OPENINGS IN THE FOREST ECONOMY:
A CASE STUDY OF SMALL FOREST OPERATORS
IN THE BULKLEY VALLEY, BC, CANADA

by
ELIZABETH ANNE BRONSON
B.A., Carleton University, 1985
M.A., University of Toronto, 1991

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Geography)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
December 1999
© Elizabeth Bronson, 1999
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 Geography
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Dec 14, 1999
ABSTRACT

The thesis is an exploration of the current role of the small business forest sector in hinterland forest communities, and the extent to which their economic and social positions correspond to the role envisioned for them by two prevailing visions of the future of the forest industry. One, advocated by Canadian political economists, predicts a continuation, indeed an intensification of corporate concentration, with attendant downsizing and job losses. Corporate restructuring is seen in part to induce small business development, through subcontracting arrangements and local entrepreneurialism, as a response to losses of core forest industry jobs. The second interpretation, advocated by the alternative forestry school, views the current crisis in the forest industry as an opportunity to return to decentralised approaches to ecologically-based forest management which encourage 'democracy in the forests', leading to community and environmental sustainability. Local entrepreneurs are an important part of this new 'value-based' forest economy.

Interviews with small forest operators reveal a diversity of economic and social identities that do not conform well to either of the positions ascribed to small business by the Canadian political economy or alternative forestry literatures. The representations of small business found in these two literatures homogenize and suppress this diversity, making it difficult to 'see' small forest operators as anything other than contractors to the conventional system of corporate forestry, or alternative operators in an ecosystem- and community-based forest economy.

In the place of these singular, marginalizing representations, I argue, using poststructural and feminist approaches to economic geography, for a 'third way' of exploring small forest operator subjectivities through overdetermined multiple class processes. Exploring small forest operator identity through multiple class processes avoids the essentialism found in fixed representations. It recognizes the transformative potential of small business in the forest economy, without denying the potential for exploitation that exists both within small business and corporate forestry. Class processes rendered invisible in the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry narratives, such as unpaid labour performed by family members and volunteer work in local planning processes, as well as work performed for wages and profit, are considered in this multiple class processes approach.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Employment</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 New Voices</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE TRANSITION</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 SUMMING UP THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST ECONOMY</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 REPRESENTING SMALL BUSINESS IN THE HINTERLAND: CANADIAN POLITICAL</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Harold Innis and the staples approach</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 The new Canadian political economy</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3 Resource Communities in Canadian political economy</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4 Restructuring in the staples economy</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.5 Representations of forest workers (small forest operators)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 VALUE-BASED ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Deep Ecology and Bioregionalism</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Communitarianism</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Entrepreneurialism</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Representations of forest workers (small forest operators)</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 CONCLUSIONS AND FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 POSITIONING SMALL BUSINESS IN THE HINTERLAND: INTERVIEWS WITH SMALL</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOREST OPERATORS IN THE BULKLEY VALLEY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 TYPE OF BUSINESS AS A CLASSIFICATION OF OPERATORS</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1 A General Profile of Operators Interviewed (Conventional and</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Environmental Stewardship</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2 Environmental Regulation</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.3 Attitudes towards Environmentalists</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.4 Summary of Environmental Attitudes Expressed By Conventional and</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 COMMUNITY VALUES</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Community/Company Town</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2 Attitudes toward Local Planning</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3 Attitudes toward Local Economy</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.4 Summary of Community Attitudes Expressed by Alternative and</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 BUSINESS PRACTICES</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1 Business Overview and Objectives</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2 Production</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.3 Summary of Business Practices by Alternative and Conventional</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 FICTIVE HINTERLANDS, FICTIVE HINTERLANDERS: REPRESENTATIONAL PRACTICES</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 THE STAPLES DISCOURSE OF CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1 Economic Determinism in Canadian political economy</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2 Resource Communities in the Underdeveloped Hinterland</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 THE VALUE DISCOURSE OF ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1 The Ecological Foundation of Alternative Forestry</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2 Being 'of a place'.</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 8 An Economics of Difference

## 8.1 Overdetermination

## 8.2 Multiple Class Processes

### 8.2.1 Class Processes Defined

### 8.2.2 Economies Defined

## 8.3 Revealing Forest Economies

#### 8.3.1 Jim Simpson: Independent/Communal/Volunteer/ “born in a logging camp”

#### 8.3.2 Pete Arnold: Independent/Volunteer/ “community-minded”

#### 8.3.3 Herb Niestrom: independent/ “buying a job”

#### 8.3.4 Jerry Piment: capitalist/ feudal/ “my wife does the books”

#### 8.3.5 Garry Nicolson: independent/communal/ “working as a family”

#### 8.3.6 The O'Tooles: capitalist/communal/volunteer/ “needed a change”

#### 8.3.7 The Smiths: capitalist/communal/feudal/volunteer/ “really flexible production”

#### 8.3.8 Joe Wilson: capitalist/communal/ volunteer/ “angry young (alternative forestry) man”

#### 8.3.9 Fred Slessinger: Independent/Feudal/ ‘small is beautiful’

#### 8.3.10 The Hawthornes: communal/ “making a difference”

## 8.4 Conclusions

# 9 Conclusions: Openings in British Columbia Forest Economies

## 9.1 Breaking Down the Centre and Margins

## 9.2 Difference and Diversity in British Columbia Forest Economies

## 9.3 Research Contributions and Limitations

### 9.3.1 Empirical Contributions

### 9.3.2 Theoretical contributions

### 9.3.3 Policy implications

### 9.3.4 Incorporating multiple class processes into Land and Resource Management Planning

### 9.3.5 Research Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research

## 9.4 What Next?

# References

# Appendices

*Appendix A: Copy of Survey Questionnaire*

*Appendix B: The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program*

*Appendix C: The Woodlot Program*

*Appendix D: Land and Resource Management Planning Processes*

*Appendix E: Forest District Profiles in the Case Study Area*
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: FOREST DEPENDENCY BY COMMUNITY (%) .......................................................... 29
TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT BY FIRM SIZE IN FORESTRY IN THE BULKLEY-NECHAKO REGIONAL
DISTRICT, 1991-1995 .................................................................................................... 31
TABLE 3: ESTABLISHMENTS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, SMALL WOOD PRODUCTS OPERATIONS
TABLE 4: ESTABLISHMENTS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, SMALL LOGGING OPERATIONS (SIC 04)
in the BULKLEY-NECHAKO REGIONAL DISTRICT, 1991-1995 ................................. 33
TABLE 5: APPORTIONMENT OF ANNUAL ALLOWABLE CUT TO SMALL BUSINESS FOREST
ENTERPRISE PROGRAM AND WOODLOTS BY DISTRICT, 1997 (M³) ......................... 34
TABLE 6: SMALL BUSINESS FOREST ENTERPRISE PROGRAM REGISTRATION IN THE BULKLEY
VALLEY 1987-1997 ........................................................................................................ 35
TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS OF SMALL FOREST OPERATORS IN THE CANADIAN
POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY LITERATURES ...................... 39
TABLE 8: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORDIST AND POST-FORDIST FOREST INDUSTRY .... 72
TABLE 9: VALUE OF SHIPMENTS OF SAWMILLS BY EMPLOYEE SIZE, 1963-76 ............... 80
TABLE 10: SMALL BUSINESS IN THE FOREST INDUSTRY, BC, 1982 – 1984 ................... 96
TABLE 11: SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS OF SMALL FOREST OPERATORS IN CANADIAN
POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY .................................................. 134
TABLE 12: SUMMARY OF TYPES OF BUSINESSES - CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE
OPERATORS .......................................................................................................................... 137
TABLE 13: CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPERATORS BY COMMUNITY ......... 138
TABLE 14: SUMMARY OF CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPERATOR DEMOGRAPHIC
PROFILES ............................................................................................................................. 139
TABLE 15: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES DEMONSTRATING ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP ................................................................................................................ 141
TABLE 16: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES DEMONSTRATING ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL
REGULATIONS ...................................................................................................................... 145
TABLE 17: ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALISTS .................................................. 148
TABLE 18: REASON(S) TO LOCATE BUSINESS IN THE BULKLEY VALLEY ....................... 154
TABLE 19: RESOURCE COMMUNITY VALUES ...................................................................... 155
TABLE 20: ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOCAL PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONS .............. 159
TABLE 21: ATTITUDES TOWARDS RESOURCE DEPENDENCY, DIVERSIFICATION AND VALUE-ADDED
............................................................................................................................................... 162
TABLE 22: REASONS FOR STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS IN FORESTRY ................. 166
TABLE 23: MEAN GROSS AND NET REVENUE, 1995 ......................................................... 169
TABLE 24: LOGGING EMPLOYEES, ALTERNATIVE AND CONVENTIONAL FIRMS, 1995 .... 176
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: THE BULKLEY VALLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA .......................................................... 26
FIGURE 2: BRITISH COLUMBIA'S SMALL FORESTRY FIRMS BY REGION, 1986 .................. 32
FIGURE 3: SMALL BUSINESS FOREST ENTERPRISE PROGRAM REGISTRANTS BY FOREST REGION, 1993/94 ................................................................. 34
FIGURE 4: REGISTRATION IN THE SMALL BUSINESS FOREST ENTERPRISE PROGRAM IN THE PRINCE RUPERT REGION 1987 - 1997 .............................................. 36
FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF SAWMILLS, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1914 TO 1940 ....................... 74
FIGURE 6: TIMBER PRODUCTION, COAST VS. INTERIOR, 1912 - 1940 .......................... 75
FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT IN THE FOREST INDUSTRY, 1928 – 1940 ............................... 75
FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF SAWMILLS, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1945 – 1978 .......................... 80
FIGURE 9: LUMBER PRODUCTION, COAST AND INTERIOR, 1951 – 1971, (THOUSAND BOARD FEET) ........................................................................................................ 81
FIGURE 10: EMPLOYMENT IN LOGGING, SAWMILLING, PULP AND PAPER, 1963 – 1980 .... 83
FIGURE 11: NUMBER OF SAWMILLS, COAST AND INTERIOR, BC, 1979 TO 1993 ............ 91
FIGURE 12: EMPLOYMENT PER 1000 m³, 1963- 95 ........................................................... 91
FIGURE 15: YEARS IN OPERATION, CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPERATORS .......... 158
FIGURE 16: GROSS REVENUES, CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPERATIONS, 1995 .... 168
FIGURE 17: NET INCOMES, CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE OPERATIONS, 1995 ........ 169
FIGURE 18: VOLUMES PER UNIT OF EMPLOYMENT, CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE LOGGING OPERATIONS, 1995, IN CUBIC METRES .............................................. 176
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this thesis I argue for a new way of looking at work as multiple class processes that occur in the workplace, at home and in the community. In many ways, ‘the proof is in the pudding’ – I have exploited the labour of so many to produce the following pages. My supervisors Trevor Barnes and Maureen Reed provided direction, insight and encouragement, even office space when it was needed. They were always available for me in spite of their arduous schedules. Many thanks. Committee members David Edgington and Roger Hayter were encouraging and thoughtful as well.

The small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley volunteered many, many hours of time to this research, and are the heart and soul of this thesis. I hope I have managed to convey, in a small way, the pleasure of meeting so many interesting people during this research.

Over the years many friends and colleagues have contributed their volunteer labour as well, lending an ear or offering suggestions to improve the thesis. These contributions really cannot be underestimated. Thanks to so many, especially Juliet Rowson, Noel Castree, Bruce Braun, Maija Heimo, Amy O’Neill, Deirdre McKay, Jenn England, Maureen Sioh and Karim Dossa.

Body and soul have been kept together by friends and family. In Smithers, Josette Wier, Colleen Jones, Max Lautenbacher and Stefan Schug could always be counted on for support. In Vancouver, Kate Stephens, Drew Jenkins, Tanya Behrisch, Matthias Jacob, Paul Mitchell-Banks and Helen Wilkes kept me fed and smiling. Across the country, my family, especially my parents Anne and Ross Bronson, never doubted that I would finish, and even had the grace to stop asking when.

I am grateful for the financial support of a SSHRC scholarship as well as a Forest Renewal British Columbia research grant to support the empirical component of the research.
1 INTRODUCTION

Mike paused to refill my teacup. We had strayed off topic, going from log markets, to value-added, to lack of quality in today’s consumer goods. I nibbled on the banana bread he had baked that morning; his grandmother’s recipe, he had told me proudly. “What made you move up to Smithers?” I asked, returning to the questions outlined on my survey form.

He then described how he had come up to visit his parents, who had moved here while he was in his twenties, and how, by coincidence, he had met up with his grade school sweetheart, married, and stayed in the area ever since. He continued: “So I actually just came here originally for a holiday. I liked the fact that you can go out and cut a Christmas tree and nobody would say anything. You didn’t need a permit; you didn’t need anything. I liked the freedom.”

The interview lasted several hours, and I felt reluctant to leave. I had been treated like a long-lost friend. His wife Susan had joined us for much of the interview, and later they had showed me around the beautiful home that Mike had built in his ‘spare’ time. Their daughter worked on her schoolwork upstairs. The entire family had been warm and gracious. When I glanced back from the road, they were waving from the doorway. Their horses looked on from the yard, and Hudson’s Bay Mountain served as a backdrop to the idyllic scene.

Driving to the next interview, I thought, not for the first time, how lucky these people seemed to me. There were long hours of work involved, no doubt, and uncertainty hung like a cloud over most small forest operators, but so often they seemed to have a sense of satisfaction with life which I had found lacking in people from the city...

My next interview quickly dispelled any tendency to over-romanticize. A recent immigrant from Europe, Rolf had little good to say about his new home. He was resigned to
the system here, he said, but found it horrible. He hated the clear-cutting, the “volume mentality”, and the lack of skills and training among British Columbia’s forest workers. Although a logger himself, he thought most loggers were ‘stupid’ or ‘idiots’. He felt sympathetic to the goals of the environmental movement, but not with the aggressive tactics that they take in British Columbia. Although he too, had a beautiful farm overlooking the scenic mountains of the Bulkley Valley, I left feeling drained and depressed. The rosy picture of the Bulkley Valley created that morning by Mike and his family dissipated like the early morning mist off Hudson’s Bay mountain.

Rolf fit perfectly the description of an alternative forest worker portrayed in the alternative forestry literature that I review in Chapter Five. He logged with horses, sought to maximize the value of the trees he cut, farmed with his wife and child, and minimized his impact on the environment by living a simple life. The alternative forestry literature suggests contentment and harmony for those who live by their ecoforestry convictions, but Rolf was openly and bitterly discontented. Mike, on the other hand, was a ‘conventional’ logger, using highly mechanized logging equipment, bringing in high revenues, logging large volumes. Nevertheless, he displayed the kind of caring attitude toward the land, community, and his family that alternative forestry claims only comes from following ‘their’ prescriptions.

Before the interviews, I had spent considerable time in Vancouver preparing a theoretical framework to investigate the small business forest sector. From the extensive literature on the British Columbia forest industry, two schools of thought were particularly compelling, Canadian political economy and alternative forestry. The Canadian political economy school has evolved from the theory, first articulated by Harold Innis and W.A. Macintosh, that Canada’s economy had a unique development trajectory as a result of its role as provider of raw material exports (staples) to be processed in the ‘home’ country –
first Britain, then increasingly the United States. Canadian political economy brings together theorists working in this Innisian tradition. Although Innis is best described as a liberal economist, Canadian political economists since Innis have tended to incorporate Marxian class analysis in order to better understand the underdevelopment of Canada as a hinterland to other nations such as Britain or the United States, and of hinterland regions within Canada. Writers such as Patricia Marchak (1983, 1985, 1995), Trevor Barnes and Roger Hayter (Hayter and Barnes 1990, Barnes and Hayter 1992, Barnes 1993, Hayter and Barnes 1997a and 1997b) have used a Canadian political economy perspective to explain the development of the British Columbia forest industry as a staples industry, and the effects that this development has on resource communities caught up in the 'cyclonics' of industrial capitalism in a staples economy.

Alternative forestry, as the name suggests, presents an alternative approach to current forestry practices. However, it is much more – encompassing new institutional structures, new community relationships, and a new identity for forest workers. The ‘University of Victoria team’ including Michael M’Gonigle, Cheri Burda and Fred Gale (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994, Burda et al. 1997, 1998, M’Gonigle 1997) has brought alternative forestry, or ecoforestry, into the academic literature. At the heart of their new vision for a value-based forest economy is the belief that control over resources must be returned to ‘the local level’; that small businesses in forestry and forestry communities are much better suited to manage the forest resource than centralized bureaucratic structures and large corporations.

Burda et al (1998:46) writes, “...the conflict in the woods in British Columbia, and indeed, around the world entails a fundamental choice between “industrial” and “eco” forestry.” “Throughout British Columbia”, they claim, “forest-dependent communities are held hostage by their over-reliance on a single corporate employer...” (ibid. p. 67), and imply that only a
social movement based in alternative forestry will be able to "successfully challenge the entrenched forces of centralist power" (ibid., p. 68).

There is a more subtle form of hostage-taking at work here as well. Resource communities and the people working in them are also constrained by the very language used by writers like Burda to describe them. The remarks by Burda et al. highlight two important themes in my research: (i) they write about resource-dependent communities throughout British Columbia, without differentiating between resource communities; and (ii) the future of the forest industry, and all those dependent upon it, is described as a binary: *either* industrial *or* eco forestry.

The Canadian political economy literature identifies and analyses the historical development and the current troubles in the British Columbia forest industry, focusing on the development of industrial forestry, whereas the alternative forestry literature emphasizes *prescriptions* to improve forest communities through ecoforestry. However, both literatures, in different ways, construct singular representations of forest workers in resource communities. This dissertation rejects the homogeneous representations of resource communities and the people working in them, as well as the industrial/eco binary in which industrial forestry is hegemonic. Instead, this thesis presents a 'third way' of writing forest economies which, I will argue, makes visible the diversity of economic and social identities - British Columbia forest economies - currently contained within the singular, corporate 'British Columbia forest industry'.

The role of hinterland small forest operators in the forest economy is the theoretical and empirical linchpin throughout this dissertation. My exploration of hinterland small forest operators revolves around the broad question:

*What does it mean to be a small forest operator in the hinterland of British Columbia?*
I am not only interested in the material circumstances of hinterland small forest operators, but also in the discursive representations of small forest operators, the forest industry, and the hinterland found in the forest industry literature. To aid this material and discursive exploration, I developed three research questions:

1. Do small forest operators provide labour flexibility for a restructured/restructuring corporate forest industry as they are represented in the post-Fordist Canadian political economy perspective? Or

2. Do small forest operators function as part of a community-based alternative to corporate forestry as they are represented in the value-based alternative forestry perspective? Or

3. Is there a third way of understanding small forest operators that does not require either of these homogeneous representations?

To explore these questions, I focus empirically on an under-analyzed sector of the forest industry, the small business forest sector, in an under-analyzed area of the province, the Bulkley Valley. My research is an exploration of both material practices of small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley, and the ways in which these practices are represented in the literature. Interviews with 68 small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley in 1996 revealed a diversity of business practices and structures that challenges the representations of hinterland forest workers and of resource communities found in the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures. The role of small forest operators in a post-Fordist economy as defined by Canadian political economists, and in a new value economy as defined by the alternative forestry advocates, is outlined below in section 1.2.

1.1 A Turning Point in the British Columbia Forest Industry

The forest industry has been, and continues to be, undeniably important for British Columbia, in both economic and symbolic terms. Although it may never have been true that half of the provincial economy could be attributed to the forest industry (Travers 1993:183), there is no doubt that the forest industry has made a substantial contribution to the

---

1 The Bulkley Valley is described in section 1.2.3 of this chapter.
provincial economy. In 1944, there were 30,000 forest industry employees in British Columbia. In 1991, there were 85,000 direct forest industry employees (ibid. p. 204). During the post-war period, growth in the forest industry came to be expected. The changes occurring in the industry correspond loosely to what is known as the era of "Fordism" – a period of unionized, stable employment, profitable corporations and steady increases in productivity.

During the post-war 'Fordist' era of forestry, resource communities appeared across the 'hinterland'. These communities rode the booms and busts of a cyclical industry. Forestry policy supported the industry through tenure arrangements which gave corporations access to the forest resource at what Patricia Marchak has called "ridiculously low" stumpage rates (Marchak 1984). It seemed a golden era – corporations, employees, unions, communities and the provincial government all fared well.

However, since the mid-1970s it has been apparent that the forest industry has undergone and continues to face massive restructuring. Coupled with changing economic conditions, there have been environmental concerns over the impacts of clearcut logging practices and over-harvesting. The result has been a growing concern over the future of British Columbia's forest industry and forestry communities.

Since 1970, British Columbia's system of forest management has been under intense fire from several directions. The state agencies and forest corporations which control the province's forests have faced stiff criticism from environmentalists protesting against destruction of wilderness, from native Indians asserting their rights over traditional territory, and from forest industry workers concerned about the employment impacts of government and company policies. (Taylor and Wilson 1993:34)

The recession of the early 1980s seems to mark a turning point in the industry, and in the British Columbia economy more generally. The service sector and small businesses were increasingly viewed as growth industries, while commodity production was viewed as a sunset industry. This has created new concerns: for example, service sector jobs are considered to be lower paying and less secure, unlike the unionized family-supporting jobs
that had prevailed in the ‘golden era’ of forestry. In Chemainus, British Columbia, for example, an artisan community was deliberately created in a successful effort to develop tourism as a decentralized development strategy to replace jobs lost in restructuring at the local sawmill (Barnes and Hayter 1992). However, they are different jobs, and target different types of workers.

Marchak attributes many of the new pressures facing British Columbia to the increased global competition in wood products as new capacity has emerged primarily in southern climates (Marchak 1997). She has argued repeatedly since the early 1990s that the global forest industry has changed so markedly that British Columbia can no longer compete in it, at least, not under the terms of the ‘old game’ which British Columbia seems intent on playing. Hayter and Barnes (1997a) share her concern about the nature of the current forest industry, arguing that restructuring, downsizing and layoffs, and the possibility of new “flexible production” made possible through new production technologies, have created a “forest economy in transition” (Hayter and Barnes 1997b).

Furthermore, while jobs have been shed in the forest industry, volume of production has been maintained or increased by most of the industry players, raising questions about the nature of the restructuring taking place. For in spite of these changes in the industry, forestry corporations continue to wield enormous economic and political power, particularly for those communities in the province considered to be ‘forestry-dependent’.

Beginning in the 1970s, changes in societal values have also put pressure on the British Columbia forest industry.

B.C's growth and prosperity historically have been centered around our highly envied forest resource. But while the forest industry is still the engine that drives our economy, it does not have the same comfortable operating environment and public acceptance that were evident throughout the first seven decades of this century. A great deal has changed. Today there are fewer jobs in the woods and mills due to the technological improvements and industry modernization that are imperative if British Columbia producers are to remain competitive in global markets.
Other societal changes are affecting the industry: Populations are shifting from rural to urban areas; the service sector is growing in economic importance; and we are living in a new era of community involvement and environmental concern. (Forest Alliance of British Columbia, nd.)

Concerns over the sustainability of the forest resource combined with an increase in outdoor recreationalists put pressure on the forest industry to ‘share’ a resource they had come to think of as theirs alone. Concurrently, the public began to demand more democratic land use planning. These changes in societal values, coupled with economic pressures both from within and without the forest industry, make it an industry ‘in transition’ (Hayter and Barnes 1997; Clapp 1998), with many within the forest industry arguing that theirs is an industry in crisis (COFI 1998).

1.2 Two Perspectives on Small Business in the ‘New’ Era of the Forest Industry

Not surprisingly, there has been a plethora of recommendations to restore the ailing forest industry and to improve conditions for the communities and workers affected by the crisis. Two competing visions of the future of the forest industry prevail in the literature. Both start with the demise of the Fordist forest industry as outlined above. One interpretation of the forest industry, advocated by Canadian political economists, explains recent restructuring through the lens of ‘post-Fordism’. This interpretation predicts a continuation, indeed an intensification of current capital accumulation strategies, with increasing lay-offs and local ‘entrepreneurialism’ as a response to the loss of unionized, secure, well-paying jobs. The second interpretation, advocated by the alternative forestry school, views the current crisis in the forest industry as an opportunity to return to decentralised approaches to forest management which encourage ‘democracy in the forests’, leading to community and

---

2 Mahon (1993:17) describes post-Fordism as “… a concept that helps us to think critically about the reorganization of production that is occurring. Briefly put, the argument is that we are in the midst of an epochal shift, from the "Fordist" logic of accumulation which drove the postwar boom to "post-Fordism," the precise parameters of which remain unclear although its broad outlines can be sketched." Mahon notes that of the various approaches which attempt to explain the particularities of post-Fordism, the regulation school has had the most impact on Canadian political economy (n.14, p19). My interest lies in restructuring within the "post-Fordist" British Columbia forest industry, and the how small business is caught up in this restructuring.
environmental sustainability. In spite of major differences between them, both schools foresee an increased role for small producers in the forest industry.

Both the post-Fordist and the value-based forest economy perspectives suggest that small forest operators will become a bigger part of the forest industry in the future. In the post-Fordist view, small operators will be part of a restructured corporate forestry, providing functional flexibility to large corporations, while shouldering the burden of increased vulnerability to the booms and busts of a staples economy. In the post-Fordist view, corporate demand for increased flexibility and niche marketing – the new demands of capitalism in the late-twentieth century era of ‘time-space compressions’ – are the driving forces behind the move toward small business. In the alternative forestry view, ‘bottom-up’ approaches to community development and ecological concern motivate the growth of small businesses. In this view, it is small forest operators who will be the leaders of a community-based, ecologically sensitive new forest economy. In the following section I consider these two differing positions on the ‘future’ of the British Columbia forest industry.

1.2.1 Small Business in the Post-Fordist Forest Industry (The Canadian Political Economy Tradition)

In the broader literature on post-Fordism, flexibility is an important part of the ‘new’ economy. While the debate over the form and extent of ‘flexibility’ or ‘restructuring’ has been intense (see Gertler 1992), there is general recognition of the changing nature of capitalism, and that Fordist production and accompanying institutional structures are losing their hegemony. At the core of the “new regime” are new technologies, particularly computers and information systems. These new technologies allow/require a new set of production methods. The crux of the debate is whether or not new production methods provide the opportunity for increased control by workers, or of workers.
Proponents of flexible specialization such as Piore and Sabel (1984) argue that the new shop floor merges activities such as research and development with production, ending the labour segmentation occurring under Fordism and introducing "functional flexibility" among the labour force – a benefit to both corporation and employee. Florida (1991) claims that "the new shop floor involves both the reintegration of intellectual and manual labour and a blurring of the imposed distinctions between innovation and production." Yet many others have observed that the new production methods introduce numerical flexibility rather than functional flexibility. Numerical flexibility occurs when job re-classification increases non-union jobs and decreases union jobs, reducing costs for the corporation and introducing 'flexibility' in their production (see for example Markusen 1991; Pollert 1988). Meric Gertler is skeptical of the extent to which functional flexibility of the "new shop floor" variety has occurred. Gertler (1992:268) notes that "it is my general sense that considerably more 'progress' has been made in introducing more flexible employment relations (especially fewer and broader job descriptions, more part-time, overtime, and temporary work) than other flexible production practices."

Using a Canadian political economy approach, Barnes and Hayter (1992) and Hayter and Holmes (1994) have incorporated some aspects of post-Fordism in their analyses of changes occurring on the 'workshop floor' in the manufacturing operations of some forest corporations. While there is some evidence of a move toward flexible specialization involving functional flexibility, this move has involved considerable job shedding as well. Canadian political economists have tended not to be optimistic about 'flexibility' in the forest industry, finding numerical flexibility to be a more convincing explanation of changes occurring in production than the functional flexibility described by Storper and Scott (1992) or Sabel (1989).
According to the interpretation of post-Fordism adopted by most Canadian political economists, small producers are dependent on major corporations, either as suppliers, subcontractors, or buyers. Thus, small and large producers together form a post-Fordist regime of accumulation. Moreover, in a staples economy such as British Columbia, post-Fordism seems only to intensify the problems of cyclical and uncertain markets, and vulnerability due to external control. As Hayter and Barnes (1990:171) observe, "... for British Columbia, at least, the more things change, the more they seem to stay the same. ...The basic features of [Innis'] staple model appear to have become even more deeply ingrained."

Regional differences between the heartland and the resource hinterland are exacerbated in the new era of flexibility. Davis and Hutton (1989:3) found that as the service sector becomes more important in the post-Fordist economy, the divide between the "service-oriented urban economy of metropolitan Vancouver" and the "resource-based hinterland economy of the remainder of the province, particularly the interior of BC" is becoming even more marked. Government efforts to increase small business through changes in tenure are interpreted in terms of numerical flexibility by Marchak (1995). She argues that after the introduction of the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, 

"...these ostensibly independent small companies sold most of their product to the large companies dominant in their territories...(ibid. p.99)."³ Shifting timber allocation to small business, according to this view, provides production flexibility to major corporations while small business shoulders the burden of uncertain timber markets.

1.2.2 The Value-based Forest Economy (Alternative Forestry)

The Victoria team argues, as does Herb Hammond ... that an ecosystem-based community strategy would lead to a greater value-added outcome and more employment and revenue per unit of wood cut. It would produce a greater diversity of products, involve smaller capital investments and lower overheads, and reduce

³ The Ministry of Forests' Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is critical for many small businesses. It is outlined in Appendix B.
dependence on commodity markets. In addition to such benefits, the proponents of community control argue that communities would husband resources because they are dependent on them, whereas large companies use resources and move on to other regions. In a similar vein, they argue that communities would act responsibly because their members are accountable to one another. (Marchak et al. 1999:146)

The ideas for alternative forestry emerged from the tradition of works such as E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (1973). These ideas challenge the merit of large-scale economic activity, centralist ‘top-down’ planning, and large organizational structures such as corporations. Advocates of alternative forestry present it as the inevitable “new value economy” (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994) which will replace the centralized, corporate model of forestry that dominated the province during the Fordist period. Alternative forestry anticipates an economy based on principles of ecological sustainability and social equity, principles that are derived from deep ecology, bioregionalism and communitarianism. As M’Gonigle (1996:12) describes it, what is needed is a move from “big established institutions with authoritative power [to] small entrepreneurial and community ones without.”

Deep ecologists such as Sale (1985) and Devall and Sessions (1985) inform much of the alternative forestry literature. They advocate a spiritual relationship with non-human nature. They believe that the rights of nature should be assigned independently of their value as ‘resources’. This spiritual relationship with nature is developed in alternative forestry through a nurturing, compassionate relationship with the forest – no more is cut than is needed, and the forest is protected, even if individual trees are removed. In this sense, it is in sharp contrast with the industrial forestry commonly practiced today.

Such deep ecology beliefs are reflected in the use of bioregionalism to delineate ‘communities’ and economic territorial divisions (discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five). Alternative forestry argues that political boundaries do not match with, and therefore cannot protect, naturally occurring ecosystems. An important goal of bioregionalism is the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Human communities should be designed with natural ecosystems in mind.
In this literature, human communities should also operate in accordance with the beliefs of communitarianism; that is, there should be a moral recognition and concern for the community in which we live. In alternative forestry, communitarian beliefs merge with bioregionalism, and are reflected in a preference for democratic local control over natural resources and consensus-building approaches to decision-making.

Another important component of the alternative forestry position is local entrepreneurialism. Alternative forestry foresees a much greater role for small business, particularly 'value-added' small business, but places them within a community-based framework. In this way, the 'dark side' of capitalism is avoided, because the entrepreneur would be guided in his/her business decisions by a sense of responsibility to the larger human and natural community.

The new value forest economy, according to the alternative forestry literature, should consist of family businesses, small companies with a few employees, woodlots, and in some cases, co-operatives and community-owned businesses. This diversity of economic enterprises will contribute to community stability, according to the alternative forestry literature. As well, they will contribute to ecological sustainability through small-scale, labour-intensive operations which emphasize value over volume.

1.3 Discourse, Representation, and the Forest Industry

The two perspectives outlined above both begin with the crisis in Fordism, and a forest industry in transition. Yet they foresee very different futures for the forest industry and the people affected by it. Post-Fordist Canadian political economy foresees an intensification of the uncertainty that pervades staples development, with reductions in the work force, capital intensification, and more unstable communities. Alternative forestry assures us of an increased labour force, decreasing reliance on major corporations and stable, environmentally sustainable communities. How are these two schools able to read
the same events so differently? How is it possible for such disparate schools of thought to be equally compelling? Why does it 'make sense' for M'Gonigle and Parfitt (1994:73) to declare that "[w]hether it's woodlot owners or furniture makers, small businesses are the underpinning of the emerging new value economy", or for Marchak to write that "...the essential ingredients of communities are missing [in resource towns]. There is no public involvement in policy decisions, the population has no shared history, there is still no independent business community to speak of..."?

Bruno Latour writes "we need...to look at the way in which someone convinces someone else to take up a statement, to pass it along, to make it more of a fact" (Latour 1986:5, cited in Willems-Braun 1996:276). The representations of forest workers found in the two stories outlined above result from what I call the 'staples discourse' of Canadian political economy and the 'value discourse' of alternative forestry. These discourses, I argue, pass from writer to writer, and are rarely questioned. In Canadian political economy, staples discourse creates the "hinterland", a pool of resources, a place determined by economics, peopled by transient, isolated victims of the cyclonics of capitalism. It makes sense, within this discourse, for Patricia Marchak to write in one of the most influential studies of the forest industry, Green Gold, that "the structure of the industry creates a transient labour force; that very little about the resource work-force can be explained in terms of personal characteristics, but much in terms of class and regional origins" (Marchak 1983: xiii), or elsewhere, that Company towns, strung-out farming settlement, ranch-lands, marginal tourist resorts, fishing villages, frontier townsites – outside of the heartland Canada has been made up of these. They have manufactured little besides a folklore which is rich with rage and humour, and though they have sported the Coca-Cola signs in the same way as do the Mayan towns in the Yucatan, they have not become replicas of American life. (Marchak 1990[1980]:198)
Given the importance of the British Columbia forest industry to the province, it is not surprising that staples discourse also extends into everyday usage in British Columbia, as evidenced in the following, not untypical newspaper article, taken from the Vancouver Sun:

The rain drips and the canopy crowds out the light. Huckleberry erupts from stumps with telltale springboard holes that look like accusing eyes in the gloom, reminders that on the first cut weary loggers felled this timber with axes and two-man crosscut saws.

That was long ago and the men came from forgotten towns that rode the boom times up and then, when the bust finally came, just fell off the map of memory. British Columbia's landscape is littered with these obscure parables of boom and bust, the cycles that have governed most of the province's history as a commodity-driven economy.

And if Greater Vancouver is booming along in the post-industrial information economy, the pain of the present resource bust resonates in single-industry commodity towns like Ucluelet. (Hume 1999)

In the other discourse, that of the alternative forestry literature, talk of staples is replaced by talk of 'value'. The hinterland is replaced by bioregions, and the people working there have a natural sense of place that ensures a harmonious existence with the natural and human community.

The considerable differences between these discourses, and yet the conviction with which both are held, raises questions about representation. By repeating and reinforcing particular representations of the hinterland, of resource communities, and of forest workers, these two metanarratives of the forest industry and those working in it are told over and over again, crowding out the possibility of different narratives. In demonstrating the partiality and incompleteness of these (meta)narratives of 'the British Columbia forest industry', I seek to open up space for other, equally partial and incomplete but different and multiple, stories of the many forest economies which are at times caught up in the British Columbia forest industry, and at times completely apart from it. All of these stories combine to create British Columbia forest economies.
1.4 Outline of the Dissertation

In the following chapter I provide an overview of the research approach used in the dissertation. The dissertation explores both the material practices and discursive treatment of small forest operators in hinterland forest communities of British Columbia, using the case study method as the primary research tool.

In Chapter Three I review three key aspects of the recent 'cultural turn' in economic geography which I find helpful to understand what it means to be a small forest operator in the hinterland of British Columbia. I first explore the idea of "reading the forest economy as a text" to develop my argument that the 'British Columbia forest industry' is a hegemonic narrative, rather than as a collection of truth statements about economic activities. In doing so I borrow from Gibson-Graham's argument that the discourse of hegemonic capitalism — the economy — makes it impenetrable by alternative development schemes. Deconstructing this discourse of capitalism, as Gibson-Graham do, reveals a somewhat deflated, far less intimidating capitalism which can be understood as one of many economic forms.

A second theme I explore in Chapter Three, found in some post-structuralist and feminist economic geographies, and used more commonly by social theorists, is the metaphor of the centre and the margin. Much of the work in cultural studies has been about or from 'the margin' — the social space of women, gays, ethnic minorities. Working from the margins of British Columbia forest industry, both geographically and metaphorically, I draw on work that presents a challenge to the dominant cultural and economic 'centre'. This leads me to my third theme, which is to develop a way of thinking about economic identity which does not require, and indeed, upsets, the centre and the margin; I do this by developing small forest operator subjectivities around multiple class processes.

In Chapter Four, I situate the study both empirically and discursively. I begin by reviewing the British Columbia forest industry as presented in the literature. I pay particular
attention to what is included in this literature, and what is excluded. At the centre of this 
hegemonic story of the British Columbia forest industry is corporate forestry. Small 
business plays a historically important but marginal role in most accounts. Furthermore, in 
spite of the economic importance of Interior forest production, the important differences 
between Coastal and Interior practices are often overlooked, resulting in a predominantly 
Coastal representation of the industry, with implications for small business and resource 
communities.

Important analyses of the British Columbia forest industry have come from writers 
working in the Canadian political economy tradition. This tradition is explored in Chapter 
Five, focusing particularly on the ways in which small business and hinterland resource 
communities are portrayed within this work. Within Canadian political economy, hinterland 
resource workers are implicitly or explicitly described as reluctant pawns for locally based, 
foreign-controlled corporations, transient, underskilled and inflexible men (accompanied at 
times by families) who tie their fortunes to corporations rather than community. They are a 
marginal component of the central, and centralized, forest economy. The value-based 
alternative forestry school of thought is also explored in Chapter Five. Again, I delve into 
the role of small business and hinterland resource communities as described (or more often 
prescribed) in the alternative forestry literature. In the alternative forestry literature, 
hinterland forest workers are depicted as deeply committed to their natural environment. 
They are community- and family-oriented entrepreneurs, who, given access to the timber 
resource, would practice ecologically sensitive and community-minded sustainability. 
According to the alternative forestry literature, if there were different institutional structures 
in place, small businesses in resource communities could become the central story of a new 
value-based forest economy.
Both of these schools of thought share a common acceptance of the staples discourse found in accounts of 'the British Columbia forest industry', as well as a strong conviction that something has gone terribly wrong in the forest industry. However, their representations of small business and forestry communities differ considerably. So much so, that they are easily juxtaposed one against the other, and from the literature reviewed in Chapter Five I create a framework of analysis, which is used to structure the interviews with small forest operators, and which is described in Chapter Six.

Using the results of the case study interviewees, in Chapter Six I attempt to 'fit' the small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley into the representations described above, but I find it is an uncomfortable fit – bits keep spilling out. Rather than the essentialized 'conventional' or 'alternative' forest workers found in the literature, the case study documents a wide range of different types and forms of small business, and small forest operators. This diversity of practices challenges the representations of small business and resource communities in both literatures, and suggests a re-reading of the story of the British Columbia forest industry presented in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Seven I deconstruct the narratives of the forest industry constructed by the Canadian political economy and the alternative forestry literatures to reveal a staples discourse and a value discourse which propel the particular representations of small forest operators found in each of the literatures. The staples discourse of Canadian political economy, with its emphasis on the heartland/hinterland relationship, resource dependency, underdevelopment and community instability in the hinterland, is deconstructed to reveal a fictive hinterland. This fictive hinterland is a discursively powerful construct, contributing to the very issues Canadian political economists attempt to resolve. In another section the value discourse of alternative forestry is deconstructed to reveal its own fictive hinterland based on a blend of communitarianism, entrepreneurialism and bioregionalism.
Both Canadian political economy and the alternative forestry literature are rejected as useful explanatories of British Columbia forest economies because of their essentialized representations of small business and hinterland resource communities. In Chapter Eight I explore an alternative form of explanation that seeks to avoid this tendency toward essentialism. Re-interpreting case study material through the understanding of multiple class processes outlined in Chapter Three, I provide an alternative reading of hinterland small businesses in forestry. I argue that this re-defined understanding of class and subjectivity is able to address the diversity of economic and social identities found in the case study without forcing a fixed, essentialized identity onto small forest operators.

Chapter Nine follows with a summary of the theoretical, empirical and policy contributions of the dissertation. Understanding British Columbia forest economies within this framework of difference points to the possibility of multiple development trajectories that enable movement away from the corporate, crisis-oriented forestry currently dominating the forest (although I do not attempt to define these here). Policy implications of this framework of difference are presented by reconsidering some of the small business institutional structures and how they might change in recognition of the heterogeneity of small forest operators in the hinterland of British Columbia.
2 Research Approach

In this chapter I describe the research approach used to explore the research questions defined in Chapter One: the case study area and why it was selected, the fieldwork, and methods used to analyze the data. This dissertation, in many ways, is a reflection and exploration of my own journeys between centre and margin. I move between standard accounts of the development of the British Columbia forest industry, and lesser known events and groups, to draw attention to the discursive strength of these standard accounts. I shift between theories that seek to explain the positioning of forest workers in the current era and conversations with forest workers about their experiences of the current era. And, in the course of conducting this research, I physically moved back and forth between the heartland and the hinterland, a lot. My travels to and from the university reflect both my personal ambiguity of having to ‘place’ myself in either Smithers or Vancouver, and my intellectual shuffling between centre and margin. In this section I describe very briefly the theoretical approach which is further explored in Chapter Three, then describe the case study approach used in this research and the case study area.

2.1 Exploring Discourses

My methodological approach in the dissertation is based upon discourse analysis. Discourses, explain Barnes and Duncan (1992:8), are

...frameworks that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices, each relevant to a particular realm of social action. ...A discourse constitutes the limits within which ideas and practices are considered to be natural; that is, they set the bounds on what questions are considered relevant or even intelligible.

Discourses are “...practices of signification, a framework for understanding the world. As such, discourses are both enabling as well as constraining: they determine answers to questions, as well as the questions that can be asked” (ibid.). It is this sense of being both enabling and constraining that I draw from my analysis of Canadian political
economy and alternative forestry. I consider these two bodies of literature as discourses, as a way of marking them as discursively powerful but socially constructed, and therefore open to deconstruction. My research is an exploration of both material practices and representations of these practices. While this approach has been used in reading the landscape as a text (Duncan 1990; Barnes and Duncan 1992) and in interpreting the idea of ‘nature’ (Cronon 1995a), it has been largely ignored in the work on British Columbia’s (or Canada’s) resource hinterlands. In this dissertation I seek to establish that discursive representations of hinterland small forest operators (and forest workers generally) and their ‘reality’ are mutually constitutive.

Linda McDowell (1997:39) observes with respect to urban landscapes: “…the best new work on urban landscapes is distinguished by its determination to link together the material production of the built environment, symbolic meanings and forms of representation and the sets of material and social practices facilitated or constrained by both physical and symbolic forms.” Canadian political economy has been a useful framework for understanding the development of a staples economy in British Columbia and Canada, and the position Canada has held in the world economy. But it has also eclipsed the development of alternative economic structures by its hegemonic representation of structural forces that create dependency and underdevelopment in the resource hinterland. Alternative forestry, in the way it is presented in the literature is enabling in that it presents the possibility of an economy in which individual agency is capable of resisting and overcoming structural forces; yet it too constrains, by representing small business owners and resource communities in narrow (albeit favorable) terms.

Delving in the margins of the British Columbia forest industry, it becomes evident that a familiar story is often told about the development of the British Columbia forest industry. It is a story about corporate concentration, foreign ownership, and recently,
restructuring. It is an important story, but it is only partial. In Chapter Four I explore how, and what, this story includes and excludes. The partiality of this story, with its focus on corporate and Coastal forestry, has produced and is the product of a staples discourse. The more familiar this hegemonic story becomes, the more difficult it is to explore other stories.

In the “new Canadian political economy” (e.g. Clement and Williams 1989), the acceptance of a staples discourse combined with an analytical interest in class enables certain questions about the hinterland, resource communities and forest workers to be asked, and others not. In the alternative forestry value discourse, an indiscriminate acceptance of small business, localness, and community has prevented questions of a critical nature. The bounds around research questions are delineated by the limits of the discourse, encouraging certain research outcomes and preventing others.

In using discourse analysis to probe accounts of the forest industry, my purpose is not to ‘prove’ that these accounts are false. Bruce Willems-Braun explains this effectively:

Before I begin, let me clarify my intent. The purpose of showing images to be constructions is not to reveal them as ‘false’ but rather to question the certainty and obviousness of their ‘truths’. The point bears repeating: to read images as misrepresentations is to tacitly accept what Timothy Mitchell (1989) has called a ‘modern enchantment’ that assumes that truth lies outside and beyond representation. Yet to assume that power operates through mis-representation (or mystification) is to leave re-presentation itself unquestioned; it is to forget that ‘truth’ is not prior to, but always an effect of, representation.

2.2 The Case Study Approach

The case study approach includes a wide range of interwoven interview, observation and participation techniques that have, as a unifying theme, the importance of ‘getting out there’. Yin (1994) suggests that “you would use the case study method because you
deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study.”

The research approach used in this project is for the most part intensive rather than extensive, qualitative rather than quantitative. The case study is structured to enable an intensive ‘close-up’ exploration of small forest operators in the hinterland, rather than a representative sampling to make generalizations about a larger population. This requires a different approach to analysis than would be appropriate in a positivist, strictly quantitative study. Statistical approaches, for example, have been employed cautiously, and are not left to speak for themselves, but are put into the context of interview material, secondary data or theory.

Schoenberger (1992:198) argues that “although statistical generalizations cannot be made [using intensive studies], the method does permit analytical generalizations relevant to theoretical positions.” Furthermore,

> Because intensive studies allow the identification of causal agents in the particular contexts relevant to them, it provides a better basis than extensive studies for recommending policies which have a ‘causal grip’ on the agents of change [whereas] extensive research aids policy analysis by picking out general trends and patterns synoptically. (original emphasis) (Sayer and Morgan 1985:154)

One of the realities of using a qualitative approach is that results may not be statistically reliable, nor is this an objective of such a study. As Eyles (1988:11) observes, “interpretative geography does not stand outside its subject-matter: it is part of the investigation and of the discourse itself.” However, results will quite likely have greater validity, where validity refers to the meaningfulness of results. While it is possible to make extrapolations using a qualitative approach, the “extrapolations are logical, thoughtful and problem-oriented rather than purely empirical, statistical and probabilistic (Quinn Patton1986 cited by Sykes 1991:7).
Schoenberger (1991:11) argues that a qualitative approach "...allows a more comprehensive and detailed elucidation of the interplay among strategy, history, and circumstances. By contrast, the standardized survey instrument must necessarily standardize and simplify a complex reality." And Healey and Rawlinson (1993) observe that "despite the debate about the validity and reliability of qualitative research, it is apparent that, as economic geographers become more concerned with examining processes, relationships and interactions, rather than simply identifying patterns and outcomes, intensive research methods and non-standardized interview techniques are becoming more frequently used ..." (Healey and Rawlinson 1993:345).

Feminist geographers have been critical of traditional research approaches that create an arbitrary and false distinction between researcher and research 'subjects'. The differences I anticipated between myself – a 'girl from the city' with more years spent in school than in the workforce – and my interviewees – men who worked 'in the bush' – were evident in interviews, but not nearly to the extent I had expected. The barriers I felt would impede communication – social class, especially education, age, gender (race I assumed correctly would not be a barrier, only three of the interviewees were not white, and I am a white Canadian of mixed Anglo-Celtic descent) – were not insurmountable. What seemed to be more important to most interviewees was to know where I was 'positioned' early on in the interviews. And, often, it seemed necessary that I be open to considerable teasing about my academic, urban lifestyle. This 'bantering' is not something that usually appears in the results of a case study. However, in my study it was a critical element in establishing a rapport that allowed for dialogue. I mention this here because this seemingly insignificant banter was often a point of entry into an exploration of differences – an exploration that often led to recognition of common ground.
By the end of the interview process I was convinced that attempting to categorize the individuals I had met into groups based on class, occupation, gender, ethnicity, politics, location and so on, would not reflect the diversity of identities I encountered through this research. The challenge was finding a theoretical lens robust enough to address issues of exploitation and underdevelopment, where they existed, without assuming they existed; to explore rather than essentialize the identity of the individuals I call small forest operators. One such theoretical lens is the multiple class processes approach explored in Chapter Eight.

A final note on my approach to ‘doing’ a case study: Forest Renewal British Columbia, a provincial Crown corporation, provided funding for the case study, and in order to meet my obligations to them I needed to maintain a ‘policy’ perspective throughout the study as well. This has contributed to the research project, I feel, by necessitating a conversation between the policy analyst, the economist and the (budding) social theorist within me. The policy analyst and economist could be horrible bullies at times, arguing that the social theorist was stirring things up for nothing. I am glad she was able to persevere.

2.2.1 The Bulkley Valley as a Case Study Area

The Bulkley Valley, British Columbia was chosen as the case study area because it fit the six main criteria for the selection of the case study area, which I had derived from my research questions. These criteria are described in the next section. First, I provide a brief description of the Bulkley Valley area.

For the purposes of this study, the Bulkley Valley is defined as the geographical area between the Hazeltons (New Hazelton, South Hazelton, Old Hazelton) and Burns Lake along the Highway 16 corridor (see Figure 1), about 1300 km north from Vancouver. Four major communities are included in this definition: the Hazeltons, Smithers, Houston and Burns Lake. Small communities that are also important in the local economy include
Moricetown, Telkwa, Decker Lake and Granisle. The population of the Bulkley Valley is approximately 13,000. Smithers has the largest population at 5,718, followed by Burns Lake, Houston and the Hazeltons.

Figure 1: The Bulkley Valley, British Columbia

The Bulkley Valley fit all the criteria I set out for my case study. And, unlike other areas of the province, such as Port Alberni on the coast, or the Slocan Valley in the east of the province, few researchers (in this field of study) had ventured into the 'Northern Interior', which I found intriguing.\(^4\)

The only drawback to the area was that, according to available statistics, there were fewer value-added manufacturers in this area than most areas of the province. On the other hand, I wondered why.

\(^4\) This has since changed with the location of UNBC in Prince George, and the increase in FRBC funding of social science research. See, for example, research projects by Halseth and Booth (in process), and Heather Myers (ongoing) at the University of Northern British Columbia.
Prior to contact, the Bulkley Valley was predominantly Wet'suwet'en territory, with some Carrier territory in the vicinity of Burns Lake, and Gitxsan territory meshing with Wet'suwet'en territory around the Hazeltons. There are Indian reserves in the Hazeltons, and near Burns Lake. Moricetown, a twenty-minute drive from Smithers, is a Wet'suwet'en reserve.

There are four Forest Districts in the Bulkley Valley: Kispiox Forest District, located in Old Hazelton, Bulkley Forest District, located in Smithers, Morice Forest District, located in Houston, and Lakes Forest District, located in Burns Lake. These districts are part of the Prince Rupert Forest Region, a much larger area which extends from the Coast at Prince Rupert, west to the Lakes Forest District, and to the Northern border of British Columbia. The government’s regional centre for the Prince Rupert Forest Region is Smithers.

2.2.2 Case Study Selection Criteria

Since I was curious to learn about small forest operators in the hinterland of British Columbia, particularly in light of the theoretical perspectives on the forest industry which emerge from Canadian political economy and alternative forestry, several criteria were of importance. It was necessary that the area be in ‘the hinterland’ as most of the province is referred to in both the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures. Leaving the Lower Mainland easily satisfied this criterion! Because of my interest in restructuring in the forest industry and the role of small business in this restructuring, a number of related criteria emerged. The area must be considered ‘forestry-dependent’; with the primary forest industry in the area being sawmilling, rather than pulp/paper. There needed to be major forest corporations in the area; and there needed to be small forestry-related harvesting and production businesses. I outline the rationale for these criteria below. A final criterion related more specifically to the alternative forestry literature, which emphasizes the importance of local resource planning, namely that there have been local
resource planning initiatives in the area since at least 1990. These criteria are described more fully below.

1. The area is in "the Hinterland."

This is a fairly straightforward criterion that emerges from my interest in the "heartland-hinterland" economic relationship described in Canadian political economy. The Bulkley Valley, located 1300 km from Vancouver, clearly satisfies this criterion.

It was also important to locate in a relatively small community surrounded by 'nature' to explore some of the assumptions of alternative forestry about community. With only one highway traversing it, the Bulkley Valley is indeed surrounded by forest, mountains and rivers. It is well known among hikers, skiers and naturalists as a scenic recreation destination, but too far out of reach for most Vancouverites to visit.

2. The area is considered 'forestry-dependent'

This criterion is critical for understanding the continuing relevance of staples theory to the current political economy of British Columbia; the potential impact of alternative forestry development strategies, and for a consideration of what 'dependency' really means. Although the terminology was unsettling to me from the outset, I wanted to comply with the assumptions of the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures as an entry point into the research. Horne and Robson's (1993) community dependency data calculate forest-dependency in communities throughout British Columbia. The average forestry dependency based on Horne and Robson's 1993 data is 27.5%; all communities in the Bulkley Valley are considerably higher (44 – 63%), as shown in Table 1.
Table 1: Forest Dependency by Community (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulkley Valley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithers-Houston</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns Lake</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazelton</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Kootenay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernie</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbrook-Kimberley</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invermere</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for East Kootenay</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Kootenay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castelgar-Arrow Lakes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creston</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon Arm</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelstoke</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Central Kootenay</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okanagan-Boundary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peachland</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelowna</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Forks-Greenwood</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail-Rossland</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spallumcheen</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver-Osseous</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penticton</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Okanagan</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squamish</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashcroft</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merritt</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Thompson</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squamish</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashcroft</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merritt</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Thompson</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squamish</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillooet</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashcroft</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merritt</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Thompson</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for Lillooet-Thompson</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Horne and Robson</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Horne and Robson 1993 (excluding LM)
3. There are major forest corporations in the area

The Canadian political economy literature suggests that the presence of major forest corporations throughout the resource towns of the hinterland has strongly affected the development of British Columbia's forest industry. Indeed, almost all forest-dependent communities in British Columbia have at least one major producer; this criterion was easily satisfied. There are seven major processing facilities in the study area:

- Babine Forest Products, Burns Lake
- Houston Forest Products, Houston
- Northwood, Houston
- Pacific Inland Resources, Smithers
- Repap, Smithers
- Skeena Cellulose (Carnaby), Hazelton
- Kispiox Forest Products, Hazelton

The combined output of these companies in 1995, the year prior to the interviews, was 1.2 billion board feet of lumber (Ministry of Forests 1995). All facilities require, to varying degrees, purchased wood to meet the capacity of their facilities. Only Northwood, in Houston, is close to self-reliant, but even it purchases some timber. The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is a major source of purchased wood for local mills. For example, one mill that normally purchased approximately 180,000 m³/yr purchased two percent of this from private sales and one percent from woodlot licensees. The remaining 97% of timber was purchased from Small Business Forest Enterprise Program license holders (fieldwork 1996).

The employment data shown in Table 2 for the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District give some indication of the numbers of people employed by major corporations versus small to medium sized firms in the area, although the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District
encompasses a larger area than just the Bulkley Valley, and does not include the Hazeltons.

### Table 2: Employment by Firm Size in Forestry in the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, 1991-1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Wood Products (25)</th>
<th>Logging (04)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Register, Statistics Canada

4. **The primary forest industry in the area is sawmilling, rather than pulp/paper.**

This criterion was necessary because alternative development strategies, such as those recommended in the alternative forestry literature are possible only with relatively low capital-intensity and low investment requirements, as the above data on small and medium-sized firms indicates. Therefore it is less likely that forestry-based alternative development strategies would occur in a community dependent on a pulp mill because the pulp and paper sector is more oriented to economies of scale.

In the Bulkley Valley there are no pulp mills, although sawmills in the area are integrated with pulp facilities elsewhere and there is considerable trade of logs and chips between the mills.

5. **There are small forestry-related harvesting and production businesses in the area**

Concentration of industry is a predominant feature of the British Columbia forest industry. Proponents of alternative forestry claim that there is a move toward decentralization in both production and governance of the forest resource (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994). To investigate alternative forestry 'on the ground' I wanted to situate the case
study in an area where small forestry businesses were operating. Figure 2 shows the
distribution of small forestry firms in the province by region for 1986. The Bulkley Valley is
part of the Nechako region.

**Figure 2: British Columbia’s Small Forestry Firms by Region, 1986**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of small forestry firms by region in 1986.](image)

Source: Ministry of Regional Development, 1990

Table 3 and Table 4 compare employment in small wood products operations versus
There are more of both types of operators with 1 – 4 employees, suggesting that very small
firms are more common than small to medium enterprises. There is considerably more
employment in logging than in wood products in the small business forest sector in this
area. Also, there has been an increase in the number of logging operations with fewer than
twenty employees during this period. Small wood products operations with fewer than five
employees have grown during this period.
An important aspect of small business in forestry is the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program. Province-wide, the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) allocated to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is 13%. In the Bulkley Valley, on average, the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is apportioned 22% of the AAC (see Table 5), suggesting that there is an active small business forest sector in the area, in spite of the relatively low figures for the Nechako region (which includes the Bulkley Valley) in Figure 2.

As illustrated in Table 5, there is considerable variation between districts even within the Bulkley Valley. Only 9.3% of the Morice District is apportioned to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, although the Morice District has the highest AAC in the Bulkley Valley. The Lakes District has apportioned 29% of its AAC to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program.

---

5 The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is described in more detail in Chapter Four and Appendix B. In brief, it is a program administered through the Ministry of Forests to provide small business with timber through competitive bidding process.
Table 5: Apportionment of Annual Allowable Cut to Small Business Forest Enterprise Program and Woodlots by district, 1997 (m$^3$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>SBFEP</th>
<th>Bulkley</th>
<th>Morice</th>
<th>Lakes</th>
<th>Avg. for BV</th>
<th>Avg. for BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>242,466</td>
<td>245,476</td>
<td>184,870</td>
<td>438,939</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlots</td>
<td>3,687</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>5,815</td>
<td>21,202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.3%)</td>
<td>(0.7%)</td>
<td>(0.3%)</td>
<td>(1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total AAC</td>
<td>1,092,611</td>
<td>895,000</td>
<td>1,985,815</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Forests 1997a

The Prince Rupert Forest Region (which contains the Bulkley Valley) has fewer Small Business Forest Enterprise Program registrants than other areas of the province such as the Vancouver Forest Region (see Figure 3). However, it also has a much lower population density.

Figure 3: Small Business Forest Enterprise Program Registrants by Forest Region, 1993/94

Number of sales in the Prince Rupert Forest Region actually exceeds sales in the Vancouver Region for 1993/94 (199 versus 169 sales), suggesting that the program is of far greater importance in the Prince Rupert region.

Table 6 provides registration data for the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program in the Bulkley Valley from 1987 - 1997.
Table 6: Small Business Forest Enterprise Program Registration in the Bulkley Valley 1987-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>% change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kispiox</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-34</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulkley</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morice</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-47</td>
<td>-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Category 1 registrants may not own or lease a timber processing facility. Category 2 registrants must own or lease a timber processing facility, which includes sawmills as well as specialty mills that upgrade and further process forest products. Throughout this period Category 1 has many more registrants than Category 2, but in both categories, registration has been declining, as shown in Figure 4.

While it appears that involvement in the program is declining, it is important to distinguish between active registrants and actively bidding registrants. Many 'active' registrants will not actually bid in a given year, for a variety of reasons such as opportunities for other work, inappropriate sales types offered, or frustration with the process (fieldwork 1996).
In most of the forest districts in the Bulkley Valley a relatively small number of registrants purchase the majority of Timber Sales (Willis 1997, Small Business Officer, Ministry of Forests, pers. comm.). A recent survey estimated the number of registrants that are actively bidding on Timber Sales at 99 for the Lakes, 15 for the Morice, 52 for the Bulkley, and 24 for the Kispiox Forest District (ibid.). Although the number of registrants in the program has declined, the program is considered to be effective and has been largely accepted by industry (Gillespie 1991).

6. Local planning initiatives have taken place at least since 1990

Within the alternative forestry literature, local planning initiatives are considered an important way to increase local control over natural resources. Accordingly, I also sought to explore the involvement of small forest operators in local planning processes, and whether this involvement 'matches' the representations of local planning in the alternative forestry literature.

A number of local planning initiatives appeared around the province in the 1990s. Some of these were initiated through the provincial government, such as the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE), and Land and Resource Management Plans.
(LRMPs)\(^6\). Others, however, evolved from local grassroots initiatives. Two of these occurred within the Bulkley Valley. The Community Resources Board that was organized in Smithers became well known around the province as a model of a locally driven, consensus-based planning process. Even earlier, the Ministry of Forests established the Smithers Forest Advisory Committee in 1976 to resolve conflicts over forestry in the area. The *Framework for Watershed Stewardship* was completed in the Village of Hazelton, and received attention from a number of academics (see Maitland and Aberly 1992; Marchak 1995; Burda et al 1998).

Other processes in the Bulkley Valley were initiated by the Ministry of Forests under the Land and Resource Management Planning Process. The Kispiox District (Hazeltons) completed their LRMP planning process in 1997, the first to be completed in the study area. The Bulkley District LRMP was approved in 1998, although it was essentially completed by the time I arrived in the summer of 1996 (this was the final outcome of the process which began as the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board). The Lakes LRMP, in Burns Lake, was in process during the study period. The Morice District (Houston) had not started a LRMP at the time of the study, but Ministry of Forests personnel told me that they attempted to include local stakeholders in resource decision-making.

2.3 *Framework for Data Collection and Analysis*

In this section I describe the process of designing the questionnaire, interviewing, data gathering, and analysis. The results of this process are described in Chapter Six, and inform discussion throughout the dissertation.

---

\(^6\) The LRMP process is described in Appendix D.
Interview questions were designed to explore the first two research questions outlined earlier:

1. Do small forest operators provide labour flexibility for a restructured/restructuring corporate forest industry as they are represented in the post-Fordist Canadian political economy perspective? Or
2. Do small forest operators function as part of a community-based alternative to corporate forestry as they are represented in the value-based alternative forestry perspective?

My readings of the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures guided my choice of three main topic areas for the questionnaire: environmental ethic, community values, and business practices. These topics are discussed in detail in Chapter Five. I provide an overview of the criteria used to explore small forest operators values and practices below in Table 7.

The questionnaire (attached as Appendix A) was designed to guide an exploration and discussion of small forest operators experiences, but I also wanted to ensure that interviewees felt comfortable with the questions asked. I began interviews with more general questions about their businesses, and moved on to employment and production information. This led to more specific areas such as their experiences with the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program and environmental regulations, as well as involvement in local planning and thoughts on the future of forestry. Questions were structured and semi-structured. Some questions were direct, seeking a straightforward short answer; others were indirect, investigative, and open-ended. Interview pre-tests were conducted, and indicated that thirty minutes was sufficient to answer all questions in the survey questionnaire. The UBC ethics review committee approved the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A.
Table 7: Summary of Representations of small forest operators in the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional operators: Canadian political economy</th>
<th>Environmental Ethic</th>
<th>Community Values</th>
<th>Business Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• exploitist approach to land: nature as resource</td>
<td>• dependent on large corporation</td>
<td>• equipment is geared to production and efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accepts existing cut allocations as sustainable</td>
<td>• dependent on company for work</td>
<td>• emphasis is on profit-maximization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• resists regulation which hinders production</td>
<td>• not preferential to local hiring</td>
<td>• capital-intensive practices preferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• deals only with major corporation in local area</td>
<td>• volume-based production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• believes that majors and government can determine best use of resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• not involved in planning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• equipment is geared to production and efficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• emphasis is on profit-maximization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• capital-intensive practices preferred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• volume-based production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Operators: Alternative value-based forest economy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• values nature: makes the best use of the available resource</td>
<td>• places priority on local economic activities</td>
<td>• equipment is environmentally-sensitive and low-impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• risk-averse approach to sustainable forestry</td>
<td>• hires locally</td>
<td>• emphasis is on lifestyle rather than profits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• supports regulation which protects the environment</td>
<td>• deals with local small firms</td>
<td>• labour-intensive practices are preferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• believes that local decisions will reflect best use of the resource</td>
<td>• value-based production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is involved in local planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Fieldwork Methods

A listing of small forest operators registered in the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, obtained from the Ministry of Forests in Victoria, was the starting point for my list of potential interviewees. Upon arrival in Smithers early in the summer of 1996⁷, business directories, local yellow pages and the telephone directory were used to augment the listing of small forest operators. In May 1996 letters were sent to small forest operators in the Smithers area (Bulkley Forest District). Interviews with Ministry of Forests personnel provided information on types of forest operators and potential key informants from a Ministry perspective. As well, "word of mouth" in the environmental community provided

---

⁷ 1996 was generally considered to have been a 'good year' in the forest industry. Soon after, the industry went into decline again with the 'Asian crisis' and the U.S-Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement.
potential key informants from an environmentalist perspective. Once interviews began, "word of mouth" provided more potential key informants from a forest worker perspective. Through this combination of methods I selected a group of potential interviewees to represent a wide variety of types of business.

Follow-up phone calls were made to set up interviews. In the Smithers area, interviews were completed within a month. In June 1996, a similar procedure took place for the Hazeltons (Kispiox FD). Interviews were completed in approximately three weeks, with some difficulty finding interviewees due to smaller number of small operators in this area. In July 1996 a similar procedure took place for the Burns Lake area (Lakes FD) and the Houston area (Moricex FD). Interviews were easily arranged for the Lakes FD owing in part to a larger number of small operators in this area. It also seemed that this area has a heightened awareness of issues concerning small operators, and interviews were completed within two weeks. It was extremely difficult to arrange interviews in the Morice FD. This may be partially explained by the smaller number of small operators (similar to the Hazeltons), as well as timing in the season (the height of what little summer logging takes place). Subsequently, surveys were sent out to 35 small operators in the Morice FD, with a letter explaining my difficulties in arranging interviews, asking operators to respond by mail, or to call for me to pick up surveys. There were three responses to this approach. In late July, I arranged with a key informant in Granisle, near Houston, to have surveys distributed to small operators in the area. Fifteen surveys were sent out with a zero response rate. Ultimately I resigned myself to a reduced input from Houston. Having discussed this issue with other researchers and Ministry of Forests personnel I have discovered that this lack of participation is not uncommon in Houston.
Community | Number of Interviewees
---|---
The Hazeltons | 17
Smithers and area | 22
Burns Lake and area | 23
Houston and area | 6

Contrary to my expectation of interviewing in an office environment, interviews usually took place in the interviewee’s home, at his or her request. Occasionally they took place in a restaurant. The interviews followed a fairly structured questionnaire. However, I also allowed flexibility for diversions and unanticipated issues – which happened a lot. The interviews were ‘semi-ethnographic’. Interviews were either taped and later transcribed, or I took notes during and after the interview (depending upon location of the interview and comfort level of the interviewee). Many interviews were well over two hours long. While I had hoped that business owners might begrudgingly allow me a half-hour of their time, the greater difficulty for me proved to be limiting the length of the interview – the “man of few words” stereotype does not apply to this group! Only two interviews were completed within the half-hour I had predicted interviews would take. 69 small forest operators were interviewed in total. One interview was later rejected, as the man was involved primarily in lumber distribution rather than harvesting or manufacturing. Interviewees were generally keen to be involved in the research project, and the view was often expressed that ‘no one has ever asked us for our opinion before’.

The intent of the research was not to represent statistically the small forest operator, and I do not claim that the proportion of alternative operators I depict from my interview group is representative of the larger population of independent operators, even within the Bulkley Valley. While I ensured that the groups of interviewees from each community included a wide variety of perspectives (with the exception of Houston), it is possible that the people who were interested in being interviewed were more inclined to be advocates of
one perspective or another – more committed to involving themselves politically, more interested in discussing issues affecting them, and/or more disgruntled with the existing system.

**Interviews with other Key Informants**

I also spoke with the key informants who interact with and affect the small forest operators - Ministry of Forests personnel involved in the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program or the Land and Resource Management Plan, log purchasers in the major mills in each of the communities, economic development officers, and participants in local planning processes. These interviews were semi-structured, since in most cases I was simply trying to gain an understanding of that person’s perspective on the small business forest sector in their area.

**Follow-up Meetings**

I attempted to incorporate a ‘check’ on the representativeness of my work by setting up a second opportunity to meet with research participants after my preliminary analysis of results. In February 1997 I conducted a series of evening meetings, one in each of the communities I have been researching, including Burns Lake, Houston, Smithers, and Hazelton. The purpose of these meetings was to update interviewees as to my research progress, provide preliminary research results, and to provide an opportunity for them to comment on these results, or provide additional information they may have felt was lacking in my work. Letters were sent out approximately two weeks in advance of these meetings to interviewees and interested parties. However, only a handful of people showed up in each of Burns Lake, Hazelton and Smithers. No one at all showed in Houston. In spite of the low attendance, some useful feedback was received, and participants felt that my results to date were a reasonable reflection of the small business forest sector in the area. As a research note, I think it is important that this method was attempted, i.e. to try to allow
for a feedback mechanism during the research process rather than as an add-on at the end. Although interviewees had almost unanimously expressed interest in attending these meetings at the time of our interviews last summer, that interest apparently waned considerably over the course of time. A firm commitment at the time of the first interview might have been more fruitful; however, it may also have limited the number of people willing to interview at all if they were told that future time commitments were required.

2.5 Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews, the taped interviews were transcribed and all responses were entered in tabular form into a Microsoft Access database. In cases where the interview included additional topics beyond those outlined by my questionnaire, this material was entered into Word documents directly. Responses were organized according to response type. Questions that used ordinal response categories (Likert scaling) were coded and entered directly into SPSS in numeric form. Open-ended questions with longer responses were coded manually after several readings of the interviews in which key themes were identified and refined.

Within the Access database, I created a number of linked tables so I could cross-reference various types of information, such as “demographic information” with “business overview” or “environmental attitudes”. The ability to create “queries” within Access made it possible to quickly investigate themes which appeared to be emerging as I re-read interview material. For example, if it seemed from re-reading the interview material that horse loggers tended to support the Forest Practices Code\textsuperscript{8} more than conventional loggers, I could quickly generate a query to support or negate my initial conjecture. This was a very

---

\textsuperscript{8} The Forest Practices Code is a comprehensive set of forest regulations introduced by the BC government in 1994. It is discussed in Chapter Four.
useful tool, as I could ‘play’ with endless variations on the data until I was satisfied that I had captured the most interesting and informative relationships.

Once I had determined, through this iterative coding procedure, the most relevant themes, I attached a number to each key theme for each question. Coded responses were then entered into SPSS in numeric form. Once all data were entered into SPSS, tests of significance were performed between the two subgroups “Alternative” and “Conventional”. The level of significance for all tests was 0.05. The statistical tests are discussed as relevant in Chapter Six where the comparisons between the two sub-groups of ‘alternative’ and ‘conventional’ operators are summarized and described.
3 REWORKING BRITISH COLUMBIA'S FOREST ECONOMIES

3.1 Introduction

What if the economy were not single but plural, not homogeneous but heterogeneous, not unified but fragmented (Gibson-Graham 1996:260)?

This chapter describes the theoretical themes which inform the dissertation. There are three main sections, although these necessarily overlap somewhat. The first section investigates the economic geography literature which deconstructs hegemonic and singular texts of 'the economy'. This literature suggests that entities that seem to be entirely material, such as the economy, are also discursive constructs. I use this idea to understand the development and recent events in the forest industry in British Columbia. I argue that discourses have literally created the British Columbia forest industry. There is no fixed truth revealed in these discourses. Rather they are necessarily partial and incomplete. Acknowledging that the hegemonic account of the forest industry is one partial and incomplete story opens up the possibility of other stories that might be told as well.

The second section of the chapter discusses the metaphor of 'the center and the margin'. Small business is situated in the margins of the corporate forest industry; the hinterland is marginal to the heartland by which it is defined. Feminist and post-colonial interpretations of processes of marginalization provide insights into understanding this economic marginalization of these 'other' places and business practices.

In the third section, I introduce the concept of multiple class processes as articulated by Fradd, Resnick and Wolff (1994) and Gibson-Graham (1996). I argue that multiple class processes are a way of conceptualizing movement between centre and margin which destabilizes the fixed boundaries between them, without requiring the completely fluid...
restlessness demanded by some post-structuralists. I use this concept of multiple class processes in Chapter Eight as an entry point into an exploration of the subjectivity of some of the small forest operators I interviewed. Revealing varied and contradictory small forest operators’ identities through an entry point of class disrupts the duality of either conventional (centre) or alternative (margins). A rich diversity of forest economies can be imagined instead.

McDowell and Court (1994:728) claim that “the idea that reality is fictitious or that the fictitious is real is not yet a common notion within economic geography, where feminist and other ‘critical’ approaches have tended to remain within the discursive and theoretical constraints of the mainstream subject.” Likewise, Amariglio and Ruccio (1994:7) claim that “…it remains the case that the challenges unleashed by postmodernism to the unified, rational subject, of all forms of determinism, and to traditional epistemology have hardly been met, let alone negated, in the field of economics.” In recent years there has been an increase in work within economic geography which incorporates postmodern concerns with discourse and the power of knowledge. Trevor Barnes notes in Progress in Human Geography, that “…the movement in political economy over the last decade has been towards some poststructural perspective that emphasizes in one way or another power, discourse, culture and institutions” (Barnes:1995:427). Nonetheless, I have found it helpful at times to incorporate work from beyond the discipline of economic geography, particularly in the section where I discuss the metaphor of centre and margin.

3.2 Reading the Forest Industry as a Text

The emerging ‘new philosophy of economics’ – Barnes (1996c) calls it “‘post’-prefixed economic geography” – recognizes the “discursive elements of the production of

---

9 I use the popular phrase ‘the British Columbia forest industry’, to indicate when I am referring to the dominant account of the British Columbia forest economy. When referring to the totality of economic activity relating to
economic theories and the social conditions implied in "reading" economic writings" (Amariglio and Ruccio 1994:8). In other words, theories are produced and productive (of one effect and not another), not merely reflective. For example, Innisian staples theory does not merely describe the hinterland as something 'out there', it participates in its creation.

Increasingly, geographers recognize that theories themselves are 'texts' or narratives that tell a single and particular story, and not others that might have been told... These scholars point out the absence of certain voices in geographic narratives – in the main, those of the powerless and dispossessed – arguing against conventional scientific methods that assume a correspondence between 'reality' and its representation by geographers, the idea that maps and texts make transparent a singular meaning for the reader. (McDowell 1995:125)

Geographers such as McDowell reject the notion that theory can be held up like a mirror to reflect reality, or that the purpose of academic pursuits is to bring theory and reality closer together. Rather, a post-structuralist approach to theories understands them as discourses, which, while appearing complete, natural and self-evident, delineate only one reading of facts, and preclude other readings. In the current era of the British Columbia forest industry, for example, the same events are filtered through two different discourses, Canadian political economy and alternative forestry, producing very different interpretations. Yet these discourses appear natural, obvious and self-evident to those steeped within them.

3.2.1 Economic Discourse and the Discourse of 'the Economy'

This section summarizes Gibson-Graham's (1996) argument that economic discourse creates a totalizing representation of capitalism as the economy. She deconstructs this discourse to reveal openings and cracks, which make it possible to imagine economies other than capitalism. In Chapter Four I continue this approach of deconstructing apparently cohesive economic systems to reveal the possibility of multiple

---

10 Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson are two economic geographers who wrote The End of Capitalism as one persona to reflect and celebrate a research methodology which seeks, in part, to disrupt hierarchical structures.
economic forms, deconstructing accounts of the hegemony of 'the British Columbia forest industry' to expose them as texts rather than as a reflection of a reality 'out there'. If the British Columbia forest industry is understood as one story of the forest economy, there is room for other stories as well. Chapter four continues this 'storytelling' by presenting two theories which attempt to explain the development and current state of the British Columbia forest industry. I use my experience with small forest operators, summarized in Chapter Six, to counter the representations of small business and the hinterland found in these theories, and in Chapters Six and Seven I provide different readings – different stories – of small business and the hinterland.

Gibson-Graham argues that neoliberal and Marxist economists alike use an economic discourse which paints a picture of the economy in which capitalism is the economy. In these literatures, capitalism is depicted as total and totalizing, penetrative, annihilating. Alternatives to capitalism are weak and incapable of overcoming the totality of the capitalist economy. The discourse of capitalism contributes to the containment of efforts to resist or overcome capitalism – actually creating the globalizing hegemony with which we are now so familiar. Ironically, proponents of Marxist and other alternative development strategies contribute to the hegemonic position of capitalism through their discursive constructions of capitalism as the singular, powerful, inevitable economy, even as they seek to overcome it.

For no matter how diverse we might be, how essentialist or antiessentialist, how concerned with equality or with difference, how modernist or postmodernist, most of us somewhere acknowledge that we live within something large that shows us to be small – a Capitalism (whether global or national) in the face of which all our transformative acts are ultimately inconsequential. (Gibson-Graham 1993:12)

Capitalism is represented in a number of ways in theory and society. It appears as a 'hero', as "the bearer of the future, of modernity, of universality", liberating humanity from the struggle with nature. It is a unified system, "bounded", vitalized by "growth", governed
by a "telos of reproduction". It is "a worldwide axiomatic" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:453),
engaged in "the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and empty places" (Jameson
1991:412); all cited in Gibson-Graham [1996:7].

Gibson-Graham argues that as a result of this discourse of capitalism, "complexly
generated social processes of commodification, urbanization, internationalization,
proletarianization are viewed as aspects of capitalism's self-realization" (Gibson-Graham
1996:8). In other words, capitalism is inevitable and natural; it is "the everything everywhere
of contemporary cultural representation" (ibid. p.9). Capitalism is represented as inherently
spatial and as naturally stronger than the forms of noncapitalist economy...because of its
presumed capacity to universalize the market for capitalist commodities" (ibid. p.125).

Noncapitalist forms of economy, on the other hand, "...despite their ostensible
variety, ...often present themselves as a homogeneous insufficiency rather than as positive
and differentiated others" (ibid. p.7). If non-capitalist economic systems are discussed at
all, these "other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are
often understood primarily with reference to capitalism" (ibid. p. 6). Noncapitalist economic
practices are represented as an insufficiency, as lacking in what capitalism is. As Gibson-
Graham describes it, capitalism/non-capitalism is a binary structure "in which the first term
is constituted as positivity and fullness and the second term as negativity or lack" (ibid.). A
consequence of this discourse of a hegemonic capitalism is that economic difference is
devalued and subordinated.

...[A]s a constituent and as an effect of capitalist hegemony, we encounter the
general suppression and negation of economic difference; and in representations of
noncapitalist forms of economy, we have found a set of subordinated and devalued
states of being. What is generally visible in these representations is the insufficiency
of noncapitalist economic practices in constituting a complex economy and
determining capitalism's specific forms of existence. (ibid. p.13)
The apparent insufficiency of alternative and/or oppositional development possibilities is a product of economic discourse in the current era, of apparently singular and totalizing capitalism.

Gibson-Graham argues that the ways in which capitalism is described in the academic and popular literatures ascribes a particular fixed meaning to it — as the hegemonic, total, natural and inevitable economic system. Gibson-Graham seeks to break apart the commonplace assumption that discussions of the economic are referring to capitalism. This process of deconstructing economic discourse, far from being simply destructive, enables new possibilities — not just one but many. Bruce Willems-Braun (1996:27-28) explains that

*for Spivak (1990), the role of the critic is to read strategically, paying attention to precisely that which disrupts closure. The goal of criticism is thus not to replace one orthodoxy with a new one, but to identify the play of absence and presence, to locate the drawing of boundaries and the ‘fixing’ of identities. What deconstruction offers is not a new ‘map’, but rather ‘openings’ by which to imagine other possible configurations.

It is in this identifying of ‘the play of absence and presence’ that I wish to deconstruct the British Columbia forest industry, and reveal diverse forest economies, not just one. This resulting mix of economic practices should be viewed as *openings* in the forest economy — possibilities for a new understanding of capitalist and non-capitalist activities in the hinterland forest, and beyond.

Gibson-Graham deconstructs texts describing changes in late twentieth century capitalism to reveal their inadequacies and contradictions. In particular she undermines capitalism’s seeming monolithic and homogenous nature, exposing cracks wherein one might discover the existence of, or opportunity for, new capitalist and non-capitalist practices. The economy is then seen as a “functioning disunity” rather than a unitary singular capitalist project. It is no longer “the Economic System”, but rather a wide range of systems, interactions, situations, none of which is static.
The political power produced by stripping capitalism of its obvious and natural hegemony lies in the shift from a unitary singular articulation of ‘the economy’ (and the society ‘dependent’ upon it) to the possibility of multiple economies and societies. “Representations of society and economy cannot themselves be centered on a decentered and formless entity that is itself always different from itself, and that obtains its shifting and contradictory identity from the always changing exteriors that overdetermine it” (Gibson-Graham 1996). Decentered, shifting, contradictory identities are important themes within a ‘post-prefixed economic geography’, which are explored in section 3.3.

3.2.2 The Story of the British Columbia forest industry

The British Columbia forest industry is typically presented in terms similar to, and as part of, the totalizing capitalism described by Gibson-Graham. In Canadian political economy, there is a sense of progress in the forest industry “…which begins with competitive capitalism and moves gradually through phases of greater concentration to monopoly capitalism. In the process, independent commodity producers (the traditional petty bourgeois class) are eliminated as large corporations overtake them and transform them along with the rest of the population into wage workers…” (Marchak 1985:684). This inevitable move toward monopoly capitalism means that “…high capacity mills have come to dominate British Columbia’s rural landscape…” (Burda et al. 1998:47). There seems to be no escape from a system in which forestry corporations overtake, transform and dominate.11

Small business in forestry, particularly what is now advocated as alternative forestry or ecoforestry, is positioned as ‘other’ to corporate forestry through discursive practices in which small business – the ‘little guy’ of the forest industry – is diminished and dismissed, even through claims about its important contribution to the industry (see, for example, the

11 The idea of a relatively few mills dominating the entire rural landscape of British Columbia is absurd if one thinks of it literally, yet it is highly effective imagery to convey the overwhelming and inescapable power of forest corporations.
discussion in Chapter Four of Royal Commissioner Sloan's treatment of "...the so-called "small man" ..."). While small business is easily understood by references to numbers of employees, or amounts of revenue, or volume of shipments, it is also identified through images of 'the small man' with their connotations of a less-than-adequate masculinity. Real men are part of corporate forestry. Real firms are part of corporate forestry – part of the central story of the forest industry. Small firms are necessarily on the margin of this account.

The 'little guy' image of small forest operators, and the 'underdeveloped hinterland' in which he resides, are essentialized representations of the people and places of the forest economy. They are essentialist in that the complexities and differences between people and places are reduced to simpler, fundamental 'truths' about these realities. Sloan (1956:14), for example, claims that the 'small man' is interested "...primarily in conducting a profitable operation within the span of his own expectancy," and, based on this self-evident 'truth', concludes that large corporations will be better stewards of the forest resource under a sustained yield policy. Essentialist representations of 'the forest industry', 'the hinterland', 'forest-dependent communities' and 'forest workers', permeate the forestry literature, and will be explored in Chapter Seven. These essentialist representations are caught up in the material business and social practices of those involved in the forest industry.

Pulling apart the neat and tidy story of 'the British Columbia forest economy', exposing the loose ends, holes and openings contained in the dominant account of the British Columbia forest economy, opens up space for other stories to be heard (cf. Gibson-Graham 1996). Some of these are the stories I heard while interviewing small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley which I present in later chapters. Writing these lesser known stories does not in itself overturn the present reality of a forest industry dominated by a handful of corporate interests, nor the uncertain future of forest workers employed by these
corporations. However, it does challenge the notion of the inevitability of capitalist development that suffocates attempts to provide alternative economic development trajectories. It seems important to recognize that these other stories are taking place now, concurrent with the dominant story of 'the British Columbia forest economy' rather than describing them as harbingers of utopian alternative development schemas, as is done in the alternative forestry literature.

3.3 Centres and Margins in Economic Geography

Although core/periphery concepts have been used literally in economic geography for over fifty years, 'centre and margin' has recently become a prominent metaphor in feminist and post-structuralist theory, and has been applied to economic geography research as well. In Gibson-Graham’s (1996) discussion of the economy, capitalism is depicted to fill the centre, with non-capitalism ever and always situated at the margin. Capitalism/noncapitalism can be seen as an “A/not-A dichotomy” (Massey 1994:256, citing Jay 1981) of centre and margin, which is also expressed in Male/female, White/nonwhite, Straight/queer social relations.

There are parallels between the use of Heartland/hinterland in Canadian political economy, and the centre/margin metaphor. For these reasons, I explore in this section, some of the ways in which centre and margin have been used by feminists and post-structuralists. I argue that essentialism is a problem in some feminists’ approaches to the production of marginality, and that because of this there are limits to the usefulness of the metaphor of centre and margin. A number of writers suggest movement between centre and margin as a way of understanding identity in nonessentialist terms. In section 3.4, I describe multiple class processes as an entry point into discussions of subjectivity, which recognizes movement, while also recognizing the situatedness of subjectivity in place and time.
3.3.1 Centre and Margin

The idea of centre and margin can be understood as part of what Steven Pile calls 'dualistic epistemologies'. "Under the regime of dualistic epistemologies, class is "working class and bourgeois", gender is "man and woman", sexuality is "straight and gay," and race is "black and white"; these categories are socially created, and they serve to maintain those categories as legitimate (Pile 1994:267)."

Feminist critiques of western dualisms argue that the relentless categorization of knowledge into dualities, into either/or's, this or that's, began with Kant's splitting of the human subject into Reason and Emotion. From this, particular forms of knowing came to be valued, and associated with the masculine. Time, reason, mind became associated with male, while space, emotion and body became associated with female. As Gillian Rose has pointed out, "...it is no bizarre metaphorical accident that it is Mother Earth and Father Time" (Rose 1993, cited in Pile 1994:259). Pile notes further that the use of this particular dualism normalizes certain aspects of the masculine experience, "...for example, in male, white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied, articulate, clean, disciplined bodies" (Pile 1994:259).12

Audrey Kobayashi (1994:227) argues that

Dualistic thinking organizes the world according to oppositional categories – man/nature; culture/nature; man/woman; state/civil society; theory/practice; black/white – that order our existence. Such categories are more than a means of imposing intellectual order; they also exert and maintain political power and they almost always involve the privileging of one over the other (Collins, 1990, p.225). The metaphors of enlightenment dualism have proved amazingly durable and powerful in influencing subsequent thought and in the construction of racist and sexist social relations that characterise modernity. Indeed, these dualisms have become so naturalized in everyday thought, language and actions that it is difficult to transform their metaphysical heritage in changing human relations.

---

12 This is an absurdly brief outline of a sophisticated argument. This is not the place for a detailed history of the construction of masculinity and femininity. What I take from these feminist critiques is the longstanding tendency to 'other', and the power relations caught up in the production of gender.
In geography, Pile argues, dualistic epistemologies allow geographers "...not only to position themselves on the side of Reason and to value their experience, but also to strip others of the capacity of understanding and to marginalize or overlook their experiences, as feminist geographers have long pointed out for women. ...This kind of positioning also distances "them" (there) from "us" (here), and allows us to actually see them as them" (ibid. p. 260).

In British Columbia, this positioning of knowledge is spatialized through the heartland/hinterland metaphor; "them" (there) are in the hinterland, doing manual labour, while "us" (here) are at the academy, or government, or corporate headquarters in Vancouver or Victoria. Marginalization of them (there) is viewed as the inevitable and obvious result of economic and social processes. Resource communities are repeatedly written into the margins of British Columbia's economy and society; yet this process is rarely questioned, and is often presented as a 'natural' outcome of economic processes – in many ways similar to the 'natural' marginalization of women or people of colour.

Further marginalization occurs in the very attempt to bring marginalized people closer to the centre. Connelly (1996), in his discussion of 'standpoint epistemology and the politics of identity', describes 1980s research on race relations in which the black community was considered by mainstream (white, male) academics as 'the problem'. Explanations of 'the problem' tended therefore to be in terms of deviance from white middle-class norms. In a similar fashion, as described in Chapter Seven, explanation of the 'problem' of hinterland resource communities tends to be explained, by heartland academics, in terms of their deviance from the norms of heartland centres.

---

13 Victoria is the political capital of British Columbia, while Vancouver is the economic capital of the province. Located in the southwest corner of the province, they form the 'heartland' of the province in Canadian political economy, and are popularly and theoretically recognized as such.
Economic processes do not just ‘happen’ to affect different people differently, nor does economic theory merely reflect pre-existing sexist and racist structures. Rather it is actively engaged in their construction. As Derek Gregory (1997) has noted with regard to post-colonialism, “it is the very production of the categories of the normal and the marginal – center and periphery – that needs to be called to account.” Similarly, the ways in which the centre and periphery of the British Columbia forest economy are produced in and through Canadian political economy need to be examined; these are the focus of Chapter Seven.

McDowell (1995) argues that the significance of gender is “...assumed rather than investigated and unpacked, and so women’s inferiority is taken for granted and, more significantly, seems inescapable” (McDowell 1995:156). Feminist geographers reveal openings and opportunities for resistance through this ‘unpacking’ of taken-for-granted constructions such as gender or race. Through stories of women’s experience as other to men, people of colour as other to whites, and homosexuals as other to heterosexuals, the categories of normal and marginal have been chipped away by social theorists. McDowell argues: “if gender is defined not as a fixed or stable category but as a construct congruent with the discourses and practices of particular locations, then it becomes possible to examine not only the ways in which particular heterosexual performances become hegemonic but also the prospects of resistance” (ibid.). Gibson-Graham (1996) makes a parallel argument with respect to economic identities – that destabilising capitalism as a hegemonic, holistic system perforates its smooth surface, revealing opportunities for new ways of ‘doing economics’. Likewise, if the marginal position of hinterland forest workers is not seen to be fixed, but is recognized as a construct resulting from a particular discourse as well as the material practices of corporate forestry, then it becomes possible to conceive of, and recognize other constructs and subject positions.
The distinctive and different experiences of women relative to men, of disabled relative to abled people, queer relative to straight, colored relative to white, undermine the notion of a single norm or universal. Capitalism has become the economic ‘norm’. Other economic forms, such as feudal, communal, or independent classes are subsumed under the umbrella of capitalism. That is, rather than being recognized for what they are – distinct and different – they are made invisible by being reduced to a single, homogeneous system, capitalism.

Using hinterland small business as an entry point into an analysis of the forest industry enables me (requires me) to break apart the dichotomy of corporate (centre) and hinterland small forest operators (margin). It also enables me to break apart the spatial centre and margin – heartland and hinterland – of staples discourse.

By writing (about) small business in forestry, I contribute to the growing literature within economic geography that recognizes that so-called universals are not necessarily or inevitably so. Exposing the ruptures and cracks of universals such as capitalism reveals and destabilizes the exclusionary power of categories such as ‘the norm’, creating awareness of, and openings for, alternative economies.

3.3.2 Essentialism in the Margins

The awareness of processes of marginalization, and the construction of categories such as gender, race, sexuality and class, has introduced a new form of essentialism – the essentializing of the margin itself.

For the academic writing about difference, attempts to give voice to ‘the margins’ raises all sorts of ethical and methodological questions. Perhaps most problematic of all, is the difficulty in speaking about the ‘othering’ of marginalized groups in society, without reinforcing that very process of othering. This problem has been raised by a number of feminists regarding ‘identity studies’, and by Gibson-Graham in relation to economic,
particularly Marxist, discourse. Chouinard and Grant (1995:138) claim that "(o)ne key feature [of what they call 'The Project' – that is, feminist and critical geography] is an emphasis on processes of oppression rooted in three sets of relations: class, gender and race. In conference sessions we hear this "trinity" so often it has almost become a group chant...." Their point is that "...in some ways 'The Project' is as partial and exclusionary as those that have gone before."

McDowell cautions that some feminists have inadvertently contributed to an essentialized 'othering' of women through their insistence on describing women as always the Other. She accuses gender theorists such as Iris Young of "bodily essentialism", arguing that "...by taking for granted women's singularity as the embodied 'Other', rather paradoxically Young [has] reinforced it in her attempt to establish a version of justice based on group membership" (McDowell 1997:164).

For example, Kim England writes "feminism and poststructuralism have opened up geography to voices other than those of white, Western, middle-class, heterosexual men. This allows for a geography which, as Lowe and Short put it, 'neither dismisses nor denies structural factors, but allows a range of voices to speak..."(England 1997:70, emphasis mine). England, as well as Lowe and Short (1990), imply that white, Western, middle-class, heterosexual men speak with one voice, and that it is the role of feminists and poststructuralists to open geography up to other voices. While efforts to open up geography to other voices is desirable, the inadvertent consequence of England's approach is the maintenance of the hegemonic gender category of "male"; an approach which continues to position these other voices as weak and tentative. Alternatively, a range of gender constructions can be articulated which destabilize both "male" and "female" constructions.
Chouinard and Grant illustrate the exclusions of 'the Project' through a discussion of their own experiences as (for one) a lesbian and (for the other) a physically disabled person. They draw on their own subjectivities to understand better marginality:

From these vantage points, it becomes clear that it is high time for all geographers to do what they can to ensure that "other" voices and practices are taken seriously in struggles to reconstruct "the Project." This does not mean simply tinkering with theories and methods so that lesbians and disabled women become another "topic" or "viewpoint;" it means drawing on these vantage points in revolutionary ways which challenge and disrupt our understanding of processes of exploitation and oppression.... It means not being content with representations of inclusion, but insisting that the voice and presence of "others" in the research process is an essential part of the struggle for social change. (Chouinard and Grant 1995:138)

I take from their work the importance of understanding processes of exploitation and oppression. But ultimately Chouinard and Grant succumb to an essentializing discourse of power structures in society as they develop their argument:

A sensitivity to the place-specificity of processes of oppression and resistance, and to the play of differences within those places, permits sophisticated explanations of the politics of creating and recreating "otherness," of how "micro" processes of power and oppression fit within the big picture of societies driven by enduring classist, racist, sexist, heterosexist, ableist and ageist power relations or structures. (ibid. p.160, my emphasis)

They maintain a discourse of stifling, overpowering, oppression of difference by 'the centre'. If these structures are enduring, how can we ever how to break them apart?

This discursive reluctance to break apart the duality of oppressed and oppressor – whether regarding economic entities or individuals' subjectivity – stifles possibilities for social change. If in the end the (white, straight, male) bourgeoisie is ever and always the oppressor, then we cannot move beyond the 'group chant' described by Chouinard and Grant. There is a danger that the celebration of difference will only reinforce and even venerate marginalization.

While it is readily accepted in the "post-prefixed" literature that identities are social constructions, and that 'gender' or 'race' should not be essentialized, categories of oppressed and oppressor too often remain fixed. For example, Pam Moss (1995:83) writes
"[d]ifference embodies oppressive and exploitative relations and the experiences of the processes of marginalization." If difference is always equated with 'the marginal' and 'the oppressed', oppression and exploitation of difference continue to be 'natural'. 'Different' voices will only be included as 'others', that is, always on the margin. Furthermore, the implication that experiences of oppression can be mapped on to categories of gender or race is misguided. To illustrate this point, Pratt (1997:171) retells an anecdote told by Spivak (1989) about an upper-class African gay man admired at a party for his 'roots', who unsettles his admirers by listing, among his ancestors, a slave trader. Spivak concludes, "Collaboration with the enemy does not depend on the color of your skin or on your gender." And Pratt adds, "Spivak's point is that we all collaborate with some enemies and that the points of difference are situated within nets of interwoven similarities and shared complicities." Small forest operators may or may not be exploited by corporate forestry, may or may not exploit their own workers, may or may not oppress or be oppressed through racism or sexism. Their marginality and centrality will shift about, depending upon the particularities of the issue at hand.

Movement has been proposed by writers such as Pratt and Spivak as a way of understanding subjectivity while rejecting the rigid duality of 'centre/margin'. In the next section, I discuss movement as a metaphor for the political resistance to fixed identities, arguing that it is useful in the abstract, but often limited by its failure to acknowledge the rootedness of economic and social life. In the final section, I turn to the concept of multiple class processes as an alternative approach, which I argue, enables movement but also recognizes the importance of fixing reference points of identity. It is through these fixed reference points that possibilities of solidarity arise.
3.3.3 Movement as a Non-essentializing Metaphor

If difference is to be celebrated, rather than marginalized, subjectivity must be understood in a way which does not require an essentialized centre. If being not-White is what gives identity to an ‘other voice’, the category White must be maintained in order for that voice to be maintained as not-White – this is paralyzing. In this section, I explore ways of writing about subjectivity which does not require a centre. In Chapter Eight this discussion will be extended to writing about the economic positions of forest workers in the hinterland in a way that does not require an oppositional relationship with the centre – the corporate heartland.

Writers such as Pratt and Hanson (1994), Massey (1994), Spivak (1988) or Gibson-Graham (1996), who seek a nonessentialist understanding of subjectivity, find movement useful as a metaphor. "Movement and mobility have been important tropes in the rethinking of feminist subjectivity, based on the idea that a subject constantly on the move would be more aware of its instability and exclusions" (Dowling 1995:25).

Hanson and Pratt (1995) develop ‘mobility stories’ out of “the idea of a continuous shuttle between center and margins” used by feminist theorists such as Trinh Minh-ha. Trinh argues that “movement and exile are metaphors that articulate an attempt continuously to displace boundaries between center and margins, thereby displacing controlling reference points” (cited in Hanson and Pratt 1995:19). Movement, according to Hanson and Pratt (1995:20), is useful as a metaphor because “we can destabilize unexamined dualisms and boundaries as we begin to see the inherent connections between inside/outside, center/margins, same/other.”

Massey (1994:11) agrees: “one gender-disturbing message might be – in terms of both identity and space – keep moving!” Likewise, Spivak (1990:37, cited in Pratt 1997:169) says “as far as I can tell one is always on the run, and it seems I haven’t really had a home
base – and this may have been good for me. I think it’s important for people not to feel rooted in one place."

The image of subjectivities in flux, unconstrained, fluid, open to every possibility, holds considerable appeal. However, I anticipate three problems with the current emphasis on mobility, at least with respect to my study of small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley.

First, and this is recognised by Hanson and Pratt, a celebration of movement may overlook the reality that many people’s lives, (and from the perspective of their study of women and work patterns in Worchester, MA, perhaps more so for women) are very local. Local processes of identity construction need to be better understood. Pratt and Hanson (1994:9) caution that “an overvaluation of fluidity as a subject position may lead away from a careful consideration of the processes through which identities are created and fixed in place.”

Second, the focus on movement may destabilise constructed representations of ‘the Other’, but, will not likely impact on the hegemonic construction of the White Heterosexual Male. This metaphor of movement between center and margins implicitly maintains the binary structure – after all, it will be the other doing all the (tiresome) moving.

Third, the metaphor of movement and fluidity seems particularly contentious with respect to small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley. As the review of Canadian political economy reveals in Chapter Five, the literature on ‘resource dependency’ and ‘resource communities’ tends to emphasize the transient ‘nature’ of resource workers. Suggesting movement here, metaphorically or otherwise, does not seem appropriate. There is a certain irony in this recent celebration of the metaphor of movement as a means of resisting the fixing of identity. Forest workers in the hinterland are described in the literature as mobile and transient, and therefore less capable as resource managers, less concerned with environment or community – geographically mobile but socially fixed. Resource
communities are likewise contrasted with the ‘rural idyll’ community type (suggested to be found in farming communities, for example), and found lacking.

Many feminists reject the ‘rural idyll’ as an essentialized construction of a world which can be stifling. Some have turned to the city to explore in situ mobility of subjectivity as a site of freedom to explore new identities. Writers such as hooks, Young, and Chambers recognise the limits to movement (hooks 1992), and look to the contemporary city as a place in which subjectivity is neither fixed nor stable, where one is made aware of the limits of subjectivity (Chambers 1994), but where one may, if one chooses, build relationships on affinity (Young 1992). Dowling (1995:28) is critical of this work which focuses on the city for failing to acknowledge that “relations to place are also socially constructed.”

Pratt and Hanson (1994:9) also recognize limits to this valorization of the city. They write that “…space, place and difference are intertwined in at least three ways. First, the city has been taken as a prototype of communities based on affinity rather than identity. Second, the constitution of difference is not only a social but also a spatial process and varying systems of difference operate in different places; this forces the recognition that differences are constructed. Third, the physical act of displacement can open up a moment of awareness of difference from others; it can prompt a reversal of ‘centre’ and ‘margins’.”

Nonetheless the idea, best exemplified by Young (1990) that the city offers the best potential for enjoying difference ‘at a distance’, respectfully, “without the pretence of empathy or any real mutual understanding (Pratt and Hanson 1994:7)” may be a reaction to essentialized readings of the ‘rural idyll’. Replacing an essentialized reading of the rural idyll with an essentialized reading of the affinity-based urban parade does not bring us any closer to an understanding of difference and identity in place, neither does competing to find the ‘best place to be different’. The rural idyll need not be the only reading of community life outside of the city. Displacement – movement – may prompt a reversal of ‘centre’ and
margins" – but 'centre and margin' remain. There has been no acknowledgement of the
contradictoriness of subject positions, and 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' remain fixed as
categories.

3.4 Multiple Class Processes (and Other Sticky Situations)

3.4.1 Grounding Movement

We cannot capture identity in motion; the best we can do is to glean 'snapshots'
which are necessarily incomplete. A number of theorists have proposed alternative means
to access knowledge of the subject, which, while rejecting the "seemingly rigid discursive
practices exhibited by dualistic categories" (Pile 1994:257), are able nonetheless to capture
the fluidity of identity. These alternative understandings build on the metaphor of centre
and margin. What I take from a number of otherwise varied approaches is the recognition
that identities, economic or otherwise, are never completely fluid; they get 'stuck' in places
(Pratt and Hanson1994). Most people do rest, get rooted, and find a home base.

Pratt and Hanson (1994:10) suggest that a focus in cultural studies on leisure may
have influenced the prevalent focus on movement, nomadism and displacement. They
point out that most lives are lived locally, suggesting limitations to movement as a metaphor
for identity. Grounding identity in place is not the same as fixing it. Identity, whether
economic or social, can and will change, creating different relationships, different
contradictions and different material circumstances. But this change is not likely to occur at
the breakneck speed suggested in some of the literature.

14 In terms of the hinterland forest workers, this can be seen in the ways that 'common sense discourse' (Dunk
1994) replaces 'the staples discourse'. Common sense amongst Northern forest workers finds over-educated,
urbanites lacking because they do not have manual skills or knowledge of 'the bush'. The hinterland thus
becomes the centre, and heartlander values are marginalized; but centre and margin remain solidly in place.
Liz Bondi (1993:96) says, “singular, coherent identities are only ever mythical constructs.” The British Columbia forest industry is presented in the literature as just such a singular and coherent identity – corporate, with professional and managerial activities centered in the heartland, exploiting the resources (including labour) of the hinterland. The two literatures informing the debate over the forest industry also contain singular representations of forestry-dependent communities and the forest workers’ living. In these representations, forest workers and communities are constructed as insignificant, marginal and incapable of making change.

Bondi recognizes that constructions of identity can be effective in perpetuating systems of domination and exploitation, and that some constructions of identity will be more politically significant than others. Understanding representations of forest workers and forest communities as mythical constructs with particular effects makes visible the role these constructs play in maintaining a system of corporate forestry. Singular identities remain caught up in exploitive social relations when they are left unchallenged, written into a discourse which constructs them as natural, obvious and unchanging.

Feminists who refuse to accept the inevitability of marginality are useful for understanding this marginal position of the hinterland in the British Columbia forest industry. bell hooks, for example, sees the margin more as a place to build and create new and potentially revolutionary cultures. hooks (1990) argues that the margin allows a “space to imagine alternative ways of existing and the opportunity to create counter-hegemonic cultures” (cited in Pratt 1997:171). Parmar (1990), cited in Pile (1994:269), expresses “...her dissatisfaction with the center/margin dualism, which is often used to map relations between the same, or center, and the other or margin.” In the case of British black women, she argues that these women need to develop their own identities, rather than accept the identity constructed for them by mainstream society. “Such a narrative thwarts that binary
hierarchy of centre and margin: the margin refuses its place as ‘Other’” (Parmar, 1990:101, cited in Pile 1994:269). In my interviews with small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley, I sensed that many refused to take their position as ‘Other’; their actions and their words belied a sense of marginality.

Pile (1994:258) suggests, concerning the construction of knowledge and power within geography, that “...the abandonment of dualistic epistemologies offers the potential for different kinds of knowledge to become legitimate. Here, I develop one alternative geometry of knowledge – a third space, which is located in neither the center nor the margin. This is more than just an epistemological shift, it is about opening up the possibility of new oppositional languages...”

Gibson-Graham suggests that third space may be a way of envisioning a new kind of economy in which there is a multiplicity of capitalisms and noncapitalisms. “If we are to take postmodern spatial becomings seriously then it would seem that we must claim chora, that space between the Being of present Capitalism and the Becoming of future capitalisms, as the place for the indeterminate potentiality of noncapitalisms” (Gibson-Graham 1996:90). She refers to Bhabha’s third space, as well as the “thirdspace of political choice” depicted by Soja and Hooper (1993: 198-9), finding similarity between these and Rose’s (1993) “paradoxical space” and deLauretis’s “space-offs”. Paradoxical space is, according to Rose, that space which is neither here nor there, neither centre nor margin, multidimensional and overlapping (described in Dowling 1995:29). But as Dowling notes in her discussion of paradoxical space, it is a difficult concept to work with empirically.

Bhabha envisions third space as hybridity, as recognition of the individual’s shifting positions in relation to ‘others’ as well as to sameness. “...the third space is a useful metaphor because it intertwines not only place, politics and hybrid identities, but also the
real, the imaginary and the symbolic; more than this, it refuses to settle down because it always implies that there are other third terms" (Bhabha 1994, cited in Pile 1994:272).

Furthermore, Bhabha (1994) notes that "...the subject is not autonomous, she or he is continually positioned in relation to others" (ibid, p.270). Routledge (1996) also interprets Bhabha's work on ‘third space’ in his discussion of the possibilities for a third space of activism within the academy:

This third space involves a simultaneous coming and going in a borderland zone between different modes of action. A prerequisite for this is that we must believe that we can inhabit these different sites, making each a space of relative comfort. To do so will require investing creative ways to cross perceived and real “borders”. The third space is thus a place of invention and transformational encounters, a dynamic in-between space that is imbued with the traces, relays ambivalences, ambiguities and contradictions, with the feelings and practices of both sites, to fashion something different, unexpected.

A third space holds considerable theoretical appeal as a nonessentializing approach to difference. In practical terms, however, it is challenging to describe ‘third space identities’. The very act of writing about them fixes their identities. Positioning hinterland small forest operators is problematic. I wish to avoid simply replacing the representations of forest workers in Canadian political economy, or alternative forestry, with my own ‘truth statements’ about forest workers. Using multiple class processes, which emphasize relationality, material practices, and semi-fluidity, enables a nonessentialist exploration of economic difference and subjectivity.

3.4.2 Multiple class processes

Multiple class processes break down the duality of centre and margin with the recognition that in some ways, at some time, we are all oppressed and oppressor, exploited and exploiter. Using multiple class processes as an entry point into subjectivity, while recognising that economic subjectivity is overdetermined by other social processes, is one way of addressing the contradictions and stickiness of identity while rejecting essentialized classed, gendered, or racialised positions. Gibson-Graham used this approach in
describing members of an Australian mining community. I discuss multiple class processes briefly in this section and return to apply this approach more fully in Chapter Eight after describing the case study results.

Gibson-Graham presents an alternative conceptualization of class which, she argues, enables transformation without revolution. She uses the term 'class processes', which can be understood as taking place wherever work is performed which produces surplus value. Exploitation thus can occur in households, collectives, churches and so on, as well as capitalist firms. Gibson-Graham argues that using this understanding of class as a process of appropriation and distribution of surplus value enables differentiation of the various forms of class processes, thereby undermining the "presumptive or inherent dominance of capitalist class relations". Of interest for this dissertation, is her assertion that "economic sites that have usually been seen as homogeneously capitalist may be re-envisioned as sites of economic difference, where a variety of capitalist and noncapitalist class processes interact" (Gibson-Graham 1996:18). The small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley revealed a diversity of economic forms that is well suited to this type of analysis, as Chapter Eight will demonstrate.

By focusing on the appropriation and redistribution of surplus value, wherever it occurs, Gibson-Graham is able to identify and address issues of concern to socialists, such as inequity and injustice, without having to force her analysis or her political program through the discourse and structures of 'the working class'. For example, in case studies of Australian coal mining towns, Gibson-Graham (1996) found a multiplicity of independent, feudal (domestic), communal, and capitalist class processes. In each case, economic identities are created based on economic and social roles; these identities are semi-fluid rather than static.
Class processes are overdetermined, that is, constituted at the intersection of all social dimensions, and participating in their production as well. "This mutual constitution of social processes generates an unending sequence of surprises and contradictions. As the term "process" is intended to suggest, class and other aspects of society are seen as existing in change and as continually undergoing novel and contradictory transformations" (Gibson-Graham 1996: 55).

Gibson-Graham is interested in the possibility of social transformation by rethinking class: "If contradiction and antagonism were seen as generating instability in every form and being, class transformation might be envisioned as a regular occurrence and noncapitalist development could become a focus of the politics of every day" (ibid. p.161). My intent has similarities to her project, but also differences. I share her enthusiasm for the possibilities of transformation envisioned as a regular occurrence, but am interested more specifically in the ways in which rethinking the role of small forest operators in the forest industry may reveal, not only possibilities for noncapitalist economic development, but also for greater freedom to explore nonessentialist expressions of subjectivity. That is, using overdetermined multiple class processes provides me with a theoretical means to explore the economic and social identities of small forest operators without replacing homogeneous representations in the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures with yet another essentializing construction.

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored issues of economic identity and class within and outside capitalism drawing on the parallels between feminist, post-structuralist and post-modern explorations of the 'other' through the metaphor of centre and margin. While research by critical theorists on British black women or working women in Worchester, MA, may seem to have little in common with (the predominantly white, male) small forest
operators in the Bulkley Valley, I believe that there are important lessons to be learned through these comparisons.

Small forest operators are positioned in the two literatures as either a marginal part of the central (corporate British Columbia forest industry) economy, or at the centre of a marginal value-based alternative forest economy. There are essentially two subject positions to define small forest operators economically, socially and culturally.

Like many feminists and post-colonialists who explore the 'margins' as a way of problematizing the 'truth statements' of the centre, I focus in this dissertation on the different practices which occur in the British Columbia forest industry. I use multiple class processes in Chapter Eight to explore a diversity of British Columbia forest economies. Using overdetermined multiple class processes as an exploration of subjectivity enables me to understand 'small business' as multiple capitalist and noncapitalist class processes, which constitute a decentered, shifting, economic disunity rather than the monolithic British Columbia forest industry presented in the literature. In the next chapter, I explore the discursive and material evolution of this 'British Columbia forest industry'.
4 CONSTRUCTING THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST INDUSTRY

4.1 Introduction: An Industry in Transition

It's almost like we're caught into where the big mills today, you know you can't stop them and you can't take any wood away from them, from that point of view they add stability, and the threat is there, if you take it away from us there'll be a whole bunch of people out of work. (small forest operator, fieldwork, Bulkley Valley, 1996)

What makes a logging contractor believe that "you can't stop them and you can't take any wood away from them"? What did he hear or experience, and how often, to convince him that "you know you can't stop them?" In Chapter One, I referred to Bruno Latour's suggestion that "we need...to look at the way in which someone convinces someone else to take up a statement, to pass it along, to make it more of a fact (Latour 1986:5, cited in Willems-Braun 1996:276). What convinced this logging contractor to take up this particular narrative of the forest industry, and pass it along?

In this chapter I explore the narrative of the British Columbia forest industry – the historical development of corporate concentration – as it is commonly explained in the literature and understood by many British Columbians, particularly in resource communities. Gibson-Graham (1996:57) argues that “[s]ociety is typically theorized as a homogeneously or hegemonically capitalist formation centered on an industrial economy, with class theorized as a social relation originating in that center.” This is the case in the British Columbia forest industry, with the dominant account of corporate forestry squeezing out possibilities of other forest economies. I argue that the discursive construction of the British Columbia forest industry as a hegemonic monolith makes it appear inevitable that corporations dominate the economic and cultural landscape of British Columbia, to the point where, as this small operator puts it, “it's almost like we're caught.”

In this chapter I outline the development of the British Columbia forest industry, as it is commonly understood and articulated in Canadian political economy, alternative forestry
and elsewhere. The recession of the early 1980s is widely recognized as a turning point in the British Columbia forest industry. While booms and busts had always been a familiar feature of the British Columbia forest industry, it became apparent by the mid-1980s that this bust was different. As Marchak (1995:87) writes:

When the crash came in the early 1980s, the industry assured the population it was one of the cyclic downturns that were inevitable in a resource industry. When the downturn became a depression, the industry blamed labour costs and environmentalists. When, in the 1990s, the depression became a long-term condition, structural changes were undertaken, and finally there emerged some recognition that forestry as it had been practised in the profligate century was no longer profitable or possible.

But it was not just the recession and the changing economic climate it heralded that were problematic for the forest industry. A tidal wave had been gradually building in British Columbia, with factors such as environmentalism, First Nations land claims, increasing scarcity of old growth forest, all playing a part.

Over the last decade and a half British Columbia's forests have become an increasingly troubled landscape. Continual environmental protests, aboriginal blockades, reduced annual allowable cuts, sweeping technological change, deep layoffs, changing global markets, multinational takeovers, and single industry communities scrambling for survival, have all shaken the once entrenched faith in British Columbia's "green gold". (Hayter and Barnes 1997:1)

Table 8 outlines some of the major changes to have occurred in what is often referred to as the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist forest industry. These changes are described throughout the chapter.

| Table 8: Characteristics of the Fordist and post-Fordist Forest Industry |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Operations | -1950 | -> | ~1990 |
| Resource Use | Natural Regeneration | Intensive Management |
| Organization | Vertical Integration | Very large and small firms |
| Production | Mass production | Flexible mass production |
| Operations | Cost minimization | Flexible specialization |
| Employment | Fordism | Value Maximization |
| Exports | Commodities | Flexibility |
| Forest Policy | Sustained Yield | Commodities |
| | | High value products |
| | | Sustainability |

In the following, I trace out the development of the British Columbia forest industry that brought it to its present-day ‘crossroad’, focusing on the structure of the industry. Given the enormous influence of forest policy, particularly tenure arrangements, on industry structure, these are discussed when appropriate. The purposes of this chapter are twofold. First, the chapter provides background information to situate my case study of hinterland small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley in the British Columbia forest industry. Second, through this review of the hegemonic narrative of the forest industry, I establish a foundation for my later exploration of forest economies in order to demonstrate that the story of the British Columbia forest industry is but one narrative, and that others are also possible.

4.2 Beginnings of an Industry

The early years of the British Columbia forest industry are usually written as a time of naïve recklessness prior to regulation. For example, Reid and Weaver (1974) refer to this time as the “period of exploitation and waste”; the Ministry of Forests (1994) refer to it as “Pioneer Days”. This phase of ‘competitive capitalism’ (Reid and Weaver 1974) in the forest industry consisted of small, labour-intensive businesses. Harvesting rights were granted easily, and stumpage rates were kept low by a government eager to develop the forest industry after the demise of the fur trade. The result was the “forest liquidation” first described by Lower (1938), and repeated in subsequent reviews of the industry, such as this summary by Marchak (1983:33):

The history and the folklore of the industry is replete with countless stories of harsh bosses, bad working conditions, a complete lack of regard for the environment or the future forest as small businessmen competed to fell record quantities of timber. The forest seemed then to be endless, and for a time so seemed the markets.

Most timber extraction occurred along the Coast during this early period, where timber was accessible, cheap transportation by water was available, and winter weather conditions were not a formidable barrier. Typically, logging occurred in good weather conditions; milling took place on site in poor conditions. The southern interior also
experienced growth between the late 1800s and the 1920s, supplying local mines and railways as well as U.S. and prairie markets. The northern interior had no significant forest industry at this time.

4.2.1 Industry Structure

The number of sawmills increased province-wide from 334 in 1914 to 542 in 1940 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of Sawmills, British Columbia, 1914 to 1940

The industry was focused predominantly on the Coast throughout this early period, as illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Timber Production, Coast vs. Interior, 1912 - 1940**

Source: Ministry of Forests Annual Reports

4.2.2 Employment

Province-wide, there were 393 persons employed in forestry in 1871; by 1911 it had jumped to 15,400. British Columbia’s population also exploded at this time, increasing by 700% over the same period (Marchak 1983:33). By the late 1920s employment in the forest industry had exceed 100,000 employees, as illustrated in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Employment in the Forest Industry, 1928 – 1940**

Source: Lands and Forests, Series K119-123

Principal Statistics of woods operations, 1926 to 1959 (1934 not available)
Employment statistics fluctuate considerably in the early era, which may reflect in part difficulties in assembling data on ‘cut and run’ operators as much as volatility in the market. The decline in employment in the early 1930s reflects the implementation of the Smoot-Hawley legislation which created barriers to U.S. markets. In 1932, Ottawa negotiated free trade on lumber within the British empire, improving prospects for the BC forest industry (Dept. of Regional Industrial Expansion 1986:23).

4.2.3 Implications of Forest Policy

Initially, land was granted outright to prospective lumbermen. Approximately 5% of the forest lands of British Columbia are still privately owned as a result of this policy. In 1896, concerned that valuable land was being alienated from the Crown, the government began to award timber leases and timber licenses, with the land remaining in the ownership of the Crown. These new timber licences were renewable annually, and transferable, causing a sudden increase in speculative timber staking.

Between 1903 and 1907, over 15,000 licenses covering 9 million hectares of Crown land were granted (Ministry of Forests 1994:268). Government involvement in the forest industry was limited during this phase of development. The “temporary tenures”, which were a means of renting out land for the purpose of cutting trees, were only granted until 1907. They were, however, easily renewed and holders of these tenures were able to maintain them long past the introduction of the first Forest Act in 1912, which ended the unregulated era.

Timber Sales Licenses (TSLs) replaced the temporary tenures and land grants of the earlier laissez-faire era. TSLs were set out and auctioned by the Forest Service, to encourage competition between companies through open bidding for rights to harvest timber on Crown land. In spite of this effort to encourage competition, large companies were able to increase their holdings under this system, and by the end of this ‘competitive
era' there was already considerable consolidation in the industry. In 1944, immediately prior to the new Forest Act and the sustained yield paradigm which would accompany it, 2,877 persons or corporations had various cutting rights throughout the province. However, of these, 58 (or 2%) held rights to 51.7% of the total tenured area, while 2,729 of these rights were tenures of less than 5,000 acres (Marchak 1983).

4.3 Fordism

Following World War II a new industrial era began, fueled by pent-up consumer demand and technological innovations induced by military requirements now available for industrial and commercial uses. What is often referred to as 'Fordism' in the literature, the long boom of the post-war years, emerged as a regime of 'management' – organized labour, corporate business, and bureaucratic government working together to ensure continued economic growth.

During the heyday of Fordism (i.e., the long boom from the Second World War to the early 1970s), the development of assembly-line techniques and Taylorism was orchestrated in North America by the three economic institutional pillars of big business, organized labour, and the state. Business and organized labour forged a mutually agreeable wage-bargain, in which management organized work practices on the factory floor in accordance with Taylorist principles in return for steadily increasing wages and improvements in working conditions for workers. Such a deal worked because of the improving productivity that stemmed precisely from those Taylorist practices (Hayter and Barnes 1997a:10).

This era of the British Columbia forest industry was characterized by large, integrated firms, a strong unionized workforce, and resource towns held together by common economic interests and similar demographics; it is considered the golden age of forestry in British Columbia. Changes in the tenure system provided greater security to
firms, encouraging increased investment. New technologies improved productivity. Higher profits for companies combined with strong unions to provide job security and hence community stability. The new sustained yield policy reassured conservationists and the public alike that their forests were being well-managed.

4.3.1 The Influence of ‘Sustained Yield’ Policy

Between 1943 and 1945, Gordon Sloan was commissioned to enquire into the state of the forest industry in British Columbia, for purposes of “protecting the lumber industry” (Marchak 1983:36). The changes in forest policy resulting from the 1945 Sloan Commission mark a shift in forest management with the introduction of “sustained yield”.

Sustained yield, in itself, is a straight-forward concept, which determines the amount of timber which can be cut over a period of time in order to ensure that the amount of timber cut is precisely equal to the amount of timber growth in the same period. In order to be able to plan the timber harvest effectively, timber withdrawals must be exactly equal to growth\textsuperscript{15}. Along with the narrow scientific objectives of sustained yield, came a new culture of rational, scientific management.

Bernard Fernow, who had brought the concept of sustained yield from Germany to his position as dean of forestry at the University of Toronto in 1907, was convinced that governments and large corporations were in the best position to undertake the long term planning required to manage forests for a sustained yield. It was not until after World War II that British Columbia was ready to embrace such a philosophy of bureaucratic management. As it was, the post war period was also a time of anti-communism in Canada, and this affected the manner in which sustained yield policies were implemented in British Columbia’s Forest Act. The emphasis on the importance of free enterprise and

\textsuperscript{15} In practice, sustained yield in British Columbia also required the removal of old-growth forest until all timber in an assigned area was even-aged, resulting in Annual Allowable Cut calculations that may be higher than the long-term sustainable cut.

78
competition might otherwise have been diminished, for Sloan was certainly skeptical by this time of the ability of free enterprise to manage the forest resources sustainably: "free enterprise" is sometimes a handy excuse for a laissez-faire policy but should not be permitted to override the public interest in seeing to it that our forests are not wasted by itinerant and irresponsible despoilers of good wood", wrote Sloan (1945:60).

Planned management became important to develop resources for the public interest. This is reflected, for example, in Orchard's testimony to Sloan in his second (1956) Royal Commission: "it is my firm belief that, if you're thinking of nothing else whatever, no consideration whatever except the public interest over a long term of years, we ought to have every square foot of forest land in British Columbia under management license."

Control over operations was certainly part of the government's preference for management units over Timber Sales as well. "Dr. Orchard admits that it is more difficult and expensive to control a large number of timber-sale operators in a public forest than one licensee of a forest management license, leaving the details to him" (Sloan 1956:65). Corporate concentration came to be seen as being in the public interest whereas small business entrepreneurs were considered 'irresponsible despoilers' out to 'cut and run'. Sloan, Orchard, and other forest managers of the time believed that through proper sustained yield management, corporations would be assured of a steady supply of timber, therefore able to provide steady employment, contribute to community stability, and provide healthy returns to shareholders. And until the collapse came in the early 1980s, that is more or less what the major forest corporations did.

4.3.2 Industry Structure

During the long boom, production was increasingly controlled by large multinational corporations, such as Macmillan Bloedel, pursuing strategies of horizontal and vertical integration (Hayter 1976), and overwhelmingly emphasized a limited range of standard
commodities, utilizing proven mass-production techniques, principally for the U.S. market (Marchak 1983; Hayter 1987).

The number of sawmills province-wide grew from 807 in 1944, to 1826 in 1950, reaching a peak of 2489 in 1955. Since then, numbers have declined significantly, see Figure 8. By 1976 only 442 sawmills were estimated to be in operation in British Columbia.

Figure 8: Number of Sawmills, British Columbia, 1945 – 1978

![Graph showing the number of sawmills in British Columbia from 1945 to 1978.]


The increasing importance of large firms during the Fordist era is reflected in Table 9, illustrating value of shipments by size of sawmill.

Table 9: Value of Shipments of Sawmills by Employee Size, 1963-76

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>1963</th>
<th>1976</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$million</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-100</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-499</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Sawmills</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1963, sawmills employing fewer than 100 people still contributed over half of the total value of shipments by sawmills in British Columbia. By 1976 small businesses
employing fewer than 100 people contributed only 24% of total value of shipments, whereas 76% of shipments were from businesses with over 100 employees. The small firm sector had declined rapidly during the post-war period.

Productivity increased in the mills dramatically during the post-war era, as did production, particularly in the Interior. Between 1944 and 1955 there was a 100% increase province-wide in the volume of production, with much of this occurring in the Interior. The gross sale value of this volume increased by 290%. The value of chip production in the Interior increased by an astounding 21000% (Sloan 1956). By 1971 lumber production had more than doubled again, as illustrated in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Lumber Production, Coast and Interior, 1951 – 1971, (thousand board feet)**


Specialization, and changing technologies led to economies of scale in both milling and logging. Hayter and Barnes (1997b:63) describe the Coastal practices of “large-scale, capital-intensive, company logging dominated by powerful machines operated by well unionized labor.” Marchak (1988:178) notes changes in logging as well: “logging which had been done by the sawmill companies or small, local contractors became impossible: independent loggers could not gain access to timber. By the 1970’s virtually all logging companies were either subsidiaries or on contract to a few large companies.”
Forestry in the Interior did become Fordist, but not until the early 1970s – the time when the so-called “industrial divide” from Fordism to post-Fordism (flexible specialization) is said to have occurred (Piore and Sabel 1984). Furthermore, Fordism occurred differently in the Interior. While coastal mills became increasingly sophisticated following the Second World War, the portable bush mill still prevailed in the 1950s in the Interior, particularly in the North (Drushka 1998). Interior firms only began to consolidate in the 1970s. The number of firms in the northern Interior increased from the late thirties until 1957, when there were 704, then decreased to 135 in 1971 (Bernsohn 1981). Over the period from the late 1960s to 1980, some 1,200 small, competitive sawmills shut down throughout the province but especially in the Interior, and of the remaining 300, most were either part of the large corporate operations, or feeding into them (Marchak 1995:87).

Very large, highly efficient mills were built in the North, in places like Prince George, Quesnel and Houston, and by the mid 1980s the Interior industry had completed an intense modernization phase (Drushka 1998:212). This modernization occurred through acquisition of harvesting rights through buying up small quotas. Nonetheless, the ‘family’ orientation of the Interior remained, and there are still fewer multinational corporations in the Interior than on the Coast (Drushka 1998).

4.3.3 Employment

The following tables compare employment in logging, sawmilling and pulp and paper between 1961 and 1980. Logging and sawmilling experienced job losses in the mid-1970s but recovered and continued to make gains until the early 1980s. The pulp and paper sector experienced gradual, steady employment growth during the period. On average, there were employment gains in all three sectors over this time period.
Woodworkers organized under the Workers' Unity League during the early 1930s (Marchak 1988:185). The long intense struggle of the “Wobblies”, then later the IWA (formed in 1937), in the many logging camps along the Coast is well-documented in “The IWA in British Columbia” (IWA 1971). A successful strike in 1946 added about 10,000 new members for a total of 37,000 members, who were concentrated along the Coast, especially in logging camps (Perry 1997:10). However it was not until after the second World War that unions made serious in-roads into the Interior, and by that time anti-Communist sentiment curtailed the strength of the unions’ bargaining positioning in labour arrangements.

Nonetheless, by the end of the Fordist era, in 1979, almost 50,000 of the province’s 85,000 forest workers belonged to the IWA, the majority of whom were mill workers (Drushka 1985:212).⁶

---

⁶ According to Statistics Canada data, there were 80,000 employees in the forest sector in 1979; these kinds of discrepancy in employment data are not uncommon owing to different collection methodologies between agencies.
Logging remained non-unionized in the Interior, especially the northern Interior. Instead, small operators continued their ‘independent’ logging operations, although their logs were more likely to be sold to major licensees than milled on site or cut into railway ties, as in generations past. Drushka (1998:131) notes that “unlike their counterparts on the Coast, Interior loggers did not rush to join the union. They did not work in big camps, as did many coastal loggers, and most of them logged only in the winter, working on their farms or at other seasonal jobs in the summer. As a result, Interior union locals were built around the sawmills, and millworkers dominated the union.”

Unemployment was rarely a problem during the Fordist era. High wages and more secure employment meant high standards of living for those living in the resource communities which were created ‘naturally’ through demand or ‘artificially’ through instant town planning. In spite of occasional ‘busts’, prospects were good in resource communities. “[In] the many Fordist forest-based mill towns found in British Columbia...high wages and employment opportunities were frequently complemented by desirable lifestyles organized around outdoor recreation” (Hayter and Barnes 1997a:11). Instant town planning focused on providing recreational amenities such as sports complexes and shopping malls for workers and their families as a way of compensating for geographical isolation and limited employment opportunities outside of the resource industry, particularly (and even within the resource industry) for women. The literature on resource communities is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

4.3.4 Implications of Forest Policy

In order to achieve ‘sustained yield’, the Ministry needed control over the timber harvest. The quota system developed to address this need, providing assured timber to

17 In 1965 the Instant Towns Act was passed, establishing guidelines for new town development in British Columbia. Responsibility for new town development was transferred from companies to new municipal structures. For discussion see Bradbury (1980).
proven operators. Since quotas were transferable, inefficient operators could sell out, making more money on their quota than the sawmill was actually worth. This system encouraged the expansion of efficient mills, with little resistance from the small inefficient operators, who could do well simply by selling out.

Most significant of the amendments to the Forest Act in 1947 was the establishment of two new tenure types, Public Sustained Yield Units (PSYUs) and Forest Management Licences (FMLs), later to become Tree Farm Licences (TFLs). In the PSYUs, operators were granted volume-based tenures through a timber sale harvesting licence, but management of the PSYUs was to be carried out by the Forest Service. FMLs were area-based harvesting licenses, originally granted in perpetuity, but after 1956 granted for a 21 year term, during which the licensee was expected to invest in production facilities (so-called appurtenance clauses) within geographical proximity to their FML.

The two types of tenure were distributed quite differently between the Coast and the Interior. By 1956, although total volumes cut were not significantly different between Coast and Interior, the apportionment was quite different, with Forest Management Licenses accounting for 62% of the cut on the Coast versus 13% in the Interior, and Timber Sales on Public Working Circle and Sustained Yield Unit lands accounting for 38% of the cut on the Coast versus 87% in the Interior.

By the 1970s, Timber Sale Harvesting Licences (evolved from Timber Sale Licences) had become a preferred tenure arrangement for government. Under these licences, companies were required to compile inventories, reforest, undertake road construction and fire suppression. Again, this trend favoured larger companies, since smaller ones could not undertake such extensive forest management practices (Marchak 1983:49).
In 1961 Pulpwood Harvesting Agreements (PHAs) were introduced, profoundly affecting the development of the North. Pulpwood Harvesting Agreements stated that additional allowable harvesting rights would be given to sawmills that demonstrated the ability to process previously unusable timber for pulpmill use in locations agreed upon by government. In 1966 consolidation was intensified with the introduction of “close utilization” standards. Close utilization standards required small or “defective” timber to be removed as well as sawlogs as a condition of a TSL. Wood which previously would not have been cut or would have been left to rot into the ground, was now required to be brought into production to be chipped for pulp.

Stumpage rates for pulpwood were fixed and low. Pulp mills were also required to purchase chips from sawmills, and prohibited from competing with sawmills at PSYU Timber Sales. The demand for chips provided sawmills with a secure market for a waste product. Sawmills with barkers and chippers could receive higher quotas, enabling increased capital investment. However, this required barkers and chippers, which smaller mills could not afford. Pulp mills tried to buy out as many sawmills as possible, to reduce chip costs and increase their access to timber. The requirement of chipping equipment led to industry consolidation and the elimination of hundreds of small outfits throughout the North.

The dramatic consolidation which occurred in the industry during this time was not embraced by everyone. Facing mounting public pressure, the government appointed Peter Pearse chair of a Royal Commission in 1975, with a mandate to investigate the implications of existing tenure arrangements in the forest industry, and to consider patterns of integration, concentration, ownership and control. Pearse covered many aspects of the forest industry; I focus on his recommendations relating to small business.

One of Pearse’s concerns was the balance between large and small firms in the industry. “The forest policies we have pursued have not … been neutral; while they have
been deliberately biased to the disadvantage of small, non-integrated firms and potential new firms, there can be little doubt that they have nevertheless accelerated the consolidation of the industry into fewer, larger and more integrated companies" (Pearse 1978:60).

Pearse found that "the scope of opportunities available for these [small] enterprises is unduly restricted in British Columbia, and that forest conditions and changing social attitudes offer a promising potential for extending them in future" (Pearse 1978:188).

Some, but certainly not all, of Pearse’s recommendations were included in the new Forest Act of 1978. A major change in the allocation of forest resources occurred through the introduction of the Small Business Program (see Appendix B). The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program was established in the 1978 Forest Act, in order “to provide opportunities for individuals and firms in the forest industry to acquire timber for their operations, and for individuals and firms to enter the industry and establish new businesses”, as well as to increase diversity, employment, competition, government revenue and forest management (Ministry of Forests, no date). The then Minister of Forests Tom Waterland suggested that the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program comprise 25% of the AAC. His suggestion was met with antagonism by the forest industry, and consequently reduced to 15% of provincial AAC as a program objective (Drushka 1985:87). In 1988, 5% of major licensee timber rights were reallocated to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, increasing the provincial allocation to the program to 13% of the total Annual Allowable Cut.

The 1978 Forest Act, along with the Timber Harvesting Contract and Sub-Contract Regulation, also set out detailed rules about relationships between licensees and

---

18 This objective has yet to be met. Currently, the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is apportioned 13% of the provincial AAC.
contractors, as well as their subcontractors. Requirements to contract out 50% of a company's logging requirements were introduced, which remain today. This legislation did not result from Pearse's recommendations, who had noted in his report the growing tendency for major licensees to contract out logging for reasons of efficiency, making such legislation unnecessary.

The Ministry of Forests (1997b:6) claims that "these two provisions evolved as a mechanism to provide contractors with a level of security similar to that enjoyed by holders of major replaceable licences." Earlier, Sloan had suggested that small operators preferred contract logging because of its greater security: "Although some operators would rather log for themselves than work for someone else, this practice of open market logging has been decreasing in favour of the greater security offered by contract and "first refusal" logging" (Sloan 1956:70).

Marchak disputes the reality of this security for contractors, arguing instead that the benefits of these contracting arrangements accrue to the large production facilities through lower cost, more flexible labour. "The contractors are not independent, since they have no ownership rights to the timber, but they shoulder the risks of over-capitalization, soft markets, and employment" (Marchak 1988:189).

4.4 Post-Fordism

The golden era of forestry did not last. Soon after the introduction of the new Forest Act came the recession of the early 1980s, severely impacting the forest industry. Walter (1997:291) claims that "the evolution of important natural resource industries in British Columbia, most importantly the forest industry, has moved from a mill/workshop to Fordist export-based economy in the post-war period, and now may be moving to a post-Fordist, corporate flexible specialization." Barnes and Hayter (1994:289) assert that "over the last
decade the forestry sector in British Columbia underwent a seachange of sorts as the industry moved from a regime of Fordism to one of flexible specialization.

Increasingly, institutional arrangements, primarily stumpage rates and tenure, were seen as bearing the responsibility for creating a governance system which encourages concentration of power, capital and access to the resource base, and contributes to instability and vulnerability in the provincial economy. In addition to these pressures, the forest industry also had to face the "falldown" which had been predicted since at least the Pearse Commission in 1978 – the reduction in quality in timber resulting from the move from old growth to second growth forests. Sustainability replaced sustained yield as a resource management paradigm, introducing new problems for forest companies accustomed to having the forests for themselves.

The forest industry and the British Columbia economy appear fundamentally altered as a result of the 1980s recession. The Ministry of Regional and Economic Development (1990:5) claims that

British Columbia emerged from the recessionary period of 1981-1986 fundamentally changed. While commodity resource products still constitute the core in terms of income and wealth creation, their contribution to employment creation has been drastically diminished by the continuous process of labour shedding due to mechanization and automation.

Three themes have become increasingly interwoven in British Columbia's forest economy: (i) the ability of major licensees to compete globally, with corresponding concerns for forest-dependent communities and workers regarding continuing job losses; (ii) increasing concern within British Columbia, the rest of Canada and in Europe over the 'sustainability' of the forest resource (and especially with preservation of remaining old growth forests), and (iii) special interest group demands that they be active participants in a much more open land use planning process.
All three of these themes have contributed, in different ways, to an increased focus on small business, especially the so-called valued-added sector, and an increased focus on local control over resources as being better able to 'solve' the problems of corporate forestry including deforestation, over-cutting, lack of or improper silviculture, job losses, and community instability. But there are important differences between analysts who understand this new role for small business as part of a post-Fordist forest industry, which remains solidly corporate; and those who interpret the same events as an indication of the increasing democratization of the forest industry, a harbinger of a new 'value economy'. These differences, which are rooted in different theoretical positions, are explored more fully in Chapter Five.

4.4.1 Restructuring and Flexibility

An important response to the recession of the early 1980s was a restructuring of the industry through acquisitions and mergers. In 1975 the ten largest companies controlled 59% of the province's harvesting rights; by 1990 this had risen to 69% (Pearse 1978 and Peel 1991), and at the end of the 1990s is at almost 68% (Marchak et al. 1999). Many of these companies are interrelated; in 1986, Marchak found that 84% of the total provincial timber cut was controlled by four interconnected groups of companies (Marchak 1995:89). During the post-Fordist era, number of sawmills declined by 39% in the Interior, from 235 in 1979 to 144 in 1993. On the Coast, however, number of sawmills remained relatively stable, with 115 in 1979 and 116 in 1993 (see Figure 11).
Productivity improvements were significant during the rapid growth years of the 60s and 70s, but have slowed in recent years (see Figure 12). During this same period, employment in the forest industry has declined. In logging, employment has dropped from 24,300 in 1980 to 18,600 in 1995. Sawmilling and planing mill employment declined from 35,800 in 1980 to 29,100 in 1995. Between 1980 and 1994, there was a decline of 3,600 workers in pulp and paper (all from Marchak et al. 1999:104-05).

Barnes and Hayter (1994:298) claim that "..the recession [of the early 1980s] signaled the existence of longer term forces of structural change that continue to have an effect, a change that is best conceived, as we have argued elsewhere (Barnes and Hayter
1992), as a transition from Fordist to post-Fordist production models.” Flexibility, particularly labour flexibility, is a key component of the post-Fordist system of production. “…the post-Fordist labour process can be defined as a flexible production process that is based on flexible machines or systems and an appropriately flexible workforce” (Jessop 1989:29).

Barnes and Hayter make two important observations about this time of transition in the industry. One, that many resource communities have suffered during this transition; and two, that the impacts have not been felt evenly, with more disruption occurring in the coastal industry. As they put it, “much of the burden of that transition fell on the coastal single-industry forest communities” (Barnes and Hayter 1994:289).

Restructuring occurred in regionally diverse ways. Grass and Hayter (1989) found that the recession was experienced differently between the coastal and interior regions due to different histories of development. The older coastal plants experienced a greater degree of employment change, especially job loss. In addition, coastal plants were more likely than interior mills to adjust their product mix and to seek out more geographically diverse markets.

Changes in production in the British Columbia forest industry revolved around three kinds of flexibility: i) production technology, i.e. computer-assisted machinery and associated work practices; ii) a new type of flexible labour market organization; and iii) flexibility in local economic strategies of forest communities trying to cope with the latest manifestation of the tension between the mobility of capital and the rootedness of place (Hayter and Barnes 1997a:8).¹⁹

Technological change has been key to the transition in the forest industry (Hayter 1988). Barnes (1996b) found that the changes in MacMillan Bloedel’s Chemainus

¹⁹ Of course, these factors interact in complex ways, and there is heated debate over the nature and causes of the new flexibility (see the debate between Gertler (1988, 1989) and Schoenberger (1989) for a broad overview).
operations exhibited characteristics of flexible specialization, but for a significantly reduced in-house workforce. Some functions, such as planing, were contracted out to non-unionized shops. The impacts of technological change leading to reduced in-house employees was felt throughout the resource communities studied by Barnes and Hayter (1992; see also Hayter, Grass and Barnes [1994] and Barnes and Hayter 1994). Many laid-off workers found informal work at much lower wages, and their spouses needed to find employment as well. This employment was often in the tourism industry, which Chemainus encouraged through a series of murals celebrating the community’s past. But as Barnes argues, “given the poor working conditions and pay, such post-Fordist employment was no match for the heyday of Fordism that it replaced” (Barnes 1996b:63).

Marchak et al. (1999:102-03) claim that “the highly computerized industry needs workers who are flexible, can adapt to new demands, can move in and out of different roles, and are innovative as well as productive. In forestry, as in other industries, this shift from “Fordist” principles to “flexibility” principles has caused labour conflict in some cases. In other cases, it has led to agreements between unions and management to permit and encourage change. Typically the trade-off involves higher wages for fewer, less rigidly defined workers.”

The dominant trend, paralleling the shift toward flexible mass production, is the move from “Fordist” labour relations, characterised by principles of seniority and strong job demarcation, to “flexible operating cultures” (Barnes and Hayter 1992; Hayter and Barnes 1992; Hayter, Grass, and Barnes 1994). This complex trend includes efforts both to produce a multi-skilled “core” workforce and to reduce labour costs, including by relying more on “peripheral” workforces. (Hayter 1996:112)

The core-periphery labour structure established during the Fordist period may be even further entrenched in the post-Fordist period. The core-periphery structure contains core mill workers who are generally unionized and well-paid for clearly demarcated tasks, and peripheral, non-unionized, logging contractors. In the current era, some changes in this structure found by analysts include the contracting out of previously ‘core’ functions such as
the planing arrangements in Chemainus, as well as re-training and functional flexibility of core workers. In 1993, 83% of logging activity across the province was carried out by contractors, with 100% of Interior logging conducted by contractors, versus only 48% on the Coast (Price Waterhouse 1994:15, cited in Hayter 1999). There has been a steady growth in the number of logging firms over the period 1979 – 1993 (see Figure 13), reflecting the increased use of contractors rather than in-house loggers.

**Figure 13: Number of Establishments in Logging, Coast and Interior BC, 1979 – 1993**

Source: Statistics Canada Cat. 25-202

Hayter (1999:8) argues that the extensive use of logging contractors reflects their efficiency, both in terms of lower labour costs as well as their “greater flexibility in making faster decisions, coping with highly varied conditions, and more fully utilizing machinery and equipment.”

The vast majority of firms in logging are very small businesses. Ninety percent of the 3,851 small businesses in forestry (which includes logging and silviculture but not manufacturing) in British Columbia in 1995 employed fewer than twenty employees (BC
Stats 1995). The presence of many logging firms, each employing relatively few employees, suggests the kind of versatility and flexibility referred to by Hayter.  

There may also be scope for smaller, flexibly specialized producers of 'value-added' products. Value-added is predicted to occur through a shift to flexible mass production in large firms and batch production in smaller, interconnected and geographically proximate firms (Rees and Hayter 1996).

There has been considerable attention paid to the potential of value-added forest industries in British Columbia (see the BC government’s Jobs and Timber Accord, for example [Ministry of Forests 1997b], in which the government sets out employment targets for value-added forest industries, and links these jobs to timber supply to major corporations). In spite of this, there is surprisingly little firm or employment data for the value-added industries. In 1986, the Dept. of Regional Industrial Expansion commissioned a report on specialty wood products which found 195 specialty product mills in the province, with 72 percent of these concentrated in the Lower Mainland (DRIE 1986:7). (Employment data were not provided for these firms.) Price Waterhouse (1994) reported in 1992 that there were 565 firms and 11,000 full-time jobs in value-added industries, which comprise remanufacturing, engineered building components, millwork and ‘other wood products’ industries. There have been no studies since 1992 to update these employment figures. Recent Price Waterhouse reports on the forest industry have estimated trends in value-added employment (Marchak et al. 1999).

---

20 The difficulty in tracking logging firms is indicative of the entrepreneurial nature of this industry. In 1988 Statistics Canada changed reporting practices in the logging industry, because, as they noted in their Principal Statistics 1988:7, “The universe for logging contains a large number of small, unincorporated businesses; many are owner operators and do not have employees. Normal methods for establishing survey universe information, developed to track incorporated companies with employees, will fail to record these small operations. While this is not a major problem within the manufacturing universe it leads to undercoverage in logging.” For this reason, Statistics Canada began, in 1987 to include Revenue Canada information on unincorporated firms in logging, resulting in more than a doubling of recorded firms.
A less optimistic view on the increase in small business in forestry is that it is either a direct result of corporate downsizing (for example, some employment losses within MacMillan Bloedel were replaced by arrangements with contract loggers [Barnes and Hayter 1994]); or a reaction to unemployment, for example, in the creation of tourism small business in Chemainus to replace jobs lost at MacMillan Bloedel (Barnes and Hayter 1992). In either case, the ‘new’ jobs are, on average, lower paying and less secure than in the Fordist era (Marchak et al. 1999). Restructuring of the labour force appears to be an inevitable aspect of the new economy. If capital is to remain in British Columbia in the face of emerging opportunities in southern markets, particularly in pulp but also in dimension lumber, it must be able to compete on the new terms, particularly with respect to labour (Marchak 1995).

During the recession, provincial numbers of small businesses in the forest industry did increase, as illustrated by Table 10. By 1984, small logging and silviculture firms had increased 11% from 1982, and small manufacturing firms had grown 25% over the same period. It should also be noted, however, that small business in forestry has been subject to fluctuations throughout the Fordist and post-Fordist periods.

Table 10: Small business in the Forest Industry, BC, 1982 – 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Forestry</th>
<th>Wood Industries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>3439</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>3214</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>3826</td>
<td>1006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stats Canada 61-231 and BC Stats, Quarterly Regional Statistics
4.4.2 Employment

Employment has fluctuated during the ‘post-Fordist’ period, but job losses along the British Columbia coast have been particularly significant. As noted by Barnes and Hayter, between 1980 and 1990, approximately 2200 permanent jobs were lost at MacMillan Bloedel’s Port Alberni facilities alone. An estimated 21,341 jobs were lost in the British Columbia forest products industries between 1979 and 1982 (Grass and Hayter 1989:244), although some were recovered. Marchak recorded a net decrease of 16,000 forest workers in British Columbia between 1979 and 1991 (Marchak 1997:158).

As Barnes and Hayter (1992:302) explain, “because of new investment opportunities elsewhere, the development of new markets and methods of production, old production sites are either abandoned, wound-down or radically altered in situ.” In any of these cases, employment loss was a result. Grass and Hayter found that employment losses varied regionally. They observe that “throughout most of the Interior job losses were “moderate” – 0.5% for 1981-82 and 2.6% for 1981-85 for all forest products industries in the Interior – and in the Prince George area there were even job increases” (Grass and Hayter 1989:245). Hence, while the overall impression of the forest industry is of unionized jobs under threat by restructuring, in the North there has been, until recent years at least, a sense of immunity to these conditions.

Unions remained strong relative to most industries, but job losses suffered in the 1980s recession weakened their previous bargaining power. Drushka (1985:206-07) refers to the

...fairly rigid class structure within the forest companies. There is a labour group of wage earners and a salaried management group. Both have affiliations outside the particular corporation that employs them; the managers belong to professional associations, the workers to labour unions – essentially one union, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA). There is practically no mobility between these two groups; in fact, there are many rules and conventions prohibiting such mobility.
By 1995, IWA memberships had dropped to 27,500, a reduction of 43% over fifteen years (Marchak 1995:99).

Figure 14 illustrates the trends in employment during the 'post-Fordist' period. Aggregate employment has been relatively steady since the mid 1980s onward, following the dramatic declines of the early 1980s. Notably there has been little upward trend during this time.

**Figure 14: Employment in Logging, Sawmilling, Pulp and Paper, 1981 – 1995**

![Graph illustrating employment trends in logging, sawmilling, pulp, and paper industries from 1981 to 1995.](image)

Source: Statistics Canada Cat. 25-202

4.4.3 New Voices

The collapse of the Fordist sustained yield paradigm created a gap in forest policy, causing uncertainty for the forest industry, forest dependent communities and environmentalists alike, which escalated into seemingly intractable hostility among the warring factions. In this ‘war in the woods’, many communities have become battlegrounds, as resource workers and environmentalists fight for the trees. Forest workers and their communities, and mostly-urban environmentalists have positioned themselves, and/or been positioned in a battle of “jobs versus the environment.” Government has responded with regulations such as the Forest Practices Code, designed to appease the international community, and local planning initiatives such as Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) which attempt to reach consensus on local resource uses and allocations.
In British Columbia, sustainability has become part of the lexicon of forestry – present in most government publications, frequently found at forestry conferences, advocated by non-governmental organizations and activists, and even heard in board room discussions. As Jim Drescher (1997:57) says, “sustainability is on everyone’s minds and lips these days. But our understanding of, and rhetoric about, it is mostly conceptual, rather than rooted in experience.”

The sustainability movement is usually attributed to the publication of the Brundtland commission report “Our Common Future” (WCED 1987), and since its publication, the goal of sustainability has been adopted, in various forms, by most governments, industry groups and corporations, and environmental groups. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Forests has embraced the sustainability movement in its policy documents, claiming that

(f)orest policy, which until the last decade has been primarily concerned with maximizing production of timber and then of multiple resources, has changed. Sustaining ecological processes, rather than soley sustaining yield soley (sic), has become the central goal. (Ministry of Forests 1994:282)

The introduction of sustainability as a policy goal did not satisfy critics of the British Columbia forest industry. Environmental campaigns such as Carmanah Valley in 1990 and Clayoquot Sound in 1993 brought international attention to what environmentalists consider the unsustainability of the British Columbia forest industry.

Faced with mounting conflicts between preservationists and industry, government appointed a Commission, chaired by Sandy Peel, to “provide the Minister of Forests and through him, the Government, with a comprehensive view of what the forests of British Columbia should represent,...to advise the Minister of Forests...on the effectiveness of Tree Farm Licences as a form of tenure; to recommend ways to improve public participation in forest planning and management, [and] to review and recommend ways of improving forest harvesting practices...” (Peel 1991: appendix 1:3).
A provincial land use planning process was strongly recommended by Peel in his 1991 Forest Resources Commission. Facing increasing public pressure in the early 1990s, the Ministry of Forests initiated numerous planning processes, including the Old Growth Strategy, Parks and Wilderness for the 90s, Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE), Forest Sector Strategy Committee (which led to the Forest Renewal Plan in 1994), and the Task Force on Native Forestry.

Submissions to the Forest Resources Commission became the principles and objectives which guided the development of the comprehensive “Forest Practices Code”. In 1994, relevant ministries were given expanded powers to work with the Ministry of Forests on compliance and enforcement of the Code, and on July 7, 1994, Bill 40 the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act was passed in the B.C. Legislature. On June 15, 1995, British Columbia’s first Forest Practices Code took effect.

The intent of the Forest Practices Code was to protect sensitive areas of the province, while remaining sensitive to the needs of industry to remain competitive. Not surprisingly, this attempt at a balancing act has met with severe criticism from both environmentalists and industry. Environmentalists argued that the Forest Practices Code did not protect the environment sufficiently, while industry claimed that it could not afford the additional costs of the Forest Practices Code.

Timber Supply Reviews began in 1991; a three year program of public meetings to provide the Chief Forester with information to determine new AACs in Timber Supply Areas and to discuss the Ministry of Forests’ intent to increase TFLs.

Rayner (1996:91) argues that these public meetings held by the Minister of Forests regarding plans to expand the TFL system (by converting volume-based tenures to area-based tenures) represent a significant turning point for the “multiple-use sustained-yield paradigm” which had held together the forest industry, communities, workers and the
general public for the past four decades. Expected to relieve public concerns about the proposed changes, the meetings instead revealed

the depth of public distrust of the close links between the ministry and the major licensees, the pervasive perception that public forests were not being managed sustainably even for commodity production, and the widespread interest in new management paradigms. At this point the dominant advocacy coalition effectively lost control of the policy agenda.

In 1995 the Forest Practices Code was introduced. Barman (1996:335) argues that the introduction of the Forest Practices Code, the provincial land use strategy, and the Forest Renewal Plan announced in 1994, which included dramatically increased stumpage fees, resulted in “an entirely new way of doing business in BC.”

Sustainability in the forest industry – the integration of economic, social and environmental goals – is seen increasingly to rest upon the extent to which the forest industry can ‘move up the value chain’. ‘Value-added’ is an important linchpin in the environment-economy-society schema envisioned by those who claim we have entered, or are entering into, a new era of sustainability. Advocates of sustainability argue that the job losses that result from more “sustainable” (conservationist) resource exploitation will be offset by an increase in value-added industries which create jobs by doing ‘more with less’. For example, Norm MacLellan, then Vice President of both the BC Federation of Labour and of Region IV (Western Canada) of the Canadian Paperworkers Union, announced that: “the labor movement strongly believes that it is not necessary to have a job loss as a result of industry operating environmentally-friendly operations. Value-added industries are less polluting and environmentally damaging than the resource-extracting industries and provide many more jobs” (MacLellan1991:1).

4.5 Two Perspectives on the Transition

In the current era there are two prevailing stories of the forest industry, one centered around sustainability, the other around restructuring. The restructuring story of a flexible,
post-Fordist economy, tells of the pressures facing the British Columbia forest economy, such as job losses and increased insecurity in the global economy. The other story, sustainability, told by environmentalists and advocates of community and regional planning, is a story of consensus-building and locally-driven land use planning, where the same pressures are resolved through increased reliance on community-based development initiatives. Both of these stories foresee an increased role for 'value-added' small business. But the similarities end there.

Differences between the two stories are highlighted, for example, in discussions of "value-added" and productivity. Value-added forest industries are loosely and variously defined as production above and beyond commodity production. For post-Fordist advocates of "flexible specialization", the term value-added implies quality and innovation in both production processes and in final products, often within geographically proximate firms. It is often equated with secondary wood processing activities (Hayter 1999). For advocates of sustainability, value-added reflects a whole philosophy of forestry in which respect for the resources, aesthetic appreciation, and community work all come together to produce value (BCRTEE 1993).

For writers in the post-Fordist school, like their neoliberal counterparts, productivity improvements are obviously and self-evidently brought about through decreasing the amount of inputs, including labour, required to produce an end product (timber, lumber, etc). Increased productivity benefits corporations through reduced wage bills, fewer employees to manage, and increased competitiveness in the global marketplace. From the sustainability perspective, however, increasing the amount of labour required to produce an end product is obviously and self-evidently a good thing. Proponents of alternative forestry argue that the costs of productivity improvements are borne by an increasing pool of laid-off resource workers and their communities. Rather than pursuing increased productivity, alternative
forestry advocates labour-intensive forestry practices, which provide more jobs per cubic metre of wood cut, creating employment and contributing to community stability. The differences between these two schools of thought, and how they impact small forest operators, are described in the following chapter.

4.6 Summing up the British Columbia forest economy

The above discussion demonstrates the economic importance of the British Columbia forest industry. Its current structure is strongly corporate, and in recent years the trend seems increasingly toward greater concentration. Given this, it may seem pointless to try to 're-work' the forest industry. Gibson-Graham faces the same challenge in her attempt to deconstruct the discourse of capitalism: how might one acknowledge the very real impacts of capitalism without further contributing to a paralyzing discourse of capitalism? How to acknowledge the significance of the corporate sector of the British Columbia forest industry, without accepting it as inevitable and overwhelming?

In later chapters I suggest a 'third way' of writing British Columbia forest economies through multiple class processes which opens up the forest industry to reveal more than the corporate sector which has dominated most of the analyses which informed this chapter. In this section I begin to explore how the corporate forest industry is constructed discursively so that it appears as an inevitable, natural and overpowering.

'The British Columbia forest industry' is usually understood as a homogenous entity. This has implications which range from humorous to tragic. Loggers in the north enjoy telling stories about tourists looking for 'old growth forests' and being horrified to discover that a northern old growth forest is considerably different from the majestic, over-sized, 'Brazil of the North' imagery they have brought with them. But less funny are the stories of corporate forestry which only tell us that half of the industry is controlled by a few corporations, without saying anything about the other half of the industry. Or stories which
describe corporations which dominate the rural landscape, as though there were nothing else. In these stories, forest workers and resource communities are paralyzed by the ‘cyclonics’ of the most recent phase of capitalism. “Enjoying a fragile existence during the best of times, some communities are now on the verge of extinction in these worst of times” (Barnes and Hayter 1994:307). Yet in 1993, there were 260 sawmills throughout the province, and over 3000 logging firms. Each of these companies has a story to tell about the British Columbia forest industry, and many will not be the story of a corporate forest industry.

The story of the corporate British Columbia forest industry, which is the central account of the forest economy, has as a subtext the marginalization of certain practices, places, and identities. When reading most accounts of the British Columbia forest industry, this marginalization ‘makes sense’ – it appears as an inevitable consequence of development. Consider Sloan’s observation in his Royal Commission in 1956:

Just as a map of an area contracts or expands in accordance with the scale used in its delineation, so do the problems of the Forest Industry differ when viewed in the short or long perspective. In general, the short-term view is that of the so-called “small man” who is vitally interested primarily in conducting a profitable operation within the span of his own expectancy; the long-term view is that held by the large integrated extraction and conversion operations made possible by the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars of shareholders’ money and employing thousands of men. (Sloan 1956: 14)

Sloan is often attributed with introducing ‘the modern forest industry’ through his sustained yield policy, and the ‘big forestry’ that went with it (Marchak 1988). As such he can be credited with the demise of ‘the little guy’ as well. Yet Sloan claimed a sense of loyalty to the ‘small man’, and recommended 400 hectare small scale management sales; a recommendation which was overlooked. (Drushka 1985:249). He noted elsewhere in his Royal Commission report that “our economy needs, and must plan for, the continued existence of the small man” (Sloan 1956:15). Nonetheless, he seemed to believe that small business was destined to decrease. On the coast, as independents were replaced by
contract loggers, Sloan noted the "...resultant and undesirable, although inevitable, diminishing open log market" (Sloan 1956:155, emphasis mine).

Sloan 'mapped' the small man onto a model of competitive, entrepreneurial capitalism, comparing this to the long-term perspective of Fordist organization. These assumptions about the relationship between firm structure and business practices are reflected thirty-five years later in the Peel Commission recommendations. While the Peel Commission recommended a radical change in tenure arrangement, it nonetheless insisted that these new tenure arrangements would be allocated to organizations who do not own or control processing facilities, and that the wood processing industry be left to 'evolve' as needed:

The Commission has concluded that the wood processing industry must be allowed to evolve into whatever structure is needed to maintain its ability to compete in world markets. That may mean further amalgamations of wood processing facilities and a further concentration of existing processing facilities. Corporate concentration among tenure holdings, however, is a different matter. The Commission believes that its recommendations for the diversification of tenure holdings and the establishment of a viable provincial log market will ensure the maintenance of a diverse, competitive forest products industry. (Peel 1991: 28)

The Peel commission recommendations reflect a longstanding implicit policy on small business in the province, which encourages a competitive (flexible) sector in logging and oligopoly in manufacturing, while describing the totality of these sectors as 'corporate'.

Hayter describes the dual model of the economy under Fordism in which large corporations were the centre and small firms were peripheral:

More generally, it might be noted that economic development theory and policy among western economies has been dominated by a dual model of the economy which distinguishes between giant MNCs ('planning system firms') and SMEs ('market system firms'). Under Fordism, planning system firms were assigned the central role (whether as hero or villain) and in the present era of flexibility, market system firms have been re-established as the key to economic vitality. Public policy has paralleled this shift. Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, regional development policies emphasized the attracting of large firms and their branch plants; since the 1970s more attention has been given to SMEs. The BC forest economy is an exemplar of this thinking, in theory and policy. (Hayter 1999: 39-40)
The growing interest in small business has not diminished the hegemony ascribed to corporations in the literature. Consider Drushka's commentary:

Historically, one of the most enduring characteristics of the industry is multinationality. What has changed more recently is that these corporate entities have become more pervasive – the MacMillan Bloedel insignia is found in the bathroom as well as in the bush, from British Columbia to Brazil.

The result is that a corporation such as MacMillan Bloedel is, paradoxically, an abstraction, almost a nonentity. Few corporations operating in North American forests are actually autonomous operations. Theoretically, of course, they are: they hold separate timber licenses, their trucks are painted different colours and so on. But beyond a certain point most of them are part of a larger, more nebulous supracorporate structure – a vaguely defined, largely unnamed and constantly changing level of organization. The nature of this superstructure is indicated in some of the realignments of corporate connections that occurred between 1978 and 1981. (Drushka 1985:202-03, my emphasis)

Drushka's descriptions of corporations as "pervasive" and "nonentities" are dramatic, but they highlight the effect of the predominantly held view of the forest industry as penetrating yet impenetrable. Statements such as the following by Marchak (1995:85) provide a too-neat summary of the British Columbia forest industry. This summary is exclusional and produces a particular effect, notably the annihilation of difference:

Thus BC produced standard-dimension lumber, pulp, a small amount of newsprint, and not much else. Rewards for this simple trade in staples were so great that labour unions negotiated some of the highest production worker salaries on the continent.

There is nothing incorrect about Marchak's summary; and it is widely accepted. But it is effective, in that some players and performances are included (corporations, unions), while others (such as small business, independent operators and family businesses) are omitted.

The discourse of the hegemonic forestry regime does not provide a complete picture of British Columbia forest economies. Yet it claims to, and as such is a totalizing discourse which erases the possibilities of alternative practices. In later chapters I will demonstrate that instead of this hegemonic essence of 'the British Columbia forest industry', the forest industry can be viewed as a diversity of business structures and practices, some of which consist of capitalist economic forms, but others of which are
noncapitalist. Writing British Columbia forest economies, rather than 'the British Columbia forest industry' emphasizes the potentiality of these different practices, rather than placing them always at the margin.

The corporate forestry which prevailed during the Fordist era was a monolith at the centre of British Columbia's economy and society. It showed all the alternatives to it - the woodlot owners, small businesses, communities, Native Bands that are referred to in alternative forestry - how to be small. With the breakdown of Fordism, and the restructuring in the forest industry, it seems likely that small business will play an increased role in the post-Fordist era of the British Columbia forest industry. How that role is foreseen depends on the theoretical lens of the viewer. In the next chapter, I explore two prevailing constructions of hinterland forest workers in the current era. One construction, found in Canadian political economy, maintains the 'small' position articulated by Sloan in 1956, albeit in a more flexible, post-Fordist form. The other, alternative forestry, posits hinterland small business squarely at the centre of the British Columbia forest industry, in a bioregional, communitarian framework.
5 REPRESENTING SMALL BUSINESS IN THE HINTERLAND: CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE FORESTRY

The story of the British Columbia forest industry described in Chapter Four maintains that the British Columbia forest industry is in transition. There are two predominant interpretations of this transition. One, Canadian political economy, foresees a 'more of the same but only worse' kind of post-Fordist restructuring. The second, alternative forestry\textsuperscript{21}, envisions the British Columbia forest industry moving toward a new era of sustainability in the industry. In this chapter I review the theoretical bases of these two depictions of the current era in BC forestry, focusing particularly on the implicit and explicit representations of small businesses and their owners in 'resource communities'. Although these two interpretations share a common understanding of the Fordist era in forestry, their different perspectives of the current era are the result of different theoretical bents. Whereas the post-Fordist perspective on the British Columbia forest industry has its roots in Canadian political economy, the alternative forestry perspective results from a theoretical mixture of bioregionalism, communitarianism and deep ecology.

Canadian political economy concerns itself more with analyses of existing or past economic development whereas alternative forestry is most often prescriptive and normative. In spite of this difference, the two literatures can be compared and contrasted for the discursive effects of their respective representations of forest workers and resource communities. The purpose of this chapter is to create a framework of analysis, drawn from the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures, for the case study described in Chapter Six. Using this framework of analysis, I investigate the extent to which either or both of these literatures reflect the 'reality' of small forest operators I interviewed in the Bulkley Valley. After I describe the case study and its results in Chapter Six, I return to

\textsuperscript{21} The literature refers to this as 'ecoforestry' as well.
re-assess the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures in Chapter Seven, in light of both the case study results and the insights of the recent cultural turn in economic geography described in Chapter Three.

5.1 **Canadian political economy**

Beginning with the staples approach developed by H.A. Innis and W. A. Mackintosh in the early part of this century, Canada’s dependency on natural resources such as forests for economic development has been a central theme in Canadian political economy (Phillips 1997). As the Canadian economic landscape has changed so too has the understanding and approach taken by political economy theorists. In the following I outline the development of Canadian political economy, beginning first with the roots of Canadian political economy, then turning to the “new” Canadian political economy, which has incorporated a more explicit account of class in its framework of analysis.

5.1.1 **Harold Innis and the staples approach**

One of the roots of Canadian political economy is the ‘staples approach’ developed from the 1920s onwards (Clement 1997:6). At the heart of a staples approach is the recognition of the important role played by natural resource exports in the development of Canada’s economy.

The staples approach has developed into two schools of thought which differ in important ways. One school of thought, crystallized in the work of Mackintosh (1923) applies conventional economic approaches to Canada’s development as an export-based economy. Drache (1978) describes the “steady-progress view of Mackintosh” which suggests that ultimately an indigenous manufacturing sector would evolve out of an export-base. The other school of thought led by the work of Harold Innis (1930; 1954; 1956), argued that reliance on a staples-based export economy propels Canada into ever-increasing dependency.
The essence of the staples approach for both schools is that capital investment and inflows of labour to a new country (Canada) produce 'staples' – natural resource raw materials – which are then exported to 'metropolitan' countries for use in manufacturing (primarily Britain, then the U.S.). Where the schools differ most is in their treatment of the distribution of resource rents. Mackintosh, representing the mainstream economic treatment of resource economies at the beginning of the twentieth century, suggested that economic growth would occur in stages. Canada, according to this economic school of thought, would eventually develop forward and backward linkages from resource industries and evolve into a fully developed, manufacturing-based economy. Rents would be distributed by the market eventually leading to an equilibrium state for both centre and margin.

Innis argued against this mainstream economic view that an export-based economy such as Canada's would inevitably develop linkages sufficient to sustain itself. While Innis was comfortable with the neoclassical treatment of developed countries at the centre (unlike later Canadian political economists, who rejected neoclassical economics), he felt a different approach was needed in recognition of the different local context in which 'margin' countries like Canada were operating. His recognition of Canada's unique situation sets him apart from his colleagues at the time. "Canadians are obliged", he wrote in 1956,

...to fit their analysis of new economic facts into an old background. The handicaps of this process are obvious...resulting in a new form of exploitation with dangerous consequences. The only escape can come from an intensive study of Canadian economic problems and from the development of a philosophy of economic history or an economic theory suited to Canadian needs. (Innis 1956:3, cited in Barnes 1993:2)

Innis' approach recognized the local and historical context of Canada's economic development. Canada's economy was dominated in its pre-industrial phase by commerce, finance and trade in staples. Modern industrialism in Europe, especially Britain, coincided with the discovery of Canada's vast reserves of staples. The timing of resource exploitation in Canada was such that large scale, mechanized extraction took place, creating a unique
position for Canada as a provider of raw materials without the social or economic context necessary to transform raw materials into manufactured products locally.

Even though settlements in England and Europe were "profoundly influenced by modern industrialism", Innis felt they had "a continuity of life and organization" sufficient to counter the unsettling effects of industrialism. Settlement in western Canada and the new countries, on the other hand, occurred only for the purposes of modern industrialism in the core countries. "The significance of the cumulative tendency of industrialism and of the continuity of industrialism to Canada and the new countries is obvious. Canada has been able to produce on an increasingly large scale, on account of the essential advantages of machine industry, the raw materials for the industrialized countries" (Innis 1933:91). Canada, according to Innis, was perceived as a storehouse of resources, rather than a place of manufacture.

Innis was conscious of the importance of geography in two ways - physically, for the unveiling of new staples, and in spatial relationships. The physical location of resources determined settlement patterns. Spatial relationships occur between the 'hinterland' as a deposit of resources, and the metropole, the manufacturing and service centre. Watkins (1989:20) describes the spatiality of a staples economy:

It is helpful to be more explicit about the spatial dimension in two senses, namely, whether linkages are reaped at home or abroad and whether by domestic or foreign capital. The first issue is: how much production takes place locally, at the periphery, around the export-base? The second issue is: of that local production, how much is under control of local capitalists and how much under the control of external capitalists? The first issue is about the quantity of production and the extent of growth; the second is about the extent of indigenous ownership and control, that is the independence and maturity of the resulting capitalist development.

The development (or not) of local linkages is key to understanding a staples economy. Innis disagreed with economists such as Macintosh who assumed that large resource rents and high rates of capital accumulation would lead to the development of a local manufacturing base. Rather, Innis argued that weak backward and forward linkages
at the periphery prevent transformation of a fully developed manufacturing economy. The very weakness of the linkages at the periphery contributes to a strong economy at the centre.

Innis developed the concept of the 'staples trap' to describe the inability of raw material extraction to move Canada forward into a manufacturing-based economy. Although rates of capital accumulation are high in staples industries, these benefits tend to accrue to the owners of capital who have invested in the technology necessary to extract the staples resource. Initially British, then American investors saw no benefit in encouraging local linkages, preferring to bring in equipment and services as needed, and manufacturing final products 'at home'. "The pace of economic growth is determined externally, and its contours are distorted towards an unending quest to extract natural resources without capturing the beneficial linkages associated with their development" (Clement 1989:37-38).

Innis argued that the Canadian economy did not, and would not, develop increasingly sophisticated linkages out of its natural resource base. Instead, these resources would be extracted until they were no longer in demand by the centre countries, or it could be found more cheaply elsewhere, or were depleted. As examples, Innis noted that "...with the disappearance of beaver in more accessible territory, lumber became the product which brought the largest returns. In British Columbia gold became the product following the fur trade but eventually lumber and fish came into prominence" (Innis 1930).

The cyclonics of these staples cycles were felt strongly in the 'hinterland' economies. Lack of diversification and reliance on a single resource, the demand for which was determined exogenously, heightened vulnerability to the 'booms' and 'busts' of commodity production.
5.1.2 The new Canadian political economy

During the 1950s and 1960s, interest in Innis' staples approach receded as, ironically, Canadian thought was increasingly dominated by American social sciences (Marchak 1985:674). Regional deficiencies were thought to explain the relatively slow Canadian growth during this period, rather than external conditions such as foreign control and ownership of resources. However, by the early 1970s, the Canadian political economy tradition had experienced a revival focusing its attention on issues of dependency largely in response to US domination of Canadian culture and economy (Clement 1997:6). The new Canadian political economy emerged, then, "out of a meeting between left nationalism and the "old" Canadian political economy, especially the work of Harold Innis" (Jenson 1990; see also Drache and Clement 1985; Clement and Williams 1989).

The renewed wave of interest in the 'new Canadian political economy' continued to interrogate the distribution of economic surplus among nations; but expanded this interrogation to consider the distribution of that surplus among classes as well (Clement 1989:39). Thus, it was "a marriage of Innis and Marx, of staples and class" (Watkins 1997:25). It was no longer focused just on what is produced, and where, but on the social relations of production and distribution of surplus value as well. In this way, class struggle within a resource-dependent, rather than a manufacturing-based, economy, was theorized. Albo and Jenson (1997:220) note the common characteristics contained within the new Canadian political economy school:

Despite much historical debate and varying emphases in details, all adherents of the staples approach agree that the pace and form of development were determined by geographical possibilities and limitations, technological improvements, the division of labour, and, most crucially, the economic surplus generated by foreign demand for "resource-extensive exports". (this latter expression referring to Watkins (1963)

While parallels were made between Canada's development and many 'third world' countries, it was also recognized that Canada had a unique position in that Canadians maintained a high standard of living while existing under conditions of uneven development.
Many Canadian political economists developed sectoral or regional interests, although nationalism and the role of the state remain central concerns (see for example, Clark-Jones 1987; Watkins 1997; Jenson 1991). More focused analyses of the heartland/hinterland relationship occurring within British Columbia have been written by Bradbury (1982), Ley and Hutton (1987), and Davis and Hutton (1989). Bradbury (1982:339) provides a detailed picture of British Columbia as "a staple hinterland for industrial markets throughout the world, yet...also a prosperous region, in which "urban places in the Georgia Strait region – notably Vancouver – constituted the core, while resource centres in the interior comprised a weakly articulated peripheral system" (ibid. p.346).

Concern over uneven development has been a consistent theme in Canadian political economy. The new Canadian political economy merges a concern with uneven development with an interest in class. Most of the new Canadian political economic theorists recognize that class relations have developed differently in Canada than other countries, a difference explained in large part by its staples history. While the staple resource itself is part of that history, so is Canada's immigration history. Settlements patterns were strongly influenced by the nature of the staple, but local community and labour organization were equally influenced by who settled where. Phillips (1997) argues that repeated waves of ethnically differentiated immigration fragmented labor's 'historical consciousness'. Such a process combined with the isolated nature of work and labour control in the various staple industries often separated their work experience. As a result, labour consciousness was more often around a regional identity rather than a class one (Phillips 1997:70).
5.1.3 Resource Communities in Canadian political economy

Settlement patterns were highlighted by many Canadian political economists concerned with the instability and dependency endemic in a staples economy. Beginning with Lucas (1971), a group of Canadian political economists focused on the problems found in hinterland resource communities created by industrial staples development.

As described in Chapter Four, resource communities developed during the post-war period in British Columbia's hinterland in response to the changing needs of staples development. Large manufacturing facilities processing high-volume commodity goods such as construction lumber and pulp required a stable labour force. However, attracting and keeping this labour force proved difficult in the prosperous Fordist period. This led to a number of studies documenting social behavior and preferences in resource communities, for example Lucas (1971), Grey (1975), Siemens (1976), and Nickels (1976). Robinson (1984:3) provides a

..."shopping list" of the special problems which confront[ed] resource towns in Canada:

1. Instability and, in many cases, impermanence – a fluctuating often boom or bust cycle of growth;
2. An unbalanced demographic structure (in both construction and operations phases);
3. Isolation- physical and psychological;
4. The provision and financing of affordable housing of different types and qualities and the financing of an adequate range of physical and social infrastructures;
5. The appropriate concepts and techniques to use in the physical planning of these towns, given their unique geographical locations, small size, uncertain future, etc.;
6. Social, ethnic and cultural problems;
7. Their governance: the allocation of responsibility for pre-planning, planning, financing, building and governance, among the different actors (company, local government, citizens, senior governments), and at different stages of a towns' growth and development.

Attracting and maintaining a labour force was a concern for corporations. However, Canadian political economists were more interested in the impacts of industrialized staples extraction on the members of these resource communities. Although writers often focused on resource sectors in their work, they found remarkable similarities in the nature of settlements produced in the "economic landscape of capital accumulation and uneven
development” (Bradbury 1979). These included high wages for staples workers and low employment available outside the staples industry, few opportunities for diversification, rigid class structures with few opportunities for class mobility, gendered occupational segmentation, and limited educational and ‘cultural’ opportunities. Bradbury (1988:8) describes the “age-old problems so common to some company towns: to wit, the problem of labour turnover, male dominance of the social structure and company paternalism with its adverse effect of dependency between workers and the companies.”

Dependency and vulnerability are persistent themes in the literature on resource communities. Himelfarb (1982:17) notes that “the central “fact of life” in these communities is dependence”. Porteous (1987:383) claims that company towns are now generally known as “single-enterprise communities”, “one-industry towns” or even “little communities with big industries”. These terms are merely euphemisms which mask the raw fact of high levels of dependence upon a single powerful corporation. (emphasis mine)

Dunk notes that “people in resource hinterlands suffer the effects of the political and economic structures in which they are enmeshed. The narrow economic base is experienced as restricted job opportunities and vulnerability to cycles of boom and bust” (Dunk 1991:1).

The result of a narrow economic base and dependency on one resource or even one company is, according to Canadian political economy, resource towns in which a cohesive sense of ‘community’ is lacking. Marchak (1991/92:362), in an article comparing forestry in the Kyoto prefecture of Japan with forestry in British Columbia, claims that

Prince George and its smaller neighbouring towns are communities more in the sense of aggregations of individuals and companies than in the Japanese sense of people with shared cultures. Profits are paramount, divisions between interest groups are pervasive, and it is difficult to discern any consensus about the general welfare.

She goes on to describe Mackenzie, an ‘instant town’ established in the mid-1960s:

The town’s population, entirely dependent on a single employer either as millworkers or as loggers on contract, does not constitute a community in the sense used to describe the Japanese towns of similar size. ...the essential ingredients of communities are missing. There is no public involvement in policy decisions, the
population has no shared history, there is still no independent business community to speak of, and internal divisions between strata of workers are endemic.

The idea that the essential ingredients needed for ‘community’ are lacking in resource communities resonates throughout Canadian political economy analyses of resource communities (Lucas 1971; Bowles 1982; Marchak 1983; Porteous 1984).

5.1.4 Restructuring in the staples economy

As described in Chapter Four, the problems of a boom and bust forest industry intensified following the recession of the early 1980s. A small group of analysts have examined this restructuring in the forest industry from a Canadian political economy perspective (Barnes and Hayter 1992, Barnes 1996, Marchak 1995). They incorporate recent theoretical contributions from economic geography and elsewhere into the new Canadian political economy in order to develop a better understanding of restructuring in a staples economy.

As Graham (1992) makes clear, there are many, sometimes contradictory versions of ‘post-Fordism’. I focus on interpretations of post-Fordism within the Canadian political economy tradition that help make sense of changes in labour processes within forest-dependent communities. I take from the very extensive literature on post-Fordism a fairly narrow focus on restructuring in the forest industry. Analysts of a post-Fordist version of recent changes in the forest industry focus primarily on changes occurring in the workplace, and the implications of these changes for communities and the provincial economy.

Barnes and Hayter (1992:648) intertwine David Harvey’s (1989) work on global capital with Innis’ triad of technology, institutions and geography to provide a theoretical explanation of places such as Chemainus, British Columbia, that are “bound up with particular geographies of accumulation.” Elsewhere they use Atkinson’s labour segmentation theory to consider in-situ corporate restructuring and employment change within the forest sector (Hayter and Barnes 1992). Hayter and Holmes (1993) reinforce the
importance of Clark-Jones' (1987) work on continentalism in their study of the restructuring that has taken place at the MacMillan Bloedel facility at Powell River, British Columbia. Patricia Marchak (1995) situates British Columbia's forest industry within the context of a global forest industry.

These analyses of restructuring suggest that the heartland/hinterland relationships described in earlier Canadian political economy work will be further entrenched as 'space-time compressions' take place in successively more rapid rounds of 'annihilation of space by time' globally. British Columbia, already vulnerable to the 'cyclonics' of capitalism, has been, and continues to be, deeply affected by the new regime of accumulation (Barnes and Hayter 1992). As described in Chapter Four, the forest industry has undergone significant restructuring, with accompanying losses in employment, beginning with the recession of the early 1980s.

According to these Canadian political economists, corporate restructuring reinforces the vulnerability of resource communities. The extreme reliance (historically and presently) of the British Columbia forest industry on external markets contributes to an even greater vulnerability in the 'global economy'. Continued weakness with respect to backward and forward linkages and limited economic diversification leads to increased vulnerability for forest workers and communities. Institutional structures which were historically put in place to accommodate British Columbia's staples development now leave British Columbia poorly placed to address the rapidly shifting economic changes occurring worldwide.

There is some evidence that restructuring will also reinforce the heartland/hinterland divisions recognized by earlier Canadian political economists. Rees and Hayter (1996) found that the growth of secondary wood processing industries which has taken place since the early 1980s has been concentrated geographically in urban areas of the province, primarily in the Vancouver metropolitan area. Davis and Hutton (1989:3) claim that
"increasingly, the economy of British Columbia is becoming divided between two distinct segments: the service-oriented urban economy of metropolitan Vancouver and the resource-based hinterland economy of the remainder of the province, particularly the interior of British Columbia."

*Flexibility* is an important aspect of most accounts of restructuring within the Canadian political economy tradition. Following Atkinson (1985), Hayter and Barnes (1992) see labour flexibility occurring in two ways: functional and numerical flexibility. Atkinson argues that "...a new form of labour-market segmentation has arisen between a functionally flexible core labour force and a numerically flexible peripheral one" (Hayter and Barnes 1992:337). Functional flexibility occurs 'on the shop floor' within the core labour segment. Under Fordist production, economies of scale using low-skilled labour contributed to cost minimization. Under post-Fordist 'flexible specialization', skilled workers are able to undertake multiple functions. Flexibility may also be found numerically, through contracting out of tasks previously done 'in-house'.

The evidence from studies of British Columbia's coastal forest industry suggest the development of new strategies of labour control that divide a functionally flexible core labour force from a numerically flexible peripheral one (Hayter, Grass and Barnes 1994). Hayter and Holmes (1994) note that when MacMillan Bloedel restructured its operations in Powell River and Pt. Alberni, its stated objective was to develop a smaller but more flexible workforce. Barnes, Hayter and Grass (1990) found that production workers at MacMillan Bloedel mills are part of the "primary subordinate segment" as defined by Doeringer and Piore (1971), with strong unions, job demarcation, hiring practices based on seniority, good wages, and good working conditions. They found that primary workers are not replaced by secondary workers (as would be suggested by Doeringer and Piore), but by changes in production technology.
At Chemainus, BC, for example, Barnes and Hayter (1992) found in the restructured sawmill that a considerably reduced workforce was re-trained to perform multiple tasks, with tests and incentives to ensure they understood the new manual. Some specialized tasks, such as dry kilning, were contracted out.

Another important segment of the labour force which is not considered in these studies of the manufacturing process, but which is integral to the forest industry, is the labour process carried out in the logging industry. Marchak (1983, 1995 and 1999) describes the decreasing tendency, beginning in the late 1970s, for logging to be carried out by unionized company loggers. Instead, logging is contracted out to small business operators. Marchak claims that these arrangements create insecurity for logging contractors. Contracting out of work previously done by company employees creates numerical flexibility for the manufacturing firms, lowering costs through increased efficiency and ability to match equipment with logging conditions (Hayter 1999).

Hayter argues there are two emergent strategies of 'value-added' in the British Columbia forest industry (Rees and Hayter 1996: 207-08). One is the in situ modernization through functional and numerical flexibility in large corporate manufacturers described above. The second is secondary wood processing by small to medium-sized enterprises, geographically concentrated in the Vancouver metropolitan area. This second type of flexibility is more in line with Piore and Sabel's (1984) interpretation of flexible specialization. A specialized small business sector is emerging which consists of “...interacting populations of small, specialized firms that compete and cooperate by flexibly deploying workers and equipment in response to highly differentiated and changing market demands (Rees and Hayter 1996:204).

Drache (1991:257), however, says that the image of flexible specialization offered by Piore and Sabel and others is misleading. “It is difficult to judge whether the new work
relations constitute a principle of organization, such as Fordism was, or are simply a management strategy for obtaining immediate cost advantages. The fact that the new production methods are aimed primarily at reducing the costs of production raise serious doubts as to whether they are a new paradigm of workplace relations."

Most post-Fordist Canadian political economy interpretations of the recent changes in the forest industry are more in line with Drache's observation, particularly in hinterland resource-dependent communities such as the ones discussed by Barnes and Hayter 1992, Hayter and Holmes 1993, and Marchak (1991/92). Most Canadian political economy interpretations of flexibility in the forest industry have found functional flexibility within the core workforce in large corporations, and numerical flexibility in the small businesses contracted by these corporations. A continuation of reduced forest-related employment, declining wage rates, weakening of union strength, and increasing uncertainty for forest-dependent communities are the predominant characteristics of the post-Fordist forest industry to emerge from this literature.

Theoretical work on restructuring has contributed to a better understanding of the transition in the forest industry. However, they have not challenged, and in some cases, have reinforced particular representations of resource communities and hinterland forest workers. Reed (1995:339) expresses the opinion held by most Canadian political economists when she writes, "where hinterland communities are heavily dependent on a single resource for their well-being, economic circumstances become intertwined with the social character of these places. Family and community life are typically shaped by the conditions within resource communities." This description reflects the opinions of resource communities held by Canadian political economists describing the Fordist era, such as Marchak (1983:365): "the class structure and local culture [of forestry communities] are contemporary outcomes of the way industry is organized." Social and cultural
characteristics are read off economic circumstances. In the following section, I draw out these representations, particularly with respect to hinterland small businesses in resource-dependent, particularly forestry-dependent, communities.

5.1.5 Representations of forest workers (small forest operators) in Canadian political economy accounts of the British Columbia forest industry

In the following three sections I summarize the environmental ethics, community values, and business structures and practices that would be anticipated to be held by small forest operators in hinterland resource communities, based on the Canadian political economy literature descriptions of the peripheral workforce in resource communities. In Table 11 I summarize these characteristics, and use them in the following chapter to attempt to classify small forest operators as either “conventional”, i.e. conforming to the requirements of corporate forestry in an era of restructuring (as described by Canadian political economists), or “alternative”, i.e. reflecting the values and practices of alternative, value-based eco-forestry.

Environmental Ethic

Canadian political economy has been remarkably silent on environmental issues. Concern for the nature of resource development, rather than the environment, has preoccupied Canadian political economists. Recently Glen Williams has argued for a “greening” of the new Canadian political economy (Williams 1992). However, the predominant theme throughout the Canadian political economy literature is that ‘nature’ is a resource to be exploited. “Regrettably, when it comes to being environmentally sensitive, the new Canadian political economy has more often reflected, than challenged, the conventional wisdom of popular discourse” (Williams 1992:16). More recently, Marchak (1998) has displayed a sensitivity to the ecological impacts of industrial forestry, and expressed some support of ecosystem-based forestry as articulated by ‘the Victoria team’ of Burda et al. (1998). This sensitivity has not, however, produce a ‘green’ Canadian political
economic analysis of the British Columbia forest industry. Rather, her concern with ecological sustainability leads her to the conclusion that “the most attractive possibility is that this province move away as rapidly as possible from forestry-based industry” (Marchak 1998:77).

Williams attributes the lack of a green Canadian political economy to its “dependency and class theoretical frameworks” which emphasize distribution over production. Although Williams is critical of Canadian political economy’s failure to address environmental concerns, he remains true to the modernist impulse of Canadian political economy when he argues that rational planning would ensure proper treatment of the environment. “...[T]he North American capitalist economy is ecohostile in the sense that it is antithetical to a rational, social planning for production and consumption which provides for the maintenance of harmonious relations with the natural environment” (Williams 1992:8).

As described above, Canadian political economy has not focused on environmental issues. Rather, it has viewed ‘nature’ as a pool of resources which are extracted and used in production. The environmental impacts of extraction and production have not, by and large, been viewed as problematic. The distribution of resource rents and the impact of resource depletion as it leads to new rounds of extraction with accompanying social disruption, have been of greater concern to Canadian political economists. Canadian political economy shares with neoclassical economics an “exploitist” ethic toward the environment in which the extraction of resources is not problematic on ethical grounds. Concerns lie in other issues – profitability, health and safety of workers, equity, justice and so on, but not with questions about the rights of nature. Within this context, then, a small forest operator would be expected to accommodate resource extraction, abide by existing environmental regulations, but resist regulations that hinder production.
Community Values

The community values of small forest operators can be read off the literature on resource communities. Marchak (1983, 1995) refers repeatedly to the dependence of contractors on large corporations. From this, I anticipated that small forest operators in the case study would be dependent on locally based corporations, and focus their loyalty to the corporation, rather than to the community. Furthermore, as Marchak (1983:362) puts it, resource communities “are communities more in the sense of aggregations of individuals and companies” so there would be no anticipated sense of belonging, involvement or permanence.

Marchak writes, “…the essential ingredients of communities are missing. There is no public involvement in policy decisions, the population has no shared history, there is still no independent business community to speak of, and internal divisions between strata of workers are endemic” (ibid.). Thus small forest operators can be anticipated to leave planning and management of local resources in the hands of corporations and government, since they would feel no sense of involvement in planning processes.

Business Structures and Practices

Since conventional small forest operators are understood to perform according to the requirements of one large corporation as contractors, business practices would be in accordance to corporate needs. Equipment would be geared to high-volume, high-efficiency requirements, meeting environmental standards but not going beyond them in terms of ecological sensitivity when harvesting. Profit-maximization would be a business objective and preference would be given to equipment which improves ‘productivity’; hence capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive practices would be preferred.

Small businesses may be expected to provide numerical flexibility to major corporations by carrying out the logging required prior to the manufacturing process.
(Marchak 1995). They may also be contracted to perform specialized functions for major corporations such as dry kilning, as was found in the Chemainus case by Barnes and Hayter (1992).

5.2 Value-Based Alternative Forestry

...[T]he British Columbia forest economy needs to move in the direction of an “alternative” economy. This is not an accidental term. Forestry “alternatives” are but one part of a holistic shift in our centralized structures, such as a shift being best explicated by the so-called “alternatives movement” encompassing sectors as diverse as “alternative energy” and “alternative health”. (M'Gonigle 1997:45)

Alternative forestry, also called alternative forestry economic development and ecoforestry, merges general community economic development principles with concerns about the ecologically integrity of the forests (Banighen 1997). The focus in this dissertation is on the alternative forestry literature in British Columbia, but there is also a strong interest in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States (see Lynch and Talbot 1995, cited in Burda et al. 1998). On both sides of the border, there are strong activist communities concerned with alternative forestry as well.

In prescriptive terms, alternative forestry calls for a shift from volume-based to value-based economy, from capital-intensive to labour-intensive modes of production, and from central (corporate and bureaucratic) to community-based forms of management and control (M'Gonigle 1997). This literature suggests that community-based management of the resource will occur through a variety of arrangements, Community Forest tenures is one, woodlot licenses and a modified Small Business Forest Enterprise Program are others (Burda et al. 1997).

At the root of these prescriptions is a philosophy based on deep ecology, bioregionalism and communitarianism, combined with a preference for entrepreneurial

---

22 The alternative forestry literature is written largely in prescriptive terms. The prescriptions which follow are the alternative forestry literatures, not mine.
economic forms and a deep distrust of large structures of any kind, whether in government, corporations or labour. "Value-added" and a focus on quality bring these beliefs together into a coherent system of thinking.\(^{24}\)

A shift to eco-forestry, which necessitates a significant reduction in timber volume, entails the maximization of value in order to sustain local economies and employment. By maintaining old-growth forests through careful stewardship, and by fostering a diverse value-added manufacturing sector, communities can enjoy the forest’s benefits in perpetuity. Eco-forestry offers a workable technical alternative to industrial forestry. (Burda et al. 1998:52)

5.2.1 Deep Ecology and Bioregionalism

Alternative forestry has its philosophical grounding in deep ecology (Drengson and Taylor 1997). Deep ecologists believe that non-human nature has inherent rights independent of their instrumental value to humans (Devall and Sessions 1985; Naess 1991). Thus, they emphasize the aesthetic and spiritual values of the forest. Kirpatrick Sale (1988), one of deep ecology’s most ardent advocates, writes that “(l)ife, human and non-human, has value in itself independent of human purposes, and humans have no right to reduce its richness and diversity except for vital needs.”

Bill Devall (1997:276) claims that “love, commitment, compassion, ecological understanding---all of these inform the ecosophy of an ecoforester.” The “Oath of Ecologically Responsible Forest Use” begins with “we shall respect, hold sacred, and learn from the ecological wisdom (ecosophy) of natural forests with their multitudes of beings” (Drengson and Taylor 1997:275).

Some ecoforesters draw fairly drastic prescriptions from this moral code:

First, we should eat the food that grows on our land, as much as possible, and only sell or barter the surplus to acquire what we can’t grow. Second, we should grow and process our own fuelwood, posts, poles, logs, and lumber, again selling or bartering only the surplus to provide for our other needs. If we can make more of the products we need, such as cheese and furniture, both product diversity and natural efficiency

\(^{23}\) Community forests are not pursued in this dissertation. See Mitchell-Banks 1999 for a history of community forests in British Columbia and the current debate over their feasibility.

\(^{24}\) Hayter (1999, in progress) makes an important, and often missing observation, when he notes that “...strictly speaking, all manufacturing is value-adding, ...the tendency in BC [is] to think of value added activities as essentially non-commodity based production.”
will increase. This will promote economic stability in our homes and lower our impact on the surrounding ecosystem. (Drescher 1997:58)

In this literature, alternative forest workers are felt to minimize the impacts of their actions on the forest by using only appropriate, low-impact technology practices (Drengson and Taylor 1997:275). Appropriate technology provides both environmental and social benefits. “Low-impact technologies are labor-intensive, and thus create more work and jobs, have positive benefits for local economies, and increase the prosperity and stability of rural communities” (Drengson and Stevens 1997: 71). For harvesting, this means adjusting practices to best suit the ecological requirements of the area. Production of wood products (which is only one of the many forest products recognized under alternative forestry, others include medicinal plants, mushrooms, decorative grasses) requires a shift from a volume-oriented industry to a value-oriented industry (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994). This means attempting to produce, within the limits of ecological sustainability, the most from each unit of resource. This is not done only for the pursuit of the best return; it is considered an ethical responsibility to make the best use of anything removed from the forest.

Alternative forestry adapts many of the precepts of ecology, such as energy flows and the interconnectivity of natural communities as described in Eugene Odum’s *Fundamentals of Ecology* (1971). These ecological precepts are put into a spatial context through “bioregionalism”. Walter (1997:294) defines bioregionalism as “the healthy coexistence and interdependence of human communities with natural communities within an ecosystem...” and notes that “practically, bioregions are often identified with watersheds.” Alternative forestry’s goal in a bioregional approach is a “healthy, natural ecosystem”, which in turn promotes healthy human communities. Actions can be judged according to the extent to which they contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, while staying within the carrying capacity of the ecosystem. For this reason, small-scale ‘appropriate’ technology is favoured. Bioregionalism, then, is a way of connecting a deeply felt
connection to the non-human world with a deeply felt connection to the human world. This latter connection is expressed through communitarianism.

5.2.2 Communitarianism

Communitarianism "...assumes a moral community, where "we ought to give equal consideration to the interest of everyone who will be affected by our conduct (Rachels, 1993:186, cited in Walter 1997:293, emphasis in original). Walter identifies some practical communitarian tools as "joint decision making, stakeholder participation, public participation, non-governmental organizations, and networking" (ibid.). For practical purposes, community is usually defined by settlements or regions, although it is recognized that the moral community extends far beyond these artificial boundaries.

Unlike the transient communities depicted by Canadian political economy, alternative forestry is strongly place-based and 'people-based' (Simpson 1997). Recurrent themes are democratization, community control, commitment to place, consensus building. Simpson (1997:212-13) writes that

localization is democratic control of local resources and services by those who have commitment to place and community: the residents...People-based, localized forestry, practiced under guidelines that guarantee ecological and social responsibility, is a better economic deal than control of forest lands by governmental and corporate powers. Certainly it is a better deal for communities.

Community control is assumed to be beneficial. "When local people are more in control of the decisions that affect their lives, they will be more likely to take care of the local environment" (Taylor and Wilson 1993). Simpson writes that

Our commitment to place within a larger region in common can inspire our sense of majesty and respect for [an area]. Once we leap to an identity with place and region, other elements will fall into perspective. Once we become responsible citizens of a region, rural and urban, our respect for the land unites and motivates us. (Simpson 1997: 213-14)

Consensus building is prescribed as the best means of democratically managing the local resource. Community forest boards are usually put forward as the mechanism for local democratic decision-making. While there are no consistent definitions for these
community forest boards, proposals usually include defining the ‘community’ based on watershed boundaries, with a combination of elected and appointed members from within this area. It is understood that community forest boards “can best protect the wide range of forest economic and environmental values” (Taylor 1997:303).

5.2.3 Entrepreneurialism

A preference for entrepreneurialism is more often stated implicitly rather than implicitly, perhaps because of the connotations of entrepreneurialism with capitalism, which by and large, alternative forestry opposes. Entrepreneurialism is situated within the context of a bioregional and communitarian society, and thus is constrained by the tenets laid out above – respect for all living things, focus on quality, and a democratization and decentralization of economic and political processes. Hence, the entrepreneurial economy of alternative forestry is considerably different than that of mainstream capitalist economies. Alternative forestry advocates competitive log markets and performance-based eco-certification for forest products which will facilitate the development and marketing of community-based businesses.

M'Gonigle and Parfitt envision the possibility of a market economy, but one based in local small businesses, not multinational corporations. Small business is at the forefront of what M'Gonigle and Parfitt call the ‘new forest economy’: “whether it’s woodlot owners or furniture makes, small businesses are the underpinning of the emerging new value economy” (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:73). Small businesses are important for the alternative forestry vision for a number of reasons. It is assumed that many small businesses will provide diversity, hence hedging the community against economic instability (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994). It is also assumed that many small businesses will employ more people than one big company (Hammond 1997:203).
Businesses should develop networks with other local small businesses, rather than buy from or sell to externally-based companies that do not support the community. Eco-forestry often entails a ‘family’ approach to business, often with actual family members, but also treating employees as part of a team, much more than units of production. “Like the family farm, silviculture is largely a job for sweat equity and landed stewards” (M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:65). Hammond (1997:138) describes the “...meaningful employment rather than short-term jobs” which will be part of an alternative forest economy. It is generally acknowledged that wages will be lower in the new value economy, but meaningful employment is assumed to be preferred to high wages. For example, family woodlots, one of the small business opportunities advocated, are feasible only because the family would not seek remuneration for their work, but this type of work fits into the deep ecology and communitarian beliefs of alternative forestry. M'Gonigle and Parfitt (1994:64) cite Jack Bakewell: “I don’t think you can grow trees economically, in this latitude with incremental silviculture using union and contract labour. A woodlot licensee with his family will donate a lot of time, and they see something down the line.”

5.2.4 Representations of forest workers (small forest operators) in alternative forestry accounts of the British Columbia forest industry

In the following three sections I summarize the environmental ethics, community values, and business structures and practices that would be anticipated to be held by small forest operators in hinterland resource communities, based on the alternative forestry literature descriptions of the peripheral workforce in resource communities. A normative tone is used to reflect the alternative forestry literature. In Table 11 I summarize these characteristics, and use them in the following chapter to attempt to classify small forest operators as either “conventional”, i.e. conforming to the requirements of corporate forestry in an era of restructuring (as described by Canadian political economists), or “alternative”, i.e. reflecting the values and practices of alternative, value-based eco-forestry.
Environmental Ethic

Stewardship is clearly a strong ethical theme throughout the work on alternative forestry (see Hammond 1997, Duncan and Taylor 1993). This implies acceptance of regulations which protect the environment, as well as a sense of duty which may go beyond these regulations. It involves a risk-averse approach to 'sustainability'; if there were uncertainty over the ecological impact of an action such as logging, then the preference would be to wait until further information is available.

A stewardship ethic of taking only what is needed from the forest and making the most from it, is at the heart of alternative forestry. However, this stewardship is not only about efficiency. Alternative forestry practitioners feel a strong emotional connection to the forest and to the local natural community as well.

Community Values

The alternative forestry literature describes forest workers committed to the local human community as well as the natural community. From this, alternative small forest operators were anticipated to support the local economy. They would prefer to hire locally in order to support the community. As well, they should attempt to deal with local firms, rather than firms outside of their community. Small firms would be preferred as customers and suppliers, rather than large corporations, because of the inherent belief of alternative forestry practitioners that 'small is beautiful', as well as their distrust of centrist, corporatist entities. Alternative small forest operators should believe in decentralized decision-making. Accordingly, they would be involved in local planning and believe that local democratic decisions will result in the best use of local resources.


**Business Structures and Practices**

Size of business is an important consideration, and small is indeed beautiful for alternative forestry practitioners \(^{25}\). In alternative forestry, environmental sustainability must be assured above all else. For small forest operators, then, the overriding emphasis of business activities would be the protection of ecological values, then on ensuring community and personal 'lifestyle' values, and lastly, on revenues or profitability.

Harvesting must respect biodiversity, forest regeneration, and so on. Equipment should be low-impact such as horselogging or small skidders. Processing should achieve maximum value from the resource, minimizing resource extraction/depletion and maximizing employment.

Manufacturing should based on adding maximum value, using labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive equipment. Wages may be less, but this would be compensated for by a sense of 'belonging', by family ownership in the company or a team approach to production.

### 5.3 Conclusions and Framework for Analysis

In this chapter I have explored the theoretical foundations for the two depictions of the current era in the British Columbia forest industry found in Chapter Four – the post-Fordist account, which can be traced back to the new Canadian political economy, and the alternative forestry interpretation, which has its roots in bioregionalism, deep ecology and communitarianism.

These two schools of thoughts share some common ground, particularly in their interpretation of the past development of the British Columbia forest industry. Within

\(^{25}\) The ideas from E.F. Schumacher's (1973) *Small is Beautiful* resonate throughout the alternative forestry literature.
alternative forestry, for example, the 'Victoria team' of alternative forestry practitioners shares the Canadian political economy approach when they describe the process in which

Geographically, what might be called "industrial centralism" is supported by resource flows from the hinterland to the heartland; politically, these flows are backed by a system of corporate/bureaucratic decision-making that concentrates authority at the top. (Burda et al. 1998:53)

But M'Gonigle explains elsewhere that "what is proposed here builds on, but is more than a modification of, [staple] theory" (M'Gonigle 1997:39). M'Gonigle rejects the marginalization of the hinterland implicit in the terminology of centre-periphery, and proposes a "territorial model" based on bioregionalism as an alternative.

There are key differences between the two schools of thought despite this common ground. Canadian political economy focuses analytically on issues of industry concentration, changes in the labour process and the impacts this has on resource communities. While Canadian political economists are aware of changing public values with respect to environment, they almost never engage with environmentalism analytically. Alternative forestry practitioners, on the other hand, are most concerned with environmentalism and changes in local resource management, particularly how these trends can be implemented in resource communities. While alternative forestry practitioners are critical of corporate and industrial restructuring in the forest industry, they do not engage analytically with these issues.

Alternative forestry entails a very different relationship with the natural environment than the one understood within Canadian political economy. "In its fullest sense, a territorial community includes not only the human community, but the natural community; not only present inhabitants, but future generations. Continuity with such a whole context is what community is all about" (Burda et al. 1998:55).

This type of cohesive community, drawing on a *gemeinshaft* conception of community (cf. Tonnies 1957), is a "natural, tradition-based, essentially rural, community in
which people feel bonded together" (Boothroyd 1991, cited in Rowson 1997:27). This type of community is almost inconceivable within Canadian political economy. More prevalent is the view expressed by Marchak (1991/92:362 and described earlier in the chapter of resource communities “…in the sense of aggregations of individuals and companies…”

Whereas Canadian political economy is concerned with a region’s or a nation’s position in international and regional flows of trade and resources, alternative forestry focuses on a very local scale. Alternative forestry advocates community boundaries based on “bioregionalism” to re-establish circular flows of wealth at the community level. They assume this will ensure an equitable local distribution of wealth. Canadian political economy is also concerned about the distribution of wealth, but at a national or regional scale, focusing on analysis of trade within and between political boundaries, and with far more emphasis on the distribution of wealth between classes. Alternative forestry, conversely, is almost classless – it is assumed that a combination of local entrepreneurship and communitarian values will ensure equity.

There is a strong moral tone within the alternative forestry literature, particularly with respect to ‘the good life’ which North Americans have been pursuing:

North Americans are now at a juncture in their history when they are finally beginning to realize that they are living far beyond their economic and environmental means. We have become wealthy because we have been recklessly converting natural wealth into financial capital, but at a cost which is unsustainable. (Drengson and Taylor 1997:31)

This is not a part of Canadian political economy, which tends to focus more on how resource communities have been deprived of ‘the good life’ through lack of amenities and isolation from urban centres. The ways in which the two schools of thought construct small forest operators are summarized Table 11, with three important areas of interest: environmental ethic, community values, and business practices.

Table 11: Summary of Representations of small forest operators in Canadian political economy and Alternative Forestry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional operators: Canadian political economy</th>
<th>Environmental Ethic</th>
<th>Community Values</th>
<th>Business Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• exploitist approach to land: nature as resource</td>
<td>• dependent on large corporation</td>
<td>• equipment is geared to production and efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accepts existing cut allocations as sustainable</td>
<td>• dependent on company for work</td>
<td>• emphasis is on profit-maximization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• resists regulation which hinders production</td>
<td>• not preferential to local hiring</td>
<td>• capital-intensive practices preferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• deals only with major corporation in local area</td>
<td>• volume-based production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• believes that majors and government can determine best use of resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• not involved in planning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Operators: Alternative value-based forest economy</th>
<th>Environmental Ethic</th>
<th>Community Values</th>
<th>Business Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• values nature: makes the best use of the available resource</td>
<td>• places priority on local economic activities</td>
<td>• equipment is environmentally-sensitive and low-impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• risk-averse approach to sustainable forestry</td>
<td>• hires locally</td>
<td>• emphasis is on lifestyle rather than profits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• supports regulation which protects the environment</td>
<td>• deals with local small firms</td>
<td>• labour-intensive practices are preferred</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• believes that local decisions will reflect best use of the resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• is involved in local planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These two representations can be imagined as a centre/margin duality, with the conventional operator functioning as part of the central account of the British Columbia forest industry, and the alternative operator functioning on the margins. My exploration of small forest operators values in Chapter Six, then, is part of my exploration of the 'centre and the margins' of the British Columbia forest industry.
6 Positioning Small Business in the Hinterland: Interviews with Small Forest Operators in the Bulkley Valley

This chapter summarizes the results of my empirical exploration of small forest operators in the hinterland of British Columbia, focusing on research questions one and two described in Chapter One:

- Do small forest operators provide labour flexibility for a restructured/restructuring corporate forest industry as they are represented in the post-Fordist Canadian political economy perspective? Or
- Do small forest operators function as part of a community-based alternative to corporate forestry as they are represented in the value-based alternative forestry perspective?

The chapter is set out in three sections, to reflect the key areas of importance in representations of forest workers in the literature: environmental ethic, community values, and business practices of small forest operators. The methodology used to analyze data from the interviews was described in Chapter One. The interview data are compared with the representations of conventional and alternative operators, as outlined in Table 7 developed in Chapter Five. In section 6.2, environmental ethics are considered, and in section 6.3 community values are examined. In section 6.4 I evaluate the business practices of small forest operators, to determine if there is consistency between the practices described in the literature, and actual practices of my respondents in the Bulkley Valley. I conclude with a summary of conventional and alternative operator characteristics.

6.1 Type of Business As A Classification of Operators

To begin the analysis of small forest operators' values, I used type of business as an 'entry point'. That is, I classified small forest operators as either 'conventional' or 'alternative', based on their type of business. This approach reflects the practice in both Canadian political economy and alternative forestry to identify workers through the technology they use. In alternative forestry, horse loggers, woodlot licensees, and small value-added manufacturing facilities or other 'value-added' producers use low-impact,
“value”-maximizing technologies (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994; Burda et al. 1997; Burda et al. 1998). In Canadian political economy accounts, highly mechanized technologies are used by small business loggers to provide numerical flexibility in the corporate system of forestry (Marchak 1983; 1995)26. In both literatures, then, operators are highly identified with the types of technologies used in their businesses. Using this preliminary classification, two groups emerge, one of 32 conventional operators, and one of 36 alternative operators. The following table summarizes forest operators into “Conventional” and “Alternative”, based on their type of business.

Table 12: Summary of Types of Businesses - Conventional and Alternative Operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Business: Conventional Operators</th>
<th>Number of Operators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logging – contract: Owns complete or near-complete set of equipment for stump-to-dump logging</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owns a range of equipment used to sub-contract</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specializes in one aspect of conventional logging, e.g. skidding, falling, road building</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not own equipment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Business: Alternative Operators</th>
<th>Number of Operators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logging – horse</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logging – cable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlot licensee</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer (primary only)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer (secondary only)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer (primary and secondary)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log home builders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet makers/wood workers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operators interviewed were almost evenly divided within communities with respect to types of business – with Smithers being the only town having significantly more alternative operators (13) interviewed than conventional (9). Table 13 summarizes types of operations by community.

---

26 As noted in Chapter Five, writers such as Rees and Hayter (1996) have found evidence of functional flexibility within flexibly specialized small firms, but not in the context of resource communities, nor using a Canadian political economy framework explicitly. Where flexible specialization is discussed in resource communities, it is either to observe functional flexibility within a core labour force within corporations, or in normative terms such as Walter (1997), much more in keeping with alternative forestry. For these reasons, small manufacturing firms are classified as alternative rather than conventional for the purposes of this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Hazeltons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithers and area</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns Lake and area</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston and area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.1.1 A General Profile of Operators Interviewed (Conventional and Alternative)

Most operators were 45 years of age or older, with conventional operators slightly older on average, but with more alternative operators in the 45 plus age group (53% of alternative operators versus 47% conventional operators). 66 were male; 2 were female. I did not request information regarding ethnicity; however, all but three informants were white and of European ancestry. The Bulkley Valley is known to have a high percentage of German and Dutch, as well as Anglo settlers; this was reflected in the operators I interviewed. Three Native contractors were interviewed. The mean annual household income, as provided by interviewees, was $62,448 for alternative operators, and $59,814 for conventional operators. These incomes are considerably higher than the average household income figures for the Bulkley Valley, which were $36,045 in 1997 (BC Stats 1998).  

The majority of both conventional and alternative operators were married with children living at home (66%). 27% were married but with no children living at home. Only one interviewee was a single parent, and only four were unmarried. 65% of conventional and 54% of alternative operators had lived in the Bulkley Valley most of their lives. An additional 13% of conventional and 27% of alternative operators had lived half their life in the Bulkley Valley, and half in another part of Canada or another country. 4 respondents

---

27 These income figures are as provided by interviewees, and, as one interviewee pointed out to me, reflect incomes earned by small business owners, which in most cases would not include any employment benefits.
had lived most of their life in another country. In other words, the majority of respondents were solidly 'local'.

There was a wide range of education levels. Alternative operators had, on average, higher education levels than conventional operators. Ten percent of conventional operators had some elementary schooling, but had not graduated Grade 8. 53% had completed high school, and of these, 9% had gone on to post-secondary education, although none had completed a degree. All alternative operators had at least Grade 8, 11% did not have more than Grade 8. Thirty-one percent had completed high school, but had not gone further. An additional 33% had gone on to post-secondary education, with 25% of alternative operators completing a post-secondary program. Conventional and alternative operator profiles are outlined in Table 14.

Table 14: Summary of Conventional and Alternative Operator Demographic Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 years of age and older</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European ancestry</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>$59,815</td>
<td>$62,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with children</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-time resident (at least half of life) of the Bulkley Valley</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some or completed post-secondary education</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from income and education levels, both of which were higher in the alternative operator group, the demographic profile is quite similar for both groups.

6.2 Environmental Ethic

In Chapter Five I defined three areas of environmental concern which summarize the explicit and implicit values which are ascribed to conventional and alternative forest operators in the literature: issues of environmental stewardship, attitudes toward environmental regulations, and attitudes toward environmentalists.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Ethic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Conventional operators:**  
  Canadian political economy | • accepts existing cut allocations as sustainable  
  • exploitist approach to land: nature as resource  
  • resists regulation which hinders production  
  • not involved in planning activities |
| **Alternative Operators:**  
  Alternative value-based forest economy | • places priority on local economic activities  
  • values nature: makes the best use of the available resource  
  • risk-averse approach to sustainable forestry  
  • supports regulation which protects the environment in local planning |

These representations are evaluated using results from interviews with 32 conventional and 36 alternative operators.

**6.2.1 Environmental Stewardship**

In the survey questionnaire I included “opinion” statements about environmental stewardship, and asked operators to what extent they agreed or disagreed with these statements. Statements relating to environmental stewardship are listed in Table 15 along with the percentage of conventional and alternative operators who agreed or disagreed with these statements.
Table 15: Summary of Responses Demonstrating Attitudes Towards Environmental Stewardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operators who agreed (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>Altern.</td>
<td>t value</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The BC forest industry is environmentally sustainable</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major licensees are better stewards of the local environment</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environmental performance of the BC forest industry would be improved if there were more independent operators</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than corporate managers</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than government bureaucrats</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75% of conventional and 73% of alternative operators agreed with the statement that “the BC forest industry is environmentally sustainable” (see Table 15). This statement did not elicit much in the way of commentary; I sensed that in many cases interviewees were not comfortable tackling such an enormous question. For example after I read out this statement, there would be a pause, and the respondent would say “oh, well, ya, I suppose...”. This was similar to responses to questions about the Annual Allowable Cut (discussed below). Whereas questions regarding Forest Practices Code or environmentalists or major corporations usually had an immediate and emphatic response, issues such as the long-term future of the industry, or the sustainability of the cut, seemed to be ‘off-limits’. Several interviewees expressed the view that they would need more information to assess the situation, and that scientists were better qualified to address these concerns. I found this interesting, given the many, many comments throughout the interviews which illustrated their lack of faith in Ministry of Forests scientists.
The statements “independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than corporate managers” and “independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than government bureaucrats” (see Table 15) were, not surprisingly, received favorably, and elicited many off-the-cuff remarks about government workers, such as “oh, everybody’s got better knowledge than the Ministry of Forests!” Even though people were quick to agree with these statements, it was often acknowledged that it depended on individuals. “It depends on who’s the manager, and if the contractor is local or not”; “operators have about as much knowledge as field personnel [in Ministry of Forests], but more than the managers”.

There were fewer derisive comments made about corporate managers, although skepticism remained. For example, one conventional logger commented in response to the second statement, that “it depends on the person, but multinationals are particularly a problem. They don’t have any concept of stewardship, profit is the bottom line, and then they’re out of here”.

Half of respondents disagreed with the statement that “major licensees are better stewards of the local environment than small business owners”. 27% neither agreed nor disagreed, and usually indicated that it would depend on the individuals involved. 21% agreed with this statement; with more conventional operators (32%) agreeing than alternative operators (10%). However, those who agreed with the statement did not ascribe any kind of altruistic motive for stewardship. As one person put it “they have to be, and they have the money and staff to do it”.

Some interviewees, when answering the question, commented on the waste associated with current corporate forestry practices, both in logging and in the mills. For many, this was an enormous source of frustration. They said they were unable to secure timber, for example, for a small portable mill, yet they drove by thousands of cubic metres of
wood which they claim is “wasted”, for example, blowdown and (potential) thinnings. Some talked of being sickened by the wasteful practices which they were ‘forced’ to conduct as contractors. One operator, who had recently started a business to utilize waste wood, said of the local mill, “they won’t let me take junk wood; they would rather have it burned or get chipped”. Another interviewee, who had rejected conventional logging in favour of selective methods, criticized the waste in the woods. He claimed that it is the ‘frontier mentality’ in British Columbia which leads to waste.

In the alternative forestry literature, there is often an implicit relationship between small business and environmental performance; the assumption is that small, local businesses are inherently more concerned about the local environment. So, I asked small operators if they agreed with the statement “the environmental performance of the BC forestry industry would be improved if there were more independent operators”. Slightly less than half (48%) the interviewees agreed.

As one interviewee put it, small operators are “closer to the gun barrel;” in other words, more likely to notice and be affected by environmental deterioration. However, 36% of alternative operators, and 21% of conventional operators, neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. “Being small doesn't equal being benign”, noted one alternative operator, “for example, he (sic) could be highly mechanized or a horse logger”. Another alternative operator felt that more small businesses in the industry would improve environmental performance, but only if they were carefully monitored, suggesting that small businesses are not in and of themselves preferable on environmental grounds. A conventional operator expressed a similar view: “unless there's a real police force to make sure people are following the code, they'll go back to how it was".
6.2.2 Environmental Regulation

Table 16 provides a summary of responses to questions regarding environmental regulations.

**Forest Practices Code**

The Forest Practices Code had been introduced the year prior to interviewing, and remained a topic of heated debate and much ire. When asked, "has your firm been affected by the Forest Practices Code?", 65% of conventional respondents, and 69% of alternative operators, said they had been affected.

Increased costs of operation including shutdowns (13 conventional and 7 alternative operators), paperwork (2 conventional and 5 alternative operators) and difficulty dealing with the Ministry of Forests compliance staff (5 conventional and 4 alternative operators) were all given as some of the negative effects of the Forest Practices Code. Twelve operators (6 conventional and 6 alternative) mentioned the additional stress and worry that the Forest Practices Code has caused. For many, these regulations have had a serious impact on their approach to business in the woods. "People are scared" is the way one horse logger put it. Another told me he had transferred all his assets to his wife for fear of losing everything. A conventional operator told me he had not been directly affected by the Forest Practices Code, yet he spent considerable time describing the "police mentality" of the Code; that the constant threat of fines or even jail has had a big impact on his life. Not everyone I talked to was worried about the Forest Practices Code; for two operators the impact of the Forest Practices Code had been positive in that it brought more work their way.
Table 16: Summary of Responses Demonstrating Attitudes Towards Environmental Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operators who agreed (%)</th>
<th>Conv.</th>
<th>Altern.</th>
<th>Chi-Sq.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firm has been affected by the FPC</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>.07827</td>
<td>0.77965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Practices Code is useful legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>.21530</td>
<td>0.64265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowable cut set at a reasonable level</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>2.71309</td>
<td>0.09953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the strong resistance of ‘the British Columbia forest industry’ to the introduction of the Forest Practices Code expressed by industry groups such as the Council of Forest Industries (COFI), I anticipated that conventional operators who are strongly entrenched in the system would share this resistance. Surprisingly, a solid majority of both conventional and alternative operators felt that the Forest Practices Code was useful (see Table 16), although many also referred to the excessive paperwork and red tape for which it is now famous. Oftentimes operators expressed the idea that there was a minority of ‘bad’ operators for whom the Code was necessary. A woodlot licensee and I had the following discussion around the Forest Practices Code:

EB: Do you think it's (the Forest Practices Code) useful legislation?
GN: That's a good question. I think it's been useful in some operations, I think bringing certain operations up to speed with what's going on has been useful. But my guess is most of the operations that I'm familiar with anyway, were doing not a bad job pre-Code.

EB: Hmm. So overall would you say that bringing those minority operations up to speed justifies the Code?
GN: Hmm. That's a tough question to answer. I don't know what the answer is. I mean, if you can help save one disaster on the Coast, is that worth it? Is that worth it? I don't know. I mean, one huge landslide down there can be pretty devastating, to fish streams, and – overall, I don't mind the concept – even if it just gives the people out there a warmer and fuzzier feeling about what's happening in the forest, then that's OK too. If that's what it takes, if they think that those huge fines or whatever are going to make a difference – and I'm sure they do have people stand up and take notice, I mean, we stand up and take notice too! At say 3 million dollars, or especially that 6 month jail stuff (laughs) – you know, that makes somebody stand up and take note.30

Of those who thought the Code was useful, many qualified it with a “yes, but...” comment. Almost half the conventional operators added a qualifier to their support of the
Code, while fewer alternative operators qualified their response. Most of these qualifying responses referred to the Code going too far, or to excessive administrative red tape. Interviewees would often go into detail about interactions they had had with enforcement officers from the Ministry of Forests, revealing the operators' frustration with what they perceived as inflexibility and lack of common sense.

I found it surprising that in both conventional and alternative groups, there were so few expressing the view that the FPC was not useful (23% of the conventional operators, and 12% of the alternatives). Almost all those who thought it was not useful, said that the required regulations were already in place and simply needed to be better enforced. Thus the anticipated resistance to environmental protection which hinders business did not surface. Rather, their resentment was toward 'bungling bureaucracy', although one disgruntled interviewee said about the FPC: “it's completely useless. They don't have a clue about logging”.

**Annual Allowable Cut**

I asked interviewees if they felt the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) was set at a reasonable level in their district (see Table 16). I asked this in order to gain a sense of where they stood regarding the ecological sustainability of the current forest regime; for example, if they felt the forest was being overcut, or if they felt environmental pressures were infringing on the amount government would allow to be cut. 65% of conventional, and 48% of alternative operators agreed that the AAC is at a reasonable level (see Table 16). 29 I found it interesting that while I received a wide range of comments about the Annual Allowable Cut, not one operator considered it too low – there were many recommendations

---

28 I found it interesting that GN felt the Code might avert a disaster 'on the Coast', 'down there'. Apparently he was not concerned about the possibility of ecological disasters resulting from forestry practices closer to home.
to reduce it, redistribute it, or get rid of the ‘rotten wood’ included in its profile, but no one mentioned increasing it. This suggests to me that there is recognition among both alternative and conventional groups, that the forest resource is not endless.

More alternative operators than conventional operators felt that the AAC was not reasonable (23% and 4% respectively), and in all of these cases they felt that it was too high. Conventional operators tended to express more concern about access to the existing Annual Allowable Cut, rather than to its actual size. “There should be more small business sales instead of it going to big mills – three big mills have wiped out 28 small sawmills”, said one conventional operator.

Other operators (7 conventional and 7 alternative) seemed more reluctant to address this statement than other statements in the questionnaire, feeling that they were not qualified to respond, and deferring to scientists. For example, this is what GN had to say:

EB: Do you think the AAC is set at a reasonable level?
GN: That’s another good question. A lot of people ask me that question, you know, are we cutting too many trees? And for me, it’s a tough one, like I’ve done a lot of flying in the area, probably more than the average kind of person, and for me when I get up and I look around, there’s a lot of area cut, but there’s also a lot of area left standing. So it’s really tough for me to make a judgement call based on that. So I have to go back to the numbers that the Ministry provides, and say here’s what the information - our inventory tells us, here’s what our growing stock information tells us, and here’s what we should be cutting.

6.2.3 Attitudes towards Environmentalists

I inquired about attitudes towards environmentalists, anticipating that conventional operators would be antagonistic towards environmentalists and that alternative operators would be more sympathetic, in keeping with exploitist vs. ecocentric representations found.

---

29 The wording of the question may have caused some confusion, with some interviewees associating AAC with a particular mill’s quota, or with the quota ascribed to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program. Although I tried to clarify my intention in asking this question, I am not sure that it was always clear. Nonetheless, I received some useful feedback.
in the literature. I provided two statements about environmentalists, which are shown in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17: Attitudes towards environmentalists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operators who agree (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalists create a false image of the forest industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalists are responsible for the majority of job losses in the forest industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall agreement was strong that "environmentalists create a false image of the forest industry" (82%). However, in discussions about environmentalists, interviewees indicated fairly strong support for the environmental cause, but frustration with the tactics employed by extreme environmentalists. While the deep ecology perspective reflected in the alternative forestry literature suggests that environmentalists would receive support from alternative operators, and be derided by conventional operators, I found no clear differences between these two groups. In some cases, comments provided were completely opposite from those that I anticipated as responses. For example, one alternative operator, a horse logger, said that "environmentalists are responsible for the development of the Forest Practices Code, and the Forest Practices Code is going to be the biggest downfall to the forest industry that there is". And yet another operator, in this case a conventional logging contractor, observed that "environmentalists are good for jobs, for example the Forest Practices Code has created more jobs". In both cases the creation of the Forest Practices Code is attributed to environmentalists, but the conventional operator sees it as a good thing, and the alternative operator predicts that it will damage the industry.

In other cases, operators fit better the anticipated response. One alternative operator said that while environmentalists could be extreme, they were an "important contribution". A conventional operator, whose family had been in logging for at least three
generations, fit the media stereotype of a logger, expressing the view that “environmentalists are in fairyland”.

Responses to statements about environmentalists’ actions and jobs losses actually revealed more disdain towards government and a corporate forest industry than towards the environmentalists. For example, when I read the statement that “environmentalists are responsible for the majority of job losses in the forest industry” (see Table 17), one interviewee, an alternative operator, laughed out loud (one of the several occasions when I felt quite naive). This person responded quickly with “it’s technology, not environmentalists”. Another alternative operator blamed technology and Native issues for job losses in the area, and still another blamed higher efficiency and greed. Three conventional operators mentioned that technology, not environmentalists, had been responsible for job losses.

What these responses suggest to me is that the friction between loggers and environmentalists which is sensationalized in the media has not taken place in the Bulkley Valley. One conventional operator told me “we haven’t been affected much by environmentalists here;” an alternative operator commented that “environmentalists are not an issue up here, they’re not the problem”.

Yet there are many environmentalists, working to improve forest management in the Valley, and who have succeeded in affecting both the rate and the location of forestry activities. However, few of these environmentalists would suggest that the industry be shut down, and many are as concerned about employment and community stability as ecological sustainability. There seems to be a different type of dialogue between

---

30 Swift (1983:214) records that “one forest business journalist wrote in 1981 that Smithers had a reputation as a town with more environmental activists enjoying more popular support than anywhere else in British Columbia.”
environmentalists and loggers in this area, and the division between the two groups is often (but certainly not always!) indistinct.

One operator, who had been involved in a local planning effort which I was often told had been overwhelmed by environmental interests\(^{31}\), provided the following perspective:

EB: What did you think of the make-up of the (local planning process)? I have been told several times that there were too many extreme environmentalists.

GN: Ya, a pretty strong green movement. Besides [names person], have you talked to anyone else on the [Community Resources] board?\(^ {32}\)

EB: No.

GN: I’m not sure if I would call them extreme environmentalists. There’s a forest ecologist, a biologist, a teacher, ex-dentist, um, you know, ex-worker for CP [Canadian Pacific Railway], I guess. But anyway, they definitely had an environmental bent, but I wouldn’t call them extreme. I’ve seen much more severe cases of extreme environmentalists than that. And the extreme ones, although some of them wanted to be on there, didn’t make it to the board.

6.2.4 Summary of Environmental Attitudes Expressed By Conventional and Alternative Operators

The interviews revealed similarities and differences between conventional and alternative operators, although there were no statistically significant differences between groups. Both groups felt the British Columbia forest industry is environmentally sustainable, although I had anticipated that more alternative operators would disagree with this statement. Both groups felt equally that more independent operators would improve the environmental performance of the industry (in keeping with alternative forestry). Both groups had been affected by the Forest Practices Code, and both groups felt the Forest Practices Code was useful legislation. I was surprised at how many conventional operators

\(^{31}\) Suggesting that there is some animosity between forest workers and environmentalists, even if not to the extent as on the Coast.

\(^{32}\) It frequently occurred that people would refer to other people I had interviewed. At the time I found it alarming that interviewees were so informed about each other’s involvement in my study. Having now spent more than two years in the valley, I have become accustomed, if not completely comfortable, with the idea that ‘everybody knows everybody’s business’. Whereas confidentiality must be assured by a researcher, there are no such guarantees among interviewees.
supported the Forest Practices Code given the industry resistance to it at the time of interviews.

The overall impression from these operators is that environmental stewardship results primarily from a combination of knowledge gained from working ‘in the bush’ and some form of external monitoring (which is resented but nonetheless recognized as necessary). Conventional operators indicated slightly more support for corporations as environmental stewards than alternative operators.

While there was skepticism about the stewardship capabilities of the major licensees, it did not always follow that operators thought small mills would be better stewards. For example, when asked if they would prefer more small mills, reference was made to the ‘gypo’ operators of the past - to the wasted wood, the workplace hazards, and poor environmental practices (see Table 19 and discussion in section 6.3.1).

Discussion of the Forest Practices Code revealed little difference in attitudes towards environmental regulation between conventional and alternative operators. Although slightly more alternative operators supported the Forest Practices Code unquestioningly, there were many conventional operators who gave the Code their support. Furthermore, those who were resistant to the Code, usually referred to the bureaucracy and inflexibility of enforcement, rather than the regulations themselves. For example, one conventional operator noted that:

> It would be good to have seminars or round tables with government, mills, environmentalists, and loggers to discuss issues around the Forest Practices Code rather than have training seminars where knowledge is shoved down your throat. Nobody listens to the people who actually are doing the work.

Attitudes toward the AAC differed more between the two groups, with more conventional operators (62%) accepting of the current cut level than alternative operators (48%). Alternative operators were more likely to feel the AAC was too high. These differences may reflect the ‘volume versus value’ differences which the alternative forestry
literature asserts exist between conventional and alternative operators. However, because I am not entirely comfortable with the way this question was received I am reluctant to interpret the results.

While it is not immediately apparent that either the Forest Practices Code or the prescribed Annual Allowable Cut ensures the sustainability of the forest resource (and is beyond the scope of this dissertation), it is clear that the group of operators I interviewed, whether conventional or alternative, are for the most part supportive of environmental regulation and moderate environmentalists. This is a somewhat surprising result given the widespread perception that conventional forest workers are resistant to any regulations which may interfere with their work. However, both groups tended to have negative views of the ‘Greenpeace’ type of extreme environmentalist. 52% of conventional operators felt that environmentalists were to blame for job losses in the forest industry, compared to 41% of alternative operators. Operators who did not agree with this statement often said it was technology instead.

6.3 Community Values

The Canadian political economy descriptions of resource communities in which “the essential ingredients of communities are missing” (Marchak 1983, discussed in Chapter Five) are a stark contrast to the depictions of community in the alternative forestry literature. Alternative small forest operators are said to care about the people in their community, be involved in local planning, and work toward creating a local economy based on diverse small businesses. Conventional operators, on the other hand, will not get involved in local planning, and will leave resource planning to major corporations and government.

The following three sections explore attitudes toward community, local planning, and the local economy, summarized in Table 11 and repeated here.
### Community Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional Operators: Canadian political economy</th>
<th>Alternative Operators: Alternative value-based forest economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• dependent on large corporation</td>
<td>• places priority on local economic activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• dependent on company for work</td>
<td>• hires locally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not preferential to local hiring</td>
<td>• deals with local small firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• deals only with major corporation in local area</td>
<td>• believes that local decisions will reflect best use of the resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• believes that majors and government can determine best use of resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not involved in planning activities</td>
<td>• is involved in local planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.1 Community/Company Town

Community structure is an important element in many analyses of the British Columbia forest industry. As Chapter Four described, the development of the forest industry in British Columbia resulted in the establishment of isolated and dependent resource communities. The alternative forestry literature views the rise in small businesses in the current era as a sign of communities shifting from over-reliance on major corporations to creating a locally-based, diversified and hence a more stable economy.

In this section, I explore attitudes toward community held by small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley. Do they consider their communities overly-reliant on major corporations? Would they prefer more small businesses in the area? And are there significant differences in these values between operators using alternative methods and conventional operators?

Because of the differences expressed in the two literatures around community, I anticipated that conventional operators would have moved to the Bulkley Valley, or have stayed there, for business reasons only. Alternative operators, on the other hand, would have a greater sense of community, or territoriality, which would extend to the natural environment as well. They might have been born in the community, or have chosen to move there for lifestyle reasons.
However, when I asked operators why they had located their business in the Bulkley Valley (see Table 18), the most common response among both conventional (55%) and alternative (29%) operators was simply that they had grown up here, or that their spouse had grown up here. Some included other reasons as well, such as “there were good business opportunities” or “we like the people here”, but the most obvious reason to them was still that they had grown up here. ‘Good business opportunities’ was mentioned less often than I had anticipated; by only 10% of conventional and 23% of alternative operators. Reasons of lifestyle, such as the beautiful natural environment, being able to spend time with family, or pursue recreational activities, were more important to both groups than business opportunities, but more so for alternative operators (29%) than conventional operators (16%).

Table 18: Reason(s) to locate business in the Bulkley Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
<th>Conventional (%)</th>
<th>Alternative (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grew up here (spouse grew up here)</td>
<td>68 (6)</td>
<td>46 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good business opportunities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Corporation Presence

59% of both conventional and alternative operators felt they were better off with a major corporation in the area (Table 19), although the reasons given for this by the two groups were slightly different. Those who felt they were better off, spoke of the advantages of having big mills in the area, primarily security of employment (5 conventional and 2 alternative operators) and economic stability (3 alternative and 1 conventional operators). Five alternative operators felt better off with a major corporation in the area, because the big mills provide niche opportunities for small business, by trading dry for green timber, for
example. These were all 'value-added' manufacturers who were able to trade with the major licensees for timber under the 16.1 Small Business Forest Enterprise Program\textsuperscript{33}.

### Table 19: Resource community values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Operators who answered 'yes' (%)</th>
<th>Operators who agreed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>Altern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your company better off because there is a major licensee in the local area?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you prefer to deal with smaller mills?</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two conventional and seven alternative operators who felt they were better off having a major corporation in the area qualified their response by noting concerns about the excessive control held by these companies. Those operators who felt they were worse off, also raised issues of excessive control by major corporations (four conventional and four alternative operators) and the volumes of timber required to keep the big mills operating (three conventional and one alternative operators).

Many interviewees revealed a reluctant acceptance of major corporations as an economic necessity; this was true for both conventional and alternative operators. One conventional operator put it this way: “you have to have that [the presence of major corporations] to unload your timber”. Another said: “they keep people employed but they have to cut a lot of wood to do it”. One alternative operator, who was opposed to having

\textsuperscript{33} The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program and other Ministry of Forests programs relevant to small forest operators are described in Appendix B.
large corporations in the area noted: “There’s steady work, but they use too much wood. They’re running out of wood for their appetites.”

Only 29% of conventional and 28% of alternative operators agreed with the statement “small businesses provide more stable jobs than major licensees.” 13 respondents (6 conventional and 7 alternative operators) noted that while it was currently the case that the major corporations provide more stable jobs, it was because of current tenure arrangements which give major corporations secure access to the resource base. One conventional operator put it this way: “it’s access to the resource that creates jobs; whoever has access creates jobs”. One alternative operator commented that while major corporations provide stable jobs during productive phases, over the long term they are inherently unstable because of the ‘boom and bust’ cycle. A conventional operator noted that “big mills are more stable when they’re here, but when they’re gone, they’re gone”.

While it was acknowledged by more than half the operators that small businesses do not provide the stability of major licensees (see Table 19), there was also a large component of both conventional and alternative operators who felt that the system was set up in such a way that large corporations are able to maintain stability in the short term.

I asked interviewees if they would prefer to deal with small mills if it were available to them as an option. I anticipated, based on the literature, that alternative operators would prefer dealing with small mills, whereas conventional operators would prefer to continue dealing with major corporations. The results reflect this, with 73% of alternative operators preferring small mills if possible, whereas only 40% of the conventional operators would prefer this arrangement. Reasons given for preferring to work with small mills were equally divided between economic stability, increased jobs, economic diversification, and simply for the fact that “small is beautiful”.

156
Of the 37.5% of conventional operators and 66.7% of alternative operators who preferred not to deal with small mills, most felt small mills would be unreliable to deal with. "Don't turn the clock backwards," commented one alternative operator. "Too many scary stories of the old days" said another; they're "inconsistent", said yet another. Conventional operators said "they're inefficient", "unreliable", and "you're never sure if you'll get paid".

One measure of the stability of small businesses is how long they have been in operation. Within the operator group that I interviewed, there was considerable variation, as illustrated in Figure 15. There was no significant difference between average years of operation for conventional and alternative operators, with an average of 14 for conventional operators and 13 for alternative operators. However, there were more alternative operations less than five years old (39% versus 22% conventional), and more conventional operations more than twenty years old (28% versus 19% alternative). This may support M'Gonigle's vision of an emergent alternative forestry. On the other hand it is widely known that there is a high turnover of small businesses in forestry. The case study data could also be used to argue that conventional operators have better staying power, having more operations that have stayed in business for over twenty years (with the implication that alternative operators may have started twenty years ago as well, but have since failed). Longitudinal data would be required to demonstrate either argument.

It is perhaps not surprising that most interviewees agreed with the statement "small business owners are more concerned about the community than major licensees." (87% of conventional and 80% of alternative operators). However, it is interesting that more of the conventional operators agreed with this statement than did operators using alternative methods. No conventional operators disagreed with this statement. Two alternative operators disagreed strongly with this statement (they did not explain their responses).
6.3.2 Attitudes toward Local Planning

I asked operators a series of questions about local planning – first, if they felt local planning was important; second, if they had been involved in any local planning processes; and third, if they felt represented in local planning initiatives. The results are summarized in Table 20.

78% of conventional and 72% of alternative operators felt that local planning processes were important for small operators such as themselves. In contrast to anticipated responses, more alternative operators felt that local planning was not important than did conventional operators (18% vs. 11%). There were no noticeable differences between the two groups in terms of reasons for supporting such processes. Comments ranged from the positive: “it’s long and tedious, but everyone is hoping for good things to come out of it; it’s good to have a community-based plan” (conventional operator); to very negative: “the process is a joke - it’s a bunch of people with self-interests sitting at the table” (conventional operator).
Table 20: Attitudes toward local planning and organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operators who answered yes (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>Altern.</td>
<td>Chi-Sq.</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are local planning processes important for small operators?</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.02236</td>
<td>0.88114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you involved in local planning?</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>0.00264</td>
<td>0.95901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel represented in local planning?</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0.12879</td>
<td>0.71969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30% and 27% of alternative and conventional operators, respectively, had been involved in some kind of public planning process\textsuperscript{34}. Six operators were involved in Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs), one operator was on a sub-committee of the LRMP. Two had been on the LRMP, but had left. Three operators were involved in Local Resource Use Plans (LRUPs)\textsuperscript{35}. Three were involved in Native planning, either for their own territories, or on Native Land Claims Advisory Committees.

When asked why they were not involved in planning, in spite of believing that the processes are important, some interviewees reflected the independent nature of this sector in their responses. For example, this alternative operator found it difficult to sit through a meeting:

But I guess it's just the mentality of the people involved, eh, um I would think the people that are in the bush, most of the work is done - it's all hand work, you know backbreaking-type work and that's the kind of people you are. You don't have a lot to say and what you have to say is how it is, sort of thing. And then you get some high falutin' guy in there that wants to argue or whatever - we're not interested in that, that's not what we're here for.

A conventional operator and I had the following discussion about planning processes, revealing his skepticism of "meeting types":

HR: Most of the people on those boards don't have to work. And they study everything to death. The working man doesn't have time to do that.

EB: So how do you get the working man represented in this kind of thing then?

\textsuperscript{34} Operator involvement in local planning processes is likely to be over-represented in my study, since I deliberately sought out operators who had been involved in local planning. This statistic, like all statistics in my study, should not be taken to be representative of a larger population.

\textsuperscript{35} Local Resource Use Plans take place at the local level and include initiatives such as Coordinated Access Management Plans, Community Watershed Plans and Landscape Unit Plans (LUCO 1998b).
HR: Well, when this thing first started, there was a lot of us very interested in it. So we went to a meeting. After several meetings they decided to pick a board. So they had you stand up in front of everybody and give them your resume and then they voted....Everybody at the public meeting had the opportunity, if you wanted to sit on it, to present his resume to the meeting, and then after all the resumes had been presented, the meeting voted, all the members there, voted on who was going to be on the board. So there was three of us major contractors there, and, but we were outnumbered quite badly.

EB: By - ?

HR: The biologists, the local greenthumbs. We never got picked. They picked one of the fellas from industry, (names person), he got chosen, but there wasn't any of us working people on it at all...I don't necessarily believe that the public should be involved. 90% of them don't know what they're talking about. As far as actually controlling -- and they are going to have control -- as far as controlling the industry out there, I don't agree with it. You're back to the same thing. A whole bunch of authority and a little bit of knowledge and you're -- dangerous. And I think the public is dangerous. I think they have lots of things to complain about, and they should have lots of concerns, but I don't think the general public should be involved in the actual running of operations. The [names a local watershed], I think that could be logged quite effectively and very efficiently, and it's not EVER going to be logged. And it's going to burn. (Pause) A big redneck, eh? (Laughs)

When asked if they felt represented in local planning processes, there was a wide range of responses from both conventional and alternative operators. 46% of conventional and 43% of alternative operators felt these planning processes represented their needs well, moderately well, or somewhat. 19% of conventional and 22% of alternative operators felt they did not represent their needs at all. Even more interesting is the fact that 35% of each group did not want to answer this question, because they didn't feel they knew enough about it to provide an informed opinion. This suggests that in spite of believing that local planning is important, many operators in the case study are not even following local planning processes that are taking place.

Many of these operators felt a sense of resignation to the apparent power of corporate interests and environmentalists in local planning processes. One alternative operator said:

The process was dominated too much by big industry interests. I'm not an environmentalist, and I'm not a redneck or whatever, I'm not involved in politics, but I have a natural feeling of what the area needs.
Another expressed it this way: “Government leans towards just making parks rather than listening to us small operators”. “The feeling we got from the meeting was that they don’t really represent loggers as strong as the people who wanted to see no logging at all”, said another.

Discussions with small forest operators regarding local planning processes reveal contradictory views held by both alternative and conventional operators. Most operators feel that these planning processes are important, yet are reluctant to get involved, are skeptical about the outcomes, and may or may not follow the process, even through the local newspaper. Interviewees who had been involved in local planning processes were fairly positive about their experiences, but many said they would probably not do it again because of ‘burn-out’.

The picture of community-based planning and decision-making depicted in the alternative forestry literature – the belief that increased local control will result in more sustainable resource management – ignores the skepticism and resignation felt by working people in resource communities. While operators may complain about a system in which decisions are made ‘down South’ (and many, if not all, of the operators I interviewed did complain about this), they also expressed considerable resignation that ‘that’s just the way things are’.

6.3.3 Attitudes toward Local Economy

The literature suggests that alternative operators would be more supportive of economic diversification, value-added production, and other small businesses than conventional operators who are part of high-wage staples production. I asked small operators what they thought about resource dependency, diversification and value-added. Their attitudes towards these issues are summarized in Table 21.

“If we’re overly specialized in anything it’s government employees”.

161
Two alternative operators offered exactly the same comment regarding my statement that this area is overly-specialized in forestry. Both operators came from Smithers, which is the government's regional centre. Although said in humor, it was yet another reminder of the resentment felt toward government.

Table 21: Attitudes towards resource dependency, diversification and value-added

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operators who agreed (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>Altern.</td>
<td>Chi-Sq.</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This town is overly-specialized in forestry</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More economic diversification would benefit this town</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More value-added production is the key to a successful forestry industry in British Columbia</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After reading the Canadian political economy literature on resource dependency, which provides a fairly damning picture of dependency in resource communities, I was really surprised at how many people did not think the area was overly-specialized in forestry (48% of conventional and 50% of alternative operators); although they readily acknowledged that diversification would be a good thing (93% conventional and 83% of alternative operators). Rather, the perception seemed to be that the area is forestry, that it was almost nonsensical to consider the economy apart from forestry. "What else is there?" was a common, off-the-cuff response. While diversity was seen as a potential benefit to the community, it did not seem likely to occur: "[the forest industry] is all that's here, but we're not overly-specialized"; "it's what's here; there's no choice". There was even one conventional operator strongly opposed to diversification, at least in the terms he imagined it:

There's too many people here already, don't bring in big industries with more people. If things were handled properly, there would be enough work in forestry to keep everyone local employed.

I was also surprised by some of the responses to statements about economic diversification and value-added production. I worded my questions about value-added without defining it, because I was curious to see how small operators would define it. In the
alternative forestry literature and in current BC forestry policy, ‘value-added’, tends to be only vaguely defined, if at all. Yet particularly in its common, undefined usage, it has taken on the status of sustainable development – something just about everyone supports.\textsuperscript{36}

Most respondents (80\%) agreed that more value-added would improve the forest industry. However, few were as excited about the prospects of value-added as government policy-makers. Responses tended to be much more cautious. For example, one alternative operator said:

\ldots in terms of solving all the province's problems, I don't think value-added is going to do that. Value-added is a very competitive market, and we're into it, and we have difficult times, and heck, we're out of it. It seems like the world only needs so much of certain things. But one thing they do need lots of is lumber. So, value-added? Sure, it's going to help, but I don't think it's going to be the be-all and end-all.

Another alternative operator, who was involved in value-added manufacturing, commented that value-added was "one component, but not the only thing". Yet another alternative operator said there should be more attention given to jobs in intensive silviculture, rather than to 'value-added' jobs at the manufacturing end. One conventional operator was quite negative about what could be considered value-added by people in the forest industry:

\ldots And this area really doesn't have a lot of high value logs, like there's some poles, and some clear tops. But we don't have any Douglas fir, and we don't have any yellow cedar, and so really the high-end stuff is not here. But I know there would be a potential if there was a type of processing plant to deal with some of the good quality stuff. But you can count the small mills in this part of the country that are actually doing anything. I mean, (names a small mill), outside the other side of \ldots there, they got into value-added thing, and they just made 2\times4s, re-sawed them into some Japanese dimensions, and now it's value-added. You know, it doesn't seem to do it for me. In my mind, the whole value-added thing was to ship a final product, not rewash something into another raw piece.

\textsuperscript{36} Recent policy statements such as the Jobs and Timber Accord (Ministry of Forests 1997b) suggests that value-added will come to be equated with remanufacturing.
However, there were some big supporters of value-added as well. One conventional operator revealed his enthusiasm by worrying that he might sound like an environmentalist:

"I'm a super - I'm just going to come out sounding like an environmentalist by the time I'm done here. I'm a real big fan of more value-added. Like, I think we have, you know, some pretty expensive labour in BC, and that makes it difficult to compete on the value-added market, you know, when you're looking at a worldwide market. But regardless, ...we have to be able to come up with a way to make more jobs out of the current - like the yield it seems, from what I've heard, it seems like the cut is not really sustainable at the levels that it's been at in the past. If the cut is not sustainable at the levels from the past, we have no alternative but to reduce it so that we can all keep on being happy and having jobs, but at the same time, rather than having everybody unemployed as a result of the reduced cut, it'd sure be nice to have some way to take some of the - if you're reducing the cut, to get more of what's left of that cut into value-added places...."

6.3.4 Summary of Community Attitudes Expressed by Alternative and Conventional Operators

Questions about attitudes toward community revealed similarities and differences between conventional and alternative operators. The data do not always concur with the representations found in the literature. For example, both groups felt equally (59%) that they were better off with a major corporation in the area, although I had anticipated strong support of major corporations from conventional operators and weak support from alternative operators. Both groups raised concerns about corporate control and excessive volume requirements in the large mills. Approximately half of both groups felt their towns were overly-specialized in forestry, both groups strongly supported more diversification (with more conventional than alternative operator support), and both groups felt strongly that value-added was the key to a successful forest industry. The only statistically significant difference between the two groups was in their attitudes toward other small firms. Only 37.5% of conventional operators said they would prefer to deal with small mills if it were possible, whereas 66.7% of alternative operators said they would prefer this. This difference in support for small business is in keeping with the representations in the literature, which suggest that an alternative operator supports local small businesses, whereas a conventional operator is more closely tied to a local major corporation.
The two groups of operators expressed very similar views on local planning, with over 70% feeling it is important for small operators (slightly more conventional operators), but less than 30% were actually involved in planning. Slightly more conventional (37%) than alternative (33%) operators felt represented in local planning processes, but in both cases the numbers are low. Attitudes toward community, local planning and local economy were far more similar between groups than is suggested by the representations of small forest operators found in the literature.

6.4 Business Practices

According to the literature, the business practices of an alternative operator should differ considerably from a conventional operator dependent on the system of corporate forestry. The ultimate objective of an alternative operator should be quality of life, minimizing impact on the environment and making a positive contribution to community. The profit-motive should be much less present in alternative firms than in conventional ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional operators:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian political economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- equipment is geared to production and efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis is on profit-maximization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- capital-intensive practices preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- volume-based production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Operators:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative value-based forest economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- equipment is environmentally-sensitive and low-impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis is on lifestyle rather than profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- labour-intensive practices are preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- value-based production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In keeping with their quality of life objectives, alternative operators would be expected to use environmentally-sensitive, low-impact equipment and practices. As well, labour-intensive practices would be preferred over capital-intensive ones to provide more employment and stability in the community. Finally, consistent with his/her environmental values, an alternative operator would seek to add as much value to the resource as
possible, whereas a conventional operator would be more interested in maximizing profits through high volumes. In the following sections I explore business practices around the themes of objectives, production, employment, and interactions with other firms, as described to me by the operators I interviewed.

6.4.1 Business Overview and Objectives

Starting A Small Business in Forestry

Sixty percent of the alternative operators indicated that they had started this business for lifestyle reasons, or because they wanted to make a positive contribution to the forest industry, for example by reducing waste (see Table 22). Only 39% of conventional operators had started their business for lifestyle reasons. Eight percent of the alternative group gave reasons that suggested that they were in it because there was 'nothing else to do', whereas 23% of conventional operators had been born into forest work, or had fallen into it when they lost a job elsewhere. The data suggest some real differences between the two groups in terms of pro-actively pursuing a given career. Nineteen percent of each group had started their business because they saw a good business opportunity.

Table 22: Reasons for Starting a Small Business in Forestry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Operators who agreed (%)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>Altern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Opportunities</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The alternative forestry literature suggests that alternative forestry is a family-centered activity. The majority of operators I interviewed did consider themselves family-run businesses (72% of conventional and 81% of alternative operators). In over half these families the spouse was part of the business. In some cases, the spouse was a partner 'on paper' only, drawing a salary to create a lower income tax bracket. However, in many other cases the wife assisted, usually in bookkeeping and administrative functions, and occasionally 'in the bush'. Both women who run their own businesses were working
partners with their husbands. Fourteen of the 68 respondents worked with their children as well, and others had business relationships with other extended family members.

Alternative operators tended to work more frequently with their spouses (66% versus 52%) or with their spouses and kids (17% versus 13%), whereas conventional operators worked more often just with their children (17% versus 3%). (This may simply reflect the fact that alternative operators were younger than conventional operators on average.)

The value of working as a family was often referred to by both groups. One woodlot licensee, when asked what the advantages of holding a woodlot license were, responded:

A lot of people have said to me, what a great nest egg this is. But really, if the price of private wood drops or nobody wants to buy private wood, which is a good reason for the price to drop, then you really don't have much of a nest egg. I think more importantly than the monetary end, is for me, is getting the family out, and getting them familiar with small-scale kind of forestry. See, I work in a business of course, that's -- you might say big-scale, large-scale, and this is sort of a weekend thing, where I can do small-scale. And the kids can relate to that. They can go out and plant trees and go back five years later, and their name's on that tree, and oh gee I planted that tree, great, or you can go out and see a grizzly bear walking down the road. I mean those kind of things are pretty hard to put a monetary value on, but it's a kind of value that I think means a lot to kids growing up. And it means a lot to me too.

Revenues

Gross revenues and net incomes, as provided by interviewees, are shown for both conventional and alternative operators in Figure 16. The range of revenues within the case study is quite wide, with some surprisingly high figures. And, conversely, there are some very low figures as well.

Mean gross revenue for conventional operations was $1.23 million, and $1.03 million among alternative operators. The large differences between revenues and net income demonstrate the high costs of many of these operations. For example, the mean net income for the 14 firms earning gross revenues over $1 million, was only $45,979. Five firms recorded negative net incomes. Mean net income for conventional operators was $67,925, compared to $3,798 for alternative operations. Statistics Canada reports average
weekly wages in the logging industry to be $873 in 1997. Average annual salaries in the Bulkley-Nechako regional district were $25,985 in 1993, lower than the British Columbia average of $27,065.

Figure 16: Gross Revenues, Conventional and Alternative Operations, 1995

The revenue data was usually ‘ballpark’ according to interviewees, and not usually provided from tax returns. Revenue figures should therefore be used to provide a general sense of business operations, rather than a completely accurate picture. Operators were generally not interested in or willing to discuss revenues, except to illustrate a particular point in the discussion, such as the wide gaps between gross and nets, or the advantages of their type of operation. Alternative logging operators, for example, often took a great deal of pride in telling me that while they grossed much less than conventional operations, their nets were often the same or better.
Table 23: Mean Gross and Net Revenue, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conv.</th>
<th>Altern.</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Revenue, 1995, before tax</td>
<td>$1.242 m</td>
<td>$1.096 m</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Revenue, 1995, before tax</td>
<td>$67,925</td>
<td>$3,798</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df = 31)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most interviewees expressed satisfaction with the economic performance of their companies (71% of conventional and 77% of alternative operators). Income levels were generally lower for alternative operators than conventional operators, however alternative operators were generally satisfied with their economic performance, even at very low levels (including negative). Those who were satisfied with a net income of zero, said they were satisfied with this, because their priorities lay elsewhere, for example providing an opportunity to educate young people, or because they wanted to keep the business small and within the family. This suggests some agreement between expectations from the alternative forestry literature, and the experience of the alternative operators in these interviews, in that lower individual incomes are recognized to be part of the value economy.

Figure 17: Net Incomes, Conventional and Alternative Operations, 1995
**Business Planning**

The investment strategies of these small forest operators were, and remain, rather mysterious to me. The textbook case of calculating return on investment, or any such measure, did not seem to exist in this world. The uncertainty of log supply, future contracts and market demand makes capital investment a ‘guessing game’ for small forest operators.

For example, I asked one conventional operator about his business planning strategies, after he had given me his past five years of (quite erratic) revenue figures:

EB: So how do you plan, when there's so much variation in your income. I'm so used to a steady – well, actually I'm used to a student's income, so –

JP: No, we don't have any trouble.

EB: So you don't find planning...

JP: How can you plan? How would you do it?

EB: Well, that's what I'm trying to figure. If you have to buy machinery, or were thinking about expanding or something like that...

JP: Well, you have to **GUESS** at it. I've been pretty lucky at guessing at it the last few years, but – and before that, but I don't know what's comin' now, and that's why I'm sorry I bought a machine, I should have just quit. Go and do somethin' else. Because the man situation this year – we got lots of guys phoning us, but we don't know what we're going to do. And now, I bid on the 13th, I bid on four roads, we don't know if we're going to get anything, 'cause we don't know how many culls are bidding on them. And after a few of these culls get roads, well then you can start biddin' on some more because – but then, we've only got I think six roads this year, well, then we'll get – if we don't get any roads, we'll get a certain amount of hourly work for the forestry, but they'll only hire one machine of mine, when I've got about six, you see. And I would bid on some in Houston, but there's only three coming up there. So it's going to be a sad year, this year. So I've been buying some property and developing it, and I might as well do that.

6.4.2 Production

**Logging Operations**

Forty-nine operators provided the amount of timber they had logged in the previous year. Nineteen operators either were not in the business of actual logging (such as truck drivers), or they were not responsible for keeping track of volume (working on an hourly rate instead). Those who are using conventional methods extract, on average, much higher volumes of timber (48,370 m³/operator/yr.) than those using alternative methods (17,156...
m³/operator). Eleven alternative operators, but only one conventional operator, logged less than 5000 m³ per year.

Less than 30% of both groups (29% of conventional loggers and 24% of alternative loggers) did not want to log more. Only slightly more conventional loggers (75%) than alternative loggers (70%) indicated that they would like to log more than they had the previous year. There is no clear relationship between the amount logged and whether or not they would like to log more. For example, the five alternative loggers who do not want to log more, only logged on average 2,228 m³ last year (all were under 10,000 m³), whereas those alternative loggers who would like to log more, logged on average 13,508 m³ last year, with a range of 700 m³ to 50,000 m³. However, there was often a ten-fold difference in the amount that the 'satisfied' conventional operators were logging compared to alternative loggers, giving some support to the alternative forestry idea that alternative operators are more likely to be satisfied 'doing more with less' than conventional operators.

Manufacturing Operations

The manufacturers I spoke with ranged from a man doing woodworking from his home, to a fingerjointing operation employing 43 people in its production facility. Accordingly, there was a wide range of products, technologies, and perspectives. Products included:

- cedar and pine shakes and shingles
- packing crate components
- component lumber for Japanese housing
- log homes
- custom cabinets
- cants for use in log homes
- rough sawn timber and boards
- finger joint stock (several types)
- kitchenwares, furniture
- craft materials, e.g. cedar strips

All fifteen manufacturers considered their operations to be value-added. This was surprising to me because the literature doesn't consider primary sawmills to be value-added. However, these operators explained that they utilize wood that would normally be 'garbage wood' – wood that would either be left on the cutblock or chipped. One miller explained that "we utilize material that is normally burned"; another that he "aims to use
'garbage wood' with one hundred percent utilization". These operators would not normally be considered value-added facilities (for example, they would probably not meet the value-added bid proposal sales criteria set out by the Ministry of Forests Small Business Forest Enterprise Program); yet they feel they perform a value-adding function. Others who had bid in the 16.1 program performed primary breakdown as well as more value-added production. Only two operations were "re-manufacturers", the term increasingly associated with value-added production. One operation traded logs for lumber with primary producers, and so was still involved in logging indirectly. The second operation performed some remanufacturing and some primary breakdown as well.

Nine of the fifteen manufacturers were interested in increasing production, but felt constrained by access to raw materials and limited demand for their products. Those not interested in expanding (5 of 15) felt that their current production levels were sufficient, offering comments such as: "I can find as many contracts as I can handle, I'm not interested in expansion", and "I just want to supply the local area, I'm not interested in overseas markets or getting into retail".

Only six of the fifteen were interested in producing higher value-added products. Of these, three were active in research to expand their product lines, two felt that there would not be sufficient demand for higher value products, and one felt constrained by the local tree species, which, as he put it, "are not value-oriented"37.

Five manufacturers felt that they were already at the top end of the 'value chain', for example by making log homes or cabinets. One was already "utilizing 100% of garbage wood" by turning it into a variety of retail products such as firestarter kits and craft supplies.

37 The species mix in the Bulkley Valley has been recognized as problematic for value-added opportunities. For example, in the Bulkley Timber Supply Area, pulp logs constitute approximately 52% of the AAC. However, the combined sawmill capacity of the 2 major licensees in the Bulkley TSA exceeds the sawlog supply by approximately one-third (Crane Management Consultants 1998). In other words, the likelihood that new entrants to the forest industry will be able to access quality timber is extremely low.
Another was satisfied doing custom sawmilling orders, and didn’t want more sophisticated production.

**Capital Investment**

There was a wide range of technologies employed. Conventional operations were usually “stump-to-dump” operations capable of all aspects of harvesting and delivering wood – a typical inventory would include buncher(s), processor(s), loader(s), skidder(s) and cat(s). I was told that it is an increasing trend for operators to also purchase their own trucks rather than sub-contract this function. Some of the operators were moving into “road-side” operations, an even more mechanized method of logging which is preferred since the introduction of the Forest Practices Code.

Not all operators had invested so heavily in equipment; one operator had sold all his equipment several years ago, and sub-contracted all logging functions, a few others had only a skidder or cat and were sub-contracted out. About two-thirds had a full “show” [logging operation], with the remaining one-third usually having several pieces of equipment. Reference was often made to the enormous cost of financing and maintaining this equipment, and the pressure that creates if there is a delay in logging (for example, if there is a shutdown to comply with the Forest Practices Code).

With the exception of some of the larger value-added operations and the innovative harvesting operators such as cable logging, there was relatively low investment in equipment among alternative operators. One logger, having switched from mechanical to horse logging, put it this way:

My overhead is down, like a lot further down. I used to have two cats, and make over $200,000 a year and I think I’m making more now with one team (net). It’s unreal what overhead in equipment is now. Whereas with horses I can - I can’t turn the key off and they don’t quit eating, but at least when I do generate a dollar it’s usually in my pocket, whereas you don’t have the big bank interest. At any time I could have put 10, 20,000 $ into those machines, but with horses it’s a lot easier to regulate what’s going on. And, oh I enjoy it quite a bit more, I get more exercise, and feel better at the end of the day.
I asked interviewees if the equipment they used had changed significantly in the past five years. Many of the alternative operators had only formed in the past five years and did not answer the question. However, of the older alternative firms, only one quarter had made significant changes in their equipment. On the other hand, over half of the conventional operators had changed equipment in the last five years. Some had changed to more ground-sensitive equipment in anticipation of, or because of, the Forest Practices Code; others had to accommodate working in steeper terrain. Some, it seemed, just couldn't resist the temptation to buy new equipment.

Approaches to equipment varied considerably. Some preferred to replace equipment every three or four years, claiming that this reduces maintenance costs and provides better tax write-offs. Others would only buy second-hand, and fix things up. Many were enthusiastic and eager to talk about their equipment, for example, one man who had recently changed from logging to road excavation:

EB: Were the changes in technology at all a part of the reason why you got out of logging?
HR: Oh no, I enjoyed that. Oh ya, that was fun.
EB: New toys?
HR: Yup, new toys (laughs).
EB: So do you read a lot of the trade magazines, things like that?
HR: Oh ya, and I go to shows, but the equipment is quite sophisticated now, it's computerized.
EB: That's why the price keeps going up.
HR: Yup.
EB: Do you think it's making logging more efficient, in terms of the return you get on your money?
HR: No, your net isn't any higher. There's the cost of money. Your efficiency is a little better, but your net, because of the capital costs, your net isn't any higher...

Others only talked about the frustration and expense of having to keep up with technological change because of pressure from the mills or the Forest Practices Code.
HN: We used to make tracks, as long as the machine would get through it. I know, maybe they were too deep, but we have gone back over some of those deep ruts what we had made some years ago, and after a few years they kind of level off by themselves. Now, I think nowadays they've gone overboard, that you're not allowed to make no tracks deeper than that, because it doesn't take nothing to track that deep. So last year I went already, I put all bigger wheels on the skidder, just for that reason, only, so I spent oh, close to $20,000 just already to upgrade the machine to make it less ground pressure, I went to a bigger size tire so I would have less ground pressure on the ground. So already that was mainly because of the Forest Practices Code. I would have rather stayed with the smaller tire because now the machine has less power. It climbs the hills not as good any more, because of the bigger tires, I get less power and less traction on the ground. So you sacrifice one thing for the other.

EB: So the Code has cost you some money?
HN: Ya, the Code is definitely costing money. And the mills are saying now that it's in force, and we're going according to what the government hasn't got no idea yet what it's costing them, in the amount of money, because it's actually only been enforced for a year. Now they're finally catching up to what is all involved, and what it's going to cost the mills to abide by this new Forest Practices Code.

Employment

In Canadian political economy accounts of the forest industry there is a strong emphasis placed on labour productivity – in simplest terms, the amount of output per unit of input. A rational employment objective is to employ the fewest employees possible to produce maximum volumes in order to reduce costs. In the alternative forestry literature, this is turned on its head. Any uses of the forest should be 'best uses' to minimize impact on the forest and provide maximum benefits to the community as a whole. Labour-intensive practices are thus preferred in alternative forestry. Given these differences in values, my expectation was that alternative operators would employ more people than conventional operators, at least on a cubic metre basis.

Table 24 summarizes employment by logging operation. For comparative purposes, differences in volumes logged per employee between alternative and conventional operators are shown in Figure 18. Logging operations employed a total of 250 people, mostly on a seasonal basis. On average, conventional firms had more employees (5.3 versus 2.2 per firm). 27% of alternative operators and 8% of conventional operators did not
have any employees; they were operating exclusively as sub-contractors. Interviewees always explained that these numbers vary considerably from year to year, depending on factors such as contracts, markets and weather.

Table 24: Logging Employees, Alternative and Conventional Firms, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Employees</th>
<th>Convention</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were considerable differences between conventional operations in terms of volume required to employ one person. Of the operators I interviewed, a conventional logging operation required, on average, 11,831 m$^3$ of timber to employ one person per year, vs. 3,317 m$^3$ for an alternative logging operation (see Figure 18). While alternative methods of harvesting, in this study, employed more people per volume cut, they employed fewer people overall.

Figure 18: Volumes per unit of employment, conventional and alternative logging operations, 1995, in cubic metres
These results certainly support the hypothesis set forward in the literature, that alternative methods of logging are more labour-intensive. The high volume, continuous stream of timber required by corporate forestry dictates investment in high-efficiency logging equipment. Only a few conventional operators said that mill managers told them directly what type of equipment they should use. But many operators expressed feeling a relentless pressure to perform, leaving the strong impression that their intensive use of mechanized equipment, often at the expense of local jobs, was directly linked to their involvement in a system of corporate forestry.

The frustration felt by loggers who comply with a system even though they recognize it is not in their best interest is indicated in the 'memo' that one operator attached to his survey questionnaire (this operator had chosen to mail his survey to me, rather than be interviewed). He wrote:

Jobs are being lost in the forest industry because of "big business". For example – if we do a conventional older style of logging to do 8 loads or 480 cubic meters of wood per day; it takes [he lists the positions] 10 people. The method they are using in the forest now is geared for road side or mechanical logging and would require [lists positions] 6 people. The point I am trying to make is that big machines don't buy clothes, homes, groceries; all of which keep communities going. The forest industry is geared up for production and it won't last that way. If we slow it down and do more conventional logging there might be a viable industry in the future.

In response to the question "why did you start your business?", this conventional operator had responded:

Because I liked the idea of having a job that would last for me and my family. But that has all changed.

Manufacturing Firms

The manufacturing firms I interviewed were all small-scale operations, and, for the purposes of this study, all considered alternative. Of the fifteen firms, ten employed fewer than five people, and two employed over 40. Employment per firm was higher on average
in manufacturing (9.3 employees per firm) than either conventional (5.3) or alternative (2.2) logging.

**Table 25: Manufacturing Employees, 1995**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturing Staff</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 40</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employees</td>
<td>148.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hiring Preferences**

The alternative forestry literature suggests that alternative operators prefer to hire locally and implies that conventional operators would have no preference. The case study results indicate that more conventional operators (93%) prefer to hire locally than alternative operators (74%) although both groups expressed a strong preference to hire locally.

When asked why they prefer this arrangement, the answers typically involved reliability, convenience, cost, trust, and commitment to the community. Alternative operators referred more often to a sense of commitment to the local *community*, whereas the conventional loggers referred more often to feeling committed to the local *economy*. Twenty-two percent of the alternative operators felt that other factors, such as specific skills, hiring family from other parts of the country, or hiring young people, were more important than the employee being from the local area. These factors were related to the 'alternativeness' of their business practices or beliefs, suggesting that the representation in
the alternative forestry literature portraying local and ecologically sustainable may simplify a more complex issue, particularly where specialized skills are involved.

**Interactions with Other Firms**

The alternative forestry literature suggests that an alternative forest operator would operate with other small firms in the local area. The Canadian political economy literature, on the other hand, suggests that conventional operators would be dependent on locally situated (but likely externally controlled) major corporations. To investigate these depictions, I asked operators to list their customers, including location and size of firm.

Only five firms interviewed, two conventional and three alternative, interact only with other small firms. On the other hand, 17 of the conventional operators and 7 of the alternative operators dealt only with local major corporations. This means that 35% of the total group were in a 'dependent' role with local corporations. Of these, several had other jobs as well to reduce their reliance on one corporation.

Many firms from both groups had other arrangements. For example, six conventional operators and seven alternative operators deal only with major corporations, but they do so in a broader geographical territory, suggesting that some marketing and planning takes place, and that they are not solely dependent on one or two local mills. Ten alternative operators sell only locally, but sell to major corporations as well as small operations.

### 6.4.3 Summary of Business Practices by Alternative and Conventional Operators

Differences between the two groups showed up the most in the area of business practices. Some differences between the groups corresponded with differences suggested in the literature. For example, the literature would have predicted that conventional loggers log nearly three times the volume of alternative loggers on average. Conventional operators log nearly three times as much per employee as alternative loggers on average.
Conventional operators tended to invest more, and more often, in equipment. Alternative operators were more likely to have started their business to meet ‘lifestyle’ objectives than conventional operators.

Less predictable were the following: more conventional operators prefer to hire locally than alternative operators, and conventional operators hired on average 5.3 persons compared with only 2.2 persons in alternative operations. Both groups had a high percentage of family businesses, 72% for conventional and 81% for alternative operators. Just over half of conventional operators dealt only with local major corporations, considerably less than I had anticipated based on the literature. Even fewer alternative operations dealt only with local major corporations. Although average gross revenues were similar for the two groups ($1.23 m for conventional operators and $1.09 m for alternative operators), net incomes were quite different between the two groups. Mean net income for conventional operators was $67,925 compared to only $3,798 for alternative operators. While there are some obvious differences between the two groups, the only statistically significant difference was in volume logged.

6.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have compared the representations of small forest operators found in the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures, to determine the extent to which the small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley can be considered “alternative” or “conventional”. This analysis reveals that small forest operators are not easily classed as either “alternative forest operators” or “conventional forest operators”. This result is contrary to the literature on alternative forestry, which suggests that ‘alternative’ values will go hand in hand with ‘alternative’ practices. While more than half of the operators I interviewed use alternative methods of logging or manufacturing, no straightforward trend emerges to relate values to practices. The results from the case study
reveal that this correlation is not very strong. The only statistically significant results were amount logged, preference to deal with small mills, and education.

There were indications of 'alternative' (according to the literature) values existing among the alternative practitioners in my study group that were not statistically significant, for example,

- more alternative operators indicated that they were in this business for lifestyle considerations, and were satisfied at lower income levels than conventional operators
- alternative firms employ more people per cubic metre than conventional firms or major licensees
- alternative operators extract considerably less timber than conventional operators, and even when they wanted to log more volume, the scale of activity was considerably less than conventional operators.

On the other hand, many values were shared equally by alternative and conventional practitioners. For example:

- both groups were largely family businesses
- both groups strongly preferred hiring locally to encourage local economic and community stability
- both groups felt equally that local planning processes are important, but less than one-third of either group were actually involved in local planning
- both groups felt that they had better knowledge of the local environment than either government bureaucrats or corporate managers
- both groups felt the Forest Practices Code was useful, although slightly more conventional operators qualified their support

Conversely, for each of the above there was a minority of both alternative and conventional operators who did not hold these values.

Given these results, the representations of conventional and alternative operators found in the literature seem rather weak. My study reveals a diversity of values and practices within small forest operators, with considerable overlap between alternative and conventional operators. Most people demonstrated a "hybrid" set of values and practices
which appear contradictory if one tries to fit them into the de-contextualized design of the alternative forestry literature. For example, the woodlot licensee referred to earlier, who placed such a high value on his woodlot for the family activities it provided, when asked about harvesting methods, seemed a bit taken aback that there were even options to consider other than clearcutting. The conversation, described earlier in Chapter Six about his woodlot went as follows:

GN: A lot of people have said to me, what a great nest egg this is. But really, if the price of private wood drops or nobody wants to buy private wood, which is a good reason for the price to drop, then you really don’t have much of a nest egg. I think more importantly than the monetary end, is for me, is getting the family out, and getting them familiar with small-scale kind of forestry. See, I work in a business of course, that’s – you might say big-scale, large-scale, and this is sort of a weekend thing, where I can do small-scale. And the kids can relate to that. They can go out and plant trees and go back five years later, and their name’s on that tree, and oh gee I planted that tree, great, or you can go out and see a grizzly bear walking down the road. I mean those kind of things are pretty hard to put a monetary value on, but it’s a kind of value that I think means a lot to kids growing up. And it means a lot to me too.

I then continued by asking him about the logging methods that he used on his woodlot:

EB: Have you ever tried any different logging methods on your woodlot?
GN: Different logging methods -
EB: Selective rather than clearcuts -
GN: Right. To date, the two times that I’ve logged, and I have only logged two times, it’s both been relatively conventional. That’s clearcut, skidding to landing, and that sort of thing. Now my guess is in the future that won’t happen, mainly because the Ministry won’t let it happen.

EB: Especially with the landings -
GN: Yeah, so it’ll be something different, it’ll probably be roadside, and some type of patch retention, that type of thing. It won’t be a conventional clearcut per se.

Alternative, ecologically-sensitive logging methods did not appear to be a priority. Nor did it seem that increasing employment opportunities was a priority for him:

EB: Did you ever think about anything like horselogging?
GN: I’ve considered it, umm, but it’s fairly expensive, and I’m not sure if there would be huge benefits to me in the end. I mean, it would be great for the
people doing the work, but in the end I would probably end up with less money...

In this case, this person holds a woodlot license, involves his family in the woodlot, takes a great deal of pride in the way his woodlot is managed, and has been involved in local planning activities as well. Based on this he could well be considered “alternative”. Yet he contracts out the logging activities on his woodlot to conventional operators using mechanized clear-cutting methods, and is more concerned about his financial bottom line than trying innovative approaches to managing the woodlot. He is also employed full-time by a major licensee. He clearly is part of corporate forestry as well. How does the alternative forestry literature account for these apparently contradictory positions?

Ultimately, it does not. And because it remains blind to the “contradictory” positions of small forest operators, its effectiveness as a strategy to resist corporate forestry in British Columbia, or to open up possibilities for new forms of development, is severely constrained.
We must continually think critically about the metaphors we use – where they came from, why they were proposed, whose interest they represent, and the nature of their implications (Barnes 1996a:159).

In Chapter Six, I explored the material practices of some small forest operators, and revealed a diversity of small forest operator subjectivities that cannot be contained in either of the representations found in the Canadian political economy or alternative forestry literatures. If so many of the small forest operators I interviewed do not ‘fit’ the representations found in the literature, the questions arise, why, and how have these representations arisen? What effect do these representations have on the lived experience of small forest operators? In this chapter I argue that these representations are not based solely on a reality ‘out there’, but on assumptions from theories derived ‘in here’ as well. I explore the discursive practices of Canadian political economy and alternative forestry to reveal how these representations arise from the different essentializing pulses in these two schools of thought. In Canadian political economy, ‘the economy’ ultimately determines the character of hinterlanders. In alternative forestry, ‘ecology’ determines this character.

Within each discourse, a particular and singular form of ‘economy’ and ‘ecology’ prevails. While the deterministic root differs, both the staples discourse of Canadian political economy and the value discourse of alternative forestry homogenize small forest operators in the hinterland, and limit the possibilities of viewing hinterlanders or hinterland development in other ways.

The chapter is set out as follows. In section 7.1 I probe the ways in which Canadian political economy merges economic essentialism with a particular mythology of ‘northernness’ (what Rob Shields [1991] calls the ‘True North Strong and Free’ myth) to produce forest workers in ephemeral, barely-there resource-dependent communities in the
hinterland. In section 7.2 I likewise explore the layers of theory contained in alternative forestry, which constructs a communitarian-entrepreneurial eco-friendly hinterland from its bioregional, deep-ecology foundations. In the concluding section I discuss the implications of these discourses for understanding the subjectivity of hinterlanders.

There are problems in resource communities, and my point in this chapter is not to deny difficulties of isolation, lack of employment opportunities, or limited economic linkages that may exist in resource communities. But what interests me as well, is the way in which discussions of particular problems in particular ‘company’ or ‘single-industry’ towns have become generalized to the point where all of British Columbia outside the Lower Mainland is effectively a company town. It is the effectivity of discourse to which I now turn.

7.1 The Staples Discourse of Canadian political economy

As described in Chapter Five, Canadian political economy began as a way of understanding economic relations among countries. This way of understanding economic relations, namely staples theory, also came to be used to analyze resource communities and people living and working in them. In these analyses, the economy is treated as a determinant of social and cultural conditions. This treatment, as I demonstrate in the following, has three related effects. First, hinterland resource communities are socially marginalized, not just through material practices but discursively as well. Second, hinterland small business is ‘doubly’ marginalized, through the above and also through descriptions of the dual model of the economy in which small business plays a less certain peripheral role to the corporate centre. And third, these representations of hinterland small businesses and resource communities are homogenous and stifling. The heartland and hinterland are treated as geographical ‘facts’ rather than as a metaphor for economic relations. The hinterland and the people living in it appear ever and always marginal, fixed in both economic and social position.
7.1.1 Economic Determinism in Canadian political economy

Escobar (1995:62) claims there is "...an orientalism in economics that has to be unveiled – that is, a hegemonic effect achieved through representations that enshrine one view of the economy while suppressing others." In Canadian political economy, this hegemonic effect is achieved through a staples discourse which enshrines the view of hinterland development based on (dependent on) resource extraction, large and often foreign-owned corporations, and a predominantly male working class situated in isolated and ephemeral resource communities.

The description of the Fordist forest industry provided by Hayter (1999) in Chapter Four highlights the central role assigned to corporations in a staples economy from the post-war period onward. "Whether hero or villain", as Hayter notes, corporations play the central role. As a consequence, as argued by Gibson-Graham and outlined in Chapter Three, "...most of us somewhere acknowledge that we live within something large that shows us how to be small..." (1993:12).

This corporate hegemony in Canadian political economy is not simply a reflection of the 'reality' that the British Columbia forest industry has a high level of corporate concentration. Descriptions of the forest industry as corporate tend to ignore or diminish other economic forms. As David Demeritt (1995/6:29) notes with respect to discourses of agriculture in British Columbia,

Perhaps it is the continuing legacy of the staple theorists for whom British Columbia, like Canada itself, was made by its staples industries...The production of these raw, relatively unprocessed commodities for the world market has engendered a very particular social geography. In the workcamps, mine shafts, and sawmill towns of early British Columbia, a largely male workforce of diverse, but racially segmented, origin confronted a fully developed international capitalism. Staple theorists and labour historians have shown no interest in family farms employing little wage labour and producing for small, local markets on the margins of the capitalist space economy.
Likewise, little interest has been expressed for small business operating in forest communities. Rather, it was assumed that independent commodity producers would inevitably be transformed into waged workers. For example, Marchak notes the historical process identified by Marx...which begins with competitive capitalism and moves gradually through phases of greater concentration to monopoly capitalism. In the process, independent commodity producers (the traditional petty bourgeois class) are eliminated as large corporations overtake them and transform them along with the rest of the population into wage workers...(Marchak 1985:684)

Staples theorists' adherence to a dualistic model of the capitalist economy, where corporations are at the centre of the economy and competitive, entrepreneurial firms are peripheral to this system, has influenced their interpretation of hinterland small businesses as homogeneously marginal and therefore incapable of offering viable alternatives to corporate forestry.

The new Canadian political economy, with its focus on class in resource economies, came to view the independent commodity producer in historical terms, as a passing phase in capitalist development. Watkins, for example, argued that “we must enquire as to the formation of the working class” to understand the post-War (Fordist) staples economy (Watkins 1977:90). Clement (1989) concurred, noting that “…industrial staples (unlike their commercial forebears) are produced directly through systems of wage labour (or their equivalent) under the command of capital, not through relations of exchange.” Trade staples are associated with an earlier commercial era, and are distinguished from Fordist industrial staples in the post-war era. Clement did add, however, that, “employment relations involving industrial staples tends to be less conventional than typical manufacturing, often involving systems of bonus (mining), piece work (forestry), or prices that are proxies for wages (fishing). Nevertheless, the tendency in all these cases is clearly
to proletarianization, from formal to real subordination of labour" (ibid. p.39, emphasis mine).

Yet the continuing presence of the small business forest sector suggests that this tendency toward proletarianization is not as obvious as Clement suggests. It is not inevitable that staples production is industrialized, or that proletarianization of the labour process takes place. This new Canadian political economy perspective on the inevitability of capitalist economic development, and an accompanying proletarianization of the labour force reflects the discourse of capitalism described in Chapter Three.

The paralyzing discourse of Canadian political economy is revealed in Watkins discussion of the barriers facing the working class in a staples economy:

Not surprisingly, if Canadian capital has been unable to formulate a full-fledged industrial strategy, neither Canadian farmers nor Canadian workers, separately or together, have been able to assume that task in its stead. *The project becomes truly daunting* when allowance is made for the divisiveness of the intense regionalism characteristic of the Canadian economy; that regionalism seems to inhere in the strung-out, bicultural Canadian economy and is further exacerbated by the uneven development associated with specialization in staples. *This situation has typically divided people, or popular forces, more than it has divided capital.* (Watkins 1989:24, emphasis mine)

Although Canadian capital is weak, Canadian labour is even weaker. For Watkins, a *united* working class is necessary to overcome the obstacles to 'full-fledged industrialism' resulting from the staples trap (although it is almost certainly not sufficient). However, regionalism, a 'strung-out' economy and uneven development all work against solidarity of class interests. Labour, particularly in hinterland regions of the country, faces insurmountable obstacles. Like the discourse of working class decline and capitalist hegemony described by Gibson-Graham (1996), Watkins' descriptions of capital and labour in the Canadian hinterland stifle, rather than reveal possibilities of alternative development.
7.1.2 Resource Communities in the Underdeveloped Hinterland

In Canadian political economy writings on the development of the early staples economy, the hinterland was ‘empty’ of settlement. The only people written into the hinterland landscape were the adventurous independent commodity producers – the fur traders, gold prospectors, seasonal fishermen and gypo loggers – what White (1995) refers to as ‘the first white men’.

In the new Canadian political economy’s descriptions of the Fordist era in forestry, a cultural landscape of the hinterland is constructed in which pockets of resource communities are peopled with working class members of single-industry, resource-dependent communities. Hinterlanders are no longer represented as the independent commodity producers of early staples production, whose travels connected the dots between hinterland posts and metropolitan Victoria and Vancouver on early maps of British Columbia. Instead, hinterlanders have been written into ‘communities’, but communities that are ‘company towns’ and therefore vulnerable, dependent and transient – not ‘really’ part of the hinterland. The post-Fordist era of restructuring heightens this vulnerability. Barnes and Hayter’s description of forestry resource towns that “literally come and go” (Barnes and Hayter 1992:653) suggests a permanent impermanence in the hinterland; workers who keep their bags packed and at the door, always ready to move.

Randall and Ironside (1996) are critical of depictions of present-day resource communities that bear more resemblance to stereotypes arising out of early writings than to actually existing communities:

A careful reading of these classic descriptions of life in Canadian resource-dependent communities reveals that the authors obviously recognized the economic and social diversity that existed within resource-dependent settings...Unfortunately the stereotypes that have emerged from these and other works of the period are either applied too loosely to these settings, or have failed to keep pace with the subsequent

---

38 Bruce Willems-Braun (1996/7) has challenged this convention, and describes the erasure of First Nations necessary to create the ‘blank slate’ upon which staples economic history has been written.
changes that have taken place in resource communities. These stereotypes may be summarized as follows: the labour-force and economic structure of resource-dependent communities are relatively alike; the contributions by non-resource industrial sectors are insignificant; most Canadian resource communities are northern and isolated, far from other industrial activity; and employment in resource-dependent communities is male-dominated. (Randall and Ironside 1996:21)

The staples discourse of resource-dependent communities constructs transient, economically motivated, vulnerable populations who have never ‘really’ rooted themselves in place, although through no fault of their own. Lack of stability and tradition are values commonly ascribed to resource communities, in direct contrast with the (it is implied, more stable) Lower Mainland.

BC is a society of recent immigrants who, with the exception of those in the southwest corner of the province, often live in single industry company towns. They have specialized labour requirements, but usually lack stability and tradition. Less than half of all British Columbians living today in the province were born here...(Travers 1985)

A constant milling about of people in the hinterland is implied in discussions of the recent arrivals in resource communities, and resonates with historical descriptions of early British Columbian settlers:

They were isolated, parochial, money-seeking, and all were recent immigrants – most of them with some education and raised in relatively civilized communities. While the settlers of the Interior were much the same as those on the coast, their isolation and their dependence on single industries were even more marked. (Black 1982:250)

Marchak also refers to the contribution that an “unsettled population” makes to the “…already unsettling effects of a frontier resource-based economy”, and suggests that this underlies the statistical profile of “highest suicide rates, the highest rate of criminal convictions, the highest proportion of labeled mental cases…etc. (Marchak 1990:196). Yet that southwestern corner Travers refers to above attracts approximately 85% of immigrants intending to settle in British Columbia (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1997, cited in Hiebert 1999).

In some sense, the ‘frontier’ has never passed away in British Columbia – it shifts about, from place to place, before and after resource extraction takes place. In the United
States, recognition of the limits to ‘empty’, free land in the 19th century led to the preservation of ‘wilderness and the now-revered national park system (Cronon 1995b). In British Columbia, with most ‘wilderness’ in public ownership, the frontier has never ‘really’ been settled in the same way as in the United States. For many writers in the Canadian political economy tradition, the frontier still exists:

British Columbia, by contrast with Ontario, is still a frontier society. Its turn of the century company towns have not disappeared. They were two-class towns then, isolated and violent.... They have not changed greatly, though they have added schools and paved streets and company housing. (Marchak 1990 [1980]:196)

In spite of over a hundred years of settlement throughout the far and near corners of the province, the popular urban and literary imagination continues to construct the hinterland as ‘natural’ and ‘wild’. This ‘uninhabited’ hinterland can then be used either as natural resources to be exploited, or as recreational parkland. If Vancouverites ‘go North’ it is usually either to get work and return, or to be refreshed from the grind of daily life in the city. Shields (1991) calls this construction of an uninhabited hinterland the ‘myth of the True North Strong and Free’. He writes,

The ideological ‘True North’ is an empty page onto which can be projected images of the essence of ‘Canadian-ness’ and also images to define one’s urban existence against. ...the North is less a real region signified by a name and more a name, a signifier, with historically-variable, socially-defined content. (Shields 1991:165)

This ‘True North’ myth requires a hinterland that is at the same time a source of wealth and a source of retreat, renewal, and recreation. Forays into the hinterland for resource exploitation purposes must therefore be temporary. Shields (1991:194) writes that

this ‘True North Strong and Free’ is archetypally an unconquerable wilderness devoid of ‘places’ in the sense of centres of habitation; the last reserve of a theosophical vision of Nature which must be preserved, not developed (see for example Wadland 1985; Drew 1973). If it must be encroached upon, this should be ‘temporary’ in the form of ‘men-only’ style work-camps; it is as if it was a zone which was hostile to domestic order.

39 Or to get field data and return to the city, as in the case of this academic.
The descriptions of resource-dependent communities in the Canadian political economy literature as essentially ‘company towns’ (discussed in the next section) have discursive roots in the myth of the ‘True North’. Staples discourse continues to portray the hinterland as not-the-heartland – uncivilized, underdeveloped, as though it were still ‘hostile to domestic order’. Staples discourse describes resource communities in terms that make it possible to reconcile the ‘True North’ imagery described by Shields (1991), Wadland (1985) and others, with a working, productive hinterland. In Canadian political economy resource communities continue to be portrayed as essentially ‘company towns’, dependent upon a corporation for economic and social life.

The Underdeveloped Hinterland

I began this chapter with Trevor Barnes’ observation that we need to think about where metaphors come from, and how they are used. This is certainly true of the heartland/hinterland metaphor used in Canadian political economy. Heartland/hinterland relationships are fundamental to Canadian political economy, and indeed can be found throughout the writings of Canadian economic history. As McCann (1982:3) writes, “the notion of a metropolis holding sway over a vast resource hinterland is germane to a discussion of Canadian life and letters...It is in the Canadian tradition to speak of metropolis and hinterland.”

The availability of a vacant and available hinterland is essential for the development of a staples economy. But this “vast repository” (Barnes 1996b:57) is not simply a material something ‘out there’; it is a particular construction within Canadian political economy, with particular effect. In much of the new Canadian political economy, the heartland/hinterland is not used metaphorically, as a way of understanding economic relations as it was first used.
by Harold Innis. Instead it has been rigidified into a geographical ‘fact’.\textsuperscript{40} Barnes (1996a:155-56) describes the process in which "...live metaphors are becoming dead ones; the initial metaphors are being equated with the literal." This captures well the change that I believe has occurred within Canadian political economy studies of British Columbia resource communities. The useful and valuable live metaphor of heartland/hinterland has been replaced by the dead, literal one.

One ‘fact’ of heartland/hinterland relationships is that the hinterland is constructed as an inferior ‘other’ to the heartland. Escobar (1995) unpacks the economistic discourse of ‘developing countries’, which he argues has literally created the Third World. “Development as a discourse is seen to have produced the “Third World” as a dependent identity subordinated to the management and surveillance of an international development bureaucracy” (Escobar 1995). Similarly Said describes the ‘othering’ inherent in colonial and post-colonial discourses of Orientalism (Said 1979), a process similar to that which Mudimbe describes as Africanism with respect to the ‘creation’ of Africa in Western discourse (Mudimbe 1988). In Canada, similar processes of creating an ‘other’ in the hinterland occurs through a staples discourse which positions hinterlanders as dependent others to the metropolitan heartland. Within the staples discourse, the hinterland is the ‘other’ to the heartland – portrayed as both spatially and socially marginal.

In Marchak’s (1981:154) discussion of heartland/hinterland interactions, she describes what she terms an “asymmetrical flow of excellence toward the metropolis:”

As any centre grows, it attracts the most capable people from surrounding territories. The city attracts workers from rural areas; the large metropolitan areas attract, as well, the most talented intellectuals, artists, writers, technicians, researchers, and administrators. In return, the metropolis feeds the hinterland its own surplus products, including people who cannot find jobs in their homeland. (ibid.)

\textsuperscript{40} Most often understood as “the Lower Mainland and Victoria” and “Rest of Province”, terms used explicitly by Davis and Hutton (1989).
Written in the law-like manner of Newtonian physics, there is little room for dispute with the ‘facts’ of this spatial relationship. The hinterland is not a desired place to be – whoever has the ability to leave, does so. Whoever remains is in some way insufficient. Whoever moves to the hinterland is a ‘surplus product’ of the heartland.

Shields writes that “the social definition of marginal places and spaces is intimately linked with the categorization of objects, practices, ideas and modes of social interaction as belonging to the ‘Low culture’, the culture of marginal places and spaces, the culture of the marginalised” (1991:5). Descriptions of hinterlanders and what is ‘needed’ to improve resource-dependent communities contain parallels to the treatment of marginalized ‘Third World’ citizens in the development discourse described by Escobar (1995). The “…underdeveloped subjectivity endowed with features such as powerlessness, passivity, poverty, and ignorance…” described by Escobar resembles descriptions of Canadian hinterlanders. Susan Heald describes her experience as a hinterlander (as well as an academic) while involved in a federally-funded local job creation project in northern Ontario, in which all program objectives and funding criteria had been set out by the (metropolitan) funding agency:

To the extent that the state is able to encourage loyalties to the north, people can be “summoned” to participate in processes like LEAP [the job creation project]. In doing so, however, we occupy the subject position made available to us: as supplicant, as underdeveloped…In these ways the job creation program, while offering us the opportunity to “develop” our “region”, tells us who we are not, we are not independent, we are not capable of surviving on our own, we are not “developed”. (Heald 1991: 105, my emphasis)

The very processes and programs instituted to encourage alternative economic development in the hinterland, are steeped in assumptions about the north that reinforce their ascribed subject position of Other. This subject position follows inevitably from the rigidified understanding of heartland/hinterland relationships that has developed in the new Canadian political economy, exemplified by Marchak’s ‘asymmetrical flow of excellence’.
Resource Dependency

Randall and Ironside (1996) evaluated Canadian "resource-dependent" communities on a number of criteria. They found that "resource-dependent communities in Canada are clearly vastly different, as reflected in the role of women and part-time labour in the groups of communities, in the relationship between the dominant resource sector and other economic activities in the communities, and in their relative isolation" (Randall and Ironside 1996:32). Yet few Canadian political economists seem interested in reflecting this diversity. Resource communities and the workers they contain continue to be represented in ways that balance the economic determination and 'True North' myth implicit in Canadian political economy.

The stereotypes of company towns referred to by Randall and Ironside developed out of the resource-dependent community 'classics' such as Lucas (1971), Siemens (1976) and Bowles (1982). My interest does not lie in the early descriptions of company towns per se, but rather in the later assumptions that all resource communities are (i) essentially company towns, and (ii) essentially alike. For example, Porteous (1987:383) describes the "extremely lightly populated hinterland" in which "the few regional service centres (Nanaimo, Kamloops, and Prince George, for example) are outnumbered by the prevailing form of hinterland settlement, the company town." For Porteous (1984:217), a company town is not a pleasant place to live in. He claims that

the most prominent feature of dependence, however, is the almost total lack of local control over the destiny of the company town...Northern company towns are caught in the web of centre-periphery relationships. They are tools for the expropriation of wealth to the metropolis, and as such are regarded as expendable. One of the results is that workers are likely to identify with the operation, and will risk health hazards in order "to keep the mine going". Lack of control over events breeds apathy, resignation, and fatalism (Lucas, 1971); the company town lifestyle is a "culture of dependence".

195
The 'culture of dependence' which breeds "apathy, resignation, and fatalism" has come to be portrayed as the essence of a resource community, not just a company town. Bradbury describes the situation for British Columbia's resource-dependent communities:

Nearly 50 percent of the province's 2.5 million people live in metropolitan Vancouver. As a counterpoint, both functionally and demographically, to this dominance, nearly one-third of British Columbia's non-metropolitan population reside in single-enterprise communities...In the resource towns of the province, life is definitely oriented to mine and mill. As well as the seasonal turnover in employment, there is a peculiar vitality in the daily pattern of shift work. *Despite the attempts in the 1960s to create independent settlements rather than company towns, the essence of the resource town as company town is still very much a reality.* Not only is there a singular dependence on the resource company operating in the community, but there is a shared consciousness that economic and social affairs are manipulated by managers and decision makers located in distant metropolitan centres. (Bradbury 1982: 362-63, emphasis mine)

The economics of resource extraction, and little else, determine outcomes in resource communities. "Resources established the formative forces that have left their scars on Canada's economic and social life; moreover, they remain the cornerstone of Canada's export-dependent economy and the life blood for a multitude of resource-dependent communities spread across the country" (Clement 1989:36). Himelfarb writes that "[n]ot only does the single-industry - the company - determine, to a great extent, the economic and social well-being of the members of the community, it also *shapes their view of the world*" (Himelfarb 1982:17, my emphasis).

Classification schemas have been developed by academics and the government to rank the dependency of resource towns. Dependency is measured in studies such as White et al. (1986), Porteous (1987), White et al. (1989), Horne and Robson (1993) Horne and Powell (1995) and Randall and Ironside (1996). In each case dependency is defined differently. For example, Porteous (1987) defined company towns as "any town in which at least 80 percent of the employment is provided by a single company and its supporting institutions." The White et al. studies conducted for Forestry Canada defined resource dependency as greater than 30% of the labour force employed in a single three-digit SIC.
Horne and Robson in 1993 used an economic base method to calculate basic and nonbasic income, but in 1995 they changed the classification of many economic sectors so that it was not possible to track changes in resource dependency from the earlier study.

In spite of the wide range of definitions of “resource-dependent”, and in spite of the fact that the variations in methods used to calculate dependency make it extremely difficult to determine if dependency has ‘really’ changed between the study periods, the ‘fact’ of resource dependency, once calculated, is unquestioned.41 And, as illustrated above, once a community is determined to be resource-dependent, through various calculations of statistics, a whole series of social and cultural problems are assumed to exist as well. By determining which towns are ‘good’ (diversified) and ‘bad’ (dependent) towns, these schemas contribute discursively to the creation of dependency. The act of classification becomes as important as the ‘reality’ of dependency in constructing a resource community.

In an article entitled “Forest Industry Towns in British Columbia”, Marchak begins with a description of Mackenzie, a relatively isolated town in northeastern British Columbia which was built in the mid-1960s to provide a labour force for a single forest products mill. Mackenzie undoubtedly was developed to be a single-industry town. Marchak goes on to say “not all single-industry towns are as bereft of a sense of community as Mackenzie was in 1977. But all have external constraints on their survival capacities. Consider, for example, the case of Ocean Falls.” Ocean Falls was also built as a single-industry town and has since been abandoned. Of the three communities she studied, only Terrace had evolved slowly over time. However, she concluded that the “the future of Terrace and many towns like it is bleak” because of the erosion of the forest resource base upon which it came to depend (Marchak 1990:100).

41 Of course, one could undertake a longitudinal study using a consistent methodology. But this would not address the arbitrary selection process of deciding how much labour force involvement in a given sector constitutes dependency.
Throughout much of the Canadian political economy literature, resource communities appear bereft of economic opportunity, incapable of making change because of socio-cultural constraints, and inevitably abandoned. Clement (1988:95), for example, writes that "in a larger sense, all resource communities are transient – some just have a longer life than do others."

Reading the Canadian political economy literature describing resource-dependent communities, one is struck by the apparent desolation and dreariness of life for their residents. Historically in company towns "however many amenities a company supplied, nothing could compensate for the isolation of the town, or the wearisome sameness of the daily work, or the lack of intellectual stimulus" (Ormsby 1958:410). Little has changed over time, apparently. Black (1982:254) tells us that "extreme vulnerability to fluctuations in the price and demand for timber, forest products, mining, tree fruits, and fish adds the important elements of uncertainty and fear to the attitudes of people in the company towns and the resource-dependent communities."

In sharp contrast to these descriptions of desolation and dreariness, the next section outlines the value discourse found within alternative forestry. These same places are transformed, through the lens of value discourse, into harmonious communities living with nature.

7.2 The Value Discourse of Alternative Forestry

In this section I deconstruct the key elements of an alternative forestry vision that contribute to the representations of forest workers and their communities described in Chapter Five. Whereas alternative forestry has much to say about the diversity of 'nature' (and the need to protect it), it remains silent on differences among humans. Being in nature inevitably leads anyone and everyone to the same eco-friendly subject position. Nature as
ecology is the essential foundation for all aspects of alternative forestry, informing its interpretation of community and work as well as the 'natural world'.

Unlike many 'wilderness preservationists' whose general philosophy they share, and unlike much of the Canadian political economy literature, alternative foresters include (some) human activities in their vision of a healthy ecosystem. Living 'in place', one inevitably develops a sense of which actions are sustainable, and which actions would exceed the 'carrying capacity' of the 'bioregion'. "The essence of ecoforestry is to learn to perceive what the forest can supply us without altering its basic ecological functions and intrinsic values" (Drengson 1997:270).

As the following discussion makes evident, this position of 'working in the natural forest' is not entirely consistent. There are strong elements of a wilderness vs. culture dualism contained within the alternative forestry vision. Like the wild-yet-exploited hinterland imagined in staples discourse, the humans-in-nature vision found in alternative forestry requires a certain juggling of contradictory beliefs. In the following I investigate this contradictory positioning of humans in 'natural' communities. I argue that the contradiction inherent in a 'natural' but 'working' forest are mediated through a value discourse which emphasizes the 'rightness' of certain human interactions with nature. The pursuit of value earns ecoforesters the moral right to access the natural forest. Value-added and quality are emphasized far more in this literature than in the Canadian political economy literature, and are understood in different terms. Particularly, value-added is understood to mean a way of working which ensures ecological sustainability, with economic and social value as derivatives.

7.2.1 The Ecological Foundation of Alternative Forestry

Nature...is a shifting construct that is always located in a particular place and time, and put to very partial and particular uses. (Davis 1995:452)
First and foremost alternative forestry seeks to maintain a "healthy, natural ecosystem." Burda et al. (1998) claims that "any industrial strategy that takes sustainability seriously (for any resource or industry) must address that fundamental ecological reality" (Burda et al 1998:83, emphasis mine), of ecological constraints placed on the level of consumption of physical goods. For alternative forestry, ecology exists. It is not understood as a model of something out there — it is the 'out there'. Furthermore, in alternative forestry ecology becomes a metaphor for social and economic relations as well, so that economic and social processes are modeled upon ecological processes.

There is a body of literature that argues that nature is a social construction (see Cronon 1996; Worster 1977; 1990). The critique of nature as a construction helps to understand how alternative forestry creates a 'new forest economy' from a few ecological principles. As Bruce Willems-Braun explains it, the 'cultural construction of nature' means that what we understand as 'nature' is always culturally mediated. “Whenever we look out into a physical world that we assume to be external to culture, we do so in ways that are invariably bound up with the practices that make it visible” (Willems-Braun 1996:9). For alternative forestry, these practices are ecological.

Alston Chase describes how a focus on a holistic, self-regulating ecosystem led to the rise of a "biocentric" perspective in the environmental movement that merges nature worship with science. “The metaphor of the ecosystem revived the notion of nature as purposive and as the foundation of value. Since an ecosystem's "health" — that is, its stability — was the highest good, then any human activity that upset this balance was not merely mistaken but immoral” (Chase 1995:7, cited in Willems-Braun 1996:300). Cronon (1995:80) argues that “…wilderness serves as the unexamined foundation on which so many of the quasi-religious values of modern environmentalism rest… . Wilderness is the
natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul.” In alternative forestry, the natural forest is a place of moral restoration as well as ultimate moral arbiter.

The biocentric perspective in alternative forestry evaluates all human actions based on the effect they have on the ecosystem. Yet the ecosystem is understood in alternative forestry as a material something ‘out there’ rather than a reflection of ecologists’ understanding of that material something. As a result, the evaluation process itself is considered free of bias – it merely reflects the inherent ‘truths’ about ‘nature. Alternative forestry is thus able to make a number of moral judgements without reference to moral foundations – ecology is the foundation, and ecology is always right. As Hammond (1997:139) puts it, “…in the end ecosystem-based approaches have truth on their side.”

Cronon describes the contradiction of a culturally specific yet universal nature:

On the one hand, people in Western cultures use the word “nature” to describe a universal reality, thereby implying that it is and must be common to all people. On the other hand, they also pour into that word all their most personal and culturally specific values: what they believe to be good and beautiful, why people should act in certain ways. (Cronon 1995a:51)

Willems-Braun found that Herb Hammond’s (1991) introduction to ecoforestry contains precisely this outpouring of moral judgements based on ‘scientific’ principles. He observes that “what emerges in the pages of Hammond’s treatise, and others similar to it, is a picture of a complex, integrated, self-regulating whole” (Willems-Braun 1996:303). Willems-Braun is careful to note that his argument is not with the precise details about the dynamics of soil, flora or fauna, but with “…the manner in which concepts derived from ecosystem ecology underwrite rhetorics that see in action of individual actors the unfolding of a greater, purposive whole” (ibid. p. 305).

Nature as a culturally specific yet universal reality is also reflected in Duncan Taylor’s observations about nature and ecology. Taylor (1997), in his contribution to Ecoforestry entitled “Nature as a Reflection of Self and Society,” like Cronon, acknowledges
that “our perceptions of nature often tell us less about what is actually “out there” in the
landscape, and more about the types of mental typography and projects that we carry about
in our heads” (Taylor 1997:261). Unlike Cronon, however, Taylor concludes that ecology is
different from other Western descriptions of the natural world. “Indeed, ecology represents
a wholly “new” type of consciousness that is emerging within the collective psyche of human
kind. But while it is new, it is also perennial and timeless. It is a consciousness of
synthesis, integration, and nondualism, and as such is increasingly able to discern those
corresponding values in the world about us” (ibid. p.263).

Deep Ecology

Ecology, for Taylor, is a way of escaping the dualisms of Western knowledge.
Ecology is the ultimate guide to understanding all aspects of human and nonhuman nature.
Yet for writers such as Cronon, ecology, and particularly environmental movements such as
depth ecology which are based on ecology, are anything but a synthesis. Cronon contends
that within deep ecology there is a constructed duality that separates ‘human’ from
‘nonhuman’, and which is ultimately misanthropic in that it prioritizes biocentrism even at the
expense of human life. In “Earth First!”, for example, Foreman argues that “the
preservation of wildness and native diversity is the most important issue. Issues directly
Herb Hammond (1993:135) applies this biocentrism to forest management. “Of all the
components of the forest web, the only one we know to be completely optional is human
life.”

For many deep ecologists, this misanthropic duality in which ‘nature’ is always
separate and morally superior to humans leads them to the logical conclusion that
ecological problems can ultimately be traced to a single root problem of (human)
overpopulation. Reduction of human populations is often advocated as a blanket solution,
although the details of how this reduction might transpire are left to ‘nature’. In an afterword to Elizabeth May’s eco-forestry critique of “the crisis in Canada’s forests,” Glen Davis (1998:228) writes “while there are many serious environmental problems, the fundamental problem is the world’s population explosion,” which creates a “never-ending worldwide demand for products from the forest and the ocean.” Ecology alone (rather than any human institution) is able to determine how many people should be ‘allowed’ on the planet: as many as can be maintained by the long-term carrying capacity of the ecosystem (Davis 1998:229-30).

Herb Hammond (1993:103) alludes to the problem of overpopulation, when he suggests that there has been no change in the attitudes of British Columbians toward the forest:

People have always valued clean water, clean air, fish, animals, plants, beauty, tranquility and the spiritual gifts of the forest. Suggesting that these values are merely fashionable is an insult, particularly to Indigenous people. The apparent “shift in values” is no more real than “objectivity” or “impartiality”. Society’s values have not changed, any more than industry’s values have changed. There are simply many more people in the game, while the playing field continues to shrink. To suggest cosmetic changes to forest practices in order to appease a social fad is to misrepresent and trivialize an ecological crisis. (my emphasis)

**Bioregionalism**

Bioregionalism is the concept adopted by alternative forestry to define the geographic and social communities that exist within larger ecosystems. It provides the territorial boundaries for ecological processes. The bioregion takes on a privileged status in alternative forestry and deep ecology; it is revered and must be protected. Berg, a bioregional activist, advises:

In bioregional workshops, I’ve said, learn these words like watershed and throw them at these scientists. Say, ‘Not in my watershed you don’t! Say it like your body, or your home, or your family. Identify with that watershed, identify with that bioregion, identify with those native plants and animals! Why? You don’t even have to know why intellectually. It’s where your alliance lies. (Berg 1990:23-4, cited in Rowson:43)
The bioregion is not just a place; it is the foundation of the political project of alternative forestry. Berg equates the bioregion with the body, home, and family as though these words were unproblematic universals without specific, and contestable, content. With a shared understanding of body, home, family and bioregion, local culture is naturally homogeneous. This local culture can then take on the 'biological' process of self-regulation at the community level. When describing the regulatory model that would be appropriate for an alternative forestry economy, Burda et al. (1998) notes that

...there would be an established, successful eco-operator with a high-status licence that required a reduced level of formal management — always, however, subject to the cultural pressures and regulatory oversight of membership in a geographically oriented peer group. ...Overall the intention would be to embed the regulatory function in a larger process of economic/cultural development around ecosystem-based values and institutions, the ultimate goal being the creation of a territorially based culture of sustainable self-management that depends on neither state nor market discipline to do what is right. (Berda et al. 1998:60, emphasis mine)

Alternative forestry depicts foresters as being 'rooted in the land' through their small-scale, labour-intensive forestry methods, and thus better able to understand 'their' bioregion. Alternative forestry assumes that increased local control leads inevitably to heightened awareness of 'your bioregion' and a willing return to archaic work forms. White (1995) is critical of this privileging of archaic work forms. He argues that there are two equally problematic positions toward work typically advanced by environmentalists. The first is simply that any work in 'nature' is destructive (this is the predominant environmentalist position, and the position which is reflected in Canadian political economy's 'True North' myth described earlier in the chapter). The second, the approach taken by alternative forestry, deems that certain kinds of work provide “a way of knowing nature” (White 1995:171). This perspective on knowing nature through work sentimentalizes manual labour and is essentially anti-technology.

“It is supposedly modern work, not work itself, that has made us into dangerous monsters. Consequently, both our salvation and the land’s can be found by harking back to
a time before modern technology, to a time in Shabecoff’s telling, before the “new machines” denigrated the landscape” (White 1995:178). Sale, a deep ecologist influential in the alternative forestry movement, privileges some types of people because their work has them ‘rooted in the land’.

The borders between such areas [bioregions] are usually not rigid...but the general contours...will probably be felt, understood or sensed, in some way known to many of the inhabitants, and particularly those still rooted in the land, farmers and ranchers, hunters and fishers, foresters and botanists, and most especially, across the face of America, tribal Indians, those still in touch with a culture that for centuries knew the earth as sacred and its well being as imperative...(Sale 1991:78, cited in Rowson 1997:44)

Drescher (1997) makes it clear that this way of knowing nature comes naturally to those who spend time in the natural forest. His comments highlight the uncomfortable positioning of working people in the natural forest. The desire to protect the natural world comes about by working with the land; the yearning for unsullied nature brought about by acts that are necessarily unnatural:

The desire to protect the natural world by working with the land comes naturally to intelligent, gentle, and courageous people (this potentially includes all human beings) who spend enough time alone in the forest. ...Sometimes we go to the forest out of fascination; sometimes it is out of the desperation that comes from witnessing the collapse of ecosystems and communities. In any case, as we experience the natural forest, we develop a passion to promote sustainability. (Drescher 1997:57, emphasis mine)

White argues that “the demonization of modern machines and the sentimentalization of archaic forms of labor allows a bifurcation of work into the relatively benign and even instructive, and the modern and destructive.” For White, this is particularly evident in agriculture, with the contrast made between peasant farmers and agribusinesses. Jerry Mander, in a foreword to Ecoforestry, refers to the transformation of the agricultural sector in our “machine society”:

Where many families formerly grew diversified crops to feed themselves and their communities, we now see a global juggernaut of corporate massification. ...The situation with forestry is identical. Where once thriving biotic communities of life permitted a biodiversity rich and stable in its complexities, industrial forestry, following the dictates of the objective rules of technique and the corporate directors of the
process, replaces diversity with emptiness: clearcut. Life removed. (Mander 1997:10-11)

White does not outright reject the idea that work can contribute to a way of knowing ‘nature’. In fact, he writes that “...our work – all our work – inevitably embeds us in nature, including what we consider wild and pristine places.” What he rejects is the romanticism that insists upon archaic forms of work, and pretends they are without impact.

A connection with the land through work creates knowledge, but it does not necessarily grant protection to the land itself. There is a modern romanticism of place that says that those who live and depend on a place will not harm it. ...Its environmentalist version appears in bioregionalism or in the work of Wendell Berry. ...Berry writes as if working in nature, of being of a place, brought a moral superiority of sorts. Such rootedness supposedly offers a solution to our problematic relationship with the nonhuman world. (White 1995:181)

Alternative forestry’s adherence to bioregionalism constructs small forest operators as ‘ecoforesters’. Contrary to the transient forest workers of staples discourse, within the value discourse of alternative forestry, forest workers are deeply embedded in their natural and social communities. Because these ecoforesters are first and foremost environmentalists who respect and revere the biodiversity of ‘their’ natural ecosystem, it is possible to construct a forest economy while maintaining the construct of a ‘natural’ ecosystem. Only people who understand and respect the needs of the forest live in the bioregional hinterland. And they live together in “natural”, geographically determined communities.

7.2.2 Being ‘of a place’

The idea of human community found in alternative forestry is based on equilibrium models of natural communities found in ecology. “If ecology is the foundation of natural relations, community is the foundation of social relations” (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:54-5). “Just as ecosystems are inherently identified with particular places, human communities, too, are shaped, limited and enabled by the particularities of their bioregions” (Forsey 1993:2, cited in Rowson:43). Communities-in-harmony are understood to have existed prior
to the 'demonization' of industrialism. A return to simple forms of work that brings people
closer to 'nature' will inevitably bring about a return to harmonious social communities as
well. Sale writes that

The lessons of the law of complementarity from the animal world and traditional
societies seem obvious enough as applied to a bioregional polity. Hierarchy and
political domination would have no place; systems of ruler-and-ruled, even of elected-
president-and-electing-people, are nonecological. So at the community level most
decisions affecting people's daily lives would be both made and carried out by those
with competence and experience in this task or that service, guided by the voice of
the body as a whole and the principles of ecology. (Sale 1985:101)

The bioregionalism advocated by alternative forestry is hinged to a particular
understanding of community that is communitarian and emphasizes social justice. Doug
Aberley, who was instrumental in the Hazelton Framework for Watershed Management,
conceives bioregionalism as a “promise that these bioregions will be inhabited in a manner
that respects ecological carrying capacity, engenders social justice, uses appropriate
technology, and allows for a rich interconnection between regionalized cultures” (Aberly
1993:3). But social justice is actually ecological justice. Whatever is good for the bioregion
is good for the 'community' as well.

Bioregionalism assumes that communities have inherent rights to the 'local' forests.
Ben Parfitt writes unselfconsciously: “Today in BC, several communities are taking steps
toward reclaiming their forests” (Parfitt 1998:115, my emphasis). Communities will know
'their' forest by their own natural sense of place. “Localization” is defined by Simpson
(1997:212) as “…democratic control of local resources and services by those who have
commitment to place and community: the residents.” Localization implies that “…the needs
of both the forest and the people must be considered” (ibid. p.213).

The community ideal advocated by alternative forestry is a natural one – there is a
deeply felt, self-evident attachment to place. “The small community…is the level, too, at
which people have been shown to solve social problems most harmoniously, to survive
randomness and change most easily..." (Sale 1985, cited in M'Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:57). Rowson found that a similar place-based community ideal permeates much of the sustainability literature, particularly in Canada. She has been critical of this ideal, having found in her empirical research on Galiano Island, BC that “defining and operationalizing sustainability in a place-based community will not be consensual and that there is much disagreement over its meaning” (Rowson 1997:233). Alternative forestry’s selective reading of ecology, itself a particular reading of reality, enables alternative foresters to envision communities living in harmony, without the need for formal political processes.

Such [community] control supplies the sensitivity, the responsiveness and the long-term view of people – not bureaucracies or corporations, but people who have a commitment to being a part of the forest and a stake in using the forest in ways that maintain its full integrity. (Hammond 1993:110)

While localization and bioregionalism assure a common understanding within a community, the existence of different bioregions mean “…that places on the planet differ from one another” (Simpson 1997:212).

Because places (bioregions) differ, there are ‘regionalized cultures’, referred to earlier by Aberly. The (natural) boundaries of these places are known by those living ‘in place’ (hence eliminating the need for political (artificial) boundaries). Simpson reveals the strong environmental determinist tendencies of bioregionalism:

There are real distinctions in terms of natural history, weather, geology, topography, botany and biology that together determine the character of a place. In some places still, and in most places prehistorically, human culture was moulded by these distinctions. Native cultures were built on experience within, and observation of, place. With the advent of industrial-technological society, some of us were granted the illusion of freedom from many elements of place. (ibid.)

The “illusion of freedom from many elements of place” (elements not specified by Simpson), might include the desire to escape from racism, homophobia or sexism experienced in the local community. The bioregionalism of alternative forestry is silent on issues of gender, ethnicity or sexuality within their ‘shared place’. Difference does not seem
to exist, a result of making decisions at the local level and in harmony with nature. The 'voice of the body' described earlier by Sale takes on an eerie silencing tone in light of these unspecified elements of place. Caught up in this place-based community, which resonates with the 'rural idyll' ideal, is a rejection of the anonymity and individualism associated with industrialized and urbanized environments. Yet as I outlined in Chapter Three, it is just this stifling, unified voice which led writers such as Chambers (1994), Young (1992) and hooks (1992) to favour the city as a place where subjectivities need not be fixed. Alternative forestry homogenizes community based on its ecological foundations.

7.2.3 ‘Working with the Forest’

Alternative forestry’s ecological foundations persist in their discussions of economics. The economy mimics ecological processes. “Just as healthy ecosystems recalculate nutrients and water locally, so too a healthy community economy is internally dynamic, recirculating wealth locally in a diversified economy that is only partly dependent on outside employers and outside markets” (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:55). Economic transformation takes place at a local scale, using labour-intensive work practices. “Conservation of biodiversity must be linked to economic transformation, and economic transformation must be linked to community and cultural revitalization” (Burda et al. 1998:68). As described above, there is a critical distinction made between people who work with the forest and those who work against it. In order to learn to protect the natural world, in order to develop that “passion to promote sustainability” (Drescher 1997), it is necessary to use simple, labour-intensive technologies at a local level. The familiar environmental slogans prevail throughout alternative forestry: “small is beautiful”, “think globally, act locally.”

Alternative forestry provides a fairly thorough critique of British Columbia’s hegemonic system of corporatist forestry, illustrating the historic domination of the industry
over government, people and the natural environment of the province. Yet in spite of this historic domination, proponents of alternative forestry believe it is possible to overcome corporatism through relatively simple legislated changes to tenure that would increase local control over resources. Their recommendation for tenure reform which would transfer cutting rights from large corporations to communities and small businesses assumes that along with these changes would naturally come changes in business ethic by virtue of ‘being local’. A voluntary return to less mechanistic work forces, which would follow on these changes in tenure, would provide the second major change required to achieve the new forest economy since “economic and social instability result from mechanization…” (Wittbecker 1997:43). The economic system described in alternative forestry is a deliberately diminished one. “Psychologically, we improve the self-confidence and the security of our communities by miniaturizing the economy” (Morris 1990, cited in Roseland 1992:218). But they do not explain how a ‘miniaturized economy’ can overcome the currently hegemonic corporatist system of forestry in British Columbia.

Alternative forestry sets out a number of policy goals to change from industrial forestry to ecoforestry, almost all of which address production rather than distribution. A network of locally based, competitive log markets to replace the current stumpage system is most often recommended for an alternative forestry economy. Log markets would, according to advocates such as Burda et al (1998:64), ensure that the market value of the forests is reflected in the price paid for wood and increase the wood available to value-added producers (since timber would be available to the highest bidder on an open market).

42 Most advocate a major reduction in harvesting rights for major corporations and re-distribution of these rights to small businesses, communities, woodlot licensees, and First Nations bands, see M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994, Burda et al. 1998.

43 Morris made this statement with reference to his vision of ecological cities; the process of ‘miniaturizing’ is considered by advocates of alternative forestry to be even more ‘desirable’ in a rural setting.
Eco-certification is also considered "...an important market mechanism for promoting locally produced value-added products" (ibid.).

Burda et al. (1998:64) note in a footnote to their discussion of economic policies that the market is, of course, a defective evaluation mechanism from a political ecology perspective because it only values those goods and services for which there is an effective demand and supply and that can be traded. Most environmental "goods" and "services" do not have a monetary value because they are not (and could not be) traded in the marketplace; thus market prices discount such non-market values.

In spite of this, however, they believe it possible for "... a market-based instrument to promote genuine sustainable eco-forestry..." (ibid. p.65). Other economic policy possibilities include a restructuring of tax policy, developmental subsidies to promote value-added manufacturing, a government procurement policy to favour eco-certified products, marketing boards to promote certified and value-added products (locally, regionally, and globally), an investment fund for community-based businesses producing ecologically sound forest products, facilitation of new forms of business organization such as cooperatives, and new education and training facilities. Apart from the possibility of new forms of business organization such as cooperatives or 'community-based businesses'⁴⁴, all other recommendations are straightforward interventions to 'correct' market dysfunction. There is no mention made of distributional issues, social justice or how these market mechanisms will create "meaningful livelihoods." The economics of alternative forestry are not linked to the social justice, communitarian position described in its more general philosophy.

This is not an oversight, however. In the alternative forestry vision, it is possible to emphasize production over distribution, and to use market mechanisms to achieve their eco-forestry vision, because activities occurring at the local level are thought to lead inevitably to social justice and sustainability. M'Gonigle and Parfitt anticipate some of the 'obstacles' to their alternative forestry vision, such as the difficulty of switching from routine
mill jobs to skilled, flexible value-added production, difficulty of small (and likely non-
unionized) mills matching union wages, finding work for displaced workers in their home
communities rather than in the lower mainland. However, they find a single solution for all
and any problems: “these challenges can be met if we move our economy away from its
top-heavy corporate form, whether private or public, and invigorate new businesses and
management authority in the local community” (M’Gonigle and Parfitt 1994:57).

Because the local community speaks with ‘one voice’, class structures within
communities are replaced by ecological principles. Experiences of marginality within the
current economic system are assumed away in a bioregional economy. Oppression is
presumed ‘nonecological’ and will simply cease to exist. Eco-forestry often entails a ‘family’
approach to business, often with actual family members, but also by treating employees like
part of the family, everyone being part of the same bioregion. Hammond (1997:138)
describes the “…meaningful employment rather than short-term jobs” which will be part of
an alternative forest economy. It is generally acknowledged that wages will be lower in the
new value economy, but “meaningful” employment is assumed to be preferred to high
wages. For example, family woodlots, one of the small business opportunities advocated,
fits well with the deep ecology and communitarian beliefs of alternative forestry, but are
feasible only because the family would not seek remuneration for their work. M’Gonigle and
Parfitt (1994:65) declare that “like the family farm, silviculture is largely a job for sweat
equity and landed stewards.” They cite Jack Bakewell: “I don’t think you can grow trees
economically, in this latitude with incremental silviculture using union and contract labour.
A woodlot licensee with his family will donate a lot of time, and they see something down the

44 Community-based businesses could be interpreted in many ways and they are not further defined by Burda et
al.
These donations of time are not considered exploitation within alternative forestry because ecoforesters have a 'natural' passion for improving the sustainability of their bioregion. The alternative forestry vision of 'families working together' is not unproblematic, however. Walton-Roberts and Hiebert (1997) have suggested that there is considerable potential for exploitation within family enterprises.

7.3 Conclusions

Patricia Marchak, in a commentary following Berda et al.'s (1998) article in *BC Studies*, writes that eco-forestry "is a nice idea", and on the surface, it is. But probing underneath the smooth surface of *Forestopia* reveals problematic silences as well as a disturbing tendency to essentialize human and nonhuman nature. The potential for exploitation in the workplace, and larger issues of racism, sexism and homophobia are eluded in their new forestry vision through references to the naturally harmonious, self-regulating equilibrium models of ecology. At a simpler level, what if you do not happen to like trees? What if being 'rooted in place' is not your style? The challenge to acknowledge difference, presented by the 'cultural turn' in economic geography, is not addressed by alternative forestry. On the contrary, there is the danger in alternative forestry that a celebration of difference would be eroded by the "voice of the body as a whole and the principles of ecology" (Sale 1985:101) in the 'new forest economy'.

Marchak is hesitant to support a policy that assigns increased resource management to British Columbia's local communities. There are, she notes, three or four communities in British Columbia where the type of community-based forestry advocated by the 'Victoria team' might work. Otherwise, she continues, "not all rural communities are stable, cohesive, interested in forests, or likely to be willing custodians of ecosystem-based forestry (some, quite the contrary)" (Marchak et al. 1999:75-6). Marchak accepts the need for a 'cohesive community' in order to achieve a sustainable local economy. Furthermore,
she claims that alternative foresters "... are right to insist that ecosystem-based forestry is the only way we can sustain what remains of mature forests in this province" (ibid. p.74).

But since cohesive communities of the type described in alternative forestry do not exist in British Columbia, she concludes: "the most attractive possibility is that this province move away as rapidly as possible from forestry-based industry" (ibid. p.77).

Marchak seems trapped by the inevitability of decline depicted in staples discourse, and is unable to see beyond the binary of corporate forestry/alternative forestry. Communities are either the resource-dependent communities of her studies ("not...stable, cohesive or interested in forests") or 'eco-communities' which are too few to provide a sufficient challenge to corporate forestry. Better, given these two alternatives, to forget about forestry altogether.

But these two alternatives are not given. They are – as I hope this chapter has demonstrated – constructed; the result of two theories that are strongly deterministic and dualistic. Both theories silence difference, albeit in quite different ways. The paralyzing impact of the discourse of capitalism within the Canadian political economy literature is illustrated in the following excerpt from Marchak’s Green Gold. In the introduction to her discussion of unions in resource towns, Marchak notes that

While frustrations were expressed in many ways, it would be difficult to sustain a claim that there is genuine and sustained opposition to the system. On the contrary, while workers in the Terrace region\(^{45}\) were clearly concerned about the resource itself and the environment, and while strong nationalist unions do have an impact there, neither there nor in the northeastern region of Vancouver Island was there evidence of strong opposition to the status quo. (Marchak 1983:46)

What constitutes ‘genuine and sustained opposition’? How much of Marchak’s impression of Terrace forest workers is a reflection of her understanding of what class politics should

---

\(^{45}\) Terrace is about 100 km west of my study area along Highway 16.
be? It seems that for Marchak, “frustrations” may be many and diverse, but real opposition is singular, and constituted as working class solidarity against ‘the system’.

For Marchak and other Canadian political economists, steeped in a staples discourse which has its own ‘staples trap’, the possibility of resource communities developing a healthy, sustainable local economy in the face of corporate forestry is literally unthinkable. For M’Gonigle and other alternative foresters, their ‘nice idea’ of alternative forestry remains just that – an idea, whose time, in spite of their repeated insistence, has not come. However, if we were able to revisit those frustrated workers in Terrace, we might find possibilities of resistance which are proximate, local, and daily, rather than universal and ‘millennial’ (Gibson-Graham, cf. Cullenberg 1992).

I cannot revisit the forest workers of Marchak’s study, but I can revisit the small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley. Now that the representations of small forest operators found in the literature have been broken apart, I ‘return’ to the Bulkley Valley in Chapter Eight to reconsider the subjectivity of small forest operators using overdetermination as a way of explaining the roles of hinterlanders in the British Columbia forest economy without essentializing or homogenizing the identity of hinterlanders.

I develop a different discourse of hinterlander subjectivity, which, I argue, makes it possible to imagine hinterlanders as not necessarily (but possibly) transient; not necessarily dependent upon either resources or corporations (but possibly). This shift in language opens up possibilities for conceiving of different development trajectories for resource communities and ‘hinterlanders’. I distinguish this from the ‘value’ discourse that flows from alternative forestry. Although the value discourse rejects the subject position ascribed to hinterlanders in the staples discourse, it replaces this subject position with an equally singular, homogenizing discourse which attributes all subjectivity to ecological roots.
8 AN ECONOMICS OF DIFFERENCE

In Chapter Three I described multiple class processes as articulated by Gibson-Graham (1996). In this chapter I use this concept of multiple class processes as an entry point into hinterland subjectivities. Using class as an entry point, rather than other social processes such as ethnicity or gender, reflects both my initial research interest – to better understand the economic position of small forest operators – as well as my academic training as an economic geographer. It does not reflect a belief that class is the ‘best’ way of understanding subjectivity. I use Resnick and Wolff’s meaning of entry point as “an analytical starting point that reflects the concerns and preoccupations of a particular knower” (Gibson-Graham 1996:55-6).

Resnick and Wolff are most interested in promoting their ‘Marxian theory’, and so focus their attention primarily on class. In this chapter I am interested in making use of the concept of multiple class processes to better understand my case study, and so I use multiple class processes as entry points which enable me to also look beyond class. Class is the entry point, not the totality, of the subjectivities that I begin to describe from the case study. I only begin to describe them because class, like other aspects of subjectivity, is understood as a process, not a static position – I do not make conclusions about the subjectivity of small forest operators. As Kathy Ferguson (1993:177, cited in Hanson and Pratt 1995:20) observes, “class, like race, gender, erotic identity, ‘etc.,’ can be a crucial but still temporary and shifting resting place for subjects always in motion and in relation.” I want to avoid creating yet another static representation of hinterland identity and I want to leave open the possibilities of movement for hinterlanders. An articulation of multiple class processes provides an alternative way of reading hinterland subjectivity. For hinterlanders who find themselves positioned as either ‘conventional’ (a marginal part of the central economy) or ‘alternative’ (at the centre of a marginal economy), this ‘third way’ of
articulating subjectivity through multiple class processes offers new possibilities for envisioning economic and social development which does not pin down economic or social identity, but instead allows for movement between centre and margin.

The value of using multiple class processes as an exploration of subjectivity is that 'small business' can be understood as multiple capitalist and noncapitalist class processes, which constitute a decentered, shifting, economic disunity. Moreover, small forest operators begin to appear, not as the 'underdeveloped' and 'ecological' subject positions found in Canadian political economy and alternative forestry respectively, but as diverse, fluid, and contradictory individuals. Even within a given category of class process, there is no fixed, predictable way of 'reading off' a person's subjectivity (as is implied by the staples discourse of Canadian political economy or the value discourse of alternative forestry).

The structure of the chapter is as follows: first, I describe Resnick and Wolff's 'overdetermination' as used by Gibson-Graham. Second, I outline Gibson-Graham's alternative conceptualization of multiple class processes. Gibson-Graham theorizes class as an entry point into an overdetermined understanding of the social; she does not attempt to capture subjectivity within the category of class. Instead, she recognizes class as one way of 'getting at' myriad and multi-faceted subjectivities. Third, I provide examples from the case study that reveal the many ways in which capitalist and noncapitalist class processes occur among the small forest operators of the Bulkley Valley, and how they are overdetermined/overdetermining. Seeing multiple class processes in traditionally 'noneconomic' spaces such as volunteer work or helping out with the bookkeeping provides a way of getting at subjectivity in a way that does not homogenize or essentialize.

My aims in this chapter are two-fold. One, by developing a more abundant set of stories about capitalist and noncapitalist economic forms in the forest industry, I hope to destabilize the singular account of 'the British Columbia forest industry' presented in
Chapter Four. Two, by revealing the diverse subjectivities found in the case study, I open up the social space of the hinterland. If forest workers are not only ‘victims’, but not always ‘caring, community-minded folk’ either, not completely ‘eco-friendly’, but not always ‘eco-hostile’ either, then maybe corporate capitalism isn’t always and only a totalizing hegemony. Then maybe there are openings in the forest economy...openings to construct other identities, to reveal other fictions, to explore other hinterlands.

8.1 **Overdetermination**

By understanding that we as individuals move between/across margins and centers, we can destabilize unexamined dualisms and boundaries as we begin to see the inherent connections between inside/outside, center/margins, same/other (Hanson and Pratt 1995:19-20).

In Chapter Seven, I destabilized the representations of small forest operators found in Canadian political economy and alternative forestry. Here, I outline one theoretical possibility for exploring potentially exploitive social relations that is also sensitive to the ever-present danger of discursive violation of subjectivity. Resnick and Wolff’s ‘overdetermination’ is a useful way of reconceptualizing small forest operators’ economic identities in the British Columbia forest economy without essentializing or requiring a fixed representation.

Resnick and Wolff use an overdeterminist approach in contrast to the essentialist approaches of empiricism or rationalism. The prefix ‘over’ is a way of signifying the difference in this approach from determinist approaches. They borrow the term from Freud, Lukacs and Althusser, but modify it considerably. Resnick and Wolff’s usage of the concept of overdetermination implies *constitutivity*, participation in constitution, rather than determination or even multiple causation.

Overdetermination rejects the monocausal determining role of class conflict or any other ultimate determinant and problematizes any notion of a consistent epistemological subject who acts in terms of her class, race, or gender interests. This is important because it explains alliances across gender, racial, and class barriers and allows us to understand subjectivities as multiple and conflicted. (Nash 1995:74)
Overdetermination recognizes that any understanding of social processes needs to start somewhere, and that even though it is never possible to recognize fully subjectivity, it is important not to remain stuck in one, hegemonic, category. Resnick and Wolff are quite content to start with the category of class. The problem is that in many ways they end there too. Gibson-Graham's use of overdetermination and of class as an entry point is more satisfactory. She does not stop at class, nor does she assume subjectivity based solely on class position.

In the alternative space we see for a politics of class we may encounter and even foster the partial identification of social subjects around class issues and the formulation of strategic solidarities and alliances to effect class transformation. Importantly though, we are always aware that these solidarities are discursively as well as nondiscursively constructed and that a class "identity" is overdetermined in the individual social subject by many other discourses of identity and social differentiation. (Gibson-Graham 1996:70)

In her discussion of the appropriation of women's unpaid labour in household class processes in mining communities in Australia, she describes the ways in which this feudal class process might be overdetermined. But she does not essentialize the social outcomes resulting from either the feudal class process or the other social processes overdetermining and overdetermined by it. She writes:

We are aware that many people may see the existence of these households as a problem in itself. When we have given talks about domestic life and women's work in coal-mining towns, our listeners often remark that life there must be terrible for women. Our interactions with these women, however, did not uphold this impression. The women did not seem particularly unhappy or unfulfilled. Even many of their gripes about their husbands seemed to be acceptable slurs slung across the gender line, rather than expressions of deep-seated animosity or dissatisfaction...Perhaps for these reasons we did not depict the feudal household as something that should necessarily be undermined or abandoned, despite the things we saw in it that we didn't like, and despite our interest in promoting communal class processes. (Gibson-Graham 1996:224)

Within an overdetermined, nonessentialist understanding of subjectivity, "class is still explanatory but not singly, and assumptions regarding class consciousness, position, interests, and so on, are problematized" (Nash 1995:73). An overdetermined approach problematizes homogeneous representations and "...gives priority to disorder insofar as it
becomes impossible to discern in advance, or even ex post, the necessary pattern of determinants or effects for any event and/or for historical change" (Amariglio and Ruccio 1996:28).

Interestingly, the Canadian political economist Wallace Clement makes an argument very similar to Resnick and Wolff's overdetermination. In his *The Challenge of Class Analysis*, Clement (1988:23) writes that

> While class 'conditions' non-class social cleavages (gender, region, ethnicity, etc.), it is also conditioned by them. I am not arguing that class is an independent variable and all others are dependent variables. Instead, these factors are relational and interactive, not determined but dialectic.

Unfortunately, however, this recognition of class as conditioning and conditioned does not carry through in his discussions of hinterland resource communities, where, as noted in Chapter Seven, he does treat 'all others' as dependent variables, in spite of his stated intentions.

There are endless ways in which class processes might be overdetermined: religions, traditions, ideologies, sexualities, gender expectations, understandings of 'place'. Likewise, each of these will be overdetermined as well as overdetermining. This is not just some kind of endless shell game. Recognition that

> The overdetermination of all events and the basic discursivity of knowledge – knowledge is not a mirror of nature but is constituted in and by discourse – precludes the idea that there is a relation of adequacy of correspondence between one's knowledge and the "real" outside of it. The "relativism" that this concept of knowledge implies is not, to our mind, a statement of the impossibility of knowledge. To the contrary, it indicates the plurality of and (often incommensurable) differences between knowledges and suggests that the means of choosing among them is not a question of finding an interdiscursive form of truth but primarily (although not exclusively) evaluating their perceived theoretical and social effects. (Amariglio and Ruccio 1994:30)

I am interested in finding an appropriate theoretical approach to describe what often appeared *to me* to be contradictory identities in the case study. One of the most puzzling contradictions to emerge from the interviews was the frequency with which operators told
me they valued their ‘freedom’ and had started a business ‘to be independent’, only to tell me later that they contract almost exclusively to one or two mills. “Independence” seemed to overdetermine many of the class processes found in the case study, as the examples in this chapter will illustrate.

Contrary to the overwhelming emphasis on dependency in the literature, most interviewees emphasized their sense of independence resulting from owning their own businesses, the “joy of being your own boss”, the “freedom” involved. Freedom and independence, although mentioned by so many operators, seemed to carry a unique meaning for each person who mentioned it. It was often defined by what it was not - not being in the city, not being tied to a desk, not having to take orders. These ‘nots’ seemed to be part of a commonly understood sense of freedom which involved a sense of space (you wouldn’t find me in the city, etc.) as well as class (being on your own). But there were also personal meanings of freedom unique to each operator, illustrating that the idea of freedom itself is overdetermined by many other social processes.

The value of considering “independence” as an overdetermining (and overdetermined) ideology is not that it reveals the ‘true’ status of small forest operators. On the contrary, I prefer overdetermination precisely because it does not allow me to read into small forest operators’ opinions about the extent of their independence or dependence. By focusing on one social process, the operator’s economic relationship with the forest industry, the Canadian political economy literature represents forest workers in resource communities as dependent. Overdetermination recognizes that the story does not end here. While the operator’s class process with the local corporation is an important consideration, other social processes must be acknowledged as constituting subjectivity as well.
8.2 Multiple Class Processes

Theorizing class as an overdetermined social process rather than as a social grouping has certain implications for the nature and purpose of class analysis. Rather than involving the categorization of individuals and the disaggregation of societies into social groups, an overdeterminist class analysis examines some of the ways in which class processes participate in constituting and, in turn, are constituted by other social and natural processes. (Resnick and Wolff 1987:55)

Resnick and Wolff (1987), Fraad et al. (1994), and Gibson-Graham (1996) describe a fairly radical approach to re-thinking class, in which class is viewed, not as a structure under capitalism, but as a process of change. "Class struggles do not necessarily take place between groups of people whose identities are constituted by the objective reality and subjective consciousness of a particular location in a social structure. Rather, they take place whenever there is an attempt to change the way in which surplus labor is produced, appropriated, or distributed" (Gibson-Graham 1996:59). This conception of class enables the theorist to witness class processes that occur in both capitalist and non-capitalist systems, breaking down the hegemony of capitalism as 'the economy', and revealing economic and social diversity in its stead.

Gibson-Graham's insights into class processes and possibilities of transformation in Australian mining communities are helpful in understanding my encounters with small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley. Recognition of economic diversity seems particularly relevant for an understanding of 'small business', which has traditionally been thought of as a transitional petty bourgeoisie position, less important than the 'real' bourgeoisie (capitalist class) but not aligned with the 'real' working class either. Tracing out the multiple class processes found within this often-overlooked group reveals that small forest operators participate in many class processes in many economies; they are never simply 'contractors' in the corporate forest industry.

By offering a "bare bones" definition of class as a social process of surplus labor appropriation and distribution, we hope to counteract the tendency to emphasize the social effectivity of property ownership, domination, and consciousness while ignoring exploitation. For a moment, then, we wish to hold exploitation up to the light and to
analyze – rather than presume – its relations to power, ownership, consciousness, and other social dimensions. (Gibson-Graham 1996:52-3)

I use this ‘bare bones’ definition of class as a social process in this chapter. Although this narrow definition of class has (somewhat ironically) been criticized as essentialist (see Castree 1999), I think the criticism misses the point of Gibson-Graham’s argument. As I see it, the explicit choice of this narrow definition enables Gibson-Graham to ‘get on with’ her project of illustrating that class processes do not occur only within capitalism. Having demonstrated her point, she may wish to tackle the larger debate about the appropriate definition of ‘class’. But at the moment, Gibson-Graham is not interested in determining the ‘true’ definition of class – that would miss the point of her own argument. She uses a particular definition of class as an entry point into a larger discussion of exploitation within capitalist and noncapitalist economic forms, and in so doing is able to reveal class within the household economy. Gibson-Graham points out that “by producing a knowledge of exploitation as a social process, we hope to contribute to a more self-conscious and self-transformative class subjectivity and to a different politics of class activism and social innovation” (Gibson-Graham 1996:53). She is interested, she explains, in understanding and possibly transforming conditions of exploitation, whether under capitalism or some other social process.

For my purposes, her narrow definition of class works equally well, although for slightly different purposes. I am most interested in breaking apart homogenizing representations of small forest operators, and providing an alternative language to describe the diversity of economic forms that I encountered in the case study. I cannot express this diversity without reference to other aspects of subjectivity. Economic position and social identity of small forest operators are too intertwined. To fully understand the economic situation of small forest operators it seems necessary to understand something else about them too, especially their sense of independence. Nevertheless, I want to remain alert to
the possibility of exploitation of small forest operators by other interests, notably major
corporations. Using class in the meaning given by Gibson-Graham as an entry point
enables me to do this.

Different class processes can be distinguished from one another by the manner in
which surplus labour is appropriated, and/or one of the ways that an overdetermined
circumstance has historically come to be associated with a class process (Gibson-Graham
1996:54). Although Marx conceived of class primarily in historical terms with five historical
modes of production: primitive communist, slave, feudal, ancient and capitalist (Resnick and
Wolff 1987:118), Gibson-Graham argues that they are more appropriately conceived as
occurring concurrently in multiple and diverse ways. In the following sections I provide
definitions of class processes and economies that I use later in this chapter to explain the
diversity of economic and social identities found in the case study. I define class processes
in order to highlight appropriation and redistribution of surplus value.

8.2.1 Class Processes Defined

Capitalist

Gibson-Graham understands capitalist class process as surplus labour being
appropriated from wage laborers in value form. Other writers emphasize ownership of the
means of production. Clement (1988) defines class in terms of property rights to the means
of production and control over the labour power of others. By this definition, the capitalist
class controls property rights and commands the labour power of others. By contrast, the
working class has no control over property and must therefore sell its labour power. In the
following, I understand the process of exploitation of surplus labour from waged employees
by a small business owner to be a capitalist class process.
Petty Bourgeoisie

Self-employed entrepreneurs have most often been classified as petty bourgeoisie. Marx referred to the petty bourgeoisie as a 'transitional' class, assuming ever-increasing polarization of the two great classes (Wright 1985). Clement (1988) distinguishes between the traditional petty bourgeoisie, with control over their own property, and the 'modern petty bourgeoisie', who perform the tasks of capitalists such as surveillance and discipline as well as selling their own labour power. The modern petty bourgeoisie is a corporate, rather than an entrepreneurial, class process, not relevant to the small forest operators in the case study.

The class position of small business has been recognized elsewhere as contradictory (see Wright 1985, and Veltmeyer 1986 for a discussion of class in a Canadian context). Most often, small business is conceptualized as the 'petty bourgeoisie', which may function in capitalist or working class positions. “This structural mobility – in and out of the working class by people in the petit-bourgeois economic position – points to a very confused and contradictory social position. Most people in the small business sector have worked (or will work) for wages at some time in their lives” (Veltmeyer 1986:56). This was indeed the case in the Bulkley Valley, but it is not the point made by Gibson-Graham in her study of Australian mining communities, and it is not the point I wish to make about small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley. Understanding small business as petty bourgeois and therefore moving between capitalist and working class at various times, overlooks the important point that small forest operators are often functioning in many class processes at the same time. Small business as petty bourgeoisie, as a contradictory class position, implies an either/or position of centre or margin – either capitalist oppressor or working class oppressed – without recognizing movement between centre and margin.
Because the term petty bourgeoisie refers to a class *structure*, rather than a process, and because of its implication of a lesser and diminishing class, I do not find the term helpful in clarifying multiple class processes occurring in the case study.

**Independent**

Gibson-Graham views the traditional petty bourgeoisie class position as independent or ancient class processes\(^{46}\). In the Canadian political economy, the term ‘independent commodity producer’ is used to describe someone in this class position. I use the term ‘independent class process’ or ‘independent producer’ rather than petty bourgeoisie or independent commodity producer to emphasize *process* over *position*. An independent class process occurs when a person performs the labour necessary to reproduce him/herself, and appropriates his or her own surplus labour (see Hotch 1994, cited in Gibson-Graham 1996). Examples are self-employment and a single-person household.

**Communal**

A communal class process occurs when the collective surplus labor of a group or community is appropriated and redistributed by (some or all) members of the community. Decisions regarding distribution of appropriated surplus labour are made collectively. This might occur in a co-operative business or in a household in which wealth, work, power, and emotional intimacy are all shared (Fraad et al. 1994).

**Feudal**

A feudal class process occurs when the surplus labour of one individual or group is appropriated under conditions of ‘fealty’ and mutual obligation in *use value* form, in return for the provision of means of subsistence (Gibson-Graham 1996). There is no intermediate role for markets, prices, profits, or wages in the relation between the producer and the

---

\(^{46}\) She uses the term ancient, following Hotch (1994), because labour is self-appropriated, presumably as it was in ancient times before capitalism. It is difficult to ignore the historicalness implied in the term, and I prefer ‘independent’ to refer to class processes in the case study.
appropriator of surplus labor. Ties of marital oaths, ideology, tradition, religion and power overdetermine this class process (Fraad et al. 1994:7).

**Volunteer**

Like household class processes, volunteer class processes occur when the surplus labour of an individual or group is appropriated in use value form, rather than exchange value form. However, a volunteer class process is overdetermined by different cultural conditions, such as a sense of duty to ‘the community’, rather than to ‘the family’. The volunteer class process is more likely to be *unilaterally* rather than *mutually* obliging. The use value may be appropriated by a group or an individual. For example, a person might volunteer to serve tea at a church function (group), or might offer to chop wood for an elderly neighbor (individual).

### 8.2.2 Economies Defined

In the household, in the so-called workplace, in the community, surplus labor is produced, appropriated, and distributed every day by ourselves and by others (Gibson-Graham 1996:264).

Class processes can be understood as occurring not just in the workplace, but wherever exploitation, appropriation and redistribution of labour take place. If class processes are understood as the basic building block of the economy, then the economy, or more accurately, economies take place in all sorts of social spaces previously considered noneconomic.

For example, Gibson-Graham seeks an alternative understanding of the household as "...an autonomous site of production in its own right in which various class processes are enacted" (ibid. p.65-6). I follow her approach of viewing the totality of the economic as "...a site of multiple forms of economy whose relations to each other are only ever partially fixed and always under subversion" (ibid. p.12).
Representations of small forest operators in the literature make assumptions about their values and behaviors in the workplace, community, and in nature. I define three economies found in the case study of small forest operators – the workplace economy, the household economy, and the community economy – which enable me to displace the assumptions about small forest operators in the literature with nonessentializing, exploratory language. Class processes may be carried out in a number of different ways in these different economies, as illustrated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Economy</th>
<th>Class Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capitalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following provides a brief overview of the way I define workplace, household, and community economies in the case study.

*The Workplace Economy*

Class processes are normally understood to take place in the workplace economy. It is accepted (if not acceptable) that laborers will be exploited in production, that owners of capital may or may not work alongside their laborers, creating different types of class processes. It is less recognized that the workplace is often the site of communal class processes, in partnerships and in family businesses. The case study examples draw out not only capitalist and independent workplace class processes, but communal class processes as well.
*The Household Economy*

Gibson-Graham seeks acknowledgement of the household as an economic site, not just as a site of reproduction *within* capitalism (Gibson-Graham 1996:207). In the household sector, unpaid labour often takes the form of child rearing and housework. This unpaid labour is not an insignificant economic activity. Yet in spite of the fact that more people are involved in household production than capitalist production, the household sector is marginalized and undertheorized (Gibson-Graham 1996:261). 'Feudal' (or domestic) class processes are an important occurrence in most households, but take on a particular resonance in households of small businesses owners. In the households of small business owners, many tasks that may be undertaken by unpaid family labour blur the line between 'work' and 'home' economics, raising issues about exploitation within family businesses (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1998). The value of considering family businesses from this multiple class processes perspective is that class is not a predicted or static outcome of occupation or social group. Rather, the class process emerges from the economic site. In this way, awareness can be raised about the potential for exploitation within family businesses without generalizing across the entire group called 'family businesses'.

For many interviewees, working as a family was an important economic and social benefit to owning their own company. For small forest operators (and probably for many small business owners in other industries) it is 'natural' to blur the boundaries of work, family, and recreation. Most operators I interviewed had their 'office' (sometimes the kitchen table) at home, and manufacturers had their facilities very near their home. Very often wives were involved in the business, most commonly by 'doing the books'.

Who 'does the books' would provide a fascinating study in itself. I found that by and large, small forest operators were not interested in the 'paperwork' side of things. Questions about bookkeeping, cash flows, revenue projections and the like, were like cold
water thrown on conversations that otherwise flowed merrily. This may have been the result of wariness to share such information, or simply disinterest. It was difficult to assess. It would be interesting to follow up more carefully on the arrangements made by small forest operators and their spouses about 'keeping the books'.

That bookkeeping often is passed on to 'the wife' to do in her spare time may say many things. I am cautious about interpreting the fact that so few of the men I interviewed seemed to put much value on the bookkeeping done by their wives. In the many cases when an operator said he had no office staff, and I would then ask, 'who does your books?', or 'Do you do the books yourself?', the response often was, 'Oh ya, well, my wife does the books.' When asked if she receives a salary for her work, the response was occasionally sheepish, sometimes astonished, but usually 'no' – suggesting that my question was akin to asking if their wives were paid for cooking dinner. Household and workplace economies are blurred, making important work such as bookkeeping invisible if the study is confined to the “workplace”.

In some situations wives were referred to as 'partners on paper'. For tax reasons business income was divided between the two 'partners', even in cases where the woman actually performed no forestry-related work or even bookkeeping. In other situations, the wife, and occasionally adult children, established separate company names in order to be able to increase the number of Timber Sales the family could log at a given time.47

In cases where women have no formal power in the family business but perform unpaid work, an exploitative feudal class process occurs in which the man extracts surplus use value from his wife's labour. Cases where a woman owns half of her working partner's

47 Resentment was sometimes expressed by other operators toward these 'paper companies', which go against the intent of the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program criterion to restrict the volume of timber that can be logged by a company at a given time. See appendix B for a discussion of the requirements of the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program.
company or her own 'company on paper' and receives income without working are also exploitative feudal class processes, with the non-working woman extracting the surplus labour of her working partner. In both situations however, there will be other class processes occurring within the household which overdetermine these exploitative feudal class processes. Wives who do unpaid bookkeeping, for example, may be compensated by a husband who performs other chores for her. Wives who receive income from their 'paper companies' may perform household tasks for their husbands.

**The Community Economy**

It is not a far stretch to extend Gibson-Graham's discussion of the household economy one step further to consider the community economy. There is probably a multitude of ways in which the community economy could be explored, but I will consider only one which I develop from the case study: volunteer communal class processes.

Many of the small forest operators I interviewed were involved in volunteer activities in the community relating to forestry, particularly the Land and Resource Management Planning processes being carried out through the Ministry of Forests. While most small forest operators felt that these planning processes were worthwhile, there was also frustration and resentment at the amount of volunteer hours 'donated' by 'independent' board members, whereas government and corporate board members were paid for their labour. Viewing community planning processes through the lens of communal class processes provides a means to explore “consensus-based” decision-making processes with an eye to the exploitation and appropriation of surplus labour (paid and unpaid) and the distribution of any resulting surplus value.

---

48 Community can also be defined in a multitude of ways. The community economy I refer to here is the set of unpaid activities occurring with a local, territorially-bounded place.

49 Quite likely they were involved in myriad other formal and informal volunteer activities, but I asked about only forestry-related volunteer activities given the scope of the study.
8.3 Revealing Forest Economies

Representations of conventional small forest operators typically position them in capitalist and independent producer classes. Small forest operators with regular employees are capitalists who appropriate surplus value from waged laborers. They also own the means of production (although this is not a necessary criterion under the definition of class I am using). Small forest operators who are independent producers do not have employees, may own one or two pieces of equipment or none at all, and typically subcontract their services to a larger (capitalist) small forest operator. A conventional operator is involved in a feudal household class process because paid employment in resource communities is largely male-dominated, and women are typically unpaid caregivers. They avoid involvement in the community economy, assuming that the company will take on community responsibilities.

Alternative small forest operators are represented as independent producers as well, but may also be involved in communal, volunteer or communist processes. An alternative operator is assumed to be involved in communal household class processes where decisions are made as a family and work and its rewards (“sweat equity”) are shared.

From the literature, one would assume that conventional operators’ class processes are overdetermined by their social and cultural underdevelopment and dependency as well as by their exploitist relationship with nature. By contrast, alternative operators’ class processes would be overdetermined by their spiritual or emotional attachment to the land and corresponding attachment to their human community.

In the following examples from the case study, I explore ‘hinterland small forest operator subjectivity’ through the entry point of multiple class processes, and how these class processes may be overdetermined in a variety of ways.
8.3.1 Jim Simpson\textsuperscript{50} Independent/Communal/Volunteer/ “born in a logging camp”

In the classification system I developed in Chapter Five, Jim Simpson was classified as a ‘conventional’ operator. In many ways he epitomizes the contract logger found in descriptions of resource communities. When I asked how long his company had been in operation, he responded that he had been “born in a logging camp”. The implication was clear; Jim had always been a logger. I later interviewed his uncles who were trying to convince a worn-out piece of equipment to start when I arrived. The conversation took place over the din of an ancient engine. The two brothers, long past the age of retirement, operated a woodlot together and each had their own ranch as well. They told me their dad had also worked in logging camps throughout Manitoba and Ontario. I could imagine young Jim learning about logging at the knees of his extended forestry family.

Jim used the most modern logging equipment available. Although he complained about the investment required to stay in business, he felt the only way to keep on top of things was to keep investing. He preferred to sub-contract and keep a minimum of employees (usually five) whenever possible, to avoid the hassles of paperwork. He had logged about 40,000 m\textsuperscript{3} the previous year, and said he would like to log more to make more money.

Jim is involved in a capitalist/independent class process\textsuperscript{51} in the forest industry, running his own equipment alongside his sub-contracted workforce. However, his business is also a partnership with his wife, and so he is also involved in a communal class process – they operate the business together, with Becky doing the books and maintaining equipment. They make decisions jointly, and distribute the surplus value collectively. Although I did not ask about household decision-making, it would likely be an extension of the communal class

\textsuperscript{50} All the names of interviewees have been changed to protect confidentiality.

\textsuperscript{51} I use the term capitalist/independent to indicate that Jim appropriates his own labour as well as that of his employees; he is not straightforwardly ‘capitalist’ in this case, although he is more capitalist than independent.
process which is carried out in their business. Jim also contributes his labour in a volunteer class process by sitting on the local Land and Resource Management Planning board.

Jim's workplace class processes are certainly overdetermined by his early familiarity with the forest industry, and he often sounded like a 'typical' logger. For example, he told me he was on good terms with the local mill, worked as a contractor for them, and sold them logs through Small Business Forest Enterprise Program Timber Sales. He felt that he was better off with a major corporation in the area.

But he also displayed characteristics of alternative representations of forest workers. Sounding much like an alternative forester, Jim also felt the mill had too much control, that the local area was overly specialized in forestry, and would benefit from economic diversification. Although he felt environmentalists created a false image of the forest industry, he felt that mechanization rather than environmentalists had been responsible for most of the job losses in the industry. He supported the Forest Practices Code in principle although he had concerns about its enforcement. His support for environmentalism and local economic diversification also overdetermines his class identity.

8.3.2 Pete Arnold: Independent/Volunteer/ "community-minded"

Pete was classified earlier as a 'conventional' operator since he was a contract logger. His yard was full of equipment – skidders, loaders, logging trucks, although notably absent was the modern fellerbuncher or processor. He preferred to hire locally to keep the local economy going, and had employed fifteen men during the winter before the interview. Pete tried to keep his men going full-time if there was wood available, but said he found it hard to get steady work from the local mill. He was concerned that his crew would go

---

52 A methodological note: at the time of interviewing, I did not anticipate that I would develop such an interest in household economic processes. In hindsight, I would have asked for more specific information about household roles. When interviewees have provided this information I have included it, but it is lacking in some cases.
elsewhere, because he was not one of the ‘favoured’ contractors at the mill, and would not be able to get enough work through the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program Timber Sales.

Pete was angry about the situation with the local mill which he felt did not support the local economy or create jobs. “It’s a farce”, he said, “that the major mills create jobs. It’s the resource that creates the jobs. And local people could create those jobs if they had access to the resource.” Pete was a strong supporter of the type of tenure reform advocated in the alternative forestry literature. He wanted to “get rid of multinationals”, have more control locally and more diversification in the industry to make room for specialty niche companies and more small contractors. He was in favour of the Forest Practices Code. Interestingly, Pete had resided in the local area for only ten years, and had started his logging company only four years prior to the interview. Before that, he sold industrial parts and lived in the Okanagan. I wish that I had probed further into the interesting paradox between his ‘local control’ convictions and his lived experience as a newcomer to the area. While almost the entire interview focused on issues of local control and how local people should have access to local resources, he expressed resentment that the local Native band was a part-owner of the local major corporation. “Since it’s Native, it just makes it harder for non-Natives to get jobs”, he said. Pete was critical of a recent Small Business Sale in the area, because some of the logging work went to a locally based First Nations logging company. For Pete, local control meant local white control. His position on local control is overdetermined by his own (white) ethnicity, and his attitude towards race.

Pete also works part-time as a meat-cutter, probably getting most of his work during the fall hunting season, which coincides well with the seasonal ‘down’ time in logging. In the workplace economy Pete is part of a capitalist class process as owner of equipment which is operated by waged employees. As meat-cutter he is part of an independent class.
process in which he also owns (minimal) equipment but appropriates only his own labour. In the household economy he is part of a feudal/communal class process. His wife contributes to the household income from her part-time job as well as raising their children. Household decisions are likely to be influenced by the fact that Pete is the major ‘breadwinner’, but may also be influenced by the fact that his income is more seasonal and unpredictable whereas his wife’s lesser income is more steady. His wife is not involved in Pete’s logging business.

Pete is very active in the community. He sits on the local Land and Resource Management Planning Board as a small business forestry representative, and he has been instrumental in organizing a local logging association. Pete’s involvement in two volunteer class processes is clearly overdetermined by his strong convictions about community and local control. These in turn are overdetermined by his capitalist and independent (workplace) class identities.

The local logging association that Pete helped to get off the ground contains interesting class processes as well. The association describes itself as “a group of small independent hand loggers with many years of selective and sensitive logging experience using horses and small machines.” Each of the members of the group (estimates at the time of interviews were between twenty and thirty) functions in the role of independent producer, some with waged laborers, some with self-employed sub-contractors, some as self-employed individuals. Many of these businesses are family businesses with a range of feudal and communal household class processes taking place as well. A further class process which occurs to a greater or lesser degree among the group is the volunteer (communal) class process in which their labour is appropriated by the whole group. The ‘surplus value’ which would occur through increased contracts and jobs ‘for the community’ is redistributed according to decisions made by the group in a communal class process.
A considerable amount of labour went into setting up and organizing this group and lobbying government, all on a volunteer basis. The value of analyzing the decision-making process of this group as a set of volunteer class processes lies in the ability to draw out potentially exploitative interactions as well as sites of class transformation and redistribution. For example, within this group it is apparent that a few individuals provided much of the mental labour required to put together the prospectus, and in that sense their labour has been exploited by the group at large. If employment is generated through these efforts, how will it be distributed? Will the group maintain its communal class identity, or will they revert to competitive independent producers? How will any resultant surplus value be distributed among the group? How will this impact on the household class processes occurring simultaneously? The group had not worked through these questions, but the answers will be unique to the group and its members, and will depend not only on the class processes outlined above, but will be overdetermined by a multitude of other factors such as shared group philosophy, power within the group, and kinship.

8.3.3 Herb Niestrom: independent/ "buying a job"

Herb was classified as a 'conventional' operator. He ran only one piece of equipment, a skidder. In the past he had worked as an employee of the local mill. He had seen an "opportunity to work on [his] own", and began contracting out to the same local mill where he had been previously employed. He had one employee, his son. Working with his son was an important aspect to having his own business. When I asked Herb why he had started this business, he told me:

The challenge to be on your own – I think that's why I did it. And also, my kids were growing up, and at that time they showed an interest that they would work in the bush, and my oldest son, he does work with me in the bush, and he was just finishing high school at that time, so ya, people said, ya, he bought his son a job, at that time, well, maybe so, maybe not. Nothing wrong with that. He showed interest, and he's still working with me in the bush.
Many operators told me that they could earn more working for someone else, but other considerations were more important. Later in the interview Herb told me about the "joy of being your own boss":

If I would count up my hours I wouldn't make that much. But it's the joy of being your own boss. But financially wise I think if I would have stayed working for somebody else, it would have been easier. But I don't mind, I make a living at it.

Herb hired his son as an employee, rather than having the son set up his own business or work as partners. In this way, he explained, if there isn't enough work for both of them, at least his son will be able to collect employment insurance.

For Herb as for many operators, there was no separation of personal and company income. When I asked him what his household income was, he said:

H: Ah - it's hard to say, because I don't have a monthly income, I just go by what I need, I take it out of the business.

Me: So you don't pay yourself a salary?

H: No, I'm not on salary. So whatever we wrote down here, the net income, that's what I go by. I can go by my financial statements, because it says here what I took out, but it varies from year to year. See last year, in the 8 months my withdrawals were 15 - oh, just about $16,000 in 8 months. That was my withdrawals. That covers everything. And of course I have to pay maintenance of $1250 a month to my ex-wife, so that comes out of that, so that's why it's fairly high, but some months I might take out personally a thousand dollars. Next month if I need more I might take out two thousand or three thousand, it depends what I need. So I don't have a set income what (sic.) I take out.

Herb's independent/capitalist class position is overdetermined by both his domestic concerns and his overdetermining philosophy of independence. His household (feudal) obligations are legally mandated in the case of alimony payments to his ex-wife. In the case of his son, he clearly feels some sense of duty to hire him, but this is a moral rather than legal duty. Herb's independent/feudal ideas may also be overdetermined by his life experience as a European immigrant who wanted to come to British Columbia because of its natural beauty, and who was helped out by extended family members when he first arrived in Canada. For many of the European immigrants that I spoke with in the area,
Canada represented freedom and wide open spaces, which might explain why many of them chose to work in forestry.

Herb did not get involved in any local planning processes, nor did he feel they represented him well. The mill had encouraged ‘their’ contractors to attend these processes, he said, but he felt the meetings only represented the extreme environmentalists’ point of view, and he stopped going. Part of his economic identity was clearly overdetermined by a sense of association with the local mill that he contracted to: “If the mill loses its timber rights, that affects us”.

8.3.4 Jerry Piment: capitalist/ feudal/ “my wife does the books”

Jerry was classified as a ‘conventional’ operator. Jerry had the kind of colorful personality that made interviews an experience I will never forget. He was gruff, opinionated, – “outspoken” was the way he put it. No one escaped his vitriol, not the Jews responsible for market fluctuations nor the Dutchmen who got away with improper road building. Certainly not Indians or the operator working for him who was “all lit up on dope” and hung himself at work. Or the “sugar coated guy” from the local mill or the “NDP goon” who was just “filling a chair” in Victoria. Academics, mercifully, were spared, at least on that particular day.

In spite of his ongoing diatribe (or perhaps because of it) I learned quite a bit from Jerry about the local industry. Jerry had been building logging roads for over forty years, although he had only been in the Bulkley Valley for ten. He had said on the phone that I would recognize his place by all the ‘iron’, and sure enough, he had a yard overflowing with equipment; work was obviously slow. Jerry said the ‘man problem’ was his main difficulty, that he could not find properly trained men and was not willing to risk the damage to equipment that would be involved in training someone himself. However, the way he described in detail the many road building sales that he had lost the bid on to operators...
willing to bid at a much narrower margin suggested that there was more to his business problems than just 'the men'.

Jerry was involved in a capitalist class process with waged laborers operating his equipment. His son had been working with him for twenty years, and had recently gone out on his own. Jerry's wife 'did the books' as part of her feudal domestic class process rather than as a business independent or communal classes process. When I asked Jerry about office staff, his wife Minnie was busy in the next room but clearly listening in:

EB: Do you have any office staff?
JP: Just Minnie [his wife].
EB: Does she get paid?
JP: [shouts to next room] Minnie, do you get paid?
JP: [to me] Does she get paid? She gets three and a half a day - three meals and half a bed, that's pretty good.

MP: [emerging from other room]: Well, not really, I'm not on payroll, no.

Jerry was opposed to the Forest Practices Code, and felt it had been unnecessary. Given his strong views on the NDP government, this was hardly surprising. Yet he surprised me by being quite supportive of environmentalists. When I asked him, "do you think environmentalists create a false image of the forest industry?", he responded:

No, not entirely. I think they've done a lot of good. In lots of cases, they've done a lot of good. It's just the way they - you know, if they come too hard on this, it creates a hardship before people even know what's going on, you know. Gotta get a little training in this, before they - they go ridiculous on some of it, you know. Like, they'll want you to corduroy to a creek. Well, you corduroy to a creek and put a bridge in, then they tear out all the corduroy! Well, if there's any fish in it - what's the sense? They do this all the time. But I think they've done a lot of good, because a lot of people destroyed those creeks you know, and skidded right through them, which is not right. It's just the way it's presented, you know. I don't think there's any - very few loggers - that want to destroy anything anyway. It's to try and get them trained, 'cause they come through an era where everything - it's got tighter and tighter and

53 It often happened that the wives of interviewees would 'listen in' while working in the next room. I presumed this is in part because these women are accustomed to 'multi-tasking' (they would be folding laundry while listening, for example), but also because I had only asked in my letters to speak to the owner of the business. Whenever this occurred, both partners appeared quite comfortable with the arrangement, suggesting to me that spouses often listen in on and contribute to business dealings and decision-making without being a formal part of the process.
tighter, now it's harder and harder and harder to make a dollar, and they will take shortcuts if they can.

Although Jerry's class identity as capitalist is clearly overdetermined by his right wing, anti-government politics, his right wing politics do not combine with anti-intellectualism or anti-environmentalism as in the 'common sense' discourse described by Dunk (1991).\(^{54}\). More important for Jerry is the sense of 'independence' that comes for him with owning his own business:

EB: What would you say are the advantages of working in this industry?
JP: Long pause – oh, well, I don't know –
Wife Minnie from next room: None!
JP: Ya, none.
MP: Well –
EB: What about the independence of it?
MP: You don't have to work in an office, that's a big bonus.
JP: What else can you do here?
MP: You don't have to be a government worker!
JP: (Long sigh).
EB: Do you like the fact that you don't have to be in the city, for example?
JP: Oh, well, yes, that's about all – well, I wouldn't be in the city anyway, even if I was starving to death I wouldn't be there. I guess the independence of it is about all. It used to be you could be your own boss, but now with this Forest Practices thing, I'm fighting with a guy now, I says it's just a farce...(gets into details of a potential infraction)
EB: [trying to get the interview back on track] So you like the independence? You remember what made you want to move to this area?
JP: Ya, I guess that's about it. And I was a real confirmed alcoholic there for many years. So I quit drinking, that's all. Still an alcoholic, just quit drinking.
EB: Do you remember what made you want to move to this area?
JP: Well, down in [ ] you couldn't get out of that rat race down there. And here you could buy land and do different things, you know. There, you were kind of stuck with what was there, you see.\(^{55}\)

For Jerry, changing locations helped him make a change in his lifestyle, and 'do different things'. Moving to the Bulkley Valley to start his own business had given Jerry the

\(^{54}\) Dunk (1991) argues that there is a "common sense" discourse in resource communities, which inverts categories so that professionals, environmentalists and government are devalued while hard work, and common sense are valued.
opportunity to shake one (dependent) identity and take on another of independence. For Jerry, running his own business gives him ‘independence’ – it enabled him to move to a new place and quit drinking – even if it requires depending on government and mill contracts for work.

8.3.5 Garry Nicolson: independent/communal/ “working as a family”

Garry Nicolson was classified as a ‘conventional’ operator. In the past Garry and his brother had run a conventional logging company, but that company went bankrupt. At the time of the interview Garry owned no equipment, and subcontracted only his labour. He said he preferred to subcontract because “you work hard; you get rewarded”.

His workplace class identity appears straightforwardly independent, but when I asked Garry about the advantages of owning his own business in forestry, he revealed a much more complex mix of class processes involving his own household as well as his extended family.

EB: What are the advantages of owning your own business in forestry?

GN: Part of it is my wife actually works under the same company. She does computer work for forestry consulting companies, desktop publishing and word processing, and a lot of manuals for the forest service and that, that she’s – you know, guidelines for juvenile spacing and that, that she's done for some of the forest companies in town, they'll send in work to her, so she just works out of our house.

EB: Is that full-time for her?

GN: Not as much anymore, we have a two-year old and another one on the way, so she’s backed off a bit. She just uses it for fill-in now, but anytime she’s wanted full-time work it’s there. Our whole family is self-employed. In different areas, but still you never know, it’s just the stability thing. Going to work for somebody else is not entirely reliable either, and I don’t know, at least if you’re self-employed you’re able to make good decisions and work hard, you know, you might as well stockpile some of your income up because you never know if you’re going to have a slow time or whatever, whereas it’s hard to do that when you’re an employee.

55 The town Jerry refers to as a ‘rat race’ would be considered fairly remote and quaint by most Vancouverites. It was difficult for me to imagine what kind of ‘rat race’ might be found there.

242
In this family, multiple communal/independent class processes within the household and the workplace provide flexibility to accommodate childrearing (although it is clearly Garry's wife who is flexible). Garry continues to work in an independent class process in which he functions essentially as a waged laborer, but takes on the risk of an entrepreneur. His wife also works in an independent class process. Flexibility to raise a family was found by setting up a company in a communal class process in which both husband and wife are owners (this point was clarified later in the interview). They have merged their two independent class processes under one company, and so are part of a communal class process together, even though they function independently in their outward business activities.

Garry referred to his "entire family" being self-employed. He was referring, not just to himself and his wife, but to brothers and parents as well, suggesting strong kinship ties in which the extended family functions at least to some extent as an economic unit. Within this extended family other feudal and/or perhaps communal class processes would take place as well.

These communal class processes did not reach beyond the extended family; Garry was not involved in community volunteer work or in local planning processes. He did not express 'alternative forestry' views of community (whether human or natural communities), yet he was as he put it, a "real big fan of value-added". 'Environmentalism', at least of the kind advocated by alternative forestry, did not overdetermine Garry's class identity. His enthusiasm for value-added was based on his belief that a focus on value, combined with a more entrepreneurial approach to forestry, would improve the efficiency of forest resource extraction and provide more jobs.

Unlike Jerry Piment, Garry was fairly positive about the role of the Ministry of Forests, commenting that "if you're responsible and you're trying to do a good job, they're
usually pretty good...", although he did not support an increased role for government in general. He referred many times to the advantages of free enterprise, sometimes in contradictory ways. For example, he suggested increasing timber available for small business as a way of improving the forest industry, noting that "the more that goes into the Small Business Program, the more free enterprise that there is." He seemed unaware of the government regulations that would be required to achieve such a thing, even though he commented earlier that "I've been in the Small Business Program and that's been my source of employment since I graduated [from high school]. I've been self-employed, and it's basically all been related to the Small Business Program."

Toward the end of the interview, Garry said that

Nothing - there's very little bad that comes from free enterprise, you know, like - that's not entirely true, but to regulate things more is not the direction that I would be happy to see things go.

The contradictions in Garry's attitude toward government overdetermine, and are overdetermined by, his class identity as an 'independent' who nonetheless relies on the Ministry of Forests' Small Business Forest Enterprise Program for his work. Garry's independent class process is overdetermined by his free enterprise ideology, but this is also overdetermined by his implied belief that there is a role for government in ensuring 'fair' access to small businesses and in maintaining environmental standards.

8.3.6 The O'Toole family: capitalist/communal/volunteer/ "needed a change"

Margaret O'Toole was classified as an 'alternative' operator. Phil was classified as a 'conventional' operator. I interviewed Margaret and Phil O'Toole separately, not realizing they were married, or the extent to which their operations were intertwined, because my informant list provided company names only, and I didn't make the connection. Later, as I pieced the interviews together, it became apparent just how interconnected the operations were. One 'umbrella' company owned the two subsidiaries. Margaret operated a value-
added mill while Phil operated a logging company. Phil also held a woodlot license. I interviewed Phil first, over breakfast at a local restaurant. He explained how he had started in forestry working for the Forest Service, but then had moved into management at a local major corporation for more challenge. However, after many years working there, the stress of feeling caught between labour and management got the better of him. “The doctor suggested a change, so I started a business”. Initially he started the mill, but he had recently sold it to his wife and started a logging company, toward which he felt he had a more natural inclination. Margaret had grown up locally, had worked at a number of waged clerical and retail jobs, and had owned her own retail store before joining Phil in the mill, later buying him out. Although Phil and Margaret participate in separate capitalist class processes, they both told me that they function as one company, that is, in a communal class process, making joint decisions about the appropriation and distribution of their labour as well as their waged employees.

In the winter before the interview Phil had employed ten people in logging, using the skidders and logging trucks he owned. Other functions were subcontracted out. Although he sold most of his logs to major corporations, an important aspect of the logging was to provide appropriate wood for his wife’s mill. In summer when the mill was in operation, they attempted to keep on the same workers from the winter logging crew.

Margaret was also involved in a volunteer (communal) class process as small business representative on the local Land and Resource Management Planning board. In many ways, Margaret epitomized an alternative forest operator, emphasizing again and again in the interview the pride she takes in their high quality product. She felt strongly about value-added as an industrial strategy, for reasons that correspond to representations of alternative foresters:
My feeling is, if we’re looking at employing people in British Columbia, this type of mill is better, because you're not going through the wood so fast. The wage scale isn't all that different. We always thought if you pay people a lousy wage you’re not going to have a good person stay here, because they have a family to feed.

Her involvement in a value-added, labour-intensive local company, her volunteer effort to ensure that local resources are managed sustainably, all point toward the ecoforestry philosophy outlined in Chapter Five. But she clearly did not position herself anywhere near environmentalists. Margaret agreed with the statements that “environmentalists create a false image of the forest industry” and “environmentalists are responsible for the majority of job losses in the forest industry”. She felt there were too many environmentalists at the Land and Resource Management Plan table, that “people from industry were outweighed by people that wanted to save the trees”.

As in so many of the interviews, a humorous anecdote often served to reveal beliefs which overdetermine class identities. Margaret told me how they had come up with a name for their recently formed joint venture company after an incident involving an allegedly endangered species in their logging area:

...We had a timber sale in [ ], and some enterprising R.O. [Resource Officer] in Forestry saw that there was a [she names an apparently unusual animal]. So we couldn't log because they wanted to look at this area, and they actually came to find out it was not uncommon that there are all kinds of [ ] in [that area]. But it took about four months before we were given the okay to log. So we called our company [the unusual animal].

In spite of this evident disdain toward both government and ecologists, she supported the Forest Practices Code in principle, and expressed interest in culturally modified trees (trees that have been modified in some way by First Nations traditional uses, but remain otherwise intact in the forest) in one of her husband's logging blocks. Margaret had taken the initiative to contact the Ministry of Forests to tell them about these culturally modified “basket-cedars” and she had kept some aside rather than use them in the mill. She appeared opposed to the idea of ‘environmentalist’ as a subject position but revealed that she shared at least some of their environmental beliefs.
The Smiths: capitalist/communal/feudal/volunteer/ "really flexible production"

Norbert Smith was classified as an 'alternative' operator. The Smith family had been involved in forestry since the 1960s when the father, Rudolph, came to the Bulkley Valley to work for the Ministry of Forests. Rudolph soon left the Forest Service to start logging on his own. As the children grew up they joined the company and it expanded into sawmilling. They had recently expanded into 'value-added' production as well. They produced specialized lumber and other components, including some finger jointing for U.S. and Japanese markets.

I interviewed one of the sons, Norbert, and was introduced to the rest of the family and shown around the work site. My conversation with Norbert revealed that in many respects the Smiths were a model of capitalist 'flexible production'. They practiced 'functional flexibility', encouraging their employees to train in many aspects of production. Norbert was constantly seeking to improve their competitive position, searching out new markets, new products, and new sources of timber supply. The Smiths had a very caring attitude toward their employees, but were adamant that their firm would never be unionized.

Work and family life appeared almost fully integrated. As sons and daughters married, their spouses (both men and women) were given responsibilities and ownership in the business. Logging trucks were parked in front of the 'senior' Smiths home. There was a separate office building next door, but meetings took place in their home.

Because work and family life are so integrated in the Smith's households, it is difficult to know where the household economy ends and the workplace economy begins. For example, Norbert's mother Muriel often cooks meals so the family can discuss business over lunch (exploitation of unpaid domestic labour in a feudal class process). She owns and earns dividends on a significant percentage of shares in the family-controlled corporation (capitalist class process), and has input into all business and family decisions. She is not,
however, on the payroll. Her daughter Rita has a salaried managerial position in the company (petty bourgeois class process), but at the time of the interview spent more time caring for her young child than in her formal capacity as office manager. This did not affect her salary because the extended family prioritizes child rearing, so that Rita's workplace petty bourgeois class process merges with a household communal class process. Rita continued to oversee the bookkeeping performed by office staff. As the need arose, the office staff would bring their children in to work and they (office staff and the Smiths) would share child care responsibilities (communal class process).

Religion is an important overdetermining factor in their household and business class processes, which influences their attitude towards their employees, customers and the kind of work they do. It also influences their attitude toward the environment. Norbert told me early in the interview that he felt a sense of connection to the land, but it was clearly a different connection than that expressed by the alternative forestry literature in Chapter Five. "One day, foresters will be thought of as farmers," Norbert said, advocating a conservationist 'stewardship' philosophy in which humans have domain over nature. He felt more silviculture was needed, but that the Annual Allowable Cut prescribed by the Ministry of Forests was probably sustainable. Norbert's view of the forest was a managed industrial forest, in many ways directly opposed to the natural forest advocated by alternative forestry. Norbert told me how proud he was of his mother Muriel's landscape paintings because she did not paint out the clearcuts like other artists, but deliberately represented an industrial landscape.

8.3.8 Joe Wilson: capitalist/communal/ volunteer/ "angry young (alternative forestry) man"

When I called to arrange a time to meet Joe, his wife forewarned me, "Joe's heard about your research, and he has a lot he wants to say to you". When I arrived at the house, I encountered a bewildering and contradictory mix of attitudes. With representations of
alternative forestry workers still in my mind from the reading I had done in Vancouver, I listened to Joe’s story. Much of what Joe told me fit so neatly within the parameters of an alternative forest worker identity.

Joe works with both horses and conventional equipment. He was accordingly classified as an ‘alternative’ operator in Chapter Six. He logged Small Business Timber Sales when he could get them, and did road building otherwise to make ends meet. He was intensely loyal to his employees, and said he would have quit before now except that there “are too many people relying on me to quit”. He felt that the Ministry of Forests should provide smaller Timber Sales to create more jobs. He also felt that clearcuts were not appropriate because of his concern for wildlife habitat. He had tried to work with the Ministry of Environment in a Moose Enhancement Program, but there were bureaucratic obstacles to getting the program going. Instead, he volunteered his own time improving habitat for moose on Crown land next to his property.

Although his logging operation involves him in a capitalist class process, he seems to have an almost feudal sense of obligation to his employees (I say almost feudal because it was still predominantly capitalist). He makes sure they get enough work and even has them stay in his home when necessary. In the business and in the household, he and his wife work together in a communal class process, in the logging operation, tending to the animals and in raising their children. His wife works part-time outside of the home in a waged class process. Joe is also involved in a volunteer class process in which the use value of his labour is appropriated by himself, but benefits ‘nature’ and the community at large as well through his moose habitat enhancement project.

In so many ways, Joe seems to epitomize an alternative forestry worker. Yet he also made racist, sexist and violent statements that suggested something other than the caring alternative forest worker identity. In the interview, he said he had experienced a lot
of prejudice from First Nations people but had no prejudices himself, except for “Hindis” (sic) – “you won’t see one of them in the bush”. He said that women should not be enforcement officers, since “they don’t know what they’re talking about”, having never logged or worked in the bush. But above all he expressed a high level of frustration and resentment toward the system. When I asked him about the usefulness of training courses relating to the Forest Practices Code, he responded that “they can shove it up their asses. Anyone with any credibility shouldn’t have to take any stupid shit courses”. When discussing the Ministry of Forests, he said that it was a “corrupt system” and that “we should have a bloody revolt”.

Joe told me he had started his business because he did not like taking orders in the mill where he had previously worked. He said he was better suited to logging, where he could work off his energy, that he tends to blow up too easily for most jobs. For Joe, his economic identity as capitalist is overdetermined by social processes such as his sense of obligation to employees as well as his environmental ethic. But his class identity also seems to be overdetermined by a strong sense of frustration and anger, with the ever-present threat of physical violence.

In his discussion of community research, Geoff Payne (1996) asks: “why is it that, from most sociological accounts, communities seem so full of such nice people?” My interview with Joe shattered any illusion I might have had that only nice people lived in the Bulkley Valley. The small forest operators I interviewed were not always ‘nice’, although difficult characters were few relative to the many courteous and friendly operators I interviewed. But even among the most pleasant of operators, frustration with the system led to talk of violence on a number of occasions. For example, one interviewee I met had been unable to find work in forestry that year, and was working as a mechanic. His yard was filled with expensive equipment that he could not put to work. My first noted
observation which I jotted down after the interview was “this is one angry guy!” He told a story of corruption and greed in his community, of collusion between mill managers and Ministry of Forests personnel supported through familial ties, which he claimed prevented new entrants into the industry and protected the interests of successful business owners through a system of bribes, take-backs and threats. I listened to his detailed and disturbing portrayal of local forestry, then asked him “How can you change things?” He answered, “Take them out in the streets and shoot them; it’s the only way”. Another operator, frustrated with the Ministry of Forests, complained to me that foresters are not guided by education or common sense but by what they are told to do from Victoria. When I asked “how do you think that can change?” he responded: “Oh, I suspect in this area, probably violently”.

Reading the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures gives no insight into this anger. In Canadian political economy accounts, there are occasional nostalgic tales of the bar-room brawls that took place when independent commodity producer loggers of by-gone days would ‘hit the town’, but these are presented in a historical, whimsical and unthreatening manner. In the alternative forestry literature, a deep and shared attachment to place among community members seems to preclude the possibility of violence.

Violent comments made by interviewees can be interpreted as simply a venting of anger in a culture where aggression, particularly male aggression, is tolerated to a much greater extent than would be the case in, say, a university setting. But dismissing the frustration revealed in the comments violates the subjectivity of these men. It does not take seriously beliefs and experiences that shape their class identity as small forest operators. Anger was usually expressed when the conversation was about their fixed class position, and I would ask, “how could you change things?” The frustration of being pinned in a
marginal position in a corporate system seemed to evoke an angry response. Like the 'joy of being your own boss', anger plays a part in overdetermining the class processes of some small forest operators. Operators who did not indicate feeling 'stuck' in the system (even if, from my 'objective' viewpoint it appeared that they were) did not provide this type of violent commentary.

8.3.9 Fred Slessinger: Independent/Feudal/ 'small is beautiful'

Fred was classified as an 'alternative' operator. Fred was an ex-logger who used to own and operate a conventional logging company that brought in revenues of $125,000 a year. Fred recounted the time he had been sent in to 'stomp regen' in a ten acre cutblock — he had been contracted by a major licensee to bulldoze naturally occurring re-growth in a previously harvested clearcut so that the desired species could be planted. Fred told me "that contract 'did it' for me". He started to re-think his involvement in the forest industry. "Disillusioned" with mechanical logging, he bought horses and did horse logging for a number of years. Thinking that sawmilling would complement the horse logging, he bought and set up an Alaska saw mill (a portable bush mill) on his own property. Sawmilling suited him better than logging (although his horses stand ready to work again at any time), and he has since focused on custom milling as well as milling oversize timber for the local major corporations. Usually he milled for local people such as someone who may have cut timber from their land to build a house. Along with the sawmill operation, Fred worked one day a week as a bricklayer at a local major forest corporation. When he was working a full logging operation he had five or six employees on a regular basis, but at the time of the interview he preferred to have no waged employees. His wife and occasionally his sons helped him in the mill. He told me that he realized at some point, "I've got enough" and he wanted to slow down. Fred estimated total household income for himself, his wife, and one adult son still at home to be $9,000 per year.
Fred is an independent producer as a bricklayer one day a week. He is also involved in an independent/capitalist class process because he owns the means of production (sawmill), but usually performs the labour himself. Many of his business transactions are based on barter rather than cash. He is a feudal landowner exploiting the labour of his wife and son, both in reproducing the household and as laborers in the sawmill. His wife provides most of their food from her garden, another feudal class process.

Fred's class identities are all influenced by his deliberately created environmentally conscious counter-cultural subject position and by his decision to 'drop out' of corporate forestry. Although he considered himself not to be 'part of the system', he was comfortable accepting part-time work with a forestry corporation to receive the cash needed to maintain their modest household.

8.3.10 The Hawthornes: communal/ "making a difference"

In the Bulkley Valley I met many people who were living a 'subsistence lifestyle'. Some of these people had arrived in the 1970s; American 'draftdodgers' escaping conscription into the Vietnam war, who made their homes in the bush, and stayed. Others had grown up in the area and were engaged in seasonal, part-time work, and/or supplemented their income with a garden, hunting, fishing or trapping. There were people in the forest sector who live this way, but as an outsider I had difficulty finding them. They tend not to advertise or bid on Timber Sales. They may or may not have a telephone, but an answering machine or fax machine is likely to be out of the question. They like being hard to track down, and do not easily fit into occupational categories such as 'small forest operator'. They probably do not pay taxes, have a social insurance number, or appear in the Census, in spite of performing a multiplicity of economic functions in the valley.

I interviewed a few small forest operators who deliberately pursued a 'subsistence' economic strategy, although not to the point of being 'economically invisible' as described
above. These operators function as independent producers, but only produce and appropriate their own surplus labour (no employees), and only to the extent required for basic reproduction of the household. Fred Slessinger (described earlier) lived this deliberate subsistence lifestyle. The Hawthornes were another family living an alternative lifestyle.

The Hawthornes were classified as ‘alternative’ operators. They were a family trying to make a difference. They held a woodlot license, carried out harvesting with horses, and in summer had a horse camp. Their three teen-age daughters worked with them and were paid wages, but they had no other employees. Any surplus value was re-invested into the horse camp or logging operations. Highly educated, the Hawthornes both had university degrees, and had traveled extensively prior to settling down in the Bulkley Valley. They felt a strong commitment to environmental education, and made environmental awareness a priority for their woodlot operations.

Like most of the operators I interviewed, they had absolutely nothing good to say about the local Forest District office, and were involved in a fairly heated dispute with them over what they considered to be the outrageous requirements of the Forest Practices Code. While they certainly considered themselves environmentalists, they did not agree with the specifics of these environmental regulations, claiming that these were unfair costs imposed on small operators. They sold their logs to the local major corporation, although they felt that major licensees had too much control and would prefer to sell to small firms if possible. However, they explained to me that there were few small mills in the area that were able to operate consistently with local logs. Like Fred Slessinger, the Hawthornes accepted involvement with a major corporation as ‘the price you pay’ for the freedom to explore their otherwise alternative lifestyle.
Because they sell their logs to the local mill, the Hawthornes actually fit the contractor/ independent producer role in the workplace economy described by Marchak and other Canadian political economists. However, they also conduct their environmental education and awareness campaign as part of their workplace economy, using their own volunteer labour as well as surplus value from their logging operation, and in this way they are also similar to 'alternative' representations of small forest operators. In the household economy, communal class processes prevail, intertwining with volunteer class processes in the community economy.

8.4 Conclusions

A very long time ago, when I first embarked on this research project, a senior professor in the department asked in his collegial way about my research intentions. After I had explained in my early stages, tentative and preliminary way, that I hoped to find a better way of addressing the current tensions between environmentalists and corporate forestry as they were played out in forestry communities (this was the early stages of my research), he responded, "well, Elizabeth, if you can figure that out, you will solve all the problems of resource communities throughout British Columbia. It's enormously important. Enormously".

I cannot begin to describe the despair I felt as the weight of his words sank in. What had I been thinking? Solve all the problems of resource communities throughout British Columbia? I had chosen an impossible task.

Not surprisingly, I have not solved the problems of British Columbia's resource communities. What I have done is to provide a 'third way' of thinking about hinterland subjectivity. This third way does not homogenize forest workers and does not require essentialist props. Instead, it recognizes (and in that sense, creates) fluidity as well as
'stickiness' of economic identities, and it highlights the ways in which these economic identities are overdetermined by, and overdetermine, other aspects of identity.

Whenever I tried in earlier drafts to create a summary list of characteristics, whether of conventional operators or alternative operators or all small forest operators, I was stopped by anomalies or contradictions. The representations of small forest operators in the literature were insufficient to explain the diversity of economic and social identities I encountered. Multiple class processes recognize what appear elsewhere as 'contradictions' and 'anomalies' as intrinsic parts as social processes which overdetermine economic identity. Multiple class processes also reveal that there is much going on in the forest economy which is not recognized in accounts of the British Columbia forest industry. For example, there are communal and feudal class processes in which families operate value-added or ecologically sensitive companies and communal labour is exploited and redistributed equitably through collective decision making. But there are also feudal class processes in which family 'sweat equity' is exploited and redistributed inequitably. Normative claims about the extent and nature of exploitation cannot be inferred from class processes, whether in the workplace, household or community economy, without some awareness of the social processes which overdetermine each class process.

The intent of revealing this diversity has not been to provide a model of small forest operator behavior upon which a new economic system can be based. Rather, this diversity of economic identities reveals that the 'British Columbia forest industry' is not a unified totality, nor is the hinterland a homogeneous pool of resources which functions always and only as a backdrop for the centered British Columbia forest industry.
9 CONCLUSIONS: OPENINGS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST ECONOMIES

If we are to free ourselves from universalizing our own parochialisms, we need to learn how to reach beyond particularities, to speak to larger questions without diminishing the significance of the places and the people to which they are accountable. (Gregory 1994:205)

The motivating question throughout this thesis has been what does it mean to be a small forest operator in the hinterland of British Columbia? I have explored this question through a consideration of the material practices of small forest operators in the case study area of the Bulkley Valley, British Columbia. I have also explored the meanings ascribed to small forest operators in two important literatures on the British Columbia forest industry. What conclusions can be reached from these explorations?

Of the small forest operators I interviewed in the Bulkley Valley, the diversity of firm structures suggests that they do not share a singular economic or social position as suggested in the literature. The results of my analysis demonstrate that it is misleading to describe small forest operators as a homogeneous grouping based on economic function or ecological role. At the same time, they do share a sense of commonality resulting from being part of the forest industry in the hinterland. Certainly most small forest operators would argue that they are more similar to each other than to bureaucrats in Victoria, or to academics from Vancouver or to environmentalists from California. They share common concerns over resource allocations, the future of forestry, local employment opportunities for their children, and so on. Why disrupt this cohesion with stories of difference? Gibson-Graham (1996:19) might answer this by arguing that

In the context of a capitalist monolith, where class is reduced to two fundamental class positions, sometimes supplemented by intermediate or ambiguous class locations, individuals are often seen as members of an objectively defined or subjectively identified social grouping that constitutes their “class”. In the discursive space of diverse class processes, on the other hand, individuals may participate in a variety of class processes at one moment and over time. Their class identities are therefore potentially multiple and shifting.
My political project in presenting these stories of difference has been to articulate a sense of the possibility of economic and social identities and communities that are not fixed, rigid or exclusionary. The stories of small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley reveal that beneath the veneer of a singular corporate forestry called the 'British Columbia forest industry' there is a diversity of capitalist and noncapitalist business structures and practices that I call British Columbia forest economies.

In celebrating this diversity of stories, I do not want to ignore the current difficulties and uncertainties felt in so many forestry communities throughout British Columbia. However, much of the academic work on restructuring has, in part, contributed to the very monster it seeks to slay – by presenting capitalism as a hegemonic, totalizing, impenetrable and penetrating Goliath. Rather than repeating this story of corporate strength, I have sought out the theoretical means to tell different stories, to probe the cracks and fissures of corporate forestry and seek out whatever forms of difference may exist there.

To paraphrase Gibson-Graham,

Calling the economy [forest industry] "capitalist" [corporate] denies the existence of these diverse economic and class processes, precluding economic diversity in the present and thus making it unlikely in the proximate future. But what if we could force Capitalism [corporate forestry] to withdraw from defining the economy as a whole? …

None of this is to deny the power or even the prevalence of capitalism [corporate forestry] but to question the presumption of both (my emphasis and additions).

The research questions outlined in Chapter One were based on my exploration of the Canadian political economy and alternative forestry literatures, and followed in a straightforward manner from the literature:

Do small forest operators provide labour flexibility for a restructured/restructuring corporate forest industry as they are represented in the post-Fordist Canadian political economy perspective? Or

Do small forest operators function as part of a community-based alternative to corporate forestry as they are represented in the value-based alternative forestry perspective?
However, in the interviews it became apparent that the *or* between the research questions was inappropriate. There were no obvious, consistent sets of behaviors and values to separate the 'conventional' from the 'alternative' operators. Small forest operators could exhibit labour flexibility *and* function as part of a community-based alternative to corporate forestry, but they did not do so in all cases. Substituting *and* for *or* did not adequately answer the research questions either.

In this thesis I have questioned the presumption of the *inevitability* of corporate forestry and challenged the singular representations of forest workers and forest communities found in Canadian political economy and alternative forestry. Research question (3) asked, “is there a third way of understanding small forest operators that does not require either of these homogeneous representations?” I have demonstrated that this is possible using multiple class processes in a poststructuralist economic geography that seeks to open up categories of class and identity, rather than solidify them around binaries such as corporate/alternative, capitalist/working class, heartland/hinterland – all centre/margin dualisms which artificially separate and limit people.

### 9.1 Breaking down the Centre and Margins

In Chapter Five I summarized the development of Canadian political economy, and how analysts working in the Canadian political economy have described resource communities and the small forest operators living there. An exploration of Canadian political economy analyses of the forest industry and its impacts on resource communities revealed an essentialized construction of forest workers in the hinterland. Within this construction, small forest operators are considered dependent on large corporations, and their function is understood to be the provision of numerical flexibility to corporations faced with restructuring in the post-Fordist economy. Equipment is geared to production and efficiency. Profit-
maximization is emphasized. Like the corporations they contract to, they have an exploitist view of nature as a resource.

In Chapter Seven I argued that this representation is caught up in the staples discourse of Canadian political economy. Staples discourse essentializes heartland/hinterland relations, fixing the hinterland as a pool of resources and resource communities as socially marginalized. In Canadian political economy, hinterland small forest operators are situated in the margins. They are likely to remain there because corporate forestry takes up all the space at the centre of Canadian political economy analyses. Small business is marginalized in its peripheral class position in which its primary function is to provide numerical flexibility for major corporations.

Canadian political economists such as Jane Jenson, Rianne Mahon and Wallace Clement have begun to acknowledge 'identity' in their work. Jenson (1990) advocates an approach which recognizes actors as “...simultaneously subjects of social structures which continue regardless of their perception of them and acting subjects carrying in their practices and the meaning systems which motivate them the possibilities of not only reproduction but also social change and transformation (Jenson 1990:656)”. But she qualifies her claim immediately with “This said, however, it is crucial to insist that whether classes form and act in all political sites, or not, class relations shape Canadian society. Canada is a class-divided society and the social relations of capitalism have consequences far beyond the realm of production, even if the discourse of politics does not explicitly mediate them as such (ibid. p.657)”

While these writers acknowledge the importance of identity, they never really incorporate identity into their work; it remains an “add on”. Maroney and Luxton (1997:99) argue that “just as mainstream political economy can be accused of “adding women on” without transforming its concepts, so feminist political economy itself can often be charged
with just "adding race on". While they are critical of analyses in which "gender, race and class" become a "litany", rather than developed centrally in the analysis, their approach within Canadian political economy is unable to move beyond this litany either. I believe this is, in part, the result of an economic determinism within Canadian political economy which assumes that social and cultural processes can be contained within class analysis. Consider Mahon (1993:17):

...class remains an important social relation and workers and their organizations form a critical component of any progressive alliance. Yet there are a multiplicity of relations of oppression, and the movements that spring up to challenge these cannot be reduced to mere appendages. The ideas they give voice to have to be woven into the core problematic if the politics of identity is to produce a politics of solidarity rather than a return to liberal pluralism. (my emphasis)

I agree with her observation that class remains an important social relation. I also agree that there is a multiplicity of relations of oppression. Where we differ is in her acceptance of 'a core problematic' and the inevitability of a dualism between 'liberal pluralism' and 'a politics of solidarity'. On the contrary, I believe it is possible to address the problems contained in a multiplicity of relations of oppression, but with a multiplicity of solutions not with a singular 'core' solution. This idea resonates much more with Gibson-Graham's suggestion of "local and proximate socialisms". She argues,

If we can divorce our ideas of class from systemic social conceptions, and simultaneously divorce our ideas of class transformation from projects of systemic transformation, we may be able to envision local and proximate socialisms. Defining socialism as the communal production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor, we could encounter and construct it at home, at work, at large. These "thinly defined" socialisms wouldn't remake our societies overnight in some total and millennial fashion (Cullenberg 1992) but they could participate in constituting and reconstituting them on a daily basis. They wouldn't be a panacea for all the ills that we love to heap on the doorstep of Capitalism, but they could be visible and replicable now. (Gibson-Graham 1996:264)

Gibson-Graham's idea of local and proximate socialism is markedly different from the utopian ideal found in alternative forestry. Alternative forestry views small business as "harbingers of a new value economy," guardians of the forest with an inherent sense of, and respect for, natural and human 'community'. Consequently, small forest operators are
constructed in alternative forestry to be bioregional communitarians valuing natural and human communities, emphasising quality and ecological sensitivity in their work.

Alternative forestry focuses on what they see as an ecological crisis resulting from forestry practices, and recommends community and economic structures to address their primary goal of ecological sustainability. Its presentation of these alternatives, however, is held together by a singular deep ecologist/communitarian ideal of a forest worker, and does not allow for multiple, shifting identities. Small forest operators appear to be much nicer people in alternative forestry than in Canadian political economy representations. But in both literatures, small forest operators are presented, by and large, as a homogeneous group with very similar economic interests, community concerns and environmental awareness (or lack thereof). In Chapter Five I developed a framework which summarises the essentialized characteristics given to small forest operators in the literature. The sharp contrasts between some of the assigned characteristics suggest immediately that it is unlikely that all small forest operators will be either one thing or another. It seemed more likely, even at the outset, that small forest operators would be somewhere in between conventional and alternative.

9.2 Difference and Diversity in British Columbia forest economies

Although I anticipated that the case study results might not line up with the framework I had developed from the literature, I was nonetheless surprised at how 'messy' my results were. Contrary to the representations found in alternative forestry literature, horse loggers, by virtue of the fact that they are horse loggers, do not demonstrate a more caring attitude toward the local community nor are they de facto better environmental stewards than loggers using highly mechanized equipment. Loggers with a full 'logging show' do not, by virtue of the fact that they are conforming to the technological requirements of the current forestry regime, appear to be more tied to corporations than to
local community, or less concerned about environmental sustainability than low-impact loggers or small mill owners. The apparent contradictions and inconsistencies, not only between small forest operators, but also within small forest operators, were analytically unsettling – but also, somehow, delightful. Summing up or averaging this fascinating disarray seemed inappropriate. Using an overdetermination approach of multiple class processes provided a way of exploring small forest operators' subjectivities without defining and confining them.

In Chapter Eight, the descriptions of different class processes revealed independent, capitalist, communal, feudal and volunteer class processes; often occurring simultaneously. These class processes occur in the workplace, at home and in the community. Viewing the forest economy in this expanded form reveals possibilities of an industry that is not singularly corporate. Revealing these stories opens up the forest industry, making it something far more complex and creative.

The 'British Columbia forest industry', as described in Chapter Four, appears to be in crisis, heading toward some fatal but inevitable end point. British Columbia forest economies, on the other hand, appear as vibrant, complex and innovative possibilities. Yet British Columbia forest economies can also be oppressive and exploitative. They may be all of these things, even at the same time. They are shifting, uncertain, destabilizing. British Columbia forest economies are not likely to provide the security and stability of the 'golden era' of forestry, but the variety of operations and arrangements captured in the interviews do provide new ways of thinking about small business, resource communities and the hinterland. The case studies from the Bulkley Valley are but a few examples of small business in the forest industry. There were 260 sawmills in British Columbia in 1993, along
with 3,297 reported logging operations and 565 ‘value-added’ operations\textsuperscript{56}. The variety found in this case study of the Bulkley Valley suggests a much richer mix and characterization of these firms than is suggested in descriptions of the British Columbia forest industry as provided in Chapter Four. The owners of these 68 firms are not singularly the conventional operators of Canadian political economy, nor the alternative operators of ecoforestry.

9.3 Research Contributions and Limitations

In this section I summarize empirical and theoretical contributions, and speculate tentatively on one policy application of my research. I then discuss some limitations to the research.

9.3.1 Empirical Contributions

Empirically, the thesis demonstrates that the British Columbia forest economy is far more complex and dynamic than most accounts reveal. Small forest operators, whether conventional or alternative, preferred hiring locally to encourage local economic and community stability. Alternative firms also employ more people per cubic metre than conventional firms or major licensees. Small business plays an important role in the Bulkley Valley, and quite likely in other communities as well in terms of local employment and stability, but this contribution is often invisible in analyses steeped in a staples discourse which focuses on the corporate sector.

Small forest operators expressed support of environmental regulation to a much greater extent than I had anticipated. Over 65\% of both groups felt the Forest Practices Code was useful, although slightly more conventional operators qualified their support for it, and some interviewees spoke out strongly against its implementation.

\textsuperscript{56} The case study also suggests that there is additional forestry-related economic activity that goes unreported because the operations are relatively insignificant, or do not report forestry income as such.
The research suggests that small businesses are often owned by men, but family-run, with both paid and unpaid labour. There was a wide range of labour practices, from self-exploitation of owner/operators to full scale capitalist enterprises with upwards of thirty waged employees.

The research also indicates that the economic position of a small forest operator is overdetermined by a wide variety of other processes, such as environmental beliefs, religion, profit-motive, commitment to community, other jobs, and lifestyle preferences such as time for recreation and a desire for 'independence'. Many operators (60% of alternative and 39% of conventional) had started their businesses as a way to achieve other 'lifestyle' objectives, suggesting that a narrow economic framework will not always provide insights into business decision-making.

9.3.2 Theoretical contributions

This thesis demonstrates theoretically the important contribution of the 'cultural turn' in geography and the need to recognize postmodernist, poststructuralist and feminist concerns with essentialism in economic geography. More specifically this thesis has demonstrated the value of breaking apart essentialized conceptualizations of social space within economic theory so that different conceptualizations can be 'seen'. The case study of small forest operators in the Bulkley Valley reveals the value of an 'economics of difference'.

An 'economics of difference' insists on breaking down singular representations of culture, leaving openings for self-revelation. It is not necessary, nor accurate, to view small forest operators as being either part of the central account of corporate forestry (but always playing a marginal role) or part of an alternative forestry which is apart from corporate forestry, but marginal to it and therefore incapable of overcoming it. There are other 'third ways' to consider subjectivity, some of which I outlined in Chapter Three. The approach I
have used in Chapter Eight is overdetermination of multiple class processes. This approach allows for movement of subjectivity while acknowledging exploitive social processes.

Gibson-Graham (1996:70n) notes that “historically, in solidarity movements of all kinds, there has been a tendency to theorize sameness as the basis of unity and solidarity, with a consequent denial or elision of difference that has had problematic and divisive effects”. While Gibson-Graham has in mind the treatment of women and ethnic groups in unions, it also rings true for participants in British Columbia’s ‘war in the woods’. In the face of the ‘enemy’ (environmentalists), ‘the forest industry’ - large corporations, unionized millworkers, independent loggers – speak with one voice. Yet as in the case of women and minorities in unions, there is a multiplicity of class as well as non-class identities within ‘the forest industry’ which are not heard when this voice speaks57.

When ‘the industry’ is threatened, small forest operators tend to allow corporations to speak for them. Yet many small forest operators dislike corporate forestry and would like to see change. The belief that a unified front is needed to combat the threat of environmentalism not only denies difference, but stifles change as well.

By revealing the essentialism found in the alternative forestry, I raise awareness of the potential for exploitation in ‘grassroots’ approaches which emphasize volunteerism and “meaningful work”. Although the alternative forestry literature seeks democratization of the forest economy, it does not address difference, whether economic or social. If alternative forestry is to be truly democratic, it must recognize that not all members of a ‘community’, ‘workplace’ or ‘household’ will fit neatly into the singular and idealized representations found in the literature.

57 And likewise within the environmental movement.
9.3.3 Policy implications

Foucault argues that

The intellectual no longer has to play the role of an advisor. The project, tactics and goals to be adopted are a matter for those who do the fighting. What the intellectual can do is to provide instruments of analysis, and at present this is the historian's essential role. What's effectively needed is a ramified, penetrative perception of the present, one that makes it possible to locate lines of weakness, strong points, positions where the instances of power have secured and implanted themselves by a system of organization dating back over 150 years. In other words, a topological and geological survey of the battlefield – that is the intellectual's role. But as for saying, 'Here is what you must do!, certainly not. (Foucault 1980:62)

I will heed Foucault's warning and avoid providing a 'list of things to do' for small forest operators (although I did provide policy recommendations to Forest Renewal BC as part of my grant obligations, see Bronson 1998a and 1998b). I do, however, wish to speculate briefly on possible implications of an economics of difference for local planning processes such as Land and Resource Management Plans. Thus I avoid proclaiming "here is what you must do!" while acknowledging my desire to contribute to social change through this research.

9.3.4 Incorporating multiple class processes into Land and Resource Management Planning

In the fictive hinterland of Canadian political economy, the alignment of forest workers with forest companies to protect their jobs appears logical and necessary. For example, Clapp (1998:133) found in his study of forestry and fishing communities in Canada that the established resource industries have a disproportionate influence in resource-allocation processes. He argues that part of the reason for this was pressure from the resource-dependent communities themselves. The resource communities he studied supported resource planning decisions which reinforce their dependency on corporate forestry.

Groups such as "Share BC" gain support by reinforcing the divide between 'working people' in resource communities and 'environmentalists' by promoting the idea that environmental organizations such as Greenpeace are "...dedicated to the destruction of all
resource related jobs in British Columbia, without any thought to the economic effect on workers and their families" (North Island Citizens for Shared Resources in Port McNeill, BC cited in Hammond 1991:169). The group goes on to say, "have they [environmentalists] ever done an honest day's work in their lives?"

In many ways, this divide is reinforced in local planning processes carried out by the Ministry of Forests. As described in Appendix D, these processes have taken place throughout the case study area and around the province. The Land Use Coordination Office (LUCO) established by the government of British Columbia describes British Columbia's Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) process as "an open, democratic process of cooperation and consensus". These planning processes include participants such as First Nations, local governments, representatives from forestry, mining, agriculture and labour, the business sector, environmental, tourism and recreation sectors, and a variety of special interest groups (LUCO 1998a).

The LRMP process has incorporated lessons from grass roots consensus planning such as the Community Resources Board that developed in Smithers in the late 1980s. But in recent years, LUCO has worked toward developing a more streamlined approach to planning including computer modeling and templates for communities to follow, with the intention of building consensus more efficiently. While this increases the speed of the process, and may reduce the 'burn out' factor for volunteers, it also reduces opportunities to develop unique local processes58. In the cases of the Kispiox and the Bulkley processes, participants often spoke proudly of their 'home-grown' or 'grass roots' planning initiatives – the fact that it had sprung up from the community rather than being imposed on the community by government. There is a certain irony to government-prescribed local

58 Members of planning processes interviewed often referred to 'burn out' as a result of feeling frustrated in a long process that made very slow progress.
planning initiatives. In its effort to be more sensitive to local planning concerns, the provincial government is implementing a model of resource planning which is in many ways insensitive to local differences.

LRMPs tend to adopt either a 'resource values' or a 'sectoral' approach. The Bulkley Community Resources Board members interviewed felt that using a "resource values" approach rather than an interest-based approach was an important difference in their process. Under this approach, participants are asked to outline their position on the use of resources – their 'resource values' rather than to identify themselves through economic position. In both the Kispiox LRMP and the Lakes LRMP a sectoral model requiring each participant to represent a sector such as forestry, mining or recreation was adopted. These groups felt that a sectoral approach helped to ensure that the process was not dominated by one or two sectoral interests and that it had the advantage of laying out people's positions clearly.

While the resource values approach allows for recognition of more than just economic identity, both the resource values and the sectoral models ensure a fairly rigid classification of members based either on economic position such as 'forest worker' or on a social category such as 'environmentalist'. Comments from interviewees who had been involved in local planning referred to the problems of defined positions when trying to reach consensus, such as the interviewee quoted in Chapter Six who said that "the process is a joke - it's a bunch of people with self-interests sitting at the table." On the other hand, interviewees who felt local planning was important but had not been involved would often make references to that fact that they were not "meeting people" – they really could not abide the thought of sitting through a series of meetings.

In both cases there is a problem with fixed subjectivities. Like the environmentalists and mill managers at these processes, these small forest operators have accepted the
inevitability of fixed identities. Pile and Thrift (1995:49) claim that "identity is a fiction which must be continually established as truth." This is certainly the case in planning processes where identities are established at the outset and contested throughout – all in the name of generating 'consensus'.

Rather than focus on defending pre-existing subject positions while Ironically striving to achieve 'consensus' (which, interviewees told me, means compromise in reality), an overdetermined planning process could encourage participants to break down categories such as 'forest worker' or 'environmentalist'. Chantal Mouffe (1995:265) writes that

...by resisting the ever-present temptation to construct identity in terms of exclusion, and by recognizing that identities comprise a multiplicity of elements, and that they are dependent and interdependent, a democratic politics informed by an anti-essentialist approach can defuse the potential for violence that exists in every construction of collective identities and create the conditions for a truly 'agonistic' pluralism. Such pluralism is anchored in the recognition of the multiplicity within oneself and of the contradictory positions that this multiplicity entails. Its acceptance of the other does not merely consist of tolerating differences, but in positively celebrating them because it acknowledges that, without alterity and otherness, no identity could ever assert itself. It is also a pluralism that valorizes diversity and dissensus, recognizing in them the very condition of possibility, of a striving democratic life.

An approach to local planning which incorporates an overdetermination/multiple class processes approach would encourage recognition of the fluidity of identities. Such an approach would encourage participants to identify not only their economic position (their 'entry point' into the process) but also all the myriad things that overdetermine this position. Increasing awareness of both the diversity of economic and social identities, and of the different capitalist and noncapitalist class processes occurring in the community might lead to very different outcomes than occur in sector-based approaches which reinforce representations arising from the staples and value discourses.

9.3.5 Research Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research

The research may be criticized for using class as an entry point to overdetermined subjectivities. Resnick and Wolff (1987) and Gibson-Graham (1996) have been criticized
for privileging class – not taking seriously their own message that class is but one of many equally overdetermined and overdetermining processes. I hope I have addressed this in Chapter Eight by exploring other processes. Furthermore, it made sense to me to use class as an entry point, because my research interest lay primarily in economic practices and forms. But a next step in this research could be using a different entry point to the same research group, such as environmentalism or gender, with a comparison of outcomes.

Given greater resources I would have found it interesting to conduct parallel research within major forest corporations in order to see to what extent multiple class processes occur in the corporate sector. This would have opened up the British Columbia forest economies even further. With even more resources, it would have been possible to explore other communities to see to what extent the diversity of small businesses found in the Bulkley Valley is simply an anomaly, or indicative of a more widespread occurrence. From casual observation, I suspect this diversity of economies is not an anomaly. A broader research base would strengthen the argument for the existence of alternative economies, but the argument for the possibilities of alternative economies can be argued sufficiently from the case study of the Bulkley Valley.

I had not anticipated the extent of family involvement in business operations of my interviewees. In hindsight, I would also have interviewed spouses of business owners in order to gain better insights into household economies.

9.4 What next?

I do not expect radical class transformation to result overnight from my interpretation of hinterland subjectivities as multiple class processes. However, I do hope that the hinterland will never again look the same to the eyes of Canadian political economists or alternative foresters. Whether Canadian political economy can incorporate identity and create a “post-structuralist oriented political economy” of the type suggested by Escobar
(1995) remains to be seen. Work by Jenson, Mahon and Bienefeld (1993) suggests movement in that direction, although it seems to me that the economy continues to be privileged at the expense of the ("small p") political.

Rather than trying to 'get it right' either within the tradition of Canadian political economy or in the emergent alternative forestry school of thought, what seems important is a recognition of the need to break down theoretical categories. Alternative forestry provides an interesting perspective on forestry, although it should not be understood nor explained as 'the truth' about the future of the forest industry. Exposing some of their representational practices negates the usefulness of neither alternative forestry nor Canadian political economy. I will continue to use Canadian political economy as a useful framework for understanding Canadian economic development when appropriate, although I will be much more cautious when I read descriptions of the landscapes and the people contained within this framework. I am sure that reading about resource communities will always bring to mind the fictive hinterland I have created for myself throughout this research process. But I hope it will not preclude the possibility of shattering my own fiction, of revealing new stories of difference, of allowing new theoretical possibilities to emerge.
REFERENCES


BC Stats. 1995. Quarterly Regional Reports.

BC Stats. 1998. Quarterly Regional Reports.


Burda C, F Gale and M M'Gonigle. 1998. Eco-forestry versus the state(us) quo: or why innovative forestry is neither contemplated nor permitted within the state structure of British Columbia. BC Studies. 119:45-72.


Chouinard and Grant. 1995. On being not even anywhere near 'the project': ways of putting ourselves in the picture. Antipode. 27(2):137-166.


Ley D and T Hutton. 1987. Vancouver’s corporate complex and producer services sector: linkages and divergence within a political staples economy. Vancouver: Department of Geography, UBC.


Ministry of Forests. (No date). *Small Business Forest Enterprise Program (pamphlet)*.


Appendix A: Survey Of Small Forest Operators In Prince Rupert Forest Region

Interview Information
Company Name: ____________________________________________________________
Name of person interviewed: ________________________________________________
Position: __________________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________
City: ___________________________ Phone: ________________________________
Postal Code: ______________________ Fax: ________________________________
Operator ID: ______________________ Date of Interview: ______________________
Interview taped? Yes No _____________

A. Business Overview and Planning

1. Type of Business:
   Logging
   Contract
   Other (please specify) ______________________________________________________
   Primary Sawmill
   Secondary Manufacturing (please specify) ______________________________________
   Other (please specify) ____________________________________________________

2. How long has your company been in operation? _______ Years

3. What do you see as the advantages of working in this company/industry:
   more independence
   can work outdoors
   can live away from the city
   more flexibility than big companies
   workforce acts as team
   less red tape

4. What do you see as the disadvantages of working in this company/industry:
   less money
   isolation/remoteness from city
   fewer benefits e.g. pension/dental
   too much government interference
   physically demanding
   negative perception of industry by environmental groups

5. Why did you buy/start this particular type of business? ________________________

6. Why did you locate your business in the Burns Lake / Houston / Smithers / Hazelton area?
   - grew up here
   - spouse has job here
   - good business opportunities here
   - attracted by natural environment
   - attracted by community life

7. Do you consider your location to be an advantage or disadvantage for your business?
   - Advantage
   - Disadvantage
   - Don't know / No opinion
   Please explain your answer: _____________________________

8. Do you plan to remain in this industry?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don't know / No opinion
   Why or why not? For how long? _____________________________

9. Please list annual revenue and net income (before tax) of your firm between 1990 and 1995 (this helps me to classify firms and will not be used for any other purposes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual Revenue</th>
<th>Net Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Are you satisfied with the economic performance of your company over the last five years (or less if company is not that old)?
    - Extremely satisfied
    - Somewhat satisfied
    - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
    - Somewhat dissatisfied
    - Extremely dissatisfied

11. How do you go about finding new customers or contracts?
    - I advertise in trade journals and industry directories
    - I read the advertisements in local newspapers
    - government agencies such as BC Trade Corp., SBFEP.
    - local word of mouth
12. Does your company belong to any industry or trade associations? Please check associations you and/or your company belongs to, and the year you joined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member of the Following:</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Since</th>
<th>Member of the Following:</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.C. Wood Specialties Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>Interior Forest Labour Relations Assoc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Forestry Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>Interior Lumber Manufacturers’ Assoc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Women in Timber</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>Interior Value-Added Wood Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Wood Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>North West Loggers Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Interior Logging Assoc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>Real Market Loggers Assn.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Interior Wood Processors</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td>Other: (please list):</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Forest Industries</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federation of BC Woodlot Assoc’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Alliance</td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. If your company is not a member of any trade or industry associations, please explain why not. ____________________________

14. Do you think membership in a local organization (i.e. Bulkley-Nechako Region) would be preferable to the above-mentioned organizations?
   Yes  No  Don’t know / No opinion
   Why or why not? ____________________________________________________________

B. Employment Information

15. How many full-time, part-time and seasonal employees do you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># Male</th>
<th># Female</th>
<th>Avg. Wage ($/Year)</th>
<th>Unionized? (Yes/ No, Some)</th>
<th>Full-Time, Part-Time, Seasonal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Production Staff:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office Staff:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Do you prefer to employ people from your own community?
   Yes  No  No preference either way
   Why or why not? ____________________________________________________________
Personal Employment History

17. What was the last job you held before starting this firm?
   - I was employed in a similar firm
   - I was employed in another industry
   - I was employed by a major corporation
   - I was not employed before starting this firm

18. Do you also work at any other jobs?
   Yes   No   If yes, where:
   - Other forestry job
   - Tourism-related
   - Agriculture
   - Other (please specify)
   - Mining

C. Production Information

19. What are the major types of equipment used in your firm?

20. Has the equipment used by your company changed over the last five years?
   Yes   No   Why/ why not?

21. Has overall technological change in the industry affected your business?
   Yes   No   Why/ why not?

22. What transportation methods do you use to bring your products to your customers?
   - truck
   - rail
   - ship
   - customer arranges delivery
   - not applicable
   - other (please list)
Logging Operations Only:
23. How much did you log last year?

24. What factors affect how much you log?
   demand for product
   accessibility/weather
   availability of contracts
   availability of timber sales
   availability of trained workers
   market price of product
   other (please specify) 

25. Would you like to log more than this amount?
   Yes  No  Don't Know

   If yes, what prevents you from doing so?
   not enough demand for product
   market price of product too low
   market price of product too unpredictable
   not enough raw material
   strict environmental regulations

   If no, why not?

26. Do you have a Woodlot License?
   Yes  No
   If no, would you like to have one, and if so, what size would you require?

Manufacturing Operations Only:
27. Please list the product(s) with approximate percentage of production produced by your firm in 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product(s) produced:</th>
<th>% of Total Volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Production 100%
28. Do you consider this a value-added operation?
   Yes  No  Don't know / No opinion  
   Why or why not? 

29. What factors generally affect production levels in your firm?
   - demand for product
   - availability of wood supply
   - cost of raw materials
   - availability of trained workers
   - market price of product
   - other (please specify) 

30. Would you like to produce additional volume if you could?
   Yes  No  Don't Know  
   If yes, what prevents you from doing so?
   - not enough demand for product
   - market price of product too low
   - market price of product too unpredictable
   - not enough raw material
   - strict environmental regulations

   If no, why not? 

31. Would you like to produce more “value-added” products?
   Yes  No  Don’t Know  
   If yes, what prevents you from doing so?
   - not enough demand for product
   - market price of product too low
   - market price of product too unpredictable
   - not enough raw material
   - strict environmental regulations
   - other 

32. What timber/lumber supply arrangements do you have?
   - Timber Sale License
   - Private Woodlot
   - Buy timber on open market
   - Other (please specify): 

33. What are your annual volume requirements (on average)?


34. Do you have difficulty getting this volume?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

35. Is your business limited by a lack of container facility in Prince Rupert?
   Extremely limited by lack of facility
   Somewhat limited by lack of facility
   Not limited at all by lack of facility
   Comments: ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

Environmental Regulation (logging and milling)

36. Has your firm been affected by the Forest Practices Code?
   Yes  No  If yes, how? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

37. Do you think the Forest Practices Code is useful legislation?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

38. Do you think the Annual Allowable Cut is set at a reasonable level in this district?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

39. Do you think the Annual Allowable Cut is set at a reasonable level generally in the province?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
D. Small Business Forest Enterprise Program

40. Do you participate or have you ever participated in the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program?
   Yes  No  (If no, please go to section E)

41. Were you awarded a Timber Sale License under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program?
   Yes  No

42. If you have a Timber Sale License, please indicate how you arrange logging of timber:
   - by self or employees
   - by contractors
   - other company arranges logging
   - other .................................................................

43. Has your company been affected by the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program?
   - Affected very positively
   - Affected somewhat positively
   - Not affected
   - Affected somewhat negatively
   - Affected very negatively

   Comments on the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program: .................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................................

44. Have you been involved with any other government Small Business Programs?
   Yes  No  If yes, please list: ...........................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................................
E. Interactions with Other Firms

45. On the following diagram, please indicate where your 1995 customers are located (with approximate percentage of total sales bought by each customer if possible). Use "MC" to indicate "Major Corporation" and "S-M" to indicate "Small to Medium Sized Firm":

- within your forest district,
- within the Prince Rupert Forest Region,
- within BC,
- within Canada
- other countries (please specify)

Use this legend to note company names:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Countries outside Canada
Canada
British Columbia
Prince Rupert Forest Region
Forest District
YOU ARE HERE!
46. Please list the types of business activities which you are involved in with a major forest product corporation:
   Contractor to major licensee
   Supplier to major licensee
   Buy product from major licensee (please list products)
   Other (please specify) ____________________________

47. Is this relationship the result of a Small Business Forest Enterprise Program sale?
   Yes  No

48. How would you describe your interactions with a major licensee?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

49. Do you feel that your company is better off because there is a major licensee in the local area?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? ____________________________
   __________________________________________

50. Would you prefer to deal with smaller mills if there were more in the area?
   Yes  No  Why/ why not? ____________________________
   __________________________________________

F. Involvement in Local Planning Processes

51. Are you involved in any local planning processes?
   Yes  No  Please list: ____________________________
   __________________________________________

52. Do you think local planning processes such as the LRMP are important for small operators?
   Yes  No  Don't know / no opinion ____________________________
   __________________________________________

53. How well do these planning processes represent your needs as a small forest operator?
   Don't represent my needs at all  Represent my needs extremely well
   Represent my needs somewhat  No opinion/Don't know
   Represent my needs moderately well
   __________________________________________
G. The Future of Forestry / Community Development

To what extent do you agree with these statements? (Please circle the most appropriate response):

1. agree strongly
2. agree somewhat
3. neither agree nor disagree
4. disagree somewhat
5. strongly disagree
0. No opinion / Not applicable

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than corporate managers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Independent operators have better knowledge of the local environment than government bureaucrats</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Major licensees provide more jobs per cubic metre of fibre than small businesses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Small businesses provide more stable jobs than major licensees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>Small business owners are more concerned about the community than major licensees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>Major licensees are better stewards of the local environment than small business owners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>This municipality is overly-specialized in forestry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>More economic diversification would benefit this municipality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>More value-added production is the key to a successful forestry industry in British Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>the BC forest industry is environmentally sustainable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>the environmental performance of the BC forestry industry would be improved if there were more independent operators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Environmentalists create a false image of the forest industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Environmentalists are responsible for the majority of job losses in the forest industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Demographic Information
This information may be useful in interpreting the results of this research. You can be assured that the information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential.

67. In which age category are you?
   18-24 45-54
   25-34 55-64
   35-44 65 and over

68. What is your sex? Male Female

69. What is your average annual household income? _________________________________

70. How many people in your household? (check as many boxes as apply to your household)
   - Myself
   - and parents
   - and spouse
   - and grandparents
   - and children
   - and grandchildren
   - and roommates
   - and boarder(s)
   - and landlord
   - other:

71. Where have you lived most of your life?
   - This community
   - Other part(s) of Canada
   - Northern British Columbia
   - Other country(s) (please specify):
   - Southern British Columbia

72. Please provide the highest level of education you have received:
   - Some elementary school
   - Some secondary school
   - Secondary school diploma
   - Some university
   - University degree (please describe)
   - Other trades or skills training (please list):
   - Secondary school diploma

73. Is this a family-run business?
   - Yes  No  If yes, who in the family is involved? _________________________________

74. Would you be interested in attending a meeting sometime next fall to hear the preliminary results of this study, before any final reports are completed? (Saying yes does not oblige you to attend).
   - Yes  No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please feel free to make additional comments on the back of this page.
Appendix B: The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program was introduced in 1978, following the Pearce Royal Commission's review of the forest industry. Pearce had expressed concern over the apparent elimination of opportunities for small forest operators. During the 1960s and 1970s there was a steady decline in the numbers of small forest operators; a consequence of the concentration resulting from integration of the forest products industry.

In response to Pearce's concerns, the Small Business Program was introduced in 1978, with the objectives of

(i) creating new opportunities for individuals and firms through competitive sales
(ii) providing continuing opportunities for small businesses and individuals in forestry;
(iii) enhancing the opportunity for increased diversity in size and location of small operations; and
(iv) providing the opportunity for increased variability in the size and specialization of industrial firms in producing logs or other forest products.

Two categories of registrants were established: Category 1 and Category 2. Category 1 registrants may not own or lease a timber processing facility. Category 2 registrants must own or lease a timber processing facility, which includes sawmills as well as specialty mills that upgrade and further process forest products.

In 1988 major changes to the program (now called the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program) included

(i) increasing the timber volume
(ii) easing registration requirements
(iii) introducing Bid Proposal Sales

The introduction of the Bid Proposal Sales (under section 16.1 of the Forest Act) was the most substantive change to the program at that time. Bid proposal sales are temporary (usually five but occasionally ten year) licenses giving firms access to Crown timber. The purpose is to encourage and promote value-added manufacturing in the BC forest industry.

In 1984, AAC allocation to the Small Business Program was 10% province-wide (Ministry of Forests 1984). By the time of this study in 1996, 13% of the provincial AAC was allocated to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program.

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program Application Process

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is managed to be self-sufficient and profitable, as a business enterprise. Revenues from sales are credited to the program account, and program costs are subtracted from this. However, revenues in excess of current expenditures and reforestation costs may be returned to the province’s Consolidated Revenue Fund (Ministry of Forests, no date). Program costs include road building, reforestation and silviculture; these costs are borne by the Ministry of Forests rather than the licensee, and are reflected in the 'upset bid' set by the Ministry of Forests for each timber sale.

Sales schedules are established by each district; sales are advertised at Ministry of Forests offices and in local newspapers. Word of mouth ensures that the sales are well advertised (fieldwork 1996). Bidding for Category 1 and 2 sales is very similar; the process for Bid Proposal Sales is quite different.

Category 1 sales are described in detail, including layout, cruise map, falling specifications and much more, in an “Invitation to Apply” available from the Forest Service. Applicants are encouraged to view the logging site. Applicants then make their calculations
to decide what bid they can offer for the timber. Applicants must estimate their costs, inquire at mills as to the highest price they are likely to receive for the logs, and provide a bid offer which will be attractive to the Ministry of Forests, but also (hopefully) provide a decent return for their efforts.

Category 2 sales are advertised in the same way as Category 1 sales. However, because Category 2 registrants own or lease processing facilities, they must establish how they intend to use the timber from the sale. Category 2 registrants may trade up to 50% of the timber from the sale with other processing facilities. This is advantageous to both the small sawmillers and the major licensees. Typically a small sawmill will trade 'green' wood for 'dry' wood. The green wood is in high demand by the large facilities producing lumber, and so the price of this wood is relatively high. The small sawmills will receive dry wood, which the major facilities cannot process (other than as chips) and some additional financial compensation. Hence, these trades have become an integral part of small sawmilling, and allow small sawmillers to invest in equipment or cover operating expenses at their facilities. Category 2 facilities are usually geared to using dry wood or green ends in a variety of ways, to benefit from these 'trading' opportunities.

Applications for Bid Proposal Sales are considerably more complex, requiring applicants to calculate projected production, sales, employment and so on. The evaluation process for Bid Proposal Sales is equally complex. There are seven scoring categories used to develop a numerical score for each applicant. The weightings for each category are set in a provincial template, but these weightings may be altered to reflect local circumstances, if approved by the Minister. The scoring categories are provided in Figure 1.
Figure 1: Provincial Template for Bid Proposal Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Investment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Value-Added</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Value-Added</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: Ministry of Forests 1996

Employment and value-added are given high priority in this weighting system, in recognition of the objectives of the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program. As Category 2 registrants, applicants of Bid Proposal Sales may also trade up to 50% of the sale timber, as described above. The emphasis in the evaluation process is on creating maximum employment and value from the given timber resource. If an applicant is able to better achieve this by trading for lower grade timber with a major facility, it is acceptable to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program.
Apendix C: The Woodlot Program

The Woodlot Program was created in 1979, replacing the Farm Woodlot Licence Program. The intent of the program was "to bring a more economically-viable small-scale forest management approach to parcels of Crown and private forest land (Ministry of Forests 1992).

The original objectives of the program were

(i) to increase the amount of private forest land under sustained yield management;
(ii) to improve the productivity of small Crown and private forest land parcels; and
(iii) to increase the opportunities for individuals to be directly involved in small-scale forest management operations.

In a 1992 review of the Woodlot Program, the committee recommended adding a fourth objective:

(iv) to promote excellence in forest management.

Supply of woodlots has been considerably less than demand for some time. Applicants are screened based on three weighted factors, established in 1979: private land contribution, applicant suitability, and management intent. These are consistent with the objectives of the program.

The 1992 review of the Woodlot Program recognized the problem of 'paperwork overload' faced by woodlot licensees. This problem has intensified considerably since the introduction of the Forest Practices Code (fieldwork 1996).

The Woodlots Program has been far more popular in the Interior than on the Coast. In 1988 there were only 35 woodlots along the Coast, versus 403 in the Interior (31 of which were in the Prince Rupert Forest Region).

In 1994, the Ministry of Forests announced a major expansion of the Woodlots Program, anticipating a doubling of licenses, from 500 to about 1000 by the year 1997.
In 1996, at the time of the case study, there were 510 woodlots in BC; 55 of these in the Prince Rupert Forest Region.
Appendix D: Land and Resource Management Planning

Land-use planning began in BC as an effort to mediate conflicting resource interests, particularly environmental interests versus industry interests. Land and Resource Management Plans are intended to build consensus at a local level regarding resource management issues, particularly forestry issues. The following are brief descriptions of the planning processes that had been taken place, or were taking place, in the case study area in 1996.

Kispiox District
In April 1996, the Kispiox Land and Resource Management Plan was released, providing sub-regional guidelines for resource management objectives, strategies and zoning.

The process began in the pre-CORE era, in 1989, as a resource management planning process for the Kispiox Timber Supply Area (TSA) analysis. An inter-agency team of government staff collated values and interests of public resource user groups, developed options for land use scenarios, which were used as a basis for discussion at a workshop. From this, a terms of reference was created in April 1991.

Government agencies provided analyses of each scenario, the results of which were distributed in a tabloid flyer and at public meetings. Consensus was reached on a majority of the land and resource management recommendations by a core group of six representatives from the forest industry, the Suskwa Community Association, and the fishing/guiding industry by November 1991. The consensus recommendation in principle was endorsed in May 1995.

First Nations were invited to participate in the process, but declined. "First Nations felt they had not participated in the design of the process and were concerned that their participation would be interpreted as recognition of government ownership and
jurisdiction over land and resources (Kispiox Land and Resource Management Planning Team 1996)."

**Bulkley District**

The Bulkley LRMP was approved by Cabinet in March of 1998. The process began with a meeting sponsored by a local environmental group, the Driftwood Foundation in 1990. This meeting attracted a wide audience, and led to a follow-up public meeting, where it was decided that a community resources board should be formed. This eventually led to the Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board Agreement in the fall of 1991, and the establishment of a 12-member Community Resources Board. In 1992, an Inter-Agency Planning Team (IAPT)\(^1\) was formed. A series of public meetings and open houses were held over the next two years, while inventories and socio-economic profiles were prepared. First Nations declined to participate in this process.

The Bulkley Community Resources Board wanted to avoid interest-group positioning. They used instead a list of sixteen "resource values perspective", intended to encompass the full range of community perspectives. These perspectives ranged from "attaches particular value to timber production above all other uses" to "attaches particular significance to a subsistence lifestyle and spiritual values". These perspectives were incorporated into the four scenarios that were used as a starting point for consensus building. In the end, the members of the Board that were interviewed in this study felt that this was a successful approach, and contributed to the eventual consensus decision.

\(^1\) IAPT is equivalent to a Inter-Agency Management Committee (IAMC).
**Moric District**

At the time of the study, the Morice forest district had not begun its LRMP process. Instead, the Morice district was focusing its efforts on Landscape Unit Planning, with the Whitesail Landscape Unit as its pilot project. Landscape Unit Planning is more of a technical exercise, but still attempts to incorporate resource values as part of the exercise. Results from landscape unit planning may be used in a higher-level LRMP; however, LRMP can also implement changes which would require revisiting decisions made in a Landscape Unit Plan.

**Lakes District**

The Lakes District LRMP is currently undergoing a review process before Cabinet. This process began in 1994 with the forming of a "Resource Council". A public meeting was held to introduce the LRMP concept to the community. Candidates for the Resource Council were nominated and asked to submit a sectoral endorsement as well as an interest statement. A local facilitator was used throughout the planning process. A consolidated issues document was completed, grouping concerns by sectoral interest. Impact statements were undertaken by the Inter-Agency Planning Team and consultants.

First Nations were initially involved, using a parallel participatory model which did not compromise their position in the land claims process. However, First Nations participation diminished towards the end of the process because they did not have the in-house capacity to keep up with the process.² The Lakes District LRMP utilized a computer modeling program called FACET to compare inventory and zoning options. This modeling exercise allowed stakeholders to view outcomes of different value inputs, in order to evaluate the different scenarios generated by the planning team.

---

² Positions at these boards are voluntary. The Inter-Agency Planning Team and consultants who prepare the background reports are paid positions.
Summary and Comparison of Planning Processes

The Kispiox LRMP was the first to be completed in the study area. From the moment of initiation to their completion, both the Kispiox and the Bulkley LRMPs were seven years in duration. The Lakes LRMP, on the other hand, may soon be approved, making it a four year process in total. All of these processes were considerably longer than the 18 – 24 months anticipated by LUCO in their Planning Process for LRMP Guidelines.

A major contributing factor to the long time involved in the Kispiox and the Bulkley processes, was that these were 'pioneering efforts' in the field of participatory planning. Both began before CORE had made any of its recommendations to cabinet regarding planning processes. 1993 saw the development of Land and Resource Management Planning: A Statement of Principles and Process. The release of this statement, and the subsequent establishment of LUCO, required that the already existing processes be re-considered in light of these new policy developments. Hence these processes were slowed to some extent by the demands of the new planning policy. The Lakes LRMP process, on the other hand, had the advantage of clear policy guidelines to assist in the development of their process.
Appendix E: Forest District Profiles

The study area overlaps with four forest districts: Kispiox (office in Old Hazelton), Bulkley (office in Smithers), Morice (office in Houston), and Lakes (office in Burns Lake). All are contained within the Prince Rupert Forest Region.

**The Hazeltons/Kispiox District**

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program comprised 22.2% of the Kispiox AAC for 1995 as illustrated in Table 1. Total AAC for the district was 1,092,611 m³.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAC apportionment:</th>
<th>m³ per year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Licenses, replaceable</td>
<td>818,424⁴</td>
<td>74.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &gt; 10,000 m³, replaceable</td>
<td>11,980</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &lt; 10,000 m³, replaceable</td>
<td>5,054</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, any category</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 1</td>
<td>172,710</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 2</td>
<td>25,740</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, value-added (sec. 21)</td>
<td>44,016</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SBFEP</td>
<td>242,466</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary AAC increase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service Reserve</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlot licenses</td>
<td>3,687</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest licenses, non-replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL (major), non-replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,092,611</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: MOF 1997a

**Smithers / Bulkley District**

Total AAC for the Bulkley District was set at 895,000 m³ in 1995. The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program was apportioned 27.3% of the district AAC, when a temporary AAC increase for the year 1995 is included, 20.3% without. Details are provided in Table 2.

---

⁴ Repap BC: 576,815 m³; Kispiox Forest Products: 64,124 m³; Kitwanga Forest Products: 77,852 m³; Bell Pole: 55,414 m³; Hobenshield Bros. Logging 13,860 m³.
The harvest profile of the Bulkley TSA was 59% sawlogs, 24% marginal sawlogs and 17% pulplogs in 1995; this compares to 87% sawlog and 13% marginal sawlog or pulplog in 1993 (Crane 1998). This decline in sawlog quality timber has significant implications for the SBFEP, particularly with respect to availability of value-added opportunities.

Table 2: Bulkley District AAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAC Apportionment</th>
<th>m3 per year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Licenses, replaceable</td>
<td>434,444²</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &gt; 10,000 m3, replaceable</td>
<td>14250³</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &lt; 10,000 m3, replaceable</td>
<td>2830</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, any category</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 1</td>
<td>128370</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 2</td>
<td>20920</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, value-added (sec. 21)</td>
<td>36186</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary AAC increase for SBFEP</td>
<td>60000</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SBFEP</td>
<td>245476</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service Reserve</td>
<td>6500</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlot licenses</td>
<td>6500</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest licenses, non-replaceable</td>
<td>140000⁴</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL (major), non-replaceable</td>
<td>45000⁵</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>895000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: MOF 1997a

Houston / Morice District

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program comprised 9.3% of the AAC in the Morice District in 1995. Total AAC for the district was 1,985,815. Details are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Morice District AAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAC Apportionment</th>
<th>m3 per year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Licenses, replaceable</td>
<td>1778380⁵</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &gt; 10,000 m3, replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Repap BC: 122,882 m3; West Fraser 311,562 m3
³ Moricetown Band Council
⁴ West Fraser Mills
⁵ West Fraser Mills
⁶ Northwood Pulp and Timber: 1064484 m3; West Fraser Mills: 713896 m3
TSL < 10,000 m³, replaceable 0 0
SBFEP, any category 0 0
SBFEP, Cat 1 65020 3.3
SBFEP, Cat 2 26240 1.3
SBFEP, value-added (sec. 21) 93610 4.7
TOTAL SBFEP 184870 9.3
Temporary AAC increase 0 0
Forest Service Reserve 16750 0.8
Woodlot licenses 5815 1.0
Forest licenses, non-replaceable 0 0
TSL (major), non-replaceable 0 0
Total 1985815 100

source: MOF 1997a

**Burns Lake / Lakes District**

The Small Business Forest Enterprise Program comprised 29.3% of the AAC for 1995, the total of which was 1,500,000 m³. Details are provided in Table 4.

**Table 4: Lakes District AAC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAC Apportionment</th>
<th>m³ per year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Licenses, replaceable</td>
<td>1022960¹</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &gt; 10,000 m³, replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL &lt; 10,000 m³, replaceable</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, any category</td>
<td>53610</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 1</td>
<td>169980</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, Cat 2</td>
<td>74530</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBFEP, value-added (sec. 21)</td>
<td>140819</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SBFEP</td>
<td>438939</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary AAC increase</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service Reserve</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlot licenses</td>
<td>21202</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest licenses, non-replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSL (major), non-replaceable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1500000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: MOF 1997a

¹ L & M Lumber Ltd.: 23,084 m³; Babine Forest Products: 431,518 m³; Bond Brothers Sawmill: 56,450 m³; Babine Timber LTD: 130,605 m³; West Fraser Mills: 367,194 m³.