

**STOLEN  
PROSPERITY**

HOW COLONIALISM STIFLED  
**ECONOMIC FREEDOM**  
IN OVERSEAS TERRITORIES



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIS – Automatic Identification System

EMFF - European Maritime Fisheries Fund

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

ILO – International Labor Office

IOTC – Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

MIRAB – Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy

SIDS – Small Island Developing States

UAPF- Union of French Fishing Vessels Owners

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The destruction and exploitation of nature, including illegal deforestation in overseas territories, contribute to the degradation of environment. These actions have always a deep economic, social impact on the vulnerable communities, harm to indigenous peoples, and loss of biodiversity.

Such exploitation erases cultural identities and perpetuates injustices reinforce inequalities. People in these territories are also denied their fundamental rights to self-determination and freedom.

For a sustainable and just future, no one should be left behind. The right to freedom in overseas territories must be upheld, and all forms of colonialism, including neo-colonialism, must be eliminated. No one is free until everyone is free.

### 1. Introduction

This document explores the multifaceted challenges and dynamics of France's overseas territories, focusing on economic underdevelopment, environmental degradation, and the socio-political consequences of France's governance. Scant academic attention has been paid to the study of Overseas France. Despite the lack of academic literature, this paper intends to show why France fails to hold together its overseas territories economically.

By examining academic research and media reports, it sheds light on the disparities between mainland France and its territories, emphasizing the persistence of structural issues such as unemployment, trade deficits, and unsustainable resource exploitation.

Key models like **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** and **Migration, Remittances, Aid, and Bureaucracy (MIRAB)** frameworks are analyzed to contextualize the economic struggles of these regions. Special attention is given to Mayotte, one of France's least developed territories, and the interplay between its reliance on public administration, limited private sector growth, and alarming unemployment rates. Other territories, including Guadeloupe, Martinique, and

French Polynesia, are examined for their shared economic vulnerabilities, such as declining tourism and overdependence on remittances.

Environmental challenges, including deforestation and overfishing, are also highlighted, illustrating the ecological costs of economic policies and resource extraction. This analysis underscores the urgency of sustainable development strategies to preserve the natural and socio-economic fabric of these territories.

By critically assessing France's colonial and post-colonial approaches, this document aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the systemic issues facing its overseas departments and the potential pathways toward equitable and sustainable development.

## **2. How France fails in its overseas territories economically**

Before illuminating the failed attempts of France in developing overseas regions, a reader must be made familiar with the terms Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Migration Remittances Aid Bureaucracy (MIRAB). The term SIDS encompasses countries mainly existing as an island (though not necessarily, e.g., Guyana) and facing almost the same unique social, economic, and environmental challenges. The term was first used during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and the countries embracing the term are further recognized by the United Nations, acknowledging them as states in special need. The MIRAB model, developed by the economists Bertram and Watters in 1985, seeks to analyze the economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that lack abundant natural resources. As a result of socio-economic challenges, a significant portion of the population in MIRAB states migrates abroad—primarily to developed countries or metropolises—in search of better-paying jobs, leading to a loss of the nation's young and skilled workforce. In turn, such an emigration leads to the inflow of remittances transferred back to the migrants' households, injecting much-needed financial aid into the home country's economy. MIRAB states are, therefore, thought to be dependent on a constant inflow of remittances and funds from the metropole and other developed economies. Bureaucracy is the final characteristic of these countries. Such an influx of foreign remittances and aid brings about the creation of a complex and bureaucratic environment to manage these resources. The MIRAB model underscores foreign

dependency through migration and aid, along with vulnerability to external shocks, whereas the SIDS framework focuses on promoting sustainable development and building resilience in such small, fragile states. These two models reflect distinct approaches to understanding island economies, shaped by their unique circumstances and external influences.

### **Economic Underdevelopment of Mayotte**

**Mayotte.** Mayotte, though not included in the list of SIDS countries like other overseas territories (Guadeloupe, French Guyana, etc.), is exceptional compared to other overseas regions in its economic struggle. It is, moreover, though to a smaller extent, studied as the follower of the MIRAB framework for development.

### **The perceptions of Candau and Rey**

A comprehensive analysis conducted by Candau and Rey (2014) on the economy of Mayotte offers a good starting point. The 2009 per capita GDP (6570 Euros) of the colony, as the authors report, was two times lower than that of other overseas territories and four times that of the metropole France. Mayotte's geographical location in the Indian Ocean serves as a passage for international trade involving Africa, Europe, and South Asia. The authors consider this a major advantage but report an unusually low foreign trade openness rate (exports plus imports divided by GDP) for Mayotte. Simply put, this means that Mayotte is a closed and insular economy placed on the same list as Rwanda or Somalia.

The formation of such a low openness rate can be explained by the colony's import relations with the mainland. One-fifth of Mayotte's imports are food products despite the colony's fertile soil. The island's main economic partner is France which accounted for 84 percent of the imports into the colony in 2001. The number slightly decreased over a decade falling to 76 % in 2009. Candau and Rey (2014) show the explosion in population for the sharp and uncontrolled rise in its imports which ultimately induces the trade deficit and lowers the openness rate as imports from France take a higher share. The low level of exports worsens its coverage (exports divided by imports) and openness ratios even more. Though one would expect better foreign trade with especially EU countries given its status as a French colony, this is not the case for Mayotte.

The main and traditional exports of Mayotte are ylang-ylang, vanilla, and cinnamon. To show the severity of vanishing exports, Candau and Rey (2014) depict the evolution of the export of these food items. For example, the portion of ylang-ylang in Mayotte's total exports was more than 60 percent in 1983 but dropped sharply to 4 percent in 2010. This meant Mayotte's loss of significant market share in the cosmetic industry as the supplier of ylang-ylang flower used in the production of scent perfumes. The metropole was thus quickly crowded out of the market by countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, the Philippines, and Côte d'Ivoire. The other cash crops vanilla and cinnamon, to make matters worse, vanished completely from the list of exported items. Moreover, Canda and Rey (2014) mention the further role of the global economic crisis in failing French exports from Mayotte. The study reveals a drop of almost 30 percent in total exports between 2008 and 2010.

### **The perceptions of Math**

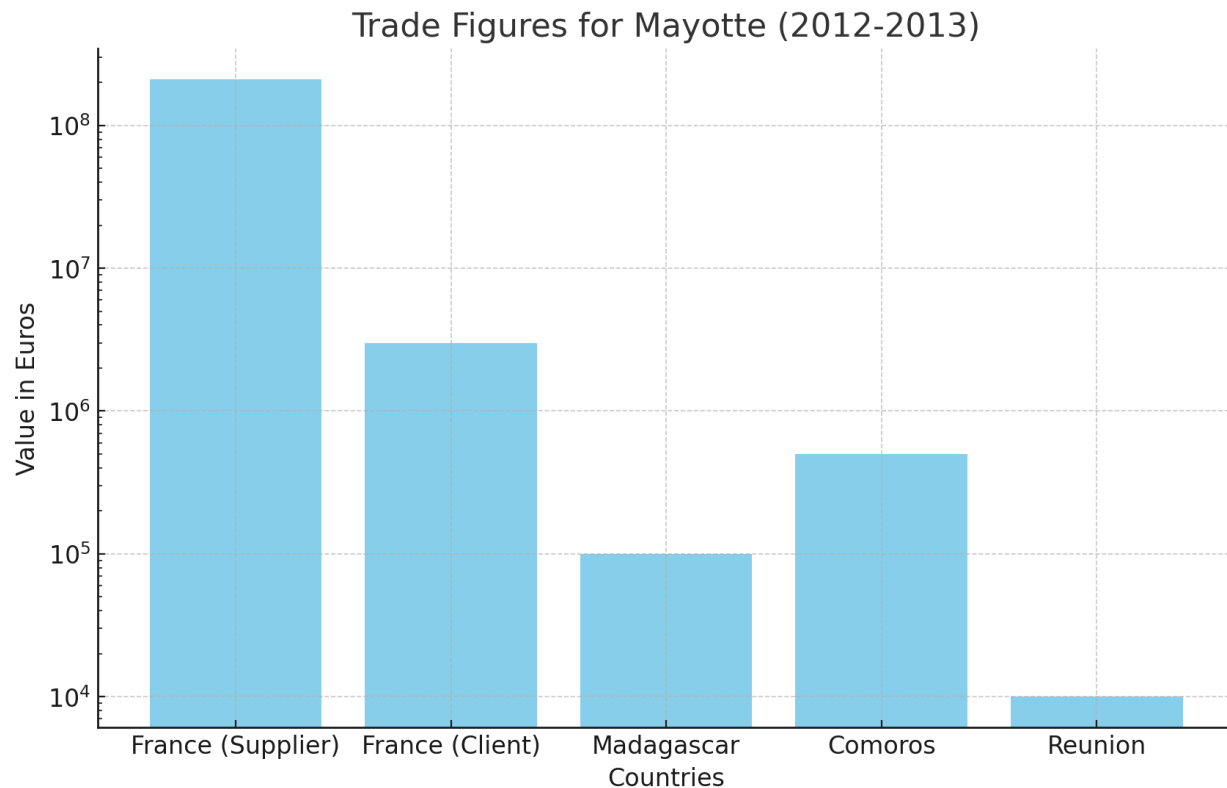
Math's (2012) study is another effort to fill the research gap in the economic underdevelopment of Mayotte in this regard. The author's reports the following facts:

- Mayotte's GDP are alarming and show the extent of its dependence on public administration from France.
- The public administration accounted for 42 percent of the GDP in 2001, 49 percent in 2005, and a little over 50 percent in 2009, showcasing the metropole's efforts to maintain the island's socio-economic development.
- In the same year, the public sector claimed 54 percent of the job stock being the main employer in the island.
- The dependence of the private sector on public procurement such as for building roads and hospitals or housing for civil servants etc.

### **The Perception of Mayet**

Mayet (2014) conducts a similar analysis touching on numerous issues above concerning Mayotte's economy for 2013. Besides the predominance of imports and its contribution to trade deficits, the author mentions the shrinking exports to the outer world.

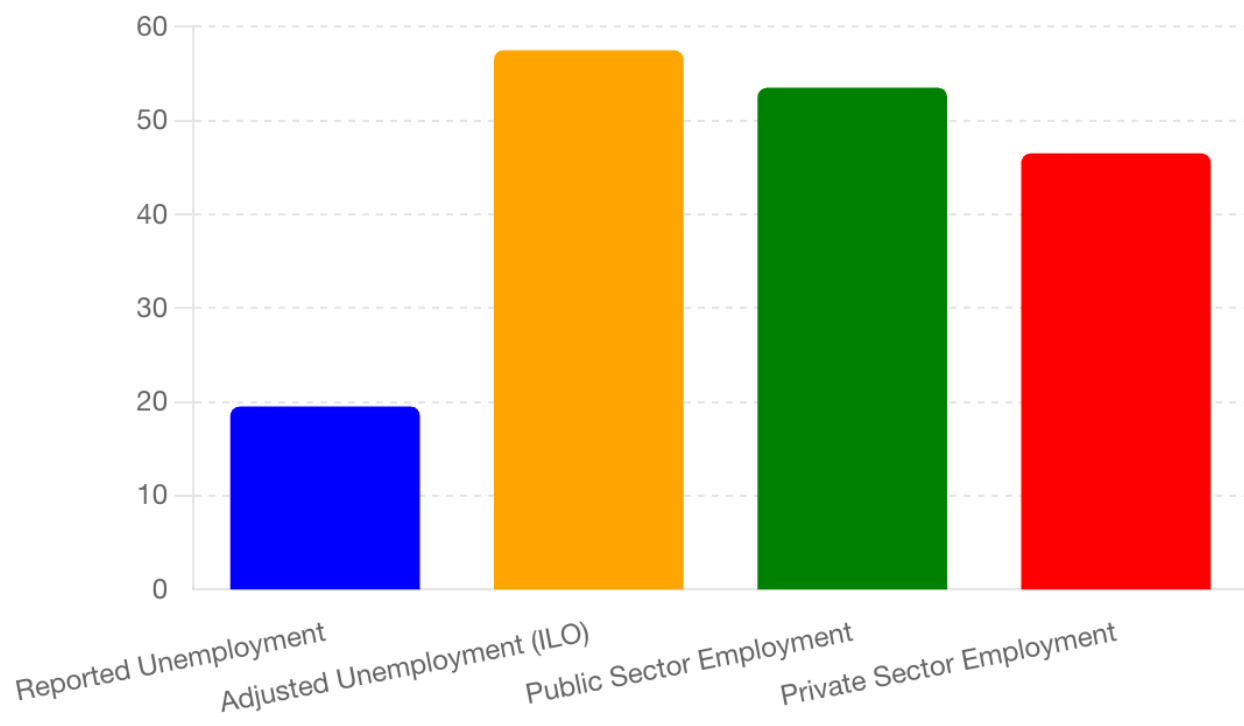
Fact: While France is, as expected, the main supplier with 210 million euros worth of goods and services to Mayotte in 2012, it also claims the biggest share as its client (more than three million euros). The closed economy feature of Mayotte is also confirmed as its remaining and primary export partners orbit around the surrounding islands of Madagascar (more than 100 thousand euros), Comoros (just above 500 thousand euros), and Reunion (share almost non-existent) in 2013.



Construction is one of the key sectors of the economy in Mayotte. It provided 10 percent of the registered unemployed with jobs in 2007 but saw a constant decline since 2008 due to falling demand and the lengthening of payment periods. This has undoubtedly affected the unemployment rate negatively. Mayet (2014) reports this rate to be 19.5 percent in 2013. The author, nevertheless, sees the actual unemployment rate higher than reported based on International Labour Office (ILO) criteria.

**Fact: The ILO criteria ignored further 29,900 people on active search for a job but not recognized as unemployed.**

To paint a better picture of how severe the real unemployment problem is, in 2012 Mayotte's total workforce consisted of 52,000 people. Mayet (2014) points out the mismatch between professional qualifications and the needs of the existing sectors. Moreover, with the disappearance of the private sector, public administration claims more and more share in the employment of people (53,5 %).



Tourism is also stuck in Mayotte. Mayet (2014) sees the development of the tourism sector as one of the means of reducing the unemployment problem and stimulating economic growth. To achieve this, the Tourism Development Master Plan was devised in 2006, which aimed to increase the number of foreign visits to the island.

However, the expectation of achieving the number of visits between 120,000 and 150,000 by 2020 was not realized. In 2013, the number reached slightly over 50,000 tourists. According to the latest statistics, acquired from Statista travelers with professional reasons accounted for less than 7,000 visits in 2016, falling from 8,500 in 2008 and seeing the only peak in 11,700 in 2013. Only 33,000 people visited their relatives as tourists in 2016.

**Other overseas territories.** Mayotte's development model is more closely aligned with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) than the MIRAB model. However, other French overseas territories, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Polynesia, are more associated with the MIRAB framework. Since there is limited international research on MIRAB economies, only a few of these territories have been studied in detail.

### **The perception of Gay on Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion Island, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia**

One of the studies was conducted by Gay (2012) and analyzed the five outermost regions, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion Island, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia. The countries akin to Mayotte also suffer from poor coverage ratios, growing trade deficits, unemployment rates, and other economic issues. Gay (2012) stresses the importance of professionalizing the tourism sector for these countries as one of the engines of economic growth. However, he shows that Overseas France's dominance among the main tourist destinations has been surpassed by other MIRAB states. For example, Reunion's share in the "stay-over" tourism market has been getting forced out by Mauritius which has implemented better targeting of the tourism sector in the Indian Ocean since the late 1980s.

**Fact: On the Pacific side of the map, New Caledonia and French Polynesia experienced the slowest growth over three decades compared to their competitors losing their market shares.**

The number of North American visitors who used to be the main customers visiting Guadeloupe and Martinique has also declined. While 50 % of visitors were from this continent in 1967 the number fell to just 5 percent in 2012 in Guadeloupe. The same dramatic fall was also experienced by Martinique where the number of visitors decreased to 1,9 percent in 2006 from almost 50 percent in 1970. The taste of European tourists other than the French also seems to have changed. In 2006, they formed only 3,4% and 5,4 % of the clientele in Reunion and Martinique, respectively. Instead, the Europeans increased the frequency of their visits to the Dominican Republic accounting for one-third of the tourists in 2009.

Cruise shipping is another major type of tourism for these territories. Guadeloupe and Martinique lost 85 percent of their cruise ship tourists in just 15 years.

Gay (2012) considers the exodus of international tourism companies in Overseas France as another way of approaching the severity of the issue.

**Fact: Large hotels such as Pointe-du-Bout in Martinique and Saint François in Guadeloupe have been vandalized, destroyed, covered in graffiti, and become the meeting spot of squatters.**

Poor quality/price ratio of restaurants and excursions, non-existent nightlife, and limited entertainment activities continue to drive away tourists to the neighboring countries. Moreover, dwindling demand made international airline companies such as American Airlines and Delta Airlines remove the French overseas territories from their destination lists.

The explanation of Gay (2012) for the tourism sector's failure is its suffering from the “Dutch disease”. Normally, a situation like this occurs when a country increases its exports after discovering mineral resources. This strengthens the value of the country's currency relative to those of others. It in turn leads to the harming of industries such as tourism or farming. In the case of Overseas France, only New Caledonia has natural resources, owning 10 % of the world’s nickel reserves and constituting 4 % of the world’s production. Despite this, Gay (2012) also diagnoses the other overseas territories as the victims of “Dutch disease”. Massive public remittances, investments, and tax exemptions are transferred to Overseas France to compensate the civil servants and aid the economy consequently making the tourism sector less competitive.

According to Gay (2012), the impact here is twofold:

1. On the one hand, better paying and secure civil service jobs take away the young strata of the population, leaving tourism with shortages of skilled labor.
2. On the other, such high salaries in the public sector, which employs more than half of the workforce, as mentioned above, have inflationist effects.

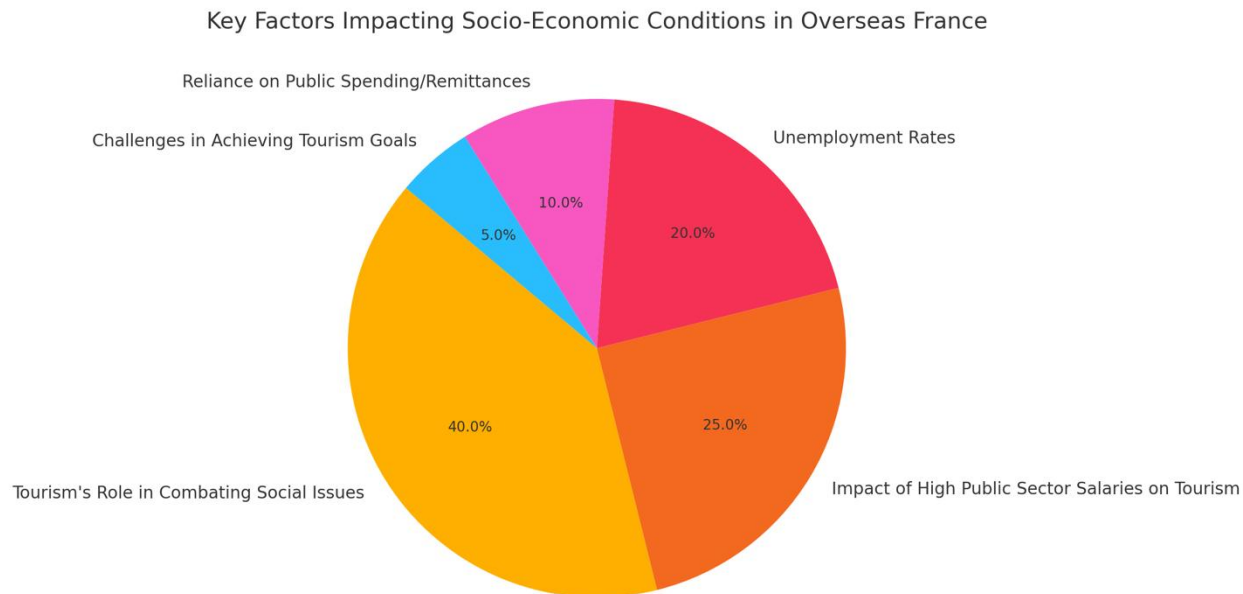
High prices not only make potential clientele change their next destination but also drive away investment opportunities. Besides, as not everyone can work in the public sector due to the limited number of jobs the unusually high unemployment rates pose another threat to these territories.

For example, in both La Réunion and Guadeloupe the share of unemployed people remained at the same high rate of 22% in 2020 as in 2009. Moreover, the young strata of society seem to be more exposed to unemployment. More than half of the Martinique (45%) registered jobless in 2020 were youngsters between the ages of 15 and 24.

However, Gay (2012) describes the attempts of the French government to turn to tax exemption instead of lowering the artificially high public sector salaries or costs of living for the revival of the tourism industry as useless. In New Caledonia and French Polynesia tax exemption was even as high as 70 % which didn't prove itself as successful in countering the "Dutch disease". The reason for this was a rapid increase in supply in the form of rising hotel capacities for which no demand was induced. This led the private investors to eventually sell their properties in this industry. A good example of this was the vanishing number of hotel rooms in Saint Martin which went from 3,500 in 1995 to 1,600 in 2007. Moreover, many semi-public-owned companies such as Air Tahiti Nui even struggled to make profits and ended up getting bailed out by their major shareholders.

### **The situation with tourism in French Overseas**

In summary, boosting the tourism industry in Overseas France is becoming increasingly important to address social challenges in these regions. The dominance of the public sector is gradually losing its effectiveness. Over time, the French government may struggle to continue funding these territories through public spending or remittances. Research has shown that artificially high public-sector salaries harm tourism development, and rising unemployment further highlights the worsening socio-economic conditions. French authorities see tourism as the main solution to bring economic relief to these areas. However, achieving these goals remains a significant challenge.



### 3. Unsustainable use of resources in French overseas territories

Industries such as tourism, aqua - and agriculture are vital in shaping the economy of Overseas France. Therefore, the sustainable use of natural resources is another front affecting these industries directly where France has a lot to do. Most of the French overseas islands are characterized by coral reefs that are rich in different fish species and therefore of huge economic importance. Most of the MIRAB islands are, moreover, especially vulnerable to climate change. France's overexploitation of its natural resources in overseas territories exacerbates this issue while also risking the well-being of future generations in these territories.

Overfishing is one such major anthropogenic factor worsening the degradation of coral reefs around the overseas French colonies as well as endangering certain fish species. Fishing is one of the breadwinning economic activities of the French territories in the Indian Ocean. According to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), alone in 2013, 37 percent of vessels from the French commercial fleet operated in the Indian Ocean. The economic importance of coral reefs justifies the interest of the French government in this area.

**Quod and Malfait (2016)** confirm this by providing the estimated economic value of Mayotte's coral reefs and its biomass which amounts to 28 million € per year. Moreover, Chabanet et al (2017) document the rich biodiversity of Mayotte with 760 species of fish belonging to 118 families and 360 genera. Of these 80 percent are also considered native inhabitants of coral reefs and are classified as endangered. The yellowfin, bull eye, skipjack, and many others are especially considered overfished and supplied to the world markets from unsustainable sources. For instance, Bigot et al. (2024) report France's overexploitation of yellowfin tuna and marlins in the Indian Ocean. In 2021 a vast majority of 300 ships belonging to the European fleet sailed in the Indian Ocean departing from the coasts of Mayotte and La Réunion mainly fishing for endangered species. Using the purse seiner fishing method, 27 boats from French departments ignored international regulations and caught more than 150,000 tons of fish consisting of yellowfin tuna, skipjack, and big eye alone in 2021.

Further statistics obtained by the French media source *Le Journal des Archipels* paint a completely different picture with the number of catches amounting to 239,000 tons of endangered tuna species.

**Le Manach and Pauly (2015)** give a more historical insight and report the illegal raids of French fishermen from Mayotte to Geyser Bank in search of reef fish since 1997. They argue that only one vessel (one longliner 12+ meters) under the French flag from Mayotte was granted permission for reef fishing since 2009 and no catch counts were provided which ultimately rendered its operations illegal. Le Manach and Pauly (2015), moreover, provide statistics on the number of fish caught and link the loss of interest in raids from Mayotte to the plummeting fish catches in Geyser Bank. Though initially one ton of fish was easily exploited the number declined quickly to 200-300 kg by the mid- 2000s. Le Manach and Pauly (2015) additionally touch on the direct contribution of French citizens to the overexploitation of holothurians – another species going extinct – by renting out their boats to the local fisheries since the 2000s during the fishing season.

**Doherty et al (2015)** assume the underreporting of reef fish domestically caught around the waters of Mayotte between 1950 and 2010 and try to estimate the actual figures. The authors wind up with 84,000 tons of fish compared to the

underestimated figure of 58,000 reported to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Doherty et al (2015) further cite Errikson et al (2010) who report the harvesting of holothurians from the mid-1994s until 2004 after which fishing of this species was declared as illegal. Pouget (2004), though to a smaller extent, completes the picture and adds that 5.4 tons of holothurians were exported in 2002. Pouget (2004) further warns about the unreported catches of this species as the only documented export amount was just 422 kg.

The underreporting and non-compliance with regulations are, nevertheless, nothing new or just an outcome of technological constraints of the past century. For example, Louis Bossy, director of Ocean Basket in Seychelles reports an unusual and suspicious behavior of ships under the French flag. He vocalizes his concerns about the French ships not complying with the Automatic Identification System (AIS) which is employed in maritime navigation targeting to reveal data on fishing vessels such as their names, identification numbers, location, and destinations thereby aiding responsible authorities in the detection of suspicious conduct. Louis Bossy reveals the percentage of evading vessels and argues the following: “Between January 2017 and April 2019, French-flagged purse seiner vessels failed to transmit AIS data for 68.2 percent of the study period.” The switching off AIS systems by the French fishermen cruising in the Indian Ocean, as he reports, is an ongoing trend and will likely continue.

The misreporting and overfishing habits of French fleets in African waters have been documented and openly condemned by a recent comprehensive investigation report written by Frédéric Le Manach from the Bloom Association in 2023. Although the yellowfin population was placed on the list of overfished species in 2015 by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) the French industrials continued their exploitative fishing and underreporting acts and even received a circular from the Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Direction des Pêches et de l’Aquaculture/DPMA) to do so in July 2015. The circular by DPMA allowed the French fishermen a “margin of tolerance” meaning fishing was only restricted by the tonnage of total catches per fishing trip and not how much of each endangered species could be fished for.

To counter the rising tensions and concerns of surrounding countries in Indian Ocean over the vanishing yellowfin population France even created an industrial lobby Union of French Fishing Vessel Owners (Union des Armateurs à la pêche de France/UAPF). Its general delegate and key lobbyist Marc Ghiglia, as Le Manch reports, has been known for his anti-environmentalist and relentless advocacy for industrial fishing. Marc Ghiglia not only represents the union but has even attended tuna negotiations in Africa instead of the French government. Given that between 40 and 50 largest vessels belong to companies that are also members of UAPF the desperate and relentless attempts of Marc Ghiglia is not surprising. Le Manach further provides the breakdown of these companies and showcases the number of ships owned by each. While 13 vessels (average length of 75 m) belong to the Compagnie française du thon océanique (CFTO), 4 (for each company) with average lengths of 89 and 76 m are owned by Sapmer and Via Océan/Saupiquet, respectively. According to Le Manach, these three companies are further joined and controlled by the French tuna lobby ORTHONGEL. The investigation also reveals how the French members of UAPF Laurent Parentê infiltrated into Madagascar's delegates, in 2019, representing the country as a spokesperson and opposing the reporting requirements despite Madagascar's struggle with overfishing by France.

***The environmental damage caused by France doesn't only end with overfishing.***

Most of the population in French departments in the Indian Ocean is concentrated in the coastal areas of these islands. Therefore, the boom in populations of Reunion and Mayotte brings about more contamination by human-made infrastructure to the coral reefs. For example, Bigot et al. (2024) report that constructing a road along the coast of Mayotte and disposal of all the rubble into the sea led to the destruction of fringing reefs in 1986. Cambert et al. (2011) mention the hotspots of industrial water contamination in Mayotte, namely, Mamoudzou, Kaweni, and Longoni Harbor.

**Garcia et al. (2011)** collect samples of oysters from the waters of Mayotte for their ingenious study. The authors analyze the levels of different metals such as Ni, Zn, Cd, Hg, and even Cr in oysters' flesh to detect the presence of an anthropogenic effect. Their results demonstrate a substantial increase in these metals indicating the pollution of water by sewage, water treatment facilities, and streams released from crowded coastal residences. They, moreover, show that the water pollution was especially concerning in the east coast around the Mamoudzou–Dzaoudzi strait, and

down the Mamoudzou–Majikavo conurbation on the Main Island and the Dzaoudzi–Labattoir–Pamandzi conurbation on the Pamandzi Island.

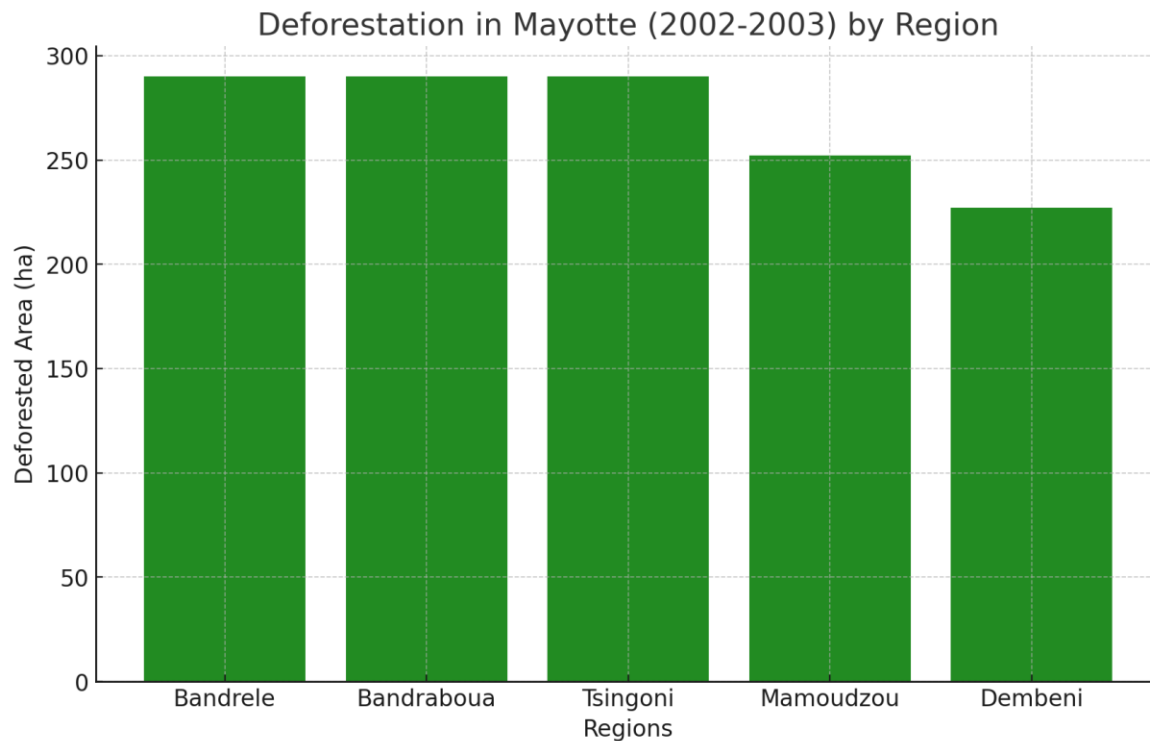
**The discharge of heavy metals, pesticides, and hydrocarbons** from water treatment facilities into reefs in La Réunion has been, moreover, confirmed by Naim et al (2013) who documented an intense eutrophication tendency in these waters. The authors stress the role of the “East-West Water Transfer project” irrigation system aimed to assist sugar cane cultivation in the chemical transformation of the Saint-Gilles la Saline watershed. The study shows increasingly fluctuating Nitrate levels in the Saint-Gilles la Saline watershed between 1999 and 2007.

**Water shortages and drought** occurred and have been continuing since 2016 for three to six months every year on the island. The source further puts Mayotte amongst the five most deforested countries had it been an independent state. Water shortage is a consequence of deforestation. As the source reports, the rivers of Mayotte must have a significant flow because they fill the two reservoirs of the island with one located at Combani (1.5 million cubic meters) and the other at Dzoumogné (2.5 million cubic meters). Both provide 80% of drinking water production and the rest comes from drilling (18%) and a seawater desalination unit in Petite-Terre.

**Deforestation.** Digging deeper into the environmental damage done by France in its overseas regions increases one’s concerns even more. Deforestation in Mayotte is a good example of how anti-environment the French presence is. According to La1ère, a French media source, an inconsiderate destruction of forests led to serious infrastructural and environmental problems in Mayotte.

The extent of the problem becomes clear when one sees the numbers behind the French deforestation. 250 hectares of forest, the equivalent of 350 football fields, is removed annually in Mayotte. The reporters see the damage huge as these are colossal areas for an island of barely 374 km<sup>2</sup> of which only 30% is occupied by forests. The annual deforestation rate of Mayotte thus amounts to more than 1.2%, making it the most deforested department in France. This rate is also like that of Argentina and Indonesia, two countries with the highest deforestation rate in the world. Global Forest Watch discloses the list of the most deforested locations in Mayotte between 2002 and 2003. While in Bandrele, Bandraboua, and Tsingoni

deforestation accounted for more than 290 ha, in Mamoudzou and Dembeni it claimed 252 and 227 ha of land, respectively.



**New Caledonia is another victim of environmental damage.** Its richness in nickel mines as mentioned in section 1, not only gave the economy hope but also destroyed its rivers and fertile soil. Dupon (1986) sheds light on how intensive exploitation of nickel mines in New Caledonia by France with a dramatic surge in demand after the 1950s led to hazardous environmental damage. Because the high-quality ore was located atop mountains, the French companies decided to bring down the mountains and dispose of the load down the slopes for more efficient transportation. This not only destroyed the vegetation and habitats of animals but also clogged streams, causing overflow of water to fertile agricultural lands of the area. The author further reports the consequences of poor mining practices for the Thio delta which was reshaped dramatically by the disposal of waste turning reddish and even losing its aquatic flora and fauna due to fine clay particles sinking deep in its water. He further shows the Plateau-Carrieres mine belonging to Thio mining center as one of the main culprits of the disaster. Akin to Thio another river called Dothio was also polluted by the primitive mining activities of the French leaving its banks occupied by waste.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper reviewed France's current colonialism practices and their consequences for different overseas territories using academic research and media articles. One can for sure see from the reports above that the current colonized states, just like the former ones, are in dire economic conditions. France's main interest seems to orbit around natural resources and political gains from holding on to these states. The countries, therefore, seem to continue to be listed as MIRAB island states dependent on regular provision of public spending.

For the demographics, the decrease in population in overseas regions and the falling birth rates in several territories indicate a potential loss in human capital and the continuation of the dependence on foreign remittances in the future.

Moreover, the high unemployment rates among French citizens do not make these departments any attractive. Even the future unemployment situation looks ominous and can be at least confirmed by academic literature. For example, Hoarau, Lopez, and Paul (2011) find evidence of the presence of unemployment hysteresis. The result suggests long-lasting and high unemployment rates in four overseas territories, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyana, and Reunion, for future periods. Though the study was conducted more than a decade ago, the current state of unemployment in these departments above still corroborates their forecast. Rising poverty rates and illiteracy levels, especially among youngsters, further guarantee this trend's spread into upcoming generations.

The statistics don't speak in favor of economics either. France could advance in main sectors such as tourism and rebuild its aqua- and agriculture by ensuring sustainable use of its natural resources, especially in colonized territories in the Indian Ocean. The remoteness of overseas states from main customers, appreciation of the euro, and high prices are proven to play a high role in the inflow of tourists in Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island, French Polynesia, and New Caledonia (Deisting & Rey 2015). Candau and Rey (2014) see rising immigration, and population growth in certain departments as a further drawback. The stagnant surge in consumption as the result of this growth increases the trade deficit of overseas colonies as well as their dependence on foreign aid from the metropole. Despite these

prospects, France's overfishing practices in the Indian Ocean, poor infrastructure, destruction of coral reefs, excessive population growth, and overexploitation of mineral resources such as nickel mines in New Caledonia and many others unreported are undoubtedly not the features of sustainable growth.

Finally, the apparatus of public funding overseas territories is a double-edged sword. While the public sector lures educated youngsters with secure and well-paid jobs it increases inflation rates Hence the future of these territories doesn't reflect anything positive for now.

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