

MARE Conference People & the Sea XI

Date: 28 June to 2 July 2021

Location: Online/Virtual

Conference theme: Limits to Blue Growth?

The 1972 report Limits of Growth marked the beginning of critical debates about ever increasing economic expansion and its effects related to resource depletion. The largely academic discussions contributed to the birth of sustainable development that now for decades serves as guiding concept for policy makers, including those concerned in coastal and ocean governance. At the same time, the 'blue economy' and 'blue growth' have nowadays become popular concepts in marine policy. Notions on blue growth especially ask attention for new uses of the oceans, such as renewable energy (wind at sea), deep sea mining and deep-sea fishing but also aim at highlighting ecosystem services that have societal value (coastal protection, CO₂ storage and biodiversity). The concept aims to reconcile two seemingly opposing uses of the oceans: exploitation and conservation, in the same way as was intended with the use of 'sustainable development'. The concept also seems to promise that there still is a new, not yet reached frontier for economic expansion. With the theme "Limits to Blue Growth?", MARE would like to contribute to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Key to this contribution is the fundamental social sciences question "Blue for who?", so who are the people of the blue economy? Who are winning and who are losing from the new developments? Who are making the decisions? Whose knowledge counts? And related to this, is a set of questions like for what, when, where and why? And with what relation to, and impact on sustainable development?

The conference theme "Limits to Blue Growth" is divided into the 6 streams described below. It is however open to those with other thematic interests relating to people and the sea.

Conference streams

Stream 1: Making Blue Livelihoods

The economic importance of oceans and the maritime industry is evidently on the rise. As the seas and coasts increasingly are being both reframed and re-regulated as a new economic frontier, it simultaneously provokes urgent challenges in terms of how to avoid irreversible ecological impacts. While the 'blue economy' agenda and discourse expresses the need for balancing competing interests in marine resources and spaces, it's rather elusive character raises concerns in terms of what a blue economy and blue growth means for the diversity of people and communities that depend on oceans and coasts for their livelihoods in the global north and south. This stream

welcomes contributions that in different ways engage with the question of how to make livelihoods blue. What new livelihood opportunities and strategies are made available in the emerging blue economy? What room is made available for existing ways of life? What are the elements and factors that promote and enable 'blue livelihoods'? What is needed in order for 'blue growth' to act as a catalyst for a more just and equitable distribution of marine resources?

Stream2: Knowing the Blue

This stream focuses on the role of knowledge in Ocean policy and politics. The stream explores how different uses, interests, scientists and industries contribute to formation of a variety of marine epistemologies. The knowledge formations, from knowledge produced through everyday practices to scientific and authorised expert knowledge, will have impact on values, principles, procedures in ocean policy and politics. Important questions are how the different discursive formations of ocean knowledge frame the human-ocean relationship in different ways and inform decisions about how to meet future challenges. This stream welcomes papers that address how knowledge production, authorisation, negotiation, inclusion and exclusion lead to different understandings of human-ocean relationships and how these understandings have impact on ocean policy and politics.

Stream 3: Governing, Steering and Managing the Blue Realm

This stream focuses on the governing, steering and managing of the Blue Realm. The blue realm has to deal with opposing uses of oceans, the economic development of maritime sectors, such as shipping, fisheries, offshore oil and gas production, offshore renewable energy, cruise tourism, coastal tourism and deep seabed mining, realizing ecosystem services that have societal value (coastal protection, CO2 storage and biodiversity), and the (ecological) sustainable development of seas and oceans. This continuous tension between exploitation and conservation asks for specific governance arrangements, institutions and management constructions to govern and manage the "Limits to Blue Growth" of the blue realm. This stream welcomes papers, panels, discussion groups, etc. about governing the blue realm, the unequal distribution of power in the blue realm, processes of capacity building, and issues of legitimacy and equity in maritime planning and policies.

Stream 4: Emerging Sectors in the Blue Space

Many new sectors are competing over and conquering the blue space for growth. These include aquaculture, wind farms, deep sea mining, desalination, tourism, or exotic activities like whale cage diving. These new activities can be beneficial for instance through creating new livelihoods and can be detrimental, for example, by outcompeting other sectors for space, and creating negative social, ecological or economic consequences (e.g., marginalising certain actors in society). These emerging sectors have different characteristics distinct from fisheries which is traditionally the MARE focus. Characteristics and impacts of these sectors could relate to the social (e.g., gender relationships), economic (e.g., investment requirements) or ecological (e.g., reproduction rates) dimensions which may help us to better understand the social interactions involved and emerging potential challenges. This stream welcomes contributions relating to these emerging sectors and their particular analysis.

Stream 5: Resisting Blue Appropriations

In the emerging blue growth era, coasts and oceans are subject to ever-rising conflicts over the distribution of space and resources. What is the nature of the ensuing contestations? How are the games played, who are the winners and losers? Ocean and coastal grabbing related to old and new forms of resource extraction and spatial appropriations, as well as man-made disasters, reveal

disparities between those causing harm and those vulnerable to the consequences. In addition, and sometimes connected to the above, oceans are a welcome host for illicit activities: smuggling and trafficking of goods and people, brazen acts of piracy, and illegal resource extractions. Securitization is a common response, creating new vulnerabilities and governmentalities alike. This stream invites papers that reflect on these processes of blue appropriation as well as people's struggles to respond to them in defence of their coasts and livelihoods.

Stream 6: Blue Crisis

Regardless of Blue Growth plans it is also becoming increasingly clear that coastal and marine areas are vulnerable to external shocks and crises. Coastal and marine communities are faced with the extreme weather events and sea level rise as a result of looming climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, increasing tourism and migration flows, and recently shocked by a global pandemic. This stream welcomes contributions that illustrate and address the extent to which the Blue economy is at risk, in crisis, or resilient to those shocks. How are people of the sea experiencing and dealing with these shocks? How vulnerable or resilient are communities and sectors to different types of shocks? Do these shocks and crises represent a temporary discontinuity to Blue Growth objectives, or are they part of a new Blue normal? Are shocks, like the market downturn due to COVID-19, hindering or enabling sustainable transformations? What are the implications of crises for governing peoples of the use of the sea? This stream will reflect on how we understand, analyse and frame coastal and marine world's in crisis.

Conference contributions

As we enter the virtual realm, we encourage panel proposals with innovative formats that stimulate interaction and dynamism such as roundtables, workshops, brainstorm sessions, debates, or documentary film screenings with discussion. The conference organizers may prioritize panel proposals that take into account these considerations. As we come across new session types, we will make these ideas available. We strongly encourage the submission of pre-arranged panels (max six presenters). If you have an idea for a panel but only a partial list of presenters, please submit and we will help connect you to individual presenters who may be a good match. For more traditional paper-based panels, we encourage thorough discussion of presented papers, for example by including discussants or by peer reviewing each other's papers. We also welcome the submission of individual abstracts (max 300 words) for oral or poster presentation. Please note that sessions will be 2-hours long; recognizing that people will be joining from all around the world and multiple time zones, the scheduling of sessions will take this into account.

[Deadline for panel, paper proposals and other conference formats:](#)

12 February 2021 (GMT)

[Structure of proposals:](#)

Panel proposals

Panel proposals should clearly state:

- The name, affiliation, and email address of the panel organizer
- A brief (max one A4 page or 500 words) panel abstract and up to five keywords
- The proposed paper titles, abstracts, authors (and their affiliations) to be included in the panel (if available)
- The conference stream to which the panel relates

Panel proposals should not be longer than one A4 page or 500 words.

Paper abstracts

Abstracts should clearly state:

- Author(s) name
- Author(s) affiliation
- Author email address for correspondence
- The conference stream to which the paper relates

Abstracts should be less than 300 words in length (please do not use abbreviations or cite references in the abstract) and include up to 5 keywords representing the main content.

Panels and individual submissions should be submitted electronically. This will be done via the virtual conference platform, with specific details on the submission process coming soon. The deadline for submissions is **12 February 2021**. Visit www.marecentre.nl or contact info@marecentre.nl for further details and updates.