

Fisheries governance mode as a result of political ideologies: The case of the sardine fishery in North-East Venezuela.



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## **Abstract**

When conducting social research in the four communities located in North-East Venezuela, it was understood through the course of communication that there was a very important issue affecting, in one way or another, the development of the sardine fishery: Governance. New formal fisheries institutions have been established since 1999 related with the election of the president Hugo Chavez in 1998. When studying governance it is the belief of the researcher that political principles and values give structure to the system. On that account, the question of how the existing fisheries governance has been formed as a result of the socio-political reforms taking place in Venezuela since 1998 becomes central. The State remains as the principal actor and controller of the interactions. Therefore, special attention is paid to the interactions between the State and the civil society, including the market. The organization of cooperatives and the supply of financial resources for fish extraction represent the base of the State's programs. The future of governance in Venezuela is unclear, but signs that Venezuela might be moving towards "cooperativism" with high participation of the State exist. Nevertheless, the system can have its pitfalls. For that reason, the construction of partnerships between the State and cooperatives is a strategic alliance that might be successful if the relation is based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding and obligations.

Keywords: governance, fisheries, social policies, cooperativism.



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## List of Abbreviations

ASOVEXP	Venezuelan exporters association
CIA	The US Central Intelligence Agency
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
DFID	UK Department for International Development
FANAPE	Artisanal Fishers Federation of Nueva Esparta
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FONDAFA	Fisheries and Agriculture Development Fond
GDP	Gross domestic product
INAPESCA	National Fisheries Institution
INIA	National Institution of Investigation
MAC	Ministry of Agriculture before 1999
MARN	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
MAT	Ministry of Agriculture from 1999
MINAL	Ministry of food
MPP	Ministry of the Popular Power
PSUV	Socialist Union party of Venezuela
SARPA	The Autonomous Service of Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources



# 1 Fisheries and governance in Venezuela

## 1.1 Introduction

In a period where the global concerns have a biological and ecological focus, the main questions in fishery issues are how many fish are in the ocean and how much fishery pressure is sustainable. Many of world's fisheries at the end of the twentieth century are in crisis (FAO, 1995a) The world crisis in fisheries has two aspects: First, the crisis of stock conservation and over-expansion of the fishing fleet. Second, there is a crisis of governance (Kooiman et al., 1999). The second is strongly related to the first. Latino-American countries do not escape neither from the crisis in fisheries nor the aspects that cause it. Venezuela, which is the focus in this study, is no the exception in this aspect.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (official name) has an area of 912.050 km<sup>2</sup>. The country is located in the Northeast coast of South America. In the perspective of fisheries, Venezuela has a strong, strategic location on the continent, with a coastal line of 2,800 km with direct access to the Caribbean Sea and a largely undisputed EEZ of 200 nautical miles (With the exception being the small Antilles)(Griffin, 2002). Considering the long coastline, it is somewhat surprising that fisheries are not one of the country's main economic activities. Venezuela remains highly dependent on oil revenues which account for one third of the GDP, 90% of export earnings and more than 50% of the federal budget revenues. In addition, the country is not only rich in oil, but in other natural resources like natural gas, iron, gold, bauxite, diamonds and hydropower (CIA, 2007). This abundance, and dependency, of non-renewable natural resources have deflected government's focus away from the economic potential of the fisheries. Nevertheless, the fishery sector in Venezuela accounts for 0, 5% of the GDP (FAO, 2005).

Venezuela's fishery consists of two different sectors, the artisanal and the industrial, with quite different dynamics. The maritime artisanal fishery dominates the harvest activities. In contrast to other Latino-American countries, the maritime artisanal fishery contributes up to 70% of the total captures of the fishery sector in Venezuela (FAO, 2005). The difference in fishing methods is used to classify artisanal and industrial fishery. The artisanal fishers use relatively small boats and traditional fishing gears like artisanal beach seines without bag and artisanal purse seines, operated by use of much manpower; while

the industrial fishery is run by more capital intensive companies that use mechanized fishing gears and more sophisticated technology. Likewise, fisheries activities are focused on the production of two marine species: sardine (*Sardinella aurita*) and yellow fin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*). Due to its abundance in coastal waters and that it is easily caught by simple methods, the sardine is the target species of the maritime artisanal fishery; and yellow fin tuna, caught in more large scale operations, is the target of the industrial fishery. The sardine artisanal fishery directly employs about 30,000 fishers. This amount represents 37% of the 80,023 artisanal fishers found in Venezuela. Around 300,000 are employed indirectly in the sardine fishery. Meanwhile the industrial fishery employs 6,480 fishers in the extraction process and 7,408 persons in the transformation process. This makes a total amount of 13,888 direct workers in the industrial fishery in addition to the 690,926 that are indirectly employed in the same sector. (FAO, 2005).

On the basis of these facts and to protect the artisanal fishers, a new fisheries law was enacted giving exclusive rights to the artisanal fishers for the sardine fishery. This new fishery law also reflects other changes that are taking place in the country. Winds from a left stream are blowing in the political atmosphere of Venezuela. This is resulting in several structural changes in the country, and notably in the governance system. As a result, the fishery governance system is also changing. Not unlike Norway, the high oil revenues are used to subsidize social policies in accordance to political ideologies and values. Social justice, human rights and class struggle are themes that follow every political discussion and implementation. Artisanal fisheries are executed by the poorest part of the population, thus fisheries issues are social issues and have become an important part of the political agenda. New institutions have been created at national, regional and, local levels in order to achieve new policy goals. In Venezuela, as in many other developing countries, the artisanal fisheries development policies are based on the establishment of fishers' or community cooperatives. Some of these cooperative programmes have been successful in many countries, but many have also failed (Ben-Yami and Anderson, 1987). A cursory observation suggests that the Venezuelan fishery sector (together with other sectors) is leading to "cooperativism", but is it really so? Are the bases strong enough to affirm that the fishery sector is moving to "cooperativism"?

The governance perspective, that this study draws on and which is described more profoundly later in this thesis, puts emphasis on a broad range of institutions that influence how public policy goals are achieved (Reyntjens and Wilson, 2004). Governance theory

distinguishes modes of governance that differ according to their locus. There are three ideal types: hierarchical governance, self-governance and co-governance. All societies demonstrate, and require mixes of the three modes of styles (Kooiman et al., 2005). For me, a central question is how this mix occurs in Venezuela?

One of the flags of the new government in Venezuela is that the country is changing from a representative democracy to a participative democracy. If true, then an increment in participation of all stakeholders in the fishery sector is expected. The central theme of this thesis is how changes in the political atmosphere are influencing the combination of fishery governance that is found in the country and the possible course it may lead to. It is of main importance to remember that the mentioned changes occur in a sector that is diverse, complex and dynamic. Therefore, government finds it difficult to perform effectively, efficiently and legitimately all of the time.

## **1.2 Research problems and objectives**

The research questions were developed on basis of my experience from the first interviews. This work started with the intention to write about the possibilities of artisanal fishers to enter global markets through sardine exports. However, while doing the fieldwork research, it became obvious that the biggest challenge in fisheries was not only to open to international markets, but also to continue operating in the national market. It was understood through the course of communication with representatives of all levels and fishers that there was a very important issue affecting, in one way or another, the development of the sardine fishery: Governance.

There are a couple of important questions to be asked when preparing to analyse this issue:

- How has the existing fishery governance system been formed as a result of the socio-political reforms taking place in Venezuela since 1998?
- What form of governance is expected in the future of Venezuela?

The working hypothesis of the analysis is that the socio-political values and ideologies of the national authorities are the bases of the governance system of Venezuela.

In order to discuss this argument, an analysis of the sardine fishery in Northeast Venezuela will be carried out. This analysis will examine the performance of the three main actors of fisheries governance (State, market and society), paying especial attention to the State and its relation with the civil society, in order to discuss and draw conclusions about the form of governance that Venezuela may be moving to. The main objectives are:

- To describe the sardine fishery sector as the subject of evaluation.
- To explain the political nature of fishery policies.
- To understand the mix of the three styles of governance present in the country. The working operations and interactions using the sardine fishery case.
- To evaluate the strength and competence of the institutions created to achieve public policy goals in the fishery sector.
- To predict future outcomes in fisheries governance.

### **1.3 Relevance of the study**

The sardine fishery was selected as the case study due to the capture production volume. It is the fishery that provides the highest level of employment and uses the largest number of vessels. As such, the sardine fishery was ideal for a study of the relationship between fisheries policy and governance, and other issues. This is also illustrated by the fact that *Sardinella aurita* is considered a national strategic food resource and the basis for the food security program that was started in 2001. Venezuelans have consumed sardine since 1970 when transportation became possible. Now sardine is an important source of proteins and carbohydrates in the daily diet of Venezuelan people. In addition, the sardine fishery is a direct source of employment for 30,000 fishers. Any change in the socio-political atmosphere will bring changes to the governance system and affect the 300,000 families that directly or indirectly benefit from the sardine artisanal fishery.

## **1.4 Outline**

The thesis is organized around seven sections including the present introduction. The second section explains the research strategy and methods used to acquire the necessary information to develop this work. The third section outlines the theoretical framework for the study with governance as the central theme of discussion. The fourth section provides an empirical description of the sardine fishery and the institutional changes that occurred in the harvest and government organizations. Section five explains the political nature of governance policies. Section six highlights the combination of fisheries governance that is present in Venezuelan fisheries today as a result of the political values and ideologies. The seventh section applies the governance theory to discuss and predict where Venezuelan fisheries governance is moving, and analyses the different directions it can take.





## **2 Research strategy, design and methods**

### **2.1 Data sources, types and forms**

Primary data is generated by me through a variety of methods. Data can come from different types of settings: Informal social settings, everyday settings, semiformal settings and from formal settings (Blaikie, 2000:187). Primary and secondary data was obtained from fishers (individuals) in everyday settings. Research conducted in every day settings involves the researcher entering an area of social activity and studying people going about their everyday lives (Blaikie, 2000:187). Secondary data such as fish capture and number of fishers employed in the sardine fishery was obtained from representatives of fishers' associations, communities' organizations, biology institutions and fishery institutions in more organized and semi- formal settings. Semi-formal settings involve asking individuals to report either on their own or the other people's activities, attitudes and motives, or on social processes and institutionalized practices (Blaikie, 2000:191). This study was focused in individual's orientation to the institutional changes, their perception, knowledge, attitudes and values. The aim was to use the information to explain aptitude and behaviors toward the governance changes. Apart from a few simple frequency counts and percentage, the data is qualitative at all stages of the research.

### **2.2 Selection of data sources**

The informants at the local level includes 60 fishers who are members of different communities, 7 representatives at the regional and national level and 2 representatives in the private sector. Non-probability sampling was used with a combination of judgmental or purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Judgmental sampling is used for selecting a case of a particular type, for example, the selection of organization cases that contrasts in some way, like successful and unsuccessful organizations (Blaikie, 2000:205). Regarding this, one successful<sup>1</sup> and one unsuccessful fishers' associations and/or cooperatives were selected in both Sucre and Nueva Esparta. In Sucre I selected the communities of Guaca

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<sup>1</sup> Success is defined in this case as the degree in which communities have organized and achieve different goals by them.

and El Morro. In Nueva Esparta (Margarita Island) I selected the communities of Manzanillo and Puerto Moreno. The selection took place in these states due to their relevance as sardine fishery areas.

The snowball sampling refers to the analogy of a snowball's growing size as it rolls in the snow (Blaikie, 2000:205). Because of difficulties in making contact with representatives of the local, regional and national level, I first contacted one biologist responsible for advising both the Nueva Esparta regional level and the national level. This person was asked for names and addresses of other representatives of organizations at the local, regional (including Sucre estate) and national level.

This study could draw a sample from a population, but due to security reasons and the resistance of fishers and representatives to answer any kind of questionnaires because of the unstable socio-political atmosphere, a more quantitative approach was dismissed. Therefore, generalization is not the aim of this study. The research design decision was made out of what was possible to do. It is better to have some knowledge that is restricted of the type of sampling and collection methods than to have no knowledge of the topic at all (Blaikie, 2000:203).

### **2.3 Data collection and timing**

Some form of participant observation is regarded as the qualitative method per excellence. It involves the researcher in one or more periods of sustained immersion in the life of the people being studied. Participant observation can be ranged from total participation to mainly observation (Blaikie, 2000:234). During field work I became observer of the fishing activities of the four selected fisher's communities. While living approximately 1 ½ weeks in each community, data and information were collected from in- depth interviews. The qualitative interview can get close to actors meanings and interpretations. In addition, interviewing in combination with reasonably extensive observation of actual social situations, provides a useful alternative to participant observation (Blaikie, 2000:234).

The observation period in the local communities was alternated with trips to the cities of Cumana (Sucre) and La Asunción (Nueva Esparta) in order to depth-interview representatives of the regional and national level, and private sector. Due to cultural issues,

appointments and contacts had to be made directly with the institutions and with the persons that wished to be interviewed. This was time consuming and it took approximately two months to carry out all the key interviews needed for this study. Once contact was made, some of the interviewees prepared some statistical data to argument their points of views. The interviewees had the freedom to express their opinions about the actual situation of the sardine fishery system and government's fishery institutions and policies. Diverse questions were adapted according the competence of those interviewed. It was not easy to use a dictaphone. Therefore, important comments and references were written down after each interview. All of the interviewees wished for their personal opinions to remain anonymous and they did not agree to include their personal quotations in this thesis. To solve this issue, references will be made for each of the levels and institutions as the following example.

Representative of INAPESCA

Representative of ASOVEXP

Representative of the fishers' association of Manzanillo

Textual analysis has also provided an important amount of empirical data for the thesis. Official documents, governmental resolutions, decrees and orders became a basis for the discussion of governance changes. Academic publication and periodical literature contributed to the collection of empirical information for the study and a basis for the discussion of the empirical findings. Internet sources were also used in this study. They were limited to the information presented by the official web sites of the Venezuelan government, and local and national newspapers. Data on annual catches and basic indicators of fisheries in Venezuela were provided by the National Institution of Investigation (INIA). I have also used data available in the official reports and periodical publications. Some information was also obtained through interviews.

## **2.4 Data reduction and Analysis**

After each interview-day a brief summary of the impressions of the interviews of that day was written including the impressions of what it seemed to develop from the interviews. As expressed before, the process of interviewing was very informal and

questions were made in different ways depending on the interviewees answers. In the course of the first interviews the central issue was detected, which in this case is the State as responsible to solve the societal problems of the fisheries communities and the individuals living in them. I found it the central core due to most of what the fishers talk about refers to politics and the capability of the State to give financial help to the fishers or their communities. Once governance was identified as a central core in all interviews, open questions about this theme were made more frequently using the informal language on which the fishers tend to give their answers. The data derived from interviewing fishers and representatives of the industry was linked to the qualitative data found in documents, publications and Internet sources. The data was also classified and structured according to the relevance they had for each of the main actors of the governance system (State, Market or Society). A relevant aspect is that the data collection and the respective classification and analysis process did not occur in successive procedures, but it occurred in stages that continually interrelated each other. In fact, the basic method of all sciences is observation and following interpretation. But observation and interpretation are inseparable; therefore it results most unlikely to obtain one in total isolation of the other (Martinez, 2006)

The classification was done in this way in order to study each actor separately, but also the relation between them. A kind of spiral analysis where evaluating one actor is evaluating all of them and vice versa, leading to an open development of this investigation and a deeper comprehension of what is occurring in fisheries governance in Venezuela.

## **2.5 Problems and limitations**

The first problem is the time required to collect the data. Given limited resources, lack of time to make contact with relevant persons, and the unwieldiness of many actors to be interviewed, the sample size was limited. Therefore, an intensive participatory investigation was conducted. Despite of the creation of a confidence relationship to understand relatively fast the characteristics of the situation in the case of the fisher's communities, the contacts with the members of each community lasted no more than 1 ½ weeks. Thus, the contacts were intense, but not prorogated. In the case of the representatives of the private sector the answers could have been affected due to political aspects that embrace fisheries in Venezuela. When discussing data collection and

interpretation, the concepts of reliability and validity are important. To increase the reliability and validity of the data I used several methods of data collection, interviews, and textual analysis. This provided different kinds of empirical information and gave a possibility to cross check the data in order to avoid misinterpretations. The mayor problem of a qualitative study of this kind is the uncertainty about how it will develop. The use of qualitative data and the subjectivity that this data is submitted to is a broad theme of discussion. Neutrality in this kind of investigations is important to increase the objectivity of the final results. However, I agree with the comment done by Leach (1984: 22 cited by (Rozas, 2001:3) “every anthropological observer will see something that not other such observer can recognize, namely a kind of harmonic protection to the observer’s own personality. When these observations are written up in monograph or any other form, the observer’s personality will again distort any purported objectivity” I quote this in order to express that despite my professional intentions to avoid being personally involved and to draw a true picture of the studied phenomenon, personal meanings about the situation in Venezuela can bias the perception of my research subject and make the analysis subjective in certain issues.



### **3 Theory and literature review**

#### **3.1 Governance, Policymaking and Management.**

Governance approaches suggest that there are important differences between management, policymaking and governance. Based on Kooiman (Kooiman et al., 2005) this work takes the view that governance is the more inclusive term, followed by policymaking and finally by management. Policies define courses of actions of a government or decision-making body, and are designed to influence future decisions or actions. Policies are put into action through local management plans in a cyclical process and local plans should therefore be consistent with the overarching policy. With these definitions as a starting point, governance can be defined as:

*Governance is the whole of public as well as private interactions taken to solve societal problems and create societal opportunities. It includes the formulation and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for institutions that enable them (Kooiman et al., 2005).*

Despite that Venezuela is a country rich in oil, poverty indicators show that 60% of the 26,000,000 people living in Venezuela live in poverty conditions (España, 2005). This number makes wonder how the incomes and revenues are used in the country. Has Venezuela a governance system that tries to solve societal problems and create opportunities? If the governance concept is adapted to the fisheries sector, the result will be that:

*Fisheries governance is the sum of the legal, social, economic and political arrangements used to manage fisheries. It has international, national and local dimensions and includes legally binding rules as well as customary social arrangements (FAO, 2001).*

Fisheries governance involves those interactions to create the necessary conditions for a successful fisheries management. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that to manage fishery is to manage people. Therefore, in Venezuela, and any country in the world

where fisheries take place, should exist a governance system that takes care of solving societal problems of those involved, directly or indirectly, in the fishery sector.

The establishment of institutions, policies and processes through which management may be realized is fundamental for effective fisheries governance. Institutions are sets of rules and arrangements (public and private, formal and informal) affecting a fishery, as well as the organizations that develop and implement those rules. National fisheries management authorities are usually a key part of governance structures, representing the legal State entity with the authority for performing specific fishery management functions. Co-management committees, fishers' associations and other groups, and the relationship among them also form part of the institutional arrangement for fisheries governance (DFID, 2006).

In Venezuela, new formal institutions have been established since 1999. The creation of a new fishery law in 2001 promotes the creation of The National Fisheries Institution (INAPESCA) that represents the legal State entity. The State is represented at the national and regional level through INAPESCA. The fishers' communities represent the informal local institutions. However, it is the intention of the State to formalize all fishers' communities converting them into fishers' cooperatives. The establishment of these institutions is part of the strategy to develop efficient fisheries governance. Naturally, it is assumed that every country wish to operate through efficient fisheries governance. Venezuela government has deflected the focus away from the potential economic incomes from the fishery to the social aspects of the local level. The formalization of institutions at this level has become crucial in governments plan, but why?

### **3.2 Values and principles as a foundation for fisheries governance**

Kooiman (2005) argues that principles and values that structure governance need to be articulated and are essential elements in developing a vision for a fishery. The concept of governance includes the formulation and principles to guide interactions. It is argued in this work that politic ideologies and tendencies in Venezuela result in a set of values and principles that can facilitate the decision-making process when confronting the hard choices of the fisheries or any other sector. If this is true, the consequences, benefits or



value added when placing values and principles centre-stage in fisheries governance can be described as follow:

- Principles and values give structure to governance. They provide a system of guidance to fisheries governors and to asses where fisheries are, where they should be, and what means can be used to get them there.
- Values and principles, if agreed to and explicit, can facilitate make hard choices easier for governors. They provide a value frame that facilitates governors in deciding between two acceptable but conflicting options, by suggesting the preferred option on the basis of a higher level of logic. It also makes decision making an institutional rather than a personal act, thus making avoiding hard choices unacceptable.
- Shared principles serve to increase the probability that partnership will evolve in the interest of all stakeholders, present and future. They serve to increase governability.

It is possible to recognize two types of principles and values: substantial and procedural. Substantial principles and values give direction to the development of images that drive problem solving and opportunity creation through the building of institutions. Hence, substantial values are used to argue that political values shape the visions that drive the building of institutions. Procedural principles and values guide the processes of decision making and interaction (Kooiman et al., 2005). To discuss this argument the concepts of images, instruments and actions are to be defined due to they are the elements of fisheries governance.

### **3.3 Governance elements**

**Images.** They constitute the guiding lights that answer the how and why questions of governance. Images are mental models of how the world (or some parts of it) presently functions and how the world should be. These are often referred to as visions. The images should be articulated as fully as possible and should be communicated among all actors so as to be commonly understood. Images are abstractions that will usually be from the

perspective of a particular actor. Therefore, sharing allows other actors to assess the validity of images from their perspective and to add to or modify them. Then it becomes a shared image. Shared images require the involvement of many actors. This leads to methodological and logistic problems of how to engage them all in to a single transparent process (Kooiman et al., 2005).

**Instruments** include existing institutions and plans. Institutions provide a framework within which to realize goals and a toolbox to address situations. They are an essential component of governability. Institutions may be formal or informal in nature. Formal institutions are most common in government/state activities. Informal institutions are most common in civil societies. An issue for fisheries governance is whether institutions should be formalized or not. Formal institutions facilitate communication between diverse actors, enable a strengthening capacity for participation, and provide a basis for legitimate representation (Kooiman et al., 2005). One example of formalizing institutions is the organization of fishers' communities into cooperatives.

**Cooperatives** constitute the most genuine entity of a social economy. It is based on the conformation of economic associations where all the members are beneficiaries of their activities. The work that every member does benefits themselves and the whole working group formed by all the members of the cooperative. It promotes the free association of individuals and families with common interests. The intention is to construct a company where everybody has equal rights and where the benefit will be shared among its associates, depending on the work that each of the members has done. Cooperatives in have a strong position in the Venezuelan political system. Despite that the creation of cooperatives was never a part of the political discourse, the creation of cooperatives has become important for the creation of a social economy which is more participative. This makes one wonder if Venezuela is moving to a kind of "cooperativism".

**Actions.** In planning is important to distinguish between enabling action and implementing action. Examples of enabling action include: engendering political will, building organizational capacity, promoting leadership, drafting regulations, etc.

Implementing action may include a wide range of activities such as needs assessment, data gathering, analysis and enforcement (Kooiman et al., 2005). The answers to the research questions will place more emphasis on the enabling actions.

These three elements of governance are closely connected and not always easily distinguishable. They generally do not present themselves in an orderly sequence. In addition, these elements are discussed when talking of governance styles. The governance styles will lead the discussion about the elements of governance and vice versa.

### 3.4 Governance styles

An effective fisheries governance system will comprise a mosaic of governance styles. The three perspectives of governance that dominate the theory and practice of fisheries management are:

**Hierarchical governance.** This is the most classical of the governance modes. It draws a sharp distinction between society (including the market) and the government. The latter is almost solely responsible for the achievement of public objectives and express itself in instruments such as laws and policies. The government is expected to act on behalf of the public's best interest, by intervening when unregulated social interactions leads to less favorable outcomes (Kooiman et al., 1999). In addition, the complexity, diversity, and dynamics of a sector may cause hierarchical governance to be deficient. In Venezuela there are some formal institutions that represent the State making use of hierarchical governance.

**Self governance.** It refers to the most informal mode of governing interactions. It involves the interferences with individuals, families, groups and organizations. It refers about how actors take care of themselves, outside the purview of government. Kooiman (Kooiman et al., 2005) emphasizes that self-governance is not a government created capacity, but comes of its own accord.

**Market Governance.** Advocates of market-governance assume public problems arise from "market failure" Market failure is said to occur when the price mechanism or

the market system, the so called invisible hand, fails to bring about a social optimum. Hierarchically organized governments correct market failures by legal and administrative measures. These measures, however, do not resolve the market imperfection and therefore do not diminish the divergence between private and public interest. As a consequence governments have to put in an enormous effort to steer unwilling subjects. The problem of fishery governance is considered the outcome of market failure resulting from the common-property character of fish stocks exploited by profit-maximizing fishers. A “rational” seeking fishermen is incapable and unwilling to forgo short-term profits in favor of long term proceeds that should be the consequence of the preservation of a bigger stock in the sea. As a consequence the crisis of governability that currently harasses the fisheries can hardly be a surprise. Given the fact that public and private incentives diverge, it is a possibility to make and implement rules that directly determine who is allowed to fish what, where, when, and how, so that the market failure is corrected. However, hierarchical governance has an automatic failure mechanism, in the sense that when a government is successful in regulating fisheries, the divergence between private and public interest increase and the fishermen’s financial incentive to cheat and to circumvent regulations grows (Kooiman et al., 1999).

**Participatory Governance.** The participatory governance considers the fact that governance is mainly organized at the macro level of State bureaucracy a main cause for the problems surrounding public policies. The meso level, the level of civil and private organizations, is hardly made relevant for governance. The micro level of the individual (or the individual firm) is only passively involved, as the subject of government regulations.

The essential element of this governance mode is that societal parties join hands with a common purpose in mind, and stake their identity and autonomy in the process (Kooiman et al., 2005). The solution that participation offers to the problems of governance is to change the structure. Central to this perspective is the idea that the meso and micro level of societies should participate more in governing. Citizens and stakeholders should be more involved in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

Proponents of participation do not believe that less explicit legislation can have any meaningful impact in case the meso level remains neglected. In order to solve the complex collective problems, there is need for deliberate coordination in modern society.

As mentioned before, all societies demonstrate and require mixes of these three modes or styles (Kooiman et al., 2005:21). The problem facing those who establish such systems is to determine and communicate which styles are appropriate and in which circumstances. A hierarchical style may be appropriate within certain types of organizations, e.g., government or private sector, but may not in civil society associations; and will seldom be effective between organizations (government to civil society). There is a need for agreed formal or informal rules regarding what styles are appropriate in various situations. In addition, the diversity, complexity, and dynamics are characteristics of the sector. These are briefly by Kooiman (2005) as:

- **Diversity** is a characteristic of the entities that form fisheries systems and it points to the nature and degree in which they vary.
- **Complexity** is a function of the architecture of the relations among the parts of a system, and between a system and its environment.
- **Dynamics** applies to the tensions within a system and between systems. They are associated with the incidence of, or propensity towards, change.

The previous concepts are important for the application of the governance approach. Every single sector is characteristic of these terms. To complement the understanding of the terms the next section will explore the sardine fisheries system in Venezuela.



## 4 Description of the sardine fishery in North-East Venezuela

### 4.1 Coastline and topography

The coastal line of Venezuela occupies most of the northern coast of South America on the Caribbean Sea. The country is bordered by Colombia to the west, Guyana to the east, and Brazil to the south. The most important fished species is *Sardinella aurita* known as sardine. The fishery of this species in Venezuela takes place in the northeast part of the country where two main fishing areas can be geographically recognized: Sucre State and Nueva Esparta State respectively. Nueva Esparta is formed by three Islands: Margarita, Coche and Cubagua. The continental platform that extends along this area represents the most important fishing area of the Caribbean (Gonzalez, 2006). Despite a wide distribution of the sardine population on the shelf, fishing activities only take place in areas close to shore owing to the artisanal scale of the fishery.

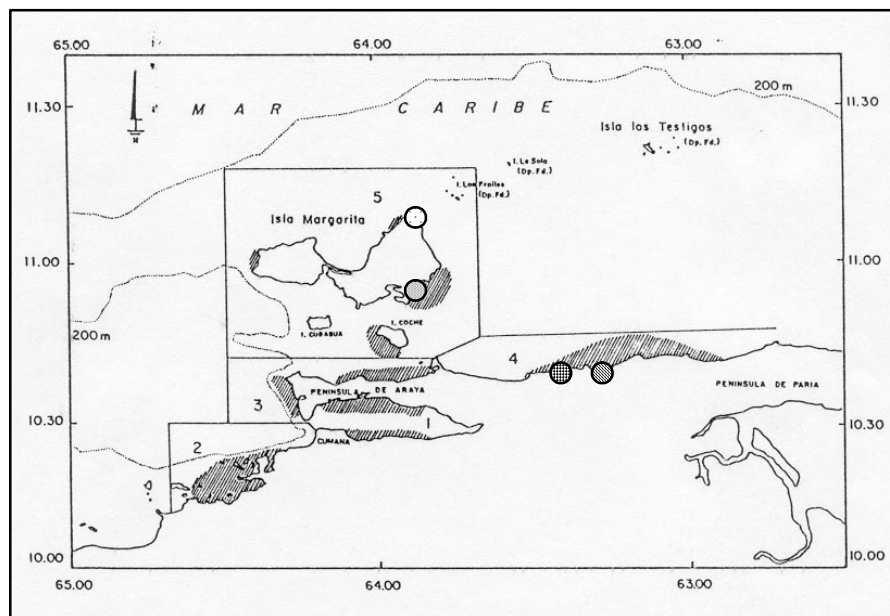


Figure 4.1-1 Distribution and fishing area of the *Sardinella aurita* in North East Venezuela.

1) Golf of Cariaco; 2) Santa Fe; 3) Araya; 4) Carupano; 5) Margarita. Source: (Guzmán et al., 1999)

Areas of study: ○ Playa Manzanillo ⊗ Puerto Moreno, ● Playa el Morro and ⊙ Playa Guaca.

## 4.2 The Species *Sardinella aurita*

*Sardinella aurita* forms part of the family Clupeidae and its Order is Clupeiforme. Its common name is sardine and presents an omnivorous diet, stomach content is always the same composition of plankton as the surrounding superficial waters (Cervigón, 1991). It is not very selective, but more opportunistic. Large fish (> 21 cm) are mainly found north of Margarita where they are not fished as much. Medium size individuals (16-20 cm) are caught in all fishing sectors while young fish concentrate north of Paria peninsula, in the golf of Cariaco (see figure 1). The vertical distribution of fish schools indicates that preferred depth varies between 10 and 30 m and their vertical extension is around 10 m. Sardine biomass presents relevant fluctuations due to biological conditions and fishing pressure. The concern on species conservation increases when evaluating the results of different researchers for estimation of the exploitable biomass. In 1974 acoustic surveys suggested that the stock was fully exploited and could not support an increase in fishing effort (Etchevers, 1974). Furthermore, Trujillo (1980) stated that the status of the sardine stock was between moderate and completely exploited. Nevertheless, acoustic survey estimations done in 1988 (Gerlotto and Ginés, 1988) indicate that the sardine biomass was over 600,000 t. implying under exploitation. Despite the large variability in the biomass estimate, Sardine biomass was estimated in the interval of 600,000 to 1.3 million in 2003 (Fréon and Mendoza, 2003). The difficulty to make reliable biomass estimation has implications in the development of a management plan.

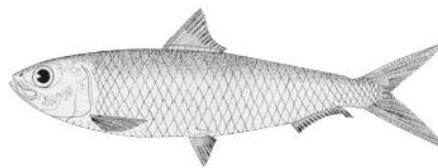


Figure 4.2-1 Sardine (*Sardinella aurita*) Valenciennes, 1847 (Pisces: Clupeidae). (Cervigón 1991).

## 4.3 Fish production and Harvest technology

With the installation of the first cannery in 1939, exploitation began in the Cariaco Gulf with larger beach seines built with natural fibers cords and cork. Production data collection by the State started in 1940. Coincident with the motorization of the fleets the



introduction of new gears took place during this year. The company “Compañía Vascas del Caribe” with Spanish owners imported artisanal purse seines which use was approved very soon as another element to fish sardine. Estimate catches for that year is 15,000 t. Nevertheless, this estimation probably only represents 60% of real production due to a high amount of small communities were not covered by the officers. They did not take in consideration neither self-consumption of fish nor fish that is transported in trucks to other cities in the country. In 1953 large import of nylons and cords, and vinyl floats were made from Germany and the United States, and used for seine construction in 1954 (Méndez, 1963). For this year catches reached 30,000 t and the fishing area extended to the Gulf of Santa Fe and North Araya Peninsula. At this time vessels were equipped with gasoline outboard or diesel inboard. The establishment of new canneries increased the level of catches to 40,000 t per year during the period 1964-1973. During the decade of 1980 the use of artisanal purse seines known as “trenes de argolla” increased in some areas.

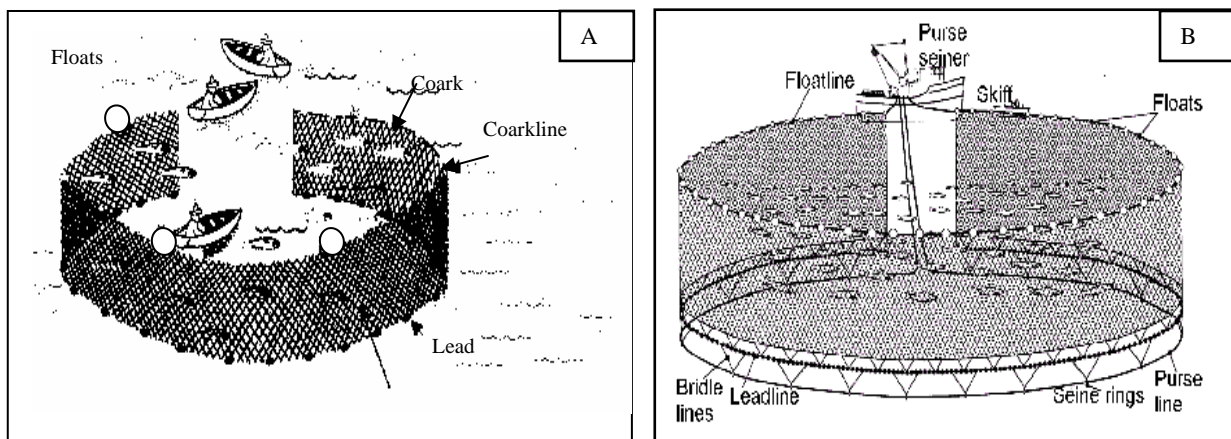


Figure 4.3-1 Gears and methods used to capture sardine in North East Venezuela. A) shows the artisanal beach seine without bag. Source: B) shows artisanal purse seine called “trenes de argolla”. Source:(Gonzalez, 2005)

Furthermore, there was a trend toward the use of larger purse seines. These are the main reasons for the observed increases in catches from 26,000 t to 54,000 t during the 7 years period 1983-1989. During the period 1990 to 1998 increments in the capture took place from 55,000 t. to almost reach 200,000 t. Posterior to this period decrements on the

catches can be observed, 124,000 t in 1999, decreasing to 74000 t in 2000. From 2001 increments in effort maintained the level of capture over 150,000t per year. But in 2005 crisis started again when sardine disappeared from national market and catches barely reached 75,000 t.

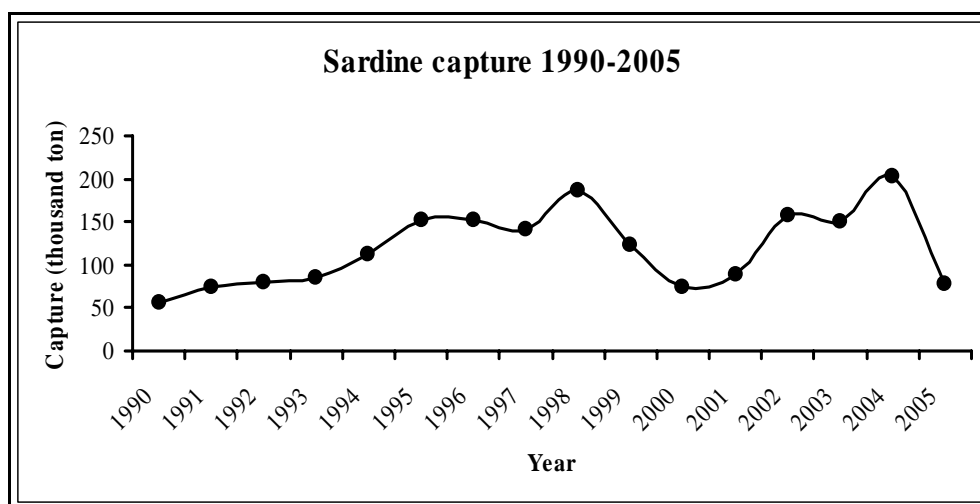


Figure 4.3-2 Historical series that shows the capture of sardine from 1990 to 2005. The trend of the last 15 years has been toward increment of capture. Source: INIA

## 5.1 Harvest Institutions

The structure of the harvest organizations is well known by the description of Andrés Aurelio Level (1942). In 1893 12 beach seines (without bag) existed in Margarita . These were used in some places called “rancherías” which in most of the cases was the origin of numerous villages in Margarita Island and Sucre State. 200 persons could work with one beach seine: from 120 to 140 were men, between 15 and 20 were women and from 30 to 40 were children. In addition, there were 10 or 12 officials, 1 leader, 1 “ranchero” and the owner; all workers were indigenous people. Despite, that the indigenous people were obligated to work, this kind of organizations can be considered as the first forms of cooperatives found in Venezuela. The involvement of family members in the fishing activities, the collaboration between families, and the increment of loyalty to the owner gave rise to informal organizations in the form of fisheries communities. Hence, cooperation is a tradition that has its roots in colonial times. The substantial evolution of the beach seine diminished size and correlatively incremented units. As consequence, the

12 beach seines existing in Margarita in 1893 with 200 workers each, increased to 170 beach seines with a total amount of between 20 and 40 fishers per beach seine in 1956. The organization and participation had not change trough the years. Kooiman (2005) describes very well the kind of socio-institutional scale that is seen in the Venezuelan sardine fishery. Between small scale and industrial fisheries lays a classificatory gray area that is labeled as intermediate or semi-industrial, since the organization of production is based on a mix of community and industrial attributes. Key to this sector is the nature of ownership and relations between owners and laborers. Generally, ownership of boats and gear is concentrated in a single owner or family but not in a corporate firm. The titular owner manages the boat, or boats, and does not engage in fishing although his or her kin may be designated as captains of the vessels to monitor crew. Crewmembers are frequently employed on a wage labors basis, although wages may be combined with shares as an incentive to raise production.

## **5.2 Government Institutions**

Until now, fisheries in Venezuela had gotten very little attention from government institutions. This is reflected in the fact that statistics showing production data, employment, fleet size, and gears, are very scant and unreliable. Before the Ministry of Agriculture was created in 1936 there was not a central organization that regulated and controlled the fishing activities. In addition, the fishery sector occupied a secondary position in the new Ministry. In the beginning the fisheries were sorted under the Animals Directorate (“Dirección de Ganadería”) later they were sorted under the Agricultural Economics Directorate (“Dirección de Economía Agrícola”), and in 1959 it became a part of the Hunting and Fishing Department of the Renewable Resources Directorate (“Departamento de Caza y Pesca de la Dirección de Recursos Renovables”). In 1963 the National Fisheries office (“Oficina Nacional de Pesca”) was created, which reached certain goals when the agreement MAC-FAO-PNUD<sup>2</sup> for investigation and development, that lasted until 1972, was implemented. The National Fisheries Office was reorganized in 1976 and integrated into the new Fisheries Development General Directorate (“Dirección

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<sup>2</sup> The project MAC/PNUD/FAO/VEN/72/017 “Investigation and development of fishery and aquaculture” has created the basic information of fisheries found in the country.

General Sectorial de Desarrollo Pesquero”) which was a part of the Ministry of Agriculture, where it endured until September 1993. However, the endeavor of creating a National Fisheries Institution never was more than projects, with few real consequences and effects (FAO, 1998). The first official fisheries law was enacted in 1935 and abrogated by the law of 1944. In 1960 huge projects of fisheries law were elaborated, but they were never implemented. The Autonomous Service of the Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources (SARPA) was created in 1993 as a transitional organization substitute of the Fisheries Development General Directorate and depended on the Ministry of Agriculture, whilst the new fisheries law was discussed by the congress (Congreso, 1993). The law of 1944 was abrogated by the current Fisheries Law in 2000. The National Fishery Institution (INAPESCA) that is currently working was created the same year, bringing relevant changes for the management of the fisheries and giving special attention to those activities done by artisanal fishers. To obtain a better picture of the transition of the mentioned institutions see appendix 2.

### **5.3 Management**

Sardine fishery is a semi-open access fishery and a new law was enacted on November 13, 2001. In its article 21 it considers this resource as common interest for national food security and it reserves the exploitation in exclusiveness to the traditional artisanal fisheries. The government document No. 38377 (Asamblea, 2006) authorizes sardine fishery at national level all year around. The harvested individuals must have a minimum size of 17 cm, allowing a 10% of the catch being lower than this size; it regulates the use of “beach seines” (1,500 m maximum length and a maximum height of 40 m), and the artisanal purse seine (400 m maximum length and 40 maximum height). All of them should have a net aperture no less than 2.5 cm. The law also controls the exportation of frozen sardine to 20% of the media of national captures in the last 24 months, and prohibits the exportation of sardine for bite.

The fact that sardine was disappearing from the national market directed the attention of the government to the importance of sardine fishery in the country. Thus, the social politics present themselves more interesting than the economic politics. Oil

production accounts for one third of the GDP, 90% of export earnings and more than 50% of the federal budget revenues (CIA, 2007). The increasing oil prices of the last seven years coincide with the installation of the new governmental regime in Venezuela. Due to the apparently good health of the economy, the “Bolivarian Revolution” that started in 1999 with the election of Hugo Chavez as president, uses agriculture and fisheries sectors as part of a strategic plan for employment generation and food security for the less favored sectors of the population.

The plan is so that the government has ensured the fishery for the artisanal sector and has stopped all the exportations of sardine until the national market is satisfied. This includes also a price control on all the parts of the harvest chain in order that the products can be acquired at reasonable price by the final consumer. The main focus is on the fishers and their activities and the possibilities to develop a social economy based on social justice and equality. The reason is that governance theory in Venezuela has a strong root in the Bolivarian Revolution.



## **6 Political environment and regulatory regime: Source of the values on which the working of the fish chain is built.**

### **6.1 The Bolivarian Revolution**

Bolivarian Revolution is the term used by the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, to nominate the political, economical and social change that started when he arrived to power in 1998. According to Chavez, the revolution is based in the ideas of the emancipator Simón Bolívar and it has as the main goal to achieve a new kind of socialism, in contrast to what he calls “neoliberalism” or a poorly regulated, highly bureaucratic and corruptible capitalism that existed in the country before his arrival to power. One of its first resolutions was to approve, through popular referendum, the constitution of 1999, created and approved by the government. Chavez and its followers call it the Bolivarian constitution because it supposedly draws inspiration from Simón Bolívar’s ideals and the ideology of Bolivarianism. It is the first constitution approved by the population through vote in referendum, approved with 71% of the votes although abstention was of 55,63%, a high number even for a highly abstentionist population. The National Assembly enacted the constitution in 1999 and gave start to what is historically known as the V Republic due to it changes the name from the previous constitution, from “Republic of Venezuela” to “Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”.

Those that call themselves bolivarians say to follow the ideology expressed by Simón Bolívar in the documents called “Carta de Jamaica”, “Discurso de Angostura” and “Manifiesto de Cartagena” respectively. The use of Bolivarianism makes reference to the concepts of social justice, class struggle, and human rights. All changes in politics in Venezuela from 1999 are part of the Bolivarian revolution. The most important changes are the increment of the fundamental rights and participation of the population, giving rise to the concept of participatory democracy. In addition to Bolivarianism, other ideas are important in the Venezuelan state ideology, like “new socialism” ideas.

## 6.2 Socialism of the XXI century

Socialism of the XXI century is a concept developed by Heinz Dieterich Steffan in 1996 and relayed from January 2005 by the president of Venezuela. The president started to use the concept of socialism of the XXI century when he assumed the new presidential period in 2006 to define the socialist character of the so called Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela. Chavez has mentioned that to achieve this socialism there will be a transition called “Revolutionist Democracy”.

The president expressed, when assuming the presidential period, “We have assumed the compromise to address the Bolivarian Revolution towards socialism; socialism of the XXI century based on solidarity, fraternity, love, freedom and equality” (Leal, 2007).

The creation of the Socialist Union party of Venezuela (PSUV) as political party after president Chavez was re-elected in 2006 confirms the socialist aspects of the revolution. The ideology of Bolivarianism and its inclination towards the XXI century socialism has some consequences in the styles and modes of governance. Traditional political parties have disappeared pressed out by the red parties. The National Assembly members are all members of the left wing parties and Chavez encourage them to form part of the PSUV. Is Venezuela moving to a single-party political style country like China? The increasing oil prices revenues experienced by the Chavez administration since the president obtained power in 1998 has helped the government to develop and subsidy social programs. The fact that Venezuela is an oil producer country increases the power of the government. Private investors were welcome to Venezuela, but under the control of government. Lately, not even this kind of investment is allowed. Programs for the nationalization of all natural resources are in course. During the last years an increasing use of cooperatives as instruments to achieve policies goals has been observed. Self-sufficiency of the Venezuelan civil society is the principal instrument used to develop a social economy, where all participants have the same right and work based on the principle of cooperation. But the style is not well defined, while the State promotes cooperation and equality, a bureaucratic system still describes what is found in Venezuela. The civil society finds it difficult to apply for those social benefits. The principle of equality becomes a double-standard when apparently only those that support the revolution can obtain credits and benefits and even then they have to suffer the consequences of a bureaucratic system



and look for different ways for succeeding. This affirmation can be confirmed by comparing the annual corruption perception index (CPI) which is released every year, starting in 1995. In 2006 Venezuela obtained a score of 2.3 out of 10 (10 means transparency). The CPI for Venezuela has always been relatively low and has oscillated between 2.8 and 2.3 from 1995 until 2006 (TI, 2006). Therefore, the affirmations of the president Chavez about a corrupt system before his arrival are true, but has the system become any better? To answer this question I remit to above-mentioned results of the CPI.

### **6.3 Conflicts with the opposition in all sectors, including fisheries**

The followers of Chavez, armed forces personnel, and principally those of the poorest sectors, affirm that Chavez is their defender, a revolutionary who wants to give power to the population and distribute Venezuelan incomes equally. Opponents, such as company owners, syndicates leaders, the Medias, the Catholic Church, and the high and middle class, affirm that Chavez has used his revolution to justify embezzlement of the funds, getting as a result a substantial increment of corruption at all levels, and that he is intending to install a totalitarian regimen. It is important to analyze why the two groups make their respective arguments. Both groups have different interests. While the supporters of the current government achieve, at least in theory and legally, social equality; the opponents lose control of the political environment that provided them social security to their own particular activities. Essentially, what both groups compete for is the loss or gain of political power that favor their ideals, principles and activities.

Despite opponents' allegations, it seems clear that Chavez, managing the concept of social justice, won the hearts of the poorest classes, which constitute the major segment of the population. All the interviewed fishers in the communities in both Margarita Island and Sucre state affirmed loyalty and confidence in the President, but it should be noticed that the confidence is merely to one man, Hugo Chavez, and not to the system or the governmental political parties. The poor faith in institutions has its roots in the own culture, where friends and friends of friends help you to obtain benefits and solve problems and the State remains as the last resources to use. The legal system has always remained as a way to get in troubles, instead of resolving them. It is this same distrust what brought Chavez into power. Poor people was sickened by the preceding corrupt governments and their lack

of attention, which was dominated by two major political parties, that have dragged its baggage to include, in their view, all of those that have high benefits from an open market, capitalist economy. The fishers of both communities are greatly satisfied with the recognition of their fishing rights and they feel, in one way or another, included in the decision making process. From their point of view the system has become more inclusive. As the constitution of the country, the fishery law was also approved through popular vote. In the other side, opponents' worries about their future increase with time. The two interviewed companies do not know if they will continue operating in Venezuelan territory because the feeling is that they will lose all control over their companies. Not only that, but the economic losses absorbed due to the prohibition to export and the establishment of a price ceiling for the final product prevents the firms from obtaining economic profits.

The loss of influence in the decision making process derive the opinion of the interviewees on the private sector. They expressed that the new fisheries law is unfair, giving too many rights to the artisanal fisheries and low priority to the income generating industry. But despite the arguments, loss of influence and low incomes, sardine companies are still operating. Besides, on Margarita Island tourist projects are putting in danger the future of fishing communities. It does not seem bad for the private sector after all. Corruption and strong tradition from "friends of friends help" in Venezuela seems to help the private sector to survive in this uncertain period. The bureaucratic procedures do not favor the artisanal fishers and increase the gap between private and public sector. Therefore, fishers only trust one man: Hugo Chavez.

The reality is that based in an oil economy with a narrow-minded ideology, and values like social justice, class struggles and human rights, it seems that the first steps following the new governance program are in accordance to the political values of the socialist ideologies. The State, as main actor of the governance system, is trying to increase participation of the civil society and to set strong controls over the market relation in order to maintain equality and promote solidarity within the society. It should be kept in mind that the ideology of the XXI century socialism is new, unfinished and prone to change, and that radical changes or "adaptations" can be done. Based on the fact that all decisions and truths rely in one man, the government and governance system is weakened. The ability to create social opportunities seems diminished when trust in institutions is weak or almost inexistent. In addition, those that predicate the theory only state what

governance system should not be, but no clear goal is specified. Therefore, uncertainty about the next steps in the revolutionary reform can develop in unknown forms.

#### **6.4 Values shaping concerns**

When established, the government in Venezuela had to address different challenges that derive from the diversity, complexity and dynamics of the sector, and that still are affecting the sector. In the case of the sardine fishery these are:

- Exploitable biomass. Even when there are estimations of biomass that show actual under-exploitation of the resource, uncertainty is the rule and the decreasing trend of the capture during the last two years can be a consequence of changes in environmental factors or/and overexploitation.
- Control of fishing capacity. Policy makers have difficulty to adapt input controls to the sardine fishery system because its condition of open access.
- The interest for sardine products in international markets has had an increasing trend from 2000. Countries as Brazil and Ecuador priced one ton of sardine in \$3,000, which is 10 times more than national prices. For governors this poses a hard choice between exploiting market opportunities to earn profits from foreign exchange and safeguarding to social interest of fish workers and consumers.
- Conflicts within the artisanal sardine fishers and the industrial shrimp fishers due to access of the latest to fishing ground within 1 nautical mile from the coastal line.
- The lack of information and knowledge on the functioning of the fish chain. No studies had been done on social or economical issues. Only biological data that has remained archived in the libraries of the most important universities in the country is found, without giving them any practical use.

These challenges faced by the sardine fishery sector raise the concerns that pervade the main of policy makers, politicians and stakeholders around the globe. Despite the interest of different stakeholders, it becomes evident that most of the concerns and hard choices made by the Venezuelan government are shaped by the ideologies of political inclinations towards socialism; but also by concerns of ecosystem health, social justice,

livelihoods and employment, and food security and safety. In other words, some of the political choices seem to be in accordance with the interactive governance approach. I will discuss this further below.

#### **6.4.1 Ecosystem health**

Due to this issue is of global concerns, Venezuela has pronounced in its Fisheries Law, article 1. paragraph 6 “ to establish the principles and norms for the a application of responsible fishing practices that ensure efficient management and utilization of the living aquatic resources respecting the ecosystem, biological diversity and the nation genetic patrimony”...” to protect the natural biodiversity and the ecological processes ensuring a healthy aquatic environment”. This is in concordance with the FAO code of conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995b) that recognizes the need to protect and restore aquatic ecosystems. Nevertheless, ecosystem health is normally in conflict with livelihoods and employments concerns. While most countries wish to maintain or improve the economic position of the fisheries sector, Venezuelan government decided to promote ecosystem health through promoting and helping the artisanal fishery. Because of the shrimp trawlers could fish even within one nautical mile from the coastal line, sea bottom layer was being destroyed and habitat affected. The new fishery law has decided that all trawlers have to fish 6 nautical miles away from the coast and in addition it has given exclusive rights to artisanal fishers over the harvesting of several species including *Sardinella aurita*.

#### **6.4.2 Social Justice / Social inclusion**

It is directly related to power and poverty, and indirectly to resource conservation. Social inclusion means that every Venezuelan woman and man can integrally develop; fulfilling their obligations, but most of all, exercise their rights to education, social security, food, work and worthy dwelling. All this is to warrantee equal conditions and opportunities that facilitate social justice and human development. In order to achieve these conditions, the government pushes “cooperativism” as the instrument of governance in small fishers’ communities and other sectors. The goal is to seek for the social and economic benefits for the organized groups. The government will subsidy all the cooperatives until they are

capable of sustaining themselves. The government as main actor of the governance system has started some social programs to promote the creation of cooperatives. The main program is called “Vuelvan Caras” and its principal goal is to give technical assistance and education to groups and communities when initiating their own cooperative. The program for the fishery sector is called “Vuelvan Caras – Pesca”. The organizations of these programs demonstrate the hierarchical organization of the State. The former program embraces the latest and at the same time depends on the Ministry of the Popular Power (MPP). Undoubtedly, the identification of the people with the social cause and/or with the interest of receiving economic help from the government; people have organized in cooperatives. Fishers have looked the ways to obtain more benefits from this form of organization. The communities of Playa el Morro and Puerto Moreno have obviously seen the benefits of been organized. They have consolidated a fishery center in their community where they fish, filet, freeze, commercialize and sell the fish. In the other hand, the communities of Guaca and Manzanillo are organized, but have not received help from the programs. Fishermen in these communities argue that the benefits of these programs never reaches directly to the fishers, the real workers. Despite differing personal interests, it must be recognized that communities are organizing and that the social justice value is common among all the interviewed fishers.

### **6.4.3 Livelihoods and employment**

The social justice program is directly linked to employment generation. Fisheries constitute the principal activity of depressed zones in Venezuelan territory. Sucre State is one of them. If fisheries did not exist, the populations located in the numerous fishing communities of the rural areas will probably abandon these communities to concentrate in urban areas of other states seeking better opportunities. Thus, the fisheries sector is important to avoid heavy migration to urban areas. It is estimated that the amount of people employed in fish capture in the artisanal fisheries for 2003 ascend to 80,023 persons with an approximate number of 25,000 families and indirect employment represent 400,000 working places(FAO, 2005). Women dedicated to fisheries activities constitute a low number of the active workforce due to most of them direct their effort to the processing and selling activities. This characteristic was specially observed in the sardine fishers

community of Guaca where women and children work all day long to make filets of the sardine. (figure 5). The artisanal fishery generates a continuous movement of different sectors within the community as carpentry, gas station, grocery stores, etc. All these activities, related with administrative and management activities generated by the fishers' communities associations and the governance instruments, most of the time constitute the center of the economic dynamics within the fishing communities.



Figure 5.4-1 Women work making fillets of the sardine in the community of Guaca.

The politics of the State seek to support fishing communities through the law. First, the law recognizes their rights and possibilities of access to the resources that these communities have traditionally exploited. The organization of cooperatives and the supply of financial resources for fish extraction represent the base of the State's programs. If this program is really directed to the poorest fishers and not only those organized by the owner of boats; all members of the community could develop different abilities to do different activities. While some fish, others could get financial help to create a public transport system, other could construct boats, sell groceries, commercialize the fish, etc. Therefore, it is not only about creating employment as fishers, but activities that can, after some years, give life to the economy of the area. The fishery would be the center of the cooperatives that develop in the community. Then outside the fishery community in the construction area cooperatives can be created to construct the ways to the fisher communities. In that way, the transportation of the fish becomes easier. Another example is development of cooperatives that produce ice to freeze the fish. I conclude that in this way the State will transfer some of its responsibilities to the market created from the cooperatives. Then the

cooperatives will be self-sustainable, the State does not have to give more subsidy and will have as only responsibility the social system, delivery of basic needs as water, electricity and security. Then the State as main actor will have reduced its control activities and civil society with the “new market” will have equal participation as the State. If the plan for employment generation develops this way, then Venezuela could be towards participatory governance.

#### **6.4.4 Food security and food safety**

Food security is understood in Venezuela as the sufficient and stable availability of food in the national market and the consumers’ opportune and permanent access to it. The state will promote sustainable agriculture as a strategic base for the integral rural development and, in consequence, it will guarantee food security for the population. Food security should be achieved through development of intern production. This means through development of agricultural activities, fisheries and aquaculture. Food production is of national interest and fundamental for the social and economical development of the nation. Therefore, the State will dictate the rules of financial, commercial and infrastructure order that are necessary to achieve strategically levels of auto-outfitting. The State will protect fishers’ communities and their fishing grounds next to the coastal line as defined by law. In accordance to this, the government executed policies that outlaw the exporting of sardines, and secured the presence of this product on the national market. The prohibition for exporting sardine extents until the demand of the national market is covered. According to the representative of the Venezuelan Exporters Association (ASOVEXP) all the exporters companies are presenting huge economical loss due to the prohibition to export from 2006. The economical loss can be calculated on basis of the incomes generated the last four year from the exportation of the sardine to Brazil which is the principal importer of the specie. (Figure 6).

If observations are made simultaneously to capture and exports, it seems to be that increments in capture in 2002 could be caused by increments in exportation. Another point is that decrement observed in sardine capture in 2005 is profoundly related with the disappearing of the sardine from national markets the same year. Almost 25,000 t were exported to Brazil that year which represents 1/3 of the total capture of that year. If the law

indicates that only 20% of the capture sardine can be exported, and only once the national market is covered; and if we rely in the data managed why the government, how is it possible that more than 31% went out of the country when both canned and fresh product were scarce in the national market? In that case the State as main actor and regulator has to execute strength controls of the market to be in accordance to the policies and ideology where favoritism is eliminated.

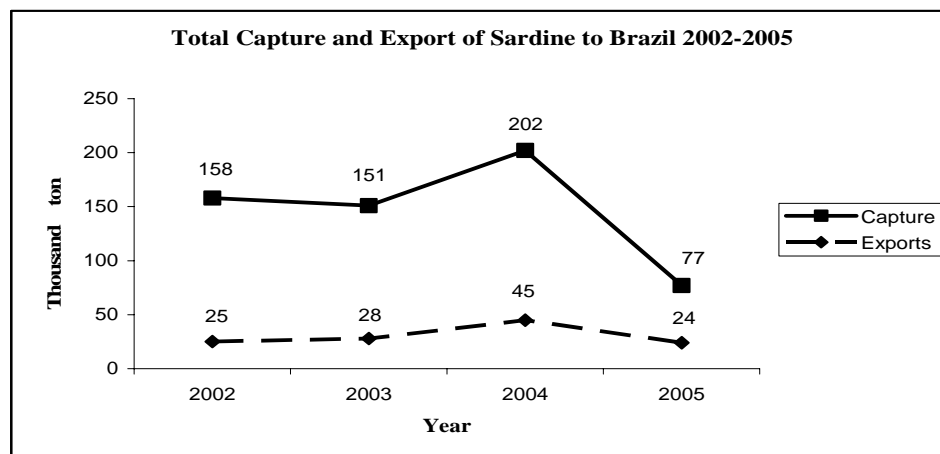


Figure 5.4-2 Venezuela exports of sardine to Brazil. From 2002 the openings of a new market in Brazil incremented the interest of the companies in exporting the product.

So what can be said about the nature of the challenges and concerns that confront fisheries governance? First, that sardine fisheries is diverse, complex and dynamic. It makes the fishery more difficult to understand. The use of different fishing methods adds diversity to the sardine fishery. The complexity added by the opening of foreign markets and the multiple linkages that occur within the chain and between fishery and non-fishery activities increments the difficulties governance system have to deal with. In addition, the dynamics of the sardine fishery, including the changes that occur by cultural, social and political issues; and the multiplicity of scales of activities aggravate the situation. (appendix 1). The values and principles that arise from political ideologies guide the ideas/images that governors have. The values and principles keep coming up as means to guide interactions. In addition, governance is not only about solving problems of global concerns, but actors have to deal with every day problems that originate in the fish chain. The classical approach of turning to government for problem solving is still very strong in Venezuela in all sectors, including the sardine fishery. In the intent to provide the mean



and give a participatory direction to governance institutions has been created in Venezuela. These instruments that can be separated between national, regional and local level constitute the connection of governors and those being governed. What problems these instruments are supposed to solve is matter of the next chapter.



## 7 Governance in Venezuela

### 7.1 Hierarchical governance: The omnipotent State

The word omnipotent has its origins in the Latin word *omnipotens* formed by *omni* (all) and *potens* (might, strength). This word is used to make reference to God, the “almighty God”. In the Venezuelan case this word can perfectly be used to refer to an almighty State. The amount of government participation in solving societal problems has always been significant. As it was expressed in the previous chapters, the activities and participation of the State has always been regulated by its capability to redistribute the incomes obtained by oil production. Hence, the State has always been seen as the responsible to provide social goods. The top-down style of intervention, characteristic of the interaction between the State and the rest of the population, expresses itself in instruments such as formal institutions, laws and policies. The most important and formal institutions that are directly related to fisheries are the Ministry of Agriculture (MAT), which design fisheries policies; and the Fishery and Aquaculture National Institution (INAPESCA) (appendix 3), which acts as the promoter to execute all the policies created by the MAT in correspondence to the legal framework. This is to guarantee a sustainable fisheries development and to implement, promote, develop and coordinate the activities of the sector. The goal is to achieve the objectives of the socio-economic development plans. INAPESCA has the capability to intervene in all activities at all levels and use its legal and administrative powers to enforce on the sector the rules and regulations it deems necessary. The department that connects the MAT with INAPESCA is the General Direction of Fishing and Agriculture Circuits (Dirección general de Circuitos Agrícolas, Pesqueros y Acuícolas). INAPESCA has its central headquarters in Caracas and extends its activities to the other states through their nine sub-departments which operate in the states with most dynamic fisheries, including Nueva Esparta and Sucre, and it also possess 47 fisheries inspectorates.

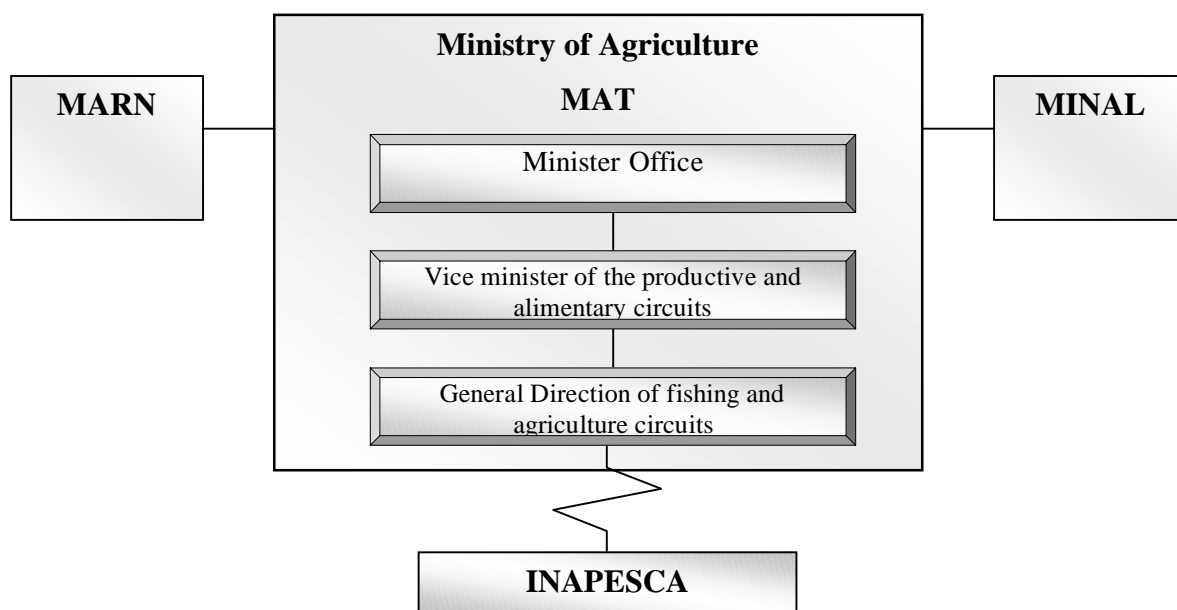


Figure 6.1-1 Organization charts that shows the association between the three ministries MAT, MINAL and MARN; and INAPESCA

In addition, two other institutions have relevance in the sardine case study. First, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), an institution in charge of guaranteeing the rational use of the natural resources through systematic organization; and second, the Ministry of Food (MINAL), an institution in charge of conducting, developing and executing food policies to guarantee food security of the nation. The three Ministries should seek for their public policies to have concordance at every level. INAPESCA as a promoter and controller institution, which hierarchically is under the control of the Ministries, should take care of the achievement of the public policies enacted by the three above named institutions.

The MINAL, MARN and MAT have agreed in important policies for food security in the country. Sardine plays a crucial role in the policy plan. Through this policy, intervention of the State is allowed in all the stages of the value change in order to control the prices in which the product is exchanged. The legal instrument used is the Fishery Law enacted the 28<sup>th</sup> of November of 2001, which substituted the fisheries law of 1944. The Fisheries Law is a legal base that is based in the worldwide used principles for sustainable use of the aquatic resources. It establishes distribution of competence among the different parts of the State and defines the functions of INAPESCA.

Thus, INAPESCA through the local offices should be an effective promoter and controller of the problem resolution process . But is it really so? The official documents places the price of the sardine at the producer level at \$35 per ton, the final price in the national market to \$0.37/kilo for fresh fish, and \$0.7 for one box of canned sardine. The result of the research shows that fish is sold at the producer level for \$116/ ton. In the city of Cumana and in Margarita Island, fresh fish can be sold for \$1.49/ kilo and \$1.26 for a box of canned fish. The State has been given by law the responsibilities to control the relations between civil society and market. Yes, the law allows the State to intervene in this kind of relations that are against what laws expresses. Therefore, if the State intervenes and imposes sanctions, its actions will be legitimized. But when we talk about controlling and solving problems, are the institutions working effectively? The fact that the sardine is being sold at a price a lot higher than the fixed prices shows, first, the little empowerment of those that only seek economic rent, and, second, the failure in achieving policy goals that use sardine as a food security product. Also, social justice becomes a central issue because while some fishers try to help in conserving the species and providing food to the rest of the population others just care about their potential economic incomes. Should not INAPESCA be a part of the picture and increase participation in solving problem issues instead of just being a center for capacitation? Which institution is going to control that the problem solving process is being executed in an effective way? The losers of this kind of interactions will be the consumers and the fishers themselves, when situations like the disappearing of the sardine extend for indefinite periods.

Fishers have proposed some solutions to this problem. They propose that the State should increase the price of the fish due to that the money they earn is not enough for subsistence for them and their families. This was a central issue in the four communities. Due to the payment form based on the share system, fishers stay with only a small portion of the total income, 80% goes to the owner of the vessels and gear, and the rest is shared among those that participate in the capture activities. Nevertheless, through the interviews, it was easy to see that the percentage varies from one community to the other according to traditions. The percentage from each community is a secret issue which only are whiling to share. An example of the community of El Morro is seeing below:

Table 6-1 Example of the share system known as “sistema de partes”. Almost 80% of the revenue corresponds to the owner (the first 5 descriptions).

Quantity	Fix parts	Part	No. parts	%	1 ton = 35 \$
1	Owner	20	20	25 %	8,75
2	Inboard engines	3	6	7,50 %	2,63
7	Outboard engines	2	14	17,50 %	6,13
1	Non mechanized boats	1	1	1,25 %	0,44
1	Gear	20	20	25 %	8,75
10	Fisher	1	10	12,50 %	4,38
2	Divers	1	2	2,50 %	0,88
2	Fix gear	1	2	2,50 %	0,88
1	Watch man	0,5	0,5	0,60 %	0,21
	<b>Optional parts</b>				
2	Divers	0,5	1	1,25 %	0,44
2	Motor controller	1	2	2,50 %	0,88
2	Fix gear	0,5	1	1,25 %	0,44
2	Utilities	0,25	0,5	0,60 %	0,21
Total			80	100 %	35,00

While INAPESCA is created to control the problems of solving everyday problems in the fishery sector, other institutions exist that are in charge of the social security system called “Seguro Social”. INAPESCA has reached an agreement with these institutions that provides social care, to include the fishers in the system once they have been organized. However, the four interviewed Representatives of the fishers’ communities expressed that fishers themselves request not to put their share of the money into social security, but why? Different answers were: “...You never know with the social security, you go there and they never have resources”, “...You put your money there and you die anyway”. Fishers prefer to use that small amount of money to cover other more immediate necessities as, for example, food. The consequence is that when one familiar gets sick, fishers can not afford to pay for medicines. Then, the owner of the boats which is a kind of chief in the community, provides the fishers with necessary money for the treatment of the person. The relationship owner-fisher gets stronger and an unbreakable loyalty relationship gets stronger. When I asked the fishers why they do not go to the mobile-hospitals created by the government in one of the projects, the answer was that they felt they could go there if they had a headache, but that the people working at these places were not graduated doctors and therefore could not treat major sickness. I argue that the binds that fishers have

with the owners gets stronger when the State is not capable of providing social care to the members of the communities. Depending on one person for work and every day issues do not seem to be in accordance with socialism principles of equality and more when this person receives 80% of the earnings of selling the fish. However, the inability of the government to create programs that truly benefit these communities has allowed the perpetuation of these relations.

Likewise, the issue is not that the State will destroy the arrangements of an organizational form that has existed from colonization time. According to governance theory, the system should seek the ways of strengthening those organizations that already existed and try to increase their participation in the system. The actual government, in its images of development of an efficient governance system, has recognized the importance of the fishery communities as means of participation. That is why formalization of the institutions is a must in policies for the current government.

## **7.2 Self-Governance and cooperatives**

Self-governance in artisanal fisheries in Venezuela has its roots in the fishing communities. Sardine fisheries in particular present self-governance as a specific form of collective action. Until the arrival of new government and the beginning of the V Republic, in Venezuela this kind of governance was merely represented by informal institutions. Fishing families in the fishing communities organized themselves among their fishing areas and established the system of payment that has been used since the colonization period. Based on the values of equality and social justice, the government realized the necessity to formalize them into institutions in order to help them acquire social goods. This means that in 2001, when the new Fishery Law was enacted, informal institutions based in fishing communities became formal institutions recognized by the State. These institutions are represented by associations and cooperatives. They have their legal basement in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in its article 70, 118, and 308. The document is the base for cooperative organizations in all industries at all levels. It refers to the cooperatives, communitarian companies and any kind of association guided by the values of mutual cooperation and solidarity as means of participation and relevance in the exercise of the sovereignty in political aspects. Besides, Venezuela

recognizes the right of the workers and communities to develop associations with social and participative character, as cooperatives. These associations can develop any kind of economic activity disposed in the constitution. The law will recognize the specification for these organizations. The State will promote and protect these associations which destiny is the improvement of the popular and alternative economy. In the Fisheries Law is mentioned the objectives as to promote the integral development of the fisheries sector. In particular to organize, develop and consolidate artisanal fishing communities. Giving continuity to the project of cooperativism, the Venezuelan government has initiated the creation of fishers' cooperatives through the project Vuelvan Caras, a project for capacitating people of all sectors. For the fisheries sector the project is called Vuelvan Caras – Pesca. The project started in 2006 in concordance with the new mission statement of the President: “Venezuela turns towards socialism and, on behalf of that, the State promotes the work of small producers” (MINCI, 2006).

The cooperatives organize, in a technical manner, the commercialization and industrialization of all the products associated. They retain a percentage in each operation. It procures to obtain equipments for fishing activities, and also food, cloths and other items to be distributed among its members. The fishing cooperatives become a fishing production cooperative if its members work in capture activities using equipment and gears of the cooperative. From this concept one can define fishing production cooperative as the union of different individuals and activities that have as the main actor the fishers. These persons add efforts to improve production conditions. In this kind of cooperative is possible to think in the industrial potential of the sea products.

In fisheries the general requirements to create a cooperative are:

- To be a fisher of tradition, member of a fishing community
- Request to the nearest INAPESCA office, technical assistance for the organization of the community in cooperatives
- That fish and fishing is the principal economical activity

Based on the activities of associations that are already formed, the State highlights the potential of the communities to organize and self-govern. The cooperatives use the name of fishers' association, but in reality is a wider cooperative that also include the fishers' guild. (Figure 8).



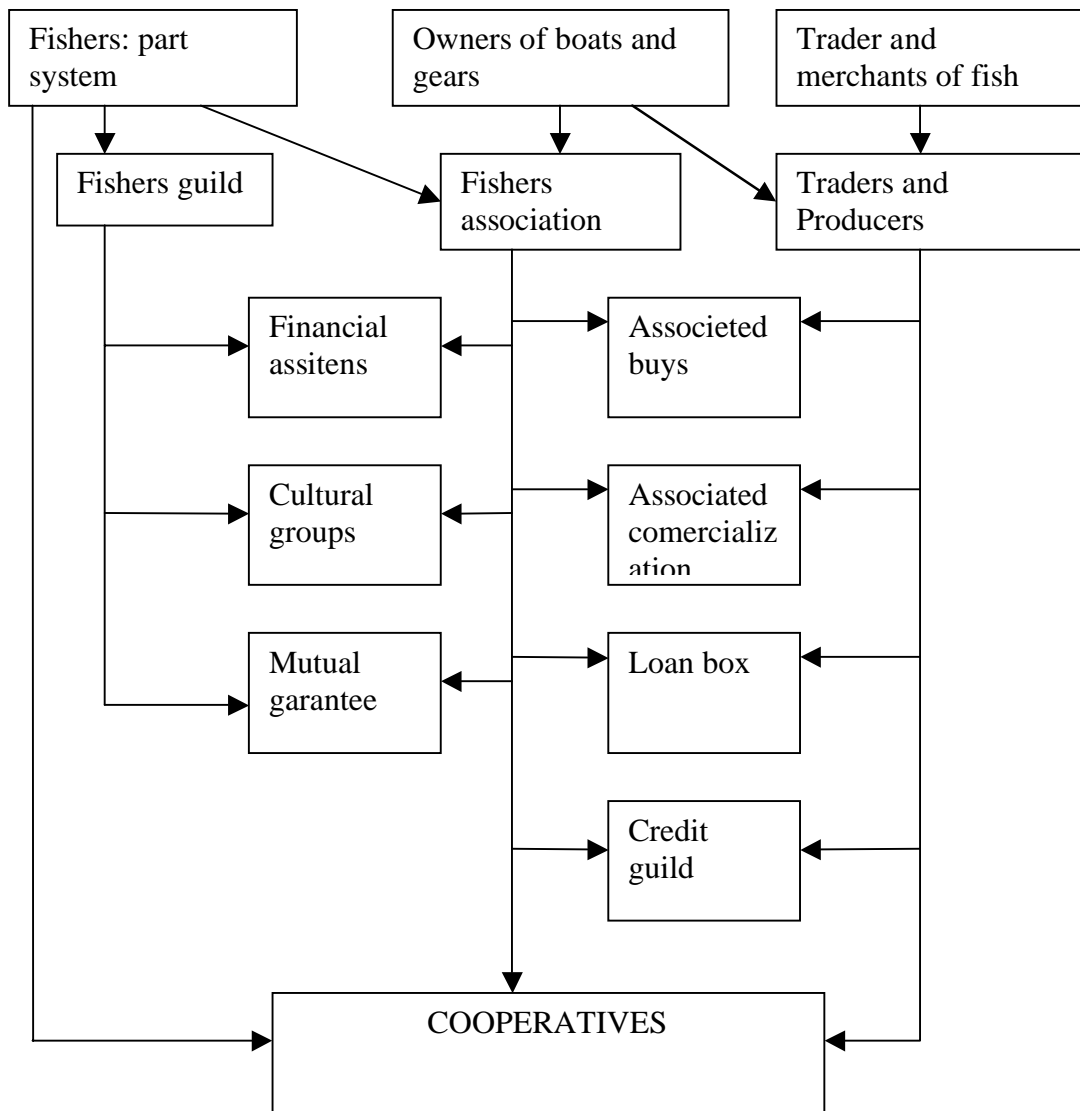
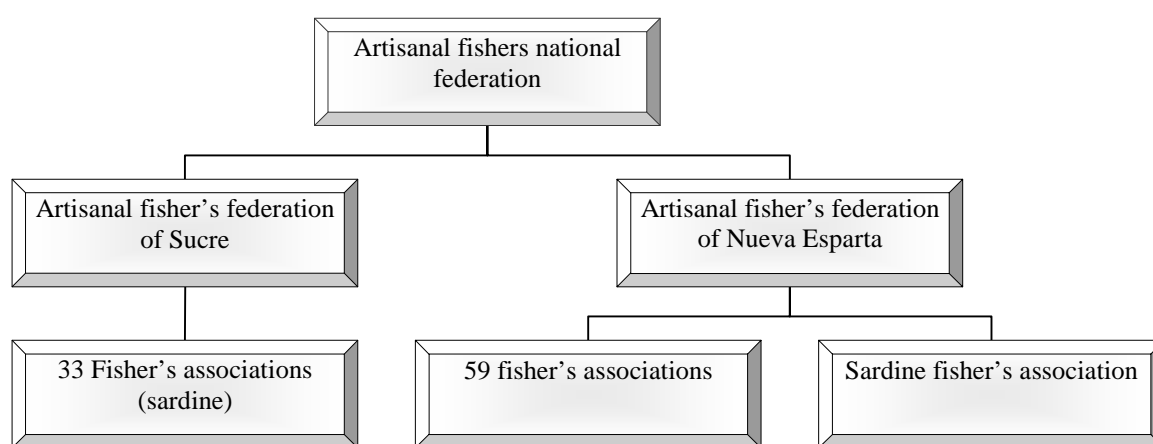


Figure 6.2-1 Organization of the cooperatives. This is a general representation of the 4 studied communities.

Both in Nueva Esparta and Sucre State every community is organized in fishers' associations. Their members can or can not be owners of boats and fishing equipment. The association must represent the common interest of all the participants as, for example, to procure improvement of security in the communities. They work in different activities as in the area of social services, credit and culture. There are, officially registered, 59 fishermen' associations in Margarita Island and 76 are formed, but no registered. (Representative of Manzanillo). All these associations are grouped in one federation: Artisanal Fishers Federation of Nueva Esparta (FANAPE). The 33 associations of fishers registered in Sucre State are grouped on the Artisanal Fishers Federation of Sucre state. Likewise, there exist

75 communities that are organized but not registered. Nevertheless, these two federations together with other states are part of the Artisanal Fishers National Federation. It is important to mention that in the case of the sardine, the owners are the representatives of the fishers' association. Due to the large amount of regulation to the fishery, the 64 owners in Margarita Island and the 33 owners in Sucre grouped themselves in Sardine Fishers Association of Nueva Esparta and the Sardine Fishers Association of Sucre respectively. Each of these associations is also part of the Artisanal Fishers National Federation. It is important to remark that cooperatives are formed by all the members of the community that want to form part of it.



**Figure 6.2-2 Hierarchical organizations of the fishers associations (cooperatives) and the respective federations.**

The federations are cooperatives' unions (umbrella organizations). The members are not conformed by individual fishers but by smaller cooperatives. The reason for the cooperatives to join their forces in such "umbrella" organizations can be commercial convenience or political reasons (to create strong town halls and pressure groups, to represent the interests and points of view of the fishers). The federations facilitate promotion of the government and financing to the cooperatives and its members. In addition, this umbrella organizations serve to persuade the government and other financial institutions to invest in infrastructure facilities (markets, processing plants , parking space for boats, warehouses for fish, etc.) and in its operations.

Fishers of the four observed communities expressed in general, "these federations are established in order to continue with the policy of the government, but also to maintain the individual cooperatives under bureaucratic control" (interviewed fisher). The formalization of the informal organizations has increase participation, but who are the

representatives? The same owners are those that joined forces to create federations. It seems that the success or not of the cooperative lays in the willingness of the owners to help the members of the community to self-sustain.

Fishing communities are classified on the bases of two perspectives. First the fisheries communities that have been successful in forming fishers associations and taking advantage of the financial credits that governments offer. In second place are those considered unsuccessful either because the community has been formed but not registered and they have not being able of getting government credits or because the association has been formed and has been obtaining credits from the government, but without seeking for the social good of their members.

## **Guaca**

The Fishing community of Guaca has developed traders and producers associations. These associations put together people of one fishing community that work filleting the fish. As an example the fisherwomen are hard workers of these communities that organized themselves to prepare the filet of the sardine in the beach and sell it to the companies already processed. The 20 organized associations called “picadoras” concentrate themselves in the reception of the sardine early in the morning. Each one of these “picadoras” employs approximately 70 workers and the majorities are women. The income of each worker (“picador”) depends on the number of boxes of 10 kilos they can fill in a labored journey of 8 hours. “The daily production means lies between 50 and 70 boxes” (picadora from Guaca). The local fabrics pay \$0.46 for each box of 10 kg of filleted sardine. “There are persons that fill up 100 boxes in one day. Everything depends on the velocity they work” (picador from Guaca) “for that same box the industrial companies pay \$3.25” (Leader of the association Chuchumar). Each of the 20 associations produces between 2,000 and 3,000 boxes of sardine daily. It is one of the activities that generates most work in the area. “Here, the person that does not fish, makes fillets”( picadora from Guaca).

While the law talks about social justice, these women and children work and live in these communities without any improvement of their social goods. Water is the main problem. All the water disposals from the houses and from the filleting cooperatives are released on the beach. Therefore, a new problem arises, which is contamination of the

beach. The captured sardine is washed in this water after filleted and then send to the processing companies that canned the filet. Creating another national problem as is the selling of contaminated fish.



Figure 6.2-3 Water disposals in the community of Guaca. All the sewers and rest of sardines are released on the beach.

In addition, the bureaucratic process to obtain credits makes it difficult for them to operate efficiently because the community is still depended on one owner and the State. Representatives of the fishers' guild in these communities highlight that: "INAPESCA do not offer technical support to the primary producers, specifically to the sardine fishers" They ensure that they have not received any financial help for motors to the boats. "Not from INAPESCA or FONDAFA. The credits have not been seen by the sector. We, for example, need a 75 horse power motor for a 9 meters boat" (fisher in Guaca). While the mechanisms to obtain help are difficult, the whole community continues to work for one owner and not for themselves. They still live in houses with difficult access to water and other goods.



Figure 6.2-4 Houses “ranchos” made out of zinc panes in the community of Guaca. Many families live without water and electricity inside their houses.

### **El Morro**

El Morro, like Guaca, is one of the communities with most members in Sucre. One of the principal demands done by the fishers was to become owners of vessels to avoid exploitation from “one owner”. They received approximately \$232 monthly which is not much in Venezuela. The fisher had to sustain all members of the family (normally 5) with this money. They lived in houses constructed out of zinc panes as people in Guaca does. They ate what they fished in addition to the sardine. Therefore, making use of the projects developed by the State, the fishers organized themselves in cooperatives in order to obtain the benefits expressed in the Venezuelan constitution. The association represents 10 workers cooperatives that at the same time represent 662 fishers.

The main representative of the association expressed that “it was difficult to fight for our rights, to educate the fishers, to teach them to respect the norms, to act by the legal ways, but now fishers understand the importance of taking care of the species.” The fishers now are owners of their boats. They have better human conditions, houses made of cement bricks and basic services as water and electricity.



Figure 6.2-5 General view of the community of el Morro. Houses with water and electricity.

One fisher expressed: “with this government I finally got my credit and bought my boat. Before, when I worked for others, I earned around \$232 a month; now I can earn nearly \$46 a day” One of the boat constructors in el Morro said: “With the credits to fishers they have given employment to many other persons. Now I have 6 men working for me and I pay them weekly”.

However, the major problem is that the community can not distribute the fish themselves in major cities and open markets because of the lack of trucks. “We want to collaborate with the rest of Venezuela. If the artisanal fishers have disponibility of trucks the fish will cost approximately 50% less than what it actually costs in the market today. Then the sardine will be seen as help for the familiar budget” (2<sup>nd</sup>. representative of the association).

The problem for the fishers is not the price by which the resellers sell the fish in other cities, but the fact that this persons play with the fishers’ money. The fishers sell the fish at credit. In other words “the fishers must wait for the transporters to go to the markets, sell the fish and come back to the community to pay the fishers. Sometimes this period extends for a week. The transporters works with the money of the fishers and after they obtain their revenues, they pay the fishers” (representative of the association).

Insecurity is a problem that affects this and all the studied communities. But fishers in el Morro allege that because other communities have not organized as well as them fishers did. “They come and steal the motors and the fish, and if the fishers resist they thieves just kill the fishers” (fisher of el Morro). Insecurity is a major problem not only in the fishery sector, but in the country in general. However, in this community the effects of voluntary participation can notably be seen. Now the community has their own supermarket, banks and university centers. All the interviewed fishers agree with fishery policies and confirm that they have seen the benefits of being part of the revolution.

## **Puerto Moreno**

Some of the other communities have received help from the government and have has developed their self-governance system represented in the organization of the community in small companies that seeks for the well-being of all the members. An example is Puerto Moreno in Margarita, a community that starting in 1999 has worked in pro of the community’s members. This community has fishing traditions for more than one

century. The association received in concession a fisheries recollection center that the local authorities own. The center was in deplorable conditions. Therefore, the community requested to include it in one of the governments programs called PESCAR 2000. All the interviewed members expressed that the development of the center is according the changes that are present in the country. They are tuned in with the Bolivarian ideal. They work in benefit of the organized community. They fish sardine and other species, prepare the sardine in different presentations and organize the commercial activities. The center delivers fish to companies and communities on which the main activity is the commercialization of fish. All the members have equal participation in the cooperative and the incomes are divided according to the activities they do.



Figure 6.2-6 Women working at the fish recollection center of Puerto Moreno.

The relevance of this case relays in the strengthening of an organization that already existed from previous times. The success of this organization is that it was the own initiative of the members to formalize their organization and make the best of the benefits that the State offered them. The good state of the economy found in the country and the initiation of the programs was and advantage for those that decide to form cooperatives at that time. Now that the State legally increased its responsibility with the population and the requirements to form a cooperative are less than before, all member of communities want to legalize their form of organization by creating a cooperative. It not only happened in this area but also in other sectors as construction, commercialization, etc. The point here is that is not sure that the State has the capacity to control all the applications and to address all the problems that communities assume the State should solve. That is the perception the

representative of the community of Manzanillo used when I ask about the achievements of the cooperative.

## Manzanillo

The community of Manzanillo has also registered a fishers' association (cooperative). The community produces 12,000 tons of fish every year. Despite this, they have not received any financial or technical help from the State and the interaction with the market is from the sardine they sell themselves. As the case of Guaca, the community has an owner who controls and gives help to the members of the community when they need it. Nevertheless, due to the location of the beach the community has made a touristic attraction out of the process of capturing the sardine. People come to visit the beach and eat in some of the 6 local restaurants that are found in the community. The community has developed itself with time and created new forms of income that it shares with the members.



Figure 6.2-7 Fisheries as a touristic attraction. Both fishers and tourists participate in the harvest process when the sardine is enclosed close to shore.

When interacting with the State they have received the opposite from help. At the time of the research a special case occurred in the interactions of the community with the State. The attractiveness of the area brings the attention of inversionists. The local government institutions made an agreement and signed a contract with the inversionists to construct a touristic complex in the area of Manzanillo. According to the announcement of the inversionists, the fishers agreed with the process. Due to the leakage of information, the representative of the community of Manzanillo knew about the project before it was



approved. His exact expression about this case was “the project plan is to eliminate the houses (ranchos) found here and substitute them for 30 productive houses that are planned to be constructed in Pachaco mountain which is located in Manzanillo. That means that they want to remove the fishers. Why do they lie to the President (Hugo Chavez)? What is the purpose? These 30 houses are needed for the families living here. Here in Manzanillo 4 to 5 families live in the same house; houses with only two rooms. We are 4,000 people living here and 80% make a living from the sardine fisheries. We need projects that help all the generations of fishers existing in Manzanillo and not projects that want to remove us from here because we make the beach ugly” Fortunately, evidences at that time were enough for the community to stop the project.

Despite the variability of each case, communities have survived to changes over the years. They have an owner that helps them to solve “minors” problems. Each member of the community has a specific task. An in these ways they avoid conflict among members. In addition, agreements between communities and fishing areas have existed since the colonial period. Fishers from Nueva Esparta state should not fish in fishing grounds of Sucre state and vice versa.

From the evaluated communities it can be observed that self-governance in the form of cooperative, which is also in accordance with the Bolivarian and socialist ideology, seems to be important in Venezuela. On the other hand, is not a pure self-regulating system. The hierarchical and omnipotent State is also active. Not only because it is imposed by law but because the State is still seen by the majority as the only institution responsible for the well being of the communities

### **7.3 Market governance**

From the establishment of the firsts canning companies in Venezuela, the market and the communities have been driven by the economical results that they could obtain. The sardine fisheries was of total open access, so those fishers that fished more earned more. Companies offering more money every time reflected the increased effort to fish sardine. The prices of the sardine have always been decided by the market. This situation increased even more during the period of 1982 to 1999 when a crisis in the oil prices increased inflation in the country to extremely high levels. Prices of the fish moved up

following the inflation rates. In Venezuela, fish sellers always raise price a lot more than the inflation rates increment. The private sector has always been seen as a rent seeking sector. The benefits that fishers and private sector obtained from that period did not reflect in the fishery society. Environmental and social cares were not actual issues in the governance process. Today, the industrialized sardine capture has diminished. This situation has obligated the stop of almost all the processing companies.

The State intervened and regulate the prices by which fishers now sell the fish to companies or to transporters. The government wishes to control all the stages of the fish chain resting relevance to the economic profits made by the private sector and focusing on employment generation and well being of the artisanal communities. The private sector is being pushed out of the economic system by those controls imposed by the State. The costs of producing one 170 gr can of sardine overcome the incomes that the sold can can generate. Thus, it seems that the controls imposed to the interactions with the market during the revolution develop two future possible panoramas for private companies: first, to convert themselves into cooperatives or, second, to move out of the market.

Nevertheless, the controls imposed by the regulatory State seem not to be strong enough. The sardine is sold at higher prices than those fixed prices imposed by the State in each level of the commercialization change. In addition, the scarcity of other products like meat, chicken, milk and grains in the totality of the national market seems to wake up the interest of those that commercialize with the fish and see an economic potential in the current situation. Fish has become the only source of proteins available in the country. The problem arose when the State wanted to fix prices for the producers of meat at a price that will bring economical loose to those involved in the business. Thus, the producers decided to stop production. Now the State threatens to take over the production of meat all over the country. But while State concentrates in taking over in the meat sector, the commercial actors of the fishery sector take advantage of the little surveillance. In this situation, it does not seem that sellers care much about achieving goals of food security programs and being solidarity with the other Venezuelans that also have little money to sustain their families.

The market and its participators do not want to be controlled by the State in its totality. Market governance in Venezuela is the reflection of a liberal State culture that goes against the socialistic ideas of the revolution. The fishery market has lost legal influence through, and in, the decision making process, but the market still dominates most of the operations that take place in the sector. If the way governance moves is toward

socialism, it could be expected more drastic controls imposed by the State. In that way self governance would be stronger from the cooperative side based on solidarity and equality and the current market actors will be pushed out of the system.



## 8 Discussion and conclusions

The fact that Venezuela is internationally considered a middle income nation due to the rent generated by the oil revenues makes the relevance of the artisanal fishery for employment generation undoubted in Venezuela. Of the 80,023 fishermen found in the country, almost 40% work in the artisanal sardine fishery (FAO, 2005). These facts increment the relevance of this sector specifically; including also the relevance of the species as a food security strategy for the poorest classes of the population. In 1998 the current president of Venezuela initiated changes in the political system of Venezuela through the so called Bolivarian Revolution. The revolution supposedly based on the emancipator Simón Bolívar's ideas has, in the period of 1999 until 2006, show the tendency to follow socialist ideologies, specifically the so called the XXI century socialism.

*Lack of political will is often cited as a main factor influencing the failure of fisheries management. An overall improvement of political governance is still seen as a pre-condition to improving fisheries governance particularly if institutional changes are to make any profound future impact on the livelihoods of the poor people dependent on fisheries in the developing countries. Politicians can establish policies and promote institutions that will lead to the most sustainable management of fish resources while also ensuring the survival of small scale producers (Reyntjens and Wilson, 2004).*

This is a perfect quotation when evaluating governance in Venezuela and its impacts in the fishery. Lack of political will is what Venezuelan politicians name as one of the main reason for fisheries failure before the current government. Fisheries governance in Venezuela has actually changed inspired by political changes. The theory described by Kooiman (2005) explains the importance of the values and principles as a foundation for fisheries governance. This theory is used to argue that political principles and values guide Venezuelan fisheries governance. Hence, the values guide the decision-making process and management implications. The Venezuelan political stream fluctuating towards socialism is not a secret issue. The world has been following the steps of the government since the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez Frias, made his announcements on the political, social and economical reforms to the system. Thus, values and principles of socialism are center-staged in governance modification.

In Venezuela governors assessed the sardine fishery prior to the creation of the institutions and laws that were going to rule the fishery. Governors determined that the increments in captures of the last years had been irregular. These irregularities were caused by political or commercial conjunctures that influenced the national fisheries development.

The artisanal fisheries were and are still considered the backbone of the fisheries activities. In addition, the artisanal fisheries have shown flexibility and adaptation towards change. Besides, the industrial fishery was considered as weak and without future. “The State decided to pay especial attention to the fishery sector by implementing policies, plans and programs that favor the development of the artisanal fishery”. (Representative of INAPESCA)

As future perspectives, they proposed that good part of the artisanal systems (primarily the sardine) have real possibilities to increment their production despite some problems connected to financing, direct access to the markets and value adding. Therefore, the artisanal fishery receives maximal attention from the State and cooperativism is promoted to solve the problems that have prevented development of the sector.

The results show that Venezuela has the same concerns, and struggles with the same problems, as many other countries: Ecosystem health, social justice, employment and livelihood. Actors must deal with the challenges that each of these concerns involve. The institutions that represent the State had to make hard choices in concordance of these concerns. The prevailing issue addressed by the new political streams is social justice, employment and livelihood. This, in addition to the high percentage of contribution from the sardine fishery to the total production and the high number of direct employments, gave enough reasons to choose to protect the artisanal fishery. Despite the facts that favor the artisanal sardine fishery and disfavor the industrial fishery, it can be argued based on what Kooiman expressed in his book fish for life (Kooiman et al., 2005) that the values of socialism seem to have provided a value frame that facilitates governors in Venezuela in deciding. If the new policies in the country express social justice and equality it is obvious that governments may favor those that are in a worst socio-economic situation. Then the institutional decisions are based on an evident logic that a socialist government can not reject. Therefore, employment generation is preferred over profit generation, on the basis of the Bolivarian Revolution ideologies and since the values of equality, solidarity, and freedom are reflected in the constitution, this makes the decision process an institutional

act rather than a “political-personal” act as many stakeholders, specifically those of the private sector, argue.

This is represented by a process in which stakeholders are part of a project to increment participation; a project which is still in a development process. One of the fishers in the community of Guaca expressed: “We have always been considered less than everybody else. It is the first time that someone cares about us” The majority of the interviewed fishers in those communities that have received financial help from the government say to agree with fisheries policies. In fact it was their representatives that created a group to draft the new Fishery Law. There is no doubt, they feel somehow included through their representatives. Meanwhile, fishers of the community of Guaca and Manzanillo are not so happy with the system “why do they lie to the president Chavez with social development projects? We are still living in the same conditions as before the revolution. We trust our president and its ideas, but we do not trust the liars that work at the regional level” (fisher in Manzanillo). A representative of the private sector expressed: “this country and the sector will be in crisis in a short period, we are not included in the decision making process and this affect us negatively” (representative of ASOVEXP).

It can be argued that the values of socialism guide the images or visions of fisheries. The state as main actor has the vision of development of the artisanal fisheries towards a sustainable fishery that also contributes to increased self-sufficiency, and food security. Through this vision, policies and management plans have been developed as in the sardine fishery case. Artisanal fishers are protected, and employment generation has become more important than economical profit. The current government has understood the importance of sharing those images with stakeholders. Representatives of the national and regional level created small political groups in almost every community. They teach their members the bases of socialism as a politic system and the impacts of the ideologies to the fisheries, but the huge challenge for the State continues to be on implementing the instruments and involving the people in a transparent process.

As shown in previous chapters, the government has used laws and institutions as instruments to achieve goals and address situations. At the national level a strong hierarchical organization is visible. Bureaucratic procedures to obtain any kind of information, finance, or any kind of support contradict the values in which images are based. Chavez mentioned in the XXI Latino-American governments meeting: “If we are going to speak of social inclusion obligatorily we will have to speak of the economic

model that has reigned for a long time on this earth. The neo-liberal capitalist model is a model that excludes the majority; if we want to include the majorities of workers, poor women, children of the street, people without land to work, the homeless, those who apparently have no life, we will have to change the economic model and create a model that includes all of them, that gives opportunity to all, that guarantees the rights to them all” He also emphasized the necessity to change the prevailing political models by participatory democracy. Yes, it is changing, but so far the results only create doubt on how much participation the State, as main actor, will allow. At the local level institutions reflect the participatory democracy politicians make references to. The State wishes to formalize the informal institutions. The emphasis is on formalizing structures in the fishing communities converting them in cooperatives. The construction of partnerships between the State and cooperatives is a strategic alliance that might be successful if the relation is based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding and obligations. But every partnership can have pitfalls. Therefore, it is important for both parties to be open-minded, willing to learn and adapt. However, in a State on which policies are directed toward socialism there is not much space to open-minded ideas. Thus, if communities want to participate they have to agree with socialism and with the idea that in any moment the State can intervene in their internal and external relations.

Furthermore, in this including process some one may be excluded and in this case is the turn of the private market to remain as a less important participator. Therefore, it seems that the State is expecting that the inclusiveness of the actors in the community and their interactions develop in positives ways. If the opposite occurs, the strategy of cooperatives will develop against socialism ideas when marginalization and mistrust towards institutions and participation increase.

It is the desire of the cooperativists to create many cooperatives, with efficient and real impact in society. The message of the government to assume the cooperatives as “points of the spear” to face poverty and other problems, constitutes an interesting incentive to the creation of these associations. Therefore, it becomes obvious the importance of maintaining mechanisms that facilitate the constitution of cooperatives.

As expressed before, this hierarchical structure is a challenge by itself due to the fact that good governance is based on more or less equal interaction between the state, market and civil society (Kooiman et al., 2005). Therefore, the question of what form of governance that can be expected in the future in Venezuela has several implications.



The use of cooperatives is the key to answer this question. With the creation of cooperatives the State ensures that all the fishers' communities are included in the system and that this now formalized institutions share the same images about fisheries with the State. The cooperatives should be self-governed and managed. The cooperatives which also are formed in principles and values of solidarity, equality, fraternity, love and freedom are obligated based also in the principle of "cooperativism" to help each other. These mean that cooperatives must cooperate with other cooperatives. These interactions form a big net that could press the private sector out of the system or convert it in to a part of a cooperativism governance system, where the State has the final right and power to intervene whenever it considers necessary to regulate the interactions between stakeholders.

However, the fact that these cooperatives have their basement in politics can be a weakness, because of the level of conflict and the existing opposition to the new Venezuelan political system. Evaluating the results, it is estimated that the number of unregistered, not formalized cooperatives, matches the existing amount of registered cooperatives; creating a problem for the State's institution when trying to execute the different programs and when trying to offer subsidies to these cooperatives. In that order, some cooperatives have obtained technical and financial help from the State, while others are still struggling to just continue operating.

At the same time, the State has put in risk its capacity to offer answers effectively to the whole sector; risk that is increased by the bureaucratic system. Therefore, instead of moving toward cooperativism, the Venezuelan fisheries may be moving towards two other different scenarios. The first scenario is that the State takes total control over all the economic activities in the fisheries and that a strictly hierarchical governance system at all levels becomes the outcome. The second scenario is that Venezuelan system is moving towards more market governance if the State loses its power and legitimacy, and faith from the civil society. Finally, as it can be read, no final solution is offered. The Venezuelan system is in change. The constitution of new fishers' cooperatives by the government and sectors that accompany it opens floodgates towards unknown ways. I would like to communicate an institutional model of Venezuela with transparency, communication, interaction and democracy in all levels. However, I am just in capacity to show fragments of where the fishery governance may be moving to, and state that the administrators should be concerned about these issues. The struggle to find good and

functioning structures for the new institutions is a continuous task for those who want to use effort in creating a good fishery governance system.

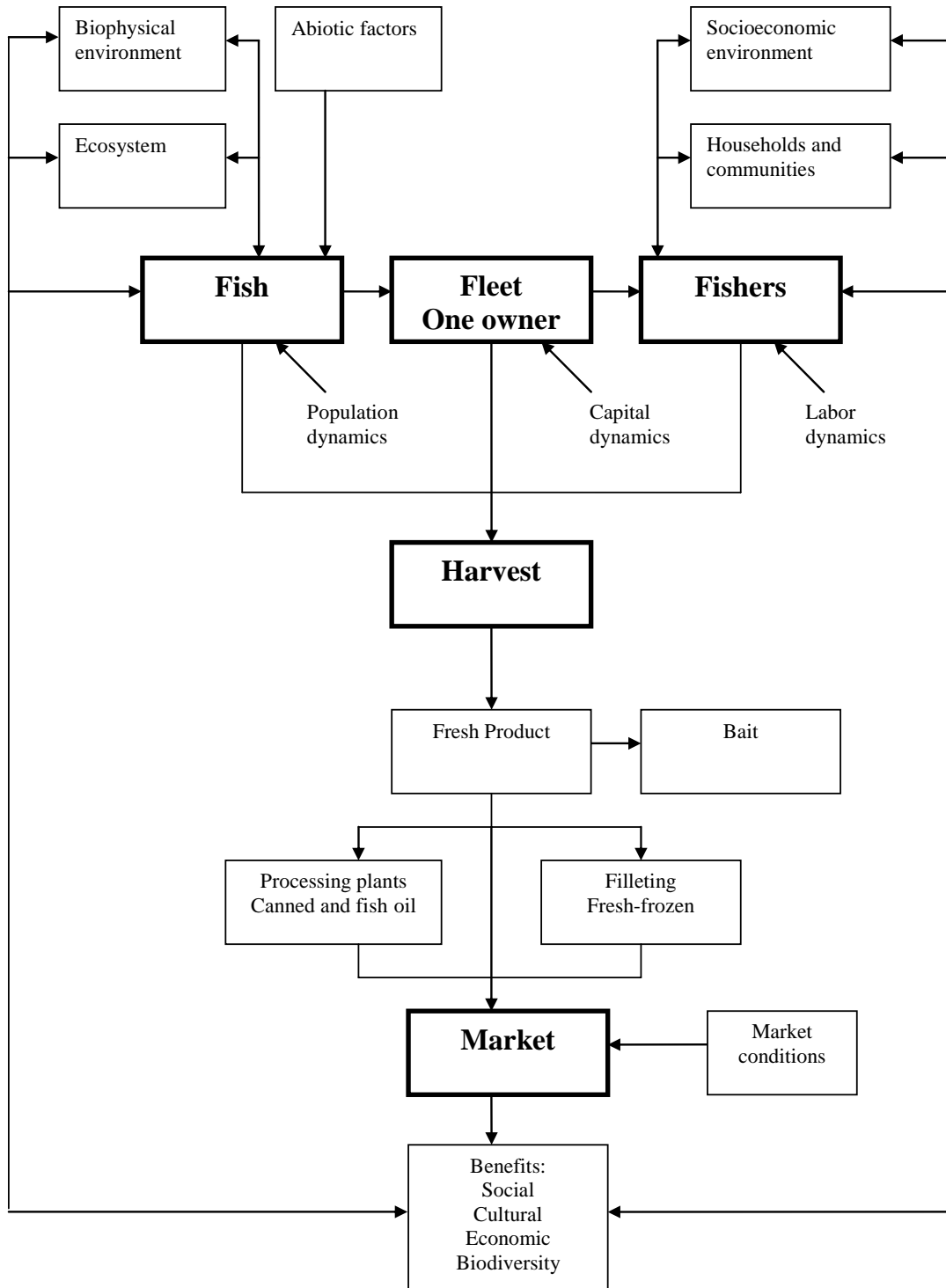
To conclude I make a self reflection: The cooperatives of fisheries and other sectors are impregnated with political ideologies and have started to grow without control. In the long run that may be a risk. They might not become truly competitive companies and their few associates could end worse than before; in addition, if they continue to be accustomed to the State donations, they will never acquired an investment culture. Communities as Puerto Morro have acquired a high status in the self-governance process. The independence achieved by the fishers and their responsiveness to the system has become an example for other communities. If all the communities achieve what Puerto Morro has done, the government would be at least in a coherent line; when the policies are combined with effective actions for the development of true cooperatives. True cooperatives will then be impregnated of values and principles, but also of appropriate economic projects and organizational feasibility.

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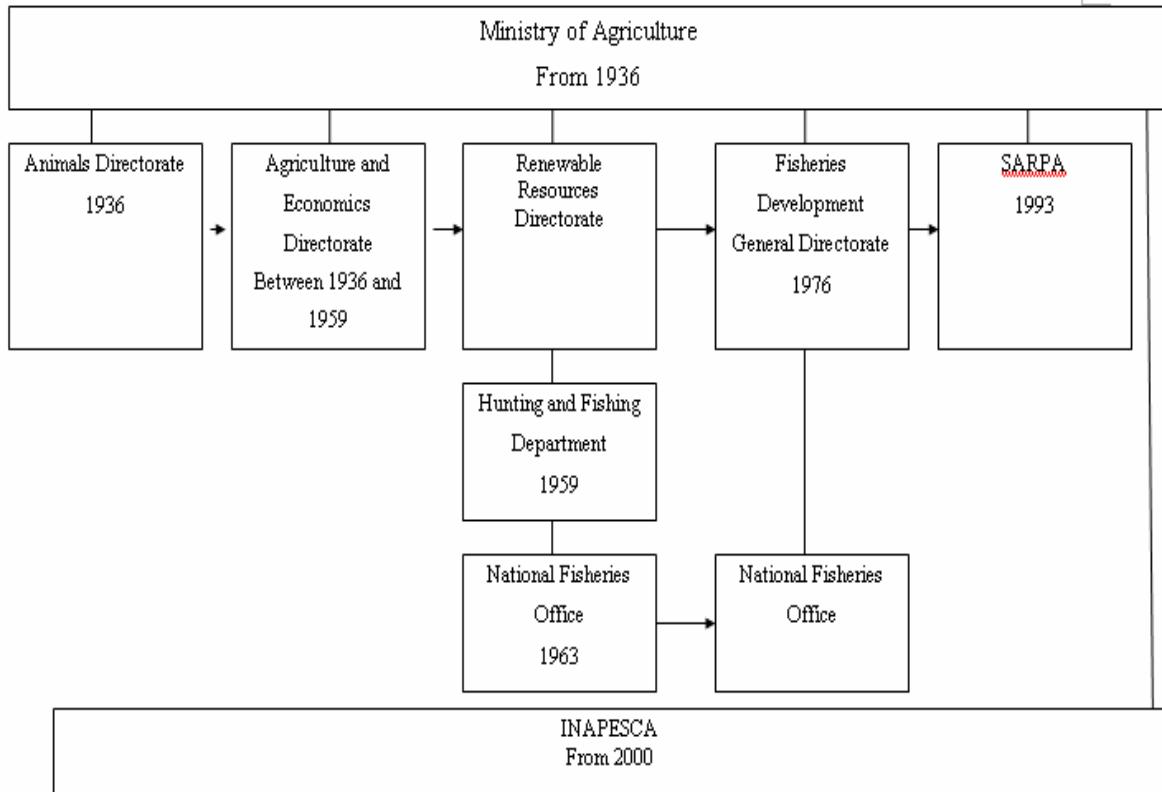
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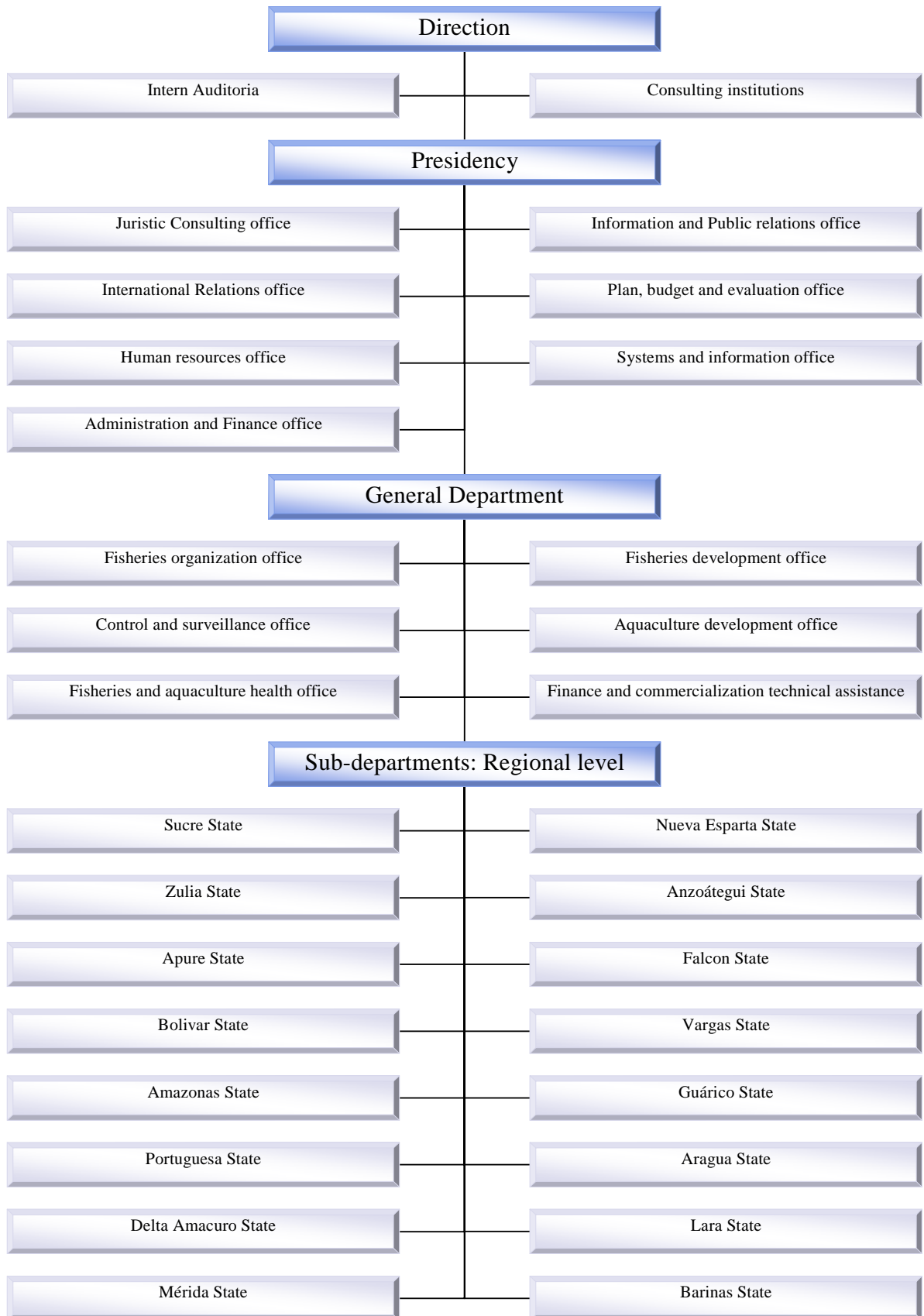
## 10 Appendix



Appendix 1 General draft of the system and its interactions of the semi industrial fishery for *Sardinella aurita* in North-east Venezuela. Based on: (Charles, 2001)



Appendix 2 General description of the transition of fishery government institutions



Appendix 3 Organization chart of the National Fishery and Aquaculture Institution (INAPESCA)

