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Dynamics of Food, Climate and Fisheries Politics: Exploring the Overlaps via Issues,
Movements and Events
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Abstract

The implications of intersecting food and climate politics have recently emerged as a key point of interest in both academic and governance arenas. However, the ways in which they overlap with fisheries politics remains underexplored and under-analysed. Little is understood about the wider social, political, and economic significance of these overlapping politics in policy, practice, nor analytically. Considering the current conjuncture of global food, climate and fisheries governance, and the crises existing in all three sectors, it has become increasingly critical to explore a more nuanced understanding of the actors and processes involved. However, despite the fact that much fisheries research focuses on food production and climate change separately, the complexities of their intersection remain ambiguous. This is problematic considering that the governance issues associated with the food, climate, and fisheries sectors are inextricably linked and should be addressed as such. A more rigorous and nuanced understanding of their interrelations is crucial for moving toward a holistic comprehension of the complex, messy relationships that exist within and between the global food, climate and fisheries systems, and the governance issues within.

Therefore, this paper aims to develop a framework for understanding the dynamics of overlapping food, climate and fisheries politics, centred on an exploration of the key *issues* (topics of concern), *movements* (transnational alliances), and *events* (moments of interaction) that interconnect these politics. It develops and employs a dynamic analytical approach, drawing from key political economy and ecology debates, to analyse the processes that drive development or change within a system (e.g. in which movements are embedded) or relationship (e.g. between movements and other actors). The main interest of this research is the implications such dynamics have for global food, climate and fisheries governance, and the ways in which civil society actors, such as transnational fishers' movements, engage with governance via formal and informal structures, practices and processes.

Keywords

Fisheries; food politics; climate politics; social movements; global governance

Acronyms

CER	Certified Emission Reduction
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
MPA	Marine Protected Area
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFF	World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers
WFFP	World Forum of Fisher Peoples

1. Introduction

Contemporary global politics around food systems and climate change are rapidly becoming both more complex and more contentious. New actors, issues, and agendas are constantly emerging, making it increasingly unclear who is doing what, how, and for what reasons (Clapp et al. 2017). As concerns about climate change continue to expand worldwide, climate change mitigation/adaptation initiatives increasingly emerge, often presented as ‘clean’ development approaches or environmentally friendly ways to stimulate economic growth. This approach has become especially prominent in the context of land-based initiatives like REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) or Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects, which involve the sale of carbon credits or Certified Emission Reduction units (CERs) as a way to prevent deforestation, offset existing and future emissions, and slow global warming (Beymer-Farris and Bassett 2012).

More recently, water spaces, particularly mangroves, oceans and coastal areas, have also become the target of such an approach – especially due to increasing land conflicts spurred by mitigation/adaptation projects that cut off local communities’ access to agricultural and forest areas. Water spaces are seen by many as both the ‘last frontier’ for natural resource investment, as well as unowned, conflict-free property – perfect for conservation. However, these spaces are not only crucial for the livelihoods of fishers and coastal communities, they are also key sites of production contributing to the global food system (Barbesgaard 2017). Thus, land and water spaces where climate change mitigation/adaptation and food production policies and agendas overlap are central points for the emergence of the global ‘climate-food system’. In this system, ‘new’ initiatives, such as Climate-Smart Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (CSA) and blue growth, are presented as win-win solutions to existing destructive food production practices and environmental degradation (Clapp et al. 2017).

Mitigation/adaptation strategies, and the implementation of governance mechanisms that address climate impacts using mainstream economics-centred approaches, such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and blue carbon initiatives, are becoming increasingly contentious in small-scale fishing communities. The human rights of these fishers are often ignored, infringed upon or co-opted in fisheries policies, leading to clashes with government officials over resources, who has access to them and how they are managed (Campling et al. 2012). Decreased access to resources caused by mitigation/adaptation strategies have overlapped with, and exacerbated, existing exclusion stemming from decades of privatisation and industrialisation in the fisheries sector (Mills 2018; Campling and Havice 2014; Mansfield 2011). The impact that privatisation of marine resources has on fishing communities is reminiscent of processes of accumulation by dispossession, which have traditionally been linked to the dispossession of people from land (Harvey 2003; Hall 2013).

In combination, such processes have contributed to the transformation of the fisheries sector, in which government officials and powerful fishing companies take a top-down approach to the control and commodification of resources, without allowing space for the development of bottom-up community-managed approaches (Meynen 1989). This raises important questions about the implications of capital in rural areas, and the neoliberalization and commodification of nature, which are often discussed in the context of land and terrestrial resources (see Borras et al. 2016; Hall 2013; Castree 2008; 2003), and increasingly also in relation to conservation (see Borras and Franco 2018; Dressler et al. 2014; Büscher and Arsel 2012), and fisheries and aquatic resources (see Bennett et al. 2015; Longo et al. 2015; Mansfield 2004). In the current era of agrarian and environmental transformations, new and existing processes of exclusion emerge out of, and are fuelled by, the global resource rush, “recasting the political economy of land, water, fisheries and forests in the rural world, and reconfiguring how capital penetrates agriculture and the countryside” (Borras and Franco 2018, 11). This highlights the critical need to develop new approaches to both analysing fisheries issues, and governance in the sector, which has become significantly more complex by intersecting food and climate crises. These intersections make it more difficult to manage and ensure equal access to finite aquatic resources, which is especially problematic for small-scale fishers, whose political and economic power continues to be weakened alongside the strengthening of the industrial fisheries sector (WFFP 2017).

While food, climate, and fisheries politics are typically discussed in separate research and governance silos, the intersection between food and climate issues has recently emerged as a point of interest (see Clapp et al. 2017). The implications of their link with fisheries politics, however, remains underexplored and under-analysed. Little is understood about the wider social, political, and economic significance of these overlapping politics in policy, practice, nor analytically. In an era of food and climate crises, the state of fisheries governance is becoming an increasingly pressing concern globally, in dire need of a more nuanced understanding of the various processes and actors involved. However, despite the fact that much fisheries research focuses on food production and climate change individually (see Levkoe et al. 2017; De Schutter 2012; Adger 2005), the complexities of their intersection remain obscured. This is problematic, as the governance issues associated with the food, climate, and fisheries systems are inextricably linked and should be addressed as such. A more careful and nuanced understanding of their interrelations is crucial for moving toward a more holistic understanding of the complex, messy relationships that exist between these overlapping systems, and related governance concerns (Clapp et al. 2017).

This contribution aims to develop a framework for analysing the dynamics of overlapping global food, climate and fisheries politics, including both historical and emerging contemporary interconnections. The framework is constructed using the key *issues* (topics of concern), *movements* (transnational alliances), and *events* (moments of

interaction) as the building blocks that interconnect these politics on multiple levels. As an analytical approach, it weaves together selected political economy and ecology tools to understand the dynamics – meaning *the processes that drive development or change within a system* (e.g. in which movements are embedded) *or relationship* (e.g. between movements and other actors). The concept of dynamics, which is typically used in understanding behaviours or events emerging from complex systems, is an important part of social and political analysis. Therefore, this research explores how these dynamics develop within and between overlapping politics, emerging from particular issues, movements and events. The aim is to contribute to expanding existing, somewhat disconnected, debates around food, climate and fisheries politics, by tracking how they overlap, and the analytical and social implications of these overlaps.

The main interest of this research is the implications particular dynamics have for global food, climate and fisheries governance, and the ways in which civil society actors, such as fishers' movements, engage with formal and informal governance processes. This research seeks to demonstrate the importance of studying fishers and fishers' movements in an era of agrarian and environmental transformations, by contributing important perspectives, experiences and knowledge from diverse actors – including fishers themselves. This can, for example, help us to better understand where and how organised fishers' movements (including both fishers and non-fisher staff) are engaging with global politics, and through which channels they are finding ways to contribute to and participate in governance processes and spaces.

The analytical approach discussed here reaffirms the importance of political economy and ecology tools in analysing food and agrarian politics, while building onto and extending the discussion, to include more recent and emerging connections with climate and fisheries politics. This contributes toward a more holistic understanding of these overlapping politics in three ways: 1) by broadening the conception of *food politics* beyond land and agriculture, through a focused exploration of the implications of fishers, aquatic resources and spaces in food system transformations; 2) by extending debates around *climate politics* through the analysis of land and water as interconnected spaces, and how fishers are being further marginalised by mitigation/adaptation agendas; and 3) by strengthening understandings of *fisheries politics* through the integration of knowledge, insights and alternatives from fishers and fishers' movements.¹

The analytical and methodological elements of the proposed framework may also be relevant for studies of other overlapping politics, where the implications of their interconnections can provide important insights. While this research focuses particularly on international level overlaps, such a framework may also be useful in grappling with national level dynamics. Set within the above context, this contribution first provides an overview of the prominent debates around food, climate and fisheries politics, as well as

1 These three points build on the four-part framework introduced in Mills 2018.

the gaps within, and highlights the significance of their overlaps. Second, it discusses how to analyse these overlaps by examining key interconnecting issues, movements and events. Third, it explains the methodological approach and the archival, virtual and visual tools that are crucial for conducting research on complex, interlinked politics. Finally, it offers a concluding discussion on the analytical and social implications of overlapping politics.

2. Global food, climate and fisheries politics: The significance of overlaps

Since the 2007-2008 food price crisis, the politics around food production has re-emerged as a topic of widespread interest. As a result, research and debates around the role of small-scale food producers globally have become increasingly popular in academia, governance spaces, and among food consumers in general – creating new avenues for small-scale farmers to engage with policymakers, NGOs and researchers (Edelman and Borras 2016). This has also increased research, policy and public attention to the issues affecting these farmers, and has contributed to broadening the global visibility of transnational peasant and land-based movements (e.g. La Via Campesina) and their agendas. However, their water-based counterparts, the issues they are facing, and the movements they have established (e.g. World Forum of Fisher Peoples and World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers²) – which are arguably equally as important in the global food system – remain much less visible in research, policy and among the general public. Instead, they are typically subsumed into ‘agrarian’ or ‘peasant’ categories, which is partially accurate in that fisheries may be understood as an extension of the agricultural sector, but also limits our understanding of the particular, complex set of issues that fishers face (e.g. due to the mobile nature of fishing). Thus, the importance of holistically understanding the diverse range of processes and actors involved in food politics is becoming increasingly pertinent. This is partially related to exploring the nature and significance of the role that fishers play.

In this research, *food politics* is conceptualised as *the formal and informal structures, practices and processes constituting food governance (related to the production, circulation and consumption of food), and the actors (movements, researchers, governments) engaging with (negotiating, establishing, disputing and reinterpreting) these structures, practices and processes*. This conceptualisation is intended to be flexible, expandable and broad, to allow for further development and

² The World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) is a mass-based social movement of small-scale fisher people from across the world, which currently has 43 national member organizations from 50 countries. The World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF) is an international organization that links small-scale fishers’ organizations, and currently has 48 national member organizations from 42 countries (WFFP 2014; WFF 2017).

inclusion of different issues, movements and events that may emerge during the research process. As Clapp (2014) argues, the types of actors involved in the global food system, and the particular financial tools they use also affect food politics and contexts for resistance. Tracking the many actors influencing and engaging with food politics, and the forms of resistance that emerge and evolve, are important aspects guiding this research. The structural context from which fishers' resistance has emerged has been referred to as a global food regime based on a system of production, circulation and consumption (see Friedmann 1993; Friedmann and McMichael 1989), which Weis (2013) vividly describes as oceans of monocultures and islands of concentrated animals. This system is built on the preference for 'efficient' industrial methods (e.g. monocropping and aquaculture expansion), corporate dominance over the agricultural and seafood markets, and exclusion from resources due to increasing privatisation – all of which threaten the livelihoods of small-scale fishers (TNI 2017; WFFP 2017; Mansfield 2011).

Debates around food regimes and food politics often highlight the need for new radical alternatives that can address the current global crisis (Duncan and Pascucci 2017; Giménez and Shattuck 2011; Clapp and Cohen 2009). However, these discussions have rarely focused on fishers as crucial contributors to such alternative visions. Instead, fishers have typically been seen simply as commodity producers, and fish as a profitable resource. Recently, however, there have been some efforts toward reframing 'fish as food', both in its literal sense and as a political statement (see Levkoe et al. 2017). Food sovereignty³ is a prominent example of an alternative first constructed by social movements (e.g. La Via Campesina), which in recent years has been adopted into both research and policy discussions as a possible way forward in food governance (see Schiavoni 2017; McMichael 2014; Patel 2009). However, food sovereignty debates have generally exhibited weak engagement with fishers. While proponents of the food sovereignty movement have always considered fishers to be allies involved in the movement-building process (see Pictou 2017; Nyéléni 2007), there have only recently been more concerted efforts toward establishing stronger alliances between small-scale fishers and farmers. These efforts are slowly becoming more visible on the ground among movement representatives, and in research (see Gioia 2017). An important point of collaboration for fishers and farmers has been around climate change issues – recognising that they are both facing a common struggle against both the impacts of climate change and the possible impacts of mitigation/adaptation efforts. This has catapulted them into the arena of key actors engaging with the messy politics around the climate system (Gioia 2017; Barbesgaard 2017).

3 Food sovereignty refers to an evolving process, framework or collective struggle to democratize access, ownership, and control of land, water and food production. Its definitions change over time as alliances are expanded and new actors are brought into the various dialogues inside the food sovereignty movement. (Rosset and Martinez-Torres 2014).

Similar to food politics, the politics around climate change mitigation/adaptation has become an increasingly complex and contentious topic in recent years. Climate change agendas were initially amplified after the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was put into effect in March 1994. The UNFCCC aims to stabilise the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to a level that will prevent dangerous impacts on the climate system, by setting limits for emissions in individual ratifying countries (Bulkeley and Newell 2010). However, these limits are non-binding and contain no enforcement mechanisms for ensuring that countries adhere to the limits. Instead, the framework focuses on how international climate protocols and agreements can be negotiated to enact further steps toward mitigating climate change (FAO 2013). While curbing climate change is a concern increasingly shared by much of the global population, the mainstream governance and policy approach to mitigation/adaptation tends to focus on strategies that gloss over imbalances in power, control and consumption in society, and thus have the potential to perpetuate uneven access to and distribution of resources (Hunsberger et al. 2017). Thus, the importance of understanding the processes and actors involved in climate politics more holistically, and questioning and analysing particular mitigation/adaptation strategies and their implementation is becoming increasingly urgent (Gasper et al. 2012; Adger et al. 2005).

In this research, *climate politics* is conceptualised as *the formal and informal structures, practices and processes constituting climate governance (related to preventing, mitigating and adapting to the risks posed by climate change), and the actors (movements, researchers, governments) engaging with (negotiating, establishing, disputing and reinterpreting) these structures, practices and processes*. Like that of food politics, this conceptualisation is intended to be flexible, expandable and broad. Similar to Clapp (2014), Bulkeley and Newell (2010) argue that it is important to shift our thinking away from the nation-state as the most important actor involved in climate politics, and to consider the other public and private actors involved, how and why they engage with climate governance, and what the implications of this are. This research engages with this argument by delving into transnational fishers' movements and their role in formal and informal governance – tracking how movements are negotiating, establishing, disputing and reinterpreting existing structures, practices and processes. This exploration attempts to re-cast fishers as powerful actors and agents of change, rather than simply allies of farmers' movements.

Much of the literature on mitigation/adaptation tends to reflect the mainstream direction pointed to above, which focuses on the urgent need to develop, strengthen and expand these agendas, without looking critically at how and why conventional agendas may be counterproductive – or even cause more damage. This contributes to the framing of climate change as a monolithic, unfathomable issue, which glosses over a lot of the nuances and specificities about how particular groups of people or places are impacted by it. To a large extent, this literature also neglects engagement with civil society actors

who are raising red flags about how mitigation/adaptation is currently being governed. Certainly there is some important work being done by critical scholars who both address such specificities and/or work closely with civil society (see Newell and Taylor 2018; Hunsberger et al. 2017), but this literature is too often overlooked in broader policy debates, and represents a small proportion of the research being done on climate change globally.

While much fisheries research and policy work is being done on mitigation/adaptation, little reflects on the role of fishers themselves in formal or informal climate governance. Instead, mitigation/adaptation agendas tend to address fishers as vulnerable to, or victims of climate change (see Cochrane et al. 2009; Allison et al. 2009; Adger et al. 2005), and not as powerful actors, creating effective solutions that could contribute to the development of governance tools. Despite the fact that fishers are living on the frontlines of coastal climate impacts, the nature of fishers' exclusion or inclusion in climate governance discussions, both in relation to policy and research, is perplexingly unclear. Fishers are also some of the first to feel the impacts of the sustainable development (e.g. tidal energy, dams, wind turbines) and ocean development initiatives (e.g. blue growth/blue carbon, MPAs) that are currently being implemented (FAO 2011; Barbesgaard 2017). Yet, little critical analysis is being done on the social impacts such initiatives could have on fishing communities (notable exceptions include Barbesgaard 2017; Pictou 2017; WFFP 2017).

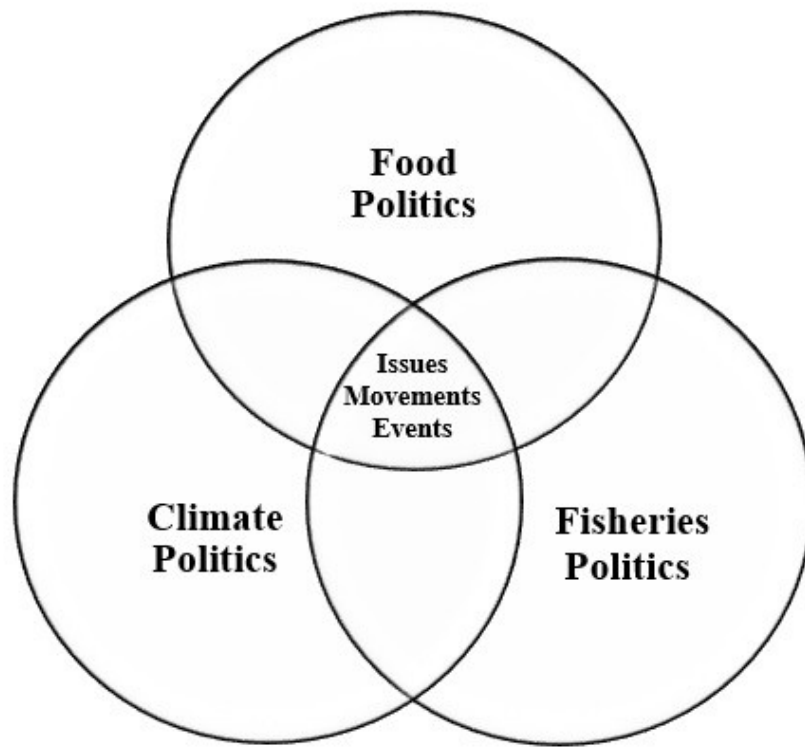
In this research, *fisheries politics* is conceptualised as *the formal and informal structures, practices and processes constituting fisheries governance (related to the production, circulation and consumption of fish), and the actors (movements, researchers, governments) engaging with (negotiating, establishing, disputing and reinterpreting) these structures, practices and processes*. Like that of food and climate politics, this conceptualisation is intended to be flexible, expandable and broad. Formal fisheries governance spaces and processes tend to operate as if fishers are powerless, and lacking the knowledge or ability to contribute to managing the fisheries sector themselves. Instead, preference is given to those using industrial fishing methods, through investment and subsidies, and inequitable policy tools (e.g. Total Allowable Catch, Individual Fishing Quotas⁴) as solutions for effective fisheries governance – both of which favour wealthy fishers and threaten small-scale producers' livelihoods (TNI et al. 2017; Mansfield 2011).

This preoccupation with governance and policy solutions is reflected in the small body of social science literature devoted to fisheries (Campling et al. 2012). While sympathetic to small-scale fisheries, such work tends to focus on reforming fisheries

⁴ Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is a limit set for a particular fishery, generally for a year or a fishing season. Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs), also known as Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), are one kind of catch share, which many governments use to regulate fishing and implement TACs (Bromley 2009).

governability and management strategies (see Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2018; Song et al. 2018; Bavinck et al. 2013), without engaging with fishers' movements or delving into the broader political and economic structures that small-scale fisheries exist within. Since the early-2000s, much of this research has been underpinned by a theory of 'interactive governance for fisheries', which proposes a creative, interdisciplinary approach to seeking opportunity-creation and addressing tensions, shifting away from a narrow problem-solving approach (Kooiman et al. 2005; Jentoft 2007; Johnsen 2014). However, this too has neglected to interact with fishers' movements. Thus, the importance of understanding the processes and actors involved in fisheries politics more comprehensively is becoming increasingly critical.

The crosscutting limitation in all three spheres of overlapping politics framed above, is that the governance/policy and research on these fields all fail to holistically address one or more of the elements of issues, movements and events – meaning we cannot have an accurate picture of the extent of their interconnections. This limitation becomes particularly intense in the context of fishers. While food and climate policy and research generally have a weak link with fishers, fisheries policy and research fails to engage with fishers' movements. And while all three political spheres seek solutions for pressing governance concerns, the alternatives put forward by fishers themselves are generally ignored. Effective alternatives for the current food, climate and fisheries crises will not be feasible when only particular segments of food producers are included in the process, while others, such as fishers, are left out or are only permitted (by more powerful actors) to engage at particular moments or in particular ways.



3. Analysing the overlaps: Key issues, movements and events

In developing a framework for analysing the dynamics of overlapping food, climate and fisheries politics, exploring key interconnecting *issues* (topics of concern), *movements* (transnational alliances), and *events* (moments of interaction), expands increasingly complex discussions around the global food and climate systems, which have tended to be more land-centric and neglected fishers and fisheries. This framework weaves together selected political economy and ecology tools, to understand the dynamics, or processes that drive development or change within a system (e.g. in which movements are embedded) or relationship (e.g. between movements and other actors). The issues that are key in this research include exclusion, dispossession, exploitation and oppression caused by industrial food and fish production; the character and terms of access small-scale fishers and food producers have to participate (or not) in food, climate and fisheries governance; and the disproportionate impacts of climate change and mitigation/adaptation on small-scale fishers and food producers. Part of the analysis of these topics of concern includes tracking the types of access small-scale fishers and food

producers have and why, and the ways in which they are incorporated or subsumed into formal and informal governance processes.

Debates about how the interplay between agency, class, mobilisation and contention shape (and are shaped by) overlapping politics are an important part of this analysis. These questions have been discussed at great length in agrarian politics literature (see Wolf 1999; Fox 1993; Paige 1978), but can also expand analytical insights into the unequal power relations, structures and institutional roles that exist within fisheries politics. As argued by Goodin and Tilly, political analysis is not simply employed when observing clashes between conflicting principles; it involves “watching the continuous creation and re-creation of rights through struggle” (2006, 5). In this research, this creation and recreation is especially visible in the context of property relations, the structures and institutions that facilitate power hierarchies, rights to resources, and how fishers’ movements organise themselves to protest exclusion from resources and property. Private property policies and privatisation agendas implemented by governments globally have been a central factor in this exclusion. “Questions of property and rent have long been at the heart of debates over the growing fisheries crisis, a debate that is gaining attention because of the importance of fisheries in ecological systems, food security and economic development” (Campling and Havice 2014, 723). Thus, property should be treated “simultaneously as a cultural system, a set of social relations, and an organization of power. They all come together in social processes” (Goodin and Tilly 2006, 4)

Ecological elements are also critical in discussions around fishing and food production, as they connect with debates about the limits of nature which often emerge in the context of how to understand the causes and consequences of the global food and fisheries crises. This is particularly important when trying to understand ecological influences on politics and power, and relationships between social, political, and economic factors and environmental issues. Neoliberal conservation rhetoric illuminates this complex relationship between politics and ecology clearly, offering up win-win-win solutions to natural limits and resource overexploitation via technological advancements (Dressler et al. 2014). In the context of fisheries, this approach is becoming increasingly widespread as the popularity of blue economy/blue growth agendas spreads rapidly worldwide, further blurring the boundaries between conserving aquatic resources and capital accumulation (Barbesgaard 2017). This also makes fisheries a fascinating, analytically distinct and challenging field. Fish are the last hunted commodity left on earth, and due to their portrayal as a renewable resource, their exhaustibility is often ignored. Mainstream approaches to fisheries governance are underpinned by quota allocations, ownership, management of fishing rights and resource conservation, which proves endlessly problematic due to both the mobility of fish and the transformation of water spaces from commonly controlled to privately owned (Campling et al. 2012). In this sense, ecology is deeply entangled in the politics around fisheries.

Food regime analysis also offers useful insights into understanding complex global processes of production, circulation and consumption. Its fundamental challenge is to trace changes in the global food system in a way that is simultaneously holistic, historically grounded and theoretically sophisticated (Magnan 2012). This is also an important aspect of understanding the interconnections within and between food, climate and fisheries politics. In this research, food regime analysis is seen as a heuristic tool for understanding the relatively stable patterns of formal (state) and informal (non-state) structures, practices and processes, that govern the production, circulation and consumption of food, and the interactions between the different actors involved (Friedmann 2016; McMichael 2009). While existing discussions around food regimes have engaged particularly with the agricultural aspects of food production, this research aims to delve deeper into the fisheries side of the story, in order to better understand present and historical relations of fish production, circulation and consumption, and capital accumulation globally. Thus, in grappling with the politics of aquatic resources, contextualised by emerging climate politics, and how these politics are contested and transformed over time, this research aims to more purposefully tie the fisheries and climate elements into existing food regime debates.

The issues highlighted above are central to the struggles of the movements that are key in this research. These include land and water-based resource justice movements and the alternatives they are constructing for addressing food, climate and fisheries crises. These movements are collective struggles involving local, national and global alliances of small-scale fishers and food producers, marginalised rural people, and environmental groups, among others. They are concerned with inclusion; equality; human and collective rights; democratising access, ownership, and control of land, water and natural resources; and the ethical and political elements of climate change, including historical responsibilities. Part of the analysis of these transnational alliances includes looking at aspects of class gender, race, generation, ethnicity, caste, and their ‘intersectionality’ in order to develop a better understanding of movement politics, movement building and alternatives.

An example of a key movement is the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), a mass-based social movement of small-scale fisher peoples from across the world, founded in India in 1997 by a number of organizations from the Global South. It currently has 43 national member organizations from 50 countries, and represents over 10 million fisher people globally. WFFP was established in response to the increasing pressure being placed on small-scale fisheries, including habitat destruction, pollution, industrial fleets encroaching on small-scale fishing territories, illegal fishing, and overfishing. In recent years, climate change has also been added to the list of threats that the movement addresses in its work (WFFP 2014).

The unequal impacts of transformations in the global food and fisheries sectors have contributed to the expansion of many transnational social movements, which must

continuously find new ways to strengthen their global linkages and seek out spaces of engagement. As more spaces open up for dialogue on issues affecting multiple countries or regions, global governance processes become increasingly implicated in trying to navigate the political integration of multiple transnational actors (Tarrow 2005; Smith and Guarnizo 2006). A key mobilisation tool, analytical guide, and alternative being implicated in movement expansion – and increasingly also by fishers’ movements – is food sovereignty, due to its counter-narrative that directly addresses both food and climate issues, with propositions such as agroecology⁵. Transnational fishers’ movements, such as WFFP, and their allies have put issues of food/agrarian and climate justice forward as key pillars of their own political agendas. They are concerned about the impacts of climate change and mitigation/adaptation on fishing communities, and are increasingly mobilising around alternatives like food sovereignty as possible ways forward (WFFP 2017; Barbesgaard 2017).

Debates around understanding the structures and actions of movements can further enrich underlying political economy/ecology analyses (see Tarrow 2011; 2005; Tilly 2004; Edelman 2001). Edelman (2001) offers insightful perspectives for exploring transnational mobilisation, describing the emergence and engagement of social movements in contentious actions as a way to broaden their political reach, and influence repressive social relations. As Tilly argues, the emergence of social movements signalled a change in the way people participated in politics in many parts of the world: “By the turn of the twenty-first century, people all over the world recognised the term ‘social movement’ as a trumpet call, as a counterweight to oppressive power, as a summons to popular action against a wide range of scourges” (2004, 3).

At the global level, transnational social movements require a high level of density, cohesion, shared collective identity, and horizontal exchange between active members, who often feel a strong connection with each other despite little direct contact. While the more precise concept ‘transnational movement organization’ involves an organised membership base in multiple countries, global justice movements, such as La Via Campesina, have also been described as a ‘movement of movements’ because of the wide array of actors (e.g. local organizations, NGOs, national movements) actively participating (Fox 2010). However, in regard to understanding the cohesion and shared identity that actually exists within a movement, and how membership is constructed (who is included and who is excluded), it is important to reflect critically on what this means in practice in particular movements (Li 2015; Bernstein 2014; McMichael 2008). Defining where a movement’s boundaries lie, and classifying which events or actors are or are not part of movement dynamics, has proven to be consistently problematic in the

⁵ Agroecology refers to both a way of producing food that works in harmony with natural cycles, and a movement or political project concerned with socio-economic and socio-political dimensions. As a political project, it seeks to transform power structures in society so that the people who feed the world hold the power to control seeds, biodiversity, land, territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons (TNI 2018; WFFP 2017)

breadth of literature on the subject. This is complicated by the existence of both direct and indirect social and political ties, linking multiple smaller networks, organizations and individual activists through various issues, movements and events. These prove to be exceedingly difficult to track, especially because movement boundaries are often an ever-moving target (Diani 2015).⁶

Building on Diani and McAdam's (2003) work on relational approaches to understanding collective action, Diani (2015) argues that current approaches to researching social movements remain too opaque, putting forward three areas requiring further development. First, conceptions of movements need to move beyond being comprised only of people, to include objects or moments (e.g. rallies, events, techniques used). Second, more information needs to be collected on the evolution of movements over time, and how changes affect engagement in collective action, since extensive archives of their activities are hard to find. And third, how virtual interactions impact social movements in the long term.

This research engages with Diani's arguments by exploring the events that emerge as key moments of interaction for particular movements. These events involve civil society organizations representing farmers, fisher folks and small and medium scale farmers, agricultural workers and indigenous peoples; NGOs; social scientists and non-academic researchers; United Nations government delegations; and private sector representatives. Part of the analysis of these moments of interaction includes tracing how they develop, how they are linked, and what their role is in shaping broader, ongoing and historical processes. An example of a key event is the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) 33rd Session, which took place in July 2018 in Rome. The COFI is a subsidiary body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which was established in 1965. It is currently the only international inter-governmental forum that examines fisheries and aquaculture issues, negotiates global agreements and instruments, and makes recommendations to governments, regional fisheries bodies, NGOs, fish workers, and the international community. COFI membership is open to all FAO members and non-members (e.g. international organizations) can participate as observers without voting rights (FAO 2018). The COFI biennial meetings are exemplary of fisheries governance events in which food security, fish production, and climate change mitigation/adaptation are discussed, and transnational fishers' movements (WFFP and WFF) are present.

In the context of transnational agrarian movements, Edelman and Borras (2016) highlight the importance of analysing the diversity of movements across time and space, within which events represent important historical markers. Similarly, Schiavoni's

6 Although much of Tilly and Diani's work focuses mainly on urban areas of the Global North, their broader conceptualizations of how movements develop, interact and engage in politics is also relevant in rural settings and other areas where fishers are present.

(2017) historical, relational and interactive (HRI) approach to understanding food sovereignty puts forward arguments about incorporating time, relational elements, and ongoing ‘eventing’ dynamics into analyses of complex processes. The analysis of interconnections, which is central to the approach used in this research, is inspired partly by the arguments above (Diani and McAdam 2003; Diani 2015; Edelman and Borras 2016), and partly by the HRI framework’s ability to weave together interactive intricacies.

While the HRI approach is most clearly linked to understanding food politics (via the food system and food sovereignty), it offers a flexible framework that can be adaptively applied to the analysis climate and fisheries politics as well. When engaging in a dynamic analysis, historical, relational and interactive elements are at the core of the processes that drive development or change within a system or relationship. More specifically, this means that each of the issues, movements and events explored in this research can be analysed partially by tracing their historical, relational and interactive elements. The events can be explored predominantly from a historical angle, due to the continuous importance of history and the events that comprise it, in shaping the present.

As Jackson argues, the cultural politics of ‘eventing’, or “the ways in which occurrences, even present-day or just-recently-past occurrences, come to take on the shape that they have for us at a particular historical junction” (2006, 492), are crucial for analyses of historical processes. Eventing is therefore a logical first step toward understanding connections between events, which are “plucked out of a ‘dynamic reality’” (2006, 494). This approach challenges explanatory strategies of systematically linking events and their outcomes as a way to generate inflexible generalizations, since an event’s contours are unfixed, blurred, and continuously being renegotiated. Eventing should therefore be understood as an ongoing dynamic process in which the boundaries of events are constantly being produced and reproduced. This form of social negotiation, or ‘contentious conversation’ (Tilly 2002), has an unusual temporal character allowing it to always take place in the present, even if the event(s) have taken place in the past. As a whole, this analytical approach aims to engage with all of the tools discussed above in an interconnected manner. This approach also requires a particular set of interwoven methodological tools that support the collection of diverse forms of qualitative data at multiple places and times.

4. Researching the overlaps: Archival, virtual and visual methods

The methodological approach and tools used in this research reflect the need to gather data on multiple levels, among multiple actors, and at multiple places and times. This approach emerges out of the contemporary globalised context in which this research is being conducted, which “calls into question social science’s primary object of scholarly

inquiry, and in so doing challenges researchers to reconfigure their units of analysis and rethink methodologies” (Mendez 2008, 136). This means that traditional means for conducting research must be adapted to more complex and dynamic contemporary contexts, rather than employed with strict adherence to their traditional methodological principles. In this research, three complementary categories of qualitative methods are necessary to collect a range of primary and secondary data. In combination, these *archival*, *virtual* and *visual* methods allow data to be collected at multiple sites, levels, and times simultaneously in order to cover more ground than would be possible by being physically present at multiple research sites:

- 1) *Archival methods* – Reviewing and analysing (via content and policy analysis tools) existing literature, policies, reports, meeting minutes, and other documents related to historical development and present context (highlighting historical continuity) of key issues, movements and events. These methods address the need to trace the construction and evolution of processes across time and space and incorporate key historical moments and events into the data.
- 2) *Virtual methods* – Tracking news and documentation about particular events and processes online, attending webinars and online meetings, and conducting in-depth Skype interviews with key actors. These methods address the need to track virtual interactions between actors, groups and movements that have added a new element of connectedness to contemporary social research. This also addresses the issue of limited time/funds by allowing multi-sited data collection to be conducted without being physically present in every place.
- 3) *Visual methods* – Participant observation at events, conducting both in-depth and informal interviews with key actors, and taking/collecting photos and videos to capture interactions and the visual nuances within them that are difficult to articulate verbally. These methods draw on elements of visual ethnography, which reflects the interpretive nature of visual outputs and adds an aesthetic element to documenting events and activities.

At the core of this research is the interconnections occurring within and between food, climate and fisheries politics, which are occurring on multiple levels, and involving diverse issues, movements and events. Therefore, this research draws on the key features of multi-sited ethnographic research – a less conventional approach that moves away from single sites and local situations, toward the circulation of meanings, objects and identities across time and space (Marcus 1995). This means it is not employed here in the anthropological sense of being physically present in every research site, as is typically associated with ethnographic methods. Instead, this mobile form of ethnography takes unexpected paths, and engages with various tracking and mapping strategies in order to construct an understanding of the associations and connections that exist between various subjects across multiple sites of activity (Marcus 1995). When

engaging in a dynamic analytical approach, this is key to tracing the processes that drive development or change within and between food, climate and fisheries politics.

Ethnographic approaches have become increasingly popular in social sciences due to their attention to the multiple interwoven factors that constitute the history and context of social groups and processes. Such approaches are seen as inclusive and effective ways to study the interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within and between organizations and social movements (Reeves et al. 2008). The reflexive nature of ethnography also means it can offer useful tools for gathering data intended for social movements to critically reflect, both inwardly and outwardly, on the structure and functioning of their agendas and alliances (Reeves et al. 2008; Plows 2008).

In the current global context, transnational alliances of activists are developing and engaging in new mobilisation strategies that challenge existing understandings of what comprises a ‘social movement’ or ‘political process’ (Edelman 2001). This adds another layer of complexity to conducting research on the role of transnational (multi-sited) movements in global politics. However, despite the challenges, more research on the broader political contexts of such movements is critical. As Edelman argues, “ethnographic analyses of social movements have been most persuasive when they transcend the single-organization or single-issue focus of much collective action research in favor of broader examinations of the political and social fields within which mobilizations occur” (2001, 309).

Building on engagement with multi-sited ethnography, and stemming from the need to incorporate multiple levels of analysis into this research, a multilevel, multi-method approach is employed. This means data is collected on multiple issues, movements and events through the use of archival, virtual and visual methods at intersecting and complementary levels, in order to understand how political dynamics unfold within and between them. This method, which aims to bridge micro-macro gaps by constructing phenomena that intersect multiple levels of analysis, is a highly useful tool for trying to understand the complexity of real organizational life (Klein and Kozlowski 2000; Costa et al. 2013).

When researching overlapping food, climate and fisheries politics, a multilevel approach is pertinent due to the complex dynamics and ‘multi-layeredness’ of the various processes and actors involved. Similarly, this approach is key to understanding and theorising social movements, which are increasingly expanding beyond local and national boundaries and becoming ‘transnationalized’ – especially those mobilising around natural resources and environmental issues (Martinez-Alier et al. 2016; Schlosberg 2013; 2004). This transnational element is explored by tracking debates on global food, climate and fisheries governance, both through processes involving international institutions (e.g. UNFCCC, COFI), and institutional documents, policies and discourse. This exploration draws from literature which tracks global food policy

and governance (Barling and Duncan 2015; Duncan 2015), and discusses methods for researching global environmental politics (Dauvergne and Clapp 2016; Dauvergne 2012), which are useful in grappling with the complexities and dynamics of overlapping politics.

This transnational approach also connects with scholar-activism, in which researchers collaborate with social movements throughout the research process. Scholar-activists are “those who explicitly aim not only to interpret the world in a scholarly way, but to change it, and who are connected to a political project or social justice oriented movement” (Borras 2016, 23-24). As a social science method, activist research has garnered both increasing recognition and critique in recent years, raising “epistemological questions about the nature and value of research, as well as political questions about how scholarship might act in conjunction with struggles for social justice” (Mendez 2008, 136). The multilevel and transnational possibilities of scholar-activist work are also valuable in the contemporary context of globalisation – meaning the current and historical social, economic, and political processes that increasingly connect individuals, groups, and institutions on a global scale (Mendez 2008). Hale reflects on ‘duality’ as a defining characteristic of activist research, because it requires loyalty both to critical scholarly spaces and struggles outside of academia. These dual political commitments transform research methods from the very beginning of a project, to its end, requiring “collaboration, dialogue, and standards of accountability that conventional methods can, and regularly do, leave out of the equation” (2006, 104).

Engaging with less conventional activist research methods requires a ‘politics of resourcefulness’ approach, in which researchers can channel academic resources and privileges (e.g. time, access, technology, experience) to supporting the work of the community groups and activist networks they collaborate with. Such research can also be designed explicitly to ask and answer questions posed by community and activist collaborators, and highlights the need to explore the barriers that are hindering active participation and activism in society (Derickson and Routledge 2015). For example, this can help us to “understand the challenges that non-academic collaborators face in affecting the change they want to see and how social relations might be transformed in ways that create the conditions for success” (Derickson and Routledge 2015, 1). This approach offers an illustrative approach to triangulating information with the research questions we pose as scholar-activists, by asking: What are the current theoretical debates or questions? Which public or institutional projects benefit from the knowledge generated? And what do non-academic collaborators want to know? (Derickson and Routledge 2015). In this contribution, these questions feed into the exploration of interconnections between researchers, governments and movements, and understanding how and why their work is both merging and serving different purposes at different moments in time. This combination of multi-sited, multilevel methods, while complex to

carry out, offers a rigorous and in-depth analysis of the unfolding political dynamics of the food, climate and fisheries sectors and how they interact.

5. Concluding discussion: Analytical and social implications of overlapping politics

This contribution has explored a combination of analytical and social aspects, focused on generating critical insights that may be useful in the strengthening or expansion of practical pursuits towards food/agrarian, climate and fisheries justice. It has offered a framework for analysing the dynamics of overlapping global food, climate and fisheries politics, using three key building blocks – the issues (topics of concern), movements (transnational alliances), and events (moments of interaction) interconnecting these politics. It has argued that tracking how they overlap, and the analytical and social implications of these overlaps, can contribute to expanding existing, somewhat disconnected, debates around food, climate and fisheries politics. Studying fishers and fishers' movements in an era of agrarian and environmental transformations is critical, because such research can contribute important perspectives, experiences and knowledge from diverse actors – including fishers themselves. It can support the construction of better understandings of where and how organised fishers' movements are engaging with overlapping politics, and through what channels they are finding ways to contribute to and participate in formal and informal governance processes and spaces.

The purpose of the analytical approach discussed here has been to build onto and extend political economy and ecology debates, by including historical and emerging connections with climate and fisheries politics. This contributes toward broadening the conception of food politics beyond land and agriculture, by incorporating the implications of fishers, aquatic resources and spaces in food system transformations; extending debates around climate politics, by analysing land and water as interconnected spaces, and how mitigation/adaptation agendas are impacting fishers; and strengthening understandings of fisheries politics by integrating knowledge, insights and alternatives from fishers and fishers' movements. Part of the expansion of these debates includes conceptualising how and why fisheries related issues, movements and events, and the researchers, governments and movements working on these themes are coming together, and how these linkages may serve different purposes at different moments in time.

This contribution has also proposed a multilevel, multi-sited methodological approach, arguing that a combination of archival, virtual and visual methods is crucial when collecting primary and secondary data at multiple places and times. While the analytical and methodological elements of this framework have focused particularly on global food, climate and fisheries politics, they may also be relevant for studies of other overlapping politics, both international and national. An important social aspect of the

engaged methodological approach involves strengthening existing relationships with key social movements and establishing new collaborations with others, in order to collectively develop new ways for fishers' voices to emerge – both through academic publications, as well as popular format reports and briefs written for the general public. Such research may also serve as a useful analytical tool for movements themselves to gain insights into their own positions and contributions in different spheres of politics, and to identify new ways to move forward. Collaborations between multiple engaged researchers or scholar-activists working on themes related to food, climate and fisheries politics are also important for broadening the critical community of people working on cross-cutting land/water issues, movements and events.

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