
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.

Keywords : Blue Justice, Gender, Procedural justice, Distributive justice, Fisheries governance

1 Introduction

There has been a recent shift in ocean governance towards a push for growth creation within the ocean space – often referred to as the ‘Blue Economy’. Scholars have highlighted that such 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 the 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 for integrating a gender perspective in Blue Justice thinking.

Long-standing studies on small-scale fishing communities and economies have highlighted that whilst fishing is often understood as a male-dominated activity – women’s contributions to small-scale fishing economies are substantial¹. As an example, a recent study has highlighted 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

¹ There is a voluminous literature that seek to highlight the important contributions women make to fisheries (see Gustavsson 2020 for a review of this).

governance (e.g. Zhao et al., 2013). Expanding on such research, Frangoudes and Gerrard (2018:118) argue that “resources and management mainly focused on what happens at sea, which seems to have spread the idea that fisheries are exclusively a male domain”. Yet, recently these issues have been raised on the international fisheries agenda within the FAO’s (2015) Voluntary Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries that focus on the importance of understanding gender issues in the context of SSF – particularly within the context of the Global South but, as other argue (see Jentoft et al., 2017), the guidelines are also applicable to the Global North context.

In this paper we understand gender relations and identities as social and cultural constructs that are ‘done’, performed, lived and enacted in everyday social interaction in a particular 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 gender difference in access to full participation in governance”. Expanding on Kleiber et al.’s (2017) argument around the need to secure better gender equity and equality within fisheries governance, in this paper we ask “how can gender and ‘Blue Justice’ perspectives be brought together to advance our collective understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved in achieving better gender integration in fisheries governance?”

As outlined above, scholars working in SSF have argued for the alternative concept of Blue Justice (e.g. Bennett et al., 2020; Engen et al., 2021; TBTI, 2018). However, the concept is in its infancy and needs both better conceptual and empirical understandings. This paper contributes to this discussion by engaging with four cases and by being conceptualised with ideas around procedural and distributive justice (Paavola, 2007; Gustavsson et al., 2014) in

examining how gender issues relate to Blue Justice in fisheries governance. The paper argues 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 particular², we will reflect on how they participate in decision making and fisheries governance as justice is both about process (and how different groups have capabilities and opportunities to participate in governance) – as well as how such processes frame any distributive outcome (e.g. Gustavsson et al., 2014). We will draw on our own experiences from cases– including Zanzibar (Tanzania); Chile; France; and the UK. By engendering ‘Blue Justice’ we move the discussion beyond the ‘blue’ (i.e. the sea) to also incorporate other types of fisheries and aquaculture work such as onshore work, childcare and relations within the household and community.

2 Conceptual framing

In conceptualising our understanding of the importance of gender in Blue Justice in SSF governance, the paper draws on the concepts of ‘procedural justice’ and ‘distributive justice’ (Paavola, 2007). The paper is building on the work of Gustavsson et al. (2014), that was published in the pages of *Marine Policy*, who explored justice within a SSF context by combining Pretty’s (1995) conceptualisation of participation and Paavola’s (2007) ideas around institutions and environmental governance which highlights the importance of

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

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 lies 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?” By drawing on the work of Fraser (2001), Paavola (2007:96 emphasis in original) goes on to highlight how “[r]ecognition is the foundation of procedural justice ... but it can take many forms which do not necessarily involve participation” and he suggests 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 recognition of groups and their interests in participatory governance are 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 otherwise] costs and benefits among actors are perceived as just”. Paavola (2007:97), however, emphasises that “dilemmas of distributive justice will remain difficult to resolve” and that there is a need to pay attention to how power is distributive 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 in particular addresses environmental concerns in collective governance of shared resources (such as ocean resources), this paper draws on these concepts to explore how we can understand gender (in)equities in SSF governance and in Blue Justice. We argue that there has been a lack of attention in SSF research to how 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 how to achieve more gender equity and Blue Justice in governance of the Blue Economy.

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

Table 1. Analytical lens through which we explore our case data.

Justice concept	Analytical questions
<i>Procedural justice</i>	Who has power to decide? (Formal and informal power relations) What norms define who gets to participate? Who sets the agenda? And how is it done? How do groups have access to decision making arenas?
<i>Distributive justice</i>	What is to be distributed in a gender equitable way? Power, wealth, rights, opportunities, participation etc...? Between what subjects? Humans in general in a specific nation, society/community (dead, living, future), or individuals. According to what principle? (In our case gender equity)

3

Methodology

The current paper draws on findings from four cases: Zanzibar, Tanzania; Chile; France; and the UK. These cases were chosen to reflect a range of different contexts from those 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 within the sample – including cases from South America, Africa, and Europe.

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

The analysis of the Zanzibar case is based on data and knowledge collected during 2000 - 2020, including fieldwork and nearly yearly visits. Methods used ranged from ethnography; interviews; diaries; participant observation and collection of fish catch from small-scale fisheries (fin-fish and invertebrates) operating mainly on the East coast. The Chile case is drawing on ethnographic observations in the Los Lagos region (2016-2020) along with 20 semi-structured interviews with women seaweed collectors and representatives of various regional organisations; observations from regional and national workshops; and reviews of secondary literature sources. The French case is based on semi-structured interviews (2019-2020) with women (n=10) and men (n=10) involved in different fisheries activities in Brittany - including shellfish and seaweed harvesting. The United Kingdom case is drawing on a research project investigating the roles women play in sustaining SSF fishing families in the UK and include in-depth biographical narrative interviews with 24 women.

4 Small-scale fisheries cases

4.1 Zanzibar

Zanzibar (Unguja), **off Tanzania's coast**, is the common name for the largest island of an archipelago formed by 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 legacy of global maritime heritage with long distance commercial routes to the East. To date Zanzibar is a mix of people descending from Arab countries, India and Africa. More recently Zanzibar became part of the global world in different ways - mainly through global tourism, the globalization of marine products, markets and donor's influence fighting poverty have been (and continue) shaping the history of the Island. Most coastal communities belong to the Swahili people in which culture and habits are embedded in the ocean in complex ways. Gender relations in Zanzibar, as in many other places, can be characterized as patriarchal. Zanzibar is predominantly a Muslim society, but with more**

‘modern’ relations than in similar contexts. Women enjoy relatively more autonomy in economic matters. Global capitalism has however yet to modernize gender relations. Unlike in East and Southeast Asia, there is little industrialization and the population is mainly engaged in the primary sector. Although the introduction of seaweed aquaculture has meant the sector has been integrated into the global economy it has not yet, in any fundamental way, led to more equal gender relations. Women have become part of global capitalist relations, however conditioned by the North where value added takes place and is being appropriated.

At the level of the coastal communities, the key livelihoods take place in the tropical seascape rich in mangroves, seagrasses, and coral ecosystems. Whilst both men and women work there daily, the division of labour and the use of different ecosystems is differentiated by gender. Women are collectors and seaweed farmers while men are fishers and perform tourism activities (e.g. guided tours, snorkel tours). Gendered income inequalities are apparent too. A recent study (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017) reports that out of all activities recorded men earn the highest; however, for both men and women SSF are a determinant for income and food security. Household activities and dynamics seem to follow historical traditions with women being directly responsible for childcare and household chores.

Despite effort and objectives of the external donors (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). For women all around the island, the most important activity is seaweed aquaculture of *Eucheimoids* (a variety of red algae rich in carragenans for industry) by using low-tech methods. Efforts have been done to enhance the production, quality of the product and possibilities to plant in deeper areas. However, algal prices set by international markets and global warming negatively affect the activity and reduce the development of seaweed farming.

Coastal people's participation in decision making has been limited - particularly for women. It is normally men who participate in social affairs, in organisations and decisions in the villages. However, women have recently entered men dominated arenas such as trading and selling fresh fish to individuals and markets. This development has been rapid and in about two decades, women are almost equal in numbers to men in many local village markets in Zanzibar (personal communication Jiddawi, 2019). Important procedural and distributive injustice however remain. For example, male buyers access the best fish, have motorcycles for longer transport and better networks for distribution (Fröcklin et al., 2013). Zanzibar has a good institutional nested structure for the management of marine resources, going from international to local/village levels and legislation is continuously updated (e.g. the Fisheries Act). In the villages there are local organisations and committees that deal with specific problems. The "Fisheries committees" were dominated by men fishing finfish with boats and gears such as harpoons, and women were not represented. One of the outcomes of one World Bank funded project Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project (MACEMP) was the formalisation of committees and the wish to create gender equality in representation. Through this project, pre-existing informal groups of seaweed farmers' became formalised as "committees". An important problem has been the strong institutional inertia found in the traditional gendered roles and the lack of time of women to engage themselves, participate and drive their own agendas. At higher levels of the institutional hierarchy women participation increases since participation is based on citizenship and the socialist legacy of Tanzania has worked with gender equality at the formal governmental levels. There is however a long way to procedural justice on the ground in terms of equity in numerical representation of women who participate in institutional decision-making as well as how women's needs are represented 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 via

microcredit provision or creating money saving groups. Taken together, we can observe that—in particular at the local level—power is unequally distributed between men and women and this is manifested in procedural injustices in the sense that women’s participation in decision-making is marginalised in terms of what they participate in as well as how their needs are integrated in participatory governance structures.

As Tanzanian citizens, all men and women have basic rights, and they can without formal hindrances partake in the development of the country. **That means that formal legislation and institutions are non-discriminatory and the socialist history has played an important role here. But informally, those are not necessarily applied and respected, and in many cases custom and tradition wins over legislation. That does not mean that formal legislation does not apply at all. For example,** the management of marine resources has been historically formed by traditional rights but **have** lately **been** subjected to rapid changes and incorporation of formal legislation in a long process that is not yet finalised. The influence of global initiatives shaped the way formal legislation, management and governance takes place at present, e.g., introduction of mangrove protection, Marine Protected Areas and certain devolution of rights to communities - all of them top-down initiatives. *Fishermen* are recognised, both traditionally and formally and they are entitled to acquire a fishing license and have formal representation through the committees to drive their agendas. Women (*fisherwomen* and seaweed farmers) are to the contrary not formally considered 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 and control. Regarding seaweed aquaculture, there are no formal property rights to the intertidal areas where the farms are placed. Women have been displaced due to growing tourism. The Department of Fisheries in Zanzibar (DFZ) is the responsible organisation to manage and develop marine and coastal matters and they are leading a myriad of initiatives depending on donor priorities at specific times. These initiatives have however

not addressed local needs – and less so the specific needs of women, their gendered activities and their gendered everyday lives as mothers and primary caregivers to children. As such it has not necessarily contributed toward achieving better distributive justice. Informal and formal institutions co-exist, and women’s problems and needs have not been addressed formally (although awareness is found specially regarding seaweed farmers). Thus, a coastal/marine gender sensitive policy is in its infancy, but efforts to include women’s opinions in this policy is particularly 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's contribution to fishing is** multiple: preparation of fishing gear, **seaweed and shellfish** harvesting, marketing and value addition along the value chain, **however, seaweed harvesting** is one of the oldest artisanal activities, carried out first by indigenous women who have developed **important socioecological** and culinary knowledge. **Most of the women and men in the artisanal fishing sector are organized in unions, most of them mixed, in which there has been an increasing participation of women in management positions in recent years.**

Since 1990, seaweed harvesting **has been** regulated by the General Fisheries and Aquaculture Law **No.** 18,892 and is included **in** the same term as other fishing activities. Statistical data show that seaweed harvesting employs men and women **who**, unlike other categories of **fishermen** (crew members, **ship owners** or divers), have a higher participation of women. **This** law does not consider a gender **perspective and declares itself neutral in this material, as it regulates a productive and not 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, use of inclusive language and gender quotas in decision-making spaces, where women's participation had been very low.

This is expected to have direct repercussions on other regulations, programs, and public policies. Currently, the different actors involved in the governance of the Chilean SSF recognize the need for a gender focus, and have expressed this through concrete actions that seek to make women and their roles in local economies and the value chain more visible. This has been a response to the intense pressures that women's organizations have demanded, and which they hope to maintain over time.

The birth of the 1990 fishing law occurred in a context where the Chilean economic model, open to the international market since the 1980s, has had an impact on marine biodiversity and gender gaps in artisanal fishing. The pressure of the international market, through the international pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, has repercussions on the overexploitation of algae and low prices for those who harvest them. This particularly affects women, for whom it is their main source of income, women who are characterized by an aging population, with low schooling and suffering from illnesses caused by frequent exposure to low sea temperatures, or the burden 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”³ (Castilla and Gelcich, 2008), free access areas far from the village, or regions to fish or work in salmon farming, while women tend to stay in

³ There are a significant number of rural “caletas”, with self-built houses, with scarce basic infrastructure (drinking water and electricity), making it difficult to implement productive development or tourism programs and difficulties with vehicle access. We also find semi-urban and urban “caletas”, where there is more infrastructure and commerce.

their “caletas” and **dedicate 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 sensitive to the productive transformations of the sector, for example, the installation of the salmon industry in the south of the country, which in the last decade has meant that women work up to a triple workday (productive, reproductive and community), which makes it difficult for them to occupy decision-making spaces.**

One of the factors **that limit public** initiatives on gender issues for **women** seaweed harvesters is the lack of information about them, **since the institutions of artisanal fishing**, from their origin, are **designed** from a male perspective. Therefore, if women do not participate in the **labour categories defined by masculinity (fisher-women or divers, crew members)**, they remain invisible and outside of public funding and subsidies. This omission has **given rise to problems** around procedural and distributive justice. To address this, formal registration of women as seaweed **harvesters** has been initiated, **which entitles** them to **collect** or harvest seaweed, 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** injustices.

The lack of laws and policies sensitive to gender issues, with an economics and scientific bias on artisanal fishing over the last 30 years, have naturalised and accentuated the lack of visibility of women's roles and gender gaps in the sector. Despite the fact that Chile has signed international agreements on gender, which has made it possible to identify gender gaps, barriers and inequities, the State has not taken measures to mitigate them, partly because of the historical distance between decision-makers and territorially-based fisherwomen's

organisations, which highlights the interrelations between procedural and distributive (in)justice.

4.3 France

France is a member of the European Union and national fisheries policy applies the principles defined by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Fisheries activities like shellfish and seaweed gathering on foot or by vessels are regulated on the national level. The management of shellfish and seaweed stocks are decided on by national law but then regional fisheries committees have the power to decide about local management rules. These decisions should be validated by the State administration at the regional level. French fisheries legislation only recognised shellfish (2003) and seaweed gathering on foot (2008) recently. The recognition of these two activities offered coastal women new job opportunities.

Within the CFP, France, as all other member's states, is collecting annual fisheries data. According to this data, the French fisheries sector employed 13,500 people, in 2017, out of which only 2% were women (STECF, 2019). This number is low compared to male fishers because the statistics only include women working on-board of fishing vessels. According to the data, women's contribution is more important in 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 reveals how difficult it is for women to combine family life with a fishing career. Seaweed and shellfish harvesting, contrastingly is not included in the EU statistics. However, it employs more women because these activities are organised around tides allowing women to organise their work around family commitments.

In France 117 out of 1227 on-foot shellfish harvesters were women in 2017 (Montfort, 2017) and in seaweed harvesting around 30% (200 people) – including regular and seasonal

harvesters - are women (personal communication with Union of Seaweed harvesters in Brittany, 2019). Shellfish and seaweed harvesters are part of agricultural social security system because their activities do not require vessels. Not using vessels made 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 (partners/husbands, fathers, or brothers). The same is the case in shellfish and seaweed harvesting. In all cases, women and men realise the same tasks; except for the use of vessels, which tends to be a male affair. Complementarity seems to be the common trend within seaweed harvesting couples where male partners are piloting vessels and women are responsible for administrative tasks. Complementarity is also found within other fishing enterprises where women carry out all the tasks on land while the husband/partner is at sea. On the other hand, administration, accounting, selling and delivery of fish products, mending nets, preparing longlines, hand lines, processing, tourism (degustation, guides of the shore) are often defined as women's work (Frangoude and Keromnes, 2008). In France, women's invisible and unpaid contribution was legally recognised with the introduction of the collaborative spouse status in 1998 after implementing the EU directives of 1986/613/EEC (later revised by 2010/41/EU). Women who opted for this status gained access to social benefits (that served to overcome some distributive injustices) such as retirement pensions, maternity leave, training, as well the right to participate in fishers' organisations (improving procedural justice) (Frangoude, 2011).

Since 1945, French fishers are organised in fisheries committees from the local to regional and national level. Since 2010, their role is defined by the rural and Fisheries Act and membership is compulsory to all fishers; women and men. Every five years, committees are elected through a direct democracy process. The committees' main roles are resources and conflicts management within territorial waters. Thus, the committee's working groups are formulating

regulation proposals later voted for by its council and then submitted for validation to regional fisheries administration. Female fishers participate in the vote and can be elected to the committee council and chair it. Since the committee creation, however, only two women chaired district fisheries committees and one of them had the collaborative spouse status. Women tend to participate and chair the committees' working groups linked to fisheries social issues. In 2010, the fisheries law transfers the competencies from district fisheries committees to the regional and national ones. 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 having secured the status of 'collaborative spouses' can be elected as chairs of fisheries committees if the husband or partner is giving up his rights. Therefore, we observe that whilst women are not overtly excluded, there are subtle nuances to this process which do not allow them a voice in their own right. For example, these women can be seen only as the representative or spokesperson of their husband/partner in these fishing institutional structures. As such, significant procedural injustices still exist.

Following the fisheries crisis of 1990s, fishers and shellfish harvesters' spouses established their own organisations to advocate for their own rights. Their first claim was the legal recognition of their invisible contribution in fisheries enterprises, with the implementation of the 'collaborative spouses' legal statute (1998) that had already been applied in the agricultural sector. France implemented these EU directives also in fisheries, after efforts by the women's organisations. All French women's organisations were voluntary, based on their members contribution. Unfortunately, French fisheries authorities did not see the value of their work and they never allocated any substantial funds to support their activities. The lack of access to public funds and absence of young women to run these organisations, pushed assisting spouses to shift from collective activities, to the private creation of new activities to increase the household income, or find jobs in others economic sectors.

Since 2002, collaborative spouses have the right to access public funding and subsidies as individuals as well as organisations – targeted at improving distributive justice. Despite this positive discrimination towards women, women and their organisations benefited little from these subsidies. This is probably because EU’s fisheries regulations are primarily concerned with resources management and markets – and do not incorporate the wider social and economic contexts in which fishing takes place. The idea that fisheries is a male activity and resources management is depending on them dominates EU and national policies and fishers’ organisations. The introduction of gender perspectives into EU Common Fisheries Policy, 2002 and 2013, was the result of fisher women organisations who lobbied EU institutions (Frangoudes et al., 2014). The French case shows that the fisheries administration, as well as fishers organisations have not applied a gender sensitive approach, and collaborative spouses and their organisations were never fully recognised. This meant they only played a minor role in national fisheries decision-making – thus failing to achieve procedural justice. In the future, because of the inclusion of the “gender indicator” in the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) evaluation process, it will be possible to know the percentage of funds allocated to and for women at French and European levels (see Freeman et al., 2018) -- a statistic that has the potential to visualise 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 which is both upkeeping the wellbeing of male fishers and families as well as underpinning the resilience of fishing families, businesses, places and industries. To increase incomes from fishing, some women have also become entrepreneurs in fishing families by

initiating activities that add value to fishing products (Gustavsson 2021). Whilst a majority of those who fish at sea are known to be men (Seafish, 2018; STECF, 2019), there are 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 carer of children within their households.

The UK fishing industry has up to recently been governed by the EU CFP. Legislation which in the past has been translated 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 the future will tell what the new governance arrangement will look like (Defra, 2018a; 2018b).

Even if women, through their many, varying, but important roles, form a vital part of the sustenance of fisheries over time, 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 is managing 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*⁴)

In the interview with *Nicola*, she noted the evident under-representation of women in fisheries meetings. Further, she highlighted that other participants in the meetings assumed that she

⁴ Pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity.

would be from a fishing family – either being 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 revealed in the following extract:

“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 for women’s participation in participatory decision-making. She further went on to discuss that wearing ‘lipsticks’ and performing other practices associated with femininity was seen as being out of place, contributing to pushing women out of these spaces. Together this is revealing of how power is distributed within the fishery and how it is gendered with performances of femininity seen as inferior to that of masculine performances. Interviews, however, revealed that those women who did get involved in decision making often brought other forms of knowledge to the table – for example, by having 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’ (after 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, often ignoring the onshore everyday lives of those working in the fishery in other ways (often women). As such, the fisheries related challenges women experience is not considered to be part of the agenda or within the remits of fishing policy. Nevertheless, the research found that women are leading important initiatives around improving male fishers’ health and mental wellbeing as well as their safety. Yet, these initiatives, whilst important, do not challenge localised gender norms through which women

are positioned as ‘supporters of’ or secondary to male fishers. Gender norms in UK fisheries, acted on 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 if, and when, they are contributing to fisheries development.

Whilst the evidence bases on the need to better recognise the vital roles that women play, and the everyday challenges they face, in UK fisheries is increasing (e.g. Britton, 2012; Zhao et al., 2013; Gustavsson and Riley, 2018), this has yet to be translated into concrete policy measures. For example, a recent report on EU Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) found that the UK dedicates less funds to projects aiming to support women than the EU average (Freeman et al., 2018). This highlights that there is still a lot to be done, by 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 then involve an examination of how resources, projects and funds are distributive to different groups in fishing communities (including women). Gender as a topic of relevance and concern is yet to enter the agenda in UK fishing policy making. To address this, targeted support to women should be an objective within a reformulation of post-Brexit fishing policies when the distribution of local support to the fishery is reconsidered. Doing so, however, requires procedural justice and to actively seek to shift the balance of power – with regards to gendered hierarchies of power, women’s participation, and public funding - within UK fisheries governance.

5 Discussion

The four cases highlight that work in SSF is often organised through a gendered division of labour with men and women doing different activities. **Whilst a robust difference in context is notable, we find that several challenges with regards to gender relations occur across contexts.**

In all cases, even if the countries analysed do not have the same economic development, there are similarities with regards to women's situations in SSF.

Women in the cases presented here work as seaweed farmers, gatherers, harvesters, fisherwomen, as fisheries managers and/or are part of fishing households and businesses more widely. Women's work is often associated with lower income tied to the observation that their gendered line of work offers less monetary rewards than in comparison to male fishers. Further, women tend to have the main responsibility for domestic spaces. The cases reveal how the gendering of parental roles shape the kind of work women do in fishing – often designed around them having to be flexible around childcare by taking up work closer to the home or working part-time.

The four cases further reveal that women tended to participate in fisheries governance, decision making and policymaking to a lesser extent than that of men. Our cases particularly highlight five aspects to this. First, the number of women participating in fisheries governance, decision-making and policy formulations is low. Second, the activities and topics represented in fisheries governance tend to revolve around the activities that primarily men do – often at sea – thus overlooking women's work and activities in fisheries and in fishing communities more widely. 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. Third, cases also reveal that women's groups are often limited in scope and in power and do not have participation or influence on wider issues or at other levels, such as regional and national levels. The Zanzibar case contradicts this slightly as the externally driven and top-down approach to governance in this place tend to encourage 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 topics they are involved in as well as their power to change policy. Fourth, women’s organisation and grassroot mobilisation 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. Fifth, the UK case particularly revealed that gender norms and gender-based discrimination presented 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 when they 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 inequities in power, shaped by localised gender norms and relations, tend to reproduce women’s marginalisation even when they do participate in fisheries governance. Thus, beyond women’s marginalised participation in fisheries governance, lies deeper procedural injustices revolving around unequal gendered power relations – **in addition to other contextual and historical relations of inequity in each place**. These relations can often become reproduced rather than reformed throughout participatory processes – and arguably these findings have to be taken seriously in any attempts to govern the Blue Economy and increase Blue Justice. Important to consider in the context of Blue Justice is 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, these institutions do not focus on overturning existing power relations (gendered, cultural, and hierarchical etc). Therefore, such institutions have a tendency to reproduce gendered procedural and distributive injustices. The French case, in particular,

revealed that women's own organisations have the potential to overcome some of these issues. However, funding, support and a recognition of their significance is needed for these organisations to sustain over time. At the same time, as argued by Kleiber et al. (2017:752) "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 further revealing of two separate but interrelated phenomena. In both Zanzibar and the UK, women's activities have often not been formalised, be that as seaweed farmers or sea cucumber gatherers in Zanzibar, or partners of fishers in the UK. The informal labour means that women do not have access to formal ownership of aquaculture territories; nor fishing equipment and are vulnerable to external powerful actors such as tourist developers in the case of Zanzibar. In Chile and in 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 already for some time. The French example, highlights that when women achieve a 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. That is, recognition and formalisation – as fundamental to procedural justice – means women are better positioned to receive more equitable benefits reducing some longstanding gendered distributive injustices. French women can also become elected representatives of fishing and fisheries organisations – highlighting how procedural and distributive justice elements reinforce each other. Achieving gender equity and Blue Justice therefore 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 central to policy making – which in turn shape how outcomes of policies (such as Blue Economy, conservation, development), benefit women or not. That is, not only is women's participation low in fisheries decision-making and governance – the observation that their needs, activities, and problems are often not part of fishing policy agendas, means that they are also generally excluded from reaping any direct benefits from development projects and/or public funding. This was particularly so because the distribution of resources to fisheries workers and communities most-often did not consider nor target the needs of women. This omission must be avoided to achieve distributive justice within **fisheries and Blue Economy governance**.

This paper suggests that increasing procedural justice – by improving women's participation together with 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

The paper has highlighted how gender considerations cut through all aspects of SSF governance – with important lessons to learn for any future policies seeking to develop the Blue Economy in a gender equitable way. The paper draws on two concepts - procedural and distributive justice – to examine gender issues within SSF governance across four cases. The paper found that gendered power relations often result in the marginalisation of women in fisheries governance participation (as embodied participants as well as a concern and target of

policy interventions) which reinforce distributive injustice. Therefore, we argue that any concept of Blue Justice needs to take seriously gender issues – that is, it has to attend to how place-specific gender relations, identities, and performances shape both procedural and distributive justice processes.

Collectively the cases highlight how women’s organisation can be important as traditional fisheries institutions have often not been designed with women in mind. However, any efforts to develop new, or reform existing, institutions have to be done with the intention to increase procedural justice and reduce gendered power inequities in participation. Future research is needed in two main areas. First, 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 within the governance of the Blue Economy. Second, 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 longstanding patterns of gender division, injustice and limitations associated with inequitable power relations – and as such have the potential to (en)gender Blue Justice within the development of the Blue Economy.

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