

Conference on Arctic Marine Resource Governance

Place and time: Reykjavik, Iceland, October 14-16, 2015

The themes of the conference will be:

1. Global management and institutions for Arctic Marine resources

For participation in this theme, we seek research that investigates global governance issues for the Arctic. This includes activities both within the Arctic Council and in relation to the rest of the world. While the Arctic Council works to bring together the 8 Arctic nations and permanent participants from indigenous Arctic communities to resolve governance issues requiring multilateral cooperation, the governance challenges this group faces are complex and cut across many different policy lines. Such challenges include non-legally binding policy. Furthermore, while other nation states may, through an application process, become observers of the council actions, engagement of the rest of the world directly with the Arctic Council is limited. Potential topics include: alternate and/or complementary global governance activities for the Arctic, including the Arctic Circle meetings and the Arctic Economic Council; North-South relations; the roles of indigenous communities, linking international legally binding policies to Arctic marine issues; stewardship of the Central Arctic Ocean for environmental protection and safety.

A sample question for this theme is: What happens when the provisions of two resource regimes conflict? The IWC, for example, has a very narrow exemption for aboriginal subsistence whaling. The Arctic Council, on the other hand, is much more sensitive to the needs of the Arctic's permanent residents. This raises questions about institutional interplay, overlapping institutional goals and jurisdictions as well as the ways in which stakeholders shape institutional goals, conflicts and outcomes.

2. Resource stewards and users: local and indigenous co-management

The living marine resources in the Arctic have long been used and managed by indigenous communities, and ice cover has, to date, assisted in protection of remote marine resource stocks. As climate change shifts the productive capacity of the environment and global values for such resources, and as economic development and technological innovations change the structure and demands of indigenous communities for resources, governance must move to co-management of the resources to best resolve disparate values and multiple uses of marine ecosystems and their services. Potential topics: evaluation of existing co-management schemes for marine mammals or other consumptive use species; forecasting of expanding long term participatory citizen monitoring with spatial ecosystem assessment for Arctic resilience; formal channels for longitudinal knowledge of indigenous residents in aiding marine resource management and improved living conditions and capacity building for Arctic residents.

A sample question for this theme is: How do we deal with situations where the interests of commercial and subsistence users conflict? How well has the American system of community development quotas (CDQs) worked to alleviate this tension? In the case of CDQs, we can evaluate the effectiveness of an institutional innovation that has been in place for some time.

3. Governance gaps in Arctic Marine Resource Management

The 6 working groups of the Arctic Council (ACAP, AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME and SDWG) all have specific mandates which in principle should cover the realm of issues requiring multilateral decision-making. In some cases, however, certain concerns may fall into governance gaps outside of the Arctic Council entirely, between the working groups, or, in overlapping several groups, find themselves without dedicated resources or actionable governance plans. Research in this theme is intended to focus on identifying these gaps and the development of potential solutions to address them. Potential topics include governance options for dynamic responses to marine resource shifts (beyond migratory species), marine invasive species management, institutional Management of externalities to marine resources beyond the on Arctic Council and not included in existing regulatory programs (Polar Code, etc). How do we deal with situations in which marine pollution originates within the jurisdiction of one state but impacts areas within the jurisdictions of others (Arctic states or others) as transboundary pollution?

Sample questions for this theme include: What happens when the relevant marine areas cut across the jurisdictional boundaries of two states or across the boundaries of the EEZs of coastal states and the high seas? Can we deal with potential fisheries in the Arctic Ocean without consulting key non-Arctic states? The underlying issue here has to do with nesting a focused arrangement for a specific issue into the broader constitutive framework of UNCLOS.

4. Multi-scale, ecosystem-based, Arctic marine resource management

The complexities of the Arctic political, economic, and ecological environment mean that governance must accommodate multiple scales of use and concern. Rapid climate change – predicted to be more rapid and more influential in the Arctic than anywhere else on the planet – means that shifts in ecosystems and the resources they provide will require adaptive, ecosystem-based management to successfully navigate the uncertainty and change underway. Potential topics include: analytical tools for connecting bioeconomic integrated systems into adaptive management among Arctic sovereign for decisions and policymaking, incorporation of risk management into ecosystem based management, analysis of systematic differences in policies and outcomes associated with scale of policy implementation.