

Module 1: Comparative Policy Analysis and the Circumpolar North

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Overview

This module provides an overview of *comparative policy analysis* in the context of the circumpolar North. Concepts relating to the *policy process* and how it can be examined are discussed, the interaction of *domestic* and *international processes* and *actors* are outlined, and an overview of *specific policy areas* pertaining to the North are also provided. After successfully completing this module, students should be able to understand and perform basic *policy analysis* while applying the comparative method.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of policy making for residents of northern regions.
2. Recognize the interaction between domestic and international actors and processes in policy making that affect northern regions.
3. Outline the basic framework (structures, processes and actors) in policy analysis.
4. Apply the comparative method in policy analysis.

Required Readings (including web sites)

The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/UD/Vedlegg/strategien.pdf>

Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy.

http://www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng

Key Terms and Concepts

- Comparative methods
- Governance
- Policy analysis
- Policy development
- Public policy
- Comparative policy analysis

Learning Material

1.1 Importance of Policy

Although it may not be apparent, policy creation and implementation is one of the most direct ways in which governments and public and private institutions can affect our lives. Policy affects many aspects of everyday living, including healthcare, education, the cost of food, housing and infrastructure (e.g. roads, water treatment and utilities).

Policy also affects us on many different levels and at different times. For example, policy decisions regarding healthcare can impact us at any age, but in different ways. On a personal level, policies regarding education, housing and employment policy can affect us daily. Policy can also impact social outcomes, infrastructure, and economic and social development at the community level. Intergovernmental relations at the domestic level and international relations between national governments can impact circumpolar policy on issues such as boundary disputes, resource extraction, state sovereignty, and recognition of Indigenous people's rights and traditional lands.

Learning Activity 1

Brainstorm examples of policy areas that affect your everyday life and discuss how they impact you. Which policies are adopted at the local, regional, national and international level?

Case Study: Environmental Policy

Environmental issues are discussed and policy decisions are made regarding environmental protection at all levels of government from international to national, regional (province/territory/state/oblast) and local or municipal levels. Individuals and organizations (lobby groups) express concerns and ideas to elected officials through voting, participation in forums such as the Arctic Council and through the media. Since the boundaries of environmental policy are difficult to define, local, regional and national governments ideally work together in the creation of environmental policy.

While it has been very difficult to establish legally binding agreements on environmental protection at the circumpolar level, the Arctic Council has been successful at spearheading and supporting a number of significant reports and guidelines on environmental issues, including the Arctic Council Impact Assessment (2004), the Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines (2009) and the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment. These reports have been crucial to informing Arctic states about environmental conditions and issues in the Arctic; however, environmental policy is still decided upon and implemented almost wholly at the national level.

For further information:

Arctic Council <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>

Arctic Council Impact Assessment 2004 <http://www.amap.no/arctic-climate-impact-assessment-acia>

Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines <http://www.pame.is/index.php/projects/offshore-oil-and-gas>

Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment

http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/detect/documents/AMSA_2009_Report_2nd_print.pdf

A vital aspect of developing and implementing effective policy is *policy analysis* or the evaluation of the goals, instruments and outcomes of a certain policy. In **comparative policy analysis**, a particular policy area or set of policies can be evaluated across time and distance (e.g. particular regions).

Researchers and policy makers use comparative policy analysis as a means of *evaluating policy* and isolating key issues, challenges or solutions, which allow for better understanding of particular policy issues and provide insight into possible policy solutions. In the circumpolar North there are a number of policy areas in which comparative policy analysis is utilized, such as health and health outcomes. Circumpolar governing bodies, *nation-states* and regional entities are constantly in the process of examining health policy, at various levels, in an attempt to improve health services and outcomes for their citizens.

After completing this module, you will have an understanding of the policy process, how policy making affects northern regions, policy areas upon which this course will focus and comparative policy analysis.

1.2 Interaction Between Policy Makers

Various stakeholders participate in and have an effect on the *policy making process*. In the North these stakeholders can include:

- Government (e.g. various levels of domestic and international)
- Non-government actors (e.g. Transnational Corporations, Multinational Corporations)
- Non-profit organizations (e.g. those representing Indigenous peoples of the North)
- Lobby groups representing industry, environmental groups, etc.
- International organizations such as the Arctic Council
- Individuals within communities and regions

When policy decisions are being made, various actors play roles in the policy process that begins with the problem definition and ends with policy evaluation (fig. 1). Participation in the policy process will vary at the different stages for each stakeholder group.

There are five main components to the **policy process**. First, the policy problem is identified in what is commonly referred to as a *problem definition*. In the second and third stages of the policy process, known as *policy design*, a formal approach for addressing the policy problem including setting policy goals and identifying policy instruments is established. During *policy implementation*, the fourth stage, the newly created policy is implemented using identified instruments. Lastly the policy is evaluated for *effectiveness* (sometimes using a cost-benefit analysis) and *efficiency* in the fifth and final stage of the policy cycle.

1.3 Policy Analysis: A Basic Framework

This course focuses on specific policy areas and governance systems affecting the circumpolar North. An overview of the course modules and the governance or policy areas they address allow us to better understand the context for comparative policy analysis.

Module Two of this course discusses three areas as they relate to policy making among the Arctic states: **citizenship** including development of citizenship rights, laws, constitutions and democracy; **institutions** including governance institutions (e.g. international, national and regional), relevant to policy making; and **participation in policy making** through organizations such as civil society, political parties and elections.

In *Module Three* concepts of **governance** and **multilevel governance**, including types and categories of each, are outlined. Different types of *Indigenous self-determination* in the

circumpolar North and their relationship to the external multilevel governance structures in which they exist are discussed.

The nature and role of **international law** and its impact on domestic policies is outlined in *Module Four*. **Sovereignty** and various international ownership systems in the Arctic are explored. An overview of the *Law of the Sea* and its significance in Arctic waters; international environmental and trade laws; and international law for Arctic Indigenous peoples is also provided.

Module Five discusses the development and main forms of policies regarding **Indigenous people's rights**. This module also explores different forms of Indigenous self-government in the circumpolar North, and discusses common traits and differences of Indigenous policies.

Module Six provides an overview of the main types of **social policy** models that are utilized in the circumpolar North. The interconnectedness of social policy and other policies in the circumpolar North is also discussed. Social policies and political ideologies in the circumpolar North are examined. Included in *Module Seven* is an outline of welfare and equalization policy in the circumpolar North and how they relate.

In *Module Seven* *circumpolar cooperation* is addressed, including state sovereignty and border disputes in the circumpolar region; northern policies, strategies and agendas of the Arctic states; forms of Indigenous circumpolar cooperation; the Arctic Council; and the significance of the Arctic and circumpolar cooperation in the context of world politics.

The development of *gender policy* and political rights in the circumpolar North are outlined in *Module Eight*. Some explanations for gender inequality in economic and social life and the implications of these inequalities for sustainable development in the North are discussed. Also included in this module is a discussion about educational opportunities and impacts on gender equality, as well as gender roles and development in Indigenous communities. Finally, different approaches to gender policy and practice in the circumpolar North are outlined in module eight.

Module Nine outlines **security** and challenges with security in the circumpolar North. Specific themes of security are addressed, including environmental security, human security, traditional security and energy security by and for Arctic states.

Environment and resource policy in the circumpolar North are discussed in *Module Ten*. The environmental impacts of globalization and resource exploitation, and outcomes for traditional stakeholders and communities are explored in this module. Management of land and resources by Indigenous peoples and the use of Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge are also outlined, including models for sustainable management and biological renewable resources.

Learning Activity 2

Divide into groups of “northern policy advisors.” Using the policy cycle, devise a policy on a particular issue affecting the North.

1.4 Policy Analysis and the Comparative Method

The purpose of *policy analysis* is to evaluate the effectiveness and success of a government activity also known as a **policy**. The goals, instruments and outcomes of a policy are all evaluated in policy analysis. “A policy analysis examines the impact of a public policy on the political environment in which it was or is to be implemented” (Schmidt, 2010).

Policies can include:

- customs
- rulings by courts
- regulations written by bureaucrats and
- executive orders

There are two basic formats for conducting a policy analysis. First, a policy evaluation examines traits, such as origins, goals and instruments of implementation of a current or past policy as well as its impact (actual or perceived by the public and/or government). Second, a policy recommendation proposes “a new solution to a new or existing problem” that may or may not involve an analysis of a current policy (Schmidt, 2010).

A basic understanding of the differences between *qualitative* and *quantitative* methods of research and analysis provide a foundation for understanding the comparative method. Qualitative methods treat “cases as wholes” and whole cases are compared with each other. Quantitative methods are based on analytical approaches to research. Put simply, qualitative research is based on ideas and the comparison of ideas, while quantitative research is based on a more “scientific” approach that involves measurement of variables and outcomes.

Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis (Collier, 1993).

Comparative methods have historically focused on qualitative methods. *Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (QCA) and *Multi-Value Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (MVQCA) are used to systematically compare a limited number of cases. This is because comparison of ideas and policies (qualitative) can normally only be done properly with a small number of cases (e.g. comparing Arctic foreign policies of the eight circumpolar states). Quantitative methods, focusing on outcomes, measurements and statistics, are best done when you have a large sample to compare (e.g. educational levels, life expectancies and household income across the circumpolar North).

John Stuart Mill’s (1843) method of difference and method of agreement are approaches to qualitative comparative analysis that seek to determine the cause of an event or circumstance. Suppose one is interested in determining what factors play a role in causing a specific effect under a specific set of circumstances. The method of agreement tells us to look for factors present on all occasions when that event occurs.

For example, what explains the relatively weak state of economic development across the circumpolar North? In all cases there is a large distance from markets, sparsely populated areas and a reliance on a primary or resource-based economies.

The method of difference tells us to look for some factor present on some occasion when the event occurs and absent on an otherwise similar occasion when it does not.

For example, what accounts for the relatively younger populations in Greenland, Nunavut and Labrador, but the relatively older populations in northern Scandinavia, Alaska and Yukon? Despite many similarities, a key distinguishing feature is the higher ratio of Indigenous people.

Comparative analysis among similar cases is weak when the outcome to be explained occurs across all cases. Mill’s method of agreement, shown in the example, selects outwardly *dissimilar* cases in order to discover the causal factor that is common among cases.

Example:

Design for Macro-Analytic Comparative History
(from John Stuart Mill)
Method of Agreement

| Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| a | d | g |
| b | e | h |
| c | f | i |
| x | x | x |
| y | y | y |
| x = causal variable | y = phenomenon to be explained | |

The comparative method is not without its problems. Researchers have identified a number of problems in the application QCA and MVQCA such as case selection or “how to select genuinely ‘comparable’ cases,” variable selection, how to integrate the time dimension, how to assess the “quality” of case studies, and the relevance of new comparative methods for policy analysis (Grimm and Rihoux, 2006). In other words, qualitative analysis is inherently susceptible to influence from the researcher’s own values, ideas and assumptions something which simple ‘number-crunching’ may be better placed to avoid. Regardless, qualitative analysis often provides important description and context to a study that could not otherwise be gleaned from statistical analysis.

Comparative policy analysis is the application of the comparative method in examining public problems and policies. Policies can be compared both vertically and horizontally. For example, healthcare policy can be compared at different levels of government, i.e. local, provincial and

Learning Activity 3

Conduct a comparative policy analysis using the Arctic policies of Norway, Canada and the U.S.A. (See appendix and required reading). In what ways are the policies similar or different? What variables (type of government, geography, history, political culture, demography) might explain the key differences?

across different places, for example, national healthcare policy in Canada and Sweden (horizontally).

Example:

The following table illustrates how the comparative method can be applied to policy analysis. In this example the origins and outcomes of struggle for Aboriginal self-government in Canada and Russia are compared. While holding all other factors constant, one variable, modern state-building, is identified as one of the key factors in the transformation of Aboriginal political communities in the two countries.

Canada and Russia Compared

| | <i>Colonial Canada</i> | <i>Canada</i> | <i>Tsarist Russia</i> | <i>Soviet Russia</i> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Options</i> | | | | |
| Culture | Western | Western | Eastern Slavic | Eastern Slavic |
| Economy | Capitalist | Capitalist | Feudal | State-Socialist |
| Political Regime | Democratic | Democratic | Autocratic | Authoritarian |
| <i>Causal Variable</i> | | | | |
| Form of State | Colonial | Modern | Absolutist | Modern |
| State Policy | Internal Political Autonomy | Segregation and Assimilation | Internal Political Autonomy | Segregation and Assimilation |
| Outcome | Self-Determining and Anarchical | Political Life Transformed | Self-Determining and Anarchical | Political Life Transformed |

Conclusion

This module has provided an overview of comparative policy analysis in the context of the circumpolar North. The elements of the policy process and the interaction of domestic and international processes and actors were discussed. Specific policy areas pertaining to the North and how comparative policy analysis is useful in determining the causes and/or solutions of a particular policy issue were outlined.

Study Questions

1. What are some obvious policy areas in the circumpolar North suitable for comparative analysis?
2. Which actors are most responsible for policy development in the circumpolar North? Are different categories of actors more influential in different Arctic states, e.g., Indigenous groups, local, regional or national government, environmental groups, business?
3. Identify and discuss the elements of the policy cycle and apply them to a particular example.

Glossary of Terms

(Adapted from Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis*)

Accountability: the quality of being accountable to another for one's actions; entailing an obligation to respond to questions and regularly report.

Agenda-setting: the social and political process of determining what issues to address and in what priority.

Argument Mapping: a technique to map and classify the different components of policy arguments made by stakeholders, such as arguments based on statistics, authority, values, intuition or judgment.

Cost-benefit Analysis: evaluation of a program in terms of total costs compared to total benefits expressed in monetary terms.

Cost-effectiveness Analysis: compares different program alternatives for achieving a given set of goals; it is also applied by considering a fixed budget and choosing alternatives that provide the highest rate of goal achievement.

Decentralization: devolution of responsibilities to other government jurisdictions or third parties and restructuring accountability relationships within government departments.

Governance: the process of governing or steering complex systems in cooperation with a variety of other actors.

Horizontal Issues: issues that cut across various policy areas.

Policy Analysis: the disciplined application of intellect to public problems.

Policy Capacity: the institutional ability to conduct policy analysis and implement the results effectively and efficiently.

Policy Design: the process of choosing the most appropriate instrument to deal with the policy problem as it has been defined in order to achieve a given policy goal.

Policy Development: the process of shaping policy initiatives from problem recognition to implementation and evaluation.

Policy Goals: the objectives to be achieved by a given public policy.

Policy Instruments: means chosen on how to address the problem and achieve the policy goals.

Problem Definition: indicates what the problem or issue is and some of the causal factors behind it.

Public Policy: a course of action or inaction chosen by public authority.

References

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APPENDIX

| Arctic Issue | Canada | United States of America | Norway |
|--|---|--|--|
| Arctic Sovereignty/ Boundary Disputes/ State Security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sovereignty is long-standing, well-established and based on historic title, international law, and the presence of Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples for thousands of years. • Promote a stable, rules-based Arctic region where the rights of sovereign states are respected in accordance with international law and diplomacy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet national security needs relevant to the Arctic region. • Exercise authority in accordance with lawful claims of United States sovereignty. • Have an unresolved boundary with Canada in the Beaufort Sea. • United States policy recognizes a boundary in this area based on equidistance. The United States recognizes that the boundary area may contain oil, natural gas and other resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain presence and exercise sovereignty and authority. • Presence of the armed forces, police and prosecuting authority is of great importance. |
| Arctic Cooperation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with international Arctic neighbours in areas such as search and rescue, icebreaker operations, fish and wildlife conservation, transportation, research, energy and environment. • Continue to strengthen cooperation while advancing priorities for the Arctic region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations. • Recognize the value and effectiveness of existing flora, such as the Arctic Council, the International Regulators Forum and the International Standards Organization. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cooperation with Russia. • In addition to cooperation with Arctic Council States, wishes to establish closer cooperation with other countries, including Japan, India and China. |
| Non-renewable Resource Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlock the resource potential of the North while protecting the environment. • Streamline the northern regulatory regime and remove barriers to private investment (Budget 2010). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to ensure energy development throughout the Arctic occurs in an environmentally sound manner, taking into account the interests of Indigenous and local communities as well as open and transparent market principles. • Seek to balance access to and development of energy and other natural resources with the protection of the Arctic environment by continuing to work closely with other Arctic nations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a suitable framework for further development of petroleum activities in the Barents Sea and ensure these activities boost competence in Norway in general. |
| Northern Governance and Indigenous Rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through ongoing devolution and self-government negotiations, Canada continues to work with all partners to create practical, innovative and efficient governance models in the North. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the Arctic's Indigenous communities in decisions that affect them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intend that policy plays a role in safeguarding the livelihoods, traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples in the High North. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to encourage future exploration and development by improving northern regulatory systems and investing in critical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development in the Arctic region poses particular challenges. Stakeholder input will inform key decisions as the United States | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote value creation through sustainable use of resources while maintaining structure, |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Sustainable Social and Economic Development | <p>infrastructure to attract investors and developers to the North.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure development occurs in a sustainable way and that northerners benefit directly from economic growth. | <p>seeks to promote economic and energy security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirms the importance to Arctic communities of adapting to climate change given their particular vulnerabilities. | <p>function and productivity of the area's ecosystems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to ensure that the Barents Cooperation continues to play an important role in creating meeting places and networks for people in the High North. |
| Education/ Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through scientific collaboration with organizations such as the United Nations, World Meteorological Organization, International Maritime Organization and the Arctic Council, Canada is building the baseline of knowledge on the Arctic environment and forming important partnerships around the world. • Ensure Canada remains a global leader in Arctic science, the Government of Canada committed to establish a new world-class research station in the High Arctic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance scientific monitoring and research into local, regional and global environmental issues. • Promote the sharing of Arctic research platforms with other countries in support of collaborative research that advances fundamental understanding of the Arctic region in general and potential Arctic change in particular. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have international leading centres of excellence in the fields of petroleum, maritime transport, utilization and management of marine resources, environmental protection, climate and polar research, and research on Indigenous peoples. • Intends to strengthen the knowledge infrastructure in the region. |
| Environmental Protection/Wildlife Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive approach to the protection of environmentally sensitive lands and waters in our North • Ensure conservation keeps pace with development and that development decisions are based on sound science and careful assessment. • Has enhanced pollution prevention legislation in Arctic waters and is taking steps to clean up abandoned mine sites across the North. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the Arctic environment and conserve its biological resources. • In cooperation with other nations, respond effectively to increased pollutants and other environmental challenges. • Support the application of the general principles of international fisheries management outlined in the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS (1982). • Endorse protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Arctic from destructive fishing practices and seek to ensure an adequate enforcement presence to safeguard Arctic living marine resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intend to be the best steward of the environment and natural resources in the High North • Give priority to dialogue on climate change with other member States and actively promote the implementation of the ACIA recommendations. • Set strict environmental standards for all activities in the High North and establish a framework to protect particularly valuable and vulnerable areas against negative impacts. |

Supplementary Readings (including web sites)

National Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-66/HSPD-25): Arctic Region Policy (United States of America).
<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.htm>

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Akureyri: Stefansson Institute.
<http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:788965/FULLTEXT03.pdf>