

Project Title: Fishing for answers: a deep dive into informality dynamics in small-scale fisheries in Peru

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Collaborative Organisation: Monterey Bay Aquarium

Project Description:

Evidence points to informality in Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) enabling illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fisheries, hindering inclusive productive development, and heightening fishers' vulnerability. Data shows that SSF have grown rapidly, primarily informally, resulting in fishing efforts exceeding the maximum sustainable yield (Garcia Lozano et al., 2023; FAO, 2023). This informal growth also facilitates the concealing of illegal activities and misreporting of information, thus enabling IUU fishing (FAO & World Fish, 2008) and hampering compliance with sustainability measures such as traceability programmes and fishing quotas.

Given that SSF operates by and large informally, its workforce is not covered by social protection programmes such as health care, a critical service, as fisheries are one of the most dangerous occupations (Pew Charitable Trust, 2022). This environment fosters precarious, poverty-engrained, and vulnerable livelihoods for fishers, making it difficult for them to comply with sustainable fisheries measures, as these can have negative trade-offs on their livelihoods. Informality also limits productivity by hindering fishers' access to financing, cold chains, economies of scale and formal markets, ultimately causing SSF poverty and heightening IUU fishing (FAO & World Fish, 2008)—and overall fostering a reinforcing cycle between informality, poverty, IUU fishing and fisheries' un-sustainability.

In this context, this project seeks to explore the nexus between SSF socio-economic dynamics, management structures and labour markets by asking: To what extent and how do SSF's socio-economic dynamics and fisheries management structures shape SSF's fishing practices and their environmentally unsustainable nature, labour regimes and their interaction with formalisation structures? This can be disaggregated into four key questions: a) What are the types of labour regimes in SSF?; b) How do the interactions between institutions, particularly those embedded in common-property and co-management regimes, property rights, and fisheries management, shape SSF's informality landscape?; c) How do linkages between the formal and informal economies in SSF affect the sector's informality?; and d) How do state policies and programmes influence SSF's informality landscape?

Drawing on extensive fieldwork and under the supervision of SOAS, UCL and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the doctoral research project entails an interdisciplinary and critical analysis of the informality dynamics in one small-scale fishery in one city in Peru.

Peru's SSF sector has increased exponentially in recent years, contributing directly to 88,000 direct jobs, which is doubled when accounting for other parts of the value chain (Ministerio de la Producción, 2022; De la Puente et al., 2020). However, this growth has occurred mostly informally, leading to exceeding sustainable fishing efforts and declining incomes for fishers (De la Puente et al., 2020). Despite Peru implementing several special employment, enterprise, and fishing vessel formalisation programmes, approximately 80% of SSF remains informal (Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental, 2022). Given this context and the ensuing need to understand what drives and fosters informality in this sector, this project will delve into Peruvian SSF's labour markets and socio-economic dynamics, guided by the research questions,

The research will explore the nexus and interactions between socio-economic dynamics, labour market structures and fisheries management strategies and their impacts on (un) sustainable fishing practices and formalisation outcomes. The doctoral student will disseminate the findings as part of the activities of Monterey Bay Aquarium.

By delving into informalisation dynamics in SSF, the project contributes to critical debates on advancing sustainability along fisheries value chains while enabling socio-economic development.

ESRC will be enforcing new and stricter conditions for completion targets for the intakes of co-funded students from 2024 onwards, with penalties for non-completion by due dates.

Candidate Requirements:

Eligibility: For nationality and residence requirements, please see <https://ubel-dtp.ac.uk/esrc-studentships-main-competition/>. Candidates must have obtained a 2.1 or equivalent in their first degree in the relevant subject – see person specification for details.

Deadlines and how to apply:

Applications should include a **two-page CV, academic transcripts and a two-page statement explaining how your research interests and academic knowledge relate to the project in general and to the studentship in particular.**

Applications should be completed and submitted via the UBEL portal at <https://ubel-dtp.ac.uk/co-fundedandcollaborative/>

Academic references will be taken up for all short-listed candidates. The deadline for application is **Monday 8 April 2024 at 23:59.**

Further details about the project may be obtained from:

Dr Matteo Rizzo at mr3@soas.ac.uk

Key References:

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- Garcia Lozano, A., Pino Shibata, J., Jeri, J. C., Krogh-Poulsen, B., Decker-Sparks, J., Finkbeiner, E., Fitzpatrick, J., & Kittinger, J. (2023). *Decent Work in the Artisanal Jumbo Flying Squid Fishery (Dosidicus gigas) in Peru*. Nippon Foundation Ocean Nexus University of Washington. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pafgH_L2yH5T1eEM1AMyxtPjIpD-6hF/view
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- Lee, B.-H., Swider, S., & Tilly, C. (2020). Informality in action: A relational look at informal work. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 61, 91–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0770/200720175125202909444219>
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