

## Thematic Network Update

### The “Global Arctic” Project

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The *GlobalArctic* project (see [www.globalarctic.org](http://www.globalarctic.org)) is an international and interdisciplinary expert network based on individuals affiliated in several Nordic and circumpolar institutions, networks and forums in the field. A joint strategy for the *GlobalArctic* project considers the Arctic region in the 2010s to have become part and parcel of global political, economic, technological and environmental, as well as societal, change. Correspondingly, what happens in the Arctic has significant implications worldwide.

Following from this, the context of the emerging research project is twofold: the first stage, the ‘*Global > Arctic*’, is to (re)define globalization and its multi-functional effects, as well as impacts of rapid climate change, as drivers of change in the Arctic region.

The second stage is the ‘*Arctic > Global*’, which will identify and explore the global implications and drivers of the globalized Arctic affecting the rest of the globe, and their interactions, as well as the role the Arctic plays in world politics and the global economy. In order to address the major stages the Project is aimed to be organized around four interrelated thematic areas of varying scope (see Matrix below): *Resources, Energy, Economics, Infrastructures and Technology; Environment, Environmental Degradation and Climate Change; (Geo)Politics, Security and Governance; and Peoples, Cultures, Well-being and Societies*. They represent the major functions of the Arctic region in globalization of the 2010s and cover the most relevant fields of research.

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The ‘GlobalArctic’ Project was initiated in the brainstorming meeting of the Thematic Network (TN) on Geopolitics and Security on January 12-13, 2014 in Copenhagen, and was accepted by the Steering Committee of the Northern Research Forum (NRF) on February 14, 2014.

Thematic Area	1 <sup>st</sup> stage: <i>Global &gt; Arctic</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> stage: <i>Arctic &gt; Global</i>
<b>I. Resources, Energy, Economics, Infrastructures, and Technology</b>	Pressure to extract of oil, gas and minerals in the Arctic; Pressure to increase fisheries in Northern waters; Development of corresponding infrastructures and technology; Mining project expansion dynamics and possible impact of the global land rush; Development of Arctic shipping; New ICT, esp. Internet; Growing role of TNCs and SOEs; Pressure for regional (economic) development.	Significant oil, gas and minerals reserves for further industrial development; Shortening of sea routes facilitating global trade; Roles of resources extracting SOEs and TNCs in global economic development; Self-determination of indigenous peoples effecting the global land rush.
<b>II. Environment, Environmental degradation, and Climate Change</b>	The Arctic as a sink of pollutants; Impacts of warming / rapid climate change on Arctic ecosystems and in the social and political spheres (e.g. rationale and potential for industrial and other economic development and shipping); The ‘Arctic Paradox’; Potential risk to sustainability and threat to state sovereignty.	Environmental ‘awakening’; Climate forcing due to loss of sea ice (albedo effect, methane release); Biodiversity; Laboratory / workshop for research on the environment, climate change and the Anthropocene; Ecology as a new discipline for ‘disciplining’; Model for cooperation.
<b>III. (Geo)Politics, Security, and Governance</b>	Regionalism, region-building and international cooperation; Environmental and Human security; Growing global interest in Arctic resource geopolitics and governance; Shaped by industrial civilization; Weakening of the states’ ability to protect their sovereignty.	Innovations in Arctic governance essential to addressing climate change; Arctic stability-building as a model and common ground for a paradigm shift of security; Military training and exercises; The Arctic Ocean as a ‘global commons’; Reinterpretation of security; New kind of space for innovations in legal and political arrangements.
<b>IV. Peoples, Cultures, Well-being and Societies</b>	Recognition of the transcultural nature of the Arctic and indigenous peoples’ rights; Threat to well-being, human health and food security; Challenge of well-being in big cities; Need for education; Migration to the Arctic; Urbanization; Challenge of de-industrialization.	Human capital and capacity. The role of indigenous peoples and self-determination in resource governance and sustainability; Knowledge as power based on ICT/Internet; The Arctic as a knowledge-based (political) space; The role of ‘paradiplomacy’; Reconceptualization of sovereignty; Workshop for research on governance and human security.

The *GlobalArctic* project aims to foster a comprehensive and trans-disciplinary approach of the Arctic in a global ecological, cultural, economic and political context. In particular, it aims, on the one hand, at understanding the dynamics of the Arctic, as it increasingly becomes part of global changes, the world-wide resources and transportation economy, as well as global geopolitics and geo-economics with a danger of an ‘irreversible collapse’ of industrial civilization. Yet, on the other hand, the Arctic already is, and increasingly will be, a key agent of global changes, as it is also a place from where a paradigmatic change in global governance, as well as that in security, can emerge. Here the Project, hence, will respond to urgent political and scientific needs to gain a better understanding of the globalized Arctic with rapid regional and world-wide changes.

To address this, the *GlobalArctic* project aims to become an international and interdisciplinary research project, as well as an international center of excellence, on the globalized Arctic with sites in several Arctic states and regions, and partners from all over the Northern Hemisphere.

The objectives of the Project are as follows:

- To study and (re)conceptualize the Arctic as a geological, biological, economic, socio-cultural and political entity within a changing global context, both being affected by it and affecting it;
- To identify and analyze the major forces driving change in the Arctic, such as global changes (environmental change, climate change, societal change), the opening of the Arctic to resources exploration and exploitation, Arctic economic and social development, evolving geo-political interests, and others more, as well as the major drivers behind these changes;
- To discuss and elaborate concrete ways to address and mitigate these changes in the Arctic and beyond, involving all the relevant stakeholders, notably non-governmental organizations, civil societies, indigenous peoples (organizations) and other inhabitants of the Arctic, nation-states and state-owned enterprises, transnational corporations, as well as the research community; and
- More generally to reflect upon, and propose and provide new bold ideas and ways of holistic thinking regarding the implications of these profound changes on humanity and the planet, both in the Arctic region and globally.

The activities and plans of the *GlobalArctic* project in the foreseeable future are as follows:

- The organization of sessions, workshops and brainstorming meetings at particularly relevant venues (see below);
- The submission of research projects and applications, notably to national funding agencies (e.g. Academy of Finland), foundations, NordForsk, and others;
- The publication of working papers, scientific articles, and publications on the subject (e.g. for Palgrave Pivot); and
- The establishment of a study / expertise program on the subject, and a *GlobalArctic* newsletter / journal.

Among the organized seminars, workshops and sessions of the Project in the foreseeable future are, e.g., annual TN on Geopolitics and Security's Panels in various forums; the Calotte Academy, an annual international travelling symposium and expertise-based seminar (May 2015 in Rovaniemi and Inari, Finland, Murmansk and Apatity, Russia, and Kirkenes, Norway).

Almost 25 universities and research institutions from East Asia, Europe, North America and Russia have, so far, accepted an invitation to become involved in the Project.

The *GlobalArctic* Project was built on the foundation of the Northern Research Forum (NRF) and its biennial Open Assemblies, fostering academic and other expertise and implementing the interplay between science, politics and business; as well as on that of the University of the Arctic's and the NRF's joint Thematic Network on Geopolitics and Security and its activities. The Project is coordinated by Rasmus Bertelsen, Aalborg University, Denmark ([rasmus@cgs.aau.dk](mailto:rasmus@cgs.aau.dk)), Matthias Finger, EPFL, Switzerland ([matthias.finger@epfl.ch](mailto:matthias.finger@epfl.ch)), and Lassi Heininen, University of Lapland, Finland ([lassi.heininen@ulapland.fi](mailto:lassi.heininen@ulapland.fi)).

The Project was officially launched at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arctic Circle at the turn of October-November 2014 in Reykjavik, Iceland.