



The quiet voices of French territories in tuna fisheries management

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ABSTRACT

Global geopolitics heavily influences international fisheries management. It also influences the engagement of fishing nations within regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs). This is especially true for participating territories. In this paper, we assess the participation and representation of French Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and Outermost Regions (ORs) within two major tuna RFMOs: the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), through an equity lens. The article provides an overview of the legal status of these territories under EU law and their roles in the conservation and management of tuna fisheries, by employing Bennett's equity framework to assess their involvement across various dimensions of ocean equity. By highlighting the strategic importance of these regions for France and the EU, the article underscores the necessity for a more equitable approach in integrating OCTs and ORs in tuna RFMOs, ensuring that their specific needs and contributions are acknowledged and valued in regional fisheries governance.

1. Introduction

Fish is one of the most traded commodities globally. This is especially true for tuna species. In 2018, 89% of the tuna came from the Indo-Pacific region with an estimated dock value of USD 9.8 billion (McKinney et al., 2020). Tuna fisheries are especially important for coastal developing states and small island developing states (SIDS) relying on tuna for government revenue, food security, livelihood, and cultural practices. These tuna species are managed by tuna regional fisheries management organisations (tRFMOs). Tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean and the Western and Central Pacific Ocean are respectively managed by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Within these RFMOs, negotiations over conservation and management measures (CMMs) of the stocks under their mandate have continuously put forward the diverging interests and positions between distant water fishing nations (DWFNs), such as China, Japan, or the European Union (EU), and coastal States. Historically, DWFNs have been playing a dominant role in some tRFMOs' decision-making processes, while the aspirations and interests of coastal States have received less attention (Sinan et al., 2021). This asymmetry is illustrated through tRFMOs' catch quota limits systems which are largely based on historical catches (Seto et al., 2021) and

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defined by flag State attribution (Davis et al., 2022), rather than catch location.¹ This mechanism confers a key advantage to States with historically developed fishing fleets, most of which are DWFNs with a colonial history and relatively high development status. In turn, it dismisses the sovereign rights and equity considerations of coastal States, particularly those of developing status (Davis et al., 2022; Sinan and Bailey, 2020).

In this context, the often overlooked specific interests and status of overseas territories is emerging as a complex issue,² as they do not fit into the DWFNs vs coastal States dichotomy. While the special requirements and rights of developing States are recognised under international law (UNFSA, 1995, Article 24) and are researched to prevent them from bearing disproportionate burdens from CMMs (Azmi et al., 2016; Sinan et al., 2021; Haas et al., 2024), overseas territories have received less attention. Yet, they are not independent nations and remain politically dependent on distant metropolitan States (Novak, 2021)³ upon which they rely to represent their interests and ensure that those are addressed. This paper argues that this often leads overseas territories' voices to be marginalised and their interests poorly represented in tRFMOs decision-making. This environment displays colonial patterns of power imbalances, where historically dominant powers retain substantial control over natural resources from their remote colonised territories (Ferdinand et al., 2020; Constant, 2022). This is exacerbated by the fact that many overseas territories face challenges akin to those of developing States such as economic reliance on few products and activities, and similarly to SIDS, insularity,⁴ remoteness, as well as small size and population.⁵ While this paper does not directly address colonial legacies within tuna fisheries management, it highlights equity challenges faced by overseas territories' fisheries, calling for further exploration of how to integrate their interests and mitigate historical power imbalances. Moreover, overseas territories' lack of representation in tRFMOs poses significant equity challenges, as fisheries tend to play a key role in their local economies and development aspirations. For instance, fishing is crucial to French overseas territories in terms of activity, employment and regional development (D'Aboville, 2007), as the sector offers opportunities for these small territories' development and food security improvement.

The lack of research and available data in these areas direct this paper's efforts to examine the engagement of French overseas territories within the IOTC and the WCPFC through an equity lens. These overseas territories fall under two EU law categories: Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and Outermost Regions (ORs). Using Bennett's (2022) ocean equity framework, we assess whether French territories' interests and voices are part of France and EU positions. In light of our findings, we argue that while French OCTs in the WCPFC can engage in discussions and support consensus, their lack of voting rights hinders meaningful participation. Similarly, we contend that the interests of ORs in the IOTC are not sufficiently considered nor represented, despite their unique challenges and importance in conferring France a coastal State status in the organisation.

By doing so, we aim to provide clarity regarding the legal basis and the nature of OCTs and ORs' engagement in the Indian Ocean and Western and Central Pacific Ocean tuna fisheries, and on whether their interests are considered.

We focus our analysis on French OCTs and ORs in the Indian and Pacific Oceans because their geographic locations enable a dual analysis of two tRFMOs (the IOTC and WCPFC), both of which include the EU as a member. With French overseas territories' waters contributing 97% of the French EEZ⁶ (Antoinette et al., 2014), making it the second largest maritime power, analysing their fisheries interests and participation in tRFMOs is important to understand their role in global fisheries management. We recognize the distinct legal and political statuses of these territories, stemming from their affiliations with different fisheries management organisations and their unique relationships with metropolitan France and the EU. However, we also note that overseas territories are inherently diverse due to their varying colonisation histories, peoples and cultures, and natural environments (Constant, 2022). Despite those differences, these territories share key characteristics justifying our collective analysis. These include: enduring ties to metropolitan France; a shared colonial history; access to significant marine resources; and their role in granting France a Coastal State status within the IOTC and WCPFC.

This paper is structured into four sections: The first section presents an overview of the legal status of OCTs and ORs under EU law, while the second section gives a brief introduction of the French Indo-Pacific territories' fisheries characteristics. Section 3 delves into the equity analysis of OCTs and ORs' engagement in the IOTC and WCPFC, based on Bennett's (2022) ocean equity framework. Lastly, section 4 offers a summarising discussion of the paper's findings with a focus on relevant equity considerations.

¹ Coastal States are nonetheless generally entitled to a baseline percentage to calculate their catch quota limits (see for example ICCAT, 2022).

² The phrase 'overseas territories' is to be interpreted as encompassing all territories falling under either the 'Outermost Regions (ORs)' or the 'Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)' EU law categories for the purpose of this paper.

³ Note: There is no generally accepted international law definition for the term 'overseas territories'. As such, Novak broadly defines them as "a wide variety of inhabited territories which were originally colonized and today either remain 'non-self-governing' or have become self-governing other than through independence and are geographically separated from their 'parent' State by sea" (Novak, 2021).

⁴ All EU OCTs and ORs are islands, except for the land territory of French Guiana (OR) located on the Southern American continent.

⁵ The specific structural social and economic situation of ORs is in fact explicitly recognised by European Union law, which describes it under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as being "compounded by their remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, economic dependence on a few products, the permanence and combination of which severely restrain their development" (TFEU, 2012; Art. 349).

⁶ 'EEZ' refers to Exclusive Economic Zone, which was established under the UN Law of the Sea Convention regime and corresponds to the maritime zone located beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, extending from 12 nm up to 200 nm seaward. Within EEZ, coastal States can exercise sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources. See (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982; Part V) for more details on the EEZ legal regime.

2. Legal status of EU overseas countries and territories and outermost regions in the Indian and Pacific Oceans

2.1. Definition of EU OCTs and ORs under EU law

Five EU Member States – Portugal, France, Spain, the Netherlands, and Denmark - still hold special links with overseas territories which came under their sovereignty during the colonial era. Although not independent from their metropolitan States and therefore not sovereign countries, these territories do however hold various degrees of autonomy as reflected by their two different statuses, as OCTs or ORs of the EU.

2.1.1. EU outermost regions (ORs)

The EU's ORs form integral parts of the EU (TFEU, 2012, Article 355) and its single market, despite their distant location from the European continent. As such, EU law and its derived rights and obligations are applicable to ORs. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the challenges and geographies of those regions – such as insularity, remoteness, and economic dependence on a reduced number of products – are recognised under EU law (TFEU, 2012, Article 349). The EU legislation further provides that the fisheries sectors in the ORs must be understood in the context of their distinct structural, social, and economic environment, which require the adapted and specific application of common European policies (TFEU, 2012, Article 349). As of 2023, there are nine EU outermost regions,⁷ seven of which are in the Atlantic Ocean, and two are in the Indian Ocean: Mayotte and La Réunion, both of which are French overseas territories.⁸

2.1.2. EU overseas countries and territories (OCTs)

Similarly to the ORs, OCTs are territories geographically distant from the EU Member State with which they maintain special links (i.e., their metropolitan State). Unlike ORs however, OCTs hold a higher and wider-encompassing level of autonomy over their domestic affairs and do not form an integral part of the European Union, nor its single market – rather, they are *in association* with it (TFEU, 2012; Part IV, Articles 198–204). This association allows the promotion of strong economic and political partnerships between OCTs and the EU, with a core objective to ‘further the interests and prosperity of the inhabitants of these countries and territories in order to lead them to the economic, social and cultural development to which they aspire’ (TFEU, 2012, Article 198). For example, OCTs enjoy duty-free access to the EU market and benefit from Member States’ economic contributions towards their development. OCTs can also serve as strategic geopolitical outposts of the EU, extending its sphere of influence within their respective regions and over large EEZs (Olesen et al., 2011).

There are currently thirteen OCTs associated with the EU, all of which are islands⁹ with special links to either France, the Netherlands, or Denmark. All OCTs located in the Indian Ocean (i.e., the Scattered Islands, which are part of the French Southern and Antarctic Territories¹⁰) and in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (i.e., French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis-et-Futuna Islands) are French overseas territories.¹¹

2.2. Consequences of OCTs and ORs’ legal statuses in the context of the EU common fisheries policy (CFP)

The EU has exclusive competence for the conservation of marine biological resources under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (TFEU, 2012; Article 3(1)(d)). Established in 1983, the CFP aims to ensure the sustainability of EU fisheries and stable income and employment for their fishers. The CFP regulates the management of fisheries in all ‘EU waters’ (i.e., combined EEZ of all EU member States) (EUR-Lex, 2013; Art. 1(2); Barnes et al., 2020), but also regulates fishing vessels flying a member State’s flag on the high seas and in waters under third States’ jurisdiction (EUR-Lex, 2013; Art. 1(2)).

Since OCTs are associated with the EU but are not *integral parts* of it (see section 1 (a)), they are excluded from European policies, including the CFP (Ackrén, 2022). Nevertheless, OCTs benefit from funding and support through specific allocations within the European Development Fund (EDF) and are also eligible for numerous horizontal EU programs under the same conditions as the member States with which they share special links (Overseas Countries and Territories Association, 2020). Their relationships with the EU are governed by the Overseas Association Decision (OAD), revised in 2021 (EUR-Lex, 2021a).

⁷ The nine EU ORs include: Five French overseas departments – Martinique, Mayotte, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Réunion; One French overseas community – Saint Martin; Two Portuguese autonomous regions Madeira and the Azores; and One Spanish autonomous community – the Canary Islands.

⁸ Both Mayotte and La Reunion fall under the domestic law category of overseas departments (Départements et régions d’outre-mer (DROM)). As such, they are fully integrated into the French domestic legal and governance frameworks.

⁹ As of 2023, OCTs associated to the EU include Greenland (linked to Denmark); Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius Sint Maarten (linked to Netherlands); French Polynesia, French Southern and Antarctic Territories, New Caledonia, Saint Barthélemy, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Wallis and Futuna Islands (linked to France).

¹⁰ The French Southern and Antarctic Territories do not hold permanent populations. They include the Scattered Islands (*Iles Éparses*) around Madagascar, as well as the Crozet and Kerguelen archipelagos, Saint-Paul and Amsterdam Islands located further south, and Adélie Land (*Terre Adélie*) – a French claimed portion of Antarctica - in the Southern Ocean.

¹¹ French Polynesia and Wallis-et-Futuna Islands fall under the French domestic law category of overseas collectivities (*collectivités d’outre-mer (COM)*), while New Caledonia and the French Southern and Antarctic Territories are considered *sui generis* collectivities due to their particular statuses (*collectivité sui generis/à statut particulier*).

Outermost Regions (ORs) on the other hand are considered as integral parts of the EU and are subject to EU law. However, they benefit from a differentiated treatment (TFEU, 2012, Article 349) and specific measures can be adopted considering their structural economic and social situation. These provisions can be applied within the CFP to better account for the specificities of these regions in the context of fisheries management.

ORs also benefit from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) (EUR-Lex, 2021b) which is set to fund the EU maritime and fisheries policies for the 2021–2027 period with a total budget of €6.108 billion. One of the key features of ORs' preferential treatment under the EMFAF, is that it sets out a compensation scheme for the additional costs incurred by ORs' fisheries operators, as well as for the processing and marketing of certain aquaculture and fishery products.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the above sections (1 (a) and (b)) on the legal status of OCTs and ORs of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, highlighting the distinctions between them in the context of EU law, fisheries policy, and access to funding and partnerships.

3. Characteristics of the Indo-Pacific OCTs and ORs' fisheries: a brief introduction

This section provides a brief overview of the fishing operations of the OCTs and ORs in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean, respectively. While it is not possible to translate a nation's fishing interests from their involvement in the respective fishery (e.g., Azmi and Hanich, 2021), it can provide valuable insights. This information provides an important scaffold for the upcoming equity assessment.

3.1. OCTs' fisheries in the Pacific Ocean

As noted in the previous section, France has three OCTs in the Pacific - French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna Islands, listed as participatory territories in the WCPFC. In the upcoming analysis, we will concentrate on French Polynesia and New Caledonia, as Wallis-and-Futuna only operates small-scale fisheries in territorial waters. New Caledonia and French Polynesia share similar characteristics when it comes to their tuna fisheries. In both OCTs, no foreign vessels are licensed, and all domestic vessels only operate within their EEZ (WCPFC, 2022a, b). Additionally, both OCTs mainly use longline gear and to some extent other artisanal gear types. In 2021, 73 longliners operated in French Polynesia and between 16 and 18 operated in New Caledonia. Their catch consists mostly of albacore and yellowfin tuna (WCPFC, 2022 a; b).

The tuna fishery is of high economic and social importance to French Polynesia (WCPFC, 2022a). Although the tuna species catch is comparatively lower in New Caledonia, it also represents an asset for local food security, and the development of a fisheries masterplan is currently in progress (WCPFC, 2022b).

3.2. OCTs and ORs' fisheries in the Indian Ocean

In the Indian Ocean, France has one OCT, the Scattered Islands, and two ORs, Mayotte and La Réunion. It is important to note that the Scattered Islands hold no permanent population and that the French sovereignty is contested by Comoros, Madagascar, and Mauritius (Bouchard et al., 2019).

The EU manages its fisheries by setting capacity ceilings for continental Europe and for fleets registered in the ORs (IOTC, 2022a). European vessels fish within the EEZ of La Réunion and Mayotte, in the EEZs of other IOTC member States via access agreements,¹² and on the high seas. In 2021, 19 longline vessels targeting swordfish were licensed to La Réunion (IOTC, 2022b). While La Réunion and Mayotte are less involved in the offshore fishery, the coastal fishery is of great importance. For example, in La Réunion, the coastal fishing fleet accounted for 87% of all active vessels (IOTC, 2022b). In the last decade, the number of coastal fishing boats and speedboats decreased, while the number of small coastal longliners increased (IOTC, 2022b). In Mayotte, only two coastal longliners were active as of 2021 (IOTC, 2022b). The majority of Mayotte's fleet consists of coastal artisanal vessels. It also comprises five tuna purse seiners, which, however, do not dock nor land catches in Mayotte and are operated by companies located offshore (CCRUP, 2020; Busson, 2011).

While La Réunion and Mayotte are under the EU fisheries management regime, the Scattered Islands' fisheries management and monitoring are ensured by the French Southern and Antarctic Lands' administration which issues fishing licences to French and foreign longliners and purse seiners (IOTC, 2022a). The licensed vessels fish in the high seas (40.5 %) and in the EEZ of the Seychelles and Madagascar¹³ (42.3 %), with only 2.5% of the fisheries taking place in the EEZ of the Scattered Islands (IOTC, 2022a).

4. Method

To assess whether the interests of OCTs and ORs are adequately reflected within their metropolitan State's position and behaviours within RFMO meetings, we applied the equity framework by Bennett (2022). Our definition and analysis of equity are structured around Bennett's ocean equity framework (Bennett, 2022) which draws from interdisciplinary academic literature on the ocean. This framework includes six dimensions: recognitional, procedural, distributional, management, environmental and contextual equity.

¹² The EU has access agreements with the following IOTC members: Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles (EC, 2023a).

¹³ The EU has a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement with the Seychelles and Madagascar (see https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/international-agreements/sustainable-fisheries-partnership-agreements-sfpas_en).

Bennett's description of these equity dimensions is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

While some of these equity dimensions may overlap in certain contexts, they remain relevant to frame this study as they cover key aspects of fisheries management policies' processes, applications, and outcomes. The ocean equity dimensions are applied below in the context of the participation, representation, and catch limits of ORs and OCTs within the IOTC and WCPFC areas of competence, except for the Scattered Islands and Wallis-and-Futuna. We justify the exclusion of the Scattered Islands from our analysis by its absence of a permanent population, which undermines the purpose of an equity analysis, which purpose is to assess the 'right and fair treatment of people' (Bennett, 2022). We further justify the exception of Wallis-and-Futuna by its lack of engagement in tuna fisheries under WCPFC management (see section 2(a)). We acknowledge that many other scholars have written about equity and provided various assessment tools. For example, [Crosman et al. \(2022\)](#) provided an equity framework that asks the questions why, where, whom, what, where and how. Others have concentrated on outcomes, process, and context ([Alexander et al., 2022](#)).

We chose the [Bennett \(2022\)](#) framework because it provides a holistic lens to assess equity across multiple dimensions. We acknowledge that this framework is general and does not fully explore the intricacies of equity issues nor their systemic nature ([Chen et al., 2024](#)). However, we believe that its six dimensions make it comprehensive, providing a good starting point to understand and address equity issues faced by ORs and OCTs. [Bennett \(2022\)](#) offers valuable insights into the interconnectedness of those dimensions, which influence each other, and collectively shape outcomes in fisheries management. For instance, recognitional equity (i.e., acknowledging local needs, culture and rights) affects procedural equity, ensuring inclusive and fair decision-making. Similarly, distributional equity (i.e., the fair distribution of local benefits and minimization of harms) is tied to contextual equity, as broader external factors shape the conditions for resources distribution. By using this framework, we therefore aim to provide a wide-ranging yet robust understanding of the multifaceted nature of French overseas territories' equity challenges relating to their engagement in trFMOS.

The equity dimensions were assessed by conducting desktop research based on academic and grey literature documents related to fisheries. The latter included reports, policy documents, newspaper publications, and a systematic review of CCRUP recommendations (2019–2024), summarised in [Appendix 2](#). The information provided is inherently influenced by the lack of available data regarding ORs and OCTs' tuna fisheries and their roles, interactions, and rights within trFMOS. Results must, therefore, be interpreted considering these limitations. It is also critical to note that the below equity considerations are examined in the specific context of tuna fisheries.

5. Equity implications

Acknowledging the differences between OCTs and ORs, this section describes the different equity dimensions they might face in the WCPFC and IOTC, respectively. In the upcoming sections, we explain each of the equity dimensions in more detail.

Table 1
Summary of key features distinguishing OCTs and ORs in the context of EU law and fisheries policy.

	French Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)	French Outermost Regions (ORs)
List of relevant entities in the Indian Ocean (in IOTC area of competence)	French Antarctic and Southern Lands (incl. Scattered Islands)	Mayotte Réunion
List of relevant entities in the Pacific Ocean (in WCPFC area of competence)	New Caledonia French Polynesia Wallis-et-Futuna	N/A
Legal basis (EU law)	Articles 198–204 TFEU	Article 349 and 355 TFEU
Relationship with the EU	In association with the EU, not part of its single market.	Integral parts of the EU and its single market.
Applicability of EU laws and policies, including the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)	Not directly applicable.	Directly applicable. Nonetheless, conditions of application can be modified to adopt specific measures considering their structural economic and social situation.
Level of autonomy with regards to domestic affairs	OCTs' respective level of autonomy varies significantly on a case-by-case basis depending on each OCT's needs and preferences, as defined through individual Association Agreements or Overseas Association Decisions. Generally, however, OCTs enjoy a substantially greater level of autonomy than ORs and have a degree of self-governance and regulatory authority in various areas.	ORs have less autonomy in comparison to OCTs due to their special relationship and integration within the EU. As EU laws and regulations apply directly to ORs, they have less flexibility in shaping their regulatory frameworks to suit local conditions compared to OCTs.
Eligibility of EU fundings and partnerships	OCTs may have restricted eligibility to calls under the EMFAF programme's <i>direct</i> management (i.e., €797 million provided directly by the Commission). Eligible to limited EU partnerships and funding under specific conditions.	Benefit from both EMFAF's <i>shared</i> management (i.e., €5.311 billion provided through national programmes co-financed by the EU budget and EU countries) and <i>direct</i> management (i.e., €797 million provided directly by the Commission). ORs are entitled to specific amounts reserved for them as well as compensation schemes under EMFAF. ORs are also eligible to EU funding and partnerships more widely, similarly to EU Member States.

5.1. Recognitional equity

5.1.1. IOTC

The local rights, values, needs, and livelihoods of Mayotte and La Réunion are not acknowledged within the IOTC governance framework. ORs do not participate in the IOTC management nor have decision-making rights. The participation of ORs in the IOTC is not specified in its Convention text nor Rules of Procedures. Due to their legal status, ORs are represented by the EU delegation, and their local specificities, constraints, and aspirations are not individually weighed. Rather, they fall under the EU's much broader array of considerations and fisheries interests. ORs' equitable recognition thus falls under EU policies and practices in the IOTC context.

From an EU perspective, ORs' distinct structural, social, and economic environments are recognised by virtue of their status, allowing for specific adaptations in their application of common European policies (see section 1 (b)). ORs' entitlement to European compensation schemes for additional costs incurred due to their specific situations signal the EU's recognition of their distinct features and burdens (see Table 1; EC, 2021). Furthermore, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) includes stakeholders' involvement as a good governance principle (Article 3). This is notably realised by the establishment of Advisory Councils (Article 43). These are stakeholder-led organisations providing the EU Commission and countries with recommendations on fisheries management. Among those, the Advisory Council for the outermost regions (hereafter, 'CCRUP'), was established in 2019 to balance ORs' resource conservation with their socio-economic needs (CCRUP, 2019). Yet, in practice, complaints have been voiced by local fisheries stakeholders who see a persisting lack of consideration of their needs and livelihoods (CCRUP, 2022a,b). Moreover, Advisory Councils' overall performance as democratic tools to inform and shape EU fisheries policy-making is contentious, with some critics noting their limitations to alleviate stakeholder representation challenges (Linke and Jentoft, 2016; Linke et al., 2022), and other arguing that regionalisation is yet to be achieved in practice (Eliassen et al., 2015).

5.1.2. WCPFC

Owing to their relative autonomy and specific legal status, OCTs in the WCPFC fully participate in the commission, its subsidiary bodies, and working groups (see section 3(B) below). They can voice their concerns about conservation and management measures (CMMs), and their interests must be considered in decision-making and management activities. Terms such as 'cooperating members' or 'small island developing states' always include territories under their umbrella in WCPFC official texts (e.g., WCPFC, 2013a). For example, New Caledonia and French Polynesia's local rights and needs are considered, when determining catch limits.

5.2. Procedural equity

5.2.1. IOTC

ORs are fully integrated within the EU and its single market (see section 1). Hence, they are not entitled to participate in the IOTC in their own right. Instead, they are represented by the EU delegation, which serves and defends a wide spectrum of interests extending far beyond ORs' alone.

During IOTC meetings, ORs are poorly represented within the EU delegation (Fig. 1). Official representatives from La Réunion attended IOTC meetings four times between the years 2012 and 2022, while representatives from Mayotte only attended the IOTC meeting in 2021, and in most cases, only with one delegate. This low representation seriously undermines the effective participation of ORs and OCTs within RFMOs (Haas et al., 2023a,b; Panke, 2012). It is most likely that ORs are represented by the French government. However, from 2012 to 2022 the French government had fewer representatives compared to the French or Spanish purse seine industry, which enjoyed strong representation at the meetings.

Large-scale fishing industry from La Réunion is represented by SAPMER (private company), which was only partly based in La Réunion until recently. SAPMER's representatives, along with other French and Spanish industry representatives, are also participating in the Seychelles or Mauritius delegations. While the average number of government officials representing La Réunion is less than one, the average for industries based in ORs is two. In this context, the representation of La Réunion's specific fisheries interests is likely diluted. Overall, it is worth noting the dominance of the EU industry in comparison to all the other delegate categories. As noted, on average, ten EU industry representatives attended these meetings, which is the highest number in comparison (Fig. 1).

Overall, the representation of OR within the European delegation is very low, especially compared to purse seine interests from Spain and France. There are many potential reasons why the representation of ORs is so low, including the lack of human capacity from the ORs and/or the lack of financial capacity to attend these meetings (e.g., Panke, 2012). Besides, the industrial fleet within the ORs' waters is dominated by Spanish and French fleets.

5.2.2. WCPFC

In the WCPFC, OCTs enjoy full participation rights.¹⁴ Article 43 of the WCPFC Convention (WCPFC, 2000) and the Rules of Procedure (WCPFC, 2019) lay out the territories' participation regime. Article 43 of the Convention notes that territories are entitled to full participation within the Commission, that they have the right to speak at meetings, and that their interests must be considered throughout the Commission's performance of its functions and decision-making process (para 3). The Rules of Procedure also guarantee territories the right to be present and express their views at meetings, as well as receive all communication material regarding

¹⁴ The WCPFC includes three overseas territories linked to France (all of which are EU OCTs), one New Zealand territory (Tokelau), and three American territories (Am. Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands).

such meetings (WCPFC, 2019). Depending on their competencies, territories can submit new CMM proposals or amendments to existing measures (WCPFC, 2019; Annex II, para 5).

When it comes to decision-making, territories can participate in discussions and negotiations to reach a consensus. Their agreement is deemed particularly important regarding issues such as catch allocations (WCPFC, 2019; Annex II, para 7). However, participating territories cannot veto consensus or vote; although the Rules of Procedure provide scope for future evolutions in this space, stating that ‘Participating Territory would need to meet a pre-determined standard in order to acquire or exercise the right to vote within the Commission’ (WCPFC, 2019; Annex II, paragraph 9). The standards, processes, and criteria for assessing whether these have been met would need further discussion and elaboration by the Contracting Parties (Annex II, paragraph 9). As of 2023, no such pre-determined standards have been established and no participating territory has acquired the right to vote. Overall, while territories can fully participate and their interests must be considered throughout the WCPFC’s performance of its functions, their absence of the right to vote and to veto consensus substantially hinders their inclusiveness in decision-making.

In terms of representation, the attendance lists of the WCPFC meetings over the 2010–2022 period revealed that the EU delegation includes industry members, predominantly from the Spanish industry, along with EU Commission officials and national government officials (see Fig. 2). By contrast, the delegations from New Caledonia and French Polynesia only include representatives from their respective local governments, and no industry representatives have joined these delegations between 2010 and 2022. Last, we would also like to note the high ratio of industry representatives composing the EU delegation. While it goes beyond the scope of this paper, more research is needed to fully understand the influence of industry on the delegations’ positions and further existing studies on industry stakeholders’ participation in tRFMOs (Petersson et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2023).

5.3. Distributional equity

5.3.1. IOTC

Pertaining to their OR status, Mayotte and Réunion are integral parts of the EU (see section 1) and are not eligible for independent catch limits under the IOTC framework. Rather, the EU receives a catch limit which is distributed among its members. The biggest share of the EU catch limit goes to Spain, followed by France (EUR-Lex, 2023). Once France receives its catch limit, it then shares it with producer organisations and fishers (Larabi et al., 2013), including those operating in ORs. The responsible producer organisation in the Indian Ocean for the French purse seiners is Orthongel (2023), one of whose members is the La Réunion-based fishing company SAPMER. It is also relevant to note that coastal longliners of La Réunion created a specific producer organisation in 2023, the first of its kind in a French overseas territory. Thus, the fishers involved will now receive a specific share of the French quota (Ortscheidt, 2023).

It is important to note that IOTC members are currently negotiating an allocation framework and the current draft text foresees a baseline allocation for all members, including a certain percentage for coastal States, and a certain percentage based on catch-based allocation criteria (IOTC, 2023a,b). Owing to Mayotte and La Réunion’s geographic locations, the EU is a coastal State in the Indian Ocean and so is France. Hence, if a coastal State baseline allocation were to be included in the new framework, both France and the EU would receive such allocations.

5.3.2. WCPFC

In the WCPFC, New Caledonia and French Polynesia receive individual catch limits applicable to their EEZs. Each of those French territories receives a separate catch limit managed by their local governments, rather than France receiving one blanket catch limit centrally managed by the French national administration. This approach recognises the different interests, economic dependencies, and management priorities of the territories (WCPFC, 2020; paragraph 320). Currently, the WCPFC has no allocation process. During the meeting in 2023, participating territories voiced some questions regarding the applicability of future allocations; however, any future discussions on allocations were referred to 2026 (WCPFC, 2024).

Under CMM 2023–01, with regards to tropical tuna species, French Polynesia has no limit for purse seine fisheries, while New Caledonia’s limit is set at 20,000 mt for skipjack tuna in their EEZ (WCPFC, 2023a). Regarding effort, the number of purse seine and longline vessels is to stay at the level of CMM 2013–01 (WCPFC, 2013b). No catch limit has been established for albacore, and under CMM 2015–02, members shall not increase the number of fishing vessels fishing for south Pacific albacore, above 2005 or recent historical (2000–2004) levels (WCPFC, 2015; para. 1).

5.4. Management equity

5.4.1. IOTC

Representatives from Mayotte and La Réunion are generally not present during IOTC meetings and rely on the EU delegation to represent and manage their interests (see section 3B). This indicates a lack of leadership and management authority from both ORs over tuna resources.

Moreover, unlike La Réunion, Mayotte’s fisheries sector continues to lack structure, with the slow and incomplete formation of a regional committee for marine fisheries and aquaculture to represent local fisheries professionals and organisations (Mayotte Prefecture, 2021). This situation persists despite local fishers’ support (Mérot, 2021; Perzo, 2022).

ORs’ lack of management authority is also highlighted by the latest sustainable fisheries partnership agreement (SFPA) between the EU and the Seychelles regarding fishing in Mayotte’s waters. The first period of this SFPA was from 2014 to 2020. During the feedback period concerning the renewal of this fisheries agreement, Mayotte raised objections regarding this SFPA including, *inter alia*, the fact that it did not benefit local artisanal fisheries (EC, 2023a). The SFPA was nonetheless renewed from 2020 until 2026 without further

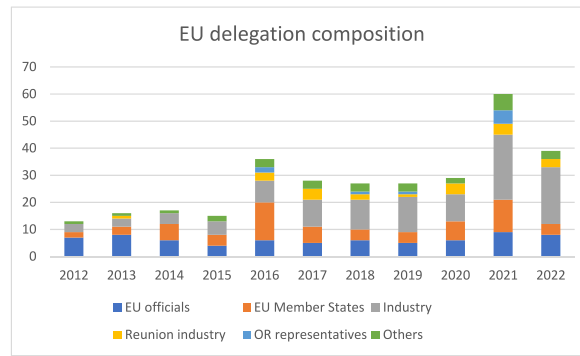


Fig. 1. The composition of the EU delegation in the IOTC in the last ten years.

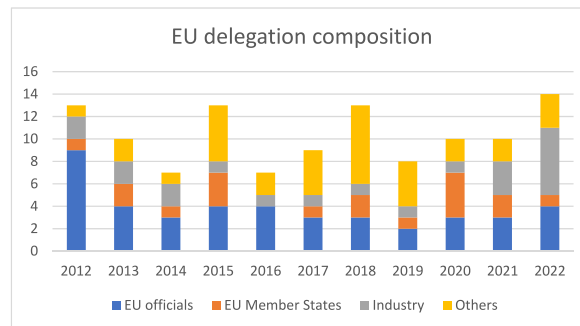


Fig. 2. The composition of the EU delegation in the WCPFC in the last ten years.

consideration of Mayotte's voiced concerns (EC, 2023b). For example, Mayotte had requested the reservation of 100 nautical miles from the baseline for vessels registered and landing in Mayotte. However, in the final agreement, only 24 nautical miles were closed to Seychelles vessels (EC, 2021).

Another illustration of ORs' lack of leadership over their tuna fisheries and the conflicting interests between ORs and the EU relates to the management of fish aggregating devices (FADs).¹⁵ In 2023, the IOTC's adoption of a CMM on FADs through voting faced opposition from eleven members, including the EU, making it non-binding according to the IOTC agreement (IOTC, 2023c). This happened despite the ORs' support for the measure (Le Marin, 2023; CCRUP, 2023b), further demonstrating the general lack of management equity for ORs in this area.

5.4.2. WCPFC

French Polynesia and New Caledonia are participating in the WCPFC in their own right and are neither part of the EU nor the French delegation. Both OCTs are well-represented during the meetings and actively engage in the discussions. For example, both OCTs regularly expressed their concerns regarding the current South Pacific Albacore management approach and noted their high dependency on this species (e.g., WCPFC, 2023b). These two OCTs act relatively independently and have the authority to manage fisheries within their EEZs. However, as previously noted, New Caledonia and French Polynesia have restricted decision-making power as they cannot vote, which significantly impairs their influence within WCPFC discussions and negotiations.

Generally, OCTs in the WCPFC are treated similarly to SIDS. For example, the CMM 2013-06 requires member States to ensure that a newly proposed measure or amendment does not result in any disproportionate burden for either the SIDS or the participating territories (WCPFC, 2013b). However, due to territories' special relationship with their metropolitan States, SIDS are sometimes reluctant to engage with territories and concerned that exemptions applicable to SIDS and territories may be misused by metropolitan States (Haas et al., 2023a,b). Such hesitancy can limit OCTs' potential for management cooperation. Furthermore, territories are not members of the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency - a regional organisation that supports Pacific Island States to manage their fisheries sustainably - and are thus not entitled to its assistance.

¹⁵ Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) are permanent, semi-permanent or temporary structures or devices made from any material and used to lure fish (FAO, 2008). EU industrial purse seine fleets widely use FADs to increase their fishing efficiency. However, the use of FADs (and particularly drifting FADs) has been linked to negative environmental impacts, including overfishing of tropical tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean (Davies et al., 2014); prompting calls from many IOTC members, as well as ORs, for stricter regulations and/or bans, in an effort to protect artisanal fisheries and ensure the sustainability of tuna stocks (Le Marin, 2023; CCRUP, 2023b).

5.5. Environmental equity

5.5.1. IOTC

Yellowfin tuna, one of the economically important species in the Indian Ocean, has been overfished since 2015 (IOTC, 2015a,b). A large part of the catch is taken by artisanal fishers (Sinan and Bailey, 2020), while the rest is taken on the high seas. Due to this interconnectedness, the depletion of important stocks negatively impacts coastal communities that rely on fish for their livelihoods and food security (Karim et al., 2020; Akia et al., 2023). Mayotte and Réunion rely on the EU to advocate for stronger management measures. Yet, the EU was one of the eleven members that objected to a measure on drifting FADs as noted before, despite ORs being in support of this initiative (Le Marin, 2023; CCRUP, 2023b).

Overall, the safeguarding and maintenance of ORs' local benefits from the marine environment and resources are not being actively achieved by the EU under the IOTC framework.

5.5.2. WCPFC

In the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, almost 90% of catches of the four main species by volume and 83% of catches by estimated value are caught within the EEZs of coastal States (Azmi and Hanich, 2021). The main target species are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring (Hare et al., 2023). Due to the interconnectedness of the high seas and EEZs as well as coastal and industrial fisheries, it is important to maintain a healthy marine environment to ensure benefits to the coastal communities. Although all target species are healthy, South Pacific albacore experienced declines. New Caledonia and French Polynesia have voiced their concerns regarding this trend due to their high dependency on this species (e.g., WCPFC, 2023c). The two OTCs have also shown support for other conservation measures regarding the management of mobulide rays and fish aggregating devices (WCPFC, 2020). French Polynesia was particularly vocal about the need to use biodegradable and non-entangling FADs, as their beaches are particularly impacted by the pollution created by this type of fishing gear (WCPFC, 2023c).

5.6. Contextual equity

5.6.1. IOTC

The contextual challenges encountered by ORs are inherently recognised by their particular legal status (see section 1). Yet, local fishers have been complaining about the lack of advancement of equity in policy and practice in both La Réunion and Mayotte.

The two regions have different colonial histories that led to distinct administrative and development paths: La Réunion first became a French region in 1982 before obtaining the OR status (under the EU framework) in 1992 (Hoarau, 2018). On the other hand, Mayotte only obtained the OR status in 2014, due to its longer administrative evolution process. Upon its separation from Comoros in 1976, Mayotte first obtained a temporary status as a French overseas collectively until 2001, before being recognised under the French Constitution (2003–2007) and finally accessing becoming a French region in 2011 (Taglioni, 2009). These distinct evolutions led to significant differences between the two ORs' socio-economic and governance environments. Importantly, La Réunion, and even more so Mayotte, suffer from important development gaps compared to metropolitan France in terms of GDP per capita, unemployment, living standards, and education, undermining their local social equity landscape (Kołodzejski, 2018).

These contextual challenges impact fisheries management. For example, local fisheries sectors continuously highlight the need to modernise ageing fleets to improve working and living conditions (CCRUP, 2022a,b). High costs resulting from the wear and tear of boats prompted the European Commission to authorise fleet renewal financing in 2022 (*Secrétariat d'État chargé de la Mer*, 2022). The aid of €63.8 million was only approved in 2024 however, due to France's failure to provide required reports with reliable data on the state of resources and practices in its overseas EEZs (Le Monde with Agence France-Presse, 2024). The process was delayed by a persistent lack of capacity and data collection in both ORs, hindering the EU's ability to meet its funding obligations.

5.6.2. WCPFC

New Caledonia and French Polynesia share similar contextual challenges to those encountered by ORs, such as economic dependence on a reduced number of products, insularity, and geographic remoteness from metropolitan France.

As a result of their distinct legal status and high-level of autonomy, both New Caledonia and French Polynesia exercise sovereign rights over their EEZs regarding the management, conservation, exploration, and exploitation of their natural resources (*République Française*, 2019; 2021). This autonomy allows them to adopt local fisheries laws and policies tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. For example, the New Caledonian longline tuna industry demonstrates its commitment to generating local employment and economic benefits by ensuring that all crew members and fishing vessels are sourced from New Caledonia itself (Pescana, 2024).

Nevertheless, both territories are confronted to fisheries management difficulties owing to their local specificities. For example, in French Polynesia, conflicts have been on the rise in shared fishing zones between deep-sea longliners expanding their activities, and artisanal fishers perceiving this development as encroaching on their traditional livelihoods (Schneider and Hare, 2024). Similarly to ORs, French Polynesia suffers from a lack of fisheries data availability and quality, particularly concerning small-scale fishing activities. This has impaired the government's ability to improve management of the interactions between both sectors, despite the importance of their coexistence in a local context where balancing growing offshore tuna fisheries and artisanal fishing is key to ensuring economic opportunities, sustaining traditional livelihoods and ecological wellbeing (Schneider and Hare, 2024).

New Caledonia also faces challenges related to its unique context. For example, the local application of stringent metropolitan ship safety regulations has been criticised by local fishers, who believe the regulations impose standards that do not account for the unique conditions of the territory, such as the common practice of converting pleasure boats into fishing vessels (Aubry, 2022). Besides, New

Caledonia has recently been the site of a violent political and socio-economic crisis linked to a project of constitutional revision involving a reform of the local electoral body, which is highly contested by pro-independence movements. It also significantly impacted the fishing sector, among others (Whaap, 2024; Waïa and Cochlin, 2024). This situation further illustrates the need for the specific context of OCTs to be accounted for in fisheries management to prevent inequitable outcomes.

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

Many research efforts have been directed towards addressing the conflicts between SIDS and coastal developing States versus DWFNs in RFMOs (see for example, Sinan et al., 2021; Sinan et al., 2022; Azmi and Hanich, 2021). However, less information is available on the engagement of OCTs and ORs in tuna fisheries management. As the French OCTs and ORs are not independent, they rely on France to ensure that their interests are considered and addressed. The aim of this paper was to assess whether this is the case. A summary of the key results from our equity assessment is presented in Table 2 below.

Owing to their specific legal and political status, New Caledonia and French Polynesia enjoy relative autonomy from France and some independence regarding their engagement within the WCPFC. Their participation in the WCPFC is clearly determined in the Convention text and in the Rules of Procedure, which allow participating territories to fully participate in the negotiations and discussions (WCPFC, 2000, 2019). Overall, owing to their different legal statuses, OCTs are less reliant on their metropolitan State than ORs, and hence face fewer equity issues (Table 2).

The equity assessment showed that the engagement of the two OCTs in the WCPFC is fairly equitable, based on the various ocean equity dimensions studied (Table 2). However, whilst OCTs can fully participate in the Commission's work and support consensus building, a substantial hindrance to their engagement in the WCPFC remains their absence of a right to vote (WCPFC, 2000). Moreover, OCTs have the capacity to manage their tuna resources with relative freedom from the influence of the EU and France. Nonetheless, their links with France can undermine their ability to engage in regional initiatives, such as the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).

In the IOTC, there are two ORs, Mayotte and Réunion, and the OCT of the Scattered Islands, which, pertaining to its absence of a permanent local population, was not included in the equity analysis. Due to their OR status, Mayotte and Réunion are fully integrated within the EU and are subject to EU laws and regulations. During IOTC meetings, these two ORs are not able to engage in the negotiations and discussions in their own right, as the EU speaks on their behalf. However, as shown in Fig. 1, Mayotte and Réunion are not well represented within the EU delegation, which is characterised by a high number of Spanish and French industry stakeholders.

The equity assessment showed that the ORs' interests are not adequately considered by the EU, and that the ORs are facing severe socio-economic hardships (CCRUP, 2022a,b, 2023). For example, despite the ORs' support, the EU objected to the FAD measure in the IOTC, a move that was celebrated by the Spanish and French industry (CCRUP, 2023b). Mayotte and Réunion are of high importance to the EU however, as their location gives the EU the status and catch limits of a coastal State in the Indian Ocean. Despite their key strategic significance, we conclude that these two ORs are not equitably integrated in the tuna fisheries.

These results point to the ongoing relevance of colonial legacies to understand power imbalances in tuna fisheries (Sinan, 2021). While these territories may have varying degrees of autonomy and distinct relationships with France and the EU, their participation in regional fisheries management remains tied to metropolitan interests, as overseas dependencies. ORs' equity assessment in the IOTC is particularly indicative of an entrenchment of persisting patterns of marginalisation of local interests, perpetuating historical inequities.

Overall, this paper highlights the underexplored involvement of ORs and OCTs in tuna fisheries management, and the need for further research in this area to tackle some of their associated challenges. The equity analysis revealed some of those key challenges such as the OCTs' lack of voting rights in the WCPFC and the ORs' struggle for adequate representation and participation within the IOTC. Those results demonstrate the need for the EU and France to work towards a more equitable integration of their overseas territories and regions in t-RFMOs, to account for OCTs and ORs' specific needs and aspirations.

6.1. Policy implications

Based on this paper's findings and discussion, we argue that improving ORs' procedural equity is a priority for ensuring their fair treatment within the IOTC. This requires greater communication with EU representatives (CCRUP, 2023a) to ensure that ORs' interests can effectively be considered. Such communication can be enhanced by the strengthening of direct communication channels, and can

Table 2

Summary of the equity assessment as per the Bennett (2022) framework for ORs in the IOTC and OCTs in the WCPFC.

Equity dimension	IOTC	WCPFC
Recognition	ORs are not recognised by the IOTC and are represented by the EU.	OCTs are recognised by the WCPFC.
Procedural	ORs are not entitled to participate in the IOTC in their own rights.	OCTs are fully participating in the meetings.
Distributional	Are not eligible for a catch limit of their own.	OCTs receive individual catch limits for their EEZs.
Management	ORs are lacking management authority.	OCTs have authority to manage fisheries within their EEZs.
Environmental	Local environmental concerns are not adequately addressed.	Able to advocate for stronger measures to address environmental concerns.
Contextual	ORs face contextual challenges due to their dependency on metropolitan France.	OCTs face contextual challenges due to their dependency on metropolitan France.

be facilitated, for example, by intermediary bodies such as the Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP). The EU needs to do more to ensure that the coastal communities of Mayotte and La Réunion are not negatively impacted by the influence of the more powerful industrial interests.

Furthermore, more research is needed to better understand the disproportionate burdens carried, or at risk of being carried by ORs and OCTs in tRFMOs. For example, CCRUP noted the need to better understand socioeconomic benefits of tuna fishing in the ORs (CCRUP, 2022a). This is especially timely given the newly formed ++++ Working Party on Socio-Economics which shall provide information on the socio-economic dynamics of tuna fisheries and assess the impact of + measures on the Contracting Parties (IOTC, 2024). In line with such recent evolutions, we recommend further research to analyse relevant ORs and OCTs' specific fisheries' contexts and needs. This could involve using carrying out regular monitoring exercises using tools such as inequity assessment frameworks (Singh et al., 2023), helping to forecast, monitor, and prevent potential inequities for local OCTs and OR coastal communities that could result from CMMs.

Lastly, OCTs and ORs require further support to strengthen their data collection, availability, and quality (e.g., Schneider and Hare, 2024). Promoting measures that strengthen local scientific research and data collection in ORs and OCTs, designed in collaboration with the ORs and OCTs, is important to enhance their local scientific capacity building and in turn, better inform fisheries management at both the local and regional level.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Constance Rambourg: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **Bianca Haas:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization. **Mathieu Colléter:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

Positionality statement

We acknowledge that we are not free from biases and that our cultural, political, and national heritage have influenced this piece. Constance Rambourg (white, female) was born and raised in France and currently lives and works in Australia on the interactions between colonialism and marine conservation, with a focus on overseas territories. Bianca Haas (white, female), originally from Austria, lives and works in Australia on equity issues in transboundary fisheries. Mathieu Colléter (white, male) lives and works in France on fisheries professional organisations using marine social sciences. He has a background in ecology and environmental policy.

We want to explicitly state that none of the authors comes from an overseas country or territory nor an outermost region, and neither do we represent the perspectives of or claim to speak on behalf of communities from these areas. However, we hope that this work, grounded in academic and grey literature, provides valuable insights into the situations of the overseas countries and territories and outermost regions in the Indian and Pacific Oceans' transboundary tuna fisheries.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Annex 1. Description of the six Ocean equity dimensions according to Bennett (2022)

- a. **Recognition equity:** the acknowledgement and consideration of local rights, values, visions, knowledge, needs and livelihoods in policy and practice;
- b. **Procedural equity:** the level of inclusiveness and participation in decision-making, and the embodiment of good governance principles (e.g., transparency, accountability, responsiveness, consensus orientation and efficiency);
- c. **Distributional equity:** the degree of fairness in the allocation of benefits, and the minimization of harms to local populations and among groups;
- d. **Management equity:** the extent of local capacity for, leadership in, and authority over management activities;
- e. **Environmental equity:** the safeguarding and maintenance of local environmental quality, sustainability, and nature's benefits to people; and,
- f. **Contextual equity:** the extent to which broader contextual factors (e.g., economic, governance, social structures, climate change, environmental conditions, rule of law) enable or undermine local social equity and the advancement of equity in policy and practice" (Bennett, 2022).

Appendix 2. CCRUP recommendations systematic review

Year	Recommendation	Relevant Ocean Equity Dimension (s)	Details/Notes	Link	Notes
2020	Recommendation N04 - Recommendation on the Communication from the Commission Towards more sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2021	Recognitional + Distributional equity	The allocation of a direct and specific quota for the fleets of the outermost regions dedicated to the tuna fishery and to the demersal fisheries should be taken into account, and differentiated from the one attributed to the member state.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_04_Recommendation_EN.pdf	
2020	Recommendation N05 - Quota allocations and the responsible management of tropical tunas	Recognitional equity	The Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CC RUP) supports the Azores Declaration and would like that the European Union (EU) fully recognize the particularities and the importance of one-by-one tuna fisheries, which operate with a very low environmental impact and are essential to the economies of many small communities.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_05_Recommendation_EN.pdf	
2020	Recommendation N05 - Quota allocations and the responsible management of tropical tunas	Distributional + Environmental equity	The Mayotte fisheries sector would like to ensure that: • France requests to the European Parliament for its ORs, and in particular for Mayotte, the application of article 5 of the CFP relating to the protection of their 100 miles zone. The access of foreign vessels in the EEZ of Mayotte is an additional pressure exerted to the detriment of artisanal fishers and therefore problematic for local professionals. • There is a link between the tuna fisheries and the fish processing operations of the ORs. In Mayotte, 5 tuna purse seiners are registered there, but these vessels do not land their catches in the ports of Mayotte. • Reduce the pressure of industrial fishing on local artisanal fisheries. [...] • Ban the use of dFADs in the Mayotte EEZ and improve their management regulations, including monitoring, control and surveillance measures (MCS) and accountability mechanisms, by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). The number of FADs deployed have a negative impact on sensitive marine habitats, vulnerable species, pristine beaches, and local fisheries.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_05_Recommendation_EN.pdf	
2020	Recommendation N07 - Recommendation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Outermost Regions	Procedural + Distributional equity	We recommend to the European Commission to increase the investments in monitoring programs and mandatory data report from the unreported sectors. This approach must be implemented so that the data collected allows a solid analysis that will find a common basis with the ultimate goal of reducing, isolating and condemning illegal fishing and significantly improving management based on accurate data.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_07_Recommendation_EN.pdf	
2020	Recommendation N07 - Recommendation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Outermost Regions	Recognitional equity	We recommend here that the European Commission makes available to every OR, the possibly of conducting an audit/study of their “subsistence fisheries”. The objective of this audit should be to determine the nature of the mentioned “subsistence fisheries”, in order to better categorize the activity in each OR. Emphasis should	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_07_Recommendation_EN.pdf	

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2020	Recommendation N07 - Recommendation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Outermost Regions	Recognitional + Distributional equity	be put on the sociological or human dimension of this activity, as this component is central to fully understanding its importance. We strongly recommend and urge that the European Commission, with the support from Member States concerned, apply IUU regulations to nations that do not respect EU waters and continually impede on the EUs sovereignty. These nations are listed in the explanation above.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/REC_201920_07_Recommendation_EN.pdf
2021	Recommendation N10 - Contribution to the report on technical measures (Art. 31 (1) of EU Regulation 2019/1241)	Distributional + Environmental equity	It is necessary to reduce and control exhaustively and transparently the use of FAD (Fish Aggregating Devices), as this activity puts at risk juveniles of several sensitive species and of high commercial value. We also consider that should be implemented a minimum catch size for these fisheries. + The Chamber of Agriculture, Fishing and Aquaculture of Mayotte issued an unfavorable opinion on the contribution to this report, as it considers that the demands of fishing professionals in relation to the protection of their Exclusive Economic Zone, namely the prohibition of the entry of seiners in its 100 nautical miles have not been taken into account.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/REC_202021_02_Contribution-to-the-report-on-technical-measures.pdf
2021	Recommendation N18 - Recommandation sur l'actualisation du partenariat stratégique de la Commission avec les Régions Ultrapériphériques	Recognitional + Distributional equity	Mayotte: « La stratégie renouvelée de la Commission Européenne pour les Régions Ultrapériphériques ne tient pas compte des caractéristiques spécifiques des régions ultrapériphériques et Mayotte n'est que rarement mentionné et souvent associé à l'île de la Réunion lorsqu'il s'agit de questions sociales. La pêche et l'aquaculture sont également peu mentionnées. [...] Cela dit, l'État membre français devrait demander à l'Union européenne d'appliquer l'article 5 du règlement de la PCP, relatif à la protection des 100 milles, à ses RUP et en particulier à Mayotte. Compte tenu du soutien au développement de la pêche à Mayotte, le renouvellement de la flotte devrait être une condition préalable essentielle au respect des normes de sécurité et à l'amélioration des conditions de travail. Il convient également de noter qu'un cadre de référence pour le renouvellement au niveau local a été élaboré, qui est toujours en attente de validation par l'UE.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/REC18_CCRUP_2021_FR_signed.pdf
2021	Recommendation N20 - Recommendation about the amending Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 11, 2013, as regards restrictions on access to Union waters	Recognitional + Distributional equity	Therefore, CCRUP considers that the rules set out in this new proposal for a regulation should be mandatory, so that the Member States should be obliged to adopt these measures, restricting access to waters both within 12 miles and the 100 miles in the outermost regions. These restrictions should be extended until 31st of December of 2032.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/REC20_CCRUP_2020.21_EN_signed.pdf

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2022	Recommendation N31 - Socio-economic impacts on fishing communities in the Outermost Regions	Distributional + Contextual equity	Recommendation regarding the equitable distribution of quota, as well as the need to ensure sustainable harvesting to protect the livelihoods of people from the ORs. Furthermore, CCRUP recommends further research about the socio-economic benefits of tuna fishing in the ORs.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Rec_SocioPel_CCRUP_EN_.pdf
2022	Recommendation N26 - Impact of the increase in fuel prices, on the Fishery Sector in the Outermost Regions	Contextual equity	CCRUP considers that is urgent to determine fair and adequate support measures for the fisheries sector in the ORs, avoiding the imminent stoppage of the fishing sector in our territories, with the consequent economic and social difficulties that this will carry	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/REC_Combustiveis_EN_signed.pdf
2022	Recommendation N25 - about the Plan for the conservation of fishery resources and marine protected ecosystems	Management equity	The CCRUP does not consider the need to make further changes in the fishing gears used in the ORs, as we already consider them to be sustainable.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/REC_PlanoConsRPEM_EN_signed.pdf
2023	Recommendation N41 - Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on Sustainable Fisheries in the European Union: state of the play and orientations for 2024	Procedural equity (?)	The CCRUP recommends that the EU include in its transversal communications the analysis of information concerning the ocean basins of the ORs	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/EN_Rec_signed.pdf
2023	Recommendation N39 - Consistent management of fish aggregating devices in ICCAT and IOTC	Management + Environmental + Contextual equity	CCRUP recommends the need to adopt effective and consistent measures across the oceans, including systems to ensure the accountability and compliance of the actions.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/EN_Rec39_FAD.pdf
2023	Recommendation N37 - Fleet renewal in the ORs	Contextual equity	Fleet renewal in the Outermost Regions (OR) is an urgent need, arising from their aging and the difficulty in complying with European regulations for on-board safety and hygiene using current vessels	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EN_REC37_CE_alt19.07.2023.pdf
2023	Recommendation N35 - The importance of empirical knowledge of the outermost regions - the case of Mayotte	Contextual equity	An ambitious scientific research programme needs to be rapidly created specifically for the outermost regions, where knowledge and data collection are far from sufficient to serve as a basis for policy. This investment should cover both marine biology and the social and human sciences	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/RecMayotte_CCRUP_EN_signed-1.pdf
2024	Recommendation N56 - Maritime Action Plan	Recognitional + Procedural equity	The CCRUP recommends the European Commission to request the European Environment Agency to carry out a better-informed review of the Marine Action Plan, duly including the ORs.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/ING_REC-Plano-Acao-Marinho-1.pdf
2024	Recommendation N55 - Maritime Spatial Planning of the Outermost Regions	Recognitional + contextual equity	French ORs: The CCRUP recommends that the French Member State ensure that its ORs are carefully and judiciously considered in the national strategy, using the continental experience as a warning, to develop specific methodologies and appropriate tools to protect fishing in the ORs.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Rec55_CCRUP_ENG_F-1.pdf
2024	Recommendation N52 - Sustainable Fishing in the European Union: State of play and guidelines for 2025	Distributional + Environmental + Management equity	The CCRUP recommends that the French Member State and the EU review existing policies to ensure that they are adapted to local specificities, particularly those of Europeans living in the ORs, including strengthening surveillance against IUU fishing and implementing a continuous monitoring system for MPAs. The CCRUP recommends that the support of EMFAF for the replacement or modernisation of the vessels engines	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ENG_

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			of ORs to be majored, and the support for the energy transition of these engines, should increase proportionally to the percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The CCRUP recommends that the EC facilitate the improvement of the access to the international market for fisheries products with origin in ORs. The CCRUP recommends that the European Commission reallocates financial resources, to allow the restructuring of the fisheries sector of ORs before 2027. To increase the environmental and economic resilience in the ORs, the CCRUP recommends to the Member States, the development of specific measures, for the outermost regions, that promote the mitigation of the environmental pressures on their fish stocks. The CCRUP recommends to the Member States the elaboration of more accurate reports about the state of the fleet and the conservation status of fish stocks to ensure that the OR fishing fleet, is not prejudiced in the quota allocation process and can benefit from appropriate support for its renewal; and for Member States to determine the support to the fisheries sector to enable the construction of ORs' own database, subsequently validated by independent entities. The CCRUP recommends that: If the closure of fisheries is unavoidable, there should be protection for the smallscale fleets of the ORs by exempting them from its application. Also note: Opinion of the Chambre de l'agriculture de la pêche et de l'aquaculture de Mayotte (CAPAM) to defend the need to reduce the number of dFADs authorised in the waters of the ORs in order to minimise the negative impact on the region's ecosystems; and Opinion of the Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins (CRPMEM) La Réunion: Twchich considers that, if the closure is unavoidable, the small fleets of less than 24 m in the outermost regions should be preserved by being exempted from its application.	Rec-Consulta-CE-Pesca-Sustentavel-1.pdf
2024	Recommendation N50 - Conservation and Management of Tropical Tuna in the Indian Ocean	Recognitional + distributional + environmental equity	The CCRUP recommends that: If the closure of fisheries is unavoidable, there should be protection for the smallscale fleets of the ORs by exempting them from its application.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/EN_Recommendation-on-Conservation-IOTC.pdf
2024	Recommandation N49 -EU-Maldives discussions for Maldives to join the interim Economic Partnership Agreement of the Eastern and Southern Africa group with the European Union	Recognitional + contextual equity	The CCRUP is deeply concerned about the detrimental consequences that the massive influx of lower quality but cheaper tuna products from Maldives, entering EU market duty free, could have on the fragile economies of ORs and their artisanal pole and line fisheries. Therefore recommends for	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ENG_recommendation-on-EU-Maldives_signed.pdf

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			EC to: (<i>inter alia</i>) c) Take into consideration the highly negative consequences duty free Maldivian tuna products would have on artisanal fisheries and associated communities in EU's ORs.	
2024	Recommendation N48 -Consultation on two actions under Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 11, 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy	Contextual + Distributional equity	The CCRUP recommends that the additional social indicators, as well as the biological, technical and economic ones already used by the STECF, be adapted for implementation in ORs. Also recommends that the exploitation of economic criteria other than historical catches, which favour positive impacts on local OR economies. Also recommends - Maintaining the application of "socio-economic" criteria in favour of artisanal fishing in ORs and the introduction of guarantee and control measures for compliance by Member States with the final section of Article 17 of Regulation 1380/2013, and in any case introducing specific quotas for small-scale artisanal fleets in ORs the allocation of fishing opportunities, with a positive differentiation for them, which have a reduced environmental impact.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ENG_Rec_PCP_final_signed.pdf
2024	Recommendation N46 -Mandate the European Fisheries Control Agency to act in the French Outermost Regions	Contextual equity	CCRUP recommends that French Member-state requests the European Commission the approval of a Specific Control and Inspection Program, covering the French ORs to facilitate control, inspection and surveillance in ORs.	https://www.ccrup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/EN_Rec46_EFCA-2-1.pdf

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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