

## Gender and Blue Justice in Small-Scale Fisheries Governance

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### Abstract

This paper examines the need to embed gender in an empirical examination or conceptual use of Blue Justice. In developing the Blue Justice concept, there is a need to avoid reproducing ongoing and historical omissions of gender issues in small-scale fisheries governance and research. By drawing on the concepts of procedural and distributive justice, this paper explores how gender equity and equality and Blue Justice concerns interrelate, inform and shape each other in fisheries governance. These issues are explored through an analysis of four cases: Zanzibar, Tanzania, Chile, France and the United Kingdom (UK). We find that gendered power inequities in fisheries and women's marginalised participation in fisheries governance are associated with procedural injustices. These further shape the distributive outcomes in fisheries governance. We argue that any effort to integrate gender into Blue Justice has to address the way that power relations are gendered in a particular fishery – extending the focus beyond the sea and including issues and concerns that are not always included in traditional fisheries governance arrangements revolving around fish resource management.

## 1 Introduction

There has been a recent shift in ocean governance towards a push for growth creation in the ocean space, often referred to as the ‘Blue Economy’. Scholars have highlighted that these ambitions present several risks to pre-existing ocean users, in particular to Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) (Cohen et al., 2019). These risks include, for example, ‘ocean grabbing’ (Bennett et al., 2015), environmental degradation, marginalisation of women, human and indigenous rights abuses, social and cultural impacts and reduced food security and wellbeing (Bennett et al., 2021). In light of this, some have called for a shift from a Blue Economy to a Blue Justice perspective on ocean governance and development (TBTI, 2018). This paper will build on this work by exploring the need to integrate a gender perspective into Blue Justice thinking with a particular focus on SSF.

Long-standing studies on small-scale fishing communities and economies have highlighted that while fishing is often understood as a male-dominated activity, women make substantial contributions to small-scale fishing economies<sup>1</sup>. As an example, a recent study has highlighted that there are over 2 million women working in SSF globally (Harper et al., 2020). Yet, women’s multiple contributions are often unpaid and not properly recognised. This tends to be the case both when women work with fish and when women are part of the wider social context of fisheries.

Previous studies have argued that there is a need for equal gender participation in fisheries governance (e.g., Kleiber et al., 2017). Yet, it is commonly argued that women remain unrecognised and unrepresented in fisheries statistics (Kleiber et al., 2014) and fisheries governance (e.g., Zhao et al., 2013). Expanding on such research, Frangoudes and Gerrard (2018:118) argue that ‘resources and management mainly [focus] on what happens at sea, which seems to have spread the idea that fisheries are exclusively a male domain’. However, these issues have recently been raised on the international fisheries agenda in FAO’s (2015) Voluntary Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries, which focuses on the importance of understanding gender issues in the context of SSF, particularly in the context of the Global

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<sup>1</sup> There is a large volume of literature that seeks to highlight the important contributions women make to fisheries (see for example Frangoudes and Gerrard, 2018; Gustavsson, 2020 ).

South but, as others argue (see Jentoft et al., 2017), also of the Global North, to which the guidelines are similarly applicable.

In this paper, gender relations and identities are understood as social and cultural constructs that are performed, lived and enacted in everyday social interaction in a given context (West and Zimmerman, 1987). We build on the work of Kleiber et al. (2017:745), who suggest for the case of fisheries that, ‘women and men often perform different roles in fisheries labour and those roles are often given different cultural importance’ and argue that ‘the same social structures ... can also create a gender difference in access to full participation in governance’. Expanding on Kleiber et al.’s (2017) argument for the need to secure better gender equity and equality in fisheries governance, in this paper we ask, ‘how can gender and “Blue Justice” perspectives be combined to advance our collective understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved in achieving better gender integration in fisheries governance?’.

As outlined above, some scholars working on SSF have argued for the need to achieve Blue Justice rather than Blue Growth (e.g., Bennett et al., 2020; Engen et al., 2021; TBTI, 2018). However, the concept ‘Blue Justice’ is in its infancy and needs to be better understood both conceptually and empirically. This paper contributes to this discussion by exploring four cases and being conceptualised with ideas linked to procedural and distributive justice (Paavola, 2007; Gustavsson et al., 2014) to examine how gender issues relate to Blue Justice in fisheries governance. It is argued that any concept of Blue Justice needs to be solidly anchored in an understanding of gender issues and how place-specific gender relations, identities and performances shape justice processes, including procedural dimensions of how women participate in fisheries governance and the ways in which power is distributed and gendered, as well as distributive outcomes for people involved in SSF. By focusing on women in particular<sup>2</sup>, we will reflect on how they participate in decision-making and fisheries governance, as justice is about both process (and how different groups have capabilities and opportunities to participate in governance) and how such processes frame any distributive outcome (e.g., Gustavsson et al., 2014). We will draw on our own experiences from cases that

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst we focus here on gendered power relations, we recognise that gender is not the only power relation that shapes equity and Blue Justice in SSF governance and the Blue Economy. We particularly wish to highlight the contextual and historical dimensions of (in)justice that shape gender relations and other intersections of power that shape how people live their lives.

include Zanzibar (Tanzania), Chile, France and the UK. By introducing the topic of gender into ‘Blue Justice’ we move the discussion beyond the ‘blue’ (i.e., the sea) to also include other types of fisheries and aquaculture work such as onshore work, childcare and relations within the household and community.

## **2 Conceptual framing**

Drawing on the concepts of ‘procedural justice’ and ‘distributive justice’ (Paavola, 2007) in the conceptualisation of our understanding of the importance of gender in Blue Justice in SSF governance, this paper builds on the work by Gustavsson et al. (2014) published in *Marine Policy*. These authors explored justice in an SSF context by combining Pretty’s (1995) conceptualisation of participation with Paavola’s (2007) ideas around institutions and environmental governance that highlight the importance of procedural and distributive justice for any institution and governance arrangement to be perceived as legitimate.

Gustavsson et al. (2014) defined procedural justice in terms of how the concept is ‘associated with the distribution of power amongst actors in society’ and how people are able to participate in shaping their own lives. Paavola (2007:96) suggests that at the core of procedural justice lie questions such as 1) ‘Which parties and whose interests are recognized and how?’ 2) ‘Which parties can participate and how?’ 3) ‘What is the effective distributive power?’. In drawing on the work of Fraser (2001), Paavola (2007:96) goes on to highlight how (emphasis in original) ‘[r]ecognition is the foundation of procedural justice ... but it can take many forms which do not necessarily involve participation’ and suggest that recognition in participatory processes is fundamental for procedural justice. Recent scholarship on Blue Justice has highlighted three forms of justice: ‘recognitional justice’, ‘procedural justice’ and ‘distributional justice’ (Bennett et al., 2019). Whilst recognition certainly is important, we suggest that recognitional justice does not add any analytical value to procedural justice as the recognition of groups and their interests in participatory governance is fundamental to procedural justice.

Distributive justice, on the other hand, was defined by Gustavsson et al. (2014: 92) as achieved ‘when there is procedural justice and when the distribution of conservation [or other] costs and benefits among actors are perceived as just’. However, Paavola (2007:97) emphasises that ‘dilemmas of distributive justice will remain difficult to resolve’ and that attention needs to be given to the way that power is distributed amongst actors in society and, in turn, how this process (re)shapes any distributive outcomes.

Whilst Paavola's (2007) concept of procedural and distributive justice addresses environmental concerns in the collective governance of shared resources (such as ocean resources) in particular, the present paper draws on these concepts to explore how gender (in)equities can be understood in SSF governance and Blue Justice. We argue that SSF research has paid little attention to the way that procedural justice dimensions – and gendered distribution of power in society and governance arrangements – are associated with, and (re)shape distributive outcomes. These concepts are particularly relevant when exploring gender issues in SSF and the way to achieve greater gender equity and Blue Justice in the governance of the Blue Economy.

By conceptually framing the paper in this way, we will explore how gender can be integrated into Blue Justice. We will examine differences in the ways that women and men participate in fisheries governance and how the distribution of power and outcomes varies between men and women in different contexts. The specific analytical questions that we consider in the analysis of the cases are outlined in Table 1.

[Add Table 1 around here]

### **3 Methodology**

The current paper draws on findings from four cases: Zanzibar, Tanzania, Chile, France and the UK. These cases were chosen to reflect different contexts ranging from countries often considered to be 'developing' (Zanzibar), to newer 'developed' nations (Chile) and 'developed' countries that represent older colonial nations (France and the UK). We also sought to include geographical diversity in the sample by including cases from South America, Africa and Europe.

As data were collected independently and are used here to retrospectively reflect on gender issues, Blue Justice and fisheries governance, we present the methodology used in each case below. As SSF are defined differently, the present study uses place-specific definitions in each case.

The analysis of the Zanzibar case is based on data and knowledge collected during 2000 - 2020, including fieldwork and (approx.) yearly visits. Methods used ranged from ethnography, interviews and diaries to participant observation and collection of fish catch data from small-

scale fisheries (fin-fish and invertebrates) operating mainly on the East coast. The Chile case draws on ethnographic observations in the Los Lagos region (2016-2020) along with 20 semi-structured interviews with female seaweed collectors and representatives of various regional organisations, observations at regional and national workshops and reviews of secondary literature sources. The French case is based on semi-structured interviews (2019-2020) with ten women and ten men involved in different fisheries activities in Brittany, including shellfish and seaweed harvesting. The UK case draws on a research project investigating the roles that women play in sustaining SSF fishing families in the UK and includes in-depth biographical narrative interviews with 24 women.

## **4 Small-scale fisheries cases**

### *4.1 Zanzibar*

Situated off the coast of Tanzania, Zanzibar (Unguja) is the name commonly given to the largest island of an archipelago formed of small islands. Pemba and Unguja are the largest islands with relatively high populations that, both historically and in the present, engage in coastal/marine livelihoods. Zanzibar has a long global maritime legacy with trade routes to Asia and the Middle East. Today, it is a mix of people descended from Arab countries, India and Africa. More recently, Zanzibar has been integrated into the global world in a variety of ways: global tourism, the globalisation of marine products and markets and the influence of donors fighting poverty. These have been the main factors that have shaped (and continue to shape) the history of the island. The majority of the coastal communities are inhabited by Swahili people, whose culture and habits are complexly embedded in the ocean. As in many other places, gender relations in Zanzibar can be characterised as patriarchal. Zanzibar is a predominantly Muslim society, but with more 'modern' gender relations than in other similar contexts. Nonetheless, although women enjoy relatively more autonomy in economic matters, global capitalism is yet to modernise gender relations. Unlike in East and Southeast Asia, there is little industrialisation and the population mainly works in the primary sector. Although the introduction of seaweed aquaculture has resulted in the sector being integrated into the global economy, as yet it has not led to more equal gender relations in any fundamental way. Women have become part of global capitalist relations, however, value addition and appropriation mainly take place in the Global North.

At the level of the coastal communities, the key livelihoods are developed in a tropical seascape rich in mangroves, seagrass and coral ecosystems. Whilst both men and women work there

daily, the division of labour and the use of different ecosystems are governed by gender. Women are seaweed gatherers and farmers while men are fishers and perform tourism activities (e.g., guided tours, snorkel tours). Gendered income inequalities are also apparent. A recent study (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017) reports that of all the recorded activities, men have the highest incomes; nonetheless, SSF are a determinant of income and food security for both men and women. Household activities and dynamics seem to follow historical traditions with women being directly responsible for childcare and household chores.

Despite the effort and objectives of external donor organisations (e.g., World Bank) to reduce poverty and improve ecological conditions, recent data show that local populations still live in economic poverty (de la Torre-Castro, et al. 2017). The most important activity for women in all parts of the island is seaweed aquaculture using low-tech methods to farm and gather *Euchemoids* (a variety of red algae rich in carrageenans) for industry. Efforts have been made to improve production, the quality of the product and the opportunity to plant the seaweed in deeper areas. However, algae prices set by international markets and global warming negatively affect the activity and limit the development of seaweed farming.

Coastal people's participation in decision-making has been limited, particularly for women. It is normally the men who participate in village social affairs, organisations and decisions. However, women have recently entered male-dominated arenas such as trading and selling fresh fish to individuals and markets. This development has been rapid, over a period of approx. two decades and an almost equal number of women to men can now be found in many local village markets in Zanzibar (Jiddawi, 2019 personal communication). However, important procedural and distributive injustice remains. For example, male buyers have access to the best fish, motorcycles for transport over greater distances and better distribution networks (Fröcklin et al., 2013). Zanzibar has a good nested institutional structure for the management of marine resources, ranging from international to local/village levels, and legislation is continuously updated (e.g., the Fisheries Act). There are local organisations and committees in the villages that deal with specific problems. The 'Fisheries committees' are dominated by men fishing finfish from boats and using gear such as harpoons, and women are not represented. One of the outcomes of one World Bank-funded project, the Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project (MACEMP), was the formalisation of committees and an effort to create gender equality in representation. Through this project, pre-existing informal groups of seaweed farmers were formalised as 'committees'. A major problem has been the strong

institutional inertia regarding traditional gendered roles and the lack of time that women have to engage and participate in them and drive their own agendas. At higher levels of the institutional hierarchy, more women are involved as participation is based on citizenship and the socialist legacy of Tanzania has worked on gender equality at the formal governmental levels. There is, however, a long way to go for procedural justice to be achieved on the ground in terms of the equal numerical representation of women who participate in institutional decision-making and the way that women's needs are characterised as a topic in decision-making. Interestingly, international NGOs have not engaged much in the livelihoods of women but have instead focused on creating better economic conditions by providing microcredits or creating money saving groups. We can, therefore, observe that, overall, power is unequally distributed between men and women, particularly at the local level, and this is shown in procedural injustice in as much as women's participation in decision-making is marginalised in terms of what they can participate in and how their needs are included in participatory governance structures.

As Tanzanian citizens, all men and women have basic rights and there are no formal barriers to them contributing to the development of the country. This means that formal legislation and institutions are non-discriminatory and the country's socialist history has played a major role in this respect. However, informally, these rights are not necessarily applied and respected and in many cases, custom and tradition win over legislation. This does not mean that formal legislation does not apply at all. For example, the management of marine resources has historically consisted of traditional rights but has lately been subjected to rapid changes with the incorporation of formal legislation in a long process that has not yet concluded. The influence of global initiatives has shaped the way that formal legislation, management and governance are currently being developed, e.g., the introduction of mangrove protection, Marine Protected Areas and the devolution of certain rights to communities. These are all top-down initiatives. Fishermen are recognised, both traditionally and formally and they are entitled to acquire a fishing license and push their agendas through formal representation on the committees. In contrast, no formal consideration is given to women (fisherwomen and seaweed farmers) in the sense that no formal instruments are linked to their activities. There is no focused legislation, no need for licenses when it comes to invertebrate collection and no monitoring or control. Regarding seaweed aquaculture, there are no formal property rights to the intertidal areas where the farms are located. Women have also been displaced by growing tourism. The organisation responsible for the management and development of marine and



coastal matters, the Department of Fisheries in Zanzibar (DFZ), is rolling out countless initiatives depending on donor organisations' priorities at any given time. These initiatives have, however, not addressed local needs and, even less so, the specific needs of women, their gendered activities and their gendered everyday lives as mothers and primary caregivers to children. As such, the DFZ has not necessarily contributed toward achieving better distributive justice. Informal and formal institutions co-exist but women's issues and needs have not been formally addressed (although awareness exists, especially regarding seaweed farmers). Thus, a coastal/marine gender-sensitive policy is in its infancy but efforts to include women's opinions in this policy are mostly being driven by researchers.

#### 4.2 *Chile*

In Chile, artisanal fishing is found along the entire coastline. This traditional activity is closely linked to coastal communities with strong family traditions and a history of seasonal mobility. Women make multiple contributions to fishing: the preparation of fishing gear, seaweed and shellfish harvesting, marketing and value addition along the value chain. Seaweed harvesting is one of the oldest artisanal activities and was first carried out by indigenous women, who developed some important socioecological and culinary knowledge. Most of the women and men in the artisanal fishing sector are organised into unions. The majority of these are mixed and have seen an increase in the number of women in management positions in recent years.

Since 1990, seaweed harvesting has been regulated by General Fisheries and Aquaculture Law No. 18,892 and is included under the same terms as other fishing activities. Statistical data show that both men and women are employed in seaweed harvesting and that, unlike other categories of fishers (crew members, ship owners or divers), there is a greater participation of women. This law does not consider a gender perspective and declares itself neutral in this respect as it regulates a productive rather than a socio-cultural activity. However, in 2019, a discussion was initiated to incorporate a gender perspective as a result of the political efforts of the National Corporation of Women in Fisheries. In June 2021, this initiative was successful and Congress approved the legislative process that included formal recognition of women's traditional activities, the use of inclusive language and gender quotas in decision-making spaces, where the participation of women had been very low.

This is expected to have direct repercussions on other regulations, programmes and public policies. The different actors currently involved in the governance of the Chilean SSF recognise

the need for a gender focus and, in response to the intense pressure that women's organizations have exerted and which they hope to maintain over time, have expressed this through concrete actions that seek to make women and their roles in local economies and the value chain more visible.

The 1990 fishing law was formulated in a context where the Chilean economic model, which had been open to the international market since the 1980s had had an impact on marine biodiversity and gender gaps in artisanal fishing. The pressure of the international market by way of the international pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries has had repercussions on the overexploitation of algae with low prices for those who harvest them. This particularly affects women, for whom it is the main source of income, and who are characterized by being an ageing population with low levels of education and suffering from ailments caused by frequent exposure to low sea temperatures or having to carry heavy bundles and sacks of green or dried seaweed.

Most women are engaged in multiple tasks, with a marked separation of roles according to gender; men tend to migrate to other 'caletas'<sup>3</sup> (Castilla and Gelcich, 2008), while women tend to stay in their 'caletas' and devote themselves to activities such as repairing fishing gear, collecting shellfish and seaweed for the local market or family consumption, preparing bait, housework and caring for family members. This division in gender roles has been impacted by productive transformations in the sector, for example, the installation of the salmon industry in the south of the country, which has meant that women have had to work double and even triple shifts (productive, reproductive and community) during the past decade, which makes it difficult for them to occupy decision-making positions.

One of the factors that limit public initiatives on gender issues for women seaweed harvesters is the lack of information about them since the artisanal fishing institutions were designed from a male perspective from the very beginning. Therefore, if women do not participate in the labour categories defined as masculine (fishers or divers, crew members), they remain invisible

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<sup>3</sup> There are significant numbers of rural 'caletas' or coves, with self-built houses and scarce basic infrastructure (drinking water and electricity), which makes both the implementation of productive development or tourism programmes and access for vehicles difficult. Some semi-urban and urban 'caletas' also exist where there is more infrastructure and trade.

and are excluded from public funding and subsidies. This omission has given rise to problems around procedural and distributive justice. To address this, the formal registration of women as seaweed harvesters has been initiated. This entitles women to collect or harvest seaweed and participate in competitive funds for productive development and training. However, few public resources are allocated to this subsector, which marks an important gender gap and contributes to distributive gender injustice.

Over the last 30 years, gender-blind laws and policies economically and scientifically skewed towards artisanal fishing have normalised and accentuated the lack of visibility of women's roles and gender gaps in the sector. Even though Chile has signed international agreements on gender that enable the identification of gender gaps, barriers and inequities, the State has not taken any steps to mitigate these, partly because of the historical distance between decision-makers and territorially-based fisherwomen's organisations, which highlights the interrelationships between procedural and distributive (in)justice.

#### *4.3 France*

France is a member of the European Union and its domestic fisheries policy applies the principles set out in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Fisheries activities such as shellfish and seaweed gathering on foot or by vessel are regulated on the national level. The management of shellfish and seaweed stocks is determined by national law but regional fisheries committees have the power to regulate local management rules. These decisions must be validated by the State administration at the regional level. It was only recently that French fisheries legislation recognised on-foot shellfish (2003) and seaweed gathering (2008). The recognition of these two activities has offered coastal women new job opportunities.

France, like all other EU member States subject to the CFP, is collecting annual fisheries data. According to this data, 13,500 people were employed in the French fisheries sector in 2017, of which only 2% were women (STECF, 2019). This number is low compared to male fishers due to the statistics only including women working on fishing vessels. According to the data, women make a larger contribution to the SSF fleet (STECF, 2019). The SSF fleet operates closer to the coast and harvests daily, which often makes it easier for women who have childcare responsibilities. This shows how difficult it is for women to combine family life with a fishing career. In contrast, seaweed and shellfish harvesting are not included in the EU

statistics. However, more women are employed in these activities as they are organised around tides, which enables them to organise their work around family commitments.

In 2017, 117 of 1227 on-foot shellfish harvesters in France were women (Montfort, 2017), while in seaweed harvesting the number stood at approx. 200 (30%), including regular and seasonal workers (personal communication 2019, Union of Seaweed harvesters in Brittany). Shellfish and seaweed harvesters come under the social security regime for agricultural workers as their activities do not require vessels. Not using vessels makes these activities more attractive to women, who tend to see vessels as an obstacle because of the capital needed for initial investments. Often, women working in fisheries operate alone or in collaboration with other family members (husbands/partners, fathers or brothers). The same is true for shellfish and seaweed harvesting. In all cases, women and men undertake the same tasks, except for the use of vessels, which tends to be a male affair. Complementarity seems to be the common trend with seaweed harvesting couples, with male partners piloting the vessels and women being responsible for administrative tasks. Complementarity is also found in other fishing undertakings, with women carrying out all the tasks on land while their husbands/partners are at sea. Administration, accounting, selling and delivery of fish products, net mending, preparing longlines, hand lines, processing, tourism (tasting, shore guides) are often defined as 'women's work' (Frangoudes and Keromnes, 2008). In France, women's invisible and unpaid contributions were legally recognised in 1998 with the introduction of the 'collaborative spouse' status after the implementation of the EU directives of 1986/613/EEC (later replaced by 2010/41/EU). Women who opted for this status gained access to social benefits (which served to overcome some distributive injustices) such as retirement pensions, maternity leave, training and the right to participate in fishers' organisations (thus improving procedural justice) (Frangoudes, 2011).

Since 1945, French fishers have been organised in fisheries committees at the local, regional and national levels. Since 2010, their role has been defined by the Agriculture and Fisheries Act and membership is compulsory for all fishers; women and men. Every five years, committees are elected through a direct democracy process. The committees' main role is resource and conflict management in territorial waters. Committee working groups formulate regulation proposals that are later voted on by their council and then submitted to the regional fisheries administration for validation. Female fishers can take part in the vote, be elected to the committee council and chair it. However, since the creation of committees, only two

women have chaired district fisheries committees and one of these had collaborative spouse status. Women tend to participate in and chair committee working groups on fisheries social issues. In 2010, the fisheries law transferred the competencies from district fisheries committees to regional and national committees. This change impacted women's participation in decision-making, which is now dominated by the larger fishing fleet and fisher-men (Frangoudes et al., 2020). Wives or partners of fishers that have secured the status of collaborative spouses can be elected to the chair of fisheries committees if their husbands or partners renounce their rights. Therefore, it can be observed that whilst women are not overtly excluded, there are subtle nuances to this process that do not allow them a voice in their own right. For example, these women can be seen only as their husbands'/partners' representatives or spokespersons in these institutional fishing structures. As such, significant procedural injustices still exist.

Following the 1990s fisheries crisis, fishers and shellfish harvesters' spouses established their own organisations to press for their own rights. Their first demand was for the legal recognition of their invisible contribution to fisheries undertakings and the implementation of the 'collaborative spouse' legal statute (1998) that had already been applied in the agricultural sector. France also implemented these EU directives in fisheries, urged on by the women's organisations' endeavours. All French women's organisations were voluntary and underpinned by their members' contributions. Unfortunately, the French fisheries authorities did not see the value of their work and no substantial funds were ever allocated to support their activities. The lack of access to public funds and the absence of young women to run these organisations prompted collaborative spouses to switch from collective activities to the creation of private activities to increase the household income or to find jobs in other economic sectors.

Since 2002, collaborative spouses have had the right to public funding and subsidies for improving distributive justice as both individuals and organisations. Despite this positive discrimination towards women, they and their organisations have not greatly benefited from these subsidies. This is probably due to the EU's fisheries regulations being primarily concerned with resource management and markets and not including the wider social and economic contexts in which fishing takes place. The idea that fishing is a male activity and that resource management depends upon them has dominated EU and national policies and fishers' organisations. The introduction of gender perspectives into EU Common Fisheries Policy, in 2002 and 2013, was the result of fisher women's organisations lobbying EU institutions

(Frangoudes et al., 2014). The French case shows that neither the fisheries administration nor fishers' organisations applied a gender-sensitive approach and collaborative spouses and their organisations were never fully recognised. This meant that they only played a minor role in national fisheries decision-making, thus failing to achieve procedural justice. In the future, the inclusion of the 'gender indicator' in the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) evaluation process will enable us to know the percentage of funds allocated to and for women at the French and European levels (see Freeman et al., 2018) and this statistic has the potential to highlight current distributive injustices and can hopefully lead to the development of strategies to overcome these.

#### *4.4 United Kingdom*

Women in the UK fishing industry are involved in many parts of the sector (see Zhao et al., 2013). Szaboova, Gustavsson and Turner (manuscript under review) argue that women who are part of fishing families form part of the wider social, relational, emotional and economic context of fishing that is both maintaining the wellbeing of male fishers and families and underpinning the resilience of fishing families, businesses, places and industries. To increase their income from fishing, some women have also become entrepreneurs in fishing families by initiating activities that add value to fishing products (Gustavsson, 2021). Whilst the majority of those who fish at sea are known to be men (Seafish, 2018; STECF, 2019), there is also a small minority of women who fish, although they often tend to remain invisible in official statistics. Regardless of what work women do in the fishing industry, the women spoken to are most often the main carers of the children in their households.

Until recently, the UK fishing industry has been governed by the EU CFP with this legislation transposed into national policy through the devolved administrations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The future of UK fishing governance is, however, up for debate as the UK has left the EU and only the future will tell what form the new governance arrangement will take (Defra, 2018a; 2018b).

Even though women have been vital to the upkeep of fisheries over time through their multiple, varied and important roles, it is rare to find women who participate in decision-making in the UK fishing industry. The following extract is taken from an interview with a woman who manages a fishing organisation:

‘It is pretty much all men that I work with. Even at meetings, the ratio of women to men is obscene. Quite often I’ll do a count and there will be, like, 23 men, two women. You think, wow, under-represented. But probably not in terms of real life, real work. Just in that. Fishing forums - very male’ (Interview *Nicola*<sup>4</sup>)

In her interview, *Nicola* remarked on the evident under-representation of women in fisheries meetings. Further, she highlighted that other participants at the meetings assumed that she would be from a fishing family, either the ‘wife’ or the ‘daughter’ of a male fisher, which is revealing of the general assumption that women do not have independent standing in the fishing industry. She further experienced other forms of gender-based discrimination when participating in fisheries decision-making, as the following extract reveals:

‘But I still struggle with some meetings. I’m known as the stropky one now because I’ve had to sit down and think about how often I get talked over as a woman. It happens much more regularly to me than it does to the men.’ (Interview *Nicola*)

*Nicola*’s interview pointed to an important aspect, that overt gender-based discrimination can act as a barrier to women’s participation in participatory decision-making. She went on to discuss that wearing ‘lipstick’ and performing other feminine practices were seen as out of place and contributed to excluding women from these spaces. This is revealing of how power is distributed within the fishery and how it is gendered with feminine performances regarded as inferior to masculine performances. Interviews, however, revealed that women who did get involved in decision-making often brought other forms of knowledge to the table: for example, a detailed understanding of legal frameworks, or by being able to translate and codify the views and knowledge of fishers to fit with the ‘policy knowledge culture’ (following Morris, 2006). Yet, women often had to adapt to the pre-existing culture, which revolved around capturing fish. Similarly, most fishing politics revolve around what happens at sea and often ignore the everyday lives of those working onshore in the fishery in other ways (often women). As such, the fisheries-related challenges women experience are not considered to be part of the agenda or within the remit of fishing policy. Nevertheless, the research found that women are leading important initiatives to improve male fishers’ health and mental wellbeing as well as their

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<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity.

safety. Yet, whilst important, these initiatives do not challenge localised gender norms through which women are positioned as ‘supporters of’ or secondary to male fishers. Gender norms in UK fisheries, adhered to by both men and women, therefore seem to act as a barrier for women to challenge some of the current exclusion of women’s lives, issues and voices in fisheries decision-making. Even though, and when, they are contributing to fisheries development.

Whilst the evidence for the need to better recognise the vital roles that women play and the everyday challenges that they face in UK fisheries is growing (e.g., Britton, 2012; Zhao et al., 2013; Gustavsson and Riley, 2018), it has still not turned into concrete policy measures. For example, a recent report on EU Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) found that the UK devotes fewer funds to projects to support women than the EU average (Freeman et al., 2018). This highlights that there is still a lot to be done by the governing bodies and the fishing industry to better recognise women as part of the industry. Further, in drawing on the idea of distributive justice, this should, therefore, involve an examination of how resources, projects and funds are distributed among different groups in fishing communities (including women). As a topic of relevance and concern, gender is yet to reach the UK fishing policy-making agenda. To address this, targeted support to women should be one of the objectives of a reformulation of post-Brexit fishing policies when the distribution of local support to fisheries is reconsidered. However, this requires procedural justice and actively seeking to shift the balance of power in UK fisheries governance with regard to gendered power hierarchies, women’s participation and public funding.

## **5 Discussion**

All four cases highlight that work in SSF is often organised through a gendered division of labour with men and women doing different activities. Whilst robust differences in context can be identified, several gender-related challenges can be seen to occur across all contexts. Even when the analysed countries do not have the same level of economic development, in all cases similarities are found in women’s situations in SSF.

In the cases presented here, women work as seaweed farmers, gatherers, harvesters, fisherwomen, fisheries managers and/or are part of wider fishing households and businesses. Women’s work is often associated with a lower income and the observation that their gendered line of work offers fewer monetary rewards compared to male fishers. Further, women tend to bear the main responsibility for domestic spaces. The cases reveal how the gendering of



parental roles shape the kind of work that women do in fishing, which is often designed around the need for them to be flexible around childcare by taking up work closer to home or working part-time.

All four cases also reveal that women tend to participate in fisheries governance, decision-making and policymaking to a lesser extent than men. Our cases particularly highlight five aspects in this regard. Firstly, the number of women participating in fisheries governance, decision-making and policy formulations is low. Secondly, the activities and topics represented in fisheries governance tend to revolve around the activities primarily done by men –often at sea– and thus ignore women’s wider work and activities in fisheries and fishing communities. The case of Chile, for example, suggests that fisheries institutions are designed around a ‘male perspective’ and similar observations have been made across all four cases. Thirdly, cases also reveal that women’s groups are often limited in scope and power and do not participate in or have any influence over wider issues or at other levels, such as the regional and national levels. The Zanzibar case contradicts this slightly as the externally-driven and top-down approach to governance tends to encourage the participation of women at higher institutional levels. However, as also argued by Kleiber et al. (2017:752), increasing the number of women participating in governance ‘does not guarantee representation of the diversity of women’s priorities’. In Zanzibar, women at the local level participate in fisheries governance in a limited way both in terms of the topics that they are involved in and their power to change policy. Fourthly, organisation and grassroots mobilisation of women in fisheries contexts have historically been short-lived and have often emerged out of, and responded to, a particular crisis, as discussed in the French case. Fifthly, the UK case, in particular, revealed that gender norms and gender-based discrimination present barriers to women’s individual and collective participation in fisheries decision-making and governance spaces.

Taken together, this means that women’s participation in SSF governance tends to be marginal in comparison to men living and working in the same place. This is also revealing of a wider power inequity in these fishing places and we argue that even when we identify that women participate in fisheries governance and are formally recognised in these institutions, they are often not recognised on their own terms and ‘in their own right’ (see Gustavsson, 2020; Kleiber et al., 2017). Instead, structural power inequities shaped by localised gender norms and relations tend to reproduce marginalisation of women when they do participate in fisheries governance. Thus, deeper procedural injustices lie beyond women’s marginalised participation

in fisheries governance that revolve around unequal gendered power relations, in addition to other contextual and historical relations of inequity in each place. These relations can often be reproduced rather than reformed by participatory processes and arguably these findings have to be taken seriously in any attempts to govern the Blue Economy and increase Blue Justice. In the context of Blue Justice, it is important to consider that even when institutions do recognise women, as exemplified in the case of Chile, they tend to reproduce women's invisibility (in terms of concerns, needs, agenda and activities) as, arguably, they do not focus on overturning existing power relations (gendered, cultural, hierarchical, etc.). Therefore, these institutions tend to reproduce gendered procedural and distributive injustices. The French case, in particular, revealed that women's organisations have the potential to overcome some of these issues. However, funding, support and a recognition of their significance are needed for these organisations to endure over time. At the same time, Kleiber et al. (2017:752) argue that 'women-only groups do not necessarily guard against the marginalization of women's needs'. They continue, 'In many cases, women's groups are given responsibility over inferior resources and receive less recognition and support than their male counterparts'.

The cases are also revealing of two separate but interrelated phenomena. In both Zanzibar and the UK, women's activities have often not been formalised, whether as seaweed farmers or sea cucumber gatherers in Zanzibar, or partners of fishers in the UK. This informal labour means that women do not have access to formal ownership of aquaculture territories or fishing equipment and are vulnerable to powerful external actors such as tourist developers in the case of Zanzibar. In Chile and France, there have been certain forms of formalisation of women's work, in Chile more recently (and how this new policy will be implemented remains to be seen) and in France for some time. The French example highlights that when women achieve professional status as professional seaweed harvesters or collaborative spouses, they can also secure access to important rights, such as health, retirement pensions, maternity leave and training. In other words, recognition and formalisation, which are fundamental to procedural justice, mean that women are better positioned to receive more equitable benefits, thus reducing some long-standing gendered distributive injustices. French women can also become elected representatives of fishing and fisheries organisations, which highlights how elements of procedural and distributive justice reinforce each other. Therefore, achieving gender equity and Blue Justice begins with securing procedural justice in the governance of fisheries and the Blue Economy.

In terms of distributive justice, the cases highlight how women's needs are not being placed at the centre of policymaking and this determines how the outcomes of policies (such as Blue Economy, conservation, development) benefit women or not. In other words, not only is women's participation low in fisheries decision-making and governance, but the observation that their needs, activities and issues are often not included on fishing policy agendas means that they are also generally excluded from reaping any direct benefits from development projects and/or public funding. This used to be particularly so because the distribution of resources to fisheries workers and communities most often did not consider or target the needs of women. This omission must be addressed for distributive justice to be achieved in fisheries and Blue Economy governance.

This paper suggests that increasing procedural justice by improving women's participation and working towards transforming the ways in which gendered power relations are manifested in fisheries governance is key to ensuring equitable (distributive) outcomes and Blue Justice, particularly in the age of the Blue Economy. To achieve this, however, there is a need to understand how gender norms and power relations shape women's participation in SSF and Blue Economy governance and how these can be transformed on multiple levels and in diverse spaces and places.

## **6 Conclusions**

This paper has highlighted how gender considerations cut through all aspects of SSF governance and that some important lessons must be learnt before any future policies can develop the Blue Economy in a gender-equitable way. The paper draws on two concepts, procedural and distributive justice, and examines four cases to identify gender issues in SSF governance. The paper has found that gendered power relations often result in women being marginalised from participation in fisheries governance (both as embodied participants and as a concern and target of policy interventions), which reinforces distributive injustice. Therefore, we argue that any concept of Blue Justice needs to take gender issues seriously, i.e., it has to address the way that place-specific gender relations, identities and performances shape both procedural and distributive justice processes.

Collectively, the cases highlight how women's organisations can be important as traditional fisheries institutions have often not been designed with women in mind. So, any efforts to develop new, or reform existing institutions have to be made with the intention of increasing

procedural justice and reducing gendered power inequities in participation. Future research is needed in two main areas. Firstly, there is a need to expand our analysis and to deploy our conceptual framework in exploring other, intersectional (e.g., race, class, ethnicity) power relations in the governance of the Blue Economy. Secondly, there is a need to explore how existing fisheries organisations and institutions, or new organisations that take women's positions and issues into account from the very beginning can overcome long-standing patterns of gender division, injustice and limitations associated with inequitable power relations and, consequently, have the potential to integrate gender into Blue Justice as an integral part of the development of the Blue Economy.

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