GeoThreat Report

Chasing the Patagonian Toothfish

Threats to Regional Ocean Resources

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SAMPLE REPORT

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Part A - Overview

Since the end of the cold war, the internationalisation of states has been distributed to varying degrees in different spaces and places (Dodds, 1998, Para. 2). Within this dynamic global context, the geopolitical landscapes of both ocean and land based constructions of the world are being transformed into new territorial representations and threats. This report will examine ocean based geopolitical manifestations of these new constructions by analysing the illegal harvesting of the Patagonian Toothfish in the Southern Ocean[1]. More specifically a chain of event based manifestations emanating from international structures will be detailed by linking geopolitical orientations in the Southern Ocean to the Indian Ocean. Subsequently, the examination of the Patagonian Toothfish will then be analysed so as to demonstrate Taylor et al's statement, "Globalisation is intrinsically geographical in nature." In particular, regionalism and its intersection with both the reconfiguration of governance and time-space shrinkage technologies will be examined. Finally, this report will assess the difference geopolitics makes to the processes of globalisation by linking physical and imagined geography to the capacity of the local to control spaces of flows[2].

[1] The Southern Ocean encompasses the Southern regions of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans geo-proximate to the Antarctica (see Figure 1). Reference within this report to the Indian Ocean refers to territorial zones and fishing resources outside the Antarctica Convergence Zone (see Figure 1).

[2] Thrift (2002, 29-33) refers to the place of flows as the heart of change in the new form of global capitalism. It is made-up of complex space such as new forms of governance, hyper-mobile space such as telecommunications, and electronic space such as time-space compression technologies.

Part B - Threats

The Patagonian Toothfish *(Dissostichus eleginoides)* is a deepwater species largely found in the Southern Ocean that can live for upwards of 50 years, can reach up to 2.2 metres long and is so highly prized a recently confiscated catch sold for AUS$2.3 million (Dodds, 2000, 231; New Zealand, 1999, para. 5; Nott, 2004, para. 17). Markets in Japan, the United States and an emerging China – processing for re-export to Japan, principally generate the demand for Patagonian Toothfish (Perry and Darby, 2000, para. 11; Dodds, 1998, Southern Ocean Regionalism section, para. 12). Since the 1980s, increasing demand and lucrative returns have induced illegal harvesting by distant water fishing nations such as Argentina and Chile threatening the long-term viability of the species (Dodds, 2000, 236). The threat of extinction with resulting impacts on local ecosystems such as declining biodiversity levels has instigated international structures including the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctica Marine Living Resources (CCALR) and the Valdivia organisation (Dodds, 2000, 238).

The CCALR was ratified in 1982 and now comprises 23 members to regulate the living resources of the Antarctica. In particular it has set Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for living marine resources within the Antarctic convergence area – a socially constructed ecological boundary of the Southern Ocean[3] (see Figure 1). It is managed by a policy making commission and scientific committee who attempt to enforce the convention by exposing states that breach the convention to the international community (Dodds, 2000, 234). However, enforcement suffers from the ease in which environmental issues cross borders, a manifestation of how the CCAMLR is conditioned by the geography of the Southern Ocean in terms of sea conditions and the expanse of the ocean such as distances from population centres (Dodds, 2000, 237).

[3] The term socially constructed suggests a boundary determined by the meanings the members of CCALR give to the region and subsequently how they react to it.

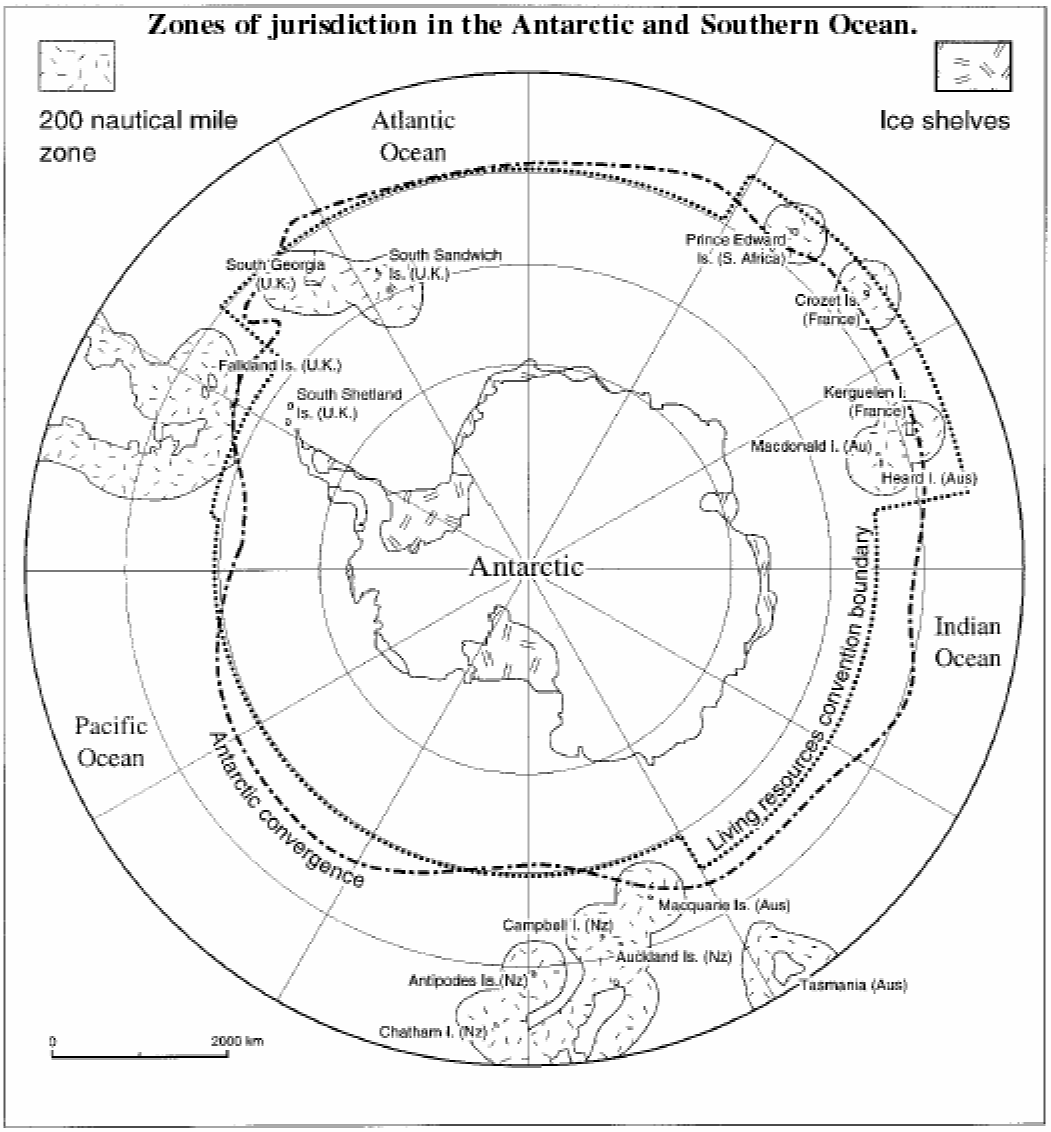

Figure 1: Zones of Jurisdiction in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean
Source: Dodds K, 2000 Geopolitics, Patagonian Toothfish and Living Resource Regulation in the Southern Ocean, *Third World Quarterly*, 21:2 pp. 229-246, p. 231.

Part C – Enforcement

Enforcement of the CCAMLR is complicated by four opposing processes. First, the re-registration of fishing vessels under non-signatory states such as Uruguay; second, the rebranding of the Patagonian Toothfish as Chilean Seabass propagating Northern Hemisphere demand; third, the limitations of fishery protection vessels to cover the expanse of the Southern Ocean; and finally, the weakness of import controls to limit illegally harvested Toothfish, for example Japan has failed to implement stringent controls arguably because of the International Whaling Commissions imposed limitations on its whaling activities (Dodds, 2000, 237; Dodds, 2000, 242). In contrast to the CCALR the Valdivia organisation is a regional organisation to further inter-environmental co-operation in Antarctica (Dodds, 1998, The Valdivia Declaration section, para. 1).

The Valdivia group was established in 1995 with a membership comprising Southern Hemisphere gateway states with geoproximate boundaries centred on the Antarctica. Gateway states encompass states such as New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Argentina and Chile banding together to protect the living resources of the Antarctic by examining various environmental threats such as biodiversity and climate change (Dodds, 1998, The Valdivia Declaration section, para. 5). This orientation is in sharp contrast to cold war based geopolitical orientations turned towards the Northern Hemisphere (Dodds, 1998, The Valdivia Declaration section, para. 3). However, competing interests have compromised the organisations capacity for collective action.

While New Zealand and other states advocate the Antarctica being defined as a natural heritage area for the world[4], both Argentina and Chile advocate the use of territorial zones to define the region (Dodds, 1998, Southern Ocean section, para. 12). Moreover, states are unwilling to criticise each other openly so as to not damage further the consensus based decision making process (Dodds, 2000, 241). Subsequently,

[4] The common heritage concept was introduced in the United Nations as early as 1967. It incorporated the absence of ownership, international administration, sharing of benefits, peaceful use of the area, environmental conservation and protection and a clear delimitation of the limits of national jurisdiction. Source: (Sanjay, 707)

geopolitical manifestations emanating from this regional organisation and the CCALR reflect the growing juxtaposition between economic growth and ecological security. Dodds (2000, 232) states, "The increasing inter-meshing of regimes, together with increasing regulation of high seas fisheries may (*inter alia*) heighten conflicts between coastal states and distant water fishing nations." In this sense, both the CCALR and Valdivia organisation have set a geopolitical tone for the Southern Ocean centred on environmental security. However, according to the CCAMLR, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and scientists, part of the regional manifestation of this position has been for illegal harvesters to shift into the waters of the Southern Indian Ocean (Dodds, 2000, 237-238).

The attractiveness of the Southern Indian Ocean to illegal harvesters of the Patagonian Toothfish in part results from the geography of the Indian Ocean comprised of large populations, various socio-political systems, different rates of economic development and inharmonious geopolitical orientations (Sanjay, 1998, 712). This geographic construct engenders both a military and economic geopolitical tone in which the mental fragmentation of the ocean still dominates the regions political imagination (Sanjay, 1998, 708).

The militarised geopolitical environ of the Indian Ocean is dominated by the posturing of primarily the United States, China, India and Pakistan within the context of defensive zones, abstract spaces of superpower rivalry and strategic sealanes (Sanjay, 1998, 705). For example, China is able to project influence into the Indian Ocean through increasing defensive ties with Myanmar and Pakistan in response to the US interest in Diego Garcia as a strategic pivot point for the region (see Figure 2) (Sanjay, 1998, 716). This militaristic orientation reflects not just the nuclear threat in the region but also the disconnectedness[5] from the global economy of various countries and states in the region such as Somalia, Iran and Myanmar and the threat these countries subsequently pose.

[5] Disconnectedness primarily reflects the lack of Foreign Direct Investment in this region.

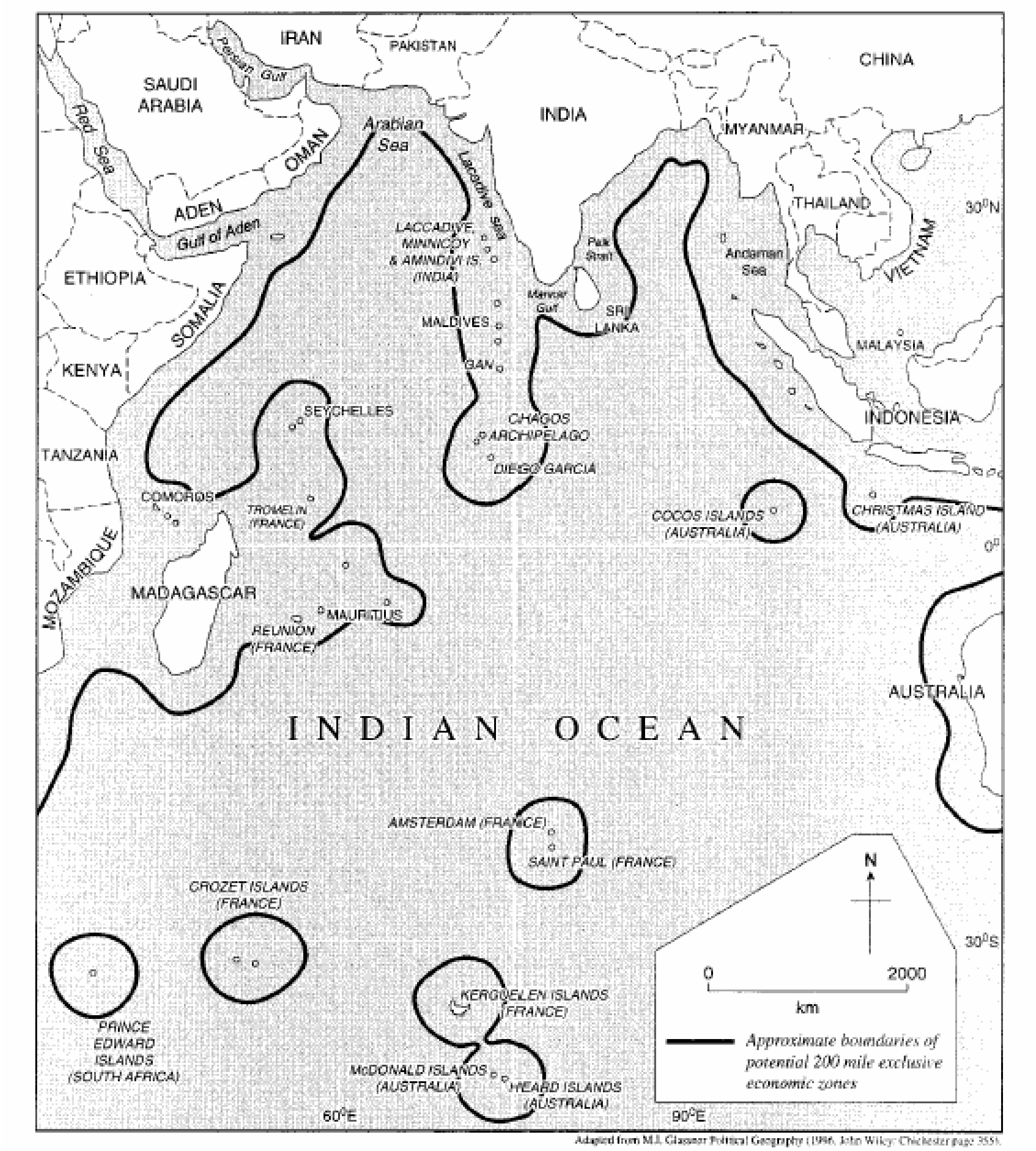

Figure 2: The Indian Ocean, with Approximate Boundaries of 200 Mile Exclusive Economic Zones
Source: Sanjay C, 1998 Common Security? Geopolitics, Development, South Asia and the Indian Ocean, *Third World Quarterly*, 19:4 pp. 701-724, p. 715.

While disconnectedness is common in the Indian Ocean, economic growth is also a central theme. The militarised geopolitics that dominate this region provide for the uncontrolled ascendancy of economic issues, which manifests as unsustainable exploitation (Sanjay, 1998, 718). For example, customary rights of traditional coastal fishing communities are threatened by developers in industries such as tourism and aquaculture in response to global competition (Sanjay, 1998, 713-714). This dynamic also reflects in the arrest of fisherman for illegal fishing, which in the Indian Ocean is generally motivated more by security issues, such as arms proliferation and drug trafficking, than environmental security (Sanjay, 1998, 717-718). Consequently, to address the regional indifference to sustainability the Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) was formed in 1997 (Sanjay, 1998, 719). However, the different security and economic needs of the various nations in the region make the task of the IOR-ARC problematic. The combination of what could arguably be described as a cold-war military landscape as opposed to the Southern Oceans environmental landscape each combined with the processes of globalisation suggest an intrinsic geographical nature to both the Southern and Indian Oceans geopolitical landscapes.

The manifestations originating from the geopolitical management of the Southern and Indian Ocean's comprising local environmental, economic and security issues are inherently governed by rule sets generated from the imagined and physical geography underlying regionalism. Dodds (1998, Conclusions, para. 1) describes "…regionalism as a set of state-led projects which intersect with globalisation." Within this framework regionalism has intersected with the following processes of globalisation: the reconfiguration of governance and time-space compression.

Part D – Regionalism and Globalisation

The intersection of regionalism with the reconfiguration of governance in the Southern ocean is inherently dictated by the geographical characteristics of ocean space. The reconfiguration of governance is described by Taylor as largely governmental absenteeism such as the promotion of NGOs, market reforms including the relaxation of import controls and the promotion of the individual (Taylor, Watts and Johnston, 2002, 12). The geographical characteristics of ocean space can be defined as its expanse comprised of the conditions of the sea and distance from population centres (Dodds, 2000, 237). In this sense, inherent in regionalism is the visualisation of the expanse of the ocean as a borderless space that is conditioned by an inherently territorial understanding of geopolitical space (Dodds, 2000, 237). The contrasting constructions of the Southern and Indian oceans support this concept and demonstrate that governance only conditions, not predisposes, global ocean spaces.

The representation and threats of the Indian Ocean are largely constructed from defensive and strategic geopolitical imaginations such as geographical regions defined for there strategic utility. This geographic rendering is symptomatic of a militarily determined territorial landscape that is little influenced by the reconfiguration of governance. For example, the lack of consensus over reducing military produced pollution occurring from weapons tests and accidents in the Indian Ocean (Sanjay, 1998, 717). However, the Antarctic Convergence Zone, which defines the enforcement boundary of the CCALR, is inherently determined by the member countries geo-proximity to the Antarctica followed by a combination of delimiters including Economic Exclusion Zones (EEZs) and their social construction in terms of environmental protection versus economic growth. For example, Australia's post cold-war interpretation of Antarctica is now in environmental and economic terms rather than military terms in contrast to distant nations such as Chile that arguably views Antarctica in primarily economic terms.

Largely, the form governance takes in the Southern Ocean is characterized by a re-territorialization or realignment of ocean space founded on a new imagined and existing physical geography and subsequently conditioned by global processes and their manifestations. In contrast, the Indian Ocean mostly represents an overlaying of military landscapes upon ocean spaces in terms of a territorial understanding of geopolitical space and conditioned to a lesser degree by global processes and its manifestations. In a similar vein, the intersection between regionalism and space-time compression technologies has allowed for the overlaying of ocean space with technological space through the re-scaling of ocean space in terms of economic growth (Taylor, Watts and Johnston, 2002, 7: Johnston, Taylor and Watts, 2002, 23).

Ocean spaces are spaces of producer flows with various commercial activities such as fisheries, oil development and marine transport linked by increasingly efficient economic networks to consumers. Taylor relates this to a rescaling or remapping of activities in which new geographic scales are created through human activities (Taylor, Watts and Johnston, 2002, 7). These activities are technologically enabled by compacting space through electronic technologies such as satellites providing for increased global trading (Taylor, Watts and Johnston, 2002, 8). Consequently, as more goods become available and demand increases Trans National Corporations (TNCs) take advantage of geographies by looking for winning areas with controls favourable to their bottom lines such as reduced or non-existent environmental regulation. The re-scaling of ocean geographies within this framework can provide incentives for distant fishing vessel operators to operate illegally. Subsequently, the illegal fishing of the Patagonia Toothfish demonstrates how space-shrinkage technologies in the form of detection and regulation technologies are inherently dictated by geography.

Illegal Patagonian Toothfish harvesters have been shown to use the expanse of the oceans (as defined earlier) to mitigate global detection technologies and counter regionally developed environmental regulations by operating in areas with alternative discourses. In the first case, the lack of geographical constraints of "…the airborne monitoring of fishing stocks and trawlers is no replacement for so called 'effective' regulation of TACS by fishery protection vessels and port state controls." (Dodds, 2000, 240) Subsequently, fishery protection vessels utilising satellite based technologies are made more effective. For example, in August 2003 Australia detected, chased and subsequently captured an illegal Patagonian Toothfish harvester following a 20 day chase (Stewart, 2003, para. 1). However, this type of enforcement is limited by geography as can be deduced from the length of the chase and the number of foreign vessels involved in its capture[6]. In the second case, illegal harvesters can move to an area such as the Indian Ocean where military and economic concerns outweigh environmental issues. Subsequently, the CCAMLR has called for the adoption of electronic monitoring of Patagonian Toothfish fish stocks and harvests in an attempt to more rigorously regulate its transportation across territorial borders (Dodds, 2000, 241). Consequently, the overlaying of ocean space with technological space is mitigated largely by the expanse of the ocean as determined by the TNCs imagining of winning and loosing economic zones. By overlaying a new form of governance and space-time shrinkage technologies upon spatial constructions of the ocean comprising an environmental security, military or economic discourse, geography is shown to influence globalisation.

[6] Australian, British and South African vessels were involved in the capturing of a Uruguayan registered fishing boat with an illegal harvest of Patagonian Toothfish (Stewart, 2003, para. 2). The number of foreign vessels involved is largely indicative of the expanse of the Southern Ocean and the necessity of regionalism to protect the fish stocks.

Part E – Geography and Globalisation

The differences the various geographical constructions of ocean space make to the fore-mentioned processes of globalisation are contained in the multilateral environment inherent in regional institutions. Regional organisations provide some distinct advantages and also disadvantages in countering the inequality caused by globalisations disproportionate spread of economic development. Taylor describes unequal development as determined by the tensions between places and flows as reflected by relative power (Taylor, Watts and Johnston, 2002, 9). In a worst case scenario the space of flows comes to a stop such as in Thrifts description of electronic Ghettos, which might occur during civil conflict (Thrift, 2002, 39). However in other cases, the lack of natural resources or the lack of skilled labour might limit rather than stop investment. Subsequently, regional organisations produce countering forces that better control spaces of flows.

The common characteristics of regional institutions comprising geo-proximity, economic interconnectedness and common histories such as colonialism provide an institutional structure that is able to re-establish power relations both internally and externally (Dodds, 1998, Globalisation section, para. 11). Internally, member states are able to exercise their own motivations to close the wealth gap such as enforcing the illegal harvesting of Patagonian Toothfish while at the same time increasing quota limits for their own fishing vessel operators (Sanjay, 1998, 714). Externally the organisation is able to wield greater influence and increased bargaining power diffusing non-local agendas such as those originating from the North (Dodds, Globalisation section, para. 8). Ultimately, geography is able to generate rule sets that better control the space of flows in and out of the region reducing inequality and uneven development. However, geography also generates rule sets that enhance the processes of globalisation primarily by constructing spaces largely void of regulation and enforcement.

The expanse of the ocean and the TNC discourse of winning and loosing economic areas enhance the forces of globalisation. These constructs provide spaces that determine the comparative competitiveness between regulated and non-regulated ocean. Schmidt uses comparative competitiveness to describe the competition between primate cities, which in this sense is arguably adaptable to ocean space (Schmidt, 1998, 143). Subsequently, non-regulated ocean space or ocean space constructed with a non-environmental discourse each provides a comparative competitiveness that reinforces inequality and uneven development.

Part F - Conclusion

This report has used the geopolitics of the Patagonian Toothfish to show the inherent importance of geography in globalisation and its processes. The illegal harvesting of the Patagonian Toothfish in the Southern and Indian oceans was analysed in order to show geopolitical manifestations and to demonstrate the intrinsic nature of globalisation in geography. This report illustrated that conflicts arose in the Southern Ocean from the regulation and enforcement originating from an environmental discourse imposed by the geopolitics of regional institutions. Subsequently, the illegal harvesters moved to the waters of the Indian Ocean where non-environmental discourses were perceived to be more favourable to illegal harvesting. It was then demonstrated that the physical and imagined geography of regional ocean space comprising either environmental, military and/or economic landscapes was an intrinsic part of to what degree ocean space intersected with the global processes of governmental reconfiguration and space-time shrinkage technologies. Finally, an assessment of how these different landscapes influenced the processes of globalisation found that they determined the comparative competitiveness of ocean space per its degree of regulation and in so doing established whether ocean space was largely controlled locally or globally. Subsequently, it has been shown that as Patagonian Toothfish are chased across the oceans the geography of geopolitics transforms ocean space into conflicting or harmonising regional landscapes that ultimately determine whether globalisation takes or doesn't take and subsequently, whether global connectedness or disconnectedness takes shape. Consequently, regionalism largely appears to be the controlling system that manages the distribution of incoming and outgoing flows and its existence or non-existence and therefore; determines the extremes of globalisation.

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