

MINISTERIE VAN LANDBOUW

LANDBOUW - ECONOMISCH INSTITUUT (L.E.I.)

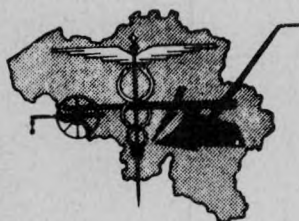
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SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY AMONG TRAINEES IN THE BELGIAN FISHING FLEET

by

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L.E.I.-SCHRIFTEN



AUGUSTUS 1984

Publicatie toegestaan mits duidelijke bronvermelding

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(Orig. : Dutch)

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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

Belgian authorities have always tried to grasp readily the specific underlying circumstances in selecting a fisherman's career and, more particularly, the distortions that often prevent that this choice may be made in a free and justified way. Various measures were taken in the past in order to solve the sometimes quite acute crew problem. The most important of these measures was undoubtedly the founding in 1971 of a Trainees Fund which aimed at countering depopulation in the sea fishery sector by allowing a fixed salary per day at sea to young fishermen under 18 years of age, as long as they have been sailing less than 400 days since their first enlistment (1).

At regular times the need was felt to assess the functioning of this Fund (2), e.g. in 1972, i.e. only a few months after the Fund was established, and again, in 1977; both assessments were made on the initiative of the Sea Fisheries Office in Ostend. For this purpose inquiries were held both among ship-owners and trainees in order to get a sound insight in their attitude towards fisherman's life in general and towards the Trainees Fund in particular.

More than 12 years after its inception (4 years under a facultative contribution scheme and 8 years under a legal regime) it seemed appropriate to examine once again the functioning of the Fund. This study, which was organized by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (I.E.A.) in cooperation with the Sea Fisheries Office was largely based upon the questionnaire that was used during the previous inquiries; the questionnaire was, however, substantially modified and completed in order to obtain an even more exhaustive representation of the opinion of the interviewed persons. Unfortunately, unlike the previous inquiries this study had to be limited to the trainees only, as for some reasons the employers (ship-owners) could not be involved although this was certainly the initial purpose. We nevertheless do hope that this study of the trainees' attitude will make it possible to produce some elements that may be of some importance in the assessment of the Fund and in all efforts to adjust the functioning of the Fund towards developing needs and circumstances.

2. Object

At the moment the inquiry got into operation some 120 trainees were enlisted in the fishing fleet. A letter was sent to the 93 trainees that were actually sailing at that period. They were asked to cooperate to the enquiry. Yet, as a matter of fact it was not possible to involve all of them, for various reasons : at sea, just resigned, refusal, incomplete questionnaire, etc.. Thus, 73 trainees were finally involved, out of a total number of 120 potential respondents, which certainly constitutes a representative inquiry sample.

(1) Since 1st January 1980 this salary amounts to 513 BF net per day at sea.

(2) See :

a) "Rapport over het bemanningsprobleem in de Belgische zeevisserij" (Study of the crew problem in Belgian fisheries) - Westvlaams Economisch Studiebureau, 1972.

b) Monique Tanghe : "Enquête bij reders en scheepsjongens in de Belgische Zeevisserij", (Sociological inquiry among ship owners and trainees in Belgian fisheries) - 1976-77.

The trainees were interviewed from December 1983 to January 1984 at the Sea Fisheries Office in Ostend by five staff members working either at this Office or at the Trainees Fund. The interviewers were well prepared for this job as they got a briefing, mainly to create a confidential atmosphere during the interview, and furthermore to guarantee a strict objectivity and to obtain answers in a smooth and easy way and with high accuracy.

Like we already told above, the study was based upon a questionnaire (appendix 2) including both multiple choice questions and open final questions. Those questions refer to a certain number of aspects, i.e.

- identification
- vocational choice and training
- occupational situation
- attitude towards the fishing industry
- the Trainees Fund.

This survey pattern also indicates the order in which the findings of the study are reported. Besides, the discussion of the results aims at identifying the variations shown by the above mentioned aspects as to the type of ship the interviewed youngsters are enrolled on (1). Readers eager to find out all about the variation of the research results according to the home port of the trainees are referred to appendix 1 which gives a picture of some of the most striking findings in this field.

I.- IDENTIFICATION

1. Residence and age of the interviewed persons

In order to determine the residence of the interviewed persons the coastal area was divided into three subregions based upon the three fishing ports and on the real sociological entity constituted by the former municipalities (not by the municipalities formed by the administrative merger). A fourth class comprising the ship boys living outside the coastal area has been added (2).

(1) It must be noted that the types of ships were used in order to indicate the fishing method (and, as a result, the specific working environment of the trainees). Distinction is made between otter trawling, beam trawling and inshore fishing. As to "inshore fishing", in this context it is all about small scale fisheries, i.e. polyvalent vessels, mainly fishing for shrimps and also for sole and herring and other seasonal activities, the constant factor being their small action radius which implies very short voyages of usually only one day (or night) at sea.

(2) Apart from the town of Nieuwpoort itself, the Nieuwpoort sub-area includes De Panne, Adinkerke, Veurne, Koksijde and Oostduinkerke. The Ostend sub-area includes Ostend, Middelkerke, Westende, Bredene and De Haan while the Zeebrugge sub-area includes, apart from Zeebrugge, Blankenberge, Heist, Knokke and Wenduine. The "inland" group includes all trainees from other towns or villages in the province of West Flanders.

TABLE 1.- Residential classification of trainees

Sub-area	Abs.fig.	p.c.
Ostend	32	43,8
Zeebrugge	27	37,0
Nieuwpoort	10	13,7
Inland	4	5,5
Total	73	100,0

The results indicated in the above table show that more than 40 p.c. of the interviewed trainees are residents of the Ostend sub-area whereas more than one third of them belong to the Zeebrugge sub-area. There is in the Nieuwpoort sub-area only a small minority of the trainees and only very few of them live outside the coastal area.

Only 10 out of the 73 interviewed trainees are 15 years old whereas 31 and 32 of them are respectively 16 and 17 years old.

2. Category and type of ship

Another significant method of trainees classification consists in a classification according to the category and the type of the ship they are sailing on. This kind of subdivision is based upon the gross tonnage of the vessels (1). The following table 2 classifies the trainees according to the category and the type of their ship :

TABLE 2.- Classification of the trainees according to the category and the type of their ship

Category	Otter trawler	Beam trawler	Inshore vessel	Others	Total
- 50 GT	-	21,1	86,7	-	28,8
50 - 69 GT	13,3	13,2	13,3	40,0	15,1
70 - 149 GT	80,0	13,2	-	20,0	24,7
≥ 150 GT	6,7	52,5	-	40,0	31,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

(1) For the special purposes of this study we used a classification into GT-groups differing quite substantially from the usual classification as used in the annual fleet report, the annual statistical report and the annual study on costs and earnings.

The rather uniform distribution shows that recruitment of trainees is spread over all tonnage groups. However, inside each type of vessels, the distribution by tonnage groups is very irregular. It is hardly surprising to see that nearly all inshore trainees are working on ships of the smallest group (- 50 GT) and that most of the otter trawling trainees have signed on onmiddle water vessels (70 - 149 GT). Meanwhile the majority of the beam trawling trainees are found in the largest category, i.e. over 150 GT.

It is also worthwhile to survey the number of trainees on various types of ships. A quite remarkable issue is the fact that 52 p.c. of them are working on beam trawlers and only still 20 p.c. on inshore vessels. This is due to the strong increase of the number of beam trawlers and, on the other hand, to the shrinking of the inshore fishing fleet. Also, 20 p.c. of the trainees are working on otter trawlers and 7 p.c. on other types of ships.

However, the above mentioned distribution varies considerably among tonnage groups : in the inshore group most of the trainees (62 p.c.) are working in small scale fisheries and on small beam trawlers (38 p.c.); in the near water group 46 p.c. of the trainees are working on beam trawlers whereas each of the other types of vessels stand for 18 p.c. only; as to middle water vessels, a majority (67 p.c.) is sailing on otter trawlers while in this group beam trawlers only account for 28 p.c.; in the distant water group nearly all of the trainees (87 p.c.) sail on beam trawlers.

3. Family conditions

69 out of the 73 interviewed boys still live with their parents; the other trainees are registered at another domicile.

The question concerning the chief occupation of their father gave the following answers :

- active in sea fisheries : 28 p.c. (1)
- active in an other maritime sector : 29 p.c.
- active in a non maritime sector : 43 p.c.

So, 57 p.c. of the fathers are (or were) directly or indirectly related to sailor's work and life. The occupation of the 20 fathers (28 p.c.) having their chief occupation in sea fisheries is : engineer (5), senior deck-hand (4), ship owner (4), skipper (3), chief mate (1) and others (3).

Globally the interviewed trainees have (or had) 107 brothers (including the deceased) who can be classified as follows : the school-going brothers account for 46,8 p.c. : 22 p.c. of them go to a fisheries school and 78 p.c. to all kinds of other schools; 43,9 p.c. of the brothers have a job : 45 p.c. of them are working in the fishing sector, 19 p.c. in another maritime occupation and 36 p.c. in other sectors; at last, a certain number of brothers do not belong to any of the above mentioned categories : since they are unemployed (8,4 p.c.) or deceased (0,9 p.c.).

(1) When compared to 1976-77 this figure slightly decreased (33 p.c.).
See : "Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens..." op. cit. p. 10.

II.- VOCATIONAL CHOICE and TRAINING

1. Vocational choice

The motives underlying the vocational choice of the trainees have been examined through the following question : "Why did you become a trainee ?". Answering this question was made easier by offering the respondents a multiple choice between various vocational incentives and by giving them, last but not least, an additional answer possibility. Also, out of this multiple choice range more than one answer could be given to this question. The percentage of respondents per premised answer is given in the following summary :

- tempting life at sea	:	54,8 p.c.
- family tradition	:	37,0 p.c.
- for lack of better job prospects	:	13,7 p.c.
- to get away from school	:	12,3 p.c.
- good fisherman's income	:	8,2 p.c.
- very special work and life	:	2,7 p.c.
- other incentives	:	17,8 p.c.

More than half of the number of respondents indicate "tempting life at sea" as a factor that determined the vocational choice. It should be noted that this motive is more frequently mentioned by boys working in beam trawling (60,5 p.c.) and inshore fishing (53,3 p.c.) than by those who are working in otter trawling (40,0 p.c.). Whereas "family tradition" is virtually of equal importance for the three types of fisheries (otter trawling : 40 p.c.; beam trawling : 31,6 p.c. and inshore fishing : 40 p.c.) (1).

The question could arise as to what extent both motives ("tempting life at sea" and "family tradition") either are independent one from another or are an expression of the same common factor that can be defined as "specific fishery environment". In this matter a clue can be found in the roots of both groups of respondents which shows that 92 p.c. of the trainees mentioning "tempting life at sea" have (had) a father who has (had) his chief occupation in the non-maritime sector whereas 91 p.c. of the boys mentioning "tradition" had a father whose chief occupation was situated in sea fisheries or another maritime sector (2). This shows that both motives are highly independent one from another, which, of course, is not without any importance in view of determining the recruitment range, for it means that accession to the fishery sector is not stimulated only by the tradition kept alive within the specific sociological environment but also by the very special appeal of the sea which seems to have a great power of attraction outside this social setting as well (3).

(1) At the 1976-77 inquiry, "preference for life at sea" and "family conditions" were also indicated as the main factors determining vocational choice. Op. cit. p. 27.

(2) The trainees who indicated both motives at the same time were not taken into account. There were only 4 of them out of 73, which clearly illustrates that the main motives mentioned here above cannot be compacted under the same denominator.

(3) One should be cautioned, however, that such projections somehow might be lowered since, obviously, some fathers having at present their chief occupation in a non maritime sector may have left the fishing sector at an earlier stage. However, there has been, to date, very little progress in assessing the real extent of this phenomenon.

The answers also include some factors revealing a rather unthoughtful vocational choice, e.g. "for lack of better job prospects" or "to get away from school". On the other hand the "good fisherman's income" only seems to be little important. And then there are 17,8 p.c. of the respondents who indicate other motives and mainly point out the fact that they were already quite familiar with the sailor's life because one of their relatives (father, brother, uncle, a.s.o.) was or is a sailor (5) or because they have friends in this sector (4); the other trainees based their choice mainly upon "career prospects", "job security" and "to escape military service". Thus, an adjunct to recruitment incentives is obviously good acquaintance with sailing relatives and friends.

As to vocational choice the parents' attitude is, of course, very important. Since the choice is often made at a very young age, we may assume that parents will determine this choice to a very large extent. From the inquiry it appears that in 47,9 p.c. of the families both parents did reach in a positive way to the vocational choice of their son; in 34,2 p.c. of the families involved either the father or the mother or both reacted in a negative way while 17,8 p.c. of the parents took no sides. Opposition to the vocational choice is mainly related to the image of the rough and dangerous life at sea which makes most parents prefer that their son might find a job ashore. In some cases the negative attitude results from the fact that the parents cherish higher ranking ambitions for their son.

In selecting a career, this kind of choice is especially important for the private life of the applicant since, contrarily to most occupations ashore, it strongly limits human activity in quite some fields of to-day's life. This is particularly true for family life, partnership and relations as well as for leisure time which differ rather substantially from what is considered as "normal" in our society. When interviewed on this subject 49,3 p.c. of the trainees said that in the fishing sector the lack of full family life and social life is experienced as being a painful deprivation, either quite deeply or to a certain extent; however, 39,7 p.c. are convinced this is not so while 11 p.c. do not have an opinion. The answers differ, of course, widely according to the type of fisheries : in otter trawling 80 p.c. mention "a painful lack", against 46,6 p.c. in inshore fishing and only 34,2 p.c. in beam trawling. Moreover, most of the trainees who consider the absence of family and social life as a personal gap, do feel this is a cause of leaving the sector at an early stage. Such opinions on fisherman's life are not irrelevant since they reflect the ideas of youngsters who gained already some skill and experience and who should guarantee the continuance of our fishing industry.

2. Vocational training

67,1 p.c. of the interviewed trainees got a certificate, licence or diploma of their studies (1). This proportion does not vary significantly according to the type of fisheries (otter trawling : 66,7 p.c., beam trawling : 68,4 p.c.; inshore fishing : 60 p.c.). It should, however, be noted that the percentage is particularly high in some categories, e.g. for trainees of 15 years of age (90 p.c.), for those sailing on ships of the 50 - 69 tonnage group (82 p.c.) and for those having their home place in the Nieuwpoort sub area (80 p.c.).

(1) When compared to 1976-77 this figure has hardly changed (68,6 p.c.).
See : "Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens ..." op. cit. p. 26.

93,2 p.c. of the trainees holding a certificate, licence or diploma went to the fishery school ; they can be classified into the following groups :

	%
- apprentice certificate	42,5
- diploma of aspirant skipper	28,8
- navigating regulations certificate	8,2
- licence motors - 120 HP	2,7
- others	11,0

It is quite remarkable that nearly 30 p.c. of the interviewed boys are qualified as aspirant skippers.

Apart from the trainees who went to the fishery school (93,2 p.c.) there are 4,1 p.c. of them who went to technical schools and who got there a diploma (A3 level). Then there are 2,7 p.c. who got a grammar school education : this small group equally obtained either a lower degree or a high degree diploma. The proportion of trainees holding a technical school or grammar school diploma may be considered relatively high (6,8 p.c.). It would be interesting to compare their career within the sector to that of trainees holding a fishery school certificate or diploma.

3. Attitude towards vocational training

The attitude of the respondents towards their vocational training could be assessed through the two following questions :

- a) What is your appreciation of your theoretical and practical vocational training when you were a school boy at the fishery school ?
- b) What is now your fisherman's appreciation of your continued vocational training aboard ?

Diagram 1 which represents the results of this analysis shows that both vocational training at school and post-school vocational training are assessed positively by a majority of the respondents but that however, in both trainings they emphasize quite different aspects. In that respect, vocational training at school gets a significantly less positive appreciation, which is indicated not only by the fact that one trainee out of five does not want to give an appreciation of this kind of training but also by the fact that only 13 p.c. of them described it as "very good". On the contrary on the score of post-school training all interviewed persons had a clear opinion and , moreover, 53 p.c. of them rated it at "very good".

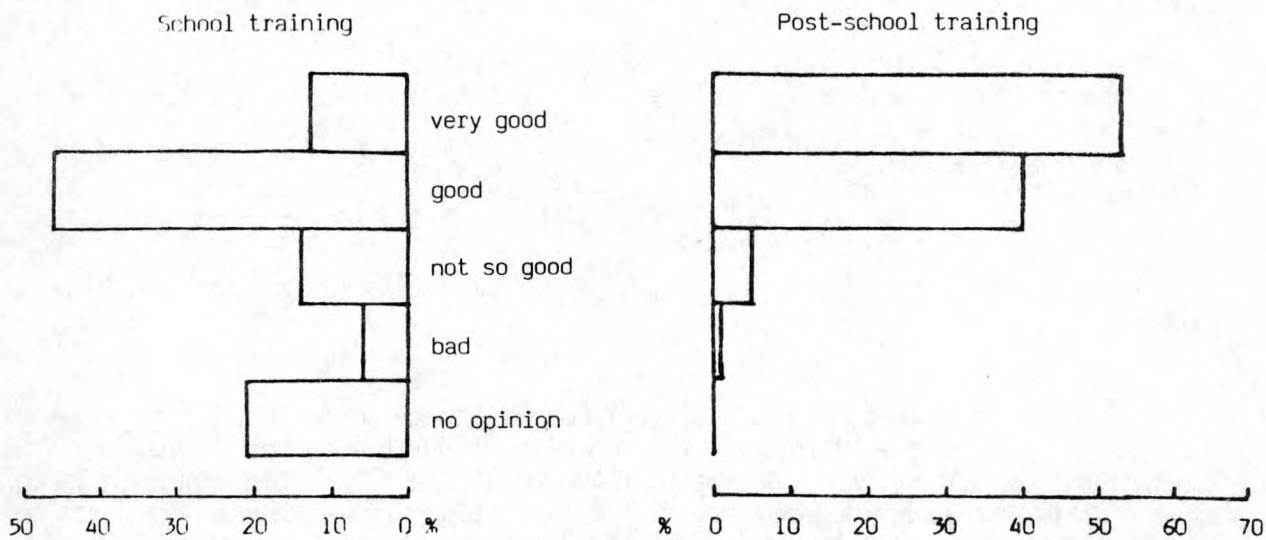


Diagram 1.- Classification of the respondents according to their opinion on their vocational training

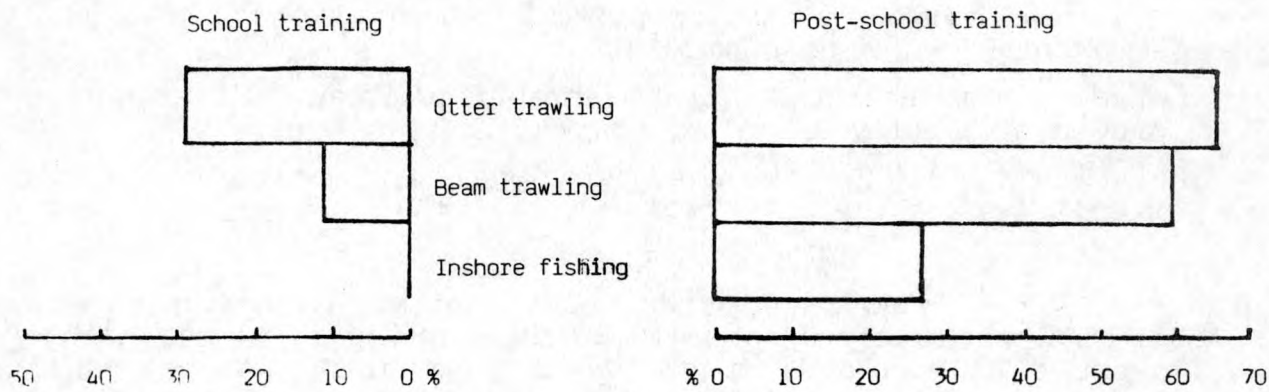


Diagram 2.- Proportion of the respondents who rated their vocational training at "very good", according to the type of fisheries

Diagram 2 reveals some important differences according to the type of fisheries. Both for school training and post-school training the proportion of respondents who rate these kinds of training at "very good" is by far more important in otter trawling; in beam trawling the appreciation is much lower and it is extremely low in inshore fishery.

76,7 p.c. of the trainees wish to receive advanced training. This percentage is virtually equally high in otter trawling (73,3 p.c.), beam trawling (73,7 p.c.) and inshore fishing (80 p.c.). Out of these trainees :

- 35,7 p.c. wish to acquire a motor engineer's certificate;
- 26,8 p.c. an advanced deckhand's training;
- 25,0 p.c. wish to obtain the skipper's certificate 2nd class;
- 8,9 p.c. the skipper's certificate 1st class;
- 3,6 p.c. wish to acquire a more perfect know-how in other fields.

In this context one should emphasize that 20,8 p.c. of the trainees are still regularly and 34,7 p.c. incidentally in touch with their school while 44,5 p.c. have lost all contact with the school. Of those who are regularly or incidentally in touch with the school 82,1 p.c. wish to perfect their know-how; yet, it is quite remarkable that those who lost all contact with their school (i.e. 71,9 p.c.) still cherish the same wishful thinking as well.

III.- OCCUPATIONAL SITUATION

1. Start

This chapter considers initial occupational aspects, e.g. the year in which the career started, the month of recruitment and - if such should be the case - the interference of problems or trouble at the recruitment phase.

Of the interviewed trainees 1,4 p.c. started their fisherman's career in 1980, 16,4 p.c. in 1981, 32,9 p.c. in 1982 and 49,3 p.c. in 1983.

Thus, nearly half of the number of trainees started to work quite recently, i.e. only one year before this enquiry. That recent recruitment mainly includes trainees in otter trawling (60 p.c.), in beam trawling (50 p.c.) and, last but also least, in inshore fishing (33,3 p.c.), which implies that inshore fishing mainly employs "older" youngsters. The reasons underlying this finding are certainly not obvious. The hypothesis that youngsters in inshore fishing would be more sedentary can hardly be supported since other results of this study reveal that ship shifting is more frequent in this type of fisheries than in the other branches of the fleet (see table 4).

Diagram 3 indicates the month during which trainees signed on for the first time. June and July (school exit period) clearly constitute a peak (resp. 26 and 37 p.c. of the first enrolments), followed by January (8 p.c.) while none of the other months represent more than 5 p.c. of the first enrolments.

Only 8 out of the 73 respondents bear in their mind some kind of trouble with other crew members at their first enrolment; four of them specify on that matter :

- "I couldn't do anything right"
- "Arguments about work"
- "The crew members got no or only little satisfaction with my work"
- "Quarrel with my brothers".

2. Days at sea and unemployment

Diagram 4 gives, to date, a picture of the number of days at sea. The lead group ranks from 100 to 149 days at sea and includes 23 p.c. of the respondents. Furthermore, we see that 53,4 p.c. of the interviewed persons spent 50 to 200 days at sea. About 10 p.c. spent more than 350 days at sea (1).

One third of the boys concerned had already been unemployed (2). The following table, however, points out that the situation is very different according to the type of vessel and the type of fisheries :

TABLE 3.- Classification, according to the type of vessel and fisheries, of the trainees with respect to unemployment

Type of fisheries	AT ANY TIME UNEMPLOYED		TO DATE, NEVER UNEMPLOYED		TOTAL	
	abs.	p.c.	abs.	p.c.	abs.	p.c.
Otter trawling	2	13,3	13	86,7	15	100,0
Beam trawling	16	42,1	22	57,9	38	100,0
Inshore fishing	5	33,3	10	66,7	15	100,0
Others	-	-	5	100,0	5	100,0
Total	23	31,5	50	68,5	73	100,0

(1) When compared to 1976-77 the number of trainees with less than 100 days at sea has substantially decreased, i.e. from 37,5 p.c. to 15,3 p.c., which implies that, at present, trainees are generally more at sea than their mates used to do in the mid-seventies.

See : Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens... op. cit. p. 28.

(2) "technical" unemployment (due to ship under repair, laying up, a.s.o.) not included.

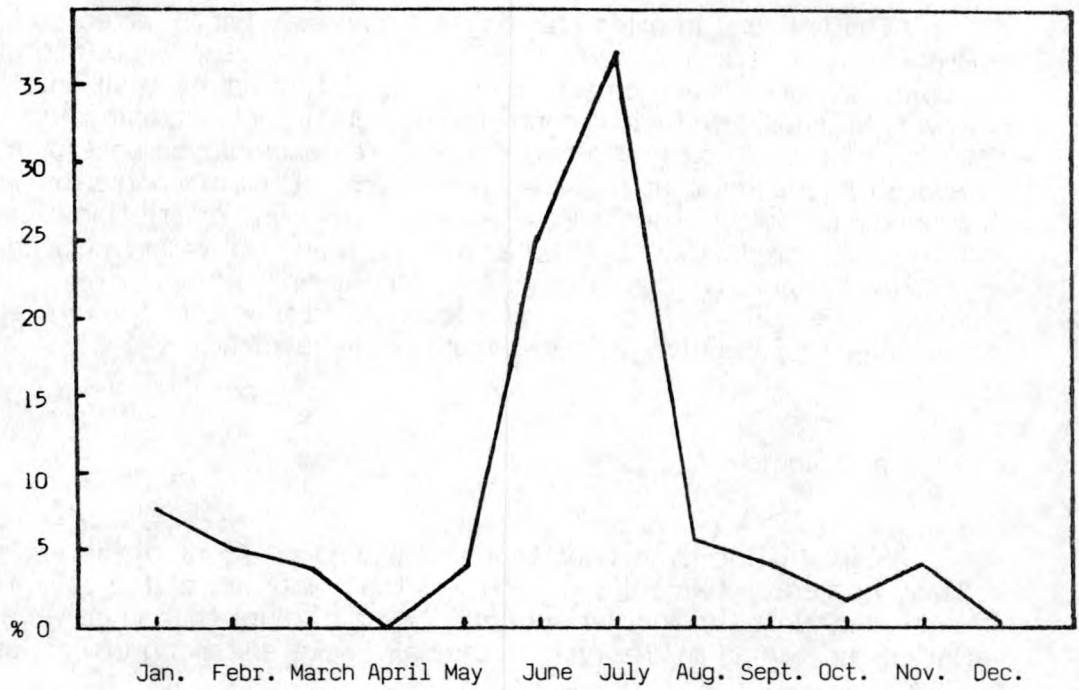


Diagram 3.- Classification of the trainees according to the month of recruitment

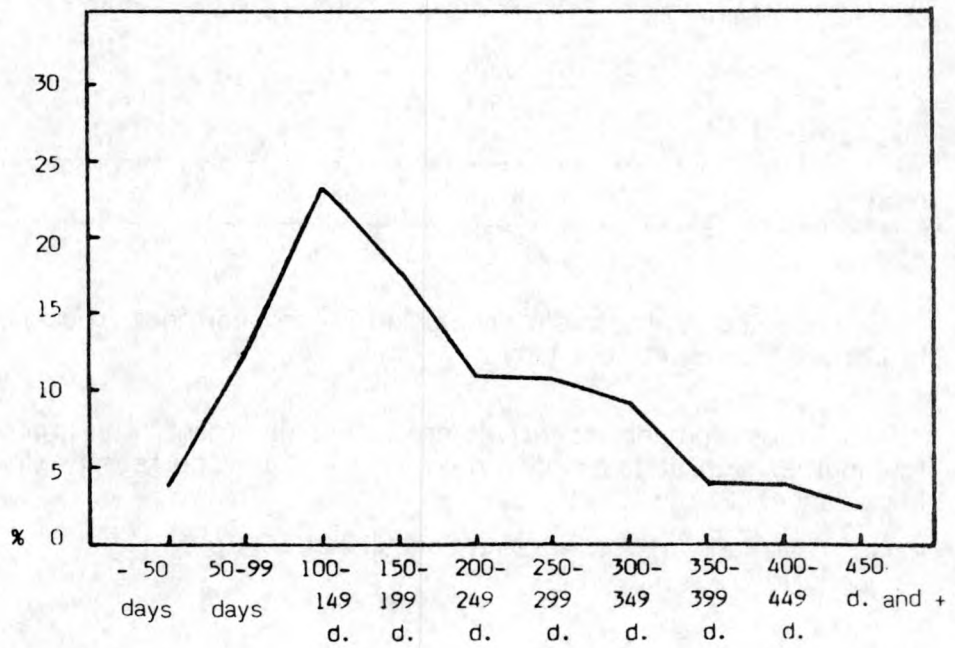


Diagram 4.- Classification of the trainees according to their number of days at sea

The trainees in otter trawling are obviously hardly affected by unemployment whereas in beam trawling more than 40 p.c. of the respondents had already been on the dole; inshore fishing clearly occupies an intermediate position. These figures must, however, be considered with regard to the duration of unemployment : the vast majority (and that at 70 p.c.) who had already been unemployed once or more often, mention an overall employment at less than one month. This, of course, brings us to assume that unemployment in the fishery sector is some kind of frictional unemployment and is certainly not conjunctural or structural, and, moreover rather only characteristic for beam trawling and, to a smaller extent, for inshore fishing. Any way, it is quite obvious that the fishery sector is certainly not affected by the present problems of mainly structural youth unemployment.

3. Transshipment

Ship shifting is an important phenomenon : 43 of the interviewed trainees have at least worked on two ships, i.e. no less than 58,8 p.c. of the total number; 31,5 p.c. of them once left for another ship and 27,3 p.c. more than once (1). However, some variations according to the type of the ship make a striking effect, as can be seen in table 4 :

TABLE 4.- Classification of the trainees according to frequency of transshipment (per type of ship, in p.c.)

Frequency	Otter trawling	Beam trawling	Inshore fishing	Others	Total
Nil	46,6	47,3	20,0	40,0	41,2
1 x	26,7	23,7	53,3	40,0	31,5
2 x	20,0	7,9	6,7	-	9,6
3 x	6,7	7,9	6,7	20,0	8,2
4 x and more	-	13,2	13,3	-	9,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Obviously, the main conclusion is the enormous frequency (80 p.c.) among trainees in inshore fishing at that time.

Transshipment incentives are rather divergent. The group of trainees who left for another ship at least once mention the following reasons (in decreasing order of importance) (2) :

- bad treatment and/or working conditions (16,4 p.c.)
- underpaid (12,3 p.c.)

(1) From the comparison with 1976-77 can be concluded that ship shifting has strongly increased; at the time there were 36,1 p.c. of the trainees who switched themselves to another ship, against 58,8 p.c. now.

See : Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens" op.cit. p. 28.

(2) In proportion to the total number of respondents (respondents could give several answers).

- unprofitable vessel (11,0 p.c.)
- long voyages (6,8 p.c.)
- technical reasons (e.g. scrapping) (1,4 p.c.)
- other reasons (37 p.c.), the most important being :
 - "to go back to school"
 - "problems or quarrels with shipowner or crew"
 - "illness of one of the crew"
 - "ship for sale"
 - "to join in for another boy"
 - "preference for a larger ship (e.g. beam trawler)".

In otter and beam trawling bad treatment and bad working conditions were mentioned as the most important reasons for leaving the ship; in inshore fishing this incentive is preceded by the motive of underpayment which, as a matter of fact, is the main transfer reason in this type of fisheries.

4. Nature of trainees activities

Table 5 gives rather detailed indications on the nature of trainees activities aboard the ship, mentioning the percentage of respondents who declared to exercise listed activities (though without regard to the frequency of these activities). As can be seen, there are two activities that nearly all trainees are charged with : "collecting, washing and gutting catches" and "cleaning". Besides, two other activities are mentioned by a large majority (over 86 p.c.), "sorting and storing catches" and "household work".

Further analysis reveals that especially the trainees in inshore fishing distinguish themselves from those in beam and otter trawling by the fact that they do exercise certain activities considerably less frequently, such as hauling in the net, collecting and cleaving ice, shackling, handing in the fishing gear and practical steering lessons. In this matter there is great parallelism between beam and otter trawling. Yet, in beam trawling trainees obviously help more frequently with hauling in the net, sorting and storing the catch and mending the nets, whereas they are taught less frequently to steer and to stand watches.

Under item "help on deck" 21,9 p.c. of the interviewed trainees indicate other activities than those mentioned explicitly. They can be listed as follows :

- holding the wings (mentioned 4 times)
- shrimps sifting (3 x)
- twisting ropes (2 x)
- cleaning up (2 x)

Finally, it should be noted that the analysis hereabove deals with activities that are exercised aboard the fishing vessel. Still, it appears that trainees must also do a lot of work ashore, particularly unloading the ship, or some odd jobs on board or at the quay side (1). Many respondents frankly emphasized that they do not consider this kind of work as specific trainees' duties.

TABLE 5.- Percentage of respondents according to their activities (regardless of the frequency), per type of fisheries

	Otter trawling	Beam trawling	Inshore fishing	Others	Total
<u>Help on deck</u>					
hauling in the net	66,7	71,1	20,0	60,0	58,9
collecting, washing, gutting catches	100,0	100,0	80,0	100,0	95,9
sorting and storing catches	66,7	94,7	80,0	100,0	86,3
collecting and cleaving ice	100,0	52,6	33,3	100,0	61,6
mending nets	46,7	63,2	46,7	100,0	58,9
shackling	33,3	52,6	13,3	20,0	38,4
handing in the fishing gear	66,7	68,4	46,7	40,0	61,6
others	13,3	21,1	13,3	80,0	21,9
<u>Upkeep</u>					
cleaning	100,0	94,7	93,3	100,0	95,9
painting	26,7	23,7	20,0	20,0	23,3
others	-	7,9	6,7	-	5,5
<u>Practical lessons in :</u>					
standing watches	80,0	71,1	66,7	100,0	74,0
steering	66,7	60,5	33,3	40,0	54,8
<u>Household work</u>					
	93,3	92,1	60,0	100,0	86,3
<u>Others</u>					
	-	5,3	6,7	20,0	5,5

(1) See p. 16.

IV.- ATTITUDE TOWARDS the FISHING INDUSTRY

A distinction is made between three dimensions of the attitude towards the fishing industry : positive and negative aspects of fisherman's life, job attachment and trade union affiliation.

1. Positive and negative aspects of fisherman's life

A better understanding of professional aspects, experienced either most positively or most negatively, was obtained through this question : "What aspects do you consider resp. as the most and the least attractive features of fisherman's life ?". Towards both scopes some multiple choice answers had been premised that as a result of intimate familiarity are known to be of some importance in the fishing sector. Further, an open-end suggestion was included in order to group unexpected answers. More than one possible answer could be given at the same time.

The most positive aspects mentioned were : "living and working in the open air" and "financially interesting" : 30 p.c. of the trainees consider these as very attractive fisheries aspects. In otter and beam trawling the aspect "living and working in the open air" is nearly mentioned an equal number of times (33 and 34 p.c. respectively) but in inshore fishing it is clearly considered less attractive (20 p.c.). The financial aspect is mentioned most often in otter trawling (46,7 p.c.) and much less frequently in beam trawling (28,9 p.c.) and in inshore fishing (20 p.c.).

Another aspect, "small risk of unemployment", is mentioned by 21,9 p.c. of the interviewed persons among the most attractive professional aspects and variation according to the type of fisheries is small : otter trawling : 20 p.c., beam trawling : 21,1 p.c. and inshore fishing : 26,7 p.c.

Then, there are a certain number of aspects mentioned rather infrequently e.g. "rewarding occupation" (15,1 p.c.), "no military service" (9,6 p.c.) and "high chances for social promotion" (6,8 p.c.). It may be surprising to see that seldom the aspect "rewarding occupation" is mentioned; yet, if we consider the fact that trainees are apparently often ordered to do "cleaning", "household work" and other "odd jobs", it is, of course, quite easy to understand (1). The factor "no military service" does not seem to have much success which is obviously due to the numerous exemptions from military service granted to non-fishermen as well, and to the substantially shortened military service. Anyway, full attention should be given to the low score of the factor "high chances for social promotion" which seems to be in contradiction with the above mentioned strong urge for continued training and full development of their faculties (2).

(1) See p. 14

(2) See p. 9

At last there is the category "others" which accounts for 16,4 p.c. of all answers and which includes following incentives :

"we can catch a lot of fish, far away from the crowd"
"getting a kick out of harvesting" (2 x)
"the last stronghold of the hunter"
"adventure"
"lots of fun aboard" (2 x)
"the engines, a thrilling experience"
"having a good and long time at sea"

Let us now focus our attention on the aspects that are considered as the least attractive of fisherman's life. In decreasing order of importance these set-backs are :

"too much away from home"	20,5 p.c. (1)
"a hard and dangerous life"	15,1 p.c.
"few alternatives when you're getting older"	8,2 p.c.
"uncertain income"	5,5 p.c.
"lack of social status"	1,4 p.c.

Thus family conditions and care for personal safety are the most determining negative aspects whereas the other aspects are hardly mentioned.

The category "other negative aspects", which accounts for 27,4 p.c. of the respondents, includes following remarks :

"still work to do when the ship is in the harbour"
"entering the port : work ahead"
"must help unloading the catch after an exhausting voyage"
"inserted in unloading the vessel when coming back in port"
"work to do on the quay-side"

"sometimes lots of work to do"
"big catches"
"scrubbing"
"odd-job man"

"rough weather at sea"
"bad weather"
"bad weather"

"not at home at Christmas; sometimes irregular working hours"
"irregular working hours"

"much to work for almost nothing, especially in winter"

" technical deficiencies"

"seasick at first voyages"

(1) Calculated, for each aspect, on the overall number of respondents.

It should be noted that, when making a classification according to the type of fisheries, the factor "too much away from home" is mentioned nearly as frequently in otter trawling (20,0 p.c.) as in beam trawling (18,4 p.c.) and somewhat less frequently in inshore fishery (13,3 p.c.) whereas the aspect "hard an dangerous life" is mentioned mainly in otter trawling (20,0 p.c.) and considerably less frequently in beam trawling (13,2 p.c.) and inshore fishery (6,7 p.c.). This difference between otter trawling and beam trawling is probably related to the fact that building new vessels and modernization, improvement and adjustment works are rather typical for the beam trawling sector.

2. Job attachment

The extent to which trainees are attached to their job has been examined through the following question : "Do you think you will stay on in the fishing sector ?". The analysis reveals that the rate of job attachment is quite impressive among trainees nowadays : 76,7 p.c. of them say they will "certainly" remain while 19,2 p.c. say they'll "probably" do. So, in all, there are no less than 95,9 p.c. of the respondents who gave a positive answer (1). It is also striking that none of the respondents answered "by no means" while only 1,4 p.c. of them answered "probably not". Furthermore, 2,7 p.c. of the trainees had no opinion whatsoever on this matter. With respect to the problem of leaving the sector, particularly at an early stage, these rather surprising figures are a reason for some optimism although, as years go by, many of the trainees will change their view... or will have to do so, very often under pressure of external factors (we should e.g. not overlook the fact that the interviewed persons are, to date, still single...) This assumption is, to some extent, confirmed by the following analysis which shows that as the trainee is getting older, the job attachment clearly decreases.

Within the framework of a more thorough analysis a distinction is made between two groups of trainees, according to their degree of job attachment :

a) trainees with a strong job attachment (95,9 p.c.) (who will "certainly" or "probably" stay on in the sector) :

- 70 ship boys of this group were asked what function they think they will occupy later on : 38 will be skilled fishermen (55,1 p.c.), 15 will be ordinary seamen (21,7 p.c.) 10 expect to become a senior engineer (14,5 p.c.) and 3 will be a junior engineer (4,3 p.c.) whereas 3 others don't have any personal outlook (4,3 p.c.). By far, most of the trainees in inshore fishery say they will be skilled fishermen (86 p.c.); however, in otter and beam trawling that score is much lower : it accounts for less than half of the boys (42,9 and 45,7 p.c. respectively); a not unimportant proportion of the trainees employed in these types of fisheries think they will be either ordinary seamen (28,6 p.c. in both types) or engineers (21,4 and 14,3 p.c. respectively).

(1) In 1976-77 80 p.c. of the trainees said they would "certainly" or "under certain conditions" want to stay on in sea fishery, which also reveals a strong job attachment.
See "Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens... op. cit. p. 31.

- Yet these actual expectations as analysed hereabove do not correspond entirely to their real preference on the score of the function they would like to exercise. Most of them do indeed want to become a skipper (21 or 35 p.c.) or engineer (20 or 33,3 p.c.); 6 would like to become chief mate (10 p.c.), 1 wants to be a ship-owner (1,7 p.c.) while the remaining 12 trainees don't have any opinion (20 p.c.). In otter trawling most of the trainees prefer to become a skipper (46,2 p.c.) whereas in beam trawling most of them want to be an engineer (48,3 p.c.) and a skipper in inshore fishery (42,9 p.c.).
- The job attachment is not the same in all groups of interviewed persons. Particularly the age is an important source of variation : as the trainees grow older, job attachment obviously decreases. All of the fifteen-year-old trainees say they will "certainly" remain in sea fishery; among the sixteen-year-old, this rates at 77,4 p.c. and among the seventeen-year-old at 68,8 p.c. It should also be pointed out that job attachment is very strong among trainees living in the Zeebrugge and Ostend sub-areas, 41,1 and 37,5 p.c. respectively of whom say they will "certainly" remain in sea fishery; in Nieuwpoort, however, this proportion fell to 14,3 p.c. which clearly reveals an extremely weak job attachment.

- b) Trainees with a weak job attachment (1,4 p.c.)
(will "probably not" or "in no way" keep on at fisherman's life)

This category includes only one trainee who, as a matter of fact, has good prospects to take on another job, probably in the pilotage section of the Marine Department

3. Trade union affiliation

Six ship boys did not answer the question concerning affiliation to fishermen's unions (1); 53 out of the remaining 67 are affiliated to a union (79,1 p.c.) while 14 are not (20,9 p.c.). The degree of union affiliation is virtually equal in all types of vessels and fisheries (otter trawling : 80 p.c.; beam trawlers : 80,5 p.c.; inshore fishing : 76,9 p.c.), nor does the sub-area seem to have any effect (Nieuwpoort : 80 p.c.; Ostend : 82,7 p.c.; Zeebrugge : 76 p.c.). The motive that prompts trainees to trade union affiliation has not been studied explicitly. Yet, it should be mentioned that trainees are more highly unionized as years go by, ranking from 66,7 p.c. among the fifteenagers and 75,9 p.c. among the sixteenagers to 86,2 p.c. among the seventeenagers.

Further study revealed that most of the respondents want the trade unions to play an active part in defending the employees' interests of the trainees : indeed, 56,2 p.c. of them wish they would be represented in the Board of the Trainees' Fund by the fishermen's unions (1); only 27,4 p.c. of them are convinced of the contrary while 16,4 p.c. do not have any opinion. The differences of views on this matter according to the type of the ship they are enlisted on can be neglected.

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- (1) In Belgium : A.C.V. (Christian trade union)
A.B.V.V. (Socialist trade union)
A.C.L.V.B. (Liberal trade union)

In 1976-77, of all answers to the question : "Do you think it may be suitable that the trainees would be represented in the Board of the Fund ?" still some 78 p.c. were positive. (See : Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens 1976-77 ... op. cit. p. 18.)

The substantially lower percentage obtained at the present inquiry (56,2 p.c.) is probably due to the completion of the question with the stipulation " ... and this, of course, by the fishermen's unions ?".

V.- THE TRAINEES' FUND

1. Actual knowledge

A large majority of the interviewed trainees (69,9 p.c.) had already heard something about the Trainees' Fund before they joined the fishing industry. However, this acquaintance was quite less marked among inshore fisheries youngsters (53,3 p.c.) than among those in otter and beam trawling (73,3 and 76,3 p.c. respectively). Obviously, informal sources of information were quite important. As a matter of fact, those who had already heard something about the Fund, did mention as main sources of information : relatives (37 p.c.), friends and acquaintances (21,9 p.c.), the school (19,2 p.c.), fishermen's social setting (11 p.c.) and "others" (1,4 p.c.). In this respect, mainly the school (i.e. the fishing school) is obviously preponderant.

Only a rather restricted majority of the trainees got approximately a sound idea about the actual aim of the Fund (57,5 p.c.). Again, scores are distinctly higher among trainees in otter and beam trawling (60 and 60,5 p.c. respectively) than among their mates in inshore fisheries (40 p.c.) although the latter do have more opportunities to find out something about the administrative framework of the industry through contacts and chats. Or should it be true that the most relevant "quay side talks" are to be heard aboard rather than ashore ?

First of all, 34,2 p.c. of the respondents could not answer the question concerning the bodies that finance the Fund, which means that they could not name any of the three bodies that are represented in the Board of the Fund. Among those who did mention some of these bodies mainly "the ship-owners" (75 p.c.) and "the Government" (60,4 p.c.) are on the record as only one respondent did mention "the Province of West-Flanders" (2,1 p.c.) which is quite remarkable since the Province maintains an almost historical crew problem policy that dates back to an early stage long before the establishment of the Trainees' Fund

Moreover, actual knowledge is still poorer when checking about the constitution of the Board of the Fund : exactly 75,3 p.c. even cannot mention one single authority of those represented. Among the residue, 77,8 p.c. named the ship-owners' association "Rederscentrale", 27,8 p.c. named the Secretary of State for Agriculture and Fisheries, 22,2 p.c. the Province of West-Flanders and 11,1 p.c. the Minister of Transport, and that should make a strange effect on every insider when he realises that it must be widely known in the fishing industry that the Ministry of Transport is in Belgium the most important authority as to fleet and crew policies. However, as this question received an answer from only one quarter of the respondents, these figures should be considered with some circumspection.

2. Income sources

All trainees get from the Fund a remuneration, but, in addition, they may also - just like the other crew members - get a certain percentage of gross earnings and in some cases some sort of bonus (1). The share of each of these sources in the total trainees' income is indicated in table 6 which reveals that nearly all of them get an extra-Fund income as well : 69,9 p.c. of them indeed also receive a percentage of gross earnings as well as a bonus whereas 23,3 p.c. only receive the Fund salary plus a percentage of gross returns and only 2,7 p.c. of the respondents have to manage with the Fund salary only (= 513 Belgian francs net per day at sea) (2).

Still, some striking differences emerge from this table. E.g., the percentage of trainees depending on Fund salary and gross earnings percentage and bonus is very high among those sailing in the category 50 to 69 G.T. (90,9 p.c.), in otter trawling (86,6 p.c.) and among those having Nieuwpoort for home port (84,6 p.c.). On the contrary, the number of trainees who receive only a gross earnings percentage in addition to the Fund salary is rather high in the lowest G.T. category (47,6 p.c.), among those having Ostend for home port (40,7 p.c.) and among those employed in inshore fisheries (33,3 p.c.). It is striking and rather surprising that Zeebrugge does not obtain the highest score in neither of both cases.

TABLE 6.- Trainees classification, in p.c., according to income sources and, on the other hand, the type of fisheries, the G.T. category and the home port

	Fund salary, p.c. gross earning and bonus	Fund salary and p.c. of gross earnings	Fund salary only	Others	Total
<u>Type of fisheries</u>					
otter trawling	86,6	6,7	-	6,7	100,0
beam trawling	68,5	26,3	2,6	2,6	100,0
inshore fishing	60,0	33,3	6,7	-	100,0
others	60,0	20,0	-	20,0	100,0
<u>G.T. category</u>					
- 50 G.T.	47,6	47,6	4,8	-	100,0
50 - 69 G.T.	90,9	9,1	-	-	100,0
70 - 149 G.T.	77,8	11,1	-	11,1	100,0
≥ 150 G.T.	73,9	17,5	4,3	4,3	100,0
<u>Home port</u>					
Ostend	51,9	40,7	-	7,4	100,0
Zeebrugge	78,8	15,2	3,0	3,0	100,0
Nieuwpoort	84,6	7,7	7,7	-	100,0
Total	69,9	23,3	2,7	4,1	100,0

(1) In Belgium that bonus (in Dutch : "drinkgeld") includes either the value of some part of the catch or a certain percentage of gross earnings, in all cases for the benefit of the crew only.

(2) In 1976-77 there were still 20 p.c. of the interviewed persons who got a Fund salary only, which seems to show that the importance of the Fund has decreased. See : Enquête bij de reders en scheepsjongens, 1976-77 op. cit. ... p. 17.

Further to these findings it was suitable to examine the importance of the Fund salary in proportion to the total trainees income. Nine trainees did not answer this question while the answers of the remaining 64 can be described as follows :

Fund salary in proportion to total income	Frequency	
	abs.	p.c.
- 33 p.c.	18	28,2
33 - 49 p.c.	23	35,9
50 - 74 p.c.	15	23,5
≥ 75 p.c.	8	12,5
Total	64	100,0

The importance of the, yet very modest, Fund salary appears from the fact that it represents more than half of the income of more than one third of the trainees and more than one third of the income of more than 70 p.c. These figures do not differ considerably from one type of ship and fisheries to another. Moreover, the fact is thought-compelling that for 12,5 p.c. of the respondents the Fund salary represents 75 p.c. and more (and for some of them the totality) of their income. This is true for 8 trainees, most of whom are active in beam trawling (3) or inshore fishing (3), whose home ports are Nieuwpoort (5) or Ostend (3) and most of whom are 16 years old (5).

3. Income preferences

The respondents' income preferences are rather parallel to the way of remuneration. To the question which way of remuneration they prefer for trainees, 74 p.c. answered they prefer the Fund salary plus a gross earnings percentage plus a bonus, another 17,8 p.c. prefer the Fund salary plus a gross returns percentage and no bonus at all, whereas only 4,1 p.c. can get satisfaction with a gross returns percentage only (plus a bonus, just in case), 2,7 p.c. suggest other formulas and 1,4 p.c. had no opinion.

Classification of the answers according to the type of the ship only shows that the formula "Fund salary plus gross earnings percentage" is preferred more frequently among trainees in inshore fisheries (26,7 p.c.) and beam trawling (21,1 p.c.) than among those in otter trawling (6,7 p.c.) who, apparently, get a higher bonus. It is also remarkable that the formula "Fund salary plus gross earnings percentage and bonus" is clearly preferred more frequently among trainees whose home port is Zeebrugge (81,8 p.c.) or Nieuwpoort (76 p.c.) than among those who have Ostend for home port (63 p.c.).

In all, the preceding figures show that more than 90 p.c. of the respondents consider the Fund salary as an essential part of their income but also that they do not want it to be their only source of income. This is rather easy to understand when we realise that the Fund salary, apart from being modest, tends to stay at the same nominal level for years, which boils down to a permanent shrinking in real terms.

4. Satisfaction about Fund salary

The question whether they are satisfied with the pay they receive from the Fund, was answered affirmatively by nearly all the trainees : 23,2 p.c. said to be "very satisfied" and 64,4 p.c. were "satisfied" whereas only 11 p.c. were "less satisfied" and 1,4 were "not at all satisfied". This pay satisfaction is rather common to all types of ships since there are in all cases 80 to 90 p.c. of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" respondents. Nevertheless, there are some differences : among inshore fishermen the "very satisfied" ones score reach the highest level (33,3 p.c.) whereas the lowest level is recorded in beam trawling (15,8 p.c.), with otter trawling occupying an intermediate position (26,7 p.c.).

This rather general satisfaction is quite surprising when we realise that in real terms (i.e. constantly in francs of 1971) the Fund salary has decreased when compared to the initial and rather low pay applied at the time the Fund was established, i.e. in 1971 (285 francs net per day at sea) (1). An explanation of this phenomenon may be supplied by the fact that, as already mentioned, a large majority of the trainees do not want the Fund salary to be the only source of income; as a consequence, their appreciation is related to their total income .

5. Expectations with respect to Fund salary

On January 1st, 1980 the net Fund salary was nominally increased from 414 francs to 513 francs per day at sea; it has not been adjusted ever since. The respondents were therefore asked whether they think it suitable that the Fund salary should be increased and, if they do, in which way this should be done. As this question should normally receive a whole-hearted affirmative answer, it was seen to that the respondent would bear in mind the possible repercussion of a substantial rise in pay on the granted percentage of gross earnings. Nevertheless about two-thirds of the trainees were in favour of an adjustment of the Fund salary whereas somewhat more than one quarter of them wish the Fund salary would not be adjusted and 5,5 p.c. had no opinion whatsoever.

The adjustment advocated by a large majority can be operated either by a substantial rise up to the level of a normal remuneration, irrespective of any extra's granted by the ship owner, or, though not to the same extent, as a result of indexation. An examination of relevant findings shows that indexation is preferred by 50,7 p.c. only of the interviewed trainees 37,0 p.c. of whom are in favour of a total indexation and 13,7 p.c. of a limited indexation. As for the substantial rise of the Fund salary, this is advocated by only 16,4 p.c. The strong preference given to a limited adjustment over a

substantial rise seems to indicate the interviewed persons answered this ticklish question with great circumspection, which is rather surprising as to youngsters. Diagram 5 also shows that indexation is not wished by a majority on all types of ships. This is indeed true for beam trawlers and inshore fisheries, but only one third of trainees sailing on otter trawlers are in favour of this formula. It is also striking that none of the trainees in inshore fisheries demand a substantial rise of the Fund salary.

The rather weak consensus on indexation may be related to the fear that, if indexation were applied, the ship owner would lower or even abolish the gross earnings percentage. The answers given to the following question : "Do you think that some ship owners might lower (or abolish) the gross earnings percentage granted up to now if the Fund salary were indexed ?" show that this fear really exists. No less than 41,1 p.c. of the respondents think the owners would "certainly" (11,0 p.c.) or "probably" (30,1 p.c.) do so whereas 53,5 p.c. think the gross earnings percentage would "probably not" (38,4 p.c.) or "in no way" (15,1 p.c.) be reduced; 5,4 p.c. had no opinion at all. The fear that the gross earnings percentage would be reduced is particularly strong among trainees sailing on beam trawlers 50 p.c. of whom answer in that way, against 40 p.c. among those in otter trawling and only 27 p.c. of those in inshore fisheries. It is particularly the latter finding that gives rise to some questions since, as we have already noticed, none of the trainees in inshore fisheries is asking for a strong increase of the Fund salary which might be the main incentive for the ship owner to reconsider the gross returns percentage.

6. Attitude towards the Fund

By analysing several questions we can describe the attitude of trainees towards the Fund :

- First of all, we can conclude from this analysis that the influence of the Fund is not that great that it directly affects their decision to become a trainee. When asking their opinion on this subject, nearly all of them said that, if the Fund did not exist, they would "certainly" (71,2 p.c.) or "probably" (20,5 p.c.) have become a trainee as well. The percentage that would "certainly" have joined the fishing industry is considerably higher in inshore fisheries (86,7 p.c.) and beam trawling (73,7 p.c.) than in otter trawling (53,3 p.c.).
- However, nearly all respondents are convinced that, as for financial matters, the Fund is "very favourable" (45,2 p.c.) or "favourable" (50,7 p.c.) whereas only some of them think it is less favourable (2,7 p.c.) or "not favourable" (1,4 p.c.). The percentage of respondents who consider the financial aspect as "very favourable" is higher in beam trawling (50 p.c.) than in inshore fisheries (46,7 p.c.) and otter trawling (33,3 p.c.).

- This does not automatically imply that trainees think the Fund may be very significant in solving the crew problem. Only 38,3 p.c. of the respondents think that, in the short run, the Fund's activities are likely to contribute "certainly" (6,8 p.c.) or "probably" (31,5 p.c.) to solving the crew problem in sea fisheries; 41,1 p.c. of them answered "probably not" (17,8 p.c.) or "in no way" (23,3 p.c.) and are obviously convinced of the reverse; finally, 20,6 p.c. of them do not have any opinion. The opinions regarding the long-term impact of the Fund are entirely in the same line, except for the fact that "certainly" scores a bit higher (11,0 p.c.).
Diagram 6 shows that, as to the short-term impact, the most positive opinions ("certainly" and "probably") were recorded in beam trawling (50 p.c.), whereas in otter trawling (33,4 p.c.) and inshore fisheries (20,0 p.c.) the Fund's contribution to solving the crew problem is considered far less important.
The opinion on its contribution in the long run is virtually identic.

- Nearly all trainees had no opinion on the question whether the activity of the Fund can be improved : only a few of them (13,7 p.c.) answered they wanted something to improve. The following suggestions have been recorded :
 - Clothing allowance from the Fund
 - The Fund is largely unknown and should be given more publicity
 - Pay 3 or 4 times a month instead of fortnightly
 - Compulsory enrollment of two trainees on large vessels
 - Fast payment
 - Either a higher percentage of gross earnings or a climbing Fund salary
 - Days at sea of less than 4 hours should be considered as full-time days at sea in case of an overall record of less than 75 days at sea (unemployment regulations).

While trainees obviously do have a definite opinion on the financial aspects, i.e. matters that affect themselves individually and directly, they apparently do not have a sound insight in common interests and management measures that should interest their group anyway. This should, however, not be considered abnormal, given the young age of the respondents.

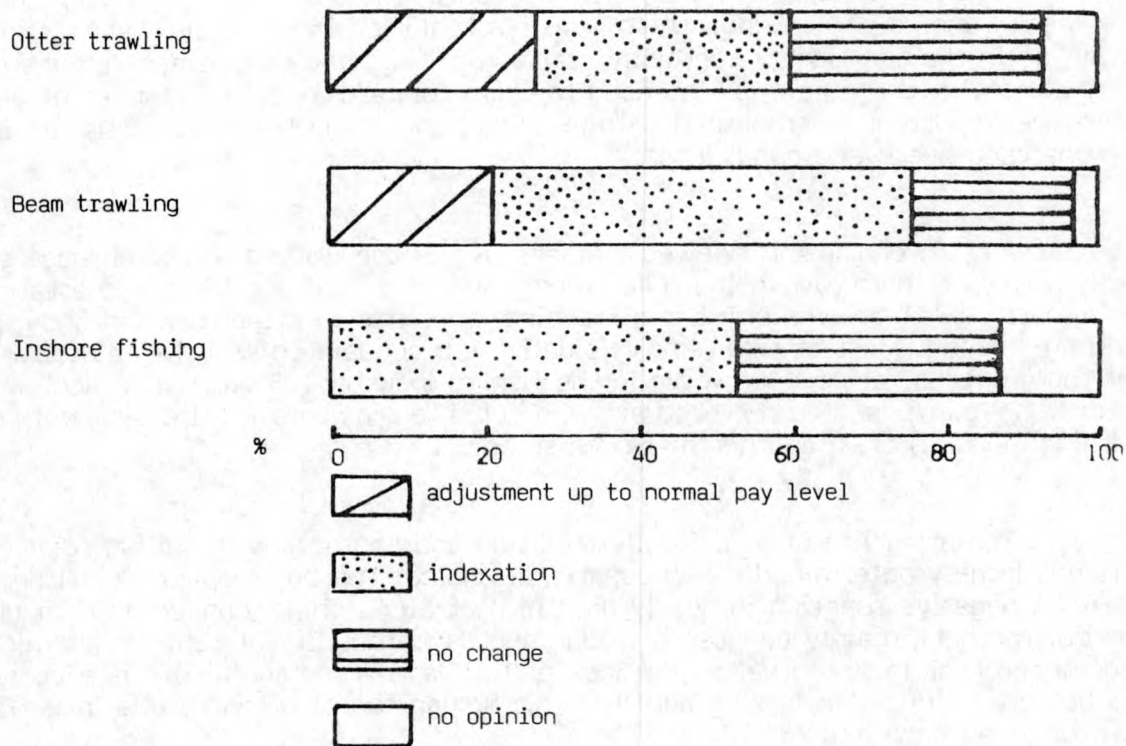


Diagram 5.- Classification (in p.c.) of the trainees according to their wishes with respect to the net Fund salary

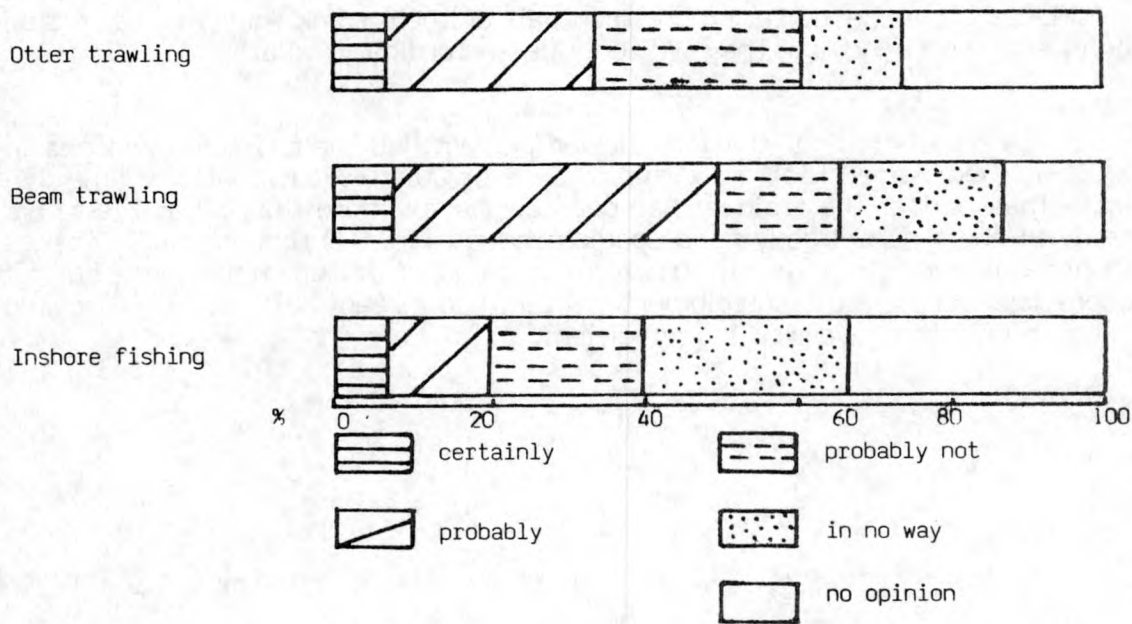


Diagram 6.- Classification (in p.c.) of the trainees according to their view on the Fund's potential of solving the crew problem in the short run

SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

73 trainees working in Belgian sea fisheries were interviewed at the end of 1983 on their attitude towards their occupation, and more particularly, towards the Trainees Fund. This Fund, which was established in 1971, aims at stemming depopulation in the sea fishery sector by granting a fixed and guaranteed remuneration per day at sea. The inquiry was intended to bring forward a certain number of elements which are important when assessing the Fund's impact and trying to adjust its activity to changing needs and conditions.

80 p.c. of the interviewed trainees live in the Ostend and Zeebrugge sub-areas; only a few of them live in the Nieuwpoort sub-area or outside the coastal area. The majority of them works in beam trawling, one fifth in otter trawling and a further one fifth in inshore fishing. Most of them are originally well acquainted with life at sea as many of them have a father who works in the fishing industry (28 p.c.) or in another maritime sector (29 p.c.); among the brothers who got a job, quite a lot are also working in sea fishing (45 p.c.) or in another maritime sector (19 p.c.).

Tempting life at sea, family tradition and contacts with sailing relatives and friends largely determined the occupational choice. The boy's option for fisheries was received with a negative reaction in nearly one third of all families (concerned through father and/or mother), mainly because of rough and dangerous life at sea. Many trainees are convinced that in sea fisheries the lack of full family and social life is experienced as being a painful deprivation and that this human factor often results in leaving the sector at an early stage.

"Life and work in the open air" and "financial advantages" are considered as the most interesting prospects of a fisherman's career; on the contrary, the above mentioned absence from home and the dangers related to the occupation are considered as the least attractive aspects of the occupation. Nevertheless, job attachment is very important since 77 p.c. say they will "certainly" stay on in sea fishing while another 19 p.c. will "probably" do so. Although most of the trainees prefer and want to become a "skipper" or an "engineer" more than half of them think they will be a "senior sailor" only, and one fifth think they will only be an "ordinary sailor".

Virtually half of the interviewed persons had their first stay at sea in 1983. Most of them joined their first ship in June or July (63 p.c.). At the time of the inquiry more than half of the trainees had been at sea for more than 50 and less than 200 days. Many of them had already been unemployed (31 p.c.) (1) though mainly for less than one month which does not reveal structural or conjunctural unemployment, but rather frictional unemployment. As to transshipment, 59 p.c. had already left for an other ship, mainly because of rather bad working conditions.

(1) "technical" unemployment (due to ship under repair, laying up, etc.) not included.

About two-thirds of the trainees do hold a certificate, licence or diploma of the education they got. Practically all of them went to the fishing school; they mainly have an apprentice certificate or an aspirant skipper diploma. A majority of the respondents considered the education given at fishing school and, particularly, the deckhand's training aboard as a positive vocational training. More than three quarters wish to receive continued training. It is significant that 55 p.c. of them are still in touch with their school (regularly or sporadically).

Actual knowledge of the Trainees' Fund is very limited. As a matter of fact, most trainees had already heard something about the Fund (70 p.c.) before they joined the industry, mainly from relatives and friends, but only a small majority had somehow a sound idea of the exact aim of the Fund (57 p.c.). 34 p.c. of them could not answer the question regarding the Fund financing authorities and even as many as 75 p.c. did not have any idea of which authorities are represented in the Board of the Fund.

Apart from the Fund remuneration, 70 p.c. of the trainees get a certain percentage of gross earnings as well and in some cases some sort of bonus, while 23 p.c. receive only a grossing percentage. For more than 70 p.c. of the trainees the Fund's pay constitutes at least one-third of the income. In this connection, 74 p.c. prefer the Fund's pay plus a percentage and a bonus. On the whole, 88 p.c. of the respondents said to be "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the remuneration they get from the Fund. Nevertheless, about a two thirds majority wish this pay might be adjusted : by far, most of them prefer indexation (51 p.c.) whereas only a few of them prefer a substantial rise in pay up to a "normal" pay level (16 p.c.). Moreover, about one quarter of the respondents wish to maintain the Fund's pay at its current level. Obviously, many of them are afraid the ship owner would "certainly" or "probably" lower their percentage if the Fund salary were index-linked (41 p.c.).

The attitude towards the Fund is definitely positive : nearly all trainees consider its impact as "very favourable" (45 p.c.) or "favourable" (51 p.c.). As far as they have an opinion, the answers re the question on the Fund's short-term impact on solving the crew problem, were positive for 38 p.c. and negative for 41 p.c. Anyway, it is clear that the sheer existence of the Fund was not likely to have any effect on their vocational decision; as a matter of fact, 71 p.c. of them would "certainly" and 20 p.c. would "probably" have become a trainee even if there were no Fund. Obviously, the importance and the part played by the Fund is not in the first place to attract youngsters (besides, this may be quite impossible with the current Fund remuneration as a "decoy"), but rather to keep the trainees who signed on within the sector, by means of an attractive combination of the Fund's pay and certain other sources of income (percentage of gross earnings plus possibly a bonus). The existing problem arises from the considerable differences among those other sources of income (as opposed to the Fund's pay which is the same for all trainees) and from the fact that because of this strongly individual character - it is very difficult to assess these sources, and at most only approximately (as for the "bonus", any assessment is clearly impossible), which means that the crew policy in this field can be based only upon momentaneous and variable recordings that are often neither very accurate nor quite reliable.

Thus, the activity of the Fund (and policy regarding this activity) is apparently squeezed between the mission the Belgian Parliament conferred to the Fund and on the other side the actual milk-and-water situation the Fund was brought to almost immediately after its establishment in 1971. Generally speaking, employers and employees (ship owners and trainees) seem to be well adjusted to this actual evolution regarding income composition : for most of the trainees the Fund's pay is no longer a "remuneration" in the sense the law intended it to be. As a matter of fact, it is only one of the elements of their income. In all those cases where this adjustment occurred in a less satisfying way, this constitutes a permanent cause of an early exit, i.e. before the trainee starts to work as an ordinary or able sailor. Consequently, part of the human investment made by the authorities and by the ship owners gets lost.

These conclusion, which can be completed by other elements, may be suitable as a basis for an adapted policy relating to the Fund. Yet, of course, this is not the object of this sociological study the aim of which consisted only in bringing forward some elements that can be used within the framework of an efficient crew policy of which the Trainees'Fund is by all means an important component.

RESUME

De novembre 1983 à janvier 1984, on a interrogé 73 mousses de la pêche maritime belge sur leur attitude à l'égard de leur profession, et plus particulièrement envers le Fonds des Mousses. Ce Fonds, qui a été créé en 1971, veut empêcher le dépeuplement dans la pêche maritime en accordant aux jeunes une rémunération fixe et garantie par jour de mer.

Cette étude donne un compte rendu de cette enquête sociale. Tout d'abord sont exposés quelques aspects généraux des mousses interrogés ; ces aspects caractérisent aussi bien leur personne (âge, situation familiale) que la profession qu'ils exercent (classe et type de navire) (chap. 1). Ensuite, on essaie de détecter les facteurs qui ont déterminé le choix de la profession des jeunes; en même temps, on prête attention à leur niveau d'instruction ainsi qu'à l'attitude qu'ils adoptent vis-à-vis de leur formation professionnelle scolaire et postscolaire (chap. 2).

Ensuite sont commentés quelques aspects importants de la situation professionnelle des jeunes (début de carrière, mobilité, durée du travail, chômage etc...) et on sonde les opinions et les espérances concernant la carrière professionnelle proprement dite (chap. III et IV). Enfin, on analyse de façon détaillée le Fonds des Mousses : dans quelle mesure ce Fonds est-il connu des jeunes ? Quel rôle joue-t-il dans la rémunération ? Dans quelle mesure les mousses sont-ils satisfaits de la rémunération qui leur vient du Fonds, et quels sont leurs souhaits à cet égard ?

L'analyse de tous ces aspects permet de toucher quelques éléments qui sont importants pour l'évaluation du fonctionnement du Fonds, et dès lors aussi pour les tentatives de mener une politique plus adéquate concernant les équipages.

APPENDIX 1.- Review (in p.c.), according to the home port, of some important findings regarding the occupational situation and the attitude of the trainees

	Ostend	Zeebrugge	Nieuwpoort
<u>Ship category</u>			
- 50 GRT	37,1	24,2	23,0
50 - 69 GRT	7,4	12,1	38,5
70 - 149 GRT	29,6	18,2	30,8
150 GRT and more	25,9	45,5	7,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
<u>Type of fisheries</u>			
otter trawling	25,9	6,1	46,2
beam trawling	40,8	69,6	30,8
inshore fishing	25,9	18,2	15,4
others	7,4	6,1	7,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
<u>Education & training</u>			
certificate, license or diploma			
yes	70,4	60,6	76,9
no	29,6	39,4	23,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
<u>Continued training</u>			
yes	88,9	66,7	76,9
no	11,1	33,3	23,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
<u>Staying on in fisheries</u>			
- certainly	63,0	81,8	92,3
- probably	29,6	15,2	7,7
- probably not	3,7	-	-
- in no way	-	-	-
- no opinion	3,7	3,0	-
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
<u>Increase current net pay per day at sea</u>			
- up to normal pay level	29,6	12,1	-
- by means of index-linking	33,3	60,6	61,6
- no change	33,3	27,3	15,4
- no opinion	3,8	-	23,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

APPENDIX 2.- Sociological inquiry among trainees in the Belgian fishing fleet
"Trainees" questionnaire

1. Identification

1.1. In which area do you live at the moment ?

- Nieuwpoort - De Panne - Adinkerke - Veurne - Koksijde - Oostduinkerke
- Oostende - Middelkerke - Westende - Bredene - De Haan
- Zeebrugge - Blankenberge - Heist - Knokke - Wenduine
- another town or village in the province of West Flanders
- others

1.2. What is your age ?

- 14 years
- 15 years
- 16 years
- 17 years

1.3. Number of

- sisters
- brothers

who

- go to school - fishing school
- other education
- are working - in sea fishing
- in another maritime sector
- elsewhere
- are unemployed
- deceased

1.4. Which is (was) your father's chief occupation ?

- working - in sea fisheries as - ship owner - sailing
- ashore
- skipper
- chief mate
- engineer
- sailor
- others
- elsewhere - in another maritime sector
- in a non-maritime sector

2. Occupational situation

2.1. Are you an active fisherman for the time being ?

- no
- yes - as a trainee
- in another function - ordinary sailor
- able sailor
- junior engineer
- others

2.2. If you are now sailing as a trainee :

a) Since when are you sailing ?

- year
 - unspecified
 - 1980
 - 1981
 - 1982
 - 1983

- month
 - unspecified
 - January
 - February
 - March
 - April
 - May
 - June
 - July
 - August
 - September
 - October
 - November
 - December

b) In which ship category ?

- unspecified
- 50 GRT
- 50 - 69 GRT
- 70 - 149 GRT
- 150 GRT

c) Which is your home port ?

- unspecified
- Ostend
- Zeebrugge
- Nieuwpoort

d) Transshipment frequency :

- unspecified
- 0 x
- 1 x
- 2 x
- 3 x
- 4 x
- more than 4 x

e) For what reason(s) did you leave your ship for an other one ?

- unspecified
- unprofitable ship
- underpaid
- bad treatment and or working conditions
- too long voyages
- technical reasons (ship out of service, etc.)
- other reasons (which ?)

f) How are you paid ?

- unspecified
- only by the Fund
- by the Fund + p.c. gross earnings
- by the Fund + p.c. + bonus

g) Which type of ship are you sailing on ?

- unspecified
- otter trawler
- beam trawler
- inshore vessel
- others

2.3. If you are no longer working in fisheries, for which reason(s) did you leave this sector ?

- unspecified
- income insufficient
- never sailing on a decent vessel
- prefer working ashore
- prefer going back to school
- family circumstances
- bad working conditions (which ?)
- other reason (which ?)

2.4. How long did you sail ? (in days at sea)

2.5. Have you ever been unemployed trainee ?
("technical" unemployment not included)

- yes
- no

If you have, for how long ?

- 1 month
- 1 - 2 months
- 2 - 3 months
- 3 months or more
- unspecified

2.6. Do you remember some kind of trouble with other members of the crew at the time when you signed on as a trainee ?

- yes
- no

If you do, what was the nature of this trouble ?

- unspecified
- financial
- other (which ?)

3. Occupational choice and vocational training

3.1. Why did you become a trainee ?

- family tradition
- tempting life at sea
- good fisherman's income
- very special work and life
- to get away from school
- for lack of better job prospects
- other incentives (which ?)

3.2. How did you parents react to this choice ?

- in a positive way
- in a negative way
- in a neutral way

If their reaction was negative, why ?

- unspecified
- preference for occupation ashore
- "higher" ranking ambitions for their son
- fearing a "rat-trap" career
- hard and dangerous life
- financial reasons
- other reasons (which ?)

3.3. Did you get a certificate, licence or diploma ?

- yes
- no

If you did, could you specify :

- a) sea fisheries
 - apprentice certificate
 - navigating regulations certificate
 - diploma of aspirant skipper
 - licence motors - 120 HP
 - others (which ?)
- b) technical school
 - A3^(x) level diploma
 - A2^(x) level diploma
- c) grammar school
 - lower degree diploma
 - higher degree diploma

3.4. How do you appreciate your theoretical and practical vocational training when you were a school boy at the fisheries school ?

- very good
- good
- not so good
- bad
- no opinion

3.5. How do you appreciate your continued vocational training aboard as a trainee (up to now) ?

- very good
- good
- not so good
- bad
- no opinion

3.6. Do you consider further skill perfection ?

- yes
- no

If you do, in which field ?

- unspecified
- deckhand
- engines (engineer's certificate)
- certificate of skipper 2nd class
- certificate of skipper 1st class

(x) A3 : lower degree
A2 : higher degree

4. Attitude towards the fishing industry

4.1. Which are, in your opinion, the most attractive aspects of fisherman's life ?

- life and work in the open air
- rewarding occupation, as for the human aspect
- financially interesting
- great chances of social promotion
(each trainee may become a skipper and/or a ship owner)
- small risk of unemployment
- no military service
- others (which ?)

4.2. Which are, in your opinion, the least attractive aspects of fisherman's life ?

- always outdoors (no family life)
- a hard and dangerous job
- ups and downs as to income
- lack of social status
- few alternative job prospects for middle-aged fisherman
- others (which ?)

4.3. Do you think you will stay on in the fishing sector ?

- certainly
- probably
- probably not
- certainly not
- no opinion

4.4. If you will "certainly" or "probably" stay on in the industry :

a) which function will you perform ?

- not specified
- ordinary sailor
- able-bodied sailor
- junior engineer
- engineer
- no opinion
- ordinary or able-bodied sailor

b) which function do you prefer ?

- not specified
- engineer
- chief mate
- skipper
- ship owner
- no opinion

4.5. If you will "probably not" or won't "certainly not" stay on in fisheries :

a) which factor will determine this option in the first place ?

- not specified
- (with respect to military service) till after the age of 25
- income conditions
- alternative employment prospects ashore
- my wife-to-be
- other factors (which ?)
- no opinion

b) Have you particular prospects of another occupation ?

- not specified
- yes
- no

If you do, which occupation ?

If you do not, which occupation do you prefer ?

5. Actual knowledge of the Trainees' Fund

5.1. Did you know there is a Trainees' Fund before you joined the fishing industry ?

- yes
- no

If you did, where did you get this information ?

- at school
- in fishermen's social setting
- from relatives
- from friends and acquaintances
- from the trade union
- from the ship owner's association (+ magazine)
- from radio, television, newspapers and magazines
- from another source (which ?)

5.2. Do you know which is the aim of the Fund ?

- yes
- no

5.3. Do you know the amount of the net Fund remuneration per day at sea ? (513 Belgian francs)

- yes
- no

5.4. Who's financing the Fund ?

- the ship owners
- the State (Ministry of Agriculture)
- the Province of West-Flanders
- wrong answer
- no opinion

5.5. Which authorities are represented in the Board of the Fund ?

- the ship owners' association
- the Secretary of State (or Minister) of Agriculture
- the Minister of Transport
- the Province of West-Flanders
- wrong answer
- no opinion

6. Financial aspects of the Fund

6.1. Do you think the Fund is financially

- very favourable for the trainees ?
- favourable
- rather not favourable
- not favourable
- no opinion

- very favourable for the ship owners ?
- favourable
- rather not favourable
- not favourable
- no opinion

6.2. Which is, in your opinion, the best trainees' remuneration system ?

- through the Fund only
- Fund + p.c. gross earnings
- Fund + p.c. + bonus
- only p.c. (plus possibly a bonus)
- others (which ?)
- no opinion

6.3. Are you satisfied with the pay you get (got) from the Fund ?

- very satisfied
- satisfied
- hardly satisfied
- not at all satisfied
- no opinion

6.4. On January 1, 1980 the Fund's net remuneration (after taxes) was increased from 414 BF to 513 BF per day at sea and it has never been adjusted since to the climbing index. Do you think that some ship owners may lower (or even delete) the trainees' percentage of gross earnings if the pay were index-linked ?

- certainly
- probably
- probably not
- certainly not
- no opinion

6.5. Do you think it suitable to increase the net Fund's pay per day at sea ?

- to a large extent, i.e. to normal pay level, irrespective of any extra's granted by the ship owner
- overhaul manoeuvre only (adjustment to current index)
- to a small extent, without full index adjustment
- no change
- current pay is sufficient
- no opinion

7. Attitude towards the Fund

7.1. Would you have become a trainee if there were no Trainees' Fund ?

- certainly
- probably
- probably not
- in no way
- no opinion

7.2. Do you think a trainee (who got no motorist training) will find it difficult to get signed on if he is still less than 18 and no longer chargeable to the Fund ?

- very difficult
- rather difficult
- rather easy
- very easy
- no opinion

7.3. Do you think the Fund's activity increases the supply of trainees ?

- to a large extent
- slightly
- no influence
- no opinion

7.4. Do you think the Fund's activity is likely to help solving the crew problem in sea fisheries ?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| - in the short run | - certainly |
| | - probably |
| | - probably not |
| | - certainly not |
| | - no opinion |
|
 | |
| - in the long run | - certainly |
| | - probably |
| | - probably not |
| | - certainly not |
| | - no opinion |

7.5. Is it, in your opinion, suitable that the trainees might be represented as employees in the Board of the Fund, and this, of course, by the fishermen's unions ?

- yes
- no
- no opinion

7.6. Do you think the activity of the Fund can be improved ?

- yes
- no

If you do, in which way ?

8. Family and miscellaneous subjects

8.1. Where do you live ?

- with your parents (or tutor)
- in a fishermen's home
- in your own flat or quarters
- home sharing

8.2. Family life of sailors (and of sailors's wives), as well as social life and leisure, is, of course, very different from what our present society considers as being "normal".

a) Do you think fishermen do experience this social gap as a painful deprivation ?

- yes
- hardly
- no
- no opinion

b) If you do, do you think this leads to leaving the industry at an early stage ?

- not specified
- yes
- hardly
- no
- no opinion

8.3. Can you give a detailed and full description of usual trainees' duties aboard ?

- a) deckhand's assistance
- hauling in the net
 - collecting, washing, gutting fish
 - sorting and storing catches
 - shovel and chop ice
 - mending nets
 - shackling
 - handing in fish gear
 - others (specify, if possible)
- b) upkeep
- cleaning
 - painting
 - others (specify)
- c) practical lessons in
- standing watches
 - steering
- d) household work aboard
- e) others (specify)

8.4. Are you still in touch with school ?

- regularly
- sporadically
- never

8.5. Are you affiliated to a trade union ?

- yes
- no

8.6. Which part does the Fund's remuneration represent in your total trainees' income ?

- 33 p.c.
- 33 - 49 p.c.
- 50 - 74 p.c.
- 75 p.c. or more
- I am no longer a trainee
- no answer

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