

The feminisation of poverty as an impact of globalisation in West African Small-Scale Fisheries

Aliou SALL

Mundus maris
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International markets as drivers of change

- The globalisation concept as referring to the expansion of markets is no new phenomenon to artisanal fisheries in West Africa.
- For >decade, several factors have combined to prevent public authorities to recognise the true value of the importance of small-scale fishing (SSF)
- As a result, we are witnessing a process of de-regulation of social organisation of communities the first victims of which are women in SSF.

International trade effects (1)

- The international seafood market as Main vector for creating new value chains in the face of resource rarefaction
- Associated de-struturation of social organisation in fishing communities
- Women relegated from original roles as family entrepreneurs gradually to poorly recognised supporting roles



International trade effects (2)

- An intelligent adaptation to the informal sector by international sea food investors / traders, particularly from Asia, to penetrate the fishing communities:
- Control the capital assets in the SSF (means of production).
- These have increased prices very significantly as a result of resource rarefaction and competition.
- Effects on the social tissue



Explaining the effects (1)

1. Women in processing and marketing (fresh and processed produts):

- UEMOA Study 2014: Benin, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire: 30.000 operators in fresh fish marketing (85% women);
- Processing sector is poorly documented:

Only for SN, 1600 women entrepreneurs creating 4500 jobs directly around small pelagics, e.g. for many young men from rural areas



Explaining the effects (2)

2. Women's important social status in traditional communities

- Exclusive access to all landed catches;
- Profits from marketing partly used as credit to fishermen (pre-financing fishing trips whenever needed);
- Important role both upstream and downstream of fishing operations (managers of family assets).

Explaining the effects (3)

2. Women's important social status in traditional communities (cont'd)

- Savings for social reproduction through rotating savings schemes ("tontines" for schooling, etc. (PM: Polygamie = social charges)
- Additionnal revenus coming from their role as restaurateur: One share as crew member.
- Valuable reserves: loincloth of value, jewelry, etc. (as bank savings and credit are unavailable)

Explaining the effects (4)

3. Globalisation and feminisation of poverty - the process:

- Deep transformations in the ownership structure of the means of production: Increasing costs of means of production, gradual expropriation for the benefit of outside investors;
- Trend observed since more than one decade: specific issue concerning the increasing demand from international markets for octopus - neither part of culinary tradition, nor part of species marketed by women/ value chains dominated by middlemen working on commission;
- Markets for new species: e.g. Largehead hairtail ...



Dispute between a commissioned trader and a woman in Mai 2018/ Hann

Explaining the effects: Examples

- The narrowing of the boundaries between the industrial and the craft sectors: Chinese
 + Coreans becoming owners of SSF boats
- So former SSF owner becomes crew: seen in Guinea, Guinea Bissau (all catches collected are exported; only low-value fish handled through local agents in local markets (higher price)
- Indian and Chinese operators invest in processing sector (e.g. dried salted shark) / Products exported mainly to Ghana, Nigeria, Central Africa from Senegal

Explaining the effects: Examples (cont'd)

- New types of migration = destructuration in a context of constraints to ressource access: New legislation in RIM forces longer-term migration for supplies of fish meal factories, → women in SN lack access to raw material;
- Expansion of factories triggers further

migrations for pelagics in direct competition of processing and marketing by women for human consumption.

Explaining the effects: Examples (cont'd)

- Dependence on waste from exporting factories (SN, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau); case of Mballing in SN located about 90 km from the harbour.
- Dependance on deep-frozen pelagics from foreign trawlers operating along West

African coast (even in SN, Guinea Conakry, not only Benin, Togo, Ghana, Nigeria).



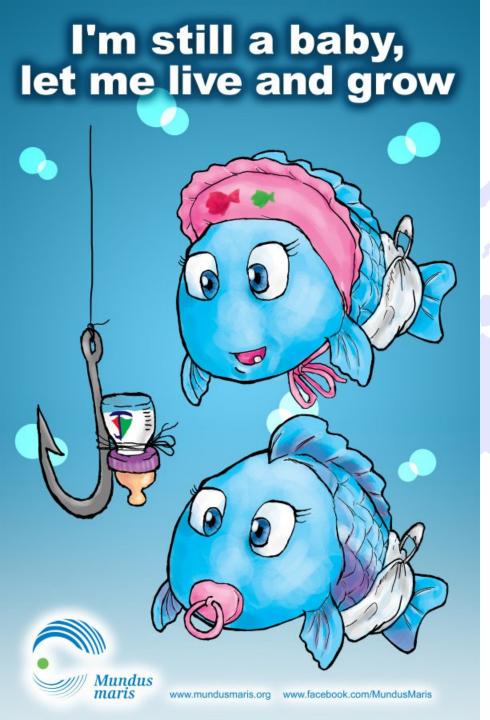
Conclusions

- Disappearance of some value chains in the processing sectors, where women used to be specialised (Cybium) = emblematic in culinary tradition, nowadays exploited by Coreans: exported deep-frozen;
- Responses by cash-strapped women are
 - e.g. to intensify group purchases and setting up of mutual savings groups.



Conclusions (cont'd)

- Women work on diversifying revenue generating activities (but only small businesses) in struggle to fight selective impoverishment in a global market.
- To stem the tide and retain/ regain their status as entrepreneurs, they will need well-structured and sustained access to education, social services and credit – the sort of structural support that has been successful in improving their lot in other countries.



Thanks for your attention

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www.mundusmaris.org

aliou@mundusmaris.org