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## **TAI Bookshelf Podcast: Coast Guards Politics in the Arctic with Andreas Østhagen**

### **Full Transcript**

**[Recorded on 10 June 2020]**

**Liuba Timonina:**

Hi, it's Liuba

**Romain Chuffart:**

And Romain.

**Liuba:**

And you're listening to The Arctic Institute's Bookshelf Podcast.

**Romain:**

In this podcast, we talk to scholars and experts about their work and new publications to make the Arctic easy and accessible to everybody.

**Liuba:**

So tune in and join our in-depth conversations that take you beyond the headlines and right into the latest ideas, challenges, and the nitty gritty of Arctic research.

**Romain:**

Hi everybody, and welcome to this week's episode of The Arctic Institute's Bookshelf Podcast. This week, Liuba and I talked to Andreas Østhagen about Arctic conflict, cooperation, and geopolitics. Besides being a well-known figure and Senior Fellow here at The Arctic Institute, Andreas Østhagen is also a Senior Research Fellow at Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, a Senior Fellow at the High North Center of Nord University Business School, and an associate professor at Bjørknes University College in Oslo. He previously worked for the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies in Oslo and the North Norway European office in Brussels. Andreas holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of British Columbia in Canada on ocean politics and disputes. And without further ado, here's our conversation with Andreas Østhagen. Hope you enjoy!

**Andreas Østhagen:**

Thank you, Romain. That was a long introduction. I'm sorry you had to read all of that.

**Romain:**

It's okay. How are you doing? Where are you right now?



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**Andreas:**

I am in Oslo. I am in the spare bedroom of my apartment, trying to avoid getting too warm because the summer sun is finally out. I've been in Oslo now since February. I guess like most of us having stayed at home during the Corona crisis.

**Romain:**

All right, and in this time where people are perhaps confined at home, as you say. Can you perhaps give us a glimpse of your life, and describe the room you are in or the view from your window if there's a window in the room?

**Andreas:**

Yes, right now I had to put the shades down, because as I said, it's finally sunny in Oslo. And it's getting warm and nice. The room is tiny. It's full of books, all the books that I haven't read yet, but probably should read at some point that I can't place anywhere else in the house. So this is what my guests when they come to stay with me have to look at. So I mean, my life. I'm living smack downtown Oslo in an apartment in an old building from 1895. I'm about to get a cat, perhaps even two cats. I guess that's a thing that is becoming more common in Corona times as well, getting pets to alleviate some of the boredom. But Norway right now is opening up again, so things are looking up in Norway. So my life right now is looking quite good, but I'm looking forward to getting back into normal routine of maybe also attending a couple of workshops and seminars and meeting people more face to face.

**Liuba:**

It's really nice to hear that actually. Your surroundings-- it sounds really cozy. And all my congratulations with getting some pets, it sounds really cool.

**Andreas:**

We'll see. It might be a spur of the moment, and then as soon as I have to start looking for pet sitters, problems will emerge. But for now, I'm excited at least.

**Liuba:**

Could you maybe now briefly tell us about yourself and your academic background, where you started studying, what you do, how you became interested in your research topics?

**Andreas:**

Yes, I am 33 years old at the moment, and I'm from the north of Norway. I'm from Bodø. If you haven't been, it's perhaps not the most the most beautiful town in the Arctic, but the scenery is amazing. It's the second largest town in the Norwegian Arctic after Tromsø. Growing up in northern Norway, you don't really think about Arctic issues a lot, even



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when I was growing up in the 90s, early 2000s. The kind of concept of the Arctic itself or the High North as we call it in Norwegian, *Nordområdene* in Norwegian language, wasn't really on the agenda. But then, as I left town when I was 19, after high school, and went to study elsewhere in Norway, I came to the realization that one of my biggest comparative advantages when we're looking at international politics, which is what I ended up studying, was the Arctic, because I was from the Arctic or because I had a connection there. That took me into the whole Arctic world – the reason why I'm on this podcast at the moment. I went off to further study a master's degree in London at LSE, and there everyone--all the students there were probably smarter and older than me, were looking at topics for their thesis, and I was encouraged by my supervisor to write about the Arctic. I ended up writing about the EU's Arctic policy, because I was interested in working in Brussels, working with the European Union. Coming all the way from Bodø and northern Norway, my goal was to end up working on Arctic issues in Brussels. I wrote a master's thesis about that, and that got me a job in Brussels, at the North Norway European office, which is a government office. Norway is not a part of the EU, but it still needs to maintain a close relationship with Brussels and the European Union because of its EEA agreement.

At that office, I worked for four years on Arctic issues trying to, if not convince, but at least convey information about the Norwegian Arctic or Norwegian Arctic challenges to Brussels, to Europe at large. We organized seminars, we wrote opinion pieces, we wrote policy documents to the Commission on the External Action Service on Arctic issues. So they're really what was propelled me into to the Arctic policy debate. After doing that for a time, I also had the fortune of venturing to Washington, DC to be a summer intern, of all things, in 2011 with Heather Conley at CSIS doing Arctic research. Later on, I went to Toronto as a Research Fellow for a couple of months, again, working on Arctic security issues. That all led to a personal interest in academia, moving away from the policy world and more into academia, but still trying to retain relevance for the policy world. And that's where I am today. I made the switch from Brussels to research to the Norwegian Institute for Defense studies, doing research as part of the Norwegian armed forces in 2014. Later on, I went off to do a PhD in Canada, and now I'm at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, a private research institute doing Arctic studies, amongst other things. So that was a long introduction to my background and how I ended up into Arctic affairs.

## **Romain:**

That sounds very impressive, and something I've learnt about you is that you have this ability of churning out and publishing papers and reports, which actually have some form of impact in policymaker circles. You've also recently published a book about coast guards and ocean politics in the Arctic with Palgrave Macmillan earlier this year. We'll put a link of the book in the show notes for listeners who are interested in buying it or reading it. How do you think, and, perhaps, this is linking to more specific issues, but



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how do you think coast guards play an important role for cooperation at sea, especially in the Arctic?

**Andreas:**

Thanks for highlighting my book. It's a short book that kind of summarizes a lot of the work that I've done over the last years before I started on the PhD project. It looks at different angles, of course, and to your question, coast guards in the Arctic are really not one thing. The reason why I started looking at it in the first place was because coast guards are in many ways, the Arctic states' foremost tool to deal with the changes that are occurring in the Arctic, especially at sea, naturally, whether it's increased fisheries or the need for oil spill protection or oil spill response, or whether it's more defense related tasks just being able to be present, to uphold serenity in an icy or less icy waters in the Arctic.

So that was the initial reason for why I got into to the coast guard study, and also because Norway has a particular relationship with Russia when it comes to coast guard affairs. Norway has to collaborate with Russia in many domains, and the coast guard collaboration is one of the most prominent ones that also has a military component.

The course guards across the Arctic deal with these challenges in rather different ways. Not to go into too much detail, but there's a clear dividing line between the North American Arctic, and the European, Russian Arctic. Here where I'm sitting right now, I'm not sitting in the Arctic, but I'm close to the Norwegian Arctic. We have no ice in the ocean, even during wintertime. So the coast guard resources are in many ways-- they have to be less tailored for ice conditions, less focused on icebreaking capacity. But at the same time, you need perhaps even a stronger presence or more resources and capabilities than for example, in the Canadian Arctic or American Arctic during wintertime where there's very little activity because of the ice. But then when something is happening, or a cruise ship goes aground at summertime even, you really need ice breaking capacity, and you really need expensive capabilities. Just today or yesterday, the Trump administration had a note coming out concerning the new polar security cutters for the Coast Guard, just highlighting the US's focus on providing the US Coast Guard with more capabilities in the Arctic. So the Coast Guard is an interesting institution to examine when you look at Arctic politics more generally. And the component of your question concerning cooperation – it's really the buzzword in Arctic studies over the last 15 years. It's been how do we cooperate, to deal with whether it's oil and gas exploration or its security issues, or its indigenous rights? How do we increase cooperation in an Arctic sphere between the Arctic countries?

I try to examine the notion of cooperation between Coast Guards. Can you actually cooperate? The question is, to an extent, what Coast Guards do, the practical day to day dealings or workings of the Arctic states at sea. When you're not located close to each



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other, for example, Norway and Canada that are so far apart in different parts of the Arctic, there's no real scope for collaboration. Yes, perhaps a bit of informal sharing of information, best practices, tabletop exercises, those things. But day to day, hands-on cooperation is rather limited. Coast guard cooperation beyond what I just mentioned on an overarching level really takes place at a bilateral level or trilateral. Say the US, Canada and the Danish Navy that serves as the Coast Guard around Greenland, or Norway and Russia, or Russia and the US, if that makes sense.

**Liuba:**

Yes, indeed, coast guards are a very significant part within the Arctic cooperation and security politics. You're right. It links directly to the notion of Arctic geopolitics with which you've been working a lot on, too. To me, there's something unsettling about this very concept historically. The Arctic emerges as a socially constructed space, like imagined space, which doesn't really evoke any sense of belonging on the local level, as you said in your particular case. With Bodø, for example, or some northernmost regions in Sweden where nobody talks about living in the Arctic. Geopolitics, in turn, is an ocean, which in the Arctic case implies highly contradictory dynamics as a place of conflict and cooperation at the same time. I've been wondering, how real, how material do you think is this architecture geopolitics? How do we go about this controversial duality of cooperation and conflict paradigm? Maybe also, with some case examples from coast guard research?

**Andreas:**

Yes, difficult questions that you're asking. How real are Arctic geopolitics? The reason, as you allude to as well, why I started studying coast guards was to examine this notion of conflict in the north. Instead of saying the Arctic is prone to conflict, or there would be no conflict in the north, instead looking at some of these institutions or actors that are actually upholding state interests on a day to day basis, which the Coast Guard is doing.

The Coast Guard is, in many ways, an ultimate example of how both dynamics are playing out at the same time in the Arctic on a regional level. On one hand, as I mentioned earlier, Norway and Russia collaborate on the Coast Guard level, not on the day to day level, but at least on almost a weekly or at least monthly level sharing of some information, concerning fisheries in particular, sometimes even having exercises together, although there were more of them before 2014.

So you see that cooperation happening, despite overarching statements concerning East-West, Russia-NATO, and Norway-Russia relations. At the same time, the Coast Guard in both countries are part of the armed forces, or in Norway, the Navy, and in Russia, part of the border guard. The Coast Guards, in that sense, also have a security component. They're armed and worst come to worst, they will inherently be part of off tensions or



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outright conflict between the countries. They are more or less sent up into the Arctic waters for both Russia and Norway in case to project serenity to show that these countries are able to be present in their Arctic, a maritime domain, which is also has a security and defense component to show that we will not be deterred or we will not be threatened. You see a duality with the Coast Guard, but then to zoom out of it and look at an Arctic geopolitics more widely, I don't think that the Arctic will be an arena for immediate conflict or immediate struggles anytime soon. I think we've seen that over the last 15 or 20 years studies and statements, showing that the Arctic states actually have a mutual interest in preserving some stability in the North, whether it's the US or Norway, or Russia or Canada, or Denmark, or Finland, or Iceland, or Sweden.

At the same time, what we've been seeing more of recently, it's kind of this geostrategic, if that word even means anything, but this overarching utilization of the Arctic as an arena for at least aggressive statements, and maybe some actual power projection or power display from Russia, but also from the US increasingly. So we've seen them in Russia continuously over the last 10-15 years have invested in the Arctic and in Arctic military capabilities. Some of this is intended for the Arctic itself for the Northern sea route to be able to be present as ice is melting as economic activity increases. Some of this has very little to do with the Arctic. It has to do with the Northern Fleet and Russia's strategic positioning globally, or at least on the Northern Hemisphere with its nuclear submarines, etc, including in the northwestern part of Russia. Russia has been doing this for the last decade or more. What we've seen with the Trump administration over the last at least a year, if not year and a half, is a realization that the Arctic is important, not only in terms of Alaska for the US, but also for the larger global political game. Here you have your provocative statements from the Trump administration, and you also have actions like the US's sixth fleet, or some vessels from the sixth fleet with the Royal Navy, sailing in the Bering Sea for so-called maritime security operations far away from the US part of the Arctic, very close to the Norwegian and Russian part of the Arctic, to highlight US and UK capabilities in that strategic space. In general, you see more and more US engagement in the North East Atlantic, the Bering Sea, the part of the Arctic that has the highest, if not conflict potential than at least the highest tension in terms of this is where the Northern Fleet is located, right where Russia is investing. This is where Norway is located with its armed forces and thereby also NATO. The point just being that you've seen the increased attention given to the Arctic from the Trump administration, but also concerns China, but China is not really active in the Arctic, at least not militarily. So here you really have a good example of the rhetoric or the discourse concerning the Arctic, statements from the Trump administration saying that China is not a near-Arctic state, such a thing doesn't exist, and that China's engagement in the Arctic risks creating a new South China Sea, which is not very accurate. It highlights this geostrategic competition between the US and China that now also has an Arctic component. I don't think there's any chance of immediate conflict in the Arctic, but I do think that you're seeing, if





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geopolitics in your definition, Liuba, is that potential or the immediate political struggles between countries over a geographic space, then I do think we've seen over the last couple of years that this has become more heightened or increased in the Arctic.

**Liuba:**

Thank you so much. That was a really, really interesting comment on that, but you've been talking a lot about the state and the state perspective, and talking about states as the agents behind the whole corporation. How powerful are the states actually? Are they more powerful than the regional actors, more significant in that case? When we talk about Arctic geopolitics? What do you think?

**Andreas:**

It depends on what topic you're talking about, and I think it depends also on which part of the Arctic you're looking at. If you say that geopolitics inherently is something that goes on between states, it's international politics, concerning the Arctic between states, then naturally states are the primary actors whether you invest in military capabilities in the Arctic or not. Again, referring to the Trump document released yesterday concerning the new cutters to the US Coast Guard. These are state actions that have a consequence for the relationships, bilateral and multilateral in the Arctic. They definitely are the primary actors. You could argue that geopolitics comprises of much more than just state actions, and much more than just security. Economic relations, trade, cross border relations also play into this. In some ways, influence of geopolitical notions might also change the way states themselves behave. Norway loves to talk about the collaboration with Russia in the Barents region concerning cultural, education or economic cooperation. That might have a calming effect or might have a conciliatory effect between these two countries bilaterally, also in the security domain and in the wider sense of geopolitics. If you look at regional relations between Norway and Russia, the town of Kirkenes plays an important role, or the municipality of Sør-Varanger, which Kirkenes is in, the county of Troms og Finnmark, or Norland, the two Arctic counties in Norway, hugely important in that sense. What takes place on Svalbard where Russia is quite present in Barentsburg, interactions there might influence bilateral relations between the two countries, maybe also influence NATO-Russia relations. It depends a bit on your perspective, if you see it as a bottom up or that states are just reacting to other states actions. I like your point that you have to widen a bit the so-called geopolitical scope as well in the Arctic.

**Romain:**

In that sense, do you have ideas? How can we go beyond the purely state centric view? I think you've hinted to local cooperation, but are there any ideas to go beyond this state centrism, if you will?



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**Andreas:**

We could argue whether you need to, but in the research that I've done and my focus is on the state so perhaps I'm a bit biased. I don't think you're going to be able to disband the state as the primary actor in Arctic security relations anytime soon. I don't think that's possible.

Going to your question that if you see this as not necessarily either-or, but you see it as the state, or what influences state policies more than just the state comprises of many different interests, and they can be influenced in many different ways. I think having a wider debate on Arctic security relations on how to decrease the tension that we've seen in the Arctic over the last couple of years. Tension in terms of exercises taking place, but also statements, rhetoric coming from the various Arctic countries: Russia, Norway, the US included. How do we kind of diffuse some of that tension? How can we perhaps create a code of conduct or better rules on how to go about doing things that has a security component in the Arctic? Having a wider debate on these issues, including academics, regional actors, and getting these actors in the same room as politicians, members of parliament, foreign ministers, I think is crucial. I am quite fed up to be honest with all these high-level Arctic meetings between foreign ministers or a couple of ministers or without major state leaders coming together, and making broad statements about the Arctic. You don't really engage in a wider Arctic debate come from a minister or government point of view. The Arctic environment is small. The actors who set the agenda are few and far between, even researchers or companies have quite a large effect on the way we talk about the Arctic. Therefore, having a broad debate, conferences—there's a lot of Arctic conferences already—but perhaps focusing them a bit more. Your states themselves, their foreign ministers going out and requesting more or opening up for more dialogue on how to reduce tension, how to reduce the conflict potential. I think it's worthwhile in the Arctic environment that we have right now.

**Romain:**

Switching gear a little here: we can see from your research to some extent you explore these ideas of the Arctic as an arena for political competition and rivalry. You contrast them with the view of the Arctic as a region of harmony and shared interest, which I think it's particularly quite interesting. You also worked on the notion of conflict between states and the maritime space. If I can narrow this even a bit further, what I see is that you've worked on the institutionalization of the expansion of territory into the maritime space and the interplay between the sovereign rise to resources in the water columns on seabed, management of these resources, etc. and the broader conflict-cooperation paradigm. Could you perhaps expand a little bit more on this?





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**Andreas:**

Yes, it's a complex topic. My argument, to summarize it in one sentence, is just that maritime space is becoming more important for states around the world, maybe not a revolutionary argument. Still, if you accept this premise, and not only in the Arctic, this goes for states in the Caribbean or in the Pacific as well, the resources in the water columns or the resources at sea fisheries, or the resources at the seabed, crab or oil and gas minerals, are becoming more important for states. This is linked to an awareness of climate change and awareness of the need to preserve or protect the ocean is thrown into this mix, making maritime space more important for states. The consequence of this is that states might be willing to go further to protect their rights at sea. The rights that states have at sea today aren't that old. They developed after the Second World War with the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, and these developments. I really think that if you look across the world, if you look across South China Sea, East China Sea, the Caribbean or the Arctic, states care a lot, and maybe even more now about where to delineate the rights, how to manage trans boundary fish docks. The point being that with this increased interest in what happens at sea, the conflict potential also rises. Not meaning that you will have outright conflict immediately, but that states and actors are willing to go a bit further to protect what they deem as theirs. Even in the Brexit campaign, we saw the fisheries played a large part of the political rhetoric take back our waters, even though the fishery sector industry in the UK is tiny compared to the rest of the economy.

In the case of Norway and the EU, we've seen that snow crab suddenly had become an issue that really wasn't on the agenda before. These two actors haven't managed to solve this. We see that the fishery protection zone around Svalbard is increasingly on the agenda of Norway-Russia bilateral relations, concerning who has what rights to do what at sea, who has rights to potential resources in that domain. You have other issues in the Arctic, whether it's a Northwest Passage that time and time again, arises on the agenda, perhaps not the biggest conflict potential there. Still, it's an issue concerning who has what rights in the maritime domain, continental shelf extensions, claims that have been submitted by Denmark, Russia and Canada might not lead to outright conflict. It's a diplomatic dispute, probably over who has what rights and where do you delineate who owns the North Pole. The point being that there are areas in the Arctic, around the world, when you look at the maritime domain, where there's dispute potential. That's not the same as saying that you will have outright conflict in the Arctic, that you will have war in the Arctic between the countries. You also referred to, Romain, the resource argument: that states will claim territory or resources. It doesn't really make sense in the Arctic. We, as scientists or academics, have a continuous job to try to describe current trends and explain what's happening in a simple manner to media, because I don't think media or politicians, for that matter, will stop caring about the Arctic. It's a fascinating part of the world. Just over the last decade we've seen an explosion in the interest of Arctic studies, of Arctic geopolitics, and it's a continuous job to keep unpacking the complexities of



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what is happening in the Arctic and the nuances of it. I really don't believe in these one-liners: "The Arctic is everything is fine." "The Arctic is just a zone of cooperation" or "the Arctic is the arena for future or immediate conflict of geopolitics." There's so much nuance in the Arctic, and between the different Arctic regions and countries that we need to keep researching it.

**Romain:**

Thanks to go a bit further on this—If we take everything you've just talked about— this very nuanced view, and your research as a whole: How do you think we can connect them to what's happening in either maritime spaces, elsewhere in the world and not only in the Arctic? Can Arctic management of maritime spaces serve as an example or role model for the rest of the world? Are there are any lessons that can be learned from Arctic governance or the Arctic way of managing the corporation-conflict dynamics?

**Andreas:**

That's an interesting question. In some ways, that's the way Arctic studies are evolving; from trying to describe what's happening in the Arctic, to trying to see what can Arctic experiences or cases, or lessons as you call them, hold in relevance for the rest of the world. There's something to be said for imposing regional lessons in one part of the world on to the other that are rather complex and have different issues. Yes, there are some things in the Arctic that function rather well. You mentioned transboundary resources, think fisheries, fishery management in the Arctic has, more or less functioned satisfactory. Perhaps not in just south of the Arctic Circle with the mackerel dispute between Norway, the EU and Iceland, and Faroe Islands, but more generally with the way that the Arctic states have managed to deal with kind of large fish stocks that are also now increasingly changing their patterns. Moving further north, you see the Russia and Norway collaboration on fisheries that have lasted for decades, you see the new agreement that was reasonably signed on a few years ago on the moratorium or preventing unregulated and illegal fisheries in the Arctic Ocean itself. You see these proactive measures taken to deal with issues before they really arise, and to try to base it on science. If that's the lesson, that might be relevant in other parts of the world. The same can be said for actually delineating maritime space. If you look around the Arctic, almost all maritime boundaries have been agreed on. The only maritime boundary that has not reached even a tentative agreement is the Beaufort Sea boundary between Canada and the US.

If you compare that to the rest of the world, where actually across the world, more or less, half of all maritime boundaries are still in dispute, maybe there's lessons there as well: that maritime boundaries might not be what states immediately are concerned with settling or agreeing in the Mediterranean or in the South Pacific or Caribbean. There might be a value to agreeing on the boundary before tension arises over who has the rights to water resources or before suddenly fish stocks or things change that heighten the relevance of that same boundary. That's the question right now. How can the Arctic serve



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us as a relevant example for other parts of the world? How can other parts of the world have relevant lessons for how to deal with the Arctic, which is a region that is rapidly changing?

**Liuba:**

Speaking about the growing role and place of the ocean, in the maritime space, in driving and altering the relationships between different actors, including states, in your personal, academic perspective, and taking this relationship through a global lens: do you actually think that there is an opportunity for an alternative approach to these relationships? For example the case of Bolivia, which implemented recently the rights of the Mother Earth on state level, or talking about the rights of the ocean, or the rise of the fish, saying instead of the rights of states to allow corporations to access certain resources? Do you think it's actually something that is possible in the Arctic?

**Andreas:**

That's a provocative question. You're obviously a much more critical thinker than I am. I tend to operate within the realms of the current two ways of thinking. But I like your point through your question, because it does raise this notion of who has what rights beyond states. If we just take an historic view or approach to it— when the Law of the Sea was being developed, it wasn't a given that all coastal states would acquire the rights that they have today when it comes to territorial seas, the exclusive economic zone and the rights; sovereign rights that states have acquired there and on the seabed. There was an alternative view that the ocean should be governed for mankind, or with a regional approach that when you have countries around an ocean or a sea together, they should jointly manage that domain. These ideas didn't win out in the end, perhaps because the states saw it as more beneficiary to acquire sovereign rights.

In an Arctic approach, you could argue that seeing the whole Arctic Ocean as a shared, joint space might solve some problems in the future. Preventing illegal fisheries in the Arctic Ocean is one way of thinking along these lines, but states are the primary focus. In the North American context, more than the European-Russian, the notion of Indigenous rights and how Indigenous groups have utilized the ice that is now melting and the waterways in the Arctic. It's not really a contrast to state's rights but it's another layer or dimension to it. Going to the realm of geography – there are ways that we are describing what's happening in the Arctic, at sea, that clashes with ideas of exploitation. There's different ways of conceiving of the ocean, as a space, as a value to society is also what your question is getting at. The environmental concerns. Whether it's for the individual or for the ocean as its own object. In some instances, exploitative resource concerns of states or companies. These different notions are increasing and clashing. Phil Steinberg wrote about this two decades ago, and I don't think it even lasts today in the Arctic. We'll see, it's a slow-moving, long process.



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**Romain:**

To bounce back on that, it also depends on what kind of Arctic we see. We've talked about the Arctic as a socially constructed place for cooperation. It all depends on what view we have of the Arctic as a whole and sustainability in the Arctic, again using the right buzzwords. How we can make the Arctic a place where can live in, if I can conclude with that?

**Andreas:**

I don't disagree at all with that. Going back to the earlier discussion on states, I think it's important to deal with the realities of what's happening in the Arctic region. For good or bad, states are the primary actors, but they are also dealing with these issues as they are arising in terms of fisheries and ocean management. To the whole discussion we have on the BBNJ negotiations, or Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction negotiations under the UN, or the marine protected area debates we have not only on the Arctic and also the Antarctic, these topics will not become less relevant in the years to come.

**Romain:**

Thank you so, so much for your time, Andreas.

**Liuba:**

Thank you so much.

**Romain:**

Thanks for listening to our conversation with Andreas Østhagen. If you've made it that far into the podcast, it means you are really into Arctic research and what's happening in the region. If you're looking for more Arctic content and want to keep up to date with what's happening in the region, you can always subscribe to our weekly newsletter, The Arctic This Week, or download our news app. It's totally free, and you get a weekly rundown of the latest news and analysis on Arctic security, environment, politics, and culture directly to your inbox or smartphone at the beginning of each week. We've shared over 14,000 stories with readers from 90 countries. Subscribe to the newsletter or download the app now to make it a part of your weekly routine.