’t see myself standing that. I wasn’t going to college. That seemed to me like more of the same. You been to college, ain’t that what it’s like there, just people sitting around talking like in the schoolhouse in Sandy Cove. (FN)

The love of the water and a love for the area combine with an excitement for fishing and the result is a person who understands himself to be rooted in a place and in a way of life.

Just born and brought up in it. I’m a 13th generation fishermen from my forefathers who came here in 1637. And it’s been in my family ever since. When I was 12 or 13, I wanted to get on the water, and when I was 14 my father took me aboard the boat. He never wanted me to do it, he always wanted me to go to school. Go to school, do something else. When I was 14, I owned my own boat and fished it a little after school, just a row boat. When I was 15 I quit school. Even in school, I just wanted to be on the water. It was a good living, everybody was making a good living. I mean I owned my first boat, a 30 foot powered boat when I was 16 years old. And I was into the ground fishery and lobstering and I never looked back. You know, just straight ahead. (KS-MS-71)

These men describe fishing as being in their “blood.” This means that they were exposed to the fishery as children and came to understand it as a lucrative set of opportunities that could be had by any man who had “direct” or “blood” connections to Digby Neck, without “paper,” or the qualifications conferred by formal education. Today though, fishing is too rich for the blood of most young men as licenses now cost at least five figures for a handline license up to a quarter of a million dollars or more for a lobster license. Up to the mid 1970s, fishermen remember paying twenty-five cents for their fishing licenses at a local store. “I can remember going in and flipping

⁴ The common term for school on Digby Neck and in the Digby area generally is, “the school house.” Even the large, institutional looking regional secondary school in Digby is still called the school house.
that quarter on the counter,” one informant from this cohort commented, remembering the days of open access to the common property ocean resource. The apprenticeship for this career was living and working around men and older boys in the community and waiting for an opportunity to be helpful in practical tasks and economically productive at a very early age. In the introduction to Kevin Major’s *Gaffer* (1997), a “gaffer” is defined as a boy who can be useful at work. Gaffers abounded on Digby Neck in the 1960s and 1970s, both in shore based support work, on father or relative’s boats, but also in small boats independently operated close to shore.

When I got old enough to be allowed to play with my friends we would go down to the "pond," which was a tidal pool that flooded every day when the tide was up but when the tide was down a pool of water was left. Here we would take our model boats and pretend to be fishermen, sailing our boats to one end of the pond to fish and then sail our boats back to the other end of the pond to come home with our load of fish. It was fun, but also educational in that it introduced us to the tools and language of the fishermen and taught us to think in terms of fishing. This is how we were introduced to the technology of fishing at an early age. (FN- from a personal electronic mail message)

For women, a community based skills complex involved: shore based fisheries support work like knitting lobster trap heads, baiting lobster bags, baiting trawl, working in fish plants (in peak periods particularly), preparing food for family, workers and community functions, maintaining households, doing a variety of community organisational work, acting as bookkeeper for fishing and other businesses and organisations, supporting children’s education, purchasing supplies for the family fishing operation among other tasks.

It’s work, work, work all the time around here, especially in lobster season. You know, he’s out there in the Bay freezing his ass off, so I feel I have to contribute too. Why shouldn’t I? So when he’s fishing he don’t cook and I take care of the house, the shopping and everything else. He comes home and he’s got to get some sleep. They work hard old days, so he can be pretty cranky with the kids. So I try to keep them out of his way. I’m always running around for something. And there’s the books. He don’t have nothing to do with that. He don’t go down to the schoolhouse neither. He says he feels just like a scared little kid again when he goes in there. (EF-FS-74)

Women are proud to claim quietly that they, “run the community,” and nobody disputes that women “run” families. Women were more successful than men in formal education on Digby Neck for a number of reasons. First of all, on Digby Neck, “women don’t go fishing” (with a handful of rare exceptions). Women seem also to have been able to see a more direct connection between school learning and the curriculum, and the kind of work they would be doing in the
community in gendered roles (eg. periodic or permanent wage work in the “around here” area such as: bookkeeping, family and community organisational work, and dealing with the school).

Additionally, women tended to be less resistant in school and more likely to do what they were “supposed to do,” probably because of their inability to establish “direct” connections to the fishery in the way that young men could. For women stayers of this cohort the typical path was from school to a marriage and into a home.

If I had stayed to grade 12 there wouldn’t be any difference because I’d be here and married and I’d have had my family. That was it because that was all I knew growing up. You see it growing up and you say, this is what I’m supposed to do. And to me being a wife and a mother was a very important job. It was not even like a job, it was something that I just thought I could do. I just (pause) I could probably have done a lot of other things (pause) but maybe I was sitting here thinking I couldn’t do anything else. I don’t know. (DS-FS-69)

Educators comment that through the 1960s and 1970s a typical career trajectory for many young people involved early marriage and establishment of well worn patterns of domestic life in a coastal community.

As far as the young women go around here, with remarkably few exceptions, they are still back in the 40s and 50s. You’ve got to have a husband and kids and that’s all there is to life ... What else would I possibly be interested in? Why would I want anything else? This kind of thinking is normal. (GG-FE)

When I first started teaching it was nothing to see kids just graduated from school getting married. And the guy was on the boat and the girl was home keeping house and that was it. You know, dad’s going to give me his boat and his licenses and he’s got 2 or 3 boats in the water and I’m going to take one of them. That’s just what’s going to happen next. I think you also will see that a large percentage of the kids on Digby Neck do end up back in the community. (CD-ME)

Popular high school secretarial programs also offered women of this cohort immediate work opportunities which could be easily combined with other traditional women’s family responsibilities. Most women who took this route ended up leaving Digby Neck or moving into the “not far” and “around here” areas to be closer to employment opportunities, but some managed to remain on Digby Neck commuting to Digby or taking advantage of local opportunities available for secretarial or service industry work.

An example of the gender divisions found in shore based support work is the division of labour in the fish plants. While women, “don’t go fishing” on Digby Neck, they do, “work in the fish.”
"Working in the fish" means working in fish plants processing fish the men catch. Both men and women work in the fish, but the wage structure in the plants is structured to favour men who are thought best able to do better paid "heavy" work. No one questioned the division of labour or the differential pay scale, both seemed to be understood as "natural" and justified by both the nature of the tasks and primary "breadwinner" position of men.

Women and men both, ya there would be. And in the fish plants you had both men and women. They might have a little different job. The men would do some of the heavier work. This is when you did a lot of it by hand. (SS-MS-71)

Women were typically employed as fish "cutters" and "trimmers" and generally did the more precise knife work of skinning and filleting the raw fish. Men worked at the tasks involving heavy lifting like fish packing, icing the fish and loading it onto trucks for shipping. Fish plant work requires endurance and the ability to withstand difficult working conditions, much like fishing. The work is considered to be skilled and informants commented on how it requires a great deal of stamina. The informant quoted below spoke with pride about being considered a "clean cutter" although she was not one of the fastest on the floor. The skill required to save as much of the valuable flesh as possible was a source of considerable pride. Fish plant work often carries a stigma outside the community, but on Digby Neck most people understand, and even admire fish plant workers most of whom are now women.

I worked hard. You know how to work hard if you've worked in the fish plant. I admire anyone who works in the fish. Anyone that can stay and work in the fish plant all day and not get home until 5:30 at night, and stand in the same spot for nine hours. It takes a very tough person, a person with a lot of stamina. It's like I was talking to someone that's still in the fish, working in it and she said, if everybody's children don't stay around here much anymore, who's going to keep the this type of work going. But I suppose there will still always be some that will do it. (DL-FS-69)
The hand on the shoulder: Socialisation for leaving

Your family was a really big influence on what kind of job you went into later in life once school was over. They were a big influence on even who you married at that time. And I think that gave you a sense - right or wrongly - it gave you a sense of belonging. People were looking out for you. (IS-ML-63)

Well, there's a very strong sense of family on Digby Neck I've found. It's in nearly every family because there are a lot of connections through the marriage circles over the last few decades. So when an event is happening, whatever it is, whether it's a wedding or fund raising or whatever, there's a very strong sense of community there, and family. So while they may be living in Toronto or somewhere, the phone bills I'm sure (laughs). There's a strong sense of family and connection and caring for each other. There's something about Digby Neck that's home whether they live in Vancouver or wherever. (CQ-FE)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the community provided a known work and social matrix. But at the same time other alternatives were becoming accessible as well. The ability to see possibilities and options outside the community and its structure of employment was clearly facilitated by family connections of various kinds. The vision of a field of options was coloured by family expectations and opportunities in the fishery. Male stayers tended to be positioned in families that had “direct” connections to the inshore and the developing dragger fishery on Digby Neck. The most financially successful of these men were those whose families owned independent fishing rigs and licenses and these individuals felt the strongest pull to remain in the community and the fishery. Women stayers in this cohort reported financial compulsion and the weight of family expectations influenced them to make the decision to stay on Digby Neck. This “career” trajectory was opposed by educators who report trying to encourage young women to “broaden their options.”

With the grade 12 girls I used to say, I've interviewed all the boys and there's not one of them told me they were getting married. So I said to them, who are you going to marry? And in the second place, that's going to take you ten minutes, then what are you going to do? You know. Well. And then the parents would come back at me when they would go home and tell them (pause) there was always in my mind the idea that you have to leave them to make their own decision, but there was always: “have you thought of,” with me. (OI-FE)

The career opportunity structure was limited for women of this generation, both on and off the Neck. Gendered careers in the service industry or in the “helping professions” as well as the traditional housewife role were available for women who wanted and were able to leave. Women stayers gravitated toward local “options” of marriage and part-time work for the social benefits and family support it gave them, or because they could see no other choice.
Given the size and "close-knit" nature of the community it is no surprise that family connections were important for leavers as well. But leavers in the sample tended to be individuals whose family connections were less local in nature. Leavers had family members who were connected to communities beyond the Neck, either through previous emigration or because they had at least one parent who came from another community. This finding is consistent with the ethnographic work done by Gill Jones in northern England where she found that the most mobile rural young people tended to be those whose own parents are in-migrants from other places (1999a).

You know, a lot of the ones that left over the years, they had some family up in the valley or in the city or in Yarmouth. And they'd go stay there until they got, you know, on their feet. (NS-FE)

But having connections outside the community is not the whole story. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Canadian post-secondary educational system was expanding offering the promise of new forms of training that could be used outside the community. The leavers of the 1963-1974 cohort were post-secondary pioneers. Some leavers report having significant family or family friendship connections outside the community, but most frame their decision as a pioneer experience or a journey into the unknown. Most individuals in this sample of leavers came from families with few immediate kinship connections outside Digby Neck. In order to facilitate out-migration, significant family-based encouragement was seen as crucial. This encouragement ranged from subtle encouragement to leave fishing and homemaking for opportunities elsewhere, to conversations with summer residents about life in other places, to the realisation that the gendered structure of opportunity on Digby Neck offered few opportunities for women outside marriage. There are then, several kinds of connection that come to light in an analysis of leavers' interviews. In these cases, families very often made it clear to young people that they ought to explore a wider range of options than those available locally. For young men, this was generally framed in terms of a rejection of fishing as a way of life. It was all right for the previous generation, but not for this one.

There was never any pressure on you to go fishing. There was more pressure on you to stay in school and get an education and get away from fishing. You know (pause) my mother and father wanted me to be better than just a fisherman. (IS-ML-63)

Such individuals interpreted the industrialization of the fishery as the close of a traditional way of
life. Some families saw the industrialization of the fishery as an opportunity while others saw it as the beginning of the end of a way of life, generally on the basis of their access to resources. Opportunities existed for most young men locally and one needed a kind of family support to leave the opportunities available in the familiar world of the fishery. Most leavers report that they simply assumed from their mid-teens that they would be leaving the community for other places. The community was presented as suitable for the previous generation or for those individuals who had “fishing in their blood,” but not for the majority of people. Parents of leavers tended to promote the idea that fishing was a way of life that did not offer sufficient stability, income and comfort. There were, they argued, “better” options.

Oh he (father) liked fishing. It was in his blood to fish. He started out with his father in a dory. You know, it was his life. He always said there was something better for us to do than fishing. You know, he didn’t say we couldn’t but he always wanted us to be better. But it was a hard tough old life. I mean we ate fish 6 days a week, three meals a day almost. (FN)

The prospects were seen by leaver families as particularly dim for women.

They never really said, like they never discouraged, nothing like that. I hate to keep bringing up gender all the time, but really like if the roles were reversed and I was the mother, I would want my daughter to move on, just because there’s nothing there for her. You know there’s no jobs. (FE-FL-73)

In the 1960s, a variety of options were available for those who were willing to emigrate to urban areas including secretarial and clerical work for women, and trades, the armed forces and abundant labour opportunities for men. Leavers also report being “unusual” because they chose to go when it seemed as though most of their peers were staying close to home. Fewer that one in six people in the full sample of 756 individuals migrated further than 250 kilometres from Digby Neck.5 What all of these mobile individuals have in common is encouragement and a “hand on the shoulder” facilitating the migration process. Typically, this hand on the shoulder came from family and staying, like leaving, was intimately connected to family ties.

Well my mother, I told her that these guys were going out and she said, well you should go and see if you can find something. See what it’s like. I had uncles ... well one’s in Revelstoke. My mother would tell me that I should go out and visit him and that I should drop in and that. I used to go to their place up around Annapolis when we were young and visit there. I think I had another uncle who lived in Montreal. And there was a few other ones around so I knew that I wouldn’t be stuck. I could travel around a bit. (HL-ML-69)

5 This distance represents a comfortable two or three hour drive or cross bay ferry crossing from the home place.
I had an uncle in Alberta who always said why don’t you come out west, why don’t you come out west. So I just loaded her up and away I went. (FN)

For male leavers who were not streamed for university, vocational training and the work skills learned fishing with family on Digby Neck were easily transferable to construction sites or to trades in western and central Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. These leavers report a migration which involved similar kinds of work and skills to what they did on Digby Neck aboard fishing boats or in manual work. “Work is work, it took you a few days at the most to catch on and then you’re away,” commented one leaver who had very little formal education (FN). In the 1960s and 1970s it was common for groups of young men (both stayers and leavers) to set out for Ontario or “out west” in search of work.

We just got together and said let’s go out and see what she’s (Northern British Columbia) like. John MacKay and Fred MacKay. He was out here and David and James Gallant was out here. He came out here, but he was just coming out for the summer to see what it was like and all that. He was going back anyway. So all of us who come out all worked in the woods all together all on one crew (pause) They’ve all gone back now. It’s just me left out here. (HL-ML-69)

The women’s version of this migration tended to be of shorter distance. Women report looking to the middle range “not far” area identified in Chapter 3 (within 250 km of Digby Neck), and particularly Halifax as a place where one could find, “good work.” With opportunities in “helping professions,” and in clerical and secretarial work, female leavers set out to make their connections with other women who had blazed the trail before them. In the 1960s and 1970s, groups of women working in Halifax formed support networks for one another helping to keep each other apprised of work, support the initial migration transition, and to provide a friendship circle in the city.

Everybody wanted to go to Halifax. It just seemed that that was the place to go to get a job. You never even thought about going up the Valley or Yarmouth, it was always Halifax. There were lots of jobs, mostly finance and insurance companies and in banks ... And we all got apartments together and went out to shows. That was really good. (TL-FL-65)

Harriet always worked in Halifax. She worked in Halifax and then came home. Well, there was always a bunch of them up there working in offices and banks. I’m sure when they went to St Pat’s (high school secretarial program) and there must have been something there for the girls to tell them to try for jobs in Halifax. I don’t think any of them ever had a job before they went down there. I think they would have gone down there and just looked around for jobs. There was lots of work. (RR-FL-70)
Once they found work in Halifax, these women acquired the experience they needed to find jobs in a variety of urban settings and in larger rural centres in southwestern Nova Scotia or in the Annapolis Valley. These “not far” migrants typically retained ties with their families and close friends on Digby Neck, but they mostly married men from outside the “around here” region and ended up settling outside the “around here” region off Digby Neck.

In other cases, the hand on the shoulder came from other life influences such as summer visitors from Ontario or from the United States. The community with the highest rate of out-migration is Sandy Cove and it is the community on Digby Neck with the largest population of summer residents and the traditional centre of the tourist trade (see Table 16). This community boasted not only a number of permanent/transient summer residents from Ontario and the United States, it also had two youth summer camps through the 1960s and 70s, one of which operated up until the early 1980s.

I guess I used to have these friends that used to visit from Oakville. They used to live in Nova Scotia and then they moved to Oakville. This mother and the two children. And they were very, like different. They were more sophisticated and everything and I guess they were sort of like role models for me. I didn’t want to end up just living on the Neck and not having anything. I think they were role models for me. And they went to school and one was going to be a teacher, and I forget what the other one was going to be now. So I guess I just knew that they were doing this so I had to do this too. (TL-FL-65)

There were people from Ontario who used to summer on Digby Neck when I was growing up. And I remember thinking they were different. They treated their children and their wives differently than what I had experienced growing up. They were interesting. And I wanted to be like them. I saw something in them that I liked. Also when I was growing up there were two large camps in the village. That’s where I made some friends, one that I met when I was 10 or 11, and she and I have been friends ever since. Well, Sherry was a great influence in my life if only because of the fact that she was going to do something with her life. And I thought I really want to do what she’s doing. We had similar interests. And those two clergy I told you about, friends I’d made. There were those kinds of supports about going on beyond high school and going on to university and doing something else other than living on Digby Neck. (SF-ML-67)

In order to access university training one needs financial resources. These are only available to a select few. In fact two of the most successful Digby Neck entrepreneurs had access to university education by virtue of family wealth. For most Digby Neckers leavers of this generation more “practical” forms of training were all that was in the realm of possibility. Thus, community habitus was recreated in the limited field of options visible to working class fishing families.
Education and mobility: Learning to leave in the 1960s and early 1970s

The Captain’s voice stopped and changed and lowered. There was a note of irritable apology in it. John could catch only a word or two. ‘Don’t... talk about it... him leaving... more than I have to... In a couple of years away to school.’ He tried to study his history after supper in the kitchen lamplight, but he couldn’t get the facts to stay. He went to bed in a kind of sober exaltation, and the future lay with him in his dreams... He saw in dreams a boy with a suitcase, a bus at the gate, and a man and woman who watched as it vanished round the turn of time. (Bruce, 1959: 206).

I knew I wanted to leave and the way of doing that was to become educated. I hope that doesn’t say to you that I wasn’t interested in being educated. I knew that if I wanted to leave Digby Neck, I had to go on to university and do something that would allow me to leave. And if I didn’t do that (pause) Frankly, I could never have been a fisherman so I don’t know what I would have done. There was this sense that I needed to get out of Nova Scotia, not only away from Digby Neck, but Nova Scotia. And going to Ontario seemed to be the place to go and that’s because of the people (tourists and summer residents) I met when I was growing up. (SF-ML-67)

Leavers in this cohort made a clear connection between formal education and leaving the community. Education took a variety of forms ranging from university, to vocational school, to secretarial, nursing and clerical training. Additionally, access to opportunities in the military with minimal secondary education and on-the-job learning in abundant labour jobs in central and western Canada in the 1960s and 1970s provided opportunities outside the formal education system. These opportunities in central and western Canada’s expanding industrial economy mirrored the opportunities for work available in the local economy in that they reflected the differential structure of family and social class on Digby Neck. Children of elite fishing families could choose from privileged options outside the local area just as they could access similarly privileged options on the Neck.

School supplemented and supported the differential “options” faced by potential leavers. Those streamed into an academic college preparatory program starting in junior high school ended up leaving, first for university and then for elsewhere. This segregation of students created an effective barrier of social exclusion and differentiation between the two groups. The streaming system created a two-track academic and social world and there was only minimal contact between the two categories after the beginning of the seventh grade. University bound informants have difficulty even remembering their elementary school classmates from Digby Neck most of whom were streamed into non-academic programs.
Um (pause) the ones that just stayed behind. I’m having a hard time remembering some of those people. Usually the ones that just stayed behind didn’t just finish school. We (academic stream students) didn’t associate with them much in high school. (FE-FL-73)

Those streamed into the non-academic strata generally “lost track” of their academic peers from the Neck.

You never thought about college (i.e. university). We all looked at the army or the new vocational up in Middleton. I don’t know anybody I went to Digby school with who went to college. (HL-ML-69)

The junior high school presented children at the age of 12 or 13 with a set of experiences which differed on the basis of presumed academic ability. Stayers typically report confusion and disjunction between their interests and school activity. Leavers report satisfying social and recreational involvements in the regional secondary through sports, clubs, outings and school organisations throughout their high school careers. The academic stream were assumed to be “going on” to university, while the others were assumed to be staying “around” or to be moving into vocational training, and the result of these assumptions was a tightly controlled regime of academic and mobility offerings.

I know we’re not supposed to say this today, but we knew who was going on and who wasn’t. You knew when they were just small children. I think we were just more honest about it in those days (FL-FE)

The entire business of “placing kids” is a predetermined and more or less conscious forecasting of the educational, but also the mobility future of young people. Not every Digby Neck child got the same message in school on this score. Some educators can see clearly the social class dimensions of this migration message. The children who are given the view that their chances lie elsewhere, tend to be the children of professionals, small business owners and wealthy fishing families.

I think the message that our kids, or professional’s kids or teachers’ kids get is that, ya, you don’t belong here, or I would hope that it would be that there are all these things out there that I hope you experience. And go out there and experience them. If you then decide that this is where you want to come back, that’s good. But I know that somewhere in there there’s a pressure to achieve and achievement means to go off to university and off to the big city and get a responsible job. (CD-ME)

The result of these streaming decisions were that friendships and associations formed that would influence later educational and mobility decisions. The “hierarchy” that streaming created sent
messages to students about who was and who was not worthy of teachers’ attention and capable of getting beyond high school. In the 1960s and 1970s, the secondary school system was overtly elitist and openly designed to usher the academic cadre out of the community and into higher education.

Students came from the feeder schools around Digby and were “placed” according to “academic ability” ranging from the middle class mobile academic class, to the rooted “dumb class,” as one stayer called his placement. Educators understood that the placements made in the streamed system of the 1960s and 70s were based upon their own projections of where a particular child’s future would lie.

You first had the separation of kids into A, B and C classes, and were sorting them out according to ability. A lot of times it was not actual ability, or it didn’t seem to be as much as it was perceived where they seem to be going ... They’re only going to go to grade 8 or they’re only going to be fishermen, or they’re only going to go back and farm or log in the woods or something and they don’t need to go on. They’d just be staying around here so what was the point. (HL-FE)

Children in the academic stream also understood that they were being groomed for post-secondary education, notably university and migration. In the estimation of educators, most academic stream students did leave en masse. The rest, those in the non-academic streams, found places in their communities determined primarily by their own family status in the fishery. Many young Digby Neck boys were placed in the non-academic stream because they were considered to be “destined” to make the “natural” choice which was to work on father’s boat as soon as he was old enough. As educators point out, there was no “shame” or “prejudice” associated with this assessment, it was simply seen as a common-sense assessment of differently placed student’s educational “potential.” Fishing was seen by most educators as a “good” occupational choice for a boy slotted into a non-academic stream in the 1960s-late 80s. The work, though very hard, was generally lucrative by community standards. This was the known path, the way that “most of them” went.

One educator tells a story of a young man who graduated high school in the early 1970s.

---

6 This informant went on to clarify that this class wasn’t “dumb,” they just “didn’t give a shit about school,” and were there mainly to “raise hell,” until they “got fed up” and walked out. This interview was crammed with stories of insubordination and general pranks and tricks.

7 One educator commented that when she was growing up on Digby Neck in the 1940s, fishermen, “always had more money that the ones who didn’t fish.” (OI-FE)
When Hector was in high school and choosing his courses he was encouraged to take the general route and not the academic because he was the son of a fisherman and he lived on the Neck and that's where he'd end up. And he would in no way shape or form be going to college (even though he said he was going to Acadia) and that he would end up there. So what was the point of taking the academic. (HL-FE)

Non academic and academic students alike saw the school as being responsive only to the top echelon. Leavers were particularly aware of the impact of streaming on the distribution of educational resources in high school.

If you were in straight A's and B's then they had all the time in the world for you. And if you didn't, they just tolerated you until you left. (IS-ML-63)

That seemed to those who got poked away into what I think they called general education, uh, those kids didn't... a lot of them were poor and they came from bad homes, I shouldn't say bad homes, difficult homes. Those kids didn't have a chance. They were poorer kids. Some of them certainly didn't have the capability of going much beyond that. And we just didn't associate with that class. The streaming also created its own hierarchy in the school. We were the people who did the yearbook, we were the people who did the newspaper. And the ones who did sports in those days certainly came from the top class. (SF-ML-67)

Family background lurked behind educators' assessments of who would and who would not "go on." These assessments also worked to shape students' understanding of themselves and their abilities. Those in the general stream were defined as being "incapable" of acquiring more than a basic education and, at best, trade training in vocational or business programs. Educators also report that streaming created "cliques" of Digby Neck children who did not "mix" with children from other communities represented in the regional secondary. Year after year, these youth formed their own insular non-academic clique which tended to remain focussed on life on the Neck. Educators claim that these "non-mixers" (as one informant called them) tended to have significantly lower educational aspirations than children who integrated into the larger secondary school community.

Being part of the elite stream gave select Digby Neck students access to the encouragement and support necessary to assist some of them to become educational pioneers and be among the first members of their families to go to university. Students in the academic stream understood clearly that they were positioned for mobility opportunities. The general character of the discourse around education and the future was higher education and mobility oriented. These students also
understood the nature of the streaming system and how it worked to create exclusive categories of individuals in school, but also different structures of opportunity and expectation. Elite students learned to define their mobility options in terms of “smart” self-definitions constructed in their communities and in the schools.

I was the first person in my family ever to get a high school diploma. I have to say that teachers did always encourage me. You just knew that you could do it if you applied yourself. You were in the academic class and you were going to be the ones to break out and do something different. Somebody told my mother I was university material in grade 7 or 8. The rest of them were put in classes that weren’t going anywhere. I think that’s very sad, they weren’t stupid people. They just got on a track that didn’t seem to lead anywhere. And you know, I can’t say what became of most of them. We were put in different worlds when we went to Digby [the regional secondary school]. (RR-FL-70)

I think that because they [teachers] were university educated themselves and they saw students with some kind of potential, that the conversation was that you’ll need this for university, or that you should do this if you plan to go on to university. It seemed that there were a lot of people just going on to higher education or some kind of training. (SF-ML-67)

Those not considered to be “university material” constructed identity and education very differently. Stayers, particularly male stayers, needed to resist school-generated definitions of their academic intelligence. This mirror’s Stern’s ethnographic finding that in Inuit communities intelligence is constructed in terms of an individual’s ability to learn, “through observation and experimentation (from which) individuals are expected to draw their own conclusions” (1999: 505). He goes on to comment how, “I have never heard adults equate being smart with success in school” (1999: 510). The community and the fishing industry provided a different forum for intellectual work and self esteem, one which seemed to many stayers to be more relevant, even superior to the way learning was presented and assessed in school.

You know learning and education is a funny thing. I can remember being called up to the board in grade 6 to do some simple multiplication problem or some math that wasn’t too hard and my mind going right blank. I didn’t know nothing, couldn’t even see two feet in front of me I was that scared. But I’m not stupid. I’ve been on jobs where I figured out things that licensed carpenters and college trained engineers couldn’t. I’ve learned more out workin’ than I ever did in school. Out in the world is where I did my learning. I learned there because it was all part of doing something and I always had the confidence to look over a job and figure out how to get it done. I never had that in school because I couldn’t see the job that had to be done there. I’ve been a carpenter, a steam fitter, I’ve done electrical work, mechanical, all kinds of things. I don’t have any training or papers up on my wall, I’m just a person that will try. And that’s why I think I’ve finally settled on fishing after working all over the country on all kinds of jobs. Fishing is my roots, that’s what I grew up around so it’s work that’s natural to me. (FN)
Educators saw this stigmatisation of youth from rural communities and they understand how the inferiority complex that this process generated truncated the school careers of many people.

It’s not so much with this generation, the ones that are in school now, as with previous generations. The ones who are parents now were students when I first came to Digby. Back then it was even moreso. They may have been in school and very capable, but had this feeling that they weren't going to be accepted because they speak this way and they come from this kind of background. (SF-ME)

The educational track was considered by leavers and by some stayers as a kind of moral imperative. In order to be “good” or “successful” people they had to “do as one should” and remain focussed on educational responsibilities staying in the structured environment of school. Leavers used mobile analogies like, “track,” or, “stepping stones” to describe their educational trajectories. Stayers used static imagery like “wall,” “tunnel” and even “prison” to describe their schooling. For many male stayers especially, education was a sentence, something to be endured. For leavers, each stage in an educational career was a step into something different and this new place then revealed a different set of possibilities.

It was like a chain reaction, or a snowball effect or even an addiction. It was you’ve gotta finish each step: now you’ve gotta get your grade 8 and now your grade 9, because quitting and being somewhere isn’t going to get you anything. It was no good, and if you dropped out what would you do? There wasn't anything. So I guess in a way you had no choice anyway if you wanted to do anything with your life after grade 12. You know, the choice is there, it’s just what you make it. It’s like a whole bunch of doors. High school is behind door number 1, university is behind door number 2, your career’s behind door number 3. And I just keep knocking on all of the doors and moving along. It sounds like Wheel of Fortune or something. (FE-FL-73)

These choices may have been difficult and fraught with unknown elements, but these students were able to place trust in the formal educational system because the system always placed trust in them. Leavers also felt the impact of the same Digby Neck stigma reported by stayers and were much more critical of the secondary school administration of the day for perpetuating (and even occasionally articulating) the myth of the “rude” and “ignorant” Digby Neck fisherman. More typically though the stigmatisation was subtle.

I’m not sure that it was expressed overtly at all, it was things that we heard. We would hear things like: ‘oh, what can you expect, he’s from Digby Neck,’ or that kind of thing. That’s usually the way it was done. Well there was always the tension between Digby and Digby Neck. Digby Neck was always looked down upon by the people in Digby. You were led to believe (pause) they saw us as sort of second class people and dismissed us as ruffians. (SF-ML-67)
This stereotype was also said to have "turned off" many Digby Neck students and many rural students in general, particularly those already stigmatised and disadvantaged by a placement in the non-academic stream. These students were the recipients of the bulk of disciplinary interventions for unruly behaviour. The streaming system reassured elite students that they were "chosen" and thought to be capable of making the leaps of faith necessary to abandon the familiar world of the community.

M: Do you choose to leave, or are you chosen to leave by the school system?

R: When you put it that way it was like we were chosen to leave and the others weren't (pause). But it's not that simple. Nobody stood in anybody's way. It's hard to talk about this without (pause) I'm not down on the place or the people there or anything like that, but I always saw some of them as (pause) not lazy, certainly not lazy in any way. I don't know how to put this. In the fish plant they could work hard and they did work hard, but in school it was totally different. I don't know why. I guess they wanted to stay and they wanted to impress people who could give them jobs around home. And the girls wanted to impress the cute guys. (laughs) But the teachers, why bother to impress them? They just didn't see anything else, they wanted to stay I guess. (RR-FL-70)

In this period, a minimal amount of formal education was still sufficient to provide a person with a reasonable standard of employment and living. And this is perhaps the single most important difference between this cohort and those which follow in later decades, having an "education" did not necessarily mean university graduation or even high school completion. One got as much education as one "needed" to do what one wanted to do. These desires were clearly shaped by family social position in the fishery, a position which mediated the ambit of possibilities open to a student. As educators point out, students of this generation were streamed and placed in terms of the kind of educational and career future individuals were thought likely to be able to access more than on the basis of perceived intellectual ability.

From the point of view of differently placed individuals making strategic decisions about their lives or their children's lives, education was an investment and a resource like any other. It made no sense for instrumentally oriented Digby Neckers to purchase an educational credential that one was not going to be able to "use." Their perceptions of "rationality" were structured by unequally distributed petit capitalist opportunities available to men in the fishery. Anything more than "the basics," or, "what you're going to use," was frivolous and wasteful and represented foregone income. Given the always volatile nature of the fishery, money must be made when the fish are
there, and if one tarries, procrastinates or wastes time (particularly if he is a man), they may not be there tomorrow.

Historically, rural parents and youth are said not to have taken education seriously, and to have been “indifferent.” On Digby Neck in the 1960s and 1970s, education was taken very seriously, so seriously in fact, that it was seen as wasteful to acquire formal education if one was not going to use it. Education was an important investment, an expenditure of valuable time and money with an eye to future returns. In the context of a stable and increasingly lucrative fishery, educational investment decisions were high stakes in terms of potential material losses for the person who “wasted time” in school or in post-secondary study. Minimal secondary credentials were enough to give an aspiring worker a foothold and an entry point into the world of work locally. More than that was only necessary for people who wanted to leave and work, “outside,” the area, “around here.” Education was a mobility ticket purchased with precious earned money and time and neither of these commodities could be squandered.

I had an uncle that had a good education, a university education and he went back and went fishing. He always talked about that. He couldn’t see why you would want a good education and stay fishing so why bother getting it. You know. He got it and I have no idea why. But he couldn’t see you wasting all that time when you could be fishing if that’s what you wanted to do. If you wanted to get out of there and go to Halifax or Toronto or somewhere, you needed an education, or job skills of some kind other than fishing. Education was your key to get away from there I suppose. A lot of them looked at it like that and that’s maybe why they dropped out of school, so they wouldn’t have to leave, I don’t know. In my generation grade 10 got you a job anywhere. (IS-ML-63)
A fisherman is a special person. He is a captain, a navigator, an engineer, a cutter, a gutter, an expert net mender, a market speculator. (Kurlansky, 1997: 230)

But the thing I love the most about fishing is that it’s the job I can do where I get to use all of these abilities I have. If there’s a problem with the engine, I get to be a mechanic. If the wiring goes wrong, I’m an electrician. There’s plumbing and steam fitting and all kinds of other kinds of work you do when you’re out fishing. And here I can afford my own home and that gives me lots of chance to fix it up. I can do it all, the carpentry, and all the rest of it. In school it’s all about tests and reaching some standard. But I’ve got a different kind of education and it’s an education that allows me to actually get my hands on tools and work on something. If you ask any fisherman he’ll tell you the same thing. When we were growing up there was lots of work for anyone that wanted it. You knew that the guy in the fish plant was going to need somebody to work, or this guy was going to want you to work on his boat. And that’s what most of us did, we went to work because through work we got confidence and felt good about our abilities and even about ourselves. School didn’t let you do that. You didn’t feel you were good at the things they were teaching in school and you didn’t feel the things they were teaching in school were really good for much anyway. They saw us as a bunch of dummies and so we went where we could feel like what we did mattered, where we could find some courage and hope. (FN)

Most Digby Neck men tend to be jacks-of-all-trades. Practical skills are highly valued by the stayers in this generation of Digby Neckers. They are proud to classify themselves as hands-on people who are able to, “figure things out,” and who can work with a wide variety of tools. Women on Digby Neck also spoke of the multiple skills that they use to negotiate everyday life. Family and friendly connections are economically important on Digby Neck and these allegiances provide a context for barter and sharing of goods, services, skills, knowledge, advice and talent. In this context, schooling, especially for men, is a pale, inactive shadow of practically oriented active learning integrated into a real economic context. Many informants spoke of the way families work together to “live on love” as one informant put it during slack times in the fishery.

I can fix most things really, or there’s somebody around here who can and I can trade with them. I can work with wood, I’m not an expert at it, but I can build me something I need for in the boat or (pause) I could build a boat. My grandfather was a farmer-fisherman and a boat builder, and I can see us coming back to that too. We’ve got the space, we’ve got the land, we got the (pause) It’s possible to do. That YK2 that they’re all worried about, that don’t bother me no more than nothing. (KS-MS-71)

One of the distinctions between stayers and leavers is that those who leave are seen as “specialized” people who were unable to master the multifaceted and arduous work necessary to
make it in the “tough” world of the small boat inshore fishery. In a certain sense education was seen as the only option for men who lack the resourcefulness, mechanical ability, stamina and ability to withstand seasickness and cold. Such a man was not “fit to do anything else,” and in certain respects he was “doomed” to, “settin in school” because he lacked physical and intellectual abilities necessary to make it as a fisherman. The other side of this equation is that an educated worker is more likely to move and likely to be more difficult to exploit. “Relevance” and “rationality” are defined in terms of opportunities available in a concrete context. From the point of view of this cohort of stayers, educated individuals became “specialised,” and as a consequence of their schooling, they have never been positioned to acquire a broad range of locally “relevant” practical skills.

They’ve gone to school and they’ve took a trade or a specialty and they’re probably very good at it. But I got my degree at the University of the Bay of Fundy. You take, if I’m out there in the bay and a goddamn engine stops, I’ve got to try to get it going. I’m a mechanic. You know, you figure it out most of the time. And that makes you a mechanic. You haul a trap and it’s got nothing in it an the next one’s full. Jesus Christ, what’s wrong with that? And you test her out and say to yourself, what’s wrong with the trap? I consider myself to be as educated as that guy out there living somewhere else, only it’s in something different. He may be a doctor, but he can’t clean his chimney, he has to hire somebody to clean it. I can clean my chimney. (GG-MS-71)

Practical skills are only acquired by active engagement in physical tasks. For men in this cohort school experience was anything but active and involved a great deal of rote learning, physical inactivity and concentration on questionable abstract tasks. This proved highly unsatisfying to a large proportion of Digby Neck men and women too. When asked what kinds of people seemed to do well in school, informants describe a person able to think mechanically, by rote, and not analytically. This reverses popular perceptions of the “school-smart” individual as an intelligent person capable of abstract thought. In the context of the working life of the community the ability to conceptualise work situation and act counts for learning.

Who did good in school? I’d say somebody that could sit and listen for one thing. There are some people that can’t sit still enough to do anything. You know you have this picture of this studious young person that’ll listen and will basically recite back what they’ve been told and then can write it back down on a piece of paper. Schools only look at one aspect of the way people learn. Some people might not quite be so interested. Some people are more hands-on. Rather than be content to listen and think about things that way, some people are more active, some people have more social interests. (SS-MS-71)
The ability to work is not seen simply as the ability to labour hard at routine tasks for long periods of time (although this is an important component of being a good worker in the fishery), to be a “good worker” is to have a particular orientation to the job, to be able to analyse a situation and take appropriate, decisive and rapid action. This is a sort of practical, common sense, working intelligence which is developed over many years of experience in the fishery. The following quote from my field diary illustrates this kind of knowledge.

Some guys, they just never get it. Workin’ takes more than a strong back and a weak mind like they say. You’ve got to have some (pause) common sense is what I call it. When that rope gets snagged or when that bait ain’t on right, you’ve got to know what to do. Some ‘fullers’ can’t do that, you got to push them out of the way and do it for em. All the schoolin in the world, but they can’t figure things out. (FN)

Multiple skills are also key to the ability to adapt to changes in the fishery. This cohort have all had to adapt to modernisation, changes in the fish stocks and government regulation by refitting their fishing rigs or working boats for other fishermen in other fisheries. All male informants have worked in a number of fisheries and a number of different fishing support activities through their careers. A normal fishing career involves work in at least a half dozen different fisheries.

I’ve been at lobstering for 32 years. But I done long lining, you know tubs of trawl and long lines, 4 or 500 hooks per tub. I done that for quite a few years. And I seen as the draggers got building and coming to this area, we seen that they was kind of taking the fish before we could get ‘em hooked on, so it came to the point where I said if you can’t beat ‘em- join ‘em. So I joined up with ‘em and we got into the fish draggin. We done that for quite a few years and then we decided to go scallop fishing because the ground fishery was getting bad. And then I went from the scalloping to the whale watching. Every year I’ve done the lobstering. It’s always been the lobstering in the winter. And herring fishing. I’ve done some drift net herring fishing and set net herring fishing. I had a ground fish license, a lobster license, a mackerel license and a herring license so there was always one we could go to. (KS-MS-71)

Versatility and flexibility have meant that fishermen have had to read the environmental waters, and the political waters and make appropriate adjustments in their operations. Each change of fishing gear requires the application of a different skill set and each fishery is a risky entrepreneurial activity requiring management and administrative skills. Fishing is a “hunting-type” of occupation. Adaptations must be made very quickly in order to exploit the stock, “before it’s gone.” Some informants spoke of the tenuous nature of community and traditional fishing practices in the face of the industrialization of the fishery. They now recognise that fishing has
become more of a business than a community and family-based enterprise. Recent conflict in the fishery over poaching and First Nations fisheries have intensified the competition for what is seen as dwindling stock.

Basically, for the most part I would say that traditional rules and boundaries have been (pause) well they’re gone. They don’t have that respect for one community, that community’s traditional territory or things like that because government rules have come in and that is the legal standard. Now people are investing more and they're moving further and you’ve got other problems like the Native stuff goin on in St Mary’s Bay and eventually you’ll see them going everywhere. This problem affects everyone around the area because if your fall’s catch has already been caught in the summer then you’re naturally going to have to move somewhere else and which means you’re forced to invest more into it. If you only value price then I think a lot of things are being undervalued. I’ll exploit this and then I’ll find something else to move on to. A lot of the mentality in the fishery is get it before it’s gone. (SS-MS-71)

The process of industrialization and regulation combined with declining stocks and competition from mobile gear has forced a lot of the smaller operators out of the fishery as boat and license ownership has become concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer big owners. Uncaught fish are now owned by “men in offices who never put on a set of oil-clothes” as one fisherman put it (FN). Fishermen blame state policy for this situation claiming that it represents a deliberate attempt to downsize the Atlantic fishery, and destroy the viability, economy and culture of coastal communities. The ITQ system, for instance, as well as government license buy-out programs and adult education initiatives are all seen as part of a general conspiracy which is aimed at depopulation of communities, concentration of control of fisheries resources in the hands of a small cadre of what are being called “core,” or “professional” fishermen. The ultimate end of this program, many Digby Neckers claim is the engineered destruction of both the small boat inshore fishery and their way of life.
They wanted me to go to school: Schooling, identity and family

It might be that you were kept in school when the winter woods work was on, and steered away from other responsibilities you would like to take a crack at, but working with the pulpwood in hot weather was nasty work ... But it was sharing a man’s work, Grant’s work, a known enterprise on the Channel Shore (Bruce, 1954: 184).

The stories of stayers contain an apparent contradiction. They all report having been given overt encouragement to stay in school as long as they could. None of the men report being actively encouraged to go into fishing and none of the women report being actively encouraged to marry fishermen. But the lessons were learned just the same. While no respondents were directly encouraged to go fishing or to follow the traditional career path of either gender, young people watched their parents and responded eagerly when adult opportunity presented itself. Fishing and support work offered a class and family structured menu of opportunities, income and the invaluable reputation as someone “willing to work.” While not everyone could “get rich” as some young men from elite fishing families were able to do, everybody had “something to do.” By comparison, school was viewed as infantilisation, irrelevance and drudgery by most male stayers who wanted to get on their feet and do, “something constructive.” They resisted school despite parental pressure to keep them there.

I had to get in fishing by myself. But he (father) did show me a little that first couple of years, enough to get me started, you know. But I always went out with him as a young person, you know, 5, 6, 7 years old. I’d go in the summertime with him and just watch him, watch how he done things. I was educating myself there. I didn’t care about school. I mean, to set in them schoolhouses all day to learn things that I knew wasn’t much use (pause) I didn’t really know, you see I was 15 years old. I just knew that I had to get on the water. I didn’t care if I could speak, I didn’t care if I could write, I didn’t care if I could read, I didn’t care if I could add, I just needed to catch fish. It was just such a pull. I’d sneak away from the school and come down here and get in a rowboat, you know 10, 12 years old, get in a rowboat and go out fishin’. (KS-MS-71)

For women the situation is more complex. Getting a “good” education (defined as completing grade 12) was desirable.

The females are more mature about looking at education as having some value as compared to men. That’s just a general statement about the population. Typically you try to get students involved in things and you try to encourage them at least to a high school level. Well, certain guys will play hockey, Digby Neckers as well as people from other communities around. But as far as student government types of things, yearbook, debaters, liberal kinds of activities. If it’s not a physical kind of thing, males kind of shy away. It doesn’t fit their persona or something. (CQ-FE)
However, for both men and women it was recognised that obstacles of various sorts were quite likely to intervene cutting short a school career. For men it was a question of how long a person could “stand” school, or how long he could put off earning a full-time wage. Women in this cohort of interviewees claim to have enjoyed school, but encountered obstacles of some sort or other along the way. If men quit school because of lack of interest, or because they “wanted to,” women did because they “had to.” Reasons ranged from the lack of financial resources to continue education further than high school, confusion concerning educational and career options, self-esteem issues, pregnancy and relationships with men and the corollary pressure to slide into the well-worn groove of traditional women’s roles.

Well, I got pregnant in grade 11. In those days you had to quit if that happened. (DS-FS-69)

Back in 1970 now, it’s like most of my friends and I, we all got married young. And that was sort of more what you thought was expected of you. You know get married by 20, and have your children by 21, and then raise your family. It was different with my daughter. I can see that now (DL-FS-69).

Each female stayer, in a slightly different way, became a housewife, just as each of the men in the sample of stayers, in slightly different ways, became fishermen. None of the women I interviewed in this cohort is presently working full-time outside the home, but all of them have worked outside the home full and part time at some point in their adult lives. None of the men has ever worked at anything other than fishing or in fish plant or fishing support work.

Male stayers were given strong encouragement to remain in school and to avoid a life in the fishery. But this encouragement had no grounding for many young Digby Neckers in the 1960s and 1970s who were witnessing, generating and responding to modernisation in the fishery. They watched their friends going into the fishery and they watched their father’s generation of fishermen modernising and investing in technological innovation and larger boats, often with government financial support. Just at the time that educational opportunities were becoming more accessible, the money in the modernising fishery steadily improved. While most families supported the idea that young people ought to stay in school, the reasons why remained unclear. Members of this cohort thought that formal education might act as “insurance” in case the marriage or the fishery collapsed, but, education beyond high school was not seen as being of much practical use should the individual choose to remain in the community. The stronger the fishery, the less relevant
school seemed for young men. For young women though a strong fishery meant that families would have surplus capital to finance higher education (see Tables 17-19 in which women have much higher post-secondary participation rates than men in both Cohorts 2 and 3).

Insurance might be necessary in high risk urban environments, but the kind of risk which existed in coastal communities is not diminished by acquiring “paper.” As one informant commented: “you kept the wolf from the door by workin', not by piling up a bunch of degrees” (FN). In the social and political climate of Digby Neck in the 1960s and early 1970s, few marriages failed and the fishery not only prospered, but grew steadily and dramatically. While the work retained much of its physical rigour, advances in fishing technology also took some of the physical misery out of the job both creating a better level of comfort for fishermen and the sense that the industry was entering a more sophisticated and lucrative historical phase. In what was perceived to be a low risk climate, few men who were positioned to take advantage of the fishery saw much need for educational “insurance.” Taking time and money out for educational purposes, especially beyond high school, would take a man away from some potentially productive years, years when he might otherwise be establishing a position in the community and in the fishery.

Either he got it (higher education) for an insurance in case fishing goes to hell; then he can turn to that. Most of em’ that went to school and got their education and came back to go fishing. You know, we thought, what did he have to do all that for, he’s just back here fishing. Here I am a few years ahead of you, I’ve got my own car and my own boat what have you got. So I mean (pause) that’s (pause) no they weren't seen as anything different from we were. They were getting insurance when we were buying boats and cars and getting our girlfriends pregnant (laughs). (GG-MS-71)

Most men who got any education beyond high school or vocational training without high school completion left the community. Schooling was also marginal to the experience of many stayers because of the relative or perceived poverty in families in the communities. Post-secondary and even secondary education was generally seen as a luxury that only the rich could afford. In the early 1970s the modernisation of the fishery was beginning to create class divisions on Digby Neck. With social class formation came the accoutrements of privilege. Included in the array of middle class advantages is access to higher education and the safe sort of social mobility that money facilitates.
Well (pause) who's paying the tuition? Somebody's got to pay the tuition. The ones who went to college didn't have to worry too much about work because their families had money. (GG-MS-71)

Post-secondary education, even vocational education was still seen by some respondents from non-elite fishing families, particularly women, as a financial burden their families could ill afford.

Well, I would have liked to have even gone to that business course at St Pat’s [high school in Digby]? Like I couldn't even afford that because it would have cost more money. It was a question of finances. Oh ya, you couldn't even afford it. My father worked in the fish and my mother worked in the fish and there was just not even a thought of it because there was just no money. (TL-FL-65)

People had to act responsibly when they were old enough to work and help the family by becoming productive and independent. This is prominent in the discourse of women in the sample, all of whom were “successful” in their high school careers. These women were in a position where they felt they had to get into the work force as quickly as possible because there was insufficient family income to support a protracted post-secondary educational experience.

There wasn't any money. I didn't know about student loans, it wasn't talked about. The kids today know what's out there and what's available for them. I didn't know about that. I didn't have the money to go myself, and I knew my parents didn't have the money. University was for people who had the ability to financially put themselves through. So my easiest way out was to switch into the secretarial program. I could come out of school with work. I could help out at home. Then I won't to be a financial burden. (DL-FS-69)

There didn’t seem to be an emphasis on that you could go out and learn something different. No it was enough for you to learn these basic things and then get busy and go to work. (DS-FS-69)

These accounts are consistent with the literature on working class obstacles to learning and the kinds of, “hidden injuries of class” described by Sennett and Cobb (1973). Male stayers felt these injuries in school and they often constructed their identities as intelligent, hard-working people against the way they were defined in school. One educator articulated how the “hidden injuries” are subtly inculcated in children from coastal communities.

In our subtle way of communicating our expectations with all the little nuances we very effectively do that a lot of times. And we stigmatise it (rural identity), we make it agony. We go one step further than saying this is where you'll end up for your life; it's not just that you're a Necker, it's that somehow we also have to say that there's something negative about that, or that if you're a Black kid from Jordantown, it's not just that, it's a negative thing. If we could just do that and say,
and isn’t it wonderful to be a Necker (laughs). If we could just do that it would be all right. But I have a terrible feeling that we do that but also somehow in the doing, we take away from the value of what being a Necker or being a Jordantowner or being all those things is, and what they really mean. And because we’re part of that institution where we think what we offer is mobility, we don’t recognise that perhaps what is out there available to these people (in their communities) is equally important and equally as valuable. (CD-ME)

Given the nature of the community and the importance of multiple practical, hands-on skills, it should come as no surprise that so many young men left school before graduation. Beyond a basic level, male stayers did not see schooling as real learning at all. Rather they remember a process of confusion, character destruction and identity stripping. Most male stayers offered some variation on this general theme: that school was, for them, a place that bore little relationship to the identities they were building in their communities in the context of work in the fishery, in the home and in the community.

It’s your identity. I’m a fisherman. And like I say, in my day there was a lot of fishermen out there that’s educated, they just, they kept their roots rather than using their wings. That’s all they done. They’re just as educated as that guy out there that’s flying around in Toronto, but they stayed here. They’re just as educated and they’ve got the same abilities but they’re here. (GG-MS-71).

One informant articulated this analysis of what he calls the “missionary” work of the schools.⁸ He saw in teachers’ attitudes an implicit denunciation of the way of life in the community and the way people made their living. Schools, in this vision, are seen as the road to “enlightenment,” or to a “better life.”

You weren’t made to feel great about yourself and where you were from. You were conditioned that way in school. You know a lot of teachers felt like they was almost like a missionary coming to liberate you from this type of life. And the impression that you got when you went in to school—maybe more high school than in elementary ... It was this notion that the fishery has been the employer of last choice. Those who don’t make it, well maybe you can go fishing. (SS-MS-71)

Schooling sat apart from the life that people lived in their communities. The respondent above claimed that the education system has not served people in coastal communities well because it set its own vague agenda above work and life in the community and effectively provided a vision of a better life elsewhere. The difficulty is that this vision was virtually unattainable for a large part of

---

⁸ Blythe also found this quasi-religious educational discourse in Akenfield (1969). One of his informants commented: “People look to education now in the same way as they once looked at religion. Are you saved? Have you got your O - levels? It’s the same thing - salvation” (Blythe, 1969: 190).
the population whose families lacked the resources as well as the sense of self necessary to attain it, or perhaps, did not even value the proffered vision. This vision, after all, implicitly or explicitly demeaned one's family and way of life.

Well, as for the education system, it hasn't actually served the people well because it hasn't really addressed their needs. It's prepared them for something else. You know they've been told that this is (pause) not the best way, not the best way to live. There's better things and your life, your family's life, has basically been demeaned. (SS-MS-71)

That was always (pause) it seemed like that was the attitude when I was in school and stuff. You know, fishin that's almost the same as working (pause) well, there was something wrong with that kind of job. (KS-MS-71)

Leaving school to do fisheries support work in peak times or otherwise continues to be a common practice for young men, and to a lesser extent, for young women. This practice continues today in a limited way in the remaining fisheries, notably lobstering. There continues to be an abundance of work at peak fishing times and young people are subtly trained to do it from a very early age. This informal training partly created a stigma around Digby Neck as a community. Teachers remember that from the 1960s through to the late 1980s it was common for boys in fishing families to “disappear” for various lengths of time, and eventually, permanently. For the young men of this cohort particularly, fishing clothes, lobster sandwiches in the lunch pail and coming from outside “town” were all marks of a lack of sophistication.

Generally ya, they [“town” people] looked down on it and it was (pause) you were just an ignorant fisherman from Digby Neck or from wherever. Cause guys from outside, if you weren't from Digby, you weren't accepted. Of course when you went to school and you still had your hip waders on, they didn't like that too much either (laughs). And they used to kind of look down their nose at you. That was just part of your identity being off the Neck. (IS-ML-63)

While in later years these differences became positive badges of identity, this 1963-74 age cohort reported feeling very much outside the mainstream social world of the regional high school. Women tended to be less resistant to the implicit stigmatising messages they too encountered in their schooling. Criticism of Digby Neck as a “primitive” place full of “ignorant” fishermen was generally understood to be levelled against men. But women also express similar perceptions and how only recently people in the community have begun to think differently about their own experiences and abilities.
In this area people would think about studying and having a lot of pieces of paper to say that they’ve done all this stuff. That’s more the older generation. Our generation is starting to move away from that a little bit. A lot more people believe that life experience can make you an educated person. I consider myself to be an educated person because of the things I’ve done. I’ve had an administrative job for seven years. Ten years ago I would never have thought that I’d be able to do that. You know that’s for somebody else, that was for smart people, that was for more educated people. What do I know about running anything? Well, I know a hell of a lot more than I did seven years ago, so it’s experience that makes you educated. (FN)

The reflective perspective of these middle aged informants reveal a clear understanding that they have been educated in the course of their lives, but it is an education that would not have been possible in school. Community experience and family life for instance have provided women with a practical education much as working in the fishery has provided men with their particular skill sets.

As far as being educated ... we’re educated. Education is not just education from grade primary up to grade 12 in a classroom. You’re educated in everyday life going from one thing to another. There’s lessons that we have learned all through our lives that you could never get behind a classroom door. (DS-FS-69)

Men never spoke of their educational careers in terms of an exploration of their interests or talents. Women did and felt disadvantaged in comparison with their own children who had the benefit of counselling and what they saw as a more humanistic form of schooling. These women claim they were not given an opportunity to “look inside themselves” and evaluate their own potential. In the absence of this opportunity or training to analyse the self, these women found themselves drawn into the well-trodden life paths on display in the community. They see this as a failure to gain a clear sense of reflexivity, to imagine their lives as what Giddens calls a”project” where they have significant choices to make. Connected to this weak sense of reflexivity, the women in the sample also report a strong strain of uncertainty about the purpose and the ends of the whole enterprise of formal education, particularly beyond high school. Comparing her own experience to that of her adult children this informant spoke quite clearly of this ambiguity about the ends of education or the possibilities to which schooling might be connected.
The only thing that I feel was different between then and today was that there didn’t seem to be as much of an emphasis to encourage you to keep going on and go to university. It just seemed to be that (pause) that was something that you never thought that you’d get that far. It was that you’d get some learning and then you’d go out and get a job. There was nobody telling you to look within yourself and think about what you’re gonna do or what you’re interested in. When I thought about high school I thought, what was I going to do, and I couldn’t see anything. I think you really would have had to have had somebody pushing you or whatever to get beyond. You were told to go to school, but the “why” wasn’t very clear. (DS-FS-69)

This respondent understood her life in retrospect as a reflexive “project,” but her community contained limited role models, and subsequently, a limited vision of what education was indeed for. In order to construct a self reflexively, one needs to have a sense of alternative possibilities or to see the self as an open set of options rather than a set of fixed roles. Giddens argues that this is a key feature of life in a post-traditional society. To see options one needs both a modernist perspective as well as access to resources and the absence of material and ideological constraints. Some informants saw school as a place where things just didn’t fit with the world as they knew it. Nebulous, frightening or unattractive “opportunities” were offered in school and school learning tasks were often constructed as “invisible” and related to skills and materials which had no tangible place in the community. For instance, informants routinely commented that they could see no purpose in what they were learning or where the trajectory of formal education was leading. As they continued in school, the work expected of students became more and more disconnected from the habitus of life in the community.

You saw all kinds of work going on around you. The community was full of boats and people working around the wharves. And women had lots to do at home with kids and feeding people and taking care of things, you know. There was no boredom that I can remember, it was work, work, work and everyone did it. But school, well that was work, work, work too, and I liked it, but (pause) I don’t know, it just seemed like a crossword puzzle or a trivia contest, it didn’t have anything to do with anything people did around here. (FN)
Homesickness, security and survival

I didn't know what I was getting myself into. When I left Nova Scotia to go to university in Ontario, I wasn't prepared for what confronted me. Other students were light years ahead of us, or of me, in some areas. And I'd never lived in a city before and I was terribly homesick. (SF-ML-67)

Well, I think a lot that came out here [Western Canada] got homesick and wanted to go back. But I got out here and there was hunting and fishing and all that I liked to do, and so I stayed. We have fog here and seagulls here and they come up here and holler and scream, just like home. (HL-ML-69)

All informants (including educators) report that in this period, Digby Neck remained relatively isolated and insular in social terms. While family vehicles had become common by the 1960s, they were not used in many families for journeys beyond the “around here” region.

When I was young, well if we went to town (Digby), that was a big event. You might go once a month. (DS-FS-69)

There are a lot of people my age that would drive to Digby and maybe to Yarmouth, maybe up the Valley a ways but they would not even consider taking their car into the city [Halifax]. It's a real traumatic experience. It's really a big thing. (MS-FE)

Those who left Digby Neck in the 1960s and early 70s faced a variety of significant challenges and an uncertain future that could not be mapped by local knowledge. Educators who began their teaching careers in the 1960s and 1970s were amazed at how many of their high school students had never travelled outside the local area. This lack of exposure of other places contributed to a particular kind of resistance to mobility and educationally related life-options.

I remember when I came to this area being blown away by the number of kids who had never been as far as Halifax. There was just no desire, no inclination, no effort to know anything beyond immediate confines. (GG-FE)

Stayers learned to construct their identities against the backdrop of the community habitus. They learned through their socialisation, “who is me?” and “where is home?” But among the basic facts of life in coastal communities was that, “not everyone could stay” as one educator put it. Informants in this cohort offer many thick descriptions of the power that the known and the local had for them, but this knowledge was counterbalanced by the understanding that some youth must leave the Neck. Feelings of acceptance and familiarity are juxtaposed with feelings of insecurity and alterity outside the community.
Maybe it’s just feeling accepted. I think a lot of people had a way of feeling
accepted in the community and there may be some at times that felt that they were
not accepted outside the community so they felt a bitterness that they carried along
which made it harder for them to mix and grow in that way. And then there’s
others who want to get them up and get their children out of this community, they
want to get them out of here because they don’t want them mixed up with the way
these people are or something. And then that makes them feel kind of adrift and it
makes it hard on some of them. They maybe kind of feel apart. (DS-FS-69)

Living in other places has presented and continues to present significant emotional, social and
financial challenges for youth from coastal communities regardless of their social position within
those home communities. This is in part because of the insular nature of the coastal community.

When I got out of school my first job was in Toronto and it was working for a
medical company doing claims. That was the first time ever out of Nova Scotia.
And I was so homesick. I was 18 or 19 when I got out of school and never been
out of Centreville before in my life so I was so homesick. Most everyone I think
stayed around. I didn't want to stay around the Neck. But I was just like so
spoiled, I was always around my mother and father. I was so homesick. (RR-FL-
70)

The visceral experience of living in a city alone was sufficiently traumatic to influence a great many
prospective migrants to turn around and return to Nova Scotia. Most leavers report missing the
physical setting of the coastal community and the comfort of the ocean, even if they saw the place
as unsustainable or unsatisfying in many respects. Digby Neck is home for leavers as much as it
is for stayers.

I mean you love it. You love it there, I think we have the best house. My mom
lives in the last house right next to the water, right next to the plants, right next to
the boats; it’s really great and I love the ocean. When I moved I was like a fish out
of water. You know I missed the water. I guess that’s just kind of part of you,
part of who you are, the way you’re brought up, you know, your setting. (FE-FL-
73)

I miss the people. They’re friendly and that. I got a lot of relations back there. It’s
a nice place to go, quiet and peaceful. (HL-ML-69)

For people raised there in the 1950s and 1960s, the coastal community is a known universe, a
place where people felt comfortable not only at a social level and in terms of their families, but also
at the level of the physical environment. My interviews with this cohort are peppered with
testimonials to the natural beauty of Digby Neck. The following quote is probably the most
extreme version of this sentiment, but the ecological focus is intriguing. This man not only lives in
this place and wants his family to remain here, he is an essential part of the place itself.
I think a fisherman, just like myself, I'm like a creature of the water. I'm like a whale, I'm like a bird, I know things are gonna happen before they happen. Before a storm, fish will change their pattern, whales yesterday were acting very very funny out there, three days before a hurricane hits. We can't even predict that storm down there. Them whales out there know something about that hurricane. They're acting really weird, staying down the longest we've seen em stay down all this summer. Why? Because they're creatures of the sea and they know. And fishermen have that instinct. (KS-ML71)

The vast majority of this cohort who went on to post-secondary education have left the community. Despite unsupported local folklore about a great number of fishermen with university degrees, very few people in this cohort with any post-secondary education remain on Digby Neck. Most of the stayers in this cohort understood education as a "toolkit" for those who wished to make their lives elsewhere. "Most of the ones who stayed in school are somewhere else," is a more accurate common perception. When the educational enterprise was "successful," the person would leave the community for the array of "opportunities" in other places. When the individual "failed" or defaulted on the mobility offered by schooling, the community provided a life.

You know the whole thing through school was, you know, get your education and move on to something different. If you were successful, then you'd be able to move on. If you weren't, well, you'd probably have to stay here and find something to do. And I don't really think (pause) I think it's a thing people have had to learn to live with. You know, they've been tagged that way. You're told to look at this group of people away over here and that these people are doing great. Well how come this other one stayed here all his life? Well, he's not noteworthy, he's not winning awards, he's not noted for success or anything like that. (SS-MS-71)

Resistance to the notion that one has to leave in order to be considered a "success" is a recurrent theme among stayers. Informants in this cohort consider themselves to have made a success of their lives while remaining on Digby Neck. Success is generally spoken of in terms of having, "worked hard," made a, "good living," and having raised a family, "responsibly," all in the difficult context of a community and fishing in transition. This vision of success unfolds within the context of a family structure and a place where one is familiar and comfortable and where one can take pride in having survived and kept alive a way of life against considerable odds. Survival itself is a kind of victory for Digby Neckers of this generation. While men went fishing, women tended to aspire to a career that combined temporary or part time work with domestic roles. These are the personal trajectories of the habitus in an Atlantic Canadian coastal community.
They can see themselves working at seasonal kinds of jobs that they'll lend themselves to, tourism kinds of jobs, or (pause) I shouldn't say unskilled, but clerks, cashiers, maybe receptionists if they go away for a year or two to get some training (pause) So I think their whole mentality, because they don't want to move away from home. So my options are going to be limited and that's the price I'm going to pay because I don't want to venture too far. (CQ-FE)

This version of success is thought to have little to do with formal educational credentials. While formal education beyond a basic level was seen as a, "waste of time" if a person intended to remain on Digby Neck, there remains an ambiguity in these accounts and mobility fixated anti-community attitudes do exist among some Digby Neckers.

I think the only part that becomes sad is when it has to be looked at as though if they haven't gone away and made something of themselves and got out of here, out of the community and made their life somewhere else they're not a successful person, they haven't succeeded. I hear kids saying that you know, if I ever get off of Digby Neck I'll never come back. (laughs) Moving is a choice, it isn't a failure. (DS-FS-69)

For those who left Digby Neck to experience it, post-secondary education was a social as well as a geographic migration. University bound leavers tended to feel unsophisticated and out of place in university. While they found the experience fulfilling in the end, they report significant transition difficulties ranging from feeling unprepared academically to feeling at sea socially. Urban students already had significant support networks in place and university was, for them, an extension of high school.

I went to university and I then left and came back home after about 6 weeks. And I remember the trip back and I knew that I had made a terrible mistake about leaving university and I knew that I had to do it. It was a good thing for me to do because that's what it took for it to really sink in that university was the only way to make a life for myself ... well hopefully that I could go on and do something. But I was very lonely because I didn't know anybody. I was confronted with high school students who went to university with all their buddies. They had sort of moved one community into another. Well I didn't have that luxury. (SF-ML-67)

The university educated leavers in this cohort really saw no options for themselves other than pursuing higher education and moving to another place no matter how difficult this transition might be. In contrast to the "rooted" stayers of their generation (who were generally unable to imagine a life outside the community at the decisive point in their adolescence) university bound migrants were unable to imagine life in the coastal community. The privilege of seeing options outside the community made leaving a foregone conclusion for university and professionally bound women.
I couldn’t see myself staying there although some of my friends did and all of my mother’s generation. I guess you sort of felt like it was nice and comfortable for them anyway. It’s a nice place to visit kind of thing, you know? I went into nursing and I knew I wouldn’t be coming back except to visit. (RR-FL-70)

A combination of the strong desire to do other things and see other places, access to financial resources, as well as a strong repulsion to traditional work in the fishery or in traditional women’s roles made the difficult move to other places palatable for migrants. While they continue to have strong attachments to family and to place, leavers could not have imagined themselves staying and doing work they “couldn’t do.” So while other places were intimidating in a number of ways for leavers in this cohort, the alternative to leaving was even less attractive.

Well I’d been out in an open boat, a 28 foot lobster boat in the middle of the bay in January and it really didn’t crank my wagon. I just wasn’t interested I guess. Oh ya, it’s still home. It’s nice to go back for a visit every now and then. It’s also nice to leave. Other than family, there’s not much down there for me. (IS-ML-63)

My friends back then wanted to keep everything the same, the same people, the same work, the same families. I guess they found that comfortable. I love my family and I like going back. It’s funny, it’s changed and it hasn’t. I see a lot fewer boats, but I see a lot of familiar people, like I say, doing the same things they were back then. I don’t know how they can put up with that. But then they probably don’t know how I could just up and leave everything like I did. (RR-FL-70)

Both the urban environment and the university setting provided a significant social challenge to leavers of this cohort who were accustomed to a familiar social environment in the coastal community. The “luxury” of an urban upbringing includes the visibility of universities, other cultures, people of different social classes working in a variety of occupations, and the general mix of difference which is absent in many rural communities and coastal villages. Part of this urban privilege is a daily immersion in a diverse social space and economic geography. This is a story of a doubly challenged individual, challenged not only by the social class habitus of higher education, but also by the isolation of urban living, an isolation made particularly acute because this man left a tightly structured, family-based, predictable life in a coastal community. This familiarity with difference, combined with the presence of school friends, made university a more comfortable and predictable place for this leaver’s urban classmates.

I knew when I was fairly young that I was going to leave. But I wasn’t prepared for the shock of leaving the village and everything familiar. I’m trying to think how I (pause) I was afraid, kind of lonely. I think I was more sort of bewildered than anything else. It was a totally different culture, a culture that I wasn’t familiar with
at all. I was scared, I was afraid (pause). Well certainly my experience was very different from the people (other university students) that I was living with and so there was not much in common and I had to stick handle my way through a lot of stuff. But the longer I stayed there, the easier it became and I didn’t take it as personally as I initially did. But it was tough because it was as though every time I turned a corner there was a new surprise. (SF-ML-67)

I didn’t want to end up ...

It’s a beautiful part of the world, but it’s not the only part of the world. There’s lots of people from here that love to get to the Maritimes and when they do get there they thoroughly enjoy it. But this is probably only for a month, at the most. They love the people, the countryside, the ocean and all of it. But then you come home because there’s something about the Maritimes (pause) I don’t know what it is. The people around here [a western Canadian city] talk about it in a funny way. I guess it’s a place you love to visit but you still can’t figure out why people stay there all the time. Maybe it’s like visiting Disney World (pause) well, a less exciting Disney world, a relaxing place. I mean you don’t want to stay in Disney World all the time and you realise that you don’t want to relax all the time. And that seems to be it, the Maritimes is a sleepy place for them, a place where not much happens and that’s why it’s a good place for a vacation. Nova Scotia is like a summer cottage, a place you go to relax, but it isn’t a real place. (FN)

Leavers tend to see Digby Neck as an almost mythical place, a childhood home which is remembered with fondness, but with a sense of unreality. Their sense of the place is a romantic, pastoral vacation place. What emerges is a picture of a place that has been both tainted by modernity and capitalist relations of production, but which at the same time retains elements of the rustic, quaint, fishing village.

When I left, it was (pause) they had just put a quotas system on. We were allowed to catch 80,000 lbs per month or 20,000 lbs per week. And then we were fishing with lots of other (pause) they put this quota on and we went out and we just couldn’t understand why all the other boats were taking everything that was there, the US boats and I can’t remember who all was there. But they were taking anything and everything. We were fishing on Browns (Bank) and sometimes it was pretty much like a city out there. And that’s when I decided I’d had enough of Digby Neck. And it was harder and harder all the time for the little guy to make it. The bigger companies were buying up the small companies and most of the work was on a company boat even at that time in the early 70s. (FN)

Given the changes in the fishery, staying was seen by leavers as a kind of stagnation. This perception is typical of both male and female leavers who did not want to “end up” spending their whole lives in what was seen as the very limited environment of Digby Neck. Male leavers particularly saw staying as not only stagnation, but struggle. All leavers reported that those who
remained in the Neck faced a struggle, implying that those who did stay were both willing to suffer hardship and to be adaptable and resilient. Not only have stayers faced the hard work that is traditional in the Atlantic fishery, they are also now faced with having to learn how to survive in the context of globalisation, capitalist development and industrialization of fisheries work, and the concomitant demise of fish stocks.

If I didn’t have that (education) I imagine I’d be fishing or trying to anyway. It’s not so easy right now. My brother there he was making traps trying to make some money. It’s hard to figure out how to make money down there cause all they knew is fishing. You know, that’s all they got and now they got to figure out a way to do it and it’s hard. Right now they’re kind of stuck. They’re kind of old now, my brothers, to try to do anything else. It’s kind of hard to try to go out and do something else. (HL-ML-69)

While work in the Digby Neck fishery was a struggle and something all of the leavers in the sample were subtly encouraged to escape, the struggle and its familiar setting on Digby Neck and on the Bay of Fundy made it attractive to many male stayers. This environment is seen by what one stayer described aptly as, “comfortable tough” echoing Ursula Kelly’s comment about life in rural Newfoundland being rough, yet familiar territory, or Paul Willis’ evocation of the way the “lads” came to accept the brutal work they saw as their lot (1978). Stayers struggle on against all odds. Leavers in this cohort find this to be a particularly insecure way to live.

I think a lot of em [leavers] thought of it as a struggle. I mean it wasn’t that horrible, but I think that’s the way a lot of them thought of it as a struggle and those were the ones who left. And there are some who like a struggle, you know the familiar struggle, the same life your parents had even if it’s tough you still want it because it’s a comfortable tough. (FN)

The industrialization of the fishery changed the nature of the familiar struggle introducing new elements of risk and uncertainty that developed more fully in the next decades (the late 1970s-90s). By the mid 1960s, family strategies and assessments of prospects in the fishery varied with some elite families making major investments to modernise their fishing operations with the support of low interest loans and grants. Leavers point out that it was mainly established fish dragging families that were able to take advantage of this kind of opportunity. The irony is that it is also this kind of family that was best positioned to take advantage of high status opportunities made available through expensive post-secondary education as well. Social class is clearly the most significant factor for access to local as well as distant opportunities in the fishery and in the
middle class. Male children of elite fishing families were “lured” out of school and into the fishery. Without reasonable prospects that education and other places could provide viable alternatives, young people from less advantaged families were “willingly forced” into the fishery.

But social class is not the only dimension of the stratification of opportunity. Women leavers describe leaving behind a place in which their options were restricted to the point where life is described as total stagnation. While they were typically very careful not to criticise their parents and brothers who inherited fishing privileges, as well as members of their own peer groups who remained on Digby Neck, for leavers staying would have been a kind of death.

I love where I come from but it just didn’t have anything to offer for women, we’ll put it that way. We didn’t buy boats, we didn’t go fishing. So if you didn’t do that (pause) and if you didn’t just marry someone, heaven forbid, and that to me was just like ending your life, you had to move on. You know, you had to kind of get out. There, it’s like (pause) well you don’t have a choice. You either have to go on or you’re stuck behind. (FE-FL-73)

In Chapter 5, I reported a migration rate for women from Digby Neck that is close to three times the rate for men. Approximately 40% of men stayed on Digby Neck while only 15% of women remained there through the 36 years that the survey covered. Women leavers and stayers both understood school to be the principal means of social mobility. School was seen as something that a woman could do in the 1960s and 1970s if she wanted to forge a different kind of life. If a woman did not want to remain in the community, and could afford it, then education was seen as the way to avoid “getting stuck.” Like their stayer counterparts, women in this sample of leavers describe generally positive, if bland, secondary school experiences. By contrast, male leavers claim that they were able to migrate and build successful lives outside their home communities in spite of their high school experience rather than because of it.

Women leavers report never having “gotten serious” with a local man. For leavers, romantic involvements with local men leading to pregnancy was a significant threat to mobility aspirations because having a child meant the termination of a young woman’s school career in virtually all cases.
I think a lot of them (stayers) had boyfriends really, really young and they were (pause) they got more involved with them. So they were married earlier or maybe some of them didn’t even finish, and they did get married ... I think that was a lot of it. You know, that was their role, they were going to be married. I never really got serious about anyone I was going to school with. But I find when they did get serious over someone like that, that is often who they end up marrying. And then they don’t get any further. (TL-FL-65)

Female leavers in this cohort assumed that they both had to acquire education beyond the high school level, and that they had to leave the community. There were, as they put it, “no opportunities” available for women of their generation. Young men were given the opportunity to go fishing even if it was not always the most desirable path encouraged by parents. For young men, fishing was the locally based default option.

Well my father was very generous with him (brother). You know he took him in. He was just that way, he wasn’t into books. He just wasn't into literature and the more (pause) it just wasn't his way. He wanted to fish and they didn’t stop him. They let him do it. (RR-FL-70)

I think, like before, when I was in school, the men, they almost always stayed there. But I think, for girls, that is how they saw it definitely, you had to leave. (TL-FL-65)

Regardless of their family’s position in the fishery, women did not inherit fishing privileges and licenses; in fact, women leavers in this sample report being actively discouraged from doing fisheries related work. While they were not actively encouraged to leave, they were actively discouraged from engaging in the only kinds of activity which would have allowed them to stay.

They didn’t want me working in the fish. My brothers, no problem. And that made me mad at the time. They had money and I had nothing or a little bit of change from babysitting. I had to leave to make any money, at least that’s how I saw it back then. (RR-FL-70)

I don’t think my mom really wanted me to (work in the fish plant), she’d say that’s no place for a girl, your hands are in cold water all day. It was basically all men. Not too many women did work in the plant at that time. I always thought, what a shame, it’s right there across the street. I don’t know it just wasn’t ... Most of the women were, I don't know how to say it, well, lower income. It really wasn’t a good place for a woman. The language and stuff like that plus the actual physical work itself. It wasn't a glamorous job. (FE-FL-73)

Since fisheries related work was virtually the only work available on Digby Neck, the logical conclusion to be drawn by young women is that their opportunities lay outside the community and
that these opportunities were accessible only through education. Women of this cohort were
effectively forced to continue with education at least to the high school level unless they “chose” to
marry a fisherman. This compulsion is reflected in consistently higher levels of both educational
credentials and out-migration for women reported in Chapter 5.

T: It was only some of the women and not the men who finished school.

MC: Why was that?

T: Oh there’d be nothing to do. I remember even in the summer you were lucky if
you could get a job even working in the fish. And I took the commercial course,
uh, because I remember I did want to take hairdressing but that would have been
like $500 and it was just too much at that time for your parents to spend. So I took
the commercial course that they offered and it was fine, but I wish I had gone on to
college or university. That was your only chance really unless you wanted to stay
around and get married. (TL-FL-65)

Marriage was seen as a legitimate “career choice” and served as the default option for women in
this sample. As one educator commented, “there was certainly no stigma attached to marrying a
fisherman in those days.” Still, default options are denoted by the prefix, “just a.” If one chose
the default path, one became “just a fisherman,” or, “just a housewife.” All women in the sample
of stayers in this cohort were married before the age of 20. None of the women leavers I
interviewed in this cohort was married until the completion of some post-secondary training or
education. Women could achieve community defined success by marrying a successful fisherman
and being in a position where she did not have to work and afford a well appointed house very
often built on family land.

Anybody that ... I don’t know why people decided to stay, like, if it was a girl,
unless that was their goal, to grow up and get married. Um, certainly it wasn’t
mine. I mean I guess, go to school and if you got your grade 12 and lucky enough
to get a boyfriend and marry him and if he had a good job like fishing and he was
doing well, I guess you were looked at as doing pretty good. (FE-FL-73)

Educators expressed frustration at what they perceived to be the majority of young women of this
cohort moving directly from school into domestic situations. Female leavers saw no options other
than to move, and stayers saw no options other than to stay. Educators could see habitual patterns
being recapitulated.

And it was off to get married, right out of school. They thought it was wonderful,
their mothers thought it was wonderful. It’s supposed to be bliss, but you could
see those old patterns being repeated. (OI-FE)
While many women did move into domestic situations, the large majority of them did so off Digby Neck. The further they moved from Digby Neck, the less likely it is that they report “housewife” as their principal occupation. The traditional image of domestic femininity and reliance on the earning power of men was rejected by female leavers. Village life held few attractions for them other than the physical beauty of the place and family ties. Leavers saw little comfort in well known daily routines. Where stayers spoke of comfort and familiarity, leavers tended to see oppression and a lack of challenge.

At that time in my life I really wanted badly to get out of there. I saw people doing the same things that their own mothers had done. That wasn’t for me. I didn’t want to marry a fisherman, I wanted to do something for myself. You know, we didn’t have much contact, the TV was pretty poor, but you just knew that you had some choices, you didn’t have to become a housewife. At least some of us figured that out. Maybe I just never fell in love in high school (laughs). (RR-FL-70)

The older members of the cohort can remember sexist anti-educational attitudes in the community. Women had to resist the idea that formal education was a dead-end that culminated for most with high school and represented a prolongation of childhood. Without the economic opportunity the fishery provided young men of this cohort, young women were faced with few options should they choose to stay. Women’s activity was stratified into the very narrow band of domestic labour and on-shore fisheries support work. Describing the climate of gendered opportunities in the mid 1960s in the community this male leaver commented:

Ya. Once they (women) got married, say 17 or 18, well that was it, they just dropped out of school, they weren't interested at all. And nobody pushed them in those times either because education, especially for women wasn’t a big thing unless she was an exceptional student. (IS-ML-63)

These accounts explain the gap between male and female migration rates from Digby Neck reported in Chapter 5. Gender quite clearly structured local opportunity available to stayers and provided a strong influence on migration and educational decision making in the 1960s and early 1970s.9 The power of gender segregation in traditional resource based labour markets is remarkably entrenched.

9 Historian Eugen Weber found identical rates of migration by gender in rural France at the turn of the 20th century to those that I report in this study.

The young and the women felt the temptation (to migration) most ... if the young men could not be persuaded (to move), the girls went alone. In one Eure village in 1900, 42 or 100 sons of agricultural workers stayed on the land against only 15 of 100 girls. (1976: 286)

191
Shovels around the root: The contemporary community and the crisis in the fishery

Tonnies style communities fall apart the moment they know themselves as communities. They vanish once we say ‘how nice it is to be in a community.’ From that moment on, the community is not the site of secure settlement: if is all hard work and uphill struggle, a constantly receding horizon of the never ending road; anything but natural and cozy (Bauman, 1992: 138).

I think again of a family in the community. This is my boat, this is my wife, these are my eight sons and my six daughters or whatever and we know who we are and this is our place. In all the layers that this applies to is a real sense of who I am and pride in that. And that's one of the things that really attracts me to these people. Cause even when they're totally out to lunch there's that clear sense of who I am and what I believe in, there's none of this liberal smearing around or wishy-washyness about it. They know who they are. (SR-FE)

These accounts are family stories. The 1963-1974 cohort are now parents of young adults in and out of the community. They are also community leaders attempting to understand and respond to what appear to be massive changes in the structure of life on Digby Neck. While they see formal education as an important strategic resource for young people in the emerging community, credentialism is also thought to be the principal justification for ignoring “uneducated” voices from coastal communities. Education is seen in contradictory terms, as a functional necessity, but one which holds questionable and largely unexplored utility “around here.” This generation of stayers support their own children’s education, but they are often nervous about the estrangement and mobility implications contained in higher education. Some felt that education would probably take their children away. Others argued that education is now necessary to develop Digby Neck itself with the emerging tourist industry and the regulation and political/legal struggles ahead in the fishery.

I don’t know what you’d do (without formal education). Live on welfare around these areas. We, as an area around here, need so much and we've got so many resources. We've got forestry, we have the fishery. I mean our lobster fishery is still good, and there's other fisheries out there we haven't tapped yet. We need managers, we need scientists, we need it all. I mean this area's got potential for tourism up the ying yang. We haven't tapped it, we need to be smart. (KS-MS-71)

All of these informants are more or less aware of the forces at play at the level of the state and at the level of the corporate fishery working to undermine the economic basis of the small boat fishery and by extension of the community itself. Fisheries problems are often set in terms of tradition and family inheritance. Fishing licenses and boats, for instance, are traditionally passed
along from father to son. While only one of the women in this cohort mentioned the sexism inherent in this practice, most of the men bemoaned the lack of opportunities faced by their own male children in the fishery even if they themselves are license holders and boat owners. The twin forces of government policy and corporate offshore fisheries sector ("fullers with the deep pockets" [i.e. corporate fishing interests] who can afford to buy out desperate license holders’ quotas) have been steadily and relentlessly conspiring to usurp the small boat family-based inshore fishery. The idea that this process of state supported, corporate resource concentration will triumph is the single most important source of Digby Neckers’ resistance. They realise that the central struggle is one of basic community survival against a hostile corporate fishery and a "government" that has consistently "sold us out" to "big players." As one resident put it, if stayers are "rooted" in the community, there are a lot of "shovels" digging away at that root.

I will survive and I will be happy. I make my living fishing. Now if you take that root away from that crop, I can’t survive. I can’t stay here, my children can’t stay here. They are forced, they have to leave. They have to eat, and they have to have shelter to live. And if you take that root away, that’s what I am, and here are them old shovels digging around it and it may get loose. It was just like I told you about one fishermen who has had a few bad years, and his ass is up against the wall, if you offer him enough money, his root is loose and he’ll sell it. Now his wings have been clipped short, he’s never gonna make it over here out of the community. He’s 40 or more years old and his wings have never been tried, you take his roots and he’s adrift I guess. Hopefully he’ll get something. (GG-MS-71)

Digby Neckers understand that every time a fisherman sells out and his “rights” are cashed in, there are young men who will not be able to make a living in the community.

Education plays an ambivalent role in this whole drama. People in coastal communities see themselves as an endangered species, or as this informant put it, as rooted plants being dug up by a multitude of “shovels.” I wondered if education is seen as yet another shovel. Education is not seen as another shovel per se, but educated people are thought to use their credentials as "shovels" against people in coastal communities. The informant quoted above went on to speak of the way that bureaucrats are complicit in community destruction and forcing young people to move by offering their parents lucrative buy-out packages.
This comes in the mail to me from these educated people, and this Mr. Anderson (then federal fisheries minister David Anderson), he says in this letter that he’ll give me this much money to buy all my licenses and all my privileges. That’s just bait. Bait, dangling in front of me. Right now I’m not hungry, but some day when he drops that down in front of me, I might have to bite that whether I want to or not. And it’ll hurt me. I could get at least a quarter of a million dollars. Geez, that’s a lot of money isn’t it? I oughta go for that. I could take that right to the bank and probably, if I did it right, I could live on that. You hear me saying, “I could live off her.” Well what about two boys that I got, and two girls, what are they going to live off of? If I sell out, they’re gone from the fishery. (GG-MS-71)

All of the stayers interviewed in this cohort have both male and female children living and working in the community. The men have been integrated into the fishery and the women living on Digby Neck are either homemakers or between jobs. Those who stay do tend to conform to traditional gender patterns. And those who go tend not to go very far away, women particularly. The analysis of data in Chapter 5 showed that while women were more prone to out-migration they mostly moved into the near regions “around here” and “not far.” One fisherman offered this comment about his daughter’s prospects:

She felt at the time that she’d (daughter) have to leave the area, and I felt it too. I says, ‘Mary, probably the only way you’re gonna be able to use that course is you’re gonna have to leave.’ There’s not much work for her in her field around here, not yet anyway. And, uh (pause) she wasn’t (pause) Mary’s one that I don’t think will ever leave this area. She’s just like me, she’s a home body. Right now she’s working in an office because she doesn't want to leave home. She doesn’t want to leave home. She knows that to use that education (pause) but hopefully she can use it (her education) around here. (KS-MS-71)

Female stayers saw their mobility blocked either by financial constraints, by the lack of guidance and role models provided in school and available in the community and by their own sense that the traditional women’s role, punctuated by full or part-time work was the way they ought to go with their lives.

When I got through school I had to go out and do something. So that's sort of how it went. Then it bothered me that I never graduated academically. So then I did the GED upgrading while I was cutting fish. I went to night school and did that. And I've taken a couple of courses. Then I started another course but it was just too much with working full time. I couldn't do it. Maybe somewhere along the way I should have taken into a couple of years and gone to university. I could have taken up something that I would like to have had and then go on from there. But I probably wouldn't have anything better than what I have today. (DL-FS-69)

Because of their relative success in secondary education, women were able to glimpse something
of the vista of educational opportunities that might have been available to them. But the lure or the 
necessity of making ready money was paramount. Many of the women who took secretarial 
training or hairdressing (which were the options of choice for young women who needed to get 
out to work quickly) migrated to the, middle-distant, “not far” region. These career choices 
allowed them to remain in southwestern Nova Scotia but to still have some occupational mobility 
in traditional gendered trades. Only a select few in this cohort had the resources to access 
significant post-secondary education. Few families had yet established the resources necessary to 
offer elite post-secondary education to their children.

For men, the lure of the ready money in fishing and the sense that higher education is designed for 
those who want to be somewhere else (a perception that was well supported in the community and 
in the school) ended the school careers of many aspiring fishermen. And from there they were 
taken in to what some fishermen in this cohort call the “University of the Bay of Fundy.”

It always seemed to me like school was for those ones that wanted to go on to 
university. I never did want to go so I just stayed on as long as I could cause I was 
having a good time. School was fun you know. I was working all the time and I 
had money in my pockets. I never had no problems in school, I never really took it 
serious enough to have problems (laughs). I knew I was going to stay around here 
and I was going to go fishing. It was just a matter of when. And I stayed in 
school there until my old man told me (pause) well, until I figured it was time I got 
to work full time. School was starting to get in the way of making real money 
anyway. So in grade 11, I quit. (FN)

Conclusion

Class, race and gender are generally considered to be differences that matter in terms of educational 
outcomes. Teacher training programs and academic publications include critical, interpretive, post 
colonial, poststructural, phenomenological, feminist discourse all of which serves to help teachers 
understand how education is a fundamentally political enterprise and one which requires 
investigation of the relationship between the teacher and the taught and between the society and the 
school. But the bulk of this discourse seems to ignore the fact that not all places are urban, that the 
grand project of modernity, the depopulation of rural spaces, is incomplete and resisted by many 
stayers. As rurality and small community habitus play together with class and gender we see that
individuals saw different sets of possibilities, different visions of the self which might be attained.

This analysis suggests that the nature of a staples oriented community and its economic base influence the way schooling is perceived by the people who live there. Staples capitalism in this coastal community provided traditional occupational and social roles for a significant proportion of young men through the 1960s and 1970s. A central decision facing young people in coastal communities has always been to stay or to go. Rural people now operate at the margins of something bigger, but the vision of what that something bigger is and how one might access its opportunities is not equally distributed among individuals. In order to consider the options, one must first be able to observe them, and then have the resources to access them. The accounts of this cohort show how these “options” were not equally accessible or even visible. Most “had to” work or quit school and others “wanted to” fish, get married or take secretarial training. The point is that both desire and compulsion are constructed in the context of the resources at hand and in a parallel context of an array of socially “reasonable” options.

For the 1963-1974 cohort of stayers in the coastal communities along Digby Neck, post-secondary and even secondary education sat in an ambivalent position. The community contained an established core of elite fishing families who found economic success by intensive and extensive adaptation of local knowledge to modern harvesting technologies. Male stayers from these families chose to engage themselves in learning this curriculum rather than the one on offer in school. Women who stayed did so mainly because they saw few other realistic options. This lack of options must be counterbalanced with the prosperity and activity in the local fishery which needed the active support of a cadre of hard-working, multi-skilled women who would stay and do the work of social reproduction and child raising in the community. Because the family was the central locus of productive activity for the small boat fishery through this period, women’s work added direct support to the main economic activity of the community. I demonstrated in Chapter 5 that relatively few women who grew up on Digby Neck stayed to marry local men. They were more likely to migrate short distances to marry men “around here.” Digby Neck fishermen are said to have married, “women from Digby” or in nearby communities, “across the (St. Mary’s) Bay.” More research could be done into marriage and migration patterns in the “around here” region.
Neither men nor women felt victimised by their “choices.” Most feel secure and content for themselves but they worry about their children because the community based cultural capital that has sustained them and previous generations is now of questionable value, even “around here.” This is not new, the Stirling County research team found the same sentiment in the area in the early 1950s (Hughes, et. al, 1960). Work and entrepreneurial skills, along with deep local knowledge of fishing grounds and strategies had visible payoffs for successful fishermen who were able to take advantage of strong family networks. But the precarious nature of the contemporary fishery led many to conclude that this knowledge and these skills will have limited future value.

Community and family-based strategies of production have remained prominent for stayers in this cohort mirroring ethnographic findings from a similar period in an Acadian community in Northern New Brunswick (Johnson, 1999). While the numbers of families able to survive restructuring in the fishery have declined, traditional patterns of initiation and inheritance remain. The 1963-74 cohort now have children old enough to take up the inheritance if they are in a position to do so. As it was with their fathers, some boys are able to stay and take advantage of remaining fisheries. As it was with their female relatives, most girls must leave to seek their fortune elsewhere. As this parent/educator commented speculating on the future of a capable young Digby Neck women from the high school graduating class of 2000:

> It’s a shame to say it but I don’t want her to stay on the Neck, I’d like to see her go because I think that she has (pause) she worked in a whale watching business the last 2 years. She can really manoeuvre things up there and she’s good on the phone and she looks after the money, and she does things like that. There’s no one here on the Neck to get in with to stay. There’s no boys, no one. I mean if she wants to find someone she’s going to have to get out and she’s not going to bring him back. Usually it’s the boys who have the job around here. Nobody’s going to take him on. (ES-FE)

In *Learning to Labour*, Paul Willis tried to explain why the working class boys in his study seem to interpellate themselves into what he considered to be miserable, meaningless work. My data suggest that in coastal communities, the equation of manual work and meaninglessness is not nearly as simple as Willis suggests. I am not romanticising manual labour; in fact, no respondents explicitly mentioned the mental/manual work dichotomy. The fishery of the 1960s and early 1970s offered machismo, but also petty capitalist entrepreneurial opportunity to a wide variety of young men on Digby Neck while those born into elite fishing families integrated into larger scale
economic possibilities in the emerging dragger fishery. While he did not analyse the dynamics of community, Willis did understand the power of the working class community to integrate the young into its routines and its value system. However, his description of the alienating nature of factory work for the “lads” is not what I found in the coastal community. Social meaning is generated in coastal communities through manual work and an intimate knowledge of physical and social geography that accompanies that work (Durrenberger, 1997; Matthews, 1976, 1993; Pocius, 1991; Porter, 1993). Fishing is not a simple monolithic occupation. As other researchers have pointed out, there are many different types of employment and work relations within any given fishery (Davis, 1991; Kearney, 1993). These range from captaining and owning a large offshore vessel, to owning and operating a small boat inshore “rig,” to crewing on a large corporate owned vessel, to crewing on a small family owned inshore vessel, to working in a fish plant, to working onshore in temporary fishing support work, either for cash or giving gratis labour to a family fishing operation. These are essentially class positions and they carry with them different rewards and different access to community based resources, particularly fishing licenses, and non-community based resources like higher education credentials. In order to leave the coastal community and follow the path to elsewhere, one needed either money or family connections, and preferably both. Without these it was virtually impossible to “blaze the trail” to elsewhere.

Education was clearly one form of transit for this cohort, but class based financial restrictions combined with a lack of social and cultural capital made the transition from the coastal community and into post-secondary education very difficult for all youth, particularly those from families whose connection to the fishery was marginal and based on selling labour to other fishermen or to plant owners. Not only did the potential leaver need the financial resources to meet tuition and living costs outside the community, s/he was also required to establish social networks without support and do this while constructing an identity that would allow him/her to “pass for middle class” as one leaver put it. Different communities provide youth with different familial, or what Bourdieu called “cultural capital” resources. The cultural capital resources which were at the fingertips of urban freshmen were missing for their rural counterparts who were faced instead with a series of social puzzles and unfamiliar routines as fundamental as dealing with public transit, living among strangers, or finding rooms in large buildings.
For stayers, this "deficit" in middle class, schooling oriented cultural capital became increasingly apparent the further they progressed in their secondary school careers. For males who had strong connections to the fishery, the increasingly obscure academic expectations and subject matter of the high school came to be perceived as irrelevant. The further they went in school the more esoteric the knowledge seemed to become. So paradoxically, at the very point in their personal lives when they felt that education ought to have become more focussed on the practicalities of a career, the exact opposite happened and Shakespeare and algebra entered their lives. At the same time, Digby Neckers were experiencing a stigma connected to their community and personal identities that served to reinforce the idea that they were rough and rude, and not the, "kind of people" who stayed in school, followed its rules and believed in what it had to offer. The culture of the fishing community was subtly and overtly undermined and criticised in both the formal and informal culture of the school. The results were very often a predictable retreat from the ethereal content of academic subjects into the practical and immediate rewards of the community occupational structure. Through the 1960s to the late 1980s, the "practical" option was more or less readily available to any young man.

It is too simple to suggest (as some educators I interviewed have) that through the 1960s and early 1970s, the possession of a Digby Neck identity was a source of some measure of self-conscious shame. A Digby Neck identity was an ambivalent possession. Digby Neckers had specialized knowledge of a particular social and economic geography in which they knew what to expect and how to "turn a buck." This is a localised cultural capital representing knowledge which is limited in its portability. On wharves and on boats men get together to do their specialized work. This work defined manhood. The nature of this work, its routines and challenges (and the stories that surround it) are common-sense, local knowledge. City people, tourists and school teachers are among those species of pathetic, stupid creatures who do not know what is common sense. This common sense was also evident in the calm competence of "fishermen's wives" who organised social gatherings and successfully managed complex financial and family affairs. Young people saw this adult competence and many of them worked to emulate it. But at another level, and often through their experience in school and via the mass media, young people also saw a wider social picture, a different set of possibilities and competences, a different kind of language. In the 1950s and 1960s particularly, this fishing based identity was often associated with poverty, hard, brutal
work in horrible conditions, and with simple, rustic living. There was often a sense that other people were more sophisticated and had, in most ways, better lives. But the stigma was also tempered with a sense of community, resilience, toughness, integration, intimate local knowledge, and belonging that constituted the resources of survival and the basis of wealth for a select few.

Into the later 1970s and 1980s when incomes from the fishery improved, this fishing identity came to be a source of pride and a positive sense of difference. Both of these identity positions fostered resistant attitudes in school. In the former period, Digby Neckers resisted their portrayal as poor fishermen who were not capable of succeeding at school or behaving in a civilised manner. In the latter period they resisted even more vigorously perhaps because they could afford to. For them, schooling was thought to be of little practical value for working people and a less profitable personal choice even for those who could have afforded it. Both poverty and wealth provided a platform for resistance to protracted schooling and higher education. With limited formal education many Digby Neck males were able to use their local community cultural capital, the ability and willingness to work hard, to access the employment structure on Digby Neck, “around here,” and until the 1980s, by migrating to take up working class positions in other parts of the province and the country.

Families from all social classes on Digby Neck had little historic experience in higher education. The vast majority of those few individuals who had acquired post-secondary education prior the 1960s had moved to larger centres. Thus, the typical urban connection between middle class incomes and formal education has never existed on Digby Neck. In fact, my analysis of income and schooling, using recent Census Canada micro data shows how income is not associated with education on Digby Neck (see Chapter 5). Local knowledge about the dubious “value” of schooling if one is to remain is apparently supported by this ethnographic data. Wealth acquired without much formal education implicitly justified acceptance of poor educational performance and low level educational outcomes of many young men particularly who had access to financial resources to pursue higher education. In other words, while virtually all respondents mentioned parental support for their education, it was generally the case, especially for boys, that this support seldom went any further than mild verbal encouragement. Indeed, where else could it go, given that even extended secondary education was a new experience for most Digby Neck families in the
1960s and 1970s. For the children of working class Digby Neck families the picture is more consistent with the literature on working class resistance to schooling. They were marginalised in school and they marginalised themselves because they lacked both the financial and cultural capital necessary to make higher education a legitimate possibility.

Gender plays an important role in determining who stays and who leaves, and additionally who goes on to access higher education. Young women typically understood that they had to leave, but their routes out of the community differed according to family position. While young men of all social classes lacked the social and financial capital to make higher education a desirable life choice, young women from elite fishing families were encouraged to pursue higher education and to seek their futures away from Digby Neck. Unlike their male counterparts, young women from these families tended to want to leave home because they saw how they lacked the community based “capital” that their brothers possessed. These young women grew up in families where lucrative fishing operations provided a good family income, but they had no opportunity to access the means of wealth generation. For these young women, education and professional careers, or alternatively, marrying into a middle class family through social liaisons in university were actively promoted in the 1970s-1990s. These families used the financial capital from fishing to buy the educational credentials for female children which would allow them to remain in the middle class, albeit off Digby Neck.

For young women from working class families, access to opportunities in the fisheries were similarly bleak. A minority remained on Digby Neck to marry into fishing families, although because of the small population base and questions of endogamy, this was often not encouraged. Those who stayed have worked in fishing support occupations on the Neck or found work commuting to Digby and the surrounding area. Educational resistance made little sense for women in this cohort and they appeared to have exhibited little of it. Some of these women have acquired post-secondary credentials, and a couple of them university degrees. More women migrated to the “around here” and “not far” regions surrounding Digby Neck marrying and settling in nearby communities off Digby Neck. These women too were, for the most part, compelled to leave, but their migration routes did not typically involve higher education, but rather marriage and part or full time employment in the service sector. Even in cases where they apparently possessed the
cultural capital and the strong secondary credential to access university, financial constraints and the weight of community and family habitus made it very unlikely that these young women would access high status post-secondary credentials. This is the common story of the “good student” who for no reason apparent to teachers, forewent university for a one year secretarial course, or for an early marriage. Like their male counterparts, many of these young women were unable to see the purpose of schooling. Unlike their male counterparts they were better “socialised” to “set still,” to meet the demands of school, and to be less openly resistant to the irrelevance they found there.
Chapter 7
The boom years: The classes of 1975-86

If you're going to further your career, it has to be for something that you see. You have to be able to say: I'd like to be that. It's hard when you're growing up and your parents are fishing and your brothers and sisters are fishing and your uncles are fishing. They're doing well, and if you have a tendency for [pause] if you enjoy it then it really puts a wall in front of you, looking toward something else. I think that's a wall that gets put in front of your schooling because you're thinking, well, why? Why would I want to go do something else at school? I can go out here and do what I want to do. I think there would even be more people that would have done better financially by staying here than [pause] some of the ones that have moved away. (SM-MS-77)

It wasn't until quite late in my adult life when I started getting out and I saw. And university didn't change that much for me because when I went to university I still had that same view, I had no idea about an education or what benefit it would be to me personally. You know, I'm in my mid 30's now and I'm just figuring it out. I didn't feel any different going to Acadia than I did in school because I didn't really realise what it was about. I just didn't have the underlying basis on why this was an important thing to do, that came a long time later. (EM-ML-80)

By the mid 1970s, the dragger and small boat fisheries were providing ready employment for large numbers of young men and women on Digby Neck. Young men were able to access jobs as crew on draggers, longliners, on lobster boats or handlining. Those who had what is considered to be a "direct" connection (i.e. inheritance rights to licenses held in their families) to the fishery sometimes went directly from school to captaining family or self-owned vessels. For those with less direct connections, large catches of groundfish and shell fish through this period also meant ready work in fishplants and in various kinds of support work on shore.

Through the 1975-1986 period, the relationship between schooling and community took on a different cast. On one hand, out-migration rates declined rather dramatically reflecting lucrative and relatively widespread opportunities in the fishery (see Table 24). This decline was accompanied by lower rates of high school completion for male Digby Neckers, most of whom remained "around here" (see Table 21). More young women also quit school early in this cohort compared to either of the other two cohorts. On the other hand, the expansion of the post-secondary educational system, enhanced school guidance programs, improved transportation links, more money in the community (especially for license holding fishing families), and the path broken by the previous generation of out-migrants all contributed to promoting the visibility of options in higher education outside the community. More out-migrants of both genders began to...
access post-secondary education at the same time as some families used their relative prosperity to provide some of their children with access to higher education.

Back in the 70s and 80s when the fishing was good there was money around and they didn’t think twice about the cost of tuition. That’s all changed now. (FL-FE)

Educators remember this period as one in which there was a transformation in the formerly stigmatised Digby Neck identity. The “poor fisherman” came to be transformed to the “rich fisherman” and being a fisherman’s son or daughter came to take on new meaning indicating economic privilege and wealth by local standards. The idea of relative privilege is important here.

Family incomes continue to be low on Digby Neck relative to provincial and national averages, but compared to local norms, they are relatively high as Census Canada micro data from 1996 shows (see Table 11). The fishery which provides the bulk of family income on Digby Neck also has a highly uneven structure of rewards which generated substantial wealth alongside poverty in fishing communities. High levels of dependence on social programs in the area points to a high degree of unevenness in incomes in the Digby area (see Table 9). Those who “don’t fish” in a coastal community earn very low incomes. Thus, in comparison to minimum wage alternatives available “around here,” fishing is a relatively lucrative occupation. So if one was “staying around here,” fishing is among the best of jobs. Relative privilege is said to have created a strong inducement for early school leaving especially for boys, supplementing lingering, strong anti-school attitudes which were prevalent for men in the previous cohort.

I can remember principals’ meetings, going over the tests that they did in grade 3, 6, 9 and 12 and looking at the grade 9 ones. When you looked at the results, these kids, some of them that were bright, you could tell that they must have filled in any old thing just to do the test, just to get it out of the way. And some of the teachers were really concerned that these kids were getting ready to quit school and talking about how they could make more money going out on the scallop draggers than the teachers who were talking about how important education was. And I can remember them saying that if you could make that kind of money what are you talking about getting your education for? I can make more money at 16 than you can without any education you’ve had to go through college and you’ve got a big loan to pay back. (HL-FE)
Gender, work and schooling on Digby Neck, 1975-86

She had an impulse to shout... *Get out of this Anna, for God’s sake get out of it! Away from the whole of it. Dirty dishes and crumbling minds, the curiosity, the sympathy, the sneers ... Away from hurt and temptation, away from the shore*

{italics in original}. (Bruce, 1954: 113)

This cohort of stayers saw clearly the role of family position in the fishery in terms of its impact on the work opportunities of young people. As Davis suggests, by the 1980s, clear class divisions were becoming apparent on Digby Neck (1991). In the interviews with this generation of Digby Neckers, the 1975-86 cohort reveal an awareness of difference in the community, difference in terms of employment and social opportunities across gender and class, and difference in terms of the felt sense that the “community” contained individuals with unequal privileges and disadvantages. Teachers too were aware of the particular social class dimensions that characterised the region, including Digby Neck.

In the Digby area things are very diverse; diverse economically is what stands out most in my mind. There are isolated pockets of what I would think would be great wealth, or reasonable security, and then the larger majority would be, I would think, people who live on the margins. There are perhaps even greater pockets of poverty in hard times. In terms of percentages, the upper 5 to 7% are secure and doing reasonably well. And then there are the people you would look at and say, they’re middle class. And this would only be only another 5 to 7%. And then what’s left over falls into that marginal area of people who have been missed, or make their own living by working for other people in labour intensive kinds of jobs and that kind of thing. I think the Neck kind of shifts a bit more, because they’re particularly involved in the fishery and that has its own kind of structure in terms of who gets the money and who doesn’t. And I think that even in that system there are still very few ... most of the people who live there are just making a basic living working for someone, or working in fish plants or those kinds of things. I think the ones that own the plants, or own the boats, or own the licenses are fewer than the mass of the population. (CD-ME)

The fishery continued to “push” or “pull” differently positioned participants into life in the coastal community. Women of this cohort articulate a clear and more critical understanding that entry into the fishery is a male “inheritance” and prerogative.

My father passed his fishing rig on to my brother. That’s how it goes down here. And my husband, he got his rig from his father. When you think about it, that’s not fair to the women is it? Most people around here, they never think about that, it’s just the way things are. Most men [pause], the older men, don’t believe that a woman should [pause] they don’t believe in women working anyway (BF-FS-84).
Young men brought up in elite fishing families connected to the dragger fishery also benefited from a doubly privileged set of career choices. Elite fishing families passed licenses and expensive fishing rigs on to their male children, sometimes at a very early age. These individuals understood not only that they had work, but that they could anticipate very lucrative ownership rights and authority as a result of their participation in the fishing industry. For young men in this position, these ownership rights allowed them to resist formal education. Educators remember young men who could leave school in adolescence and move directly into a fishing job. Unlike the stories told by the 1963-74 cohort of entry into a developing fishery where hard work and a small investment could bring some measure of security and community respect, individuals who entered directly into a family owned, established fish dragging operation in the mid 1970s and early 1980s reaped significant financial rewards.

And when I was 16 my father had a little boat that he got running and he let me take it out. I couldn't even mend (nets) or anything. I didn't know about fishing or anything but I took it out and the first two trips I pretty near loaded it. So they said, well this fuller, he's gonna be something, he's gonna be a good fisherman. I just got lucky I guess. Not long after that my father gave up fishing. He said, I'm all done with her boys, he said either you boys take her or I'm selling out. So I was 17 years old and I walked in the wheelhouse of the biggest steel boat in the fleet. My wife's mother came down to meet me one time and she said that little boy's got that great big boat? And like, I was surprised because I didn't know much, never had no experience. And we was, I figure, the top boat in the fleet that year. (ES-MS-82)

This gendered inheritance structure in the fishery exacerbated the gender divisions described for the 1963-1974 cohort because in the state regulatory regime of the 1970s and 1980s the value of this inheritance increased astronomically.1 Educators generally regarded young women in this cohort were both more open to education during this period, but paradoxically, less inclined to use it to open up the options out-migration might provide them. Out-migrants would, after all, be leaving Digby Neck just at the time of its greatest economic prosperity. Marrying a fisherman during this period could mean having considerable family income by local standards.

For young people from working class families whose employment history was in the small boat fishery or in fishing support work, there was still “lots of work,” but it was of a very different sort. Fish plants were booming, processing record catches from both the small boat dragger and

---

1 Licenses which originally cost less than a dollar are now valuable commodities worth as much as half a million dollars.
the inshore fleet. In addition, young men could find work crewing on both types of boat. The transition from school to work was equally easy for male stayers from this type of family and they describe quitting school young and moving directly into employment.

I first started workin' when I was 16, when I quit school. The first place I went was down the road there to the fish plant. And I worked them for awhile and then I went to Joey's and worked them for awhile. Then I started nettin', gill nettin' and for herring, trawling and lobstering. I stayed with William DeCoste for quite a few years. Then after that I just come back to the plant an then I went back to fish draggin', scallopin'. I done it all, right from the time I was 16. All fishin': lobsterin', draggin', trawlin', anything. I've worked with a lot of different ones over the years. Whoever needed help. (TR-MS-77)

The decision to drop out of school continued to be seen on Digby Neck as a "natural" event for young men. Women, who stayed in school longer as a group, report simply noticing from time to time, as a matter of course, that certain boys were no longer on the school bus only to find out through inquiries that, "oh ya, he quit." This was the normal male career trajectory on Digby Neck for this cohort, a few years of secondary schooling, usually (but not always) a bit more than one's parents. In fact, male stayers in this cohort have the lowest high school completion rates of any of the three cohorts at 24.2% (see Table 22). Typically, young men's school careers were marked by more or less resistance, a final blow up, and then entry into the fishery.

That was the attitude. A lot of people did say (to the teachers): 'screw you, who the hell are you, I've got better options than this.' And up went the middle finger and out they went. And they didn't get any pressure from the parents, because their parents didn't have any schooling either, most of them. (CF-ML-86)

Well, it was Christmas holidays and we was off for the holidays and it was on a Wednesday we went back. And somebody took my social studies book when we was out of school. He [teacher] looked at me and he says, 'where is you book?' And I said, 'I ain't got one.' 'Well you better find one right quick.' So I reached over to the next fuller's desk and picked it up and I threw it at him and headed for the door. He said, 'where are you going?' I said, 'I quit.' 'You can't quit.' I says, 'I am.' I went out and started hitch hiking home and who picks me up but the old man. 'Where are you going?' And I says, 'I just quit.' He says, 'that's good, you get to the shore and you get to work.' (TR-MS-77)

The decision to leave school for fishing was not unusual, it was expected for most boys and there was no stigma attached to early exit from school.

I found that we weren't judgmental of the choices of the young men who dropped out. There was a tacit agreement. You know you would be getting yourself in a lot of trouble for saying you're stupid for dropping out of school. (LS-FL-83).
Look at my brother, a typical dropout. The first time he became a captain he was twenty-two and running a million dollar vessel, 150 miles away from land. The responsibility it just blows me away now I look back on it. How could he have ever done that? I don't think I could’ve done it. My brother dropped out in grade eleven. (BF-FS-84)

Through this period, young men continued to be able to access opportunities in the fishery through family connections and recommendations. While the fishery was becoming more capital intensive, traditional patterns of employment recruitment through families continued to be the principal means of finding employment for young men. Work was plentiful and post-secondary education was seen by male stayers as an irrelevance and a form of specialized training that did not relate to a life in the fishery or success in the coastal community. This educator who raised her own children in the community describes the lure of the lucrative fishery in the 1970s and 1980s for young men. Her account also demonstrates how the industrialization of the fishery provided good financial opportunities that meshed with established traditions of masculinity and work forming a potent attraction for young Digby Neck men.

I can take my own family, or my husband’s family for example, and Charles Smith, three generations. Charles was a fisherman from the time he could get into a boat. That's Phillip’s father. So when Phillip came along, he would be sitting in school and all he could think about was the fishing. OK, so Jim came along ... So when Jim came along, well the boys [pause] but Tim was different, he wanted to get and education. And I would say to him, you're going to school, you're going to school, and you're getting an education and that's it. The second one it was you’re going to school and you’re getting an education and that’s it, but you get a little bit lenient. And then you get a little more lenient with the third, and then even more lenient with the fourth one. And as the youngest comes along you’re not as strong. So when Jim came along, he went into Digby and all, and in grade 9 his mind was no more on school than anything. His father says you don't need an education, I've done good and I've only had grade 7. So Jim got this in his head and he thought why do I need an education? I've got a job, I can do this now, I can go on a boat if I’m out of school, and he did go. And remember, the money was good. So it just repeats itself like this. (ES-FE)

The pursuit of formal education did not relate experientially to financial success; in fact, it was perceived to be just the opposite. One had to, “go to work” to make money and catch fish, “before they’re gone.” The nature of the resource and the way it was managed, the application of intrusive industrial harvesting technologies, the demand for a “skilled,” or what Digby Neckers call “born
and bred” fisheries labour force, and the lure of money all conspired to create a kind of desperate “gold rush” mentality among young fishermen in this cohort.

We were what, 16 or so, and most of the guys were quitting. Most of the guys from the Neck would quit school and go to work and make more than most of the teachers made in five years in one year. And they were driving new trucks. I remember one guy I knew went one weekend and made 30,000 dollars. Back in the early 80s. That’s a lot of money back then. So the old saw about how you’d better stay in school because if you don’t you’re not going to become anything, well ... It was a gold rush. (DE-ML-81)

They were going to school and saying, well which part is going to benefit me? When you get into high school you’ve learned your math, and if you're planning on staying here and if you've done fairly well through school, then you have the basic skills as far as getting along in life already. University's just fine tuning and streamlining, as far as I see it, fine tuning your interests and streamlining you into some special work. Well around here most people specialise in fishing and their training for that is on board a boat. (SM-MS-77)

The perception among this cohort was that abundant money could be made by men in the fishery of the 1970s and 1980s. This was true for male stayers in elite fishing families and for those working as wage labour crewing on boats or working in fish plants. The reality is, according to most informants, that a few families and individuals “did real well,” and “watched their money,” but the majority just worked hard for a decent living wage, and made money for the captain or the fish plant owner. For people interviewed in this cohort, work was like a religion, it was an obsession and a moral responsibility. Education, particularly at higher levels, may have been resisted because for many Digby Neck children “school work” appeared patently unlike “real work.”

I think they see school as something divorced from working a lot of times. These kids know about work. The boys have been brought up around fishing. They don’t lay around. They may not be very engaged in school and they may even seem painfully lazy there, but when it comes to getting to work at fishing, get out of the way. The girls too, they know how to work because they see their mothers keeping everything together and girls work in the fish too. So school, [pause] to them, it’s not real work and that’s what they look for when they evaluate what’s going on in an educational program. What’s this going to get me, how will this lead to money? (NS-FE)

2 Digby Neckers claim that in order to make it as a fisherman, one has to be, “brought up around it” (FN). This means that a protracted informal orientation to fishing begins in early childhood and continues on into adulthood. This socialisation is considered to be an essential element in a fisherman’s education and the general belief is that only people who have undergone the process can ever really acquire the intuitive skills necessary to be a successful fisherman. The other side of the “born and bred” notion is having close family connections through which both expensive gear, boats and knowledge is shared openly and exclusively across kinship lines.
While the structure of rewards varied in terms of family position, everyone was seen to benefit in relative terms. The perception of readily available “big money” helped to lure a willing labour force out of school and into the fishery. With relatively low educational levels as well as a very specialized sort of work experience, many of the stayers of this generation have since regretted their decision to leave school, a decision that seemed so logical when it was made.

One year I set in the class and talked with one of the teachers and I told him what I made that year and he said, that’s more than I make. I had a brand new car when I was going to school there. My father never bought me anything. I don’t think he ever bought me so much as a pair of socks from the time I was 13. Any time I wanted to make some money I’d take a day off school and get a first class job on a fishing boat. I’d go out and make $400. So that’s how I kept going. The thing about it was that I kind of got a false sense of reality. I mean you never really dreamt of being anything else. Now I wish I would have done it different, done other things because I think that I’ve wasted half my life because here I was pursuing the fishing and now here we are and the fishery ‘s gone. It’s not there no more … Here I am now 35 years old and I don’t know anything but fishing, never got an education in anything else. I never even got trained to do anything with my hands, just fishing. And now with the fishery going out from under me, that puts you in a hard situation with a family to feed. (ES-MS-82)

But this is hindsight. This former dragger captain argued that for him, and for others in his position, staying in school was really an irrational decision which would have meant foregoing significant income. Indeed, he claims the only men who stayed in school were those who could not stand the seasickness and hard physical labour of fishing. This account demonstrates the ambivalence that men in this cohort emanate, they feel the need to justify their decisions which now seem quite irrational to observers who “weren’t around” through the boom of the early 1980s.

I don’t think anybody ever said I think I’m gonna go to college because it was the best way to go, they said, hey I can’t make it as a fisherman. It was, I just couldn’t do that in the winter or in storms and in gales and I get too seasick. You know, I think most people that chose not to be fishermen couldn’t stand the work. Now I’m not saying that that was the best way to make that decision, but it was the decision that made you some money. You’d have to be a pretty good talker to talk somebody out of it when you could drop out of school and jump right aboard a boat and make 50 or 60 thousand a year. You’d have to be able to talk him out of that and make him go to school for ten years when he had to pay for it and pay for it and pay for it. Why you’d have to be a pretty good talker to change his mind and sell him that wouldn’t you? That was the problem the fishery was too good and too easy to get into. I can remember jumping right aboard a boat and making 60 or 70 thousand in my first year. My brother one year back in the 80’s made $127,000. He jumped right out of school and made $127,000, I mean, people with 10 years college wasn’t making no more. (ES-MS-82)
For young women, who did not have the same access to fisheries work and especially licenses, education was coming to be seen as an important way to improve employment prospects. Like the 1963-74 cohort, women in the 1975-86 cohort “did better” in school in terms of staying in longer and achieving better in high school according to all informants in this cohort. This analysis is supported by my survey data reported in Chapter 5. While young men had ready access to money and work opportunity, young women increasingly saw education as a fundamental career support.

The boys could get out and go to work and they could make good money. Why spend that money on education when you could make that money now? That’s how I saw it when I was growing up. Somebody would always hire them on. For us girls it was different. We had to hope school would give us something. And I think most of the girls I went to school with did graduate. I think that’s what you’ll find. (TC-FL-79)

Women of this cohort report having been more directly steered into prospective occupations that their parents thought would be good for them. Rather than floating aimlessly through high school for no apparent reason, these women were expected by their families to access a menu of gender and class specific options which included hairdressing, secretarial work, nursing, teaching and social work. Women in this cohort do not report feeling as though they were expected to marry and set up housekeeping at an early age. Education, and sometimes mobility were promoted to many young women as the favoured route to a better life.

3 Several parents of young women commented in informal interviews that they were actually frightened that their daughters would settle on Digby Neck and marry a fisherman. For example, this excerpt from my field notes recounts the story of one of the few families who migrated to Digby Neck.

All of my kids were glad to get out of here. They weren't fishing kids, especially the boys. We were really worried about our youngest daughter because she was hanging around with boys from Digby Neck. You know, when we first moved here my husband had a professional position and he was making something like $23,000. He was counselling a young fellow from down here at that time, a 17 year old boy who was fishing and making $25,000. My daughter wanted a car like some of her other friends and we had to tell her that she couldn’t expect us to give her the things that a fisherman’s kid could expect, we just didn’t have enough money. It was tough to try to push the idea that a young person needs an education to have something in their back pocket when they see this going on with their friends. You know, education is supposed to be the ticket to security and decent money. The girls found this really hard to understand. My boys never fit in here, they were never Digby Neckers so they were never lured to that lifestyle. They didn’t fit in to the culture. They fit in to the Digby culture, but not the one down here. It was easier for the girls because they would just have to connect with a man. But all of them are glad now that they got out of here, very glad. (FN)
They even had what I was gonna be, a secretary. Where that come from I'm not quite sure but that's what their expectations was. They wanted me to get an education and move far away as you can get. Far away as you can get, don't be stayin' here. There ain’t nothin for you here they always said. (BF-FS-84)

Educators saw the decision making of young women to be particularly problematic. Given that there were very few options for young women in the community in the eyes of teachers, the decision to leave school early typically resulted in what educators saw as highly limited future prospects. All high school educators commented in slightly different ways about the young women in this cohort who quit school, “because she got pregnant” or who “no sooner cleared the stage” from graduation and was, “pushing a baby carriage.” Educators wondered both why this incongruous trajectory was so prevalent among some “really nice” girls who were “excellent students.” These young women were seen to be resisting the liberal “options” oriented agenda of secondary schooling, typically by their own passive acceptance of gendered life roles. This educator cast this common lament in liberal terms.

I like to think what I define as success is that kids have options and make conscious choices. I really think if your choice is to do whatever you're going to do regardless of where you're going to do it, then that's fine, then it's a good choice for you. It's the kind of dull eyed women who aren't even 25 yet who are shoving strollers up and down the front road that bother me because I really don't have a sense that they really had options or allowed themselves to exercise any kind of options. So you have to spiral back and in terms of the school system wonder, did we do anything for them. What did we do for them? Young women are the part of the population that I see the school system failing in my particular circumstance at least in terms of the outcome I'd like to see. And that's where the heart wrenching examples are. I mean given the parameters of their world the young men definitely have favoured status. So those ones who decided to stay are happy with it and why wouldn’t they be? (SR-FE)

Yet, a considerable proportion of Digby Neck young women did exercise the option of post-secondary education. Nearly one in three women from Cohort 2 have some university experience. Among those elite families who were positioned to take financial advantage of the booming fishery, education was coming to be seen as a way of providing opportunity to female children. One female leaver commented for example, that her brothers were given fishing licenses, boats and gear while she was given a university education. Her brothers remain on the Neck and she now lives in central Canada. The gift of an education was offered with some reservations though because this would mean that the young woman would have to move.
I went home from school that day and I said, "dad" [pause] and you know I can remember so vividly I said, 'dad, I think that I would like to be a reporter. And he was thinking: the Digby Courier was that what you mean? And he said, 'well, where do you go to school for that?' And I said, 'well there are some different schools, there's a school in Halifax called King's College and they have journalism program. And there's another one that's well known in Ottawa.' He said, 'Jesus Christ, Ottawa.' I said, 'well, I'll apply to them both.' My father didn't [pause] it would always come kind of as a shock to him when I would make some statement about my future. It was [pause] he [pause] I think that in a lot of ways I was kind of a mystery to my father. He understood the boys so much better. (LS-FL-84)

The ambivalence about the connection between mobility and higher education remained prominent through this period for young people and their families. Most women understood that post-secondary education would lead them out of the community and some families did encourage their female children to migrate as did the family in the quote above. Some of the women in this cohort rejected this directive while others embraced it.

It was "get your education so you can become something." And that was always a big thing of mine. I always wanted to be something and that was always a big thing when we went to school, to be something. And one of the first things every child would say when they came out of school was: "and I'm not going to be stuck on Digby Neck." And here I am [laughs]. (LF-FS-81)

In this cohort, gender distinctions remain pervasive and plain. Men experienced an intensified "pull" into the fishery caused by rapid industrialization opening up work on draggers and increased opportunity in booming fish plants, to supplement existing opportunities for independent petty production in the small boat fishery. Women, on the other hand, experienced an intensified "push" and the understanding that, "there's nothing here for you." The fishery offered young men both the security of a "steady" industrial wage in fish plants and crewing on draggers, as well as the well established inducements of independence and money in the small boat fishery along with an identity that was sexy, valued in the community and in conformity with male cultural machismo.

I remember when my son was courting that girl across the bay. I used to watch her look at him and it reminded me how I used to look at his father. You know, he was strong and good looking. He was my fisherman. (ES-FE)

They're tough and they're proud that they're tough. If you talk to some of these guys about how they see the world and about men being men and the world being the world ... We go out there and work our guts out and go hard 20 hours at a stretch and come in and get drunk and we're tough. We want to help these people rise up above this, but really, is that such a bad life? This is what these guys know as manhood. Is that so different from what you find in the video store? (CD-ME)
As opportunities for young men expanded on Digby Neck, young women became increasingly marginalised in the coastal community and aware of their relative disadvantage. They saw their brothers and male friends making money in fishing through the boom period. Many leavers particularly resented this gender divided structure of opportunity in the community. This awareness of disadvantage became a prime motivation for both educational achievement and outmigration in women in this cohort.

My father was strict and kind of old fashioned. He forbade me from working in the fish plant. This bothered me at the time because I could see my brother and my friends making good money working in the fish while I was cutting a few lawns and babysitting for pocket money. You know, I thought that was really unfair, but he said that the fish plant was no place for a young woman. (US-FL-80)

Women in this generation, particularly leavers, were much more aware of the social limitations and prejudices of their communities. They tended to feel uncomfortable with what they saw as the narrowness of the people, a narrowness which always sat in contrast to the physical beauty of Digby Neck. These women saw education as a way to "escape," but the way was blocked for some young women by informal social forces that made the practical contingencies of day to day life in school untenable. Leavers of this cohort identify Digby Neck as a "male space," a place where long traditions of gender inequality and men's exclusive occupational and economic position in their fishery gave them considerable power. Male racism and sexism for instance could impede not only boys' school careers, but those of girls as well.

The worst that I can remember; and this left a real psychological scar on me as a child, were [pause] there were two series of incidents. One was the racism and another was the sexism. The racism [pause] there were some girls from the Neck, two sisters who were very pretty girls and they liked Black guys. At the time there was incredible segregation in high school. There were 40 kids out of 800 who were Black. There were actual gang fights going on at the school, gangland style fights going on at the school when I went up there to go to school. It was ugly, it was like Cole Harbour.4 And so there were these two girls who liked Black guys and I remember one day they had to go on our bus because there was something wrong with theirs. But they were being taunted by other kids on the bus who were yelling at them calling them nigger lovers. That sounds like something from the deep south doesn't it? And these girls both dropped out of school. And the boys dropped out of school too. (LS-FL-84)

---

4 Cole Harbour is a suburb of Greater Halifax near the city of Dartmouth. The area high school serves a racially diverse population and it was the scene of several highly publicised instances of overt racial violence in the late 1990s.
While stayers and male leavers continue to speak of the "community" as a unitary entity, some women saw cracks in the solidarity of place. This vision of difference came both from literate interaction with wider communities via books and wider social experiences, as well as from the experience of being denied opportunities which were "naturally" passed on to men in the social conventions of family and community. These women saw their brothers and male relatives reaping advantages and access to work and social privileges they were simply assumed to deserve and by questioning the social order they became uncomfortable in the community.

I knew I couldn’t stay there from a pretty early age. You’ve got to think of this from a woman’s point of view which is totally different from yours. I could never understand why it was just handed to boys without a question. They were taken on the boat and they were told stories about fishing and everybody would call them little fishermen all their lives. That really pissed me off because all of that ended up giving them money. They could go out and make a lot of money, and what could I do? Cut a few fish once in awhile and babysit. I did it but it bored the shit out of me and I swore I wasn’t going to be doing that for the rest of my life. (TC-FL-79)

Despite this insight into the problematic nature of gender relations on Digby Neck and in the fishery, women in this cohort still spoke fondly of family connections and their intimate, nostalgic relationship with the physical setting of Digby Neck. For the most part their discourse is not overtly feminist. Only one of the women I interviewed spoke about the influence of women’s issues in the larger social context or identified herself as a feminist, or as having feminist ideas. On Digby Neck, feminism is generally seen as a form of extremism, an example of reasonable ideas “taken too far.” Yet, a deep ambivalence runs through their accounts of life on the Neck. Female leavers understood it as a place to which they could not remain, or return on a permanent basis. At the same time Digby Neck is for them a place that holds memories and deep connections that are still very important. Digby Neck is home, but like Tom Wolfe’s protagonist, these informants can not go back home again. Sometimes this ambivalent sentiment is framed in positive terms as a desire to recover a lost solidarity.

The Neck is my home. We are a very close family. There’s no other place that I will ever call home and when I die my bones will be up there in the graveyard with my family. It must sound weird, but that kind of gives me a good feeling to think about that. But I’ve been thinking about home lately and [pause] I’ve been thinking that home is the people and when the people aren’t around any more then it isn’t quite the same. The place is still there and so are the memories, but it’s different. I’m only living where I am now because I have no choice. If I won the lottery I’d be back on the Neck in a minute. (US-FL-80)
And in some accounts it is framed as justification for staying away.

I love the Neck. I love the physicality of the Neck. I love the Fundy shore, I love the Saint Mary’s Bay shore. I just feel so alive when I’m there. But sometimes the people really get on my nerves, the narrow mindedness of some of them. And the jealousy. That’s not to say we don’t have it up here. And I want to say right up front, for everything that’s wrong about the Neck, there’s something that is right. And there are more things that are right than are wrong. But there is a real pettiness in some communities about who’s got what. I think that it stands out in stark relief against all the things that are good. Here in Toronto there are so many things that are wrong, there are so many shitty things and I really don’t like it here. And you just take the bad with the bad. You know, the backbiting and the one-upmanship ... You don’t expect it to be a community. (LS-FL-84)

Female leavers in this cohort penetrated the habitus in the community by developing a critical analysis of sexism on the Neck. Because they were children of relatively privileged families, they were able to use higher education as a means of mobility out of the gender stratified community social structure. As relatively privileged female youth, they expected to have advantages and education provided them with an avenue to acquire the middle class dividend not available to them in the community. The community was defined with ambivalence, a place that is at the same time comfortable and profoundly uncomfortable. Male leavers, on the other hand, saw a comfortable community, economic potential and a family support structure that was difficult to resist because of the comforts and opportunity it offered.

The support structures down there are so good in a lot of ways that I think it’s really easy to [pause] I don’t know, I remember telling my mother one time that you’ve gotta kick the bird out of the nest some time. They can’t stay with you forever. My mom would have been perfectly happy if all of her sons were still living at the house, right. That would have been the cat’s meow for her. And I said to her, mom, sometimes you’ve gotta let them be adults. I guess it’s good in a lot of ways. You go back, you know, and it’s a very strong community and as far as emotional support, there’s just a lot of stuff there. And so if you’re of the personality that, that’s what makes you feel comfortable, then it’s really hard to go anywhere. (EM-ML-80)

For many young men of this cohort, Digby Neck was a hard place to leave and my analysis in Chapter 5 shows that more of them stayed than in the previous cohort.
Defining security: Education, identity and work

So ... I mean it's beautiful geographically, and I think they feel like they're special in a way because of their geography. It makes them special in a sense [pause] and secure. (CQ-FE)

There's something about Digby Neckers. They have very close families and they stick together. They really know who they are because they really know where they are. (NS-FE)

A recurrent theme for this cohort of Digby Neck natives is the idea of security. As the fishery industrialised, a more secure and affluent consumer lifestyle became possible for at least some Digby Neckers. People felt as though they were "doing good" in the 1970s and 80s. The fishery was flourishing, apparently more secure than ever before and the resource seemed endless. Fishing families spent money, modernised their homes, and treated their children to luxuries they themselves could never have imagined as children. Some paid off boat loans and mortgages, while others invested in high status consumer goods and "lifestyles" as several informants put it. With lucrative fishing, the Neck effectively entered consumer society during the 1970s and 1980s and began to access its benefits. Life in the single industry community offered a range of opportunities and challenges for those who chose to stay. For the male children of elite fishing families, security was defined in terms of access to financial opportunities and the feelings of camaraderie that accompanied life in the fishery. This feeling was reported by male leavers as well as stayers. For these individuals the fishery offered security, both at the level of financial returns, but also at the level of living within a culture of masculinity that offered social rewards as well.

It's a physical challenge and it's a challenge and it's a gamble. The stakes are pretty high you know. You're looking for fish and if you strike them there's a big payoff. And you never know if you're going to get in (to port) or not. It's a real rush you know. I've never felt the way I did when I was fishing and I've done a lot of things in my life. It's an adrenaline thing that I've never experienced since, the danger, the gambles and the pay-off. And you're out there with your buddies, you work together and you drink together, you know party and stuff. There's real camaraderie there. There's nothing like it anywhere else. (DE-ML-81)

In his classic ethnography of life in rural England, Blythe described the deep satisfaction of work on the land that is missed by "leavers" (1969). Blythe found that it was the class dimensions of community life which decided young men against staying rather than the rigour of rural work itself.

It is ... an inescapable status quo maintained by a poor wage and the social pressures exerted by a small community, which decide the bright boys against farm work. The work itself has never been despised and those that leave it know that they will never find anything else which is so entirely satisfying (1969: 93)
Oh yeah, its the camaraderie of all your friends are doing the same thing. It's competitive, you know and it's hard work and there's nothing like the hard work that makes you feel like a man - right? It was all that at the time, and the attitude was I can always go back to it (fishing). I can never fail. If I fail in university, shit, how can I fail, I can always go back to the fishery. There's nothing to be lost there. (CF-ML-86)

These young men came from established, license holding fishing families. For male leavers in this cohort, there was a safety net hanging under their forays into post-secondary education. They had the financial resources from summer fishing and the certain knowledge that they could always "fall back" on fishing and the "tough comfort" of life in the community. Most male leavers say they left either because they did not like fishing, because they were simply bored by the routine, or because they sensed an insecurity in the way the resource was being exploited.

I graduated in '81 and that was at the peak of the fishing. There was huge money to be made in the fishing industry. So on the financial side of things, there wasn't anything pulling me away. I mean a deck hand could make 6 figures, and you had very little responsibility. And most of the guys were running around with new vehicles and could afford to buy new homes and cottages. There's still people that survived all that. A lot of the money went down the tubes with drinking and the lifestyles and all that, but some of them played it smart. But the other thing about that is [that] I found it very boring. The fishing was exciting. I mean, there is certainly the romance of the sea life. But once you got ashore there was very little. I don't know, I found it very limited, there was lots of alcohol and partying and nothing beyond that. I guess I wanted something bigger. (DE-ML-81)

For stayers, there seemed little sense in acquiring much formal education because the fishery seemed to them totally secure. While the fishery was booming it seemed to many in this cohort that life would continue much as it had for generations and the application to new technologies would not significantly reduce stocks or jeopardise the way of life on the Neck. This tradition and the security of following what seemed like a "natural" course for young men in coastal fishing villages combined with lucrative income potential made possible by new technologies.6 Through

6 Fishing is a high risk, capricious and dangerous occupation. Fishermen on Digby Neck often tell stories about particularly dangerous or lucrative voyages. In all of these accounts there is a strong sense of collective struggle and accomplishment, the lived sense of having faced adversity with one's mates. Kurlansky writes:

Fishermen like to talk about their espirit de corps, and it is true that there is a warm camaraderie, a sign of being part of an elite brotherhood. Fishermen are like combat veterans who feel understood only by their comrades who have survived the same battles. But fishing is a constant struggle for economic survival (1997: 112).

Another contemporary literary example is The Perfect Storm (Junger, 1999). The movie release of the screenplay of this book was a much anticipated event for many Digby Neck fishermen. Several of my informants had read the book and one young man commented that it was the only book he had read since dropping out of school in grade 9.

218
this period the state was also contributing to the sense of security by actively supporting the industrialization and modernisation of the fishery by financing expansion of harvesting and processing capacity. As one dragger owner/operator (who is reputed locally to be a multimillionaire) commented: “you can’t blame us for what happened to the stocks in the 70s and 80s, we just played by the rules, we didn't make them. If it wasn’t me, it would have been somebody else” (FN). This potent mix of the known and the new created conditions of both security and prosperity for young men whose families held licenses and owned fishing rigs, but also new problematic questions about staying and leaving. This parent/educator saw the dilemma facing young men and women in the 1970s and 1980s.

Well, we know that the school plays an important part. They start here and decide whether they’re going to slide into the community or slide out. It’s stressful for a lot of them, mostly the boys but a lot of girls have left too but I can see those boys not wanting to leave home, not wanting to leave here. My parents have done this and I’d like to stay around. I can’t remember anyone actually saying it, but you just know, you can tell that they want to stay. If they haven't given you notification, that well I’m going to [leave]... You know if they’re going to go away they tell you very young: ‘when I get through here, well I’m not staying around at all.’ But if you don't hear that, well then you know they are going to stay. (ES-FE)

People had fished for generations and fished as hard as they could with the tools that were available to them. The tradition was one in which the harder one fished, the greater the rewards. This generation was the first to be in a position to exploit emerging technologies en masse. They believed, and a few continue to believe, that these new technologies would provide them with additional security and increased incomes indefinitely. Security was not evenly distributed though, nor was it interpreted in the same way by all Digby Neck boys. Several leavers described a “hunter mentality” and masculine identity constructed on the basis of machismo and a belief in the inexhaustible bounty of the ocean. By this time though, many Digby Necker leavers were beginning to question the sustainability of the hunter mentality.

And if you’ve been out on a boat, especially in the days when the dragging was around- if you’ve been out on a dragger and you’ve seen the way the bosses and the captains reacted. You pull a net of fish up and you get couple of bags of fish, you want to get that thing back in the water just as fast as you can and catch and catch and catch. And you come in on a Friday night and you drink till you have to go back out again. And you do that until the weather gets bad. It’s a hunterish kind of mentality, and I always wondered how long it could last. (EM-ML-80)

In this context it is not difficult to see how education was given a low priority by most stayers,
particularly the men. The fishery was considered to be so secure and so lucrative that education was an irrelevance for men who had “direct” connections to the fishery and who could anticipate inheriting licenses and fishing rigs.

I’ve heard stories of boys earning $50 or $60 thousand dollars in the summer. So their decision was, well do I take the $50 or $60 thousand and go to college, or do I make $150,000 and stay at this all year round. Now, that’s a tough one. That’s really a tough one. And the ones who liked it, they were maybe just as secure as they would be in a profession. Like I said before, there was no guarantee for a good many years that they’d find a job after university. (MS-FE)

Dad never encouraged me to quit, but he never encouraged me to go to school either. He never made me do my homework. I guess he just thought like I did, well, “he’s got the fishery.” I think actually dad wanted me to become a fisherman so he could have somebody to run his boat. I don’t think he [pause]. I know my sister, he used to really plan her going to college and this and that. He paid her way all through and she was guaranteed to go to college because she was a girl. But me being a boy, I don’t think I was ever even thought of as being anything but a fisherman. (ES-MS-82)

For other men whose connection with the fishery was more tenuous, the fishery was defined in terms of insecurity. Contrasting the comments of the dragger fisherman above, this leaver who was a member of a large family in the small boat inshore lobster fishery saw the industry as a tremendously insecure way to make a living. Dependent on the availability of fish and to the caprices of the marketplace, this individual felt insecure and vulnerable as a fisherman. For him, education provided a “portable” sort of credential which seemed to him more predictable and potentially lucrative than the fixed credential of a fishing license. Marxist analysts of the Atlantic fishery have consistently pointed to the proletarianisation of the small boat fishery (Clement, 1986, Brym and Sacouman, 1979, Sacouman, 1981, Fairley, Leys and Sacouman, 1990). This quote supports the sense that small boat fishermen had little control over prices, and thus, their total employment conditions.

In fishing, like there’s a body of water with a limited resource, a finite resource. If you didn’t harvest them first, somebody else will. I was thinking it would be like having one big field for the farmers and whoever got the harvest first got everything. Because in fishing, you either do really well or you get nothing and it’s [pause] you know lobster season, if your motor breaks down the first day of the season ... You’re shit out of luck. We’d come into the wharf and tie up, and the guy would say lobsters just dropped a dollar a pound today. I mean it was like I always felt so weak and out of control when something like that happened. My brothers told me of scenarios where they spent a lot of money gearing up for a season and then having them tell him the day before that there’s going to be no season that year. I found that a really emotionally stressful thing. And I think my personal reaction as a young person growing up was that whenever I saw
something like that happen to adults and people I cared for, it’s like I’m never gonna let that happen to me. So I kind of, I guess, in the long path, the way it’s done out, I didn’t get involved in fishing but I’ve done [pause] I’ve always tried to enter into work type situations and occupation that are always very portable and quite secure. (EM-ML-80)

Leavers tended to define security differently than stayers and they tended to see in the mechanisation and expansion of the fishery the seeds of danger. Where stayers saw opportunity and rewards, leavers tended to see limitations and potential for tremendous insecurity and even immanent collapse. These perceptions cut across class lines and to a certain extent the difference is that children of elite fishing families were virtually the only Digby Neckers in a position to easily choose higher education. But for these families, the choice of investing in higher education for their male children made little sense because they were the very people benefiting most from the industrial fishery. This is an important irony. Those with the greatest access to higher education were the same people who had the greatest access to the fish stocks in the 1970s and 1980s.

Female stayers have more ambivalent memories about the connection between education and sustainable futures. Female stayers defined security in terms of staying, but their sense of staying had more to do with the importance of community linkages and relationships than with opportunities in the fishery. They found marriages, employment in the service industry, and occasional fisheries related employment like gathering “winkles” (periwinkles), baiting bags or trawl, and working in fish plants. The community is defined as a sustainable, albeit “tough” economy if one was willing to work hard, and a great place to raise kids.

7 In my field work I have encountered a few families of limited means that claim to have sacrificed in order to put their children through higher education. The following example is a verbatim reconstruction of a part of a conversation with a middle aged mother of three from my field diary:

Well we always pushed our kids. I guess we were kind of looked down on around here. We weren't interested in the same kind of things that other people were and they told us that we were outsiders in no uncertain terms. I guess we were seen as kind of hippies, you know, back-to-the-landers. We just wanted a quiet place to live where we could raise our kids and have a decent life. My husband was in electronics and he always included the boys in whatever he was doing. I remember that they used to follow him around taking things apart and finding out how they worked. He told them if you want to understand something, take it apart and figure out how it works. Maybe that’s where the interest in engineering came from. All of our kids graduated from university and they did it on their own, we couldn’t help them. But we wouldn’t let them quit either. Our youngest boy found it really hard and he wanted to quit at one point. Well, we wouldn’t let him and he made it. It’s a tough world out there but you’ve got to let them go, they’ve got to make it on their own. We always encouraged them to go where they had to, to Toronto, or wherever they had to go to do what they wanted to do. (FN)
Quiet. Well the first thing you always say is that it is a fishing community. It’s very beautiful, friendly. People here are [pause] you’ll always get help from somebody, like if you break down on the road. Not a lot of opportunity, but we still have a school, we still have churches, we still have our fire hall, we have stores, we now have [pause] actually there’s probably more to tell about Digby Neck than when I was growing up ‘cause it was all to do with the fisheries. Well it still is today, but I mean it’s different. You know we’ve got two salmon hatcheries now. It’s a great place to live. You can always find ... like I say there’s always something that you can do once you get to know the people. I don’t think we’d ever starve or go homeless here. You know I don’t even hear people talk about getting their kids off of Digby Neck like when I was growing up. (LF-FS-81)

Women of this cohort did not speak of security in terms of connection to a successful fisherman, but rather in terms of the way they could acquire educational credentials or local work experience which would allow them to earn an independent income. The presence of an independent income was the measure and indicator of security for these women. Yet, these women all married and virtually all of them married fishermen. Female stayers were typically more able to see the direct connection between formal schooling and income than men. This informant illustrates how women combine formal educational credentials with more traditional family connections and work ethic to make a living in the community.

I’ve always wanted to work. I’ve never wanted to be stuck as a housewife. You know I wanted to be a career person, you know, pay your own way. I’ve never depended on anybody, I’m very independent. I didn’t actually know what I wanted to be till I got out in the world and experienced it. I’ve done everything from logging, to helping in schools, to cooking. [pause] You know, I knew how to cook, but not for a hundred and some people [pause] and it gave you all these different opportunities. So I picked what I like to do and I got my training [community college]. So I said, well that’s what I’m going to do. The experience is how I found out what I wanted to do. Everyone on Digby Neck is a hard worker. Hands-on, hard work, do anything to work. Like I say, if worse comes to worst, you can always look after someone’s kids or go down the road and [pause] well in lobster season, walk in the door and bait bags. It’s adjusting yourself to that type of work. I could sit in the house and look after the kids or I can go and get up at five o’clock in the morning and go down to the shore in cold weather and haul on a pair of rubber boots and bait bags, or clean the ditches [for returnable bottles] if you had to, or work in the woods. There’s always something to do. (LF-FS-81)

Female stayers defined the community as a place where a flexible, multi-skilled person can always find something to do. This response mirrors the multi-skilled emphasis of men in the 1963-1974 cohort. Women in the 1975-86 cohort are highly active in the labour force as well as in more “traditional” gendered roles in community organisations. They work in a wide variety of occupations, both in the fishery and in service sector employment mainly in nearby Digby. Some
educators commented on the versatility of these women praising their ability to “carve out a niche” in the community to provide themselves with some income. Most educators see this change as a kind of women’s entrepreneurship. “They’re workers,” everyone says, and this designation carries with it elements of pride and apology, admiration and scorn. This educator, on the other hand, questions the extent to which women’s multi-occupational activity represents a real departure from traditional roles in coastal communities.

It’s just a different organisation and spin on what they’ve been doing all their lives. I find when the word entrepreneurship comes up and the educators got a hold of this one about 10 years ago, when it tends to be applied in rural areas to women what it amounts to is: I do something that I do at home, or it’s more in the domestic scene. And what I find interesting in this is that I’m still very closely tied to home, I’ve still got a rope around my ankle. I may do catering and I may make Phentex slippers or whatever. (SR-FE)

Was the entry of women into the labour force on Digby Neck a result of the feminist movement? Women in all cohorts report having worked in fishing support jobs, often in family operations. Women on Digby Neck have a long history of work outside the home. As the fishery boomed in the 1970s, the labour of women became a more integral and necessary part of the Digby Neck economy. There was at this time, more work than people to do it. And it was urgent work that needed to be done in order to unload and prepare bait for boats fishing virtually around the clock. Fish then need to be processed quickly and efficiently before they spoil. Women have always been a part of this activity in the family-based fishery. As more and more men were attracted to high wages in fish and scallop dragging, more opportunities opened up for women to get paid for doing fisheries support work, work they had often previously done gratis in family-based fishery of the 1950s and 1960s. As the fishery industrialised, there was more for women and children to “support.” The ability to work hard when needed is the mark of a good worker in the fishery, male or female. Just as fishermen needed to be on the deck at 4 or 5 AM, the boats needed bait and supplies.

Unlike the women stayers of the 1963-74 cohort, these women did not anticipate marriage as either a path they were expected to follow or as a means to economic security. Women of this generation expected to work and they saw the community as a place that held potential for them to make work for themselves. The notion of flexibility, for women included formal and informal education and both of these kinds of learning were respected. They tended to be very much immersed in the
work ethic and the idea that it is hard work that provides security.

Around here you’ve got to be willing to work. A steady hard worker, doesn’t mind doin’ a good day’s work, not all the time off takin’ breaks. Somebody that’s always dependable, willing to do [pause] I bait bags this time of year see. You gotta be there, you gotta work. If they got 8 tubs [of baited trawl], you gotta have 8 tubs and you stay there till the 8 tubs are done. The first time you went somewhere else, that’s it you’re done. If they weren’t done for the next day, that’s it, you’re done; they’d just find somebody else. So you gotta be pretty flexible and whatever they want done you gotta do it. You gotta be there. You say, “the next day I’ll have it done,” well you’re done. You gotta be reliable. (BF-FS-84)

This informant went on to justify her decision to stay in the community in terms of opportunity and security as well as the comfortable feeling of living in a known space. The community not only provides opportunity for those who are well integrated into its routines and work structures, it also provides the kind of high visibility and security of a community where “everybody knows everybody else” described by Bonner (1997). Stayers take pride in having been able to survive transitions in the economy and in the fishery, and this pride is reflected as both a personal achievement, and an indicator of the resilience of community.

You succeed by surviving. You know you look at a lot of people around here and you think, I don’t know how they’ve done it, how they’ve held out here this long. It’s been hard. Things were just moving along and then bang, the fish plants are gone. But we’re still here and we’re still surviving. (LF-FS-81)

A friend wanted us to go out west. I said no, you go, cause I can survive here. I can survive here myself if I have to, with two kids I can survive. I make money every day. I wouldn’t have to worry come the end of the day if I wouldn’t have a toonie ‘cause there’s something out there to do and I know that. But if I go somewhere else, to a strange place, I wouldn’t do it until everything was checked out, and yes, you do have place to live, and yes, you will have a job doing something. Other than that I would never, never leave here. My house is paid for if nothing else. There’s always something you can do here if you want to make a living. If you wanted to make yourself 30-35 dollars today you grab yourself a periwinkle bag and go down to the shore and you go pickin and you will have that 30 or 35 dollars. But if I go somewhere else, a strange territory, I don’t know what I’m getting into. I don’t know anybody there, all my family and friends are here. I know the school and the kids they hang around with. So I’d never take my children out of here unless I had guaranteed there is a job there for ya, and it would have to pay. I wouldn’t leave that because that’s my security. To ever take the kids somewhere where I have to think, well what shall I do today. I could never do that unless someone says: you have a good job year round. You have to guarantee work and guarantee your kids will have a good school. But you’re not gonna get that guarantee I don’t think. (BF-FS-84)

In the insecure economic climate of the contemporary Canadian (or global) economy, the kind of
assurances and security this woman demands is only available in the known spaces of home. Women stayers saw the direct connection between both learning and life in the community. In fact, two of the three female stayers interviewed in this cohort left the community to pursue post-secondary training in order to establish themselves more securely within the community.

I thought that if I was going to stay in the area, because I was with my boyfriend and he was a fisherman, like if I was going to stay in the area, what could I do so that I could make decent money? I looked at that, well you had a hospital there that was pretty functional. And you had teaching. And what else did you have? You had a fish plant to work in. You know, there was secretarial work. But, you know, those seemed to be what you were limited to if you’re a woman. (FS-FS-77)

Formal education was seen by both female stayers and leavers as one means of security that might complement or replace work in and around the fishery on Digby Neck. Women from this cohort saw formal education offering a kind of enhanced security that would allow them to remain in the known community. Unlike male stayers, who saw formal education as being disconnected from gendered work in the community, women tended to see education as a vehicle for achieving occupational and economic security that was denied them in the fishery, both “around here” and in more distant locations. These women have been “released” from the traditional roles of wife and mother in domestic spaces and into the multi-occupational space of the community; they are the first cohort to experience (almost universally) the two income phenomenon that now characterises Canadian families. They do fisheries support work, labour in service industry jobs, and acquire relevant credentials that allow them to access “more permanent” or “good” jobs. Sometimes the education strategy worked in terms of leading to professional employment, as in the case of the stayer quoted above, and sometimes it did not.

In my own case I am bitter about the way my education turned out. I never really wanted to leave the Neck. I did want to travel and I’ve done a lot of that. But my real goal was always to settle down. I was travelling and working in other places mainly because I thought the experience I gained would help me to find a job around here. Wrong. I figured that if I went and got a good education that I would be able to come back here and get a good job. That’s what I always believed and that’s what people said to me, get your education and you can do anything. Well, that’s not true around here and I’m kind of an example that people use. They say, look at her, she’s got all that education and she’s back here. I feel like one of those grade 9 dropouts: a failure. The funny thing is that I can get work anywhere in the world, but I can’t seem to get anything here. So education took me away even though what I really wanted was to stay and that’s why I wouldn’t encourage anybody to get a university education if you want to stay and work around here. Those dropouts have at least had that. They haven’t had to move from the place they want to stay. I don’t know what they’re doing, but it can’t be much worse than this. (US-FL-80)
This story is a testament to the dubious value of “too much” formal education for stayers. She understands herself, and she is seen in the community as someone “overqualified” for existing positions and professional service in the local area, and as a result she must move.

The ability to stay in the community and find a reasonable living was differentially available to men and women on the basis of gender and class. Different definitions of security emerged out of the differential structure of opportunity faced by individuals of different genders and in different social classes. While males from elite and license holding fishing families had the opportunity to access higher education, they typically saw security in pursuing their exclusive opportunities in the fishery. At the same time leavers needed to have sufficient family income and support in order to access opportunities in higher education. Unlike the situation of the 1963-74 cohort, these people were not trailblazers in quite so stark a sense. University and the menu of higher educational opportunities was within their sights and their families had sufficient funds to allow them to access high status post-secondary credentials. All of the leavers interviewed from this cohort attended university and all of them have acquired at least one degree. Leaving continued to be traumatic for many Digby Neckers of this generation, even when they understood from a very early age that they, “had to leave.” The stress was particularly acute when leaving was combined with post-secondary education where one’s identity was challenged at a very deep level.

I think if you buy into it [university education], and in the sense of rural communities, you have to give up who you are. And have faith that, ya, an education does mean that there are going to be bigger and better things and ... you buy into something that you can’t see in these kinds of areas, you can’t really see and reflect on and think about for yourself. For a lot of these kids to buy into the educational dream, it means giving up what they know is solid, dad does it, mom does it and they can see it. And there is a sort of scale of wealth and poverty built into that, but it’s real and it’s relevant. Then we ask them to buy into this other thing that says that: ya, I know that if I go and study, and if I do this and I do that, and as I work my way up through training and education that, ya, there is a whole vast world out there. (CD-ME)
What's that going to get you?: The educational tunnel

Somebody who went away to college or to get a university education, that was a rarity in the 40s and 50s. So by the 70s and 80s, although they did see a slightly different world, if they could hang on to that old world, they saw nothing wrong with that. And there is nothing wrong with it as far as that goes. It's just that this world has almost disappeared now. I don't know what's become of all those people ... some of them I suppose have prospered really well and others I suppose are just struggling. (SF-ME)

Like the 1963-74 cohort, many stayers as well as leavers experienced the formal educational system as a tunnel. They entered into it and they complied with its demands (more or less) never really understanding clearly the options it might open for them. Their lifeworld was contained in a space where relatively few people had ever accessed higher education, and those few who had were gone. Some of them openly resisted the futility and dubious outcomes offered in the education system and left it early for local opportunities, while others followed along until they could no longer see the point. Like Jones' Scottish (1999a, 1999b) rural stayers, many Digby Neck stayers could not see the trail markers that led one out of the education system and into a particular career or professional track. Virtually all known paths in their families led directly from school to work. Those who continued on until the end of high school and on into higher education were quintessential trail blazers.

There weren't any role models in my family for education. I'm the first one who went to university. I'm the role model I guess [laughs]. Imagine that. For a lot of people on the Neck, education was a mystery and people are afraid of mysteries. They're scared of what they don't understand, right, and they'll take the easiest route out, I mean that's human nature. And you're scared, and dammit if you don't understand something, you know, you're going to take the easy route out. And for a lot of people, that's education, something they don't understand. It didn't make much sense, it was foreign to them. Most people are going to go to my comfort zone which is what I know. (CF-ML-86)

Most stayers and leavers reported not being able to see any authentic purpose for higher education when they were in secondary school. They claim not to have been “prepared” for university and other forms of higher education not so much in terms of academic demands, but more in terms of the general sense of the purpose of higher education. In Bourdieu's terms, they lacked the cultural capital they needed to make sense of an extended education, and to breathe relevance into the move beyond secondary school. Even secondary education continued to be a new experience for many families as educators pointed out. With no tradition of high school experience in many families in
this cohort, a young person was still considered to have, “done pretty good” to, “stick it out” beyond a very rudimentary education.

They wouldn’t have understood what you were doing and I think for a lot of these whose parents hadn’t gone that far, if the kids got to grade 10 and 11, they’d done alright, they’d hung in there a good long time. And they’d say that you’d got farther than I did. Again it’s an endurance test and we’re not sure what it’s about but you got further with it than I did. You did real good. I only got to grade 7 and you got to grade 11, you’ve done alright. Now you can go to the real world and see what it’s about. For a good many, I’d say that was basically the outlook, and it probably still is. And when they get up around grade 6 and 7, I can’t help you anymore because you’ve gone beyond what I did. You’re on your own. (HL-FE)

In this context, higher education was a foreign space for most Digby Neckers. Higher education was seen as a journey with only a vague purpose and outcome, a tunnel into which one entered unable to see what would come into view at the other end. Leavers saw this tunnel vision in terms of the restrictions it imposed on their aspirations and those of their peers.

I think the fundamental basis for why you’d want to get an education, where it was going to put you, it wasn’t there with me. Like I’m fundamentally no different than most of the people that are still living on the Neck at that time as far as perceiving what an education will get you. I had no idea why I needed an education or why I should get one. You know the big picture, the ability to look down the road, you want to be able to have a certain amount of power over your life as far as knowing what you want to be doing in you life and as far as what you can have around you. I didn't have that feeling of possibility in school. As far as understanding how this schooling all fit in to the big picture, there was just nothing there. And like I say I could have sat down with any of the guys who have stayed and gone fishing and I would have been exactly the same at that time. (EM-ML-80)

One stayer described the experience of formal education as “having blinders on.” She was able to see only a narrow set of experiences and expectations in front of her, but she was unable to make a connection between the set of experiences and expectations that counted as her education, and a set of future options. Among many working class Digby Neckers there was no concrete expectation that education should connect directly with one’s life and one’s prospects other than offering a vague promise of a better life. As one person put it: “Education was a word, it was like going to a movie. You know, it was all about somebody else, not you or the people around you” (FN). Platitudes like, “you can’t get enough education,” and, “you’ve got to get your grade twelve,” were common, but few respondents, stayers or leavers report having any clear sense of what they might mean.

When I was a kid going to school it felt just like you had blinders on. You were shy, you didn't look around on the bus. You didn't look this way and you didn’t look that way. It was just like you had blinders on. And you know, going to school nowadays, it’s not like that, you have all kinds of opportunities to get involved in all kinds of things. It’s good for you to turn your head. (FS-FS-77)
It really struck me when I worked in a pretty high end computer place and it was like, holy, this is what mathematics does. You look at the programmers and the engineers and you think this is really nice. I think in a lot of ways I’ve done it the hard way because I’ve never really taken the easy road. I’ve never felt like someone’s kind of taken me by the arm and said that this is the way you go to where you want to be as far as the comfort factor down the road. I was lucky enough to instinctively realise that it wouldn’t happen on Digby Neck. Because if I was living on Digby Neck I don’t think I’d be a very happy person. (EM-ML-80)

Educators also saw the limitations in the vision of their students. Many high school teachers commented that rural children in general and children from the Neck in particular had historically not seen a very wide array of options connected to education and as a result they were not particularly interested in pursuing higher education. Educators’ interviews are full of similar types of commentary about the way the area’s rural children were not significantly exposed to a reality larger than the one found in their small communities and home environments. Educators were universally of the opinion that this limited “exposure” impeded the process of educating the children of these coastal communities and particularly getting them to see and consider options that diverged from those they could see in their day-to-day lives. A good example is this teacher’s comment on a future projection exercise she did with her grade 6 students on Digby Neck.

I remember going to an inservice at a school in Halifax. And I noticed that the teacher had put up future projections her grade 6 kids had done. Now this is something I had my own classes do for years. But what I saw in the Halifax school was so different. I couldn’t get over it. They were all going to be in university because they were interested in doing something in science, they had to make sure that they kept up with their math and their sciences ... Somebody else was doing something and they needed to make good marks in English all the way and they had to be reading all these things and it was all kinds of things from Shakespeare to ... But they had the feel and they knew this kind of thing and if they wanted to get scholarships, they knew that this scholarship would be available to them in grade 11 and all that. And I was thinking how different things were down on the Neck or in other places I’ve taught in the district. My kids never talked about education, they would talk about the kind of car they were going to have or four wheelers or skidoos, and who they were going to marry. A lot of them would be going to quit school at 16 where these [urban children] were talking about at 20 they were just beginning their education for their future life. And it really surprised me to see that, because I had been so long in the rural areas. (HL-FE)

Male stayers tended to see their secondary school experience as “putting in time” for no apparent purpose. At best this was “fun” at worst it was drudgery. There were few male role models in the community who had completed any form of higher education and even those individuals who were encouraged to remain in school to the secondary level were unsure about why they were doing so.
Well, high school seemed to go by really quickly for me the years went by quickly, and I don't think I was really preparing myself for anything. I was just there and that was about it. (SM-MS-77)

Career guidance was offered, but it seemed disconnected from the opportunities that male stayers particularly were easily able to imagine and construct for themselves out of the familiar fabric of community life. Women tended to see education as a kind of moral imperative, something one did just as one went to church or behaved properly in public. The completion of schooling to the secondary level was becoming an established norm, but there was little understanding why one bothered to follow it, other than employers seem, for inexplicable reasons, to require it even for labouring jobs. A highly moralistic language has come to mark most discourse around schooling and particularly the paramount importance of “staying in school.” Virtually all respondents of all cohorts echo this sentiment. Finally, a solid hegemony had entered discourse around schooling in this coastal community, but only in the 1990s. The common idea is that a person now, “needs grade 12.”

And they’re told they’re stuck and they’re bad people. Bad people don’t have education nowadays because it’s so readily available and you can do all these wonderful things with it. I still wonder if having an education gives you any kind of an advantage, whether it gives you special status. I think we have to look at some of the people in these communities and look at some of the lifestyles and say that those lifestyles have value and they’re what the people are about. (CD-ME)

The educator above reflects the kind of question that was common among stayers. What will education give me that I can’t have without it? If I want to stay here, can I not have a decent life that does not include a protracted formal education? This discourse (and the hegemony it represents) is troubled and it questions itself. This cohort of stayers, who are now young parents in the community, raise deep questions about the ability of the local staples economy to support existing “lifestyles,” but some question the facile “learning culture” discourse driving the rhetoric around the necessity of formal education. As one leaver put it: “It’s all stay in school, prepare yourself for the future and all that bullshit. But you can’t trust that any more than you can trust the fishing” (DE-ML-81). Still, there was a growing sense among this generation that formal education was important because some vaguely defined negative future might befall those who lack it.
Ya, but you didn’t have people coming in and talking about careers. You went to school, you come home and did your work. And that was just it, “get your education, that’s important.” For what we don’t know but get it. It might be bad for you if you don’t. (LF-FS-81)

Stayers in this cohort, like the older cohort of stayers, often spoke in moralistic terms about the need for education, “in this day and age.” Education was a “good thing” to do and something that one does to “improve oneself.” For many of these stayers, education has the aura of prayer, going to school has the transcendent effect of deliverance. This is a devout activity that people often referred to derisively as, “settin in school.” Like prayer, the power of education to effect mundane reality is a matter of faith and perception for many Digby Neckers. One stayer spoke of school as a place where young people find themselves in an orderly environment and that this orderliness contrasts the relative abandon and free-wheeling life in the fishery. This was a life that was not particularly rule governed and one which is heavily influenced by impulsive behaviour and alcoholism.

We weren’t big church people, but when you went to church, you had a certain structure, you know. You followed things in that manner and you come to school and you had a certain structure there. And that kind of makes you straighten up a little bit and follow a few rules and everything. When you quit school early, what guidelines do you have? The law, and that’s about it [pause]. When you talk about people who quit school, I guess my thoughts, within the area is that lots of times they went to drinking in this community, I would say a pretty high percentage went to drinking. (FS-FS-77)

But this moralistic language of schooling generates its own problems because there is still no clear grounded evidence that education is indeed able to fulfil the promise of security it is thought to hold out to Digby Neckers. Some Digby Neckers of this cohort are dubious about the promise of security in the educational message preferring instead the tried and true path of entrepreneurial ventures rather than credentialism to provide a future for their children. Many parents of this generation see setting up a “little business” as something they can do to keep their children on the Neck and contribute in a tangible, known way to help them shape and control their futures.

Now with all this fisheries stuff we started a small business because you’re worried about your kids. You’ll find most families around here with kids, they’re not talkin’ college, they’re not talking about getting out of school and their kids goin’ on to college or even to vocational school. They’re wondering, “what are my kids gonna do?” We gotta do something to keep our kids so they’re either gettin’ into fishing with them or setting up weirs. We started a small business and if that worked out, well then that’s something our boys could do and run themselves. A lot of people are thinking of stuff that the kids could do and not thinking about sending them to college. (LF-FS-81)
In a chaotic world, the community provides a haven of security, a protected space for one’s family. Leavers too saw the disconnection between the orderly structured life-world of school and what was seen as the less structured of life in the fishery. In school the student is expected to follow what one informant called an “incremental” ethos. Schooling is the slow accumulation of credentials over the course of a long period of time, and, in order to succeed in this environment, one needed to be patient and steadily industrious. The student also had to take a view of profit and gain that were incremental and long term as opposed to the short term, aggressive, capricious nature of profit taking behaviour characteristic of the fishery. The classic middle class life strategy of delayed gratification was embodied in the structures of schooling and resisted by the boom and bust, all or nothing, nature of work and rewards in the industrial fishery. Unlike in agricultural contexts or in the entrepreneurial or professional middle class, if a fisherman delayed, someone else would catch the fish.

When I was younger you could make a lot of money fishing and I think this comes back again to the all or nothing, kind of the short term, worry about tomorrow tomorrow. I think in an agricultural background the mentality is [pause] well the mentality in the people I dealt with and lived with, it was very easy for them to think ten years, five years, fifteen years into the future. And I don’t think that was prevalent in my community [pause] because I remember people getting kicked out of school and making like $1000 the week they got kicked out. And it seemed like a lot of money if you have the mentality that [pause] I don’t know. It seemed like the whole fishing style and the idea that you go out and get what you can and get as much as you can and then you come back and wait to go out again and you hope it’s there. It’s really a bit of a game and it doesn’t fit well with the educational way of life. You know you put four years of university in and then another two you’re gonna be here. And you know, it’s better to save $10 a week than to get $100 in a lump sum in one day. I think fishing [pause] I don’t think that mentality ties in really well with school because school is incremental, it’s a little piece at a time and you build on it and you build on it. But you don’t wander in and work really hard for a week and get your stuff done. To be honest with you Mike, with my personality, I still fight that. (EM-ML-80)

Paul Theobald has argued that rural places are often defined by the youth who reside in them as unexciting spaces that they desire to abandon in favour of more stimulating urban areas (1992). There is something of this flavour in the comments of female leavers (although it is always

---

8 Lofty has analysed this phenomenon in fishing communities in his engaging, and largely ignored, *Time to Write* (1992). Lofty found radically different and generally incompatible rhythms of work in the fishery as compared to school. Working as a language teacher in a junior high school in a coastal community in Maine Lofty struggled with his sense that the misfit between school and life in the community could be bridged in his language arts class by conceiving of time differently. While I find his practical suggestions for instruction questionable, his analysis of the divergent men’s life worlds of schooling and work on board a lobster boat is excellent.
tempered with a clear understanding of the trade-off between rural and urban lifestyles), in this cohort, there appeared to be considerable excitement available to young men. Both leavers and stayers described a stimulating pursuit of profit and machismo in the fishing industry of the 1970s and 1980s which, for them, bore striking contrast to the dull routines of schooling. Male leavers were in a position to finance education through part time high wage fisheries work, government loans which were still relatively generous, and most importantly perhaps, family support. Digby Neckers almost universally and across divisions of gender, social class and age cohort identify family as an important factor in all aspects of their lives. This is a discourse of love, and like Derrida’s analysis of friendship (1996), love has its roots in material circumstances, exchange and passing on privilege to one’s offspring.

**Family/Class**

The more we look at the working class life, the more we try to reach the core of working class attitudes, the more surely does it appear that the core is a sense of the personal, the concrete, the local; it is embodied in the idea of, first, the family and, second, the neighbourhood. This remains, though much works against it (Hoggart, 1957: 33).

Family structure is closely connected with the various fisheries on Digby Neck. On the top of the class structure of the fishery which had developed by the mid 1970s was the elite dragger owner/operator, fish plant owners and their families. These families had “all the toys,” the satellite dish, paved driveways, late model cars and four wheel drive vehicles (sometimes even for the children), new or fully renovated classic houses, manicured grounds, snowmobiles, boats, cottages and all the indicators of material success in a consumer society. Owner/operators of small boat fishing operations like lobstermen, gill netters and long-liners also prospered through this period, albeit in smaller measure. Many of these families also displayed, and continue to display, the accoutrements of consumer success. The class of worker that laboured on board another man’s boat or in the fish plants of Digby Neck also found “lots of work” through this period, and their success was directly connected to that of all other classes of fishermen and fish plant owners. Social class divisions in a coastal community are both subtle and integrated in the sense that those at the top of the structure often (but not always) have a sense of noblesse oblige to the people they employ because these are their neighbours and even family members. Along with the consumer
privileges, this cohort of families was the first to be able to consider higher education for certain of their children, particularly their girls.

More of them started to think about educating their kids... Mostly the girls because they took to school more [pause] Well the money certainly never stood in the way for certain families i could name. They were considered successful in the area and money wasn’t a problem. (FL-FE)

Many informants in this cohort report that they could have pursued post-secondary education, and that they were encouraged to do so by their families. By the mid 1970s, the post-secondary system was as open as it has ever been with a variety of offerings that ranged from trades training in vocational schools, to a relatively accessible, expanding university system. Government student loans were available to prospective students of higher education in Nova Scotia, and for those who could imagine the possibility of university and who could complete the endurance test of secondary schooling in the face of a booming fishery, there were educational opportunities. The leavers in this cohort all took advantage of parental money and/or the system of student loans and went to university. Those children of elite fishing families who remained in the communities defined security in terms of growing opportunities in an expanding industrial fishery. Most of these were men. They actively resisted schooling because they had “better options.” Female children of elite fishing families tended to opt for post-secondary education and the out-migration this entailed. As was the case in the previous cohort (1963-1974), there was a cadre of stayers from more marginal families who had no clear picture of the possibility of post-secondary education. These were individuals whose family/class position in the fishery did not situate them where they might seriously consider post-secondary schooling of any sort. These people lived to labour and anticipated nothing more than a lifetime of manual work in the fishery. Their schooling tended to support their reproduction as labour for an expanding industrial fishery.

We worked, my whole family. My father had a little boat and he fished it. Me and my brothers we always worked around. It was always like that as far as I can see. I mean for us anyway, that’s all we ever done. You didn’t need no college for that. Could you see me sittin’ at a desk chewin on a pencil? [laughs] (TR-MS-77).

For people like this male stayer, formal education continued to be an irrelevance rather than a tunnel. Manual work and the ability to labour long hours continued to be highly valued among this cohort. The good, steady worker, male or female is a theme that resonated among stayers. This was the kind of person who could survive in Digby Neck without the support of formal education.
or family money and "direct" access to the fishery. Survival was achieved by these stayers through an application of multiple skills and through the flexible, hard, steady work required by local employers. Parents were silent about formal education. "Real" education did not happen in school; it often was understood as the ability to watch what people did locally and learn from them and apply that learning.

They [parents] didn’t say much about school. They didn’t discourage you, but they didn’t encourage you either. Dad never had that much education anyway. Mom did go to, I think she went to grade 10. Dad never ever really talked about it because he never ever went there. He just figured it was a waste of somebody’s time and the place for you was out workin’ and not sittin’ behind a desk pushin’ a pencil. And my brother was out [by the] time he was 13. The day he turned 14 he was out of school and on that boat. But he learned a lot though on his own. Now he can do carpentry work and everything, you know, what he learned on his own, talkin’ to other people. (BF-FS-84)

It was through this period that the observant, practically intelligent, "steady," "smart," worker could make what was considered to be a decent living and establish the survival skills. Family support for individuals whose connection to the fishery is less "direct" spoke in terms of mutual aid and sharing work. The silence around formal education was interpreted by these people as testimony to its lack of utility. Or, if education was a path to a better life, it was understood as one that was only open to certain privileged people. When I asked the question, "what do people around here say education is for?" one stayer responded immediately, "for the rich." In fact, "success" was defined differently by differently placed individuals. For many stayers, success meant being able to persist in the community, while for many leavers, success meant being able to leave it. And staying meant being able to remain in a place where family and friends are there to share and trade with in a familiar environment. Intimate knowledge of the natural and social environment count as resources for those whose family connections to the fishery are not established through licenses. In the course of most of my interviews on Digby Neck there were continuous "interruptions" caused by the normal flow of visiting, bartering, mutual aid, and phone conversations. These interviews were held in kitchens which, along with wharves and "the store" (local village convenience stores) are the social hub of families and communities.
T: Well, I like it here. It’s only a small village and people is quiet. There’s not much goes on and for hellery or anything like that. Like I say, you know, it don’t matter. You can walk up and down the road and there’s always somebody waving to you or saying ‘hi.’ And they’ll do anything for you. I mean you might go to Digby and you might live alongside of somebody and they won’t even speak to you.

MC: You never thought about living out in other places?

T: No, no. No, just around here. Like I say it’s a small village and everybody knows one another and everybody helps one another. You know what I mean?

MC: Well how does that work? Tell me about it.

T: Well like [if] somebody come in the yard just like that fuller did a minute ago and asked me to go do something, I’d jump right up and go [pause] well not now I wouldn’t cause I’m talking to you [laughs]. If somebody come and asked me to go somewhere to mow a lawn or dig a hole or something like that, I’d go do it. And like if I asked him to take me to town or something like that if I wanted to go, they’d take me to town and wouldn’t charge me a cent. We got to take care of each other cause we ain’t got much. (TR-MS-77)

For leavers, family support was more often defined in terms of money and encouragement. But leavers, all of whom have completed higher education, reported that they were not given significant counselling by their families about the array of options that stood before them. They had to, “figure it out by themselves.”

High school was very uncomfortable for me. I felt like I was marking time a lot of days. And I look in envy at the education that my (Southern Ontario born) husband got and he [pause] I don’t think he takes it for granted, he worked hard for what he got, his family wasn’t wealthy and he had scholarships. But the access to knowledge, the mentorship was incredible. My parents did not mentor me. I realise now that they couldn’t because they could only see so far. (LS-FL-84)

Through the boom period of the 1970s and 1980s, success for less privileged families meant being able to labour hard and meet the challenge of abundant labour opportunities in the fishery. School was for “other people” people who couldn’t or wouldn’t work, or who were wealthy enough not to have to. Hard physical labour was a source of pride for some and a source of contempt for others. Women whose families were reaping the economic benefits of the industrialisation of the fishery described a community in which the saw “nothing for me.” Parents expectations were somewhat contradictory and mixed.
I hate to say it but I just knew there was nothing for me there. The best you could hope for was a good marriage. Well, you looked at those guys around and they were pretty wild most of them. Sure there was lots of money and partying and excitement when they were ashore. But then you thought, if I stay here I’ll be stuck on my own a lot, a fisherman’s wife. It’s not much of a life, you don’t have much independence and there aren’t any decent jobs for miles. No thanks. (TC-FL-79)

In later years, success for people whose connection to the fishery is indirect has meant being able to find enough work to survive. For more privileged families, success could mean either developing the family fishing business, looking at expanding tourism related opportunities, or leaving the Neck in pursuit of a profession or other sorts of business opportunities.

My daughter and I were going around town yesterday and noticed somebody from the Neck that has his own whale watching business and he’s about her age. And I said to her, he has his own whale watching business. But, I said in all fairness, I suppose his parents probably helped him get his own whale watching business. He wouldn’t have it unless his family was a factor, if they didn’t own boats and have seafaring knowledge and things like that. (SF-ME)

They’ve maybe started their own business or around here it was mostly people who went into fish dragging. Fish draggers were the successful people around here because they were the ones making the money. It’s just to do with money and making a good living and supporting other members of the family. Their kids goin’ to college or [pause] success, I don’t know success [pause]. It’d be a lot of people around here because there’s a lot of people that do for others. But then when you talk about, when they talked about when I was growing up, the ones that went away and went to college, and they said, “now he’s a doctor, or now she’s starting her own business, that was considered a success.” (LF-FS-81)

Still, members of this cohort retain highly instrumental attitudes toward education as well as the clear sense that formal education is a tenuous route to economic success. This view is shared by

---

9 This leaver’s response is more typical of a women from an elite fishing family background. In fact she was able to access university education and establish a career in Central Canada. An equivalent sentiment about becoming a fisherman’s wife, expressed by a fisherman’s daughter, who incidentally is a fisherman’s wife, of a more marginal family comes out sounding very different.

B: Lots of people (women) think that way, oh ya we’ll go get this rich fuller and marry a doctor and just get out of here and not be a fisherman’s wife. That’s what most young girls are thinkin’.

MC: Why, what’s wrong with being a fisherman’s wife?

B: It’s boring. You spend most of the time by yourself. It’s lonely. You talk to a lot of them and it’s not on your life they say, I’m not gonna stay here. And some do, they just pack up and go get a job somewheres. Doesn’t matter if it’s not that interesting, it’s just till they meet somebody or something. Ya, a lot of ‘em have moved out of here and moved to Yarmouth or Bridgewater. (BF-FS-84)

237
both stayers and leavers who see both the difficulty of making a living in urban places with a good education, and the money that elite fishing families made during their formative years.

I'd like to put any one of those professors, at any university, and his income up against some of the fishermen I know, and his lifestyle. In my mind, money's what makes things happen, if you want a lifestyle, you gotta have money. There's lots of fine learning and fine arts and everything, but dammit, if you want a lifestyle you have to make money and I can count off the top of my head how many millionaires are on Digby Neck. There's a lot of them and they don't lead the extravagant lifestyle but they're extremely successful people and they made a lot of money, yeah. (CF-ML-86)

These comments also speak to the class divided nature of the Digby Neck community in the present day. As one fisherman commented, "it used to be everybody drove old trucks; now we got a few driving Cadillacs and the rest walk" (FN). As parents themselves, educators in this sample see the influence that they have had and how their overt or covert assumptions have had a profound impact on the career educational and mobility decisions of their own children. As the children of middle class professionals the children of teachers are "naturally" placed (or perceived themselves to have been placed) outside the community in the future that their parents imagine for them. Teachers are, in coastal communities, the quintessential stranger described by Simmel (in coser, 1980); they live in established communities like those found on Digby Neck, but their reference points are always elsewhere.

My own younger daughter cast up to me one time in recent years the pressure she had felt about going to university. And it was an unspoken pressure, just because both their father and I were university grads and teachers the assumption was that she would go to university. Well she did go and she poked along and got her degree finally. And then she went and did a 2 year course in something that she was interested in all the time. You're right I said, I just did make that assumption. (GG-FE)

Young people need support to leave their families and "go on" to pursue further formal education. The community provided a backdrop and a functional social and economic support structure that needed to be actively resisted by leavers. By the same token, the school offered, at some level, the
possibility of mobility to all students. Formal education is the chance to become a stranger\(^{10}\) and some Digby Neckers took it. This offer needed to be resisted by students content to stay in the local milieu. Consciously in the 1960s and 1970s, and more unconsciously by the 1980s and 1990s, middle class students and select working class students in the regional high school have been systematically or implicitly expected by educators to be mobile. This finding is consistent with leavers' own perception of their own situations. If leavers felt subtle pressure or a “hand on the shoulder”, educators understand that they have played a part in providing that subtle support to students they thought “capable.”. Such members of “mobile families” experienced secondary school as a progressive ushering out of the community and on to other places.

The mobile family

These analyses (of schooling and social class reproduction) fail to capture the notion of family-school linkages with - to use and analogy - a small, rarely used pathway in one community or a large well-travelled pathway in another. Researchers need to study the size, nature and purpose of these home-school ‘roads,’ as well as the number of travellers using them. Having the company of many others may shape the nature of the journey by focussing primarily on individual travellers, researchers have missed these possibilities (Lareau, 1989: 6).

The most mobile communities are Sandy Cove and Little River respectively (see Table 16). Educators understand some families to be more outward looking than others. These families are known to be non-traditional or mobile. Non-traditional families possess and value books, have access to elite cultural activity and academic pursuits, and have at least one parent who has no involvement in the fishery, and who often either originated or works outside the community. But

---

\(^{10}\) By “strange” I am using the term in the sense that Simmel used it to describe “the stranger.” For Simmel, the stranger was the harbinger of modernity, the individual who entered ideologically cohesive communities providing alternative points of view. Papastergiadis describes the significance of the stranger in understanding the transformation of social bonds in the age of migration.

The presumption that social bonds are defined by purity of origin, and based on an exclusive characteristic, is undermined, he argues, by the ambivalent presence of strangers. Simmel thereby claims that the most responsive visions of modernity are sustained, not by the consolidation of the unified Renaissance perspective, but through the dynamic incorporation of alternative viewpoints (2000: 66)

Bauman's work also contains extended discussions of estrangement and strangerhood in contemporary societies (1991, 1992).
most significantly and consistently, non-traditional families travel more often and further in the view of educators in this sample. A number of social theorists view mobility as a marker of both modernity (Giddens, 1995, 1996) as well as post-modernity (Bauman, 1991, 1992, 1999). Mobility is equivalent to choice, and as Bauman points out, contemporary consumers are, "doomed to choose," everything from the products we use to the selves we construct (1999: 134). Children from those families educators saw as "traditional" had an array of choices that were relatively limited compared to the more "worldly" family. Children of "mobile families" could choose from a larger, more extensive menu of options.

If the family is, how shall I say it, worldly, you see this. These days you can be quite worldly with the internet and so forth without ever going very far, but there’s nothing like the real experience of travelling there and doing it, such that there’s programs ... this Ottawa experience is an example, but there are many I can think of. One of our students went to Ottawa on one of these programs and when she got to grade 12, no problem. She wanted to take a program that was offered at Algonquin College in Ottawa. Yes, it’s still a ways from home, but I’ve been away from home and I know what it is like. (CQ-FE)

In the case of female children it was generally considered imperative that they study hard and generally focus on a mobile, educationally rich future. Both non-traditional and many traditional parents tended to discourage female children from involvements in the working community and especially male dominated activity “down to the shore.” This “protection” of daughters from the male dominated world of the fishery effectively reinforced the gender segregation that marks much of the east coast fishery and which continues to buttress gender inequality in coastal communities. By keeping girls and women away from the locus of action in the fishery, wharves and fish sheds remained male preserves.

This was the way it was in quite a few families. They didn’t want their girls in the fish plants and running the roads. We were more strict with her that’s for sure. Three boys and one girl and we wanted her to not be like ... well the boys. That’s ok the way they are, but we just wanted her to have a different experience and do something that we ourselves couldn’t do. (ES-FE)

11 Bauman writes:  

...whether we like it or not we are doomed to choose, to go on choosing and to justify our choices and to be painfully aware that choosing and being pressed to prove ourselves right is our fate, since in a polycentric setting we are continually exposed to more than one image of the good life, more than one personal ideal pattern, more than one proposition how to tell apart the ‘should’ from the ‘should not,’ and more than one credible story told of the world, past or present ... (1999: 134)
As young women were kept away (and kept themselves away) from the working surface of the fishery, it became clear to many of them that schooling was the route to employment. In the context of nascent feminist mass media messages about women’s potential careers, young women in elite fishing families saw significant limitations in “traditional” women’s roles they realistically saw as the only option for them on Digby Neck. Women in this cohort reported that they integrated well in the regional secondary school and that while they may not have been able to see clearly the purpose of their education and where it might lead them, they knew that a direct slide out of school and into the fishery or marriage was not a viable option for them.

Educators drew a connection between mobility and the ability of individual children to integrate into larger communities. Some children were able to do this more readily than others who remained in a “clique” of Digby Neck students after entering the regional secondary school in grade 7. Those children who “integrated” with children from other communities in the regional secondary, and particularly with the academic and sports oriented middle class “town kids,” tended to stay in school longer and were thought to be more likely to access higher education and to become mobile.

To a greater or lesser degree it was every year. Some years it would be just two or three kids who were insular. Some kids are just uncomfortable about or afraid to mix. And then there would be another group that would mingle. And I don’t know, some of it may have come from the home situation and how comfortable children coming from a particular home were with meeting particular people. Some of it may have come from sort of general community attitudes that you get from time to time. You know they say that everybody in Digby looks down on you if you’re from here so just keep your guard up to some extent ... And the Digby Neck clique, they’d be the ones more likely to head into the fishery or get a job at the local garage. They had no notion, no desire to leave this area whatsoever and didn’t see education as a key to getting away because they weren’t interested in getting away. They didn’t see it as valuable as an end in itself because they didn’t care about anything outside of the framework within which they had always existed and always expected to exist. (GG-FE)

The students who integrated better into the regional secondary school were, in the 1960s and 1970s, typically people who were streamed into the academic program. Educators implicitly understood that the academic stream contained those students thought capable of “going on,” i.e. to leave their community in the pursuit of higher education and professional jobs. In more recent times the sorting has been more subtle and the “mobile family,” the family that had travelled and seen “a bit of the world,” was the one which provided their children with a crucial piece of cultural
capital and an advantage in school, both because of wider experience, but also because these children were better prepared for the mobility that accompanies post-secondary education.

Children in mobile families were thought to be able to imagine more easily life beyond Digby Neck. Education is clearly seen as part of the picture for most mobility oriented young people because in the mobile futures they imagine, formal education is not only imperative, but a “natural stepping stone” and the destination in the working class tradition was a job somewhere.

Well, I don’t know. I think we all as teachers encourage children to get as much education as they can. But in the rural area, college was always for the ones who wanted to leave. College, for someone to go to college, it was always a stepping stone into a job, where as I think in the more well-to-do people, it was just a thing you do to get well rounded and have a, whether you were ever going to make a career or whether you were just in college. (MS-FE)

Yes, I would say there is a link [between education and mobility]. It’s hard to say. You’d have to think of it and look at individuals so that you can put some perspective on it. But just generally speaking you know from the ones that sort of spring to mind right now: those that have gone off and migrated even as far as Halifax, it’s usually been for an educational reason. They’ve gone off to further their education. There’s not too many that migrate between here and Halifax to just go and work, especially doing something that maybe they could do closer to home. So whether or not they finish their educational plan or not, that might be another question. But certainly the educational pursuit has taken them away And it does have to do with the kind of family a child comes from. Some families are more mobile. And that’s kind of the family life structure, what she’s familiar with. I do the same kinds of things sometimes in my own mind when I’m looking at the children I work with. It’s important to know the families and where they’re coming from. (CQ-FE)

Mobile families also tended to have contacts and connections in other places. This is a crucial factor in understanding why some people move and some people stay. The truly mobile family can be reproduced in other places and supports can be set up in a destination off Digby Neck. The “hand on the shoulder” described in Chapter 6 was also a hand on the chequebook and often the hand that passed the mobile child along into the hands of supportive relatives elsewhere.

The thing I notice more now too in recent years for those that want to venture off that way, they seem to have a broader family connection at least in what you’d call the middle area, between here and Halifax or whatever. You can see patterns sort of. Their aunt or some family connection somewhere is living in Bridgewater or Kentville or Fall River or somewhere and if they can get a program in something that they’re interested in in whatever area that person may be living- even though they may not live with them when they go to study- but there’s somebody there, that kind of hand on the shoulder. (CQ-FE)
The privilege of becoming a stranger

Every immigrant knows in his heart of hearts that it is impossible to return. Even if he is physically able to return, he does not truly return, because he himself has been so deeply changed by his emigration. It is equally impossible to return to the ahistorical state in which every village was the center of the world (Berger, 1984: 64).

I think we understand, or schools perhaps promoted that what it means to be a success is to be like me and to be free to move off into the great world, but I think the other part of the reality is that that whole mythology is starting to fall apart. (CD-ME)

Leavers did not have to worry about survival; they originated almost exclusively from relatively privileged license holding families. As part of their family/class privilege they had the choice between staying on the Neck connected to the fishery and moving into middle class professions and stable trades via higher education and migration. As I have pointed out in the first section of this chapter, for women from elite fishing families, this choice was relatively clear cut. Female leavers knew from a very early age they would not be remaining in the community.

A doctor’s wife ran a clothing store down town and one day she said to me, she said, you aren’t going to stay here, already I can see that this place is too small for you. And I was 16 at the time and I thought that was a funny thing to say. But that was the first time that anyone had actually verbalised to me that I could leave. (LS-FL-84)

Female leavers also understood most clearly the connection between the acquisition of formal educational credentials and out-migration. Seeing few opportunities for themselves in the community, they regarded higher education as their path into the kind of standard of living their brothers and male friends could access through the fishery. Additionally, these leavers experienced separation from many of their Digby Neck peers from the beginning of junior high school at 12 or 13 years of age. The streaming system in the secondary school continued to generate two sets of divorced and radically different secondary school experiences especially for girls.

Education does take you away. I always knew I was going to leave and go to university because I always wanted to be a professional and everybody seemed to know this. When I got to junior high I was put in the [pause] I don’t know what they called it at that time [pause] the advanced class. There were only two other kids from Digby Neck who got into that class. I’ve always wondered about that. I know the kids from the Neck were no stupider than kids from Digby, but there they were, the kids from Digby I mean, all in the advanced class. And we went right through school together. Most of us went on to university or at least to some kind
of training. When we got to Digby we kind of got sorted into groups and the group you got sorted into made a great difference in the life you ended up leading. I can see that now but at the time you didn’t know what was going on. You just knew that you wanted to be with other kids who wanted to learn. And after that I lost contact with my friends from elementary school. I don’t know, it just seemed that you never saw them any more because they were all in those other classes, the ones who weren’t going on. (US-FL-80)

By the 1980s, it was assumed that the majority of those students in academic classes would be leaving the community and “going on” to university or some form of higher education. Leavers report that the way school guidance discussions were conducted, the kinds of presentations that were made to the “advanced” students, and the subtle assumptions built into teachers’ comments all transpired to reinforce the idea that beyond grade 12 there was another set of educational experiences. The educational triage in a high school serving coastal communities is complex. For young men there were community economic opportunities and established male identity formations to adopt, for young women there were multi-skilled work opportunities mainly in gendered service sector employment and romantic attachments to “rich fishermen.” Some secondary school students, particularly males, actively resisted secondary and post-secondary education, but approximately four in ten female students came to accept a definition of the self that included both higher education and out-migration.

I hung out with pretty smart kids. I don’t know what happened but in my senior year I began to go a very different path than a lot of my friends. I hung around with one girl and her father was a minister. We were best friends from grade 2 up till grade 9. And she was a little different to begin with and she was a very smart girl. There was no question about her, she was leaving. There was another smart boy in our class who always made the honours program. And my cousin did too and him [pause] I don’t know what happened, he became kind of a class clown and he dropped out of school pretty early and he went to work pretty early on his father’s dragger. I knew pretty well that I was off. (LS-FL-84)

Just as family connections lured many young men into the fishery, a combination of educational promise and family money offered young women a set of privileged opportunities beyond high school. Young women were also beginning to learn to understand this privilege in terms of separating themselves from their families, friends and home communities, a process that began with streaming into general and academic programs in grade 7. Being streamed into the “advanced” class allowed female leavers to gain and “outsider’s” perspective on the Neck, they began to see the place from which they originated through the eyes of others. This sense of alterity distanced them from their peers as well.
You sort of started to pick up attitudes [in secondary school]. [pause] This is really difficult to put into words. You started to almost look down on some of the people who used to be your friends. Nobody told you to do this, but you were just around a different bunch of people and the way they talked about Digby Neck wasn’t very complementary, even though they knew that’s where you lived. (TC-FL-79)

For women, this alterity included an acceptance of the middle class vision of the trajectory of education into higher education and professions, out-migration to urban areas, and a definition of the self separated from the Digby Neck community. This perspective is highly ambivalent for both male and female leavers of this cohort who love the community, the people who live there, and the geography; but at the same time most are unable to imagine themselves living on Digby Neck ever again. Education has provided these individuals with a different perspective not only on their own communities, but also about the world, learning and life in general. They became strangers in the course of their education. This leaver describes an educationally fuelled intellectual migration which, in important respects, has removed him forever from his home place.

You get hungry for education, you get hungry for new challenges. You’re constantly [pause] I find myself constantly [pause] I have to constantly mentally challenge myself because I think I’ve worked. The brain’s like a muscle, you work it, it’s going to grow stronger, and I find myself, I have to keep mentally challenging myself all the time now because I’m in that thought process that’s an institution. You’ve taken all your life from the time you’re five or six years old till the time you’re twenty-one years old, you’re in school, that’s three-quarters of your life learning to learn, I mean to grasp, suck in knowledge, you can’t just dump yourself out and go back aboard a boat. Your brain would die. (CF-ML-86)

Like their counterparts in the earlier cohort, leavers in the 1974-1986 cohort reported significant disorientation in the social space of university. As “country kids” they had to deal with social disorientation in addition to heightened academic demands in higher education. University was defined by many leavers as a traumatic experience that left them feeling like migrants and outsiders. For Digby Neckers the simple experience of being on a college or a university campus continued to be a very rare event. When the “tunnel” of educational progress led there, leavers typically had to not only survive the transition, but also construct a reason for being there as well.

But I think that all comes back and kind of circles around with maybe how their sons and daughters maybe feel toward education. If your parents understand that it’s a big world, and the more you know about this outside world the better you can deal with it, or the better you can meet obstacles when they show up, and the better off you are. I don’t know how much that has changed, but I know when I went to, golly, I think, what was there two of us from my class in Sandy Cove that went to university? And in some degree they don’t even today recognise the power of a university education. I really went to university because a couple of my friends
were going. I was a total babe in the woods as far as knowing what to expect or knowing how to do well in school. (EM-ML-80)

Most Digby Neckers who confronted the challenge of university did succeed, like the six leavers from this Cohort I interviewed. Community, Schooling and Migration Survey data show that among leavers, university participation rates range between thirty and forty percent for all age cohorts (see Table 23). But they were faced with a “do-it-yourself” challenge, they had to construct an education trajectory out of raw cloth. While they could “afford” higher education, these leavers had no middle class academic path to follow. For many leavers, educational success distanced them from their communities and families. This is not to say that these individuals are not “close” to their families and communities, but rather that their connections are fundamentally different because they now see Digby Neck from a geographic and social distance. They are migrants.

You keep using the word migration. I find that interesting because when I watch refugees on TV I always feel like I know what they’re going through. I mean, it sounds weird but [pause] When I left home, for a long time I felt like I was lost. I didn’t know anyone or what to do next or how to act even. I had to figure out how to live in the city on top of the stuff I was learning in university. Now when I go home it’s kind of like that again unless I’m around my family. (TC-FL-79)

The realisation that mobility is connected to higher education is highly problematic both for the leavers themselves and for their families who retain the strong desire to “keep family close.” Out migrants from this cohort seem to exhibit the classic “marginal man” characteristics of migrants described in the 1920s by Park (1982). They struggle to become comfortable outside their communities and realise that they will now always be strangers back home.

You know I’ve been away for quite awhile now and some of the friends I have out here we talk about it a bit. And an example of it is how we talk about the fishery and the lobsters and what’s happening with them. One of my friends said he doesn’t like to phone home any more. And I’m the same way. I don’t know if it’s been a defence policy with me or whatever, but the longer I stay away from home, the less often I phone home. Mom phoned me last week and I hadn’t talked with her since July or August. And it’s not a reflection of how much I care for her or anything, it’s just that, I don’t know [pause] I feel like I’ve drifted apart because I’ve been away for so long. Every time I phone home that is a question that is asked: when are you coming home. I know she [mother] gets down a lot not having me closer. But that’s the lifestyle back there. People don’t move very far from their house basically. There’s a lot of people on Digby Neck that can throw a rock to where they grew up, right? (EM-ML-80)
The kind of ambivalence that resonates in this quote demonstrates the problematic nature of education on Digby Neck. As this informant said, on Digby Neck, “support systems are just so good.” By this he means that it was relatively easy for a young man to choose fishing as his life’s work and remain in the community. Families provide material and emotional support, and friendship and mutual aid networks are extensive and well developed. Virtually all leavers comment: “a lot of my friends are still there,” and, “some of them have done well.” Finally, the environment itself is a support because people know it intimately and they know a great deal about how to exploit its resources. All of these things are “supports.” For young men, education was in competition with other forms of economic and social opportunity. For women the picture was much more bleak. There was little choice for either female leavers or stayers. There were significant obstacles no matter whether they chose to stay or to leave. Women still said they, “had to” leave, quit school or get married. Theirs is a discourse of compulsion. Men continue to use the language of choice in their descriptions of the educational and occupational trajectories, but these choices are contextualised within class boundaries and the menu of economic and social opportunity those boundaries frame. Stayers needed to learn to negotiate the complex environment of the local economy and manage to “survive.” Leaver needed to exit the community and negotiate another complex social matrix in higher education and in unfamiliar social spaces beyond.

Conclusion

... nothing may reduce the speed at which those on the transparent side of the one way mirror may move. The flexibility of the world for those on the move bears an uncanny resemblance to a rock-hard indomitable reality from the viewpoint of those who have been forced to stay (Bauman, 1999: 26)

So often when you talk about any subject, sooner or later if you blather on long enough you kind of end up having to say that all of these experiences, all the experiences that are out there, there’s probably a strong element of who you’re talking to at play in this whole thing ... It would seem to me [pause] the more education that one has, and all of this means to me that one has had experiences that focus around having broader perspectives and having an array of choices and an process for arriving at some kind of decisions that have balance. [pause] The more education one can have, the more choices one can see. Presumably one will exercise those options more often than not. So of course, if you have more options than one, you are going to have a greater incidence of migration. (SR-FE)

Options are a luxury, unequally available possibilities liberal educators wrongly imagine anyone
can access. Men and women of this cohort were able to see different opportunities for themselves based on their position in the class structure of the fishery and gender. Different class and gender positions gave the reality of community a different texture for these individuals and each group, in different ways saw into different aspects of the structural conditions in which they grew up. These social positions carried with them different educational expectations. These expectations were much higher for women as a group, largely because career opportunities “around here” were so restricted. For males, social class did not necessarily “determine” educational experience. Male stayers from elite fishing families typically invested their energy, time and capital intensively in the fishery from a very early age. They understood themselves to be seeing through the false promise of schooling as insurance against a downturn in the fishery. In other words, like their predecessors in the 1963-74 cohort, they saw the promise of economic security offered by schooling as a sham in the face of a lucrative fishery. They were in on the boom period in fish dragging and many made very good (at least short term) money while prosperity lasted. When the fishery turned down they came to question their youthful decision to choose the fishery as their sole means of support.

Male leavers saw the same opportunities but they read the future differently. They were able to reject what they saw as the false promise of the fishery choosing to use their economic capital to acquire educational credentials. By working through the summers in the booming fishery of the late 1970s and 1980s, and by accessing student loans, these leavers were able to finance their post-secondary educations. They report seeing the precarious and fluctuating nature of life and incomes in the fishery. They were, and continue to be, ambivalent about the fishery during the boom years and about the current situation in the fishery, expressing both discomfort with the riskiness and shortsightedness of the fisherman’s hunter mentality while at the same time remembering their own experience in that highly charged masculine fishing environment with great fondness. They also share stayers’ analysis of bungled historic fisheries policies of the department of fisheries and Oceans, and their impact on the communities of Digby Neck and its way of life.

Male stayers have remained more or less successfully in the fishery usually in a “scaled down” fashion. Both elite fishermen and those employed more marginally have suffered through the downturn in the fisheries of the 1990s. They were “lured” into the fishery by opportunities created
by the expansion of the fishery in the 1970s and 1980s and they now consider themselves fit for no other kind of work. They tend to be fishing specialists to an even greater degree than those men in the 1963-74 cohort, although some of them also engage in multiple economic activities in order to make a living. Educationally, men in this cohort have few formal credentials and a group high school dropout rate of 74.7%. Formal education was clearly not important to this group in the context of an expanding fishery through the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s when they were coming of age and now many of them have regrets, mortgages and families to feed.

Female stayers are more difficult to categorise. They have found multiple ways of making a living on Digby Neck. Virtually all are married or living in long-term heterosexual relationships. Some have “survived” through formal education, going out for brief periods to acquire credentials and returning to Digby Neck. Others have followed the more traditional route of working in the fishery and in multi-skilled piecemeal jobs managing to cobble together a living. Female stayers tend to relate staying with security, just as leavers relate leaving with security. They tend to be “entrepreneurial,” occupationally versatile, and report knowing and understanding how to find work and money from multiple sources in the community in a way that they probably would not be able to do outside it. They are the kind of women Porter (1993) describes in her analysis of Newfoundland women in fishing communities, tough, committed to community, family and to the survival of their way of life. The structural context they seem to have been able to penetrate is the idea that the inshore fishery and coastal communities are doomed to the forces of history and capitalist corporate concentration. These women are very active in community survival organisations such as community development organisations and projects, organisations of small boat fishers and local school related organisations which are concerned with the survival of both economic and institutional structures on Digby Neck. For instance, in the protests that followed the Supreme Court of Canada Marshall Decision in the spring and summer of 1999, women and men of this cohort were the most active, vocal and committed to mobilisation and resistance around
Female stayers tend to come from what might be called working class families they never took seriously (or saw as part of the realm of possibility) the idea that they might attend university like the female leavers in this cohort, either because of financial restrictions, academic obstacles, or because they could not (or did not wish to) overcome the community habitus of life in the fishery. These women do not necessarily accept the gendered structure of employment on the Neck and in the fishery, but they do not see that there is anything they can do about it. This is not, however, a situation of powerlessness in the eyes of these women. They work in their “space” and use their skills to keep families together and surviving on the Neck. As one stayer put it: “bitching about what I can’t do ain’t going to put any money in my pocket.” These stayers tend to value community and family attachments, have intimate local knowledge and relatively high education levels (compared to their male counterparts) which they use in community organisations and to access paid work in “town” (Digby).

Female leavers in this cohort all attended university and acquired professional credentials. Each of them came from elite fishing families and saw themselves as family trailblazers cutting out the path to higher education and eventually to out-migration and professional careers. They can be both romantically nostalgic and critical (sometimes simultaneously) about Digby Neck, its lifestyle, their families and friends. They understand clearly how they were able to use formal education to establish their lives outside the community, and they also understand how difficult it is for youth from coastal communities to “make it” into higher education and survive there. They were highly aware of the direct connection between education and migration. For these women education opened up a range of options they could never hope to achieve on Digby Neck. As the children of elite fishing families, they expected to have lives that would continue to contain the accoutrements of the middle class lifestyles to which they had become accustomed in their parental homes.

12 The following is an excerpt from my field diary from early August of 1999:

On the drive back up the Neck there was a group of young mothers blocking traffic. They’re mothers of children I teach mostly. They were holding placards with different kinds of conservation related messages. This is the spin they’re using to counter the Marshall Decision, the idea that they fear an unregulated fishery. Most of their husbands are protesting and living on their boats in Yarmouth this weekend. It’s a very tense situation all round. There could be violence. They are worried about their incomes, their children and their very survival here on the Neck. (FN)
Eschewing early marriage and dependence on men (i.e. not wanting to be a “fisherman’s wife”), the only way they could see to achieve this was through higher education and professional training. Despite this, they still look at their mobile lives with ambivalence because leavers retain bittersweet Digby Neck attachments and, at some level, each of them longs to return “home.”

The importance of fishing licenses to families on Digby Neck is illustrated in the comments of stayers. Fishing licenses are, in many respects, the glue that holds the community and families together. In the regulated fishery, they have become the method through which the privilege to fish is passed on through male family lineage insuring the continuity of communities and family class position. Thus, it should come as no surprise that stayers, and not only those from this cohort, envisage a serious threat to their communities, families and way of life when licenses are jeopardised in any way. The imposition of the ITQ system in the 1990s has begun the process of intensive commodification of fishing licenses, and as licenses increase in value, there is an escalating incentive for fishermen to “sell out” and leave the fishery. What results is concentration of ownership in fewer and fewer hands.

From the point of view of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, such measures are implemented for the purposes of conservation of the stocks and to halt the “tragedy of the commons.” From the point of view of small boat fishermen, regulation and ITQs creates a situation where they face both declining opportunities in the fishery and at the same time increased prices for their licenses. The Supreme Court Marshall decision has additionally had the two-pronged effect of producing the threat of an unregulated First Nations fishery while at the same time further contributing to the value of the fishing license as a commodity. Members of this cohort of stayers feel vulnerable, more vulnerable than the 1963-1974 cohort, many of whom are now well established in their fishing operations. This cohort of men are old enough to hold licenses, but not old enough to be established and have, “everything paid for.” And so, they must choose between lucrative buyouts and an uncertain future in the fishery. Young fishing families now find themselves in the position of holding licenses which are at present valuable commodities, while at the same time the fishery seems to becoming less and less tenable and secure as a long term, intergenerational means of income. The result is a highly ambivalent discourse of nostalgic desire for a community regulated fishery controlled by those who know it best (i.e. fishermen
themselves), and an aggressive confrontational resistance to the incursions of both the corporate fishery and First Nations claims.

And there's the Indians and that's a scary thing. We could lose the whole fishing. [pause] Here I am now 35 years old and I don't know anything but fishing [pause] never got an education in anything else. And now with the fishery going out from under me, that puts you in a hard situation with a family to feed. And right now those licenses are worth something, but tomorrow, who knows? [pause] Anybody that had a boat wanted their son to take over their boat. That was your dream, to have your son walk into your boat. But I guess that's what most fathers in the area wanted, it was just that they have something for their sons and that something was the fishing boat. Like my little fuller, I was going to sell my licenses but my wife says, 'Harvey you can't sell his rights to the ocean out.' So it's just assumed that he's going fishing. I don't really want him to go fishing but she thinks we gotta keep it for him. And he might want to go fishing. (ES-MS-82)

With the transferability of fishing licenses, the fishery has gone from an inheritance to be passed down from generation to generation to a valuable commodity which can be bought or sold in the market. This has entirely changed the nature of community and the way Digby Neckers see fisheries resources, their children's future chances, and their own opportunities. "What young man can afford to pay three or four hundred thousand for a lobster license?" they ask.

This in turn has influenced the way formal education is seen on Digby Neck. With the downturn in the fishery the rhetoric around the need for children to "get their grade 12" has intensified. However, at the same time the late 1980s and 1990s have seen the emergence of a new set of questions about the practical value of formal education. If they, "need their grade 12," the logical next question is, "what for?" In the fluid context of neoliberalism, postfordism, globalization and what is described as the "withering away of the state," parents and children now wonder if formal education can actually deliver on the promise it has always held out, a promise of financial and occupational security. Post-modern insecurity and manufactured risk are everywhere and they are particularly acute in rural areas. The result of this new climate of risk may not be that youth in coastal communities will flock to extended formal education for the security it offers. Media and experientially informed images of young people with worthless degrees flipping hamburgers are powerful symbolic forces leaving many people in this cohort to question the wisdom of trusting their children's future to the unknown, uncertain and apparently discredited processes of higher education. Higher education too typically means out-migration and in order for families and individuals to place faith and resources in a college or university
education, they need to believe that there is a job, and indeed a life, at the end of the process. For families on Digby Neck the stakes are high and through the past decade the ability of formal education to deliver on its promise of prosperity is in question. And this is the world facing the cohort of 1987-1998.
Chapter 8
Surviving the crisis: the classes of 1987-1998

Myself, I love to work with my hands and go in the woods. If I’m not at work, especially with fall coming on, I want to be in the woods until spring. I cut my own wood. Last year I burned about 8 cord and I’m trying to cut that back because last year I insulated my ceiling really good upstairs. I’m redoing the house as I can afford it. I’m doing my own carpentry work. I gyprocked the upstairs, and I did all the plumbing and wiring. I do all my own mechanical work, well almost all of it. I keep it [his truck] running ... The only way I can afford to keep it going, I just buy my parts and do the work myself. I’ve had it apart from front bumper to rear bumper. Any other vehicle, I don’t know that much about. (TB-MS-88)

And I think of fisherman and some of the people who didn’t finish (high school). I don’t ever, and would never put myself above any of them because of formal education. And in a lot of ways I think that’s just the way that I am, or the way that I’m made, I’m limited too. My only choice is to pursue a formal education. I don’t know if I could do what they’re able to do. I don’t think quite that way. I don’t think I have the tenacity to do what they do day in and day out. If you consider that they work sometimes day and night out on those boats, I don’t think I could do what they do. And they probably carry the whole heart and soul of Digby Neck with them. If everyone were to get a formal education, it could be gone. I think Digby Neck would die. (KF-FL-90)

There’s nothing for the younger ones ... is there?

What am I doing? Not much. I do a little work around garages. I’m always fooling with machines. My life ain’t easy, but it’s better than school. (FG-ML-97)

... the existence of out-migration implies three issues: their home towns had few economic opportunities; they lacked faith in their hometown’s ability to provide favourable economic conditions, and rural youth were willing to look elsewhere for opportunities. If rural schools prepare students so their hopes and dreams are permeated with options - to remain in the community, to leave, or to return - rural communities stand to benefit (Ley et. al, 1996: 134).

By the end of the 1980s it was becoming clear that the fishery would not be providing reliable employment for many residents of Digby Neck, no matter how they were positioned in terms of family, social class or gender. The ground fishery was in decline and announcement of the Newfoundland cod moratorium combined with the “moral panic” of the federal Stay in School Initiative in 1990 (Anisef and Andres, 1996; Roman, 1996) to generate a clear sense among youth that there was little future in the fishery and that education was the key to personal success. One would expect that these kinds of forces would conspire to create a climate ripe for massive out-
migration from Digby Neck in the 1990s and much higher levels of commitment to formal
education. Teachers of younger children assumed that a large percentage of young people would
now be forced to move away from Digby Neck in the absence of fisheries related opportunities.

The older ones, well they went fishing and naturally a lot of them stayed around. But the young people today, you know in their twenties [pause]. Well, most of them would be gone from here. There’s nothing for the younger ones ... is there? (NS-FE)

From the point of view of economic rationality, there appears to be little to hold Digby Neck youth. Yet, I discovered through my analysis in Chapter 5 that Digby Neck youth, particularly young men, are becoming less mobile through time. This is to say that the two younger cohorts are less mobile than Cohort 1. The youngest cohort, Cohort 3 is also less mobile than Cohort 2. Before proceeding any further with the analysis of this youngest cohort it must be said that this group are now (March of 2000) between the ages of twenty and thirty-two. Many of them, particularly those in their early to mid-twenties are not yet “settled.” Several of the youngest among them are still completing high school and many are still engaged in some form of post-secondary education and training, or are planning to “go back to school.” The younger part of this cohort is clearly a group in transition. However, given that this is so, we should still expect to find a high rate of out-migration in this population because there are no post-secondary opportunities that are easily accessible from Digby Neck and young people taking training generally have to move. Large scale studies of migration patterns have also shown that rural people between age twenty and thirty have been historically the most mobile element in the American population (Johnson and Fuguitt, 2000). Given this propensity of rural “twenty-somethings” to migration and current economic conditions on Digby Neck, Cohort 3 should be highly mobile, much more so than either or the two previous groups. The opposite is the case on Digby Neck (see Table 24).

In this coastal community, young people appear to be resisting the “rational” economic compulsion to leave. If they were rational economic agents they would form a reserve army or “adjust” by moving outside the “around here” region with its high unemployment rates and relatively low wages. But fewer than one quarter of men in Cohort 3 have settled outside the fifty kilometre “around here” circle, and less than half of the women (see Table 24). In this relatively weak propensity to move, Digby Neck youth are part of a larger national (Finnie, 1998; Mendelson and Bollman, 1998) and international trend (Johnson and Fuguitt, 2000) in rural areas of North
America. The fastest growing communities in Canada for instance are classified rural non-farm by Census Canada. Of course, this growth is occurring mainly in those “rural” areas within easy commuting distance of major centres, but my data show that, in a coastal community relatively isolated from any urban centre, there is a sharp decline in out-migration among the cohort that came of age in the 1990s. The educator’s question about, “nothing for the younger ones” is poignant. How and why are these young people staying in a coastal community that appears to be both in decline economically and which is well outside commuting distance of any urban area?

Cohort 3, as a group were the first to have a clear sense of the “around here” region as their place of origin. They went to secondary school in Digby and they integrated into that school far more readily and far more successfully than people in either Cohort 1 or in Cohort 2.

I get the impression that there’s a lot less of that, the sense of packing together. More integration. But I would agree that the kids who have integrated over the years are the kids who have tended to do better, a lot better. (SF-ME)

While this group mentions general problems of integration in the regional secondary, they report less feeling of difference and less discrimination against them as Digby Neckers. The Digby area was accessible to them because there is so much “traffic” moving “up the Neck” toward Digby. Most Digby Neck families make at least three or four trips to “town” each week and Digby has been a very familiar shopping and recreation destination for virtually all of this cohort.

I would say that most of them are still in the area. There are some that are out of the area completely but not too many. But most are around. It isn’t like you see them every day, but they’re still around, they’re still here. (KS-MS-89)

Most of the ones I went to school with are up in Digby or around there somewhere. You see them around working different places, or in the stores [pause] the club (local tavern), you know. You know, it just seemed like there was nothing to do on the Neck, you had to go up to Digby. I mean there’s always somebody going to town, it’s no problem to get up there. I can live home here and still get to work no problem. I got a car now. (HV-MS-98)

---

1 Digby Regional High School has had a history of racial trouble, for example. This regional secondary enrols students from the town of Digby, Digby Neck as well as residents of a number of communities surrounding the town. Included in these communities is an area that was settled by Black families and which continues to be predominantly Black. There have been two major investigations (1980 and 1998) and reports about racial issues in the school in the past two decades (see Frank, 1998). The most recent, conducted by Mount Saint Vincent university sociologist Byle Frank found that racial tensions are one face of a history of unequal social and economic relations that generate multiple lines of tension and division in the Digby area. Some of these historical inequalities can be traced to particular communities and particular populations. Understandably these divisions and the tensions they give rise to find expression in the regional school.
As was the case for previous cohorts, young men have more to hold them on the Neck (relative to women) and more opportunity to find work and social support while remaining close to home. But the sense of home is within the ambit of the around here region. The young man quoted below had lived outside the local area but never felt comfortable there. His description of the geography of home identifies the around here region very clearly. The vista from Deep Brook hill on Highway 101, or the Bear River bridge that separates Digby from Annapolis counties are often cited as the spatial markers identifying home for stayers.

MC: So it sounds to me like you’ve decided conclusively to make Digby Neck your home.

K: Probably. I have ... the whole time I was away I didn’t want to be there. I’ve never wanted to be anywhere else. I grew up here, I know what it’s like to live here. If you put up with the gossiping and the small town stuff...It’s not perfect but you put up with it. I never wanted to leave here. I had the hope that someday I’d be able to go fishing. I call it home. Even in Digby, I still call it home. No, it don’t matter if I had to live in Little River or Digby, to me that’s home. It’s not Digby Neck. I wouldn’t have to live in the same place I grew up in. Even when I come home on the bus, when I got to that Digby County sign on the Smith’s Cove bridge, I felt I was home. I didn’t have to be home to feel at home. (KS-MS-89)

Women on the other hand report being encouraged to leave the Neck and sometimes the area around here. Even those who have remained on Digby Neck retain a highly tentative sense of attachment to the Neck itself and claim that they are only remaining in the area because it is difficult for them to make a life elsewhere, either for social, financial or family reasons. In this cohort, the categories of “stayer” and “leaver” become blurred, especially for women. Many women who remain on Digby Neck are not because they want to be, but because they have no other options. This university educated “stayer” for instance was encouraged to pursue education and to use that education to leave the area for places with more “opportunity.” Parental love was expressed for this individual not by wanting to keep children close, but by encouraging and supporting them to leave and build a life elsewhere.

They [parents] loved me, they would love to be around me but they know that I have to make a life for myself and if it's elsewhere that you have to seek it then that's where you have to go. They knew that as I was getting older it was being seen that the economic or job situation I guess you could say, wasn't that great for women. I mean you could take a job at the store or you could go into the fish plant and there's lots of women who made lots of money in the fish plants. I didn't like it. They knew I wasn't the type of person that could stand to cut fish for a living. And they basically said that if you want more, then you're going to have to go somewhere to get it. And they encouraged it and allowed it. Even when I moved away to Toronto when I was married, like, when we said we were coming home,
well what are you coming home for, there's nothing down here for you. You
know. It's not that they don't want me near or anything like that it's just that they
know the situation down here. Even if you go to Digby you know, it's not that
great. There's not as many job opportunities as it is for a bigger population area.
(WC-FS-92)

University educated women from this cohort were very much in agreement with the idea that there
is nothing in the local area for them. Their expectations of professional positions were simply
unattainable in the local area and they realised the necessity of moving outside the local area in
order to find suitable work.

I'm trying to remember if I applied for anything here. I think I did. There were
couple of summer government jobs that I applied for but I knew that the
opportunities were in Halifax so that's where I went and I spread my resumé
around everywhere from a Tim Hortons to, well, everywhere you know. The
companies where I was likely to get a job and start up. I applied for a job in Digby
as well. I thought it would be neat to work in economic development or that kind of
thing. There weren't any opportunities. Well there was a marketing job at the
airport but it was only for a few months so I knew I needed something more long-
term. That's why I decided I couldn't stay here. But I would have stayed here if I
could have found long-term position. I think I would have enjoyed doing
marketing for the airport but ... (KF-FL-90)

Having completed higher education, the local labour market came to be seen by leavers as
inadequate in terms of opportunity and income. Their educations placed them in a position where
they had significant debt and significant investment in career trajectories which were not tenable
“around here.” Remaining in the local area was out of the question for this group and indeed, there
was “little for them” in the local area. Another “stayer” who is probably on the cusp of leaving to
pursue post-secondary education spoke of his parents’ intention that he leave the area.

Ya they do (talk about his leaving) a lot, they think you’re better off leaving.
There’s more out there for finding something to do and higher paying jobs. That’s
for sure. You got to go to the city or something you’ll get a job no problem. They
don’t see many opportunities on Digby Neck. There’s nothing here unless it’s
fishing or teaching or something. (HV-MS-98)

But despite this mobile discourse, most Digby Neck youth now also realise that it is difficult to
leave, even if one has “the marks.” Male and female stayers both identified work and family and
the connection between these two as the way they are able to remain on the Neck. Family
traditions of working hard and supporting one another have allowed young people to be able to
remain on Digby Neck.
When I was growing up, well, it was like that... we always worked. Everybody in my family worked. You know, that's how we were brought up. And they help us out, finding jobs and that. We're a really close family, you know. We call each other just about every day and every Sunday, that's family day. You know, we're down there for supper or they're up here or we're over at my brother's. Every week. And we're always dropping in on each other. And when I call home and I forget to say I love you before I say goodbye, then they're right back on the phone in a few minutes calling to see what's wrong. (LL-FS-88)

Family also provides the kind of support that enables young people not yet "on their own" to live with a relative amount of dignity on limited funds. As informants point out, on the Neck there are no homeless people and there are many who "do for others." The story below provides a tangible example of this support which stands in contrast to the assumptions built into my question about moving to a place where there is more work. The ability to find a job is only one of many concerns for a single mother and a move to an urban area would create tremendous insecurity in her precarious life. In her situation, staying is security, and leaving would be a considerable risk involving the abandonment of the very social supports that make her life situation tenable, and keep her child's care within the trusted circle of the family.

U: I take whatever work I can get. It ain't much, but babysitting, that's no problem. My mother and my grandmother and my sisters, they all help out. I'd be out on the streets somewhere if it wasn't for them.

MC: Have you ever thought about moving maybe to the city where there's more work?

U: [laughs] More work, ya right. Who's gonna hire me? My grade ten ain't gonna get me no job. Macdonalds maybe. And where would I live? I mean I'm better off here. I got a place to live and my family is close. (UR-FS-95)

Rather than seeing "nothing for her" on the Neck, this young woman sees nothing for her anywhere else. Being able to "see" potential for life "around here" is a mixture of local connections and comfort in the familiar local area. This comfort is provided in a context of family caring and sharing which is becoming increasingly essential with the erosion of state social supports. The world outside the "around here" area is defined as a "world apart" and one that is not congenial or even accessible for many stayers.

It's a totally different world apart and I can easily see how someone might not... might decide not to take that step and leave, and try to do those things because it is such a different world apart. And all those things I spoke about in our conversation about the people that I associated with, the tourists I associated with, all kind of contribute to that, I think it all contributes to that fact that it made it easier for me to leave. (ET-ML-87)
H: Most people that are there, they're set in their ways and they all like it down there. Like I say, there's nothing wrong with it.

MC: And most of your friends that you went to school with, do you think they'll stay?

H: Oh ya. They like the Neck and I think most of them will stay there. They won't leave, not the ones that I went to school with. (HV-MS-98)

When I asked members of this cohort about the connection between education and leaving, their answers all confirmed in retrospect that they and their peers understood the link. And the link works both ways, one needs to leave to be educated and one needs to be educated to leave. Without education, leaving is virtually impossible. Without leaving formal education beyond high school is very difficult to obtain. Thus, youth who do not have the family support to finance higher education are virtually doomed to staying regardless of their intentions. The only exception I was able to find were youth who use family contacts off Digby Neck to support the transition to urban labour markets. However, this link between education and leaving was not always understood consciously at the point where fateful life course decisions were made. When I raised the question my informants were able to make the association between decisions taken for nebulous reasons and attachment to a particular way of life.

MC: Do you think people actually made that connection (between education and leaving) in their heads?

W: I don't know if they actually made the connection. I don't really [pause] I think the majority of people put up a barrier to that connection, not really aware of any [pause] now that you say it, you can see it. But to actually think it, like if someone at that age say they're quitting school, well, they're not going to come out and say [pause] I don't even think they're going to think it that the reason I'm quitting school it because I don't want to go anywhere. You know. I don't think they actually put that link together. Either they're denying that link or they're just not aware of it. How many people really understand why they do what they do? (WC-FS-92)

To me it would be one of those hidden messages inside your body. You didn't understand that because I never even thought about that until you brought it up in this interview, but it makes a whole lot of sense. Education means that you have to move. If you don't want to move, why get the education? And that's something I've never thought about until today. It's there, I can see it throughout the years that I've gone to school and in things you've done. I can see that, and maybe you've made it clear. (KS-MS-89)

Others understood clearly that the decision to remain in the area was implicated in their youthful decision to leave formal education. For those young men who had family and connections to the
fishery and who had a very clear sense of purpose and direction in terms of locally oriented fishing opportunities, education continued to seem irrelevant. In retrospect, this stayer has mixed feelings about his decision to leave school well before graduation, but his life has unfolded much as he expected it would in his teens.

I knew it was an important decision for me. I knew that at the time. Like when I decided that I was going to quit I knew it was a big decision, I knew that all the time I was thinking about it. I just didn't get mad and walk out and say I'm never going back. I thought it over. I decided well, 'cause I didn't want lot go to college or anything and I was thinking, I knew I definitely didn't want to go to college and I knew where I was going to end up and that was down here and fishing. And I just thought about it, what I'm going to get for education wasn't going to help me at least not at that time. It was only going to hold me back a couple of years if anything. So I gained by getting out and getting a couple of years jump start on the ones who stayed in school. Which I did. I guess you'd class I only got grade 9. I wish I had a little more now because the work I do (aquaculture) is like fishing but as far as the people I have to deal with. You know I have to deal with a lot of people now, you know I met the Minister of Fisheries and it'd be nice if I had a little more education even just to help me talk with them. (TB-MS-88)

Returning to the question, “what is there for the young ones?” the answer appears to be that for young men there are still opportunities in the fishery albeit on a limited basis and at peak times. One of my key informants commented that during the lobster season it is often difficult to get anyone who “wants to work.” He commented that, “with all this unemployment that’s supposed to be around here you’d think it’d be no problem to find somebody to go fishing.” (FN) But for members of this cohort it is difficult for them to stay in the local area doing seasonal or temporary work on a permanent basis due to changes in the employment insurance program. For this reason, some members of this cohort have become transient moving between seasonal employment in the fishery and temporary employment in Halifax, western and central Canada. This again makes the distinction between “leaver” and “stayer” problematic with this cohort. This informant, for instance, defines himself as a “nomad.”

It used to be that you could get enough work around here to make it right through the year. Not any more. So when fishing (lobster season) is over, I’ll be going out west again. They fucked up the pogey (unemployment insurance) so you gotta be a goddamn nomad. It sucks, but what can you do? My father don’t have a license so I got nothing holding me here. (KF-ML-91)

For young men, the crucial connection that allows one to remain in the fishery is the family business and especially the “direct” connection of the fishing license. An important part of this
direct connection to the fishery is the expectation that a young man will “work” and that this is indeed what he is supposed to be doing because his destiny is to become a fisherman. This is a destiny which is not necessarily critical of education, but it is a definition of the self which precludes post-secondary education because of the sheer time the work takes and because if one is going to assume this fisherman’s identity, education was still perceived to be unnecessary. Besides, young men still need to learn the craft and multiple skills of a fisherman.

They have encouragement from their parents. You're going to be a fisherman, you're supposed to be fishing, that's your life, that's what I did, you know, and that's where you're going to make your money so stop screwing around in school and get to work. Help me out. Well, actually, the truth is help me on the boats, I need help, you gotta help me. They end up helping them for the summer and then you know they just don't end up going back to school a lot of the times. (ET-ML-87)

Stayers who lack this direct “blood” connection, or who lost it through fisheries regulation changes, unfavourable quota allotments, death of a parent, or by some other means have a more difficult time getting into fishing in a permanent and sustainable way. While there continue to be opportunities crewing on “company boats” (vessels owned by corporate fisheries operations) or crewing for small inshore operators like lobster fishermen, the most direct connection to the fishery is through family licenses. Those young men who grew up knowing that their fathers would “pass on their rights” via inheritance were pressured into fishing much more than young men who could not anticipate inheritance privileges.

I find ... I don't know, to have your father above you when you get a lobster license, there's more pressure to go fishing. But without their father they wouldn’t have the chance to go at all. That's what I was lacking. I’ll never have the chance to have my own license because of what it costs, the price of the license. There’s no way that I can do it on my own. I’d lose it all in payments. Hell, I’d never be able to keep up with the interest, it costs that much money. So you’ve pretty well got to work for the other fuller unless you’ve got somebody to help you to get into it. (KS-MS-89).

The ability to work hard and to learn the complex of fishing related skills remained the central focus of socialisation to a life in the fishery for male stayers. This socialisation also continued to be the principal justification for school resistance and the idea that a young Digby Neck man did not, even in the 1990s, need significant formal education. In the late 1980s, there continued to be a strong labour market locally for those young men “born and bred” in the fishery.
It was no problem to get a job fishing. There was lots of work around. I think I caught the last end of it when there was lots of jobs around. If you talk to the younger ones I think you'll hear a different story. My brother, he left when he was 15, younger than I was and he started right in fish dragging. He was on a 65 ft fish dragger and they were fishing out of Shelburne and Port Latour and all over the place. And they made big money, it was really big money for a kid and at the time I looked at it as big money. Now I look back and I didn’t think I was a kid then, but now I know I was a kid. (TB-MS-88)

Younger members of this cohort did face a more difficult labour market in the fishery. By the early 1990s, the availability of work in the fishery was very unstable except for young men who had direct access to family fishing licenses. Telling the story of his return to the community from university in the early 1990s, this young man saw work opportunities but doubted that he would be able to access them.

Well I believed I could go fishing but I also believed I was never going to be able to get a chance. I was home it must have been almost a year or better before I got a job lobster fishing. And that was starting to get a little bit nerve wracking. But I never once missed university and I told him that... the fuller you had to see before you left and he would ask you questions about why you was going. I was wearing an Ultramar hat or something and he said it looks like you’re going to go home and get a job pumping gas. I said, no, I got the hopes of going home and going fishing. (KS-MS-89)

By the end of the 1990s, there were few fisheries related opportunities for young Digby Neckers, but there was a growing menu of local service industry jobs. For many stayers, any work is better than school. As one young man commented, wondering why I would want to continue working in schools, “working on a lobster boat ain’t my favourite kind of job, but it’s a hell of a lot better than goin to school” (FN). But it is not just fishing that gives young people “something to do.” Two major grocery chains and several fast food franchises moved into Digby in the late 1990s and these have provided new opportunities for minimum wage work. Tourism has also created new opportunities on the margins of the labour force for many youth who remain “around here.” Part time minimum wage jobs combined with extended family support and a relatively low cost of living in rural Nova Scotia all contribute to making life “around here” as viable as anywhere else.

You know there’s some that get jobs waitressing. And they work at the new Superstore if they can get in there. They say you’re supposed to have grade twelve. It’s hard to get jobs if you don’t have grade twelve. That’s why a lot take that GED. There’s work around here, probably just as much as anywhere else these days. I mean they aren’t big money jobs, but they’re jobs. (UR-FS-95)
Educators comment that students are not necessarily making the link between education and out-migration in the 1990s and that even fairly focussed "around here" types are beginning to view education as a way of remaining in the community. This is perhaps an emerging trend for the educationally successful stayer.

Well the young lady that I referred to awhile ago about now being focussed spent two years at university and could have come home any time but since her summer placement this summer and knowing now that she’s found an area of specialisation and there’s going to be opportunities to come back here and do that. Well now she will even go out of province for a year or two now that she knows she can come back and spend the rest of her life here. This is what she wants to do. (CQ-FE)

Quitting in the 1990s: Finding something to do when there’s nothing to do

If you're not encouraged to do well in education, I think you become complacent and when you know that you've got something waiting there for you like a lot of people here did. If, you know, you get a fishing boat or whatever that you can go to, or if your family has money you don't have to think about these things. You know, they don't have to be concerned with what they have to take on as responsibility for their careers and education. It's the same in other small towns I've worked in. I think a lot of parents have a lot of money and the kids, well they don't really care about university. They'll just take over of their father's jobs. So they don't feel the responsibility to go on working hard and get an education and make their own way. So maybe it's the same here on Digby Neck. (KF-FL-90)

I had many friends that could easily have gone to post-secondary schooling that chose to go fishing because that's what they thought was the smart thing to do; and they were intelligent people. (ET-ML-87)

The federal Stay in School Initiative launched in 1990 was a massive state propaganda campaign designed to create a "learning culture" for Canada and to convince individual youth that they ought to finish at least secondary schooling. Still young people continued to quit school because it seemed to them irrelevant. For many young people of Digby Neck, this study has shown, higher education and even secondary schooling was a supreme irrelevance. In order for a course of action to seem relevant, it must be situated within a context. The context that provides the surround of relevance to a particular action like staying in school and pursuing higher studies. As the previous two chapters have shown, extended formal education was not a well integrated part of the male community habitus on Digby Neck in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s

---

2 Of course, such programs are not new in Canada. The “learn to earn more programs” of the 1960s are but one example (see Wilson, 1977). A definitive history of the “school dropout” in Canada has yet to be written.
Ya, they don’t see education as kind of life long, or even beyond school. Or maybe community college for one or two years, that’s what a typical student sees. And they don't know that they’re going to be competing against university graduates for those seats in the community colleges. There are a lot of things that they just don’t realise. (SF-ME)

And into the early 1990s this familiar male resistance remained powerful. Describing the attitude of her male peers, this young woman described male resistance to formal education that was built on the perception that education was unnecessary to earn a good living as a fisherman.

I’m not going to go through education because I’m scared of what’s ahead of me. I think they thought, I don’t need this, you know, I don’t. They put this big exterior barrier up and try to [pause] in their own minds, they’re trying to tell themselves that that’s reason why they’re quitting, because they just don’t need it [pause] I can make money out there without having to put myself through this. (WC-FS-92)

However, by the middle of the 1990s it was common for most people to parrot the Stay in School rhetoric and evoke the notion that, “you need your grade twelve.” Young women tended to act on this advice as nearly ninety percent (88.1%) of girls in Cohort 3 graduated high school (see Table 21). For some children who came of graduating age in the 1990s, higher education did seem to contain relevance. Some young women whose families could afford to send them on to university or community college could see the relevance in acquiring a higher degree which would allow them to access employment and social opportunities that Digby Neck could not provide. These young women were raised in homes that contained the physical accoutrements of middle class privilege.

It’s almost like there were two different groups of people from Digby Neck as well. There were people whose fathers owned their own fishing boat and had the satellite dishes and the new Ford trucks and the nice houses, and then there were those people whose parents worked in the fish plants. If you came from the first kind of family like I did, you wanted to keep your lifestyle and you knew you couldn’t do that without education. (KC-FL-92)

A part of this privilege was the cultural capital, the family-based understanding that in order for women to reproduce this privilege for themselves they had to acquire higher education credentials. Their context was one of relative financial privilege. For these women, the path provided by financial comfort was an educational one.

I guess we discussed university and what we wanted to do. It didn’t have to be university but they wanted us to further our education so that we could better our lives. I just don't remember because it always seemed like that’s the way it was going to be. I was going to graduate from high school, and then after that I was going to go on to university. It just always seemed to be that path. (KC-FL-92)
Daughters of these license holding families, like their predecessors in the previous cohort were expected to continue with their education and move away from the Neck. These expectations were sometimes stated, but were also implied and made possible by associations these women "naturally" formed in the regional secondary with other mobile young middle class women.

K: It was just that we all knew we were going to university. It was never instilled in the me that you were going to university or to further your education. You know, it was never: I want you to go to be a doctor or lawyer, it was never like that. I was kind of on my own to figure it out. All of my friends in high school were from Digby. But people from here (Digby Neck), I didn't really hang around with them in high school.

MC: I'm quite interested in the difference between those people, those who wanted to go on with their education, and the other ones, the people who didn't.

K: They were fisherman. And I'm trying to think of the girls. I kind of broke from them as soon as I went to high school I was automatically hanging around with people from Digby, for whatever reason why I don't know. And the guys were fishermen and they knew that this is what they were going to be doing. Fishing. And for the most part they did become fishermen. Out of the ones that I went to school with on Digby Neck that's what they're doing. In Digby that wasn't really the mentality. A lot of the people who lived there were either going to college or university or a technical institute in Halifax. (KF-FL-90)

Other young men and women saw a more local set of options because their families were not in a position to allow them to reasonably expect that they could ever "go to college." For young men in the early part of this cohort, the fishery remained a viable option, but as this option lost its viability, other educationally related options did not necessarily become more attractive or accessible. Young women from less privileged backgrounds considered higher education outside the scope of their potential.

You just can't decide you're gonna go to college. I mean, you never thought about something like that. Where's the money gonna come from in the first place? I mean, we just didn't go there. Nobody in my family got the brains to do something like that. That's something maybe you do if you're rich or something. (UR-FS-95)

The "stay in school" literature of the 1990s was peppered with arguments of economic rationality attempting to convince youth that without at least a high school diploma, one's future was limited and diminished. As one slogan read: more education = more choices. This supposedly common sense equation between education and employment and personal prosperity was not read by all
Digby Neck students as it was intended to be understood. Those who were unable to access higher education because of poverty or a chequered academic career, or simply because they were following a well-worn family path, did not see higher education as something they could or would want to access. And as the fishery turned down, families who could have formerly afforded to send their children on to post-secondary education became more careful about the kind of education and training they would fund. Fewer and fewer families could afford the privilege of higher education in the 1990s.

And the money is a big factor too now in the sense that it's not a real option for more and more children all the time. We were talking a bit about how the transportation is less of an obstacle now and how it's easier to get to the community colleges in Middleton or Lawrencetown or Yarmouth or even Kingstech for that matter. But at the same time the cost, tuition fees, textbooks and other additional costs for some programs, and then if you have to pay room and board for the whole week or part of the week, then you're looking at 10 to 12 thousand dollars. That's hard to come by for some families. You've got to make sure you're going for the right reasons if you're going to fork out the money. (CQ-FE)

Despite the force of the Stay in School rhetoric, many Digby Neckers in this cohort (particularly once again, men) did not finish high school (see Tables 21-23). Young men in the early part of this cohort were still able to access fisheries work, but what about those who came of graduating age in the 1990s? Almost ninety percent of women in Cohort 3 did graduate high school, but why did more than fifty percent of men drop out of school (see Table 21)? For this woman who remains on Digby Neck it is a problem of risk and security. Most women have been forced to take the risk and move away from home because of a lack of supports to allow them to stay. But young men are more protected (from the need to acquire higher credentials by their privileged positions in fishing families and the gendered structure of work) and more resistant to education. According to female informants, this male resistance was also fuelled by an unwillingness to take chances outside the known environment and the familiar structure of risk-taking in the fishery.

W: I don't really know about the women, I can just remember the men because the majority of the men are still here. There's the odd one that is gone but it's not ... they didn't get their education.

MC: I'm trying to look at the link between education and mobility. Do you think that part of what you're learning when you're in school and you move to higher education is you learn to be mobile?

W: Yeah, I think so. You're more open I think. I think people that don't have education are kind of scared about what's out there [pause] they're safe with their familiarity and whereas when you get education you're not saying it makes you
smarter, it just advises you of I guess if you’re willing to take the risk on having an
education then part of you is willing to take the risk to move on to another area.
(WC-FS-92)

Stayers’ comments about their schooling evince a discourse of boredom, frustration,
misbehaviour, disinterest and waiting until an opportunity to leave presented itself.

Well I was just frustrated, I got bored with the teachers and I got, I don't know ... maybe I was one of those kids that thought they knew it all. I don’t know. Where I lost interest was in grade 9. I was good right up until then. I can say I was right at the top and all my friends said, well you’re in with the nerds. All my friends skipped class and smoked. That’s where all my friends were. And they always used to tease me and say oh, you hang out with the nerds. That didn't bother me at all. But once I hit grade 9, I lost interest and started skipping a lot of classes. By the time I got to grade 10 I just give it up. It was the lure of the loot I suppose [laughs]. They were sitting in school and I was making money. (TB-MS-88)

But the question remains: “what is there for them around here?” The fishery is the answer only for a limited number of the elder males in this cohort. What opportunities now exist for young people “around here?” Recently those opportunities have come in the form of service sector work rather than in the fishery. Educationally resistant “bad” kids find work in a variety of minimum wage jobs.

I don’t know, they were always kind of bad anyway most of them [laughs]. I know they found a lot of the (school) work hard, English and Math and history. They had a very hard time with it all. They didn’t know how to cope with it really. So they got frustrated and just kind of got off of it. I guess they must have found jobs or something to do. You know work in a store or pump gas or something like that. One or two of them might do a little fishing. (HV-MS-98)

Most of ‘em find enough work in stores and restaurants and stuff to get their stamps.3 (UR-FS-95)

One of the reasons for increased graduation rates among young women is that many of the service sector jobs available “around here” now require high school completion. But there remain a significant number of low wage service sector jobs that do not require high school completion, particularly more manually oriented jobs available to young men. The idea that there’s “lots of work” in Digby is cited by stayers who see the expansion of the rural service sector as a way to piece together enough income to survive. This perceived expansion also makes the lure of low wage opportunities beyond the local area less attractive. One individual even used our interview to

---

3 “Getting one’s stamps” is Atlantic Canadian slang for working enough weeks to qualify for Employment Insurance benefits.
get information on the local job scene wondering if things had gotten better in Digby since he left more than a year before prior to the opening of the two large grocery outlets.

Well I know one of my buddies is working in the Sobey’s. There seems to be quite a bit of work up in Digby right now. Do you think I could get a job there now if I came home? (FG-ML-97)

Through the 1990s, young Digby Neckers continue to quit school because they continued to be able to see the disconnection between education and the world they know. Why do labourers, tourism workers, part time and seasonal fisheries workers, gas pump attendants, chambermaids and supermarket cashiers require a high school education? And how will post-secondary education help a community oriented youth integrate better into occupational and social networks that are led and controlled by people whose education comes from local experience? While the occupational sphere in the “around here” region has expanded to include service sector work in the growing retail sector in Digby, most “available” work that is seen as achievable is unconnected to formal education. Young people are staying in school longer because these new employers have slightly higher educational requirements than many fisheries related jobs have traditionally held, but the song remains the same, “you don’t need much education to make it around here; what you need is to be able to work.” (FN) However, for an increasing number of young people the notion of “making it” has shrunk to fit jobs that offer them a few hours of work a few days each week, just barely enough to survive while living with parents.

Well, I got to live [at] home. I could never afford much on my own. I had a place in town for awhile, but everything went to the rent. So I come back home. But I want to get a place of my own. It’s just temporary. (UR-FS-95)

This is obviously miles away from the world of the young women who describe growing up assuming that they would be going to university and leaving the area. The significance of the discourse around the importance of school is situated within the different experiences of differently placed individuals. Understandings of the self are not uniform among Digby Neck youth, even if they received the same educational and mobility messages in school. Some individuals are positioned to access and act on the power/knowledge of the contemporary school and to understand why they ought to remain there until the end and construct a mobile self. Others do not have that privilege and are forced into another track, constructing an immobile self, one which uses the natural and social assets at hand. All of this young woman’s meagre resources are

269
concentrated in the local social geography of Digby Neck. She has no portable resources, and as Charles Dickens' lawyer Pettifog kept reminding Pip, money is the most portable property of all.4

The new reserve army of labour

Well, I got a chance to try it up in Ontario. There was work up there when I left home. (FG-ML-97)

One of the most powerful theoretical explanations of out-migration from Atlantic Canada has been the reserve army of labour thesis (Veltmeyer, 1979, 1990). This thesis fits within the general structure of Marxist political economy and argues that social class exploitation takes on a regional dimension within the modern state and that pools of labour are kept in "reserve" in peripheral predominantly rural areas where they are warehoused until needed during periods of capital expansion in metropolitan regions. Veltmeyer argues that Atlantic Canada is a textbook case for this phenomenon and population flows in and out of Atlantic Canada can be seen in terms of the needs of capital in industrial centres of the country, i.e. in central and western Canada. When industry needs workers in the "core" they are siphoned out of the "periphery" only to be returned when the work is done. The key problem with this analysis is that it largely ignores communities and cultural forces in peripheral regions arguing that people living on the rural margins are simply shunted to and from by the "needs" of big capital in other places (Southcott, 1999). While this political economy is presented as a theory of emancipation, it is, in practice, yet another theory that explains away the culture of coastal communities as a knee-jerk mechanism of response in a larger theoretical matrix. In other words, these studies effectively deny the importance of the agency of rural inhabitants. This analysis shows that the population of the coastal communities on Digby Neck is mobile and out-migration from the villages of Digby Neck is significant but the scope of much of this out-migration remains within what Veltmeyer would describe as the periphery. There is a sub-group of what might be called migrant labour moving back and forth between the rural "periphery" of the coastal community and the metropolitan "core" in Ontario or western Canada, but this is a relatively small group. Far more numerous are individuals working hard to become

4 Or to quote Bourdieu on the portability of educational credentials:

Educational qualifications, like money, have conventional fixed value which, being guaranteed by law, is freed from local limitations (in contrast to academically uncertified cultural capital) and temporal fluctuations ... (1991: 132)
established “around here.”

Could it be that the reserve army of labour has been stationed permanently in the rural periphery? Or could it also be that the periphery also has its internal core and sub-periphery and that the organisation of the hierarchy of place is now done on the basis of consumption volume and size of markets? Could it be that contemporary consumerism has not created the conditions where consumption matters more than production and that the central task for capital in rural areas is not only keeping a labour force mobile, but also teaching it to consume well on the margins as a reserve army of consumers? Does the reserve army in its traditional sense still exist in a rural place like Digby Neck? Cohort 3 is the most transitional group in this study. Many of them are still preparing for permanent employment by taking post-secondary programs or moving from job to job looking to “find themselves” and establish more permanent residence and occupational identities. This is true of both leavers and stayers and among younger members of this cohort there are few exceptions. For most young men and women who remain on Digby Neck, the mobility necessary to be “useful” as a member of the reserve army of labour does not appear to be evident. Young people on the margins in rural communities lack the portable resources necessary to move, even temporarily to urban areas. They understand that marginal jobs in cities are not sufficient to support a reasonable standard of living and that the supports they have at home from family and friends can.

I tell everyone down there, stay where you are. You can’t get nothing to live in for less than five or six hundred a month. And the jobs up here [a southern Ontario city], they’re about the same as what you could probably get in Digby, only thing is you don’t know nobody. So why bother. I’ll probably be coming home this summer. (FG-ML-97)

Part of the Stay in School rhetoric was the functionalist notion that one needs formal education to escape a life of marginal, poorly paid, dead end jobs. The reserve army is conjured in this rhetoric as a labour force that needs to be trained and educated to assume better positions in the emerging “information economy.” Several female leavers in this Cohort have managed to establish themselves in stable professional careers in other parts of the country. Even for young women with higher education credentials the situation can be just as bleak. This young woman’s story tells a tale of five years of transient work experience “away” from home. While she believes what everybody says that, “there’s nothing here for you,” her life experience has led her back to the
supports available at home.

I lived in Halifax for 3 years and then I moved away to Ottawa, tried to find work there but with a BA you need more now - you need a Masters, in whatever field and I basically couldn't afford to stay out there just on my volunteer work. They said sooner or later you're [pause] you accumulate so many hours volunteering and eventually you could get the job, whatever [pause] but my funds ..(unintelligible) ..so I came back home and then years passed, I worked as a supervisor in Digby and then I got married and my husband got a job in Toronto so I moved out there and then he got laid off and [pause] money situation again, so we moved back down.

(WC-FS-92)

Even for some well educated individuals who have taken the plunge and pursued the higher education route, the economy of the 1990s proved a difficult environment in which to establish roots. The "jobless recovery" of the late 1990s has not provided the kinds of "good jobs" that highly educated graduates form previous cohorts could access with relative ease. For those wishing to find anything other than marginal service employment "away," it does appear to be essential that they have some post-secondary credential.

I got my ticket up at vocational and that's how I got on. But the work isn't steady out here [an Alberta city], so I'm back and forth. Sometimes me and my girlfriend we wonder where I'm going to land next month. She's out here because that's where her family is and she's got a job. But me, I could be anywhere between here and home. (KF-ML-91)

This transient "leaver" is a classic reserve army labourer whose work and location are determined by the "needs of capital" in Western Canada. But he also moves into the coastal community during peak fishing periods to work in the fishery, sometimes leaving steady jobs in order to do so. It is not simply economic rationality that drives this man's decisions, he is also drawn back to his community which is his home, and the way of life and work rhythms that seem "natural" to him. His family connections provide him with a place to live, free meals and access to work because he is "known," connected by "blood," and welcome as one of the family.

Oh Jesus, she (his girlfriend) gets some pissed off with me sometimes. She says, what, you're gonna quit to go back there for a couple of months. But she don't understand how I love fishing. I guess it's in my blood or something. And when I get that call to go home and go to work aboard a boat, well, like the song says, 'you can take this job and shove it.' (KF-ML-91).

The new reserve army seems perpetually in transition. Most informants in this cohort are ready to move when the right moment arrives. The trouble is that they have considerable difficulty
breaking attachments and garnering the resources necessary to finance either higher education or a move to another part of the country.

I would move in a heartbeat. Why? I know that's your next question - and I shouldn't probably say this with friends sitting in the room but ... friends. I don't have the friends here that I used to have. After high school everybody moves on and all you got left is your family. Well that's important, but it wouldn't keep me here if a good opportunity came up. (LL-FS-88)

This very recent graduate describes a life of working in manual jobs in a kind of holding pattern, working in minimum wage jobs, saving and waiting for the right time to enter post-secondary education. Like many of his friends from Digby, he is “taking a year off,” a year which has stretched into two. He also describes a common disjointed school-to-work-to-school trajectory which is now being taken by many of his “town” peers.5

MC: Have most of your friends left?

H: Most of them are still here in Digby. But they're going away next year like I am.

MC: So you've all taken an extra year to make up your minds? Is that becoming a normal career path?

H: It is, I find. It's really good. A lot of my friends have gone to university for one year and come back to work this year and uh, two of them have dropped out. One went back this year and another is going back next year. They failed actually. It's a lot of pressure. And it's so expensive, you can't just go and stay there until you finish. (HV-MS-98)

This informant also went on to claim that there is a good deal of work now available locally for a young person who is “not too fussy,” and willing to “take what they can get.” So the reserve army seems to have established a new encampment in the rural communities surrounding the newly developing regional service centre of Digby. These businesses have created the need for a pool of part time and minimum wage labour “around here” to supplement resource harvesting jobs and more established tourism and service sector opportunities. The Stay in School rhetoric has

5 Dianne Looker and her co-researchers have also noted the non-linear nature of contemporary school-to-work transitions for both rural and urban youth in 1990s Canada (Looker and Theissen, 1999; Looker and Dwyer, 1998; Looker and Andres, 1998). Young people's careers are marked by entry and exit from school-to-work-to-tertiary education-to-work, etc. etc. (as funds and other commitments permit). Looker argues that the idea of a normal trajectory is becoming more problematic as idiosyncratic nonlinear transitions become common. Perhaps this is the unpleasant emerging face of a perpetually schooled, “learning culture” or what is commonly called, “life long learning.” We now perhaps meet Weber and Foucault's nightmare, a biopolitics that never even allows the escape of an eventual graduation. Cliff Falk calls this phenomenon being, “sentenced to learning for life” (1998).
come true for young women who are now required to have “grade twelve” for cashier jobs. While these marginal jobs are acceptable to middle aged women looking to reenter the labour force on a part time basis, they are transitional McJobs to many young people who are waiting for something better or the chance at post-secondary training. Quitting school these days is not like it was in the 1980s when there was money to be made in the expanding fishery. However the connection between school and steady lucrative employment is even more tenuous now than it has ever been. Given that this is so, it should come as no surprise that so many Digby Neckers stay around here waiting for things to improve and taking “whatever they can get” in the meantime.

Getting out: Class, gender and education

I think part of it may have been income. It’s perceived and it’s true, college and university costs money and I think that Digby Neck certainly had two classes of people, two distinct classes. It had the people who owned boats and fish plants and they had people who worked on boats and in fish plants. I think there was a real dividing line there, a huge gap in income and I think a lot of the people who didn’t have the income did not encourage their kids to get off Digby Neck. A lot of it was ‘cause they didn’t have an education either and they maybe didn’t understand the whole concept of getting an education but also they didn’t have the money to do that. (ET-ML-87)

Many of those families which have survived the crisis in the fishery in the past decade and who have managed to retain fishing licenses and family-based fishing operations are the entrepreneurial middle class in coastal communities. While men’s work is tough and industrial in character, it typically remains a small family business, albeit one operated by fewer and fewer families. Like any business, it is the basis of a family’s wealth, an inheritance for children and a valuable commodity all at the same time. Just as elite fishing families in Cohort 2 passed on fishing privileges to male children and educations to female children, young Digby Neckers in Cohort 3 faced different inheritances on the basis of family wealth and position in the fishery. As I showed in the first part of this chapter, the children of families whose connection to the fishery was through paid employment rather than license or business ownership would never have considered the possibility of going to university any more than could the son of a man whose families did not own licenses conceive of finding several hundred thousand dollars to buy him a fishing license. Post-secondary educational credentials are obviously marks of privilege and they are bought at considerable expense. But they are also presented not as privileges, but as universally accessible
choices or “options” by teachers. In the liberal analysis of many public school teachers, education is not a prerogative of any particular class, but the inalienable right of any individual who makes the right “choices.” The importance of good choosing is the hallmark of contemporary liberal educators’ idea of what schooling ought to provide.

Somehow the individuals have to have the usual sorts of liberal things that I value: knowledge, skills; they have to have the equipment of make choices and to recognise the implications of the choices they make. (SR-FE)

The difficulty with this liberal view is that it fails to address seriously the differential access that social class, gender and race represent in a given school. On Digby Neck for instance, while school is taken to be fair, it is also recognised openly that some individuals have an advantage that stems from their family background. Secondary education was designed for those “moving on” and those who move on are those who can afford to. There is nothing more galling to secondary teachers than the boy or girl who makes it through to graduation and then stays “around here.”

... being somewhat pushy by times I call some of these kids aside and say, do you realise that you have extraordinary abilities and powers in this and this and then and I say to them, it doesn't really concern me where you do this kind of thing, but that you shouldn't abandon it at graduation. And then there's kind of a nice little sweet smile and a shrug of the shoulders and they're off. (SR-FE)

Former students in this cohort are much more aware of how schooling is more easily dealt with by the children of professional parents. This is the habitus, the subtle nuances of taste and discrimination that mark out successful students’ “intelligence” (Bourdieu, 1984). In a coastal community, the professional class are “strangers” in Simmel and Bauman’s terms, they come from the “outside” and bring different values and practices, and among these values and practices are an ability to deal with institutions like school and to support their children’s success there. This recent graduate’s description of the kind of students who are successful in high school demonstrates a particular vision of what counts as “smart,” but also a corollary vision of the kinds of families that understand the educational system and help their children negotiate it. Significantly, and more than a bit ironically, teachers themselves are also identified as the very kind of “stranger” who can support their own children’s education in a way that families whose traditions are rooted in the fishery cannot.
Who succeeds in school? Smart ones. A lot of 'em, like, that had doctors or teachers or ministers for parents. I found that they did way better in school for some reason. Maybe it’s because of the people they were around. You know, if your father’s always fishing and working around boats or something. I found their marks were a little lower for some reason. There wasn’t people around like encouraging them you know, people that went through university and had degrees and stuff that could sit down and help you with the math. I found my parents, it kind of confused 'em most of the math. The parents that went to university and stuff found it easier to help 'em out with projects and stuff. And if they had questions it was probably easier for them. (HV-MS-98)

The discourse of educational attainment is framed by most informants of this cohort in terms of families who “valued” education and those who did not. Families who valued education saw education as a legitimate and desirable career trajectory for their children as opposed to families whose identity and day-to-day life practice was tied up in work. Informants saw work-focussed families and education focussed families. In this cohort family connections were seen as the lynch-pin both for work opportunities and educational opportunities. Employment opportunities are “family oriented,” meaning that unless a young man has a direct family connection to licenses, he may not have any opportunity to work in the fishery. In other words, the working class in the small boat fishery is shrinking, leaving only family business opportunities for individuals positioned to inherit them and increasingly sporadic temporary work for the rest. The result is that the traditional fisheries “working class,” the individuals who crew or work in fish processing, are being squeezed out as family members, and older “experienced hands” who often have families to support, are given first priority for a diminishing pool of labour jobs.

A few years ago I think you could have pretty well taken a job anywhere. Now it’s harder and you’ve got to be almost family oriented because any man in this community, if they’re in there 30s, or mid 30s to 40s, they’ve done this job before. For a young person starting out with no family connections it’s hard. I know all about it. (KS-MS-89)

Families that “valued” work were those families that needed either labour in small boat fisheries operations or who had a family history of working in the fishery. By the 1990s fewer families were in this position and employment opportunities for work oriented Digby Neckers decreased. Education oriented families were those families who had acquired significant capital during the industrialization of the fishery and who saw schooling and post-secondary education as the most sensible path for their children, especially their daughters. As one informant commented, “the ones who made the real money don’t care about the community, they’re sending their kids off to
college. They got it made and their kids are gone.” (FN) Those families who prospered were the ones able to afford to educate their sons and daughters and turn their financial capital into the social capital of education. In Cohort 3 this was the case and more children of elite fishing families did access higher education than in previous cohorts. Gender differences still remained significant though as fifty percent more women than men in Cohort 3 reached university (see Table 21). But at the same time the percentage of Digby Neck men who had the lowest levels of educational credentials actually rose (see Table 21). So while more young men and women were graduating high school and getting post-secondary education in the 1990s (compared to Cohort 2), at the same time more young men were quitting school before grade 10. This “anomaly” reflects the way social class works in terms of access to higher education and how the relevance of secondary schooling is constructed by individuals who see themselves as having no legitimate chance at accessing higher education, and thus, no need for the subject matter of a secondary school curriculum “all geared up” for those moving on and out.

It was just boring and I hated it. It was all geared up for the smart ones, the ones that was goin’ away. They didn’t care about the rest of us, the ones still here. If you wasn’t right smart, and you didn’t dress rich and act like them snobs [pause]. I just never felt comfortable and I knew I didn’t need none of what they was teachin’. It was alright up to grade 9, but then it [pause] it got hard. (UR-FS-95)

In families where education was “valued” in this cohort, female children particularly were assumed to be moving on out of their home villages and into higher education. Leavers of this cohort identified a feminist element in the way they were encouraged by teachers, counsellors and sometimes by family members to leave the community and to pursue careers. Leaving implied abandoning limited opportunities and dependence that marked women’s roles.

There were some that didn’t view it (schooling) as important, but then there was some who did view it as important. A lot of that had to do with your family life, whether or not basically you were able to go through with your education and how your upbringing was when [pause] like I say, women were taught to [pause]. I can’t speak for everybody because I don’t really know, but I know in my home, and in a lot of the people that I hung around with in their home, it was basically, you know, find a career, you know, go through school, find out what you want to do, decide what you want to do and go for it. And that’s just the way it was. I think a lot of mothers especially in the situations like, it was just getting to the generation where women weren’t feeling so subservient to the man and they were feeling that if they only had the chance to continue to their education then maybe they wouldn’t be in this situation. They would be more independent, they wouldn’t be relying on men to take care of them so they tried to push that on their daughters. (WC-FS-92)
The vision of education as the path out of traditional roles continued to be a difficult topic for both stayers and leavers. But still, educational and work histories of women in this cohort who left Digby Neck contain a strong sense of purpose and a strong desire to both become mobile and to acquire higher education credentials. These women were on an entirely different “track” than stayers who remained in the area and typically married young.

MC: The boys had a boat waiting for them but I see you kind of reaching back and wondering what the girls would have waiting for them.

K: A marriage to a fisherman. I had a friend here visiting from Alberta and I was asking my sisters about the different girls I went to school with and what they were doing now. And there was this one girl that I met in Digby, and oh, I can’t remember her name. And then I said, oh, she must be married. You know I said she stayed in Digby because she got married. Then the person I was with said I didn’t know that was a job. You know, she said, I didn’t know that was like something you could do as a career. And I didn’t realise what I had said. But I guess, yes, but was just the way it was. A lot of girls grow up and become women and have a kid and maybe a little part-time job and that’s the way I’m not demeaning it in any sense, but I think that’s how they saw it, that’s what they thought life was, because they saw their mother doing it and that kind of thing. (KF-FL-90)

I don’t know. I knew that I didn’t want to be just a simple homemaker with no job, which I mean I’m sure people are very happy with that. That’s what my mother has always done and she’s been very happy but I just didn’t want to be married to a fisherman. I just had that mind set and she encouraged me. So did dad. We sat and planned it all out. And education was a part of that plan. (KC-FL-92)

The experience of these women contained conversations about “options” and the range of possibilities that lay before them. They entered into an enhanced, family supported, middle class tutelary system in “honours” programs and in “academic” classes where they were counselled in terms of seeing their lives as Giddens’ project of the self. This, however, was part of the privilege of their family’s elite position in the local class structure and not part of a “modern” form of consciousness as Giddens suggests (1990, 1991, 1996). The ability to see education as part of life’s project was unevenly distributed on the basis of family wealth. For these young women, money was quite literally no object in the sense that it wasn’t a significant concern. The informant quoted above believes that on Digby Neck money was not an impediment to young people of her generation who might have accessed higher education. For her the “decision” whether or not to go on to other places and to post-secondary education was entirely a question of personal ambition and the financial lure of prospects in the fishery.
I don’t think on Digby Neck [pause] I don’t think it was financial reasons that stopped people from furthering their education. I think it was more that they wanted to stay where they were. I mean there was incentive, the money was good. (KC-FL-92)

There were a lot of kids with bad attitudes and most of them dropped out to make some money. I don’t know if you could say it was their fault, but it was their choice. (OS-FL-96)

What choice did I have, I got pregnant, I had no money and no support, and I couldn’t do the work anyway. (UR-FS-95)

And this is precisely the “attitude” necessary for success in school, one must believe that it is entirely a question of personal orientation in order to be committed enough to invest in higher education or training. This functionalist “attitude” is an essential part of the middle class cultural capital necessary to access university for instance. The kind of “family planning” the informant quoted below describes happens in the context of a family committed to the notion that higher education is both necessary and accessible and who therefore initiated a long series of conversations with their child about a future that was assumed from an early age and assured by family capital. And like many young female leavers in former cohorts, her brothers were not party to any such conversations and strategic planning which included higher education.

It was totally different with him. With my sister and I, it was always that we knew that we were going to go to university, and with him it’s always been that he was going to take over the family business. And now he’s running the boat. So why wasn’t he geared the same way that we were? I don’t know. I don’t think it was deliberate, it was just the way that it went. It was the expectation and it was very subtle. He just always wanted to do it from the time he was 13, 14, 15, his summers he would spend going fishing. It was just like a progression. He just [pause] it was his choice because they wouldn’t have forced him to. They wouldn’t have wanted him doing it if that wasn’t what he really wanted. It’s just always what he wanted. And he still wants it and he enjoys what he does. (KC-FL-92)

This young man was fortunate enough to be in position to be able to access dwindling opportunities in the fishery because of his “direct” family connections. As more and more licenses were consolidated and sold out, fewer and fewer young men on Digby Neck had access to the fishery except as occasional labourers. Yet masculine identity constructions, even if they are now mythological, still have the power to define education as an unnecessary pursuit for virile men. A nostalgic discourse about the entrepreneurial opportunities in the historic post-war fishery is more common among young men than what teachers see as forward looking discourse about a future in which formal education is valuable and central.
It’s not that they’re not listening, they just don't accept it because it’s contrary to what they have always believed. I had a couple of young men as recently as 3 or 4 years ago back when what was happening in the fishery was all over the media. Not only was it all over the media, it was the subject of supper table conversation, certainly at every house in Digby Neck. And I made the remark to one of these guys that you need to have an education whether you accept that, whether you like that idea or not. That is the only chance that you’re going to have unless you’re going to get a dead end job where you’re not going anywhere. One of these kids said, 'I don’t need any of this stuff. I have a job waiting for me, I can get into the fishery.’ I said, ‘excuse me but I know you and I know your parents. I know where you live. Why would you say something like that to me? I know what’s going on in the fishery.’ ‘Well Frank Gibson done it.’ And I had to stop for a minute and I said, ‘do you mean Frank senior?’ He said, ‘yes.’ And then I clued in that it was Frank senior he was talking about. I said look, when Frank Gibson did that it could be done. It can’t be done anymore. There are no more Frank Gibsons who are going to drop out of school in grade 5 or grade 6 and end up a multimillionaire, well respected in the community. It ain’t gonna happen anymore. But this kid had grown up and he was 15, 16 years old and he knew, he’s heard all the conversations and he’s still had in his head that if Frank Gibson did it 50 years ago, he could still do it. (GG-FE)

In the 1990s, the “natural” male transition from school to work in the fishery had become complicated and highly problematic causing community elders and youth alike to wonder “what is here for them.” For women the situation is not unlike in previous cohorts where the “natural transition” for women from elite fishing families continued to be bound up with post-secondary education. These young women integrated well with the middle class academic stream in honours classes in the regional secondary school, participating in sports and in what one leaver called “nerdy” cultural and social extra curricular activities. Their identities as “fishermen’s daughters” had become a sign of money in the 1970s and 1980s and their parents still had the wealth necessary to provide them with ready access to higher education and careers no longer constrained by gendered role expectations.

Oh, they’d say, you’re a fisherman’s daughter. You don’t have to worry about money. That’s how you were looked at. And they went into secretarial and hairdressing. I didn’t want to be the wimpy hair dresser, that’s why I went into fisheries. Most women around here don’t want to do that, but I wanted to be different, I wanted to be able to get my navigation class 4 just like Billy Morgan did. I wanted to be right up there making the money like the guys did, not to show off, but just to show that I could do it. Just to prove a point more or less that yeah, I can do it. I did want to go into nursing, but then something clicked and I said, well, ya, I guess I can run a boat just as good as anybody. You know how it is in the fisheries officer thing, you’d be running the boat and I’d be checking to see if you did it right kind of thing [laughs]. Just to prove that I could do what they could do too. I could if I stuck with it and got my class 4 ticket and go fishing, I know I could. I got my dad behind me [laughs] (LL-FS-88)
And as was the case with previous cohorts, these young people “integrated” better into the general population of the regional secondary school, never associating with Digby Neck focused “cliques.”

For me, university of was a natural transition. When I finished high school I knew I was going to university. I had planned for that. I didn't ever considered not furthering my education. It was never an option, and I just knew that I had to go to university. I wanted to. (KF-FL-90)

The ones from the Neck, I don’t know [pause]. I made friends really quickly up there [the regional secondary] and we were [pause] I guess we were the good kids, you know, the ones the teachers like. We weren't into drinking and drugs and we did our work and that stuff. A lot of the kids from the Neck, they went kind of bad. (OS-FL-96)

The other side of the mobile clique was the immobile Digby Neck focused clique. Women from Digby Neck who were drawn to the immobile cliques were not making the irrational decision to forego extended formal education for a life following their mother's footsteps. In fact these young women were typically the most “resistant” and “wild” young women in their age group, choosing instead to focus their energies on “partying” and pursuing the lifestyles that could be had through an attachment to a “rich fisherman.”

E: Yeah, and the boys had money and they had a fast car and they could spend money on them, sure, and we saw that in Digby. But it was a certain type of girl that would be attracted to that.

MC: What type of girl?

E: Umm, I don't know how this sounds but maybe less educated, I don't know, ‘cause I think the girls in my class and I went through at a time when they did have an honours class and for the first couple of years and then they broke that up but they didn't break up the class, they just stopped that system I think, but we still went to school all through the same, right through to grade twelve and there weren't any girls in my class that were attracted to that type of person. They were all going on. (ET-ML-87)

I got to admit, I was a partier from the time I was fourteen or fifteen. I was pretty wild. It got me in a lot of trouble, but it got me in some good times too. Like they say: we're here for a good time not a long time. (UR-FS-95)

Contrasting this latter view was the mobile sensibility of this education-focused young woman who saw “the good life” as being somewhere else. She also defined control in terms of getting away from the power granted to men by virtue of their relative wealth in the fishery. Womens’
accounts from this cohort demonstrate a much more overt and deliberate feminist consciousness.

I always wanted to get out. A lot of people asked me well why didn't you go out with anyone from down the Neck or marry a fisherman or [pause]. All I saw was pigs. They were too dominating. I didn't want to be in a situation where I wasn't in control of my life. That's the way I chose it. You know, I'm not saying that they're all like that it's just my view I guess of how I see things sometimes. A lot of them drank and partied and made the big bucks so they figured they could waste a lot of it and do foolish things and give themselves some trouble. I just didn't have any interest. (WC-FS-92)

This young woman's choice to continue her education beyond the secondary level was supported by her family who encouraged here to leave and planted in her consciousness that "there's nothing for you here." And her decision to leave and pursue liberal arts in university gave there the tools of a feminist perspective with which she could reflect back on and use to redefine her youth. But like many young Digby Neck women, she also discovered that there was little for her elsewhere either with or without higher education in the jobless recovery of 1990s Canada. And like others she found her way back home to the supports provided by family.

Survival and Family

Because boats in the kinship sector are family owned and operated ... people continue to operate them as long as they can cover their costs. The labor force in the capitalist sector changes with conditions, while the kinship sector remains more constant because it can survive conditions that are lethal to capitalists. In some New England fisheries, the flexibility of the kinship sector to expand in good times and under employ people to maintain itself during bad times gives it a competitive edge over the capitalist sector (Durrenberger, 1997: 160).

Stayers in Cohort 3, like their predecessors, take pride in having survived in an increasingly difficult economic climate on Digby Neck through the down-turn in the fishery. They "like it around here" and feel comfortable in close proximity to a familiar geography, family and friends. They generally believe that the population of the Neck has taken a significant downturn as well from the late 1980s into the 1990s. Table 2 shows that Census Canada population figures for the communities on Digby Neck confirm this trend. Population declined twenty-three percent between 1980 and 1990 and declining school enrolment figures in the 1990s no doubt indicate another population drop since the 1991 census. Family size is also said to be declining, contributing to decreasing population figures among those who persist on Digby Neck. The idea that there is no
longer “enough work” especially for young people to “keep busy” is a common perception. Fishermen who once worked year round in multiple fisheries and whose fathers and mothers had combined fisheries related work with “a bit of farming” or working on family wood lots now complain that they just “sit around half the year driving themselves crazy” (FN). To have survived all of this and to have been able to stay “around here” and to have avoided the necessity of having to move very far is viewed by many people as an accomplishment in itself.

My family connections are all on the Neck here. We’re survivors. Well, on my father’s side here we’re all on the Neck. We’re a dying breed and there’s four of us to carry on the family name. There’s me and my brother and there’s my uncle’s two boys who are the same age as me and my brother. They don’t have no kids yet. Me and my brother too, but we both have girls. And that’s the end of us as far as I know. It’s tough to survive here in these times, but we’re still here. (TB-MS-88)

Few males of this cohort who have left Digby Neck. Those who have left speak of a harsh employment and social climate that allows them little of the freedom or comfort they enjoyed as children on the Neck. “I miss going out on my four-wheeler and tearing around in the wood and down to the shore,” one young man commented (FN). While they feel forced to leave in order to find work, they feel trapped in the impoverished life available work provides them given the high cost of living in western and central Canadian cities. They find themselves paying for things that they are accustomed to getting for free and spending money more quickly than they can make it.

I wish I was home. All my friends are there and, like I said, it’s hard up here. My rent eats up everything I make. There’s lots to do but when you got no money [pause] fuck, you might as well be sittin home watching TV with your friends and your family. I’m up here and I don’t hardly know anybody. (FG-ML-97)

I make good money out here you know. I’m gettin twelve dollars an hour. Nobody back home will pay you that for any kind of work, at least not steady. But you have to pay to park your car for Christ sake. Everything costs money out here and you can’t get ahead. (KF-ML-91)

The experience of these male leavers is atypical because the strong majority of young men in Cohort 3 are still living “around here” within range of family and community “support structures” that provide at least marginal work, room and board for free or for very low rent, and what is generally a very low cost of living. However, everyone recognises that staying also has its costs.
Most people don’t want to see their family disappear. If I have kids of my own I hope they don’t have to go way out west to earn a living. But on the other hand, do I really want them to be here the way things are today... If I had the opportunity right now to leave fishing and make the same amount of money working a full year job, where I wouldn’t have to move too far, somewhere in the (Annapolis) Valley maybe. If I had the opportunity to leave fishing now I think I would. But I don’t want to go back to school. I’d have to be able to leave fishing on my own terms and maybe jump into something else. In lobstering you’ve got to make your living basically off one month and that’s [pause] you’ve taken 6 months off and your living rides on December. And there’s nothing you can jump into on May 31st unless you’ve got some family that’s got some other fishing operation. Then you go on unemployment. To me, if I go to McDonald’s and work for the summer well I’d be losing money cause I can draw more unemployment [Employment Insurance benefits] than I can make working there. I’d rather have [pause] as I see it now, I’d rather have a full year job rather than have mad rush in December, March, April and May when you just work yourself to death. I don’t think it’s easy on a fisherman’s health. When you go from doing very light work to the last Monday in November you’re wide open for four weeks. It ain’t easy on the system. (KS-MS-89)

Staying presents challenges, but in order to leave, this young man more requires security better than what he can find locally by combining unstable but known employment and social benefits. Most of Cohort 3 remains around here despite the difficulty and it is family support that allows them to do so. Dropping out, staying and working hard were still mingled together by members of this cohort. The majority who remained worked hard, parted hard and were supported significantly by their families.

I can really say that everybody that I grew up with is still on the Neck. And either fishing, working in the fish plant, lobstering, some type of fishing industry. There was actually not too many that graduated, you know, a lot of them parted, didn’t take it serious, I’m not saying that haven’t done anything productive with their lives because the fishing industry at that time was good. It’s just education I found with them wasn’t that great and a lot of them dropped out. Yeah, they just dropped out and a lot of them still live with their parents. (WC-FS-92)

I can always live home. Mom’s always after me to come home. (FG-ML-97)

---

6 The lobster fishing season opens on Digby Neck in the last days of November or in the first days of December. There first few weeks of the season are always the most productive accounting for the bulk of the yearly catch.
Back to the future: Surviving in the new economy

Overcoming the exodus of youth from rural communities and providing opportunities for young people who have left to return to the region, is key to future growth and development. (Western Valley Development Authority, 1999: 18)

Suggestions were put forward to encourage entrepreneurship training within the education system and to make sure that the courses being taught were relevant to the labour market realities within rural communities. (Government of Canada - Rural Secretariat, 1999: 9)

For the past several years the state has been promoting a vision of an emerging information economy and it is now becoming apparent that the “vision” for the development of the Canadian countryside is being framed within this matrix. Part of the emerging “new economy” discourse around the contemporary rural community is supported by the statistical trend toward increased population growth in rural non-farm communities noted by Finnie (1998) and Mendelson and Bollman (1998) in Canada and Johnson and Fuguitt in the United States (2000). The argument is that in the emerging information era, geographic location is becoming an increasingly less important factor in terms of the generation of economic activity. Another part of the argument is that as global ecotourism grows, rural places, their scenery and their culture become valuable commodities which can be sold to visitors. In the analysis presented in contemporary rural development or community economic development (CED) literature, “strategic planning,” education and technological innovation become key assets which might allow rural communities to retain their youth populations in the emerging economy. This attempts to reverse more established “brain drain” notions of schooling and higher education as a force for rural depopulation. In the “new economy,” the educated, entrepreneurial individual is supposed to be able to overcome and even transcend the problems of geographic “isolation” and participate fully in a kind of economy that is not restricted in any way by place.

These two opening quotes come from state supported bureaucratic structures designed specifically to “develop” and “modernise” rural areas by expanding governmentality into spaces which are considered to have been beyond the reach of older established institutions like public schooling. For instance, a big part of the mandate of the Western Valley Development Authority is to support adult literacy and various sorts of employment readiness training as well as to support entrepreneurial initiatives (1999).

For example, Atlantic provincial governments have attracted a number of low wage “call centres” and these enterprises are often cited as this kind of information industry.
If this new economy exists in the context of coastal communities in Southwestern Nova Scotia, it ought to be manifested in the lives of Cohort 3. It is fairly clear that the economy in the “around here” region has changed, but the transition is generally framed in negative language, in terms of what has been lost. But has something been gained as well? What does the new economy offer youth on Digby Neck? It is true that some entrepreneurial Digby Neckers have been able to exploit opportunities in tourism and in aquaculture for instance.

There has been transition for sure. I’ve seen people who were willing to make the transition to the so called modern or post modern economy. People are facing that issue. I teach a class called tourism at the high school now and we were looking at this article on a small town in BC, Uclulet. And they are having a very painful transition to becoming a tourist town. And I could see it when I was there because they just didn’t seem to be ready for that kind of change. Tofino up the road is quite different. That community loves the tourists and everything is oriented to that. Digby is somewhere in between the extremes and I think that it is having less difficulty than Uclulet in adjusting because of the background in tourism with the Pines Hotel and other things around here. So some of these people are making the transition. (SF-ME)

But is this “new economy” really very much different than the old one? Is aquaculture, for example, very different than fishing from the point of view of the individual labouring on the working surface of the industry? According to one informant the answer is no and he describes an industrial work routine which requires many of the same skills needed by successful fishermen. The new economy looks a good deal like the old one as “feed” replaces “bait,” “cages” replace “traps” and fewer people have jobs.

MC: Is it as hard work as traditional fishing?

T: It’s pretty hard work. We handle a lot of feed. There’s a lot of lifting. Right now we’re feeding three times a day and there’s a pallet of feed and there’s 40 bags a piece so it’s 2,200 lbs. altogether. And we handle all of that, like them 55 lb bags, we handle them one by one. Like right now we’re feeding about 120 bags a day to approximately 70,000 fish. Like I do a lot of mechanical work, you know, with the boat, and we deal with a lot of small engines ... I pretty well look after that stuff, keep right on top of it. And I’m running a 36 foot boat with diesel, a 6 cylinder diesel into it. For instance, the other day we ran out of fuel and, well the fuel, sometimes it isn’t too bad, but this time I had to crack an injector line ... So there we was with a 40 foot barge in tow, coming across the basin and we was just getting into the high tide at the time. So I had to play mechanic but things worked out OK. (TB-MS-88)

Other evidence of the new economy comes in the form of tourism and in the expanding service economy in the town of Digby. Tourism has been an important industry in the Digby area since
the inter-war period when the Pines Resort was constructed by Canadian Pacific Railways near the Bay of Fundy ferry to St. John New Brunswick, offering a luxurious rural retreat to middle and upper class tourists. People in the Digby area have worked in a variety of capacities in this and the area’s other tourist resort, and in other tourism related services like restaurants, bed and breakfasts, hotels and motels, along with the centrepiece of local ecotourism, whale watching. So this “new economy” is well established and it has used seasonal labour from “around here” for generations. The most significant development “around here” is the rapid expansion of retail services. In the past year alone more than one hundred mostly part-time jobs have been created in an emerging grocery store war which has pitted the Empire corporation’s Sobey’s chain against Loblaw’s Superstore. If post-war, modern production-capitalism extracted raw materials from the Digby area as never before, post modern consumer-capitalism is now returning them as never before.9 Both of these outlets are thought to be harbingers of development and rumours of “something big” coming to Digby were rife through the construction and grand opening of the new stores. It now appears more likely that the two corporate grocery chains are waging war for a grocery monopoly “around here,” a war which has already seen the closing of two smaller grocery chain stores and which has placed the local co-operative store on the brink of collapse. These stores attract clientele from a distance of seventy to eighty kilometres in all directions. According to the Superstore manager, “they don’t set these places up unless they know they’re going to make money; it may take up to ten years, but we’ll make money in the long run.” (FN) All of this has created what is seen locally as a kind of new economy, a new set of consumer choices, a magnet for the area’s rural consumers who previously had to “do their mall crawling” in Yarmouth or “up the Valley” (i.e. in New Minas), and a new crop of low waged, mainly part-time jobs.

The new economy is very similar to the old one, it pays poorly and it relies on a steady supply of

9 In his seminal article on the industrialization of the Maritimes, Acheson argued that industry developed around multiple points of growth using mainly local capital (1972). This made sense in the context of Atlantic Canada, but not in the context of continental capitalism. It is Acheson’s claim that this localised growth pattern effectively restricted the growth of sustainable large scale capitalism in the Maritimes because the concentration necessary for the creation of metropolitan areas was impeded as capitalism was developed within the infrastructure of community rather than vice versa. Acheson argues further that the Maritimes is not actually a region in economic terms at least.

The Maritimes had never been a single integrated, organic unit; it was in fact, not a ‘region’ at all, but a number of British communities clustered on the Atlantic fringe, each with its separate lines of communication and its several metropolises- lines that were water-borne, flexible and changing. In this sense the railroad with its implications of organic unity, its inflexibility and its assumption that there was a metropolitan point at which it could end, provided an experience entirely alien to the Maritime tradition (Acheson, 1972: 27).
exploited and immobile labour. The principal work force are women tied to the local area by a combination of restrictions of social class described above, family responsibilities and by the sense that the community is a safe and secure place, a good place to raise children. Fear of moving into insecure urban spaces, spaces which have become visible through the magic of cable television, is also a barrier to mobility and to higher education which is linked with urban living, and perhaps even urban sophistication represented by cultural forms that extend beyond the folk sentiments of contemporary country music.

Around here, people listen to country music and they are very sentimental about home [laughs]. They don’t want to leave. Maybe they can’t leave. Maybe they’re scared. What do you expect when people watch the Detroit TV news every night. That’s got to make you think, who wants to live in a city? (OS-FL-96)

All of people think that way. They don’t want to move, they’re safe and secure. They don’t want education. When you grow up in a small place like this you fear the unknown, you fear even Halifax and going down on your own because you’ve been protected and isolated in this safe little environment where everyone knows everyone. (KF-FL-90)

Leaving now seems to be the prerogative of a shrinking elite.

As Rothstein suggests, the development of the “new economy” with its downsized state apparatus and flexible accumulation is creating the conditions where higher education is less accessible than ever and at the same time it is also appearing less “useful” than ever. After all, it is perceived that there isn’t much work in urban centres regardless of how much schooling one has. As the service sector of the local economy expands there are jobs because, “the labour of youth is an important part of the flexible accumulation that characterises contemporary capitalism” (Rothstein, 1996: 361). This might help explain why fewer young Digby Neckers are now leaving home and making what they can of their lives “around here.”
Resistance

Yes and the culture of school has rules and regulations that you're duty bound to follow. You say 'up yours' and 'you ain't telling me what to do.' It's a culture of resistance ... I think the seeds were planted after the war and then came to fruition in the mid 60s with the civil rights movement and the hippies. I think to a large extent it came from the men and the few women who went overseas to Europe and saw and experienced things there that changed them when they come back, but they were also planted in those who stayed home because they found themselves doing things that they would never have done or been allowed to do if things had remained normal. And I think that all leads into what we saw in the 1960s. And the whole idea of resistance and revolution has been much stronger since the second war than it ever was before that. The idea of civil rights and not taking shit off anyone. Before that society basically said this is the way things are and most people went along with it. (GG-FE)

The emphasis on experience, on self-worth, and on anti-authoritarian education would influence the 1960s. Most significant of all, however, was the real message of 1950s education: child-centredness to an unparalleled degree ... The sheer numbers confirmed it: this society is designed for you (Owram, 1996: 135).

A common perception among educators is that they operate within a culture of resistance. Students are now seen as less docile and less willing to submit to authority. The school is regarded as a part of a larger institutional complex often referred to as “society,” and this complex of institutions is thought to be losing its grip. This is one view of resistance, a Parsonian functionalist and conservative one. Another view of resistance is the one which emanates from Marxist conflict theory positing that central institutions in the society are complexes which operate in the main to legitimise and support existing structures of social inequality. I have critiqued this view in Chapter 3. Both theories imagine a more or less monolithic society which is driven by some central thrust, i.e. “order” in the functionalist tradition, or “class struggle” in the conflict or Marxist tradition. The resistance of individuals within the structures that these theories imagine is essentially an individual level reflection of structural causation. Individuals resist the logic of capitalism or the functional society because they have been able to poke a hole in its logos, in Willis’ terms, they have “penetrated” its facade.

In the Marxist tradition, Willis (1978), Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Corrigan (1979) documented this in their studies of working class youth (mainly boys) in urban Britain in the mid 1970s, Gaskell (1995) analysed the way that young Canadian women found their way into marginal lives, McLaren (1980, 1989) documented another in the Jane Finch corridor north of Toronto, McRobbie (1991), yet another in her analysis of the resistance of working class girls; indeed the list is long.
Ethnographies have never been much in vogue in the functionalist tradition. In a functionalist vein there are few studies of schooling per se, but many studies of communities in which schooling figures prominently and schooling is seen as one of the central socialisation functions in the community training, initiating and integrating young people into adult roles. In place of "penetration," one finds "integration."

The view of resistance that I propose in Chapter 3 challenges this sort of theorising. While I am generally supportive of critical theory in the Marxist tradition, I argue, following Foucault, that there is no singular discernible matrix of societal power either functional or entirely class based. Educational institutions do not simply support the ruling elite or hegemonic class interests. Nor do they provide more or less uniform support for the social integration of everyone they process. Schools operate within a complex of lines of power and multiple modes of living, and in fact, it is the very difference that these multiple communities express that are brought more or less within the sway of the school’s institutional power. Educational systems are profoundly functional in that they attempt to take individuals from different worlds and give them identical experiences. The attempt always falls short of the mark as many longstanding traditions of research in educational sociology have shown. For instance, as Marxist ethnographers have shown all too clearly, social class and gender confound normalisation efforts and recalcitrant working class youth “resist.” As Michel de Certeau argues, every exercise of sovereign power, every attempt to impose a set of practices upon a group generates a reading and a tactical response and it is this response that generates everyday life and resistance to power (1984). Walkerdine has shown, for instance, the multiple forms of resistance that operate in elementary school classrooms as social class, gender meet the institutional power of predominantly female teachers (1990). The capitalist development of the fishery caused individuals in coastal communities to become increasingly “proletarianized” as Sacouman (1980), Davis, (1991), Kearney (1993) and others have shown, but how individuals and communities have responded and fashioned resistance to this power is not well understood.

The difference represented by multiple communities sets up multiple relations of power that attempts to change individuals and groups in a number of different circumstances. Young people are at once members of a class, a gender, a region, a village, a community, a family, a generation, a labour force and other social positions out of which identity is constructed. This cohort are not
coherent, unified subjects who view themselves as "fishermen" or "housewives." Their contemporary identities are shaped in spaces which include the virtual space of the mass media, the local economy, the family, and in schools which are becoming more "community sensitive" sites of normalization. In the modern school there is a concerted attempt to hold youth and normalise them specifically by not promoting particular kinds of identity construction, but rather by opening the door to alternative possible identities. Yet a "full range" of identities is only made available by a complete school career.

MC: I was really intrigued that in a conversation with another [local] administrator we raised a similar kind of question and he said that rather than promoting mobility, he’s very afraid that what the school actually promotes is immobility among large parts of the population his school serves. He talked about prejudices of staff who might look at a child and say this is from this family and they’ll effectively place that person in a future. They’re all fishermen, he’s a kid from Jordontown and he’ll end up there, or he’s a lawyer’s kid, this is no place for him. He’s the one we send out.

S: There’s been a very conscious effort to recruit staff who, as much as we can find them, do not have those attitudes. A strong promotion of the notion of every child’s entitlement to whatever he or she needs to become everything that he or she is capable. I’ve tried to recruit bright teachers who are divergent thinking ... I have had the luxury of having had the support of a lot of excellent intervening types of people, where some kids who should have, and this is I guess the kind of proof I’m trying to steer toward, a good number of kids who should have dropped out who haven’t. I’m thinking about kids who have graduated and will graduate who would have been very much in this predicament because of the family, because of the raw ability should have dropped out early. I guess I shouldn’t name names, but there are a number of kids ... and I know that dropout rates have been decreasing because of the economics, but I think even so when I operate in a milieu that’s small enough to think of individuals, that we are going against that tide, but still the same outcome is there. But still kids aren’t typecast to the same extent that they might be in a number of other schools; they’re still going with the community flow.

(SR-FE)

This program of community sensitive education generates multiple types of resistance, penetration and integration. The work ethic in the coastal community is both a reflection of a kind of male personality structure which is key to the capitalist development of the fishery while at the same time it serves as resistant to options offered in institutions of formal education. So integration into community and class relations in the fishery is at the same time resistance to schooling and the normalisation project that schooling represents. The period of this study spans the transition from the pre industrial fishery of the pre World War 2 period, to the initial industrialization of the fishery in the 1950s and 60s, through the move offshore and heavy industrialization and regulation of the fishery in the 1970s and 80s, to the 1990s when concentration of ownership and the decline in
stocks have choked off community based opportunities for many people. Each of these stages in the development of the Digby Neck fishery have generated different forms of resistance and integration.

As French historian Eugen Weber (1976) and Canadian social historian Bruce Curtis claim in different ways, formal education did not gain support in rural areas until it was seen as useful to country people. Formal educational facilities were established in the early part of the 19th century but were sporadically attended until the latter part of the century. The change, Weber argues, happened with the industrialization of the society and the concomitant opportunities, communication and transportation, that accompanied this process. In rural schools, though, the problem has always been fashioning an argument and a practice which is relevant, and so long as a strong manual labour market existed, formal education had a struggle to appear relevant. Before the existence of a locally understood reason for rural schooling, it was broadly resisted and seen as an irrelevance or an undesirable depopulation mechanism. And in Weber’s view, schooling is a depopulation mechanism; the question is whether or not depopulation makes strategic sense to individuals in rural communities. This question is complex and it can only be answered by microstudies of the development of different kinds of communities as they become integrated into broader economies and polities.

Educators in this sample note a longstanding tradition of resistance to both school and to migration on Digby Neck prevalent among large numbers of students. Describing a typical male resister, one educator noted the long history of traditional patterns in which formal education beyond junior high school was seen to be of little immediate utility. In the contemporary coastal community, educators’ arguments about the need for extended formal education is couched in negative terms that stress what is no longer available for youth.

10 Writing of a school inspector in late 19th century rural France, Weber writes:

“A school inspector, attempting to refute the accusation that education taught children to flee the country for the town (of course it did!), advanced his own list of determining factors: a person got regular pay, higher of course but above all without unemployment, dressed like ladies and gentlemen; could see far more people and more interesting things; exerted less effort or at least was better rewarded; and did not have to bear with the rain, wind, sun and cold. And all this only a few hours away” (Weber, 1976: 286)
You know, here’s a guy who's 20 years old and he has a good job and it pays really really well. He may have a brand new truck and he can afford to make payments on a home. You know we're looking at getting ready to settle down and start a family. That has an appeal particularly in a rural culture where the previous generation had done that and that was regarded as the norm of life at that time. Somebody who went away to college or got a university education, that was a rarity in the 40's and 50's. So by the 70s and 80s, although they did see a slightly different world, if they could hang on to that old world, they saw nothing wrong with that. And there is nothing wrong with it as far as that goes. It’s just that this world has almost disappeared now. (SF-ME)

This situation did remain quite viable for particularly positioned individuals until well into the 1980s, but as he suggests, this world and its opportunities for educational resistance and continued prosperity have all but vanished. But the change has only occurred significantly in the eyes of most educators, in the past decade. The following quote is from a teacher whose career began in the early 1980s.

When I first started teaching it was nothing to see kids just graduated from school getting married. And the guy was on the boat and the girl was home keeping house and that was it. I think that doesn’t happen so much any more, I think there’s a lot more looking around going on. Whether for jobs or for different opportunities ... There are those who are still pretty much toeing the line in terms of: dad’s going to give me his boat and his licenses and he’s got 2 or 3 boats in the water and I’m going to take one of them. That’s just what’s going to happen next. I think you also will see, even though they are looking around more, that a large percentage of the kids on Digby Neck do end up back in the community. (CD-ME)

Resistance to education has also been grounded in family life in the community. This educator also reflects the common but not universal perception that most Digby Neckers do not move very far away. This perception is supported by the empirical evidence reported in Chapter 5. Most informants report that resistance to formal education among young men has traditionally been rooted in the practical orientation of students and the critique of irrelevance of education to the lives they saw around them and could imagine for themselves. Educators in the sample reiterate the novelty of the notion that everyone ought to finish high school; this is something that has “only just arrived” (FN) in this community and is still taking root. Virtually every educator in the sample saw Digby Neck culture as highly “materialistic” and very “practically oriented.” People were only interested in education as an instrumental tool for making money. As such, education has always been a relatively poor tool in the eyes of many fishing families.
It [education] hasn’t been needed. They see wealth being generated through all kinds of ways that have nothing to do with education. Success, all those things that go with quality of life, happen in these areas without education being an active part in it. And traditionally, education hasn’t been a part of it. We sort of came along after the fact in a lot of ways, and we’ve said we’re the institution and we do it better. But the argument has never been proven to a lot of the local families that have been here hundreds of years doing what they’ve been doing and doing quite alright with it. And to say that my quality of life is better or worse, I’m not sure how that works. If the existence is something that the community accepts, then the better or the worse doesn’t really enter into it. We can look at that and say what we want for them, but for those people who are experiencing it, that is life. And that’s what they chose to make of it. They’ve built it, it’s theirs. And because some of these activities have been going on for so long, there’s such a long history. For instance, the Neck has such a long history and it’s been such a wonderful place, and it is a wonderful place, and that is the way the economy has developed and education doesn’t have a lot to do with that history and that community. And their sense of community is based on a sense of tradition, a lot of tradition and values and goals, things that they’ve arrived at over a lot of years of being where they are.

Resistance to “higher purposes” of formal education as a means of acquiring “culture” and “options” is, in the eyes of educators yet another badge signifying a lack of family cultural capital in certain places.

No, it’s the same, well you know what rich people do, they take their children to Europe, they take them you know to all the operas and all the plays ... educational books, good books and so on. And the rural people, they don’t see any reason for doing that...You’d get children to do projects and you’d have to provide all the materials for them, they didn’t have any encyclopaedias at home, they didn’t have any magazines. We always bought the National Geographic when the kids were going to school because we thought it had a lot of things in it that would be useful for them and when they were in high school, magazines like Time and something that they could get information from for social studies and so on. There were a lot of homes where they had nothing. Not even the daily paper, maybe not even the weekly paper. (MS-FE)

The “ability” to see the “higher purpose” of formal education is a part of class privilege and the economic security to be able to support a child through higher education. The “decision” to prolong formal education also forces a working class youth to forego earning potential in a his or her most physically vigorous years when it is imperative to build one’s labouring credentials, reputation and general resume.

That’s really a tough choice for some of those boys. And the ones who liked fishing, they were maybe just as secure as they would be in a profession. There is no guarantee for a good many years that they’d find a job after university. Ellen Berry’s grand-daughter, she graduated with a Business Administration degree a number of years ago, she couldn’t get a job anywhere, so she went and took her R.N. Then she got a job right away with the 2 degrees as an administrator in a
hospital in Maine. I think she's back here now, married and living in the Valley somewhere. But she couldn't get a job in Nova Scotia other than just working like in a take-out or something. And I think this has discouraged maybe some that they look around and they see some big student loans to pay back and can't get a job. 'Cause the job market [pause] when it started there in '92, '93 with all the cutbacks, especially since then. And I don't think the job market was too great maybe through the '80s. (MS-FE)

For practically oriented petty capitalist families who made their living by investing wisely and taking entrepreneurial risks, higher education has looked like a very questionable investment.

While the situation is somewhat different for young women, some educators saw young women as being practically oriented as well as looking to carve out a "niche" for themselves in the local area. Traditionally, carving out this niche has involved developing multiple ways to earn ready cash locally through fish plant work, babysitting, fishing support work or wage work mainly in the Digby area. When they could make a clear connection between formal education and sustaining a life in the local area, then the prospect of higher education became a lot more attractive.

Well the young lady that I referred to awhile ago about now being focussed spent two years at university and could have come home any time but since her summer placement this summer and knowing now that she's found an area of specialisation and there's going to be opportunities to come back here and do that. Well now she will even go out of province for a year or two now that she knows she can come back and spend the rest of her life here. This is what she wants to do. So there are some examples like that. Sometimes in that group that go away certainly, as you said, usually are those that have done well in the education scheme of things here, and/or have travelled a fair bit. So their world, in my opinion, or the radius of their world is beyond Halifax so that they say, well if I have to go to Ottawa to go to university there, or Newfoundland or wherever, beyond the province, it's no big deal. I've been there. I've got supports. (CQ-FE)

Education is increasingly being seen by young women as a way to remain in the community as resource industries and opportunities in the fisheries diminish. Because family connections are so strong and so important on Digby Neck, contemporary youth are said to be becoming more interested in higher education not because they see it as a way to leave the community, but as a way to stay in it. The discourse of rural educational administrators is also becoming more focussed on providing "relevant" curriculum as a way of keeping youth in school longer and extending the process of governance at least to the end of secondary education. In the words of one educator, this realisation combined with better road access via recently improved highways has made the possibility of post-secondary education more attractive to many students. With transportation improvements, going into higher education does not necessarily imply leaving home for the first
time. Community Colleges in Yarmouth and Middleton are both now within a 90 minute commuting distance of Digby Neck.

But social class remains an issue and it is one which is becoming increasingly problematic with increasing tuition and living costs. Working class youth must forego admittedly limited ready cash and known employment in a known place in order to attend post-secondary education which is typically an unknown experience in an unknown place for highly questionable returns. As one educator comments, “we ask a lot when we ask them to go on, especially to university” (CD-ME).

But the reality is that even today, higher education is not part of the experiential scope of the lives of most Digby Neckers. As the above quote shows, the general consensus among educators is not so much that there is not enough money in the community or in families to finance higher education; the feeling expressed is that there remains strong reservation among less “well to do” families about the practical utility of post-secondary education. Resistance occurs when a student realises that the program is not right and the expenditures are high, and in the present climate of occupational uncertainty, which program is “right?” As several stayer informants commented, they, “couldn’t see what it was going to get them.” This vision referred to above is simply different for children from a rural area.

---

11 One leaver commented that even today the great majority of adult men and women in the community have never been on a university or a community college campus.

12 At one level this is a problem of practical understanding of the nature of the economy inside which one operates as an agent. As Weber wrote:

The urban poor had occasion to use the skills picked up in parish school and to observe the opportunities of improving their position with that learning. In the countryside, such skills brought little profit, their absence small disadvantage, and there were fewer chinks in the armour of misery through which curiosity or enterprise could find escape... School was perceived as useless and what it taught had little relation to local life and needs... for a country child school learning was useless, enabling him merely to make a few letters and carry books at mass... parents found their reticence justified by the slight difference in the situation of those who attended school and of those who did not (1976:326).

In his ethnography of the recent history of schooling in a Papua New Guinea village Peter Demerath (1999) found a similar finding concerning popular perceptions of the utility of formal education. The general argument here is that school as an instrument of modernisation has fallen into disrepute and is actually losing local support of rural villagers in the 1990s vis-a-vis the 1970s and 80s.
Well they [urban children] have a larger perspective to begin with. I mean they see a much bigger world than the kids around here see. I’m constantly struck by that around here. Even at school as a teacher, these kids don’t seem to realise that they’re competing in this vast pool of people for ever diminishing good jobs. I just don’t get a sense that they have a focus on that, whereas I think the city kids have. I could be wrong about this, but I think the city kids are more attuned to that idea. There’s a solid core in a [Halifax] school like Queen Elizabeth or Halifax West that are in fact competing for those jobs and who are saying, ya, this is a dog-eat-dog world and I’d better get out there and get a good education and try to get out there and get a good job. I don’t get a sense that our kids do this. But even the poorer kids who live in urban areas, they see it. And if you can [pause] the only door to that is the educational door. And if you’ve got some education you can get a job and make some money. You don’t need a whole lot of education, you don’t need a PhD or something. You need it to survive. School may not be a great way to educate kids but it fits into what’s happening in cities and you might as well just try to go with it and get what you can out of it. I guess, although I’ve never taught in a city school. That’s my belief that this is the way it would be. (SF-ME)

To be able to see the practical application, work preparation and economic returns seems essential to many Digby Neck youth. The discourse of competitiveness is supposed to motivate young people to work harder and achieve more in terms of formal education, but it may also discourage rural youth who understand the cultural disadvantage they face.

I always felt right stupid in school. Some kids, they could talk and the work was nothing to them. I just sat there scared somebody was gonna ask me something. I only learned to talk around my friends, and then I never shut up. Even talking to you makes me kind of nervous cause you’re a teacher too, and I’ve been out of school a long time. You were asking about the ones who did good in school. I noticed that they could talk to the teachers just like they could talk to their friends, it was like they was friends with the teachers or something, you know, teacher’s pets. Maybe it was because the teachers was like their parents. (UR-FS-95)

Several educators in the sample report that Digby Neck students very often have difficulty staying with higher education and that they resist by returning to the community and a known place precisely because the anonymity and competitiveness they found in higher education places is what is perceived as a “dog-eat-dog” environment. Despite its hardships and marginality, youth in coastal communities can at least see where work can be had “around here” and what one needs to do to make money.

I think they see school as something divorced from working a lot of times. These kids know about work. The boys have been brought up around fishing. They don’t lay around. They may not be very engaged in school and they may even seem painfully lazy there, but when it comes to getting to work at fishing, get out of the way. The girls too. So school ... to them it’s not real work and that’s what they look for when they evaluate what’s going on in an educational program. What’s this going to get me, how will this lead to money? (ES-FE)
Something that disturbed me for quite a few years and I expect it’s still happening is that every year the kids who are graduating from the high school and who go to university and into college go somewhere else to further education and who within two weeks are back home. I run into them on the street and they tell me I didn’t like it. Well, I say you couldn’t tell that in 2 weeks. Well, they say, I was homesick. (GB-FE)

This practicality shows itself in school as a highly critical, anti-authoritarian Digby Neck identity. This identity is the core of educational resistance and it is rooted in the availability of what are seen as good, practical alternatives for adult life available without enduring the abstract and infantilizing experience of upper secondary and post-secondary education. The Digby Neck identity also carries with it a certain baggage with educators in the view of some informants. With official streaming now unavailable for placing students according to their social backgrounds, more subtle forms of differentiation are now at work. The quote below demonstrates how resistance is manufactured as children are marginalised by the subtle cues which work to make particular categories of marginal students “feel uncomfortable” in school. Referring to his own slow realisation that marginal students resistance is rooted in the complex and troubled context of their out-of-school lives, this administrator articulates how resistance is typically seen as “bad behaviour” and justification for stereotypes.

C: I think that there are stereotypes that are attached to these kids. I think certain family names elicit certain responses from certain long standing teachers. Through one generation, two generations of students, those kind of things are certainly there. And you have conferences with people about that and suggest to them that they might be a bit premature in their judgments when they say that, ‘oh, it’s just another one.’ But those kinds of attitudes ... I do talk to people about them, once again for whatever reason, teachers have this insulated mentality. Somewhere along the line there is this misconception that if you’re a teacher you’ve been successful and you’ve made the upper reaches of life.

MC: You’ve made it to the top of Digby society?

C: Ya It’s a scary thought [laughs]. And that allows you unfortunately, even if it’s destructive, to qualify and quantify and categorise and limit a lot of people around here based on their income, and who they are and what their family has done, and what their background is. But anyway, working in our school, a lot of stuff that I deal with as an administrator is that kind of nonsense. So a lot of people are made to feel uncomfortable in school. I think the institution isn’t comfortable for a lot of people and some of the teachers are not comfortable with certain communities we serve; they’re not comfortable with the Neck, not comfortable with this or that place. (CF-ME)

In recent years, resistance to formal education finds fertile ground in the perceived questionable
utility of post-secondary education. Indeed those families with the resources to support their children will be much more likely to attempt to establish entrepreneurial opportunities (i.e. "a little business") for them in the local area than to invest in higher education. Higher education remains "invisible" training for invisible jobs in an elsewhere economy that has little tangible presence or discernible utility for traditional families on the Neck. Digby Neck students need more of a "guarantee" regarding the utility of post-secondary credentials before making the leap into uncertainty precisely because of the chasm they have to bridge in doing so. But because of the location of their family-based supports, they actually have less of a guarantee than urban youth.

Here at college I look around at the girls I’ve met. Most of them come from towns and cities and they always talk about going home when they graduate. They figure that there will probably be some kind of work for them when they graduate. You know, some talk about going to Toronto or something like that, but not too many. But me, where am I going to get a job on the Neck or even around Digby where I can use my degree? (OS-FL-96)

In these days of an uncertain fishery many families can not afford to send a child to expensive post-secondary programs for the fun of it.

I think they looked at it differently a decade or so ago because it (fishing) was more lucrative back in those times. Then there’s also the element of: you go off for a couple of years and you study to the tune of 10 or 12 thousand a year and you have massive student loans. Then what are you going to do? So they’re hearing some of these horror stories of going off to university for four or five years and then flipping hamburgers at Macdonalds trying to pay off student loans, so sometimes that’s very scary and horrifying. So you want to make sure that the decision is something you really want. (CQ-FE)

The systemic response to this resistance was to create general stream programming and special classes for these resistant individuals. These kinds of programs were established in the late 1950s and were part of the recommendations brought forth by the authors of the Stirling County Study as part of its general recommendations for improving the mental health of the Digby area. This initiative was put in place in order to stem the tide of school dropouts and attract and “modernise” young people who were leaving school early for a life in the fishery. Whether or not, or how this program worked might well be the subject of another study, but it does seem clear that the streaming this program introduced actually served to maintain, legitimise and accentuate the differences between the children of country parents and their “town” counterparts. What it did do was to put in place the rudiments of a larger system of normalisation which came to include
psychiatric services, a variety of school based “special services,” emergent modern social welfare, and the complex of agencies of human services that now surround the individual. This tutelary complex is now expanding into adult education and community development initiatives which parachute university trained experts to deliver a specially tailored facsimile of tertiary education to stayers in the rural community. This normalization thrust has come to be represented by a new series of “practically oriented” secondary course offerings in “entrepreneurship,” “tourism,” “oceanography,” and courses designed to be directly relevant to youth who are moving directly from school and into the fishery or into the local service sector economy. The aim is to create a system so “responsive” and relevant that resistance to education will be virtually impossible. Future governance will be so flexible and so seamlessly accommodating and articulated with the rural economy that there will be no “cracks” for youth to fall through and nothing to “drop out” into.

13 I am not aware of any Canadian studies of these kinds of governmental innovations, the community economic development and adult education bureaucracies that have emerged in the wake of the demise of state sponsored employment training programs. The state now seems to realise that generic “top-down” programming are problematic particularly because they are run from “outside” and that effective normalization efforts must include local economies and “communities” (Rose, 1997, Valverde, 1997). Contemporary rural development and educational projects use the discourse of community and local traditions to frame their discourse and their work of modernising what Valverde calls “backward spaces.”
Conclusion: The mobile discourse of schooling

I can remember teachers maybe asking, what do you want to do? Or they would say, ‘good for you, you want to go into nursing,’ or ‘good, you're going to go fishing with your dad.’ But I don't remember teachers discouraging or encouraging, either one thing or the other. If you wanted to go be a lawyer, good for you, I hope you do great, or if you're going to quit school and go fishing, well, that's up to you -- I'm sure they encouraged you to stay in school but I don't remember then saying sure, well if you want to go and quit school in grade 9 and be a smart-ass, go ahead, if you want to go fishing, if you think you can make more money. (LL-FS-88)

Just the underlying [pause] no one said it in so many words. They (teachers) kind of had this way of talking about Digby. I remember some of the teachers talking about other places and making it sound exciting and making us feel like Digby was the bottom of the barrel. It's terrible but as a kid but I didn't see those layers. You don't understand why they feel like that. I see a lot of people now who do that and I understand now that they're unhappy people. But as a kid you don't understand that, you see it has your horrible little community where nothing important is going on and where the fishing is dying. And what can you do if you're not a fisherman? And in grade 12 it was all geared to getting us to think about where we're going next year and what you're going to do next year. You knew you couldn't stay and you had these teachers with chips on their shoulders [pause] you did look at your community in a negative way. Maybe that's why I always stayed detached from things that were in Digby. Maybe it was that feeling that I got from my teachers or wherever, but it was the feeling that you can't make it in Digby. I didn't know what to do, what to look for or who to call. But I wasn't going to be embarrassed. I wasn't just going to stay here. So, it was just that. It wasn't a cool thing to do. If you wanted a career, a success story, you had to leave. (KF-FL-90)

The messages rural youth receive through the course of their educational careers in community schools are highly mixed. They come to understand the limited prospects that their communities hold for them and the way that family, class and gender structure the menu of possibilities open to them. They also encounter what I have been describing as a mobile discourse in school, a discourse which presents their communities as peripheral places playing an ever diminishing role in an increasingly centralised and urban political economy. This is not presented to them as an overt political agenda or as a conspiracy of any kind, it is presented as a fact of life. Part of these facts of life are the idea that successful people are mobile and leave, while unsuccessful people are “stuck” and consequently forced to stay. In the first two cohorts, stayers were “stuck” in fisheries

---

14 At best, coastal communities are presented as ecotourism destinations or imagined as some sort of high tech mecca for emerging industries not constrained by considerations of location. And sometimes the pitch works. For example, the Western Valley Development Authority, a regional economic development organisation responsible for the promotion of economic development in Digby and Annapolis Counties of Nova Scotia, has recently (May 2000) received a five million dollar “smart communities” grant from the federal government to “wire” the western end of the Annapolis Valley (including the Digby area and Digby Neck) with high speed internet connections and other information infrastructure.
jobs and in marriages. In Cohort 3 stayers are increasingly seen as being stuck in the few remaining fisheries jobs and more commonly in low wage part time work, and/or in social welfare or family dependency. More than half of the young men in Cohort 3 have not graduated high school and make up the lion’s share of the seventy six percent of men in this cohort who remain “around here.” Most members of this cohort are still single or living in common law relationships with “Digby girls” or women from “across the Bay.” Most either live with their parents or on family property on Digby Neck. This generation are in limbo, unable to commit to marriage, mortgages and raising children because the fishing economy is precarious and most other forms of available work pay such poor wages. One informant commented, “they call them Generation X, but I call them the minimum wage generation” (FN). When I asked people about how young people in the area who have limited formal education manage to survive, there is typically a long pause, lowered eyes and a sigh before the inevitable answer follows: ‘I don’t know.’

MC: So what do they do here? They stay and then what? [pause] You’re shaking your head.

G: I don’t know what. Marginal employment and it’s even more marginal than it ever was because we’re now into the permanent part time because employers are into even hiring people on a basis where they have to pay regular benefits. So they pick up just barely enough to keep body and soul together and they have absolutely no benefits. And in some cases working two or more jobs to make a go of it. It used to be you could drop out and get a job as a cashier somewhere and you worked your 8 hours every day and you could go off and join a union maybe. But now ... and it’s worldwide, it’s not just in this area. People are being hired on a much different basis because employers are trying to avoid the costs associated with full time employees. What’s really happening in a lot of cases is that what we used to know as the middle classes just won’t exist. I don’t know. At least when you stick around you have friends and relatives who will help you over the hard times. When you’re away you don’t have that safety net. When you migrate, you’re out there on your own. (GG-FE)

The comments of educational migrants from earlier cohorts tell the story of being, “out there on your own,” in the social space of higher education and urban environments. These sentiments are repeated in Cohort 3, for example this account of a stayer who spent a couple of years at university never really seeing the purpose of his educational trajectory. The connection between higher education and actual work remained vague and undefined and as a consequence he left before completing his degree to find work in the fishery.
I never ever thought where I’d go after I was done because I could never ever see myself getting anywhere. I was just wondering what I was doing, and the stuff that I was taking and doing these lab experiments in the organic chemistry class and stuff like that. What was I going to do afterwards; I had no plans. I didn’t know what I wanted to do. As I grew up it was you ... well you get your education, well you go to school and then you go to work. I was having the problem of where this education was taking me that I was going to be able to go to work. (KS-MS-89)

Higher education is such a major investment for most students who do not come from elite fishing families that it needs to be connected directly to some means of employment and very lucrative employment because of its cost. The paradox is that the kind of employment which pays the kind of money needed to finance an education was virtually unavailable “around here,” for this cohort. Thus, higher education and particularly university was de facto considered to be an expensive exit from the community; indeed, it could be seen in no other way by individuals who would have to pay the costs after the fact when their student loans came due.

If you’ve got an education you’ve spent thousands and thousands of dollars, what are you going to get here that’s going to sustain what you’ve got to pay back. If you’ve got a student loan like I did, how are you going to pay for that staying on Digby Neck. There’s very few jobs on Digby Neck that earn that kind of money other than fishing. So if you’ve got that education, you’re going to look somewhere else. Especially a good education, you’re going to look for the biggest dollar you can make ‘cause you’ve got to get that paid back and then you want to retire early some day. There’s just too few jobs that make any kind of money and even in the Digby area there ain’t many jobs around, unless you work for the government, the ferries and transportation and stuff like that. That’s a good job; but what constitutes a good job? Are those jobs any better than fishing? (KS-MS-89)

Even for children from elite fishing families who could pay the cost of higher education “up-front” leaving their children with no educational debt to pay after graduation, educational relevance still had to be constructed by those students who were in a position to access higher education. For education to be relevant, leavers’ discourse indicates that they had to acquire a mobile consciousness. Education was relevant precisely because it allowed one to be mobile and to “get out.” Women particularly, spoke of the relevance of education in terms of the mobility it gave them, the opportunity to leave the community and access “bigger and better” things outside Digby Neck.

I guess the relevance was that it (post-secondary education) was going to get me out. Not that I hated being where I was but I needed to move on and that was going to get me to where I wanted to go. Education took me out [pause] educationally wise but socially as well because it was going to take me out of the community and I was going to meet new people, different opportunities, things like that. (KC-FL-92)
These were the “good students,” the ones who were “motivated,” involved in a variety of school activities, and who “got the marks.” Teachers understood and supported these young people who were open to the mobile, options oriented discourse of schooling. On the other hand most teachers were much less able to understand the desires, career trajectories and educational decisions of young men whose identities and life circumstances were moving them into the fishery and into life in the coastal communities on Digby Neck. Their resistance and seemingly irrational decision to chase a few dollars in a declining industry seemed to most teachers incomprehensible.

My teachers never ever said anything directly. Most of them didn't even care. I think it was just a job to them those teachers there in he high school [laughs]. I don't know what they’re like now. I had one teacher, I liked him and he used to be a fisherman himself. He could understand where I was coming from when I left. Most of them couldn’t. He could understand it because he had been a fisherman and he had a general idea of what I was facing. But I would say the teachers promoted anything but fishing, just get your education they would say. (TB-MS-88)

While many students have difficulty remembering specific teachers telling them directly about opportunities outside their communities and the education necessary to access them, teachers are generally conscious of the mobile nature of the discourse they use to describe successful and unsuccessful students.

Even the language we use about this “to go further” is a positive kind of language about leaving. To move on, to go far, and I wonder if for some people even that language is intimidating, people who want their kids to stay. The words “he’ll go far” might mean we’ll never see him again. You know you hear people talking about somebody being a success and that means they’ve moved away, and somebody else only stayed here, or stayed down the Neck so they couldn’t have been a success even though they have done well, they’ve got a nice home, they’ve supported their family, done alright, but it’s still just alright, they haven't done well. (HL-FE)

If the mobile discourse of schooling was resisted by many stayers, it was embraced by many leavers in this cohort. Digby Neck students continue to pursue sets of options which allow them to use their personal and family-based social capital to cut out some kind of a living. Those from elite and license holding fishing families are much more easily able to access higher educational credentials which are portable and can be exchanged for professional positions off Digby Neck. Some younger members of this cohort hold out the hope that they may be able to use their post-
secondary credentials close to home.

I hope I'll be able to come back and get work around Digby some day; maybe even live on the Neck. I love it there, it's home. It's really confused for me right now though cause I know that if I come back home, like for good, that I've failed. I mean there's nothing there for me, just family. (OS-FL-96)

As the fishery declines and as ownership and license rights consolidate into fewer and fewer hands, the cadre of young people who have access to the money required to make higher education a legitimate option declines apace. In fact, educational credentials are now virtually essential as a support for migration outside the region around here. The forty-four of forty-eight of the young men and women both in Cohort 3 who leave and migrate into the "not far" and "away" regions have completed high school and more than forty percent of them have university level training (see Table 23). Educational migrants struggle hard to maintain a Digby Neck identity while at the same time developing a mobile consciousness. For instance, this young woman commented that she feels layers of herself peel away with the time zones the closer she gets to home, and she arrives a self-reflexive migrant, a stranger when she arrives home.

Education does make us migrants if we choose to pursue it. I know that when I pursue my masters that it won't be in Nova Scotia. I think I'll probably choose another city and do it in and then I'll call that home for awhile. So does it take away from [pause] I just think that every city that I am going to be living and will add to my feeling of Digby Neck as my home because I think how your roots become stronger and thicker when you move from city to city. I think it's unfortunate that some people say when they move from here to Toronto and they say that, well, Toronto's my home and Digby Neck, well, that's a place I'd rather forget. They don't even go back to visit and they don't ever talk about it as their home. I think that's the dark side of education. I think they've migrated spiritually. I think that's the dark side, because they went to U of T or Acadia and made Toronto their home; they've cut themselves off from what made them who they are in the first place. (KF-FL-90)

But this young woman's story is also an account of a hybrid identity, one which has been formed by experience elsewhere as well as by experience and grounding in the home place. As Ryan claims, "while this global culture has a powerful effect on men, women and children, it does not simply roll over everything in a systematic fashion creating similarity as it does so" (1997: 47). Identity is now a creation of here and there, then and now, present and absent.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

The goal is to be out of here ... One cannot explain why he is standing where he stands; why he is moving where he moves. But all this is irrelevant - as getting out is the goal. The only one to be had (Bauman, 1991: 183: emphasis in original).

These youth show a very strong sense of identification with the locality which, though it had a negative side, sprang ‘from a familiarity with the geography of the district, and the feeling of being a cherished part of a close network of relationships’ (Coffield, 1986). The authors comment that in consequence of ‘localism,’ the quality of these young people’s lives would have been lowered had they left the area (Jones, 1999b: 3).

Resistant rural spaces

According to many contemporary theorists, a culture is no longer connected to any particular place. The idea of deterritorialization of culture stressed the declining importance of borders and the intimate connection that was supposed to exist between social identity and particular locales. Identity is forged in the “third space” between particular places, traditions and global mass culture as migrations, travel and mass communications/media generate hybrids that range from the Donga Tribe, a loose multinational collection of wandering youth (Urry, 2000), to “world music,” to the dozens of ethnic restaurants on a given block in any major western city. According to Papastergiadis (2000), ideal type modern/traditional categories are rooted in anthropological studies of small societies, which counterpoise a view of culture rooted in local practices with the modern idea of culture as an “imposition” usually by nation states. Other anthropologists who study migration call for a view of culture that is not stuck in one closed place, but which is a more open system of: “cross cultural negotiation and power differentials” (Papastergiadis, 2000: 104).

However, Atlantic coastal communities like the one I have studied here, and the rural communities described by sociologists, historians and educational researchers in the early chapters of this work resemble those “small societies” built on face-to-face interactions to a considerable extent.

People living in these locales understand that they are under siege by cultural, economic and political forces that work to enclose and assimilate them. What emerges from the meeting of rural communities and the normalising institutions and practices of late modernity (including the public
school) is conflict, negotiation and an ambivalent intersection of purposes and values that is made all the more problematic by the way that the current phase (call it late modernity or post-modernity) simultaneously generates mobility and immobility. Communities are plastic constructions these days if contemporary theorists like Bauman, Giddens and Castells are to be believed. But like Theobald (1997), Creed and Cheng (1997), Bonner (1997), Porter (1996), Brandau and Collins (1994) and others, I found a strong strain of rural resistance to this conception of community and place.

Both theories of reproduction and resistance in the sociology of education have tended to be theories of entrapment. In classic functionalist reproduction their emanating from the work of Parsons, individuals were socialised and voluntarily integrated into particular roles and positions in the social structure. Their own voluntary "choices" integrated individuals into their "lot" and each individual choice generally worked to create social solidarity, harmony and a functioning society. And of course, sociology would play a fundamentally conservative role helping to make the whole drama more understandable and workable. Correspondence theory then developed in the 1970s as a functional Marxist explanation of how and why particular youth found their way into particular stratified positions in the social class structure (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976 and Apple, 1979). Correspondence theory saw schooling as a superstructural reflection of determining infrastructural relations of economy, power and hegemony. Again, the agent was trapped, the victim of social forces operating behind his or her back, this time the forces not of social harmony, but of social class reproduction. Resistance theory then emerged in the late 1970s as yet another theory of entrapment. Individual agents resisted the class content of their schooling refusing to accept their interpellation into disadvantaged positions and "penetrated" the facade of the emancipatory liberal rhetoric of schooling. The trouble is that in doing so they propelled themselves into menial jobs and trapped themselves in the working class anyhow.

A more subtle theory for explaining the nuanced way that particularly positioned social actors make the decisions they do is Bourdieu’s Logic of Practice (1991). Bourdieu sees social actors creatively inventing their lives in differential circumstances. Bourdieu’s social actors are positioned by "objective" circumstances of gender, race and class and these circumstances are beyond their control. Bourdieu’s research has mapped the nature of these forces in French society.
as well as the ways schools operate to promote opportunity but at the same time to structure the
availability of opportunity by privileging the cultural practices of particular groups. Despite the
dynamic, even anthropological nature of his analysis, Bourdieu tends, like resistance theorists to
use agency to explain structure. All action tends, in the end, to funnel into Bourdieu’s structural
categories of class domination and reproduction. Thus, Bourdieu’s analysis is yet another
discourse of entrapment.

What I found on Digby Neck is not a discourse of entrapment, but multiple discourses of strategic
decision-making. It is true that the habitus experienced by individuals growing up in particular
communities did structure certain kinds of choices as “coherent and convenient,” but this is not to
say that the coherent and convenient choices were untroubled by competing discourses. To cite
one example, youth in coastal communities have, for many years, been confronted with a negative
discourse about the future of the fishery. The accounts in Chapter 6 and 7 show how young men
in established fishing families wondered whether or not they were making the right choice by
deciding to follow their fathers into fishing, and very often their fathers were offering no
courage that they do so. There was no uniform sense of coherence and convenience and
particularly in Cohorts 2 and 3, the “natural” path was increasingly seen as problematic. Even in a
small, “close knit” single industry community like Digby Neck, young people experienced multiple
habiti mediated by social class and by gender.

Because resistance and reproduction theories each imagine a sovereign exercise of power and
therefore, develop only more or less tight discourses of domination, I have chosen Foucault’s
poststructural idea of power relation to understand the multiple oppositions that form the basis of
educational and migration decision-making on Digby Neck. I have found that each family is, in a
certain sense, a habitus on Digby Neck, representing a particular history in the fishery, access to
resources, as well as a set of relationships and traditions. Children in particular families are
presented at home and at school with a variety of “options” which seem to them more or less
possible and attractive. Some options are accepted and embraced and others are resisted and
rejected. Each competing habitus is a discourse as well because it is produced and sustained
symbolically and for this reason it can be resisted. The habitus and normal middle class life
trajectory presented and valorised in school was seen by male stayers particularly as a feeble force
which was typically resisted because the community and the area "around here" presented "better options." For women, the educational trajectory resisted the community habitus, but it was still seen to provide a "better option" for many women than staying and relying on the restricted range of options available to women on Digby Neck. Still other women and a few men followed the middle class path only to return to the familiar geography of "around here" as professionals, white and pink collar workers and entrepreneurs.

In chapters 1, 2, and 3, drawing on Foucault, post-colonial theorists, and the work of contemporary rural sociologists and historians I presented the idea that rural communities are sites of resistance to the homeless, placeless assimilatory vision perhaps first described by Berger et. al. in the early 1970s (1973), and developed by contemporary social theorists like Giddens and Bauman. In chapter two, I showed how historically the normalization efforts of the state in rural areas were led by the development of public schooling. While early school promoters were interested in establishing routines and normative practices of schooling within rural communities, there was a consistent and significant resistance to these efforts by rural dwellers who had other agendas. The crops needed to be brought in, father needed help on the fish flake, mother needed "help at home," the family moved from place to place in mining camps where there were no regular schools or teachers, the teacher quit and no replacement could be found, or the family needed money and a child of fourteen could sometimes earn close to an adult wage or make what amounted to an adult contribution to family income. All of these kinds of activity and their ordinariness across the developing rural landscape of Canadian communities created traditions of resistance to schooling. These patterns have been part of the weave of biography and history, a "natural" transition from childhood to adulthood in rural Canada. Quitting school, being resistant while in school, working in the community and with family while in school, and seeing school as an impractical "waste of time" divorced from the "real" pursuits visible in a rural economy were all part of this resistance.

In this study "stayers" are the back-bone of the Digby Neck community. Many of them are early school leavers who dropped out of school in order to drop in to life in their communities, a life which they take seriously, are committed to and want to protect in the face of forces which are marshalled against their survival on Digby Neck. The majority of men in this group quit school
and most of them are involved in some way with the fishery. They have learned to stay and
learned how to survive, lessons that no one ever learned (or expected to learn) in school. They run
boats, resist state efforts to make the industry more "efficient" by running them out of business by
consolidating access to fisheries resources in the hands of a few elite fishermen and corporate
interests.\footnote{Examples of this kind of "force" are found in the way harvesting fisheries resources are thought about by the
corporate sector. In a televised address at a recent conference on electronic commerce and business, corporate fisheries
magnate John Risley commented that his company, which harvests some thirty percent of the total Canadian
scallop catch, does so using seven vessels (CPAC (Canadian Parliamentary Channel) broadcast, 10 June, 2000). He
then went on to argue that if they figure out how to manage offshore scallop ground more efficiently his company
ought to be able to harvest the same quantity of scallops using only three vessels. These remarks were obviously
addressed to a business audience who would be impressed with the way Risley is rationalising his operation and
increasing corporate profits by cutting costs. From the point of view of coastal communities, this kind of analysis
is exactly what has destroyed both fish stocks and the small boat fishery. The influence that Risley and others in his
position have over state regulatory bodies is seen as the reason why the fishery has been, "turned over to them
fullers, so he can sit there in an office and send his boats out to catch his fish" as one fisherman put it referring to a
local "fishtocrat."}
The struggle is ongoing and continual and the threat of quotas, closures, the emerging
First Nations fishery, fish stock collapse, corporate and government license buy-outs, the loss of
land to logging and to wealthy "outsiders," and other problems give these men and women a great
deal to do and think about. They see themselves immersed in a political and ideological struggle
for community survival that is much more difficult than the well known struggle of getting a living
from the sea.\footnote{Digby Neck poet and fisheries activist Arthur Bull has rendered the idea of struggle and community in a poem
that serves as an introduction to a digitised collection of photographs, movie clips and stories from Digby Neck (Bull,
2000). Struggle, Bull points out, is nothing new to Digby Neckers; it is just that the field of struggle has shifted to
an explicitly political stage. Bull writes:}
The struggle to protect these spaces and the resources they contain is also a women's struggle
despite the fact that far fewer women raised on Digby Neck stay there. Women stayers are among
the most active workers in community survival organisations that seek to protect and preserve the

And now we know that this way of life won't stay here without
Our dreaming and working together and fighting for it
We know that our fishermen will not even be allowed to fish
Even if the fish are plentiful in the water -without a fight.
It seems crazy really
But at the same time it has always been that way
There's nothing here that wasn't got without a struggle

The internet site that contains this poem and the photographs that accompany it also serves as a very complete tour
institutional infrastructure of the community, particularly its elementary school. Just as men struggle to preserve their livelihoods, their “ocean spaces”, women engage in struggle to preserve “community spaces.” These activities all resist the forces of consolidation, concentration, and community disintegration that have emerged in the retreat of the state from providing services to coastal communities. This, too, is an ongoing political/ideological struggle and hard, discouraging work which flies in the face of the discourse described by Berry (1977), Theobald (1997), Bonner (1997), Popkewitz (1998) and Creed and Cheng (1997), a discourse which marginalises rurality and which seeks to govern and reform if not destroy it. This resistant counter-discourse is the language of survival and community resilience that runs through these accounts.

Contrary to my expectations and to those of virtually all of my informants, popular discourse and the scholarly literature on schooling in rural areas, I found residents of Digby Neck to be less mobile now than in previous decades. It is my contention that this decreased level of out-migration reflects a strong resistance to both the mobility imperative in rural schooling, and to the discourse of decline that figures so prominently in the way Atlantic coastal communities are now described. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the industrial fishery boomed providing a strong economic reason for young men and for some young women to resist formal education. In this context, it comes as no surprise that out-migration rates fell in this period. But, the late 1980s and 1990s was a period in which the prevalent discourse was that of fish stocks collapsing, communities dying and general decline in coastal communities. This discourse of decline though, was received by Digby Neck youth in tandem with an equally pessimistic discourse of diminished urban opportunities, “downsizing,” and industrial decay. Urban opportunities were made available principally through the acquisition of mobile educational capital. The Basic Data Bank and the Community, Schooling and Migration Survey show that mobile out-migrant Digby Neckers who settled in the area outside the 50 kilometre “around here” zone, have indeed acquired significantly higher levels of post secondary credentials. On the other hand, those who remained inside the 50 kilometre circle seem very able to negotiate their lives with relatively low levels of formal education. The “around here” area and its occupational and social structure continues to provide a context within which resistance to higher education is supported, particularly for men.

Learning to leave was not generally a conscious process, although when I raised the connection
between formal education and out-migration, most informants were able to see the linkage. For many stayers, school was simply experienced as an irrelevance. Why it was irrelevant was generally not given much thought. Accounts from the interviews though, trace the connection between formal schooling and out-migration and leavers understood that they needed higher education in order to survive off Digby Neck. Leavers typically understood why education was relevant for them, and it was because they required it to be mobile. This was less true in Cohort 1 where the employment market for men particularly, in central and western Canada could absorb large numbers of workers whose manual skills were more important than their educational credentials. Women of all cohorts needed education to leave as did men in Cohorts 2 and 3. Unless one was a young man coming of age in the 1960s or early 1970s, one had to learn to leave.

Mobility and ambivalence

Few people anywhere in the world can any longer be unaware of the fact that their local activities are influenced, and somehow even determined, by remote events or agencies (Giddens, 1996: 9).

What Bourdieu’s conceptual scheme misses most in the context of rural economies is that capital must be transformed from fixed, locally negotiable capital like fishing licenses, boats, fish plants, quotas and gear in the case of a fishing community, into the mobile capital represented by formal educational credentials. Even those families which had access to financial capital need to invest it in intangible, trust based, and, to quote an educator from this study, “largely unproven” (CD-ME) form of symbolic capital which is only negotiable (with remarkably few exceptions) outside the life world of the coastal community and the “around here” region. Higher education does not just imply that children will leave, it is the “ticket” and the mobile capital now necessary to leave.

I want to argue here that schooling is a quintessential institution of disembedding, that schools are concerned with severing the attachments of individuals to particular places and making young people adaptable, flexible and mobile. Giddens writes: “(E)xpert systems are disembedding mechanisms because, in common with symbolic tokens, they remove social relations from the immediacies of context” (1990: 28). This study has shown how the discourse of mobility or disembedding is both accepted and resisted. Like all discourses, this one creates oppositions, it
identifies individuals to be "educated," and it engenders a resistant set of tactical responses. When the educational process "works," schooling mobilises Digby Neckers and "re-places" them, if not physically, then at least by giving them an outsider's perspective on their own lifeworld. Leavers in this study expected their education to provide them with a larger sense of the world and they see the inability of many stayers to contextualise their problems, and their biographies, in the larger context of national and global events as the root of many of their limitations.

You know I look at the fishery as such a great example because there's a lot of very heartfelt emotional things that are happening there that a lot of Canada, 90% of Canada, doesn't even know is going on ... You know they (Digby Neckers) take their licking without even doing too much. They're not the kind of people that are going to stand there and throw their emotions in front of the TV camera. But the other thing is that there is the (pause) sometimes I just don't think they see what the outside would be like ... But I think that all comes back and kind of circles around with maybe how their sons and daughters maybe feel toward education. If your parents understand that it's a big world, and the more you know about this outside world the better you can deal with it, or the better you can meet obstacles when they show up, then the better off you are. I don't know how much that has changed. (EM-ML-80)

The more schooling rural youth get the more mobile they become. When schooling "fails," youth or when youth "fail" school, they remain in places like Nova Scotian coastal communities and ambivalent "at risk" discourses about both these youth and these communities grinds on. On one hand mobile, academically credentialed youth are praised while on the other hand community leaders bemoan the loss of the "cream of the crop" of potential entrepreneurs, consumers, producers, solid citizens and community leaders. There is a persistent discourse about what will "become of" those youth who do not complete an education and become mobile. Teachers and parents alike wonder "what will they do?" in the economic space around here. The "dropout problem" is considered to be of crisis proportions by school board officials and various "concerned" groups that formed and met with a fair degree of regularity through the 1990s in Digby County. Their target was always that simultaneously pathetic and frightening construction, the dropout, or the proto-dropout, the child "at risk," in danger of not becoming mobile and useful.

But in the context of contemporary global culture, Digby Neckers are becoming less and less geographically mobile. Fewer students follow the path of this kind of mobile biography. And this creates yet another form of ambivalence among teachers who are often surprised (and perhaps quietly disappointed) to find out how few of their former students have "moved on" and how many
are “just around here.” How do we explain this apparent contradiction? I claim that mobility is an accoutrement of privilege and economic power. In order to be mobile and see the potential for a life within a space broader than “around here” a young person needs to have access to the mobile capital necessary to leave. Certain kinds of capital are mobile while others are not, and formal education credentials represent the quintessential, guaranteed form of mobile capital. With the decline in the fishery, an ability to see the mobility path opened up by taking school seriously and dedicating oneself to mastering it’s discourse, was constricted in the 1990s by a provincial and even national economy that seemed to offer little opportunity for families to realistically imagine that their children might survive elsewhere. Because they cannot see mobile futures, these children resist or dismiss formal education, because for them, it leads nowhere. And as Bauman points out, when the master narratives of modernity collapse, all forms of life become acceptable, one no better than another. In schools, it is no longer acceptable to “cream,” “stream” or to actively select mobile youth from families who have mobile capital. Teachers are now forced to adopt a discourse of community relevance that recognises the “needs” of rural youth who may want to stay “around here” and consequently modify their own mobility oriented discourse to present staying on as a legitimate “option” and one which must be supported by a new form of community sensitive “responsive” education and governance for those who remain.3

At the same time that this is happening, space outside the geographic parameters of Digby Neck and the known area “around here” is collapsing. Services are brought to people “around here” and they no longer need to go out in search of them. This helps individuals who see no possibility of moving outside the area “around here” to feel as though they are integrated into modernity as consumers, and that they have everything they need because everything that is available elsewhere is also found right “in their own backyards.” One no longer has to go to Halifax or “up the (Annapolis) Valley” for consumer goods and services. The mobility of goods and services then serves to create conditions of immobility and greater insularity in the local area “around here.” As one informant commented: “people were more on the move a hundred years ago, they were on boats to Boston, all over the world really. It was a more cosmopolitan environment and it showed in the people” (FN). But surely, people have now become “cosmopolitan” (or at least

3 In order to conceptualise the project of teaching as a communitarian enterprise these teachers will have to fight against what their training in teacher education has told them to be true and desirable. I have taken up this problem in an autobiographical account of my own teaching career in a series of rural communities (Corbett, 1999).
cosmopolitan consumers) in a different and more intense way in the current epoch, if only because of ready access to mass media.

Just as the concept of space is no longer located in any particular place, mobility is also unconstrained by geographic boundaries. The internet is the most obvious example of a type of mobility that requires no geographic movement. This kind of mobility is becoming both a more accessible form of travel for youth on Digby Neck and at the same time a form of valuable cultural capital for those children in elite families who have at-home access to computers and the internet. To be mobile in this world also requires financial capital and the cultural capital of a "wired" family. Having computers and knowing how to use them is an unevenly distributed access to mobility. Electronic commerce and relatively inexpensive long distance telephone service is also beginning to have an impact on mobility as well as allowing shoppers to access consumer goods "on-line" without the need to move physically. One can live in a highly mobile world and benefit from some measure of its excitement and consumer pleasures not because one is more geographically mobile, but precisely for the opposite reason, because anything is now accessible at the click of a mouse on the home computer, in the local convenience story video rack, or in the grander shopping facilities in "town."

Like so many other places, Atlantic Canadian coastal communities have been drawn into an expanding global process of highly mobile goods, services, ideas and people which move rapidly across what Urry calls "scapes" or grids of transmission that range from airlines to fibre optic cables (2000: 35-36; 63-64). When one lives in a context of radical mobility it is possible to consume the products made available in the global market-place while actually becoming less geographically mobile than one was previously. The increased proletarianisation that Marxist theorists described in Atlantic Canadian fishing communities in the 1970s and 1980s is supported in this analysis. Fewer and fewer workers have been needed to harvest and process fish on Digby Neck, populations have fallen, and I show here how those remaining populations have become less mobile. This contradicts the reserve army of labour portion of the Marxist analysis of the development of underdevelopment in Atlantic Canada. The reserve army of mobile young people are not the poor; in the context of this study they are the privileged children of elite fishing families

---

4 As Urry has recently argued, sociology has failed to understand with any clarity and in any depth, the impact of a mobility technology as mundane in the West as the automobile (2000).
who use their financial capital to buy the mobile capital or "tickets" provided by higher education. In late modernity consumer society and the mass media seem to have penetrated even the most remote of communities generating ambivalence and immobility among those who remain.

Bauman writes that strangers are mass-produced in the, "new intense and feverish mobility itself which arises from the state enforced 'uniformization' of vast spaces" (1991: 62). As movement and travel become normal, and strangers abound, localised spaces are changed by the invasion of unattached persons who defy, "the easy expedient of spatial or temporal segregation" (Bauman, 1991: 59). The stranger is notoriously restless and obviously placeless, s/he is an object of reform and at the same time is responsible for his/her own reformation in the context of modern institutions and power/knowledges, unlike his/her opposite the per-modern "native" whose identity is fixed to place, habit, custom and tradition.

Being a stranger means, first and foremost, that nothing is natural; nothing is given of right, nothing comes free. The native's primeval union between the self and nature has been sundered. Each side of the union has been brought into focus of attention - as a problem, and as a task (Bauman, 1991: 75).

Bauman contrasts the experience and reflexive self understanding of his stranger to that of the "native member of a community." The native lives within a structure that is socially scripted and the self is effortlessly revealed to the individual in stages as part of the process or maturation and status passage in the community, "born as he is 'into the community' and growing inside it without much challenge from the outside. His is the state of 'being saturated' or 'tuned'" (Bauman, 1991: 75). The stranger has none of this straightforward socialisation experience, rather the stranger as a figure of modernity needs to be flexibly educated for a variety of contexts and a future that cannot be know in advance, therefore, "he is denied the smugness of self-oblivion ... the stranger is his own problem" (Bauman, 1991: 76). This is the modernist notion of the self as a project described by Giddens, an identity that one writes with one's "choices," choices we are "doomed" to make whether we like it or not (Bauman, 1999). Educational credentials are the "objective" measures of one's suitability to a variety of contexts; they amount to references from academically certified

---

5 The idea of the credential as a "ticket" is common nomenclature for both journeyman status in a trade as well as for professional certification. Informants sometimes used the example of my teacher's "ticket" to describe the kind of portable qualification I possess. The ticket is a mobile credential. Bourdieu also argues that the reserve army of labour has been extended out of the "lowest levels of competence" to the graduates of higher education (1998: 82-83). This, I think, is a topic well worthy of research.
strangers to other academically certified strangers that a given youth will necessarily encounter on his/her pilgrimage of choice. Education has taken as its object the “native,” in the case of the study at hand, natives of Digby Neck, and attempted to write “options” onto their personality structures, and to gauge the capacity of given individuals to adapt to particular kinds of changes, choices and to specialized tasks outside a space where one is “known.”

But what choices should one make? There is no longer a single coherent habitus and if Bauman has it right we are all strangers. Identity is plastic for the stranger; s/he is not rooted in either geographic or social place. The modern self floats free in the context of what Bauman calls the ambivalence generating, “apriori displacement of the modern person” (1991: 207). Modern individuals must be equipped to become what modernity makes them, choosers, movers, workers, members of the optimistic/pessimistic consumer culture of the millennium and tacticians framing selves against a backdrop of multiple discourses. Bauman goes on to analyse the place of “expertise” in reflecting the self back to us for monitoring and choice. Again the system of formal education in western democracies takes the “individual” as its object in a psychologised discourse of adjustment to a universal strangerhood. Under these conditions ambivalence grows unchecked and nobody really expects order any more, which is good for the expert particularly in fields that deal with the engineering of social behaviour like counselling, education, astrology, New Age “healing,” health, “self-help,” and religion. Ambivalence is the “industrial waste” of modernity as Bauman says, and management of this waste has become a huge modern industry. What is there left for education as a central unifying governance mandate other than mobilising people?

People on Digby Neck are aware of these “forces” that work to displace and integrate them and of how “experts” in schools have tried to help at least some of them become modern, functional, deployable strangers in the landscape of modern capitalism. This study is an account of the way that this project has been constructed in the discourse of schooling and embraced and resisted by generations of Digby Neckers. The role of the teacher in the coastal community is that of the stranger in the sense Simmel described it. The teacher enters the community, often as a stranger from another community calling the whole apparatus of the “native” community habitus into question, resisting the natural order of things by virtue of his/her alterity (Bauman calls this an “incongruent existential constitution” {1991: 76}), his/her “external” perspective on the
community, and by promoting the mobile cultural capital that educational credential represent.

The educated eye, cultivated through the mobile discourse of schooling, the strangerhood of teachers and by the increasingly national, pan-national and global nature of curriculum (Willinsky, 1997), a feature of schooling which denigrates localism and marginalises regional problems in Atlantic Canada (Kelly, 1993). A mobile sensibility is also inculcated, probably much more effectively and powerfully, in other mobile “educational” discourses like the regional and national news programs, newspapers and magazines described by Williams (1958, 1961, 1973) and Hoggart (1958) in Great Britain, mobile culture blending contemporary pop music made ever more accessible to privileged audiences via the internet and cable television, internationally accessible internet chat groups, inexpensive air travel, global youth culture, flexible “bund-style” interest group associations described by Urry (2000), e-commerce and the ready availability of a virtually unlimited array of consumer products and services, among many other postmodern forces. An understanding of these features of the current epoch is a crucial part of a contemporary education and it is no more evenly distributed regionally or across social class lines than were the educational technologies of any other period.

Williams argued that the state and corporate interests could produce just about any kind of human being it wanted by applying modern methods of social control of which the educational system was a key component. Bauman calls this the quintessential modernist dream, the notion of assimilation or the creation of a unified “society” (1991, 1992, 1999). But this is a project that has always contained the seeds of its own destruction for within every assimilatory initiative conceived in the context of modernity including his favourite example, the Jewish Holocaust, the drive toward assimilation was met with resistance. In fact, resistance generates ambivalence because without it power relations would be finished before they began (as Foucault pointed out), sterile, fascistic and uninteresting. Resistance has put a sense of ambivalence at the centre of the project of modernity, an ambivalence which at least since the holocaust, and particularly since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, has become sharply defined and crucial as a psychological buffer against ever embracing any emancipatory ideology or modernist system too uncritically.

---

6 Urry describes loose associations of mobile youth who create a kind of floating community both in cyberspace and by moving across geographic space setting up temporary physical communities in a variety of places. He describes these social organisations as “bunds.” (2000: 143-147).
Assimilation was the front line of social engineering, the cutting edge of the advancing order. With spontaneity discredited and nature's self monitoring capacity questioned, order became synonimous with monopoly of power, with control and repression of resistant 'otherness.' Ambivalence was that denial of order which the product of order in general and its assimilatory arm in particular, could not help turning out in ever increasing volume. In the production of uniformity, ambivalence was the industrial waste. As with all refuse, it was shunned, viewed with disgust, and suspected of magic poisoning powers (Bauman, 1991: 149).

Rural schooling has been such an assimilatory project. It has sought to do the missionary work of cultural elevation in the backward space like the coastal community studied here and it has consistently failed in this project because dropout rates remain high, resistance remains common and people still continue to remain committed to staying where they are and learning a lot of practical knowledge about their locales rather than a little theoretical knowledge about places they have never seen. But through the years the nature of this project has changed. No longer are young people sorted on the basis of teachers' perceptions and judgments about their ability to survive outside the community or to “go on,” Youth are now faced with making their own “choice.” What was once presented to them as inevitability is now presented as choice and it is the responsibility of each individual child to come to learn the modernist role of the stranger which is to construct a life. As such, they are responsible, as individuals for their own failure and their ability or inability to have made the “right choices.”

Since natives no longer exist anywhere, no one is any longer “granted their existence, so that they can live in tranquillity - to be rather than to become” (Bauman, 1991: 155). We are all strangers, we are all responsible for ourselves and we are all in motion. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter asserts, to be in motion is the only remaining goal. The ambivalence Bauman describes is a deep feeling of unease and unrest associated with the modern condition. Giddens also writes of the insecurity associated with living in a matrix of expert systems and networks of production and consumption that range from our dwellings, to our jobs, to our entertainment, to our illnesses, and to their cures is difficult to resist (1990, 1991). Modern people live as much in systems regulated by experts as in particular locales, and they need to struggle to keep control of territory, often against the hegemony of expert systems seeking to enclose rural places within the scope of their governance. Schooling is one of these expert systems, and one which I am arguing works to disembend and mobilise young people.
If getting out is the only goal, as Bauman suggests, perhaps the only remaining form of resistance is staying. It is precisely the vision of modernity so well described by Giddens and Bauman that Digby Neckers seem to resist. Giddens “high modernity” is itself a discourse and it is one which many Digby Neck stayers deplore. They detest and resist being drawn into abstract systems preferring to remain multi-skilled and community-based. The women prefer to pitch-in and help rather than turn problems over to professionals and the men prefer do-it-yourself problem-solving and sharing skills and knowledge to relying on experts. Digby Neckers’ attitudes to problems of life in the matrix of expert systems is captured by their dismissive disinterest in the Y2K problem that gripped the international media through 1999. The abstract systems which were threatened were somebody else’s problem.

My research shows that this particular population at least is less mobile these days in the face of high modernity, post modernity or whatever this is we are living in. While they are not necessarily aware that staying confounds the call to move, most Digby Neckers nonetheless resist the mobility imperative built in to the middle class educational trajectory and remain “around here.” And perhaps the most important aspect of this apparently growing level of immobility is that rural schooling has lost direction and it no longer understands its central mission which has been to replace and mobilise young people. If one place is no better than another, can rural teachers any longer shunt selected youth out and bemoan the situation of the rest being “stuck?” As one current teacher commented, “I don’t know that we really ask them to go to Acadia (university) anyway. We do ask them to finish high school and then to see what they’re going to do after that” (FN). Contrary to the fears of many rural sociologists and educational theorists, the rural community, in at least some instances, is at least as stable as it ever has been and it is stable because its youth are more resistant to the siren song of the bright lights than most of us imagine. Rural schools can no longer admit to their role as institutions for “creaming,” “streaming,” sorting and selection; they now require new narratives around which to organise governance, and in my view, they are still floundering toward finding this discourse.
... schools have become ‘rational’ in that ‘what education is good for’ is often defined today with respect to expanded occupational possibilities and living standards possible by ‘obtaining a good education.’ At the same time, schools teach individuals that they are free from the constraints of local communities and families, since desirable economic and geographic mobility is theirs via the careers that good schooling has opened up to them. (DeYoung, 1995: 171).

Bourdieu’s analysis seems much more appropriate for explaining the work and educational histories of the two earlier cohorts in this study. Up until the early 1990s there was a strong community based habitus that drew young men into the economic orbit of the fishery. The habitus, however, is a problematic concept for explaining schooling on Digby Neck. Like Giroux and McLaren’s resistance theory, Bourdieu’s scheme is too tightly connected to a structural analysis of what he calls “objective” conditions and the logic of practice and habitus which arise from them. “Objective conditions” on Digby Neck have set the stage for a wide variety of educational response including privileged young fishermen refusing the very real opportunity to access higher education because it was not sufficiently lucrative to attract them. But powerful ideas like Bourdieu’s “habitus,” Giddens “high modernity,” and Bauman’s “universal strangerhood” are all discursive productions and descriptions of particular sets of power relations. As such they represent plays of strategic vision, and tactical resistance. This study looks into one small microcosm of these dynamic power relations and the resistances they contain.

For young women, the community habitus was and continues to be educationally focussed. Girls have been expected to do well in school and to leave, if not for post-secondary education then for work or relationships which allow for support. Because of this women “did better” in school, both in terms of credentials and in terms of experiencing schooling as a positive personal experience. Many women realised, typically at a very early age, that their options were limited by staying on the Neck. For many of them this was a very difficult realisation because it meant leaving behind attachments and family support systems that were very important. Women also tended to have a strong attachment to place commenting often on the natural beauty of Digby Neck. But they were also more likely to report wanting to “get off the Neck” and experience a bigger world. This was partly because of limited opportunities on the Neck but also partly because of the way they understood the position of women there. Most migrant women understood that choosing
to stay on the Neck would mean living in a space that is dominated by men and in which men receive economic and social privilege. Women's out-migration was a form of resistance to the gender stratified opportunity structure in which they saw their mothers and some peers "trapped."

The consistent pattern for women, though, is that nearly fifty percent migrate outside the "around here" region. Their superior educational credentials allow these women to move further afield and access occupational positions and relationships outside the around here region. However, women who stayed both on the Neck and in the around here region had nearly as high a rate of high school completion as women who migrated further, but not of university attendance (see Tables 22 and 23). Women who stayed "around here" were not, for the most part, educational failures. Yet the relative success of stayer women (compared to male stayers) in formal education did not translate into an economic advantage. Census data showed that for all but one census enumeration area of Digby Neck, women's average income was significantly below that of men. The presence of many relatively well educated women earning less money than their relatively poorly educated male peers may have been yet another piece of local evidence that prolonged education was not of much value locally either to men or to women. Perhaps, education was irrelevant to economic success just as some people had always maintained.

By the time Cohort 2 and especially Cohort 3 came of age, the vast majority of women were finishing high school (see Table 21). In Cohort 2 women's university participation rate peaked at over twenty-four percent of the population (see Table 21). This percentage fell slightly to 21.4% for Cohort 3. As interview data showed, license holding families were investing their financial capital from the strong ground fishery into educating their daughters, an education which was often explicitly designed to take them out of the community and into middle class lives elsewhere. By the 1990s this strategy was available to relatively few families, and as the fishery contracted and the cost of post-secondary education rose, so too did the ability of young Digby Neck women to access post-secondary education and resist being "forced" to remain close to home. The result is that the overall female population has become slightly less mobile moving from Cohort 1 to Cohort 3 (see Table 24). Resisting the gendered structure of economic welfare and social privilege that these younger women describe as characterising life on the Neck was became more difficult as the decade of the 1990s unfolded.
Men who grew up in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s rejected school because they considered it to be an impractical waste of their time. The gendered structure of labour in the fishery favoured them, and those born in families with different sorts of connections to the fishery moved into different positions in the industry. The male children of fish plant owners ran fish plants and got choice positions on company boats; the male children of license holding families worked the family rig, often with their fathers; the children of fish plant workers were brought “into the fish” at an early age and learned to be on the job when there were fish to cut, an availability that sometimes conflicted with school. Resisting school was a “natural” thing for men in virtually every social position in the fishery because school interrupted the community habitus, the economic potential of a young man “willing to work” rather than “settin in school.” By the late 1970s and 1980s the booming ground fishery continued to offer employment to anybody who “wanted to work,” and resistance to schooling continued in a fishery where young men in license holding families (and even those who crewed on draggers) could earn professional wages at the age of sixteen. These opportunities created a climate in which men’s commitment to schooling as a path that led toward a career was generally weak, and those who did pursue schooling to the end of high school typically found their way out of the community, into post-secondary and typically, away from the around here region.

In Cohort 1 it was possible for men to leave the area with few formal educational credentials and find employment. Booming economies in central and western Canada absorbed a considerable number of Digby Neck men at least temporarily. Fewer than one-in-five Digby Neckers stayed “away” (the percentages are nearly gender balanced). Women who left generally acquired formal educational credentials, even in the 1960s. Most of these women took secretarial or “office” jobs and some went into expanding “helping professions.” In Cohort 1, nearly seventy percent of female leavers graduated high school (see Table 20) and this is in an era where the high school dropout rate was between fifty and seventy percent (Nova Scotia, 1999). This demonstrates that most Digby Neck women have always understood the importance of secondary education for their personal success. In Cohort 2, the high school graduation rate for women rose slightly to 70.1% and in Cohort 3 it rose to 88.1%. In order for women to leave, educational credentials were a virtual necessity, and if she did not have them, chances were that a woman would have to stay “around here.”
This climate of economic prosperity in the industrialising fishery signalled the demise of the fishery in the eyes of most Digby Neckers. “We caught ‘em all up,” many men comment while at the same time arguing that if they were allowed to return to a strictly “fixed gear” fishery that the stocks would once again rebound. As it was for women on Digby Neck, the 1990s was also difficult for young men. The community-based habitus and discourse around work in the fishery and the lucrative nature of fishing for the hard working, macho fellow with fishing “in his blood,” an ideology that was supported in the booming ground fishery of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, continued to lead large numbers of young men out of school before graduation. Up until the early 1990s it was easy to resist education; it was “natural” for an adolescent to quit school and go fishing, it was a historic pattern, a well worn path taken by one’s elders and one’s peers.

However, when the economic supports for this path eroded in the early 1990s, young men seemed still to be caught in the transition. Their families seemed unsure how to support them staying in school beyond the “natural” quitting age of fifteen or sixteen, and the young men themselves typically seemed unable to “put up with” school. Through the 1990s the male dropout rate remained at more than fifty percent despite what appeared to be few fisheries-based employment opportunities (see Table 21). But for the “mobile” among the male population, those who moved outside the “around here” circle, drop-out rates fell from 51.6% in Cohort 1 to 16.6% in Cohort 3. By the 1990s, if there were jobs outside the “around here” region, they could only be obtained with the mobile capital of higher education for most men. Thus, by the late 1980s and 1990s, learning had become a prerequisite for leaving.

For those who stayed “around here” the learning-earning equation was not evident. The “salvation” of this less mobile group has been the expansion of the service sector and mainly part time, temporary, and seasonal work in the “around here” economy. With the growth of the town of Digby as a service centre for the surrounding communities, retail activity has concentrated there creating a variety of “McJobs” which have allowed a large marginally educated population to subsist and to continue to resist formal education. This resistance has a logic in that many of these youth have difficulty imagining themselves working at anything other than marginal jobs regardless of their educational qualifications. Living in the coastal community and in families whose whole intergenerational economic history and family habitus is connected with the fishery, many of these young men have never seriously considered doing anything but working as
fishermen, a career which is built by “working around” and by “helping out” and by watching fishermen, and thus, getting an appropriate practical education. But many of these young men have been caught in an economic and social transformation.

The community habitus contained not only sets of restrictions and negative sanctions concerning one’s “place” and one’s “people,” it also contained positive attractions like large (by local standards), albeit irregular pay cheques, and masculine work identities and caring family focussed communities. What has remained constant through time is the resilience of different forms of resistance to schooling among Digby Neck men. Men resist schooling by staying. While the logic of this resistance has been transformed, its content has not. What is also constant is Digby Neck womens’ resistance to the gendered structure of opportunity on the Neck. Women resist by leaving and by taking education seriously, realising that their “default option” is marriage and probable economic dependence. This women’s resistance, however, is becoming harder to sustain because it became more difficult for young women to access post-secondary education in the 1990s and as a consequence more young women consider themselves to be “stuck” on the Neck and living with parents. Young men are also in this position, but their staying is more “normal” as a community pattern. Most young men have always stayed, but young most women have always gone. And the fact that so many of these young people remain at home is not problematic for many families who like having them around. As one informant put it, “I don’t care if they never leave home and they stay in here with us. We’ve only got the two boys and they’re a good help. We’d love to see them stay right here” (FN).

Bourdieu describes a sense of belonging, or being part of “people like us,” in negative terms in his discussion of the logic of practice. He details this feeling as a kind of restrictive sense of what one can accomplish and a sense of one’s limitations grounded in habitus. Particularly in Cohort 3 it becomes difficult to distinguish this sense of integration in a community, class or family based habitus. Who indeed are “people like us” in the eyes of young Digby Neckers who see themselves as part of a generation linked by new media to youth around the world? Even the most entrenched stayers are as likely to see themselves as residents of the Digby area or of southwest Nova Scotia as residents of Digby Neck. Greater mobility within the around here area has created a different sense of belonging and community, one which is spread at least into the the fifty kilometre circle.
Digby Neckers’ socio spatial identities are moving on to a broader stage it seems. While members of Cohort 1 tended to speak of their community as the particular village in which they were raised, and Cohort 2 tended to identify with “the Neck,” members of Cohort 3 identified themselves with the around here region where they work, socialise, shop and very often live. Youth from Cohort 3 were the most mobile of the three groups within the fifty kilometre circle, mainly because of the employment and social opportunities available to them there. Members of Cohort 2 were very mobile as well, but their mobility often took them further afield to shopping centres in Yarmouth, New Minas and Halifax in the 1970s and 1980s when these facilities were not as well developed around here.

The influence of new media have also changed the sense of community among the younger members of Cohort 3 particularly. As modernity has progressed and infiltrated the rural margins, habitus has multiplied; there are multiple relations of power at work in the life of any given individual and the concept of habitus tends to subsume these under a single umbrella. Bourdieu understands this, but it is my view that he never develops it in the context of his theoretical work because his work lacks a theory of resistance. It is my contention that the idea of resistances introduces the play of multiple social patterns converging in a given biography. For instance, Digby Neck students in all cohorts found themselves surrounded with discursive constructions that informed them in “commonsense” terms that their communities were dying and that the way of life of their families was on the wane. At the same time they confront other discursive formations both local and through the course of their schooling that present family and community as a space in which “people like us” belong, and where we are “known,” seen, comfortable, loved and cared for. It is only here that the skills learned from childhood are of value. While some youth accept this assessment, others resist it, and it appears that the latter group are growing as time passes. Yet the paradox is that into the 1990s the economic base of Digby Neck has declined making it increasingly difficult for most young Digby Neckers to access the financial resources needed to acquire higher education and to migrate with any sort of security or reasonable chance of finding a living wage off the Neck.

The contemporary “community” contains multiple discourses introduced in part by institutions of disembedding like school, the mass media, the corporate fishery and the multinational commercial
chain store. For example, the community habitus has a very different set of messages and possibilities for men and for women. It also contains different sets of possibilities for members of different families by class. Children of elite fishing families face an entirely different set of "realistic" options than the children of marginal fisheries workers. However, as members of the same "peripheral community" space which sits at the rural margins, all of these multiple discourses are still basically discourses of rurality. A complex play of power relations results from this multiplicity and only close cultural analysis can unravel them. Just as structurally oriented theories of resistance, reproduction and transmission of educational credentials are too crude to explain particular cultural scenes where these phenomena occur, Papastergiadis argues that structural theories of migration are unable to explain contemporary migrations. More complex models are needed to explain multiple migrations in the context of globalization which opens up new forms of mobility that cannot easily be explained by mechanistic explanatory models.7

It is true that the analysis of out-migration from Atlantic Canada has rested on a variety of mechanistic assumptions which, while questioned forcefully from the 1960s (Stone, 1969; Levitt, 1960), have not been acted upon in actual research. This study has uncovered several dimensions of educational resistance that influence mobility decisions in a coastal community.

So What?

Improvement is sought, not in the opportunity to escape from one’s class, or to make a career, but in the general and controlled advance of all ... Not the individual, but the whole society will move (Williams, 1959: 326).

In his discussion of the mass society he saw emerging from industrial capitalism and urbanisation Williams claimed that the concept of "mass" is derived from a way of seeing people, not from any tangible reality (1958). He claims that in seeing people at a certain distance we "mass" them, we construct them as a stereotypic "other," as part of a "herd" (1958: 300). What was interesting to Williams was discovering the conditions under which people become massified. He was also

7 Papastergiadis writes, "... the new narratives of global migration are often superimposed upon crude explanations of the decentering of industrial expansion. Migration is thereby, once again, subordinated to structural changes" (2000: 39).
interested in resistance to massification and he saw communities as sites of resistance in the sense that they represent experiential grounding against which mass communication is never entirely able to subdue. Much has happened since 1958 and massification has continued along facilitated by technologies which were unimaginable forty years ago. Communities have also been transformed from the relatively self-contained lifeworlds described by the elder informants in this study to the geographically spread “around here” region which is totally infused with global culture and products. Several “dot.com” television commercials play on this theme showing rustic characters using laptops and an imagined wired world that has connected the urban poor in the United States, the rural poor in Africa, and a host of other stereotypes all bound together in a virtual global community. How, in this kind of space, can community be described as a resistant site? I think in the end Williams had it right. Communities as actual physical places are containers of concrete experience as well as the mediated experiences now available. As Theobald (1997), Bonner (1997), Creed and Cheng (1997), Berry (1977) Haas and Nachtigal (1998) and others argue, rural communities may hold the last chance for resistance to the homogenising juggernaut of what Lefebvre (1991) and Castells (1997) call capitalist dominance of space. Digby Neckers love their place because of its history, and their place in it, because of the geography and “oceanography” and also because it is a place which is not homogenised in the same way that cities are, it is not universally commodified in the sense that place becomes another product to be bought and sold and nothing more.

In this final section I would like to sketch out a few implications for rural schooling and community resistance. Williams was interested in communities as sites of resistance. Foucault encouraged us in an interview late in his life to look for those spaces in which resistance is likely to emerge. He writes: “the problem is knowing where resistance will develop. For example, in a working class that will resist domination, will this be in unions or political parties; and what form will it take - a strike, a general strike, a revolution or parliamentary opposition” (Foucault in Rabinow, 1997: 292-293). Arguing for a self conscious resistance against the consumer orientation embedded in advanced capitalism and the commodification of all aspects of the lifeworld, Bonner writes: “What is needed, therefore, is a critical and knowing resistance to the life world that Berger and associates merely describe and by implication legitimise” (1997: 171). My own discussion of resistance so far has focussed on the ways that people in a coastal community of

---

Nova Scotia have resisted the mobility imperative in rural schools through more than three decades, but I have said nothing yet about the practical sort of acts of resistance that to me make sense.

First, it seems to me that rural schools need to adopt a more communitarian focus in the sense that schooling must be connected to the specific struggles and problems encountered in particular rural locales. These struggles include the challenge of environmental stewardship, the “whistle blowing” function of rural residents who can see at first hand what is occurring in wild spaces, and, the necessity of sustainable and fulfilling employment. Also included in what I would consider to be necessary struggles is the confrontation of sexism and constructions of masculinity and femininity which lead to oppressive and systematic inequality. Finally, it is now becoming increasingly apparent that the colonial history of places like Digby Neck will not remain buried. First Nations claims to rural spaces, resource revenues and access will continue to present all residents of Canada’s rural areas with a formidable challenge. Rural schools can and should be places where at least some of the complex intellectual work required to deal with these and other rural problems is done. Theobald has written a blueprint for this kind of rural education tracing the philosophical roots of contemporary American schools to the ascendancy of liberalism as opposed to communitarianism. While there are problems with the bifurcation of the “community” and the “individual” in his account, the following kind of active political orientation for rural school seems imperative to me.

Beginning at the elementary level, students must be socialised into the practice and habit of researching and deliberating answers to the questions that vex their communities at the moment ... students should be able, if asked to make the connection between ongoing work in the classroom or in the community and the issue of social justice (Theobald, 1997: 134).

I quote this passage knowing full well how difficult this would be to implement, and the kinds of political divisions in a community such an approach could engender. Communities are not the kind of unified entities Theobald seems to imagine. Communities contain within them multiple power relations and divisions, as well as tangible and virtual connections to other communities. But this is precisely why these multiple discourses need to be introduced into schools, so that children can watch them at work. I am also aware that this whole approach is entirely at odds with the generic “outcomes” agenda that currently drives elementary and secondary curriculum discourse in all
Canadian jurisdictions.

Next, I think it is essential to understand much better how rural schools transform economic capital into mobile cultural capital for elite students. This can be understood in the context of schools working as travel agencies for those who can afford the tickets. In order to understand this we need more studies of specific rural communities as well as larger rural populations that investigate the connection between what Bourdieu calls “objective” economic factors and the acquisition of educational credentials by particularly placed social actors. This transformation of one type of capital into another may not be so straightforward in rural areas as studies of class and schooling would suggest.

Rural educators also need to be aware of the way that the dominant regimes of truth around the past, present and future of rural communities are used in and out of formal educational settings, and what impact these discourses may have on their practice and on their students. The pervasive discourse of the decline and eventual collapse of rural communities has not been recognised as a force that drives curriculum and generates particular orientations toward rural youth and the places they live. This discourse of the “unstoppable” economic juggernaut that is destroying rural communities is far from politically neutral. When rural communities, and in the case of this study, forms of economic organisation and resource access and harvesting are written off as dead or dying, youth are oriented to look elsewhere for their futures. This is not so much showing them “options” but presenting the “option” of a future constructed in the rural community as a non-option. This view of rurality is a discursive production, and one which has a long history in rural schools, to the point where it is an act of resistance to face the way rurality is constructed. This, in the end, is the kind of resistance Foucault imagined, confronting the way one is discursively produced and daring to think differently.

Rural educators also need to be conscious of the paradoxical effect of the discourse of decline and fall. By presenting the community to rural youth as a diseased or deceased place, rural educators may unwittingly be encouraging educational resistance by generating a kind of general hopelessness about the future. After all, rural children live in rural areas and so do their families. Nobody wants to live in a ghost town, or in a place that is said to contain a past, but no future.
This general hopelessness is well supported and reinforced by a mass media focussed on a running monologue of mostly urban violence and misery. Small wonder that so many rural youth decide that they are better off taking their chances in the dying community they know rather than in the imploding “outside” world they know not. In the discourse of rural education, those who remain are “stuck,” left behind, they lack the necessary skills to move into the modern world which is unfolding far from their home communities. This study shows however that many stayers resist this view and take pride in surviving where they want to be rather than where they feel they are suppose to go.

Finally, I think rural educators need to find a way to incorporate the “survivalist” discourse of rural communities themselves into its own discourse space in a way that is not backward looking and largely ignorant of modern global interchanges, or alternatively which is focussed in a naïve and jingoistic way on the wonderful opportunities presented to rural communities in the “new economy.” Rural community survivalist discourse is often resistant to education as an “expert system,” but not to rural schools themselves which are very often considered to be the focus of community survival strategies (Wotherspoon, 1998). Can we imagine rural schools as sites of resistance to the forces that threaten families and communities without at the same time falling back into simplistic notions about community which is yet another discourse and very often one which has been used very effectively to mask the power of vested local interests who have no stake in seeing anything change to the detriment of their own privilege?

We must be aware that when we set up programs and initiatives, we are building, once again a technology of power, another set of inclusions and exclusions. Yet, when one is aware of power/knowledge or the idea that everything is power and that power is everywhere, as Foucault suggested, there also can arise the idea that freedom is also everywhere and that power only emerges in its modern form to engage freedom. Resistance sometimes works, at least for a while; and the game is never over. G. H. Mead liked baseball analogies to describe symbolic interaction. Baseball has rules which are very restrictive and it is played on a fairly standard, spatially simple, constrained field, and yet, the possibilities for creative play are virtually endless. These possibilities obviously expand exponentially when one has the analytical distance to be able to step outside the game and imagine another one. Surely an understanding of the discursive basis of
power opens up rather than closes down the possibility of human freedom. The discursive basis of power also forces us to begin to come to terms with the multiple ways control is demanded and conduct is shaped as well as the multiple ways that this modernist project is resisted by social actors who always find ways to make do and survive in a familiar territory.
References


Sawyer, D. (1979). Tomorrow is school and I’m sick to the heart thinking about it. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.


Sutherland, N. (1990). "We always had things to do": The paid and unpaid work of anglophone children between the 1920's and 1960's, Labour/Le travail, 25, Spring, 105-141.


Thompson, E. P. (1967). Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism, Past and Present, 38


Appendix A

Community, Schooling and Migration: Stayers’ Interview Schedule and Consent Form

Theme 1- Work

1. Where do you work right now?
2. How did you get this job?
3. Please tell me about the different work you have done since you left school.
4. What was it like for finding work around here when you left school?
5. How do people around here talk about work? (Tell me about the work ethic on Digby Neck.)
6. How did people on Digby Neck talk about the relationship between school and work when you were a student?
7. What kind of people “do well” around here?
8. When people on the Neck talk about a “successful person”, what do they mean?

Theme 2- Family

1. Did your family help you to find work?
2. Tell me about any work you do/did with family members?
3. How has your family helped you to “get by”?
4. What did your parents say about school when you were a student?
   - Did your parents help you with school?
5. What kind of work do/did your parents do?
6. Have your parents or other family members encouraged you to stay on Digby Neck? - move off Digby Neck?
7. Is most of your family still around here?

Theme 3- Place

1. How do you describe the way of life on Digby Neck?
2. When Digby Neck people talk about “the community”, what do they say?
3. What kind of place was Digby Neck for young people of your generation trying to make a start?
4. How have you managed to stay on Digby Neck through hard times?
5. What kind of people seem able to make it on Digby Neck?
6. What is the greatest challenge you face living on Digby Neck?

**Theme 4- Schooling**

1. Tell me about your schooling.
2. Do people around here say that their own schooling was useful to them?
3. What kind of people “did well” in school in your day?
4. What kind of people “didn’t do well” in school?
5. Why did so many Digby Neck people leave school before graduating?
6. What do people around here say education is for?
7. Did school and work sometimes get in each other’s way for you? 
   -How about for others you grew up with?
8. Did teachers ever talk about life in fishing communities?
9. Did teachers ever talk about staying or leaving Digby Neck?

**Theme 5- Migration**

1. Have you ever thought about moving away?
2. Do you have any regrets about the choice you made?
3. What kind of people moved away from the Neck?
4. What kind of people stay?
5. Do you remember hearing talk about staying or leaving the Neck? 
   -parents/ family talk 
   -friends’ talk 
   -teachers’ talk
6. Did teachers ever talk about fisheries work as a career choice?
7. What kind of career choices were promoted in school?
8. Some people say that a good education is a ticket out of coastal communities. Would you say that this has been the case for the people you grew up with?
**Personal Information**

1. How old were you on your last birthday?
2. What work did your father do most of the time?
3. What other work did he do?
4. How far did your father go in school?
5. What work did your mother do most of the time?
6. What other work did she do?
7. How far did she go in school?
8. In your immediate family, who still lives on Digby Neck?
9. In your extended family, would you say that most people have moved away or stayed on the Neck?
Appendix B

Community, Schooling and Migration:
Leavers’ Interview Schedule

Theme- 1 Work

1. Where do you work right now?

2. How did you get this job?

3. Please tell me about the different work you have done since you left school.

4. What was it like for finding work around here when you left school?

5. How do people around here talk about work? (Tell me about the work ethic on Digby Neck.)

6. How did people on Digby Neck talk about the relationship between school and work when you were a student?

7. What kind of people “did well” on Digby Neck when you lived there?

Theme 2- Family

1. Did your family help you to find work?

2. Tell me about any work you do/did with family members?

3. Did your family members encourage you to leave Digby Neck? How?

4. What did your parents say about school when you were a student?
   - Did your parents help you with school?

5. What kind of work do/did your parents do?

6. Have your parents or other family members encouraged you to stay on Digby Neck?
   - move off Digby Neck?

7. Is most of your family still living on Digby Neck?

Theme 3- Place

1. How would you describe the way of life on Digby Neck to a stranger?

2. When Digby Neck people talk about “the community”, what do they say?

3. What do you miss about Digby Neck? What do you not miss?

4. How have you managed to stay where you are so far from family and roots?
5. What kind of place was Digby Neck for young people trying to make a start when you left school?

6. Would you encourage your young relatives to migrate from Digby Neck?

**Theme 4- Schooling**

1. Tell me about your schooling.

2. Did people on Digby Neck say that their own schooling was useful to them when you were living there?

3. What kind of people “did well” in school in your day?

4. What kind of people “didn’t do well” in school?

5. Why did so many Digby Neck people leave school before graduating?

6. How do you think Digby Neck people in general viewed formal education when you were growing up?

7. Did school and work sometimes get in each other’s way for you?  
   -How about for others you grew up with?

8. Did teachers ever talk about life in fishing communities?

9. Did teachers ever talk about staying or leaving Digby Neck?

**Theme 5- Migration**

1. At what point in your life did you realise that you would leave Digby Neck?

2. Do you have any regrets about the choice you made?

3. What kind of people moved away from the Neck?

4. What kind of people stay?

5. Do you remember hearing talk about staying or leaving the Neck?  
   -parents/ family talk  
   -friends’ talk  
   -teachers’ talk

6. Did teachers ever talk about fisheries work as a career choice?

7. What kind of career choices were promoted in school?

8. Some people say that a good education is a ticket out of coastal communities. Would you say that this has been the case for the people you grew up with?
Personal Information

1. How old were you on your last birthday?
2. What work did your father do most of the time?
3. What other work did he do?
4. How far did your father go in school?
5. What work did your mother do most of the time?
6. What other work did she do?
7. How far did she go in school?
8. In your immediate family, who still lives on Digby Neck?
9. In your extended family, would you say that most people have moved away or stayed on the Neck?
Appendix C

Educators' Interview Schedule

**Place**

1. Please tell me about your experience living and working on Digby Neck.

2. If you were asked to describe the communities on Digby Neck to a new teacher, what would you say?

2. a. What kind of a place is Digby Neck for a young person trying to make a start?
   - historically - today

3. Tell me about the role the school plays in the community?

4. What attractions in the community seem to lure so many young people out of school before graduation?

5. How have you tried to encourage young people to succeed in their lives?

**Family**

1. How is family important on Digby Neck?

2. Do families generally encourage education?

3. Can you tell me about a family that seemed to produce children who succeed in school?

4. Do you think some families have encouraged young people to go to work at an early age rather than stay in school or go on to higher education?

5. Can you give me an example of a family whose children did not succeed in school?

**Education**

1. Please tell me about the schools in which you have taught?

2. What kind of children seemed to do well in school?

3. What kind of children seemed not to do well in school?

4. It has been suggested that the best and brightest typically move away from rural communities (brain drain). Do you agree?

5. What about the people who stay, what kind of people do they tend to be?
**Migration**

1. What kinds of young people seem to move out of the community?
2. What kinds of young people seem to stay?
3. Do you think education has played a part in young people’s decision to stay or leave?
4. What have you told young people about the career opportunities in their communities?
5. What have you told young people about where the opportunities are?
6. Do you think that implies leaving home and becoming mobile?
Appendix D

Community, Schooling and Migration Survey

1. Name: ________________________________

2. Community of origin: ________________________________

3. Where do you live now? ________________________________

4. What is your present job? ________________________________

5. How far did you go in school? ________________________________

6. Have you had any additional education or training? ________________________________

Thank you for participating in this study.