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► **To cite this version:**

A. Nassiri, O. Thébaud, M. Lauer, S. J. Holbrook, A. Rassweiler, et al. Hedonic evaluation of coral reef fish prices on a direct sale market. *Marine Policy*, 2021, 129, pp.104525. 10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104525 . hal-03212908

HAL Id: hal-03212908

<https://hal.science/hal-03212908v1>

Submitted on 30 Apr 2021

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Hedonic evaluation of coral reef fish prices on a direct sale market

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1. Introduction

World-wide, coral reefs support small-scale subsistence fisheries (Cinner 2014). These are particularly important in the South Pacific, where coastal communities are strongly dependent on reef fisheries (Leenhardt et al. 2016; Rassweiler et al. 2020). The subsistence nature of these fisheries has often led to the assumption that, with the exception of export-oriented fisheries, their dynamics and the associated trade in fish products cannot be fully explained by standard market behavior (Léopold, Thébaud, et Charles 2019). Indeed, the existing social science research on coral reef fin-fish fisheries in the Pacific is largely focused on their ethnographical and sociological characteristics and non-market determinants of their evolution (Johannes 1981; Lauer et Aswani 2009; Audras, Bambridge, et Gaulme 2017). (but see Cinner et al. 2007). Here, we will show how an economic analysis can help explain the patterns of fish sales and fish prices in a coral reef fin-fish fishery without centralized market. We assess the extent to which different taxa of reef fish attract different prices, reflecting relative supply and demand characteristics. In order to highlight such pricing strategies, we use data from a survey of fish sales on the island of Moorea, French Polynesia. Fishing plays an important role on Moorea, as a source of food for the local population, of income for fishers, and as an important aspect of Polynesian cultural identity (McManus 1997; Rassweiler et al. 2020). The majority (58%) of the fish landed are taken from the lagoon (Yonger 2002), and a fraction of these are sold in lots called tuis. Each tui is composed of individuals of one or several different species of fish, tied together in strings of varying length. This local market is composed of multiple outlets along the island's coastal road, where fishers present their landings (tuis hanging from a rack) and consumers come to buy fresh fish (Leenhardt et Moussa 2012; Moussa 2010; Rassweiler et al. 2020). Both fish buyers and sellers are sensitive to the quality of the fish offered for sale. They also have a good knowledge of the value of each species, and of the value of tuis composed of different species as well as the distribution of prices across outlets. Therefore, the willingness

of buyers to pay for an additional quantity or quality of a species of fish is likely to be equivalent to the costs that a fisher would incur to provide it, which should also equal the value that they expect to derive from the market.

To identify fish pricing strategies, we apply a hedonic modelling approach which accounts for different sources of price heterogeneity. With the required precautions, using the principle of revealed preferences (Rosen 1974), this method enables estimation of the implicit price of a non-marginal variation in the length (taken as a measure of the quantity) of individual groups of fish species, based on the price of the tui composed of these species groups. Indeed, fish buyers pay a price based on their knowledge of the species groups that compose the tui: their preference for each species group is thus expressed as a monetary amount equivalent to their willingness to pay to acquire an additional quantity of this species group.

Our analysis demonstrates how applied economic methods can be used to elicit the relative economic value of different species of reef fish landed in a small-scale fishery. Estimates of the market value of species groups frequently observed in tuis in Moorea reveal that implicit prices of fish may vary by a factor of four to five across species groups. These prices are affected by the origin of the catch and fishing techniques used. The results, derived from the fraction of catch that is sold, may be used as a guide to assessing the economic stakes associated with changes in the composition of catches in the broader, subsistence-oriented and non-market components of the fishery. The results may also help inform the design of management strategies for the fishery, taking into account economic drivers of fishing pressure on this local market. Beyond the fishery under study, the results also highlight the relevance of empirical economic analysis to improve the understanding of small-scale coral-reef fisheries in the Pacific, and demonstrate a methodology to investigate the economic stakes associated with changes in the structure of their production, which could be applied across a broad range of contexts.

2. Context and Data: Tui Sales on the Island of Moorea, French Polynesia

Coral reef fishing is a key activity for the coastal communities of French Polynesia. On the island of Moorea, fishing is strongly embedded in the livelihood and lifestyle of the local population, with most households engaged in a fishery-related activity (Leenhardt et al. 2016; Rassweiler et al. 2020; Thiault et al. 2017). A fraction of the landings of Moorea's small-scale fishery is sold along the roadside, generally close to the fisher's home in the form of strings of fish called tuis. The prices of individual tuis are observed through direct surveying of the sellers. Tui composition varies significantly, being made up of the same species or a mix of species, and of variable numbers of fishes of different sizes.

Tui prices and composition were surveyed on Moorea during 2014 and 2015 along the 60 km ring road. The survey documented the price of tuis sold. The species composition and sizes of fish on each tui were determined from photographs taken of each seller's rack at the time of the survey, with fish lengths calculated based on comparison with a scale bar of known size (see Rassweiler et al. 2020). Over the two years, 12 002 individual fishes were measured, of which there were 8 568 records with complete information, incorporated in 742 tuis sold by 164 sellers¹ and the majority of these (79.88%) are the fishers themselves. The mean number of tuis observed² per seller on a given day was 4 to 5, with a maximum of 23, and half of the sellers were selling 3 tuis or more. Fish on each tui were identified taxonomically from the photographs with variable levels of precision (usually to genus or species). The identified taxa were aggregated into 37 functional groups (here called species groups). Parrotfish that had been noted as potentially belonging to two or more taxa (e.g., *Scarus/Chlorurus*) were assumed to belong

¹ 559 tuis sold by 123 fishers in 2014, and 183 tuis sold by 41 fishers in 2015.

² This was the number observed at the moment of sampling, so in certain cases, may be an underestimate of the total number of tuis offered for sale by a seller each day, as some tuis may already have been sold.

to the first group listed. A range of non-reef taxa were aggregated within a group designated “pelagic” (*Cheilopogon*, *Coryphaena*, *Cypselurus*, *Katsuwonus*, *Sarda*, *Scombridae*, *Thunnus*). A large number of the observed tuis were composed of single-species groups: 360 out of 742. Multi-species group tuis were composed on average of 3 different species groups, and rarely contained more than 7.

The resulting database contains three dimensions: the tui t of seller i composed of several species groups j . Table 1 provides summary statistics on the composition of the observed tuis. The data reveal that some species groups are commonly encountered in a majority of the recorded tuis with consistent lengths offered across multiple sellers. Indeed, the total length of fish offered with the first fourteen species groups (in grey) in Table 1 represents the vast majority (95.85%, 4th column) of the total length of available fish across all the recorded tuis. Other species groups are more rarely encountered, and they appear in a limited number of tuis presented by some sellers. Within the same tui, the number and size of the fish pieces are negatively correlated (-37.3% being the correlation coefficient) and the species groups most frequently encountered consist of smaller fish. The median length is about 22 cm for the four most frequent species groups and 26 cm for the others.

According to these observations, the prices of the 742 tuis vary by 482^{3a} CFP⁴ around an average of 1773^{3b} CFP and their lengths by 106^{3a} cm around an average length of 249^{3b} cm. These tuis are characterized by substantial heterogeneity along several dimensions, particularly with respect to their species-group composition. Almost half of the sample (361 tuis out of 742) is composed of single-species groups, corresponding to 42% of the total length of fish sold on this market by three quarters of the sellers (118 out of 164). These single-species tuis are composed of 21 of the 37 species groups recorded in roadside sales. The survey of 742 tuis

³ a=Standard deviation and b=Average

⁴ The local currency is the Pacific Franc, Compagnie Française du Franc: 1 CFP= 0.008380 Euro as of March 2021.

includes both species groups characterized by smaller- (*Acanthurus*, *Siganus* and *Myripristis*) and larger-bodied (*Epinephelus* and *Naso*) fish, between 16 and 39 cm each. The prices of these tuis vary across species groups and sellers from 850 CFP to 2000 CFP, around an average price of 1620 CFP (Standard deviation, SD=594 CFP). The lengths of all fish offered on individual tuis also vary greatly with a 107 cm standard deviation around an average length of 216 cm. It should be noted that price and length variations are positively correlated, but these correlations are weak between tuis (27.37%) as well as between species groups⁵ (13.75% the correlation coefficient). Therefore, price variations among tuis and among species groups are not a simple function of the number or total length of fish on each tui.

⁵ Correlation is calculated with the length and the price of the 118 single-species groups (Table 2).

Table 1. Characteristics of the tuis observed in the survey

| Species group j (by decreasing number of tuis) | Num. of sellers | Num. of tuis | % of tuis in sample containing each species group | Num. of other species groups present in tuis sold by seller | Total Length of each species group (cm) | % of Total Length in sample | Average Length of species group j in single tuis (cm) | SD Length of species group j in single tuis (cm) | Average Price of a tui (CFP) | SD Price of a tui (CFP) | Average Length of fish of species group j (cm) | SD Length of fish of species group j (cm) | CIG (Index of ciguatera risk absence) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <i>Scarus</i> | 114 ^a | 311 ^b | 42% ^e | 27 ⁱ | 57734 | 31.2% | 186 | 109 | 1926 | 246 | 23 | 5 | 100 |
| <i>Chlorurus</i> | 78 ^c | 140 ^d | 19% ^f | 21 | 9813 | 5.30% | 70 | 66 | 1900 | 301 | 24 | 6 | 100 |
| <i>Parupeneus</i> | 81 | 130 | 18% | 25 | 11121 | 6.01% | 86 | 67 | 1919 | 247 | 23 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Myripristis</i> | 59 | 115 | 15% | 28 | 18924 | 10.2% | 165 | 117 | 1939 | 249 | 19 | 3 | 100 |
| <i>Mulloidichthys</i> | 75 | 108 | 15% | 27 | 11737 | 6.34% | 109 | 88 | 1898 | 296 | 22 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Siganus</i> | 55 | 104 | 14% | 24 | 15609 | 8.43% | 150 | 104 | 1952 | 215 | 19 | 3 | 100 |
| <i>Pelagic</i> | 20 | 90 | 12% | 4 | 15739 | 8.51% | 175 | 76 | 864 | 549 | 30 | 13 | 100 |
| <i>Naso</i> | 49 | 85 | 11% | 21 | 6760 | 3.65% | 80 | 71 | 1929 | 269 | 28 | 13 | 100 |
| <i>Epinephelus</i> | 53 | 73 | 10% | 22 | 8698 | 4.70% | 119 | 136 | 1986 | 117 | 22 | 5 | 75 |
| <i>Acanthurus</i> | 43 | 58 | 8% | 21 | 6427 | 3.47% | 111 | 108 | 1922 | 226 | 19 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Cephalopholis</i> | 46 | 55 | 7% | 21 | 2567 | 1.39% | 47 | 29 | 2000 | 0 | 21 | 5 | 67 |
| <i>Sargocentron</i> | 37 | 52 | 7% | 24 | 2355 | 1.27% | 45 | 31 | 1885 | 307 | 20 | 3 | 100 |
| <i>Lutjanus</i> | 24 | 30 | 4% | 20 | 1968 | 1.06% | 66 | 68 | 1967 | 183 | 22 | 5 | 40 |
| <i>Selar</i> | 7 | 30 | 4% | 2 | 7798 | 4.21% | 260 | 91 | 1350 | 494 | 20 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Monotaxis</i> | 14 | 17 | 2.29% | 17 | 675 | 0.36% | 40 | 23 | 2000 | 0 | 26 | 9 | 40 |
| <i>Cheilinus</i> | 13 | 16 | 2.16% | 15 | 730 | 0.39% | 46 | 25 | 1906 | 272 | 24 | 6 | 75 |
| NI (Non Identified) | 10 | 16 | 2.16% | 16 | 604 | 0.33% | 38 | 21 | 1813 | 512 | 25 | 6 | 40 |
| <i>Kyphosus</i> | 6 | 15 | 2.02% | 13 | 830 | 0.45% | 55 | 35 | 2000 | 0 | 30 | 7 | 100 |
| <i>Lethrinus</i> | 13 | 15 | 2.02% | 12 | 566 | 0.31% | 38 | 23 | 1933 | 258 | 27 | 12 | 40 |
| <i>Calotomus</i> | 14 | 14 | 1.89% | 12 | 603 | 0.33% | 43 | 28 | 1893 | 289 | 25 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Gnathodentex</i> | 10 | 11 | 1.48% | 15 | 542 | 0.29% | 49 | 24 | 1955 | 151 | 22 | 3 | 100 |
| <i>Carangoides</i> | 6 | 7 | 0.94% | 9 | 383 | 0.21% | 55 | 29 | 1857 | 244 | 41 | 23 | 100 |
| <i>Epibulus</i> | 7 | 7 | 0.94% | 11 | 228 | 0.12% | 33 | 9 | 2000 | 0 | 26 | 8 | 100 |
| <i>Tylosurus</i> | 4 | 7 | 0.94% | 3 | 478 | 0.26% | 68 | 35 | 714 | 567 | 67 | 36 | 100 |
| <i>Caranx</i> | 4 | 6 | 0.81% | 5 | 333 | 0.18% | 55 | 33 | 2000 | 0 | 33 | 17 | 40 |
| <i>Crenimugil</i> | 4 | 6 | 0.81% | 12 | 333 | 0.18% | 55 | 44 | 2000 | 0 | 22 | 2 | 40 |
| <i>Albula</i> | 2 | 4 | 0.54% | 1 | 288 | 0.16% | 72 | 14 | 1750 | 289 | 65 | 19 | 100 |
| <i>Ctenochaetus</i> | 3 | 3 | 0.40% | 8 | 94 | 0.05% | 31 | 26 | 1833 | 289 | 18 | 3 | 75 |
| <i>Pseudobalistes</i> | 3 | 3 | 0.40% | 0 | 188 | 0.10% | 63 | 10 | 2000 | 0 | 63 | 10 | 100 |
| <i>Sphyraena</i> | 3 | 3 | 0.40% | 6 | 275 | 0.15% | 92 | 76 | 1833 | 289 | 44 | 21 | 100 |
| <i>Chanos</i> | 2 | 2 | 0.27% | 3 | 254 | 0.14% | 127 | 28 | 1250 | 1061 | 34 | 6 | 100 |
| <i>Heteropriacanth.</i> | 2 | 2 | 0.27% | 5 | 159 | 0.09% | 80 | 86 | 2000 | 0 | 19 | 4 | 100 |
| <i>Liza</i> | 2 | 2 | 0.27% | 8 | 85 | 0.05% | 42 | 3 | 1750 | 354 | 37 | 20 | 100 |
| <i>Priacanthus</i> | 2 | 2 | 0.27% | 4 | 44 | 0.02% | 22 | 2 | 2000 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 100 |
| <i>Balistapus</i> | 1 | 1 | 0.13% | 5 | 24 | 0.01% | 24 | | 1500 | | 17 | | 100 |
| <i>Cantherhines</i> | 1 | 1 | 0.13% | 1 | 67 | 0.04% | 67 | | 2000 | | 36 | | 100 |
| <i>Coris</i> | 1 | 1 | 0.13% | 8 | 21 | 0.01% | 21 | | 2000 | | 22 | | 100 |
| All the survey^a | 164 | 742^g | 100%^h | | 185054 | 100% | 249 | 106 | 1773 | 482 | 25 | 11 | |

^aNote for Tables 1 and 2: 14^a sellers have 311^b tuis containing *Scarus* (S) and 78^c sellers have 140^d tuis containing *Chlorurus* (C), which corresponds respectively to 42%^e and 19%^f of the total number 742^g tuis of the survey (100%^h). Tuis do not contain only one species group. Among the 311^b tuis, 90ⁱ contain exclusively *Scarus* (Table 2) and, by subtraction, 221 tuis may contain up to 27ⁱ different species groups (Table 1). Note that 122 tuis are composed of the two species groups, *Scarus* and *Chlorurus* (for brevity this information is not included in the table). So there are 329 tuis that contain one, the other or both species groups according to the counting rules: $Card(S \cup C) = Card(S) + Card(C) - Card(S \cap C) = 311 + 140 - 122 = 329$. The total number of the tuis is equal to 742^g, 100%^h of the survey, and not the sum of all the elements of the third column. The same is true for the columns 3 and 4 in Table 1 and the number of sellers in Table 2.

1 In the sample, more than 90% of tuis containing *Selar* or Pelagic taxa are single-species tuis,
 2 meaning that these species are rarely mixed. By contrast, the proportion of tuis containing only
 3 *Parupeneus*, *Epinephelus*, *Chlorurus* or *Mulloidichthys* does not exceed 6%, indicating that
 4 these species groups are frequently mixed with others.

5 **Table 2. Characteristics of the single species group tuis observed in the survey**

| Species group <i>j</i> (by decreasing number of tuis) | Num. of sellers | Num. of tuis | % of single species group tuis | Num. of tuis Single/Al 1 tuis (%) | % Length of Single Species group tuis/ all tuis | Average Length of species group <i>j</i> in single- species group tuis (cm) | SD Length of species group <i>j</i> in single- species group tuis (cm) | Average Price of a tui (CFP) | SD Price of a tui (CFP) | Average Price of species group <i>j</i> (CFP/10 cm) | SD Price of species group <i>j</i> (CFP/10 cm) |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|--|--|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Scarus</i> | 55 | 90 ⁱ | 25% | 29% | 41% | 262 | 82 | 1961 | 154 | 84 | 34 |
| <i>Chlorurus</i> | 5 | 6 | 2% | 4% | 16% | 264 | 108 | 1833 | 408 | 107 | 119 |
| <i>Parupeneus</i> | 4 | 5 | 1% | 4% | 10% | 224 | 91 | 2000 | 0 | 109 | 64 |
| <i>Myripristis</i> | 18 | 43 | 12% | 37% | 57% | 252 | 106 | 1977 | 152 | 107 | 88 |
| <i>Mulloidichthys</i> | 6 | 7 | 2% | 6% | 17% | 293 | 90 | 1857 | 378 | 69 | 27 |
| <i>Siganus</i> | 19 | 34 | 9% | 33% | 52% | 239 | 91 | 1971 | 171 | 160 | 280 |
| <i>Pelagic</i> | 19 | 85 | 24% | 94% | 91% | 169 | 69 | 850 | 533 | 62 | 62 |
| <i>Naso</i> | 14 | 30 | 8% | 35% | 53% | 120 | 86 | 1933 | 254 | 233 | 121 |
| <i>Epinephelus</i> | 2 | 3 | 1% | 4% | 17% | 506 | 233 | 2000 | 0 | 49 | 30 |
| <i>Acanthurus</i> | 4 | 7 | 2% | 12% | 34% | 309 | 28 | 2000 | 0 | 65 | 5 |
| <i>Selar</i> | 5 | 27 | 7% | 90% | 94% | 271 | 90 | 1333 | 460 | 76 | 120 |
| All the single species groups of the survey ^a | 118 | 361 | 100% | 49% | 42.12% | 216 | 107 | 1620 | 594 | | |

6
 7 The large number of single-species tuis and their broad taxonomic representation allowed
 8 calculation of average prices of a number of individual species groups. Table 2 provides
 9 statistics regarding the characteristics of these tuis, including average and standard deviation of
 10 prices per species group for the 11 species groups observed in the survey among the 14 most
 11 frequent.

12 Tables 1 and 2 highlight the strong heterogeneity of tuis in terms of length, price and species
 13 group composition. Using a benchmark length of 10 cm to calculate species-group prices, we
 14 observe that the price of the 11 most frequent species groups varies considerably: the species
 15 group with the lowest average price, *Epinephelus* (49 CFP/10 cm) is more than four times less
 16 expensive than the species group with the highest price (*Naso*, 233 CFP/10 cm).

17 Not unexpectedly, prices of single-species group tuis differ from one species group to another.
18 But strikingly, they also differ within each species group, both among sellers and among tuis
19 for the same quantity (length) of fish. Measured by the standard deviation (SD in Tables 1 and
20 2), these deviations range from 34 CFP for an average price of 84 CFP for *Scarus* to 119 CFP
21 for an average price of 107 CFP for *Chlorurus*, which are the two most frequently encountered
22 species groups in the sample. For *Chlorurus* and two other species groups, *Siganus* and *Selar*
23 (making up a total of 17% of single species group tuis), the deviations are even greater than
24 average prices: by 11%, 175% and 156% respectively. Such price disparities for the same
25 species group between tuis and sellers may relate to the length of the individual fish (consumers
26 may prefer fish pieces of shorter or longer lengths depending on the species groups) and thus
27 to the number of pieces included in the tuis.

28 Overall, however, the observed price disparities imply the existence of a wide variety of quality
29 attributes of the fish being sold. These attributes may relate to the tuis, their composition in
30 terms of variety of species groups and length of fish offered, but also to the sellers, the fishing
31 techniques used to catch the fish and other determinants of their quality, such as fishing
32 location. Indeed, in addition to the composition and price of tuis, the roadside surveys also
33 collected information regarding the sellers, particularly where and how the fish composing the
34 tuis had been caught, which may directly affect their quality, and hence the price. Table 3
35 presents the qualitative variables measuring these quality attributes.

36 Among quality attributes of fish, freshness is a key factor. Local buyers have a keen sense of
37 how long a fish has been out of the water based on the color of the gills, opacity of the eyes,
38 texture of the skin, flesh and fins, and smell of the entrails, with the key indicators of freshness
39 differing across species groups. Many of these factors, however, are subtle and difficult to
40 generalize. In order to control for these factors involving freshness, roadside sellers were asked
41 in the survey when the fish being sold were caught. However, the time when fish were caught

42 had low variability and a skewed distribution. 83.98% of fishers declared departure time was
 43 between 6 pm and midnight, which corresponds to 85.21% of the quantity of fish sold. Most
 44 fish were thus taken at night and sold the next morning to ensure freshness at the time of sale.
 45 In addition, the low variability of the time when fish were caught is closely linked to many
 46 other factors in our empirical model such as “Habitat” and “Boat”. Because of these problems
 47 of low variability and collinearity with other factors, we do not introduce the time variable in
 48 our estimation.

49 **Table 3. Qualitative attributes characterizing the sellers and fish sold**

| Variable | | 164 SELLERS | | 742 TUIS | |
|------------------|---|-------------|-----|----------|-----|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| HABITAT | LAGOON | 119 | 73% | 561 | 76% |
| | REEF | 28 | 17% | 104 | 14% |
| | PASS | 9 | 5% | 29 | 4% |
| | OPEN OCEAN | 8 | 5% | 48 | 6% |
| CREW | FISH WITH CREW | 101 | 62% | 525 | 71% |
| | FISH ALONE | 63 | 38% | 217 | 29% |
| FISHING | SPEARGUN | 136 | 83% | 618 | 83% |
| GEAR | • <i>with un-motorized boat</i> | 72 | 44% | 264 | 36% |
| | • <i>with motorized boat</i> | 38 | 23% | 244 | 33% |
| | • <i>without boat</i> | 26 | 16% | 110 | 15% |
| | POTI MARARA Fishing | 11 | 7% | 72 | 10% |
| | LINE | 10 | 6% | 26 | 4% |
| | • <i>with motorized boat</i> | 9 | 5% | 24 | 3% |
| NET | | 7 | 4% | 26 | 4% |
| | • <i>with un-motorized boat</i> | 4 | 2% | 18 | 2% |
| BOAT | WITH MOTOR | 69 | 42% | 379 | 51% |
| | WITHOUT MOTOR | 67 | 41% | 246 | 33% |
| BOAT TYPE | VAA | 80 | 49% | 334 | 45% |
| | • <i>un-motorized</i> | 67 | 41% | 246 | 33% |
| | • <i>low power (≤ 40 HP) motorized</i> | 13 | 8% | 88 | 12% |
| | POTI MARARA | 56 | 34% | 291 | 39% |
| | • <i>high power (> 40 HP) motorized</i> | 53 | 32% | 286 | 39% |
| | NONE (without boat) | 28 | 17% | 117 | 16% |

50
 51 Fish offered on the tuis came from several different reef habitats. However, the vast majority
 52 of landings originated from the lagoon or coral reef areas: 76% of tuis (offered by 73% of
 53 sellers) came from the lagoon, and 14% of tuis (offered by 17% of sellers) came from reef areas
 54 and the remaining 10% from the pass and open ocean. A total of 38% of sellers had been fishing
 55 alone, and were offering 29% of tuis. A large majority of the fish offered had been caught with
 56 an average crew of 2 people, but some crews were as large as 7. The two most widely used
 57 fishing methods were speargun and polyvalent fishing methods including harpoon and line

58 fishing techniques from motorboats called poti marara, often with powerful motors. Spearguns⁶
 59 had been used by 136 sellers (82.93%) to land 83% of the fish offered on tuis; and poti marara
 60 fishing had been used by 7% of the sellers to land 10% of the tuis. These are both fairly selective
 61 fishing methods. Sellers (80 out of the 164) also used vaas (outrigger canoes), without motors
 62 or with very small motors, to catch the fish on offer in 45% of the tuis. In addition, a significant
 63 part of the fish sold was caught without a boat: about 16% of tuis consisted of fish caught while
 64 swimming from shore by 17% of the sellers. Finally, the survey showed that sellers had only
 65 rarely used multiple techniques to catch the fish offered on their tuis.

66 Additional information regarding the fishing trips was obtained during the surveys of sellers.
 67 Table 4 summarizes quantitative attributes of fish catches. A total of 42% of sellers used motor
 68 boats with an average engine power of 39 HP. Trip length varied, with an average duration of
 69 6 hours. This trip length did not change when sellers used more powerful boats, although it did
 70 vary across fishing locations (with shorter trips when fishing in the lagoon and longer (1-2 hour)
 71 trips when going to the reef and beyond). Only 28 sellers (17%) retained a fraction of their catch
 72 before composing their tuis. Their retained catch averaged about one fourth of their total catch
 73 (22%), with a maximum value of 62%.

74 **Table 4. Quantitative attributes characterizing the sellers**

| Variable | Definition | % of non-zero | Average | (SD) | Max |
|------------------|--|---------------|---------|--------|-----|
| HP | Engine power (HP) | 42% | 39 | (21) | 125 |
| CREW | Number of crew | 61.59% | 1.87 | (1.25) | 7 |
| HOUR FISH | Hours fishing | 100% | 6 | (3) | 17 |
| FRAQ KEPT | Fraction of catch kept for family and friends (not sold) | 17% | 22% | (13) | 62% |

75 The empirical observations of tui sales derived from the roadside survey summarized in Tables
 76 1-4 highlight a wide heterogeneity in the characteristics of tuis. A modelling approach is thus
 77 needed to address these different sources of heterogeneity in order to assess the extent to which

⁶ A skilled spearfisher will shoot fish in particular spots to maintain the fish's aesthetics.

78 changes in the quantities (lengths) of fish of different species groups offered on tuis are likely
79 to affect their price, all else being equal.

80 **3. Hedonic Modeling Approach**

81 Hedonic modeling approaches are beginning to be applied in seafood studies as for health goods
82 (Jensen et Morrisey 1990), real estate (Farber 1998), computers (Karamti, s. d.), and
83 agricultural (Roka et Palmquist 1997) or environmental goods (Freeman, Herriges, et Kling
84 2014). This development has been driven by new evaluation questions, relating to the
85 identification of attributes impacting the quality of seafood, as well as their associated monetary
86 value (Carroll, Anderson, et Martínez-Garmendia 2001; Larkin et Sylvia 1999; McConnell et
87 Strand 2000; Shimose, Kanaiwa, et Nanami 2019). The approach builds on the observation that
88 on a market, the price of a good is dependent on several attributes that are intrinsic or extrinsic
89 to it, and that measure the level of good quality in its different dimensions. Applications of the
90 approach have thus also relied on the increasing availability of adequate data sets of good
91 quality.

92 In the case of the Moorea market for fish, since sales are based on the catch of the day and a
93 direct interaction between fishers and fish consumers, demand and supply adjustments can be
94 considered to be very short-term. This is a small-scale subsistence fishery and a closely
95 connected island market of a basic consumption good. Hence it is not surprising to assume in
96 this study that sellers as well as consumers have all and the same information at the moment of
97 the sale⁷. However, demand is expected to be more sensitive to market changes, while supply
98 is constrained by environmental conditions determining access to fishing grounds as well as the
99 productivity of fishing effort, which is in turn related to fish abundance. Given this, the

⁷ Some authors introduce more adequate econometric methods to deal with asymmetric information with seller overestimating and consumer underestimating price (Kumbhakar et Parmeter 2010; Bonanno et al. 2019)).

100 willingness to pay to dispose of an additional quantity of fish of a given species group is
101 expected to be equivalent to observed marginal variations in the (hedonic) price of tuis.
102 Contrary to demand, in the context of Moorea reef fisheries, the supply of fish is considered not
103 flexible enough to follow market variations so that the (marginal) cost of fishing an additional
104 quantity could be equivalent to the variations of (hedonic) prices of tuis. Fishers who sell part
105 of their catch are aware of this and are compelled to compose their tuis and set the tui price
106 taking into account the preferences of local consumers.

107 Following Rosen (1974), we estimate the implicit price of individual species groups of fish
108 encountered on tuis using the two-step hedonic price approach. First we estimate the hedonic
109 price model of tuis and, second, the implicit price model of the fourteen most abundant species
110 groups in our sample. For the purpose of our analysis, we consider a set of intrinsic and extrinsic
111 attributes that have been shown to determine seafood quality in previous studies (Hammarlund
112 2015; Larkin et Sylvia 1999; McConnell et Strand 2000).

113 We also considered factors that might affect the quality of the fish of each species group.
114 Ciguatera fish poisoning is an important health and safety issue in coral reef fisheries, including
115 in Moorea (Morin et al. 2016). Caused by a toxin that is produced by dinoflagellates and
116 contained in fish tissues, the risk of contamination varies greatly among different taxa of fish.

117 We thus included a qualitative score capturing the absence of risk associated with Ciguatera for
118 a species group j , noted W^j , varying from 40 (high risk of Ciguatera) to 100 (no Ciguatera risk)
119 for each of the 37 species groups (Table 1)⁸. The length of the j^{th} species group was weighted
120 by its relative absence of Ciguatera risk $W_{it}^j = L_{it}^j W^j / \sum_{l=1}^J L_{it}^l W^l$ combined with the
121 importance of its length L_{it}^j in the tui t of the seller i (L_{it}^l is the length in cm of each l^{th} species

⁸ The scores were established based on expert knowledge of researchers from CRIOBE (Centre de Recherches Insulaires et Observatoire de l'Environnement, www.criobe.pf). Although ciguatera risk can vary spatially somewhat around the island, for our analyses we applied the same risk factor to a species regardless of where it was caught because finer-scale risk patterns have not been quantified for Moorea.

122 group present in this tui). The hedonic price of a tui P_{it} is assumed to depend on the aggregate
 123 length of fish $LP_{it} = n_{it} \sum_{j=1}^{37} L_{it}^j \omega_{it}^j$ of all species groups $j = \{1, \dots, n_{it}\}$ composing the tui t
 124 of the seller i , weighted by its relative Ciguatera absence score $\omega_{it}^j = W^j / \sum_{l=1}^{n_{it}} W^l$ depending
 125 on whether the species group is or is not present in the tui.

126 According to different studies of seafood products (Aubanel 1993; Leenhardt et Moussa 2012;
 127 McConnell et Strand 2000; Moussa 2010; Vignes et Etienne 2011), the quality of fish products
 128 strongly depends on the fishing techniques used to catch the fish. These are considered by both
 129 sellers and buyers of fish as indicators of the quality of seafood. In the context of Moorea, as
 130 shown in Table 3, fish are largely caught with a speargun. This technique is likely to be
 131 perceived as producing high quality fish as it is selective and preserves the fish flesh (Nielsen,
 132 Hyldig, et Larsen 2002). The location of the catch, whether from the lagoon or the reef, can
 133 also be an additional quality indicator. Tables 3 and 4 summarize the available data regarding
 134 these quality attributes of the fish sold.

135 Using these attributes (represented by the matrix Z), we estimate the following log-quadratic
 136 specification of the hedonic tui price equation:

$$137 \quad \ln(P) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_m + Z\theta + \sum_j \rho_j I^j + \beta_1 LP + \beta_2 LP^2 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

138 This specification enables measuring ρ_j , the equivalent of a lump sum payment incorporated
 139 in the price of tui containing the individual species group j , provided it is present in the tui
 140 ($I_{it}^j = 1$ if $L_{it}^j > 0$; 0 otherwise) regardless of the quantity available. Fixed effects are also
 141 introduced when estimating the model in order to account for the potential existence of temporal
 142 trends α_m , or other sources of unobservable heterogeneity between tuis or sellers⁹.

⁹ Other fixed effects parameters were tested during the estimation process, in order to take into account disparities between tuis of each fisher, including the location of sales considered at different scales, but these proved not statistically significant.

143 The Rosen two-step evaluation procedure consists of deriving the purchaser willingness to pay
 144 \widehat{PWP}_{it}^j for a marginal increase in length of each species group j from the derivative of the tui's
 145 hedonic price, as follows:

$$146 \quad \widehat{PWP}_{it}^j = \widehat{P}_{it} \omega_{it}^j (\widehat{\beta}_1 + 2\widehat{\beta}_2 LP_{it}) \quad (2)$$

147 Following standard recommendations of Heckman, Matzkin, et Nesheim (2010) and the
 148 pioneering studies of Griliches (2013), Freeman, Herriges, et Kling (2014) and Mäler et Vincent
 149 (2005), three methods are used to identify such demand functions for each species group j in
 150 the Rosen two-stage model.

151 First, the estimation relies on flexible non-linear specifications with changes in the functional
 152 form of the hedonic tui price and the demand functions of each species group. The hedonic
 153 price of the tui is assumed to be a log-quadratic function of its aggregated length (Equation 1)
 154 while the demand function of the j^{th} species group is a translogarithmic function (Berndt et
 155 Christensen 1973) of the length of all the species group present in the tui (Equation 3):

$$156 \quad \ln(\widehat{PWP}^j) = \alpha_0^j + \alpha_m^j + Z\theta^j + X\delta^j + \sum_{k \neq j} \rho_k^j I^k + \sum_{l=1}^J \beta_l^j \ln(L^l) +$$

$$157 \quad + \sum_{l=1}^J \beta_{kl}^j \ln(L^j) \ln(L^l) + \mu^j \quad (3)$$

158 where X is the matrix summarizing the available demand factors (see below).

159 Second, the species group demand function (Equation 3) is estimated in the second-stage with
 160 a stratified sample database containing the species group under consideration while the first-
 161 stage model is estimated using the entire data set. The third column of Table 1 shows that all
 162 species groups are not present in all tuis. The first fourteen species groups in the table occurred
 163 most frequently in this market, such as *Scarus* which is present in 42% of the tuis (see next
 164 section).

165 Third, identification is based on geographical demand factors (named X in Equation (3) and
 166 described in Table 5) characterizing the demand for fish in the different locations based on

167 where each tui was sold. We distinguish the five municipalities of Moorea using a municipality
 168 fixed effect¹⁰ and a set of instrumental variables to measure purchasing power in each
 169 municipality, such as unemployment rate, population density and population change (Bellwood,
 170 Hoey, et Hughes 2012). Indeed, these instrumental variables show that the five municipalities
 171 differ in some characteristics, which may directly affect the local demand for fish¹¹.

172 **Table 5. Geographical demand factors**

| Municipal. | Sellers | | Tuis | | POP | POPVAR | SURFACE | DENSITY | POIDEMOG | UNEMPL |
|-------------------|----------------|----------|-------------|----------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | Populat ion in 2012 | Population growth between 1977 and 2012 | Area in km ² | Population density per km ² | % of municipality in total population 2017 | Unemploy ment rate in 2012 |
| Afareaitu | 229 | (30.86%) | 69 | (42.07%) | 3455 | 277.50 | 23.80 | 145.20 | 21.04 | 33.80 |
| Paopao | 305 | (41.11%) | 40 | (24.39%) | 4580 | 271.00 | 30.00 | 152.70 | 26.56 | 15.60 |
| Haapiti | 106 | (14.29%) | 32 | (19.51%) | 4062 | 352.30 | 38.80 | 104.70 | 24.36 | 21.60 |
| Papetoai | 80 | (10.78%) | 16 | (9.76%) | 2318 | 339.90 | 25.10 | 92.40 | 13.34 | 26.80 |
| Teavaro | 22 | (2.96%) | 7 | (4.27%) | 2484 | 311.30 | 15.80 | 157.20 | 14.70 | 21.80 |
| TOTAL | 742 | (100%) | 164 | (100%) | | | | | | |

173 Other instruments are also used to account for the impact of the fish supply differentiation
 174 operated by sellers in this market. Three instruments are calculated from the database (Table
 175 6), which correspond to the number of tuis (NTUIS) and the total number of species groups
 176 (NSPECV) offered by each seller, as well as the total number of species groups in each tui
 177 (NSPECT). The two first instruments vary in one dimension, between fishers, and the third in
 178 two dimensions, between fishers and tuis. Indeed, 50% of fishers offer more than 3 tuis (some
 179 of them up to 23 tuis) while the number of species groups varies from 5 to 14 between sellers
 180 and from 2 to 9 among the tuis of individual sellers.

181 **Table 6. Definition and descriptive statistics of supply differentiation instruments**

| Variable | Signification | Mean | (SD) | Median | Max |
|-----------------|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| NTUIS | Number of tuis of each seller | 4.52 | (3.60) | 3 | 23 |
| NSPECV | Number of species groups of each seller | 5.29 | (3.44) | 5 | 14 |
| NSPECT | Number of species groups in each tui of each seller | 2.08 | (1.41) | 2 | 9 |

¹⁰ Each municipality is represented by a dummy variable. One of the five municipalities is excluded in the estimation as a reference modality. This statistical precaution is respected for all the other binary variables.

¹¹ Equations 1 and 3 are estimated with Stata16 software. All available factors are introduced using a stepwise estimation approach with backward selection, only the variables with statistically significant parameters at the 90% confidence level are retained in the final model.

182 As for the hedonic price of tuis, species group pricing strategies have a quantitative dimension
 183 in the demand function (i.e., the price and length of fish offered), as well as a qualitative
 184 dimension: sellers can combine species groups j in variable proportions. To capture this, the
 185 binary indicator $I_{it}^k = (1,0)$ is included in the model, specifying that the k^{th} species group
 186 ($k=1,\dots,J ; k \neq j$) is present in the tui with the j^{th} species group, in addition to its length L_{it}^k .

187 The final step in Rosen's model is a monetary evaluation of the additional length (quantity) ΔL
 188 of individual species group j in the tui using the estimated demand function. This amount is
 189 equivalent to the sum of the purchaser's willingness to pay for this additional quantity using the
 190 estimated Equation 3. Represented by $p^j(L^*)$, this is the price in CFP of an additional length
 191 ΔL taken to be 10 cm, or one extra piece of fish, as follows:

$$192 \quad p^j(L^*) = \int_{L^*}^{L^*+\Delta L} \widehat{PW}P^j(x) dx \quad (4)$$

193 This price is not a fixed amount but varies according to the length of the tui because of the
 194 flexibility of the estimated demand function (Equation 3). We calculate this price for a fixed
 195 reference length of each species group j , $L^*=100$ cm, which is the per tui median length
 196 encountered for the fourteen most frequent species groups in this market.

197 **4. Results**

198 Applying least square estimation of Equation 1 and the backward stepwise selection procedure
 199 of significant variables, we find that several factors have decisive effects on tui prices that seem
 200 consistent with the reality of the market (Table 7 and commentary below). The overall level of
 201 reliability of the results is relatively high: the empirical model offers significant explanatory
 202 power of tui price variations, with an overall coefficient of determination between 64% and
 203 76%, and its level of reliability exceeds 99.9% based on the Fisher test.

204 However, there is reason to doubt the exogeneity of two of the explanatory variables. These
205 relate to the fraction of the catch retained by the seller for his personal use (KEPT_UN, a binary
206 variable which identifies sellers who keep part of their catch for themselves, and FRAQ_KEPT,
207 the share-in percentage of this fraction). It is possible that this fraction is kept because of the
208 value of the fish and the species group landed. These variables therefore relate to decisions that
209 are specific to sellers (to retain part of the catch, and how much), and may not be independent
210 of the price of the tuis offered for sale. Carrying out the Hausman test (using its Nakamura and
211 Nakamura version) confirms this. To correct the ensuing endogeneity bias, we use a 2SLS
212 method retaining four instrumental variables in addition to the significant explanatory variables.
213 These instruments provide information on the standard of living in the geographical areas where
214 sellers sell the tuis (usually close to their home), measured via levels of unemployment as well
215 as the demographic weight of the municipality (respectively UNEMPL and POIDEMOG in
216 Table 5) and variables capturing the diversity of catches measured by the number of species
217 groups available from each seller (Table 6) and whether or not the seller is the fisher who caught
218 the fish being sold (79.88% of sellers are the fisher). The estimated auxiliary equation using a
219 2SLS method shows that most of these instruments have significant impact on the endogenous
220 factor FRAQ-KEPT. In addition, performing the Sargan over-identification test confirms the
221 validity of these instruments¹².

222 Results from the estimation of Equation 3 with OLS and 2SLS are presented in Table 7. Given
223 the endogeneity problem mentioned above, only the 2SLS estimation is considered hereafter.
224 The Price Index column of the table gives the value of the tui price index for each category of
225 the binary variables and the marginal/elasticity effect for the quantitative explanatory variables.
226 After correcting the endogeneity bias, we note that the price of tuis is 175% higher on average
227 for sellers who retain a share of their catch for their consumption. However, this price drops as

¹² The significance level of this test is 24.30%, for the null hypothesis not to be rejected.

228 the retained share increases, which may be related to the fact that the most highly priced fish
 229 are those that are retained by the sellers first.

230 The price of a tui is an increasing function of its length. This function is quadratic: the price
 231 increase is steeper for longer tuis. The price elasticity is 7.16% for a tui of average length (252
 232 cm), but varies according to the different factors introduced in the model.

233 Our results indicate that of the 37 species groups that compose tuis, the presence of four¹³ has
 234 a fixed effect on tui prices. Based on parameter values, the price of a tui is lower if it contains
 235 *Chanos*, *Mulloidichthys*, Pelagic taxa and *Tylosurus*; the tui price index decreases on average
 236 to 59%, 92%, 55% and 54% respectively in these cases (last column in Table 7). Two of these
 237 species groups (*Chanos* and *Tylosurus*) are rare in this market, representing only 0.4% of the
 238 total length of all of the 37 species groups (Table 1).

239 The results also reveal the existence of monthly fixed effects with lower prices of tuis in the
 240 months of February, July, and the last four months of the year. As reported by Graddy (2006),
 241 these seasonal variations may highlight a strong dependency of the fresh seafood market on the
 242 suitability of sea conditions for fishing as well as temporal differences in the amount of time
 243 available for fishers to participate in the fishery (relative to other activities).

244 In addition, fishers who sell fish they caught on their own or with smaller crew have tuis with

245 **Table 7. Estimated hedonic price function of tuis (Equation 3): 2SLS method vs OLS**

| VARIABLES | Statistics | | OLS | | 2SLS | | Price Index e^{β} or Elasticity* |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|---|
| | Mean | SD | β : Param. | (p value) | β : Param. | (p value) | |
| Length | L | 249.4 | 106.0 | | | | |
| | LP | 252.6 | 109.9 | N.S. | | N.S. ¹⁴ | |
| | LP ² | 75,877 | 65,450 | 4.32e-07 | (0.000) | 4.83e-07 | (0.004) 7.16%* |
| Species group | <i>Chanos</i> (1 vs. 0) | 0.00270 | 0.0519 | -0.515 | (0.000) | -0.535 | (0.005) 59% |
| | <i>Monotaxis</i> (1 vs. 0) | 0.0229 | 0.150 | 0.0930 | (0.077) | N.S. | |

¹³ There is a fifth species group (*Monotaxis*) present in 2.29% of our sample, which seems to be the only species increasing the value of tuis (it increases prices by 106%) but the estimated parameter is not statistically reliable after correcting for endogeneity.

¹⁴ p value of bilateral Student test exceeding 10%.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|--------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|---------|
| | <i>Mulloidichthys</i> (1 vs. 0) | 0.146 | 0.353 | -0.0517 | (0.022) | -0.0840 | (0.003) | 92% |
| | Pelagic (1 vs. 0) | 0.121 | 0.327 | -0.594 | (0.000) | -0.597 | (0.000) | 55% |
| | <i>Tylosurus</i> (1 vs. 0) | 0.00943 | 0.0967 | -0.650 | (0.000) | -0.622 | (0.000) | 54% |
| Trend | February (1 vs. 0) | 0.0741 | 0.262 | -0.0993 | (0.002) | -0.224 | (0.000) | 80% |
| | July (1 vs. 0) | 0.164 | 0.371 | -0.187 | (0.000) | -0.166 | (0.000) | 85% |
| | September (1 vs. 0) | 0.131 | 0.337 | -0.120 | (0.000) | -0.194 | (0.000) | 82% |
| | October (1 vs. 0) | 0.0606 | 0.239 | -0.0691 | (0.052) | -0.170 | (0.000) | 84% |
| | November (1 vs. 0) | 0.0916 | 0.289 | -0.0634 | (0.032) | -0.154 | (0.000) | 86% |
| | December (1 vs. 0) | 0.0566 | 0.231 | -0.277 | (0.000) | -0.337 | (0.000) | 71% |
| | Crew and hour fishing. $x_0=2.62$ | ALONE (1 vs. 0) | 0.292 | 0.455 | 0.212 | (0.000) | 0.167 | (0.000) |
| CREW | | 1.511 | 1.563 | 0.237 | (0.000) | 0.204 | (0.000) | |
| CREW ² | | 4.721 | 9.209 | -0.0451 | (0.000) | -0.0399 | (0.000) | |
| HOUR_FISH | | 5.757 | 2.948 | -0.00560 | (0.043) | -0.00953 | (0.007) | |
| Gear | LINE (1 vs. 0) | 0.0499 | 0.218 | 0.124 | (0.003) | 0.137 | (0.011) | 115% |
| | SPEARGUN (1 vs. 0) | 0.833 | 0.373 | 0.102 | (0.001) | N.S. | | |
| Boat and HP | BOAT_POTI (1 vs. 0) | 0.392 | 0.489 | 0.350 | (0.002) | 0.354 | (0.013) | 142% |
| | MOTOR (1 vs. 0) | 0.511 | 0.500 | 0.225 | (0.000) | 0.122 | (0.054) | 113% |
| | POWER>40 HP (1 vs. 0) | 0.385 | 0.487 | 0.494 | (0.000) | 0.584 | (0.000) | 179% |
| | HP | 18.89 | 23.78 | -0.0392 | (0.000) | -0.0403 | (0.000) | |
| | HP ² | 921.6 | 1.680 | 0.000243 | (0.000) | 0.000243 | (0.000) | |
| Endogeneity bias correction | KEPT_UN* (1 vs. 0) | 0.173 | 0.215 | 0.158 | (0.000) | 0.560 | (0.000) | 175% |
| | FRAQ_KEPT* | 0.0315 | 0.0837 | -0.704 | (0.000) | -2.367 | (0.000) | |
| Test statistics | Constant | | | 7.349 | (0.000) | 7.524 | (0.000) | |
| | R ² (R ² _{aj}) | | | 76.1% (75.3%) | | 64.4% (63.1%) | | |
| | F | | | 91.26 | (0.000) | 60.37 | (0.000) | |
| | Sargan test | | | | | 1.364 | (0.243) | |

246

247 higher prices (price index up to 118%). The price of tuis increases with crew size, up to a point
248 (crew of 3) after which it decreases. Tui prices appear to be higher if they are composed of fish
249 caught with selective fishing gear such as line (price index up to 115%) and motorized boats
250 such as poti marara (price index up to 142%). The price of tuis also depends on the power of
251 the motors on boats, in the shape of a convex polynomial function with a minimum of 83 HP¹⁵.
252 Hence, tui prices are higher when the fish have been caught either with small or unmotorized

¹⁵ $\ln(\widehat{P}) = 7.524 - 0.0403 HP + 0.000243 HP^2$

253 boats, or with boats with powerful motors. Tui prices are lower for fish caught with boats of
254 intermediate horsepower (80 HP).

255 **Implicit Price of the Most Frequent Species Groups**

256 To estimate the demand function with Equation 3, we first stratify our database to form
257 subsamples of tuis containing each species group. This stratification shows that the first
258 fourteen species groups in Table 1 (*Scarus* followed by *Chlorurus*, *Parupeneus*, *Myripristis*,
259 *Mulloidichthys*, *Siganus*, Pelagic taxa, *Naso*, *Epinephelus*, *Acanthurus*, *Cephalopholis*,
260 *Sargocentron*, *Lutjanus* and *Selar*) are the most abundant, representing 95.85% of the total
261 length of all the fish present on the 742 tuis. Only these species groups have large enough
262 subsamples to obtain reliable estimates. These fourteen species groups are ranked in Table 8
263 from right to left in descending order of the number of tuis in which they are encountered. The
264 size of these subsamples varies from 311 to 30 tuis. The most abundant species group is *Scarus*
265 (in 311 tuis) followed by *Chlorurus* (in 140 tuis) and *Parupeneus* (in 130 tuis), while *Lutjanus*
266 and *Selar* are rare (in 30 tuis only).

267 Tuis can contain up to nine different species groups and half of the sampled tuis (51.28%)
268 contain at least two species groups. Table 8 shows the structure of species group combinations
269 on the tuis. Some species groups are more often combined for sale than others. Two species
270 groups, Pelagic taxa and *Selar*, are crossed with very few other species groups: *Selar*, present
271 in only 30 tuis is combined with two other species groups only (*Lutjanus* and Pelagic);

Table 8. Species groups combinations on tuis

| | <i>Scarus</i> | <i>Chlor.</i> | <i>Paru.</i> | <i>Myri.</i> | <i>Mull.</i> | <i>Siga.</i> | <i>Naso.</i> | <i>Epine.</i> | <i>Acan.</i> | <i>Ceph.</i> | <i>Sarg.</i> | <i>Lutj.</i> | <i>Pela.</i> | <i>Sela.</i> |
|--------------------------|--|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of tuis | 311 ^a | 140 | 130 | 115 | 108 | 104 | 85 | 73 | 58 | 55 | 52 | 30 | 90 | 30 |
| Number of species groups | 27 ^b | 21 | 25 | 28 | 27 | 24 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 24 | 20 | 4 | 2 |
| <i>Scarus</i> | | 122 (0.87) | 64 (0.49) | 18 (0.16) | 53 (0.49) | 22 (0.21) | 16 (0.19) | 26 (0.36) | 25 (0.43) | 23 (0.42) | 18 (0.35) | 12 (0.4) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Chlorurus</i> | 122 ^c (0.39 ^d) | | 22 (0.17) | 4 (0.03) | 15 (0.14) | 12 (0.12) | 8 (0.09) | 10 (0.14) | 10 (0.17) | 7 (0.13) | 4 (0.08) | 6 (0.2) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Parupeneus</i> | 64 (0.21) | 22 (0.16) | | 19 (0.17) | 72 (0.67) | 20 (0.19) | 20 (0.24) | 26 (0.36) | 20 (0.34) | 20 (0.36) | 15 (0.29) | 10 (0.33) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Mulloidichthys</i> | 53 (0.17) | 15 (0.11) | 72 (0.55) | 14 (0.12) | | 13 (0.13) | 10 (0.12) | 24 (0.33) | 16 (0.28) | 17 (0.31) | 13 (0.25) | 7 (0.23) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Epinephelus</i> | 26 (0.08) | 10 (0.07) | 26 (0.2) | 22 (0.19) | 24 (0.22) | 12 (0.12) | 8 (0.09) | | 14 (0.24) | 40 (0.73) | 16 (0.31) | 12 (0.4) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Acanthurus</i> | 25 (0.08) | 10 (0.07) | 20 (0.15) | 13 (0.11) | 16 (0.15) | 16 (0.15) | 14 (0.16) | 14 (0.19) | | 10 (0.18) | 7 (0.13) | 4 (0.13) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Cephalopholis</i> | 23 (0.07) | 7 (0.05) | 20 (0.15) | 14 (0.12) | 17 (0.16) | 9 (0.09) | 1 (0.01) | 40 (0.55) | 10 (0.17) | | 13 (0.25) | 5 (0.17) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Siganus</i> | 22 (0.07) | 12 (0.09) | 20 (0.15) | 21 (0.18) | 13 (0.12) | | 17 (0.2) | 12 (0.16) | 16 (0.28) | 9 (0.16) | 14 (0.27) | 3 (0.1) | 2 (0.02) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Myripristis</i> | 18 (0.06) | 4 (0.03) | 19 (0.15) | | 14 (0.13) | 21 (0.2) | 17 (0.2) | 22 (0.3) | 13 (0.22) | 14 (0.25) | 27 (0.52) | 9 (0.3) | 1 (0.01) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Sargocentron</i> | 18 (0.06) | 4 (0.03) | 15 (0.12) | 27 (0.23) | 13 (0.12) | 14 (0.13) | 5 (0.06) | 16 (0.22) | 7 (0.12) | 13 (0.24) | | 3 (0.1) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Naso</i> | 16 (0.05) | 8 (0.06) | 20 (0.15) | 17 (0.15) | 10 (0.09) | 17 (0.16) | | 8 (0.11) | 14 (0.24) | 1 (0.02) | 5 (0.1) | 6 (0.2) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) |
| <i>Lutjanus</i> | 12 (0.04) | 6 (0.04) | 10 (0.08) | 9 (0.08) | 7 (0.06) | 3 (0.03) | 6 (0.07) | 12 (0.16) | 4 (0.07) | 5 (0.09) | 3 (0.06) | | 0 (0.00) | 2 (0.07) |
| Pelagic | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 1 (0.01) | 0 (0.00) | 2 (0.02) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | | 1 (0.03) |
| <i>Selar</i> | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 0 (0.00) | 2 (0.07) | 1 (0.01) | |

Explanation of the data: 311^a tuis contain *Scarus* (2nd line). *Scarus* is combined with 27^b other species groups (3rd line). *Scarus* is combined with *Chlorurus* in 122^c tuis, which corresponds to 39% of the subsample of 311 tuis of *Scarus* (the matrix).

Pelagic taxa are sold with four other groups (*Myripristis*, *Selar*, *Siganus* and the unidentified species group). The other 12 species groups (in grey in Table 8) are often combined with a large number of other species groups (between 20 and 28 of the 37 species groups present in the market). For example, the most abundant species group, *Scarus*, is combined with 27 other species groups, while *Myripristis* is with 28 (Table 8, Line 3). The second most frequent species group, *Chlorurus*, is pooled on 122 tuis together with *Scarus*, but only on 4 tuis together with *Myripristis*. Note that *Naso* is combined with *Cephalopholis* only on one tui. This structure of species group combinations provides information on the degree of dependence between different groups in the composition of tuis.

To account for cross-species group elasticities within the same tui, we introduce in the model of each of these fourteen species groups, the lengths of the other species groups, as well as a binary indicator of their presence in individual tuis. However, the tuis in each sample do not contain all possible combinations with the other 37 species groups in the database. The most frequent combinations are only between the fourteen most frequent species groups and between a subset of these for some species groups. In the subsample of tuis of the most frequent species group, *Scarus* is combined with *Chlorurus*, *Parupeneus*, *Mulloidichthys*, *Epinephelus*, *Acanthurus*, *Cephalopholis* and *Siganus* in respectively 39% , 21%, 17%, 8%, 8%, 7% and 7% of the 311 tuis. In estimating the model of the implicit price of *Scarus*, we only introduce these seven species groups in order to identify the corresponding parameters. We do the same for each of the other 14 species groups. Table 9 gives cross-elasticities for only those combinations of species groups that are observable and frequent enough among the tuis.

Using Rosen's second stage (Equation 3), we estimate the demand functions for the fourteen most abundant species groups (Table A1 in the supplementary material). We limit this analysis to these fourteen species groups, because they are the only ones with sufficient sample size. Additionally, the demand factors needed to identify these functions only have a discriminating

effect for these fourteen species groups, with their parameters having statistically significant and reliable values. In estimating the demand functions, we also correct for the endogeneity problem of the explanatory variable *FREQ_KEP*, by the use of a double least squares estimation procedure (as in the hedonic price estimation), and for the problem of collinearity between the explanatory variables by stepwise elimination of variables with the highest VIF (all the factors in the estimated models have VIF values below the theoretical reference threshold of 5).

The length combinations of the fourteen species groups whose implicit price models are estimated allow us to identify the signs¹⁶ of cross-price elasticities between these groups (Table 9). These elasticities specify whether the species groups enter into the composition of tuis as complements (+) or substitutes (-). Results show that ~~all~~ the elasticities are positive **between all reef species and negative between Pelagic taxa and two reef species, *Selar* and *Siganus*.** ~~except for two species groups: Pelagic taxa and *Selar*. *Selar* appear as a substitute group for Pelagic taxa only;~~ **This means that, except for Pelagic taxa which appear as a substitute group¹⁷ for *Selar* and *Siganus*,** ~~The other twelve~~ **all the reef** species groups enter as complements in the composition of tuis: some with more species groups than others. *Scarus* is combined with ten other species groups; *Parupeneus* and *Myripristis* with eight; *Epinephelus* and *Acanthurus* with six; *Mulloidichthys* and *Siganus* with four; *Chlorurus*, *Naso* and *Sargocentron* with three; *Lutjanus* and *Cephalopholis* with two. Other interaction parameters are not statistically significant (according to Student's bilateral test): the underlying elasticities are therefore not important and the corresponding species groups appear to enter independently in the composition of tuis. *Scarus*, for example, is present independently of *Lutjanus*, *Selar* and *Cephalopholis*, which are rare species groups in our sample. These interactions reflect seller

¹⁶Price elasticity of species group j with respect to a variation in the length of species group k available on the tui is $e_{j/k} = \beta_k^j + 2\beta_{kk}^j \ln(L^k) + \sum_{l \neq k}^{37} \beta_{kl}^j \ln(L^l)$. Given the flexible form of the implicit price equation, this elasticity is not constant, but its sign is easy to determine: it is equivalent to the sign of the parameters.

¹⁷ We note in Tables 1 and 2 that Pelagic taxa are often sold alone: 24% of single species group tuis and only 12% of all the survey.

strategies to enhance the value of the fish sold: where cross price elasticities exist, the species groups on offer value gain in the presence of other species groups, except in the case of Pelagic species (which are caught outside the lagoon and reef areas).

Table 9. Signs of cross-price elasticities between the 14 species groups

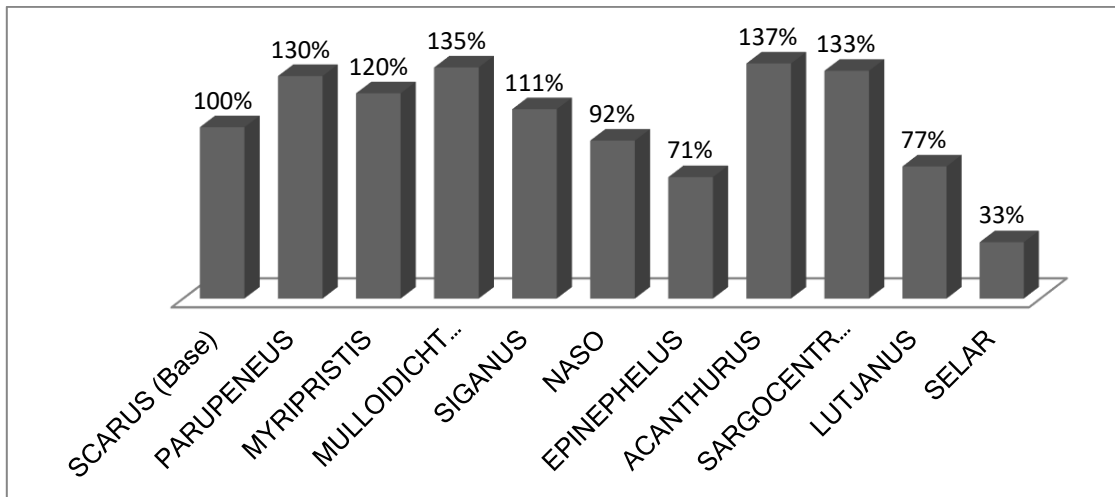
| Species groups | <i>Sca.</i> | <i>Chl.</i> | <i>Par.</i> | <i>Myr.</i> | <i>Mul</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Pel.</i> | <i>Nas.</i> | <i>Epi.</i> | <i>Acan.</i> | <i>Cep.</i> | <i>Sar.</i> | <i>Lut.</i> | <i>Sel.</i> | <i>NI</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Scarus</i> | | + | + | + | + | + | | + | + | + | | + | | | + |
| <i>Chlorurus</i> | + | | | | + | | | | | + | | | | | |
| <i>Parupeneus</i> | + | | | + | + | + | | + | | + | + | | + | | |
| <i>Myripristis</i> | + | | + | | | + | | + | + | + | | + | + | | |
| <i>Mulloidichthys</i> | + | + | + | | | | | | + | | | | | | |
| <i>Siganus</i> | + | | + | + | | | - | | | + | | | | | |
| <i>Pelagic</i> | | | | | | - | - | | | | | | | - | |
| <i>Naso</i> | + | | + | + | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Epinephelus</i> | + | | | + | + | | | | | + | + | + | | | |
| <i>Acanthurus</i> | + | + | + | + | | + | | | + | | | | | | |
| <i>Cephalopholis</i> | | | + | | | | | | + | | | | | | |
| <i>Sargocentron</i> | + | | | + | | | | | + | | | | | | |
| <i>Lutjanus</i> | | | + | + | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Selar</i> | | | | | | | - | | | | | | | | |

Using the estimated demand function of the fourteen most abundant species groups, we calculated their prices according to Equation 4. The results are illustrated in Figure 2, for eleven of the reef-associated species groups¹⁸.

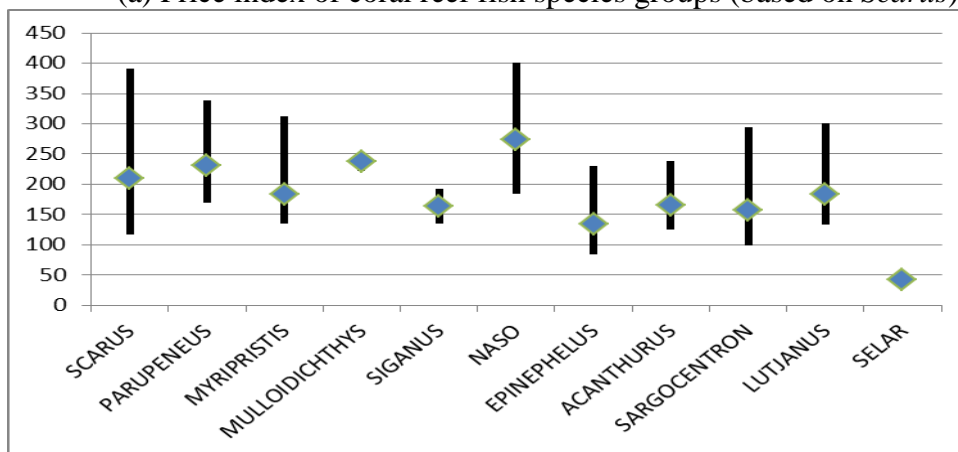
Figure 1a shows the price-index of these species groups relative to the price of the most frequent taxon encountered in the survey (*Scarus*). The results highlight strong heterogeneity in the market value across species groups, which varies between 133 and 137 per cent of the market value of *Scarus*. The next most abundant species groups in this market (*Parupeneus*, *Myripristis* and *Mulloidichtys*) have high market value, with a price index varying between 120 and 135 per cent. *Acanthurus* and *Sargocentron* display high price indices (respectively 137 and 133 per cent), but are encountered less frequently in the tuis.

¹⁸ Excluding *Chlorurus* which appeared as an outlier in the price distribution with a price index of 479%. This may have been due to the heterogeneity of the species group, and observation biases.

When applied to the average size of individuals encountered in each species group¹⁹, prices derived from Equation 4 provide an estimation of the minimum, mean and maximum price one would pay for a single fish of each species group (Figure 1b). The four species groups



(a) Price index of coral reef fish species groups (based on *Scarus*)



(b) Price in CFP of mean (min and max)-size fish per species group

Figure 1. Price estimation results for most frequent coral-reef fish species groups
(Species groups are ranked left to right from most to less frequently encountered in the survey)

most frequently encountered on tuis (*Scarus*, *Parupeneus*, *Myripristis* and *Mulloidichthys*) still appear to be the more valuable (with prices/fish of between 184 and 237 CFP for an additional medium-sized fish measuring between 35.42 and 48.25 cm). *Naso* display the highest prices per fish (274 CFP for a medium-sized fish of 68.50 cm), and is not frequently encountered in the tuis (Table 1). All the other species groups, which are less frequently encountered on this

¹⁹ See Table A2 in the Appendix for data regarding average fish sizes of each species. The medium size of individual fish across all species groups varies between 27.17 and 68.50 cm.

market, present lower prices/fish piece (under 184 CFP/fish of medium size varying between 27.17 and 53 cm). *Selar* and Pelagic taxa present very low prices, in addition to being rare in the composition of tuis.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research examines the extent to which economic analysis can help explain the patterns of fish sales and fish prices observed in the coral reef fin-fish fishery of Moorea, French Polynesia. We used the data collected in a survey of roadside tui sales around the island to assess the factors contributing to the price at which the tuis are sold, and to deduce the implicit price of different species groups entering in their composition. Our results show that different groups of reef fish attract implicit prices that may vary by a factor of four to five across species groups. In addition to certain species groups, factors that entail higher prices for tuis include a seasonal dimension (higher prices being fetched during the first half of the calendar year), as well as the fishing techniques and other characteristics of the fishing trips such as the size of the crew. Ciguatera risk, by contrast, did not seem to account for price differences between species groups. Furthermore, our results highlight positive cross-price elasticities between many coral reef species groups. In other words, this means that sellers develop strategies to enhance the value of their daily catches through the species mix (except in the case of Pelagic taxa, that are caught outside the lagoon and reef areas).

This fish market can be considered transparent, since the sellers catch the fish they offer close to sale outlets, using local fishing techniques. However, the quality of the fish and therefore their price can also depend on other criteria (that were not measured in the survey). For example, the appearance of fish was not documented in the survey. Data on the physical quality of fish sold, such as traces of handling or state of freshness, are notoriously difficult to observe and measure. Attributes such as the presence of marks due to the fishing method could affect the

perception of the quality of fish offered on tuis, leading to bias in the measurement of their implicit prices (Pope 2008).

Despite these limitations, the results of this analysis illustrate that market processes can help explain the composition and relative prices of tuis offered in roadside sales in coral reef fishery. Taking the observed price differences as a reflection of the preferences of local consumers and associated demand for fish, the results can also be used to assess the economic implications of changes in the supply of the different species groups, such as would result from changes in the abundance and accessibility of these groups to fishers around the island. In particular, Moorea has undergone strong environmental disturbance in its recent past due to the detrimental impacts of blooms of a coral predator sea star and cyclones (Lamy et al. 2016). Although most of the effects on fish resulted in biomass transfer within functional groups (Lamy et al. 2015), the marine ecosystems presented a recovery debt (Dubois et al. 2019) and understanding how fishermen respond and adapt, and how this translate into changes into how fish are sold remain unresolved..

In addition, the results provide important information on the status of the market for fish on the island. Fish buyers are willing to pay more for extra quantities of fish. This implies that the demand is not completely met by the supply of fish from the local fishery. Besides, the fish demand is expected to grow with an increasing number of new inhabitants less involved in fishing activities themselves (Thiault et al. 2018b). Provided the local fish resources enable additional catch and landings, this market would be expected to expand over time.

Finally, our results show how these fishers value their coral reef fish species on a local and direct sale market. This should be complemented by an analysis of the costs of fishing to gain a comprehensive economic perspective of small-scale fishing activities in Moorea. Beyond this case study, the research also illustrates how empirical economic research can help improve the understanding of small-scale coral-reef fisheries, and demonstrates a methodology which can

be applied to a broad range of contexts in the Pacific, where these fisheries have particularly strong social and cultural value, provided similar data on fish sales is available.

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