

Short-term Model

The government of Brazil is backing increased production through promoting industrial fisheries and aquaculture to the detriment of small-scale fisheries

With the election in Brazil in 2003 of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the Workers Party candidate, high expectations were raised that policies would be developed that favoured the working classes. In the case of the fisheries sector, this would mean policies favouring artisanal fishworkers. Over the next eight years (2003-2011), including the second mandate of President Lula, many programmes

different institutional structures and lines of action, which are important to bear in mind when trying to get a better understanding of the current policy. The first period, from 1964 to 1989, was characterized by a development model for modernization that was environmentally irresponsible. In the second period, from 1989 to 1998, the government reacted against what had preceded, and established a policy that was fundamentally conservationist. The third period, from 1998 to 2003, was characterized by institutional infighting where attempts to resuscitate the development of the sector were blocked by environmental requirements.

From 1964 to 1989, a period that included the military government (1964-1985), the body responsible for sectoral policies was the Department (Superintendence) for Fisheries Development (SUDEPE), which implemented a development-oriented policy with a particular focus on industrial fishing, and making use of, *inter alia*, fiscal incentives and tax breaks in the 1967 Fisheries Law. In this period, various modernizing measures were also applied in the artisanal fisheries sector, notably, the financing of motors, although these occupied a minor space in the entirety of programmes undertaken.

Extractive fishing

The overall impact generated by this policy, from an economic perspective, was the greatest-ever continual growth of extractive fishing the country has seen. However, from an environmental perspective, it generated overfishing of the main resources, highlighted by the collapse

and actions were conceived and implemented by the government for the fisheries sector. However, a rigorous analysis of these shows that in the case of artisanal fisheries, although it had been given greater consideration than ever before, it was not the subsector that benefited most. The actions directed at the other subsectors, along with other omissions have, in reality, weakened artisanal fishworkers. In the last years, all indications are that the government of President Dilma Rousseff (who took office in 2011 and continues to date), who comes from the same party as President Lula, is continuing and deepening these policies, creating conditions that make artisanal fisheries even more vulnerable.

Prior to Lula's government, fisheries policy in Brazil passed through three distinct phases with

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of the 'Brazilian sardine' (*Sardinella brasiliensis*). The fishery resource crisis, in addition to various denouncements over misappropriation of public funds and corruption, led to the extinction of SUDEPE.

In 1989, after the revival of democracy and the enactment of the new Constitution, the functions of SUDEPE were passed to a newly created environmental institute, the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). This later became the main executive branch of the Ministry for the Environment, created in 1992. In this period, which goes up to 1998, in addition to responsibility for fisheries policy being in the hands of the federal environmental body, there was a general adoption of neoliberal policies which constrained certain kinds of public investment, and which led a conservationist policy focus. In this way, all incentives for developing fisheries activities were cut, being considered in their entirety to be destructive, and various management instruments were created, which sought to restrict fishing effort and protect certain species.

The third period began in 1998 with the creation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DPA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, which was an attempt to remove the environmental focus of the sector and implement once again a policy for its development. Thus a period of fierce institutional conflicts was opened up between the Ministry of Agriculture and IBAMA, caused by the division of competencies in the regulation and management of fishery resources and by the barely started resumption of investment in the fisheries sector. The focus now is on the industrial fisheries sector and commercial aquaculture.

Artisanal fisheries was, therefore, not the target of practically any governmental action over these three periods, which were centred as much on the development of the industrial sector as they were on conservation and preserving resources. In this way, the social condition of the artisanal fishermen, their contribution to the

economy and to food security, and the cultural diversity of their livelihoods were basically at the periphery of governmental concerns. What is more, developmentally oriented and conservationist policies, in addition to the absence of substantive policies, forces artisanal fishers and their communities to remain in precarious living conditions. In this way, these fishers were the principal victims of the fishery resource crisis although they had not been mainly responsible for causing it; they remained condemned to poverty and had to face unequal competition with industrial fisheries and commercial aquaculture.

When President Lula began his first government, in 2003, it was hoped that he would act to favour artisanal fisheries, which is responsible for more than half of the national fishery production, directly providing employment for 700,000 people and sustaining around two mn people.

The main actions taken by the Lula government to implement the new fisheries policy were: the creation of a specific and hierarchical sectoral body and, years later, a new fisheries law; the creation of new spaces for, and forms of dialogue between, the government and civil society; and the incorporation, in the body for developing the sector, of environmental regulatory and

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A truck marketing fish in Brasilia, Brazil. Overfishing has led to the collapse of the main fish resources in the country

management functions which previously were implemented by environmental bodies. Thus, President Lula, at the start of his government, in 2003, created the Special Secretariat for Aquaculture and Fisheries (SEAP) with ministerial status. In 2009, SEAP was transformed into the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA), which represented an increase in human and financial resources, widening and strengthening institutional capacity.

As regards the spaces for dialogue with civil society involved in the sector, the government created two main bodies: the National Fisheries

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Council (CONAPE), which is a permanent collegiate body that is consultative in nature, created in 2003 as part of the SEAP structure, and the so-called National Conferences. Preceded by State-level conferences to which all the fishers from the communities are invited, these are a mechanism for knowing the demands of civil society, and have been carried out for fisheries as well as for other sectors. CONAPE is made up of 54 members, 27 being nominated by civil society every two years for its assemblies (15 representatives from workers' social movements, 10 representatives from the commercial sector, and two from academia and research), with the other 27 members from governmental bodies linked to the issue. In the period analyzed, CONAPE met two to three times per year, held three National Fisheries and Aquaculture Conferences (2003, 2006 and 2009), gathered 600 to 1,500 people, and also organized a Conference of Women Workers in Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2004.

Although the creation of these spaces for participation represents an

important step forward democratically because popular demands can be expressed through them, on their own they do not guarantee that these demands will be incorporated into public policies. What is more, participation in these spaces, above all when numerous, can be used by the government in power as a show of strong support for its own objectives, or for electoral purposes, seeking to capture votes, and, in any case, may provide a mechanism for legitimizing policies that do not benefit the working classes or which may even undermine them. In fact, the four fisheries conferences organized contained all those aspects to varying degrees.

Also in 2009, alongside the creation of the Ministry, a new legal framework was approved for fisheries in the country, Law No 11.959, which instituted the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries. One of the main changes arising from this legal restructuring was the incorporation of competence for fisheries administration and aquaculture management in the hands of the MPA.

Up to that moment, this competence was split between SEAP, the Ministry for the Environment (MMA) and IBAMA, but with the greater power vested in the environmental bodies. SEAP perceived the activities of these bodies as an obstacle to the boost it wanted to give industrial fisheries and especially to aquaculture.

Then, after years of tensions and conflicts, the new fisheries law made the MPA the co-ordinating body of the fishery management and regulatory processes, while maintaining the environmental bodies as collaborators, in the System for Shared Management for Fisheries Resources which also foresaw the participation of scientists and resource users.

Political action

This institutional reorganization constituted a political action through which the federal government, backed and legitimized by the participation

and support of the artisanal fishermen and other fisheries and aquaculture sectors, brought together a range of forces. This enabled it to open up the way for boosting fish production through the creation of a new ministry, the approval of new legislation and, above all, the weakening of environmental barriers.

Fisheries policy objectives were oriented by the government to consolidate growth in production as the main aim, as was announced in the first Political Project of SEAP, presented after the First National Conference of Aquaculture and Fisheries in 2003, and enshrined in 2008 in the first systematic plan for the fisheries sector entitled "More Fisheries and Aquaculture". Additionally, it included amongst its objectives the modernization of the sector, for capture, processing and trade, and, secondarily, to increase the social rights and income for artisanal fishers.

Recognizing that most fish stocks in coastal areas were overexploited, but not putting special effort to reverse the trend, the government drew up incentives for high-seas industrial fish production, based on the argument that in deep waters there still existed some margin to increase fish production.

In this way, for extractive fisheries, the government established industrial fishing companies rather than artisanal fishermen as the main actors for realizing the intended growth. To generate such growth, the government developed various lines of action. One of them is the Pro-fleet programme, which consists of a credit policy to build vessels and establish a national fleet for the Brazilian exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This is expected to increase fishing for species such as tuna and tuna-like species. This fleet would serve to replace foreign vessels which were being chartered and would provide the country with resources that were also being appropriated by foreign fleets.

It is noteworthy that, in addition, the Pro-fleet provided funding for replacement of industrial fishing

vessels that operate on coastal stocks of shrimp, snapper (*Lutjanus purpureus*) and piramutaba (Brazilian catfish, *Branchyplatystoma vaillant*) that was conditional on older vessels being scrapped. The programme, however, did not achieve the desired success: only eight vessels were financed of the 130 planned.

In addition to the above, industrial fisheries benefited from the gradual increase in the Diesel Subsidies Programme for vessel fuel, which, later on, the government tried to extend to artisanal fishermen, but with limited success due to operational difficulties. It may be said, then, that this programme favoured industrial fisheries, and contributed to making fishing that was not viable environmentally, economically viable, and, on the other hand, contributed to increased conflicts between industrial and artisanal fisheries.

The expansion of credit for the fisheries sector has also been a priority for the government, and was consolidated with the launch of the First Water Harvest Plan, in 2010. New lines of credit were created and the ceilings increased for industrial fisheries and aquaculture. On the other hand, there was increased inclusion of artisanal fishermen in the National Programme for Family Agriculture (PRONAF), the credit

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The Pro-fleet programme in Brazil revolves around a credit policy to build vessels and establish a national fleet for the country's exclusive economic zone

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The Third National Conference of Fisheries and Aquaculture was held in Brasilia in 2009. Aquaculture is the main fisheries development focus of the Brazilian government

system designed specifically to aid such producers, which suffers from many limitations and implementation problems.

Data on credit policy available with the MPA, show that an amount of R\$ 1,484,230,710.00 (around US\$ 811,055,033 at the 2010 exchange rate of R\$1.83 =US\$1) was applied over the years 2003 to 2010, in a total of 212,662 contracts. But this data does not differentiate between the beneficiaries and enable us to know how much was destined for each fisheries subsector, nor the amount destined for the purchase of fishing gears, vessels and/or motors.

The government had already begun to attach increasing importance to aquaculture, so that when the MPA removed the barriers set up by the environmental bodies and assumed the management function for regulating aquaculture, they undertook the demarcation of aquaculture parks as well as implementing local plans for mariculture development. From then on, aquaculture evolved into the subsector considered to be the most important for achieving productive growth and, therefore, was afforded the highest priority by governmental policy. The MPA is providing concessions for aquaculture areas that are either “paid or gifted”, effectively selling off and giving

away public waters for private cultivation. Meanwhile, proposals are afoot to make the production chain in aquaculture vertically integrated, through the development and adoption of technology packages.

Although the allocation of aquaculture ‘concessions’ is aimed at small producers and artisanal fishers, the policy encourages privatization of inland and marine waters.

Without a doubt, this will undermine artisanal fishers, by disposing off the spaces where they normally work. The government does not admit to this conflict, and continues to hide behind the claim that the artisanal fishers, thanks to its aid, can turn themselves into fish farmers. This, they say, would help remove the restrictions imposed by the resource crisis and will permanently improve their earnings and living conditions.

Aquaculture is the main fisheries development focus of this government. However, the future being programmed for artisanal fishers is not conducive for their remaining as fishermen.

It is important to highlight that, despite evidence to the contrary, since the creation of SEAP, the government discourse insists that its intention is to give priority attention to artisanal fisheries. The sectoral distribution of SEAP’s budget over the years 2003 to 2009, at first glance, seems to confirm this intention.

Thus, looking at Table 1, the overall numbers show that artisanal fisheries received the greatest amount of allocations (36 per cent), followed by the industrial sector, which received 26 per cent of the total, and aquaculture, which received barely 14 per cent, with the remainder destined for spending on administration and publicity.

Reversed distribution

However, if we take account of the number of people in each sector, who are the real beneficiaries of the allocations, the distribution is reversed. This shows that the 700,000 artisanal fishermen of the country receive much less compared to the few

thousand industrial entrepreneurs, considering that there are barely 5,000 vessels in this subsector.

In turn, recalling that over this period, SEAP had not yet removed the environmental barriers in order to be able to promote aquaculture on a massive scale, the amount destined for the latter also represents a relatively large amount. But, what interests us here, and what these numbers confirm, is that, despite the official discourse, artisanal fishers are not the main beneficiaries of government aid for the fisheries sector.

What then is the government's actual policy for artisanal fisheries? Starting with actions aimed at fish production, the main measure used by the government has been the increasing artisanal fishermen's access to credit under PRONAF. But the loans and complementary conditions encourage replacement of fishing equipment and not creation of new capacity. Input measures were targeted at ice distribution and fuel subsidies. However, implementation has been ineffective.

Other measures were aimed at optimizing the post-harvest phases of the fish production chain, such as through the distribution of kits for initial processing (cleaning, filleting, etc.) and the distribution of refrigerated lorries to facilitate transport of fish to commercial centres.

Lastly, at the level of consumption, the government has included fish in children's school meals, as a measure to

increase or secure a regular consumer market, as well as assured prices.

In parallel, in 2008, the National Plan for Technical Assistance and Fisheries Extension was launched, which, together with the boost given to create associations and co-operatives, would provide other measures to improve efficiency in the productive chain and reduce costs.

On the other hand, the government took other initiatives in education, such as literacy programmes and technical courses in fisheries and aquaculture, with contents and teaching methods designed specifically for fishermen.

But what stands out amongst the actions designed to improve incomes, is the so called 'closed season benefit' for artisanal fishing. This consists of a minimum monthly salary (around US\$ 340 at 2013 values) to artisanal fishermen during fishing ban seasons (for two to six months of the year), aimed at promoting reproduction and maintenance of stocks.

Initiated in 1991 as a fishery management tool, this policy was exponentially increased during the government under President Lula. SEAP facilitated access but did not apply the necessary controls, encouraging many fishermen who were not fishing for these species to receive these benefits. Even people who were not professional fishers, but mere relatives, were illegally registered as beneficiaries.

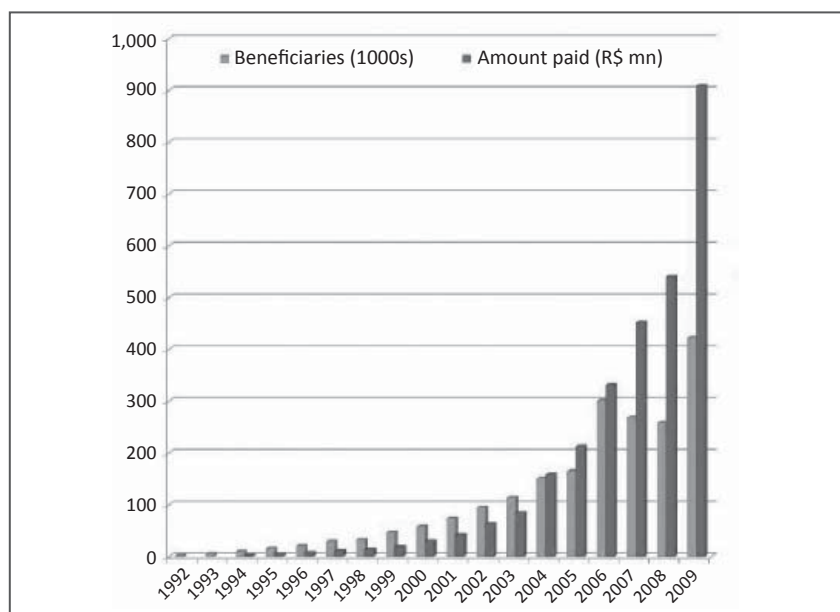
This tool for environmental management has become a very strong

TABLE 1. SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE SEAP BUDGET (2003-2009)

SECTOR	INVESTMENT (in R\$)	% (approx.)
Artisanal Fisheries	257.57 mn	36
Industrial Fisheries (includes Proflota/ Pro-fleet and diesel subsidies)	191.6 mn	26
Aquaculture	102.45 mn	14
Others: Publicity and Administration	171.16 mn	24
TOTAL	722.78 mn	100

Source: MINISTÉRIO DO TRABALHO E EMPREGO (MTE). Políticas públicas de emprego no Brasil: avaliação externa do Programa Seguro-desemprego. Brasília, 2010 and MINISTÉRIO DA PESCA E AQUICULTURA (MPA). Relatório de Ações Executadas no período de 2003 a 2010. Brasília, 2010.

FIG. 1: EVOLUTION OF THE AMOUNT GRANTED AND TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES OF CLOSED SEASON BENEFITS (1992 – 2009)



redistributive policy, conceived and facilitated by SEAP and the Fisheries Ministry, and financed by the Ministry of Work and Employment. Figure 1 shows the increase in the number of people registered as professional fishers and the even greater increase in the amounts of money paid as ‘closed season benefit’ during the period 2003 - 2009. This relative large increase in the amount paid is due to the increase in the national minimum wage (US\$ 77, in 2003; US\$ 291, in 2010).

These data indicate, then, that the main objective of government policy for artisanal fisheries is to reduce poverty through increasing artisanal fishermen’s income, mainly through improving the production chain and reducing the dependence on intermediaries. This, being both positive and necessary, is limited by the fact that none of these measures is either overarching or systematic in nature. Rather, its actions are piecemeal, dispersed and isolated, and are not capable of significantly changing the realities for fishing communities.

On the other hand, the volume of public money distributed as payments through the ‘closed season benefit’ to a large part of the subsector, makes this distributive practice the principal

action realized by the government as regards the artisanal fishery in the period under consideration. But this measure is also limited by not being a universal mechanism, and, even worse, for having procedural defects that call into question its legality, and, therefore, its continuity.

Overall, what stands out as a specific policy for the artisanal fishery, then, is a short-term distributive policy. Despite serving to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for fishing communities for the time being, it is totally insufficient for addressing the fragile structural situation of artisanal fisheries in the medium to long term, as is necessary.

These characteristics of current fisheries policy are in line with the development model established by the federal government in recent years, which has been denominated ‘neo-developmental’.

Government action

This is characterized by a combination of strong government action to push economic growth, principally through large public infrastructure works and public credit provided through economic agents considered capable of distributing it, with a policy for distributing income, to a large extent made viable through

social benefits that are neither universal nor permanent; as of now, they stimulate consumption and strengthen the internal market, and create complacency in workers' sectors.

In the case of the fisheries sector, this model finds expression in the priority given to industrial fisheries, and, increasingly, to aquaculture, and in the predominantly social and distributive nature of the policies aimed at artisanal fisheries.

Large infrastructure projects like hydroelectric dams, ports, roads, public and private undertakings, like petrol extraction, shrimp ponds, mining and industrial complexes are impacting increasingly on artisanal fisheries.

But these do not have any kind of special protection that guarantees the permanence of artisanal fishermen's territories and their ways of life. The policy for the fisheries sector not only does not treat artisanal fishermen as privileged agents of government aid, but, even worse, the priority given for aquaculture implies privatization of waters, which has already started, and will end up making artisanal fisheries non-viable.

Taken together, government actions in recent years, behind a discourse of supposed social awareness and environmental responsibility, and despite the immediate reduction in poverty, has contributed to increase vulnerability and the situation of environmental injustice suffered by artisanal fishing communities.

Faced with this situation, a significant segment of organized artisanal fishworkers has adopted a position that is critical of the government. In 2010, this crystallised in the creation of a new national autonomous movement, calling itself the Brazilian Movement of Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen (MPP).

In 2012, MPP launched the National Campaign for Regularizing the Territories of Traditional Fishing Communities, which had the main objective of getting a Citizens' Initiative Law approved, which

recognizes and demarcates areas of land and water on which these communities depend.

The recognition of the right to these territories and to the resources that are present within them, is considered to be a basic condition to guarantee the sustainability of artisanal fisheries and the maintenance of the traditional livelihood of their communities.

The struggle to obtain this

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constitutes an example of exemplary resistance of Brazilian artisanal fishers to the exclusionary development model pushed by the government in recent years. ❧

For more



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