

## ANNEX 1 - INTERVIEWS

In this file, I provide a summary of each interview realised throughout the fieldwork process in Chile. The interviews were made in the cities of Santiago, Puerto Montt, Ancud, Quemchi, Castro and Quellón between the months of October and November 2010.

The selection of interviewees is based on their expertise in the field. In this way, I interviewed the three presidents of the major federations of salmon workers unions, Mr. Ricardo Casas -*Federación de Trabajadores de la Industria Pesquera* (FETRAINPES); and national CUT leader-, Mr. Javier Ugarte -*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores del Salmón* (CONATRASAL)-, and Mr. Gustavo Cortés -*Federación de Trabajadores del Salmón de Quellón*-. Mrs. Alejandra Uribe, President of the Union of Transitory Workers, Quellón, was interviewed as well.

I also interviewed active civil society members, amongst them Mr. Juan Carlos Cárdenas and Mrs. Isabel Díaz -Ecoceanos, NGO focused on the Regions of Los Lagos, Aysén and Magallanes, Santiago-, Mrs. Ximena Valdés -Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (CEDEM), Santiago-, Mr. Patricio Peñaloza -Canelo de Nós and OLACH, NGOs focused on the salmon industry zones, Ancud-, Mrs. Ana Vera -TV Quellón, local TV channel; local Communist Party (PCCH) activist, Quellón-, Mrs. Denis Alvarado -president of the Association of Artisan Fishers' Wives and the Corporation of Sustainable Development, Quellón- and Mr. Héctor Kol -environmentalist, civil society activist, and consultant for mytilid-cultors, Puerto Montt-.

Finally, during our interview, Mrs. Alejandra Uribe kindly agreed to call upon workers related to the union of transitory workers of Quellón “Visión de Futuro”, what allowed me to count with an improvised focus group session. A group of 10 transitory workers of the municipal emergency employment programme of Quellón participated in the focus group session. In particular, the participants provided me with important insights regarding participation in unions and other organisations as: a) all of them were women and, for this reason, face additional obstructions to organise; b) half of the participants were former salmon workers, and could provide a inner perspective of the common worker in the industry (as more than half of the workers in salmon processing plants are female), and c) half of these women were affiliated to the union of transitory female workers of Quellón, providing me with direct information regarding incentives and deterrents for organisation and action.

Interview questions:

Unionised:

- How long have you been working in the salmon industry in general?
- In particular, how long have you been in your current job?
- Are you hired with contract or outsourced?
- How are the working conditions in your job?
- When was your union formed?
- Did you meet significant opposition and barriers to form the union? From who and what institutions?
- How did the organisation manage to overcome that opposition? What lessons do you think you have learned out of those events?
- Recently, have there been major conflicts and disputes with the company?
- How did the union face the conflict? Were coercive and force measures (i.e. strikes, blockades, manifestations) taken against the company and its allied organisations?
- Ultimately, how was it solved?
- Did the union struggle for itself or did it count with significant support from other people and organisations?
- What do you think has been the role and significance of other social and political organisations in your particular struggles?
- What do you think has been the impact in economic, social, cultural and political terms of the salmon industry over your community/town/city?

Non-unionised:

- How long have you been working in the salmon industry in general?
- And in particular in your current job?
- Do you have a contract or are you outsourced?
- How are the working conditions in your job?

- What are the main reasons for not being unionised?
- Have you and your fellow workers tried to set up a union?
- Has there been strong opposition from your employers to form a union?
- When facing adverse conditions, what do you do in order to attain better ones or redressing?
- Did the union struggle for itself or did it count with significant support from other people and organisations?
- What do you think has been the role and significance of other social and political organisations in your particular struggles?
- What do you think has been the impact in economic, social, cultural and political terms of the salmon industry over your community/town/city?

Interview N° 1

Santiago de Chile, October 22, 2010.

Interviewees: Juan Carlos Cárdenas, director Ecoceanos; Isabel Díaz, member Ecoceanos

*Labour unions are a relatively new issue in the Region*

According to the interviewees, union formation is led by migrant workers from the Regions of Valparaíso and Bío-Bío

*Unions usually act only for short-term negotiations*

*The case of Puerto Montt and Chiloé are a good example of drastic transformation of pre-capitalist structures through globalisation*

*Puerto Montt and Frutillar act as residential zones for Chilean and foreign businessmen*

*Puerto Montt*

becomes administrative capital in the region after the salmon industry boom

Concentration of processing plants

Concentration of female workers

Lack of infrastructure

*Chiloé*

provides workers for salmon farms, which do not require extensive labour

there has been a process of migration from the island to Puerto Montt

*Quellón*

has shown huge levels of inwards immigration

according to CEPAL/ECLAC, is the city with highest growth rates in Latin America

emergence of campsites and poverty

**(J. C. Cárdenas leaves the room)**

*Salmon industry behaviour*

Blockage and pressures from the industry over politicians, civil society and media

SalmónChile funds press

+20000 workers currently unemployed due to the ISA virus outbreak

Subcontracting, outsourcing and seasonal work rates are over 60%

### **(Beginning of recording)**

The Chilean Navy, in charge of overseeing compliance with labour and environmental regulations on sea sites, is not very effective. No statistics on accidentability have been developed and most accidents happen despite Navy prohibitions.

ca. 80% of the firms were accused and fined for non-compliance with labour and environmental regulations. TNCs have the worst records in matter of compliance with labour and environmental laws. In this sense, Marine Harvest was sued in by Ecoceanos in the OECD.

### *On the Federations*

Three major federations and confederations:

1. FETRAINPES (Puerto Montt-Calbuco), Ricardo Casas, the oldest and biggest federation
2. Federación Quellón (Quellón, Chiloé), Mr. Cortés
3. CONATRASAL (Puerto Montt), Javier Ugarte.

There exist differences and disputes between the latter and the other 2.

The role of the CUT and its tactics: Díaz thinks that direct contact with unions is better than working with some of the federations and confederations, as some of them have been constructed

CONATRASAL supported the “privatisation of the sea” law, discussed with ministers, assisted the National Congress and supported the salmon firms, while FETRAINPES and Quellón opposed it.

“Privatisation of the sea”: reform of the Fishing and Aquaculture Act, allowing the cession of aquaculture concessions -national and public strips and columns of sea- to the private sector -i.e. banks and financial services- as mortgage or guarantee for credits. This cession is not perpetual *de jure*, but it is *de facto* as it is automatically renewable every 25 years. This reform was approved in March 2010, 2 days before the end of Bachelet administration. Ecoceanos struggled against this act, and achieved some support in the civil society and in the Senate -Navarro, Girardi-. However, secondary legislation is still in order to allow implementation of this law and that is the current site of the struggle.

CONATRASAL has some levels of rejection as it has proceeded to negotiate with the employers: for instance, their support to the privatisation was exchanged by a protocol (a statement

of intentions) that is still to be implemented. They show high levels of interaction with the ministry of Labour and affirm that labour conditions are improving, though there exists proof that such is not the case, as in Quellón, where the hired workers are seasonal and women above 40 in order to avoid cases of pregnancy.

#### *On improved working conditions*

There is many people who wants employment, who has been in the industry for several years and has been laid off and now seeks for more jobs. That is why salmon firms have popular support. However, many other people do know about the bad working conditions on the salmon industry.

Many people, actually more people than originals, working on the salmon industry in Chiloé come from outside the island.

Several health problems: cystitis, fungi, tendinitis. It is not a career job, it lasts 10-15 years, and it is difficult to obtain pensions from working on the industry.

#### *Judiciary*

Salmon firms are able to manipulate and bribe judges. Labour trials can be left on standby for 3 or 4 years and then are closed.

#### *Civil Society and action against industry*

Moderate success when agriculture and productive sectors organise themselves. However, these cases are isolated.

Information is crucial in order to achieve effective mobilisation.

In Chaitén, illegal farms were exposed with support of Ecoceanos and small scale fishermen. The authorities were forced to close the illegal facilities.

Canadian net-cleaning facilities were to be installed in Quellón, near a *mitilicultor* (shellfish) farm. The farmers insisted and struggled until the Canadian corporation dropped the project.

Example of Quellón, 2009: major strike led by shellfish farmers, unemployed salmon workers and small scale fishermen due to a *Marea Roja* (red tide or algal bloom) brought to the zone by salmon industry well-boats. This movement achieves changes in secondary legislation.

Example in Quellón: raped woman exposes her case in national TV. She sues the firm for accident in worksite: taking a bus from the processing plant, she was assaulted in her way home. Legally, that is considered a work-related accident, however the firm tried to ignore the issue.

#### *Role of senators and representatives*

Senators and representatives support sometimes the workers.

All senators and representatives supported the “privatisation of the sea” law. This project was led by Senator Camilo Escalona. The justification to this support was the levels of employment.

There are rumours of politicians appear to be financed by the salmon industries.

Fidel Espinoza, Representative from Socialist Party (PS), appears to be closer to the unions and workers. He denounced fellow representatives for taking bribes. He played a crucial role in the creation of the investigation commission of the lower house in 2006. He also denounced high levels of accidents.

For the first time, an investigation commission was set up to oversee private operations: these commissions are limited to investigate public agencies.

Gabriel Ascencio, representative from Christian Democrat Party (PDC), shows no apparent interest.

Camilo Escalona, senator from Socialist Party (PS), displays some work in favour of workers, but usually sides with salmon firms. He fostered the creation and development of *Mesas de Diálogo* (Dialogue groups) in the region: these were set up when salmon firms were beginning to lose prestige -high rates of accident, environment degradation, bad working conditions-. According to Ecoceanos, this was just “lip service” and a matter of PR, trying to improve the public image of salmon firms and government.

Nor mayors nor municipal authorities appear to oppose salmon firms. “Ultimately, money talks louder.”

Visit to Marine Harvest stockholder meeting in Stavanger, Norway: organised by Juan Carlos Cárdenas and Ricardo Casas (FETRAINPES) together with Pure Salmon Campaign. However, the effects were not very strong.

### *Expansion of the industry to the Region of Magallanes*

Industry is moving from Puerto Montt and Chiloé to the Region of Magallanes.

However, citizens and civil society organisations oppose the establishment of salmon firms in the zone: despite efforts from municipalities, for instance in Natales, the citizens do not want the entry of the salmon firms. Besides bad working conditions, the benefits for the region are not clear and the social impacts appear to be very high: the salmon industry offers +/- 5000 new jobs which, probably, will be filled with migrant workers from Pto Montt and Chiloé.

This opposition appears to be sustained on the work of NGOs and civil society movements disseminating information and campaigning actively. Díaz suggests that the more exposed to information on the industry, the less supportive the citizenship is to the salmon industry.

Opposition organisation is led by productive sectors and tourism-related business people: according to Díaz, “organisations and groups that will be the most affected in their pockets are organised, but the people and the citizenship are not...”

Ultimately, there is no clear organisation in opposition. There is little integration between the different opposing organisations: few alliances have been established between these -productive- organisations and other -environmental, social, labour- movements.

### **(J.C. Cárdenas returns to the room)**

According to Cárdenas, the only successful way to oppose the expansion of salmon industry is through coordination between different movements.

*On the Unions (part 2), and NGOs and organisation*

FETRAINPES, the older organisation.

Federación Quellón, strong organisation.

CONATRASAL, now the biggest confederation of unions in the industry. It was created by *Canelo de Nós* which, according to Cárdenas, it is a NGO associated to the Socialist Party, and fostered by Osvaldo Andrade, Minister of Labour (PS), the Concertación (center-left) Government of Michelle Bachelet (PS) and the Socialist Party.

According to Cárdenas, it works in support of the salmon industry. The CONATRASAL operates controlling the labour movement in order to adequate it to the requirements of the government and the firms. Operates in leader formation and union co-option, while neutralising more critical and radical unions. Concentrates public resources provided by the Ministry of Labour and the Industry. Strong clientelism and co-option driven by NGOs linked to Concertación.

Canelo de Nós acts, according to Cárdenas, as intermediate between labour movement and the government and firms: this organisation took control of the labour movement. The main focus of CONTRASAL/Canelo de Nós is the negotiation with firms, discouraging wide scale mobilisations.

It becomes apparent that a coupling exists between Concertación (center-left block) and Alianza (center-right block), and between these and the industry.



Clientelism from the state towards union leaders and labour movement: direct leader co-option through “purchasing” them with funds, education and legitimisation as valid actor vis-à-vis the state.

Clientelism from the firms: firms purchase union leader's legally provided immunity and then fire them when the union becomes strong. Several instances of complete unions being “purchased” have been recorded until the creation of CONATRASAL. The “purchased” union leaders would, then, acquire a taxi.

Other cases of “purchased” union leaders include those that, after fired, become contractors for the same firm.

According to Cárdenas, TNCs are very fond of these mechanisms, and do not distinguish themselves from Chilean corporations. For instance, the LO-Norway report, which tries to give account of the state of the Norwegian salmon firms in Chile, was also under pressure of the Norwegian state: the state is stockholder of the firms operating in Chile. Thus, the agents chosen to participate in the interviews for the preparation of the report were hand-picked by the LO representatives in Chile: the Chilean labour representatives were the more moderate sectors (apparently linked to CONTRASAL). Internal political struggles led to open the hearings to the more critical organisations and union leaders during the last day of the procedures. However, the final report had to be edited several times in order to avoid strong opposition from Marine Harvest and Cermaq. Ultimately, the report had no effects: between 2007-2009, more than 20000 workers were fired; work conditions did not improve; women labour rights have been violated systematically. Marine Harvest has the biggest record of death by accidents; ISA virus is introduced to Chile by Norwegian companies due to lack of inspection of imported eggs and over-crowding of farming sites. Now, the Norwegian firms have taken over SalmonChile and the industrial association.

According to Cárdenas, in interview with the Norwegian ambassador, the main problem in Chile is the lack of sound regulations and proper enforcement.

The process of globalisation in Chile is one that leaves the dirty, bad, undesirable parts in Chile, and exports the good and wealth.

Geopolitical issues: Norwegian, Spanish and Japanese firms control territories in the south of Chile thanks to the law of “privatisation of the seas”. In the case of Norwegian companies, both sides of the south of South America are controlled.

Immigration to Region of Magallanes: initially, it will be composed by Chilean workers from

northern areas; later, foreign workers.

In the case of Magallanes and the different struggles, there is little cross-articulation and support is not as wide as expected.

In the case of Puerto Montt and Chiloé, there was a moment where several NGOs were able effectively articulate against the expansion of the industry. In this sense, the 2006 investigation commission is result of concerted action of civil society organisations, unions and fishermen associations.

However, other NGOs disrupt worker movement exactly in the moment when the worker movement becomes stronger. For instance, Pure Salmon Campaign. They came into the alliances, hegemonised sectors of the movement, fragmenting the wide alliance. After that, these NGOs present themselves as genuine counterparts of the movement vis-à-vis the state, the industry in Chile and outside, while de-linking themselves from the movement in Chile. Finally, in the peak of the salmon industry crisis (2008-2009), the resources and support from NGOs as Pure Salmon Campaign are cut, dismantling the alliances.

Thus, unions and workers organisations were systematically and intentionally disrupted and dismantled. Moreover, state-directed police repression was effected in the case of Quellón, in Los Fiordos.

After the movement in Quellón, Canelo de Nós comes in and tries to control the situation. The dismantlement of the movement was effected and, now, CONATRASAL leads the worker organisations in Chiloé, marginalising the other two federations, which are not invited to dialogues.

Lack of prestige of salmon industry leads to creation of dialogue instances, proposed by PS leaders and the government. From then onwards, protests, strikes and other major movements were neutralised or stifled. Cárdenas and Díaz suggest a very well-planned strategy.

In terms of lessons for concrete praxis, Cárdenas and Díaz consider that local organisations must be very careful when dealing with bigger NGOs, particularly international and transnational, as these are able to impose their agenda over the local ones.

2005 and 2006, in the peak of the industry, alliances were sought with foreign consumer and environmentalist associations. However, internal problems within other organisations blocked further works.

Other NGOs also work with and for the industry, the former legitimising the final agreements by providing their public image and legitimacy. The case of WWF and Terram, which supported the

law of “privatisation of the seas” and Felipe Sandoval (PDC), former under-secretary of Fishery during Bachelet administration, coordinator of dialogue instance that produces the law on the “privatisation of the seas” and, months later, becomes member of the board of SalmonChile. He was in charge of neutralising worker movements in coal mines in Lota, and port unions. His role during the Concertación governments has been to shut productive areas. Recently, he was accused of fraud and bribery, using public funds to co-opt union leaders; however, he was absolved.

Environmentalist NGOs were grouped, in the beginning of the 1990s, by Greenpeace in a form of mobilised alliance. However, by the end of the decade, several of these organisations became lobbyists, more moderate, prone to negotiations and more interested in receiving funds.

Lack of political opposition: centre-left and centre-right are relatively coupled due to institutional/electoral factors, and there appears to exist no strong opposition in the law- and policy-making processes. Finally, civil society ends up being manipulated by politicians to shift balances in negotiations, stifling and neutralising popular demands.

**(End of recording)**

*Split in SalmónChile: AquaChile leaves the association due to lack of implementation of safety measures.*

Interview N° 2

Santiago de Chile, October 26, 2010

Interviewee: Ximena Valdés, director CEDEM

- *Quellón, 2009: riots and major strike*  
explosive growth of the city  
female work
- *ANAMURI*  
recording organisational creativity  
food sovereignty  
wage work  
against union bureaucracy  
local-global links - MST-Brazil
- *Parallels: female season workers return to Mancomunales instead of proceeding through unions*
- *Parallels: Crisis of saltpeter and migration from north to south (1930-1950)*  
strengthens worker movements in the rural areas
- *Important aspect is to take into account the experiences during the military regime*
- *Elite control vs. development of new forms of organisation*
- *Important aspect: globalisation, by destroying traditional links and bonds, also opens new spaces of action and participation*

Interview N° 3

Puerto Montt, November 10, 2010

Interviewee: Ricardo Casas Mayorga, President FETRAINPES, Directorate of CUT-Chile, member of the Communist Party of Chile (PC).

*Globalisation for workers*

Workers may participate in the global market, but they are not empowered in global terms.

*Legislation blocks unionisation*

There exist restrictions in order to form federations and confederations. The latter do not have the possibility to receive fees for associated workers. If a union leader gets “angry”, the funds are cut.

Negotiations are within firms, not by federations or confederations. The latter can take one representative to negotiations, but that is not enough.

*There is no meaningful contact between Chilean and International unions*

E-mails or limited conversations only. For instance, the LO-Norway representatives coming to Chile. For political issues, in particular regarding the membership of Communist Party, there was exclusion: Socialist Party members organised the visit and excluded other political party members. These representatives showed interest in full-time workers of Marine Harvest plants, but no interest in sub-contracted and temporary workers and those working in related industries.

Working conditions and relations have improved slightly with Marine Harvest: demands in OECD and meetings with stakeholders in Stavanger, Norway. There exist trade unions in these firms.

*There is no organisation of sub-contracted and temporary workers*

People who are hired for temporary jobs or *faenas* are almost unreachable: travelling workers, paid in trucks.

*SalmonChile exists to foster business, not ensure good working conditions*

Firms are not prone to negotiate and improve on their behalf working conditions.

*Inter-firm unions, no other forms of alternative organisation*

Complicated to form and operate. With this organisation, workers remain members of the union

although they are fired or the firm goes bankrupt.

Inter-firm negotiation is not possible without acceptance of employers.

Satellite commissions and organisations have been formed, but progress has been slow. For instance, there exist housing problems, as credit access is limited for workers with scarce incomes. In this issue, the inter-firm union is trying to proceed: union members do not understand well the procedures.

#### *Relations with political parties*

Parties are not linked to the organisation, and Casas does not open the Federation to the parties. He argues that the federation has members from different political parties and sectors

Parties seek to have representation and hegemonise federations: use the “name” of the existing union or federation as resource in intra-party political struggles. On the other hand, the party is not interested.

#### *Relations with CUT-Chile*

The house where FETRAINPES operates, although says CUT-Chile, is not from the CUT: it is from Ministry of *Bienes Nacionales*.

Despite Casas being a national leader, the organisation has not shown major interest. The central levels claim that the struggle between FETRAINPES and CONATRASAL should be solved first.

According to Casas, the creation of CONATRASAL was part of the strategy to divide the labour movement in the salmon industry. This was directed by the Concertación in order to allow the “business”.

On the other hand, a major problem is that of the lack of knowledge on the issue in the central levels of the organisations, usually located in Santiago: e.g. during a meeting with the former Minister of Labour, Osvaldo Andrade (PS) to inform about the ISA virus and its effects over labour and employment, Andrade reaches Casas and asks incredulously if he (Casas) “really” thinks it will be that bad. This in spite of all the support documentation provided by Casas and the FETRAINPES. “In Santiago, the expert in salmon is the one who eats salmon once a week.”

#### *Relations with other unions*

Casas speaks to all unions in Puerto Montt. However, unions do not work together and do not assist each other: workers do not understand the need for unity.

Affiliation to the Federation is never demanded.

## *Federación Quellón*

There are good relations with it and there were attempts to create a confederation. However, these attempts were unsuccessful and there has been no further efforts in organisation. They have good use of internet and web tools; yet, there is no organised structure.

## *FETRAINPES*

Used to include 22 unions; now, it is composed by 4. This is due to the effects of ISA virus. Once laid-off from the firms, workers were more open to participation and contact. In order to gather people, the FETRAINPES proposes investigating millionaire FONDEF projects assigned to the industry, and to shift moneys to work reconversion.

## *Projects of work reconversion*

Idea of FETRAINPES in 2009 was to form worker cooperatives to train former salmon workers as builders, as a proper response from the trade unions. There was no support from the Concertación governments: they required the movement to conform a cooperative first.

## *Representatives and senators*

Representatives do not offer great support: at the most, they appear on the media and offer a lawyer. Fidel Espinoza (PS), for instance, was contacted and provided the documents on FONDEF moneys; however, he never replied.

In the region, Vallespín (DC) and Iturra.

## *Lack of mass character of the movement*

Unions now work as administrators of emergency employment programmes. Thus, they appear in contradiction: on the one hand, they ask for the end of precarious employments; on the other, they appear defending the extension of these emergency precarious employments. Employers indicate that they will open new job positions; yet, none are created.

Work with other organisations -students, other trade unions- is beginning. Several declarations are given, but there is no mass movement. Casas identifies a major problem here: union leaders define what their affiliated workers want and need; however, there is not an accurate fit between the leaders' designs and the workers desires. Workers must decide what has to be negotiated for collective agreements. On the other hand, the vision and the definition of tactics and what to negotiate is not clear.

Too much dispersion, too many leaders

## *Gender*

“When we talk about *género* (gender, but also fabric in Spanish), we talk about tablecloths and curtains!”

Gender is taken in a all-too-feminist way: when the SERNAM organises activities, men are excluded: however, Casas argues, he also represents women.

In collective agreements, the biggest achievement for women is the benefit of time for health controls for their children.

Women participation in trade union directorates is very complicated: men do not like women being more intelligent or thinking differently. “A woman, when she comes in the union, stops watching soap operas and starts watching the news.” Husbands react adversely to this. Women are then limited by their husbands: men rarely take care of children or the household, hindering women's possibilities to participate.

Regarding mother and neighbour associations, there is too much dispersion. Community organisations are constituted by 15 persons; state agencies provide food packs to each association; thus, everyone started to create associations and nobody wants to abandon the benefits. Achieving unity of these sectors is very difficult.

Different modes and perceptions of activist work are also a problem. Despite having a social role, trade unions defend workers: trade union leaders are not social workers. Different from indigenous committees, mother associations, youth organisations, etc.

## *Unions, their role and CSR*

“Welfare” departments within firms take away roles previously played by unions: dance groups, parties, popular events are handled by the firm. This practice also includes signing contracts for consumer benefits for workers. Thus, unions are relegated to collective negotiations and agreements every 3 or 4 years: however, unions frequently fail in the negotiation. This happens because groups usually ask the firm for authorisation and resources -money, time-: eventually, HR ends up taking the leadership of the group and the event. Thus, lack of own resources is crucial. This, for Casas, ends up becoming an anti-union practice.

## *Solutions*

Union education and dissemination of information becomes fundamental. For instance, the emergency employment programmes are attributed to the mayor Rabindranath Quinteros (PS); however, besides the execution, those programmes are provided and funded by state agencies and



guard no other relation to the mayor's administration.

Interview N° 4

Ancud, November 10, 2010

Patricio Peñaloza, Coordinator Canelo de Nós-OLACH, and consultant for CONTRASAL

*No links to political parties*

OLACH is a programme organised by Terram, CENDA and Canelo de Nós, and was initially funded by OXFAM.

*Labour Movement*

According to Peñaloza, there is increased labour movement in Puerto Montt and Chiloé due to the salmon industry.

*Salmon production introduces Fordist type of organisation*

Processing plants concentrated great amounts of workers in a particular space during the boom years (pre 2007). This form of productive organisation allows strong unions. Some unions were composed by +700 affiliates. Peñaloza states that unionisation in salmon industry was around 20% according to official statistics from *Dirección del Trabajo*.

Regarding the distinction between forming a union and having an effective union, Peñaloza considers it depends on how issues are dealt with and with what sort of emphasis.

*CONTRASAL+OLACH*

CONATRASAL has presence in three regions (Los Lagos, Aysén, Magallanes), linked to some groups of workers in the Region of Araucanía. They are organised “around concrete demands, not the pamphlet”: struggles must be articulated around work shifts, labour security, labour relations, education and capacity building, protecting jobs in a sustainable form.

The other sectors (FETRAINPES, FED. QUELLÓN) appear to be engaged in ideological battles against firms, industry and the state, forgetting that the accumulation of forces is central. This is the main distinction between these and CONATRASAL.

Concentrates around 80% of the employed unionised workforce: 4 federations in Chiloé, 2 in Pto. Montt, 1 in Aysén and 1 in Porvenir.

Federación Quellón is virtually inexistent, barely nominal

*Quellón as special case*

Regarding the red tide manifestations in Quellón (2008), artisan fishermen and mytilid-cultors are active, strong and well articulated. This movement was wide and encompassing in social terms.

Quellón is the least Chilote city, becoming a cradle of different forms of work and social relations. Massive immigration flows came in during the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s led to growth of 500% in 20 years.

Chiloé has a “peaceful” culture: it is less conflictual, and it appears to find problems developing/vocalising conflicts. Most of the people from Chiloé working in the industry come from the country side, where they had self-subsistence forms of production. That is not the case of the immigrants.

There are strong social problems in the city: lack of social services, wide unemployment, very affected by red tides. All these situations led to the development of stronger social networks in Quellón.

#### *Consequences of the industry*

Until beginning of the 1980s, Chilotes emigrated from the isle towards Patagonia and Argentina, both seasonally and permanently. Now, a good deal of the inhabitants stays in Chiloé and works in a salmon firm or some of the related industries (divers, net cleaners, transports, etc.).

According to Peñaloza, the salmon industry ended up capturing Chiloé. This happened in the absence of a discussion on the territory, on the benefits and costs of this process; there is a lack of information for the population. It is only during the second half of the 2000s when the industry's dark side starts surfacing and becoming known -lower productivity, environmental problems, bad labour conditions- and the consequences of this process become clear. Apparently, the positive impact is related to employment; yet, this employment is precarious and dependence-generator, as every productive development in the isle is articulated around the salmon industry.

When the ISA virus crisis explodes, everyone is taken by surprise, including the authorities. Although this should have forced a change in perspectives, the responses has not been up this shift: the salmon industry says that there shall be a recovery soon, and former workers are inactive, waiting, while comprehensive public plans and policies oriented to productive shifts and diversification are inexistent.

#### *On unions:*

The role of unions is more social, it must look to society and have the capacity to be both “speaker” and agent in civil society. Unions must go beyond protecting wages and working

conditions; they must take care of their jobs and the industry as well, learning more about the productive processes and the general conditions of the industry. In this sense, technological developments allow to increase productivity with less labour: probably, states Peñaloza, most of the workers displaced from the salmon industry will not return to salmon industry jobs. Therefore, unions must increase their connections to society: establish links to unemployed, participate in emergency employment plans, be active governance agents. This is the major difference regarding the other federations, which place the ideological question before the base discussion.

Low unionisation level is a country-wide phenomenon, not exclusive of the salmon industry. Real impact of collective agreements is very low. The major problem is the lack of trade union culture. Lack of policies fostering unionisation during the Concertación governments (1989-2009), where the authorities did not have sound policies regarding trade unions. On the other hand, the amount of resources transferred to firms are huge -R&D, subsidies to hire workers (D.L. 889/1975), cluster development, CORFO moneys, etc.- while funding for unions -*Fondo de Desarrollo Sindical*, *Ley 19644*- has been very small in comparison. The strife between trade unions further complicates the situation for the labour movement, particularly when political parties try to hegemonise unions.

*Moreover, political parties are not linked to the salmon issues.* Actually, they appear decoupled from the society and this can be seen in the ways movements are organising. The case of peasant movements is interesting. Before 1973, the peasant movement was well organised by the left parties (PC, PS) and had big memberships; however, this is not the case nowadays. Another interesting case is that of the indigenous movements: once well organised and strongly linked to PS and PC, now they have proceeded through different routes.

This is more important every time that the salmon industry is new. The older unions in the sector have 12-14 years of existence and CONATRASAL affiliates and leaders are, in average, 30 years old. These leaders are not connected to political parties nor to the previous, “good old” union experience. Maybe Quellón and Puerto Montt are exceptions.

#### *Regarding subcontracted/outsourced workers*

CONATRASAL has tried to set housing committees with marine cultivator unions, including non unionised workers. This is one strategy to reach these workers.

However, leaders lack instruments to enhance unions. Leaders find themselves caught between elections and collective negotiations, the peaks of their governments; however, the departments and committees (housing, education) are usually abandoned and there are limited capacities to properly

use these effectively. The low or null amount of benefits offered by the unions acts as a deterrent for affiliation. And as all employees -unionised or not- are granted the benefits which are collectively negotiated and achieved by the union, unionisation is not fostered at all.

The point is that the legislation weakens unions. One example is the possibility of setting *ad-hoc* negotiation groups, most frequently articulated by the firms, what stifles unity of the labour movement within firms. Firms have also dismantled unions through massive lay-offs of unionised workers. The use of fear has been extensive: the excess of labour supply makes jobs precarious and inhibits opposition from individual workers.

The possibility of setting up inter-firm unions is not contemplated by the CONATRASAL, as this instrument fosters “worker bureaucracy”: union affiliates and leaders must be physically working, present in the firm.

Peñaloza considers that the alternative to overcome asymmetry between labour movement and firms is that of strong, robust unions, collective agreements on industry and branch levels, end of negotiation groups.

#### *CONATRASAL:*

In general, the unions confederated by CONATRASAL are big and robust: thus, firms are limited and must negotiate. Successful collective agreements have been led, and these unions have never resorted to strikes.

The CONATRASAL seeks the permanence of the industry and the jobs, together with the adoption of international standards of quality, environmental protection and working conditions. It is not coherent, Peñaloza argues, to oppose the industry while being member of a union in the industry: it runs counter to the workers in the salmon and related industries.

The labour legislation is weak and poorly enforced. For instance, for every 100 US\$ of profits in exports, the Chilean state spends 1 CLP (US\$ 1/470) in enforcement and oversight.

CONATRASAL includes workers of the whole industry, and in 2007 the confederation had the capacities to gather information and act as an alert to the ISA virus. This capacity, states Peñaloza, is crucial in order to exercise checks in the industry and improve conditions.

#### *Links to civil society*

In Chiloé, there is a link between unions, peasants and indigenous peoples. This is due to the Huilliche and peasant origins of the population in the isle. However, the student movement is virtually non-existent as there are no big universities or educational centres in the isle, and most of

the people who study leave Chiloé.

The OLACH has established a social and economic council with different civil society organisations. The goal is to think and plan the territory and its productive relations, shifting towards tourism and other activities.

In general, there is scant relationship with municipalities. Ancud, Castro and Quellón appear as exceptions, as the union federation works together with municipal offices. However, there is no bigger commitment from the municipalities regarding relations with the industry: municipalities do not receive funds from salmon firms, as the taxes go to Santiago or Puerto Montt.

Regarding gender and women participation, issues of working shifts and defence of maternity, crèches and related points are dealt with by the confederation. Moreover, the first president of the confederation was a woman, and several unions are composed and represented mainly by women, particularly those of processing plants.

#### *Differences between Puerto Montt and Chiloé*

There is more politicisation in Puerto Montt than in Chiloé, where the discourse is more basic, maybe, but also more concrete.

#### **(End of recording)**

*NGOs cannot replace social movements*

Hegemonic tactics and vanguardism.

Distance between intellectuals and workers.

*Salmon farms are located in Aysén. Employment in the industry in the Region of Los Lagos is given mostly by processing plants.*

60% women, 40% men.

Interview N° 5

Quellón, November 15, 2010

Ana Vera, social leader, Community Radio Broadcaster, local PC leader, living since 1998 in Quellón

*Labour organisation depends on the consolidation of the industry*

In spite of the labour regulations, a major factor in the development of the labour movement is that of the level of consolidation of a particular industry. For instance, mining industry -copper, but before that saltpeter and nitrates- has more than 100 years: so does the labour movement in these areas. On the other hand, the salmon industry is relatively new, +/- 20 years, and develops in a very different zone regarding productive development, that is in Chiloé. In this sense, it was pre-capitalist, with lack of experience with wage work relations. In Quellón, *Huilliche* people constituted the majority of the population. Most of the Chilotes were farmers or fishermen, producing in context of self-subsistence economy. The only exception would be that of shellfish cultivators and extractors. There was no knowledge of a employee-employer relationship.

The salmon industry was very exploitative: 10 years ago, people would work for 16 hours, in miserable working conditions, with no respect for labour regulations. This situation was stopped by the development of trade unions and mobilisations, circa 2004, with the Newen Union strike. Due to these mobilisations, the *Inspección del Trabajo* agency established a local office to inspect and enforce compliance with labour regulations. In that moment, there was a peak of the movement; however, the labour movement started to decline afterwards.

*The immigration factor is decisive in the organisation of trade unions.*

Quellón was the city with biggest demographic growth in Latin America. “Outsiders” and Chilotes who previously worked in other regions of Chile had previous experiences with industrial relations: it is they who started to organise the labour movement. Then, the trade union started to propagate to the rest of the firms. The strike in Calbuco, in the Aguas Claras plant, was a big example afterwards.

The case of Puerto Montt, where unionisation rates are higher, is different as there was previous experience with industrial relations. Moreover, during the military regime, increased amounts of funding and resources were transferred to the city, as it was privileged as regional capital. This, together with the salmon industry after the 1980s, allowed the productive growth of the city.

### *Huilliche factor*

Particularly in Quellón, the original inhabitants are *Huilliche*. These communities are more organised in this city than in the rest of the isle. They lacked experience with wage relations when the salmon industry was established.

However, despite the existence of organised communities, these are not organised around surplus issues. They are not associated for profit, and this goal was not sought after: selling labour force was not yet understood by these communities.

### *Newen mobilisation (2004)*

Newen trade union was explosive and unpredicted. The workers faced terrible working conditions: 2 12-hour shifts, unpaid extra working hours. This union was small in quantitative terms. After an unsuccessful collective agreement, as the firm offers a wage adjustment of CLP 1000 (€1.6) when minimum monthly wages were of CLP 110000 (€180), the union votes the strike and locks out the firm. The union and its mobilisation was harshly repressed, and police forces were brought from outside the city in order to suppress the strike. Despite the small size of the union, non-unionised workers also actively supported the strike, and there was also some public support by several civil society leaders and priests of the Catholic Church. This was, according to Vera, the first experience of waged workers mobilising in the city against firms.

However, there have been several experiences of mobilisation in Quellón. These are organised by small scale fishermen and mytillid-cultors in order to defend their interests. Demands are directed to state and its agencies, and are usually dealt with in satisfactory terms. In this sense, these groups are highly effective. These experiences may have been exemplar for unions, although unions mobilise against firms: this might also make mobilisations less effective. Nevertheless, one of the demands posed by Newen union was the establishment of state agencies overseeing working conditions. Ultimately, the mobilisation was moderately successful: although wage adjustment was not the expected, the mobilisation improved not only working conditions, but also a deficient inspection and oversight of the fishing industries in general and the labour conditions of the salmon industry in particular.

### *Mass mobilisation in Quellón (2008)*

A set of related crisis leads to the mobilisations in 2008. The global financial crisis was compounded by the salmon crisis (ISA virus) and a stationary phenomenon of red tide. Thus, artisan fishermen, salmon industry formerly and currently employed, and mytillid-cultors join forces and mobilise. The most benefited with this mobilisation were the latter, as the state provided them with



funds, resources and infrastructure. On the contrary, salmon workers were barely heard, and the only result for them was the creation of emergency employment programmes and a donation of a box of food per family. Nevertheless, salmon workers were not that attached to this movement either.

### *Social networks*

The 2008 movement was the only successful instance of association and common struggle between the different productive sectors of Quellón. There have been other attempts to establish civil society networks, yet these have proven unsuccessful. Lack of knowledge, together with class and productive identification differences (salmon workers are waged labour; artisan fishermen and mytillid extractors are self employed; farmers seek self-subsistence), leads to a lack of sensitiveness on the need of cooperation between groups: all these productive groups depend on the sea and the extractive industries for survival.

On the other hand, salmon trade unions have been rather weak and unattractive in Quellón: during 2010, there was a single public mobilisation, which gathered circa 60 people around unemployment issues. In Puerto Montt there have also been mobilisations from the industry's unions, as also the one in Aguas Claras, Calbuco.

### *The Role of the Leaders*

The problems of organisation have much to do with the characteristics of the leaders. First, they are relatively young (less than 30 years old), thus counting with lack of knowledge and experience in trade unions. This is compounded by the general lack of experience with wage labour relations.

The bad working conditions were a great motivation to set up unions: yet, the step of setting a union is not automatic. Then, with the beginning of the global financial crisis and the outbreak ISA virus, the development of the movement was stifled. Moreover, considers Vera, the movement is deformed by deliberate blockage and policies from the state. In this sense, she points out to a simultaneous lack of effective support together with the bureaucratisation of union leaders through formal courses, separating and decoupling them from the mass of the workers.

### *The lack of experience and organisational creativity*

There appears to exist no space for organisational creativity and innovations, as there is a extended shared belief on the formal institutional procedures as the track for achieving successful results in negotiations. The experience is that unions, federations and confederations are ruled by specific sets of legislation, and that no achievements can be made outside these. Thus, organisation

proceeds through formal and legal logics. “We Chileans are very framed by the regulatory, and it is very difficult to escape from this logic. Maybe because we have just recovered from a military regime.”

The case of negotiation groups, which could be used by the labour movement, have been used by the employers to hinder union development. However, considers Vera, every form of labour regulation in a context of free market economy will favour employers and firms. Moreover, this economic system fosters individualism, stifling solidarity links throughout society. During the military regime (1973-1989), the situation was different. “Nowadays, alternatives are open with the arrival of democracy, which I do not think of it as a democracy, laws are established and with big efforts there are advancements in the situations of the people and workers, yet on the other hand, consumption is introduced and exacerbated ... and then each one is on its own, as your work mate or neighbour is not going to pay your bills!”.

### *Logics of consumption*

Labour conditions are slowly improved, but simultaneously consumption is glorified. For instance, this is new in Chiloé. This is a very powerful drive and lock, as increasing levels of indebtedness generate fear of risking jobs, and thus less vociferous unions.

### *Anti-union practices*

Vera says that juridification and criminalisation of workers are a common practice against union leaders. Another practice is that of the “black lists”. These actions generate fear in the workers, who find no incentives to become union leaders.

### *The situation nowadays...*

After 2 years of ISA virus, unemployment levels are very high: in the municipal employment office (*OMIL*), there are more than 3000 registered persons. Conditions have totally changed, what can be seen in the forms of contract used. Now, workers are employed on a seasonal basis or subcontracted, and hopefully +40 years old women, so they do not get pregnant.

Vera considers that it is required to study forms of organisation in other relatively similar industries: for instance, fruitpacking workers.

### *CUT is weakened*

In Quellón, the CUT has never been very present. Usually, this organisation has been very close to the directions of the previous Concertación governments. Here, they relate to *CONATRASAL*, trying to sustain the *status quo*.

### *Geographical distance and invisibility of the problem*

Something very relevant (or tragic) must happen to make the region visible for the rest of the country.

### *CUT (cont...)*

It is not as the organisation of the 1960s. A major problem is the lack of elite renewal, as the internal decision-making processes are not very democratic. For instance, the current president, Arturo Martínez, has been in office for the last 20 years.

### *On other union federations*

CAT and UNT, no. There were attempts of *Corriente Sindical* anarchist currents to penetrate the movement. They proceeded through courses but they have not been very effective. This movement is linked to the PT-Brazil.

### *Escaping class-based organisations...*

There are two problems. First of all, the organisations of the kind -unions, labour- are only beginning in Chiloé. Second, the search for small parcels of power and influence in the left partisans has produced great deformations. In this sense, parties have always been struggling to keep the direction of organisation and controlling the leadership, ignoring work with and for the masses, and lacking internal consultation and democracy. Moreover, leaderships are not renewed; yet, this same leaders are still re-elected. This, considers Vera, is extended throughout Chile.

### *Firm and industrial organisation and sub-contracted workers.*

After the ISA virus crisis, the levels of production diminished enormously; and now, workers are hired for seasonal jobs. These workers have not had organisations, as firms subdivide themselves -multiple denominations and registrations- in order to block unionisation both within firms (having less than 8 workers) and of the conglomerate's workers (as each firm must have its union). Inter-firm unions developed as a response: this is the origin behind Río Dulce inter-firm union. *However, sub-contracted workers are not organised*

Interview N° 6

Quellón, November 16, 2010

Interviewee: Denis Alvarado, Mujeres Pesca Artesanal, CODESU, PRODELMAR

*Wives of artisan fishermen, 1995*

Husbands and men who work as fishermen, they are “adventurers” and have no social pension funds and health care system, as well as insecure and unstable work sources. It was initiated by 1800 women and seeks to obtain funds for projects.

Until 2009, the organisation was in recess. But the global financial crisis, together with the ISA virus outbreak and the red tide phenomenon in 2008 led to critical job and sea resource scarcity: massive lay-offs and no shellfish production. Quellón was in a critical situation. Now, there are 800 associates in Quellón, and other associates from the isles around Quellón.

Unlike salmon workers, fishermen are not in relations of wage labour, and thus are not considered unemployed. In this way, they are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

*Mobilisation and road occupation, May 19-22, 2009*

Women led the movement demanding increased governmental attention on the artisan fishing sector and more resources than the offered ones. This movement was composed by mytilid extractors, salmon industry unemployed, *Huilliche* communities, artisan fishermen: in short, the whole city. Alvarado claims that the inhabitants of Quellón are economically sustained by artisan fishing. Leaders travel to Santiago and negotiate extra resources, benefits and change in regulations.

Women/wives achieve inclusion in several programmes: micro-entrepreneurship programmes, together with 150 emergency jobs, were made available. Besides this, subsidies to leaders, university scholarships for children, and patents for mytilid-cultors/extractors were issued.

*Distance from Education (but also everything else)!!!*

*Emergency jobs and Women*

80% of the emergency job positions are taken by women, dedicated to urban improvement and embellishment. According to Alvarado, the crisis bend *machismo*, as proletarianisation and pauperisation bursts open traditional bonds. 2 or 3 years ago, wives would not go to work as they did not need it, and they would stay at home. Nowadays, women are maintaining households and generating main income sources.

Chiloé has a very *machista* culture. However, economic conditions have led to women going out for work. This has not been easy, but men have bent. In this sense, these wives have established contacts with wives of salmon workers, *Huilliche*, and peasants. Domestic violence, rapes, alcoholism, and *machismo* increased in Quellón since 1995, mainly due to the economic problems. This has required hard work for Alvarado's organisation.

This wives' organisation has established links with 18 fishermen unions, *Huilliche* communities, mytilid-cultors and salmon workers. Links have also been established with the mayor and municipality.

Artisan fishing products are very ill-paid; yet, the costs of production are very high. [This, obviously implies increasing quantities of extraction, with its increasing environmental costs.] This complicates the situation for artisan fishermen's already complicated working conditions: lack of insurance, long periods in the sea.

#### *Newen Union, 2004, and links with Civil Society*

“Which one is the Newen? Is it a firm?” Nobody in civil society gave support. Alvarado says that salmon workers vote strikes for bad working conditions and they only are affected by the relations with the firm. “Internal issues”, it is salmon workers business, and it is an issue for the community. On the contrary, fishermen issues are major issues for the population and everybody gathers round artisan fishing, and works together. In this sense, links are established to all social sectors.

Law blocking artisan fishing from travelling beyond the region's limits to fish (2001) is leading to public manifestations on behalf of the artisan fishermen. Resources in Chiloé are now scarce, and fishermen have to travel outside the region (for instance, Melinka Isle, in the Region of Aysén) in order to capture fish and shellfish.

Direct action has been required to capture attention from the central government and achieve results: bureaucracy has not worked.

#### *Salmon workers and lack of connections*

Quellón has now +25000 inhabitants, including floating population. Demographic growth during the last 20 years was due to the salmon industry. However, salmon industry issues are not as appealing as artisan fishing ones. Alvarado considers that this is due to several reasons. First, most of the salmon industry labourers come from outside the city. They are, thus, unknown to the rest of the community. This, according to Alvarado, is a mistake of the salmon industry, concentrating the

amount of workers in Quellón. “If I don't know it, there is no reason for me to fight for something I do not know, or for people who work in conditions that I ignore within their firm.” On the other hand, salmon workers do not publicise their problems and struggles, while the people involved in artisan fishing is a community: the shop-keeper, the traders were also an artisan fisher before and live in Quellón.

In salmon plants, there is strong discrimination: non-fertile women are preferred; psychological tests and appearance are important to be hired. In the fishing industry, no experience is needed; it is also less regular.

Only in 2009 the contacts were established and salmon workers explained what and why they are struggling for. This explains why salmon workers have lost several battles and count with no support, as they have not communicated their interests and struggles: some mobilisations are composed by 30, 80 workers.

The visible change in structure of the city: Quellón has expanded outwards, and hundreds of small houses with tin roofs have been set up covering the hills. During the salmon industry boom, workers would arrive and rent rooms or houses for certain periods of time. The demand grew so fast that local dwellers built increasing amounts of houses and shacks to deal with the expanding housing demand. However, after the boom, all these houses were left abandoned. Salmon workers have not lasted long in the city, as work is seasonal and the demand for workers used to be high before the ISA virus outbreak: workers would move constantly from city to city and firm to firm. After the ISA virus, salmon workers left and the city has been slowly abandoned. Some former salmon workers stayed and began a family. On the other hand, people from the countryside has left their previous lands and established themselves in Quellón, looking for new educational and work possibilities.

### *Leaders*

Denís is linked to many civil society organisations in Quellón, leading several of them. The main one in terms of importance is CODESU, in which several sectors have been brought together in order to think Quellón in a sustainable way. This was a response to the immobilisation of the civil society after the 2008 protests, produced by differences between leaders. However, salmon workers have not supported the CODESU during 2010. Alvarado considers that salmon union leaders are too “closed” and narrow-minded.

Health and education problems, connected to lack of infrastructure, are major issues in Quellón.

### *NGOs*

Several NGOs have been involved and trying to give assistance to the different organisations in Quellón. Between 1995 and 2001, and despite national and foreign NGO support, the problem was that the movement started to fragment. Leaders were very responsible for this situation, as some unions and organisations were playing against others. Capacities, personalism, connection to the mass and their needs, and connections and understanding of necessities of the community.

**(recording paused)**

**(recording continues)**

*Solidarity*

*Minga* is an old Chilote tradition, and only older people continue with it. Nowadays, there is no knowledge of agriculture in younger people. Thus, there is a great need for state subsidies in order to recover those lands and production. However, government budgets are really low and limited: there is little attention from the government to the isle of Chiloé. There is no clear and explicit policy for workers reconversion.

Interview N° 7

Quellón, November 17, 2010

Interviewee: Alejandra Uribe, Pdte. Union of “Visión de Futuro”, 8 years employed in the salmon industry

Uribe used to work with indefinite contract as quality control in Yadrán. There existed an active trade union in the firm, and she was aware of its existence, but she did not participate in it. She had never participated in a Union before and she had the impression that any connections to the trade union meant being fired by the employers. Apparently, this is the case: now that Uribe is a union leader, she has not been employed by salmon firms.

After the 2008 crisis, several plants and firms were closed: pregnant women were fired, wage settlements were considerably lower than the legal limit imposed.

This union of unemployed and former salmon workers counts with 200 affiliates. Some of them work in the salmon industry, thanks to municipal support. The rest works in the emergency jobs.

Nor Alejandra Uribe, nor the bulk of the actual and former workers in the salmon industry come from Quellón. This is a floating population, although some have stayed in Quellón.

#### *On the 2009 mobilisations*

Connections between salmon unions and other organisations in Quellón are very limited and scarce. Uribe thinks this is due to different styles of operation and issues, but the major problems have to do with the Chilote culture being too narrow-minded and male-centred, *machista*.

#### *Subcontracted/outsourced*

Uribe worked in a service provider firm (outsourced) 8 years ago, in Puerto Montt. The workers in these firms earned minimum wages (in the time CLP 102000, approximately €160) against the plant employees (earning around CLP 300000, approximately €500). There was no legal possibility for workers to organise in these service provider firms as the contracts are made for a limited time extension. Moreover, no informal associations developed either: “the people who worked there was just interested in doing their job, very quiet... and if the boss came and screamed at you, you would just take it. I was like that as well, so... that was it... you got like scared.”

Nowadays, salmon plant workers are being hired with similar forms of contract, in which the worker must produce certain amount of goods, regardless of the time extension of the work.



Working conditions are terrible in outsourced firms. However, these service provider firms are not operating now: many of the employed by these firms are now hired by the salmon firms.

### *On their union*

Of the 200, 30 are on emergency jobs, 10 in FRIL projects, and the rest in the salmon industry. There are stable connections with the salmon workers federation of Quellón. No connections with the fishermen, mytilid-cultors and their wives. This is due to different agendas for every group.

Regarding trade union education, Chiloé Cómo Vamos programme invited the union to participate in a workshop. Besides that, *Dirección del Trabajo* also sends invitations to programmes and courses. The relations with the CONATRASAL are very limited, depend and are channelled on the Quellón Federation, led by Gustavo Cortés.

### *Union experiences*

All union experience is recent for Alejandra Uribe. In Quellón, Uribe says, there were reasons to form unions: great amounts of unemployed people being seen everyday. It was not about fighting the firms: it is about getting something to work on. And from then on, getting small things and victories. That is how this union of unemployed workers has been learning how to work and proceed: this is how they got the emergency jobs.

### *Emergency jobs*

Full-time positions end in November; part-time positions in December. The government will not renew the programme, the argument being that the salmon industry has recovered: however, states Uribe, where 1200 used to work, now only 500 do. Moreover, plants are hiring with governmental subsidies of up to 80% of the wages: so, contracts are being established for 4 month basis and workers are paid 80% of the wage.

### *Relations with Municipality, representatives and other organisations*

Relations are fairly good with municipalities. With representatives, the relations are virtually non-existent: lack of interest, together with limited resources, make it very hard for union leaders to meet representatives. Moreover, Uribe says, promises are seldom kept by Congresspeople.

With the CUT-Chile, there are always offers for leader formation and preparation courses and workshops.

### *Solutions*

The union has been trying to reconvert workers: courses in English-language, tourism,

greenhouse agriculture, etc. However, the same people who take the courses do not apply the acquired knowledge. Uribe thinks that people are still waiting for the salmon industry to recover, so they rather take courses on quality control and other positions inside salmon plants in order to earn more in the future. Yet, Uribe is not sure that the industry will recover soon.

The unemployed workers union works with both employed and unemployed people. Uribe says that this people is not afraid of affiliating to this union; however, that is not the case for the unions within a firm. In this sense, there are instances of lay-offs due to being seen talking to the union leader.

Interview N° 8

Quellón, November 17, 2010

Interviewee: Gustavo Cortés, Pdte. Federation of Salmon Unions of Quellón, Pdte. Union Río Dulce, 5 years in the industry

#### *On Cortés and union*

5 years in Río Dulce. Chilean capitals, processes salmon for other firms. 100 workers in the plant, plus other 80 workers processing for other firms.

The union has shrunk during the last years. After the ISA virus, massive lay-offs happened and there have been major personnel reductions. There are +3000 unemployed in Quellón. Evidently, this has affected union membership.

#### *People fears unionisation*

Jobs are precarious. Río Dulce, for instance, used to hire for certain amounts of processed product; nowadays, the criteria is a very short time frame, around 15 days. This people cannot unionise, and there is also fear: job stability is more important for people.

According to Cortés, unions offer assistance both to unionised and non-unionised workers.

The minimum amount of workers to form a union is of 8 workers. 8 affiliated workers guarantee immunity to 1 union official, 25 affiliated guarantee immunity to 3 officials. Before the ISA virus outbreak, 60% of the salmon workforce was employed as outsourced or service provision, not indefinite contracts. Outsourcing and subcontracting was circumscribed, in the beginning, to service provider workers; then it expanded to the other processes and firms.

#### *Forms of organisation*

Regarding forms of labour organisation, in the salmon industry the workers associate through unions, federations and confederations. There are no alternative forms of organisation. The major problem of the labour movement in the industry, according to Cortés, is the lack of unity and coordination. Ideological differences and personalism and leadership issues hinders the strength of the movement. The impossibility to negotiate on the industry level, as the law requires that each union deals by itself with its own firm, takes away the possibility to gather increased support.

#### *Relationship with CONATRASAL and FETRAINPES*

CONATRASAL has achieved certain levels of unity. Fed. Quellón works closer to

FETRAINPES. Cortés considers that CONATRASAL has not defended appropriately the workers: for instance, their leaders have dealt without consulting the masses. Claiming to represent the whole of the unions, they proceeded through dialogue instances, and agreed, with the government and employers.

Nowadays, dialogue has been established between the Federation of Quellón and the CONATRASAL. Probably, says Cortés, there should be unity between the federations; however, there has been no effective dialogue between CONATRASAL and the other two federations.

Fed. Quellón worked with unemployed to achieve public support and state-provided jobs after the ISA virus outbreak. That is behind the participation in the 2009 manifestations in Quellón.

#### *Lack of communication*

The problem between salmon unions in Quellón and the connection with other organisations was the difference between objectives. Salmon unions wanted jobs and education, while the other organisations wanted other things. However, despite the support, the salmon unions did not receive what they wanted nor community support. Similarities with Newen union in 2004: there was no effective community support. Cortés does not understand this lack of support, as the salmon industry -together with fishing and mytilid production and extraction- economically supported the city: when the industry fell, everything else fell behind. When the emergency jobs arrived to Quellón, it was due to the effects of the ISA virus: however, while the salmon industry was reducing its personnel, the emergency jobs were assigned to fishermen or mytilid-cultivators.

#### *Exterior origins*

Cortés comes from Chillán, +400 kms. north of Quellón. There he had both political activity and university education. He has been 11 years working in Chiloé.

In Quellón, there exist 8 or 9 unions of active salmon workers, and 2 unions of unemployed workers. Most of the leaders and officials come from outside Chiloé. Actually, around 70% of the workers comes from outside the isle. Although Cortés thinks that there is no relationship between being outsider and forming the union, he thinks that *Chilotes* are not that active, and outsiders end up forming the unions.

The origins do not produce communication failures, according to Cortés. Actually, he says that a good deal of the fishermen and mytilid cultivators are not from Quellón either. Maybe the problem, Cortés thinks, is that fishermen and mytilid-cultors blame the salmon industry for red tide, environmental degradation and other effects, blaming the salmon industry workers in the process.

### *Authorities*

There has been scant support from municipal authorities, considers Cortés. Only after the 2009 mobilisations, there was some unity and some success. However, the unity between social groups was lost. Regarding congresspeople, they have also been distant and their support insufficient.

### *CUT*

The provincial leader, Nicolás Nilo, supports the federation and the Fed. Has a very good relationship with them. However, this is not quite the case in the central level.

### *NGOs*

Ecoceanos has always been present with the Fed. Quellón, and both work very closely. Other NGOs have been contacted, but never in the level of Ecoceanos.

### *Unions or nothing!!!*

There are no alternatives to unions as there is fear. For instance, the practice of blacklists functions to deter organisation. But there is also the responsibility of the leadership. Some leaders take advantage of unions *fuero* and do not go to work, losing contact with the fellow workers; personalism between leaders and officials is another great problem. Moreover, there is a lack of interest in union education and preparation: courses are taken as day trips and holidays.

*Corriente Político-Sindical*, non-party organisation -connected to Trotskyist fractions- has provided monthly schools. The *Dirección del Trabajo* has also provided courses. In general, there is lack of interest in these courses.

### *Political parties:*

No party politics nor funding from parties in Quellón. Regarding inscription in electoral rolls, Cortés considers that it is wide. [Data from SERVEL indicates almost 9000 inscribed voters in Quellón for the last municipal elections -2008-. Out of circa 25000 inhabitants, without knowing the proportion of adults in vote age, the number appears low.]

There might exist political party intervention in CONATRASAL (PS) and FETRAINPES (PC), though no identification in the Fed. Quellón. This lack of political identification has benefited the unions, as supports can be achieved from different political sides. In this sense, regarding the “privatisation of the sea” law, Carlos Kuschel (RN) was the only one who did not favour it.

## Focus Group N° 1

Quellón, November 18, 2010

### Participants:

- Fernanda (22), former salmon worker, Melinka
- Yohana (29), former salmon worker, Osorno. Worked seasonally in summers to pay for studies, but in 2000 she had daughters and stayed in Quellón.
- Claudia (26), former call centre operator, Quellón
- Clementina (43), former salmon worker, Melinka. Worked before in Chonchi
- Patricia (25), former salmon worker, Quellón. Working in Quellón since 2008.
- Jessica (26), urchin fishery until 2005, Iníó (near Melinka).
- Fabiana (25), household, Valdivia
- Marcela (40), trade and stores, Villa Alemana
- Alejandra (28), former salmon worker, San Antonio
- Ana, former salmon worker

### *Seasonal character*

When working in the salmon industry, sometimes there is seasonal work. “Before, when there was more salmon, one could work round the year; but when the amount of salmon started to decrease, you would only get hired for the season. So, you get hired by September and in January you get fired.”

Contract used to be set for months, but now it is established for task, usually for a certain amount of pieces or tonnage.

### *Bad working conditions*

“You have to work as machines. They don't care if you like the conditions or not, they care for the production. So, when there's nothing else, people has to work there anyway, because they need the wage.”

“In some plants, they [the supervisors] even measure the time you take for bathroom, and if you

leave for more than a certain amount of time, they even charge that from your wage. In Yadrán, for example, you have 5 minutes to go to the bathroom. After those 5 minutes, they start charging it from you production bonuses.”

“Imagine that, for example, the bathroom is outside, and you have to walk to the bathroom, take off your working gear to use the bathroom, put the gear on and return... 5 minutes is not enough!” “Everywhere is the same thing...”

“As there is so many people here, they choose: you may leave, but there is a long queue outside waiting...”

The firms are hiring older women, +30 years, because younger women may get pregnant. Some firms, as Los Fiordos, are also applying urine exams in order to check for pregnancy, while other firms are hiring more men than women. Besides this exams, feet and hands are checked, and psychological tests (Rorschach, “man under the water”) are applied.

Claudia started to work due to husband's unemployment. He started working in a salmon farm for a service provider firm. There was a gap between his wage and the indefinite contract wage of CLP 100000 (approx. €150): this is a normal practice. He was hired then by another firm with a double contract as diver and salmon worker, in spite of regulations prohibiting divers to work after diving: there is a danger of damage due to decompression. He complained and the firm answered that he had to work anyway unless he wanted to lose the job.

In general, these women went to work because of need. Not all of them are married, and some are single parents, as Marcela.

*In general, no union experience*

Almost none of the present women had a previous experience in a trade union before. There are two exceptions: first, Marcela, who also worked as secretary with Denís Alvarado, from CODAMAR, and in political campaign of the actual mayor of Quellón, Ivan Haro. Her problem, she said, “was to say the truth in the face. Then, I became the conflictive secretary.” When she fought for her workplace and for fair relations for her workmates, she got into trouble: “the mayor has vetoed me. I can have no more jobs! Why? Because I appeared on the newspaper covers complaining and defending my rights and those of my fellow workers.”

“The same ones that appear on the front are usually the ones that are left. Because now that I work in the municipality, for every strike, every time we go and occupy the municipality it's always the same ones there the whole day.”

“It's not that we take over the municipality because we like it.” These workers took over the municipality because the full-time emergency jobs programme would be terminated, remaining only the part-time jobs: “who survives with 70000 pesos [approx. €110] per month if you have 2 or 3 kids, you have to pay the rent?”

“Everything here is contacts: whole families are working in the municipality!”

The second exception is Fernanda, who also had an experience with unions; however, the union president disappeared after elected.

There was a previous unemployed and transitory workers trade union before *Visión de Futuro*. However, the women in the actual union did not like the forms and operations of the direction and formed a new one.

There are blacklists circulating between firms. Apparently, the unions are not very effective giving support. Claudia: “My husband, he is a diver, and he was affiliated to the union. You can see there is no support from the unions, as he paid 3000 pesos [€ 5] per month, the quota, and he is forced to work with closed port [condition decreed by the Navy when the weather is not apt for work in the sea]; where is the union there?”

“My husband was in the union of Quellón net cleaning firm. He had a surgery and was on legal leave for 3 months. The last day of his leave, he was fired. And the union, where were they? They washed their hands. Because the firm owners give the union leaders extra money... save yourself, and the rest...”

There have been several instances of union leaders recurring to the *Inspección del Trabajo*, telling the agency officers to “give them [firm managers/owners] a shake”, when additional money is needed or they want to provide a job for someone. Thus, some union leaders take advantage of their position and extort firm owners and managers with extra money or jobs, threatening to call the inspection officers. Some union leaders even boast with this.

“Unions are no good.” “They just get you into trouble!”

“You just have to put up with everything and swallow it.” “That's the way it is in Quellón.”

Some firms declare bankruptcy and then begin again, changing their name and revenue role. In this way, firms avoid paying compensations for contract termination. “But, I mean, where are the inspection agencies?” “It has always been this way: the inspection officers are all *sold-out*”

“The people in here struggled so hard to get a *Inspección del Trabajo* office in town, because there was none before, and for what if they do not inspect anything.”



“Actually, when the emergency jobs programme started in may last year, the agents from the inspection office gave us a seminar. They said that no woman should get pregnant, otherwise she would not be supported.”

The municipality is not very active. The emergency jobs are over in December 2010 and the Mayor has not managed to get funds for the reconstruction after the February 27<sup>th</sup> Earthquake.

Marcela: “Besides going out to sell our bodies [laughs], I do not know what else we can do, because there are no jobs in town, and with the Mayor we have... I am not going to get any jobs from him. (...) The Mayor has done nothing, besides having a small surgery in his face. And getting on the roof of the Town Hall to take pictures of us when we are protesting. From that he builds a blacklist.”

These women have received support from a corporation in Castro, but besides that, there has been no major support. The suggestions they receive is to get some lawyer to assist them.

“That's the way it is here. You're in the end of the world.” “This is a miserable town.” “Crime here is terrible. You can get stolen in the street at 12 am. The police harasses us when we are manifesting, while people are getting stolen and they do nothing about it.”

Senators and representatives talk with them only for their political interests. “They do not come to offer solutions.” It is the same for right- and left-wing politicians.

“They come here once every three months and have a meeting with 2 or 3 social leaders, for example Gabriel Ascencio (PDC) or Camilo Escalona (PS) call us to get information on how to *piss off* the ones in government now [Alianza por el Cambio, right-wing coalition], do you get it? They say that 'now that we're opposition, it's our turn to *piss them* [the government] *off*'”.

Marcela worked in the campaign of a right-wing candidate for Congress. After all the promises, she did not get any reply. She says: “I, who had basic and high school and some specialisation courses, find myself sweeping the floors, while there are persons working in the municipality who haven't even finished their basic schooling! That's all cronyism!”

Most of the participants have had their basic schooling, some completed high school, and Marcela, Alejandra and Fernanda had higher education.

There have been programmes to complete basic education. Alejandra indicates she tried to get one of these programmes for members of the union. However, she met opposition from the director of DIDECO (Municipal Community Development Office).

In a local school, a whole family has been hired as teachers, although they do not count with

preparation to teach.

City councillors are never present, and civil society leaders are not effective either. Moreover, some of the city councillors go from one party to another.

There are no contacts nor participation with political parties.

About the changes of the city, the salmon jobs were taken mostly by people from outside of the city, so not much of the money stayed in town. However, legal and illegal service and entertainment businesses did expand in the city, particularly bars, cabarets and prostitution, thus keeping part of worker's wages. However, there is no real growth. "It is a fake wealthiness. It is wealthy poverty."

On the farms and the countryside, people have abandoned their lands. Many people sold their lands to build small houses, and come to the city and work in the industry. Another vast tract of land is owned by Sebastian Piñera.

The women who are affiliated to the union consider that it has benefited them.

Interview N° 9

Quemchi, November 22, 2010

Interviewee: Javier Ugarte, Pdte. Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores del Salmón (CONATRASAL), Pdte. Trade Union Marine Harvest, 8 years as trade union leader, 12 years in the industry, his parents are farmers, he grew up in a small isle near Quemchi.

### *Salmon and the region*

[Talks very positively about the salmon industry]

Changes in 22 years, since the industry began in Chiloé, have led to a connection of the region with the globe. First, economic growth has happened in Chiloé, particularly in isolated parts of the island which have been connected. On the other hand, it impacted negatively on the agriculture, as farms were abandoned. After the ISA virus crisis, the countryside was not prepared for agricultural production. In this sense, there has been a strong process of inner migration of workers.

The industry grew on 200% and became not just the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest exporter in the world, but also the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest export industry in Chile (after copper).

In Chiloé, and partially in the rest of the Region of Los Lagos, there existed no wage labour relations. In this sense, wage work is a new phenomenon. Ugarte considers that life quality levels improved thanks to the establishment of the industry. This allowed a fast industrialisation of the region.

On unionisation rates, during the peak of the industry (until 2007), the levels of unionisation reach 15%.

### *Mistakes*

Despite the successes in production, there were many mistakes in the industry. For instance, the accident rates in the industry are very high, higher than in the construction industry: between 2005 and 2010, there have been 64 dead workers between plant workers, farm carers, divers, boat-manners. Very bad working conditions.

### *Trade unions*

The statistics on casualties and working conditions are not complete as there was no labour movement in the beginnings of the industry. The labour movement begins during the 1990s, low profile and clandestine, and unions are shy: “they did not yet assimilate that democracy had been

restored.”

Labour unions start flourishing with time, and this is a young movement: one of the oldest unions is 18 years old. After this, the problems start being publicly known. The first years were of a hard fight against firm owners and managers, the struggle was violent. It is during the 2000s when unions start to appear: abuses -bad working conditions, abuses against women- start to accumulate, together with the explosive growth of production and construction of new plants, as this was a highly profitable business. Hard work, long shifts, *comités paritarios* were virtually non-existing, hygiene and security departments within firms did not exist either. This is when unions start appearing and denouncing these conditions in state agencies and media. The growth of working masses is a major factor in the appearance of trade unions.

Temporary workers can organise themselves, although the same temporary character of their work limits the existence of the union. Moreover, the only ones who will remain in the union are the leaders. However, in their case, their participation in union formation will affect them negatively, as employers will “mark” them (blacklisted) and avoid employing them. On the other hand, the sole seasonal character of their work blocks possibilities for unionisation.

In this sense, legal conditions favour employers, as they are allowed to have almost 80% of their employees contracted in a temporary, unstable form. Legal conditions render temporary employees totally unprotected. Union leaders, not only in the salmon industry but in general, cannot take care of them. The Chilean labour legislation is oriented to weaken and stifle the labour movement.

### *CUT-Chile*

It is overall weak, as it agglomerates only 9% of the workers in Chile. Moreover, this organisation avoids strong, radical opinions and actions.

However, copper miners and fruit packers have proceeded through alternative forms of organisation.

### *Reasons for the lack of unions and labour organisations*

Chiloé and Los Lagos still have not developed an organisational culture, states Ugarte. Moreover, besides the cultural issues, the problem of geography has to be considered: “you cannot organise mass manifestations as the territorial dispersion and isolation is a major issue. If we want to manifest in Puerto Montt, we have to wake up at 5 am to be in Puerto Montt at 10 am.” The labour movement is very disperse, and we have little resources: “workers do not want to give a lot of money in their fees”.

Regarding the issue of scant resources, Ugarte indicates that there is no major public support and funding, except for project applications: it is not a constant funding. In this sense, the differences with the LO-Norway and Sweden are gross. Before 1973, there used to exist public funding for unions: but now, with a right-leaning Congress, it is virtually unthinkable. Political parties pay lip service, but do not provide effective support. Some organisations do provide support in resources and information, as OXFAM, OLACH, and Pure Salmon Campaign.

In order to strengthen the labour movement, civic education and instruction in union formation and organisation is needed on the school level. “This country is heavily indebted to its workers!”

#### *Relationship with firms*

Relations with firms brake in collective agreements. In general, employer-employee relations are not good in the industry.

Strikes are frequently adopted when collective agreements fail. The last offers from the firms are not usually taken, and unions frequently vote for the strike. However, strikes are not often undertaken. Usually, what happens then is that the parties proceed to *buenos oficios* [the participation of the *Inspección del Trabajo* as mediator between the parties; check <http://www.dt.gob.cl/1601/w3-article-62783.html>], where the negotiation begins again from scratch. Nevertheless, the damage on the relations is done.

Ugarte thinks that this happens because “we workers increase our demands... because we know that the firm can give us more!” As levels of profit are so high, firms resist giving more. On the other hand, after 40 days of strike, workers can be replaced by the firm, thus favouring one-handedly the latter: “instead of raising wages, firms can use those moneys in order to hire new workers.”

Regarding the high rotation of workers, Ugarte says that there are agreements between firms in order to start their processes in sequence, as to avoid leaving people unemployed.

#### *Outsiders and Communication breakdown!*

There used to exist a lack of communication between outsiders and native Chilotes. According to Ugarte, these outsiders were mostly technicians. Yet, these relations improved during the years. On the other hand, the “outsiders” supported with their experience the development of unions. Ugarte talks about the managers and how they instructed and gave examples of their experience with union formation. Of course, before 1973, commitment to union and labour movement was stronger than now.

### *Other federations and confederations*

There have been attempts to work together between the different federations and confederations. CONATRASAL includes 8 federations. Yet, these attempts have not been emphatic. The idea with the CONTRASAL is to create one single voice.

The three confederations struggle for the same objectives, although there are political differences. Nevertheless, says Ugarte, the three major organisations have tried to establish dialogue and communication.

Here, states Ugarte, the labour movement must modernise itself. “We are also responsible for securing the source of employment of our affiliates. And being responsible for the union direction... it is important how you educate politically your affiliates.”

Modernisation means union education and capacity-building, more dialogue, achieving more trust between workers-firms, achieving basic education levels for the affiliates. That is the least in order to be a powerful labour movement: we have to be able to communicate properly in order to avoid confusing workers.

Interview N° 10

Puerto Montt, November 25, 2010

Interviewees: Ricardo Casas, Hector Kol

H.K. is a former consultant for Association of Artisan Fishers of Aysén. He starts working in the salmon industry in 1988, for a Canadian firm. He was doing biological and geographic research, but also a search for land property rights and titles in the zone. Now, he is an active member of the civil society.

H.K.

*Transformations produced by salmon industry*

In the initial years of the industry, the conditions for research and production were totally amateur.

Chilotes were not land owners. Although dedicated mainly to agriculture, no one had titles of land ownership. Thus, salmon firms bought these rights, forcing the displacement of native chilotes. In this way, people entered wage relations. During the first 10 years, there were no trade unions. Firms were medium size and came from other productive areas. In this sense, says Kol, the development of the salmon industry is the final chapter of the policies implemented during the military regime in order to diversify production and foster economic groups/holdings.

*Industrialisation of the salmon is driven by Concertación*

The Concertación governments fostered and protected the development of the industry and its crimes. For instance, labour conditions are terrible, allowing for more than 100 deaths during the last 7 years. Regarding environmental conditions, the sea is totally collapsed. Anaerobic spots have destroyed the marine ecosystem of the region, and salmon has to be injected oxygen in order to survive. "State has subsidised failed experiments in thousands of millions of dollars." The amount of epidemics that have attacked the salmon is a proof of this, and of the violations of the self-imposed regulations: however, these breaches happened with the acquittal of public authorities. In this sense, Kol points out to the connivance of inspection agencies and top-level politicians. This is the case with the ISA virus, which travelled from Puerto Montt to the south. Regarding social conditions, bad labour conditions and "slave" waged labour have led to chronic illnesses of former salmon workers. This has been achieved with full complicity of ACHS, state agencies, and firms.

### *The Salmon state!*

There has existed a salmon state, with special organisations, agencies, laws and relations between academics, politicians and businesses. All representatives are compromised in this agreement. In particular, says Kol, this was achieved by Eduardo Frei R. (1994-2000), who allowed these toxic firms to be evaluated through EIAs, and by Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010), who granted millionaire funds for useless research. Despite common knowledge on the conditions being excellent for salmon farming and production, more than 16 illnesses plague the animals, and there are another natural mechanisms eliminating the species in the zone. This is continued by the granting of licenses for production in other zones of the country.

“The Presidents, ministers and Congress representatives paraded in the zone. They just came to eat salmon and drink wine at the annual salmon dinners.”

100% of base wage was subsidised by the state (approx. CLP 111000, €180). Senator Camilo Escalona exposed this situation, threatening to remove the subsidy. The salmon industry would pay but a percentage of profits: yet, all profits go to the firms. Moreover, this has been further facilitated by free use of water resources, free workers. “This is because the conditions are not good for cultivating salmons: if they were, there would be salmon here. But no, they had to be brought.”

The actual bet is that the industry will re-emerge. However, the unemployment situation can become un-manageable, as the salmon industry may not re-emerge: there are lower production rates and lower employment rates. This failure to recover would be a major setback for the political class and their economic project. Moreover, the industry is displacing itself to the south, to the Regions of Aysén and Magallanes, while producing half the levels before 2008: only 25000 employees.

Kol considers that what happened with the salmon industry was a fraud, and the banks and financial institutions are compromised in CLP 4,000,000,000 (approx. € 5,970,149). Thus, all the public investment and life-saving programmes are measures to avoid private financial institutions to collapse. And that is why the banks now own the stocks of salmon firms.

R.C.

Since 1988, the damage can be seen. Casas says that it is from 2001 that the opposition to the salmon industry appears organised. However, the support from representatives is scant, and limited to lip service and verbal declarations.

Eventually, an Congress investigation on the salmon industry is led by Congressman Fidel Espinoza, but it gets divided: artisan fishing discusses its issues separately, and salmon workers



have to sit in 11 different dialogue sessions, without any major outcomes.

In the beginning, unions expected some support by NGOs, but besides showing the problems in the international level, there was no major support in terms of resources. In this sense, he complains that NGOs came, fished for information and left nothing in exchange: “it’s not that you are going to condition the provision of information for materials, but if we are going to work together and we need, for instance, a printer to hand out the information, the least they could do is help us with one!” In this sense, Casas says, the NGOs live out of the conflicts.

On the other hand, before the ISA virus, the FETRAINPES was invited to meetings and union education programmes. However, after 2008, nobody invited them to anything anymore.

CONATRASAL has been receiving funds from Ministry of Labour for education and seminars: “CONATRASAL did the dirty job of saying 'everything is fine' with salmon firms in the Congress, so the firms could keep on functioning and giving jobs, and in exchange they would get CLP 20 million (approx € 30000) to get their courses and seminars. They also worked with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (IS), OXFAM, and TERRAM.

The FETRAINPES, on the other hand, worked with ICAL (linked to the PC) and ICLER (*otec*).

FETRAINPES is 13 years old. In its beginnings, unions included salmon and “white” fishing workers alike. Back in those days, “*los viejos* [old men, way to refer to the workers] had to be connected all day to the radio, where they were told that a firm was opening operations at certain time and location. You knew at what time the operations began but you never knew at what time it would end, because it stopped when you were done processing what the fishing boats were bringing. So, *los viejos* would sleep in the plant, waiting because in some moment could arrive other boat. Then, it was extremely precarious. And that could be both “white” fish or salmon: so first you got hake, and then they brought the salmon a couple of hours later. In some other plants, they would bring shellfish. These workers were hired per hour, thus had no possibility of unionising.”

Casas tells a story of a woman who was placed as a domestic worker by her parents. Her wage was paid to her father. When she heard in the radio about the salmon factories establishing in the zone, she left the house where she worked at and started to work in the factories. She met women like her and was able to rent a place with them. This story repeats itself, Casas says, and in that way the people from the countryside migrated to the city.

This is the reason, Casas argues, that people took so long to form their unions: “peasants are not used to unions.” And this was common both to Chiloé and Puerto Montt.

H.K.

Critical vision on Chiloé. He considers that the isle's society is only beginning a “post-colonial moment”. “Every time there is a manifestation on the Chacao bridge project [a bridge projected over the Chacao channel that separates the continent from the isle; this project was frozen in 2006], the Chilotes show their Spanish flags. And in Ancud's anthem, they boast about being the last spot of Spanish resistance against the Chilean state.”

“Chilotes are still conquered people. Before by the Spanish, now by the Norwegians!”

In this sense, workers are prone to negotiating for little. For instance, the last strike in Mainstream plant, Calbuco, was motivated because the union asked for an arrangement of CLP 1 (approx. € 0,0016). As the managers would not give it, the workers went on strike for three days. In Aguas Claras, also in Calbuco, 78 workers went on strike for 3 months and ended up tortured by *Carabineros*. In Quellón, the strikers took the streets and cut the highway, isolated Quellón for 5 days, and the strike ended after the firm gave 300 life-saving jackets. Thus, strikes are held for nominal adjustments and arrangements.

Regarding NGOs, Kol considers that they exist thanks to the existence of problems, not their solution. “Unlike Amnesty International, who aspire to dissolve it when torture in the world ends, the environmental NGOs not only live from the problems, but they also certify them. Now they are selling ecolabels, with WWF and Universidad Austral, selling the panda bear in the salmon packs...” On the other hand, OCEANA seeks state protection for certain geographic areas, transforming these in national parks. “My particular problem, Héctor Kol's problem, is that I am against the capitalist state!”

Transformations must be political, and the work is to create a new organisation -state or else- that guarantees a decent life. “It is unexplainable how these people resisted this! People had to sign up a queue for the bathroom; mothers with young babies would be given the night shifts, as for them to resign and lose their maternal benefits. The latest of this practices was that of sexual harassment to pregnant women, so they would resign by themselves!”

This colonised mentality, argues Kol, has not been able to think on organisation. And most salmon workers want the return of the industry: they are trapped in the consumption circuit. This dependency is reinforced by the actual legislation, particularly the law on “privatisation of the sea”.

R.C.

Regarding the adverse conditions for unionisation and labour organisation, it is hard for unions

to establish political education programmes. Casas indicates that +70% of the union leader were outsiders; they were not from the region. Casas himself came from Temuco. In this sense, changing the workers mentality is complicated: “talking about voting for strike meant going against the assembly, as they would accuse us of dooming them, for we have union rights and will keep our jobs, while they [the firm] will fire all the rest of the jobs, so they [the assembly] preferred keeping what they had.”

Despite higher levels of unionisation, collective negotiations yield poor results. Thus, Casas argues, or these unions are “fake” unions, and collaborate with firms, or the leaders had no union preparation. On the other hand, the FETRAINPES articulated 22 unions out of a universe of +60 unions: however, these other unions would avoid the FETRAINPES claiming they were “independent”. Yet, many of these unions were limited to hand in the arrangements to the workers after they were fired.

H.K.

The problem of de-politicisation and lack of participation is nation-wide phenomenon, due to the loss of ethical and moral values. During the salmon boom, 4 out of the 10 most dangerous cities and 6 out of the 10 poorest cities appeared in the Region. “Where is the success?”

This happens because the government rules for the richest 20%. “With the minimum wage levels we currently have, what is our power as consumers? What is our political power? We cannot even go to *SERNAC* [consumer right service].”

All state institutions are committed in the success of this industry. The most dramatic case of this are the “salmon” congressmen, e.g. Fidel Espinoza. “His father was leader of a popular land seizure in the 1960s and tortured and executed after 1973. Now, Espinoza was one of the 92 Congressmen that approved the law on “privatisation of the sea”: for 2 years we handed him all the information on the critical labour, environmental, economic situation here. And his dad? That's the level of corruption here: it was not a bribe, and no money was involved. He had to save his government, and his government had to save the private banks, otherwise all they [Concertación governments] did for 20 years would go bust. And that's what happened, everything went bust: all you see is debt, nothing is paid here. People here are indebted 17 times their wages. This is bankruptcy in suspension!”

This was a resource-rich region. However, artisan fishing is now ruined. Moreover, salmon firms give CLP 28000 (approx €40) to the municipalities where the plants and farms are located.

Kol points to major collusion between the political and business sectors, as the regional

government is now composed by people coming from salmon firms. In order to transform this, Kol says, the authorities and structures cannot be relied on: “we had to ask the president to reject the same draft he supported. It's insane!”

R.C.

The strategy of cooperatives to face the situation and organise workers (see interview to Casas). This would be composed by former employees, and be dedicated to artisan fishing and other productive areas. It has not been possible, though.

H.K.

There is no sense in setting up an unemployed union, as it has an announced death: it will last until most of the members have a job.

**[The rest of the interview is partially audible]**