People’s Perception on Development

- A case study on Chinese investment in Gunjur, Gambia.
Abstract

This study examines how the people of Gunjur perceive the development impacts caused by a Chinese fishmeal factory. Also, how they believe it has affected them. The study highlights the voices of the villagers by viewing development and foreign investment as more complex rather than looking at the increasement of the GDP. This is to identify if there is an actual development contribution which is entitled and enjoyed by the villagers.

16 qualitative interviews were performed in November 2017 in Gunjur, The Gambia. The results show both the positive and negative short-term consequences caused by the operating factory and how it affects the people, society and environment. It also shows that the development contribution from the factory can be questioned. Finally, it suggests that the government should prioritise sustainability and inclusiveness in their approach with foreign investors to reach a stable and long-term development in the country.

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1. Introduction

In December 2016, Gambia elected a new president after 22 years of dictatorship. The election symbolises a desire to become democratic and to improve the development of the country. However, Yayha left unresolved conflicts and a low state fund when he was forced to leave Gambia in January 2017 due to pressure from the opposition parties and the international community\(^1\). International companies with contracts written during Yayha's time without the proper consultation of the local population still remain as an issue in Gambia today. One of the companies is the Chinese company Golden Lead Factory (GLF) that started operating in September 2016 and has its factory in the fishing community of Gunjur where they produce fishmeal for exporting. According to the minister of Fisheries (James Gomez) the company has promised to provide up to 5000 jobs. Several Gambians and Senegalese are employed at the GLF and more Gambian fishermen are getting involved in supplying the majority of their catch to the company\(^2\). However, the operation of the factory has led to heated discussions about the negative impact the company has in Gunjur and other parts of Gambia throughout the year. Questions like "Is this the kind of development we want?" has become common while discussing this issue.

The case in Gunjur is an example on how foreign investment can be viewed as a step towards development, such as providing employment, but at the same time have a different outcome that leads to negative consequences. Fisheries is huge in The Gambia, as it provides livelihood to a large part of the population. It is important to look at the investment on fisheries when we discuss the development in the country. I want to examine how the local population experience the development impact caused by foreign investors in the Gambia. I also want to investigate if the fish factory in Gunjur has affected the villagers, living conditions according to their own experiences. Development should be discussed as something more complex than the increment of GDP and their needs to be a dialogue about the impacts of development and how it affects those whom it might concern or involved, in this case the villagers.

This paper can be viewed as a contribution to the dialogue about foreign investment in Gambia. By discussing what kind of impact the investment have on the country’s

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\(^1\) BBC. 2016-12-10
\(^2\) Freedom Newspaper. 2017-03-25
development, regardless of the company and the government’s intention. The re-shaping of the nation due to the spirit from the 2016’s election makes it more relevant. The voices of those who are affected by the factory are being focused on, which in turn can teach us about how companies and the government should view development as more complex and perhaps try to contextualize it to able to achieve a more sustainable and inclusive development in a country like the Gambia.

1.1 Aim and research question
The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the perception that the population of Gunjur have about the development impact caused by GLF and how they believe it has affected their lives and the society. Highlighting the voices of the villagers is interesting to be able to investigate the reality of how foreign investment can affect individuals and the community directly. This is important in the dialogue about an inclusive and sustainable development in a country such as Gambia, which I will discuss further in this paper.

My first question is: How does the population in Gunjur perceive the development impacts concerning the operation of Golden Lead Factory?

The second is: Does the villagers believe that the factory has affected their socio-economic life and the development of their village?

I am taking a critical standpoint to showcase how some foreign investment and their approach can be a threat to the development rather than promoting and contributing to it. I will therefore present factual evidence on the issue of the factory together with the opinion and experiences of the respondents to prove my argument.
2. **Context of Study**

2.1 **The Gambia**

I will present information about The Gambia and the country’s historical background, political climate as well as the current socio-economic state for its population.

2.1.1 **Background**

The Gambia is known for its rich history as it has been a part of an empire such as the Malian Empire in the 14th century. However, by the 15th century the Portuguese reached Gambia and dominated the trade in the region with rights that was later bought by the British. Gambians became victims of the transatlantic slave trade and in 1888 Gambia became a British colony and was under British rule until 1965 when the nation was declared as independent\(^3\).

2.1.2 **Political Climate**

In 1994, a successful and non-violent coup took place in Gambia after several allegations against the former regime, such as corruption. After taking power, former president Yayha Jammeh ruled Gambia with a firm hand as he was seen more as a dictator than a democratic leader. Yayha Jammeh have been accused for corruption, killings and torture of civilians, political activists and oppositions as well as conspiracy, to mention a few. Nevertheless, at the 2016 presidential election that was held on the 1st of December, Yayha Jammeh lost to Adama Barrow who was declared as the winner together with the coalition-party\(^4\).

Today, the situation in Gambia is somehow stable as freedom of speech have been established over the year in an environment that used to get people imprisoned, tortured and killed. The past year has also brought partnerships between Gambia and other countries as well as institutions such as the EU. Foreign direct investments (FDI) is becoming more visible in the country as it is seen as a step towards national development. However,

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\(^3\) Landguiden. Downloaded: 2017-11-05

\(^4\) Ibid.
challenges such as poverty, poor wages, electricity, health and environment is still a problem that has to be tackled by the new government.

2.1.3 Socio-economic situation

Before introducing the socio-economic situation in Gambia, I need to define the term “socio-economic life” based on my second research question. Socioeconomic is a term that explains how the economic activity can affect the social aspect of people’s lives, or how the social aspect can form the economic one. This term is mainly used in the Human Development Index (HDI) to be able to get a deeper understanding on quality of life and the economic development in different countries. HDI look at factors such as health, education and income. In this study I will focus on the income factor and if it has affected the lives of the respondents.

In The Gambia 48, 4% of the population live below the poverty line. One third of the population make a living by working in the agriculture sector, growing crops such as cassava, cashew, and different kind of vegetables. Manufacturing activities such as processing fish is also common among the communities that are situated near the coast. One of the most vital sources of income for the country is tourism. Although Gambia is a small country, it manages to attract many tourists as the country is famous for its hot weather and coastal beaches. About 20% of the GDP is from tourism, which in turn creates jobs for the local population.

Gambia has a young population, 60% of the population is under the age of 25. The unemployment is however high among the youths (age 15-24) as 44, 3% of them are unemployed. Consequently, this has partly resulted in regular and irregular migration abroad, as the migrants are looking outwards in search for occupation and improving their lives and their families.

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5 Socioeconomic Atlas. 2018-03-15
6 CIA. The Gambia. Downloaded: 2017-11-25
7 Ibid.
8 Landguiden. Downloaded: 2017-11-05
9 Ibid.
10 Dampha, Mamadi et.al, 2017
The poor wages and the high unemployment together with bad governance over the years has affected the average Gambian’s ability to access social benefits, such as education and health services.

2.2 Gunjur

Gunjur is situated in the southwest coastal strip in Gambia. The majority of the villagers work within agriculture or fisheries\textsuperscript{11}. Gunjur can be classified as a fish community, as the beach is the working place for many people who work within the local fish sector.

As any other Gambian village, there is an Alkalo in Gunjur who is the chief of the village. Together with a council consisted by the elderly of the village, the Alkalo govern the community\textsuperscript{12}.

2.3 Golden Lead Factory

The Golden Lead Factory (GLF) is a Chinese company that started to operate in Gunjur, in September 2016. The company mainly produces fishmeal, which they export. There has been a lot of attention drawn to the operation of the Chinese factory. At the beginning, the operation of the factory brought both excitement and expectation among the villagers of Gunjur, as they saw it as an opportunity for employment and development in the society. However, in May 2017 environmentalists, activists and residents of Gunjur together with the neighbouring village Kartong, organized a protest against the factory as it was accused for polluting the environment. The activists from Kartong was particularly engaged because they feared to experience the same consequences of environmental degradation as a factory was getting built in their village. Pictures of the waterways turning red, dead fish washing down the shore as well as pictures of skin rashes on people who took a swim in the beaches of Gunjur started to circulate the internet together with complaints about bad smell and irresponsible fishing\textsuperscript{13}. The protests from the residents of Gunjur, Kartong and other parts of Gambia as well as the international media coverage of the situation eventually led to a lawsuit that was filed against

\textsuperscript{11} Access Gambia. Downloaded: 2017-11-25
\textsuperscript{12} Access Gambia. Downloaded: 2018-10-05
\textsuperscript{13} Daily Mail. 2017-07-30
GLF by the National Environment Agency (NEA) on the 14th of June 2017. GLF was accused of dumping toxic waste in the water and polluting the environment. In response to that the GLF had to pay a fine of 25,000 US dollars\(^\text{14}\). However, by the end of June, NEA and GLF reached an out-of-court settlement and GLF promised to remove the pipes that went to the sea where the toxic waste was dumped and to also repair the damages they made to the environment\(^\text{15}\). The agreement resulted in disappointment among the activists that fought for their environment as they witnessed how the promises were not kept. Nonetheless, environmentalists and activists decided to take matters into their own hands and in August 2017 two environmental groups, Environmental Concern Group Gunjur and Gunjur Environmental Protection & Development Group (GEPADG), filed a civil suit against GLF\(^\text{16}\). In this lawsuit, GLF is accused for polluting the environment of Gunjur and specifically dumping toxic waste in to the sea and a nearby wildlife reserve, causing damage to the marine life as well as the health of the villagers\(^\text{17}\). The accusations concerning the pollution of the environment, especially the poisoning of the waters, have been evident through a research done by a biomedical scientist that was able to identify the chemicals that was dumped in the waterways and in Bolong Fenyo Wildlife Reserve. However, GLF has denied all the allegations made against them and the court case is on-going throughout this study.

With a new government in place, activists and environmentalists have tried to reach out to decision-makers concerning the issue in Gunjur. The government has recently established a partnership with China, both when it comes to trade and Chinese investment in Gambia with the hope of bringing development to the country. Ministry of Fisheries together with Ministry of Trade, Employment and Integration has commented on the operation of GLF as something that will generate increased employment in the country, especially among the youths. There has only been about 64 employees that has been documented so far\(^\text{18}\). The government’s approach has been experienced as passive and politically motivated to maintain the partnership with China without considering the environmental aspect as well as the sustainable development of Gunjur.

\(^{14}\) Africa News. 2017-06-30

\(^{15}\) Sputnik News. 2017-08-02

\(^{16}\) News24. 2017-08-02

\(^{17}\) Court case, 2017

\(^{18}\) Daily Mail. 2017-07-30
3. Previous Research

Exploitation and Chinese Investment in Africa

The word exploitation can be associated with Africa, as many countries in the continent have been systematically exploited since the time of slave trade. In this time of post-colonialism, the presence of western countries together with the other countries, such as China, is increasing rather than decreasing. There is a so-called “new scramble” for Africa’s natural resources which western and Asian countries see as a high potential to invest in. In the lights of African countries, foreign investment can be many times viewed as a step towards development. However, the outcome can in some cases differentiate from the intention of bringing development in the society. With the background of imperialism, colonialism, slavery, neo-colonialism as well as western countries and institutions imposing neoliberal economy in the continent, Africa is still being marginalized in the international community when it comes to the terms of trade and commodity exports. East Asian countries do not however have the same historical connection with African countries compared to the west and their aid is many times not conditioned. This in turn has led to misinterpretation that East Asian countries are not as exploitative as the west.

In recent years, Chinese investment and firms has highly increased in the continent with a strong economic interest of investing mainly on Africa’s natural resources in exchange of aid or developing the host countries infrastructure. Along with the increasement of Chinese investment, there has been debates concerning the impact of their presence in Africa. Chinese investors have mainly been criticized on the lack of inclusiveness, as well as the negative impact on the environment in the local communities they operate in. This in turn, has led to the debate about what kind of implication Chinese investment has on the sustainable development in the African countries they operate in.

I will present two cases that has been important in the discourse of the China-Africa relationship, especially on the environmental and social mismanagement of Chinese investment on natural resources in African countries. The first case is Congo-Basin, which is

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19 Honig, B & Acquaah, M. 2016. p 177
20 Marton, P & Matura, T. 2011, p 155
21 Bond, Patrick 2006, p 8-14
22 Li et al, 2013, p 300
23 Zhao, Youngjun, 2012, p 356
24 Gu, Jing, 2009, p 570
located in the Central Africa at the Congo River. Congo-Basin is the second largest tropical rainforest in the world. The environmental importance of the rainforest is extreme, as it functions as Africa’s lungs. The Congo Basin rainforest is also known for having a wide and large biodiversity as well as a rich ecosystem. The several million habitants that live in countries of the Congo region are depended on the Congo Basin ecosystem as it provides fresh water, medicine and food. However, in recent years the second lung of the world has been exposed to foreign investors who wants to get a hold of the regions rich natural resources, such as timber, palm oil and rubber to mention a few. One of the biggest investors of Congo Basin are the Chinese. 70 percent of the logs exported from Africa to China is from Congo Basin, which has had an impact on the rainforest. Also, the Chinese’s interest of minerals and mining causes great damages as it requires removal of soil and trees which in turn causes environmental degradation. China’s strong economic interest of minerals in Congo Basin has led to an expansion with a multibillion-dollar investment in mining that has been agreed between China and the governments in the region. Consequently, this does not only affect the environment but also the habitants in nearby villages. A Chinese company has been recognised for taking social responsibility in the village Ikobey in Gabon, by compensating the local habitants through financial means. On the other hand, the company does not create employment opportunities for the locals as the Chinese staff make sure to do everything on their own, such as fishing and hunting. This has a negative impact on the economic development of the village. Also, according to a report issued 2009 by the Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID), the Chinese companies in Katanga in DRC Congo was found to be ranked the lowest in terms of working conditions among all the companies in DRC. The report documented bad treatment of Congolese employees by Chinese managers who have violated the human rights of workers in several cases. The abuse of the Congolese employees has in some cases been severe and resulted in court cases. One manager was accused of stabbing one of their workers, another was accused of whipping four workers. There have been cases of workers not getting compensation or medical attention when they have been injured. In short, Several Chinese companies in Congo Basin are not only damaging the environment, but also violating human rights as well as preventing the development in areas where they operate.

25 Greenpeace. Downloaded: 2017-12-01
26 Putzel, L. et al. 2011 p 2
27 Ibid p 21
28 Ibid p 27
The second case is the extraction of oil in Chad. It is said that the oil-producing countries in Africa will become one of the top suppliers of oil and gas to the world’s consumers, together with Russia and the five states around the Middle East Gulf area. With the growing oil demand, these African countries have attracted a lot of international attention. In 2000, Chad became an oil-producing country that attracted companies such as Chevron, Shell and ExxonMobil. In 2003, the Chinese oil company China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) started to operate in Chad until an incident that occurred 2013, when CNPC was accused for spilling oil which led to a dispute between the Chadian government and the company. Consequently, the crude oil that was dumped in Koudawla led to suspension of CNPC’s activities as a respond to the environmental violation caused by the company. The dispute was however settled as CNPC agreed to pay compensation for the damages they caused. In the case of Chad, it has been evident that CNPC has contributed to the economic growth of the nation and in other countries where the company is operating. However, Chinese oil investment tend to harm the quality of the country recipient’s political development, for example, increasing corrupt activities. The oil investment can also make the government less transparent and accountable to its citizens. It is more likely that Chinese oil investment has a negative effect on governance in the developing countries they operate in, compared to other western oil companies in Chad. It does not mean that western companies are “better” or that they promote political development, but the companies do not worsen the status quo.

The conclusions that can be drawn from these two cases is how Chinese investment in African countries can result in violation and deterioration, not only on the environment but also when it comes to human rights, national development and domestic politics. According to the findings from the study by Chia-Yi Lee (2015) about the impact CNPC has on Chad, Chinese oil investment has been shown to have a positive impact on the economic growth of the recipient country’s GDP. However, that can be on the expense of the political and human right aspect of the country as China is more likely to invest in countries that already has a weak state. In the findings by Putzel et al. (2011), social contribution could be identified in Congo Basin as the Chinese mining investors employed local habitants. Despite that, issues

30 Lee, Chia-Yi, 2015, p 144
31 Reuters 2014-10-27
32 Lee, Chia-Yi. 2015, p 153-157
33 Ibid. p 158
such as poor working conditions, low wages and long working hours makes the contribution questionable, as human rights are being violated\textsuperscript{34}. The researchers of both of the mentioned studies agreed that their findings as well as other kind of research regarding Chinese investment in Africa can only identify short-term impacts. It will therefore take time before we can identify the long-term effects on the political, social and environmental aspects caused by Chinese investors.

With the given background of exploitation and Chinese investment in Africa, I will investigate how the local community of Gunjur perceive the development impact from GLF as well as how it affects them. The study will engage in the discussion on what kind of implications Chinese investment has in relation to the development of Gunjur. Themes such as expectations, environment and socio-economic situations will be the main focus in the interviews.

4. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will introduce and define the conception of development as well as discussing the different aspects of development, such as sustainable and inclusive development.

4.1 Development

Defining development can be difficult and complex. Early economists such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill et al, have been important in the debate on development which they have contributed to with different economic analysis concerning income, international trade, labour and economic growth. The discussion in development was for a long time dominated by the view that development equalled a high level of GDP, as technology, income and modernization was the central focus\textsuperscript{35}. The debate started to however shift at the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and in 1999 the economist Amartya Sen published his book "Development as Freedom". According to Sen, freedom is the mean and the end to achieve development and the dominating focus on income and wealth is more viewed as an important instrument for human freedom\textsuperscript{36}. To achieve development, Sen argues that people need to be

\textsuperscript{34} Putzel, L. et al, 2011, p 35
\textsuperscript{35} Sen, Amartya. 2001, p 27
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. p 53-57
looked upon as active agents and not be viewed as passive recipients of development programs.\textsuperscript{37}

While discussing development, it is vital to be clear on how the concept of development is being defined. It is important to view the impacts of development by not only looking at the increasement of a country’s GDP but to also by investigating if change and positive impact is being experienced by those whom it may concern. With some perspective from Amartya Sen I have chosen to use the definition on development from the UN Declaration on the Right to Development that was proclaimed in 1986.

“all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized”\textsuperscript{38}.

4.2 Sustainable Development

According to Susan Baker, sustainable development can be seen as a challenge to the dominant perspective on development, which is equal to economic growth and modernization in the lens of western countries. The western model of development tends to exclude other vital factors such as social and ecological aspects that cannot be excluded in the discussion about countries’ development levels\textsuperscript{39}. According to environmentalism, the current dominant view of development has resulted in ecological destruction as well as high level of mental illnesses, stress and social exclusion in OECD countries hence to the failure of a complex view and strategy of development\textsuperscript{40}. Critiques argues that the western model of development also fails to recognize natural resources and the nature more than the instrumental aspect of it, meaning that the nature and natural resources is only being viewed as a necessity for economic growth. In turn, this leads to many of the environmental issues we face today as well as jeopardizing the future development in many countries, especially developing countries\textsuperscript{41}.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. p 75.
\textsuperscript{38} UN 1986-12-04
\textsuperscript{39} Baker, Susan, 2006, p 1-2
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid p 3
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid p 3-4
Another central argument is how the western development model tend to ignore the importance of social stability in the management of natural resources. This means that the degradation of natural resources in a society can lead to danger concerning the human health, as well as increasing the risk for conflicts in the area\(^2\).

The concept of sustainable development offers a broader perspective and strategy of development which not only include the economical aspect but also the social and the ecological dimensions. In a country such as Gambia, promoting sustainable development is crucial for its long-term vision of developing the nation. I have therefore chosen to use the definition of sustainable development that was compiled by the UN:

> "Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"\(^3\).

While performing my interviews, I will ask the respondents how they view the sustainability and the long-term development impact that can be in result of the GLF.

### 4.3 Inclusive Development

While discussing sustainable development it is also important to speak on inclusive development. Inclusive development is about including all people and stakeholders to contribute to the development that emerges in a country or a society by creating opportunities, participate in decision-making and sharing the benefits\(^4\). In the definition above about development, the inclusiveness aspect of development is being stated. However, the definition by Oxfam help us to get a greater understanding:

> "Inclusive development is a pro-poor approach that equally values and incorporates the contributions of all stakeholders - including marginalized

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\(^2\)Ibid p 4  
\(^3\)UN Downloaded: 2017-11-03  
\(^4\)Wu, Dong, 2013, p 443-444
groups - in addressing development issues. It promotes transparency and accountability, and enhances development cooperation outcomes through collaboration between civil society, governments and private sector actors.”

In the definition on inclusive development, the inclusion of the different groups in a society is being emphasized for achieving development.

The definitions of development, sustainable development and inclusive development has a central role in the discussion of the development impacts in Gunjur and it is therefore being introduced in the theoretical framework to give a clearer picture while discussing the results.

5. Method

This research is a case study. The purpose of doing a case study, is to get a deeper understanding about an issue. It will help us to understand the impacts from different aspects and perspectives as well as discovering interesting findings that may have not appeared if it was not for the detailed investigation about the case. The method of case study is to not only focus on one case, but it is also a way to contribute to the discussion of other similar cases.

To collect data for this research, I chose to conduct interviews. 16 interviews were performed in order to get a deeper understanding about how the respondents in Gunjur perceive the development impacts from the GLF as well as how they get affected by it. The respondents were asked questions regarding the operation of the factory along with questions concerning the social and economic aspects of their lives before the factory started operating compared to the time the interviews were taken place (see appendix 2). The forming of the questions were developed based on the research questions to be able to identify the various perceptions and perspectives that exists in this case. Furthermore, the questions were structured to give the respondents a chance to freely view their opinion and their experience necessarily taking a critical standpoint. One main goal according to Teorell and Svensson is to give the respondents as much independence and freedom as possible to answer the questions, therefore the questions were formed to be open to be able to give the respondents space for different opinions and experiences.

45 Oxfam Downloaded: 2017-11-03
46 Teorell, J., Svensson, T. 2007, p.90
According to Esaiasson et al. qualitative interviews are a way to find out how the respondents perceive their reality\textsuperscript{47}. Qualitative interviews can also be used to get more knowledge about an unexplored field.

5.1 Selection of respondents

Teorell and Svensson emphasise the importance of choosing respondents that are motivated for the interviewer to get good and authentic answers as possible\textsuperscript{48}. In order to answer my questions, I have chosen to interview some of the local population in Gunjur. To prevent the interviews from becoming biased I made sure to interview people that were more likely to have a positive outlook when it comes to the operation of the factory, such as fishermen and employees at the factory that can be seen as benefactors. I also interviewed those who are more negative to the factory, such as activists and workers in the tourism industry. This is vital for the dynamism of the study as well as trying to strengthen the arguments.

According to Esaiasson et al. it is important in the selection process to select as many respondents as necessary to avoid new central aspects to emerge which can be vital in the study. About ten respondents per group is an accepted figure\textsuperscript{49}. I was able to interview eight people that have a critical standpoint and eight individuals that are more likely to perceive the development impacts of the factory as positive.

The selection of respondents was somehow strategic, as I chose to interview local activists in Gunjur that I was connected with through mutual contacts. Some of the respondents are organised environmentalists whom are working to prevent the negative environmental impacts from the GLF. The selection of respondents who view the development impacts as something positive were however different. From that group, I was able to interview mainly individuals who work as fishermen or people that either sell fish or carry the fish from the sea to the shore. The selection of whom to interview in the group of the less critical were spontaneous. I and my translator went down to the beach in Gunjur where we spent four full days (from 10 a.m. till the afternoon) over a period of two weeks. We started by making sure to get an overview of the beach, as it is known to be a busy work place, and the place where GLF have their factory. Before we started the interviews, we made sure to not interview

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Esaiasson et al. 2012, p.194}
\footnote{Teorell, J., Svensson, T. 2007, p.90}
\footnote{Ibid. p.259}
\end{footnotes}
fishermen or workers that were situated close to the factory. The reason was to minimize the risk of jeopardizing their work with GLF, if they had any agreement with them. We selected those who seemed less busy and more attentive to our presence when we passed by and greeted them. Even if the selected were mostly fishermen, I tried to make sure to have a diversified selection by interviewing individuals of different age, sex and occupation on the beach. The majority of the workers on the beach were however fishermen and they are also the group who hypothetically would benefit the most from the factory. Therefore, it was more interesting to interview them.

I am aware that 16 respondents is not a large number, meaning that the interviews cannot generalize the whole of Gunjur based on the respondents’ perception and experiences. However, the interviews can help us get a hint as well as a better understanding of the case in Gunjur and lessons can be learned from those testimonies.

5.2 Interviews

All the interviews took place in Gunjur, as the majority of the respondents worked or lived near the beach where the GLF operates. The interviews with the environmentalists and the local activists took place during the day, in their homes or at their work place. Interviews with fishermen and with those working on the beach was done on the shore. Each interview lasted for a minimum of 10 minutes up to a maximum of 45 min. The conducted interviews were semi-structured, as I had prepared questions and themes I wanted to touch on. The questions were most of the time not asked in a specific order as it depended on how the conversation went. There was also room for follow up and spontaneous questions that was not formed in advance. I wanted to give the respondent the opportunity to tell their story and give them the chance to lead the interview within the specific themes, to get a deeper understanding of how they perceive the situation. The goal with the interviews was to put the voice of the respondents in focus to get a greater understanding on the development impacts caused by the factory.
5.3 Method Analysis

I will present and discuss the findings of my research as well as categorizing the answers in themes. The themes will be decided based on the answers that occur in each interview. It will also be based on the relevance to answer the questions on this study50.

5.4 Critical reflections

One reflection is that there is a risk for interviewing effect as I can be perceived as an outsider. For example, I am born and raised in a western country and I am a university student. There is an existing power structure because of my privileges as well as being the researcher, meaning that I dictate most part of my study. This can create an inequality towards the respondents who live in a developing country where many do not have access to higher education. However, I have the advantage of being from the Gambian diaspora and speaking one of the largest languages, which is Wolof. Secondly, I do not speak the language that the majority speak in Gunjur, which is Mandinka. This means that I had to perform many interviews with a translator, who translated from Mandinka to English. All the information is being passed through a second person, meaning there is a risk that the answers from the respondents can be rephrased or information can be skipped in the process of translating. My translator is also known to be an engaged activist, especially during the time of the former president Yayha Jammeh. This was solved through dialogue between me and the translator, as I explained the aim with this study and my neutral standpoint as a researcher. The questions that was asked was also designed to be as neutral as possible, so that the respondents did not feel any pressure to take sides.

The court case between the plaintiffs Environmental Concern Group/Gunjur and Gunjur Environmental Protection & Development Group (GEPADG) vs. Golden Lead Import and Export Company Limited, was ongoing throughout the study. It was therefore sensitive to interview certain respondents who played a certain role or who are involved in this court case. I made sure to give each respondent the possibility to be anonymous as well as choosing what questions they wanted to/could answer. I also assured them that the recording of the interviews was only for me to listen to, if they agreed to be recorded.

50 Ibid. p 271
6. Results and Analysis

In this chapter I will present the findings from the interviews conducted in Gunjur and thereafter analyse them. During the conduction of the interviews, two groups could be identified. Those who were more critical to the factory and those who were less critical depending on age, occupation and education. The results will be presented thematically on the basis of the respondents answers to further compare the two groups’ experiences.

6.1 Consultation and Expectations

The Chinese fishmeal factory started to operate in September 2016 and has been operating since then. In the typical tradition of villages in Gambia, the companies have to consult the local chief as well as the elders of the village to be able to get a green-light to operate\textsuperscript{51}. However, one of the respondents mean that even if that was the case, the fishmeal factory came during the time of dictatorship, a time when it was difficult to question government affairs.

The local environmentalist described the consultation:

\begin{quote}
I heard about the factory around 2015. The events of factory came in a bad time, when we were having a dictatorship in The Gambia. Nobody dared to ask anything regarding government affairs, because of the fear factor that anything you might say can lead you to somewhere you never expected […] the fear factor which the company applied was that they had acquired their certificate from the government, meaning no one dared to ask questions about that certificate\textsuperscript{52}.
\end{quote}

The information and consultation of the company was executed as expected as regional representatives of the GLF came to the local elders to seek conformation. At the same time, the majority of the more critical respondents does not hold the chief and the local elders accountable as they express the fear factor of questioning the government, but also because of the little knowledge they have about dealing with foreign direct investment in the village, such as a foreign factory. The fear can also be viewed as a mixture of excitement. As mentioned before, there is a perception in poorer countries that foreign investors equalizes development and should therefore be welcomed with open arms.

The environmentalist continues by stating:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{51} Gunjur News Online. 2018-05-18
\textsuperscript{52} Environmentalist\textsuperscript{*}
\end{flushright}
So the Golden Lead came to Gunjur in 2015 and had some discussion with the councillors of the elders, where they applied two factors there, which is the fear factor and the opportunity factor […] And the opportunity factors they had was that they were going to employ more people, up to 600 people and that they will create job opportunities for the youths within the community.

The mixture of fear, inexperience and opportunities became the green-light for Golden Lead, as the local leaders approved the operation of the factory hoping it will bring some kind of development in the village. However, not everyone was consulted despite the proper procedures of going to the village elders. Tourism businesses as well as a nature wild reserve close to where the factory was going to be built were not consulted nor properly informed at the time.

Bajo Badara is the director and co-founder of Gunjur Environmental Protection and Development Group (GEPADG) that is responsible for the Bolong Fenyo Wildlife Reserve and he stated following:

My area is just next door to the factory. Unfortunately, I was not consulted and my organisation was not consulted. So we have just seen a work that have been carried out next door. […] At that time, we did not know what kind of factory that was being built.\(^{53}\)

The consultation of the company was carried out, on the other hand the factory had the prior-government’s imitating agenda to their benefit. Furthermore, the issue of including those nearby who would be directly affected by the factory can be questionable, as businesses and organisations were not included in the consultation. This can be viewed as the opposite of inclusive development as the factory did not bother to include important stakeholders in Gunjur except the elders. In turn, environmental organisations, lodges and the people were not invited to participate in what would bring further development to their society. Their approach did not promote transparency nor accountability to the villagers and some of them were clueless about what was going on in their society and how it will come to affect them.

Talking about excitement from the elders, the factory became perceived as a great opportunity to develop the village further, and with the factory came expectations. The villagers’ expectations were primarily based on what the factory later promised together with the perception of how foreign investment could bring positive impacts and development to the society. The vast majority of the respondents expressed that one of their expectation was that the factory would provide increased employment among the youths of Gunjur. This came

\(^{53}\) Bajo Badara
from the promise that GLF would employ up to 600 people on a local level and up to 5000 people regionally according the minister of fisheries. One of the respondents explained:

I felt happy first time I heard about the factory, because I thought many of our youths can be employed there.

Another respondent expressed his first impression of the factory:

Well, the first impression I had was: ‘wow, if we have the fishmeal factory here, then maybe that will create employment for the youth’. And also that it will boost the economic factor of the community.

Employment of the youths was one of the most central expectation among the respondents as it was seen as important factor for a more stable economic activity in the village. In addition to that, the respondents shared other promises, such as GLF building the road that connects the highroad to the beach as well as building up a fish-market for the older women at the beach who sells the fish to the locals and people from other villages. There is however no sign of those promises that were made by the factory to the people of Gunjur. According to the local environmentalist organisations in Gunjur, there was only about 60 local employees identified in the factory, as the Chinese workers held a majority of the high positions. One of the environmentalists interviewed confirmed it by stating following:

We have insiders at the factory and also we have a monitoring team which are there to make sure that we have the facts regarding this issue. […] they said that they were going to employ 600 people and through our investigations only 60 people are found to be employed there.

In addition to that, the fish-market has not been built and the road has not been constructed after more than one year of operating. The respondents who are identified as more critical towards the Chinese fishmeal factory view this as a betrayal as the majority expresses how their expectations have been crushed by the actual activity of the factory. When one respondent was asked why his expectations had been crushed, he answered:

What they have said, they do not pay attention to that. They said that they were going to employ 600 people and that is not the case. And that they will boost the economic activities in the community, which also is not the case.

Another one explained how the failed promises led him to take a decision to take action:

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54 Freedom Newspaper. 2017-03-25
55 Fatou Joof
56 Environmentalist*
57 South China Morning Post. 2017-07-30
58 Environmentalist*
59 Ibid
I started to lose hope during the first week the factory started to operate. Because what they told us and what we were seeing was quite different. And that is the time I tasked myself as a Gunjurian and a local activist, to investigate more to know what is going on.\(^{60}\)

On the other hand, the less critical respondents showed more hope as their expectations did not shatter nor did they get discourage about the fact that the promises have not been met yet. The majority of the less critical respondents answered that their expectations were still intact as the promises are still pending and that it takes time. Instead, they shifted their focus from the negative consequences resulted from the activities of the factory and focused on what has changed since GLF started to operate.

As many other of the less critical respondents, a middle age fish seller at the beach said:

> Before the factory started, we normally dig a whole and bury the fish there. Because we normally get fish over. But since the factory has started, there is no waste of fish here. We sell all our fish to them.\(^{61}\)

The two groups differ as one group describes their expectations as shattered while the other group remain hopeful. What can be said on the comparison of the two groups is that the beneficial group that is also less critical to the factory is more likely to have their hopes up as they are already benefitting and seeing the impact the factory has in their personal life. As for the critical group, the actual activity of the factory affects them more directly, which has a negative impact on them in various ways that will be discussed further when discussing the perception of development impacts. We can already here question if GLF is contributing to the development as they promised. Based on the answers from the respondents, there is two perspective that we can identify so far. What can be said from the perspective of the less critical, is that there is a development contribution from GLF. They are currently enjoying the economic development even though the promises have not been met yet and for them, that can be viewed as a sign of development. The perspective of the critical group differs, as it can be viewed that the factory has not contributed to the development, because they have not encouraged the participation of the civil society. Also, only a small part of the villagers are enjoying the benefits so far.

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60 Lodge manager*
61 Fish Seller 1*
6.2 Development Impacts

Based on factual information about the activity of GLF and its consequences, there is strong evidence showing that the factory is bringing negative impacts in Gunjur, such as polluting the sea, air and the environment as well as harming the tourism in the area. At the same time, it is argued that the factory is bringing positive impacts and development in the village by employing more people and engaging other workers in the activity of the factory. In this section, I will present the experiences of the respondents and how they perceive the development impact concerning the environment, society and their personal lives.

6.2.1 Environment

One of the most discussed topics regarding development and foreign investment in the “new” Gambia is about the effects on the environment caused by the GLF. The Chinese fishmeal factory have been accused for polluting the atmosphere with noxious and bad odour coming from the factory. They have also been accused for polluting the sea and a nearby nature wild reserve by dumping toxic waste through pipelines, which in turn can result in damaging the marine life, the biodiversity as well as the health of the people. The accusations has led to a court case between local environmentalist organisations and the factory. Seemingly, the government have not raised a red flag on the activities of the factory as it can be interpreted that the government perhaps prioritises the economic development rather than the environment. Maybe with the similar mind-set of Indira Ghandi: “poverty is the worst form of pollution”.

I asked the respondents how they experience the impacts on the environment and if they believed that the development contributions from the factory should be on the expense of their environment. Most of the less critical respondents did not make any comments about the environment. Others admitted on witnessing the pollution at the same time as they admitted that they did not have enough knowledge about what the impacts can eventually led to. One of the respondents from the group was even able to view the pipelines as something positive, he said following:

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62 Sputnik News. 2017-08-02
63 Court case, 2017
The pipe that connect the factory to the sea that is the pipe I normally follow. Because where the pipe stops is where I can have much fish.\textsuperscript{64}

Another less critical respondent answered:

Due to the lack of my education, I cannot talk about the kind of chemicals they are using and the side effects of the factory, because I do not know about it. But what my eyes can see, is that the factory has been helping people.\textsuperscript{65}

What can be understood by the experiences of the less critical group is that they do not feel any concern about the environment because they are experiencing positive impacts in their life from a socio-economic point of view. However, being one of the benefactors does not necessarily mean that individuals do not get concerned about the environment. One of the respondents, a young fisherman who during our interview explained his higher income due to the factory, did not answer as the rest of the interviewed fishermen. He expressed his concern for the environment and the future by saying:

We had someone that came to advise us that we will not know the consequences of this factory until 3 to 5 years’ time. They [the factory] have their own fishing boats and they do their fishing where the fish breeds. Which mean that place will be empty in the future. I want the factory to leave.\textsuperscript{66}

The young fisherman is not the only one who is concerned about the consequences the factory has on the environment and the village’s fish resources. Three out of the eight respondents from the more critical group consider themselves as environmentalists as each one of them are heavily engaged in local environmental organisations. Their main focus is a sustainable development that protects the environment and resources for future generations.

Talking to the three environmentalists, they all agreed on two things: that environment should be highly prioritised no matter what. Secondly, that the activities of the factory will leave devastating consequences based on the research carried out by the scientist Ahmed Manjang and by the local organisations. According to Bajo Badara, the environmental impacts of the factory has already led to a decline of biodiversity in the area. It has also poisoned the lagoon, the home of crocodiles and many water birds that have suddenly disappeared.

The concern about the environment does not only have to do with destroying the nature and putting the biodiversity at risk. Another concern is how the chemicals of the waste dumped in

\textsuperscript{64} Fisherman 2
\textsuperscript{65} Fish seller 1
\textsuperscript{66} Fisherman 3
the sea will lead to less fish in the future. The environmentalists were asked about what they thought that the environmental impact will lead to in the future:

Number one, the fish will be less. And also, our environment is under threat as well as the aquatics because of the chemicals they are using. The future will be a community without fish. And the fish is going to be expensive.

The environmental consequences of less and more expensive fish can become problematic as the villagers and other villages are depended on the fish from Gunjur’s beach, as it is the most important and affordable protein for many in the Gambia.

So far, the environmental impacts have been viewed from a negative perspective, both when it comes to the nature itself and the villagers’ food security. Furthermore, I asked the respondents working in the tourist sector how they viewed the impact the factory have on the environment. As mentioned before, the Gambia is depended on tourism, as 20 % of the GDP comes from it. Gambia is known for attracting tourists because of its beaches, nature and its biodiversity of animals, especially birds. Gunjur is a place where many tourists come to enjoy and take a part of the ecotourism in the village. However, the respondents working at nearby lodges have experienced the impacts on the environment as negative as the smell is disturbing the guests and swimming in the water can lead to rashes.

I have less guests now because when they started operating people left because of the bad smell, they cannot cope with it. And when the tourists come they are usually scared to take a swim in the water.

In conclusion, there is a correlation between the actual negative impacts on the environment and how the respondents experience it. Even if the majority of the less critical group did not comment on it, many of them could still acknowledge it, for example by talking about the bad smell. It is clear that the impact on the environment is noticeable for everyone.

In the discussion about Chinese investment in African countries, it is common that the environment and the sustainability is not prioritised, and the same goes for this case. GLF’s activities does not promote sustainable development in the village as it causes negative impacts on Gunjur’s environment. The irresponsible management of the fish as a natural resources, together with polluting the environment, does not consider the danger that it can

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67 Environmentalist*
68 Lodge manager*
have on the people’s health. Nor does the factory work in a sustainable way, which in turn can endanger future generations’ access to fish and an environment with a wide biodiversity.

6.2.2 Society

Another dominating topic that followed through the interviews was about how the factory have impacted Gunjur as a society. I asked the respondents about their opinion and if they have noticed any positive or negative impacts the factory has on the village. The concern of the villagers’ health was one vital issue that the majority of the critical group raised. The promise of building the road was also brought up, as the factory did not build the road with asphalt but with sand instead. Gunjur Project Lodge is situated close to the road and one of the workers explained:

They [the factory] said that they are going to make the road. But they did not put stones, they put sand. It affects us. Every time the cars pass, the dust comes. All these days everyone is complaining about cold, and I think it is the dust. It is affecting our health.\footnote{Fatou Joof}

Another interesting perspective is about the health of the GLF employees. The local environmental organisations have been able to investigate the local employees’ work conditions in the factory. Unfortunately, I was not able to interview the workers due to the risk they could be exposed to. According to the environmentalists that conducted investigations with their organisations, the estimated 60 local employees does not have proper safety gears in regard to the chemicals they work with. One of the local environmentalist states:

The way they are employing our youths are not in terms with our employment policies. Because they employ them without terms of references, they employ them without job descriptions and they do not have safety needs. So the health of our youths who are working there is also important.\footnote{Environmentalist*}

The issue of health is not only the problem in this case, but also the workers’ rights. However, the health aspect is not the only concern in Gunjur, as the expectation of promised employment and economic activity has not been witnessed yet. At the same time, the tourist sector is being harmed by the impact the factory has on the environment, which has led to less tourist according to the respondents who work with tourism in Gunjur. This in turn can

\footnote{Fatou Joof}
\footnote{Environmentalist*}
lead to a decline of economic activity and continued youth unemployment in the society, which will damage the livelihood of the villagers that expected otherwise. Also, the pollution in the waters have damaged the nearby marine life, which makes it hard for fishermen to catch fish closer to the shore. The ships from the factory that catches a higher quantity at once does not only damage the rocks where the fishes lay their eggs\textsuperscript{71}, it will eventually minimize the economic activity of the fisherman that currently are benefitting from selling majority of their fish to the factory. Even if the Chinese factory would contribute to the country’s GDP in general, there is still a great risk that the activities of the factory will stagnate Gunjur’s development rather than helping it to move forward.

Another vital concern shared by the critical respondents is the increasing fish prices. It will take some years before we see the consequences of the factory, which is expected to lead to a drastic decrement of fish. A problem of food security will therefore emerge, as fish is the most affordable protein for Gambians compared to chicken or meat. Consequently, the average Gambian will have issues to in cooperate protein in their nutrition. The issue of increasing fish prices have already started to emerge in the village and videos of villagers debating about their food security is surfacing on social media platforms. The fish prices, especially the Bonga fish, have increased since the factory started to operate and the reason behind is that the factory have become the local residents and other villages’ biggest competition. The fishermen are selling the majority of their fish to the factory, by selling a high quantity after every catch for the producing of fishmeal. They have therefore increased the price for the local residents and buyers from other villages, knowing that their profit will increase if they sell the fish to the factory rather than selling it for the same price to the local residents that only buy a small quantity. A fish buyer coming from Basse-areas to purchase fish confirm it by saying:

If locals cannot buy the fish for 350 dalasis [per bucket], then the fishermen sell it to the factory. And they sell it to the Chinese for 290 dalasis, because the Chinese are going to buy a lot. Since yesterday, we have been here and we cannot even get a bucket of fish. Because if they [the fishermen] sold the fish for the normal price, then we could be able to compete with the Chinese\textsuperscript{72}.

The increased price on the affordable fish, Bonga, affects both businesses in the fish sector as well as individual’s nutrition. In turn, this will not only affect Gunjur, but also businesses and villages all around the Gambia that are depended on the fish from coastal beach.

\textsuperscript{71} SMBC Gambia 2017-12-27
\textsuperscript{72} Fish Buyer*
The major focus for the less critical group was about the positive impact the factory had on their personal lives and their families rather than how the factory impacted the village. The interviewed fishermen were aware that focusing their sales towards the factory could lead to possible consequences that would harm the villagers.

One of the fishermen explained why he believes that the factory is good even if he is aware is the controversies about the factory debated both in Gambia and in the diaspora:

The reason why we are saying that the factory is good, is because of our own interest. We have so many boats here. And when the catch is high and we cannot sell it to the local costumers, we have to throw the fish which is a waste to us. So this is the reason why we say that the factory is good.

The individual take from the less critical group continues to permeate majority of their answers based on one major factor: they are economically benefitting from the factory. Most of them answered that they could see the development in the society. Overall, there was no critics or questioning towards the factory.

To conclude, the impact on the society and its consequences is hard to identify yet and we can only see the short term effects. However, what can be drawn from these results is that the factory is contributing to the economic activity, but in a lesser way than expected. At the same time, the factory is damaging other opportunities and businesses in both the tourist sector as well as the local fish sector. This in turn can lead to troubles with people’s livelihood and their access to afford fish.

Once again, the development contribution from the factory can be questioned based on the answers from the respondents. Firstly, the working conditions can be seen as a violation against human rights, as the safety of the local employees is being overlooked. The human rights discussed in the definition of development can therefore not be realized. Secondly, development according to my theoretical framework, is mainly about people being entitled to enjoy economic and social benefits. The short-term consequences caused by the factory hinders people to enjoy economic development, as the economic activities and opportunities is declining rather than increasing according to the respondents. Also, the increased fish prices are doing opposite to enjoying economic benefits. It has become more expensive for businesses as well as private persons to feed themselves with affordable protein and issues such as food security can therefore emerge.

73 Fisherman 1
6.2.3 Personal Life

My main focus in this study is to also investigate how the development impacts affect those who are considered as the beneficiaries of development. Therefore, it is important to ask the respondents if they experience any socio-economic development in their lives, as the argument for developing a country or society is to better people’s lives.

The less critical group have been clear on their positive outlook considering the factory and they have expressed the benefits it has brought to their lives as well as their families. The question is how exactly they are benefiting based on their experiences? Every respondent that view the factory as a positive contribution to the society, have also had an increasing income compared to before the factory started operating. The fishermen’s salary has enlarged because of the high sales of fish to the factory. But it has also benefitted the women working with selling fish to the locals. One of the respondents sells White Fish, which is among one of the more expensive fishes compared to the Bonga. The increasing price of the Bonga has boosted her business, as more people are trying to buy the White Fish instead. In the interview she said:

> It has really increased the income that I earn. Because the kind of fish I am dealing with is different from the fish the factory is buying. I am dealing with the most expensive ones, that we normally call the white fish. There is no competition with the Bonga fish and the expensive ones now, because people are now buying from me. I have more income now and I am stronger now.74

The fishermen and the women selling other kinds of fish get greater opportunities with a higher income. For example, expanding their businesses by buying larger boats. The higher income, as they expressed it, is giving them a better life for themselves and their families as they can pay for housing, food and the children’s school fees.

On the other hand, the reality for those who are not getting a better salary is different. One of the respondents who work as a lodge manager, expressed how his livelihood is declining rather than increasing. He said:

> We opened this lodge to get a livelihood from this tourists, but now it gets so hard to even get the daily meals because of no tourists. So life is getting hard for us.75

There can be other indicators why the tourism is not going well, however one major factor is that the ecotourism that have been the main attraction of visiting Gunjur have been harmed.

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74 Fish Seller 1*
75 Lodge manager*
by the pollution caused by the factory. Even respondents that are not working in neither the tourist nor the fish sector have expressed hardship on making ends met. The environmentalist Buba Touray who is a Secretary General at the Environmental Concern Group explained how the fish prices have affected his economy:

We are family men, we have to give money to our kids, our wives so they can cook. But now fish is our major problem. If you gave out 100 dalasis, you have to now give 200 dalasis or 175 dalasis to have enough food in the house.

The amount of buying protein for the week that will feed people and their families have almost doubled. Which in turn affects socio-economical life for many villagers that receive about 2000 dalasis or less as their monthly income.

There will always be some people that wins and some that lose. However, it becomes a problem when only a small number of people can enjoy some sort of development impact on the expense of damaging the sustainable development that will last more long term and can benefit more people to take part of the social, economic and political development. A win-win situation might be seen as ideal, especially for a host country that believes that foreign investors can help them contribute to their development. In this case, based on the results, the factory can be viewed as one that stagnates the development of Gunjur rather than taking it further. Looking at the definition of development, the economic and social development that was supposed to be contributed by the factory and enjoyed by the villagers have done the contrary. Also, the activity of the factory have not increased the economic development in the society even if it has contributed to higher income for some individuals. Instead, it has caused a more expensive life for the villagers.

6.3 Governments involvement

The new government have been active about transmitting to the Gambians and the rest of the world that their intention is to engage the nation to become democratic. They have reached out to the international community to reassure them that they are welcome to help them to improve the development of the country. The government’s actions and involvement on handling this case have gotten critics from environmentalists and activists in the Gambia and

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76 Buba Touray
the diaspora\textsuperscript{77}. I therefore asked the respondents about their opinion on the governments approach and if they experience inclusiveness as well as being heard.

The ongoing court case between the environmentalists and the factory has made this topic sensitive. Anyway, the respondents that are engaged in the court case or are more critical were still able to express their disappointment with the approach of the government. The newfound Gambia-China relationship have not brought so much excitement among the Gambians due to the activities and presence of Chinese enterprises in other African countries. However, for the government there is another perspective, which is the economic gain and the contribution the Chinese can have on their development and infrastructure. In turn, there is a perception that the government is cautious about addressing the issues of the GLF because of other major investments from China, such as an international conference centre that is estimated to cost several millions of dollars\textsuperscript{78}. The perception was confirmed by the environmentalists that was interviewed and one of the respondents said:

Many senior officials explains that they found the factory there and the government is young. And that is why it takes time to address the issue. They have the impression that the factory is creating more employment opportunities and that the more noise will stop other investors to come to the country, particularly those coming from China\textsuperscript{79}.

The disappointment towards the government and the relevant ministries kept on being expressed by the critical group during the interviews, and the expectation for the government to take action keeps declining. After several attempts of engaging the government, the environmentalists still feel rejected and unheard. The court case can be seen as an example that reflects the communication between the people and the government as they did not stand for a fair trial in court between the GLF and NEA despite the evidence that NEA was able to identify. One of the respondents stated:

We have engaged the government several times for consultative meetings and it has honestly failed. I feel like this is tactics, delaying tactics, in order to make people to relend their efforts about the Golden Lead. They just stay in their offices and call the factory to check what is happening there, they do not come to the community\textsuperscript{80}.

\textsuperscript{77} Freedom Newspaper. 2017-03-25
\textsuperscript{78} SMBC Gambia 2017-12-27
\textsuperscript{79} Bajo Badara
\textsuperscript{80} Environmentalist*
The outcome of their involvement has led to a higher mistrust towards the young government. Also, based on the interview with Minister of Fisheries by Freedom Newspaper, there is a hint that reflects the communication between the government and the Gunjurians as he said:

“But who is the government? You think any government will accept people would just come and say relocate this and… Have they done an environmental study? The people that are demonstrating. Have they done an environmental study that can tell you that if this is situated here it will create a problem?”

The minister’s questioning directly minimizes the environmentalists’ effort of being active agents that is concern about their environment and natural resources.

Seemingly, the government have been backing up the factory, as they continue to use the argument that the factory can contribute to the development by increasing job opportunities in Gunjur and the rest of the Gambia. However, it is contradicting that the government is promoting development, when it can be questioned if the factory really is a contributor or just a foreign investment that is less concern about the best for the environment and the sustainability of the area. The government is overlooking both the environment and the sustainability, even if they have been informed about the damages caused by the factory, both from NEA, scientists as well as the local and international environmental organisations. The importance of inclusiveness has also been neglected, as they have not been willing to participate in the talks and assessments together with local environmentalist organisations and other stakeholders. Nor have they invited activists and the civil society to discuss the topic further to come to an understanding between both parties, according to the engaged respondents. Even if the government has the intention to promote development in the country by welcoming investors, their approach can be questionable according to my findings. They are not paying attention to the long term consequences and they are not considering if there actually is a development contribution enjoyed by the vast majority of Gunjur.

81 Freedom Newspaper. 2017-03-25
6.4 Analysis

In this study, I was able to investigate how the people of Gunjur perceived the development impact caused by the GLF. I also investigated if the respondents believed that they have been affected from the impacts. This in turn tells us more about the complexity of development and the activity of foreign investments, and how it actually affects those whom it might concern. To get a more dynamic discussion I made sure to interview both people who experience the factory as good and those who view the factory as something negative. The reason was to be able to identify the two group’s experiences as well as finding out why and how they were able to experience it differently.

According to my findings, the less critical group is those who view the factory as positive. They are the group who have gotten a higher income than usual since the operation of the factory. It has led to a higher quality of life for them. Their perception and experiences of the development impacts caused by GLF have therefore been positive, as they are clearly benefitting from it. Even if the factory has not met their promises yet and the environment is being polluted, their focus remains on the positive outcome which have affected them in a good way.

In contrary, the critical group’s perception of the GLF is negative. This group is more engaged in this topic and/or have directly experienced the consequences of the actual activity of the factory. Their engagement and experiences, unlike the less critical group, have made them more aware of the short term and the long term consequences. They continue to question if the factory is actually contributing to the development of their village as well as the approach of the government.

Seemingly, the position of each respondent have to do with if they are benefitting from the operation of the factory as well as if they have been negatively affected by it. But also how engaged and aware they are about the situation by seeing the bigger picture instead of basing their perception on how it affects them personally. The people’s perception about the different aspects concerning the development impact can give us a hint if there is an actual development in the society. The less critical group is a small group in the society of Gunjur, who are more or less blinded from the actual activity of the factory because of how good it has affected them now. Their view on the development impact is personalised, and they neglect the actual and long term consequences that eventually will affect them as well. While
the critical group is being affected negatively and are more prone to be engaged in this issue and therefore able to identify if this is actual development or just written on paper.

The answers from the respondents reflects the actual activity of the factory. Even those who experienced the factory as positive could still acknowledge the bad odour, the pollution and their little knowledge about future outcomes. In this case, there is lack of development, sustainability and inclusiveness. The factory continues to operate without including important stakeholders in the society that is willing to find a compromise as long as their environment and natural resources is not being harmed. The government is seemingly doing the same by protecting their interest of others investors and neglecting the voices of the civil society, even if they are the ones who are entitled to enjoy the benefits from this foreign investment and its contribution to their development. Instead, environmentalists and opposers are being seen as “trouble-makers” rather than active agents. Also, the sustainability is not being prioritised which will not only harm Gunjur, but also Gunjur’s future as well as Gambia’s. What I can draw from my research and my collected data, is that even if the GDP is increasing because of the operation of the factory, the argument that the GLF is contributing to the development in Gunjur is invalid, as the three definition of development is not being fulfilled.

7. Conclusion

Foreign investment in developing countries can often be viewed as a step towards development. Increasing the nation’s GDP, job opportunities and the economic activity is some of the arguments that comes with the idea of bringing investors from the outside. To be clear, this minor study does not imply that a country as the Gambia should not be open to foreign investors that can help the country to develop further. Rather, it tries to point out the importance of viewing development as more complex than just looking at the GDP. Also, to make sure that sustainability and inclusive development pervades projects and investment that has the intention to take the development further and better people’s life conditions. I have been able to investigate how some people of Gunjur perceive the development impact since GLF started to operate and how they believe it has affected them. Even if it hard to generalise a small number of people to the whole community, we can still get a better
understanding of the specific case and whether it actually contributes to the development or not.

Based on the collected data and documentations about this case and other similar cases, I recommend the young government to prioritise sustainability and inclusiveness in their cooperation with foreign investment, such as the Chinese. The presence of Chinese investment and partnerships in Gambia is increasing together with other foreign investors. To be able to work towards a long term development that will better the lives of the Gambians, it is important for the government to not repeat the same mistakes as the previous one. It is therefore vital to view the civil society and other stakeholders as active agents. There needs to be proper assessment and requirements for foreign investors by demanding them to prioritise the sustainability, to minimize the risk of harming a long term development that benefits the Gambians today and in the future. I hope that this minor study will be viewed as a contribution to the discussion about foreign investment in the Gambia, by making sure that there actually is a contribution to the development as promised, and that the people are being entitled to enjoy that development.

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Documents:
Appendix 1 - Respondents

Information about the 16 respondents.

* = Anonymous.

Note: Some people did not get registered at birth and they do not know their age.

Critical group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/occupation</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bajo Badara</td>
<td>Environmentalist/Activist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatou Joof</td>
<td>The Gunjur Project Lodge</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buba Touray</td>
<td>Environmentalist/Activist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Ringstedt</td>
<td>The Gunjur Project Lodge – Owner</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodge Manager*</td>
<td>Lodge Manager/Activist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman 3*</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalist*</td>
<td>Activist</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Buyer*</td>
<td>Fish Buyer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Did not know age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-critical group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/occupation</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish Carrier*</td>
<td>Carrying fish from beach to shore</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman 1*</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman 3*</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Did not know age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman 4*</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Did not know age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Smoker*</td>
<td>Smoke Fish</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Seller 2*</td>
<td>Fish Buyer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Did not know age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Seller 3*</td>
<td>Fish Buyer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Did not know age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Seller 1*</td>
<td>Selling fish</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 – Interview Questions

- When did you first hear about the opening of the factory?

- Did you have any expectations?

- Were you consulted before the factory was built? (Those with businesses around)

- Do you remember the first months of when the factory started operating?

- How was your life before GLF operated in Gunjur?

- How is your life now?
  - Has there been any changes, if so, what kind of changes?
  - Do you believe that the changes has to do with the operation of GLF?

- What development impacts can you see caused by the GLF?
  - How is it affecting you?
  - How is it affecting the society?

- What do you think that the future consequences of GLF will be?

- What do you think about the government cooperating with international investors/companies like this?
  - Is there anything they can improve?
Additional questions for activist/environmentalists:

- Was there any public statement from the government or the company about the factory?

- Were you among the protesters when the dumping of toxic waste was brought up to light?

- What is your take on the filed lawsuit?

- What do you know about the government’s approach toward the lawsuit?
  - What is your take on it?