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**A METHODOLOGY  
FOR RESEARCH  
ON INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION ON MARINE  
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:  
APPLICATION OF THE BALTIC  
SEA PRACTICES TO THE  
NORTHERN SEAS**



*This article is dedicated to the methodology for the study of international cooperation on marine environment protection. The author suggests applying the practices of marine environment protection in the Baltic Sea to the northern seas as well as examining earlier projects for the effective implementation of interdisciplinary initiatives bringing together international law, international relations and world politics.*

**Key words:** methodology, international relations, international law, world politics, Baltic Sea region, Arctic, northern seas, marine environment protection, common security, world politics and transnational approaches.

Marine environment chosen as the subject of research in the framework of the study of formation of transnational environment of world politics in the Arctic region relates to the development of such fields of world economy as navigation, fishing, and oil and gas industry. These fields are the main components of formation of marine policy of coastal countries on the basis of the existing international legal rules.

The Arctic region as a new independent political unit consists of five state bordering the Arctic Ocean — Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, and the USA — Sweden and Finland, parts of whose land territory lie within the Arctic Circle, and Iceland, which borders the Circle. The Arctic shelves, rich in oil and gas, are covered with the waters of the Barents, White, Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, and Chukchi Seas.

The political situation in the region is usually compared to the international legal regime in the Antarctic due to similar climate conditions, but the principal difference is that the five coastal states in the Arctic are sovereign and populated. The increasing role and significance of the Arctic makes it possible to say that we are witnessing the formation of a new region on the political map of the world — the Arctic region exhibiting its own regional policy. The process of regional formation consists of two components: firstly, the Arctic is a region of the global ecosystem balance; secondly, the Arctic is a region of energy resource reserves.

These two factors are the results of strategic political actions of the developed countries, which formulated Agenda 21. Not unlike environmental awareness, the new region is based on the best examples of international practice.

Marine environment as an integral part of nature protection discussions is a topical issue of globalisation and political processes within interna-

tional relations and world politics. Moreover, the formation of legal framework for environmental (including marine environment) protection at the regional level has its own history within international relations. Important environmental agreements have been signed under the aegis of the UN and European communities. European regional agreements on marine environment protection make it possible for researchers to address their legislative experience, as well as the practice of international cooperation on the field and the possibilities of their application. In this context, the Baltic region can become a model of regional marine environment protection for the northern seas.

The reasons for that are as follows.

Firstly, in the late 1980s, international cooperation in the north commenced on the initiative of the USSR. The collaboration of northern states in environmental protection was proclaimed the priority area of cooperation. Back then, the Soviet Union suggested applying the practice of joint measures aimed at marine environment protection in the Baltic area implemented by the commission comprised of the seven coastal states to the whole northern ocean and sea area. It concerned international cooperation on marine environment and living resource protection in the Baltic area by the Baltic countries — Denmark, Finland, the GDR, the FRG, the People's Republic of Poland, Sweden and the USSR — the states that adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area in 1974. The USSR also proposed the development of a joint integrated plan for environmental protection, through which the states of Northern Europe could set an example for other countries having agreed on the establishment of a system of environmental and radiation safety monitoring in the region [1, p. 1—3].

Secondly, a good example of the application of Baltic practices in the northern seas is the experimental passage of the shortest way from Europe to Asia by the giant *Baltica* tanker, whose crew was experienced in crossing the Baltic Sea. A 100 000-ton tanker with 70 000 tons of gas condensate on board navigated the Northern sea route in 2010. The project was implemented by three companies — Rosatomflot, responsible for icebreakers, Sevkomflot, the owner of the tanker, and Novotek, the cargo owner. The tanker was accompanied by two icebreakers — *the Rossiya* and *the Taimyr* [4].

Thirdly, Russia proposes the establishment of a global or trans-European system of emergency response through combining the efforts aimed at the protection of marine environment from oil spills and sharing the best practices in the field of oil spill prevention and response [3]. These three examples illustrate the firm intent of the stakeholders to support collective protection of marine environment of the Baltic and northern seas.

The current condition of research on the Arctic region and its development, and the formation of arctic policy require a comprehensive study of earlier programmes and projects in the field of marine environment protection. As the system of regional agreements of marine environment protection suggests,

the most effective mechanism of convention implementation are found in the Mediterranean, Black, and North Seas, the North-East Atlantic, etc.

However, on the one hand, the Baltic Sea region is chosen as one of the examples of study into the methods and approaches to international cooperation on the protection of marine environment not only as a region situated close to the Russian Arctic, but also as a possible hub within the Arctic transport system.

On the other hand, the existing American approach to the protection of marine environment in the Arctic is another model for the development of Russian arctic policy. The Russian Arctic located between the European North and North America should become the region of a balanced choice of policy for Russia. Thus, new knowledge on seas and oceans and their protection are a befitting area of joint activities for Russian and the Baltic countries from the perspective of collective security.

The advantage of approach developed by Russia and her Baltic neighbours above that of North America lies in the fact that the former have experience in joint activities for the protection of marine environment in the Baltic Sea region.

For further examination of this issue, it is important to formulate the following questions: is it possible to use the practices of international cooperation on the protection of marine environment in the Baltic Sea area in the northern seas? Why is it necessary? What contribution will the Baltic practices make to the formation of marine environment protection policy in the Arctic region? How will the interests of the Baltic countries, the European community, and Russian interact within this initiative?

The methodology for research on international cooperation on the marine environment protection can be placed in the context of:

- concept base manifesting the global nature of international cooperation on marine environment protection;
- identification of individual elements of international cooperation on marine environment protection and their features;
- identification of the methods, organisational form and means of international cooperation on marine environment protection.

### **The conceptual component**

The conceptual part of the study into international cooperation on marine environment protection is given in Table 1, where the common criteria for basic knowledge are represented by a number of theoretical frameworks such as the noosphere and self-organisation theory, research on the issues of intergovernmental cooperation in environment protection, the political components of the regime theory development, the structural and institutional approaches to regionalisation, the spatiotemporal approach, the "ocean governance" theory, the theory of complementarity in international law, international relations, and world politics.

Table 1

**The conceptual component of research on international cooperation  
on marine environment protection**

The noosphere theory — the theory of self-organisation of material and spiritual worlds	V. I. Vernadsky, N. N. Moiseev, K. Ya. Kondratyev, V. V. Kazyutinsky, Ye. A. Mamchur
Theory of intergovernmental cooperation in the field of environmental protection	A. Hurrell, D. Held, etc.
Policy of regime theory development	P. M. Haas, R. O. Keohane, M. A. Levy, J. S. Nye.
Spatiotemporal approach	N. A. Kosolapov
Ocean governance theory	V. D. Pisarev
Theory of complementarity in international law, international relations and world politics	A-M. Slaughter, A. S. Tulumello, S. Wood, A. N. Talalayev, V. A. Kartashkin, R. A. Kalamkarian, A. S. Lantsov
Structural and institutional approach regime theory	O. R. Young, M. Tennberg, N. Petersen

At the conceptual level, the international law of the world community combined "law as will" and "Law as reason" [6, p. 5] providing the legal framework for the progressive motion of human civilisation [2, p.5]. The notions of "humanity" and "world community" are taking on a new meaning in the interdependent world manifesting themselves in the context of globalisation and civilisation concepts. Many theoretical approaches, which draw much attention in the changing world, are emerging today. On the one hand, the determine world processes, where states and regions find their place and role, on the other hand, states and regions give rise to new theories and knowledge in the framework of the new world order. In this connection, Russian and the states of the Baltic Sea might play the leading role in international cooperation on marine protection.

**The features of elements of international cooperation  
on marine environment protection**

At the present state, a remarkable feature of identifying the key elements of international cooperation on marine environment protection is the diversity of stakeholders. From the perspective of national and regional security, intergovernmental relations are divided into naval, border and customs, and environmental protection relations of the coastal states aimed at prevention and response to emergencies at sea, relations within research activity, etc.

It is important to analyse the most successful legal frameworks for multi-lateral and bilateral relations, as well as previous projects and projects, work group reports, mass media coverage, etc.

Today, the activity aimed to the establishment of a comprehensive regime of environmental protection is intensifying in the Arctic. The process of decision-making involved not only the countries but also international organisations and indigenous peoples, i. e. transnational actors. The current international legal regulation of environmental protection in the Arctic is carried out on the basis of the following international agreements: the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships of 1973, the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation of 1990, etc. There are also regional agreements between arctic states and a numerous bilateral agreements. However, despite the significant number of documents of the kind, one cannot say that a consensus on the arctic regime has been achieved.

Maybe the reason is that international agreements sometimes lack support of large transnational corporations or private companies. In this connection, it is befitting to analyse this problem from the perspective of transnational approach, i. e. the correlation of interests of states and transnational corporations trying to come to an understanding in the framework of international organisations. Recently, the latter have been playing the role of mediators in terms of international cooperation issues; so far, their contribution has been mostly limited to project activity, the study into best practices in the field, and devising formulae for the issues of joint marine environment management. Table 2 presents a number of mechanisms and initiatives at four levels — the global, regional, sub-regional and local (coastal) ones.

Table 2

**The levels of analysis of initiatives within international cooperation on marine environment protection**

Region	Intergovernmental/Transnational
<b>Global</b>	
	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea Supervision mechanisms: International court — the primary body of the UN Security Council — the political body of the UN
<b>Regional</b>	
Euro-atlantic area	The objective is to apply the practice of joint measures aimed at marine environment protection in the Baltic Sea area implemented by the commission of the seven coastal states to the whole northern ocean and sea area [1] and to create a trans-European system of emergency response [3].
North-east	The South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC); the UN project for coordination of marine research on non-living resources of the Pacific Ocean; the committee of regional organisations of the Pacific regional strategy

Region	Intergovernmental/Transnational
<b>Sub-regional</b>	
The Baltic Sea region	The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki 1992, replaced the convention of the same name adopted in 1974, included seven states — the USSR, the People's Republic of Poland, the GDR, the FRG, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland). Issues: the borders of territorial sea, the regime of Baltic straits.
The Arctic region	Rovaniemi Declaration, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPSP (1991, eight states — Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Russia, the USA, Sweden, Finland). Issues: the expansion of external continental shelf border beyond the 200 mile zone; the north-east sea passage regime
<b>Local (coastal)</b>	
Baltic	The HELCOM action plan (nine countries — Poland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia). The Baltic Sea strategy
Arctic	The Surface Heat Budget of the Arctic Ocean Project (SHEBA), 1970 — the USA, Canada, Japan The first international conference on northern environment held in 1974 (Hokkaido, Japan) brought together representatives of local authorities from Canada, the USA and the Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish capitals.

### **The methods, forms and organisation features of research on international cooperation on marine environment protection**

The methods, forms and organisation features of research on international cooperation on marine environment protection are of interdisciplinary character, which is indicated by a number of factors. I will draw only two examples relating to international political science. So, the 7<sup>th</sup> International congress on the history of oceanography held in Kaliningrad (Russia) on the premises of the Museum of the World Ocean in September 2003 focused on the "International cooperation in the World Ocean studies". The conference participants emphasised that "the historical approach to research on international cooperation is not sufficient. There is a need for a new approach, which would be called *world politics approach* within the young research field of world politics" [5].

Another alternative is the transnational approach to research on marine environment and coastal zones developed by the author on the basis of N. Petersen's [7] forecast. Table 3 presents the transnational actors — five arctic states, coastal countries, countries of the flag, international organizations, and private companies according to the principal fields of international cooperation — navigation, fishing, and oil and gas industry.

Table 3

## Arctic transnational environment

Indicator	A5	Country of the flag	IMO	WMO	AC	EU	Private companies	Insurance companies	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission	Coastal countries
<b>Navigation</b>										
Transportation	+	+	+					+		+
Vessel counting system	+									+
Issue of vessel certificates			+				+	+		+
Research and prevention of emergencies	+									+
Preparedness for emergencies	+									+
Meteorological services and ice conditions				+			+			+
Ice breaking capacities	+							+		+
<b>Fishing</b>										
Total Allowable Catch	+									
Conservation	States						+		+	+
<b>Oil and gas</b>										
Current legal systems	+									
	States							+		
Pollution restrictions (UNCLOS)	+				+					+

Each approach has its own methods, forms and research features. A comparative analysis of international cooperation on marine environment in the Baltic region and the newly forming Arctic region is suggested as a research method. At the same time, the comparison of the Soviet period of cooperation between the seven Baltic countries and today's cooperation between nine countries is of interest from the perspective of international legislative, institutional and functional components. The identification of positive and negative aspects of the activity will help build a model of marine environment protection for the northern seas with the elements of adaptation of corresponding mechanisms.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that, on 10 December, 2012, it will be 30 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Law of the Sea at the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN conference. The "marine constitution", as the document is frequently called, is not only yet efficient, but has all the potential for improvement.

Maybe, the greatest achievement of specialists in international law of the sea will be the incorporation of other fields of knowledge for the effective implementation of the Convention articles. Hopefully, the proposed method-



ology for research on international cooperation in the area of environmental protection with the help of transnational approach of the world politics science will arouse interest among scholars and contribute to the accumulation of new knowledge and skills.

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