

Advance Praise for *Global Fishers: The Politics of Transnational Movements*

“*Global Fishers: The Politics of Transnational Movements* by Elyse Mills is a pathbreaking book about a very important but largely overlooked transnational social movement. It is a modern classic in the making. All academic researchers and activists interested in social justice and a positive future of humanity must read this book.”

— Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., co-author of *Political Dynamics of Transnational Agrarian Movements*

“*Global Fishers* offers an unparalleled historical account of one of the world’s lesser known, but vitally important social movements. But Elyse Mills’ book is more than a history of the transnational fishers’ movements, it is also an insider account of political strategies, splits and struggles as they unfold to resist the ever-shifting forces of industrialization, privatization and extractivism. Essential reading for students of anthropology, development studies and politics who know that history is made as much from the bottom-up as it is from the top-down.”

— Liam Campling, author of *Capitalism and the Sea* and professor of international business and development, Queen Mary University of London

“A powerful message about the past, present and future of global fishers’ movements. This book advances our understandings of the politics of fishers’ movements and, in so doing, offers important insights into the politics of fisheries and food systems more broadly. A must read for anyone working at the intersection of movements and food governance.”

— Jessica Duncan, associate professor in the politics of food systems transformations, Wageningen University

“This is a very well researched and written book that will make an important contribution to the scholarship and practice of transnational fishers’ movements and social movements more broadly. The text provides a valuable overview of two key network organizations at the centre of fishers’ movements and traces their origins, development, and engagement in contemporary transnational political spaces.”

— Charles Levkoe, Canada Research Chair in Equitable and Sustainable Food Systems and associate professor, Lakehead University

“Can we conceive food sovereignty and climate justice without the peoples from the lakes, rivers and oceans? Clearly not and yet we know little about them. This book is a groundbreaking contribution to fill this gap. It tells the story of the fisher peoples, their struggles and aspirations, and how they have organized to defend not just themselves, but our blue planet.”

— Sofia Monsalve, secretary general, FIAN International

“This book fills an important gap in the literature on global politics and transnational social movements through its focus on small-scale fishers’ movements.”

— Kristen Lowitt, assistant professor, School of Environmental Studies, Queen’s University

“Elyse Noble Mills has written the definitive account of transnational fishers’ movements, such as the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF). But this magnificent book is more than that, analyzing not just justice movements of small-scale fishers but also the varied global governance arenas that deal with ocean and inland aquatic resources, climate change, plummeting seafood stocks, and thorny issues of geopolitics, biodiversity, and intellectual property of genetic material. A remarkable tour-de-force!”

— Marc Edelman, Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York

“*Global Fishers: The Politics of Transnational Movements* is a fascinating book that should be essential reading for anyone interested in the world’s small-scale fisheries, in social justice movements, and in big global issues of climate change and food security. Mills explores how these all interrelate, in an intriguing book that looks back in time, and forward, through the lens of the two major international fishers’ movements.”

— Anthony Charles, director, School of the Environment, Saint Mary’s University

“Mills has crafted a clear, well organized and highly informative book describing the struggles, politics, aspirations and possibilities of the global “fisheries justice” movements. It is a ‘must read’ for students of history, food justice activists, and indeed for anyone who seeks to understand the critical link between small-scale fishers, food security, ecological health and climate change.”

— Nettie Wiebe, farmer, founding leader of La Via Campesina and professor emerita at St. Andrew’s College, University of Saskatchewan

“In this empirically rich and carefully argued book, Elyse Mills analyses the structural conditions which shaped the transnational fishers’ struggles for justice and recognition. She shows how activists were able to build and maintain through painstaking organizational work an effective movement, which not only defended fishers’ interests but also contributed to food sovereignty and agrarian justice movements. This is essential reading for scholars and activists interested in social movements and environmental justice.”

— Murat Arsel, professor of political economy,  
International Institute of Social Studies

“Millions of fishermen and women in developing countries undergo great hardship because of the waves of industrialization, privatization and conservation that have whipped their industries. In response, however, they have organized themselves and fought battles to defend their ways of life. This book provides a thoughtful analysis of the backgrounds and the political strategies of the most important international fishers’ movements of this moment. The author must be congratulated for contributing a timely account of this overlooked corner of global food politics.”

— Maarten Bavinck, professor of coastal resource governance,  
University of Amsterdam

Excerpt

# **Global Fishers**

Excerpt

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# **Global Fishers**

**The Politics of Transnational Movements**

**ELYSE NOBLE MILLS**

**CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



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# Contents

<b>Critical Development Studies Series .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Series Editors .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>1 Diving into the Politics of Transnational Fisheries</b>	
<b>Justice Movements .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Why Fishers' Movements Matter .....	3
Framing and Doing Research on Movements .....	5
Positionality and Context .....	7
Organization of the Book .....	10
<b>2 Three Waves of Development in Global Fisheries .....</b>	<b>12</b>
First Wave: Industrialization (post-1900) .....	13
Second Wave: Privatization (post-1970) .....	17
Third Wave: Conservation (post-2000) .....	21
Overlapping Waves and Processes of Exclusion .....	25
<b>3 Transnational Fishers' Movements: Birth, Consolidation, Evolution and Contestation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Building an International Fishers' Network .....	30
Evolution of Two Transnational Movements .....	50
Developing the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines (2009–14) .....	56
Post-Guidelines Endorsement and Ongoing Challenges (2014–20) .....	61
Pivotal Developments for Political Agendas and Alliance-Building .....	65
Concluding Remarks .....	74

<b>4 International Political Spaces: Movements as Actors in Fisheries, Food and Climate Governance .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Fisheries Governance Space: Committee on Fisheries (COFI) .....	81
Food Governance Space: Committee on World Food Security (CFS) .....	91
Climate Governance Space: Conference of the Parties (COP).....	99
Concluding Remarks.....	109
<b>5 Contentious Fisheries Issues: At the Heart of Social and Political Struggles .....</b>	<b>112</b>
IPC Fisheries Working Group.....	113
Dispossession and Displacement Caused by Ocean and Coastal Grabbing .....	118
Threats Emerging from Industrial Aquaculture Expansion.....	120
Critical Loss of Aquatic Genetic Resources and Biodiversity .....	122
Detrimental Neglect of Inland Fisheries .....	124
Development, Exclusion and Implications for Small-Scale Fishers	126
Concluding Remarks.....	132
<b>6 Capacities, Alliances, Critical Voices and the Future of Fisheries Justice.....</b>	<b>134</b>
Overlapping Processes of Exclusion Propelling Mobilization .....	135
Internal Capacity-Building and Forming Productive Alliances.....	136
Contributing a Critical Voice to International Political Spaces.....	137
Raising the Profile of Small-Scale Fisheries Issues.....	138
Critical Issues for Fisheries, Food and Climate Governance .....	139
Challenges and Ways Forward for Fisheries Justice Activism.....	140
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>160</b>

## Critical Development Studies Series

Three decades of uneven capitalist development and neoliberal globalization have devastated the economies, societies, livelihoods and lives of people around the world, especially those in societies of the Global South. Now more than ever, there is a need for a more critical, proactive approach to the study of global and development studies. The challenge of advancing and disseminating such an approach — to provide global and development studies with a critical edge — is on the agenda of scholars and activists from across Canada and the world and those who share the concern and interest in effecting progressive change for a better world.

This series provides a forum for the publication of small books in the interdisciplinary field of critical development studies — to generate knowledge and ideas about transformative change and alternative development. The editors of the series welcome the submission of original manuscripts that focus on issues of concern to the growing worldwide community of activist scholars in this field. Critical development studies (CDS) encompasses a broad array of issues ranging from the sustainability of the environment and livelihoods, the political economy and sociology of social inequality, alternative models of local and community-based development, the land and resource-grabbing dynamics of extractive capital, the subnational and global dynamics of political and economic power, and the forces of social change and resistance, as well as the contours of contemporary struggles against the destructive operations and ravages of capitalism and imperialism in the twenty-first century.

The books in the series are designed to be accessible to an activist readership as well as the academic community. The intent is to publish a series of small books (54,000 words, including bibliography, endnotes, index and front matter) on some of the biggest issues in the interdisciplinary field of

critical development studies. To this end, activist scholars from across the world in the field of development studies and related academic disciplines are invited to submit a proposal or the draft of a book that conforms to the stated aim of the series. The editors will consider the submission of complete manuscripts within the 54,000-word limit. Potential authors are encouraged to submit a proposal that includes a rationale and short synopsis of the book, an outline of proposed chapters, one or two sample chapters, and a brief biography of the author(s).

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## Series Editors

HENRY VELTMEYER is a research professor at Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (Mexico) and professor emeritus of International Development Studies at Saint Mary's University (Canada), with a specialized interest in Latin American development. He is also co-chair of the Critical Development Studies Network and a co-editor of Fernwood's Agrarian Change and Peasant Studies series. The *CDS Handbook: Tools for Change* (Fernwood, 2011) was published in French by University of Ottawa Press as *Des outils pour le changement : Une approche critique en études du développement* and in Spanish as *Herramientas para el Cambio*, with funding from Oxfam UK by CIDES, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz, Bolivia.

ANNETTE AURÉLIE DESMARAIS is the Canada Research Chair in Human Rights, Social Justice and Food Sovereignty at the University of Manitoba (Canada). She is the author of *La Vía Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants* (Fernwood, 2007), which has been republished in French, Spanish, Korean, Italian and Portuguese, and *Frontline Farmers: How the National Farmers Union Resists Agribusiness and Creates our New Food Future* (Fernwood, 2019). She is co-editor of *Food Sovereignty: Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community* (Fernwood, 2010); *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems* (Fernwood, 2011); and *Public Policies for Food Sovereignty: Social Movements and the State* (Routledge, 2017).

RAÚL DELGADO WISE is a research professor and director of the PhD program in Development Studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas (Mexico). He holds the prestigious UNESCO Chair on Migration and Development and is executive director of the International Migration and Development Network, as well as author and editor of some twenty

books and more than a hundred essays. He is a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences and editor of the book series, Latin America and the New World Order, for Miguel Angel Porrúa publishers and chief editor of the journal *Migración y Desarrollo*. He is also a member of the international working group, People's Global Action on Migration Development and Human Rights.

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*Dedicated to the members of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples  
and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers,  
for their continuous commitment to a more just and equitable world.*

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Excerpt



# Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Coordination Committee
CFI	Coastal Fisheries Initiative
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
COFI	Committee on Fisheries
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
CSM	Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIAN	Food First Information and Action Network
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFQ	Individual Fishing Quota
IIPFCC	International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change
IITC	International Indian Treaty Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC	International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITQ	Individual Transferable Quota
LMPA	Large Marine Protected Area

LVC	La Vía Campesina
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MFU	Maritime Fishermen's Union
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NFF	National Fishworkers Forum
NFI	Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (FAO)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REDD+	reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
SFPA	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SSF-GSF	Global Strategic Framework on the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines
SSF GUIDELINES	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries
TBTI	Too Big to Ignore
TNI	Transnational Institute
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNDROP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VGFSYN	Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
WFF	World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers
WFFP	World Forum of Fisher Peoples
WFP	World Food Programme
WG	Working Group
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZAC	Zone of Action for the Climate

# 1 Diving into the Politics of Transnational Fisheries Justice Movements

**T**ransnational fishers' movements, like all social movements, have a history marked by both periods of politically charged, lively mobilization, and quieter moments, impacted by a lack of capacity, resources and organization. It is a history full of inspiring events, general assemblies, protests, alliance-building, convergences, internal and external tensions, conflicts and agreements, and social and political losses and gains. It is also a history that is difficult to piece together, due to the absence of complete or available archives. There are fragments of documentation here and there, mainly in the collections of individuals who have been part of the movements or of organizations that have worked closely with the movements. There are also vivid stories shared between long-term and newer members and allies and differing perspectives on how things played out in various meetings and processes. Much of the movements' historical fabric and organizational memory is preserved within the minds of the founding and early members and the members of allied organizations who have worked with the movements for many years. Some of this history has been lost along with members who have left the movements or passed away. However, ensuring that the history that remains is preserved, shared widely and learned from is crucial for the future viability of the movements.

Fishers' movements face the added complication of being embedded within the fisheries sector — a sector laden with complex and contentious politics, within which many conflicting interests are at play. New actors, issues and agendas are constantly emerging, making it difficult to have a clear picture of who is doing what and why. Particularly enigmatic is the role that social movements play in fisheries politics. This book bridges this gap by

focusing on two transnational movements representing small-scale fishers — the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF). It links the politics of these movements with academic and political debates by exploring three connected spheres: *transnational movements* contesting and seeking to influence the politics of global fisheries; *international political spaces* movements are prioritizing; and *contentious fisheries issues* movements are struggling over (Mills, 2021).

Despite being historically under-researched, fishers' movements and their political agendas have played a critical role in global fisheries, particularly in the context of rural and environmental transformations. These global transformations include rural spaces and food production expanding beyond farming and agriculture; climate politics moving to the forefront of global development processes; and international political arenas (such as the United Nations) increasingly illuminating the importance of transnational social movements (Borras et al., 2018). These transformations accentuate the critical need for fishers' organizations to mobilize beyond their national boundaries and expand their movements internationally. Exploring movements like WFFP and WFF gives us a more concrete picture and a better

**Transnational Movements**

**Contesting and seeking to influence the politics of global fisheries**

- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)
- World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF)

**International Political Spaces**

**International arenas movements are prioritizing**

- Committee on Fisheries (COFI)
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP)

**Contentious Fisheries Issues**

**Shaping movement struggles and political agendas**

- Blue economy and blue growth
- Ocean and coastal grabbing
- Aquaculture
- Aquatic genetic resources and biodiversity
- Inland fisheries

understanding of the dynamics that are reshaping global political spaces and social movement politics (Mills, 2021).

## Why Fishers' Movements Matter

In the last fifteen years, the politics around food systems — namely production, circulation and consumption — have gained widespread interest. Food systems became a particularly hot topic in the wake of the 2007–08 food price crisis, during which food prices around the world shot up rapidly, leading to increased hunger, poverty and social unrest. This crisis directed attention to the role of small-scale farmers and agrarian issues in the global food system, resulting in a remarkable expansion of research in this field (Clapp, 2014). In contrast, awareness of small-scale fishers' issues and perspectives has remained limited, in both research and political spheres. Small-scale farmers and transnational agrarian movements have been able to gain access to new avenues for engagement with policymakers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers, which has contributed to broadening the visibility of prominent agrarian movements, such as La Vía Campesina (LVC)<sup>1</sup> (Edelman and Borras, 2016). Yet, their fisher counterparts, WFFP and WFF, remain less visible. Fishers are typically subsumed into “agrarian” or “peasant” categories, which is partly accurate in that, in some national contexts, fisheries is understood as a part of the agricultural sector. However, merging fisheries and agriculture limits our understanding of the unique and complex issues that fishers face. The comparative lack of public awareness of small-scale fisheries issues is also surprising considering the sector's crucial importance to global food security — contributing 66 percent of catches for human consumption and providing 90 percent of employment in fisheries (FAO, 2020c). This raises the question: why is so much less known about fishers' movements than their farming counterparts?

All three transnational movements (LVC, WFF and WFFP) were established in the 1990s, partially in response to the ramping up of international food trade and the 1995 establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (WFF, 1997). Initially, most members of WFFP were part of WFF, as one consolidated international organization. However, internal political tensions caused a split in 2000 at the 2nd WFF General Assembly in Loctudy, France (discussed in Chapter 3). The Icelandic, French and North and South American members remained in WFF, while the members from Asia, Africa and Oceania, and a Canadian First Nations member formed the WFFP (Mills, 2022; Sinha, 2012). Public lists show that WFFP currently has 75 member organizations (WFFP, 2020a), while WFF has 44 (WFF, 2020a).

#### 4 Global Fishers: The Politics of Transnational Movements

WFFP and WFF can be considered “fisheries justice” movements, meaning collective struggles of local, national and transnational alliances of small-scale fishers, fishing communities and their allies who are concerned with issues of inclusion, equity, human rights, democratizing access to and control of natural resources and the politics of climate change (Mills, 2018). WFFP considers itself

a mass-based social movement of small-scale fisher people from across the world, founded by a number of mass-based organisations from the Global South. WFFP was established in response to the increasing pressure being placed on small-scale fisheries, including habitat destruction, anthropogenic pollution, encroachment on small-scale fishing territories by the large scale fishing fleets, illegal fishing and overfishing. (WFFP, 2020a)

WFF considers itself

an international organization that brings together small scale fishers’ organizations for the establishment and upholding of fundamental human rights, social justice and culture of artisanal/ small scale fish harvesters and fish workers, affirming the sea as source of all life and committing themselves to sustain fisheries and aquatic resources for the present and future generations to protect their livelihoods. (WFF, 2020a)

Both movements have played an important role in political debates in global fisheries by advocating for the human rights and survival of small-scale fishers, raising critical issues and demanding space at decision-making tables. This book argues that it has become increasingly important to connect WFFP and WFF more directly to academic and political debates in order to expand and deepen our understanding of food systems and social movements, particularly in this era of climate change. The book explores how deeper analyses of the politics of transnational fishers’ movements can 1) broaden the scope of food politics beyond land and agriculture by examining how small-scale fishers, fisheries resources and territories are entangled in food system transformations and how fishers’ movements contribute to alternative approaches; 2) extend debates around climate politics through analyses of how environmental change and mitigation and adaptation initiatives are impacting small-scale fishers and fisheries and how fishers’ movements respond to these impacts; and 3) strengthen existing bodies of fisheries research and analyses of fisheries politics by integrating knowledge,

insights and alternatives from fishers and their movements (Mills, 2021).<sup>2</sup>

Considering the many forms small-scale fisheries take globally, including for example artisanal and subsistence, and the diversity within these categories, it is difficult to adequately address all of the specificities within a broad discussion on transnational movements and the politics of global fisheries. Yet, as Charles (2011) notes, small-scale fisheries do share a core set of characteristics, including the low-impact methods and the social and cultural role fisheries play in their communities — particularly in comparison to large-scale, industrial fisheries. These commonalities make it useful to explore small-scale fisheries collectively, with small-scale fishers making up one broad socio-economic group, especially in the context of international processes like fisheries governance, seafood production and trade.<sup>3</sup>

This book aims to contribute to understanding where and how organized fishers' movements are engaging in the politics of global fisheries and through what channels they are finding ways to participate in formal and informal governance spaces and processes. The approach used to carry out this study also contributes analytical tools and empirical information which help to expand our understanding of transnational fishers' movements as movements that both overlap with, but are also distinct from, transnational agrarian movements. Beyond academic debates, this book also offers analyses and insights for fishers' movements themselves into their own positions and contributions in political arenas and identifies ways forward for strengthening and expanding practical pursuits toward fisheries justice.

## Framing and Doing Research on Movements

Situated within the field of international development, this book takes an interdisciplinary and crosscutting approach. It engages with insights from both social and political sciences, weaving together three core sets of literature: fisheries politics (e.g., fishing communities, fisheries governance, policy); food politics (e.g., small-scale producers, food systems, food sovereignty); and climate politics (e.g., climate governance, mitigation and adaptation, climate justice).<sup>4</sup> Concepts and debates emerging from these three sets of literature have been used as building blocks to develop a crosscutting analytical framework. In relation to transnational mobilization among fishers, understandings of social struggle, social movements and the strategies used to broaden social and political reach have been particularly crucial in this book (see Edelman and Borrás, 2016; Tarrow, 2011; Tilly, 2004; Edelman, 2001). The emergence of social movements around the world signalled a change in the way ordinary people participated in politics. By the early

2000s, the term “social movement” was recognized globally as a call for popular action and a way to resist oppressive, unbalanced power structures. Movements came to be understood as inclusive organizations made up of members of different interest groups, such as food producers, workers, women, students and youth, who are all bound together by a common struggle, often stemming from the malfunctioning or lack of democracy in a specific political setting (Tilly, 2004).

Yet, as Diani (2015) argues, approaches to researching social movements have historically been opaque. He suggests three areas that need to be further developed: First, conceptions of movements need to move beyond being comprised only of people to include objects, moments, spaces, rallies, events and strategies. Second, more information needs to be collected on the evolution of movements over time and how changes affect engagement in collective action. This is a response to studies of movements often being done at a single point in time and extensive archives of their activities being hard to find. Third, more research needs to be done on the long-term impacts of virtual interactions in social movements. Part of the focus of this book — particularly in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 — has been to explore and develop these three areas in relation to fishers’ movements. This includes looking into some of the main international political spaces the movements participate in and how these spaces have contributed to the movement-building process. Political spaces themselves are opportunities and channels through which civil society actors can attempt to influence the discourses, policies and decisions that affect them (Gaventa, 2006). For transnational movements, international spaces have become particularly important since the 1990s as the intensification of globalization has contributed to changing forms of power and opened up new governance arenas, which has consequently created new spaces for citizen action and engagement (Gaventa and Tandon, 2010; Scott, 2008; Edelman, 1999). As global governance arenas, particularly at the UN level, began shifting toward a more participatory approach, civil society actors seeking to influence policy and decision-making processes, increasingly recognized the strategic importance of engaging in international intergovernmental spaces (McKeon, 2017a).

Set within this framework of transnational movements and international political spaces, it was necessary to develop an approach that suited the global context of this research. Early in this research process, I discovered the lack of written historical information about transnational fishers’ movements. There was no central movement archive, no published histories and little trackable online presence. However, I also quickly learned that everyone I talked to about the movements had stories to tell and perspectives to share



about what had happened at different moments in the movements' history. I began to collect these stories and weave together a historical narrative.

The research process involved a combination of three complementary sets of methods — archival, virtual and in-person — which were used to collect both primary and secondary data. The archival methods involved reviewing and analyzing existing literature, policies, reports, meeting minutes, mailing lists, social media pages and other documents. The virtual methods involved tracking discussions, news and documentation about particular processes and events online, attending online meetings and webinars and conducting formal semi-structured interviews with key actors. Interviewees included members of fishers' and agrarian movements, researchers and representatives from NGOs and international organizations. The in-person methods involved engaging in participant observation at events, conducting both formal semi-structured and informal conversational interviews with key actors (same as above) and taking and collecting photos. All interview participants have been kept anonymous in order to respect the political sensitivity of the research. This combination of methods allowed more ground to be covered transnationally, facilitating the collection of a range of data at multiple places and times and addressing a necessity which has emerged out of the contemporary globalized context for researchers to expand their approaches and methodologies (Mendez, 2008). This approach also allowed me to gain important insights into the evolution and trajectory of the transnational fishers' movements that would have been difficult to uncover otherwise.

## **Positionality and Context**

An important element of understanding how and why someone does a particular type of research is understanding the researcher's story. What sparked their interest? What steps led them to conceiving of the research, and later, conducting it? Before diving into the story of the fishers' movements that unfolds in the rest of this book, I first give a brief account of what sparked my interest, both politically and academically, in these movements and the politics surrounding fisheries. I grew up in the rural fishing community of Prospect Bay, just outside of Halifax in the eastern province of Nova Scotia, Canada. As a child, lakes and oceans were a regular part of my daily life. I spent my summers fishing and paddling around the lake behind my childhood home, catching "tickle fish" (small crayfish) and hermit crabs, and swimming in the cool waters of the Northumberland Strait at our family cottage. For dinner, we would often go to the local lobster pound or buy the

freshest catch directly from the lobster fishers that docked a few minutes down the road. When I finished high school, some of my classmates became lobster fishers, usually because they inherited a licence from a relative. The local fishers were always a visible fixture in the community, either because you could see their colourful boats tethered to their buoys in one of the bays or because someone had been lost at sea during a storm. After the tragic Swissair 111 crash off the coast of Peggy’s Cove in 1998, the fishers were the first to get in their boats and help comb the waters for possible survivors, with many of them suffering from lifelong trauma because of what they found.

A decade later, during my undergraduate program in international development studies at York University in Toronto, a course about civil society in Latin America led to an interest in social movements. In that course, I did research projects on mobilization among the *cocaleros* (coca producers) in Bolivia and on agency in small-scale fishing communities in Nicaragua. This fascination with social organization continued to grow during my undergraduate life, propelling me to apply for a master’s program where I could explore this interest more deeply. The International Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands offered just that, and I joined the Agrarian and Environmental Studies major in order to delve deeper into critical agrarian studies and debates around rural social movements — particularly agrarian movements. I soon noticed that fishers were rarely visible in debates about rural social movements. Even when mentioned in passing, as for example, allies of agrarian movements, fishers never seemed to be the key point of interest, nor was much understood about their politics or history.

In 2015, while working as a freelance researcher, I had the opportunity to join the Transnational Institute (TNI) team in Paris for the COP21 (UN Climate Change Conference), where the Paris Agreement was adopted. In another part of the city, there was a parallel people’s assembly taking place (discussed in detail in Chapter 4), where TNI was part of a delegation of social movements and allied organizations that were conducting workshops and events. Together with WFFP and WFF, TNI co-organized events on blue carbon as a “false solution” for climate change and converging land and water struggles and filmed interviews with WFFP and WFF members for a documentary. This was my first opportunity to work with the fishers’ movements, and this work continued through research on EU Fisheries Agreements (see Mills et al., 2017) and the beginning of my PhD project in 2016.

During my five-year PhD journey, I had many more exciting opportunities to collaborate with and learn more about the transnational fishers’ movements. Some of the highlights were participating in the WFFP’s 7th

General Assembly in New Delhi in 2017; conducting a project evaluation for WFFP in 2018; participating in a political training for the fishers' movements and the UN's Committee on Fisheries 33rd Session in Rome in 2018; and participating in the Civil Society Mechanism forum and the Committee on World Food Security 46th Session in Rome in 2019.<sup>5</sup> These experiences taught me a great deal about the politics of global fisheries and how fishers' movements navigate international forums, while also allowing me to develop invaluable relationships with many of the members and allies of transnational fishers' movements. This was crucial for carrying out this research, not only for being recognized as a researcher but also as an ally supporting the struggles of the movements.

My position as an "engaged researcher," who is both sympathetic to and critical of the movements being studied (Edelman, 2009), or a "scholar-activist," who conducts rigorous academic work that is explicitly connected to political projects or movements (Borras, 2016), was central in guiding my approach to this research. A scholar-activist approach is challenging and involves a constant balancing act in figuring out how emotionally or politically invested you can be in your research and the people you engage with, as well as when to establish boundaries. A wise person who has worked with social movements for decades once told me that there are typically four types of researchers who engage with movements:

- 1) those who work closely with the movement, often taking on a staff role within the movement to support it from the inside. They often only publish what they see as beneficial to the movement;
- 2) those who are considered an ally and are invited by the movement to work on a particular project for short periods of time or to contribute their expertise on a particular issue;
- 3) those who are sympathetic to the movement but are autonomous enough to offer constructive criticism on how things are functioning as a way to possibly strengthen its agenda; and
- 4) those who are completely autonomous from the movement, conducting observational research from a distance, but are occasionally invited by the movement to participate in events or discussions.

As someone who moves between the second and third types, my role fluctuated at different moments during the research process. At times I felt conflicted about setting boundaries and about my alignment with the political struggles of the actors and movements I work with. Questions arose about how constructively critical I should or could be and what informa-

tion could be revealed in order to avoid negatively impacting the actors and movements involved or their political relationships. There is no handbook for addressing such questions, so I dealt with these using social and political intuition, as well as advice from colleagues and mentors who had experience with similar situations. I also had many conversations with people engaging in or with fishers' movements to get a sense of what kind of critical analysis they found most useful to include in the research. These conversations served as important guideposts throughout the research process.

## Organization of the Book

This book consists of six chapters, including this introductory chapter and a conclusion. Chapter 2 sets the context and explores the historical development of global fisheries, arguing that there have been three distinct yet overlapping waves: the industrialization wave (post-1900), the privatization wave (post-1970) and the conservation wave (post-2000). The chapter provides a global and historical framing for the book, reflecting on structural and institutional transformations in fisheries in the last century, and situates the research within development studies debates. It also reflects on how the consequences of these waves have facilitated overlapping processes of exclusion in global fisheries.

Chapter 3 tracks the transnational movements that are contesting and seeking to influence the politics of global fisheries. It weaves together the histories of WFF and WFFP, exploring the steps that were taken toward building an international fishers' network between 1984 and 2000 and the movements' evolution between 2000 to 2020. The chapter turns to three pivotal developments, which offer critical insights into the movements' political agendas and alliance-building strategies. These include fishers' movements' internalization of overlapping fisheries, food and climate crises; convergences between fishers' movements and agrarian movements and platforms; and intergovernmental bodies increasing their attention to fisheries issues in their analyses and activities.

Chapter 4 maps the international political spaces that fishers' movements are prioritizing. These include three intergovernmental United Nations spaces focusing on fisheries, food and climate governance: the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The chapter looks particularly at the movements' strategies for participation in these spaces, the role of alliances and the challenges they face in their engagement.

Chapter 5 identifies the contentious fisheries issues that movements are struggling over. It focuses on five main issues highlighted by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty's (IPC) Fisheries Working Group and how the movements have grappled with and addressed these issues. These include blue economy and growth, ocean and coastal grabbing, aquaculture, aquatic genetic resources and biodiversity, and inland fisheries. The chapter also explores how these issues are embedded within the overlapping waves of development discussed in Chapter 2. These waves and associated processes of exclusion have profound impacts on small-scale fisheries, emerging through the expansion of privatization in the industrial seafood system; the extension of "sustainable development" into fishing areas; the spread of climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives; and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The concluding chapter synthesizes the book's main findings and implications. These include overlapping processes of exclusion triggering and propelling transnational mobilization; fishers' movements' engagement with fisheries, food and climate politics and their contributions to international political spaces; and the key role fishers' movements play in raising the profile of the issues and threats small-scale fishers are facing globally. The chapter also pinpoints critical issues for fisheries, food and climate governance, and challenges and ways forward for fisheries justice activism.

## NOTES

1. La Vía Campesina is an international grassroots movement established in 1993 that defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. It currently has 182 member organizations in 81 countries (LVC, 2017).
2. For the purposes of this book, food, climate and fisheries politics refer to the formal and informal structures, practices and processes constituting food, climate and fisheries governance and the actors involved. For a more in-depth discussion on the importance of fishers' movements in food, climate and fisheries debates, see Mills, 2021.
3. For the purposes of this book, "small-scale fishers" refers to people who fish to meet food and basic livelihood needs and/or are directly involved in harvesting, processing or marketing fish. They typically work for themselves, without hiring outside labour; operate in near shore areas; employ traditional, low-technology or passive fishing gear; undertake single day fishing trips; and are engaged in the sale or trade of their catches.
4. For a more in-depth discussion on how fishers' movements can be linked to these three core sets of literature, see Mills, 2021. The reference list also provides resources for further reading on these core themes.
5. The COFI, CSM and CFS are all discussed in detail in Chapter 4 on international political spaces.