

Briefing Note

Model Arctic Council at secondary school

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Growing interest in the Arctic Council amongst scholars and educators has recently stimulated a number of Model Arctic Councils (MACs). MACs are pedagogical simulations in which participants play the role of delegate to a cycle of Arctic Council meetings. MACs are normally aimed at university students, particularly postgraduates and advanced undergraduates, but since 2016 I have developed and launched two MACs at secondary schools in the UK and Spain: Norwich MAC (NORMAC) and MAC Bilbao. In this paper, I describe how these MACs work, and I discuss challenges to running secondary-school MACs, including attracting participants, assisting with preparatory research and consensus building, balancing realism with creative learning, and sustaining interest in the Arctic. I highlight differences with university MACs, as well as deviations from actual Arctic Council procedures designed to accommodate secondary-school pupils. I also evaluate data from surveys of delegates to four MAC conferences over two years: NORMAC 2018 and 2019, and MAC Bilbao 2018 and 2019. These data show that both MACs are meeting their educational objectives of raising awareness and understanding of the Arctic amongst secondary-school pupils; inspiring them to learn more about the region, its peoples and its challenges; and helping develop their skills in public speaking, negotiation and consensus building. I conclude with a brief discussion of future plans for secondary-school MACs.

Introduction

The Arctic Council will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2021 at the end of the current Icelandic chairmanship. As the Arctic Council's profile as the premier high-level forum for international Arctic cooperation has grown, so too has specialist interest in its structure, procedures and effectiveness (see for instance Axworthy, Koivurova & Hasanat, 2012; Heininen, Exner-Pirot & Plouffe, 2016; Nord, 2016; Lackenbauer, Nicol & Greaves, 2017). Amongst some educators concerned with the Arctic, this interest has also stimulated a small but increasing number of Model Arctic Councils (MACs). MACs are experiential learning exercises at which pupils or students, playing the roles of civil servants and diplomats attending a simulated cycle of Arctic Council meetings, discuss salient issues facing the region and try to build consensus around solutions.

Perhaps the most notable MAC to date is the biennial conference developed by the University of the Arctic (UArctic), a consortium of universities concerned with Arctic-related education and research, and which itself was originally an Arctic Council initiative (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017). After a successful pilot in 2014 at the Northern Arctic Federal University in Arkhangelsk, Russia, the UArctic MAC was officially launched in 2016 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, during the US chairmanship of the Arctic Council. It has now convened a second time in 2018, at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland, during the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Having focused on education as one of the thematic priorities of their chairmanship, the Government of Finland highlighted the UArctic MAC as a significant deliverable of their programme, and they provided financial support to the Rovaniemi UArctic MAC (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2017; UArctic MAC Thematic Network, 2018).

As a secondary-school teacher, as well as a university educator and a former policy official with the Government of Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic, I take a special interest in the MAC concept. But very few MACs advertised to date have been organised for secondary-school pupils rather than university students (see Table 1). Indeed, many participants in the Fairbanks UArctic MAC were not undergraduates but postgraduates, and the Rovaniemi UArctic MAC was explicitly advertised to postgraduates and advanced undergraduates. Such senior students have the specialised academic backgrounds to understand the often highly technical work of the Arctic Council (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017; UArctic MAC Thematic Network, 2018).

However, similar experiential learning simulations have been organised for secondary-school pupils for many decades. Model United Nations (MUN) is the best known, but Model International Court of Justice, European Youth Parliament and others are regular events. My own experience introducing MUN at Norwich School convinced me of the potential educational value of secondary-school MACs. Inspired to share with pupils my own experience of and enthusiasm for the Arctic, I developed and launched the Norwich Model Arctic Council (NORMAC) at Norwich School in the UK in 2016.

The educational objectives of NORMAC are to raise awareness and understanding of the Arctic amongst secondary-school pupils; to inspire them to learn more about the region, its peoples and its challenges; and to help develop their skills in public speaking, negotiation and consensus-building. Now entering its fifth year, NORMAC has also generated a second MAC series at Colegio Ayalde in Bilbao, Spain, which is convened in conjunction with that school's annual MUN conference. Inaugurated in 2018, 'MAC Bilbao' is now entering its third year, and it shares the same objectives as its sister conference.

Compared with simulations of large and well-known organisations such as the UN, MACs offer a more specialised and 'niche' learning experience, whether at university or secondary school. Yet with the Arctic looming ever larger in public consciousness thanks to climate change, MACs fill an educational gap. Especially at secondary school, pupils learn very little about the Arctic, and the general public tend to conceive of it either as an endangered and pristine wilderness to be protected at all costs, or a newly accessible global resource frontier over which the Arctic States and other powers are 'scrambling' to stake their claims (Pincus & Ali, 2016). By exposing pupils to the complexities of Arctic governance, MACs help develop an early and more nuanced understanding of an increasingly important global region, as well as the people who call it home.

To my knowledge, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are the only secondary-school MACs in the world today. Indeed, perhaps only two other MACs have ever been convened specifically at this level—both in 2010, and both apparently as special, one-off events (see Table 1). For secondary-school pupils familiar with global issues and the UN, but not with Arctic issues or the Arctic Council, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao represent an exciting new format of model diplomacy. For educators, policymakers and others concerned with the Arctic, they represent a useful new channel through which to promote interest in the region amongst youth.

With such promotion in mind, I shall explain in this paper how NORMAC and MAC Bilbao work, and I shall discuss a few of the challenges involved in running MACs at the secondary-school level. I shall also present survey evidence suggesting that NORMAC and MAC Bilbao have had considerable positive educational impact on participating pupils—or ‘delegates’ as they are known. Finally, in the hope that this paper sparks interest in supporting or attending NORMAC or MAC Bilbao, I shall provide information on future events and plans.

How NORMAC and MAC Bilbao work

Interested readers can find full details of NORMAC online, including detailed delegate materials for download (see Table 2). MAC Bilbao lacks a dedicated website distinct from that of MUN Bilbao, but basic information and some delegate materials can be found online (see Table 2). Rather than rehearse publicly available information here, I shall instead offer a general overview of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao procedures, noting particularly certain deviations from Arctic Council procedures (Arctic Council, 1996 & 2012; Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013). I have adopted these deviations purposefully to allow for the still-maturing capacities of secondary-school pupils, as I explain in the following section.

Both NORMAC and MAC Bilbao work in very much the same fashion. Delegates from participating schools gather at the host school, which provides meeting rooms, materials, catering, social activities, and a team of pupils to help with conference administration. Registration fees defray some of the associated costs, but the host school covers any excess, including any reduced fees or other such assistance for deserving schools. NORMAC 2017 and NORMAC 2018 also benefitted from additional funding from host-school benefactors, and MAC Bilbao 2018 and 2019 benefitted from additional private sponsorship of the MUN alongside which it ran. Delegates and their schools are themselves responsible for registration fees, and for the costs of any travel or accommodation.

Over the course of the event—two days in the case of NORMAC 2018 and three days in the case of NORMAC 2019, MAC Bilbao 2018 and MAC Bilbao 2019—delegates then simulate a cycle of Arctic Council meetings. Just as the Arctic Council does, but in a vastly compressed timescale, they begin in Working Groups, proceed through a meeting of Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) and end with a Ministerial meeting. The number of Working Groups simulated depends on logistical issues such as delegate numbers and room space. Working Groups simulated at past NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences include the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) and the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG).

Like Arctic Council Working Groups, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao Working Groups operate co-operatively. They pass the results of their work to SAOs, who base their recommendations to

Ministers upon them. However, unlike at the Arctic Council, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao Working Groups immediately begin to draft formal ‘declarations’ on the issues on the conference agenda. SAOs and Ministers then consider and amend these declarations and Ministers ultimately decide them. If time permits, Ministers may also consider special political issues determined to be inappropriate for the more technical Working Groups. At the end of each conference, all declarations passed at the Ministerial are collected into a ‘Norwich Declaration’ or ‘Bilbao Declaration’, imitating the Arctic Council’s own toponymous declarations.

Delegates to NORMAC and MAC Bilbao consider issues that range widely over current questions facing the Arctic as a region (see Table 3). These issues reflect the actual thematic priorities set by the country concurrently holding the Arctic Council chairmanship. However, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao delegates may also consider issues normally excluded from Arctic Council meetings, such as commercial fishing (Molenaar, 2015), and issues typically reserved for other international bodies, such as whaling. Nonetheless, at both conferences the Arctic Council’s constitutional rule against discussing military security matters remains in force.

The Arctic Council is well known for its collegial atmosphere, even at times of tension between members elsewhere in the world (Heininen, Exner-Pirot & Plouffe, 2015). NORMAC and MAC Bilbao rules are designed to encourage common effort amongst delegates, particularly during Working Group meetings, when delegates draft declarations jointly. In keeping with clause 7 of the Ottawa Declaration which established the Arctic Council, all decisions at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao must be taken by full consensus of delegates from the Arctic States. However, unlike at the Arctic Council, delegates from Indigenous Permanent Participant (PP) organisations also have a vote, even though their votes can be overridden by countervailing unanimity amongst Arctic-State delegates, in line with Arctic Council rules.

Like the Arctic Council, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao employ a ‘Secretariat’. However, the NORMAC and MAC Bilbao Secretariats exercise much wider functions than the Arctic Council Secretariat. Consisting of myself and colleagues and pupils from the host school, these Secretariats not only take responsibility for conference administration, but also monitor compliance with the rules of procedure imposed especially at SAO and Ministerial meetings. Members of the Secretariat also chair all meetings as a neutral party, unlike at the Arctic Council where one of the Arctic States holds the rotating chair. Finally, drawing on my own Arctic policy experience, I personally conduct special briefings for delegates ahead of the Ministerial, offering advice on the issues to be decided.

Like all model diplomacy, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are games of persuasion and influence. I encourage delegates not to think of their conference as a competition, but rather to seek mutually agreeable solutions to difficult and often controversial political, social and environmental problems. At the same time, I remind them that they should not reach consensus by sacrificing the interests of the Arctic State or PP organisation that they fictively represent. As an incentive, delegates are eligible to receive commendations at the end of the conference based on how effectively they drove consensus, how well they researched and prepared their positions, and how credibly they acted their assigned roles.

Finally, like real diplomatic gatherings, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are multi-day affairs involving shared meals and social events alongside the rounds of meetings. At MAC Bilbao these activities are subsumed under the wider MUN Bilbao agenda, but at NORMAC they provide a further opportunity to spotlight the Arctic. For example, the keynote speaker at the NORMAC 2017

welcome dinner was the recently appointed head of the UK's observer delegation to the Arctic Council. At NORMAC 2018, delegates engaged in a question-and-answer session with the filmmakers behind *Village at the End of the World*, a documentary film about contemporary life in the remote village of Niaqornat, Greenland, and they later gathered for a private screening of the film. Delegates may also be exposed to wider issues that have bearing on the Arctic or Arctic governance. For instance, at NORMAC 2019, the keynote speaker was an expert on evidence-based policy-making, an issue of critical significance to the Arctic Council, considering the scientific foundation of its work (Kankaanpää & Young, 2012; Exner-Pirot *et al.*, 2019).

Challenges to running a secondary-school MAC

I have written briefly in a previous issue of this publication about a few of the early challenges involved in launching NORMAC (Specca, 2016). I shall revisit those challenges here, in the context of making MACs accessible to secondary-school pupils, and I shall discuss other challenges as well. I shall also make some comparisons with university MACs, drawing in part on observations from a 'NORMAC University' for junior undergraduates that I convened in June 2019 in collaboration with Trent University and the University of East Anglia, as well as from a panel discussion on MACs that I co-convened in July 2017 at the Ninth International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences, together with Jeff Kormos, a delegate to the Fairbanks UArctic MAC.

Five challenges involved in running a secondary-school MAC stand out for discussion:

- What would attract pupils to a MAC, instead of a MUN or some other model diplomacy conference?
- How can pupils be assisted with MAC research and preparation, especially assuming no prior exposure to the Arctic?
- How can pupils be encouraged through the process of building consensus, which is difficult even for adult professionals?
- What balance should a secondary-school MAC strike between strict realism on the one hand, and creative learning on the other?
- How can pupils' newfound interest in the Arctic be sustained after the MAC ends?

I shall tackle each question in turn, with reference to practices I have instituted at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao.

MACs vs MUNs

The first question is particularly important at the secondary-school level, since pupils have not normally conceived any special interest in the Arctic, nor even necessarily in a particular field of study. In contrast to the university curriculum, the secondary-school curriculum is mostly fixed, and it does not easily accommodate Arctic- or MAC-related teaching and learning. Most of the postgraduate and advanced undergraduate delegates to the Fairbanks UArctic MAC, by contrast, had prior interest in the Arctic or had studied the region academically, and some even had personal experience of life in the circumpolar North. A few of the junior undergraduate delegates to NORMAC University had studied the Arctic as well, and the majority who had not had nevertheless embarked on specialised degree programmes in international relations, geography, environmental science and the like.

Secondary-school pupils also tend to have far fewer unscheduled academic hours for MAC research and preparation than university students do, as well as numerous other organised extracurricular options on which to spend their limited free time. These competing options include other model diplomacy conferences, such as MUNs, which are already well embedded in the secondary-school context and which tend to attract the same internationally-minded set of pupils. Yet unlike MUNs, which are geographically and thematically diffuse, MACs offer pupils the chance to explore more deeply a region of the world that is now attracting great interest. Moreover, as a UK-based MUN consultant put it to me, MACs can offer an antidote to ‘MUN fatigue’—that is, they represent a novel alternative for pupils who have attended perhaps too many MUNs throughout their secondary-school careers (A. Payne, personal communication, 2016).

There is indeed a very large number of secondary-school MUNs that pupils can attend, especially in Europe and North America. At least in part to attract delegates, some MUN convenors offer alternative simulations alongside their conferences. Robert Stern’s Model International Court of Justice, developed in conjunction with The Hague International MUN (THIMUN), and now offered alongside many THIMUN-affiliated MUNs globally, is a well-known example within secondary-school MUN circles. MAC Bilbao, offered alongside MUN Bilbao, is itself also an example of this trend.

To differentiate NORMAC and MAC Bilbao from the many available MUN conferences, I emphasise two unusual features of the Arctic Council that distinguish it from the UN and other intergovernmental fora—the category of Indigenous PP, and the rule of consensus (Brigham, Exner-Pirot, Heininen & Plouffe, 2016; Nord, 2016). At most MUNs, delegates typically play representatives from UN Member States only. At MACs, by contrast, delegates play representatives from PPs as well as Arctic States, and all MAC delegates must grapple with the ideas of indigeneity and Indigenous rights. Many pupils in their teenage years are very sensitive to issues of fairness and justice, and in my experience they are motivated by the challenges that Arctic Indigenous peoples face, and by the idea of the Arctic as an Indigenous homeland.

Similarly, at most MUNs delegates pass motions or declarations by simple majority vote. At MUNs employing THIMUN rules of procedure—which include most secondary-school MUNs outside North America—delegates may also pass more than one competing declaration on each issue discussed. By contrast, MAC delegates must build real consensus in order to influence proceedings. At NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, delegates may not take any decisions except by unanimous vote, and they may ultimately pass no more than one jointly drafted and negotiated declaration on each issue. Just as at the Arctic Council, unanimity need only involve the Arctic States, and not necessarily PPs. But even this rule encourages delegates to consider carefully the relationships between Arctic States and their Indigenous peoples, and to aim for the Arctic Council ideal of full PP agreement.

All the same, most secondary-school pupils have little or no exposure to the Arctic, and they are only just beginning to develop mature interpersonal skills. They require support from their teachers to profit from their exposure to a nuanced picture of the Arctic, and from the discipline of a rule of consensus. Yet secondary-school pupils are not alone in needing teacherly help to benefit fully from their MACs. The convenors of the Fairbanks UArctic MAC, for instance, assigned preparatory reading and writing to their undergraduate and postgraduate delegates. Reflecting after the conference on the obstacles to delegate agreement, the convenors also suggested that delegates to

future UArctic MACs should undergo training in effective communication and cultural sensitivity (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017).

Assistance with preparation

As I mentioned above, the fixed secondary-school curriculum does not easily accommodate teaching and learning about the Arctic. For this reason, secondary-school pupils cannot be expected to achieve the sort of facility with Arctic issues that university students might do, and the material content of a secondary-school MAC cannot be as technical and rigorous as that of a university MAC. But in my experience, if preparatory work is properly signposted and support from teachers is in place, most delegates can gain enough basic knowledge of the Arctic to learn effectively from their MACs. As one teacher preparing delegates for NORMAC 2018 wrote to me, 'I first considered the questions [*i.e.* issues on the conference agenda] too difficult, but the students proved me wrong' (K. Vackova, personal communication, 2018).

In order to aid delegates and their teachers with pre-conference research and preparation, I provide a number of resources. First, with the support of the Arctic Portal, I have established a small online 'MAC Research Library', featuring not only specialised documents and publications on specific Arctic issues, but also general introductory and educational materials about the Arctic and the Arctic Council (see Table 2). Second, I circulate short 'research briefs' on the issues to be discussed at the conference, which include open-ended questions to stimulate further thinking. Third, I provide some research links and tips both on the NORMAC website and in materials circulated to delegates ahead of the conference. Finally, at the conference itself, I conduct personalised briefings with delegates ahead of the simulated Ministerial, at which I play the role of a policy advisor interpreting SAO recommendations, and presenting options as appropriate to the tone and path of proceedings.

The depth and quality of delegate preparation for NORMAC and MAC Bilbao varies, just as it does at university MACs and other diplomatic simulations (Hazelton & Mahurin, 1986; Haack, 2008; Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017). As model diplomacy is an extracurricular activity at most schools, delegates and their teachers must find time to prepare outside of the usual school day, typically in the context of an after-school club. Delegate registration closes at least two months ahead of the conference, at which point delegates are assigned roles and the 'research briefs' noted above, allowing them time to research their particular Arctic State or PP, and to strategise their approach to negotiating the issues on the conference agenda. Ideally, delegates would also have conducted more general reading about the Arctic even before knowing roles and issues.

Some delegates take their preparatory research very seriously. Delegates assigned to play Denmark at NORMAC 2017, for example, contacted the SAO at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enquire after details of actual Danish policies on the issues on the conference agenda. They met with an informative reply (N. Dignum, personal communication, 2017).

Encouragement toward consensus

Even after thorough preparation, achieving consensus on contentious issues in the course of a few days is a formidable task for secondary-school pupils. Most NORMAC and MAC Bilbao delegates are senior pupils of 15 to 17 years of age, mature enough to recognise that MACs necessitate collaboration, but inexperienced at finding the bridging solutions to facilitate it. For this reason, I

have found it useful to take a number of steps to assist delegates with consensus building, most of which entail deviating from actual Arctic Council procedure.

As noted, actual Arctic Council Working Groups are purely expert bodies pursuing specific technical programmes or projects. Their scientific assessments of issues facing the Arctic are at the core of the Arctic Council's work, and they serve to shape the policy agenda (Kankaanpää & Young, 2012; Exner-Pirot *et al.*, 2019). At the Fairbanks UArctic MAC, the postgraduate and advanced undergraduate delegates simulated this technical work in their Working Groups, including for example actual SDWG projects on water quality and suicide prevention (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017). Similarly, at NORMAC University, junior undergraduate delegates collaborated to draft an 'issue report' in their Working Group, which served as a jointly-agreed base of evidence for the subsequent development of a political declaration at SAO and Ministerial levels.

At NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, by contrast, Working Groups are more like issue-driven committees than task-based expert bodies. After brief introductory speeches, delegates begin straightaway to draft formal 'declarations' for consideration by SAOs, and ultimately decision by Ministers. Whilst delegates need not agree on every item submitted upwards to SAOs and Ministers, achieving consensus on multiple issues in a short timeframe becomes impracticable for youthful non-experts without this early common effort to hammer out mutually acceptable wording for the Norwich and Bilbao Declarations.

At the same time, to remain as true as possible to the collaborative nature of Arctic Council Working Groups, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao Working Groups are structured as round-table discussions rather than oppositional debates, with the chair acting more as facilitator than adjudicator. In order to support collaboration further, I also require delegates to prepare brief 'discussion papers' detailing their Arctic State or PP's perspective on the issue to be considered. Discussion papers are due one or two weeks before the conference begins, and I circulate them to all delegates in good time for them to familiarise themselves with their counterparts' views.

Sustaining an atmosphere in which consensus can be built also requires delegates to feel that their MAC is run transparently, and that each of them has a fair chance to participate fully. For this reason, at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao I apply formal rules of procedure at the SAO and Ministerial meetings, which dictate the order in which delegates may speak, and how they may introduce, discuss and decide matters. Based loosely on the actual procedures of the UN General Assembly, these rules are not wholly in keeping with the Arctic Council's own less formal and more collegiate approach, and there were no similarly formal rules governing the UArctic Fairbanks MAC. But they do provide secondary-school delegates with a clear framework for achieving as fair a consensus as possible in limited time, especially as delegates begin officially to accept, amend or reject the draft declarations they have jointly composed in Working Groups.

In a further departure from Arctic Council procedure, I also invite PP delegates at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao to vote together with Arctic-State delegates. I inform PP delegates that, for the sake of realism, the rule of consensus officially extends to Arctic States only. But this deviation from actual practice enables PP delegates to make their positions as clear as possible in limited time, as well as openly to challenge the credibility of Arctic-State delegates who fail to live up to their domestic or international commitments to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous rights.

Finally, Arctic Council meetings are chaired by one of the Arctic States, a practice copied at the Fairbanks UArctic MAC (B. Boylan & S. Gilbert, personal communication, 2018). By contrast, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao meetings are chaired either by host-school pupils with experience of MAC or MUN, or by me personally with support from host-school pupils. Third-party chairing clears a patch of neutral ground on which a large and disparate group of delegates can seek consensus more freely. Turning meetings over to delegates from one of the Arctic States merely for the sake of realism would invite scepticism from their young peers about the fairness of proceedings. It would also deprive me of a significant opportunity to guide proceedings in a teacherly but unobtrusive way—an expedient that also proved necessary to ‘nudge’ even the junior undergraduate delegates to NORMAC University toward consensus in the face of one or two particularly challenging impasses.

Indeed, at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, consensus is achieved on most issues only in the Ministerial, often after intense discussion and sometimes even the near-collapse of previous apparent agreement. For this reason, I have tended nearly always to reserve the chair of the Ministerial for myself, so that by clarifying impasses, inviting relevant proposals, and correcting any errors of fact, I can gently encourage delegates toward consensus without imposing solutions. The pre-Ministerial briefing mentioned above also serves as another opportunity for teacherly guidance towards consensus. And where consensus is achieved too easily—for example, if delegates have overzealously adopted some proposal without accounting for serious policy problems or clashes of interest—the pre-Ministerial briefing allows me to re-inject ‘friction’ between the SAO meeting and the Ministerial.

Ultimately, however, the primary factor determining consensus must be the delegates’ own collaborative skills. The possibility of insurmountable disagreement must be real, lest the educational value of the exercise be compromised. Delegates to NORMAC 2018 fell short of consensus by a mere single vote on three of the four issues considered, and delegates to MAC Bilbao 2019 failed to reach consensus on any issue. Even at NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences that have ended in consensus on all issues discussed in Working Groups, the prolonged task of forging it precluded discussion of the special issue reserved for the Ministerial (see Table 3).

Realism vs creativity

A secondary-school MAC is an experiential learning exercise, not a diplomatic scenario analysis, and I have already noted a number of ways in which NORMAC and MAC Bilbao procedures deviate from actual Arctic Council procedures for educational purposes. By contrast, the UArctic MAC is intended to prepare university students for leadership roles in the circumpolar North by inducting them into the complexities of Arctic governance (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017; UArctic MAC Thematic Network, 2018). Delegates to the Fairbanks UArctic MAC formally presented their ‘Fairbanks Declaration’ to an audience of SAOs and other Arctic Council officials in the hope that it would inform future Arctic Council proceedings. Some Fairbanks delegates, together with delegates from another university MAC, have even argued that their MACs served as an alternative form of real diplomacy (Sarson *et al.*, 2019).

For obvious reasons, the objectives of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao focus more squarely on creative teaching and learning alone. Experience with MAC may well motivate some delegates to study the Arctic as part of a broader undergraduate programme, such as in anthropology, geography or

international relations. But secondary-school pupils have many possible academic and professional paths ahead, and it would be inconsonant to expect a secondary-school MAC to inspire them except in a more general way.

With this in mind, delegates to NORMAC or MAC Bilbao are afforded considerable licence to propose, discuss and pass a 'Norwich Declaration' or 'Bilbao Declaration' that does not meet Arctic Council standards, and which may not even be politically practicable. Most secondary-school pupils are only beginning to learn how their own governments work, let alone the intricacies of international diplomacy involving both state and non-state actors. In my experience, they are prone to overestimate the power and resources that public bodies actually have, perhaps because of the pervasive role authority plays in their still-young lives.

At the same time, preparatory materials for NORMAC and MAC Bilbao stress that the Arctic Council is a 'policy-shaping' rather than a policy-making body, and that the Arctic Council is an international forum without the legal status of an organisation such as the UN (Brigham *et al.*, 2016; Nord, 2016). Delegates are advised to craft realistic declarations that call for or sketch out a common approach to a problem, rather than declarations mandating compliance with rules that could not be enforced. However, the quality of declarations varies with the individual delegates most closely involved with drafting them, and with the quality of their own pre-conference research and preparation. The process of learning creatively and autonomously, not only about the Arctic itself, but also about how public bodies work and how consensus can develop, ultimately must take precedence over the political plausibility of the final declaration.

Additionally, delegates to NORMAC or MAC Bilbao may tackle some issues not found on the Arctic Council agenda. For instance, at NORMAC 2017 the PAME Working Group debated the issue of commercial fishing in the international waters of the central Arctic Ocean. In reality, the 'Arctic Five' coastal states controversially decided to take this issue forward outside the Arctic Council, possibly the better to control negotiated outcomes (Molenaar, 2015). Similarly, at NORMAC 2019 the CAFF Working Group debated the regulation of whaling in Arctic waters, an issue normally reserved for the International Whaling Commission. But NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are expressly intended to raise awareness and understanding of the Arctic amongst delegates, and it would seem counterproductive to bar them from discussing issues relevant to the Arctic simply because political factors have removed them from Arctic Council auspices.

That said, realism is still an explicit aim of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao. As I described in the section above on how NORMAC and MAC Bilbao work, the Arctic Council's constitutional rule against discussing military security matters is maintained, most issues on the conference agendas reflect the thematic priorities of the current Arctic Council chairmanship programme, and delegates are eligible for commendations based partly on how well they researched those issues and acted their assigned roles. I also use the pre-Ministerial briefing to attempt to steer delegates back towards actual Arctic-State or PP positions if they have drifted too far from reality, even after allowing for creative licence.

Sustaining interest

Like all model diplomacy conferences, secondary-school MACs involve considerable preparation on the part of delegates. Ideally, delegates would conduct this research together in an existing model diplomacy club, or perhaps even at a new MAC or Arctic club that could continue after the

MAC itself. Where appropriate, this research could be woven into existing curricula—for instance, a cold-climate topic in a geography course, or an international relations topic in a politics course. However, the opportunity that university faculty have to offer a special, timetabled module on Arctic international relations, Arctic regional governance, or the Arctic Council itself, in order to prepare students for a MAC, is simply unavailable to secondary-school teachers.

Although MAC preparation may not overlap with the school curriculum except indirectly, delegates from schools in the UK offering an Extended Project Qualification at A-Level have the opportunity to transform their NORMAC or MAC Bilbao research into a nationally recognised certificate. Delegates from schools around the world offering the International Baccalaureate, with its Extended Essay requirement, or from schools offering credit for some sort of independent study project, could do the same. In this way, the most enthusiastic delegates can extend their engagement with the Arctic well beyond the conference.

Participating schools could also consider integrating MAC preparation with other co-curricular activities, such as visits to universities with Arctic-related programmes, or youth campaigns for Indigenous rights through clubs such as Amnesty. School trips to the Arctic are also possible. At certain UK schools, trips to Iceland or Norway are already popular.

There have now been a total of six separate NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences, with three further secondary-school conferences scheduled for 2020. Many of the same schools, and a few of the same delegates, have attended more than one conference (see Table 4), and the NORMAC Secretariat in particular is evolving into an office handed down between pupil year-groups at Norwich School. Repeat attendance as a MAC delegate, or sequential years of service on a MAC Secretariat, helps to build and sustain interest in the Arctic. It is my intention to continue running NORMAC, MAC Bilbao and possibly other secondary-school MACs on an annual basis, which will allow for more repeat attendance and service, and even for some pupils to become MAC veterans.

Evidence of educational outcomes

NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are intended to raise awareness and understanding of the Arctic amongst secondary-school pupils; to inspire them to learn more about the region, its peoples and its challenges; and to help develop their skills in public speaking, negotiation and consensus-building. Survey data obtained from delegates to four NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences in 2018 and 2019 show that both MACs are meeting these objectives, and that they have had considerable positive educational impact. An analysis relating the survey data to each of the three objectives follows, after a brief general discussion of the survey method and the characteristics of the respondents.

Method and respondents

Delegates to the four most recent NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences—the inaugural MAC Bilbao conference of January 2018, the third NORMAC conference of February 2018, the second MAC Bilbao conference of January 2019, and the fourth NORMAC conference of February 2019—were requested to complete two surveys. In the first survey, taken ahead of the conference, delegates were asked to provide a few basic details about themselves, including any past participation in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao, and any first-hand experience of the Arctic. They were also

asked to rate on a five-point scale their expertise with model diplomacy, as well as their general knowledge of the Arctic and Indigenous peoples' issues before beginning preparatory research.

In the second survey, taken just after the conference ended, delegates were again asked to rate on a five-point scale their knowledge of the Arctic and Indigenous peoples' issues, as well as their agreement with statements describing what they might have learned from NORMAC or MAC Bilbao. Qualitative data were collected in the form of two open-ended questions. In the pre-conference survey, delegates were asked what excited or interested delegates most about participating in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao. In the post-conference survey, they were asked what they had learned the most from their participation.

Response rates to both surveys were very high. Of a total of 142 possible respondents, 141 completed the pre-conference survey fully and one partially, and 131 completed the post-conference survey fully and five partially. All respondents, apart from the five who partially completed the post-conference survey, answered all quantitative questions. Many respondents answered the qualitative questions as well, with 135 of 142 respondents answering the qualitative question in the pre-conference survey, and 113 of 138 respondents answering the qualitative question in the post-conference survey.

Like most secondary-school model diplomacy conferences, the four recent NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences attracted older pupils. The average age of delegates to the four conferences was 16.2 years, with 86% of delegates between 15 and 17 years of age. The youngest delegates were two pupils of 13 years of age, and the oldest delegates three pupils of 20 years of age.

On the face of it, the four recent NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences seemed to prove particularly appealing to girls. Sixty-three percent of delegates were female, and girls outnumbered boys at all four conferences. It is worth noting, however, that all four conferences involved a comparatively large number of delegates from girls' schools, totalling 27% of all delegates. Considering only delegates from coeducational schools, the genders were equally balanced.

Many delegates had previously attended MUN or similar conferences. Taken as a group, delegates rated their experience of model diplomacy at a mean of 2.3 points on a five-point scale. Relative newcomers significantly outnumbered veterans, however, with 63% rating their experience at one or two points, and only 15% at four or five points.

As might be expected, only 10 of 136 individual delegates had attended a previous MAC, all of them an earlier NORMAC or MAC Bilbao conference, and none had previously attended more than one. Three individual delegates attended both NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, two of them just one month apart in 2018. Moreover, of 24 individual schools sending delegates to at least one of the four conferences, 10 sent delegates to two or more MACs, including NORMAC 2017 (see Table 4).

Delegates who answered the pre-conference qualitative question expressed a variety of opinions about what features of NORMAC or MAC Bilbao interested or excited them the most, with many pointing to the opportunity to meet new people, and to learn how to communicate effectively in public. Taken together, however, 51% of respondents mentioned some unique or novel aspect of the MAC format. Of these respondents, 54% mentioned the thematic focus on the Arctic or the Arctic Council, 21% the chance to represent or learn about Indigenous peoples, and 19% the emphasis on collaboration and the rule of consensus. Seventeen percent also explicitly drew a

general contrast with MUNs, perhaps lending some credence to the idea of ‘MUN fatigue’ mentioned above.

Few delegates to any of the conferences reported noteworthy first-hand experience of the Arctic. Two delegates two had visited Iceland on a school trip, one had visited northern Sweden briefly on a school exchange, one had visited northern Norway, and one had visited Alaska. However, one delegate to NORMAC 2019 had circumnavigated Svalbard twice, and he explained that he had chosen to participate in the conference because of a fascination with and love of the Arctic.

Most delegates hailed from non-Arctic countries, particularly the United Kingdom and Spain where NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are located. However, a significant number of delegates to both conferences were enrolled at international schools, and as a group delegates represented 27 home countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America (see Table 5). A small number of delegates came from or had lived in Denmark, Russia or the United States of America, but none of them reported having visited or lived in the Arctic territories of those countries.

Raising awareness and understanding of the Arctic

Since delegates to the four recent NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences had had little previous exposure to the Arctic, it is especially encouraging that they valued both conferences extremely highly as learning experiences (see Table 6). Depending on the topic, between 87% and 92% of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had taught them about the Arctic as a region, about the issues and challenges facing the Arctic, about the workings of the Arctic Council, and about the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. Taken individually, 97% of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had taught them about at least two of these topics, 88% at least three topics, and 70% all four topics.

Not only were delegates certain that they had learned something from NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, but also that they had learned much. Ahead of each conference, and before any preparatory research, delegates rated their knowledge of the Arctic and of Indigenous peoples at means of 1.9 and 1.7 respectively on a five-point scale. After participating in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao, they rated their knowledge markedly higher, at means of 3.8 and 3.9 respectively on a five-point scale. Whilst these subjective ratings are only directionally meaningful indicators of knowledge possessed or gained—delegates certainly did not become Arctic experts!—they at least demonstrate that delegates had no doubts that they learned a significant amount from their MAC experiences.

Indeed, delegates thought highly of the educational value of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao in general. Eighty-two percent of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that, by playing a delegate to the Arctic Council, they had learned more about the Arctic than they would have done simply by reading about the subject, and 93% of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned more about the point of view of the Arctic State or PP that they fictively represented. Moreover, 96% of delegates also agreed or strongly agreed that diplomatic simulations such as NORMAC or MAC Bilbao are a good way to learn. These figures echo similar results obtained from surveys of delegates to the Fairbanks UArctic MAC (Ehrlander & Boylan, 2017).

The only exception to these uniformly high results is the 69% of delegates who agreed or strongly agreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had taught them about the concept of Indigenous rights specifically. This result contrasts with the 87% who agreed or strongly agreed that their conference

had taught them about Indigenous peoples of the Arctic more generally, and with delegates' self-reported improvement in knowledge of Indigenous issues. These results suggest that an opportunity exists to teach delegates more about the legal and political context of Indigenous participation in the Arctic Council. I shall return to this opportunity below.

At the same time, the fact that over two-thirds of delegates agreed that their MAC experience taught them about Indigenous rights represents significant learning. It is also worth noting that delegates who represented PPs were 21 percentage points more likely than delegates representing Arctic States to agree or strongly agree that they had learned about Indigenous rights, at 83% to 62%. Furthermore, no delegate who represented a PP was amongst the 4% of delegates who disagreed or strongly disagreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had taught them about this particular topic.

It seems clear from the results above that NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are meeting their objective of raising awareness and understanding of the Arctic amongst secondary-school pupils. Qualitative data reinforce this conclusion, and they suggest further that NORMAC and MAC Bilbao instilled a newfound appreciation for the Arctic and the Indigenous peoples living there. Of the delegates who answered the post-conference qualitative question about what they had learned the most from their conference, 51% pointed specifically to learning about the Arctic or Indigenous peoples, including learning about the Arctic Council and the specific Arctic issues on the conference agenda. Indeed, just as many delegates pointed specifically to learning about Arctic Indigenous peoples as those who pointed to learning about the Arctic in general. One delegate commented that he had 'debunked many misconceptions I previously had about Indigenous people', and another wrote 'MAC Bilbao opened my eyes to new struggles'.

Other delegates were particularly impressed by the unexpected complexities of the Arctic. One delegate commented about the improvement in her knowledge of the Arctic after the conference that 'it's far more complicated than I thought!'. Similarly, another delegate summed up the post-conference comments of a number of his peers, writing that he had 'learned a lot, but there is still a lot to learn'.

Inspiring further learning about the Arctic

In contrast to the emphasis that some delegates placed on how much remains to learn about the Arctic, it may seem somewhat surprising that no more than 62% of delegates agreed or strongly agreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had in fact inspired them to learn more in future (see Table 6). Despite this result, 91% of delegates indicated that they would like to attend a future NORMAC or MAC Bilbao conference. Given the preparatory research necessary to participate in a MAC, this figure strongly suggests a continued interest in further learning about the Arctic. It is possible that the 62% figure reflects some exhaustion amongst delegates after an intense few days of model diplomacy, and after having committed to some weeks of preparatory research in addition to their usual schoolwork.

This interpretation must remain speculative pending more probing survey questions accompanying future rounds of MAC conferences. As I mentioned above, many delegates reported that they wished to participate in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao for reasons not specifically related to the Arctic, such as meeting new people and learning how to communicate effectively in public. Whilst

these reasons are not incompatible with a desire to learn about the Arctic, they may have been more important to some delegates than the topical content of the MAC itself.

All the same, only 7% of delegates disagreed or strongly disagreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had inspired them to learn more about the Arctic. It may well be that up to 93% of delegates were either inspired by their MAC experience in a more active sense, or felt open to further learning in a more passive sense—especially experiential and interactive learning that would also introduce them to new people and facilitate the development of their interpersonal skills. This figure tallies closely with the 91% of respondents who would participate in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao again. Interpreted in this way—and considering that nearly two-thirds of delegates were in fact inspired to learn more about the Arctic—the survey results tend to support the conclusion that the two MACs are meeting this objective.

Improving interpersonal skills

As I mentioned above, many delegates participated in NORMAC or MAC Bilbao with the desire to improve their abilities to communicate and collaborate with others. It is an explicit objective of both MACs that delegates do so. In keeping with Arctic Council practice, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao delegates must take all decisions by consensus of the Arctic States, and ideally including PPs as well. In this way, the two conferences offer a dynamic and challenging setting in which delegates can build skills in public speaking, negotiation and consensus building.

Delegates are not alone in their desire to build such skills. Speaking from my own experience, as well as from conversations with colleagues, teachers do not merely hope that model diplomacy will help our pupils to become more politically aware. We especially hope that it will help them to become more confident in themselves and more adept at collaborating with others. As one teacher remarked after his school's third NORMAC conference, 'It is the need for consensus (not just a majority) which makes it truly special—in a world of hyper-partisanship and populism, an event that identifies the things that unite and compromise is just the tonic for the youth of today' (J. Kempton, personal communication, 2019).

Survey results show that 72% of delegates to NORMAC and MAC Bilbao agreed or strongly agreed that their MAC had helped them develop skills in public speaking, negotiation and consensus building (see Table 6). Nearly three-quarters of delegates represent a substantial majority, and it suggests considerable learning. However, despite its significance, the figure may seem relatively low in comparison to the very large proportion of delegates who agreed that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had raised their awareness and understanding of the Arctic.

It may be worth noting in this context that a number of delegates to NORMAC and MAC Bilbao had previous experience of model diplomacy, particularly MUN. They may have considered their interpersonal skills already well developed. One delegate, who gave the maximum rating to his own MUN experience, explained that his rating indicating neither agreement nor disagreement with interpersonal skills development was not meant critically, but only to say that 'nothing much [was] added or improved'. By contrast, another delegate who was a newcomer to model diplomacy, wrote in a rating of '10' to demonstrate his enthusiastic agreement with the statement that his MAC had helped him develop interpersonal skills, rather than simply circle the maximum rating of five printed on the survey sheet.

Even so, the data show no correlation between agreement that NORMAC or MAC Bilbao had helped improve interpersonal skills, and self-declared experience with model diplomacy. It appears that some veterans and some newcomers alike benefitted greatly from the conference in this way, and some less so. In my experience, teachers familiar with model diplomacy believe that pupils 'get out what they put into it'. It is also my experience that delegates vary enormously in their willingness to speak and interact with other delegates at conferences, with some dominating discussions, others saying virtually nothing, and many in between. It may well be that those delegates who participated more eagerly saw more improvement in their interpersonal skills than delegates who did not.

As with the question of inspiration above, however, this interpretation must also remain speculative pending more detailed surveys after future conferences. Nonetheless, with nearly three-quarters of delegates reporting that they had improved their interpersonal skills at NORMAC or MAC Bilbao, it seems fair to conclude that the two MACs are also meeting this objective.

Future plans

Survey data clearly indicate that NORMAC and MAC Bilbao have had a strong and positive educational impact. They also suggest some ways in which that impact could be strengthened further. In addition, I continue to experiment with NORMAC and MAC Bilbao procedures to meet the challenges of assisting delegates with preparation, encouraging them toward consensus, and balancing realism with creativity. In this section, I shall briefly remark upon four ways in which I intend to try to extend and improve NORMAC and MAC Bilbao further in the near to medium-term future.

First, as I indicated above, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao have attracted a handful of delegates hailing from some of the Arctic States. However, they have not yet involved delegates from any schools in the Arctic itself, especially Indigenous delegates. The involvement of delegates with experience of the Arctic, especially those who could bring to bear personal experience of indigeneity and Indigenous rights, would in my view tremendously increase the educational value of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao for all delegates.

Funding for travel to Norwich or Bilbao is the main obstacle. I would be keen to hear directly from any Arctic State governments, PPs or charitable bodies that may be interested to assist delegates from an Arctic school defray all or some of the costs of attending NORMAC or MAC Bilbao. This initial contact could also lead to a more permanent school-to-school relationship, which could involve other educational benefits such as future pupil exchanges.

Second, whilst it would be welcome to host pupils from Arctic schools at future NORMAC and MAC Bilbao conferences, it also seems desirable that there exists one or more secondary-school MACs in one or more Arctic States, ideally hosted by an Arctic school. Unlike MUNs, which can be very large given the number of UN Member States, MACs are necessarily much smaller affairs. One way to increase secondary-school interest in MACs is to establish more of them, either as stand-alone conferences or alongside the many MUNs already running around the world. I would welcome expressions of interest from any school or organisation interested to host or help fund a MAC, most especially from schools or organisations located in, or concerned with, the Arctic region.

Third, even amongst non-Arctic schools, the costs of participating in model diplomacy conferences—including registration fees, travel and accommodation—can be prohibitive. Hosting a model diplomacy conference is also expensive, especially the costs of catering meals for visiting pupils and their teachers, and of hiring external venues if school premises cannot accommodate the conference due to size or other clashing activities. In the UK, for instance, MUN is to a large extent the preserve of private schools, and even here parents are sometimes asked to help defray expenses for travelling pupils. State schools with limited budgets can find model diplomacy simply unaffordable.

NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are not exempt from this problem. Of the 25 schools participating to date, 17 have been private schools. Considering the educational benefits of MAC discussed above, as well as the educational and career advantages that private-school pupils already enjoy relative to their state-school peers, it would seem valuable to make MAC more accessible. I have already opened discussions with interested organisations about launching a MAC aimed specifically at state schools, particularly schools from communities whose pupils have not historically applied for or been accepted to university. I would be grateful to hear directly from any organisation interested in supporting such a project.

Finally, the secondary-school MAC format that I have developed for NORMAC and MAC Bilbao is by no means fixed. I continue to seek ways to develop it to heighten interest in the Arctic amongst secondary-school pupils, and to augment its educational value. Three selected possibilities under consideration include eliminating the formal rules of procedure, simulating Arctic Council Observer delegations, and adding teaching sessions to the conference timetable.

As I discussed above, the formal NORMAC and MAC Bilbao rules of procedure at the SAO and Ministerial level are designed to provide secondary-school pupils, whose interpersonal skills are nascent, with a supportive framework for effective consensus building in limited time. Yet they do not well reflect Arctic Council practice. Where host-school logistics make it possible to convene a longer conference, I intend to experiment with facilitated or moderated discussion at all levels of the conference, rather than merely at Working Group level.

I may also experiment with inviting pupils to play delegates from Arctic Council Observers, an option available at the Fairbanks UArctic MAC and other university MACs. Observers include influential non-governmental organisations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, as well as powerful non-Arctic states, such as China. However, according to Arctic Council rules, Observer delegations participate primarily in Working Groups, with some limited possibilities for participation at SAO and Ministerial meetings. Secondary-school pupils without specialised interest in a particular Observer may find it undesirable to be assigned a role that constrains their participation in the conference relative to their peers. If Observers are to be a part of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao, delegate expectations will need to be balanced against realism.

Finally, as I indicated above, an opportunity exists for delegates to learn even more about the broader context of Indigenous participation in the Arctic Council, and in particular about Indigenous rights. There may also exist an opportunity for delegates to learn more about other fundamental concepts at play in Arctic governance as well. Where time permits, I may experiment with a ‘teaching morning’ on the first day of the conference, designed to supplement delegates’ own preparatory research on the Arctic, the Arctic Council and the issues to be discussed at the

conference that year. In addition, I intend also develop a ‘MAC Handbook’ explaining such concepts in simple terms, which delegates can consult before and during the conference.

Indeed, pedagogical studies of university-level model diplomacy suggest that quality of preparatory research, and familiarity with international governance structures and challenges, are major factors determining the educational value of the simulation for participants (Duchatelet, Gijbels, Bursens, Donche & Spooren, 2019; Haack, 2008; Hazelton & Mahurin, 1986). Where secondary-school delegates are motivated, a teaching morning and MAC Handbook could similarly help them and their teachers realise the full educational benefit of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao.

Concluding remarks

NORMAC and MAC Bilbao are the only secondary-school MACs in the world today. The discussion above shows that participating pupils and schools have found them educationally beneficial to a very high degree. By their very nature, they are smaller and more intimate than typical MUN conferences—with only 14 possible delegations rather than 193, and a rule of unanimity rather than of majority, they offer a correspondingly greater opportunity for pupils to learn about international diplomacy, develop collaborative interpersonal skills, and to grow in confidence.

NORMAC and MAC Bilbao also offer pupils a powerful corrective to the today’s prevailing Arctic ‘imaginaries’. Exposure to the complexities of Arctic governance, and especially to the existence and values of Arctic Indigenous peoples, explodes preconceived notions of the Arctic as simply an uninhabited and fragile wilderness to be protected from any human influence, or an unclaimed resource frontier to be annexed and defended against others. At the same time, the challenges of building consensus on controversial political, social and environmental issues impresses upon pupils that the Arctic and its peoples are subject to the competing interests of powerful states and other groups that may be extremely difficult to reconcile.

These lessons are valuable. But one need not subscribe to ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ to wish not only that today’s youth develop a more nuanced understanding of the region, but also that they conceive of the Arctic as a place of co-operative dialogue, and as an ancient homeland for Indigenous peoples. By bringing pupils together with a mandate to build consensus according to the Arctic Council ideal of full agreement between states and Indigenous peoples, NORMAC and MAC Bilbao explicitly advance this goal. They should find much favour with educators, policy-makers and Arctic specialists concerned with the wellbeing of the Arctic and its peoples—and indeed with the Arctic Council itself.

The third MAC Bilbao and fifth NORMAC conferences are already scheduled for January and March 2020 respectively. I also plan to launch a new secondary-school MAC series in January 2020 at Wycombe Abbey in the UK. Like MAC Bilbao, ‘WYCOMAC’ is inspired by NORMAC, and it will share the same educational objectives. At present, I intend to continue all three conferences on an annual basis, and to develop new conferences wherever possible. Full details of future conferences are available online, including contact information for any schools, organisations or individuals interested in supporting or attending them.

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Table 1: MAC conferences

Date	Host	Location	Level	Remarks
August 2010	Students on Ice	(shipboard)	Secondary school	Held during youth Arctic expedition
October 2010	UN Association in Canada	Whitehorse, Canada	Secondary school	
March 2011	Nord University	Bodo, Norway	University	
March 2012	Nord University	Bodo, Norway	University	
March 2013	Nord University	Bodo, Norway	University	
December 2013	University of Tromsø	Tromsø, Norway	University	
February 2014	Northern Arctic Federal University	Arkhangelsk, Russia	University	UArctic MAC (pilot)
March 2014	Nord University	Bodo, Norway	University	
March 2015	Nord University	Bodo, Norway	University	
April 2015	Moscow State Institute for International Relations	Moscow, Russia	University	
October 2015	Youth Atlantic Treaty Association Norway; University of Tromsø	Tromsø, Norway	University	
November 2015	Northeastern Federal University	Yakutsk, Russia	University	
December 2015	French Polar Cluster; Kallander & Associates LLC	Paris, France	University	Held during UNFCCC COP 21
February 2016	Moscow State Institute for International Relations	Moscow, Russia	University	
February 2016	University of Oslo	Oslo, Norway	University	Jointly with Oslo MUN
March 2016	University of Alaska Fairbanks	Fairbanks, USA	University	UArctic MAC
July 2016	Polar Aspect; Norwich School	Norwich, UK	Secondary school	NORMAC (pilot)
September 2016	Northern Arctic Federal University	Arkhangelsk, Russia	University	
April 2017	Polar Aspect; Norwich School	Norwich, UK	Secondary school	NORMAC
May 2017	Italian Society for International Organisation	Rome, Italy	University	Some secondary-school delegates
June 2017	Dartmouth College	Hanover, USA	University	
September 2017	Inuit Ataqatigiit Folketingmi; University of Greenland	Nuuk, Greenland	University	Some secondary-school delegates
January 2018	Polar Aspect; Colegio Ayalde	Bilbao, Spain	Secondary school	MAC Bilbao; jointly with MUN Bilbao
February 2018	Polar Aspect; Norwich School	Norwich, UK	Secondary school	NORMAC
October 2018	University of Lapland	Rovaniemi, Finland	University	UArctic MAC
January 2019	Polar Aspect; Colegio Ayalde	Bilbao, Spain	Secondary school	MAC Bilbao; jointly with MUN Bilbao
February 2019	Polar Aspect; Norwich School	Norwich, UK	Secondary school	NORMAC
June 2019	Polar Aspect; Trent University; University of East Anglia	Norwich, UK	University	NORMAC University (pilot)
January 2020 (in preparation)	Polar Aspect; Wycombe Abbey	High Wycombe, UK	Secondary school	WYCOMAC; jointly with WASAMUN
January 2020 (in preparation)	Polar Aspect; Colegio Ayalde	Bilbao, Spain	Secondary school	MAC Bilbao; jointly with MUN Bilbao
March 2020 (in preparation)	Polar Aspect; Norwich School	Norwich, UK	Secondary school	NORMAC
March 2020 (in preparation)	University of Akureyri	Akureyri, Iceland	University	UArctic MAC
June 2020 (in preparation)	Polar Aspect; Trent University; University of East Anglia	Norwich, UK	University	NORMAC University

Note: This list is not necessarily exhaustive, and the author would be grateful for any additions or corrections

Source: Polar Aspect

Table 2: Websites for Polar Aspect secondary-school MACs

MAC	Website
NORMAC	http://www.normac.org/
MAC Bilbao	http://www.mun-bilbao.com/en/preparation/arctic-council.html and http://www.mun-bilbao.com/en/conference/committees-topics/arctic.html
WYCOMAC	https://mun.wycombeabbey.com/wycomac-arctic-council/
MAC Research Library (for all MACs)	http://vlt.is/course/index.php?categoryid=4

Source: Polar Aspect

Table 3: Issues on the agenda of NORMAC and MAC Bilbao

Session	Issue
<i>NORMAC 2016</i>	
PAME	Marine protected areas in the Arctic
SDWG	Suicide in Arctic communities
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (not discussed)
<i>NORMAC 2017</i>	
AMAP	Arctic wetlands and climate change
PAME	Commercial fishing in the Arctic Ocean
SDWG	Educational opportunity for Arctic children
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (not discussed)
<i>MAC Bilbao 2018</i>	
AMAP	Arctic wetlands and climate change
SDWG	Educational opportunity for Arctic children
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (not discussed)
<i>NORMAC 2018</i>	
AMAP	Methane hydrates and climate change (no consensus reached)
PAME	Seismic exploration for oil and gas in the Arctic offshore (no consensus reached)
SDWG	Broadband connectivity in Arctic communities
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (no consensus reached)
<i>MAC Bilbao 2019</i>	
PAME	Seismic exploration for oil and gas in the Arctic offshore (no consensus reached)
SDWG	Broadband connectivity in Arctic communities (no consensus reached)
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (not discussed)
<i>NORMAC 2019</i>	
AMAP	Meteorological cooperation in the Arctic
CAFF	Whaling in Arctic waters
PAME	Growth of Arctic shipping
Ministerial	The EU as an Arctic Council observer (not discussed)

Note: The 'special political' issue on the Ministerial agenda serves as a backup in case pupils either reach or fail to reach consensus on the other issues with time remaining before the conference ends, or if pupils wish to discuss it in preference to continuing with the issues discussed in Working Groups

Source: Polar Aspect

Table 4: Schools sending delegates to NORMAC or MAC Bilbao

School	Country	Delegates
<i>NORMAC 2016 (14 delegates)</i>		
Norwich School	United Kingdom	14
<i>NORMAC 2017 (35 delegates)</i>		
Colegio Ayalde	Spain	6
Ibstock Place School	United Kingdom	7
Langley School	United Kingdom	9
Norwich School	United Kingdom	4
Notre Dame High School	United Kingdom	3
Wymondham High School	United Kingdom	6
<i>MAC Bilbao 2018 (28 delegates)</i>		
Bishop Thomas Grant School	United Kingdom	2
Cívico Liceo Lingüístico Alessandro Manzoni	Italy	2
Colegio Ayalde	Spain	8
Colegio Munabe	Spain	2
Dhahran High School	Saudi Arabia	4
King's College Madrid	Spain	8
Rijnlands Lyceum Sassenheim	Netherlands	2
<i>NORMAC 2018 (46 delegates)</i>		
CATS College Cambridge	United Kingdom	3
CATS College Canterbury	United Kingdom	11
Colegio Ayalde	Spain	6
Gresham's School	United Kingdom	3
Ibstock Place School	United Kingdom	9
Langley School	United Kingdom	2
Notre Dame High School	United Kingdom	6
Wycombe Abbey	United Kingdom	6
<i>MAC Bilbao 2019 (26 delegates)</i>		
Colegio Alarcón	Spain	2
Colegio Munabe	Spain	2
Vrije ASO-School De Bron	Belgium	2
Gymnasium Schwerstraße Solingen	Germany	1
Heidelberger Privatschulzentrum	Germany	4
Institut Saint-Dominique	France	2
King's College Madrid	Spain	3
Lycée François Magendie	France	2
Ransom Everglades School	United States of America	2
Runnymede College	Spain	4
Wycombe Abbey	United Kingdom	2
<i>NORMAC 2019 (42 delegates)</i>		
CATS College Canterbury	United Kingdom	4
Colegio Ayalde	Spain	12
Gresham's School	United Kingdom	6
Langley School	United Kingdom	12
Norwich High School for Girls	United Kingdom	5
Norwich School	United Kingdom	3

Source: Polar Aspect

Table 5: Home countries of delegates to NORMAC and MAC Bilbao

Country	Delegates
<i>MAC Bilbao 2018 (28 delegates)</i>	
Spain	15
Saudi Arabia	3
United Kingdom	3
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Indonesia	1
Iraq	1
Turkey	1
<i>NORMAC 2018 (46 delegates)</i>	
United Kingdom	21
Spain	6
Nigeria	3
Germany	2
Malaysia	2
United States of America	2
Bahrain	1
China	1
Denmark	1
India	1
Indonesia	1
Ireland	1
Japan	1
Kazakhstan	1
Russia	1
Thailand	1
<i>MAC Bilbao 2019 (26 delegates)</i>	
Spain	11
France	4
Germany	3
Belgium	2
United Kingdom	2
United States of America	2
China	1
Turkey	1
<i>NORMAC 2019 (42 delegates)</i>	
United Kingdom	22
Spain	13
Albania	1
China	1
India	1
Iran	1
Qatar	1
Russia	1
Slovakia	1

Source: Polar Aspect

Table 6: Survey responses from delegates to NORMAC 2018 and 2019, and MAC Bilbao 2018 and 2019

Question or Statement	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Average Rating out of 5
<i>Pre-conference knowledge (1=worst, 5=best)</i>			
Please rate your level of knowledge of the Arctic			1.9
Please rate your level of knowledge of Indigenous peoples' issues			1.7
<i>Post-conference knowledge (1=worst, 5=best)</i>			
Please rate your level of knowledge of the Arctic			3.8
Please rate your level of knowledge of Indigenous peoples' issues			3.9
<i>Quality of learning experience (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)</i>			
'I learned about the Arctic as a region through MAC Bilbao/NORMAC'	90	1	4.4
'I learned about the issues and challenges facing the Arctic through MAC Bilbao/NORMAC'	92	0	4.4
'I learned about the workings of the Arctic Council through MAC Bilbao/NORMAC'	92	1	4.5
'I learned about the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic through MAC Bilbao/NORMAC'	87	2	4.3
'I learned about Indigenous rights through MAC Bilbao/NORMAC'	69*	4	3.9
'I learned more about the Arctic through participating in MAC Bilbao/NORMAC than I think I would have if I had only read a book about the Arctic'	82	3	4.3
'Playing the role of a Delegate from an Arctic State or Indigenous Permanent Participant helped me better to understand that group's point of view more than I think I would have if I had only read about it'	93	2	4.5
'MAC Bilbao/NORMAC has inspired me to continue to learn more about the Arctic'	62	7	3.8
'MAC Bilbao/NORMAC has helped to improve my skills in public speaking, negotiating or collaborating with others'	72	7	4.1
I believe that simulations like MAC Bilbao/NORMAC are a good way to learn'	96	1	4.7

* 83% amongst delegates who represented Indigenous Permanent Participant organisations rather than Arctic States.
Source: Polar Aspect