

New social landscapes of cooperation and/or conflicting gender relations?

The entry of women into small-scale artisanal fishing in Chile



Purpose:

To examine the entry of women in TURFs fisheries with a focus on gender relations, resource struggles and transformation possibilities/strategies



Since 2004 in Chile:

- The number of women formally registered in artisanal fishing has increased by 517%.
- Men have increased by 39% (2012, 2015).
- Of ca 100 000 artisanal fishermen registered in 2016: 26.4% (26,122) were women (2016)
- Unionization: of 53,975 unionized fishers, 19.9% were women (2016).



What is a fisher?

In Chile (LPA 1991) the definition of fisher includes four categories:

- seaweed collectors,**
- boat owners,**
- scuba divers**
- fishers.**

Therefore, an algae collector is a fisher or a fisher category in the Chilean context.

Sernapesca only includes in its statistics the fishers registered in the National Fisheries Registry. There is, then, a high degree of invisibility of a significant part of the fishing community.

E.g. In 2005 in Chiloé, there were 1,571 women fishers and 87% of them were not formally registered as fishers (Godoy et al., 2005).

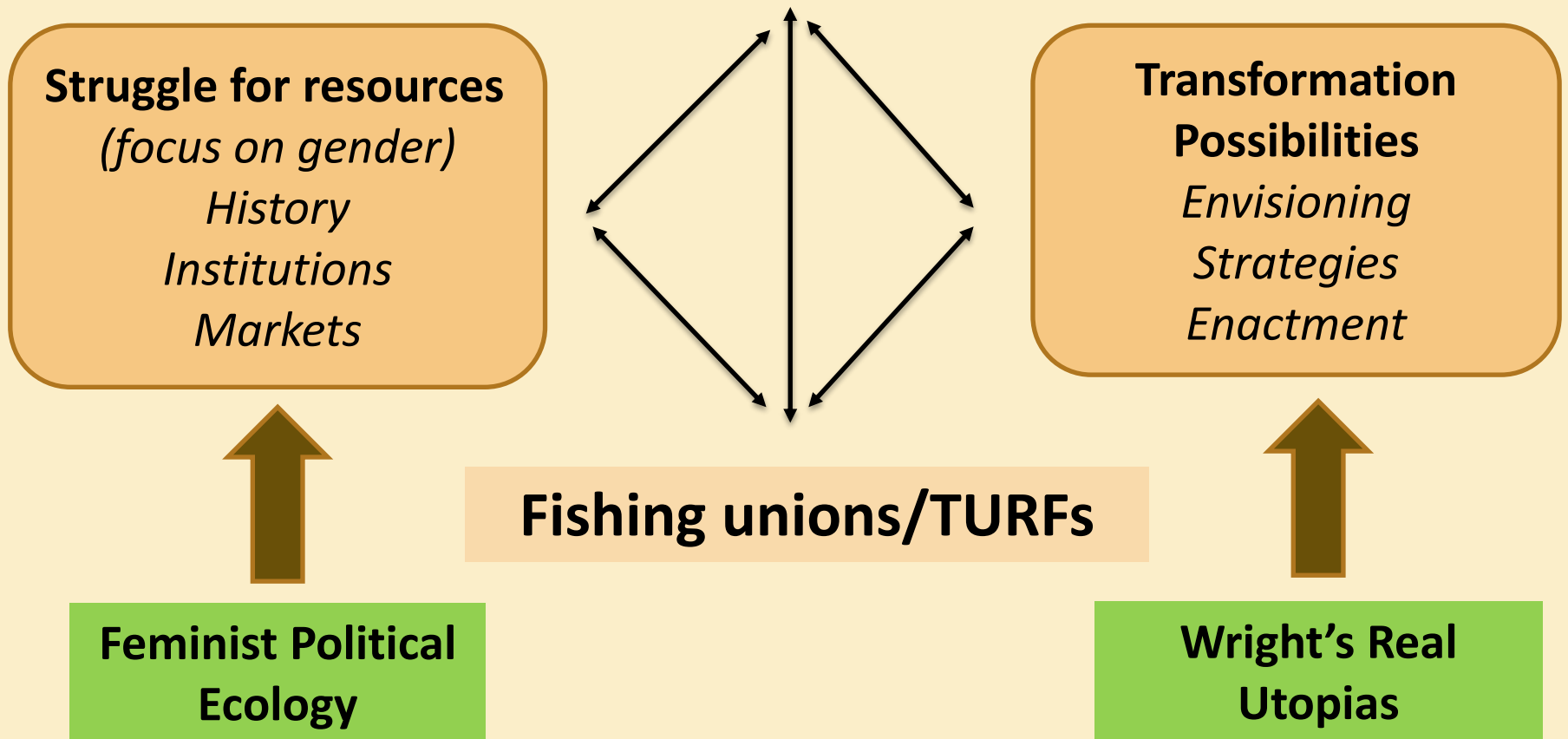
- **This process of formal integration of women entering this sector dominated by men is quite new.**
- **It is generating new gendered social relations.**
- **Including cooperation but also tensions and conflicts in some areas as women begin to compete with men for natural resources.**
- **Women unions start even to compete among themselves for natural resources, leading to community conflicts.**

What are the consequences of this process for gender relations and future opportunities?



Conceptual framework

Conflict & cooperation



TURFs

Guarantee fishers organized in collectives (unions and guilds associations) exclusive rights of use to coastal resources in parcels of sea in which only the members can fish (most collectively).

TURFs began to be implemented in 1997.

2017

573 TURFs entitlements in operation

These were in the hands of 383 artisanal fisher organizations (17 319 fishers of which 1 902 were women):

- 60% gender mix**
- 40% only men**
- 0.8% only women**

In Chile, fisher organizations with TURFs share in common:

- A specified coastal marine area
- Management and care of the species, therein
- Harvest/collection of species
- Marketing and sales
- Distribution of production and income.



Coliumo/ Coliumo TURFs

Basic data:

2000: 1 union of men in Coliumo.

Today: 6 fisher organizations in a town of 1,285 people (652 men and 633 women), 2017.

3 unions have TURFs: 1 male and 2 female.



Organization name	Union establish ment	TURF MINECOM* Decree	Resolution Manage- ment & exploitation Plan (PMEA)	Sector	Ha	Gender	No. of Mem- bers
STI** Pescadores Caleta Coliumo	1950	1997	2002	B	150	Male	150
STI Pescadoras Artesanales Recoletoras de Algas (Union 1)	2002	2002	2005/2008	Rari El Tope Litril	0.61 2.49 0.98	Female	30
STI Pescadores Artesanales Recoletores de Orilla y Algueros (Union 2)	2006	Part of the 1997 designated TURF is ceded to Union 2 in 2008	2002	A	70.83	Female	65

Sources: Sernapesca 2017, AM, VIII Región.

* [Ministerio de Economía, Fomento y Turismo](#)

** STI: Union of Independent Workers

Methodology

- **Fieldwork in Coliumo: 2014, 2015 2017.**
- **Qualitative methods, combined with individual and semi-structured group focus interviews with participatory tools.**
- **Relevant literature and reviews of statistics and official reports were also used.**



Research approach

- **Guided from a “action research” perspective, aspiring both to co-design and co-production of knowledge with key social actors.**
- **Historiography, problematization (gender), envisioning, strategies for change.**



2014 Field work – Histography

- Examined changes in governance, fisheries collapses, power structures, future visions and transformation strategies

2016 Field work - Envisioning/Strategy mapping

- Selected strategies to develop with union members preparation detailed chosen strategies;
- Undertook feasibility analysis with other stakeholders in a workshop.
- Reflected on how, when and with whom to carry out the selected strategies

2017 Field work – Meaning/experiences

Undertook qualitative interviews with a small group of active members to obtain their personal stories in relation to the union and its TURF. Six fishers were interviewed in the same way.



Unfolding community/TURFs events

- The threat of "strangers" galvanized men and women fishers in a common cause (to defend Coliumo customary fishing rights), in some ways transcending their traditional gender roles.**
- This struggle resulted in women being formally integrated as fishers, forming Union 1 - it included more or less all Coliumo female seaweed gatherers .**
- The exclusion and/or marginalization exercised by the Union 1 sowed the seeds for the formation of the Union 2.**
- Conflict and cooperation are juxtaposed here, with one stimulating the other.**

Testimonies of new conflict over coastal resources

When a female fisher was asked why they were organized and applied for TURFs, she responds:

"It was a necessity. Before, Coliumo was free and you worked at the moment you wanted, you got what you wanted, until the divers of Dichato invaded us and began to overexploit, because here there were many resources. We started to fight against them, to get them out of here." (Alguera nr. 4)

New gender roles & relationships in and between organizations, community & the household

"We were brought up to become nannies and housewives, but now we dream of becoming in entrepreneurs." (Alguera 1)

"It's good that women have organized and obtained a management area [TURF] ... is an advance, because with a union you can obtain many things. It's legal ... the same ladies who were even embarrassed to go to a meeting ... " (Retired male fisher 3)

Differences in org., economy & resource management

In ref. to conflicts with Dichato fishers:

"In one hour, we loaded a boat; with the divers, they load two or three boats in an hour; They destroyed what was there. Not us, because [when we extracted] in a fortnight, the meadow was full, again. But when they [the fishermen of Dichato] began to draw and draw, the resources decreased. " (Alguera 4)

Referring to fisher gender differences:

"In the aspects of care, women have difficulties because they do not know how to operate a boat, they do not drive the engines. This would be the difference. The men handle the technical part of the boats." (Male fisher 1)

"men in the sea and women in the management areas". (Male fisher 1)

Despite the formal inclusion of women in fisheries, spatial segregation persists between women and men.

Conclusion

The experience of Coliumo reflects a struggle for coastal resources that the implementation of TURFs as a political intervention, unwittingly launched.

Stimulated complex episodes of conflict and cooperation resulting in acts of exclusion and inclusion.

Differences in terms of capacities and performances in the TURFs between men and women – in organization, economy and resource management

Increasing acknowledgement of women as fishers

New prospects and opportunities for women as fishers - social enterprise partnerships.



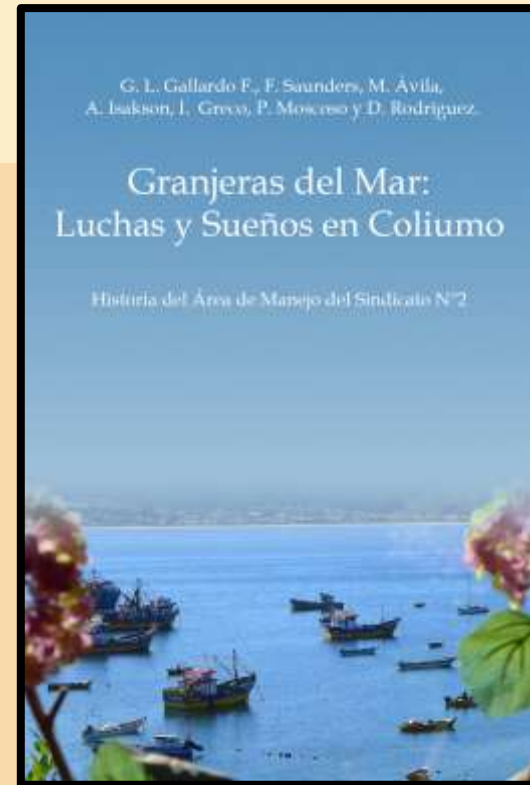
Strategy 1. Enhancing Visibility:

Important aspects:

- Union history
- Culture and identity (changes, gender inc.)
- Struggle (setbacks, achievements, etc.)
- Sustainable fishing (production, local, green, fair & community)

Enacting the strategy:

- Union website (urgent).
- Flyers
- Publication book (CD included) & on line
- Scientific article



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RESEARCH



“Before we asked for permission, now we only give notice”: Women’s entrance into artisanal fisheries in Chile

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Abstract

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) in the Global South are increasingly subjected to the internationalisation of food systems. Guided by a feminist political ecology approach, we examine how gender relations and power structures within SSF are changing through policy interventions and market linkages. Chilean women working in SSF have traditionally been unregistered direct producers. Since the early 2000s, however, women have formally entered as fishers within this hitherto male-dominated space. Today, women constitute almost a quarter of artisanal fishers in Chile. While women have become more visible in their engagement in territorial use rights in fisheries (TURFs), little research attention has been paid to women’s roles within SSF. We redress this shortfall by examining the struggle to obtain TURFs by an all-women seaweed gatherers union in Coliumo (Bio-Bio Region, Chile). Using participatory research tools, we describe key gendered interactions and events over a local struggle for resources. Our findings show how closely related episodes of cooperation and conflict were involved in realising TURFs, which included differently-gendered relationships. While the women implicated in formalising fishing entitlements accrued individual benefit and enhanced their collective standing, the conflict left a deep scar among women in the community.

Strategy 2: Adding Value

Collaboration with local company Bioingemar (lead by a women)

1. Project: production % sale of algae from both natural meadows and small-scale aquaculture, drying and packaging. Bioingemar provides machinery. (Market: Japan, USA.) State financing.
2. Project: work with salmon scales. Bioingemar provides raw material. Target start: 2019-2020
3. Product line of nutritional salad derived from the TURF (Market: Brazil). 2022.



Thanks!