

Offshore oil and gas in the Arctic

Making simplified world more complex

“

What I found out was that most of my time as a premier
I spent in trying to understand what is the real problem
rather than what various parties presented to me as a
problem

”

Former Premier of Yukon, Tony Penikett

This is framing

- Various stakeholders were presenting to Tony their understanding of what is problematic, and evidently it was colored by their own values/interests
- Framing as an activity is highly strategic, intending to portray a complex reality from a certain viewpoint – a frame
- Frames are simplifications of a complex reality
- And they are problematic because they hide the complex reality that regulators and decision-makers would need to be dealing with

What I try to do in this presentation

What I hope to demonstrate is that current and future regulation would benefit from uncovering these framings simply because with more complex understandings of these realities we would be able to nuance our regulatory solutions

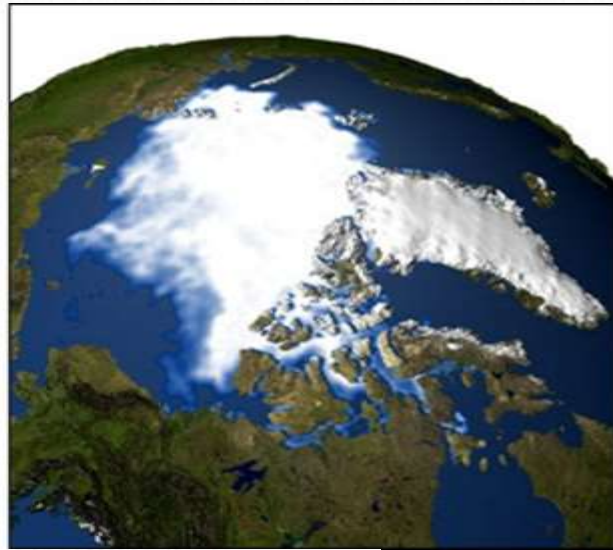
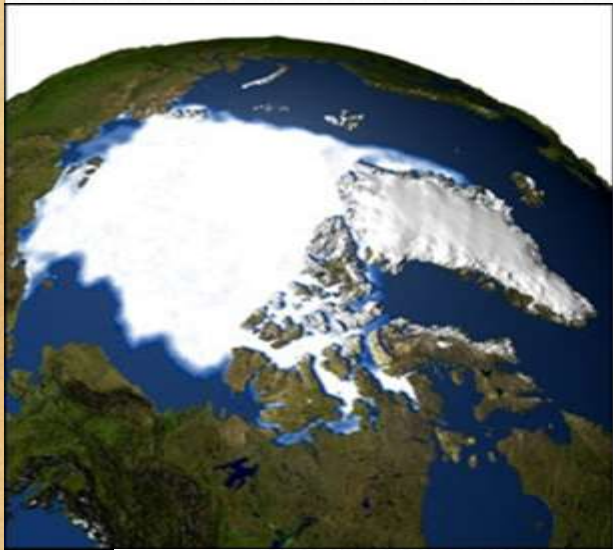
I think this is exactly what we academics should do!

Outline

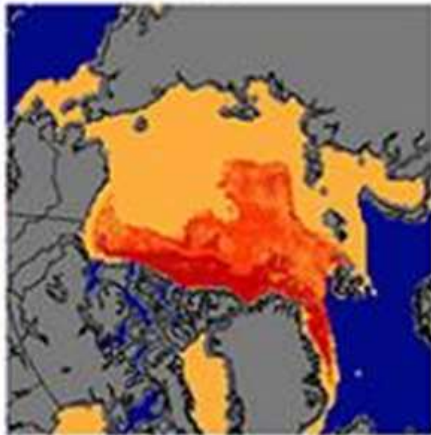
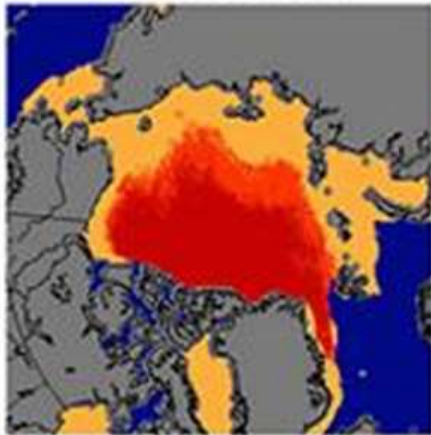
- Four framings – what they see as problems in offshore fossil fuels in the Arctic – and what are the problems in each of these framings
- This will lead us to narrow down what are the relevant problems for current day decision-makers and possible ways to approach solutions
- But it is also important to critically evaluate the premises on which these frames are built, which will be done in the second sequence
- And then we can draw final conclusions

This is the main way to
show

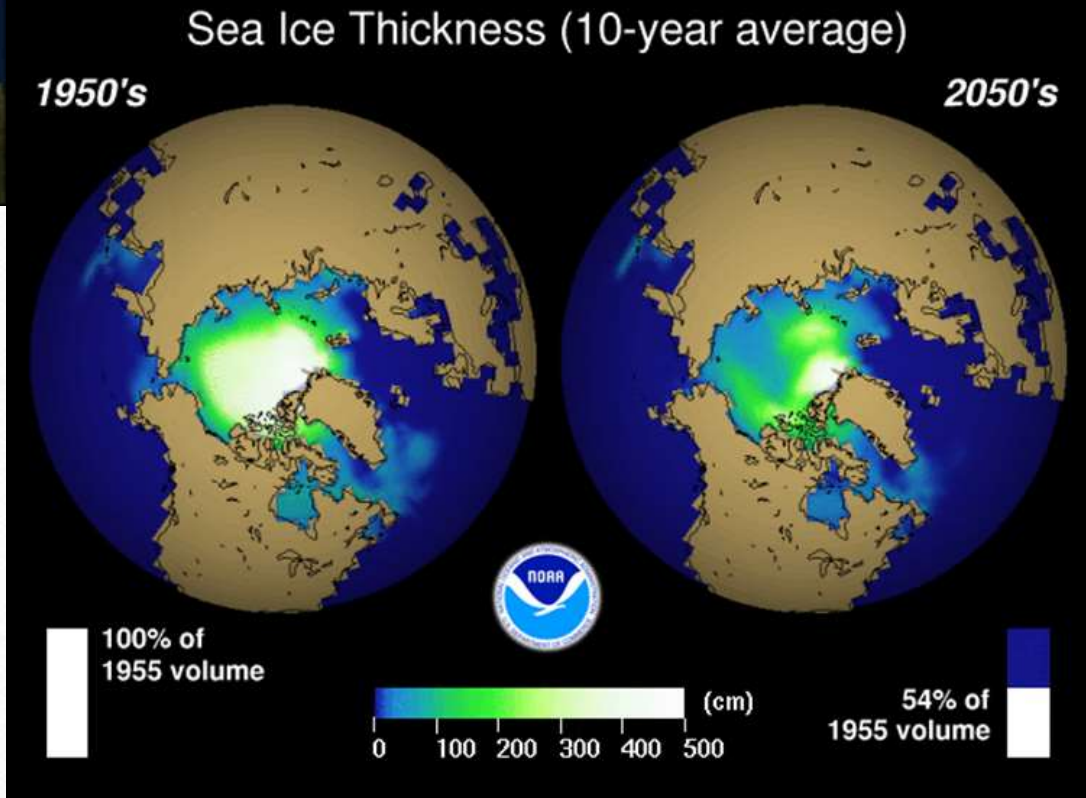
Why offshore oil and gas has become
problematic



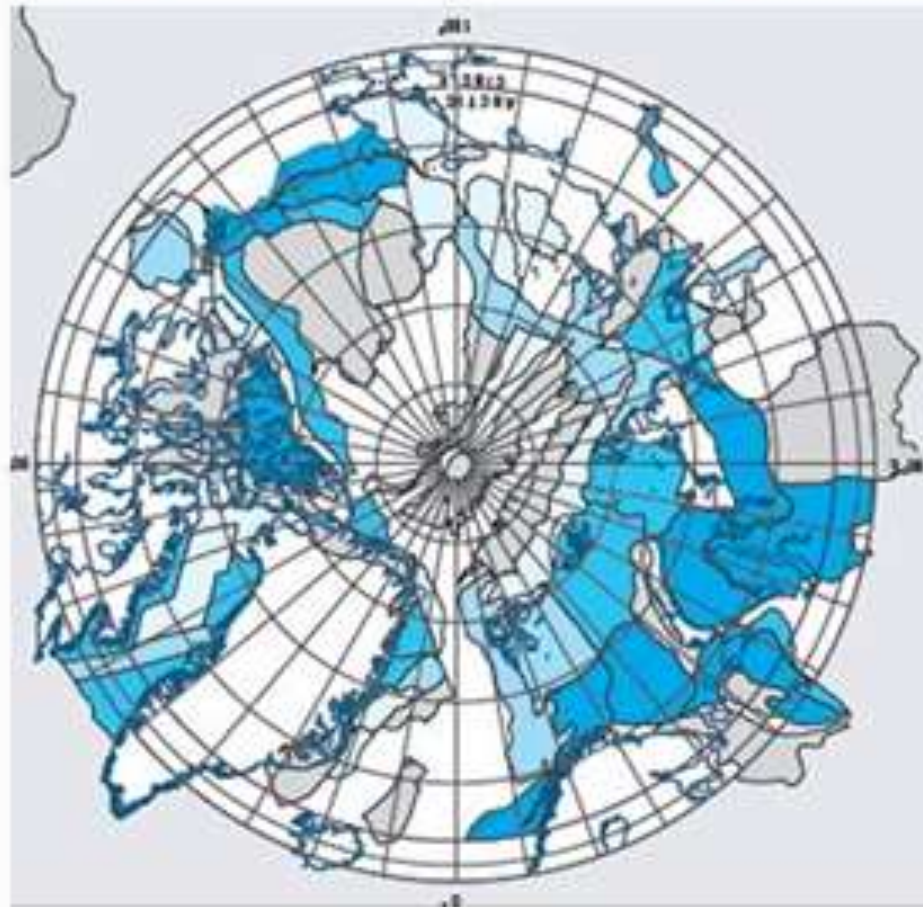
End of February Arctic Sea Ice Age
1981-2000 Median 2009

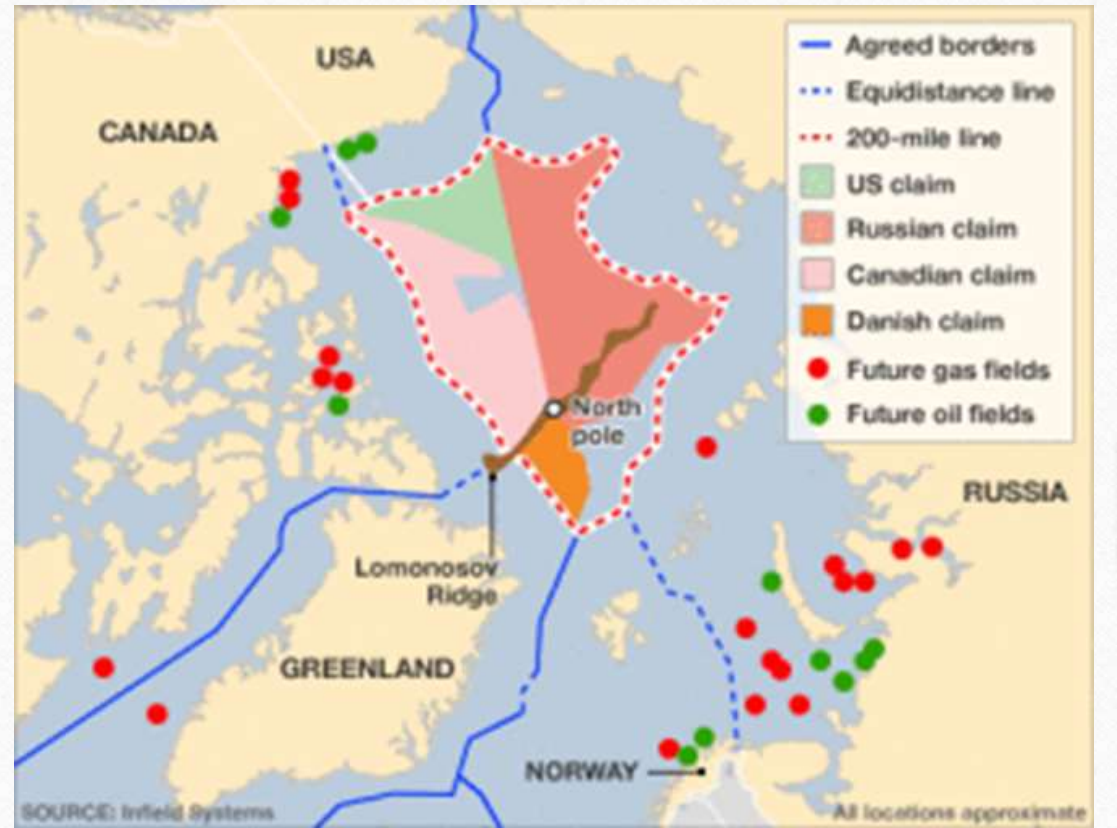


Yellow: First year ice (< 1 Year Old)
Orange: Second year ice (1-2 Years Old)
Red: Older ice (>2 Years Old)



Offshore Hydrocarbon potential

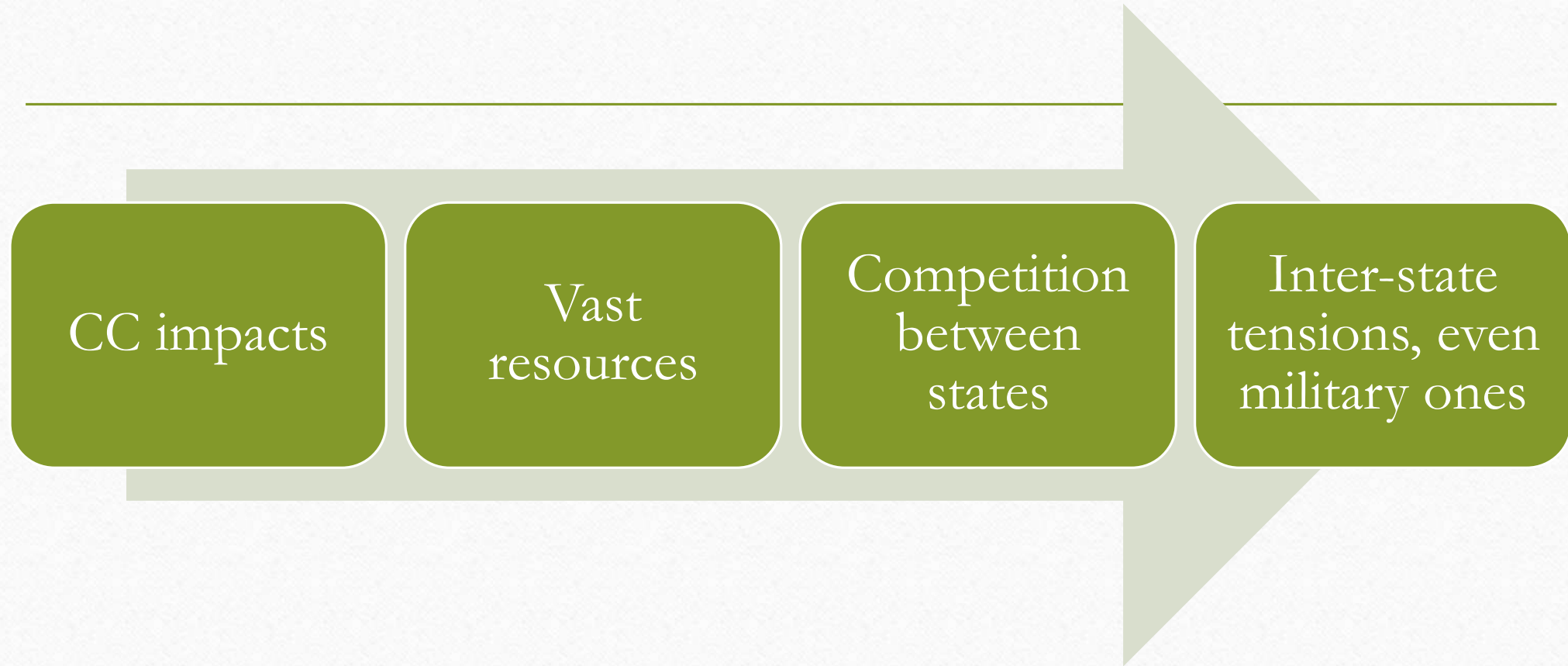




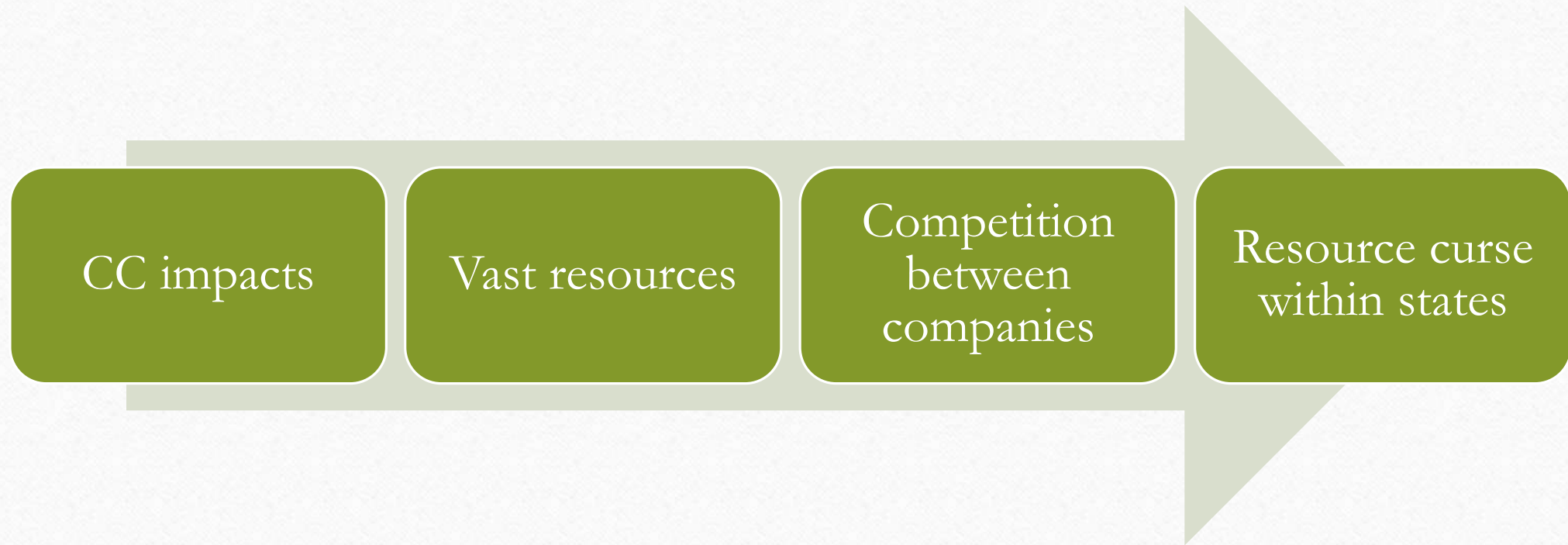
Scott Borgerson, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2008
Issue

The situation is especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes. The Arctic has always been frozen; as ice turns to water, it is not clear which rules should apply. The rapid melt is also rekindling numerous interstate rivalries and attracting energy-hungry newcomers, such as China, to the region. The Arctic powers are fast approaching diplomatic gridlock, and that could eventually lead to the sort of armed brinkmanship that plagues other territories, such as the desolate but resource-rich Spratly Islands, where multiple states claim sovereignty but no clear picture of ownership exists.

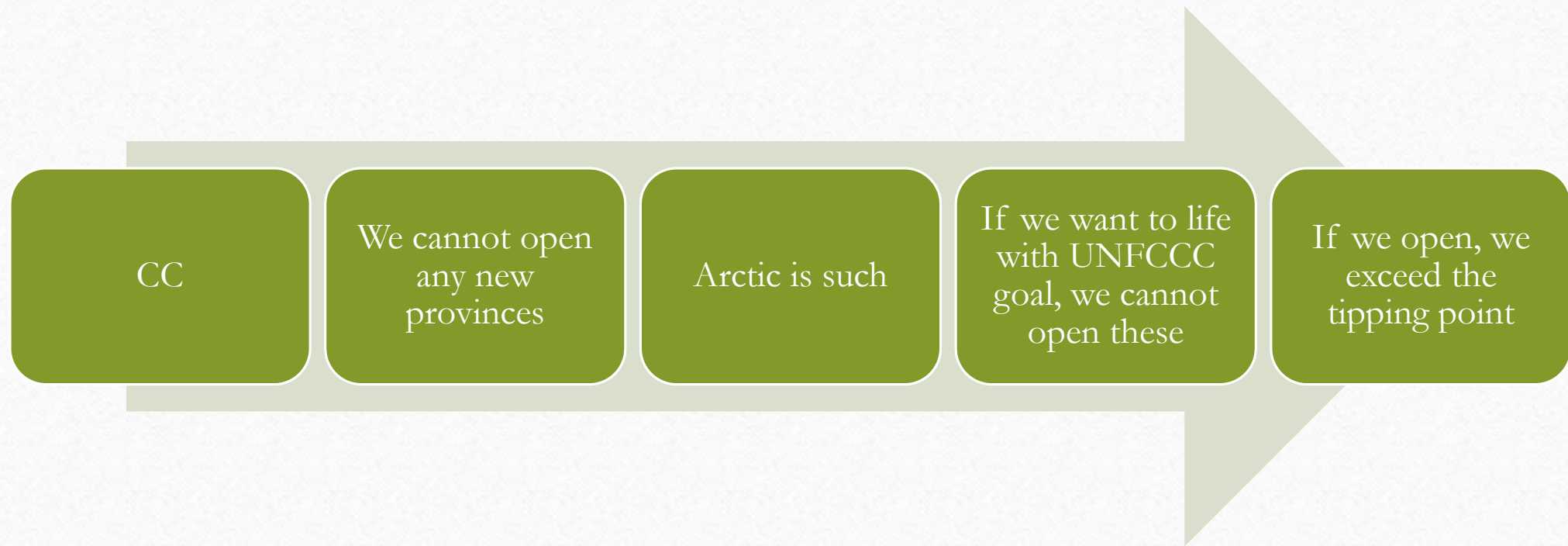
Arctic Fossil fuels driving geopolitics



Arctic Fossil fuels triggering resource curse



Arctic Fossil fuels causing global climate catastrophe



Offshore oil spill will cause a major Arctic environmental catastrophe

Offshore HD exploitation is very risky (Gulf of Mexico)

Arctic conditions make it even more risky

Because it does not disperse and there is no technology to remove it

Full-scale long-term Arctic catastrophe

Mid-term conclusion

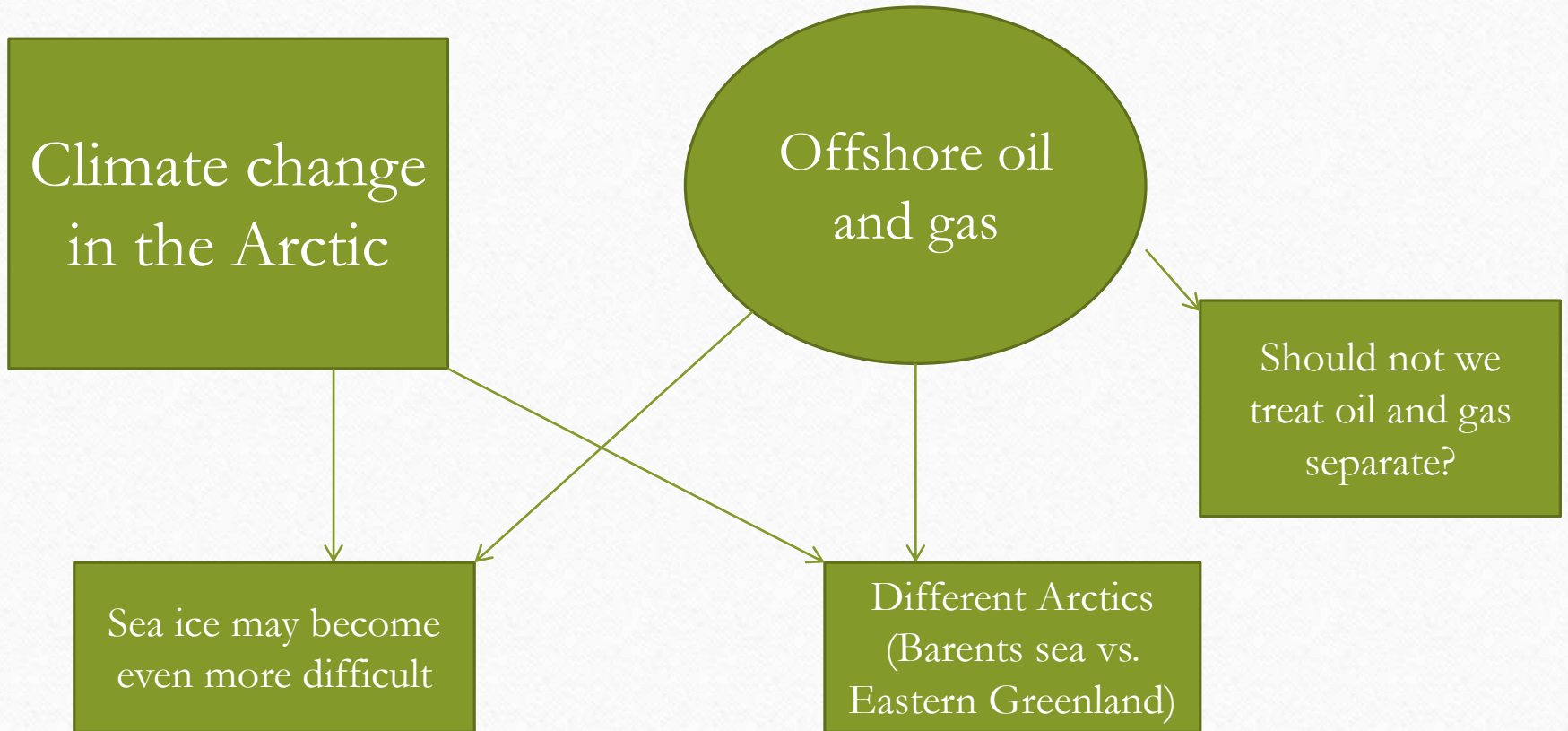
- After this thought rehearsal, we might end up suggesting to the current decision-makers that the real problem they should be focusing on is:
 - how to govern safely and environmentally soundly those offshore resources
 - Extra high safety and environmental standards needed
 - Oil spill is a **REAL** threath!!
- With the prominent exception of most harsh areas, where an outright moratorium should be a serious option

Mid-term conclusion - challenge



-
- Even if we now have satisfied in giving current decision-makers a better understanding of what are the problems in hydrocarbon exploitation, and how to approximately solve them, we can go deeper in "deconstructing" the frames that simplify complex reality

CC and offshore hydrocarbons
Perceptionally linked but also for real



Is there offshore oil and gas in the Arctic?

USGS Study

Is it reliable (Greenland experience)

Therefore, the CARA relied on a probabilistic methodology of geological analysis and analog modeling.

Short-term: fracking revolution

Are there markets for Arctic offshore hydrocarbons?

Long-term demand seems fairly clear

Population growth

lifestyle

Fossil fuel use

Final conclusion

- Hence, we can provide the current day decision-makers a way through the frames and Tony Penikett finds a real problem to be solved
- And we should ask these difficult questions as academics
- This will be our contribution to future regulation of the Arctic, also in terms of offshore oil and gas exploitation