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Managing marine resources under conflict - experiences from the Barents Sea

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Managing marine resources under conflict

- the fishery complexes in the NE Atlantic and their international management regimes
- Joint Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Commission
 - political context and developments in cooperation
 - interest constellations and negotiation mechanisms
 - national objectives and international cooperation



The large multilateral fishery complexes in the NE Atlantic

- the Barents Sea:
 - the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission
- the Norwegian Sea:
 - coastal states negotiations between Norway, the EU, the UK, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Russia
- the North Sea:
 - the EU-Norway-UK agreement



Barents Sea fisheries

- the world's largest cod stock
- Norwegian–Russian management since 1975
- Joint Fisheries Commission sets total allowable catches (TACs)
- most important fish stocks split 50/50



Political context and main developments

- 1970s/1980s: Cold War
 - mainly TAC setting and quota exchange
- 1990s: Russian 'openness' and chaos
 - harmonization and joint introduction of regulations, establishment of enforcement cooperation
- 2000s: increased East–West tension
 - BUT: major achievements like harvest control rules and harmonization of minimum mesh and fish sizes
- 2014: Crimea, 2022: Ukraine
 - cooperation continues



Why?

- shared interest
- negotiation mechanisms, institutional capacity



'Negotiation mechanisms'

- long-term commitment – 50/50 sharing
- taking things in several rounds
- using different levels of negotiation
 - plenary sessions
 - sub-committees and working groups
 - the scientific level
 - enforcement/control



Interest constellations

- both states: maintain coastal state interests ('ownership to the resource') vis-à-vis third states
- Russia: access to Norwegian waters!
- Norway: stability and order in the Svalbard zone
- consequence:
 - Norway–Russia alliance in the Barents Sea towards 'intruders' from south and west- (i.e. Norway's political allies!)
 - what now?



Sustainability

- main objectives:
 - economy
 - sustainability
 - political stability

- why successful cooperation during political conflict?
 - coincidence of the three objectives!
 - solid institutional construction!

