DISPLACEMENT AT SEASCAPES: SENEGALESE FISHERMEN IN-BETWEEN STATE POWER AND FOREIGN FLEETS

Abstract

This empirical study examines the displacement of Senegalese artisanal fishers following the depletion of fishing stocks in Senegalese waters owing to the activities of European and Asian industrial fleets over the last two decades. Through semi-structured interviews with local fishermen, the study demonstrates that, by plundering the fishing stocks in Senegal, rich superpower states become instrumental in the displacement local fishers, and the ensuing increase in migration. While there has been some recognition in scholarship that extractivism leads to dire precarity and displacement within local populations, it has not been demonstrated how exploitations at sea are dependent on the displacement of the indigenous people for corporate gains. Thus, this study conceptualises displacement of local Senegalese fishermen as the product of an active, arguably deliberate process, solely motivated by corporate gains to the detriment of communal and human life. Furthermore, the study shows that displacement can take on multiple forms such as economic and temporal as well as physical movement. Data is drawn from eighteen semi-structured interviews with fishers from the three fishing villages of Bargny, Saint-Louis, and Thiaroye.

INTRODUCTION

From the early 2000s European states such as France and Spain, and Asian countries such as China and South Korea, began to fish extensively in the Senegalese sea where artisanal local Senegalese fishers had been fishing for generations. These industrial fleets have continued to rise and numbered up to 152 vessels in 2017 (Belhabib, 2019). This rise has been noted by scholars some of whom have linked the activities of foreign fleets to the depletion of fisheries and marine resources in Senegalese waters. For instance, Niasse and Seck (2011) note the 'over-exploitation' of Senegalese fisheries resources by foreign fishing fleets. It has further been estimated that from 1950-2010, 15.5 million tons of fish were caught by foreign fleets

from Senegalese waters alone representing half of the total domestic catch (Belhabib, 2014). Illegal extraction of fishing is not limited to Senegal but also extends to several of the coastal countries within West Africa. The plundering of fishing stock by foreign fleets reached an average of 690,000 t/ year between 2010 and 2015, resulting in income losses for Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone of USD 2.3 billion annually (Doumbouya et al., 2017; Enríquez-de-Salamanca 2022). Atta-Mills et al. (2004) attribute the decline of Ghana as a fishing power to the dominance of European fleets in the region.

Even though Senegalese president, Macky Sall, was critical of the impact of foreign industrial fleets in the run up to the presidential elections that saw his emergence in 2012, his administration has gone on to sign similar agreements with the EU for the 2014-2019 period (Mayault 2017). More recently, Senegal's fisheries ministry has issued fishing licenses to Chinese industrial fleets, which are reputedly involved in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity (Cissé 2020).

This paper examines the adverse effects of these unregulated fishing and plundering of the Senegalese waters from the perspectives of local fishermen and their understanding of the notion of displacement. The study demonstrates how displacement manifests in different forms in the lives of artisanal fishers such as economic, temporal as well as geographical movement. The study highlights the perspectives of local Senegalese fishers who view the actions of Western and Asian superpowers, often in union with the national authorities of weaker low and medium income (LMIC) states, in this case Senegal, as playing an instrumental role in the displacement of the working poor. Thus, this study conceptualises displacement of local Senegalese fishermen as the product of an active, arguably deliberate process, solely motivated by corporate gains to the detriment of communal and human life.

EXTRACTIVISM AND DISPLACEMENT

Extractivism refers to those activities which appropriate significant quantities of natural resources from the global South with the aim of exporting them to more economically dominant states (Acosta 2013). One of the 'neo' or new dimensions of contemporary extractivism is its connection to financial capital with the role of the state becoming a key factor in this stage of neoextractivism (Gudynas 2018).

There has been much scholarly critique of neoliberal rich states plundering and extracting resources from poor states and displacement of indigenous communities (e.g. Acosta 2013; Belhabib et al 2017; Gudynas 2018). Studies have highlighted how the diversity and scope of extraction of natural resources cause migration and displacement (See for instance, Vandergeest et al. 2007; Bennett and McDowell 2012; Lunstrum et al 2015; Oliver-Smith 2009). Lunstrum et al (2015) have demonstrated how resource extraction projects of varied kinds in conjunction with climate change cause what they term as 'environmental displacement' – 'a process by which people find the land they inhabit – whether as a living space, source of livelihood, and/or site of cultural and political connection – irrevocably altered in ways that foreclose or otherwise impede possibilities for habitation' (p.1, 2015). Scholars have argued that extraction of natural resources bring about higher rates of displacement even when compared with political conflicts and persecution, the main reasons for the existence of refugee populations (Bose 2014; 2011; De Wet 2005).

Scholarship has also demonstrated how neoextractivism has had severe impacts on local communities and resulted in economic displacement, break-up of communities and indigenous traditions (See, for instance, Gudynas 2018). Gudynas (2018) discusses the notion of spill-effects of mining, oil extraction and agricultural exploitations in South America and notes that 'spills are expressed in various social impairments tolerated to support extractivism which include, 'labour flexibility, poor sanitation in workplaces,

tolerance or concealment of local violence, prostitution and trafficking of women' which in turn demonstrate violations of human rights in order to make possible the extractivist undertakings.

A body of literature has further demonstrated the relationships between extraction and temporality (see D'Angelo 2018; Pijpers, R.J., 2018). Citing various scholars, D'Angelo and Pijpers assert that 'the establishment of extractive industries habitually generates certain perceptions and expectations regarding the effects of it in the present and future'. For example, in developing countries, expectation of resources in the future may cause anxieties or optimism and expectations (Weszkalnys, 2016).

There has also been some discussion of overfishing which leads to displacement of indigenous communities (see Enríquez-de-Salamanca 2022; Belhabib et al., 2014; Oakes et al., 2019; Zickgraf 2018). According to Enríquez-deoSalmanca (2022) overfishing in the coastal waters in Senegal has resulted in ocean depletion and has been one of the main causes of migration to Europe because of unemployment and less income from the same work.

In sum, scholarship has recognised the fact that neoextractivism offers very little economic advantages to local communities, and instead pushes these communities into precarity and unemployment resulting in multiple forms of displacement (see Gudynas 2013; Frynas and Paulo 2006). Consequently, extractive environments have been understood as *not* politically and ecologically neutral (D'Angelo, 2012), but have been recognised as spaces charged with a range of political, economic, ecological and social interests. However, there is a dearth in scholarship which explicitly demonstrate how extractive economies come to depend upon displacement of people in local fishing communities in Senegal. This study therefore seeks to contribute to extant literature by demonstrating, through the lens of affected fishers, how more than being simply an indirect consequence or a spill-over effect of

extraction and exploitation, industrial scale fishing actively disrupts, through arguably intentional actions, the lives of local fishermen in Senegal for corporate neoliberal gains.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the limited discussion on the lived experiences of local fishermen who depend on fishing for their livelihood at the hands of more sophisticated competitors. This is particularly relevant in the context of the importance of the oceans to billions of people, mainly in the global south, who rely on it for their livelihoods (Sonigara 2022). More significantly, given the scale of industrial fishing by wealthy countries in the coastal waters of poorer African nations, as well as some fishing villages in South Asia, it becomes important to illustrate how local fishers themselves comprehend ruptures and shifts in their own lives. It is important to recognise that extraction does not solely result in 'land alteration' and 'environmental displacement' but, rather, the plundering of the seas by industrial vessels actively impacts on people's lives including displacement of the people along spatial, temporal, and economic lines for their own gains.

METHOD

For this study, U.K-based researchers collaborated with a researcher based in Senegal who interviewed 18 fishers in three fishing villages. The research questions were guided by themes around the fishers' own understandings of the reasons for the decline of the fishing stock in the Senegalese coastal waters and the impact it has had on the everyday lives of the fishers. Interview questions were also guided by topics relating to how the artisanal fishers envisioned their future and the future of the tradition of fishing in Senegal.

The fishers who formed part of this study were known members of the *Lebou* community. They all lived in fishing villages along the coast. All of the fishers interviewed were exclusively men who were traditionally assigned to fishing while the women sold fish in the markets and to wholesalers. Three of the 18 fishers who formed part of the interviews were retired from fishing and the rest were active. Their ages ranged between 19 and 52 years

old. All the fishers interviewed said that they were born in fishing villages, and they acquired their knowledge of fishing skills from their parents and grandparents. Some of the fishers had attended primary school but subsequently decided to support their family with fishing activities. Fishing in Senegal was thus a tradition which was passed across generations.

Senegal's Atlantic coastline is 718km long, with three major rivers flowing through the country, which makes it a favourable climate for fishing. It is the second largest fish-producing West African country, with an annual catch in the vicinity of 450,000 tonnes (Blédé et al 2015). The three fishing villages where the interviews were conducted are located in the towns of Saint Louis, Bargny and Thiaroye. The selection of the three villages was motivated by the need to tap into the experiences of fishers from different parts of the country. However, there were no significant differences in the fishers' responses. Saint Louis is in the northwest of Senegal, near the Senegal River, 320 km north of Senegal's capital city Dakar. One of the principal economies of the town is fishing which takes place in the river as well as the sea (Dieye 2017). Bargny is a village consisting of 70,000 people which was founded by the *Lebou* ethnic group. It is located 35 kilometres south of Dakar (Simoncelli et al 2021). Thiaroye-sur-Mer, is a small fishing village on the outskirts of Dakar with a population of 36,000 of which 374 people have disappeared at sea since 2006 while trying to reach the Canary Islands in search of alternative and viable economic opportunities (Carretero 2019).

The researcher based in Senegal met the fishers through his personal networks which included friends and family members living in the villages. He explained the importance of the study to his networks who also conveyed the message to the fishers. Prior to each interview, the researcher explained the goals of the research to each fisher. Therefore, there was a level of trust established and the fishers were forthcoming during the interviews even though the researcher had had no prior contact with them.

The interviews with the fishers were conducted in their covered sheds made up of straw and wood which served as resting and meeting spaces at the seaside. Thus, the shed served as an ideal space to conduct the interviews. Responses were anonymous and pseudonyms have been employed in relaying the views of the participants.

The study employs a decolonial methodology by seeking to dispel some of the Euro-North America-centric worldviews and perspectives. Building on Tuhiwai Smith's seminal work on decolonising methodologies, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017) has asserted that to decolonise research 'means recasting research into what Europe has done to humanity and nature rather than following Europe as a teacher to the rest of the world.' In this sense, the research methodology needs to be understood as decolonial since the research questions were guided by the recognition of the existence of uneven power relations between poorer and rich states.

In this sense, the study aims to unmask European and the richer Asian economies' roles in the global South. Thus, the study attempts to shift the gaze from the "other" to a critique of European and Asian state power. As Banerjee and Linstead (2004) have contended:

> Indigenous value systems need to be taken seriously and with respect, but we argue that this must entail a reflexive awareness of the ideological and historical conditions out of which and against which these systems have developed and struggled for their continued existence, and in interaction with which they have adapted, rather than solely the ecological systems within which they are situated (p. 225).

The researcher based in Senegal was given considerable autonomy in the research design and modification and translation of the research questions given that he was conversant with the socio-cultural and political context of Senegal. The two U.K. based researchers' origins were countries within the Global South thereby softening any effect of a potential power imbalance between the researchers and participants. At the same time, since all three researchers had

received advanced levels formal education and were well advanced in their careers, they were self-aware of their positionality and the power imbalance.

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the University of Central Lancashire.

THE FLEETS AND STATE POWER

The fishers recognised the uneven power relations between the foreign fishers and themselves. As one fisher noted, prior to the presence of the foreign industrial vessels, 'Senegal was the El Dorado of fishing'. They used the Wolof word *saxaar* (smoke) to describe the big vessels to distinguish them from the *pirogues* (canoes) used by artisanal fishers. The word *saxaar* was used to identify the bigger vessels because they contained exhaust pipes with smoke emerging from them. The participants showed awareness of the imbalance in powers since by recognising that the fleets belonged to richer corporate and other entities from states such as France, Spain, Greece, China, and South Korea.

The participants noted how a large canoe could return with 1 ton of fish daily whereas the bigger fleets could bring in 1000 tons of fish in the same time. The majority of the participants were much more critical of Chinese and South Korean vessels since they believed that those boats did not adhere to licensing restrictions and fished extremely close to the coast, and they understood them to be responsible for 'plundering' the Senegalese waters by 'carrying in their nets both large and small fish.' They were of the view that the fleets had been fishing along the Senegalese coast for several years, but that their numbers had increased in the last two years. While it has been recognised that the African continent has had a long history of exploitation by Western nations, recent scholarship has started to interrogate China's role in resource-rich Africa. Rich and Recker (2013) contend that the question remains the extent to which China's approach is truly benefitting Africans or 'if the current trend is nothing more than 21st century exploitation from yet another emerging

economy'. Chinese efforts to secure natural resources through greater relations with Africa are well documented, and understood as neocolonialism (Zweig and Bi, 2005; Frynas and Paulo, 2006; Taylor, 2006a; Melber, 2007; Harman, 2007; Norberg, 2006) with former South African President Thabo Mbeki cautioning about growing Sino-African relations resembling neocolonialism (Mahtani, 2007; Russell, 2007).

Almost all the interlocutors held the *état* (state) responsible for granting licenses to the bigger vessels for fishing along the Senegalese coast and felt that the state possessed absolute power. The interlocutors noted that local fishers had formed associations in each village who spoke on their behalf to the fishing ministry; however; they believed little had changed, and the problem was worsening. They also recognised the power and complicity of the state. Below are some ways in which this was expressed:

Baye: We feel sad because the problem is caused by Europe. And the boats are not at your level nor my level. They are at the level of the state.

Badara: We need to challenge the foreign fleets, they are causing us a great deal of damage, but we can do nothing against them, because they are protected by the Senegalese government.

Saliou: Fishing contracts are of no use to us, only the rulers and their relatives benefit.

The fishers who formed part of this study thus understood that the powerful and corrupt state 'protected' the foreign fleets nations so that corrupt politicians in Senegal could benefit. This, they believed, was achieved at the expense of their welfare which in turn affected their livelihood and led to their displacement. These views are in line with scholarship on the subject. For instance, Petras and Veltmeyer (2014) have recognised that 'Western imperialism, depends on the cultivation, maintenance of collaborator regimes—politicians, military officials, business elite—to open their countries to plunder, to transfer wealth to the imperial financial centers and to repress any popular opposition' (p.3). They assert:

In the scramble to plunder African resources, amidst inter-imperialist competition,

> new imperial-collaborator partnerships have emerged: a new class of corrupt billionaire African rulers has opened their countries to unrestrained pillage. While imperial multinationals extract mineral wealth, the African collaborators transfer hundreds of billions in illegal flows to the imperial financial centres (2014: 283).

ECONOMIC RUPTURES

The interlocutors stated that they experienced economic shifts because, to compete with the French, Spanish, Greek, Chinese and South Korean fishing vessels, they needed larger sums and investments. Some of perspectives are provided in the following accounts:

Ibrahim: In the past there was no net, everyone was angling. With angling you could fish with four or five crew members on a canoe. But with the net, we have to be forty or even fifty on a canoe. All the fishing equipment, net, canoe, and engine can reach the sum of 50 million CFA francs. The government finances only 10% of these needs.

Omar: For a complete fishing equipment, it takes a total of about 80,000,000 CFA francs because it takes a canoe that costs about 7,000,00, an engine of 3,800,000, and mesh costs 480,000 while it is necessary to accumulate 37 meshes to have a whole net. We have to buy between 20 or 30 cans of gasoline and food 75,000 CFA francs.

Omar: Before the arrival of the fleets, we had a lot of money to help each other. Life has become more difficult; we spend more to go further than before. At the time, we used to make the trip with six bottles of gasoline, unlike nowadays where we are forced to go further to catch fish. The cause of the increased distance are the industrial fleets that prevent the fish from going down the coast, so we are obliged to go and get them. The price per liter of gasoline has risen and we find ourselves needing more.

It is significant, from the fishers' perspectives, that the state does not adequately support fishers with the cost of fishing especially given the heightened competition from the industrial fleets. The economic challenges experienced by the fishers can therefore be understood as displacement given that they experience increased costs of fishing which in turn lower their profit margins. Their accounts show that the artisanal fishers recognise that exploitation and exercise of state power, in collaboration with industrial fleets, affected their livelihoods. For example, in his account, Ibrahim reminisces about the past when he mentions that the fishers could rely on *angling* whereas currently, they were forced to use 'expensive nets' and 'bigger boats' in order to compete and offset the impact of the foreign

fleets. According to the interlocutors' own perceptions and understandings, displacement did not occur solely as a consequence of exploitation of natural resources, but rather, the state had become complicit in these acts by failing to support them. As one interlocutor, Omar, believed that the government deliberately tried to mislead local fishers by stating that species of fish caught by the Asian fleets were different from those consumed by the Senegalese population. Overall, in the interlocutors' views, the actions of the state amounted to support of the industrial fleets and had the effect of actively weakening the position of local fishers leading to economic ruptures in their work and everyday lives.

DISPLACEMENT AT SEA

The fishers who formed part of this study spoke extensively on the displacement of local fishers at sea and what forms such displacements took. They shared the view that foreign fleets had displaced artisanal fishers from the coastal areas where they had fished for generations thereby forcing them to fish further out into the sea since they could not find larger fish near the coast. Several interlocutors believed that the Asian fleets were also actively responsible for changing the seascape when they caught the 'smaller fish that were meant to grow and reproduce.' They believed that fleets were responsible for 'destroying' the smaller fish in the Senegalese waters which the larger fish depended upon as their fodder. In this way the larger trawlers came to actively control the very sea-life which the artisanal fishers depended upon. The absence of smaller fish in the coastal areas meant that the bigger fish were less likely to be found nearer to the coast.

Thus, the participants were of the view that, because of the presence of the industrial vessels and their use of sophisticated techniques, the larger fish stayed away from the coastal areas and were now found only in the high seas. Ismaila provided the following account:

Sometimes we win, sometimes we come home empty-handed…The fish used to arrive on the Senegalese coast without difficulty but now the foreign boats prevent them from coming. They have very effective techniques for keeping them in the high seas. They use lamps that attract

fish. Once their boats are filled, they leave the lamp on the spot and another boat comes to fish.

In his account above, Ismaila states how foreign fleets, in order to keep the catch for themselves, actively prevent fish from reaching the coastal waters where local fishers can catch them. Such manufactured scarcity effectively leads to economic ruptures and displaces local fishers. One could go further to make the case for such displacements as going beyond mere 'spill-over effects' of 'overfishing' to being the outcome of deliberate actions by industrial fleets who, in their bid to maximise commercial interests, take overt steps to restrict the catch of artisanal fisher.

The interlocutors further weighed in on the impact of these practices, noting that local fishers have had to venture into distant waters such as the Mauritanian and Gambian seas, staying out for days away from their families till they could bring home what they considered a good catch. These perceptions are illustrated in the following accounts:

Baye: We go to other localities in Senegal to go to the sea. We go to Dakar, Kayar, Casamas, Mbour, and even to the Gambia.

Mane: In the past, we caught a lot of fish, but now fish has become rare. We now go further than before to catch the fish. As against 3 or 4 km in the past, we are now forced to go 30 or even 40 km, and sometimes we do not catch anything because of foreign boats.

Modou: The Senegalese coasts are in deficit of fish which forces us to go to Mauritania. The Mauritanian coastguards hunt us and confiscate our equipment, we pay a fine of 2,00,000 or 3,000,000 CFA before taking back our equipment.

Badara: Now we travel great distances to catch fish. We go to Mbour, Gambia or Mauritania for six months. Sometimes, we get fined heavily.

The above accounts are insightful for a number of reasons. First, they demonstrate that from their perspectives, some local fishermen in Senegal have crossed national boundaries not simply to settle, but oftentimes to fish owing to the decline of fisheries in Senegalese waters. Indeed, this offers an alternative perspective to what may be termed as the dominant rhetoric of economic migration which has failed to cast necessary spotlight on

migratory fishing, including withing the environs of West Africa, as opposed to onwards migration and settlement in Europe. More significantly, the fishers' accounts reveal that the adverse activities of the industrial fleets play an active role in their displacement at sea. The absence of suitable catch close to shores simply mean that local fishermen have to make trips way beyond the territorial borders of Senegal, not simply to Europe, but also other neighbouring African countries.

Thus, the artisanal fishers' absence in the Senegalese waters proves to be beneficial for the industrial vessels from richer countries since they do not have to contend with competition. In this way, in this context displacement needs to be understood as actively displacing local fishers so that the foreign big boats could have easy access to the fish in the Senegalese seas. The fishers arriving from rich countries made no attempts to collaborate with the small-scale fishers so that fishing could become an open and collaborative activity for all. The participants noted that there was little room for developing friendly relationships and 'accidents' at sea due to the power imbalance between industrial fleets and local fishermen. The following accounts illustrate frequent conflicts and clashes between the industrial vessels and artisanal fishers:

Aba: We have no relationship with foreign fleets; sometimes they cut our nets and we are not able to reach them to claim compensation.

Matar: A boat can destroy our equipment and we come to inform the crew members, but they do not even understand our language.

Saliou: The boats tear our nets apart and sometimes a captain would cry like a child. Fishing gear is very expensive, so it is our only hope to survive and support our families. At night, foreign fleets turn off their lights to drift close to the coast. Around 4am, they return very far into the open sea without being spotted by the coastguards. There are very many of them here, they cut our nets, they sometimes hit our canoes. Media reports say that there is an accident at sea without specifying the nature of the accident.

Baye: Our small canoes have limits, they cannot reach the high seas, but the foreign boats still come to trample us in our waters.

It is noteworthy that in the above accounts, the fishers describe the fleets to be actively engaged in destroying their boats, their fishing gear, canoes, thereby impacting on their work and lives. These accounts demonstrate how 'necropowers', through their activities, inevitably prioritize capitalist motives oftentimes over communal and human lives. As Mbembe (2019) notes, necropower comes into operation when the economically and militarily superior colonial powers have little concern for the lives of the colonized: 'they are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there' (p. 80). The interlocutors' accounts highlight actions in the Senegalese coastal waters that arguably fit neocolonialist models of oppression resulting in deliberative attempts disruption and displacement.

The fishers who formed part of this study understood the seascape as a contested space from which they were actively removed when the bigger vessels destroyed their fishing gear and nets. They also saw themselves as disadvantaged competitors owing to the superior sophisticated techniques available to industrial fleets, such as the use of lamps to attract fish.

MIGRATION TO EUROPE

Migration to Europe from Senegal has dominated the news and other media in recent years and was the theme of a Senegalese-produced film, *La Pirogue (2012),* which documented the disappearance of some fishers in the Atlantic as they tried to reach Europe. Between January to November 2020, nearly 20,000 people, in 545 migrant boats, were reported to have reached the Canary Islands, seen by the migrants as a gateway into Europe (Shryock 2020).

The majority of interlocutors mentioned that migration was motivated by hope for a better future for the young. According to one interlocutor, 'most of the people who emigrate are fishermen.' Temporality became key since decisions to migrate were undertaken when the fishers either compared their present situation with the past or did not envision a more

hopeful future. Migration was also directly attributed to the presence of bigger fleets in the ocean. The fishers express these viewpoints as follows:

Pap: Some are for, others are against migration, Personally I am not against it. There are many risks and human losses. Young people emigrate without having a choice. Some have even returned and continued to fish.

Diagne: I had to migrate to Spain to make some money. Because before the years 2001 and 2002 there were lots of fish. But from 2003 onwards there has been no fish to be found here. There are now lots of fpreign boats. Before this wasn't the case. Before they were further away, but now the boats are coming nearer and nearer and the fish are disappearing.

Matar: The sea is overexploited. Not only are there many artisanal fishermen but also there is the presence of foreign boats. The sea is oversaturated. That is why people are selling their equipment in order to emigrate illegally. If we have the chance to arrive at our foreign destinations so much the better. Otherwise, we return to Senegal and start from scratch. The situation in the country is very difficult. We who have stayed in the country are suffering

Modou: Emigration is the result of the desperation of young people. The sea still has fish, but the main problem is that we cannot share the few fish with these foreign fleets. We are always the losers

Badara: I have friends who emigrated. Some arrived at their destinations. Some died along the way. Others came back because they encountered difficulties. Despite the difficulties experienced, they remain ever ready to leave again.

Mousa: I would go to Europe if I were courageous. All the people who are courageous have gone there because there is hope there. I am not courageous that is why I am here.

The participants therefore recognise a clear link between their experiences of displacement and the activities of the fleets. Migration therefore needs to be understood as a form of forced displacement which was activated through uneven power dynamics and plundering activities in the sea. Thus, the accounts illustrate that the large vessels and the state put the fishers in a precarious position such that they are pressured into embarking on clandestine and dangerous sea voyages to Europe. Friends and family had disappeared in the sea and the Senegalese media regularly reported news of loss of lives in the Atlantic Sea. To migrate to Europe was understood as inevitable even though the fishers were aware of the dangers that the sea posed. In this way, the notion of perilous journeys was normalised. However, the fishers recognising the power of the state and the vessels risked perilous journeys because,

for them, to ‘stay was to endure suffering.’ In the fishers’ view, the rich countries stole fish from the Senegalese sea water robbing them of their livelihood, while at the same time shutting their borders to migrants. Thus, the fishers explicitly linked the causes of migration with the plundering of seas by foreign vessels.

TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT

Examined through the lens of time, artisanal fishing is a process that can last for an infinite amount of time as it is an activity which is passed from generation to generation. However, the artisanal fishers who formed part of the study understood this activity to be disappearing because of the encroachment of the foreign vessels in the sea. They were of the view that, in the future, the tradition of artisanal fishing would most likely disappear as many young people either chose alternative professions or migration to Europe. The interlocutors stated that although there was available fish for their subsistence, there was not enough to base a livelihood on including building houses and providing for one’s family as past ancestors had been able to do. It is important to recognize that even though they were fishers, they valued certain ideals of permanency, residency and fishing close to home. However, because of the plundering of the sea by foreign fleets, most could not envision realizing these ideals. The temporal aspect is particularly significant in the following account:

Saliou: Our lives before and now are different. Now life is more expensive. Our parents had fields in addition to the sea on which they could grow food during the rainy season. But, nowadays, our only hope is the sea… Today we know the engine and the nets because of the white men, so far, we do not manufacture nets or engines in Senegal.

The above quote shows Saliou’s experience with respect to loss of place and time: in the past, there was cultivable land available, therefore, the ancestors could grow their own food and survive. Significantly, Saliou recognises the dependence on the ‘white men’ since he states that Senegal does not even manufacture its own materials. Thus, for him, the dependence on Europe, the negligent nation state, and the plundering of fish were all interlinked and contributed directly to the shifts along temporal lines. These perceptions must

be understood to be linked to Ramsay's (2020) conception of displacement as an 'existential experience of contested temporal being, in which a person cannot reconcile the contemporary circumstances of their life with their aspirations for, and sense of, the future…which is determined by forces that are outside of their direct control (p. 388.).

Several of the fishers told the researcher that they did not wish their children to suffer from the impact of what they described as a 'dead sea' bereft of fish and said that they would rather see them work in a different sector. They articulated their views as follows:

Omar: We do not have a park to raise the fish. The state must find parks, otherwise if the foreign fleets over-exploit the sea, we'll be left with a dead sea. The solution is to let the fish reproduce otherwise the young will desert the coast to seek another activity.

Pap: The amount of fish has decreased. The decrease did not affect us too much, because we found alternatives by letting the other members of the family do other jobs.

Badara: My children go to school; my preference is for them to succeed through education.

These views show that the artisanal fishers did not envision the subsistence of traditional fishing practices and methods over time. The plundering of the sea by industrial vessels had ruptured their current circumstances thereby affecting their futures, and those of their descendants, as fishers. As Drothbohm (2021) has noted, 'in conditions of displacement, references to past and future places, can be equally relevant in constructing a meaningful and livable present.' In this case, the fishers' references to the past becomes instrumental in helping them envision a 'livable future' given that their children would cease to work in the fisheries sector.

Temporal aspects and dynamics become even more significant from the participants' accounts of how artisanal fishers were careful not to destroy the sea life in ways that the industrial fishers did. Matar, for example, expressed this view which echoed the perspective of several fishermen:

Our critics say that artisanal fishermen have plundered the sea, but we work at sea, so we protect it, the nets we use do not catch small fish. On the other hand, foreigners do not make the selection of the sizes of fish to be fished. They pick up and then throw what is useless at sea, it is a mess. If local fishermen destroy the sea, they will see the consequences, and this will have repercussions for future generations.

Thus, Matar believed that the industrial fleets did not have the requisite knowledge to preserve the fish in the sea, but rather, it was the artisanal fishers who possessed such knowhow to protect life in the sea for future generations. According to these perspectives, industrial fleets were rather actively responsible for destroying sea life, the sea and the livelihood of the future generations by failing to fish responsibly, the main motivation being quick capitalist gains as opposed to protecting sea-life over a longer span of time. Compared to artisanal fishing, interlocutors thus believed that industrial fishers disregarded temporalities and natural rhythms of the sea in favour of industrial gains. Anibal Quijano (2000) has argued that 'coloniality survives within the spheres of knowledge'. For Quijano, this suppression of knowledge accompanied the annihilation of indigenous throughout the continent, as well as indigenous societies and traditions.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The study demonstrated how European and Asian fleets, on the one hand, and state hegemony, actively and deliberately displaced artisanal fishers in Senegal in several respects such as when they destroyed their nets in the sea, when they caused accidents in the sea resulting in disappearances of fishers, when they removed the smaller fish from the coastal areas which the bigger fish fed on, and when they entered into contracts with the Senegalese government which did not serve local fishers' interests.

According to the fishers' views who formed part of this study, the foreign boats plundered and destroyed the seas impacting adversely on the everyday lives of local fishing communities. Indeed these findings question the propriety, from both welfarist and

sustainability perspectives, of fishing contracts entered into between the Senegalese state and other European and Asian actors. were in violation of rules and regulations and described the acts of foreign vessels as that of 'plundering', 'stealing', 'crossing limits', 'trampling' 'destroying sea life', 'crushing their canoes, nets, and livelihoods.' Senegal's entry into agreements with European states and the emerging economies such as China and South Korea demonstrates that the government neglected to care about the welfare and survival of small-scale fishers but rather acted upon their self-interests. Langan (2018), whilst asserting the pertinence of neocolonialism (as conceptualised by Nkrumah) in the current context, questions whether African states (in particular) are able to exercise policy sovereignty, or whether or not their state institutions are "captured" to such a degree that they do more to serve foreign interests than that of their own citizenries.'

The relevance of the research lies in foregrounding the perspective of local fishers directly affected by the activities of fishing fleets in waters that have served as a source of food and revenue for local inhabitants for several generations. The study demonstrates that extractive economies actively displace small-scale fishers through their presence, the destruction of fishing gears, and expensive fines when they fish further into the sea. Therefore, displacement in the context of extractive economies needs to be conceptualised as an active process which in this case richer economies depend upon for their own profiteering. Scholarship on extractivism has largely understood 'displacement' as an indirect consequence or 'spill-over' effects resulting from mining from the earth. Thus, the research demonstrates that displacement must not be understood solely in narrow exceptional terms, but scholarship should pay further attention to potentially exploitative actions driven by neoliberal values which ultimately displace and disrupt everyday lives of the working poor across various sectors.

The article also illustrated that displacement in the artisanal fishers' lives takes on multiple forms such that affected fishers do not always need to physically move from one place to another other. They experience displacement in economic, temporal, and changes in the sea as well as migration to Europe. Thus, the meaning of displacement needs to be broadened in the context of the plundering of the oceans.

The fishers who formed part of this study believed that the solution was for the government to halt the activities of foreign vessels because they 'plundered the sea' and 'killed the smaller fish' which the local fishers would usually leave alone. For some interlocutors, the sea was an 'open and free place', and it was the vessels that needed to be restricted. Others believed that the state needed to support the fishers economically by subsidizing the cost of equipment needed for fishing as well as by granting them licenses to fish further into the sea.

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