

O Último Peixe

Ideas About the Future in Coastal Trairí



Photo credit: MaryCate Brower

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Será que...

*Somente quando for coriada a última árvore,
poluído o último rio, pescado o último peixe,
é que o homem vai perceber que não pode comer dinheiro.*

It will be that...

*Only when he has cut down the last tree,
Polluted the last river, fished the last fish,
That man will perceive that he cannot eat money*

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Abstract

This paper uses ethnographic methods, including semi-formal, semi-structured interviews, but especially participant observation and informal conversation, to attempt to understand the realities of the coastal population of the Municipality of Trairí, Ceará, Brazil, as the traditional fishing communities of Guajiru, Fleixeiras, and Emboacca react to international and national economic policies, tourism, and land speculation that are enacted through the lens of neoliberalism. This study corroborates the statements of community members as they relate their ideas about the present conditions of *pescadores artesanais* as they deal with increasing and ever-changing government policies that regulate and limit their craft, a lobster population on the brink of collapse, and the everyday necessity of back-breaking physical labor, against the competition of poachers and frauds who unlawfully collect the government security that many depend on during the months of December through May, when taking lobster is prohibited in an attempt to bolster the stock. The varied feelings of many community members regarding the institutions of tourism as they are now in the area is also evaluated, but this study also endeavors to appreciate the visions of the future in coastal Trairí, as they are perceived by local inhabitants, with relation to the possibilities of environmental conservation and sustainable development. It is found that for environmental conservation and sustainable development to be viable possibilities, there must be a shift in the paradigms used to conceptualize the worth of the individuals and the resources of coastal Trairí.

Definitions of Terms

A truncated definition of important terms used herein; all are further elaborated within.

- Alternative tourism**—Forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social, and community values, and which allows both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences; may include ecotourism, community-based tourism, and cultural tourism (Stronza, 2001: 274.)
- Aquaculture**—The breeding, rearing, and harvesting of plants and animals in all types of water environments, including ponds, rivers, lakes, and the ocean. Similar to agriculture, aquaculture can take place in the natural environment or in a manmade environment. Using aquaculture techniques and technologies, researchers and the aquaculture industry are “growing,” “producing,” “culturing,” and “farming” all types of freshwater and marine species. The propagation and rearing of aquatic organisms in controlled or selected aquatic environments for any commercial, recreational, or public purpose. (The NOAA Aquaculture Policy, 1998: 5.)
- Common-pool resources**— characterized by the difficulty of excluding actors from using them and the fact that the use by one individual or group means that less is available for use by others. (The latter point distinguishes CPR from pure public goods which exhibit both non excludability and non rivalry in consumption). CPRs include some fisheries, irrigation systems and grazing areas. (Young, 1999)
- Ecotourism**—A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures (Stronza, 2001: 275.)
- Globalization**— The growing integration of economies and societies, around the world (World Bank Group, 2000)
- Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD)**—Recognizes a direct link between human needs and biodiversity, where human livelihood and community conservation initiatives are interdependent (Brown, 2000: 7-9.)
- Neoliberalism**—An economic paradigm (see below) that is characterized by following the rule of the market (de-unionization, etc.), cutting public expenditure for social services, deregulation (re: regulations for workers’ job safety and environmental protection), and shift responsibility for success from the community to the individual. (Martinez and Garcia: 113.)
- Paradigm (/worldview)** – The constellation of beliefs, values, and concepts that give shape and meaning to the world a person experiences and acts within (Gladwin, et al., 1995: 880.)

A Pesca Artesanal—Artisanal fishing. Small-scale fishing, includes subsistence and/or commercially oriented producers who exploit living aquatic resources with relatively small-scale capital commitments for consumptive use (McGoodwin, 1990: 8-12.)

To be recognized by the Brazilian government (to qualify for benefits) as an artisanal fisherman, fishing must be the main source of revenue for the family, the person with the license must physically be fishing (not owning a boat or sending a relative), without the use of diving equipment, and the boat fished from must be less than 9.9 meters in length. (11/05/2009, la Justicia Dra. Julia, Trairí)

A Pesca Predatoria—Predatorily fishing. Either poaching (taking lobster while it is federally prohibited during the months of December through May) or using diving equipment to harvest lobster

Sustainable Development— Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs; environmental, economic, social progress and equity within the limits of the world's natural resources (1987 World Commission on Environment and Development)

Tourist—a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing change (Stronza, 2001: 265);

Temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours in the country [or location] visited, and the purposes of whose journey may be classified [as] (a) leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion, sport) or (b) business (family, mission, meeting) (Cohen, 1984: 374)

Statement of Social Relevance

There are many powerful groups and individuals whose vast fortunes and seats of privilege would be disrupted, should the ideas of peace, social justice, economic equity, and environmental consciousness ever be put into global practice. The puppet masters of the neoliberal capitalist system have tried to make the concepts of peace and non-violence into the ridiculous ideals of a lost generation—so they might continue to foster a culture of fear and sell guns. They created, bolster, and continue to excuse an economic system that reduces millions to the daily terror of extreme poverty, and resist all attempts to protect life—that of the very planet, its ecosystems, animals, plants, and people—from indiscriminate destruction, in the name of profit. They have co-opted, intimidated, persuaded, and tricked us all into believing they do not exist, and that they do not benefit from the cries of starving and the oppressed. Theirs is a:

History of unapologetic, though at times secret and now still generally unknown, brutal dehumanization of the populations of Asia, Africa, and South America as sources of resources to be used, exploited, and be of service to the needs of the U.S. and western industrialized powers. (Chomsky, 116.)

The neoliberal capitalist system (NCS) is brutal, but its brutality does not harm it. The NCS is immoral, but its immorality will not destroy it. What has finally come to challenge the supremacy of the NCS is its own canon of unlimited growth, unceasing consumption, and the slaving search for ever-increasing profit. Like the Midgard Serpent who encircled the world only to begin to swallow its own tail, the NCS is destroying itself, through its lack of sustainability. There is no future, and no profit, for anyone, if we are to continue to live by the rules of the NCS.

In high-income countries, consumption is out of control. Development cannot intend to bring the rest of the world to this level of consumption, because 20% of the world's population

consuming 86% of the world's resources has already strained the environment past its capacity. (Saha, 2008) It is already too late for this critical awakening, which is now only beginning, that we must, as societies, nations, communities, and families, re-evaluate the paradigm we have been operating under. For humanity to live, we must rediscover sustainability, and live by its principles, which can be paraphrased as “inclusiveness, connectivity, equity, prudence, and security.” (Gladwin, Kennelly, & Krause, 1995: 878-880.)

The situation of the small artisanal fishing communities in littoral Trairí has the opportunity to be the staging ground for the paradigm shift towards sustainability. Although the profession of the pescadores artensenais may be lost due to its lack of governmental and societal valorization, changing environmental realities, and economic viability, the citizens of littoral Trairí have the ability to decide to on a common set of values, which may be able to provide sustainable economic growth, for the future; values that must include a determination to preserve the natural resources and spaces—clean, unspoiled beaches and unpolluted waters, magnificent sand dunes—that can be utilized for non-consumptive use.

Introduction

Our world has become globalized, a status that the World Bank defines as a, “growing integration of economies and societies, around the world.” As an agent of this very process, however, the World Bank gives a definition that may belie globalization's effects; it paints the phenomenon of globalization as more incidental and harmless than it may, in reality, be.

Globalization has occurred, and continues to occur, under a specific paradigm, or worldview. For the purposes of this study, I define paradigm as, “the constellation of beliefs, values, and concepts that give shape and meaning to the world a person experiences and acts within,” and should be regarded as self-reinforcing (the system maintains itself). (Gladwin,

Kennelly, and Krause, 1995: 880) The paradigm that our world exists under is the neoliberal capitalist system (NCS), called the “Washington Consensus” by some scholars (Cf. Chomsky), or the Technocentric Paradigm (Gladwin, et. al, 1995.). The NCS is the collective of structural economic adjustment programs designed by the United States’ government and the international financial institutions it largely dominates, which came into being in their first forms around the end of World War II. (id., 115.)

Policies of economic neoliberalism, while tricky to define, can be recognize by several key factors. Neoliberalist policies follow the “rule of the free market” in that they favor a reduced role of government in the economy, eliminating barriers to trade, and proponents of this system contend the ability of wealth to “trickle-down.” An example of this type of barrier-elimination is the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, including the emphasis on the de-unionization of workers. Secondly, neoliberalists are generally in favor of the reduction of public spending for social services, such as education and health care, but remain steadfastly *in favor* of subsidies and tax benefits for businesses. There is also an emphasis on deregulation, removing obstacles of profit such as job safety and environmental protection. The IMF, World Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank are a few examples of organizations that promote neoliberal policies around the world. (Martinez, et al., 113.)

While proponents of neoliberalism argue that the fastest way to growth and stability is through following the whims of the “free” market, this system has led to the systematic exploitation of those countries who are not in control of it (mainly the United States and Western Europe) and has resulted in a low-wage, low-growth economy that relies substantially on speculative transactions (Chomsky, 116.)—speculation that has resulted in the collapse of the market and financial crisis that we are now experiencing. Furthermore, the proposed ability of

wealth to “trickle down” has been found to be nothing but a fantasy, and neoliberalist policies across the developing world have come to be associated more with a continuation of brutal colonialism, propagation of sickening, unspoken racism, and the maintenance of sinister classism; in the words of former Brazilian Secretary of the Environment José Lutzenburger (1992), the incarnation of neoliberal economic policies is, “...Characterized by unbelievable alienation, reductionist thinking, social ruthlessness, and arrogant ignorance.” (Saha, 2007.)

It has furthermore been found that the neoliberal goals of perpetual growth and unlimited profit are completely unsustainable, and it is necessary to question these definitions of progress (Brown, 2000: 7.) as the planet has already reached its carrying capacity and been pushed beyond in the strain of many industrialized countries’ scrounging for resources and by their pollution.

Ethics are narrowly homocentric and utilitarian, because contemporary and proximate human beings matter most. Sacrifices on behalf of future generations, nonhuman nature or distantly less fortunate current generations are generally unwarranted, unless market signals dictate otherwise. (Gladwin, et. al, 1995: 883.)

Even resources once considered indefinite, like the sea, are facing crisis; ocean stocks everywhere are so depleted that many experts are predicting a collapse of global fishing stocks by 2050. (Worm, et al, 2006.). In Brazil particularly, the lobster population is on the brink of collapse (federally recognized as of 08/05/2009), and it is the small producers, the *pescadores artesanais*¹, who are the hardest hit by this crisis. As of 08/05/2009, the United States, Brazil’s

¹ Artisanal fishers; Small-scale fishers, includes subsistence and/or commercially oriented producers who exploit living aquatic resources with relatively small-scale capital commitments for consumptive use (McGoodwin, 1990: 8-12.)

To be recognized by the Brazilian government (to qualify for benefits) as an artisanal fisherman, fishing must be the main source of revenue for the family, the person with the license must physically be fishing (not owning a boat or sending a relative), without the use of diving equipment, and the boat fished from must be less than 9.9 meters in length. (11/05/2009, la Justicia Dra. Julia, Trairi)

largest market for lobster, reported that it would only buy lobster of more than fourteen centimeters, and buy no lobster with ova or that had been cleaned of ova, in a conservative effort to allow the females to grow large enough to successfully reproduce and bolster the population. However, this measure comes as too little, too late, and, along with the Brazilian federal prohibition on taking lobster during the months of December through May, is constructed under a “classic” conservation approach (Brown, 2000: 7.) that disadvantages the local community by denying them access to resources and excluding their welfare from the equation of law-making.

The question of tourism is also of considerable importance in this equation; as lobster that measure less than fourteen centimeters will be sold to markets in Europe, Japan, and within Brazil domestically. In littoral Trairi, however, the domestic consumption of lobster is not necessarily by Brazilians, and is especially not by those Brazilians who catch them, but frequently by tourists, who create notable market for the crustaceans, which feeds the poaching of, and further population instability of, the species. The difficulty of conserving common-pool resources² has long been appreciated in research (Cf. Acheson, 1981; Begossi, 1995; and Young, 1999.), and while my findings affirm some of the difficulties, it also resists the dourest prognostications, which would call the attempt to encourage conservation of common-pool resources a ‘tragedy.’

Neoliberalism is a driving force behind many of the issues that we face as a global society: from issues of inequality in education, access to healthcare, and resources; it is a force that has brought poverty or more extreme poverty to the majority of individuals of the world—and poverty is the fuel of violence, against other human beings and against the planet. Ideals of

² characterized by the difficulty of excluding actors from using them and the fact that the use by one individual or group means that less is available for use by others. (The latter point distinguishes CPR from pure public goods which exhibit both non excludability and non rivalry in consumption). CPRs include some fisheries, irrigation systems and grazing areas. (Young, 1999)

peaceful conflict resolution and environmental conservation can ring falsely when a few, powerful nations are consuming far, far more resources and producing more waste than any of the others combined; obvious reactions to this are resentment and rage. None of these issues can stand alone, and none has a simple answer, because all of them are interconnected; for these reasons, it is necessary that these potentially fatal challenges be addressed holistically, as the symptoms of a system that is failing, rather than as solitary problems to be faced one by one.

This realization of a failed system of what can be modestly called a set of manipulated economic principles and what has been academically appreciated as a “de facto world government” (Chomsky, 115.) is what can free us from it and allow us to move on. What is required, it is argued by Gladwin, Kennelly, and Krause (1995: 874) is a paradigm shift, from what they define as technocentrism (this paper’s neoliberalism) to sustaincentrism without passing into the radical ecocentrism. Sustaincentrism, or the pursuit of sustainable development as a paradigm, is late in coming yet practically past due, and as such, is still difficult to define succinctly. (See Table 1 for a satisfying variety of sources and definitions.) For a firm start, we will begin with:

At a minimum, sustainability mandates no net loss of (a) ecosystem and social system health (i.e., capacities of natural and social systems to resiliently provide essential life-support services to humanity)...(b) critical natural capital (i.e., stocks of irreplaceable natural assets such as biological diversity, the ozone layer, and biogeochemical cycles)...(c) self-organization (i.e., capacities of living systems to carry out self-renewal, self-maintenance and self-transformation, which provide the context for all human activity)... (d) carrying capacity (i.e., long-run capacities of biophysical and social systems to support physical scales of human enterprise) ... and (e) human freedom (i.e., civil society, with democracy and full realization of human rights in day-to-day living dependent on participation, accountability, reciprocity and transparency)...including the fulfillment of basic human needs. (Gladwin, et al, 1995: 876.)

TABLE 1
Representative Conceptions Of Sustainable Development
 (Gladwin, Kennelly, and Krause, 1995: 877)

<p>To maximize simultaneously the biological system goals (genetic diversity, resilience, biological productivity), economic system goals (satisfaction of basic needs, enhancement of equity, increasing useful goods and services), and social system goals (cultural diversity, institutional sustainability, social justice, participation) (Barbier, 1987: 103).</p>
<p>Improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems (The World Conservation Union, United Nations Environment Programme & Worldwide Fund for Nature, 1991: 10).</p>
<p>Sustainability is a relationship between dynamic human economic systems and larger dynamic, but normally slower-changing ecological systems, in which (a) human life can continue indefinitely, (b) human individuals can flourish, and (c) human cultures can develop; but in which effects of human activities remain within bounds, so as not to destroy the diversity, complexity, and function of the ecological life support system (Costanza, Daly, & Bartholomew, 1991: 8).</p>
<p>A sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support (Meadows, Meadows, & Randers, 1992: 209).</p>
<p>Sustainability is an economic state where the demands placed upon the environment by people and commerce can be met without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations. It can also be expressed as . . . leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, and make amends if you do (Hawken, 1993: 139).</p>
<p>Our vision is of a life-sustaining earth. We are committed to the achievement of a dignified, peaceful, and equitable existence. We believe a sustainable United States will have an economy that equitably provides opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations. Our nation will protect its environment, its natural resource base, and the functions and viability of natural systems on which all life depends (U.S. President's Council on Sustainable Development, 1994: 1).</p>
<p>Sustainability is a participatory process that creates and pursues a vision of community that respects and makes prudent use of all its resources-natural, human, human-created, social, cultural, scientific, etc. Sustainability seeks to ensure, to the degree possible, that present generations attain a high degree of economic security and can realize democracy and popular participation in control of their communities, while maintaining the integrity of the ecological systems upon which all life and all production depends, and while assuming responsibility to future generations to provide them with the where-with-all for their vision, hoping that they have the wisdom and intelligence to use what is provided in an appropriate manner (Viederman, 1994: 5).</p>

When the goals of conservation and development are integrated, they begin to have a more realistic chance of each being fulfilled or met in a sustainable way; theoretically, conservation ceases to be a threat to human livelihood, and development ceases to be a threat to the maintenance of resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity. (Brown, 2000: 6.) Integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) (Brown, 2000: 9.) can often be characterized by the utilization of non-consumptive resource use, but is almost always characterized by the reduced interference of the demands of the wider national or international market, with local access to resources assured over outside claims. (Young, 1999: 599.)

Understanding tourism³ under a lens of sustainable development can be very challenging, especially since many economists of the 1970s encouraged tourism as a panacea to many developing countries under a formula of unrestricted growth that has frequently led to a loss of ownership of tourism infrastructure by the local community, and a more unwilling local participation in the industry. (Cf. Stronza, 2001: 275; Cohen, 1984: 384.) Under a neoliberal paradigm, tourism (especially international tourism) can encourage inflationary tendencies. (Ibid.) At its most destructive:

Tourism has the most serious dislocating effects and yields the smallest relative benefits for locals when large-scale, high-standard facilities are rapidly introduced by outside developers into an otherwise poorly developed area; dependency, rather than development, the results...[as the new infrastructure] fails to engender linkage with other sectors (especially agriculture). (Ibid.)

However, there is a significant future in tourism for sustainable development, especially in the arena of alternative tourism, a category that comprises those forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social, and community values, emphasizes an exchange of positive experiences between guests and hosts; and may include ecotourism, community-based tourism,

³ The system of infrastructure and activities that cater to a tourist, a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing change (Stronza, 2001: 265.)

and cultural tourism (Stronza, 2001: 274.) An ideal ecotourism, for example, would focus on non-consumptive resource use like whale-watching (Young, 1999.), which could provide revenue and economic opportunities to local residents, and might additionally create revenue and valorization for local conservation efforts and development needs. (Stronza, 2001: 275.)

Discussion of Methods & Practices

The research for this paper began in early April during *Semana Santa* for about eleven days, and resumed in May, for a period of twenty-one days, in 2009. My home base in Trairí, and the greatest source of information, friendship, and afternoon breaks for tapioca, was the home of Pedro Edivan dos Santos Vianna and Marta Helena Vianna Dia, their children, and grandchild, in the seaside village of Guajiru. With the assistance of Edivan, I was able to come to a modest knowledge of the municipality, especially the nearby, burgeoning resort town of Fleixeiras, the local seat of government at the inland town of Trairí, the fishing settlement of Emboacca, and of course, the serene yet apprehensive Guajiru.

The bulk of my research, took place in the littoral towns of Guajiru, Fleixeiras, and Emboacca. However, because my research period coincided with the annual period in which the fisherman must apply or reapply for a government license (and for the *segurança* that provides them with a cash income during the months that lobster fishing is prohibited), some interviews and conversations were carried out in Trairí, the local seat of municipal government because that is where the fishermen who lived in Guajiru, Fleixeiras, and Emboacca were meeting with the government officials who regulated the process of licensing. My interview with the Coordinator for the Secretary of Tourism for the municipality, Eron, also took place in Trairí, in the Office of Tourism, as did my interview with the leaders of a young people's environmental group.

My main technique for gathering information, which was by far the most fruitful, was informal conversation with members of my host family in Guajiru, neighbors, friends, and various acquaintances. My host family comprises ten individuals, ranging in age from Edivan's sage forty-six years to Maria Luiza, not yet two years old. Both Edivan and Marta were indispensable resources for everything from fishing regulations to local religious customs, while their children provided me with companionship, unique points of view on life in Guajiru, and helped introduce me to a wider circle of people than I would have met if I had been with only Marta and Edivan. All individuals whose information or knowledge that is incorporated into this study were over sixteen years of age, were informed of its purpose, and gave informed consent.

Edivan's position as a community organizer also gained me access to speak in a slightly more formally with individuals from a wide array of backgrounds and professions; including a youth group from Emboacca⁴, the Coordinator of the Secretary of Tourism for the Municipality of Trairi⁵, the leaders of a young people's environmental group⁶, and several fishermen⁷. Speaking to individuals of varying professions, positions of power, and age was influential in creating a broader picture of the conditions, challenges, and realities that are lived everyday in littoral Trairi.

While I had entered the field intending to use more formal interviews and tape-record them, this turned out to be a dead-end source for the kind of information I was seeking. Most people were visibly perturbed by the presence of a notebook and pen (even after they had given informed consent to participate as informants for my monograph), and became much more reluctant to speak, less willing to volunteer unsolicited information, and all-around much more

⁴ Interview #1, summarized in the Interviews/Primary source bibliography section

⁵ Interview #2, same as above

⁶ Interview #3, same as above

⁷ Interview #4, with Francisco, same as above

difficult to “interview” when a tape recorder was introduced. As a result, I dispensed with the idea of formal interviews early into my 3-week research period and focused on participant observation, which included attending several large meetings of fishermen from the municipality alongside day-to-day observation and interaction, and informal conversation with many different individuals.

It would be inexcusable to not mention that for both periods of research, I was privileged to have had the (thought-provoking, uplifting, and bolstering) regular companionship of Callie Thuma, and it is important to point out that my research was undoubtedly influenced by many of the perceptions and comparisons of the two of us. Some meetings we conducted together, for the sake of convenience and transportation as much as time-management. Indeed, Callie and I were often regarded by local inhabitants as inseparable (in the face of considerable contradiction to this assumption) and both of us were treated as responsible not only for our individual research and bodies, but also as responsible for knowledge of the other’s whereabouts, health, and needs. Only in the last week of the second research period did I begin to experience acceptance as an entity completely separate from Callie, and then only from certain people.

A brief description of Littoral Trairí: Guajirú, Fleixeiras, and Emboacca

Anecdotally, Guajiru and the other small settlements of littoral Trairí originated as a communities formed by runaway slaves and indigenous people who fled Portuguese expansion into the Northeast of Brazil by retreating to the coast, which was originally ignored for its lack of productivity, a situation which is now reversed as tourists both foreign and domestic ignore the interior of the Trairí and proceed directly to the beach communities and resorts. These inhabitants are regarded as beginning the tradition of artisanal fishing to littoral Trairí: Fleixeiras, for example, takes its modern name from the arrows that the indigenous people used to fish with.

Guajiru takes about two hours to reach by car from the capital and largest city of Ceará, Fortaleza, depending on weather and road conditions.

There is one road that leads into and out of the seaside village of Guajiru. It begins as a federal highway that is overtaken by the sand blown off the surrounding dunes about seven kilometers away from the town limits. The road in Guajiru proper is not paved, but is made up of irregular stones sunken into the compacted clay soil, a modernization of the past twenty years. Electricity also came to Guajiru in the 1980s, while many of Guajiru's now-middle aged men were serving obligatory military time under the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 until 1985, along with running water and basic sanitation plumbing, although in many households, backyard hand-pump is still utilized for any project requiring more than a liter of water.

Today, Guajiru boasts a population of about 700 people, about 40% of whom rely solely on fishing for their income, with about 90% at least partially reliant on fishing. (Silva, et al., 2003: 6.) The *pescadores artesanais*, whose professional qualifications are explained in detail in the introduction, are an essential part of the battle against hunger in the rural Northeast of Brazil; while lobster is regarded as an income-bolstering cash crop, the daily catch of ariacol⁸, pampo⁹, peixe-espada¹⁰, and tainha¹¹ are either eaten or sold to purchase other household necessities. There are seven hotels in Guajiru owned by local residents, and two large, up-scale, foreign-owned hotels. (Ibid.: 8) There are many vacation homes that dominate the beach, owned by predominantly by wealthy Brazilians and Europeans. Different community members

⁸ Southern Red Snapper, *Lutjanus purpureus*. Catálogo de Peixes Esportivos Marinhos Brasileiros, Ministério Federal de Meio Ambiente.

⁹ Pompano, *Trachinotus* spp. Op. cit.

¹⁰ Largehead Hairtail, *Trichiurus lepturus*. Op. cit.

¹¹ Mullet, *Mugil brasiliensis*. Op. cit.

previously owned the beachfront land where these homes and hotels are built, most of the land was sold only beginning in the 1970s and continues to this day. (See fig. 1)

There are two churches in Guajiru, a Catholic church around which the town *praça* (plaza) was built, and an Evangelical church on the main town road. An Evangelical informant from Guajiru told me that the majority of Guajiru is Catholic, with about 30-35% Evangelicals, and a very, very small minority claiming another religion or no religion at all. Religious events are important in Guajiru, especially when they involve the celebration of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of fisherman and sailors, who is frequently invoked by the community.

Figure 1: A plot of land for sale in Guajiru. Photo credit: M Brower



There is one *clube* (club) that receives occasional bands and holds *festas* (parties/events) that are widely attended; Guajiru also has a primary school, a health center that is attended by a doctor from Trairí once a week, a school/rental and equipment center for kitesurfing, one clothing boutique, and several small grocery and sundry goods stores.

Fleixeiras (alternative spelling: Fleicheiras) is Guajiru's larger, more developed, in terms of tourism infrastructure, neighbor to the Northeast, about 8 kilometers away. Fleixeiras is home to the local high school, where students from Guajiru and Fleixeiras go (more or less) every weeknight from 18:40-23:00. Fleixeiras has one Catholic Church and several different Protestant churches, three pharmacies, several internet cafés, its own primary school, many small *mercandinhos* (grocery/ sundry goods shops), a large central praça, and, significantly, a large number of restaurants and large, up-scale *pousadas* (hotels) and condominiums, many of which are beachfront.

While a significant number of individuals still rely on *pesca artesanal* as their primary source of income, a considerable amount of Fleixeiras residents participate in the tourism industry; frequently as waiters, property caretakers, maintenance workers, and maids. Rarely, local residents are bar owners or run small restaurants.

Emboacca is the smallest and poorest of the three communities where I did research, is still almost completely economically reliant on artisanal fishing. The population of Emboacca was unofficially estimated, by four young men who live there, to be between five hundred and six hundred people. There are no hotels or restaurants in Emboacca, but there is a primary school and a one-room building that is used by older students, a building that is used by the *Associação dos Moradores de Emboacca* (Association of the Residents of Emboacca), and the homes of the residents. There is one Catholic church, and four Evangelical churches, but the

Catholics hold a dominant majority. Youth groups, prayer groups, and many other activities are focused around the Church; as such, it has a very significant roll in the lives of many residents of Emboacca. Once a week, a doctor comes from Trairí and sees patients from Emboacca in the *Associação* building.

Perceptions of the Present: A Pesca Artesanal in Littoral Trairí and Tourism under the Neoliberal Paradigm

A Pesca Artesanal

Guajiru is a village that is still rooted in the tradition of artisanal fishing, and Fleixeiras has only recently stepped out of this tradition and developed tourism infrastructure. Fishermen around the world, previous research has found, “Are often under-represented in the political arena,” and excluded from political process, they also experience a “social distance” between themselves and the rest of society that results in the devalorization of their work and lifestyles. (Acheson, 1981: 277-279.) In littoral Trairí, the devalorization of the worth of artisanal fishing has resulted in what many of my informants there describe as discrimination and suffering.

My research period in May 2009, happened to coincide with the period of license-renewal for the artisanal fishermen; these federal licenses provide the fishermen with a *segurança* (unemployment stipend) during the months when the taking of lobster is prohibited. While the stipend, many fishermen say, is far less than they would make if they were selling lobster, many have observed the declining lobster population and understand the effort being made to conserve and replenish the stock. The fishermen of Guajiru face the issue of conservation of a common-pool resource (lobster and fish) (Cf. Acheson, 1981; Young, 1999.), and with the many issues of fishing regulation and fishery management.

Many fishermen in Guajiru complain of a lack of governmental (both municipal and federal) support, frequently citing the lack of a government “plan” for fishermen. A government

plan for aquaculture, however, does exist, and is the source of a significant amount of resentment for the fishermen, who point out that aquaculture is favored in colder Southern waters and by large, industrialized enterprises that can profit from it. The problem of overexploitation is a complicated one; fishery management, “Seeks to increase output and conserve overexploited stock by lowering fishery effort,” but the ways this is done (such as limiting licenses, done both in Guajiru and in British Columbia, Canada) frequently increases socio-economic inequality locally. (Acheson, 1981: 302-305.)

Although artisanal fishers receive very little support from the government, they are frequently vocal about their perception of the value of their own work: a common theme is the idea that hunger in the northeast of Brazil would be a much more serious problem if the fishermen were not present. (For further information about fishery management in Brazil, see Begossi 1995.) The young generation is not interested in learning to fish, or working as fishers. Even present fishermen do not consider it to be a good option for their own children, often counseling them to study other professions, because they do not see it as a viable economic option, both due to environmental changes (reduced number of fish), lack of governmental support, and the back-breaking nature of the work of fishing. It says much of the nature of fishing in Guajiru that in three weeks in a small town I only met one person my age (early twenties) who worked as a full-time fisherman.

Tourism in Littoral Trairi: Land speculation, Foreign Enterprises and *Cascudo*¹²

The impacts of tourism on any host community are always a combination of economic, social, and cultural factors, but it is important to never regard the host community as a passive agent in the process of tourism. (Stronza, 2001: 268.) Guajiru is an interesting case in the study of tourism; while its beaches stand empty for half the year, it is a popular, yet still “under the

¹² Cascudo—a fixed sand dune, with capital “C” refers to the large, fixed sand dune that overlooks all of Guajiru

radar” vacation spot for Europeans (especially Spanish, French, Italian tourists) and North Americans (mostly the United States and Canada), and the site of many vacation homes for wealthy Brazilians. During the summer tourist months, there are an especially large number of individuals who come for the surfing, kite surfing, and windsurfing, waves powered by the wind that fishermen call the *Vente de Sur*¹³, and have depended on for moving their *pacquetes*¹⁴ and *jangadas*¹⁵ out to sea for generations.

Tourism as it operates now in Guajiru is plagued by the “dislocation” (Cohen, 1984: 384.) of poorly integrated foreign-owned infrastructure; the local community is characterized by an unwilling dependence upon the tourists, for the jobs that the industry brings to a community in need of job opportunities, especially for young people. However, there is also a heavy aura of resentment, especially for foreign-owned resorts (which are reviled by the community for their practice of buying lobster out of season and encourage poaching) and individuals whose large vacation homes rest on land that was once held by community members. A story that repeats with alarming frequency is that of community members induced to sell hectares of land for misleading prices, frequently being taken advantage of by buyers who know they can re-sell the land for significant profits.

The individuals of Fleixeiras, in general, are more uniformly in favor of supporting the tourism industry. While some individuals bemoan the lack of community and the increased pace of life that have accompanied the development, there is less apprehension regarding future development than there is in Guajiru, perhaps because Fleixeiras is already, to a certain extent, developed. Many of my acquaintances and friends in Guajiru worried about drugs and

¹³ Wind of the South, said to originate in Bahia. A strong, almost constant land-to-sea wind during the months of June through November

¹⁴ Medium-sized fishing boats, usually with a *vela*, a sail

¹⁵ Small fishing boats (historically rafts of palm logs lashed together)

prostitution that they believe will accompany an increased tourist presence. There is also mention of increased division within the local community, coming from the differing sides of the arguments of whether or not to support tourist infrastructure. (See Interview 2 for a review of the differing opinions of government and local voices.) (Cf. Stronza, 2001.)

**Visions of the Future:
Is Conservation or Sustainable Development Possible? Ideas from the Youth of Littoral
Trairi**

There is no belief in any of the small communities of littoral Trairi, even Emoboacca, which currently relies almost exclusively on fishing, does not have a new generation ready to take over after the current fishermen retire. There is no belief that fishing will continue to support individuals or families beyond the present generation. No more young people are seeking licenses to be registered as artisanal fishers; few learn and fewer pursue it as a part-time job, when it is the only work to be had. Tourism, and work within tourism, has been accepted as de facto the way of the future, although with considerable trepidation in some circles.

For tourism to continue to be a viable option for these communities, however, the resources that many of the tourists come for—idyllic beaches, calm fresh water lagoons, and dramatic, picturesque sand dunes (See figure 2)—must be preserved. While there is not yet a significant environmental movement in Guajiru, Fleixeiras, or Emoboacca, there is recognition of changing environmental realities. The neighboring settlement of Canabrava has launched a young people's group to begin addressing the care of local mangrove ecosystems, and they share many of the broad ideals of the conservation movement, while also emphasizing the local population's responsibility to the next generation. (See Interview 3.)

Figure 2: The Panorama of Sand Dunes of Guajiru. Photo credit: M Brower



Young people who I spoke with extensively in Guajiru, including an artisan, a kite-surfing instructor, and a grocery manager, did not put a lot of emphasis on a need for what has been described in this paper as sustainable development; that is, they understand only the half that includes improved, more equitable development, but not how it ties into a need for environmental conservation. I believe this is greatly influenced by the as-yet unspoiled nature of Guajiru's natural beauty; because they do not see a threat, they do not yet imagine a need for conservation.

However, there are some very persistent and acknowledged voices within the community, such as that of my advisor for this project, Edivan dos Santos Vianna, who has begun calling for a "right" type of progress, one that is not the single-minded pursuit of profit. He emphasizes the

need for more education, including especially environmental education, that will help the community to thrive. I see these seeds of possibility for sustainable development, although the progress toward this goal is too uncertain at this point in time to know how the situation in littoral Trairí will resolve itself.

Conclusion

The world has globalized under the paradigm of economic neoliberalism, which has only served to increase the unequal access to resources, exacerbated global poverty, and antagonized the natural world. Previous scholarship has argued that the world's operation under the neoliberal paradigm is unsustainable and must be shifted to a new paradigm of sustainable development. Industries like tourism, agents of globalization themselves, must be reimagined under a sustainable paradigm. In littoral Trairí, communities of traditional artisanal fishermen are looking at their last generation, as no young people join their ranks, due in part to the collapse of the lobster population, economic uncertainty, and low levels of work valorization. More and more, the communities in littoral Trairí are beginning to rely on tourism as their new source of revenue, but with considerable apprehension for the more negative aspects of the industry.

While ideas about environmental conservation and sustainable development are still uninitiated in the communities of littoral Trairí, there are key voices that call for their implementation and give me reason to believe that they have potential to be incorporated in the future.

Possibilities for Future Research

On the road between Guajiru and Fleixeiras, there is a large, walled complex of condominiums called “Fleixeiras Eco-Residence”. It is foreign-owned and not well integrated with the local population; no one who I spoke with from the communities of Fleixeiras or

Guajiru knew much about it. This inconsistency with the philosophy behind alternative tourism is evident; it could be that the title of “eco-residence” may be nothing more than that. Or, it may be a valuable resource for the local population as they begin to think about sustainable development and the kind of hotels or businesses they want in their communities in the future, if this enterprise can be integrated into the community. I believe that students interested in ecotourism would do well to investigate the possibilities of this “eco-residence”.

Marine sports like kite surfing, wind surfing, and surfing are already popular with both the young residents and many of the tourists who visit littoral Trairi. If this sport could be pursued with emphasis on its non-consumptive nature (needing only wind and weather conditions), infrastructure could be built around it, with opportunities for local individuals as instructors, renters or sellers of equipment, and other supportive practices. Since it is already being practiced in the community, I think more research on the viability of this avenue to encourage non-consumptive resource use/ecotourism could be very rich.

Summary of Interviews and Meetings/ Bibliography of Primary Sources

This section is included to give a brief summary of those interviews and meetings that were the most useful and utilized for this study. All of these interviews can be found, at length, in my field journal, along with the numerous interviews, meetings, and conversations that were not used as sources for this paper.

Interview 1—With Euvânio, Renato, Paulíne, and José Felipe, in Emboacca, 14/05/2009

For this meeting, Callie and I biked to Emboacca from Fleixeiras, about six kilometers. We were under the impression that we were supposed to be meeting at 16:00, and when we arrived at about 16:20, were concerned because we did not know where our meeting was to be held. After a considerable amount of misdirection and talking to several helpful people who all pointed us in the wrong direction, until we ended up (more by accident than not) at the home of one of the young

men we were meeting with, to the news that we were in fact early for the meeting that they thought would begin at 17:00.

This meeting was held in the Associação dos Moradores de Emboacca building, a more-or-less open porch built onto a small walled room, with plastic chairs and an overhead lightbulb. There were four young men present, as we sat in a wide circle and talked together. We asked the young men to introduce themselves, give their ages and talk about what they do. Euvânio was 24 and his brother José Felipe was 20; Pauline was 24, and Renato (younger brother of Mani Barbosa, organizer of the fisherman's cooperative in Emboacca) was 19. All of them were members of a young people's Catholic prayer group; none had "fixed" employment, but worked as work was available—as waiters, in nearby Fleixeiras, as fishermen, etc. None were licensed to fish, but all discussed its difficulties.

They said that now, people can only take a few lobster and that they want other jobs, because fishing involves a lot of suffering, they called it a "guerra" and that it is not good like it was in the old days.

"As peixes acabou." and "No época de nossos pais foi facil [pescar]."

The government is viewed as, "Respeitan as peixes...mais não os pescadores."

Tourism is viewed as a double-edged sword. While they "tem bastante [la em Fleixeiras]" who work in tourism, and it is "Bem forte," "Mais al mesmo, faz mal...drogas e prostituição...más drogas que prostituição." The boys saw prostitution as the lesser of two evils in this case.

They had high hopes for the future; while they liked living in Emboacca, they all hoped to leave at some point. Renato thought things were getting better, and that business investments might mean formal employment for them sometime soon. He hoped for opportunity and resources. However, Renato also pointed out that the situation with tourism was complicated, because business from outside do not include the community, which needs to be involved, for the better.

Renato also talked about land speculation, about how land used to be free if more houses needed to be built, but now they need to think of their children before they sell land, because they cannot expand Emboacca anymore, it is surrounded by foreign-owned land on three sides and the sea on one. They also said that one person who sold “pouca terra” for R\$10,000 watched that land be re-sold to a foreign buyer for R\$100,000.

They were happy to live in a calm town, without fear of things like assault, but they also worried about money and the future. None of them wanted to fish for the rest of their lives, and none thought that they would teach their [hypothetical] children to fish.

Interview 2—With Eron, the Coordinator of the Secretary of Tourism, in Trairí, 18/05/2009

I met with Eron at around 09:00, in his office in Trairí; it was my second meeting with him, having met and spoken with him once before in April. He was not who I had originally hoped to interview—but the (notoriously difficult to track) Secretary of Tourism was in Brasília, or so Edivan and I were told. My conversation with Eron was enlightening in several respects, but most especially because it began to paint a clear distinction between the rhetoric or ideas of the government and the reality of the citizens of littoral Trairí.

Eron is originally from Itapipoca, 60-70 km away from Trairí. He has been working as the coordinator for the Secretary of Tourism for only four months, but is working to expand the projects of the office. Right now, the goals or objectives of the gabinete is to maintain traditional festivals in the municipality, qualify several types of tourism-related workers: construction worker, fireman, electrician, waiter/waitress, cook, trailguide, receptionist, and hospitality worker. His greatest challenges lay in lacking (financial) resources, advertisement/media capabilities, and legal knowledge. There is a proposal in the works for a project to study the pedagogy of environmental tourism, due in November, which currently lacks funds. Eron feels the most frequent task of the gabinete is orienting and helping different groups and individuals connect with one another. Eron usually spends the mornings in the office, but often leaves in the afternoon to know the “reality of our people.”

Eron says that the fact that the dunes, lakes, and beaches that are the patrimony of the community will naturally be cared for by community members who realize how important they are to preserve. Eron also says that he thinks that tourism helps fishermen, because fishermen can sell their catches to tourists or hotels to make money.

There is no limit on the number of hotels that can be constructed in a given amount of space, which Eron explains by saying that business improves the quality of life for the people, that the beach does not need to be insured against harm, and that the people of the municipality are very hospitable. When I ask about lobster being consumed in hotels/by tourists out of season, Eron says that all hotels are asked to substitute shrimp for lobster during the months that lobster is prohibited.

Eron says that the ministry of tourism does not help individuals to sell their land or ensure a just price, and that only after the land is sold and a touristic structure is built does it become the business of the ministry. Eron says that he thinks that the system of tourism that is in place now is sustainable, and that it has the capacity to grow more. To Eron, sustainability means “Everything. Health, to live well, socially well, economically well.” He argues that the tourism in Trairí now is free of sexual tourism, and will probably remain that way with good dialogue with different associations and cooperatives, because “We know our people.”

Interview 3—With Marila Alves and Elineide Sousa, organizers of young people’s environmental group, learning to care for mangroves in Canabrava, Trairí, 18/05/2009

Marila and Elineide are young women, each a little over twenty years old. Both have finished their studies, and are now working exclusively for their environmental group, which does not pay them any money. They teach a course about environmental care, specifically regarding mangrove ecosystems, in the local school in Canabrava. They are particularly worried about the quantity of trash that ends up or is dumped into the mangroves in Canabrava, and about the lost of biodiversity that this pollution and littering is engendering. They hope that their group will impact the consciousness of the citizens of Canabrava, and especially the children and young people. Marila, the more talkative of the young women, says that “A terra é nossa mãe” and that

one must “perceber a importancia” of caring for it. Their goal as an organization is to “Evitar terra sem produção,” but realize this is a large, world-wide goal.

In Canabrava, they struggle with tourists who throw their trash onto the beach, and that the very enterprise of tourism brings extra trash into their community. They have attempted to speak the five of the bar/restaurant owners in Canabrava, to talk about implementing trash cans in strategic locations and to enforce their use with tourists, but these meetings are challenging to keep or bring all of the group’s members to, because many lack transportation, and anything that they all want to do must come out of their own pockets, since they do not have any NGO or governmental support, although they are trying to change this. [NB: This meeting actually took place in the Office of the Secretary of Tourism, with whom they were trying to secure an interview—as I was. The Secretary was in Brasília when we visited, but they secured an appointment at a later date.]

Elineide’s hope was that, “As proximas gereções têm o memso que temos hoje” and that the world recognize our “problema comun.”

Interview 4—With Francisco, Artisanal fisherman, Trairí, 18/05/2009

This meeting took place in the indoor football court at the Escola de Artes in Trairí, while he was waiting to re-register as an artisanal fisher. Francisco has been an artisanal fisherman for over twenty years. He is licensed by the government. He learned to fish from his father, who was also an artisanal fisherman. His children (21 and 16 years old) have not learned to fish, because they are both female, but even if they were boys, he would prefer that they do the same as what they are now, studying (administration in Fortaleza, and pre-Vestibular in Trairí, respectively). He lives in Fleixeiras, and sells most of the fish he catches. The difficulties he experiences in fishing are many: the boats, without motors or refrigeration, are a concern. The season (winter) lacks wind, and often the fishermen return without a catch, and that there is the constant fear of sharks and capsizing. There are fewer lobster than “before.” There is a lot of competition from larger companies or boats, who fish without nets or lines like the artisanal fishermen, but with trawling,

divers, or more sophisticated means. He worries about the environment [the ocean] because there are fewer fish and fewer lobster than before, and there is noticeable pollution. He thinks that poaching, taking lobster out of season, and fraud of the fishing licenses, are problems of equal gravity. He says that the fishing community lacks the support and respect of the municipal and federal governments, that there is no plan for the fishermen, as there is for aquaculture.

“O pescador vai acabar...tem esperança, tem, mais chegar quando?”

Francisco does not believe that tourism helps the fishing community, and that it “kills the land.” He believes that the communities that are “unprepared” for the arrival of tourism will suffer the most. The *segurança* that the artisanal fisherman receive for not taking lobster during the months of December-May is “almost nothing” according to Francisco. He feels alienated by the government, because “they make their laws, there... in Congress” but they rarely show concern for the fishermen or their communities, because they are “forgotten.” Fishing is marked by uncertainty for Francisco, who says, “Não sabe si vai, não sabe si volta.” Francisco sees a link between cancer, the many chemicals that people use nowadays, the changing environment [global warming], “industrialized living”, and processed foods, and is concerned about it—but he has a special preference for Coca-Cola.

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Marta Helena Vianna Dia, Guajiru

João Jackson dos Santos Vianna, Guajiru

Maria Livia dos Santos Vianna, Guajiru

Clarisse dos Santos Vianna, Guajiru

Henrique Sousa, Guajiru

Sandro, Fleixeiras

Gabriela from Terramar

Fishermen (who were shy to give their names) from Guajiru and Fleixeiras

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