Chapter:

Shaping seascapes: reimagining the Senegalese Atlantic

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Recent geographies of the sea emphasise the vital role that the ocean plays in the organisation of societies. Steinberg (2001) argues "the ocean is not merely a space used *by* society; it is one component of the space of society." Far from being an insignificant or marginal space, the sea carries powerful meanings that shape – and are shaped by - everyday land-based activities. For Senegalese fishing communities, the sea has not only provided resources but has occupied a central position in their social, geographical and cultural imaginations. Depletion of marine resources and competition for access to them create power struggles that are, in turn, transforming traditional Senegalese understandings of oceanic space. The shape of this new seascape is largely a function of fishers' mobility and the regulation of these movements by a rather fluid and contested hierarchy of state actors. For Senegalese fishers, declining catches have seen them re-imagine oceanic space as a set of possible migration routes to Europe and, in the process, re-imagine their relationships with states.

Drawing on field observations and interviews conducted in Senegal, this chapter examines how the Eastern Atlantic seascape is being reshaped by the different forms of mobility fishermen deploy throughout the ocean in order to secure their livelihood. We show that, for Senegalese fishermen, the ocean was traditionally imagined as a resource space that enabled the development of local fishing knowledge and the projection of local political power. With resource scarcity, the ocean has been increasingly reframed as a space of political conflict, a space of regulation, visibility and invisibility created

through power struggles and competition between various local actors and states. Fishermen who turn to organising international migration routes begin to imagine the ocean as a transitional space. No longer their destination in itself, crossing this space will enable them to earn the money necessary reaffirm their control over their households, community and local fishing economy.

We examine international maritime mobility as organised by small-scale Senegalese fishermen, describing fishing mobility from Senegal to Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania and maritime migration from Senegal to Europe. We show that these patterns of mobility are undoubtedly connected, but not simply reducible, as Nyamnjoh (2010) suggests, to fishers' resistance to state mismanagement of fisheries and a lack of government attention to coastal communities.

Not only do fishing trips and migration voyages share similar organisational characteristics and have comparable socio-economic effects on organizers and investors, in each mobility pattern the crossing of international maritime borders is now required to secure fishers' long-term economic and social investments. It is the oceanic border itself that enables the production and appropriation of value. As international migration has emerged from fishers' regional mobility, migrations routes have become a central livelihood strategy that shapes land- and seascapes. Having seen their control over their households diminish with diminishing fish catches, migration and its facilitation becomes the preferred strategy for fishers to retain, regain, or aspire to positions as household heads, providers and local political leaders. The sea, for them, remains imagined as a space of possibility and potential that will solve their land-based problems.

Regional mobility

In the Senegalese case, the sea is a space of political struggle. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the sea is a “smooth space par excellence” (Deleuze & Guattari 1988; Steinberg 2001) and provides the necessary fluidity for the deployment of nomads’ movements. Like Senegalese fishers in the pre-colonial period, Deleuzian nomads follow resources without attending to the geography of state borders. When the state finally emerges to striate this space with an apparatus of political control, nomad-fishers respond by adjusting their ‘lines of flight’ (Adey 2010) – routes which stretch mobile actors between shifting origins and destinations on their round. The different values given to fishers’ mobility patterns by fishers themselves and by national governments have changed the geography of the Atlantic, and also changed relations between states and people, and the operation of states themselves. Though at first fishers’ mobility was forced and signified their lack of control over fish resources, their mobility then became a way of resisting state power by organising sea journeys to Europe. In this sense, fishers’ mobility shapes the ocean space not just for themselves, but for their governments and those of European receiving nations. Steinberg (Steinberg 2001: 158) stresses that,

> “Because spaces (even the ocean) are simultaneously creations of social processes *and* arenas for everyday experiences, there is a constant negotiation between the ‘spaces of representation’ implied and reproduced by users of the sea (e.g. the world’s navies, as well as its fishers, refugees, sailors, etc.) and the ‘spatial practices’ emanating from the structural imperatives of the world economy.”

More than 600,000 Senegalese of a population of 12 million depend directly or indirectly on fishing for their livelihood (FAO 2010). Senegal’s small-scale fishery

sector currently counts around 17000 *pirogues* (artisanal canoes)[1]. This number of boats has tripled in the past fifteen years, suggesting the immense pressure on marine resources and the desperation of coastal communities. Although the largest canoes are 20 meters long motorized wooden boats and their simplicity might make them seem archaic to a western eye, fishers using them have sophisticated techniques and detailed local knowledge in which these boats are a key part of mobile resource extraction strategies. As highlighted by Chauveau (2000: 43):

> "The organisational forms of small-scale fishery economy that accompany its growth are not 'modernised'; they remain traditional, and this is precisely for this reason that they are more efficient than the modern institutions and that they enable the development of the artisanal sector"[2].

There has, of course, been some engagement between the modernizing state and the artisanal fishing sector. In the 1970s, the Senegalese government helped fishermen to invest in their first motors, enabling them to go further out to sea to find fish stocks. From the 1980's, fishers then organised the first motorised trips to foreign waters and started expeditions to waters off Guinea Bissau to catch high-value market demersal[3] species that had largely been fished-out in Senegalese waters. A number of fishermen then abandoned daily local fishing trips for these longer, riskier and more profitable expeditions throughout West African offshore waters (Failler & Binet 2010). This long-distance fishing migration has spread within Senegal at local level, with fishers from Hann in Dakar, Saint-Louis, Mbour and Joal joining in. This form of regional mobility is comparatively new and distinct from the local everyday movement of small-scale fisheries in local Senegalese waters. Fishers organise journeys to what are now

[1] Provisional results for the 2011 Senegalese Fisheries Census – statistics collected during Hallaire's interviews with fisheries officials, field notes, Dakar 2011.

[2] Translation ours

[3] Demersal species are found in deep waters. One of the most common in Senegal is the grouper (*thiof* in Wolof or *merou* in French) and this species is now highly threatened.

recognized as neighbouring countries' waters and then come back to Senegal to sell their high-market value catches. With fish lines, an average of 12 crewmen, and ice-boxes to preserve the catch for the two weeks at sea, these boats initially used to stay for a couple of days and then went back to Senegal to land and sell their catch. Now, they spend up to 15 days at sea using their GPS to record their fishing places and find their way in the sea.

Regional mobility and new technologies have seen the ways fishers map oceanic space itself change. Modou and Abdoulaye, two young fishermen had initially worked as crew on the boats. They travelled by sea to Europe in 2006 and were deported back to Senegal two months later. When they drew a mental map of their Kayar local fishing area, they explained how some of the ancient names were given according to what land-based elements could be seen from the fishing places. For example, one of the oldest Kayar fishing places is called "Thiès" because when the ancestors were fishing there, he explains, they saw a big tree which they deemed was located near the Senegalese city of Thiès. This type of names gives information for navigation as, according to the position of the land-based elements spotted from the sea, fishermen can find their fishing place easily. Other names such as "Mbayène", "Palène" or "Mbenguène" were those of influential families who were used to fishing in these particular fishing places. Also, many names refer to the fishing quality of the place: "Takalé" means "sparkling" whereas "Amul Yagal" litteraly means "no patience": fish is immediately caught and fishermen do not have to be patient when fishing there. However, these places are not so popular anymore and the relevance of their names is now put into question: for example, in "Takalé" fishermen used to find groupers and sea bream. They are now

replaced by octopus, a far less profitable species which is found there in great quantity. Access to these fishing places is open to everybody although they are not necessarily as resourceful as they used to be. New fishing places are not necessarily more distant than the oldest ones. However their "creation" is a sign of the increased mobility of the fishermen. Their less poetic names inform on their recent discovery: simply called "11 kilometres" or "6 kilometres", their names refer to the distance that separates them from the shore and tell on the novelty of these fishing places: they were discovered after the use of GPS devices had become popularised as they enable the distance to be measured in kilometres.

In most communities, and especially in Kayar, fishermen have always combined their fishing activities with farming in order to complement their income (Le Roux & Noël 2007) . However, the increased population density has made access to land more difficult today which threatens the balance that has traditionally obtained between land-based and sea-based activities. Fishers often do not want to disclose their new fishing places so that they can keep the preserve of their exploitation. In this case, they give them new "personalised" names or just record their geographical information in their GPS device[4]. These practices lead to a new individualisation of the fishing activity and to a complex geography of the sea space as its knowledge is less shared. Names *and* new fishing places now belong to individuals or small groups of fishermen who do not wish to share their new information. Therefore, particular power/knowledge relationships emerge from this ecological crisis. Knowledge and power are produced

[4] This practise of 'non-naming' has been observed in several fishing places. Local government officials in charge of collecting data on fishing activity find it difficult to learn where exactly fishermen have been fishing. In addition, this locational information is not shared between fishermen.

through the increased mobility of the fishermen: controlling knowledge such as information about fishing places, is for fishermen a way to secure the resource and maintain a fair balance of the exploitation of the sea. On the other hand, managing navigation techniques and technologies enables the fishermen to cope with the fishing crisis through mobility. The structure of the industry means fishers imagine it will be much more difficult to move up their local hierarchy than to find new fishing grounds or alternative work.

The Senegalese fishing sector is organised according to a strict hierarchy, with power concentrated in boat owners, captain fishermen, and, finally, crewmembers on the basis of experience. Those who physically take part in the migration are from the last two categories. They generally work for the boat owner who organises the fishing activity from land. Boat owners are former captain fishermen who were able to invest their income into fishing gear, canoes and motors. They hire, in order of priority, members of their immediate family and then more distant relatives belonging to the same community. Owners appropriate half of the value of the catch landed. The other half of the money is shared between the captain and crew. As soon as owners perceive a new constraint on their ability to see a return on their investment, they look for other investment opportunities. Owners are able to invest millions of CFA francs (FCFA) in maritime expeditions.[5] However, although a part of this enterprise is not controllable through the organisation of the trip, risks such as storm, illness at sea, death or bad fishing, are also taken into account in the organisation and are dealt through the spiritual

[5] The CFA franc is the currency used in Senegal and is guaranteed by the French Treasury with an exchange rate fixed to the Euro. In French it is abbreviated as FCFA.

work of the marabouts. Fishermen dedicate part of their investment to the consultation of a spiritual leader and gain control over the unpredictable through this investment.

Though the comparatively long-trip, regional strategies were first developed by a small number of fishermen, the numbers involved expanded when, in 1989, a border conflict broke out between Senegal and Mauritania. In 1991, Mauritania decided to close its maritime border by selling a limited number of fishing licences to Senegalese fishermen who traditionally fished freely in what had become Mauritanian territorial waters (Diop 2004). Tensions between Senegalese and Mauritanian boats and between the national governments finally led a number of Senegalese boats to direct their fishing trips further south to waters off Guinea Bissau. Although not all Senegalese fishers are long-distance fishers, fishers following such strategies are now found in almost every Senegalese port. Their pattern of movement is one of mobility. Fishers usually live in Senegal while not fishing and never land their catch in foreign countries' ports. Senegalese ice-box canoes fishermen always come back to Senegal and chose the best place to land their catches to sell into a national market. For example, a key informant[6] reported that around 11 ice-box canoes currently fish illegally in Mauritania, navigating 200 km to the west and 500 km to the north in order to avoid Mauritanian border controls. These long journeys involve huge amounts of petrol, ice for the fish and supplies for the 10 day trips for the 12 crew members. However, this investment is still worthwhile regarding the number of canoes doing this. Increasing regulation and seizure of catches will see the investment move elsewhere.

[6] Field interview, March 2012

Fishermen who now go to Bissau-Guinea need similar levels of investment. In the Petite Cote, a local boat owner reported that he funds his 9 canoes, lends the money for the trip preparation to the captains who work for him and organises by the acquisition of licences in Guinea-Bissau.[7] He controls an informal company of around 110 fishermen from his home village. Each of his canoes requires a FCFA 900,000 licence from the Guinean government to enable his crews to fish legally in Guinean waters. Each boat also requires around FCFA 600,000 for its petrol, and more money for the kilos of rice, water, sugar and tea that provision its crew for the time spent at sea. This owner explained that he did not want the Senegalese Ministry of Fisheries to help him get his 9 fishing licences in 2012. The licence was his biggest problem in 2012. The previous year, Senegalese boat owners had been sold invalid fishing licences and then had to pay high fines to the Guinean authorities. A group of affected owners had asked the Senegalese government to help them by accessing valid licences directly from the Guinean authorities for 2012. However, this boat owner had his own reliable broker and could get his licences from the Guinean government faster than through the Senegalese administration. As the licence started the 1st of January, he could not afford to have his crews waiting for the Senegalese and Guinean governments; crews do not want to go into debt to cover their everyday expenses while they are not at sea and the best fishers will eventually leave to find other work.

Fishing mobility has led to internal migration in Senegal. Fishermen from Saint-Louis have always fished in what are now Mauritanian waters because these fishing grounds were close by. These fishers are described as “Guet Ndarian” as they come

[7] Field interview, April 2012

from Guet Ndar, a famous fishing village of the spit of land stuck between the Mauritanian border and the mouth of Senegal River. This village has high population density, a long fishing history and occupies a very narrow area, leading to intense resource competition. These factors have pushed the fishermen from St. Louis to expand their fishing grounds and migration routes. Fishers from St. Louis are well-known across West Africa for their great navigation and fishing skills. Following the 1989 conflict and the resulting closure of Mauritanian maritime border, a huge number of Guet Ndarians decided to organise fishing trips to Guinea Bissau but leaving from the ports of Saint-Louis or from Dakar – two areas much closer to Senegal's southern border[8]. Thus, after 1989, Guet Ndarian fishermen have spread down the Senegalese coastline, relocating their households to new ports as internal migrants. Because they were landing catches from Guinea Bissau, rather than competing with local fishers in their new settlements, Guet Ndarian migrants were mostly tolerated. Although they are respected and considered to be "the best fishermen" of the region, they are also perceived as very rough, stubborn, and a bit unpredictable, so their integration in new settlements was not always successful, even if they were landing high market value fish from long distance trips and were not in competition with local fishers. Thus the Guet Ndarians have become a highly mobile group, both along coasts and the open ocean off off East Africa. Recently some St. Louis fishers were seriously injured in a clash with Mauritanian border agents.

Those fishers who remained in Saint-Louis have developed other fishing strategies. Purse seine[9] fishermen buy official fishing licences for pelagic[10] species or

[8] Field interviews, Saint-Louis, Dakar, 2011 and 2012

[9] Large fish nets used to catch species close to the surface

[10] Fish species living near the surface.

go fishing illegally in Mauritanian waters when they do not have licences. Line fishermen cross the border illegally as Mauritania does not provide licences for demersal species. They then travel further north and west than before the 1989 closure to avoid being discovered by Mauritanian state patrols in the night, spend 10 days at sea and come back to Senegal to land the catches. The other strategy they pursue is to work for Mauritanian "businessmen" who have legal Mauritanian licences for line fishing. Their business strategy is to hire Senegalese fishermen to fish each day in Mauritanian waters and the fishermen then have to live in camps not far away from Nouakchott in Mauritania. Fishers following this strategy stay in Mauritania with their crew and canoes for one or two months before coming back to Saint Louis on a regular basis (Binet et al. 2010 and field interviews).

Though fishers accounts make it sound comparatively easy to escape state regulation, the state is nonetheless present at sea. The Senegalese government has intensified competition for fish stocks by enabling foreign fleets to fish in Senegalese waters, signing a growing number of industrial fishing agreements (Catanzano & Rey Valette 2002). The government has also attempted, at the same time, to regulate local-scale fisheries by controlling access to the sea, fishing techniques and areas. Since access to the sea is traditionally open to everybody in Senegal, fishermen find it hard to accept government restrictions. The ambiguity of Senegalese maritime governance has generated frustration among the fishermen who have organised through a number of national professional associations since the 1980s. These organizations lobby the government, calling for more coherence, transparency and government attention for the sector. They often protest when they hear a rumour about obscure new agreements

signed with foreign fishing companies. In March 2011, 20 agreements with private Russian and Chinese companies were thought to have been signed by the government without consultation of the small-scale sector, causing widespread street protests[11].

The growing frustration of the fishermen slows the efficient application of fishing regulation. From the viewpoint of government agents, small-scale fisheries' recent evolution is threatening the efforts of government to managing the resource. According to the official in charge of Senegalese maritime fisheries, it is the small-scale fishery that causes conflicts occurring with the international trawlers:

> "... with its very fast development and dynamism that moves offshore towards industrial fishing areas. There are often these kinds of conflicts and damages because the small-scale fishery does not respect navigation and fishing practice norms in general. For example, the nets: they generally let their nets without indication. Then, when the industrial trawlers pass, they can't see the nets, they are not visible to the naked eye, so they tear the nets up, which then causes all kinds of conflicts"[12].

Because fishers are now so mobile, they are more and more difficult to regulate for the government. And much regulation undermines government claims to understand the sector. Among the new fishing rules, for instance, is one specifying fishermen now must wear lifejackets in any circumstances. However, they often refuse to do so, considering that this norm questions their ability to navigate safely and that wearing lifejackets would also mean they interfere with God's will (Sall 2007). They claim lifejackets slow down their work on board and do not replace their own safety practices

[11] http://ipsinternational.org/fr/_note.asp?idnews=6452

[12] Field interview, Official of the *Direction des Pêches Maritime,* Dakar, June 2011

– the talismans, prayers and sacrifices organized by marabouts that are the only elements that tradition allows them to use in order to ward off fate and bad spirits at sea[13].

The dynamism and flexibility of artisanal fishers in pursuing fish resources across political and ecological boundaries is actually enabled, rather than constrained by the fishing sector's traditional character. Most fishers rely on experiential knowledge and oral history to navigate. They now cross international boundaries, escaping surveillance and navigating for more than 15 days thanks to the accurate use of GPS combined with a developed sense of stellar navigation and a particular maritime culture (Sall 2007). Fishers can quickly adapt their movements to constraints and lack of resources in local Senegalese waters on the basis of rational calculations. Their small wooden canoes enable them to travel faster and at a lower cost than modern boats with heavy, expensive gear. Over time, these fishers have gained in-depth knowledge and navigation skills that are now essential for their organisation of illegal migration to Europe.

Whether pursuing regional fishing mobility or carrying would-be migrants, fishers calculate the benefits they should receive from their movements on the basis of the resources required, returns to capital and their labour costs. The fishers' relationship to the state is almost nonexistent. In each kind of mobility they avoid interacting with government agents, with the exception being circular migrant fishermen who seek legal international fishing licences in Bissau-Guinea. Indeed, their goal seems to be efficient in their use of resources and time and their very investments in migration are attempts to

[13] Field interview, Dakar, June 2011

circumvent regulatory and administrative procedures. For them, crossing a border is synonymous with returns on investment; it is the social and economic effects of border itself at a much larger scale that produce the expected benefits that will make fishers' own movements worthwhile.

Migration, borders, investments

From the late 1990s, fishers identified carrying migrants as a potentially strategy to work around the constraints of diminishing catches, increasing requirements for licenses, and intensified fisheries regulation on the well-known fishing grounds across maritime West Africa. Boat owners calculated that investing their capital in such trips would compensate for the decline in their income from fishing. Thus the organisers of the first migration voyages were either boat owners or comparatively wealthy fishermen with funds to invest. The organisers would stay in Senegal and hire others to take the risks of the voyage. They invested in 20 meter boats, motors, supplies for the passengers, and hired skilled captains willing to go to Europe. Those best qualified to be captains of migrant-carrying boats were fishers already familiar with the long-distance fishing mobility routes up and the West African coast and accustomed to evading maritime surveillance. Would-be migrants willing embarking these voyages were mostly young to middle-aged Senegalese men – fishers involved in local and regional scale fishery or non-fishers who could not find stay employment in the towns and cities. Many of the fishers who became would-be migrants had been working as daily-paid crew on purse seine canoes, or on small line-fishing canoes and, as stocks declined, found their labour was no longer profitable or needed. Determined to go to Europe, an average of 100 would-be migrants each paid FCFA 400,000 (€ 600) in passage on each

boat. Samba is a fisherman who left Senegal with the first migrant-carrying canoes. He wanted to work in ports somewhere in Europe, sending what he would earn to his family and would then come back to Senegal. He explained that he was not afraid of crossing the ocean: “we know the sea, sometimes we spend 15 days at sea to fish, it doesn’t scare us”[14].

Maritime migration from Senegal to Europe further intensified after land-based routes through North Africa were restricted. A number of would-be immigrants to Europe from sub-Saharan Africa decided to cross the border into Spanish territories on the African continent. The would-be migrants attempted to break through the boundary fences surrounding the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco but their assault on the fences was brutally put down by Spanish and Moroccan authorities (Carling 2007; De Haas 2007). The failure of this attempt to breach the land border led to the organisation of new maritime routes to Europe, targeting the much more permeable ocean border, departing first from Mauritania and then from Senegal. At the same time, in 2004 – 2006, the use of GPS devices was spreading among Senegalese fishermen communities, their navigation skills were rapidly developing the capacity to expand their long-distance fishing mobility, and declining catches saw their economic situation further deteriorating (Sall & Morand 2008). In addition, the stories told by supposedly successful returned Senegalese emigrants from previous rounds of migration to Europe convinced the younger generation that migration was the route to success. Even imagining a personal migration project to Europe became considered a quick and easy way to gain respect in the community. Those migrants who were sending remittances home on a regular basis had already secured themselves a respected

[14] Field interviews, Dakar, 2007

position, even if they had been absent for several decades (Fouquet 2008). The combination of politics, technology, economics and social conditions encouraged fishers to take part in the organisation of migration journeys to the Canary Islands.

While border controls reinforced with the development of Frontex (the European border agency) in Spanish, Mauritanian and Senegalese waters, departures were organised further south in Senegal, from Kayar, Dakar, Mbour and Ziguinchor. The further south the voyages departed, the higher the risks they were taking. These departures were constantly adjusted to maritime border controls and boats were secretly leaving at night trying to reach international waters undetected so they could escape increasing numbers of patrols. Moreover, through the constant adjustment of the routes to border controls, fishermen were resisting maritime controls as well. In response, European border adopted a similar mobility strategy to arrest these illegal migration journeys. The Spanish government counted that 90,000 illegal migrants had reached the archipelago between 2001 and 2010[15]. Among them, thousands were Senegalese and were deported back to Senegal through the frame of Senegalese/ Spanish cooperation. It is not known very precisely how many died during these journeys, nor is it known how many of these migrants were Senegalese[16].

Fishing knowledge underpinned this illegal migration to Europe, with migrants being discouraged to apply for a visa and owners often denouncing the large amount of

[15] "Lucha contra la Inmigración Ilegal, Balance 2010", Ministerio del Interior, Spain, www.mir.es, reporting official Spanish government statistics.

[16] As an example, between September and October 2006, more than 4700 Senegalese migrants were repatriated, after official repatriations were announced by the Spanish government: « Environ 4.000 clandestins rapatriés en un mois au Sénégal depuis l'Espagne », news article, AFP, Avomm, 18 October 2006

time and the impossibility of obtaining legal permit to go to Europe. Boat owners were promising a safe trip to Europe and migrants were often given the money for the trip by their family of friends, considering this as a long-term investment that would soon enable them to work in Europe and send remittances to their family.

Cheikh, a returned migrant-fisherman from Dakar, explains that he took part in an illegal journey to the Canary Islands. His boat had a problem and the crew decided to land in Mauritania without even having reached the archipelago. His testimony shows how this decision involves his whole family and becomes a potential solution for a better life:

> "It's been 25 years that I have been going to the sea and I've got nothing. We don't have means. Nobody can help me, my family believes in me; they depend on me. If I go to Europe, what I will earn, I will send it. At the moment, the sea provides me with 3000 Francs a day, sometimes nothing. I come back, I have nothing, my family waits and I still have nothing. I meet with my friends, they help me a bit but I am ashamed. What is good for me is to fight to earn a living."[17]

In 2006, Modou – who drew the fishing map, discussed above - crossed the ocean with other migrants in order to reach Europe. A 20 meters long fishing boat driven by experienced captain fishermen led him to the Spanish archipelago. In charge of his family since he was able to earn a living, he was facing the decrease of fish resources and was no longer able to provide a decent livelihood to his relatives. He decided to embark for this perilous illegal journey and fund it with the sale of his fishing gear. Once in the Canary Islands after 7 days spent in high sea, he got arrested and was sent back by the Spanish authorities to Kayar, his village. His perception of the

[17] Field Interview, Yoff, Dakar, 2007

decline of resources is fairly accurate as he assesses it with the approximate length of his fishing trips, the number of fishing places he has to go to and the strong feeling that the sea is no longer profitable for him. As most of the returned fishermen who were interviewed, the difficulties Modou is facing at sea and the low average income he now gets, were the main reasons for his migration project.

Crossing the ocean becomes synonymous with a positive fight, an opportunity to recover the role that the sea is no longer able to provide to him. Although the sea, as a resource place is no longer fulfilling its function, it remains a central "socially constructed" space enabling the fishermen to "become someone" (this expression was recurrent in the interviews). This migration project takes the meaning of a "sacrifice" which young men have to make for their family as simply put by Pape, a repatriated fisherman from Dakar suburbs (Yoff): "there is nothing more in the sea and there isn't a lot of land for the children. There is no land in Yoff, we are obliged to go sacrifice ourselves." His friend adds "It's a matter of dignity"[18].

In each situation, international maritime migration involves a great investment for the crossing of borders – either legally or illegally. These international migration strategies are always organised from land: non-owner captains highly depend on their land-based boat owner for the choice of their trajectories at sea and through the necessary investments involved in the migration. The rationale behind voyages carrying migrants to Europe is drawn from fishers understanding of the dynamics of the small-scale fishing sector in Senegal. Fishermen can escape political, socio-economic and environmental constraints thanks to their ability to assess risks and identify worthwhile

[18] Field Interview, Yoff, Dakar, 2007

investments. For them, government is an obstacle on their route and the intervention of the state only slows their mobility.

Narratives of fishers' arrival in the Canary Islands tell a lot about the ways their understanding of the European border has been assimilated to the ocean. Abdoulaye and 19 other fishermen organised a journey to Europe (carrying other non-fishermen-migrants). Although he admits the conditions were rough and regular discussions occurred on board, they got well organised as part of the crew was in charge of cooking while the others were managing the navigation. He describes how they were taken in by the Spanish authorities:

> "When we were getting closer to the island, we didn't know how and where to go ashore. We saw an old man in a small boat. Our captain could speak Spanish. The guy said to him « wait, I will call the Red Cross » and 20 minutes later, a boat of the Spanish Guards and the Red Cross came and told us to follow them. When we arrived in the port, they tied our pirogue, they got into it. There were two big tents of the Red Cross and policemen everywhere. I didn't want to throw my papers. [...]" [19]

Indeed, instead of hiding themselves from the coastguard might have been expected, they systematically started to look for assistance, yet were aware that they would get arrested. According to Carling (2007: 23), irregular migrants who arrive in the Strait of Gilbraltar by sea are dropped by smugglers not far away from the coastline and must swim to reach the shore unnoticed. After a 7-day sea journey in an overcrowded boat, travelling in extreme conditions, most of the migrants were seriously in need of rehydration and medical care and were understandably confused by the

[19] Field interview, Kayar, 2011

circumstances of their reception. Their first feeling was one of relief; they assumed that they already crossed the border having arrived in Spain. Although they were about to be sent to camps and then deported to Senegal, they paid little attention to formal immigration procedures. Instead, they took their success for granted simply because they have reached Spanish territory after having survived the voyage.

Senegalese people very commonly called the phenomenon of illegal migration “Barça or Barsakh” meaning “Barcelona or the Beyond” (see Bouilly 2008). This appellation associates the theological and cultural significances of the journey and converts the ocean either into a pathway to Europe - better nicknamed as “Barça”, in reference to the football club of Barcelona- or, more tragically, to the Beyond (in Arabic). This expression also shows that migrants were aware of the high risks they were taking. Although they put their life at great risk and had a high probability of being repatriated, they relied on God’s will and were still convinced they had to leave. Most of the migrants had consulted a marabout before taking the decision to embark in these boats. They trusted their spiritual leader who was able to let them know whether they should take this risk and therefore get particular protections. Marabouts also provided *talismans* which would make them invisible to police patrols[20]. In the case of an accident in high sea, their death would often remain ignored, leaving desperate families with the hope of an everyday more unlikely return.

Conclusion: productions of knowledge, projections of power

[20] Field interviews, Dakar 2007, 2012. See also Naranjo Noble 2009

The ocean, whose function has unquestionably been changed, remains the decisive space embodying power over life and death, a space for the expression of inescapable fate. It is a space where determined fishermen struggle for the future of Senegal's coastal communities. Although the use of the ocean has been changed, it remains the space where, for fishermen, the will of God expresses itself and limits their power to change their own fate. The sea carries ambiguous values as it can be both synonymous with death and life, with power and loss of power, and with wealth and failure. The sea, through its fluid and linking functions, allows the problematic juxtaposition of very different imaginations for oceanic space.

For Senegalese fishing communities, the sea is filled with mystic elements (Mercier & Balandier 1952), and fishermen often mention the presence of spirits in the sea. They protect themselves with *talismans*, small sacrifices and marabouts' advice and benediction before going fishing and, now, before carrying migrants to Europe. Naranjo investigated the forgotten death of 160 migrants from the Senegalese region of Kolda who all embarked on the same boat. He drew a parallel between their invisible death and the power of the talismans they were carrying in order to remain invisible to police or border patrols, whether West African or European.

For European policy makers, the deployment of Frontex changes the ocean into an external space of security on which border practices protect the European territory. The "lines of flight" (Adey 2010) unfolded by fishermen avoiding border controls have, in response, seen Europe produce a further "striating" action on the formerly smooth oceanic space (Deleuze & Guattari 1988), intensifying surveillance on the open ocean, monitoring departures and arrivals up and down the Atlantic coast, and scaling-up

inspections at ports. By constantly improvising and adjusting their routes, fishers engage in power struggle with the border agents charged with blocking their trajectories. Yet the blocking itself makes what the boat owners and voyage organizers promise that much more valuable, as the stories of success circulating in Senegal mean that young fishers may make two or three attempts at the voyage.

For the subregional West African governments – Senegal, Mauritania, and Guinea Bissau here - the sea is both a space to protect and a source of revenues. By controlling the growing mobility of fishermen, their use of gear, their safety equipment and requiring them to have permits to fish, fisheries ministries and their officials seek to preserve a disappearing natural resource. At the same time, other government agencies seek to earn revenue by contracting fish resources to foreign boats through joint ventures. Governments are increasingly able to access funds for migration prevention, resettlement and local development from European sources, in return for better governance of fishers and local policing of migration departures, both on the coasts and at sea. So the ocean space off West Africa becomes doubly striated through the governance of mobility, both for fishing and migration. But these comparatively new projects of governance may be somewhat ambivalent. National officials who now seek to extract fines from highly-mobile fishers who lack the proper permits and from foreign governments via migration-prevention funds are well aware that both these streams of value depend on migration to Europe continuing to be the preferred solution to the woes of Senegal's coastal communities. Many Senegalese – not just fishers – have invested in the shared imaginary of an ocean crossing as the best route to a more secure livelihood, increased social status and thus a better life.

The social construction of fishers' imagined maritime space here shows how the ocean takes on the characteristics of a Foucauldian heterotopia (Foucault 1994; Steinberg 2001), the maritime space acting as a mirror of the land. Foucault (1994) uses the metaphor of the mirror to illustrates how heterotopias operate. The heterotopia/mirror reflects the dematerialized image of a space and, through this reflection, the identity of the initial space is recreated. Here, the organization of maritime space mirrors then transforms that of the land. We have shown how Senegalese fishers organise ocean space in reference to their terrestrial territories. While they originally gave priority to dominant families, or projected the frame and marks territorial landscapes on to maritime spaces, they now name the sea through technology and carry talismans, not for a successful catch, but to evade surveillance when crossing borders. Likewise, Foucault argues that heterotopias are at the core of social practices and there is a continuous movement between them and the central places of societies, with heterotopias playing decisive role in the creation of social identities. In coastal Senegal, we have shown how the sea space always remains central in fishing communities, whatever role and function it embodies. Crises, conflicts, technological and geographical changes occurring in oceanic spaces have had meaningful consequences in the social organisation of Senegalese communities, undermining male authority, excluding younger generations from important forms of social status and threatening livelihoods. As soon as the security of the maritime space is jeopardised, as we have seen in the Senegalese fishing crisis, power relations on land are reconfigured. Such shifts then gives a new shape to the seascape, in this case revealing to be full of potential migratory routes to a better life.

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