

# The World Ocean Regime: Polluted Waters and Exhausted Fisheries

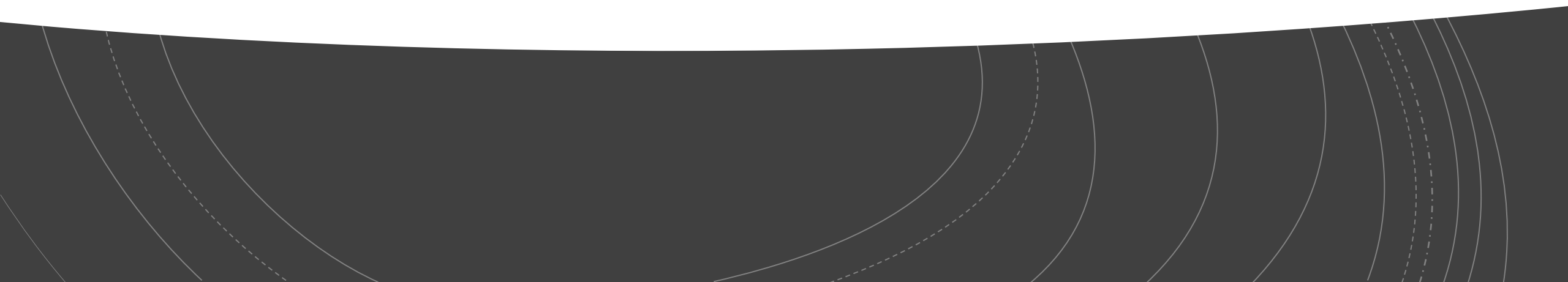
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ERA	MARINE REGIME	DOMINANT WORLD ORDER	DOMINANT MODE OF PRODUCTION
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~8000+ BCE-  1492 CE	Local customs  determined by rituals,  taboos, and  Indigenous Knowledge  Systems	Precolonial: Villages,  chiefdoms, principalities  and occasional regional  empires	Artisanal, dispersed small-  scale extraction and  local/regional exchange
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ERA	MARINE REGIME	DOMINANT WORLD ORDER	DOMINANT MODE OF PRODUCTION
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1492-  1940	<i>Mare liberum</i>  starting in 1609  taking a stronger  hold by 1800s	Colonial system	Mercantile capitalism
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ERA

MARINE REGIME

DOMINANT WORLD ORDER

DOMINANT MODE OF PRODUCTION

Post-World War II- 1979	Law of the Sea, starting with US claims to the continental shelf just after WWII	Modern State system and Embedded Liberalism	Market capitalism and economic globalization launched by world financial institutions born in Bretton Woods at the end of WWII
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ERA	MARINE REGIME	DOMINANT WORLD ORDER	DOMINANT MODE OF PRODUCTION
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<b>1979-  Present</b>	World Ocean  Regime	“New Governance” and  fragmented institutional  architecture	Neoliberalism
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EACH ERA CAME WITH INCREASED  
EXTRACTION AND SOME POLLUTION

HEGEMONIC NEOLIBERALISM CURRENT  
STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY  
REDUCING SOCIAL POWER AND  
EMPHASIZING EXTRACTION

# POLLUTION: THE USUAL SUSPECTS

- DUMPING AT SEA ISSUES CURTAILED BY SEVERAL REGIMES **BUT**,

“Almost all of the problems of the oceans start on land. It is here that virtually all of the pollution originates, whether from factories and sewage works at the coasts, from fertiliser or pesticides washed into rivers and down to the sea, or from metals and chemicals emitted from car exhausts and industry and carried by the winds far out to the oceans” (GESAMP [2001b](#):19; see also NRC [1997](#); GESAMP [2001a](#)).

# POLLUTION: THE INVISIBLES



CO2



NITROGEN



HEAT



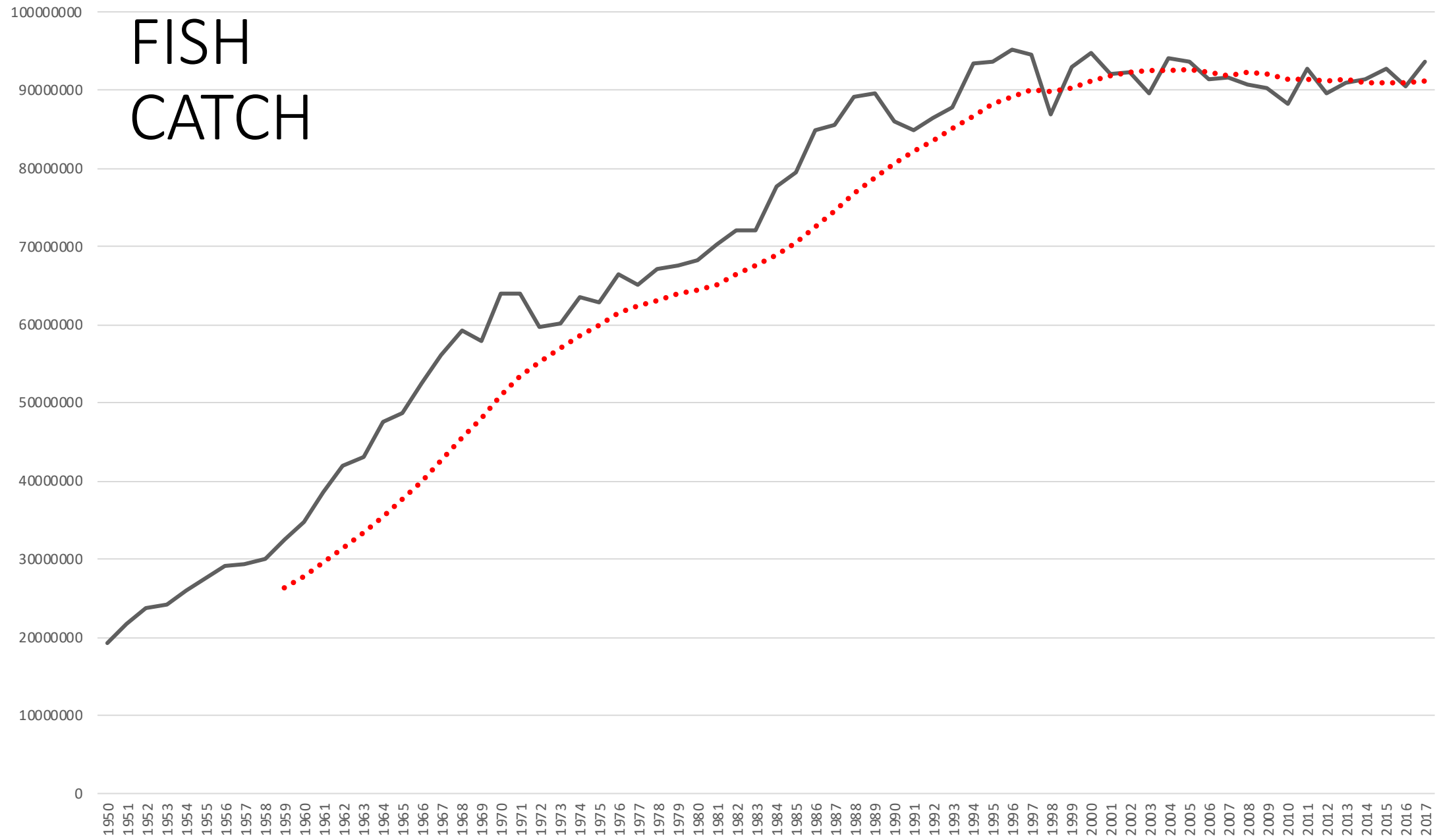
PLASTICS



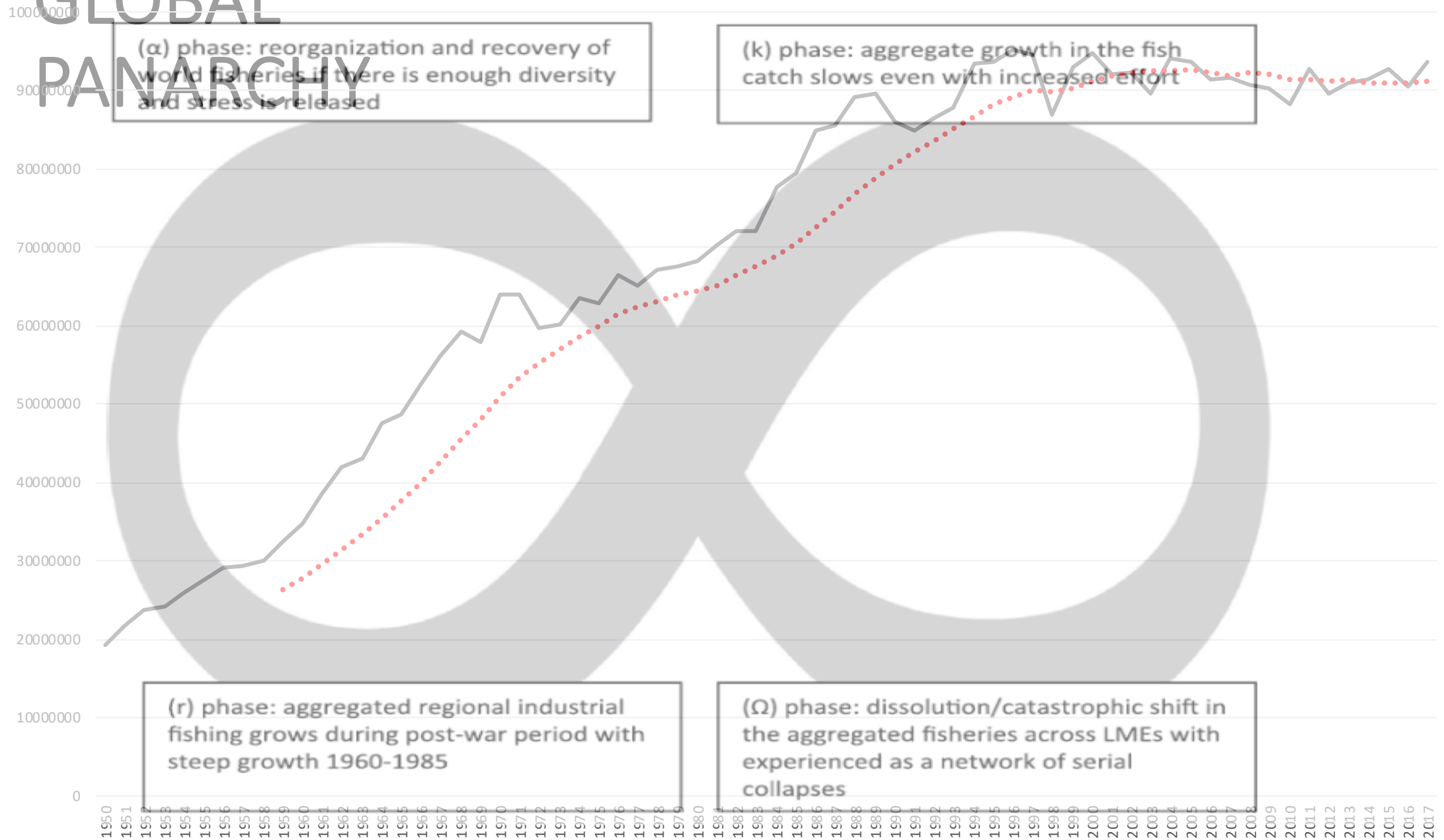
BBNJ WON'T TOUCH THESE



# GLOBAL FISH CATCH



# GLOBAL PANARCHY



- **EXHAUSTED FISHERIES**

- **RFMO FAILURE**

- **TRAGEDY OF THE COMMIDITY [Longo, Stefano B, Rebecca Clausen, and Brett Clark. 2015. The Tragedy of the Commodity: Oceans, Fisheries, and Aquaculture: Rutgers University Press.]**

## ABNJ “SHOULD NOT UNDERMINE”

- “...should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies,” that Mendenhall et al believe, “reflects the overarching ‘freedom of the seas’ principle” contrary to conservation (online).



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## SOFIA'S choices: Discourses, values, and norms of the World Ocean Regime<sup>☆</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Some scholars have thought the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would transform marine politics and policy by incorporating social values of equity and justice via the Common Heritage of Mankind and authentic conservation of an essential part of the biosphere, displacing the dominant commodification of the ocean. Likewise, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization has claimed that the “productivity paradigm” of growth in fishery catch has been replaced by balanced norms of sustainability. This article tests these claims by asking “What is the ‘generative grammar’, or value-based blueprints, of governance for the World Ocean?” using a quantitative content analysis of all extant State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) reports (1995–2016). Not only does the analysis disprove the FAO’s assertions, this research reveals an otherwise invisible, non-codified economic regime governing the World Ocean that is guided by the norms of sheer volume production, named here simply the “World Ocean Regime.” This partially explains why the marine world is experiencing structural ecological changes, including massive biodiversity loss partly driven by

## The Shifting Context of Sustainability: Growth and the World Ocean Regime

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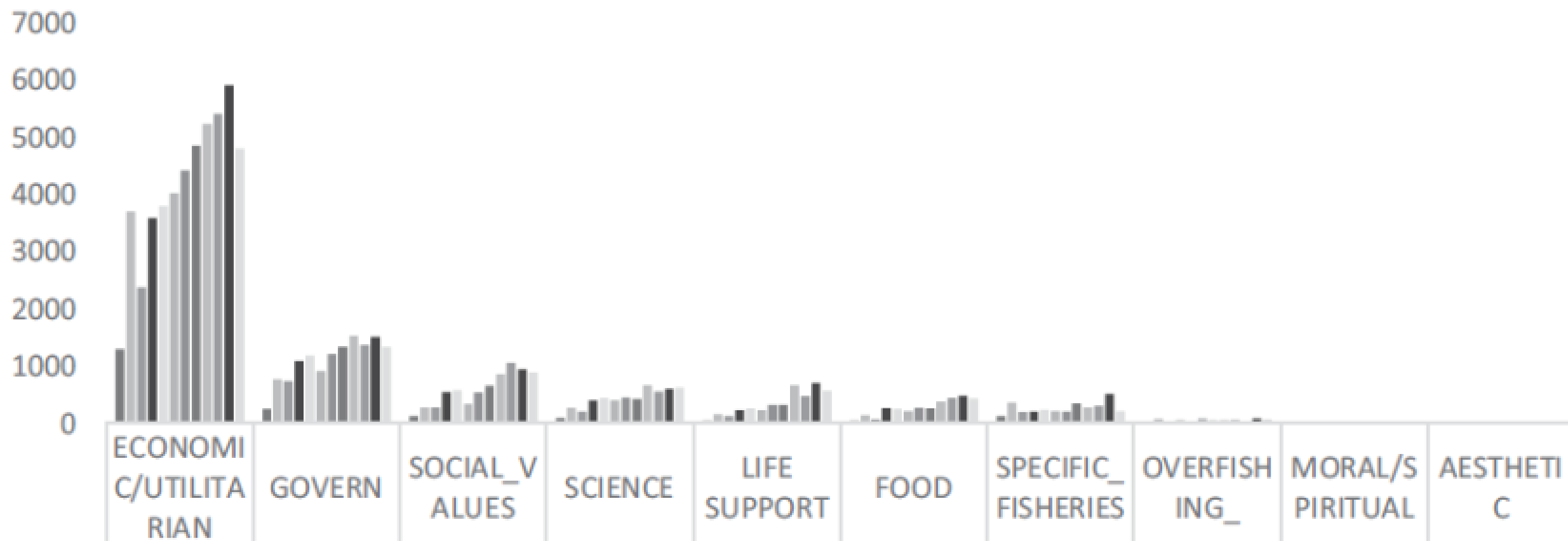
### Abstract

To better understand how regimes select norms and how sustainability concepts are used and change, we conduct a quantitative content analysis of important documents specifically related to a critical Earth system, the “World Ocean.” Using the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s *State of the World’s Fisheries and Aquaculture* reports from 1995 to 2016, we find that economic norms have always been dominant, and the use of sustainability concepts has become increasingly growth oriented. Discourses of restraint, relevant to principles of sustainability, are virtually absent. Growth is the central driving concern for the World Ocean Regime, a noncodified, economic regime that governs the oceans. We conclude that the norms of sustainability have been selected for fitness with the neoliberal political-economic order and a totalizing ideology of growth, and that sustainability concepts are used as a mask to legitimize extractivist goals that are actually not sustainable.

Even as sustainability concerns have become more urgent and important in science (Clark and Dickson 2003) and development (Anand and Sen 2000), there is still little understanding of how this organizing concept is used or how that use has changed over time. In this article, we consider the governance of the “World Ocean” (see, e.g., Jacques and Smith 2003 for a rationale of this term). We also attempt to understand the selection of norms in the World Ocean Regime (WOR), a noncodified regime governing the world’s oceans identified by Lobo and Jacques (2017). In our 2017 article, we described the WOR through a quantitative content analysis (QCA) of global marine documents—the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s (FAO) *State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (SOFIA) reports from 1995 to 2016. We return to this data to investigate sustainability discourses and norms over time. We find that sustainability discourses are increasing but are most often a proxy for growth rather than for ecological limits or social justice.

<sup>\*</sup> We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers and the students of the Political Ecology Lab at UCF.

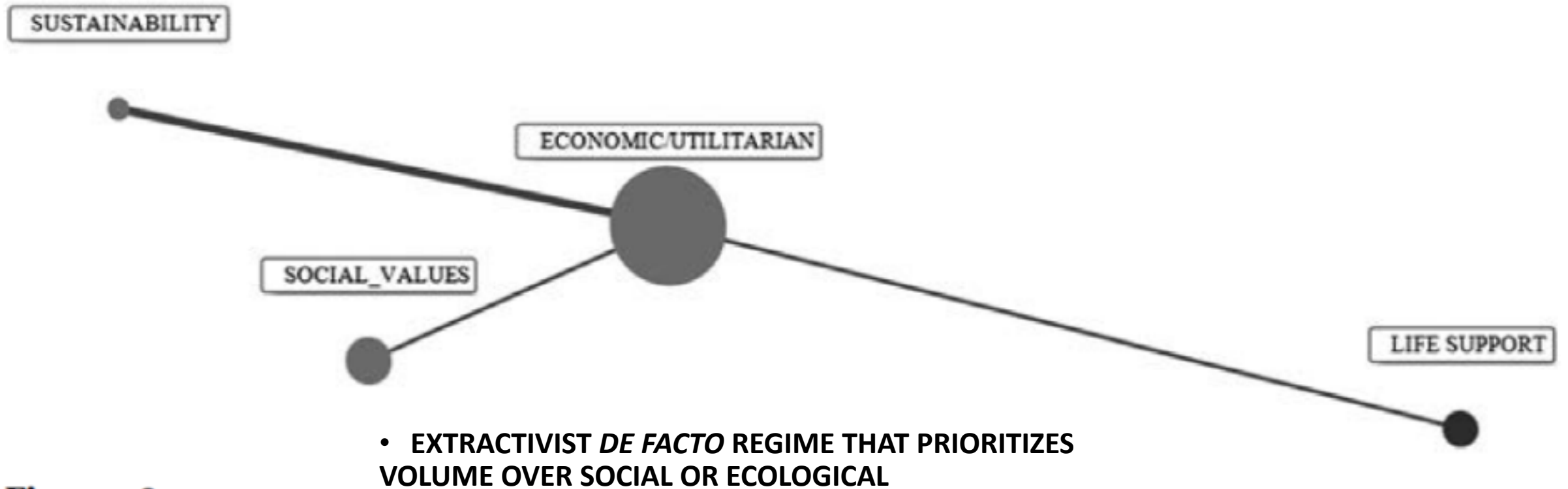
# SOFIA'S CHOICES FINDINGS: Frequencies



**The issue of growth dominates**







**Figure 2**

Relationships Between Sustainability, Economics, Social Values, and Life Support in 1995–2016 SOFIA Reports

First order co-occurrence--when one category is invoked in a sentence, it is likely alongside economic discourses. Economics is the central discourse and priority, and sustainability has the strongest relationship to this priority

# WORLD OCEAN REGIME

- NEOLIBERAL, EXTRACTIVIST *DE FACTO* REGIME THAT PRIORITIZES VOLUME OVER SOCIAL OR ECOLOGICAL