

# Becoming treasures of the sea: Epistemological constructions and marine resource regulation

Porta Delgada, The Azores, 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018

*Becoming treasures of the Sea* is a 3-day interdisciplinary conference concerned with the epistemological and regulatory underpinnings of human-marine interactions. The conference will take place on the 12th - 14th of September 2018 at the [University of the Azores](#), located in Ponta Delgada on the Azores. This is the annual conference of the research project *The high seas and the deep oceans: Representations, resources and regulatory governance* ([3ROcean](#)), sponsored by the Research Council of Norway and co-hosted by the [University of the Azores' School of Social Sciences and Humanities](#).

Two contrasting images of the sea prevail: One is of an inexhaustible mine; its riches plentiful, its treasures many. Bounties await the brazen in the form of fossil, mineral and biological prospects. The other portrays the ocean as fragile, requiring control and moderation on the part of its human heritors, to protect it from anthropogenic deregulation in the form of habitat devastation, the depletion of fish stocks and acidification. Both of these representations rely on epistemological infrastructures. Both have provided the foundations for regulatory measures pertaining to the frontier of human appropriation, which is the sea. These measures range from the freedom of the high seas to today's regionalised marine environmental conservation legislation. What appears to be a uniform body of water is therefore rather a composite of contiguous and culturally conditioned resource-spaces, the exploitation of which is either inhibited or made possible by their representations and regulations, and the development of technologies and sciences. Accordingly, ocean resources are not merely natural givens, but things which are brought into being through our knowing them. They "are not, they become", to paraphrase the political economist Erich Zimmerman.

A new map of Portugal, portrays its mainland and the Azores archipelago, as well as the vast immersed territory comprised of its internal waters, the territorial sea and the limits of the continental shelf. These new boundaries, which would grant exclusive rights over the natural resources of the shelf were re-submitted to the UN for approval last August. This possible extension of territory renders Portugal roughly the size of the European Union, with 97% of Portugal being Sea. It also places the Azores centrally in national and international discussions on marine territorial dimensions. We are therefore very happy to be able to convene in such a pertinent location.

This conference seeks to examine how the associations between the sea and human activity have changed historically, pinpointing the regulatory and epistemological undercurrents affecting relations and interactions at sea. In essence, to seek out the "processes of becoming" of marine resources. It will bring international researchers together overseas in order to explore our cultural, historical, and political perceptions with regard to ocean regulation.

We welcome proposals for presentations from scholars working in and across the humanities and social sciences. Papers are invited on, but not limited to, any of the following topics:

- Shifting understandings of ocean resources and responsibilities over time (e.g. from colonial scramble to a cultural heritage of mankind and notions of trusteeship)
- Methods of mapping, recording and representing the sea

- Alternative resource modalities (e.g. hydropower, bioprospecting and cultural heritage)
- Stately and economic appropriations of the sea – submarine warfare, deep sea cables, ocean-floor mining, and cargo shipping
- The development of marine regulatory regimes (e.g. fisheries, whaling, pollution)
- Literary and aesthetic imaginings of Sea Treasure
- The becoming of resources linked to specific geographies
- History of marine sciences, oceanography, geography and biology
- Legal history of the ocean
- Environmental history of the ocean
- Marine resource management

The conference participant number is limited, acceptance will therefore be upon the merit of a submitted abstract which sufficiently attends to the conference topic and the overarching goals of the [3ROceans project](#). Meals and lodging are covered by the conference organisers, however please specify whether you will require additional support for travel costs in your application.

**Please send your abstract of no more than 250 words to [3ROceans@ntnu.no](mailto:3ROceans@ntnu.no) by Friday 30 March, 2018.**

Conference convenors: Håkon With Andersen ([hakon.andersen@ntnu.no](mailto:hakon.andersen@ntnu.no)) and Knut Ove Eliassen ([knut.eliassen@ntnu.no](mailto:knut.eliassen@ntnu.no))