

Global Governance of the Earth's Oceans

2.2.8

Sovereignty of ocean resources

Specification content

Distribution and ownership of major ocean resources including minerals and fossil fuels, including the establishment and reproduction of territorial limits and sovereign rights that benefit some states but not others.

Geopolitical tensions including the contested ownership of islands and surrounding seabeds and attempts to establish ownership of Arctic Ocean resources.

Injustices arising from unequal access to ocean resources, including the geographical consequences for poor landlocked countries and indigenous people in some coastal areas.

Major (abiotic) ocean resources

“The ocean floor is a source of abiotic resources for those countries equipped with the technology needed to exploit them.” (Student Guide 5, p65)

Minerals

Where?

Coastal waters/continental shelf

Relatively easy to recover

- Placer deposits – what? (e.g. diamonds S&W South Africa)

Deep water/sea bed

Much more difficult to recover (UNCLOS website: seabed mining is like “standing atop a NYC skyscraper on a windy day, trying to suck up marbles off the street below with a vacuum cleaner attached to a long hose” quoted in the Student Guide p65) and of questionable financial viability.

- Manganese nodules (> 4km depths, e.g. E Pacific Ocean)
- Copper, zinc, gold (e.g. SW Pacific)
- Cobalt crusts (only found on land in a few countries but also 1-3km around submarine volcanoes e.g. S Pacific)

Read more:

<https://chinadialogueocean.net/6682-the-future-of-deep-seabed-mining-will-be-decided-this-year/>

<https://chinadialogueocean.net/6677-deep-seabed-mining-key-questions/>

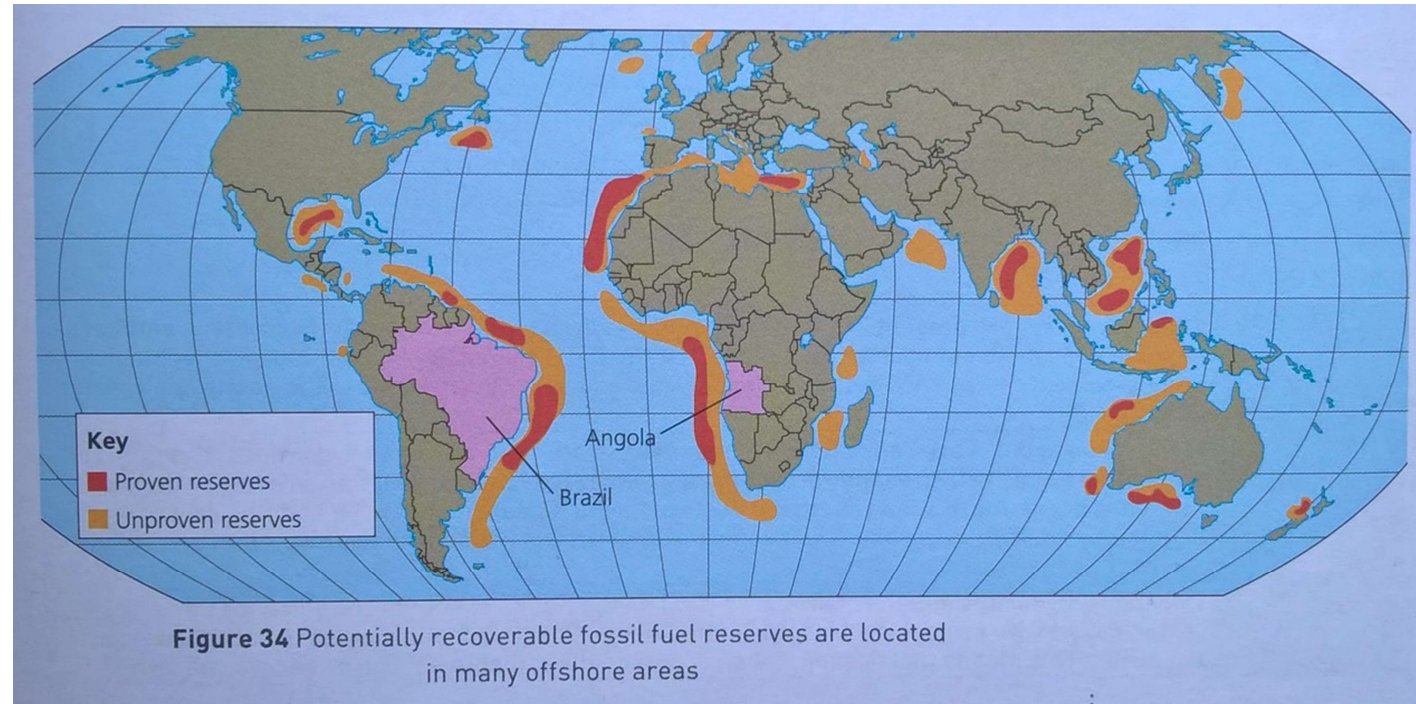
Fuels

Where? – good map p66:

Difficulty/risks associated
with deep sea drilling:

Deepwater Horizon, Gulf of
Mexico, 2010

Unlikely that any oil/gas in
very deep water would
ever be recoverable – why?



Ownership – and tension/conflict

UNCLOS determines this:

- Territorial waters/sea (12 nm from baseline) and EEZ (200 nautical miles from baseline): state has sovereignty over water column and subsurface
- Continental shelf (up to 350 nautical miles): subsurface only
 - NB volcanic islands, like the Canaries, can have legal continental shelf (even though, geological, they don't)

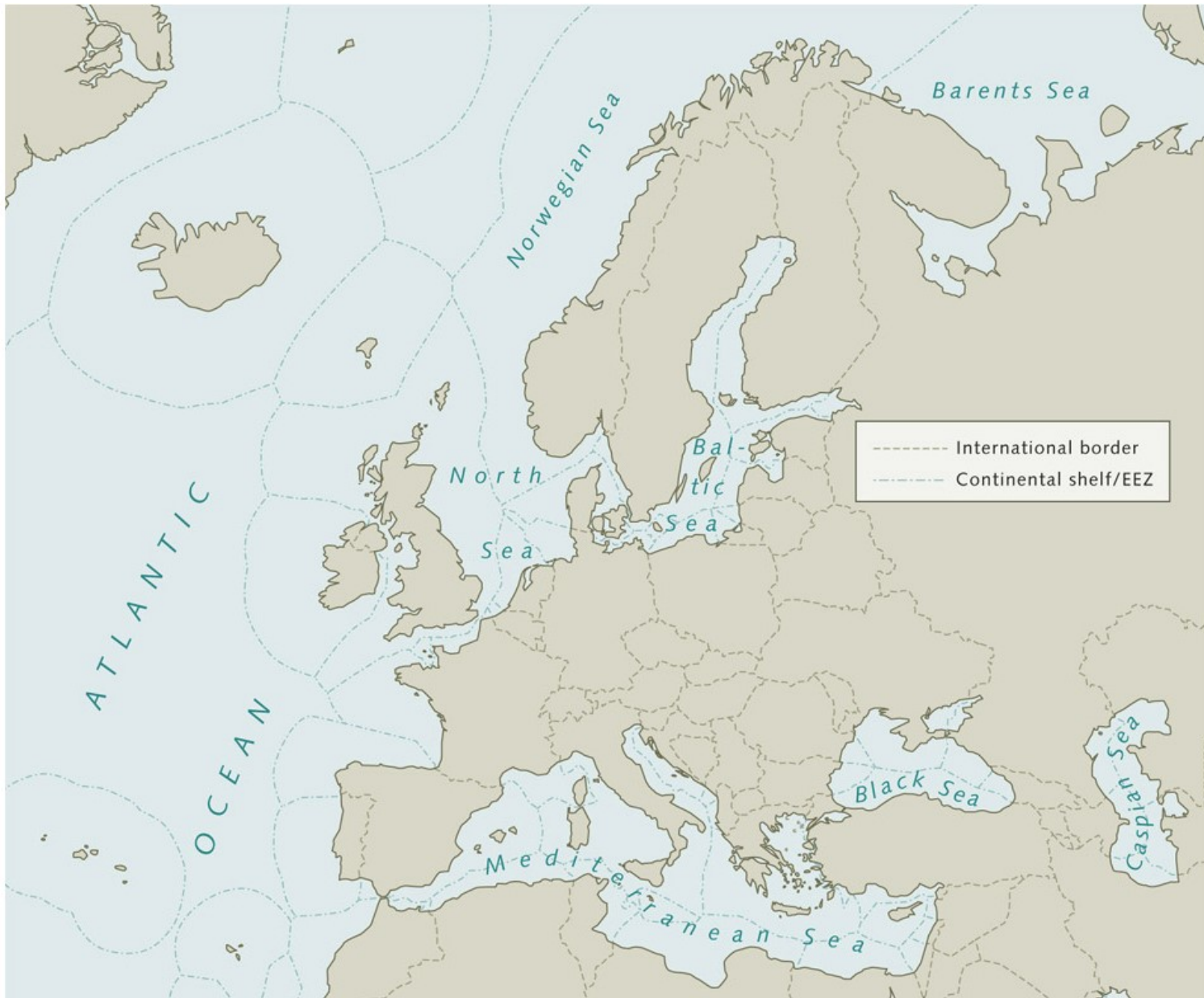
But EEZs can potentially overlap ([North Sea](#), Sea of Japan, [South China Sea](#))

Overseas territories (e.g. Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas) allow states to lay claim to other areas

Role of **International Seabed Authority** (ISA) in negotiating legal right of states to use ocean floor resources beyond their territorial waters

Why do you think it will be difficult to resolve the issues over China's claims on the South China Sea?

Ownership



10.6 > In densely populated Europe with its many borders, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) often extends for less than 200 nautical miles. This applies to the Adriatic, the North Sea and the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, worldwide, around 90 per cent of all commercially relevant fish species are caught in the relatively narrow belt of water which forms the EEZs. © maribus

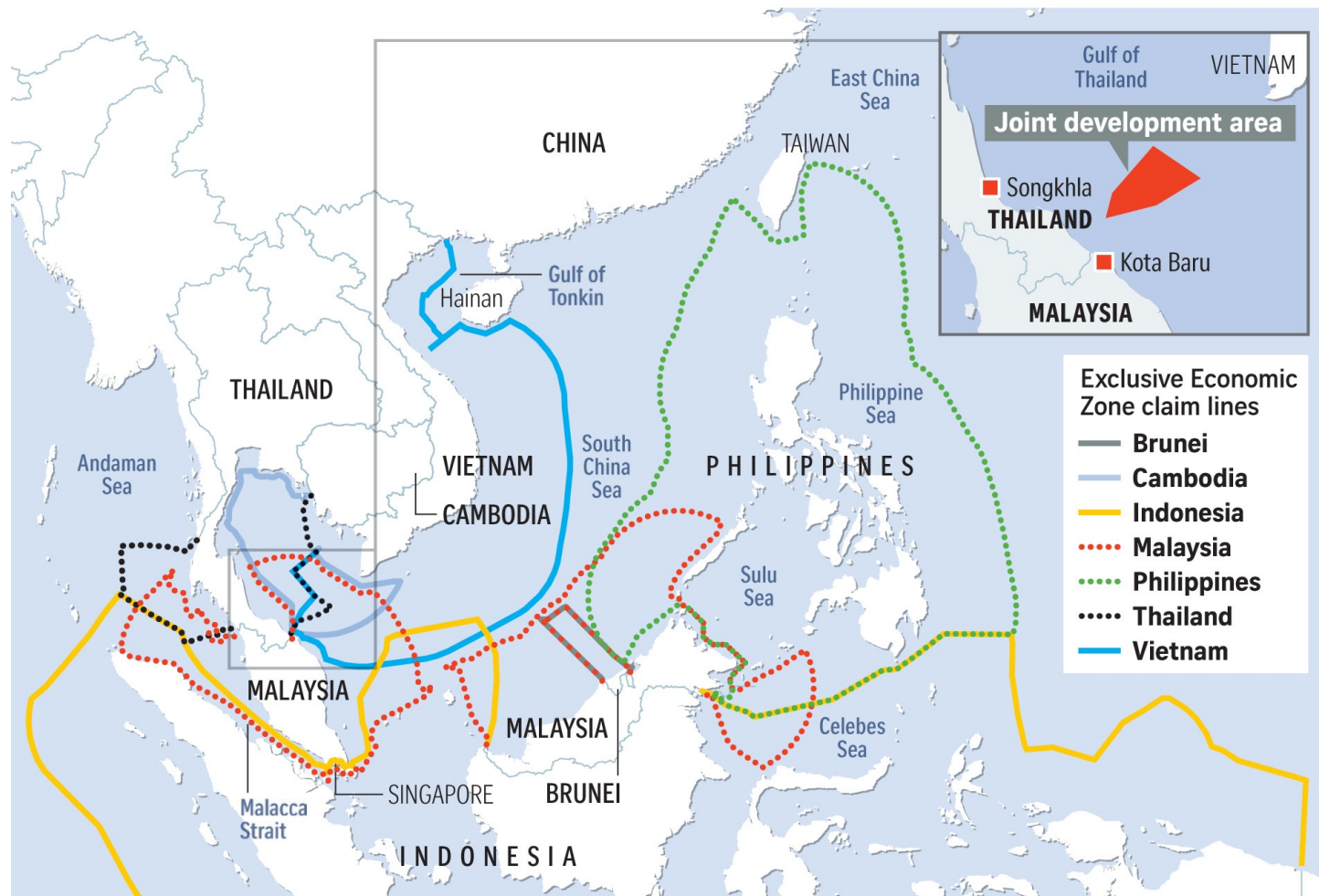


Geopolitical tensions

18/07/16

Maritime claims in South-east Asia

Last week's landmark ruling by the Arbitral Tribunal at The Hague could provide a helpful template for resolving disputes among South-east Asia's own littoral states. Several Asean countries have overlapping maritime claims.



Sources: ASIA MARITIME TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE/CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, MALAYSIA-THAILAND JOINT AUTHORITY STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Geopolitical tensions

Spratly Islands

Newly armed:

China's militarisation of the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea appears to be complete. Newly released high-resolution images obtained by a newspaper in the Philippines (pictured) show that what were once reefs – claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam and other countries – are now artificial islands fit for use as a military base, with radar domes, missile shelters, observation towers and what looks like barracks. There is also a two-mile-long runway and a deep-water port.



Article from The Week (09/02/17)



The Arctic Ocean

What's the [situation](#)? Who are the key players?

Why the issue?

- Oil and gas reserves
- Fish stocks
- Strategic importance of North-west and North-east passages
- Why is ownership unclear?
- How might these change with time?
- *Handout*

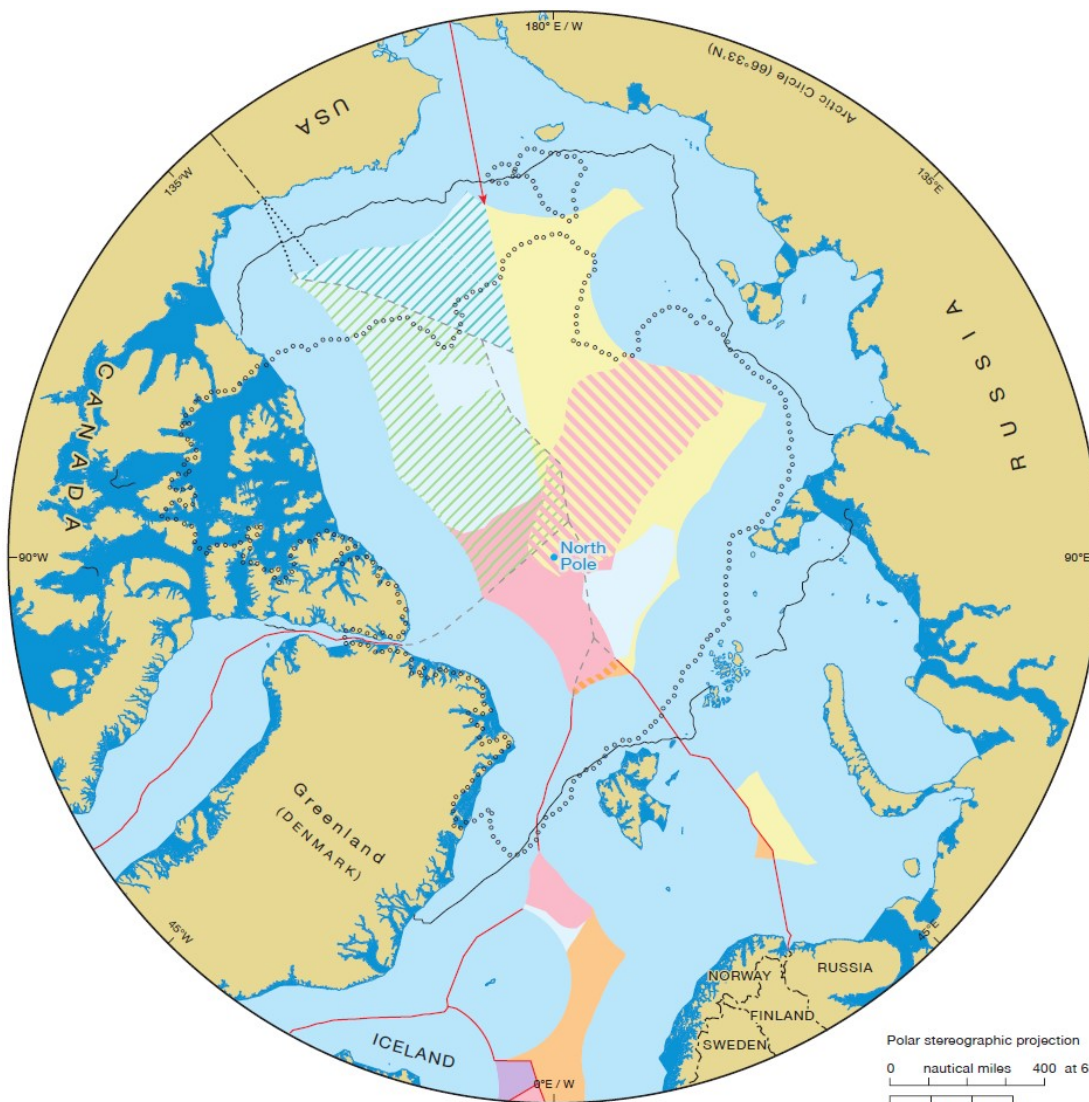
Links to climate change

- Global warming and shrinking of Arctic sea ice creates new [challenges](#) for global governance

Links to work done in Ecosystems unit

- The Arctic Council – is this an appropriate body for dealing with such disputes?

Arctic Ocean



- Internal waters
- Territorial sea or exclusive economic zone
- Unclaimable or unclaimed continental shelf
- Norway claimed continental shelf beyond 200 nm (approved by CLCS)
- Russia claimed continental shelf beyond 200 nm (under review by CLCS)
- Potential Canada continental shelf beyond 200 nm
- Potential USA continental shelf beyond 200 nm
- Denmark claimed continental shelf beyond 200 nm (under review by CLCS)
- Iceland claimed continental shelf beyond 200 nm (approved by CLCS)
- Agreed boundary
- Equidistance line
- Disputed maritime boundary
- Median September Sea Ice extent (1981-2010)
- Mean September Sea Ice extent (2016)

**Arctic waters > 200nm
IBRU***

*International Boundaries Research Unit - part of Geog Dept at Durham Uni
<https://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic/>



The Arctic Ocean

“Climate change is shifting politics as surely as it is shifting ice,” says Roger Boyes. Take the case of Greenland, a remote territory mostly covered by ice that has always been of huge strategic significance, given its proximity to both Russia and the US, but which is becoming even more of a hotspot as the Arctic warms, the ice melts and its minerals become easier to excavate. China, in particular, is now a very visible presence there, hoping not just to get hold of its rare earth metals, but to exploit the northern sea route that would allow it to ship goods quickly to Europe. A Chinese firm even put in a bid to buy the Cold War US naval base put up for sale by Denmark, which is still the island’s sovereign power. This spooked Copenhagen, which rapidly took it off the market. But Greenlanders may soon win independence, and if they do they’d be happy to “exchange the Danish yoke for a no-political-strings-attached commercial relationship with Beijing”. In this way China, and Russia, are extending their reach across the Arctic: a good deal for them, a clear threat to the West.

The Week 19/05/18



Injustices for indigenous peoples

To what extent are the wishes/needs/views of indigenous people considered by states in their desire to exploit ocean resources?

Who might be affected – and why?

What might be the impacts?

Who looks after their needs and fights their corner?

How powerful are they in changing decisions by states and/or MNCs?

Handout

Obvious connection here with the situation in the Arctic

⇒ *p71 in the Student Guide and 3rd article on previous handout*

Unequal access

Injustices arising from unequal access to ocean resources, including the geographical consequences for poor landlocked countries and indigenous people in some coastal areas.

Unequal access

Landlocked countries

Of the 30 countries with lowest HDI ranks in 2015, 11 are landlocked and all are in Africa...

Is there a wider connection?

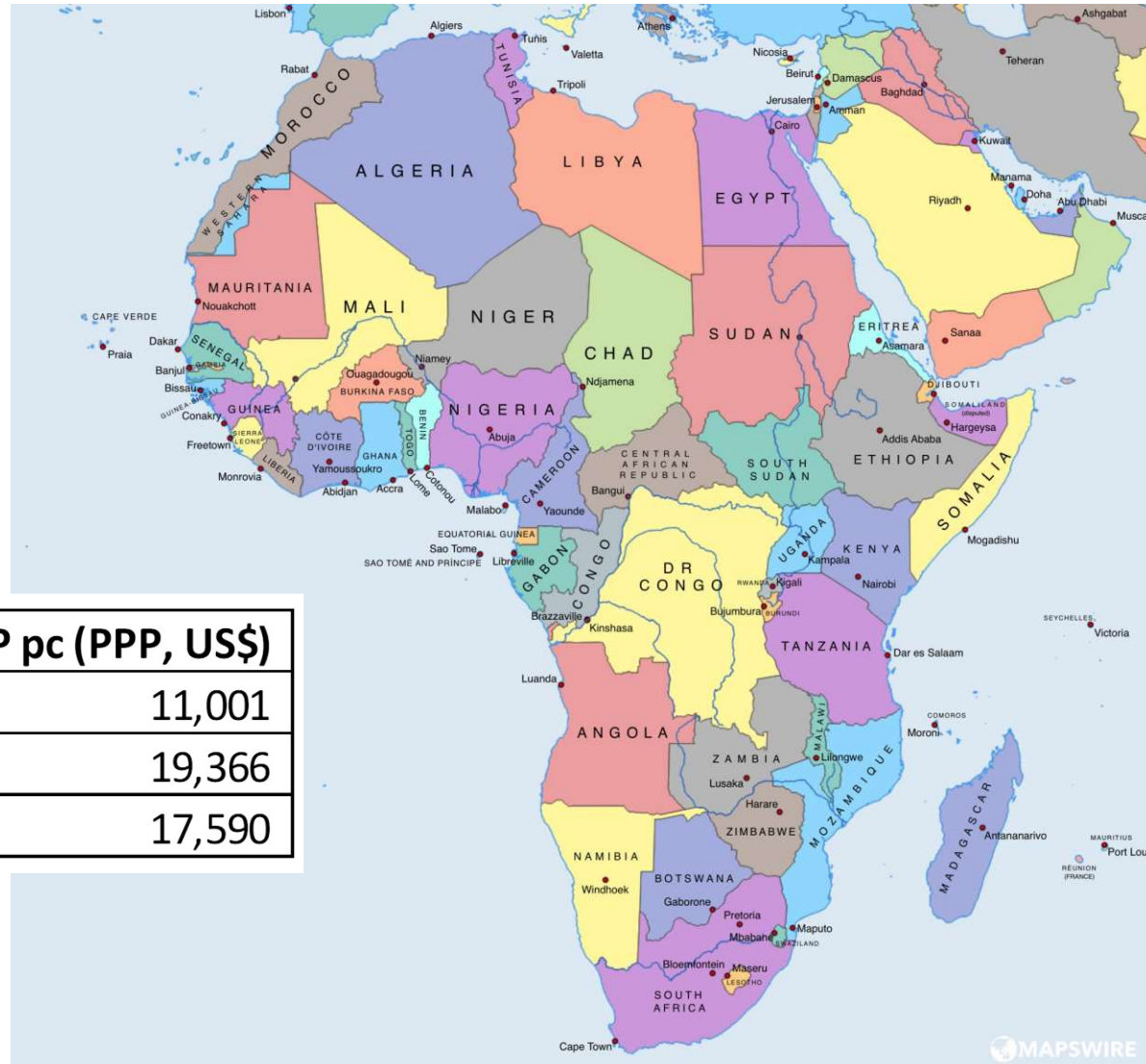
How could you test it?

Mean values	Number	HDI	HDI Rank	GNP pc (PPP, US\$)
Landlocked	38	0.626	119	11,001
Coast	141	0.720	87	19,366
All	179	0.700	94	17,590

Why might this relationship be?

Is being landlocked always a barrier to economic development?

What might override this issue?



Unequal access

Landlocked countries

What can countries do if they are landlocked?

International law (?) states that countries with no sea coast have a right to and from ocean via **transit states** for the purpose of enjoying 'the freedom of the High Seas' (but see below...)

How effective is this at addressing the imbalance?

Student Guide p70 – an interesting idea about scale: large countries with coasts will have some areas that are effectively 'landlocked' through being distant from the coast. To what extent do you think this explains some of the regional inequalities in some large states?

La Paz

Cut off from the sea: In a blow to the government of Evo Morales, the International Court of Justice in the Hague has ruled against Bolivia in its long battle with Chile over access to the Pacific Ocean. Bolivia once had a 250-mile coastline, but lost the territory to Chile during the War of the Pacific (1879-84). While the loss was formalised by a peace treaty in 1904, the issue is live and emotive in Bolivia: the landlocked country maintains a small navy and celebrates the Day of the Sea every year. Morales had vowed to "return the sea" to Bolivians. However, following a five-year legal battle, the court has ruled that Chile is under no obligation to negotiate granting Bolivia access to the coast.