

Justice in Scale and Distribution in the Arctic

Scale and distribution are crucial dimensions of justice

This is particularly the case with the Arctic, a region with a tangled, colonial past and a present of widespread extractivist economic activity, often seen as having its roots in this past. Scale is about how individual and local concerns are valorized in the larger scheme of regional and national planning and development – and vice versa. The distribution of justice concerns who reaps or should reap the benefits of justice claims and who actually bears or should bear the burden. How to promote forms of justice capable of navigating this ethical complexity in economic processes is the key concern in new work by JUSTNORTH.

Case Studies 7-12

CS7

Fisheries: Changing coastal communities, fisheries governance and equity issues in Iceland

Researchers: Niels Einarsson, Stefansson Arctic Institute
Catherine Chambers, Stefansson Arctic Institute

CS8

Tourism: Communities, Globalisation and Marine Tourism in Northern Iceland

Researchers: Niels Einarsson, Stefansson Arctic Institute
Edward Huijbens, Wageningen University
Edward Ariza, Universidad Autonoma Barcelona
Silvia Gomez, Universidad Autonoma Barcelona

CS9

Mining: Socio-economic Development, Self-determination and Global Change Impacts in Greenland

Researchers: Joan Nymand Larsen, Stefansson Arctic Institute
Jon Ingimundarson, Stefansson Arctic Institute

CS10

Research Stations: Field Research Stations, Sustainable Development, and Knowledge production in the North

Researchers: Hele Kiimann, Uppsala University
Susan Millar, Uppsala University

CS11

SAR: Northern Seas, Global Connections: Shipping, Search & Rescues and Small Communities in Canada & Norway, Sustainable Development, and Knowledge production in the North

Researchers: Hannes Hansen-Magnusson Cardiff University
Corine wood-Donnelly, Nord University

CS12

Cruise Tourism: Polar Tourism, Cruise Ships and Northern Communities: Competing Interests and Resource Use

Researchers: Hannes Hansen-Magnusson Cardiff University
Corine wood-Donnelly, Nord University

In six empirical case studies, JUSTNORTH researchers have explored the relationship between economic development and ecosystem services, especially cultural ecosystem services. Covering a number of cross-cutting issues, such as the rural and urban divide, gendered barriers to market entry, the role of local practices in the development of the knowledge economy, and the problems posed by economic path dependence, the case studies deal with fisheries governance and equity in coastal communities in Iceland, field research stations, polar tourism and cruise ships as well as search and rescue infrastructure in Canada and Norway. Across the cases, our research has identified the ethics and value systems underpinning these economic activities. The assumption we have worked from is that this knowledge is crucial for a better understanding of justice scaling and fair distribution



The case studies demonstrate a complex mixture of ideas of justice, which are typically contingent on parameters such as country of origin, gender, ethnicity, class and so on. Importantly, the wounds of the past remain a living presence in Arctic communities even today. When planning new economic activities, it is imperative that these are acknowledged. Indeed, as several case studies show, present-day local communities still suffer multiple forms of inequality, discrimination and injustice. In the Icelandic fisheries management system, for instance, big business reinforces unequal power distribution in decision-making and unequal allocation of fisheries access rights. In the case of field research stations, indigenous ways of knowing tends to be marginalized in favor of Western science, typically compounded by structural constraints.

The variety of perspectives and ethical motivations identified across the key stakeholder groups underscores that finding common ground poses a genuine challenge. Greater fairness in economic development in the Arctic can only materialize if the multiple forms of ethics and community interests are properly negotiated, with a view to reconciliation, premised on ideas of mutual aid and a progressive sense of place. One of the most salient findings from the case studies is that there is a need to better valorize local and traditional knowledge and to make serious effort to include it in decision-making.

This has important implications for governance structures. In the Arctic, the national government is the central power but is typically far removed from the everyday concerns of local communities. There is thus a need to better accommodate multiple scales of governance and community interests. The JUSTNORTH research suggests a number of legal and regulatory solutions that could aid that work. For instance, to further a greater inclusion of local communities, the EU Maritime Spatial Planning policy is in fact a potent, if underused tool. It provides a framework for how different uses of the marine space, with their underlying divergent priorities and ethical concerns, can be overcome in a manner that may integrate economic, environmental and social layers of economic development.

