

**The Arctic Council and  
Circumpolar Governance**

# ONE ARCTIC

Edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer,  
Heather Nicol, and Wilfrid Greaves

One Arctic

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**Canadian Arctic  
Resources Committee**

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## Introduction

*P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Heather Nicol and Wilfrid Greaves*

*Eight countries make up the Arctic: the Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the United States and Canada. And nothing would be worse than each of these countries trying to exploit the maximum instead of working with the other countries to promote responsible stewardship. Nothing could be worse than militarization based on mistrust between these countries that are neighbours.*

*The Arctic Council is the way to create cooperation among eight countries that cling strongly to their sovereignty ... Also at the table, and this is crucial to the Council's success, the Indigenous Permanent Participants—from Canada, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Gwich'in Council International and the Arctic Athabaskan Council, as well as the Aleut International Association, the Saami Council and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.*

*In the words of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, words later borrowed by the current U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the aim is, and I quote, "One Arctic: shared opportunities, challenges and responsibilities.*

-- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, Parliamentary Secretary to the  
Canadian Minister of Global Affairs, 29 September 2016

Since its founding through the Ottawa Declaration in September 1996, the Arctic Council has, to quote the U.S. State Department (2011), evolved to become "the preeminent forum for international cooperation in the Arctic." The eight member Council is the key intergovernmental body for regional cooperation in addressing environmental and sustainable development challenges in the circumpolar north, and plays a vital role in conveying Arctic perspectives to other international and global organizations. Although a high-level "discussional and catalytic" venue rather than a political decision-making

body (Koivurova and VanderZwaag 2007), the Council “does excellent technical work and informs and enables states to adopt progressive and environmentally and socially responsible policies” (Arctic Athabaskan Council 2008: 3). The inclusion on the Council of formal status for six organizations as “Permanent Participants” representing Indigenous peoples – an innovative development in international relations – enables the region’s original inhabitants to contribute their political perspectives, policy expertise, and traditional knowledge to debates on circumpolar issues.

This volume of essays, written during the time when the Arctic Council was celebrating its twentieth anniversary under the theme of “One Arctic” and the leadership of the United States’ second chairmanship, discusses the evolution of the Arctic Council as a political forum. It traces the key developments in the formation of the Council, identifies recent directions in intergovernmental policy and decision-making, and assesses how the Council engages with its membership. Key to this discussion is understanding how the recent North American chairmanships by Canada (2013-2015) and the United States (2015-2017) identified and articulated new pathways for Arctic cooperation. In devising the US Arctic Council chairmanship’s program, American policy-makers grounded the “One Arctic” concept in a holistic environmental paradigm rooted in addressing climate change. Often called the bellwether of global climate change, the Arctic has warmed at about twice the rate of the rest of the planet, resulting in decreasing Arctic sea ice, accelerated melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet, thawing permafrost, and acidification of the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic is uniquely vulnerable to environmental changes, and the Arctic Council’s activities have traditionally focused on scientific research and environmental conservation (English 2013; Koivurova 2009). As David Balton (2016), Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials during the U.S. chairmanship, noted, “thanks in part to the top-flight assessments of climate change and related phenomena that the Arctic Council has produced, people throughout the world have a much greater appreciation of the profound effects of climate change on the Arctic and of the effects of Arctic climate change on the rest of the planet.” Building on this legacy, the U.S. focused its chairmanship on three key priorities: improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change. Coinciding with the final two years of

President Barack Obama's time in office, during which he prioritized climate change as an issue across his Administration (see Greaves, Chapter 5 in this volume), the U.S. chairmanship further elevated climate change and the management of environmental risk to the top of the Arctic agenda.

It differed in this respect from the Canadian chairmanship that preceded it, which emphasized economic development in the region, including establishing a new forum for the involvement of non-state corporate actors in regional governance (Exner-Pirot 2016). Paradoxically, climate change has enabled new economic prospects related to the opening of the Arctic Ocean from seasonal sea ice cover, such as new maritime transport routes and offshore energy resources. In the past decade, these opportunities have sparked the interest of the international community and led numerous non-Arctic actors to articulate their interests in the region. Estimates of large volumes of untapped polar resources, particularly oil and gas (Gautier *et al.* 2009), provoked a geopolitical sensation: around the world, news media speculated about an alleged "race" to tap the melting Arctic's riches and promoted narratives of interstate conflicts and a new Cold War. Though many scholars have rebutted such Arctic alarmism (Young 2009; Keil 2014; Greaves 2016), the phenomenon demonstrates the contemporary salience and interconnectedness of issues pertaining to environmental change, economic opportunities, and the dynamics of regional conflict and cooperation. Together, those developments have presented a challenge to the Arctic Council, but they also helped bring it into the global spotlight, where it remains.

The theme of "One Arctic," however, is broader and more ambiguous than a focus on environmental issues such as pollution or climate change, or the prospects for regional economic development. Although it offers an appealingly flexible rubric to some actors that can be applied to the region in disparate ways, the conceptual origins of "One Arctic" are Inuit (see Fabbi, Young and Finke, Chapter 8 in this volume). It was adopted as a way of fostering bonds among Inuit people who – though still residing in their traditional homeland – had experienced processes of colonization and state expansion that left them divided across the borders of four different countries. To other Arctic states and peoples, however, "One Arctic" means everything from transnational Indigenous cooperation, to sustainable resource development for local communities, to a regional sea program predicated on international law and the United Nations

Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It provides a thematic umbrella with the potential to help unify a region that is, in fact, characterized by substantial social, political, demographic, and ecological diversity that must be constantly defined as belonging to a single, clear conception of what ‘the Arctic’ means as a region of the world (Østreng, Chapter 10 in this volume; Bennett *et al.* 2016; Steinberg *et al.* 2015).

Accordingly, contributors to this volume were asked to unpack the different meanings behind the “One Arctic” agenda, to reflect on its evolution, and to contemplate its relevance to the future of the Arctic Council and Arctic governance more broadly. All of the authors indicate that significant changes in the Arctic over the past decade make it necessary to reassess some common assumptions about the nature and direction of the Arctic Council and how it fits within the larger arena of international relations. The questions raised include: Do the recent US and Canadian chairmanships reflect continuity or change from the Council’s earlier phases of institutional development and policy emphasis? What is the significance of increased participation by non-Arctic states as Observers to the Council? What are the implications of the Council’s emerging role in producing legally binding international agreements? Do the Arctic Council’s recent efforts to promote regional economic development undermine its longstanding emphasis on sustainable development and environmental protection? Lastly, how do Arctic policy goals relate to the other priorities and actions taken by circumpolar states? Do Arctic Council members practice what they preach when it comes to pressing regional issues such as climate change, natural resource extraction, scientific cooperation, and Indigenous rights and self-determination?

As the chapters in this volume suggest, the idea of “One Arctic” can serve as a lens through which to interrogate more closely how Arctic states, Indigenous rights-holders, other stakeholders, and the Arctic Council itself produce and transform divergent Arctic imaginaries (see Steinberg *et al.* 2015). Our shared goal is to better understand how these actors balance disparate positions, policies, strategies and stakeholder interests into coherent sets of regionalized policy platforms consistent with national ambitions, while accommodating the interests of regional, international, non-governmental, and non-state actors. To answer this question, the authors in this volume identify and map Arctic state agendas (with a particular focus on the Swedish, Canadian,

and U.S. chairmanships) and their relationship with Arctic Council processes, leading us to consider the effectiveness of various approaches to policy-making and of the Council itself. Analyses also consider and engage with the structural parameters which define the organization of the Arctic Council (see, for example, Graczyk and Koivurova 2013), the range of programming and governance activities that the Council influences (Koivurova 2015), the relationship between circumpolar cooperation and national/subnational governance (Dodds 2015; Steinberg and Dodds 2014; Heininen 2004), and potential spillover effects in capacity-building at the international scale (e.g. Heininen and Nicol 2007).

The first half of the book explores the evolution of the Arctic Council from its establishment in the mid-1990s to the end of its second decade, while the second half examines the genealogy and disparate meanings of the “One Arctic” theme, evaluates the ongoing work of the Council, and relates both to the policies and practices of Arctic states. Four Arctic commentators have recently suggested that the Arctic Council is a “marvel” and, while conceding some limitations, “contend that it is the closest thing we have to perfection in international relations” (Brigham *et al.* 2016: 15). The contributors to this volume suggest that, while this description is certainly inflated, the Arctic Council does serve as an important example of robust international cooperation, region-building, inclusion of Indigenous stakeholders, and incorporation of Indigenous traditional knowledge. We argue that the Council’s activities have provided a scientific basis for state and international agenda setting and decision-making, and make the case that the interplay between domestic and international agendas, economic and environmental development, and the efficacy of the Council’s role in global relations puts this innovative regional forum at an important crossroads in its history.

In Chapter One, Małgorzata (Gosia) Śmieszek and Timo Koivurova argue that the Arctic Council’s 20th anniversary marks an appropriate point for reflection on its performance so far and the challenges that lie ahead. Over its first two decades, the Council —established at a time when global interest in the Arctic was historically low — managed to adapt to a rapidly changing biophysical and geopolitical environment and become the primary intergovernmental body for cooperation on regional issues. During the same period, the Arctic has experienced profound transformation due to the

combined and interrelated forces of climate change and globalization. Koivurova and Śmieszek explore how the Arctic Council has reacted to this burgeoning global interest and new developments. How has it coped with the regional challenges? What does this tell us about its ability to address challenges to come? To answer these questions, the authors re-examine the foundations upon which the Arctic Council was built in the 1980s and early 1990s. They suggest most of these foundations remain intact, and remain important in directing current agendas and demonstrating continuity in Council operations. However, the general provisions of the Council's founding documents left enough space for interpretation, which has enabled incremental change. In this way, the Arctic Council has become a negotiating space for legally-binding agreements and has served as a catalyst for external bodies — such as the Arctic Economic Council, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and the Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum — to address specific topics of importance to the Council and to regional rights-holders and stakeholders more broadly.

Continuing the discussion on evolution and institutional change, in Chapter Two Douglas C. Nord examines the roles played by the Chair of the Arctic Council under three successive national chairmanships: Sweden, Canada, and the United States. His chapter engages conceptually with the different forms that leadership can take within international organizations, and highlights the different approaches taken by these three states in providing direction for the Council's governance efforts. Nord is particularly attentive to the states' differing capabilities in facilitating a cooperative framework for governance across the circumpolar north, and considers both the formal and informal "powers of the Chair," asking whether these powers were, or purposefully were not, employed in addressing specific governance challenges within the Council.

In Chapter Three, P. Whitney Lackenbauer focuses on the second Canadian chairmanship (2013-15), arguing that Canada's propensity to project its domestic northern strategy (which is deeply embedded in North American Arctic priorities) into the circumpolar sphere should come as no surprise owing to its success in deeply institutionalizing its conception of the Arctic within current instruments of regional governance (eg. Keskitalo 2004). Overall, Lackenbauer offers a succinct but nuanced overview of Canada's historical engagement with the Arctic and the development of its northern strategies, explaining why it places a high priority on sovereignty, economic development

for the benefit of Northerners, environmental protection, and governance (particularly by Arctic states and Northern Indigenous peoples). Although Canada's Arctic Council chairmanship priorities certainly reflected the Harper government's willingness to set an agenda that explicitly projected national interests for domestic political gain (unlike preceding Council chairs), they also reflect the intertwined domestic and international dimensions of the country's polar policies.

In Chapter Four, Andrew Chater poses the more specific question of how has Canada's second chairmanship influenced the Arctic Council and its contemporary role in regional governance? Chater suggests that Canada helped propel the Council's turn toward addressing explicitly economic issues (in addition to environmental problems), but did so with the consensus of other member states. Although Canada supported several economic projects in the Council, other key initiatives encouraged sustainable development and environmental protection, such as championing international co-operation on the creation of an agreement to address black carbon pollution. Chater argues that, despite criticism to the contrary, the Harper government actually helped to strengthen the Arctic Council and backed a policy that will ultimately help improve the position of Indigenous peoples in the institution.

In Chapter Five, Wilfrid Greaves situates Arctic politics within a broader policy context by examining how recent U.S. federal policies on energy and the environment have been constructed as both security-relevant and related to the Arctic. Specifically, he analyzes the security discourses used to frame U.S. executive policies on energy and climate change under President Barack Obama, and assesses these against the stated priorities of the 2015-17 U.S. Arctic Council chairmanship. When the United States assumed the rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council in spring 2015, Greaves observes, it articulated three key priorities: improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change. However, these priorities are situated against the backdrop of a president whose "all of the above" energy strategy promoted conventional and unconventional sources of fossil fuels while eventually prioritizing the fight against climate change during his final years in office. Greaves argues that the Obama Administration employed both environmental and energy security claims to justify various policy choices,

within and beyond the Arctic, resulting in accusations that it has done both too much and too little to curb fossil fuel extraction and use. Overall, Greaves' findings contribute to an assessment of the energy and environmental priorities and achievements of the Obama Administration, American leadership in the Arctic region, and debates over the securitization of energy extraction, economic development, and environmental change.

In Chapter Six, Jennifer Spence focuses her analysis on the credibility, saliency and legitimacy of the Arctic Council as a boundary organization. She suggests that the work of the Arctic Council, over its first two decades, offers an appropriate case study to explore the interplay between policy-makers, the scientific community, and Indigenous organizations in the circumpolar region. Spence adopts the concept of boundary, as defined by a literature in science and technology studies, as one that differentiates between different systems of knowledge – a boundary organization being an institution that brings together actors from both scientific and political communities, and that provides important mechanisms for the flow of ideas, information, and skills amongst actors in both communities. Spence is concerned with how the Arctic Council, as a boundary institution, facilitates the engagement between different social worlds to create knowledge relevant to policy- and decision-makers. She suggests that the Council's success has increased expectations for it – namely a shift from a decision-influencing role to a more action-oriented decision-shaping role. Spence concludes that the Arctic Council can only maintain its credibility, saliency and legitimacy if it continues to be supported by actors on each side of the boundary, and that this shift may make it more difficult to maintain the lines of responsibility and accountability among the different parties to which the Council is answerable.

Jim Gamble and Jessica M. Shadian pick up on this theme of the Council's shifting political role in Chapter Seven. Rather than conceptualizing the Arctic Council as a boundary organization, they suggest that it is becoming a conventional intergovernmental regime. Nonetheless, the political power that sub-national regions and the Permanent Participants have achieved cannot be set aside. A wide range of institutional forms of governance exists in the North, from land claims to legislation for greater political autonomy to cultural rights. As such, the Arctic is a region of regions with a variety of institutional linkages which exist above and beyond the Arctic Council, and the Permanent

Participants are an important piece of the governance puzzle in this complex, multi-scalar region. Gamble and Shadian suggest that the Arctic Council moved early on to bring Indigenous peoples to the negotiating table, and it must sustain this involvement by funding full participation by Permanent Participants in all aspects of the Council's work. They argue strongly that Permanent Participants bring a high level of value to the Arctic Council, and make it unique among intergovernmental organizations.

Chapter Eight also examines the Council's Permanent Participants, this time through the specific lens of the "One Arctic" theme. Nadine Fabbi, Jason Young and Eric Finke trace the evolution of "One Arctic" from its origins within transnational Inuit politics to its recent status as the first thematic selected for an Arctic Council chairmanship. They explore the goals and aspirations of the Inuit Circumpolar Council in developing the concept of "One Arctic" and the intention of the United States in adopting that theme, and ask how the concept might inform our understanding of possibilities for the region's future. By examining the historical, cultural, and linguistic nuances that inform the genealogy of "One Arctic," Fabbi, Young, and Finke call attention to both the contributions that Indigenous peoples have made to Arctic politics beyond standard accounts of their inclusion in regional governance, and underscore the divergence that often still exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous use of concepts and language. They conclude that the meaning underlying American use of "One Arctic" to guide their chairmanship is at odds with that invoked by Inuit using the phrase *Ukiuqta'qtumi hivuniptingnun* to mean "One Arctic, One Future".

In Chapter Nine, Daniel Pomerants looks at the evolution of the Arctic Council through the lens of International Relations (IR) theory. His chapter critiques recent contributions that seek to theorize the nascent complexity of modern Arctic governance but fall short in trying to encapsulate the dynamism of the region. Pomerants reiterates that, over the past two decades, the Arctic Council has grown beyond its original purpose seeking to address environmental protection and sustainable development in the region. It remains an intergovernmental forum for Arctic governments, Indigenous Peoples, and other participants, but he suggests that the prospect of managing governance in a region that is about to be open to global trade and investment would not be congruent with the Arctic Council's original purpose. Amidst a changing

climate that is simultaneously putting significant pressure on effective pan-Arctic cooperation, he grapples with the question of how best to understand the role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council in this new context.

In Chapter Ten, Willy Østregren returns to the theme of “One Arctic” and interrogates the political context(s) in which it was formed, the political purposes that it intends to serve, and its conceptual utility (and challenges) “at the intersection of regional politics and geography.” Østregren critically reflects on how the geographic Arctic has been defined using various criteria, from latitude to treeline to politics. As he demonstrates, there is something elusive and incomplete about each definition of the Arctic that fails to capture the diversity and complexity of the region. These definitions matter because over the course of recent Arctic governance they have been used to determine who gets to be included within the institutions of regional decision-making; he observes that early on the concept of a geographic region north of the Arctic Circle defined the constituency of the Arctic Council member states, while the concept of proximity to the region has more recently determined the legitimacy of accredited Observer state participation. Today, Østregren sees indications that the Arctic Council is entering a redefinition period which will broaden the participation of Member States, Permanent Participants, and Observers in trans-regional issues. This broadening of trans-national cooperation may lie at the heart of the “One Arctic” concept promoted by the U.S. In Østregren’s assessment, however, this concept also requires refinement or redefinition to acknowledge and accommodate the reality of “Multiple Arctics” spanning the circumpolar North.

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# 1

## The Arctic Council: Between Continuity and Change

*Małgorzata (Gosia) Śmieszek and Timo Koivurova*

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arctic Council (AC) marks a good point for reflection on the Council's performance so far and the challenges lying ahead of it. Over the course of its existence, the institution established at the time when the world's interest in the Arctic was historically low managed to adapt to a rapidly changing biophysical and geopolitical environment and establish itself as a primary intergovernmental body for cooperation on matters pertaining to the region. During the same period, the Arctic has gone through a profound transformation resulting from the combined pressures of processes of climate change and globalization. Called the bellwether of global climate change, the Arctic has warmed at about twice the rate the rest of the planet, resulting in decreasing Arctic sea ice, accelerated melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet, thawing permafrost, and acidification of the Arctic Ocean. At the same time, economic prospects related to the opening of the Arctic Ocean including new transport routes and offshore energy resources sparked the interest of the international community and non-Arctic actors who began to articulate their stakes in the region.<sup>1</sup> The worldwide media speculated about a race to tap the

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This presentation is roughly based on Timo Koivurova's presentation on 27-28 April 2016 at the One Arctic Workshop that was held at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. co-hosted by Trent University, the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, and the World Policy Institute's Arctic in Context initiative.

riches of a melting Arctic and drove narratives of alleged geopolitical conflicts and an emerging new Cold War. Together, those developments presented a challenge to the Arctic Council, both from outside and from within. In May 2008, the five of its members with coasts on the Arctic Ocean met in Ilulissat, Greenland to affirm their sovereign rights in the region, at the expense of excluded Finland, Iceland and Sweden as well as representatives of Indigenous peoples. Simultaneously, they have also put the Arctic Council into spotlight, and it has stayed there ever since.

How did the AC react to these new developments and this global interest? How did it cope with the regional challenges? What does it say about its ability to address challenges to come? To examine these issues, we claim that it is important to go back in time and understand the foundations laid in the late 1980s and early 1990s on which the Arctic Council was built, as most of them still prevail today and demonstrate the continuity in the AC's operation. The general provisions of the Council's founding documents left enough space for interpretation to enable the body's incremental changes. They allowed it to become a negotiating space for legally-binding agreements and to catalyze the formation of external bodies to address specific topics of increasing importance, such as the Arctic Economic Council, Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and Arctic

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<sup>1</sup> According to Oran Young the Arctic in the last three decades has experienced two fundamental state changes, each of them having major consequences for Arctic policymaking and governance in more broader terms. The first change, 'a delinking or decoupling shift', took place in the late 1980s/early 1990s and was closely linked to the waning of Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It resulted in the launch of numerous formalized structures of collaboration, was marked by a strong focus on Arctic-specific matters and allowed for the gradual development of 'the idea of the Arctic as a distinctive region with a policy agenda of its own'. At the same time this process brought also a disconnection between Arctic governance and the governance unfolding on a global scale. The second state change, 'a linking change', began in the Arctic in the early 2000s and continues until today. It has been to a large extent driven by processes of global environmental change and globalization – in other words, a mix of forces of environmental and socioeconomic character. See Oran R. Young, "The Arctic in Play: Governance in a Time of Rapid Change," *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 24 (2009): 423–42 (Young, 2009a).

Offshore Regulators Forum. Hence, we observe in the AC both continuity and change. Arguably, whereas the former may be perceived as a limitation, the latter represents the possibilities that the Council has at hand when it comes to taking up emerging issues. To elaborate on these issues, this chapter is structured as follows. First, it covers the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) signed in 1991 and the transition period when the body was subsumed into the Arctic Council established in 1996. Second, it provides an overview of the early days of the AC until 2007 when the Arctic, following a series of hyped up events, became a focus of the global community. This section also includes initiatives that the Council took up to cope with this unprecedented attention and its related challenges. It then moves to illustrate the continuity and change visible between the two periods when the United States acted as the AC Chair (1998-2000 and 2015-2017). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the record of the Arctic Council's performance and its ways to move forward.

### **From Rovaniemi to Ottawa**

The origins of today's circumpolar cooperation go back to the late 1980s and the Finnish Initiative, which followed the historical speech of Mikhail Gorbachev in Murmansk in 1987. In his talk, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union called for making the Arctic a zone of peace and fruitful cooperation through, among others, coordination of scientific research in the North and cooperation in protecting the Arctic's natural environment, supported by a circumpolar environmental monitoring program. In an international arena deeply divided by the Cold War, science and the environment were perceived as relatively neutral grounds to help further reduce political tensions (Nilsson 2007), hence the latter idea induced Finland to convene a meeting of all eight Arctic states in Rovaniemi, Finland in 1989. At that gathering, the Arctic states discussed the prospects of such collaboration – the initiative that gave birth to the *Declaration on the Protection of Arctic Environment* and the *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* (AEPS) signed in 1991. The AEPS aimed at deepening scientific understanding of sources, pathways and effects of pollution in the Arctic, as well as assessing on a continuous basis threats to the Arctic environment. Following the consultations and work carried out earlier, it was decided that the AEPS would focus

primarily on particular pollution issues, including oil, acidification, persistent organic contaminants, radioactivity, noise and heavy metals (Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy 1991). To achieve its objectives, the Strategy called for the establishment of four working groups: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Emergency, Preparedness, Prevention and Response (EPPR) and Protection of Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), which were to carry out the programmatic activities of the AEPS in accordance with their respective mandates (Young 1998). As Håken R. Nilson (1997) reports, the initial stages of the AEPS were to set those programs in motion and develop arrangements to enable the specialist work to deliver results of some substance. Consequently, the process was to a large extent driven by environmental experts and of a bottom-up nature, where working groups were given substantial autonomy in forming and developing their projects. The major deliverable of the AEPS came in 1997/1998 from AMAP in the form of a thick report presenting the state of the Arctic environment (AMAP 1998). Next to critical information on heavy metals, radioactivity and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), the report also provided substantial texts on polar ecology and peoples of the North, and established a lasting precedent for conducting assessments, which would become the hallmark of the AEPS/Arctic Council work and recognized as its most effective products (Kankaanpää and Young 2012; Stone 2016).

In the meantime, while the AEPS was carrying out its projects and working on its first assessments, the negotiations continued to expand Arctic cooperation from one focused primarily on environmental issues to the one that would encompass more of the human dimension and matters of sustainable development. The idea of broader circumpolar collaboration was not itself new. In fact, it was considered much earlier by the Canadians, who in the 1970s had already pondered the conception of an Arctic Basin Treaty (Cohen and Pharand as quoted in Keskitalo, fn. 192 in Nilsson 2007). It did not gain much support at that time, nor in the early 1990s due to resistance from the United States, and the bargaining over the establishment and form of the Arctic Council was much protracted. The US insisted on setting up the Council as a purely consultative forum with few mutual obligations (Scrivener 1999: 55), but ultimately agreed to the formation of a body without legal personality (Bloom 1999) - a high level forum designed to promote cooperation “among the Arctic

states, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues” (*Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council*, 1996, hereafter Ottawa Declaration). As a result of the position held by the United States during the negotiations, the AC emerged as a minimalist version of what had been earlier envisaged (Scrivener 1996 in Scrivener 1999; see more English 2013), an institution small in scale, without a permanent chair,<sup>2</sup> secretariat or budget. While the Ottawa Declaration marked a shift in focus for Arctic cooperation from environmental protection alone toward a broader concept of sustainable development, the newly established AC subsumed four working groups of the AEPS.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the AC began its operations by working on the rules of procedure and drafting terms of reference for a sustainable development program.<sup>4</sup> There was, however, a considerable lack of accord among Arctic states over the meaning and definition of the concept of sustainable development (see more: Keskitalo 2004) so instead of a comprehensive program it was decided at the Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit in 1998 that the Sustainable Development Program would comprise a series of specific projects (Bloom 1999), a practice that largely prevails until today.

In addition to the category of Members of the Arctic Council – reserved for the eight Arctic states: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States – the Ottawa Declaration provided for the categories of Permanent Participants and Observers. The former has been an innovative and largely unprecedented arrangement under which a number of organizations of Indigenous peoples have

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<sup>2</sup> It was assumed that rotating chairmanship would serve as a cost-sharing measure where the temporary host country would provide much of the operational and support resources needed to run the Council in the given two-year period.

<sup>3</sup> Technically speaking, the formal transition of these programs to the Arctic Council, and the termination of the AEPS, occurred only at the AEPS Ministerial meeting held in Alta, Norway in June, 1997 (Fenge & Funston, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Whereas the AEPS had focused primarily on environmental protection through the work of its working groups, its institutional structure somewhat extended in 1993 when the Task Force on Sustainable Development and Utilization (TFSDU) was established in attempt to broaden the scope of the Strategy’s activities.

their representatives sit alongside ministers and Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs),<sup>5</sup> and have a strong voice in the Council's activities (Arctic Governance Project 2010; Bloom 1999; Fenge and Funston 2015).<sup>6</sup> The latter category encompasses non-Arctic states, global and regional inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations "that the Council determines can contribute to its work" (*Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council* 1996). Originally, 14 Observers were present at the signing ceremony of the declaration in Ottawa in 1996 – today there are many more actors, including China, India and Japan, plus the European Union (EU), recognized as *de facto* Observers of the AC. As the Council's rules of procedure stipulate, the primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council and they are expected to contribute and engage predominantly at the level of AC working groups (Arctic Council 2013a). All decisions of the AC and its subsidiary bodies are taken by consensus of all eight Arctic states (*Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council* 1996).

### **Emerging Change and Institutional Response**

During much of its first decade in operation, the Council resembled more a science than policy forum as the Arctic remained largely on the sidelines of the mainstream foreign and national politics in most Arctic countries. The practices

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<sup>5</sup> Senior Arctic Officials (formerly Senior Arctic Affairs Officials, SAAOs) are the high-ranking officials (usually at the ambassador level) designated by each Arctic state who meet at least twice a year. Their main task is to oversee the work of AC working groups and its other subsidiary bodies in order to ensure the implementation of the mandates issued by Arctic ministers at Ministerial meetings. Additionally, over the last decade SAOs have been given some flexibility to review and adjust work plans and mandates of the working groups while ensuring they remain in accordance with the overarching guidance provided in the biennial ministerial declarations.

<sup>6</sup> As Fenge and Funston note in the overview of AC practices, in most respects Permanent Participants take part in discussions in the same manner as states and even though technically speaking only Arctic states are considered to determine whether there is a consensus for decision, due to the moral authority held by Indigenous representatives, they have been able to influence the course of taken resolutions occasionally (Fenge & Funston, 2015).

coined under the AEPS largely prevailed and the Council's work was carried out predominantly by the working groups. Their priorities and work plans were identified and elaborated on by scientists and officials in each working group and usually approved by SAOs and Ministers without many modifications and following only limited debate (Fenge and Funston 2015). Whereas the inaugural Canadian chairmanship of the Council (1996-1998) was mostly dedicated to developing rules of procedure and other operational measures, the United States stood at the helm of the institution during the first active phase of the Council's existence (1998-2000). It was during that period that the Council initiated work on its most seminal product, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) – the first such regional assessment of climate change impacts (Duyck 2015; Nilsson 2007).<sup>7</sup> The ACIA was approved as a project by the Arctic Council in 2000 and was a joint effort of AMAP, CAFF and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). In 2004 the assessment team delivered to the AC the report *Impacts of a Warming Arctic*, intended for policy-makers, and in 2005 a full, more than 1000-page scientific report was released.

The results of ACIA contributed greatly to understanding the implications of climate change for the Arctic, and many of the report's findings were subsequently incorporated into the work and assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Moreover, ACIA attracted world-wide media attention and focused it on the circumpolar region, resulting too in speculation building about new economic opportunities and challenges as well as security risks related to the opening of the formerly frozen and largely inaccessible Arctic Ocean (T. Koivurova, Kankaanpaa, and Stepien 2015). This discourse was further escalated by a number of events in 2007-2008. Those included the planting of a Russian flag on the seabed underneath the North Pole in August 2007, the collapse of Arctic sea ice in September

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<sup>7</sup> Climate change was identified as one of the two most significant threats to the Arctic environment already in preliminary studies leading to the AEPS. At that stage, however, it was decided that the Strategy should focus its work on pollutants while the responsibility for advancing knowledge of causes and effects of climate change would lie with other international groupings and fora (Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, 1991; Nilsson, 2012)

2007, and the publication in May 2008 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) of the estimates of Arctic oil and gas reserves, according to which around 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of the undiscovered natural gas could be located in the region (U.S. Geological Survey 2008).<sup>8</sup> The alleged scramble for Arctic territory and resources (Borgerson 2008; TIME, 1 October 2007, cover, "Who Owns the Arctic?") along with surging public and international interest in the Arctic led the five littoral Arctic states to reassert their rights in the region in the *Ilulissat Declaration* issued in May 2008. In that Declaration, Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia, and the United States proclaimed that "[b]y virtue of their sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large areas of the Arctic Ocean the five coastal states are in a unique position to address [...] possibilities and challenges" in the region, and that they have a stewardship role in protecting the ecosystem of the Arctic Ocean (Ilulissat Declaration 2008). Whereas some of the states present at the meeting justified the Arctic Five format as necessary at a time of heightened interest in the Arctic (Pedersen 2012), Iceland, Finland, Sweden and the Permanent Participants expressed their deep discontent with the new forum, claiming it undermined existing patterns and rules of collaboration in the circumpolar north. It also raised questions about the Arctic Council as the preeminent region-specific forum – a debate that somewhat came to halt in 2010 when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signalled a significant shift in US Arctic policy and practically dismissed the Arctic Five gathering, making the Arctic Council (for the time being) the only relevant forum for general discussions on Arctic matters (Pedersen 2012).

The rapidly changing climate and ice conditions of the Arctic Ocean firmly placed the Arctic on the international agenda and translated into expressions of interests by various non-Arctic actors in the regional matters and work of the Arctic Council (T. Koivurova et al. 2015; Pedersen 2012). The number of applications to become Observers to the AC has risen dramatically

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<sup>8</sup> The International Polar Year (IPY) (2007-2009) was another major event that brought together the global scientific community and focused its research efforts on the Arctic. The results of those extensive international scientific collaborations advanced understanding of the importance of the Arctic as an indicator of global changes and the interconnectedness of the Arctic and global systems.

since 2007, and existing state Observers raised the desirability of enhancing their role in the Council (Graczyk 2011; Koivurova 2009; Young 2009b). There were, however, significant concerns expressed among the main AC actors – both states and Permanent Participants – with regard to an increased role and number of Observers. To address those issues and elaborate on principles and rules concerning the admission, function and position of the AC Observers, the Council decided at the Ministerial meeting in Nuuk in 2011, following the discussions and initiatives undertaken by the Danish Chairmanship (2009-2011), to establish a Task Force for Institutional Issues (TFFI) to “implement the decisions to strengthen the Arctic Council” (Arctic Council 2011). Whereas the Ottawa Declaration and AC Rules of Procedure from 1998 stipulated only that the applicants and holders of Observer status should contribute to the Council’s work, which was to be determined by the AC (Arctic Council 1998; *Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council* 1996), the Task Force developed a more specific set of criteria to be adhered to by new and ongoing Observers. The criteria were first presented in the annex of the SAO report to ministers in 2011 and eventually incorporated into the revised rules of procedure adopted by the Council in 2013 (Arctic Council 2013a).<sup>9</sup>

The Nuuk Ministerial in 2011 marked the history of the Council also in two other respects. First, at that meeting foreign ministers of Arctic states took the decision to establish a permanent Arctic Council secretariat to be located in Tromsø, Norway and operational no later than at the beginning of 2013 (Arctic Council 2011). The decision to establish a standing secretariat was a major step in the AC’s effort to strengthen the capacity of the Council to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities and provide it with the institutional memory it had not had with a secretariat rotating every two years with the chairmanships. It also constituted a principal difference in the practice of the AEPS and the Council’s first fifteen years in operation. Second, at Nuuk ministers signed the first legally-binding agreement negotiated under the

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<sup>9</sup> Following the adoption, an applicant for observer status is now to, inter alia, recognize Arctic states’ sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic; respect the values, interests, culture and traditions of Arctic Indigenous peoples, and demonstrate a concrete interest in and ability to support the work of the Arctic Council (Arctic Council, 2013a).

auspices of the Arctic Council. It was the *Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* (SAR Agreement), followed by the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic* (Oil Spills Agreement) signed at the Ministerial in Kiruna, Sweden in May 2013.<sup>10</sup> Because the Arctic Council has no independent legal personality both agreements are between the eight Arctic states – rather than being “Arctic Council agreements”. Nonetheless, even if the Council served primarily as the catalyst for their negotiations and signature, the agreements marked an evolution of the AC from a body “set up to discuss, inform and potentially shape decisions by national governments” (Fenge and Funston 2015: 10) toward more of a decision-making one.

The Ministerial meeting in Kiruna drew global media attention for yet another reason. As questions relating to the appropriate role for Observers were a key part of the negotiations that led to the creation of the Council in 1996, so the decision on granting status to new actors and non-Arctic states was a major point of discussions in 2013. In parallel with including the agreed set of criteria for Observers into revised AC rules of procedure, the Council decided to admit as Observers six new countries: China, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, while receiving the application of the European Union ‘affirmatively’, with a final decision yet awaiting ‘implementation’ (Arctic Council 2013b).<sup>11</sup> Next to defining more precisely criteria for Observers, the Council also adopted

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<sup>10</sup> Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (signed in Nuuk on 12 May 2011, entered into force 19 January 2013) 50 ILM 1119 (2011) (SAR Agreement); Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (signed in Kiruna on 15 May 2013) <[www.arctic-council.org/eppr](http://www.arctic-council.org/eppr)>, accessed 15 January 2017 (Oil Spills Agreement).

<sup>11</sup> In practice, the EU participates in meetings of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies as any other Observer and is recognized as *de facto* Observer of the AC. Even though Canada has lifted its objections to granting the EU Observer status since 2013, developments in relations with Russia and sanctions that the EU imposed on it following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 have put the implementation of the Kiruna decision on hold.

in Kiruna an Observer Manual, which is to guide the Council's subsidiary bodies in matters of meeting logistics and the role played therein by Observers.<sup>12</sup>

The example of legally-binding agreements points to another development in the institutional architecture of the Arctic Council, namely the increasing use of task forces (TFs) as vehicles for targeting specific matters within a given time frame. According to the AC Rules of Procedure, the Council may establish working groups, task forces or other subsidiary bodies to carry out programs and projects under the guidance and direction of Senior Arctic Officials, with their composition and mandates agreed upon by the Arctic states in a Ministerial meeting (Arctic Council 2013a). The AC began the practice of establishing task forces in 2009,<sup>13</sup> and since then three of them have paved the way for three legally-binding agreements.<sup>14</sup> The Task Force to Facilitate the Circumpolar Business Forum also laid grounds for the establishment of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC), which is first among a series of bodies aimed to address specific matters related to economic development in the region, in cooperation with but independently from the Arctic Council. Whereas some close observers of the AC see the use of task forces as an illustration of the Council's "increasing commitment to translate its science and assessment work into policy and action" (Fenge and Funston 2015: 11), there are also concerns about the relationship between newly established bodies on the one hand and working groups on the other hand that may lead to competition over already limited human and financial resources (Supreme Audit Institutions of Denmark, Norway, The Russian Federation 2015), and the duplication of efforts. Another group of

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<sup>12</sup> Since its adoption in 2013, the Manual was updated twice – first at the SAO meeting in October 2015 and second at the SAO meeting in October 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Examples include: Task Force on Short-Lived Climate Forcers (2009); Task Force on Search and Rescue (2009); Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response (2011); Task Force for Institutional Issues (2011); Task Force to Facilitate the Circumpolar Business Forum (2013); Task Force on Black Carbon and Methane (2013); and Scientific Cooperation Task Force (2013).

<sup>14</sup> Next to the SAR and Oil Spills agreements, the Scientific Cooperation Task Force recently agreed *ad referendum* on a text of third legally-binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the AC, the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. It is expected to be signed by representatives of Arctic states at the Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska in May 2017.

questions relates to the development of relationships between the AC and bodies it led or helped facilitate: the Arctic Economic Council (AEC), Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum,<sup>15</sup> and Arctic Coast Guard Forum formed, respectively, in September 2014, April 2015, and October 2015. While all of them operate independently from the Council, their composition to a large degree resembles that of the AC (e.g. in the case of the AEC each Arctic state and Permanent Participant organization can name up to three business representatives) and their chairmanships go in tandem with the rotation cycle of the Arctic Council.<sup>16</sup> They all also intend to provide information to the AC, serving as the synthesis of Arctic business perspectives for consideration by the Arctic Council (AEC), tapping into the work of the EPPR working group of the AC (Arctic Coast Guard Forum), and complementing AC work in the field of offshore petroleum safety (Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum).

Altogether, the various bodies and entities formed both within and outside the Arctic Council provide a far more complex picture than in the beginnings of the Council in the mid-1990s. By its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016, the Arctic Council represented both continuity and change in the formalized Arctic cooperation of the last two decades. On the one hand, the body has inherited many practices coined at the time of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and in the early days of its own existence. Those include a relatively strong position of the working groups that perform the majority of the AC's scientific and technical work, but also a precarious funding situation based on grants and voluntary and in-kind contributions from some of the participating member states. On the other hand, the Council today is considered the

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<sup>15</sup> Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum has had its roots in the work of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention (TFOPP) and the Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic that it produced. Among others, the Framework Plan strengthened cooperation of national regulators.

<sup>16</sup> Arguably, the relationship between those bodies and the Council depends as well on the position of the AC Chair on the given issue. For example, while Canada viewed very favorably the Arctic Economic Council, for which it provided the initial impetus and remained in favour of forging close bonds with it, the United States maintained a more reserved position toward engagement with the business community.

preeminent forum for political discussions on region-specific matters, firmly placed in the institutional landscape of Arctic governance. It has a permanent Secretariat, catalyses legally-binding circumpolar agreements and its meetings much higher levels of political attention than used to be the case. Comparing the AC chairmanships of the United States in 1998-2000 and 2015-2017 provides a good illustration of the developments the Council has gone through.

### **From First (1998-2000) to Second (2015-2017) US Arctic Council Chairmanship**

Somewhat ironically, the celebrations of the Council's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary came right in the middle of a chairmanship held by the country that was the greatest sceptic of the AC's inception in the first place. The United States' opposition to broadening the environmental cooperation of the AEPS into a wider framework in the mid-1990s revolved around several contentious issues, including the participation of Indigenous peoples, the use of the concept of sustainable development, issues of military security and, finally, a low degree of interest in the Arctic among Washington officials and politicians (English 2013: 188-193).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, neither the AEPS nor the Arctic Council were regarded at that time in the US as strong tools of foreign policy in its relations with Russia (Russell 1996). The position taken by the United States in the negotiations arguably found its roots in the overall international geopolitical setting of the 1990s, when following the end of the Cold War the US became the sole unchallenged superpower in a clearly unipolar world (Krauthammer 1990; Śmieszek and Kankaanpää 2015).

For all these reasons, the United States was not in favour of creating a new international organization, and even the signing of the Ottawa Declaration in September 1996 did not put an end to discussions over the structure and *modus operandi* of the Arctic Council. Instead, they continued throughout the first

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<sup>17</sup> In result of the US position the Ottawa Declaration states explicitly that the Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security (*Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council*, 1996) – a point deplored by some authors (Huebert 2008 in Graczyk 2012; Huebert, 2016) and praised by others (Byers, 2016) who see it as the measure, which facilitated preservation of Arctic cooperation in the aftermath of developments with Russia since March 2014.

Canadian chairmanship (1996-1998) and were resolved only with the adoption of the AC Rules of Procedure at the Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada in 1998, when the US took over the helm of the institution it joined rather reluctantly. To ensure the smooth and focused work of the Council, the US government established a secretariat located within the State Department and announced the close cooperation and involvement of the State of Alaska in activities of the AC throughout the two-year period. One overall priority for the US was human health. However, as Douglas C. Nord critically observes, “the government of the United States was not prepared to devote any considerable amount of energies or attention to the work of the body ... throughout its ‘rather lackluster chairmanship’ during which “it clung rather tightly to its preferred vision of the body as a forum for Arctic discussions rather than a policy development or decision-making entity” (Nord 2016: 43). Indeed, the chairmanship was run by relatively low-ranking officials and the Ministerial meeting was chaired by the US under-secretary of state for global affairs. While the position taken by the United States as the AC Chair certainly reflected to some extent its more general, fairly disengaged attitude to formalized Arctic cooperation, it is important to balance the critical review of the first US chairmanship by noting that it was the United States that initiated and largely funded the ground-breaking Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (Rogne, Rachold, Hacquebord, and Corell 2015; Stone 2015). Even if the delivery of the ACIA became somewhat convoluted, “coming as it did within the first half of the George W. Bush administration” (Stone 2015: 208), the support offered to the process by the US was critical to its conduct and completion, and ACIA ultimately changed the image of the Arctic from a ‘frozen desert’ to the one of ‘Arctic in change’ (Koivurova 2009).

Nonetheless, by 2000 and the second Ministerial meeting in 2000 in Barrow, Alaska “much of the original excitement and enthusiasm associated with the Ottawa Declaration had been dampened” (Nord 2016: 44), and soon after its establishment the Council became a subject of criticism and a long series of reviews and reform proposals, both from actors engaged in the process and from its outside observers (Fenge and Funston 2015). The first among these followed a request from Arctic Ministers to SAOs at the meeting in Barrow to

consider and recommend appropriate ways to improve the structure and functioning of the Arctic Council.<sup>18</sup> In response to this request, Finland, as the next chair of the Council (2000-2002), commissioned Pekka Haavisto, the former Finnish Minister of Environment, to prepare a study on the topic. The report, delivered in 2002 at the Ministerial meeting in Inari, Finland, identified several limitations and challenges in AC operations, including poor coordination of actions between the AC and other Arctic actors, deficient communication among the AC working groups and between them and the Senior Arctic Officials, competition for resources among the working groups, deficient outreach, and imprecise definition of the role of Observers (Haavisto 2001). In a similar vein, when it was taking over the AC chairmanship at the Council's tenth anniversary in 2006, Norway included among its priorities the review of the AC's structures to provide for regular evaluation of the institution and consider ways of improving its efficiency and effectiveness (Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). The proposal was also included in the joint programme that Norway, Denmark, and Sweden announced in 2007 for their consecutive Arctic Council chairmanships, where among other common objectives for 2006-2012<sup>19</sup> they listed issues related to the management of the Council (*Norwegian, Danish, Swedish common objectives for their Arctic Council chairmanships 2006–2012*).<sup>20</sup> The efforts to strengthen the AC during that period corresponded directly with the outside world's rapidly growing interest in the Arctic and in the Arctic Council's work, and *inter alia* involved a review of Observers carried out by the Danish Chairmanship (2009-2011), as well as already mentioned undertakings and deliverables of the Task Force on Institutional Issues (TFII 2011-2013).

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<sup>18</sup> Similar review and study was also carried out for the AEPS by Nilson and completed in 1997 (Nilson, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> During the Norwegian chairmanship, it was decided that instead of holding Ministerial meetings in the fall they would be moved to spring, thus Norway's term extended beyond the fall of 2008 and lasted until spring 2009, when Norway passed the gavel to the Kingdom of Denmark. Since then each chairmanship continues with regular 2-year intervals.

<sup>20</sup> Three countries agreed too to establish a joint secretariat in Tromsø, Norway for the period 2006-2012 – the development that facilitated and ultimately led to the inception of the permanent AC secretariat.

Separate from actions taken by the Council itself, non-governmental organizations and academics involved and interested in Arctic affairs have considered the AC's shortfalls and presented proposals for addressing them (Graczyk 2012). Concerns raised included a soft-law profile of the Council and its basis in a declaration, not a treaty, which precludes the imposition of legally binding obligations on its participants (Koivurova 2009; Koivurova and Molenaar 2010). The AC was also criticised for a lack of systematic evaluation and no follow-up of guidelines produced within its framework, a lack of long-term and strategic policy, and a tendency to exclude certain important issues from its deliberations (including fisheries and military security). The list also included difficulties in securing regular funding for the Council's projects, and debated the place of the AC within the broader structures of Arctic governance, as well as its exclusive character which leaves the voices of sub-national northern regions out of discussions.

Whereas some of the identified hindrances were addressed over time, others continued to impede the work of the Council and recently have been noted again by Danish, Norwegian, Russian, Swedish, and US institutions that collaborated on a multilateral audit of their national participation in the Arctic Council, with the results published in May 2015. The audit in the United States came ahead of the second US chairmanship, when the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) examined matters related to US Council participation and the Council's organization in order to "position the United States for a successful Arctic Council chairmanship" (United States Government Accountability Office 2014: 42). The audit was one of the series of measures taken by the US government to prepare for its chairmanship in a domestic and international context much altered compared to the country's first chairmanship from 1998-2000. First, the increased interest in the Arctic was in large part generated by the personal commitment of Hillary Clinton, who was the first sitting Secretary of State to attend the AC Ministerial meeting in 2011 in Nuuk, Greenland.<sup>21</sup> Second, her successor Secretary John Kerry's focus on

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<sup>21</sup> As mentioned earlier, strong endorsement by Secretary Clinton of the Council as the preeminent regional forum also put on hold discussions about the Arctic Five and paved the way for the eventual revival and strengthening of the AC (Pedersen, 2012).

climate change and ocean issues was another factor that elevated the country's chairmanship on the national agenda. Finally, the overall importance given to climate change during the second Obama administration (2012-2016), in particular its ramped-up efforts since 2015, provided a favorable context for the institution focused on the region where consequences of climate change are the most pronounced on the planet.

Soon after the release of the GAO study, in another step to prepare for the US taking over the AC chairmanship in May 2015, Secretary Kerry appointed Admiral Robert Papp as the US Special Representative for the Arctic to lead the country's diplomatic efforts and serve as the Secretary's coordinator for the Council's chairmanship.<sup>22</sup> The nomination of Admiral Papp, who reported directly to the Secretary of State and had a direct access to most senior officials in the American administration, signaled a significant increase in the Arctic's importance as an issue area in US foreign policy. It was also very well received internationally, and Admiral Papp attended numerous venues where he spoke about US Arctic policy and prospects for the country's term at the helm of the Arctic Council. The second US chairmanship (2015-2017) program prioritized three thematic areas: improving economic and living conditions for Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change. To advance them, the US co-chaired the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC), which was formed at the Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada in April 2015, "to consider future needs for strengthened cooperation on Arctic marine areas, as well as mechanisms to meet these needs" (Arctic Council 2015b), and chaired, as stipulated by the relevant terms of reference, the Expert Group in support of the implementation of the Framework for Action on Black Carbon and Methane (Arctic Council 2015a). The United States also co-chaired the Scientific Cooperation Task Force, which in July 2016 concluded a text of a third legally-binding agreement negotiated

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<sup>22</sup> Simultaneously, Fran Ulmer, Chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission (USARC) was appointed to serve as Special Advisor on Arctic Science and Policy to continue and expand to inform and advise the Obama administration and Congress on Arctic issues.

under the auspices of the AC (see fn.13).<sup>23</sup> This development is particularly worth noting considering that the US co-chaired the SCTF along with Russia at the time of a general freeze in relations between the two countries following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Despite very serious tensions between the former Cold War adversaries in other parts of the world and the sanctions imposed on Russia by all other AC member states, it was the policy of the United States during its AC chairmanship to diligently and consistently maintain the Arctic Council as a platform of dialogue, collaboration, and engagement with Russia.<sup>24</sup> The discussions continued as far as agreeing in principle to undertake the development of a long-term strategic plan for the Council, endorsed by the Senior Arctic Officials at their meeting in October 2016 and presumably to be continued under Finland's chairmanship of the Council from 2017-2019. Finland, however, will take over the chairmanship from the United States in May 2017 at the Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska in a setting once again altered amidst questions and uncertainty related to the new executive leadership in the US whose positions on issues like climate change and strict environmental protection rules mark a difference compared with the precedent administration. This too leads to a question about the prospects of the Arctic Council for the years to come.

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<sup>23</sup> Next to its work within the Arctic Council, the US organized in parallel with its chairmanship two other major international gatherings related to the Arctic. First, the Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience (GLACIER) took place in September 2015 when the then incumbent President Obama visited Alaska to highlight climate change and other pressing issues facing the region, and to generate momentum in addressing them ahead of the UNFCCC Paris Climate Change conference in November 2015. The second event, the White House Science Ministerial, occurred a year later, in September 2016 and brought together ministers of science, chief science advisers, and other high-level officials from 25 countries and the European Union to debate and expand joint collaborations focused on Arctic science and research, observations, monitoring, and data-sharing.

<sup>24</sup> During Canada's term at the helm of the Arctic Council, the Canadian government decided to skip an AC working group meeting in Moscow in April 2014 as a way to censure Russia for its involvement in the conflict in Ukraine.

## **The Arctic Council at its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

At its 20th anniversary, the Arctic Council received both a lot of appraisal and some critical reflection on its evolution since its inception in 1996. Despite its modest and rather unpromising beginnings (Koivurova and VanderZwaag 2007; Stokke and Honneland 2007; Young 2009b), the body is today generally regarded as the preeminent regional forum by Arctic and non-Arctic actors alike, and firmly rooted in the institutional landscape of Arctic governance. During its first two decades in existence, building largely upon the structures and practices coined within the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, the Council continued working on scientific assessments, providing new knowledge on a rapidly changing region and becoming the “cognitive forerunner” of the Arctic (Nilsson 2012). It has also served as a platform for increasing the prominence of the concerns of Arctic Indigenous peoples (Kankaanpää and Young, 2012) and for the negotiation of legally-binding agreements among the eight Arctic states. In parallel, the Council managed to adapt to the increasing global attention paid to the Arctic by strengthening its organizational structure, revising its rules of procedure, establishing a permanent secretariat, and clarifying rules for admission and participation of Observers in its work. It also catalysed the formation of new circumpolar bodies dedicated to addressing issues of increasing importance such as the Arctic Economic Council and, thanks to the efforts of all Arctic states, continued its work despite the emergence of major tensions between Russia and the West. Even if there have been academic discussions as to whether the Arctic Council should be able to deal with issues related to military security (Conley and Melino 2016), the consensus among the members, Permanent Participants and the Observers in the Arctic Council points to exactly the opposite. Conceivably, one of the reasons why the cold period between Russia and the Western powers has not spilled over into the Arctic is that states do not have to address hard security issues in the Council. Furthermore, these developments provide a merit in appraising the soft-law character of the AC as well as the flexibility of its modes of work and structures, and a certain degree of informality of cooperation (T. Koivurova et al. 2015).

While the Council has been critical in raising awareness about the causes and consequences of rapid change in Arctic social-ecological systems, the record becomes more mixed when it comes to the translation of these efforts into

effective action to address them. For example, AMAP's work on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and the contribution it brought to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants provides a clear case for a substantial impact of the AC on international policy development (Downie and Fenge 2003; Nilsson 2012), similar to inputs from the Protection of Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) to the development of the Polar Code under the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Less clear, however, are the reverberations of the Council's continuous work on climate change, despite the attention generated by ACIA (Duyck 2015), and on extractive industries, where the challenge relates in particular to the suitability of the Arctic Council to address issues on a local and sub-regional scale considered domestic in most Arctic states (Arctic Council 2016).

The Council also continues to face a series of challenges of both endogenous and exogenous character. While many of them have been successfully resolved, others continue to impede the effectiveness and efficiency of the AC. The internal factors plausibly have much to do with the evolving and constantly growing workload of the Council, which poses challenges when it comes to overlapping and prioritizing work across AC working groups and task forces, funding the ongoing projects and new initiatives, and, perhaps most importantly, regarding the effective implementation of the AC recommendations in member states (Supreme Audit Institutions of Denmark, Norway, The Russian Federation 2015).<sup>25</sup> As a remedy for these AC's maladies, some point to a need for a comprehensive vision of Arctic cooperation to guide the work of the Council and bring to it more continuity between rotating chairmanships (Rottem 2016).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, such a vision – as well as

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<sup>25</sup> The Arctic Council does not require national governments to report back to the Arctic Council on the implementation of recommendations and, in general, the member states have no feedback mechanism to track whether their responsible departments and agencies effectively consider and follow-up on the AC recommendations.

<sup>26</sup> At the Ministerial meeting in Kiruna in 2013 Arctic ministers signed the statement "Vision for the Arctic", where they laid out their vision for a peaceful and prosperous Arctic along with committing to "pursue opportunities to expand the Arctic Council's roles from policy-shaping into policy-making" (Arctic Council, 2013). The statement missed, however, any further details and at present, upon the

establishing more stable financing mechanisms – could shield the Council more successfully against shifting political priorities and radical changes on Arctic states' domestic political scenes.

Part of the elaboration of such a vision could be a reflection on a position and role of the Arctic Council within the broader and increasingly intricate network of international bodies and regimes relevant to the region. Whereas the Council deserves credit as a preeminent forum for consulting Arctic issues, and discussions and activities undertaken within it help set the Arctic agenda (Rottem 2016), the AC does not appear to be a major actor nor even the principal venue for addressing matters related to Arctic governance in areas such as shipping, fisheries, climate change or biodiversity (Young 2016b). For example, recently launched negotiations to develop an implementing agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, if successfully completed, would be of major relevance to the Arctic Ocean. Yet, the Arctic Council refrains from identifying and communicating related concerns and positions of Arctic constituencies, similarly to how it does in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conferences of the parties. Moreover, Arctic states themselves seem to prefer other fora for taking action concerning governance, as exemplified in terms of fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean (Young 2016a), where discussions are held within the extended Arctic Five including China, Iceland, the European Union, Japan and South-Korea, and not the AC Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC).

Finding its specific place and role within this landscape of a more and more complex Arctic regime can be considered one of the major challenges for the Arctic Council in the years to come. Its past certainly provides reasons for cautious optimism when it comes to the adaptability of the AC to rapidly changing circumstances, and the Council enters its third decade much strengthened in comparison to its early days. Important in considerations for

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initiative of the US chairmanship, the Council again debates prospects for the development of its long-term strategic plan.

the future will be curbing exaggerated expectations regarding the AC's role as a decision-making body capable of developing regulations for the region and tailoring them instead to the reality of an evolving complex of institutional arrangements. Finding its niche therein and enhancing its capacity to effectively engage with a multitude of other policy processes relevant to the Arctic could be a determinant of the Council's success in the years to come.

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## 2

### **Leadership from the Chair: The Experience of Three Successive Chairmanships of the Arctic Council**

*Douglas C. Nord*

In the autumn of 2016, the Arctic Council will be celebrating its twentieth year of existence. Such a milestone is certainly worth noting. Over the past two decades this international body has done much to address the concerns and raise the profile of the entire circumpolar North. Through its several scientific working groups it has conducted and publicized a variety of important studies on the effects of climate change in the Arctic region. It has also worked to identify key environmental, economic and social concerns facing the peoples who inhabit this far northern portion of the globe. Perhaps most significantly, the organization has provided a forum for problem-solving among governments and non-state actors from across the Arctic and from further afield. At a time when regional conflicts have become a common consequence of many efforts to build cooperative international relations, the Arctic and the Arctic Council have remained largely immune to them (Borgerson, 2013). This is a positive accomplishment that deserves our continued attention and support.

Despite such a laudable record, the pathway forward for the Arctic Council has not been an entirely a smooth one. At various points during its twenty year history, the organization has lost some of the energy and urgent sense of mission that led to its establishment. This unfortunate condition came about despite the best efforts of its supporters and advocates to highlight the Council's continuing important role in circumpolar diplomacy. Near the time of its tenth

anniversary, some informed observers went so far as to suggest that the body might soon disband because of a lack of a shared vision and the absence of an agreed upon path forward. Fortunately, that did not happen—but it can be argued that without the skillful intervention of key Arctic leaders and diplomats such a circumstance might have occurred.

This chapter argues that many of the past accomplishments of the Arctic Council, as well as the success of its future undertakings, may be linked in an important way to the quality of leadership provided by the successive chairs of the organization. It contends that much of the institutional progress that the Arctic Council has achieved over the past twenty years—as well as its occasional periods of institutional stagnation—can be seen as a reflection of the differing approaches and capabilities of those countries that have served at its leadership helm. I suggest that not all of the Arctic Council chairmanships have been undertaken with the same intent nor have been conducted in the same manner. Some have appeared to be organized around rather narrow national priorities or concerns while others have sought to be more broadly inclusive. Some have been conducted in a directive manner while others have been more consensus-oriented. It is argued here that both the willingness and the ability of the rotating national chairs of the Arctic Council to promote common concerns and to work to instill an attitude of collective problem-solving among the organization's diverse membership has been critical to the overall success and effectiveness of the body.

The chapter begins by briefly examining the origins of the Arctic Council and some of the differing visions that the Arctic Eight had for its future operation and leadership. It is argued that alternative understandings of the desired scope and organization as well as the leadership style required for the body have existed from the outset and have resulted in differing approaches to agenda-setting and organizational operation during successive Arctic Council chairmanships. This is discussed in the context of the first years of the organization's existence and some of the detrimental consequences it had for the Council's program initiatives and institutional development. Focus is given to the growing realization that emerged a decade ago within the Arctic Council that an improved form of leadership from the chair would be required for the body to be truly effective and achieve its goals.

The chapter then turns its attention to consider the challenges of institutional leadership more broadly within the context of contemporary international organization. It begins by examining some of the traditional functions performed by chairs within international bodies similar to the Arctic Council. Here, distinctions are drawn between the rather well-understood and limited function of the “presiding officer” of an organization and the more extensive but less-often considered managerial, representative and brokerage roles undertaken by those who are at the helm of such institutions. Next, three alternative leadership strategies or “styles” that have been utilized by chairs of current international bodies are explored. The specific approach and content of each is detailed as well as the circumstances associated with their use. Finally, an effort is made to outline the several “powers of the chair” that endow its occupant with some degree of formal and informal influence and control over the operation and development of the organization. The limits and constraints on the use of such powers are also detailed.

With this theoretical foundation in place, the chapter proceeds to examine the three most recent chairmanships of the Arctic Council—those of Sweden, Canada and the United States. Here an effort is made to consider both the particular goals that each country established for its chairmanship and the specific leadership strategies that they pursued in order to achieve them. This inquiry also looks at some of the individual “powers of the chair” that each country utilized to advance its agenda and secure its primary objectives. Such comparative analysis reveals three very different approaches to leadership from the chair. The strengths and limitations of each are noted and assessed with the objective of considering what important “lesson can be learned” from their experience and can be utilized by future leaders of the body.

### **Origins and Early Development of the Arctic Council**

While the Arctic Council was established through the Ottawa Declaration in September of 1996, proposals for the creation of such an organization and ideas as to how such a body might operate go back nearly a decade earlier. The gradual thawing of the Cold War in the 1980s brought forth a number of suggestions for replacing the potential “zone of conflict” in the Far North with a new collaborative Arctic regime. The much quoted Murmansk Speech offered by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the Finnish Proposal to establish what

was to become the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) represent two important steps along this trajectory. However, it was the Canadian Initiative championed by successive governments in Ottawa towards the end of one century and the start of another that was to become the true focus of such efforts and ultimately create the Arctic Council (Nord, 2016a).

As originally conceived by the Canadians, the future organization was to be a broadly representative body with significant deliberative and decision-making roles for the national governments of the circumpolar North, the several Indigenous peoples of the Far North, and a variety of non-state actors with established interests in Arctic affairs. It was to provide a common meeting ground where all such participants could help to fashion the future of the Arctic region. The proposed organization was also to be active across a number of policy areas including those related to the northern environment, economic development, social and cultural expression as well as peace and security. Very much in the spirit of international regime theories of the day, it was seen to be populated by scientists, policymakers and Indigenous leaders working together in common cause. So conceived, it was to operate as a unified, strong and vigorous advocate on behalf of the far northern lands and peoples of the globe (Scrivener, 1999).

In terms of leadership, the initial Canadian proposals called for a rotating chairmanship among the governments of the eight Arctic countries: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. It was assumed, however, that representatives of the several Indigenous peoples of the Far North would have near-equal status with the delegates from the Arctic Eight states. Overall, the body would follow collaborative decision-making processes and operate on the basis of consensus. As originally envisioned, the organization would have professional staff at its disposal and a permanent secretariat like most contemporary international organizations (English, 2013).

Once these ideas for an Arctic Council began to circulate, it soon became apparent that many of the original Canadian assumptions regarding the nature, focus and operation of the body were not uniformly shared by all potential members of the organization. Some Arctic states objected to any equality of decision-making authority between their representatives and those of the Indigenous peoples and other non-state actors. Some—including most prominently the United States—objected to the organization having any

binding decision-making authority whatsoever, preferring to see it alternatively as a “forum for the discussion of ideas” and operating strictly on the basis of consensus among the governments of the Arctic region. Individual states also questioned the scope of the Council’s endeavors. Some raised objections to its consideration of “truly domestic concerns” such as fishing policies and natural resource exploitation practices. The United States shared these concerns as well as voicing a strong objection to any consideration of defense and military security issues within the body. As a result of these reservations the drafters of the Canadian Initiative would ultimately have to make significant modifications to the deliberative processes and policy scope of their proposed Council (Bloom, 1999).

The organizational structure of the emerging Arctic Council was also significantly trimmed from its original design. Objecting to what it saw as the “excessive costs and bureaucratic intrusions” of many modern international organizations, the United States government of the day made it clear it could not support any institution with an elaborate headquarters, a large permanent staff or an ongoing operating budget. As such, it proposed that the headquarters for the proposed Arctic Council should rotate between the Arctic Eight states. Necessary staff support for the body would come from seconding officials from the bureaucracy of the current host state. Most significant, for the purposes of this discussion, no permanent Chair of the Arctic Council would be appointed or elected from the membership. This position would also rotate. It was also suggested that any ongoing funding for the organization should be “project oriented,” aimed at supporting the efforts of its several working groups and be made by means of voluntary contributions from individual member states. Ultimately, in order to secure American participation in the Arctic Council, the Canadian proponents had to accede to their neighbor’s views on all of these matters (Scrivener, 1996). Such acquiescence was to have important consequences for the operation of the organization and the functioning of leadership in the body for several years.

The pronouncement of the Ottawa Declaration in September of 1996 represented a significant accomplishment for both the Canadian government and the Arctic as a whole. Canada assumed the first Chairmanship of the new organization and expressed satisfaction over its labors. After nearly a decade of protracted effort, the full circumpolar community had finally accepted the

concept of a governance framework for the region. Yet it was one thing to have approved the concept and still another to transform this idea into a functioning body. A significant percentage of the efforts of the first Canadian Chairmanship of the new Arctic Council were devoted to “organizational housekeeping.”

Basic tasks such as integrating the pre-existing work of the AEPS within the new format of the Arctic Council had to be undertaken. Communication and information services had also to be provided to the member states, Permanent Participants and proposed Observers. Senior Arctic official meetings had to be scheduled and arranged and preparations made for the first Ministerial Meeting in Iqaluit in 1998. Most importantly, an agreed upon set of rules of procedure and terms of reference for the body had to be crafted for formal approval at that session. This latter effort proved to be a particularly complicated and extended exercise as some member states such as the United States and Russia seemed reluctant to accord much freedom of expression or autonomy of action on the part of the new body or its subsidiary units. All of these undertakings had to be overseen by a very small support staff that was cobbled together from various Canadian government departments serving as the provisional secretariat of the organization.

This potential gulf between expectations and performance was to be a nagging concern for the Arctic Council for the next decade. It manifested itself almost immediately in the rather lackluster leadership and program of the first American Chairmanship. Having only reluctantly joined the organization, the government of the United States was not prepared to devote any considerable amount of energies or attention to the work of the body. Under considerable pressure from Ottawa to show its “good faith” in new circumpolar undertakings, Washington took the chair of the organization more out of a sense of obligation rather than with any real enthusiasm. During its two year leadership term (1998-2000) it clung rather tightly to its preferred vision of the body as a “forum” for Arctic discussions rather than a policy development or decision-making entity. It saw to it that the organization operated on limited resources and with a minimal support staff.

By the time of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council in Barrow, Alaska in October of 2000 much of the original excitement and enthusiasm associated with the Ottawa Declaration had been dampened. It became evident that sustaining and developing an effective circumpolar

organization would be as complicated as giving birth to one. It would require the interest, resources, focus and political will of the entire body to do so. Unfortunately all four of these ingredients would be in short supply over the following years.

The next three national Chairmanships of the Arctic Council (Finland, Iceland and Russia) saw some progress made in dealing with circumpolar affairs but on a much more limited basis than had been originally planned. Part of the constraint came from the international environment. The first few years of the new millennium witnessed considerable turbulence in the global community as a result of a rise in global terrorism, increased energy and trade worries and political crises in various parts of the world. As such, the Arctic tended to remain in the back of the minds of most policymakers—even among those who came from the region. Another factor which limited the efforts of the body was the lack of consensus among its members as to the priorities of the Council. Some favored giving the majority of attention to environmental protection issues while others preferred prioritizing sustainable development concerns (Keskitalo, 2004). Still another limitation to the work of the Council was that each of the next three chairs of the organization was confronting their own domestic crises which gave their governments little time to focus on broader circumpolar concerns during their respective leadership terms. Finland (2000-2002), the once proud champion of the AEPS, was mired in a major economic recession at home giving its government little latitude to encourage any new costly Arctic initiatives. Iceland (2002-2004), for its part, was entering its own economic and political crisis arising from unwise international banking and commercial efforts and was similarly constrained. Russia (2004-2006) was still enmeshed in the aftermath of its own post-Soviet restructuring and only beginning to regain its international diplomatic sea legs. As a consequence, none of these chairs had either the available resources or the political will to boldly lead the organization forward.

As the Arctic Council moved toward the conclusion of its first decade of operation, it presented a mixed profile. On the one hand, it was lauded for the quality of its research efforts and the important scientific reports it had produced which addressed various forms of Arctic pollution and ecosystem endangerment. It was also applauded for its consensus style of operation and its specific efforts to include northern Indigenous voices in its deliberations. It was

also cited as the chief organizational force behind moving the Arctic from being simply a geographic reference point to becoming a functioning regional community bound by common interests and concerns. Yet on the other hand, there were perceived flaws in both its lack of focus and the style of its operation. As a result of rather tepid leadership from the chair and the continued reluctance of some members to give their wholehearted endorsement of the body, the Arctic Council was increasingly becoming more of a diplomatic “talk shop” than the problem solving organization that had been first envisioned by its originators (Koivurova and VanderZwaag, 2007). It was criticized for allowing itself to “drift” as a result of being unable to commit itself to a common vision and a clear set of priorities. The body was also increasingly chastised for its failure to run a tight organizational ship—with timely organized and arranged agendas, meetings and discussions. The efforts of its working groups were seen by some as being poorly coordinated and at times duplicative. The Arctic Council seemed to be falling well short of the image of a focused and committed organization that had been first set forth in Ottawa in the early fall of 1996.

This sense of “drift” was to come to an end with the advent of three successive Scandinavian chairmanships of the Arctic Council. While the three countries, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, had played only limited roles in the creation of the organization, over the first ten years of its existence they had become increasingly important participants in its work. Not only had the three Scandinavian countries contributed a number of leading polar scientists to the working groups of the Council, but they often provided the necessary funding and staff support that enabled them to undertake several of their key investigations. The Scandinavians also shared a long-standing interest in international environmental issues and had been leading advocates for addressing the problems of climate change in the Arctic and further afield. They were also deeply interested in the question of sustainable development and its operation within a northern setting. They were dedicated to seeing how matters of regional economic resilience and community adaptation and growth could be squared with additional calls for environmental protection of sensitive Arctic ecosystems. They hoped to steer a middle path of agreement between the frequently contending environmental protection and economic development advocates on the Council (Nord, 2016b).

Equally important, the Scandinavians also shared a long tradition of involvement and leadership in international organizations of all sorts. They had been founding members of most of the post-war international bodies and had provided significant organizational leadership for many of them. As such they were well familiar with the challenges—external and internal—of assisting a new organization to develop its full potential and knew how coordinated and effective leadership from the chair could assist the process. They were also keenly aware of the need to work toward achieving consensus within such bodies and to find ways of bridging and resolving disagreements between their members. Collectively, they had become known as “problem solvers” and impartial advocates of the needs of the broader international community. In 2007 the three Scandinavian countries jointly announced an “umbrella program” for the body that would provide a common agenda and direction for their successive leadership terms. This was to provide new focus and direction for the body and new leadership opportunities for each of these neighboring states.

### **The Influence of Chairs within International Organizations**

Most observers of world affairs and international diplomacy tend to share a particular vision of the nature of the chair within any international organization. It tends to be a somewhat limited and constrained view. For many, the chair of any international body is seen simply as the presiding officer who attends to the smooth operation of the organization. The chair sits at the head of the table and makes sure that the particular debate or negotiation is conducted according to the established agenda and rules. As an entity, itself, the chair has minimal power and has limited influence over the outcome of events.

Omnipresent, but largely impotent, the impact of chairs over the affairs of international organizations is frequently regarded as marginal at best. As a consequence, the role played by chairs in the development and activities of such bodies is rarely investigated. A review of the extensive literature on international diplomacy and negotiation provides limited insights. Until very recently, most chairs from nearly all international organizations were portrayed as performing basically the same functions and conducting themselves in the same manner (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004).

Traditionally, the efforts of the chair were seen to be allocated around four undertakings. The first was to ensure the smooth unfolding of organizational meetings or negotiations. In this “convening” or “presiding” role the chair had the responsibility for initiating discussion and for recognizing subsequent speakers. The chair was also tasked with the assignment of seeing that any agreed agenda was followed and that the time schedule and rules of procedure were observed. As a particular organization grew and developed the chair, might also take on certain longer-term operational responsibilities. Within this “management” role the chair would endeavor to oversee its external activities and internal operations. Often in concert with a support staff or a secretariat, the chair would issue reports to the membership and supervise funding allocations. A third role of a chair was seen to be “representational” in character. The chair would take on the task of presenting the views and program of the organization at other international meetings or forums. The chair might also assume the responsibility of providing a “face and voice” for the organization. In so doing, the chair would serve to offer an audible and visible reference point for a variety of external audiences. Finally, the last of the key functions of the chair could be seen to be that facilitating agreement between members of the body. In this “go-between” or “brokerage” role the chair would seek to build consensus and maintain harmony within the organization. Often utilizing informal means of information sharing and extended discussion, the chair would endeavor to perform the important tasks of reconciling opposing viewpoints and bridging differences between contending groups within the membership (Bengtsson, Elgström, and Tallberg, 2004).

While most analysts agree that these four roles continue as the modal patterns of behavior for most chairs within contemporary international organizations, increasingly it is pointed out that the manner in which they perform these functions can vary significantly. These observed variances in chair behavior may be reflective of differences in personality or cultural background, the nature of the organization of which they are a part or the particular style of leadership that a chair adopts. Each of these factors may contribute to the creation of distinctive chair profiles.

Finally, chairs may adopt a distinctive style of leadership which may arise from a combination of the factors listed above. Some may see themselves as committed to promoting a very specific agenda that embodies either their own

national or personal objectives or the internal organizational priorities of the bodies they head. This “entrepreneurial” style of leadership tends to emerge when a chair believes it enjoys a significant degree of autonomy in performing its various roles and where it can exercise a substantial degree of influence over desired outcomes (Young, 1998). Alternatively, some chairs adopt a leadership style that has at its core a preference for advancing a more inclusive agenda that reflects collective membership needs. This “honest broker” style of leadership tends to emerge when the chair often does not possess a burning ambition to promote their own individual projects and recognizes it may not have complete control over ultimate decision outcomes of the organization. A third leadership style, that of “the professional”, may be adopted in response to an existing internal norm within the body that favors neutral or limited efforts by the chair and demands a minimal leadership profile (Tallberg, 2003).

Regardless of the leadership style that is adopted, the chairs of most international organizations can—and do—exercise significant influence in performing their several roles. This fact, however, has not always been adequately acknowledged or discussed in many studies of international relations and global diplomacy. Prime attention tends to be allocated to the power dimensions and relationship behavior among the individual state participants. Their actions and interactions when exercising their clout and influence tend to be focused on and discussed in great detail. The impact of effective organizational leadership tends to be overlooked (Nye, 2004).

When the “power of the chair” has been considered, it has been usually limited to the context of its role as the convening or presiding officer of the body. Some acknowledgement is usually made of the inherent power of the chair that is secured by determining who shall speak, for how long and in what order. Also, on occasion, the chair’s influence is sometimes considered when note is made of its contributions in setting the agenda of the body and in ensuring that its rules and procedures are observed. Most often, however, other forms of its power tend to be overlooked. It is often forgotten that the chair can also exercise considerable influence through its managerial role within an organization. This can be seen in its ability to help shape operational budgets and to allocate staff and other support services. It can also be discerned in its involvement in supervising the release of information, data and reports coming from the organization. The chair can also exercise its power through its

“representational” role. In becoming the “voice and face” of the body it can help determine which of the organization’s programs and objectives are prioritized in the minds of both internal and external audiences. In performing this role, a chair can also contribute to the development of an identity and mandate for itself and for its organization that may be independent of that of its nation-state members. Similarly, in performing its “go-between” or “brokerage” role, the chair can exercise a form of transactional influence that may not be available to other participants within the organization. Taken together these separate avenues of influence contribute to a considerable base of potential power within the organization and with regard to the membership (Tallberg, 2010).

### **The Leadership Styles of Three Recent Arctic Council Chairmanships—Sweden, Canada, the United States**

Each of the last three Chairmanships of the Arctic Council has provided a distinctive model of leadership for the organization. These alternative approaches can be seen to reflect both differences in their assessment of the needs of the body as well as their own national priorities and goals within the Arctic. In providing both direction and focus for the efforts of the Arctic Council, each of the three chairs has performed several of the different formal and informal roles associated with their institutional position. Each, at times, has also made use of some of the “powers of the chair” that have been noted above.

Sweden, for its part, provided one of the clearest examples of an Arctic Council Chairmanship whose efforts and energies were directed primarily toward the needs of the body as a whole. With a limited national Arctic profile and an established tradition of working for the collective interest within international organizations, Sweden announced from the start of its Chairmanship that it desired to play the role of an “honest broker.” In this capacity, it would seek to reconcile discordant views within the body and strive for the development of a common Arctic vision among the membership. Its Chairmanship Program was organized around this theme of a “common vision” and directed toward three themes—the needs of the Arctic environment, the needs of the peoples who inhabit the region, and the need to strengthen the operation and effectiveness of the Arctic Council as a whole (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

In noting its intention to focus the Council’s work on both environmental protection and sustainable development concerns, the Swedish Chairmanship signaled its desire that the body make headway in both areas. It would seek to reconcile divisions within the organization between proponents of each cause. By taking such a conciliatory position the Swedish Chairmanship was able to advance research efforts in both areas during its leadership term.

It was, however, in the third thematic area—“building a stronger Arctic Council”—that the Swedes excelled in their role as an “honest broker.” By listening to differing views around the table and seeking to build consensus among a variety of contending participants, the Swedish Chairmanship was able to establish a common ground that allowed the body to move forward on a variety of fronts that had earlier plagued the body. This included formalizing new rules of procedure, implementing an effective communication strategy, establishing a permanent Secretariat and, perhaps most critical, breaking the logjam that had prevented the addition of new national observers to the Arctic Council (*Economist*, 2013).

In achieving these objectives, the Swedish Chairmanship performed adroitly each of the previously discussed roles of an organizational chair and made use of the formal and informal powers associated with its position. It effectively moved its objectives forward by carefully crafting its agenda as the presiding officer of the body and by the skillful use of its gavel. In performing its managerial role it oversaw the specific steps by which undertakings as the creation of a common communication strategy and the establishment of the Secretariat in Tromsø moved forward from plan to full implementation. It undertook to perform its representational role by actively becoming the “voice and face” of the body as it attended a variety of international meetings dealing with global climate change and actively participated in social media around the circumpolar North. It performed its “brokerage” role repeatedly throughout its leadership term utilizing its “good offices” to promote compromise and consensus on difficult and complex matters—perhaps most notably in the case of the lingering Observer question. The end result of such endeavors was a truly reinvigorated international organization with a sense of common purpose and expectations (Nord, 2013).

Canada, for its part, offered a very different leadership approach. It could be best described as being “entrepreneurial” in nature. As the originator of the

Council and as a country with a strong Arctic profile, Sweden's successor at the helm of the organization was less interested in forging consensus and more interested in seeing a specific agenda and program endorsed and acted upon by the body. Under the thematic heading of "Development for the Peoples of the North" the Canadian Chairmanship announced that it had three specific programmatic objectives to advance within the Arctic Council during its leadership term. These included: 1) providing for Responsible Arctic Resource Development; 2) fostering safe Arctic shipping; and 3) securing sustainable circumpolar communities. In addition, it would seek to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples within the organization (Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013).

Contrary to the Swedish approach of seeking to balance and redress contending views within the body, the Canadians were primarily interested in pushing forward their own understanding as to what action should be taken in support of specific initiatives under each rubric. This was most evident in their almost single-handed insistence that an Arctic Economic Council be established in order to build circumpolar trade and foster business and natural resource development opportunities in the Far North. Encountering significant resistance from representatives favoring a more environmentally conscious approach to such economic development efforts, the Canadian Chairmanship insisted ever more strongly that the initiative should go forward as originally framed. In its mind, the Council needed to get on board with the proposed plan and not engage in unnecessary debate and delay (McGwin, 2014).

In undertaking their Chairmanship, the Canadians were not seen as performing their required chair functions as effectively as their predecessors. Nor did they seem as skillful as the Swedes in utilizing the formal and informal tools and powers of the position. In their convening role they often seemed confused and at cross-purposes with themselves. Agendas were frequently delayed and reworked. Discussions at scheduled meetings seemed to wander. They appeared to fare little better in undertaking their management role. Oversight of the formal working groups of the Council lagged as did liaison with the newly established Secretariat. Progress toward creating concrete deliverables for presentation and discussion at the Ministerial Meeting was, at best, measured. The representational role of the Canadian Chairmanship was also somewhat diminished during this time. Although frequent press releases

and photo sessions were offered by the Chair of the Council, Leona Aglukkaq, the regular change of personnel and assignments within the Canadian Chairmanship failed to provide a consistent “voice and face” for the organization (Axworthy and Simon, 2015). This was most in evidence with the sudden replacement of the Canadian Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, Patrick Borbey, not even half-way through his term. Finally, the Canadians did not really seek to undertake much of brokerage role in their capacity of Chair of the body. As indicated above, they did not really see the need to foster agreement or consensus within the organization. As they understood it, their primary role was to lead and to have the others follow. Unfortunately for the Canadian Chairmanship this proved not to be an automatic relationship. An insightful observer was to note that: “The Canadian Chairmanship featured lots of leadership—but saw few followers” (Exner-Pirot, 2014).

Although the United States Chairmanship of the Arctic Council is only half-way completed, one can discern elements of a distinctive leadership style that seems to borrow from both the approaches of the Swedes and the Canadians. Under the thematic heading of “One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges, and Responsibilities,” the Americans have launched a series of initiatives within the Arctic Council that are reflective of their own national priorities for the region. These include efforts to: 1) address the impact of climate change in region; 2) enhance Arctic Ocean safety security and stewardship and 3) improve the economic and living conditions of Arctic communities (Arctic Council Secretariat, 2015). This list of objectives emerged from a prolonged discussion within the bureaucracy of the U.S. federal government and from sometimes heated discussions with other national policy players such as the government of the state of Alaska. They have now become the central touchstones for their Chairmanship Program. As such, like their Canadian predecessors, the Americans have seemed to favor more of an entrepreneurial style of leadership than either a “professional” or “honest-broker” approach. They have definite objectives they wish to advance and as a major global player inclined to make use of their established influence and power to secure their endorsement by the Council.

Unlike the Canadian Chairmanship, however, the United States has been far more willing to seek the assent and cooperation of its fellow Council members when promoting its priorities. This can be seen in the manner in

which it has sought to build support for action on topics as diverse as circumpolar health and Arctic Ocean acidification. It can also be observed in the way it has endeavored to accommodate the views and perspectives of the Russian Federation within the work of the Council. Whereas during the Canadian leadership term there existed a tense standoff between the Canadian and the Russian delegations, the Americans have sought to bridge differences with the Russians when they have arisen. In this manner, the United States' approach at the helm of the body has adopted features of a brokerage leadership style that was seen earlier during the Swedish Chairmanship.

Also like the Swedes, the Americans have been far more willing to perform the other necessary roles associated with being an effective organizational chair. They have received generally good reviews in their presiding capacity. The Americans have also been seen to be effective managers of the behind-the-scenes operation of the body providing necessary oversight and accountability. Furthermore, they have done a credible job in providing a visible "voice and face" for the organization within the circumpolar region and in the broader international community. The United States Chairmanship has also been quite skilled—like its earlier Swedish predecessor—in utilizing both the formal and informal "powers of the chair" in advancing its overall objectives.

## **Conclusion**

The above discussion has suggested that the Arctic Council over its two decades of existence has been subject to the leadership styles pursued by those states which have occupied the chair of the body. Sometimes this "leadership from the chair" has been beneficial to the growth and development of the organization. At other times it has been, perhaps, detrimental. Nonetheless it has helped to fashion and direct the conduct of the Council in a manner that has not always been readily acknowledged.

The comparative analysis undertaken here has noted that like other heads of international bodies, the chair of the Arctic Council can and often does exercise influence over the path and direction that the organization has taken. Successive chairs have elected to pursue alternative leadership styles and strategies that have been reflective of their assessment of the needs of the organization and their own national objectives and capacities. The three most recent Chairmanships—those of Sweden, Canada, and the United States—have

each chosen to pursue alternative leadership paths. They have performed the necessary formal and informal roles of the chair with differing degrees of enthusiasm and success. They have also exercised the “powers of the chair” in their leadership position with differing degrees of effectiveness.

As the organization looks to the future there are clear “lessons to be learned” from these alternative experiences of leadership from the chair. First and most prominent of these is the observation that no national chair is likely to follow exactly in the path of its predecessor. Each Chair of the Arctic Council will face a distinctive set of challenges and possess different ideas and capabilities as to how best to respond to them. The rotating feature of the Arctic Council chairmanship allows for such heterogeneity and offers the incoming chair certain flexibility in their approach to their leadership role. The second lesson, however, is the realization that to be an effective organizational leader the incoming chair must endeavor to perform all four types of roles associated with their position. It is not sufficient to serve simply as the convener or presiding officer of the body. Normally, there are important managerial, representational and brokerage functions of the organization that also must be undertaken. Failure to undertake any of these will result in a weak organization and an ineffective leader at its head.

Finally, it is important to take cognizance of the fact that while alternative leadership styles might appeal to different chairs, the nature of the Arctic Council itself sets some parameters on the effectiveness of each approach. Most significantly, the number and variety of its participants, as well as the requirement for consensus, suggest that any chair of the body must work to address and accommodate differing perspectives and priorities within the body. If a chair too quickly narrows the agenda for discussion or limits the alternatives for action there is the danger that one might have “decisive leadership” but in the end achieve little in the way of results. The challenge of truly effective “leadership from the chair” is to present both innovative ideas and approaches for the Arctic Council and to help build the consensus within the body that will enable their adoption.

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### 3

## Conceptualizing “One Arctic” as the “Canadian Arctic”? Situating Canada’s Arctic Council Chairmanship (2013-15)

*P. Whitney Lackenbauer*

*Since I was appointed Minister for the Arctic Council in August, 2012, northerners from across the Arctic have made it clear to me that the well-being and prosperity of the people living in the North must be the top priority of the council. This is why for the first time in the Arctic Council’s history we put the people element at the forefront of the agenda by making ‘Development for the People of the North’ the overarching theme of Canada’s chairmanship.*

*Over the past two years, we have worked to ensure that the council focuses its efforts on action-oriented projects and programs that benefit northerners and improve our lives.... The Arctic nations and the Indigenous organizations of the Arctic Council have worked co-operatively to ensure the council remains effective, relevant and strong. In Iqaluit, with the world’s eyes upon us, we will demonstrate how our work is making a difference, for northerners and for their environment.*

-- Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, April 2015

Current approaches to regional governance aggregate multiple understandings and visions for the circumpolar North. The notion of *multiple Arctics*—North American, Northern European, and Russian—points to both convergence and discordance in how different regional actors perceive the North. Professor Carina Keskitalo of Umeå University astutely observes that “Canada developed a specific understanding of its ‘Arctic’ quite early” that went

beyond the Arctic Ocean and its immediate vicinity to encompass its entire Northern territories above 60° North latitude as “Arctic.” At the end of the Cold War, when Canada played a leading role in political negotiations to institutionalize circumpolar relations, its particular understanding of the Arctic in environmental and human terms (rooted in Indigenous subsistence-based livelihoods) deeply influenced the region-building process. Accordingly, Canada’s “historically developed notions of ‘the Arctic’ have been transplanted to northern areas everywhere, with little reflection on whether it is applicable to the different regions or not” (Rover with Keskitalo, 2014; also Keskitalo, 2004).

As an Arctic coastal state with 40% of its landmass north of 60° latitude and 162,000 km of its coastline in the Arctic, Canada’s concern with effectively exercising its sovereignty is understandable. Its emphasis on the human dimensions of the Arctic, and particularly those related to the northern Indigenous peoples, also reflect national realities. Its three northern territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) are home to just over 110,000 people (more than half of whom are Indigenous or Aboriginal), spread out in remote communities. Social indicators in Canada’s North are abysmal, pointing to the challenges of providing social services and infrastructure to small and remote communities. Indigenous peoples, in particular, have experienced numerous challenges associated with rapid changes to their homelands, including threats to language and culture, the erosion of traditional support networks, poorer health than the rest of Canadians, and changes to traditional diet and communal food practices (eg. INAC, 2016; NAHO, 2016; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015). Rich in natural resources, but geographically distant from major markets, the North has long served as an economic “land of tomorrow” in the Canadian political imagination (eg. LeBourdais, 1938; Grace, 2007). Buoyed by the prospect of heightened global demand and new access to resources, boosters have trumpeted the Arctic’s “coming of age” in the early twenty-first century. This has rejuvenated national interest in Northern affairs, as well as resurrected longstanding anxieties about sovereignty, security (in its many dimensions), and the well-being of Northern Canadians.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On popular opinion and the Arctic, see the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program, 2011 and 2015; Landriault, 2016; Landriault and Minard, 2016. On

Canada's propensity to project its domestic northern strategy, which is deeply embedded in North American Arctic priorities, into the circumpolar sphere should come as no surprise owing to its success in deeply institutionalizing its conception of the Arctic in current instruments of Arctic governance. Canadian politicians and commentators often trumpet how their country led efforts to establish the Arctic Council through the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, which reflected Canada's preoccupations with the environment and Indigenous peoples (eg. Axworthy and Dean, 2013; English, 2013), and served as the Council's first Chair (1996-98). Canada's recent chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2013-15) also reflected a strong emphasis on what one commentator labelled an "Arctic Indigenous Canadian vision" (Willis, 2013), predicated on a commitment to "put Northerners first," as well as economic development priorities closely aligned with Canada's Northern Strategy. This prompted some critics to lament its domestic (rather than global) orientation, its comparative lack of emphasis on scientific research, its alleged promotion of the interests of "big business" over environmental protection, and its suggestion that non-Northerners had a limited role to play in agenda-setting or circumpolar dialogue (eg. Exner-Pirot, 2016: 87-88). Other assessments of Canada's chairmanship have yielded a more favourable verdict, pointing to strong efforts to promote human dimensions of the Council's work (particularly the expertise and contributions of Indigenous peoples) and many substantive Council activities and outcomes—all in the face of tense political relations between Russia and the other Arctic states emanating from outside of the region.

This chapter provides an overview of Canada's historical engagement with the Arctic and the development of its Northern Strategy, explaining why it places a high priority on sovereignty, economic development for the benefit of Northerners, environmental protection, and governance (particularly by Arctic states and Northern Indigenous peoples). Although Canada's Arctic Council chairmanship priorities certainly reflected the government's willingness to set an

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changing definitions of sovereignty and security, see Greaves and Lackenbauer, 2016.

agenda that explicitly projected national interests for domestic political gain, unlike preceding Council chairs (Berger, 2015), they also reflect the intertwined domestic and international dimensions of the country’s polar policies.

### **Canada’s Northern Interests: Historical Developments**

Canada’s leading role in the founding of the Arctic Council has been well documented by scholars (eg. Young, 1998; Keskitalo, 2004; English, 2013), who have demonstrated how its early championing of the circumpolar forum fit with its emerging views of how to integrate Russia into the post-Cold War world order and how to promote the inclusion of Indigenous peoples. With the end of the Cold War, the official discourse in Canada on Arctic affairs shifted away from a traditional fixation on continental security and on narrow sovereignty interests to emphasize circumpolar cooperation and broad definitions of security that now prioritized human and environmental dimensions (Huebert, 1998). In 1997, a Canadian parliamentary committee recommended that the country should focus on international Arctic cooperation through multilateral governance to address pressing “human security” and environmental challenges in the region. Committee chairman Bill Graham reported that environmentally sustainable human development was “the long-term foundation for assuring circumpolar security, with priority being given to the well-being of Arctic peoples and to safeguarding northern habitants from intrusions which have impinged aggressively on them” (HCSCFAIT, 1997: ix, 100).

The Liberal government under Jean Chrétien (1993-2003) embraced this emphasis on transnational cooperation, and *The Northern Dimension of Canada’s Foreign Policy* released in 2000 revealed how environmental and social challenges now predominated. “Whereas the politics of the Cold War dictated that the Arctic region be treated as part of a broader strategy of exclusion and confrontation, now the politics of globalization and power diffusion highlight the importance of the circumpolar world as an area for inclusion and co-operation,” it summarized. The Arctic had “become a front line” for new trends and developments. “The challenges mostly take the shape of transboundary environmental threats—persistent organic pollutants, climate change, nuclear waste—that are having dangerously increasing impacts on the health and vitality of human beings, northern lands, waters and animal life,” the *Northern Dimension* observed. But rather than seeing globalization as a simple

threat, the document found optimism in the “increasingly confident northern societies who, drawing on their traditional values, stand poised to take up the challenges” (DFAIT, 2000). Framed by principles of Canadian leadership, partnership, and ongoing dialogue with Northerners, this new northern foreign policy was rooted in four overarching objectives: to enhance the security and prosperity of Canadians, especially Northerners and Aboriginal peoples; to assert and ensure the preservation of Canada’s sovereignty in the North; to establish the circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity integrated into a rules-based international system; and to promote the human security of Northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic. Asserting and ensuring the preservation of Canadian sovereignty was deemed compatible with multilateral cooperation, and traditional preoccupations with “defending” sovereignty had slipped to the back burner (Huebert, 1998; Lackenbauer, 2009).

In December 2004, Paul Martin’s Liberal Government announced an integrated Northern Strategy (devised in concert with the premiers of the Northern territories of Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) built around seven main goals. First, the strategy promised to strengthen Northern governance, partnerships and institutions to provide Northerners with greater control over decisions about their future. Second, it committed to establishing robust foundations for “strong, sustainable, diversified economies where northerners share in the benefits of northern development.” Third, it proposed “to engage all partners in the North in the protection and stewardship of the environment.” Fourth, it sought to promote “healthy, safe and sustainable northern communities” that would “promote self-reliance.” Fifth, the document committed to ensuring that Canada would continue to play a “leading role” in promoting international cooperation, while taking Northerners’ concerns into “consideration in national efforts to reinforce sovereignty, security and circumpolar cooperation.” Sixth, the strategy promised to preserve, revitalize, and promote Indigenous cultures, recognizing and encouraging “the importance of language, traditional knowledge and way-of-life.” Seventh, the government committed to ensuring that “Canada is a leader in northern science and technology, and to develop expertise in areas of particular importance and relevance to the North.” Although the Martin government conducted public

consultations on the strategy in 2005, the results were not released during its tenure in office.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrent to this holistic strategy, Martin’s Liberals also acknowledged the return of age-old concerns about Canada’s Arctic sovereignty early in the new millennium. Climate change reports, vigorous academic and media debates, and hyperbolic rhetoric over boundary disputes such as that over Hans Island and the status of the Northwest Passage led prominent commentators to securitize the Arctic political agenda with their “sovereignty on thinning ice” thesis (eg. Huebert, 2003; Byers and Lalonde, 2005). Canada’s International Policy Statement, released by Martin’s Liberal government in 2005, identified the Arctic as a priority area given “increased security threats, a changed distribution of global power, challenges to existing international institutions, and transformation of the global economy.” The next two decades were anticipated to bring major challenges requiring investments in new military capabilities and creative diplomacy. “In addition to growing economic activity in the Arctic region, the effects of climate change are expected to open up our Arctic waters to commercial traffic by as early as 2015,” the statement noted. “These developments reinforce the need for Canada to monitor and control events in its sovereign territory, through new funding and new tools” (DFAIT, 2005). Although the Liberal government was defeated before it could implement its vision, it had intertwined sovereignty and security in political rhetoric and strategic documents.

It fell to the Conservatives, who were elected in January 2006, to implement this agenda and to make Arctic sovereignty and security a major political priority. The Canadian North was a key component of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 2006: 2. In 2005, the Liberal Government’s International Policy Statement (IPS) also identified the Arctic as a priority area in light of “increased security threats, a changed distribution of global power, challenges to existing international institutions, and transformation of the global economy.” It anticipated new diplomatic challenges and the need for new defence capabilities, stemming from “growing economic activity in the Arctic region, the effects of climate change, ... [and] the need for Canada to monitor and control events in its sovereign territory, through new funding and new tools.” See DFAIT, *Canada’s International Policy Statement*, Overview (2005), excerpted in Dean, Lackenbauer, and Lajeunesse, 2014: 39-40.

Conservatives' 2005 election platform, which played on the idea of an Arctic sovereignty "crisis" demanding decisive action. Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised that Canada would acquire the military capabilities necessary to defend its sovereignty against external threats. "The single most important duty of the federal government is to defend and protect our national sovereignty," Harper asserted. "It's time to act to defend Canadian sovereignty. A Conservative government will make the military investments needed to secure our borders. You don't defend national sovereignty with flags, cheap election rhetoric, and advertising campaigns. You need forces on the ground, ships in the sea, and proper surveillance. And that will be the Conservative approach" (Harper, 2005). In short, the new prime minister's political message emphasized the need for Canadian action with a particular attention to conventional military forces, differentiating his government from the Liberals whom he believed had swung the pendulum too far towards diplomacy and human development.

The Harper government's "use it or lose it" approach to Arctic policy dominated the agenda from 2006-09.<sup>3</sup> A spate of commitments to invest in military capabilities to defend Canada's rights in the region, including new Arctic patrol vessels and more vigorous patrolling, reinforced the government's emphasis on "hard security" rather than "human security" like its predecessors. This formulation offered little political incentive to downplay the probability of military conflict in the Arctic, given that the Conservative government was trying to project an image of strength and commitment to defend the country's sovereignty. But this "use it or lose it" rhetoric frustrated and even offended Northerners, particularly Indigenous peoples who had lived in the region since "time immemorial" (and thus resented any intimation that it was not sufficiently "used") and continued to express concerns about their lack of substantive involvement in national and international decision-making. Inuit representatives, for example, suggested that the government agenda prioritized military investments at the expense of environmental protection and improved

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<sup>3</sup> A survey of political speeches and news releases from the Conservative government reveals that this phrase was consistently used up to 2008, with only one official reference to it after that point. See Lackenbauer and Dean, 2016. On Harper's early vision, see Dodds, 2011 and 2012; and Dolata, 2015.

social and economic conditions in the North. They insisted that “sovereignty begins at home” and that the primary challenges were domestic human security issues, requiring investments in infrastructure, education, and health care (eg. Kaludjak, 2007; Simon, 2008; ITK, 2013). Furthermore, the Inuit Circumpolar Council’s transnational *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* (2009) emphasized that “the inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic and Inuit self-determination and other rights require states to accept the presence and role of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.” The declaration envisions the Inuit playing an active role in all deliberations on environmental security, sustainable development, militarization, shipping, and socio-economic development.<sup>4</sup>

### **Canada’s Integrated Northern Strategy**

After the Ilulissat Declaration by the Arctic coastal states in May 2008, official Canadian statements began to adopt a more optimistic and less bellicose tone. In March 2009, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon acknowledged in a speech that geological research and international law (not military clout) would resolve continental shelf and boundary disputes, and he emphasized “strong Canadian leadership in the Arctic ... to facilitate good international governance in the region” (Cannon, 2009). These constructive messages were echoed in *Canada’s Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future*, released the following July. It emphasized four main pillars: exercising Canada’s Arctic sovereignty, promoting social and economic development, protecting Canada’s environmental heritage, and improving and devolving Northern governance. The strategy reinforces a message of partnership: between the federal government and Northern Canadians, and between Canada and its circumpolar neighbours. Although it trumpeted the

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<sup>4</sup> Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) 2009. Inuit representatives have opposed state actions that they feel violate their interests, such as Canada’s decision to host a meeting for the five Arctic coastal states in March 2010 without inviting Inuit and First Nations to the discussions, and even critiqued a bilateral Canada-Denmark Arctic defence and security cooperation agreement because they were not involved in negotiating it. As such, Indigenous voices add to the complexity (and richness) of the Canadian message projected to the rest of the world.

government's commitment to "putting more boots on the Arctic tundra, more ships in the icy water and a better eye-in-the-sky," it also emphasized that Canada's disagreements with its neighbours were "well-managed and pose no sovereignty or defence challenges for Canada." This signaled a rather abrupt change of tone from previous political messaging (DIAND, 2009).

Rather than a "use it or lose it" message, *Canada's Northern Strategy* stressed opportunities for cooperation in the circumpolar world. The strategy cast the United States as an "exceptionally valuable partner in the Arctic" with which Canada has managed its differences responsibly since the Second World War. It also emphasized opportunities for cooperation with Russia and "common interests" with European Arctic states, as well as a shared commitment to international law. Implicitly, this confirmed that bilateral and multilateral engagement is key to stability and security in the region. "We're not going down a road toward confrontation," Cannon emphasized. "Indeed, we're going down a road toward co-operation and collaboration. That is the Canadian way. And that's the way my other colleagues around the table have chosen to go as well." The foreign minister insisted that his government saw the Arctic as an "absolute priority" and that the needs of Northerners would be at the heart of Arctic policy.

The Department of Foreign Affairs released its *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* in August 2010 (DFAIT, 2010). This document reiterated the importance of the Arctic in Canada's national identity and Canada's role as an "Arctic power." The overall message mirrored the broader Northern Strategy, outlining a vision for the Arctic as "a stable, rules-based region with clearly defined boundaries, dynamic economic growth and trade, vibrant Northern communities, and healthy and productive ecosystems." These themes—which bear striking resemblance to *The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy* released in 2000—reinforce how recent strategic messaging from Ottawa reflects an approach to circumpolar issues that began under the Liberals but was simply pushed more forcefully by the Conservatives.

The first and foremost pillar of Canada's foreign policy is "the exercise of our sovereignty over the Far North." The "hard security" message has been muted since 2009, and the tone of cooperation with circumpolar neighbours and Northerners has been amplified. Reaffirming that Canada's Arctic sovereignty is longstanding, well-established and based on historic title (rooted,

in part, on the presence of Inuit and other Canadians in the region since time immemorial), the statement projects a stable, secure circumpolar world—but one in which Canada will continue to uphold its rights as a sovereign, coastal state. Accordingly, Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy Statement commits Canada to “seek to resolve boundary issues in the Arctic region, in accordance with international law” and to secure its rights to the extended continental shelf. Longstanding disputes respecting the Northwest Passage, Beaufort Sea, and Hans Island are well-managed and pose no acute sovereignty or security concerns to Canada.<sup>5</sup> Leading Canadian academic experts seem to have reached a similar consensus, with previous proponents of the “sovereignty on thinning ice” school largely abandoning their earlier arguments that Canadian sovereignty will be a casualty of climate change and foreign challenges. Instead, academic narratives anticipating potential conflict now emphasize how other international events (such as Russian aggression in the Ukraine) could “spill over” into the Arctic or how new non-Arctic state and non-state actors might challenge or undermine Canadian sovereignty and security.<sup>6</sup>

Other dimensions of the *Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy* reflect the interaction between domestic and international agendas in Canada’s Northern strategy. Canada’s North is home to numerous world-class mineral deposits, and the country has a long-standing reputation for welcoming foreign investment in its resource sector. Trade and investment in resource development, a primary catalyst for the surge in international interest in the Arctic, are upheld as main priorities given that the mining and energy sectors are key drivers of northern economies and offer significant opportunities for economic and social development. Accordingly, the second pillar, “Promoting Economic and Social Development,” promotes the idea that creating a dynamic,

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<sup>5</sup> On 28 November 2012, the Foreign Ministers of Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark announced that they had reached a tentative agreement on where to establish the boundary in the Lincoln Sea. Negotiators are transforming the tentative agreement into a treaty text for ratification by their respective governments.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Huebert, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Burney and Hampson, 2015; Byers, 2015; Sorensen, 2015; Borgerson and Byers, 2016. For less alarmist views of Russia, see Roberts, 2015; Lajeunesse and Lackenbauer, 2016; and Lackenbauer, 2016.

sustainable northern economy and improving the social well-being of Northerners is essential to unleashing the true potential of Canada's Northern Territories. The statement emphasizes that Canada is actively promoting Northern economic and social development internationally on three key fronts: 1) taking steps to create the appropriate international conditions for sustainable development; 2) seeking trade and investment opportunities that benefit Northerners and all Canadians; and 3) encouraging a greater understanding of the human dimension of the Arctic.

The third pillar, "Protecting the Arctic Environment," suggests that Canada is taking concrete action to protect and manage the unique and fragile ecosystems and wildlife of the Arctic, which are being affected by global forces. Its "comprehensive approach" to environmental protection, built around the idea of sustainability, seeks to balance the frontier-homeland equation, "ensuring [that] conservation keeps pace with development and that development decisions are based on sound science and careful assessment."<sup>7</sup> Domestic initiatives included cumulative impact monitoring programs, scientific research to support regulatory decision-making related to Northern oil and gas management, remediation of contaminated military and mine sites, the creation of new terrestrial and marine protected areas, and the expanded application of the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* to the full extent of Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone (Bartenstein, 2011).<sup>8</sup> In the international sphere, Canada's official environmental actions pursuant to its Northern Strategy are geared towards: 1) promoting an ecosystem-based management approach together with Arctic neighbours and others; 2) contributing to and supporting international efforts to address climate change in the Arctic; 3) enhancing efforts on other pressing international issues, including pursuing and strengthening international standards for environmental protection; and 4)

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<sup>7</sup> Canada, "Protecting our Environmental Heritage" (updated 13 April 2015), <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/env/index-eng.asp>. For the debate on this policy, see Dolata, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Pursuant to article 234 of UNCLOS, on 1 July 2010 Canada also implemented mandatory ship reporting (NORDREG) for vessels destined for Canada's Arctic waters, replacing the previous voluntary reporting system which had been in place since 1977.

strengthening Arctic science, building on the legacy of the International Polar Year (IPY, 2007-08).

Science and technology is considered a cross-cutting theme that underpins all of Canada’s Northern Strategy priorities. As a world leader in Arctic science (second only to the United States in terms of scientific publications on the Arctic) (Côté and Picard-Aitken, 2009; Canadian Polar Commission, 2014), its research extends beyond the academic sector to the private, not-for-profit, and government sectors (including Indigenous researchers and organizations). Official statements tout that Aboriginal peoples and Northerners played a significant role in Canada’s planning, coordination, and implementation of its contributions to IPY, and that Canada’s investment of \$156 million was one of the largest by a single country (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 2011). The government has committed to significant new infrastructure in support of Northern science, including a new polar icebreaker and remote sensing systems to support northern monitoring activities such as sea ice monitoring for navigation support, vessel detection in support of security and safety, and various environmental monitoring activities including pollution detection and marine wind derivation. As a flagship initiative, Canada is investing \$250 million in building the Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS)—a world-class hub for science and technology, based in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut—that it hopes will attract international scientists to work with Canadians (Polar Knowledge Canada, 2016; George, 2015).

The fourth pillar commits to “Improving and Devolving Governance and Empowering the Peoples of the North.” Domestically, this involves the ongoing negotiation and implementation of land claim and self-government agreements with Northern Indigenous peoples, as well as the negotiation of devolution agreements of federal responsibilities to the territorial governments. In its international dimension, improved governance includes continued support for the Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council, and ensuring that Northern governments and Indigenous organizations in Canada have opportunities to actively participate in shaping Canadian policy on Arctic issues. In Canada’s view, this high level of engagement with Permanent

Participants (as rights-holders<sup>9</sup>) and other Northern stakeholders is vital to ensuring that the Arctic Council continues to respond to the region's challenges and opportunities.

### **The Canadian Arctic Council Chairmanship (2013-15)**

The *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* emphasizes the Arctic Council as the leading intergovernmental forum through which Canada advances its Arctic foreign policy. This reflects its strong contributions to the founding and activities of the Council since 1996, including significant government, Indigenous, and academic expertise, leadership, and resources (both human and financial) to the various working groups and task forces.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, Canada assumed its second tenure as Chair of the Arctic Council from 2013-15 with great optimism. Canada's vision for the Arctic was again reflected in its overarching theme, "Development for the People of the North," and its three sub-themes: Responsible Arctic Resource Development, Safe Arctic Shipping, and Sustainable Circumpolar Communities. These themes, determined by a government-led public engagement process with northern Canadians, focused on enhancing the capacity of Indigenous Permanent Participants, creating conditions for dynamic and sustainable economic growth, and promoting vibrant communities and healthy ecosystems (DFAIT, 2013). The federal government's appointment of Leona Aglukkaq (the first Inuk to serve as a Canadian Cabinet minister) as Canada's Minister and Chair of the Arctic Council reaffirmed a national commitment to Indigenous leadership. Although her appointment elicited criticism from some commentators who questioned her mandate and competency because she was not Canada's foreign minister, others were pleased to see an Arctic Indigenous person serve as chair of the Arctic Council for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

During the course of its chairmanship, Canada committed to eleven priority initiatives: strengthening the Arctic Council; the creation of a

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<sup>9</sup> On the distinction between stakeholders and rightsholders, see Cochran, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> For overviews of the Arctic Council, see Koivurova and VanderZwaag, 2007; Koivurova, 2010; Axworthy, Koivurova and Hasanat, 2012; and English, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> On the debate over Aglukkaq's appointment and the northern consultations, see Exner-Pirot, 2016: 86; Aglukkaq, 2013; and Wallace, 2013.

Circumpolar Business Forum; Arctic marine oil pollution prevention<sup>12</sup>; guidelines for Arctic tourism and cruise ship operations in the Arctic; protecting Arctic traditional ways of life; promoting traditional and local knowledge; addressing short-lived climate pollutants; facilitating adaptation to climate change; promoting mental wellness in Northern circumpolar communities; migratory bird conservation; and enhancing scientific cooperation in the Arctic. All of the Arctic Council states and Permanent Participants supported these initiatives, the first ten of which Canada proposed and the eleventh (on scientific cooperation) coming from the U.S. and Russia.<sup>13</sup> This agenda invited criticisms from stakeholders who worried that Canada’s agenda departed from the Council’s traditional emphasis on environmental protection and scientific assessments, instead imposing a parochial Canadian (rather than a circumpolar) vision. “Rather than viewing the Arctic as an increasingly global place, with a legitimate role for non-Arctic actors,” political scientist Heather Exner-Pirot suggests that “Aglukkaq prioritized activities that supported Northerners, especially Canadian Northerners, and more specifically Nunavummiut, and in particular Inuit” (Exner-Pirot, 2016: 87). Given the dramatic surge in non-Arctic state interests in circumpolar affairs in recent years, as reflected in the accreditation of five new Asian state Observers to the Arctic Council at the 2013 Kiruna Ministerial, Canada’s insistence that Indigenous Northerners had a

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<sup>12</sup> Arctic States signed an Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response at the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting in May 2013, but the Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention initiative was revised in light of American and Norwegian concerns, with the U.S. reticent to support language that implied the negotiation of a new international instrument and Norway reluctant to discuss standards. In the end, the Council developed a Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic to promote regulatory cooperation in the petroleum and shipping industries to prevent marine oil pollution, protect the environment and local economies, and safeguard traditional livelihoods and ways of life (DFAIT, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> The Kiruna Declaration (2013) referred to eight of these initiatives, with the two initiatives that were not mentioned (Guidelines for Arctic Tourism and Cruise Ship Operations, and Migratory Bird Conservation) captured in the relevant Working Group sections of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) Report to Ministers.

paramount voice could be construed as an exclusionary emphasis that sought to promote a self-interested agenda.<sup>14</sup>

The first sub-theme, Responsible Arctic Resource Development, emphasized the sustainable development of natural resources. While debates continued in academic and advocacy circles over the role of non-renewable resource development as a backbone of a sustainable Northern economy (eg. Everett and Nicol, 2013; Harrington and Lecavalier, 2014; Nicol, 2015), the Harper Government had shown a clear commitment to prioritizing this form of development as the conduit to improve socio-economic conditions in Canada's Arctic. Accordingly, Canada's "top priority" as chair was to create a "Circumpolar Business Forum," intended to bring circumpolar business perspectives and advice to the work of the Council.<sup>15</sup> The Arctic Economic Council (AEC) held its first meeting in Iqaluit in September 2014. As an "independent organization that facilitates Arctic business-to-business activities and responsible economic development through the sharing of best practices, technological solutions, standards and other information," the AEC's membership represents a wide range of business interests: "from mining and shipping companies to reindeer herding and Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations" (AEC, 2016).<sup>16</sup> Although prematurely criticized for potentially undermining the Arctic Council and the unique status of Permanent Participants, as well as for providing "transnational corporations with preferential access to national governments,"<sup>17</sup> the realities of the AEC remain

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<sup>14</sup> On the acceptance of non-Arctic states to the Council, see Manicom and Lackenbauer, 2014; Lackenbauer, 2014; and Willis and Depledge, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Petra Dolata (2015: 140) notes that the origins of this idea extend back to a 1997 all-party parliamentary report that recommended the creation of a Circumpolar Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>16</sup> AEC members decided to focus their efforts on five overarching themes: establishing strong market connections between the Arctic states; encouraging public-private partnerships for infrastructure investments; creating stable and predictable regulatory frameworks; facilitating knowledge and data exchange between industry and academia; and traditional Indigenous knowledge, stewardship and a focus on small businesses (AEC, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> See Axworthy and Simon, 2015. In actual practice, permanent participants have voting privileges within the AEC. See Windeyer, 2016. On controversy over the AEC, see also Exner-Pirot, 2016: 89-90, 93.

much more modest and aspirational at this stage, offering the prospect of business support to bolster Canada’s desire that Arctic communities benefit from the economic boom that is unfolding in the region.

The Safe Arctic Shipping theme built upon previous Council recommendations, such as the landmark Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (Arctic Council, 2009), as well as the ongoing work of multilateral mechanisms like the International Maritime Organization (IMO). At the Arctic Council, the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group developed best practice guidelines for sustainable marine-based tourism and safer cruise-ship operations in the Arctic, encouraging the benefits of tourism for Arctic communities while seeking to mitigate the risks associated with increased activity (DFAIT, 2015). This activity also complemented and encouraged the conclusion and adoption of the International Polar Code, negotiated through the IMO, which Canada had long championed and which is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2017.<sup>18</sup> These initiatives reflect Canada’s consistent advocacy for the protection of the Arctic environment, and reflect its interests as both a maritime nation and an Arctic coastal state that welcomes navigation in its waters, so long as maritime activities comply with domestic and international rules and regulations.

Work under the third theme, Sustainable Circumpolar Communities, also reinforced the human and environmental dimensions of a changing Arctic. Under Canada’s chairmanship, the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) worked with Indigenous communities and health professionals to identify successful approaches to improve mental wellness and resiliency, designed to help Arctic residents (particularly youth) adapt based on solutions that reflect Indigenous cultures and values.<sup>19</sup> The SDWG also developed recommendations to integrate traditional and local knowledge into its work more consistently (a topic of ongoing debate since the founding of the Council) and facilitated PP-led efforts to enhance their capacity and participation in

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<sup>18</sup> On the IMO Polar Code, see VanderZwaag, 2012; Bai, 2015; and IMO, 2016. On Canada’s role, see Kikkert, 2012: 319.

<sup>19</sup> Results of this project were shared at the Circumpolar Mental Wellness Symposium held in Iqaluit in March 2015. See Arctic Council, Sustainable Development Working Group, 2015.

Council activities.<sup>20</sup> With respect to climate change, the Council launched a web-based adaptation portal to facilitate information sharing between Arctic residents, researchers and decision-makers (eg. the Arctic Council Adaptation Exchange project led by the Sustainable Development Working Group) and, building on the Council's ongoing scientific assessment work, developed an action plan to help reduce short-lived climate pollutants (such as black carbon and methane) that warm the Arctic and harm the air quality and the health of Arctic residents.<sup>21</sup> Progress in other priority areas, such as the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (a longstanding biodiversity project), also acknowledged the importance of enhanced cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic countries to conserve vulnerable species and protect traditional Indigenous ways of life (CAFF, 2016).

Managing delicate relations with an increasingly aggressive Russia, in the face of its illegal annexation of Ukrainian Crimea and its backing of insurgents in eastern Ukraine, proved more controversial than anyone could have anticipated when Canada assumed the chair. Indeed, Canada's foreign minister had celebrated the positive working relationship between Russia and Canada in the Arctic in January 2014, which reflected the mutual interests of both countries in the region.<sup>22</sup> When Russian forces occupied Crimea in March of that year, however, the Harper Conservatives suspended almost all bilateral

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<sup>20</sup> See Arctic Council, Indigenous Peoples Secretariat, 2014. The 2015 Iqaluit Declaration notes that the Ministers of the Arctic states “**welcome** the recommendations on traditional and local knowledge and recognize the importance of using this knowledge in the work of the Council, **instruct** the Arctic Council to take relevant actions to implement these recommendations, and **note with appreciation** the work done by the Permanent Participants to develop their own principles for the use of traditional knowledge.” Arctic Council, *Iqaluit Declaration* (2015). On PP capacity initiatives, see Gam[b]le, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> See Arctic Council Secretariat, 2015. The Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) initiative was revised to reflect the concerns of Russia, which wanted to focus solely on scientific research. In the end, the Arctic states and PPs reached a consensus to proceed with work focusing on black carbon and methane, which included both supporting science and the development of appropriate national activities to reduce emissions of these pollutants.

<sup>22</sup> See CBC News, 2014. On Canada-Russia Arctic relations more generally, see Lackenbauer, 2010 and 2016; and Roberts, 2010 and 2015.

contact and soon touted Canada as “among the strongest international supporters of Ukraine’s efforts to restore stability and implement democratic and economic reforms” (GAC, 2016). Canada also seemed poised to hold the Arctic Council hostage to the broader geopolitical context when it boycotted an Arctic Council task force meeting in Moscow in April 2014, citing this as a “principled stand” against the situation in Ukraine (Mackrael, 2014). Fortunately, Canada did not repeat this act and participated, alongside Russian representatives, in all subsequent Council meetings. Insulating the Arctic Council from Canada’s general unwillingness to engage with Russia persisted until Canada’s chairmanship was nearly over. “Canada will use the Arctic Council ministerial meeting as an opportunity once again to deliver our tough message to Russia for their aggression against Ukraine,” Council chair Aglukkaq promised in anticipation of the 2015 Iqaluit ministerial (quoted in Weber, 2015). Along these lines, Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson told reporters that he approached Russian Environment Minister Sergei Donskoi at the meeting and “indicated to him that we were very vehement about our support for Ukraine and I told him that was going to continue” (CTV News, 2015). The official response from Russia criticized Canada’s decision to link the issues. “Overall, the Arctic countries’ cooperation has been developing constructively, but Canada’s attempts to add unrelated matters to the Arctic Council’s agenda, to politicise discussions, and to make decisions on Arctic cooperation issues dependent on these unrelated matters have not promoted cooperation,” it noted, drawing particular emphasis to “the preparations for and the holding of the Iqaluit meeting.” None of the other Arctic states or the Permanent Participants “supported this policy from Canada and unanimously pointed to the inadmissibility of proposing a confrontational agenda for the Arctic forum” (Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, 2015). Ultimately, because Canada chose to levy its criticisms behind close doors and not publicly during the Council proceedings, it was largely “business as usual” and the Russian representative at the meeting “took a conciliatory line, reassuring the forum that stability and cooperation must remain a mainstay of the Council” (Sergunin, 2015).

In the end, Canada’s chairmanship achieved a mixed success. The official summary report emphasized that it had “worked to support economic prosperity in the region, recognizing that business is essential to support

residents and create sustainable communities,” and it had “also supported Arctic Indigenous peoples as they continue to adapt to changing social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions” (DFAIT, 2015). While these areas of emphasis served to reorient the Council’s work towards human development, Exner-Pirot notes “many grumblings about Canada’s management and leadership of the chairmanship, with some [stakeholders] expressing that it lacked transparency, decisions were made without sufficient consultation, and emphasis was inevitably placed on issues of Canadian domestic concern.” Canada’s chairmanship did not produce any landmark assessments, yield any binding treaties, or convince other Arctic Council states that Canada’s domestic economic priorities were simply transferrable to the rest of the circumpolar world. While tensions with Russia over external developments in Ukraine and Syria may have inhibited progress on some initiatives, Exner-Pirot concludes that Canada’s chairmanship also reflected the shortcomings of Canada’s leadership, particularly its propensity to conflate domestic and international agendas (Exner-Pirot, 2016: 90-94). In answer to their rhetorical question whether Canada could “claim to have strengthened the council as it finishes its two-year term as chair and hands the gavel to the Americans,” former Liberal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy and Inuit political leader Mary Simon (2015) had a simple answer: “Unfortunately, the answer is no.”

Other commentators are more favourable in their assessments. Russian Arctic expert Alexander Sergunin observes that, “in contrast with gloomy prognoses on the possible failure of the Canadian AC presidency, the Iqaluit meeting demonstrated that Ottawa’s chairmanship was a rather productive one” (2015). “During Canada’s chairmanship,” journalist Kevin McGwin (2015) summarizes, “the council has taken action to improve the lives of Northerners, and it has sought to do so by focusing on many of the areas that [fell within Minister Aglukkaq’s] portfolio, including enhancing sustainable economic development, promoting mental wellness, supporting Indigenous languages and ensuring that the traditional knowledge of Arctic communities is more consistently included in the work of the council.” More holistically, political scientist Natalia Loukacheva (2015) suggests that Canada’s chairmanship represented a “substantial success,” particularly given the “delicate task of balancing the unique role of its Northern Indigenous peoples with interests of its other Arctic Council partners who tend to view the region from a geo-

economic and geopolitical perspective.” Citing the many Arctic Council accomplishments to promote economic and social development as well as environmental protection, she concluded that “Canada has maintained its position as a leader of Arctic co-operation and assured an excellent foundation for the United States to take over chairmanship of the council.”<sup>23</sup>

### **A New Way Forward?**

On 19 October 2015, Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party won the Canadian federal election with a sweeping majority. Although this represented a clear repudiation of Stephen Harper’s Conservative government, it should not be misconstrued as an inherent rejection of the 2009 *Northern Strategy* which, while released under the Conservatives, reflects a longstanding Canadian Arctic agenda built around sovereignty, sustainable development, environmental protection, and governance. Accordingly, there is no need for the “180 turn” in Canada’s Arctic foreign policy promoted by some commentators (eg. Plouffe and Exner-Pirot, 2015). The change in government, however, is likely to bring a change in tone and emphasis to highlight a *political* departure, even if the main substantive elements of Canada’s Arctic policy are likely to remain intact. Similar to previous administrations, it is likely that Trudeau’s Arctic agenda will continue to focus on domestic issues—particularly those related to the health and resiliency of Indigenous communities. Internationally, this agenda is complemented by a renewed commitment to global climate change mitigation, a “return” to multilateralism and a foreign policy rooted in “responsible conviction,” and a more constructive relationship with the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Two of Trudeau’s foremost priorities relate to global climate change and respect for and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. “No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples,” the new prime minister highlighted in his mandate letter to each of his Cabinet

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<sup>23</sup> For the official list of Canada’s accomplishments, see DFAIT, *Iqaluit 2015: Development for the People of the North – Results achieved during Canada’s Arctic Council Chairmanship 2013-2015* (Ottawa: Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2015), <http://www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique/assets/pdfs/ac1b-eng.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Bondy, 2015; Berthiaume, 2015a; and Dion, 2016. On the new government’s main priorities and their relationship to the North, see Axworthy, 2016.

ministers in November 2015. “It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership” (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015). Accordingly, Canada will place the highest priority on ensuring that its activities in the Arctic acknowledge, protect and promote Indigenous peoples’ rights—and, by extension, will insist that other Arctic stakeholders do the same both domestically and internationally.<sup>25</sup> Trudeau has also declared that Canada “is back” when it comes to joining global efforts to mitigate climate change (Fekete, 2015). While the Harper government emphasized climate change adaptation measures in its Arctic agenda, the Liberals chastised their predecessors’ alleged “refusal to take meaningful action on climate change,” their lack of funding for science and their “muzzling” of government scientists, and their prioritization of economic growth over environmental protection (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015).<sup>26</sup> Trudeau has heralded the recent Paris Agreement on climate change as a pivotal moment, and promises to “continue to respect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples in all climate change decision making” (US-Canada Joint Statement, 2016).

Given Canada’s longstanding position that its sovereignty in the Arctic is well-established, there is unlikely to be any reversing of its basic stance on the rights and roles of Arctic states in regional governance. Nevertheless, the new government is more likely to emphasize constructive diplomacy rather than to adopt militant rhetoric on Arctic sovereignty issues, given its promotion of a more “nuanced” foreign policy. Building on Trudeau’s promise that Canada would have a more “compassionate and constructive voice in the world” under

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<sup>25</sup> The *Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy* adopts the phrase Canadian “Aboriginal People,” thus emphasizing individuals living in the North, rather than the plural “peoples” connoting group rights. This reflects a longstanding debate in Canada about Indigenous rights to self-determination under international law. According to some strands of international law, and especially Article 1 of the Covenant, the word “peoples” opens up the prospect of unqualified acceptance of self-determination. See, for example, Cooper, 2004: 122-51. The Trudeau Government, however, seems fully prepared to acknowledge Aboriginal peoples as collective entities as well.

<sup>26</sup> On the muzzling of government scientists, see for example Klinkenborg, 2013; Gatehouse, 2013; Munro, 2015; and Hume, 2015.

the Liberals after a decade of Conservative rule, Global Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion opened the door for renewed “engagement” with Russia on issues of common interest, with specific reference to the Arctic (Berthiaume, 2015b).<sup>27</sup> While this revised stance provoked debate amongst Canadian commentators, some of whom worried that this would send the wrong signals to an increasingly assertive Putin already “pivoting” towards the Arctic as a “strategic frontier,”<sup>28</sup> the intention to continue cooperation on areas of common ground in Arctic affairs is an eminently sensible one and bodes well for the future of the Arctic Council (Roberts, 2015; Lackenbauer, 2016).

Given geography and history, Canada understandably considers the United States its “premier partner” in Arctic affairs (Lackenbauer and Huebert, 2014). Although academic and popular commentary often highlights disagreements between these North American neighbours over the status of the waters of the Northwest Passage (NWP) and the maritime boundary in the Beaufort Sea, the common interests of both countries have provided a firm foundation for strong cooperation in the Arctic region. The idea of a “four-year North American” chairmanship with Canada and the U.S. coordinating their efforts did not take shape (Fenge, 2012), but the U.S. chair will continue to advance its predecessor’s agenda while pursuing its own focus areas: improving economic and living conditions, renewable energy, Arctic ocean safety and stewardship, and addressing the impacts of global warming.

The U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership, issued by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau in March 2016, affirms that the bilateral “special relationship” includes a common

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<sup>27</sup> During the election campaign in October 2015, Trudeau had told reporters that, if he became prime minister, he would “tell off” Putin “directly to his face” after accusing the Russian leader of “being dangerous” in eastern Europe, “irresponsible and harmful” in the Middle East, and “unduly provocative” in the Arctic. Canadian Press, “Justin Trudeau would tell off ‘bully’ Vladimir Putin ‘directly to his face’ if he becomes prime minister,” *National Post*, 13 October 2015.

<sup>28</sup> In January 2016, Dion reiterated that Canada hoped to resume dialogue with Russia, despite that country’s military aggression in the Ukraine, and cited the Arctic as a region where Canada would benefit from re-engagement with its circumpolar neighbour. Borgerson and Byers, 2016. See also Fisher, 2016; and Salinas & Hoag [in conversation with Huebert and Exner-Pirot], 2016.

commitment to the shared priorities identified by both countries. Emphasizing Indigenous rights and knowledge, as well as “natural marine, land and air migrations that know no borders,” the statement conceptualizes the Arctic as “the frontline of climate change” and articulates four main objectives. The first, “conserving Arctic biodiversity through science-based decision making,” commits to working “directly with Indigenous partners, state, territorial and provincial governments” to set “a new, ambitious conservation goal for the Arctic.” The second promises to collaborate with “Indigenous and Arctic governments, leaders, and communities to more broadly and respectfully” incorporate Indigenous science and traditional knowledge into decision-making. The third seeks to build a sustainable Arctic economy, with commercial activities occurring “only when the highest safety and environmental standards are met, including national and global climate and environmental goals, and Indigenous rights and agreements.” Sub-priorities include establishing low impact shipping corridors, seeking a binding international agreement to “prevent the opening of unregulated fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean,” and ensuring that oil and gas development and exploration activities “align with science-based standards between the two nations that ensure appropriate preparation for operating in Arctic conditions, including robust and effective well control and emergency response measures.” The fourth objective is to support strong Arctic communities by “defining new approaches and exchanging best practices to strengthen the resilience of Arctic communities and continuing to support the well-being of Arctic residents, in particular respecting the rights and territory of Indigenous peoples.” Priority areas include “innovative renewable energy and efficiency alternatives to diesel”; community climate change adaptation; “innovative options for housing and infrastructure”; and “greater action to address the serious challenges of mental wellness, education, Indigenous language, and skill development, particularly among Indigenous youth.” Indigenous and environmental organizations in Canada applauded the statement, with national Inuit leader Natan Obed stating that “the final language in this document really spoke to Inuit” and heralding it “a tremendous breakthrough for Indigenous people who live in the Arctic” (quoted in Zerehi, 2016).

The Obama-Trudeau joint statement reaffirms a primary emphasis on the North American lens through which Canada views the circumpolar world.

Closer bilateral cooperation, however, does not address the criticism that Canada’s Arctic agenda remains relentlessly domestic or continental in its assumptions and priorities. If Canada promoted any “One Arctic” idea during its latest two-year tenure as chair, official statements suggest that it sought once again to imprint its own vision, opportunities, and priorities onto the broader Arctic and, by extension, onto the global community increasingly interested in the region. “It’s a real opportunity for people on the ground in the North to tell the world what we’re doing,” Cabinet minister Leona Aglukkaq proclaimed in 2012, before Canada assumed the chair (quoted in CBC News, 2012). While correcting misconceptions about Northerners and about Canada’s Arctic remains a laudable goal, it does not replace the need to articulate and promote a holistic, comprehensive view—rooted in a deep awareness of regional variations—for an Arctic Council that reflects the broader interests of the circumpolar world.

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# 4

## Understanding Canada's Role in the Evolution of the Arctic Council

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Critics have characterized Canada's foreign policy under the Conservative government of Stephen Harper (2006-2015) as less engaged internationally than previous governments (Kinsman, 2014; Kotarski, 2009; Nossal, 2013; Paris, 2014). Whereas past Liberal governments asserted Canada's place in the world through multilateral co-operation and participation in international institutions (eg. Keating, 2002; Smith and Sjolander, 2013: xiii-xxvii), the Conservative government was isolationist, most concerned with United States relations and preoccupied with economic gains (Massie and Roussel, 2013: 36-52). Further, most pundits agree that environmental protection was not a priority under the Harper government (Sanger and Saul, 2008: 281). Yet, from 2013 to 2015, Canada was chair of the Arctic Council, an international institution made up of the eight Arctic states, deliberately designed to encourage the type of co-operation on environmental protection that the Harper government opposed. The Conservative government did not seek leadership of the Council; it was merely Canada's turn to chair the institution, which it had previously done from 1996 until 1998. At the time, it was unclear how Canada would contribute to the Council in such a situation.

The Arctic Council had evolved significantly since Canada last held the chair. It had shifted from a body that provided policy recommendations on environmental problems and promoted sustainable development to one that also addressed more explicitly economic issues. It had become a more robust institution, with a permanent secretariat and a policy-making role. As chair,

would Canada stymie the environmental work of the Council and accelerate its turn to economic affairs? Would Canada show hostility to strong international co-operation during its chairmanship?

This chapter examines the following question: How did Canada’s chairmanship impact the Arctic Council and its contemporary role in regional governance? It argues that Canada helped further the Council’s turn toward addressing explicitly economic issues (in addition to environmental problems), but did so with the consensus of other member states. Canada supported several economic projects in the Council, but the majority of its projects encouraged sustainable development and environmental protection, such as championing international co-operation on the creation of an agreement to address black carbon pollution. The Harper government helped strengthen the Arctic Council and backed a policy that will help improve the position of Indigenous peoples in the institution. At least in this case, Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s government supported multilateralism, challenging notions that its foreign policy was isolationist in nature.

The first section of this chapter discusses the method employed in this analysis and the contribution to literature. The second section outlines the evolution in the Council’s role that occurred between its founding in 1996 and the start of Canada’s second chairmanship in 2013. The third section examines the policy focuses of that chairmanship, and outlines the likely impact of the Canadian chair on the Council, from 2013 to 2015. Ultimately, under Canada’s second chairmanship the Council became an institution more concerned with economics, albeit one with a significant interest in protecting the Arctic environment and promoting sustainable development.

## **Method and Contribution**

This chapter analyzes Canada’s second term as chair and discusses how it furthered, or hindered, the evolution of the Arctic Council. Canada was previously the first Council chair (1996-1998), followed by the United States (1998-2000), Finland (2000-2002), Iceland (2002-2004), Russia (2004-2006), Norway (2007-2009), Denmark (2009-2011) and Sweden (2011-2013). The method employed in this chapter uses qualitative descriptive statistics, compiled from 5,000 pages of primary Council documents, such as meeting minutes and reports, and historical process tracing, which is “the systematic examination of

diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator” (Collier, 2011: 823). The method “analyzes trajectories of change and causation” and “gives close attention to sequences of independent, dependent and intervening variables” (Ibid). The dependent variable in this study is the evolution of the Arctic Council’s role and membership, while the independent variable is Canada’s work in the institution between 2013 and 2015. This analysis examines Canada’s behaviour in Arctic Council meetings, as opposed to meetings of working groups or task forces. Since the most fundamental work occurs in Council meetings, and working group documents are not available in the same manner as Council meeting documents, a comparison of these groups is more difficult.

The chapter contributes a new conceptualization of the role of the Council and understands Canada’s contribution to that role. Most authors who study the Council consider it an inter-governmental forum that compiles research on important Arctic environmental issues (Bloom, 1999; Fenge, 2012; Young, 2005). Other scholars add that the Council creates international norms (Charron, 2012: 275; Huebert, 1998: 56; Koivurova and Heinamaki, 2006: 104; Ronson, 2011: 100; Stokke, 2007: 402; Stokke, 2007, 10; Tennberg, 2000: 9.). This chapter argues that the Arctic Council is now a policy-making body, as well as a policy-recommendation body, that facilitates work on environmental, sustainable development and economic issues. Political scientist Heather Exner-Pirot argues that, given Canada’s contributions to the Council between 2013 and 2015, “it is unlikely that the Canadian chairmanship will be remembered as anything but a continuation of the Arctic Council’s success and growth” (2016: 94). This chapter demonstrates Canada has actively supported the policy-making turn in the Council’s work.

This chapter also tests a common assumption about the Harper government’s foreign policy in academic literature, namely that it was not multilateral in orientation (eg. Kinsman, 2014; Kotarski, 2009; Nossal, 2013; Massie and Roussel, 2013), especially compared to previous Liberal governments (Keating, 2002). It finds that, in this case, Canada supported multilateralism and international co-operation during the Harper government’s tenure.

### Evolution of the Council, 1996-2013

Since its founding in 1996, the Arctic Council has evolved in five specific ways. First, the Council's informal mandate has grown to include issues with a primarily economic orientation, alongside its primary focus on environmental issues and sustainable development. The Council's formal mandate is to: "Provide a means for promoting co-operation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States ... with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."<sup>1</sup> From 1998 until 2000, the Arctic states worked on 36 projects through the Council.<sup>2</sup> Only two projects had some economic implications, namely a workshop promoting eco-tourism and research on reindeer husbandry.<sup>3</sup> Some environmental projects could encourage economic growth in the long term, though the primary focus of most activity was environmental protection.<sup>4</sup> This narrow environmental focus made sense; the Council grew out of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which the government of Finland proposed in 1989 as a way to encourage better relations with Russia and to protect the natural world (English, 2013: 108). Early in the history of the Council, Canada's political leaders wanted the institution to be a flexible and robust body to address a variety of issues, but sought to avoid institutional overreach. For example, in November 1999 at the Council's meeting in Washington, D.C., Canada's delegation vetoed a presentation by a representative from the United States military about a program with Russia to reduce the environmental footprint of military vehicles operating in the Arctic region because military issues are outside the Council's mandate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arctic Council, *The Iqaluit Declaration* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Arctic Council, *Report of Senior Arctic Officials to Arctic Council Ministers: Barrow, Alaska, United States of America, October 12, 2000* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat/Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see *ibid.*, 8 and 18.

<sup>5</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials Meeting Highlights, November 17-19, 1999, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 1999), 10.

The Council had clearly evolved when Canada assumed the chair in 2013, because a greater proportion of the institution's projects were economic in orientation. During Sweden's chair, from 2011 until 2013, the Council completed or worked on approximately 202 projects.<sup>6</sup> Of these, 19 had economic implications, many relating to emergencies in resource development, such as pollution and spills.<sup>7</sup> One project had a deliberately economic focus, namely the creation of a circumpolar business forum.<sup>8</sup> The Council still completed significant environmental work, but it also completed work to further the Arctic's economic potential. If it were broadly true the Harper government privileged economic issues in foreign policy and placed low priority on environmental problems, a hypothesis would follow that Canada would push the economic turn of the Arctic Council during its time as chair. We also would expect that Canada would work to stymie environmental progress in the Council, particularly action on climate change.

Second, the role of the Council in the creation of international policy such as international agreements and treaties has undergone an evolution. The Arctic Council was not a venue in which to create policy prior to 2009. It mostly generated assessments on environmental and sustainable development issues, such as the 2004 *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*. The Nordic countries generally were open to using the Council as a policy-making institution. For example, at the November 1999 Arctic Council meeting in Washington, D.C., all of the Nordic countries expressed support for a formal strategy to reduce Arctic contaminants.<sup>9</sup> Canada ultimately vetoed this action, stating, "Canada could not support an imposition on national sovereignty."<sup>10</sup> Yet, in 2009, all member states supported the creation of a formal agreement on Arctic search

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<sup>6</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Official Report to Ministers, Kiruna, Sweden, 15 May 2013* (Kiruna, Sweden: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-40

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>9</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials Meeting Highlights, November 17-19, 1999, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 1999), 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

and rescue.<sup>11</sup> It is a basic agreement, which divides zones of responsibilities for search and rescue, as well as commits states to share information and assist each other with search and rescue if requested.<sup>12</sup> In 2011, all states backed the creation of a formal agreement on responding to oil spills. It divides zones of responsibility for cleaning up oil spills and allows states to work together where appropriate.<sup>13</sup> These agreements are narrow in scope, but are significant because they indicate a new role for the Council as a venue to create international policy. If the government of Stephen Harper was ideologically opposed to international co-operation, as per the charges of many critics, a hypothesis would follow that Canada would be hostile toward policy-making in the Council.

Third, the Council's institutional capacity has grown. The Council did not have a permanent secretariat when it was founded in 1996.<sup>14</sup> It carried out only a few dozen projects during the 1990s. Ten years later, the Council had more than 100 projects in progress. In 2011, the member states announced that they would create a new permanent secretariat in Tromsø, Norway. If Canada, under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, was broadly hostile to multilateralism, especially around environmental issues, one could hypothesize it would likely oppose strengthening the Arctic Council.

Fourth, over the last ten years, non-Arctic states have shown new interest in the Arctic Council. Non-Arctic states cannot join the Council, but can sit as Observers. The Council had just six accredited Observers when it started (Britain, Poland, Germany, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Arctic Science Committee). Observers provided updates on their Arctic activities and made technical suggestions for projects. In 2013, China, India, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea became accredited Observers, after

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<sup>11</sup> Arctic Council, *Agreement on Co-operation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* (Nuuk, Greenland: Arctic Council, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix, Articles 3, 8, 11, and 12.

<sup>13</sup> Arctic Council, *Agreement on Co-operation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic* (Kiruna, Sweden: Arctic Council, 2013), Articles 3, 8, 10, and 13.

<sup>14</sup> Arctic Council, *Rules of Procedure* (Iqaluit, Nunavut: Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, 1998), Article 29.

attending Council meetings for six years as ad-hoc Observers. In addition, Observers have sponsored Council projects and collaborated in several cases. A new Observer manual, adopted in May 2013, indicates that these actors must recognize the “Arctic states’ sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic” and respect “the values, interests, culture and traditions of Arctic Indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants.”<sup>15</sup> If Canada, under Harper’s leadership, was unenthusiastic about international co-operation, one could hypothesize that Canada would oppose expanding the number of Observers on the Council.

Fifth, the influence of Permanent Participants has evolved, as well. Whether Permanent Participants should be full members of the Council was a major debate in negotiations to create the institution, with Canada favouring full membership (Winnipeg Free Press, 1996). Yet, in practice, Permanent Participants send smaller delegations to Council meetings and cannot participate in every Arctic project due to financial limits. These groups can (and have) sponsored projects. They have contributed traditional knowledge to scientific assessments by the Council. Influence is possible, as they have made key moves that have strongly influenced Council action.<sup>16</sup> If the mainstream view of Canada’s foreign policy under Stephen Harper is correct, one can hypothesize that Canada would be hostile to multilateral co-operation and strengthening the influence of non-state actors, such as Indigenous peoples’ organizations.

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<sup>15</sup> Arctic Council, *Arctic Council Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), Annex 2, Article 6.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Inuit Circumpolar Council representative Shelia Watt Cloutier gave key testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Commerce in March 2004, which is part of the reason that the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment* includes a policy document. The assessment is a major compilation of research on climate change. Authors originally intended that the assessment include a list of policy recommendations, which United States policy-makers opposed. The testimony of Cloutier helped overcome this opposition. See Sheila Watt-Cloutier, “Written Testimony of Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, Transportation Hearing on Climate Change,” Inuit Circumpolar Conference Media and Reports, 3 March 2004, <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/index.php?ID=256&Lang=En> (accessed 14 May 2014).

**Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses on Canada’s Arctic Council Behaviour, 2013-2015**

Hypothesis 1	Canada is hostile toward policy-making in the Arctic Council.
Hypothesis 2	Canada works to stymie environmental progress in the Council.
Hypothesis 3	Canada opposes strengthening the Arctic Council.
Hypothesis 4	Canada opposes expanding the number of Observers on the Council.
Hypothesis 5	Canada is hostile to multilateral co-operation and strengthening the influence of non-state actors, such as Indigenous peoples’ organizations.

### Canada’s Chair, 2013-2015

The Arctic Council’s role in regional governance shifted as its informal mandate became increasingly economic in orientation under Canada’s leadership. The Council remains an environmental body, but predominantly economic issues are addressed more frequently. Canada made “Development for the People of the North” the theme of its chair.<sup>17</sup> A focus on development indicates a keen interest in economic issues. Yet, this theme also implies a social aspect, given the focus on “people.” However, in addition, the proportion of the Council’s work with strong economic implications has increased since 2013. Overall, 23 out of the 84 projects completed during Canada’s turn as chair had a strong economic component, compared to 19 out of more than 100 between 2011 and 2013. High profile projects completed during the Canadian chair include the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment working group to create *Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines*, and the work of the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group to compile the *Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow*.<sup>18</sup> The Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention created a “non-binding agreement” on oil pollution,

<sup>17</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada, 24 April 2015* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council, 2015), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Arctic Council, *Annex 2, Iqaluit 2015 SAO Report to Ministers, Amarok: Arctic Council Tracker (AAC), Iqaluit, 24 April 2015* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council, 2015).

which represents strong action to push forward economic growth in the region.<sup>19</sup> This agreement demonstrated to industry that states are willing to take action to mitigate negative externalities that arise in Arctic economic activity. It helps create international norms that respond to industry concerns. Clearly, the environment still occupies the majority of the Council's time, but the proportion of economic projects in the Council is increasing.

One could argue that this change is not profound because these projects also have significant environmental implications. However, this work is economic in orientation because it helps foster international norms that create a stable regulatory environment necessary for industry to operate. If a search and rescue emergency arises, industry knows that a plan exists to deal with the crisis (and importantly, limit liability). These projects do not complete the process of creating a good climate for business, but they contribute to that goal.

Canada supported the move toward economics, but did not drive this transition more than other member states. Clearly, states were in consensus that the Council could be a body to facilitate economic growth, in addition to one that addresses environmental issues and sustainable development. Canada supported several projects that have strong economic implications; however, every country supported the incorporation of more economic work, as seen in Table 2. States' sponsorship of a project indicates support for its goals.

Country	Project Sponsorship	Economic Projects
Canada	29	8
Denmark	11	5
Finland	8	3
Iceland	3	3
Norway	29	11
Sweden	5	2
United States	32	14
Russia	21	7

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<sup>19</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials' Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada, 24 April 2015*, 5.

Organization	Project Sponsorship	Economic Projects
Arctic Athabaskan Council	0	0
Aleut International Associaton	4	0
Gwich'in Council International	3	0
Inuit Circumpolar Council	5	0
Saami Council	1	1
Russian Assn. of Indigenous Peoples of the North	0	0
Observers	3 (all NEFCO)	0

The Permanent Participant organizations sponsored fewer economic projects, compared to states, indicating that these organizations are less interested in the less-environmental work of the Council, as demonstrated in Table 3. The majority of the economic projects focus on national economic goals, as opposed to community goals that benefit Indigenous peoples. Permanent Participants sponsored only one economic project from 2013 to 2015. The Saami Council’s project focused on reindeer herding and conservation, aimed at Indigenous peoples.

The most significant project in the economic realm was the creation of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC). It is the first major project completed by the Council that does not have at least some environmental implications. All previous economic projects also addressed an environmental issue; this new group can address environmental issues, but such work is not implicit. Overall, the body came together quickly and without strong controversy among the member states. With the goal of “improving economic and social conditions,” and promoting “dynamic and sustainable Arctic economies,” Arctic Council member states called for the creation of a “circumpolar business forum” in May 2013.<sup>20</sup> The purpose was to create a forum that would allow business to comment on the work of the Council. States created a task force that negotiated the AEC at several meetings between 2013 and 2015, updating the Council at its bi-annual meetings. Canada was a major force that proposed and created the new entity, as it sponsored and chaired the task force to create the forum

<sup>20</sup> Arctic Council, *The Kiruna Declaration* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 2.

(alongside Iceland, Russia and Finland).<sup>21</sup> The task force operated apart from the Council, and its creation raised few serious disagreements among states; the AEC, for example, did not provide states with meeting minutes, as reported at the Arctic Council meeting in Whitehorse in October 2013.<sup>22</sup> The task force said that the goal of the new AEC would be to “foster sustainable development, including economic growth, environmental protection and social development in the Arctic region.”<sup>23</sup> The founding meeting of the AEC took place on September 2 and 3, 2014, in Iqaluit.<sup>24</sup>

The AEC determined “its own governance, organizational structure, work plan and activities.”<sup>25</sup> Every member state of the Arctic Council, along with each Permanent Participant, selects three representatives to the AEC.<sup>26</sup> It opened a secretariat in Tromsø, Norway, in September 2015, to aid in its operations.<sup>27</sup> It has established four working groups, on marine transportation, telecommunications, “responsible resource development” and “stewardship in the Arctic” (AEC, 2016c). Conceivably, these groups will review Arctic Council work and contribute thoughts and research. It held a general meeting in April 2016, but did not review any Arctic Council projects at that time (McGwin, 2016). It did, however, adopt a strategic plan for the future (AEC, 2016a). The new AEC did not make a presentation at either of the first two Arctic Council meetings of the United States’ turn as chair in 2015 and 2016, nor did any of the working groups discuss collaboration with the new institution.

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<sup>21</sup> Arctic Council, *Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, October 22-23, 2013, Plenary Meeting, Final Report* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council, 2015), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Arctic Council, *SAO Meeting, Yellowknife, Canada, 26-27 March 2014, Final Report* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Arctic Council, *Arctic Council SAO Meeting, Yellowknife, Canada, 22-23 October 2014, Final Draft Report* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Arctic Council, “Arctic Economic Council,” Arctic Economic Council, January 28, 2014, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/working-groups/aec> (accessed July 17, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Arctic Council, *Summary Report, SAO Plenary Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, 21-22 October 2015* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 25.

One indicator that the new Arctic Economic Council will have influence on regional governance in the future is that there seems to be high buy-in from industry. There are 20 companies represented in the AEC, out of 36 total representatives. Nine representatives are industry groups and seven are Indigenous peoples’ organizations (AEC, 2016b). Of the business representatives, seven are resource companies, one is a tourism company, one is in communications, three are involved in shipping and eight are Indigenous peoples’ corporations, in regional development, tourism and services. Indigenous peoples’ organizations appointed the Indigenous businesses, except for one, which the United States appointed.

Two uncertainties remain in the AEC. First, business seems unsure of the role of the environment in the work of the new body. Its recent working groups emphasize the environment, but, based on Council statements about the AEC, environmental protection was not a key reason for the founding of the group. Second, states seem uncertain as to the best actors to appoint to the AEC. States seem split on whether it is best to appoint companies or industry groups. All the representatives appointed from Canada, Finland and Sweden are businesses, while all representatives from Iceland, Denmark and Norway are from industry groups. Russia appointed one company and two industry groups. The United States appointed two companies and one Indigenous peoples’ corporation. A Canadian is president of the AEC, indicating that the Stephen Harper government supported the creation of the new institution. Overall, the future of the AEC is unclear.

The Council’s role in regional governance continued to shift as policy-making continued during Canada’s leadership. The Council did not create any formal agreements during Canada’s turn as chair, seemingly indicating that the institution’s policy-making role has diminished or paused. Instead, the Council created two less formal agreements. First, the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention created an informal agreement, with its mandate to “identify how best the Arctic Council can contribute to marine oil pollution prevention in the Arctic, recommend a concrete plan of action, and, as appropriate, develop co-operative arrangements to implement the Action

Plan.”<sup>28</sup> Russia and Norway co-chaired the task force.<sup>29</sup> Through five meetings, states decided to create a “non-binding agreement.”<sup>30</sup> The *Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic* sees states agree to share information on efforts to reduce pollution,<sup>31</sup> carry out assessments on marine pollution<sup>32</sup> and develop common best practices to reduce pollution in a variety of areas.<sup>33</sup> It provides the same functions as earlier Council agreements as it is similar in intent and scope. Second, the Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane created an agreement on black carbon pollution. Canada and Sweden chaired the task force.<sup>34</sup> It held six meetings during Canada’s turn as chair and wrote the *Arctic Council Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane*.<sup>35</sup> The task force made clear, “This Framework represents a high level commitment of Arctic states to take mitigation action, but is not legally binding.”<sup>36</sup> It commits states to develop national action plans and inventories to reduce black carbon and methane emissions, though it does not offer specific targets.<sup>37</sup> It provides the same functions as earlier Council agreements as it is similar in purpose and structure to an international agreement.

The Council’s policy-making role did not end with these informal agreements. Beyond these task forces, the Council implemented the two earlier Council agreements, the 2011 *Agreement on Co-operation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* and the 2013 *Agreement on Co-operation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic*.

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<sup>28</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Arctic Council, *Framework Plan for Co-operation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 1.4.1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 1.5.1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 2.2.a.

<sup>34</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Arctic Council, *Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions: An Arctic Council Framework for Action* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 2.

The Council completed “operational guidelines on oil pollution response” and held the *Arctic Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Agreement Exercise*.<sup>38</sup> The Council is a policy-making forum, as well as a policy-recommendation forum.

All Council states supported the new policy agreements, and Canada was actively involved in policy-making. The Harper government did not drive the transition in the policy-making role of the Arctic Council, but support is clear. The less-formal approach to policy-making has advantages compared to a more formal approach. Formal agreements require domestic ratification, which can take time. It took more than two years for Council states to ratify each of the earlier unambitious Council agreements.<sup>39</sup> States can implement informal agreements more easily and they serve much the same function as a formal agreement.

In regards to the Arctic Council’s institutional capacity, the Council is stronger now institutionally than it ever has been. The Council’s secretariat is up and running, giving updates on progress, hiring of staff and work at each of the Council’s meetings. Each country contributes \$106,418 per year to the Council secretariat, with the exception of Norway, which contributes \$768,191. The Council has a budget of \$1,655,600.<sup>40</sup> The secretariat completes research on the Council, maintains the Council website, deals with various institutional logistics and maintains an online archive. It keeps track of Council projects and maintains communications. The secretariat is here to stay as it has support from all of the Council states. Canada contributed to the institutional capacity of the Council, as strengthening the Arctic Council was a special initiative of Canada’s turn as chair.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Arctic Council, *Arctic Council SAO Meeting, Yellowknife, Canada, 22-23 October 2014, Final Draft*.

<sup>39</sup> Arctic Council, *Status of Ratification of Agreements Negotiated Under the Auspices of the Arctic Council* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Arctic Council, *ACS Biennial Work Plan and Proposed Budget for 2016 and 2017*, (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 12.

<sup>41</sup> Arctic Council, *Annex 2, Iqaluit 2015 SAO Report to Ministers, Amarok: Arctic Council Tracker*, 15.

In regards to the Council’s Observers, the influence of the Observers has not significantly increased. In some ways, the Observers seemed weaker than ever. Observer states and organizations were not allowed to make comments during the plenary sessions of Arctic Council meetings and rarely sponsored projects. Yet, in other ways, the Observers contributed to the Council. Several states, such as China, participated in meetings of task forces. The chair held special closed-door meetings with Observers to discuss Council projects and potential contributions, though there were no clear outcomes of those meetings. New Observers continue to seek to become part of the Council, and all Council states appear to agree about the current power of Observers.

During Canada’s chairmanship, the Permanent Participants remained a weaker force in the Council, based on their sponsorship of projects, the major way that actors can affect proceedings in the Council. They sponsored fewer projects than most states, though a comparable number to some Nordic countries, namely Finland, Iceland and Sweden, as Table 4 demonstrates.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 4: Project Sponsorship in the Arctic Council, 2013-2015**

Country/Organization	Project Sponsorship	Economic Projects
Canada	29	8
Denmark	11	5
Finland	8	3
Iceland	3	3
Norway	29	11
Sweden	5	2
United States	32	14
Russia	21	7
AAC	0	0
AIA	4	0
GCI	3	0
ICC	5	0
SC	1	1
RAIPON	0	0
Observers	3 (all NEFCO)	0

<sup>42</sup> Arctic Council, *Annex 2, Iqaluit 2015 SAO Report to Ministers, Amarok: Arctic Council Tracker.*

After Canada’s second term as chair, it is possible that the influence of the Permanent Participants will increase for two reasons. First, there was a concerted effort to increase the capacity of Permanent Participants. There was an assessment by the chair, two workshops and a committee to make recommendations on ways to increase the influence of the Permanent Participants. The result was two reports and another workshop to help Permanent Participants “pursue alternative sources of funding.”<sup>43</sup> Second, after work by the Sustainable Development Working Group, the Council adopted a new policy at a major meeting in Iqaluit to include traditional Indigenous knowledge in all Council assessments.<sup>44</sup> Canada, Denmark and the United States led this project, working in collaboration with the Aleut International Association and Gwich’in Council International. This policy could increase the power of the Permanent Participants, as it requires their input in Council activities. Some Council projects incorporated traditional knowledge, such as the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*.<sup>45</sup> Other high-profile Council projects, such as the *Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost Assessment*, did not.<sup>46</sup> The Council took positive steps to improve the participation of Permanent Participants, even if there remains much work to be done.

As for Canada’s role in the Council vis-à-vis Permanent Participants, it is clear that Canada supported Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council, even if it did not address some fundamental issues of participation. In addition to sponsoring the project on traditional knowledge, Canada undertook a chair initiative called *Promoting Traditional Ways of Life*. The goal was to create a “compendium of best practices” on promoting traditional ways of life.<sup>47</sup> It is essentially a document collecting information on all programs that promote traditional Indigenous culture. There were updates on progress and input at

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<sup>43</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada*, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Arctic Council, *Recommendations for the Integration of Traditional and Local Knowledge into the Work of the Arctic Council* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 1.

<sup>45</sup> Arctic Council, *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment: Impacts of a Warming Climate* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Arctic Council, *Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost Assessment* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Arctic Council, *Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers, Iqaluit, Canada*, 43.

Country	Average Delegation Size
Canada	9
Denmark	5.7
Finland	3.7
Iceland	2.3
Norway	3.3
Sweden	4
United States	5.7
Russia	1.7

every Council meeting during Canada’s turn as chair. It is clear that Canada wanted this project to be a showcase of its time as Council leader. Overall, we can conclude that Canada was supportive of the Indigenous peoples’ organizations and their role as non-state actors in the Council.

A clear source of tension during Canada’s turn as chair was the role of Russia in the Council. Russia invaded Crimea in February 2014, which drove a wedge into Western-Russian relations. Canada and the United States boycotted some Arctic Council working group meetings in April 2014 because they were in Russia. Russia’s Foreign Minister opted out of Canada’s May 2015 Arctic Council meeting in Iqaluit; in retaliation, Canada cancelled a photo opportunity in Ottawa involving all of the Council members to avoid the presence of Russian officials in Canada’s capital (Exner-Pirot, 2015). As demonstrated in Table 5, Russia still participated in many Council projects, indicating that the tensions did not negatively affect the work of the Council. Russia, however, sent small delegations to Council meetings. The tensions with Russia were a notable feature of Canada’s time as Council chair.

It is clear that the Council continues to evolve, providing a promising area for future research. In 2015, the United States succeeded Canada as Council chair. The United States’ chairmanship is focusing the work of the Council more on human development and the environment. This point is clear for two reasons. First, the United States identified its Council priorities to “protect the marine environment, conserve Arctic biodiversity, improve conditions in Arctic

communities and address the rapidly changing climate in the Arctic.”<sup>48</sup> There is one reference to the economy in its chair brochure, which serves as an introduction to the United States’ priorities. Second, there is less discussion of economic projects in recent Council meetings. States discussed 31 projects at the October 2015 Council meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, only one of which followed on the economic initiatives of the Canadian chair (namely, the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention).<sup>49</sup> The Council discussed 18 projects at the March 2016 Council meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, only one of which stemmed from earlier economic work under the Canadian chair (an Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group report on search and rescue).<sup>50</sup> It remains to be seen whether Canada’s turn as chair will have a lasting impact on the Council. Without support from the other Council members, the economic work of the Council will not endure.

Returning to hypotheses about Canada’s behaviour in the Council, none has significant empirical support. Canada acted in ways that promote multilateralism and international co-operation. The Harper government completed both economic and environmental work in the Council between 2013 and 2015. It supported policy-making through the creation of informal agreements and helped strengthen the Council by making that goal a special initiative, fostering international co-operation. It supported Observers and Indigenous peoples’ organizations by working to increase their capacity and adopting a new policy on traditional knowledge.

## **Conclusion**

How did Canada’s turn as chair impact the evolution of the Arctic Council and its contemporary role in regional governance? This chapter shows that the Council continued to develop a new role in regional governance between 2013-2015, supported by Canada. It is more than an institution that brings scientists together to compile research on important Arctic environmental issues, and does

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<sup>48</sup> Arctic Council, *U.S. Chairmanship Brochure, 2015-2017* (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2013), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Arctic Council, *Summary Report, SAO Plenary Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, 21-22 October 2015*.

<sup>50</sup> Arctic Council, *Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials, March 16-17, 2016, Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A.*, (Tromsø, Norway: Arctic Council Secretariat, 2016).

more than just support international norms. The Council is a policy-making institution that promotes co-operation on environmental protection as well as economic growth. Canada contributed to this evolution during its turn as chair of the institution. It is possible that the Council's role will further shift away from the direction supported by Canada.

This chapter also shows that, in this case, Canada's international behaviour was multilateral in orientation, in contrast to authors who say that Canada was isolationist during the Harper government. This chapter does not argue that those who characterize Canada's foreign policy under Stephen Harper as less-than multilateral in orientation are incorrect, as it does not provide an overall assessment of the Conservative government's international agenda. In addition, this chapter does not assess whether Canada's work in the Council was adequate to deal with the region's many pressing issues. The Council may produce many high quality environment assessments, but the impact of these projects is a task for another research project. It argues that, in this one case, Canada co-operated with its allies and helped shift the role of the Arctic Council in regional governance towards a greater emphasis on economic development, including natural resource extraction, shipping, fisheries, and tourism.

Canada has supported international co-operation in the Arctic Council. It supported multilateralism and environmental protection in the institution. It sponsored eight projects that furthered the evolution of the Council into economic areas, but also sponsored 21 projects to protect the Arctic environment, including an informal international agreement. The Council created two informal international agreements during Canada's time as chair. Canada undertook special initiatives to strengthen the Council and improve the position of Indigenous peoples in the institution. The position of Observers in the Council is weak, but Canada allowed opportunities for them to contribute to the Council's work. The government of Canada supported an international institution and co-operated with other countries in a constructive manner. This behaviour stands in contrast to scholars who argue that Canada under the government of Stephen Harper was more isolationist in orientation, less interested in international co-operation and hostile to environmental protection compared to past Canadian governments.

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# 5

## **Environmental Security, Energy Security, and the Arctic in the Obama Presidency**

*Wilfrid Greaves*

When the United States assumed the rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council in spring 2015, it identified three key priorities: improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change. These goals are consistent with President Obama's commitment to prioritizing the fight against climate change during his final term in office, but are also set against the backdrop of his Administration's "all of the above" energy strategy that embraces expanded domestic extraction of conventional and unconventional fossil fuels. In defending these priorities, Obama has employed the language and grammar of security, specifically employing securitizing language to make both energy and environmental security claims. As a result, Obama has been accused of doing both too much and too little to fight climate change and curb domestic extraction and consumption of fossil fuels. His policies are thus implicated in both mitigating and exacerbating ecological transformation in the Arctic region, whose uniquely vulnerable ecosystem to climate change, role in regulating the global climate system, and site as both a current and prospective source of hydrocarbon extraction situates the region at the intersection of American environmental and energy policies.

This chapter examines the security claims that have framed executive policies on climate change and energy during the Obama Administration, and how these relate to the Arctic region. First, it provides a brief overview of the context of the Arctic Council and the current U.S. chairmanship (2015-2017).

Second, it outlines securitization theory, highlighting the significance of powerful political actors like the president framing policies through security discourse. Third, it examines the Obama Administration's environmental and energy security claims through a textual analysis of four of Obama's executive addresses or policy statements. Fourth, the chapter evaluates these security claims against the United States' Arctic Council priorities, and assesses the compatibility of these statements and resulting policies. The findings contribute to an assessment of the energy and environmental priorities and achievements of the Obama Administration, American leadership in the Arctic region, and debates over the securitization of energy extraction and human-caused climate change.

### **The Arctic Council and the U.S. Chairmanship (2015-2017)**

2016 marks the midpoint of the United States' second two-year term as Chair of the Arctic Council, the principal institution for Arctic regional governance. It was created in 1996 to succeed the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which had been established following the end of the Cold War to study the extent of pollution in the Arctic region. Unlike other regional organizations, both the Arctic Council and AEPS included all eight sovereign states bordering the Arctic (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States), as well as permanent representatives of Arctic Indigenous peoples and various state and non-state Observers. The Arctic Council has a broad mandate to promote cooperation on environmental protection and sustainable development through its various task forces and working groups, as well as facilitating the political participation of Indigenous peoples. Its work has been increasingly prominent and productive, and has met with a considerable degree of political success (Chater 2014). Several of its reports and studies (notably the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*, *Arctic Human Development Report*, and *Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment*) have become "touchstone documents" widely employed by policymakers, activists, and scholars (Charron 2012, 771). The Council has also facilitated recent agreements on regional search and rescue, oil spill preparedness and response, and scientific cooperation, which mark the first legally binding agreements established under its auspices. Operating according to the consensus of its members, but requiring full consultation with the Indigenous Permanent

Participants which comes close to constituting an Indigenous veto over its activities (Koivurova and Heinämäki 2006, 104), the Arctic Council has emerged as a unique and influential forum for negotiating a variety of Arctic policy areas.

While George W. Bush signed the first Arctic-specific American policy document, U.S. National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-66), during his final week in office, a sustained focus on Arctic policy fell to his successor. In 2013, the Obama Administration released its own *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, and the President signalled his commitment to the region by appointing a four-star Coast Guard admiral as the first U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic and being the first sitting president to visit the Arctic in person. In addition, unlike the United States' first term as chair shortly after the Council's formation in the mid-1990s, this time the country has used its leadership position to set an ambitious agenda in the circumpolar region. The theme of the U.S. chairmanship is "One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges and Responsibilities," and it identifies three thematic areas: improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change. The recent focus on the Arctic reverses a longstanding relative disinterest in Arctic issues by U.S. leaders, and seeks to rectify the fact that despite being an Arctic nation the United States has often remained peripheral to Arctic governance, notably by failing to ratify the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS). Since signing the 2008 *Illulissat Declaration* with the other coastal Arctic countries, however, the United States has agreed to abide by the principles of UNCLOS as a matter of customary international law, a commitment reaffirmed by the Obama Administration in its Arctic strategy.

In many respects, the American emphasis on climate change and environmental stewardship is an implicit rebuke of Canada's tenure as chair of the Arctic Council (2013-2015), which immediately preceded that of the United States. While productive and successful on several fronts, the Canadian chairmanship was also marked by controversy and the widespread perception that it was prioritizing economic development and natural resource extraction while diminishing the Council's traditional focus on scientific research and environmental conservation (Exner-Pirot 2016). For instance, in describing how the American chairmanship would differ from Canada's, the senior Arctic

official in the U.S. State Department stated that “the United States would never allow any threats to science work at the Council, so we would defend it. That might be something that’s a little different between Canada and the US, actually – science will be central to our chairmanship” (quoted in Wingrove 2013). The U.S. emphasis on climate change thus indicates a pivot away from promoting extraction-based industrial development in the Arctic and, as discussed below, marks an important convergence between Arctic and non-Arctic areas of federal policy.

While the activities of the Arctic Council have expanded considerably, issues related to military security remain explicitly excluded from its mandate. This has been generally interpreted as a prohibition on the Council involving itself in *any* security issues, though some scholars have called this into question. As its work has expanded into new areas such as shipping and search and rescue, the Council has effectively broadened into areas that include “hard” security linked to the management and deployment of military assets (Charron 2012; Chater 2014). As an intergovernmental forum that includes the United States, Russia, and a mix of aligned and neutral middle and smaller powers, the Council also offers a potentially valuable contribution to managing heightened East-West tensions in the aftermath of the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, and Russia’s continuing support for separatist proxy militias in eastern Ukraine (Rosen 2016). Finally, if one’s understanding of security is broadened to include non-military threats to states, peoples, and their vital interests, then the Arctic Council’s work on climate change mitigation, community resilience and adaptation, and ecological conservation suggests that it has contributed significantly to governing non-traditional security issues in the region (Greaves 2013, 2016a; Chater and Greaves 2014). Indeed, the very establishment of the Arctic Council has fostered important changes in Arctic governance that promote issues of environmental protection, human security and community wellbeing, and respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples.

### **Securitizing the Arctic**

In recent years, a substantial body of literature has examined the different meanings of “security” in the circumpolar region, underscoring both the contested and changeable nature of Arctic security issues (e.g. Åtland 2008; Exner-Pirot 2013; Hoogensen Gjørv *et al.* 2014; Greaves 2016b). The existence

of different understandings of Arctic security over time reflect the core elements of securitization theory, a “radically constructivist” theory that explains how security discourses transform political issues *into* security issues through the (re)production of specific phenomena as threatening (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 35). It theorizes that security threats are not objective, but socially constructed: an actor makes a statement or utterance – a ‘securitizing move’ – that identifies a ‘referent object’ whose survival or wellbeing is endangered by a specific phenomenon, and the securitizing move must then be accepted by an authoritative audience with the power to invoke exceptional measures in response (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998; Balzacq 2011). The audience must accept a securitizing move for it to become a complete or successful securitization, but once accepted securitizations legitimize the breaking of norms and the implementation of exceptional measures in response to the accepted threat-referent dyad. Employing the language and grammar of in/security thus attempts to elevate the policy importance of a political response to a specified threat. The logic of averting or repelling a perceived threat to a specific object of social value underpins invocations of security, but neither the threat nor the referent is given or immutable: in/security is what actors make of it.

While security discourse “is a structured field in which some actors are placed in positions of power,” theoretically anyone can make a securitizing move, i.e. posit a threat-referent relationship in an effort to catalyze action by the state or another power-holder (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 31). But the likely success or failure of a given securitizing move is structured by three “facilitating conditions”: use of securitizing language, the authority and social capital of the securitizing actor, and the features of the threat in question (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 33). Of these, the authority of the actor making a securitizing move is particularly central to internal debates within securitization theory. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the lively debate over whether powerful and authoritative actors are able to construct security threats solely through their own speech acts – in essence functioning as their own audiences for accepting security claims – or whether social agreement of other actors is required (see Balzacq 2005; Stritzel 2007), such a distinction draws analytical attention to the specific interests and identities of actors making security claims. These, in turn, shape which issues

are articulated as security-relevant (Sjöstedt 2013). It also highlights the question of whether securitization is a relatively open discursive process that can be accessed by regular citizens and subjected to a measure of democratic control, or whether it is the exclusive domain of state elites who monopolize the capacity to determine what is considered threatening to their society.

Relevant for this chapter is the extent to which the authority and social capital of securitizing actors underscores the significance of securitizing moves made by political leaders, including, in this case, the President of the United States. Clearly, any occupant of the presidency possesses a substantial degree of both normative influence and executive power that will allow him or her to significantly influence securitization processes within the United States and beyond. The President “acts as the highest state representative, policy-maker, chief of staff, and combines security issues that represent his and his party’s interests with advice from the [national security establishment]” (Floyd 2010, 63). Whether American presidents are able to function as securitizing actors *and* audiences is less clear, with findings that external factors can constrain presidential abilities to securitize (Hayes 2012) contrasting with the observation that presidents exercise broad powers to determine security threats, particularly through their role as commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed services. Without seeking to resolve the deeper question over whether the President is able to securitize independently of a separate authoritative audience, it is reasonable to suggest that the President is one of the most visible and influential securitizing actors within global politics. The combination of the presidential pulpit, authority to set the priorities and direct the behaviour of the U.S. federal government, constitutional power to deploy the U.S. military, and the increase in executive war-making and national security powers since 11 September 2001 (Ellis 2012, 235-240) suggests that any securitizing move the President makes must be taken seriously, and rigorously assessed for the type of threat-referent dyad it specifies and the implications of the securitization it proposes. The remainder of this chapter examines two sets of securitizing moves made by President Barack Obama with deep implications for the Arctic: environmental security and climate change, on the one hand, and energy security, on the other.

## **Climate, Energy, Security, and the Arctic under the Obama Administration**

As president, Barack Obama employed security discourse for various purposes. In the cases of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that he inherited from his predecessor, he pursued the goal of relative *desecuritization* of these conflicts and the wider “global war on terror” within U.S. national security policy in order to facilitate the withdrawal of American combat troops (Goldberg 2016). At the same time, he expanded or deepened the use of security discourse to address new areas of concern for U.S. national interests, including securitizing the economic crisis that began in 2008 and accelerated during the early years of his administration (de Goede 2010). This chapter specifically examines instances of securitizing language used by Obama to frame his policies around climate change and energy. The analysis in this section is principally based on six of President Obama’s statements on climate and energy policy, one made prior to becoming president and the other three over the course of his presidency: Obama’s 2006 speech on energy security as national security; his 2011 remarks on American energy security; his 2015 statement on the rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline; his 2015 address to the GLACIER climate change conference in Alaska; and Obama’s two joint statements in 2016 on climate change, energy, and the Arctic with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. These texts offer a representative sample of the high-level discourse employed by Obama on these subjects. While not systematic, they are the most detailed and high profile public statements made by the President on the subjects of climate change, energy, and the Arctic. They thus offer insights into the nature of the referent objects identified by the President as in need of defending and the threats that threaten their survival.

Even before he became president, Obama employed securitizing language to describe the issues of climate change and energy. During his time in office, however, Obama increasingly emphasized and highlighted the threats associated with human interference in the climate system, eventually making climate change the signature issue of his second term. In numerous public statements, Obama employed grave, sometimes dire, language to generate support for environmental policy and describe the current and future threats posed by climate change to the American people, U.S. national interests and the economy, and the world (Bricker 2012). Notably, he consistently positioned

climate change as intimately linked to energy and economic policy, and connected to issues such as the behaviour of American corporations and consumers, U.S. global leadership, and the changing balance of the international economic order. Thus, Obama rarely addressed climate and energy issues in isolation, but acknowledged the connections and paradoxes between them. In effect, he articulated a complex and interrelated cluster of security issues situated at the nexus of climate change, energy, and economic growth.

For instance, in 2006, while still a member of the U.S. Senate, Obama gave a speech titled “Energy Security is National Security.” Linking reliability of fossil fuel supply and pricing to the health of the U.S. economy, he identified reliance on foreign oil as a critical vulnerability that represented “the Achilles heel of the most powerful country on Earth” (Obama 2006). He warned that oil revenues benefited unfriendly regimes and terrorist groups while offering these actors a powerful tool to use against the United States. In response, he proposed a whole of government effort directed towards transitioning the United States away from fossil fuels through the promotion of domestic renewable energy, which he explicitly equated to the national efforts needed for victory in the Second World War and Cold War. He called for the creation of a new office of “Director of Energy Security” analogous to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence. Obama called for this government-supported transition to renewable energies because “American’s dependence on oil is a major threat to our national security.” But while the speech focused primarily on the national security imperative to wean the U.S. economy off its dependence on oil imported from unfriendly or unstable foreign states, in its opening paragraphs Obama also implicated the use of fossil fuels in causing “the dangers of global warming—how it can destroy our coastal areas and generate more deadly storms.”

The 2006 speech only briefly touched on the Arctic. In rebutting arguments that simply scaling up domestic production of oil and gas would help secure America’s energy needs, Obama referred to the fact that “we only have 3% of the world’s oil reserves. We could start drilling in ANWR today, and at its peak, which would be more than a decade from now, it would give us enough oil to take care of our transportation needs for about a month.” Located in northern Alaska, ANWR – the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – was first protected by the Eisenhower Administration in order to preserve the region’s

unique but delicate ecology. The growth of the oil industry on Alaska's neighbouring North Slope, however, has led ANWR to become the subject of significant debate over the merits of environmental protection versus expanded energy extraction. Most recently, ANWR became politicized as a potential area for domestic energy extraction during the Bush Administration, which constructed drilling in the refuge – and fossil fuel extraction more generally – as essential to U.S. national security (Schlosser 2006). It was this view that Obama sought to rebut by rejecting drilling in ANWR as a solution to America's energy security needs, demonstrating that, even peripherally, the Arctic is implicated in broader policy debates over energy, the economy, and the environment. In contrast, Obama's 2006 statement on energy security argued for the vital importance of transitioning to *renewable* energy sources based on the negative security implications of fossil fuels for innovation and economic growth, climate change, and the weaponization of energy supplies by actors hostile to the United States.

Obama revisited these themes midway through his first term as president in his remarks on America's energy security, delivered in the context of popular uprisings against authoritarian leaders across the Arab world and following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in Japan. He again stressed the importance of reliable and affordable energy for the U.S. economy, and reiterated the importance of addressing “the climate change that threatens the planet that you [young people] will inherit” (Obama 2011). In these remarks, however, Obama's position on fossil fuels shifted perceptibly to emphasize the reduction of *foreign* oil, calling for an increase in American hydrocarbon production as an important part of improving the nation's energy security. He endorsed expanded offshore drilling, and positioned U.S. shale gas production as a transition fuel as America “discover[s] and produce[s] cleaner, renewable sources of energy that also produce less carbon pollution, which is threatening our climate.” Following the devastating impact of the BP-Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in spring 2010, however, he noted the importance of preventing local environmental damage through spills and leaks from oil infrastructure, and of embracing nuclear power as a key component of a low-carbon energy mix.

Notably, after observing that “producing more oil in America can help lower oil prices, can help create jobs, and can enhance our energy security,”

Obama explicitly stated that long-term energy security can only be realized through a transition away from fossil fuels. “Even if we increase domestic oil production, that is not going to be the long-term solution to our energy challenge ...,” he suggested. “Even if we drilled every drop of oil out of every single one of the reserves that we possess – offshore and onshore – it still wouldn’t be enough to meet our long-term needs ... The only way for America’s energy supply to be truly secure is by permanently reducing our dependence on oil.” As early examples of statements on energy security, these speeches in 2006 and 2011 reflect how Obama constructed energy security as inextricably connected to both economic and climate security:

The United States of America cannot afford to bet our long-term prosperity, our long-term security on a resource that will eventually run out, and even before it runs out will get more and more expensive to extract from the ground. We can’t afford it when the costs to our economy, our country, and our planet are so high. (Obama 2011)

Obama routinely emphasized the inter-related dangers of failing to transition to cleaner sources of domestic energy in terms of American jobs, economic growth, energy prices, and environmental protection. Unlike his earlier statements, once he became president Obama promoted the short-term benefits to the U.S. economy of expanding domestic hydrocarbon extraction while specifying the need to radically reduce fossil fuel use over the medium- to long-terms in order to mitigate climate change caused by burning those very fossil fuels.

Obama’s 2015 keynote address to the GLACIER conference in Alaska signified the clearest discursive intersection of his presidency of the issues of climate and energy security, as well as their implications for the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> In greater detail, and invoking darker and more overtly catastrophic possibilities than his previous statements, President Obama (2015a) articulated how “the urgent and growing threat of a changing climate” will “define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other.” He listed the specific climatic

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<sup>1</sup> The Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience (GLACIER) was hosted by the U.S. State Department in Anchorage, Alaska on August 31, 2015.

changes already occurring globally and across the Arctic region, noting the particular challenges facing small communities and Indigenous peoples, and the adaptations that would be necessary in the face of climate changes that were already unavoidable. He then outlined in stark and detailed terms the global, existential stakes of failing to effectively respond to climate change by insufficiently curbing use of fossil fuels and other sources of GHGs:

Few things will disrupt our lives as profoundly as climate change ... If those trend lines continue the way they are, there's not going to be a nation on this Earth that's not impacted negatively. People will suffer. Economies will suffer. Entire nations will find themselves under severe, severe problems. More drought, more floods, rising sea levels, greater migration, more refugees, more scarcity, more conflict ... If we were to abandon our course of action, if we stop trying to build a clean-energy economy and reduce carbon pollution, if we do nothing to keep the glaciers from melting faster, and oceans from rising faster, and forests from burning faster, and storms from growing stronger, we will condemn our children to a planet beyond their capacity to repair. Submerged countries. Abandoned cities. Fields no longer growing. Indigenous peoples who can't carry out traditions that stretch back millennia. Entire industries of people who can't practice their livelihoods. Desperate refugees seeking the sanctuary of nations not their own. Political disruptions that could trigger multiple conflicts around the globe ... On this issue, of all issues, there is such a thing as being too late. That moment is almost upon us. (Obama 2015a)

This statement represents a remarkable articulation of the security implications of climate change, on par with the most acute and worried assessments of climate security within global politics (Detraz and Betsill 2009; Greaves 2016a). It amounts to the acknowledgement by a sitting U.S. president of the complex interrelationship between the industrialized way of life and unsustainable use of fossil fuels, and thus implicates citizens of Western countries—and, most importantly, Americans—in the generation of climate-related threats to the survival and wellbeing of people and societies around the world.

Obama's comments also imply a rejection of the excitement around new Arctic hydrocarbon extraction that accompanied the U.S. Geological Survey's estimates that the Arctic holds as much as 90 billion barrels of oil (13% of undiscovered global resources) and 46 trillion cubic meters of natural gas (30% of undiscovered global resources) (Gautier and others 2009). Instead of an emerging energy resource region becoming available due to reduced summer sea ice resulting from climate change, Obama (2015a) positioned the Arctic as simultaneously the first victim of climate change and a harbinger of the world to come, specifying that "this once-distant threat is now very much in the present. The Arctic is the leading edge of climate change – our leading indicator of what the entire planet faces." In light of his previous statements on climate change and energy, it is not difficult to interpret Obama's words as a securitizing move designed to convince a wider audience of the clear and immediate threat to national, human, and global security posed by human-caused environmental change.

The same nexus of climate-energy issues informed President Obama's decision to reject the proposed Keystone XL pipeline that would have transported diluted bitumen from northern Alberta to refineries on the U.S. Gulf coast for shipment to global consumers. Keystone XL represented a challenge for the Administration, as it was a specific project requiring government approval rather than a broad topic on which the president could lay out sweeping policy objectives. It also became a significant electoral issue during the 2012 campaign and a bilateral irritant between Canada and the United States (Burney and Hampson 2012). During the review period, Obama employed climate security discourse to defend his Administration's lengthy assessment of, and apparent reluctance to approve, the pipeline. He situated Keystone XL and America's continued reliance on "dirty" sources of energy (including the Alberta bitumen sands) within the context of global ecological security, and specifically listed hazards related to climate change including extreme weather, sea-level rise, and access to fresh water (Greaves 2013). Ultimately, in his November 2015 statement rejecting the pipeline, Obama deemed that approval "would not serve the national interest of the United States" because "approving this project would have undercut [America's] global leadership [on climate change]. And that's the biggest risk we face—not acting" (Obama 2015b). Although he acknowledged that Keystone XL was not "the

express lane to climate disaster proclaimed by others,” Obama argued the pipeline warranted rejection because it would not significantly affect the U.S. economy, would not lower consumer gas prices, and would worsen America’s energy security by maintaining its reliance on “dirty fossil fuels.”

Towards the end of this statement, however, Obama presented an argument hitherto unstated by an American president or any leader of a major industrialized economy. Noting the success of U.S. shale production and significant reduction in demand for foreign oil, he reiterated his view that transitioning to a clean energy economy would require continued, though diminishing, consumption of oil and gas. Then, anticipating the COP21 climate summit in Paris scheduled for just weeks later, he said: “Ultimately, if we’re going to prevent large parts of this Earth from becoming not only inhospitable but uninhabitable in our lifetimes, we’re going to have to keep some fossil fuels in the ground rather than burn them and release more dangerous pollution into the sky” (Obama 2015b). This statement marks a remarkable acknowledgement that the long-term goal of climate-related public policy is the decarbonization of advanced economies, and an acceptance of the view that a significant portion of current global fossil fuel reserves must remain undeveloped if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided. According to one recent study, globally, a third of oil reserves, half of gas reserves and over 80 per cent of current coal reserves should remain unused from 2010 to 2050 in order to meet the target of 2 °C, and particularly important for the analysis in this chapter, that “all Arctic [energy] resources should be classified as unburnable” (McGlade and Ekins 2015). Thus, although the Arctic was not directly referenced in either Obama’s 2011 energy security remarks or his 2015 statement on Keystone XL, his acceptance of the argument that some fossil fuel reserves must not be burnt has significant implications for the northern polar region.

These themes were reiterated and further expanded in two statements released in the final year of Obama’s presidency jointly with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership, released in March 2016, outlined a bilateral vision for clear energy and economic cooperation and climate change mitigation and adaptation with a focus on the Arctic region. It articulated both high-level goals for these issue areas and specific strategies and policy approaches for

realizing them, all embedded in the context of signalling both states' commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement negotiated under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Thematically, it reflects the longstanding intersection in Obama's public statements on the dangers of climate change, the economic opportunities of transitioning to a low-carbon economy, and pragmatic recognition of the ongoing reliance on fossil fuels in the North American economy. However, the statement was noteworthy in several respects: it provided concrete details of how GHG reductions, greater energy efficiency, and other environmental goals would be achieved; further affirmed the centrality of the Arctic for energy and environmental security policy; qualified expanded Arctic fossil extraction by noting that "*if* oil and gas development and exploration proceeds, activities must align with science-based standards" [emphasis added]; acknowledged in greater detail the vulnerability of Arctic Indigenous peoples to the effects of climate change and their need for greater government support to adapt; and unexpectedly acknowledged that "Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic are vital to strengthening and supporting U.S. and Canadian sovereignty claims" (The White House 2016a). The statement also situated the social and ecological changes occurring in the Arctic within the broader context of the global security ramifications of climate change:

Recognizing the particular impact of climate change on countries already dealing with conflict and fragility, the leaders commit to addressing the intersection of climate change and security as an issue for foreign, defense, and development policies. Through the G-7 working group on climate and security and elsewhere, both sides will work together to support sound analysis, practical recommendations, and meaningful cooperation to address climate-fragility risks. (The White House 2016a)

The first U.S.-Canada Joint Statement was followed up in December 2016 by a second one, the United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement. Essentially an update on the previous document, the latter statement was particularly significant, however, in that it announced a major bilateral policy initiative that implemented several aspects of Obama's previous positions on the climate-energy nexus. Noting the countries' joint commitment to a "science-based approach" to policy-making under which "commercial activities will

occur only if the highest safety and environmental standards are met, and if they are consistent with national and global climate and environmental goals,” the leaders announced a near-total moratorium on new offshore oil and gas drilling in the coastal Arctic waters of both Canada and the United States. The announcement cited the specific ecological, cultural, and scientific attributes of the Arctic region, its vulnerability to a hydrocarbon spill, and the unique challenges of effective emergency oil spill response as the basis for the five-year drilling ban, which was also to be reviewed on the basis of both marine science and climate change considerations (The White House 2016b).

However, while not specifically citing climate change as motivation for the moratorium, the decision to prohibit offshore drilling in two of the five coastal Arctic states represents the single most important policy measure taken globally to realize McGlade and Ekins’ (2015) admonition that Arctic oil and gas should be considered “unburnable”. It thus reflected a major shift in state awareness of the security and other policy ramifications of climate change, and displayed a newfound willingness on the part of the governments of some fossil fuel-producing states to impose restrictions on which oil and gas deposits should even be available for private sector-led extraction. However, made as it was in the closing days of the Obama presidency and early in Trudeau’s tenure as prime minister, and designating as it did fossil fuel deposits that had proven unattractive in recent years for corporate investment (Byers 2015; McCarthy and Lewis 2016; Chater 2017), the Arctic oil and gas moratorium also demonstrates the challenges of banning fossil fuel extraction. It took one leader with nothing to lose and another with plenty of political capital to spare to impose a five-year renewable ban on drilling for oil and gas deposits that energy companies were not particularly interested in extracting anyway.

The implication of this is leaders with other policy priorities, less cooperative partners, or less political capital to expend will be unlikely to ban fossil fuel extraction in spite of the implications for both climate change and green economic growth. Moreover, the fact that President Obama’s decision to impose the ban was taken just weeks before the inauguration of his unexpected successor, Donald Trump, suggests the decision, while highly symbolic, was taken in order to force the new administration to spend its own political capital to overturn the new offshore drilling status quo. Indeed, in April 2017 President Trump issued an executive order overturning Obama’s ban, but the legality of

his statutory power to do so without an additional act of Congress remains uncertain and will likely remain so until tested in federal court (Meyer 2016).

### **Assessing Obama's Climate and Energy Security Policies**

While Barack Obama has clearly embraced the discourse of climate security and the global stakes of failing to effectively mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, his Administration's record on climate and energy policy is more ambivalent. The articulation of climate change as a threat to U.S. national security has occurred against the backdrop of a prior securitization of energy, namely access to reliable, low cost oil and gas for American consumers. While shifting away from certain elements of energy security articulated by the Bush Administration, including strong support for the development of the Alberta bitumen sands (Greaves 2013), Obama has maintained many of the same core tenets of American energy security policy. Scholars note that 'energy security' is a widely contested term, with dozens of differing and contradictory definitions reflecting distinct theoretical perspectives and multiple constitutive factors (Ciuta 2010; Sovacool 2011). While the International Energy Agency defines energy security as "the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price" (IEA n.d.), in practice the source of energy in question is overwhelmingly fossil fuels, with scarcity or disruption of supplies and higher energy costs depicted as the threats to be protected against. There is thus a fundamental paradox between the simultaneous securitization of climate change and fossil fuel energy: the very thing to be secured according to energy security is the thing to be secured against according to climate security. Beyond the level of security discourse, it is thus possible to explore public policies on climate and energy as a means of assessing the relative adoption of these securitizations within U.S. government policy.

Although Obama has made climate change a centrepiece of his presidency, this paradox of climate and energy security is reflected in many of the policies of his Administration. Indeed, promoting American energy security through his "all of the above" energy policy and joining the global fight against climate change are among his signature policy achievements, and are now integrated by the Administration into a single policy area. Unsurprisingly, the White House (n.d.) touts its success in promoting renewable energy, particularly a tripling of wind power and a 30-fold increase in U.S. solar energy production.

Nevertheless, renewables remain a small part of the overall U.S. energy mix, with only 13% of U.S. electricity production coming from hydro-electricity and other renewables. And while total U.S. GHG emissions declined in 2013 by 9 per cent since 2005, this still represents a 6% increase over 1990 levels, which were used as the baseline for reductions in the now moribund Kyoto Protocol. Though coal use has declined substantially as a result of Obama's environmental regulations, fossil fuels still comprised "81.5% of total U.S. energy consumption" in 2015, with projections based on "current laws and policies [estimating] that percentage declines to 76.6% by 2040" (EIA 2016). Conversely, production of hydraulically fractured shale gas has experienced a massive increase under the Obama Administration from 1% of U.S. natural gas production in 2000 to over 20% in 2010, and an expected 46% of U.S. natural gas supply by 2035 (EIA n.d.). Thus, policy priorities around climate change and energy production remain in tension, as the goal of radically reducing U.S. carbon output continues to compete with the domestic economic imperatives of producing and consuming fossil fuels.

Though beyond the scope of this chapter, even a partial list of climate and energy policies by the Obama Administration reflect the extent to which it has simultaneously encouraged decreasing GHGs while increasing renewable energy, and promoted increased domestic hydrocarbon extraction, while limiting or reducing the most carbon-intensive forms of fossil fuels, particularly coal. Selected policies include:

- April 2012, Obama issued an "Executive Order Supporting Safe and Responsible Development of Unconventional Domestic Natural Gas Resources," which encouraged hydraulic fracturing based on domestic economic benefits and reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil
- September 2013, the Administration introduced carbon emission standards for new power plants, and in August 2015 expanded this initiative through its Clean Power Plan that also introduced carbon standards for existing power plants, and seeks to reduce US carbon emissions by 32% from 2005 levels by 2030, reflecting a 23-25% further reduction from current levels
- December 2015, Obama signed the Paris Agreement on climate change that commits parties to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C over pre-

industrial levels, and which was written such that it could be implemented through the president's executive authority and without ratification by the Senate

- December 2015, just days after signing the Paris agreement, Obama signed a legislative package that lifted the 40 year ban on US crude oil exports
- March 2016, the Administration announced a reversal of a previous policy banning offshore drilling on the US Atlantic coast, but not on the Pacific or Arctic coasts, notably the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas
  - December 2016, the Administration announced an indefinite ban on offshore oil and gas leasing in the vast majority of U.S. waters in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas

Overall, these climate and energy policies demonstrate the on-going reliance of the American economy on fossil fuels, and reflect the breadth of the systemic change required to achieve the goals of a more sustainable, low-carbon society. They also underscore the largely rhetorical nature of any high-level claim to promoting decarbonization, and the challenge of actually designating specific deposits of fossil fuels that should remain in the ground. As indicated above, even when a sitting president accepts a general argument that suggests Arctic energy reserves should remain undeveloped, his Administration may take only limited steps to actually prohibit the development of Arctic hydrocarbons. Moreover, Obama's decision to impose an Arctic offshore drilling ban immediately encountered partisan opposition that virtually guaranteed his Republic successor would seek to overturn the decision and promote the expansion of Arctic fossil fuels extraction. Taken so late in Obama's presidency, the symbolic weight of the ban must be considered to outweigh its practical consequences. In the final assessment, the tension between securitizing *both* human-caused climate change and continued access to low-cost fossil fuels remained unresolved within U.S. government policy under President Obama. Though paradoxical, even the president who has demonstrated the greatest commitment to fighting climate change and weaning the United States off fossil fuels has found the promotion of domestic hydrocarbons to support the American economy and reduce dependence on *foreign* oil to be a seemingly unavoidable imperative of his office.

## Conclusion

The analytical strength of securitization is that it allows for the identification of concurrent, or even contradictory, security discourses. However, it offers no particular tools with which to determine the empirical or normative attributes of any particular security claim. As articulated by, among others, President Obama and his Administration, environmental and energy security discourses are largely incompatible insofar as they depict different referent objects as requiring protection from radically different understandings of the relevant threat. Environmental and climate security claims posit the maintenance of a stable global biosphere conducive to human flourishing as the referent object to be protected. Conversely, energy security claims assert that continued extraction of hydrocarbons, their transport to market, and maintenance of acceptable prices for consumers are the things to be secured, and actors or policies that restrict or adversely affect these as the threats to be protected against. The essence of the contradiction between these discourses is that environmental security essentially suggests the threat to be secured *against* is the same phenomenon that energy security identifies as the referent to be defended. Conversely, energy security seeks to maintain fossil fuel extraction against precisely the kinds of regulation, and ultimately decarbonizing policies, that environmental security regards as the solution to the insecurities generated by hydrocarbon consumption. As examples of competing security claims over the same phenomenon, energy and environmental security discourses pose analytical and policy dilemmas. How do we adjudicate between energy security and our current industrialized mode of life on the one hand, and environmental security and the maintenance of an ecosystem hospitable to human wellbeing on the other? More specifically, how can the Obama Administration's climate goals be reconciled with expanded extraction and continued consumption of fossil fuels?

These questions are clearly not limited to the Arctic, but their implications do find expression in debates over the circumpolar region. Having specified improving economic and living conditions in Arctic communities; Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship; and addressing the impacts of climate change as the priorities for the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, can these goals be reconciled with the concurrent policy choices being made by the U.S. government? The Arctic – notably the Arctic Ocean that forms its core – is

being transformed by climate change at a pace and to a degree that fundamentally challenges existing configurations of human society in the polar region. Climate change is directly driven by the consumption of fossil fuels, but in addition to being a high consuming energy region per capita, the Arctic is an exporter of hydrocarbons, and the fossil fuel industry is central to the economic wellbeing of whole communities and entire Arctic sub-regions. Policy decisions to protect the Arctic Ocean and address climate change are thus intimately bound with the economic futures of many Arctic communities. If all remaining Arctic resources must go unburned in order to avoid catastrophic climate change of more than 2 degrees C, it will come at a cost to the very people who will benefit. Inversely, the expansion of fossil fuel extraction-based economies elsewhere in the world, and the economic gains they may accrue as a result, comes at the direct expense of people in the Arctic and elsewhere currently experiencing the impacts of the most acute environmental changes in the world.

Ultimately, the choices that must be made in assessing the merits of climate and energy security claims are ones of priorities, values, and trade-offs. Both sets of security claims are, in view of securitization theory, equally 'true.' Both reflect the articulation of objects that require protection if their survival or wellbeing is to be protected. Ultimately, what matters more than the securitizing moves around climate and energy is whether these are accepted by an authoritative audience with the power to transform them into political reality. Answering the underlying theoretical question of who such an audience is comprised of is, thus, of paramount importance for determining the ultimate success of these securitizing moves. More immediately, the tensions between parallel but mutually exclusive constructions of climate and energy security indicate that neither has been fully securitized, because if they were then the exceptional measures warranted to respond to the specified threat would require the negation of the other. Energy security, as related to supplies of fossil fuels, is fundamentally threatened by regulatory action to promote a decarbonized global economy. Climate security, understood as the preservation of a global biosphere hospitable for continued human flourishing, is inherently undermined by the continued extraction and consumption of carbon-based sources of energy. Thus, in the long-term, the successful construction and acceptance of either of these security claims requires the other to be abandoned, or constructed on a different empirical basis. *Ceteris paribus* they cannot be

reconciled, and it is in the context of the Arctic – as an example of a region sensitive to climate change that is also responsible for producing a substantial portion of global fossil fuels and possesses even greater resource potential – that these contradictions become clearest. While U.S. leadership on climate change under President Obama, including through the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, is greater than any previous president, the tension between climate and energy security claims remains ongoing and unresolved in U.S. government policy.

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# 6

## Is a Melting Arctic Making the Arctic Council Too Cool? Considering the Credibility, Saliency and Legitimacy of a Boundary Organization

*Jennifer Spence*

The Arctic Council was established “as a high level forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic” (Arctic Council, 1996). The work of the Council, over the past 20 years, offers an interesting and unexplored case study of international boundary management between policy makers, scientific communities and Indigenous organizations in the circumpolar region. In fact, by many accounts, the Council’s notable success can be attributed to the production of high quality policy products, including the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (2005), the Arctic Human Development Reports (2014; 2004), and the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment Report (2013) – all of which meet the criteria of “boundary objects” (Star and Griesemer, 1989).

This paper will focus on introducing the concept of the boundary organization and making the case that our understanding of the Arctic Council is enhanced through the application of this analytical frame. In particular, this paper seeks to answer the questions:

1. How does the boundary organization concept inform our understanding of the Arctic Council?

2. How does this concept inform our understanding of what makes the Arctic Council a credible, salient and legitimate institution in the circumpolar region?

This paper is supported by data collected from September 2014 to March 2015 through 60 in-person, semi-structured interviews with those involved with the Arctic Council and other Arctic institutions and from observing meetings and discussions of those involved in Arctic environmental and sustainable development research and policy.

### **Boundary Management: The Concept**

The concept of a “boundary” was first introduced in Science and Technology Studies (S&TS) to refer to how scientists distinguish science from politics, religion and other systems of knowledge (Gieryn 1983). This literature proposes that scientists create and maintain boundaries with other knowledge holders to differentiate how knowledge is generated and to protect their cognitive authority (Gieryn 1995, 1999). This concept was extended within the S&TS literature with the introduction of the concept of boundary work to facilitate an analysis of the interactions between communities of science and policy, which were recognized to be a reality of modern science and policy decision making (Miller 2001, Lidskog and Sundqvist 2015).

The “boundary organization” was introduced to acknowledge institutions that bring together actors from both scientific and political communities. These organizations internalize the negotiation process that continually takes place between these two different social worlds and seeks to establish processes and governance mechanisms by which mutual understanding and the co-creation of knowledge can take place. ‘The boundary organisation thus gives both the producers and the consumers of research an opportunity to construct the boundary between their enterprises in a way favourable to their own perspectives’ (Guston 2001, 405). Boundary organizations provide important mechanisms for the flow of ideas, concepts, information and skills between social worlds (Fujimura 1992). Furthermore, analyzing the means by which knowledge is co-produced across boundaries has the potential to provide a framework for analyzing an important feature of the policy making process and those governance features that support effective policy-making (Jasanoff 1990).

Guston (1999, 2001) proposes that these types of organizations meet three criteria: 1) they involve actors from both sides of the boundary, 2) they provide

an opportunity, and even an incentive, to work across the different social worlds of politics and science, and 3) they maintain distinct lines of responsibility and accountability to their respective social worlds. Boundary organizations do work that is useful to actors on both sides and, as a result of the process they adopt for knowledge creation, they play a distinctive role that actors on either side of the boundary are unlikely to have the credibility or legitimacy to perform unilaterally (Scott, 2000). Boundary organizations gain stability by being accountable and responsive to actors on both sides of the boundary. Through boundary work, both the producers and consumers of research have an opportunity to frame their work in a way that meets their respective needs and interests.

Inherent in the concept of the boundary organization is the idea that the processes and products of boundary work will have an impact on both science and politics. The outputs from these types of organizations can take many forms – assessments, models, reviews, and policy recommendations. These different products are commonly referred to as boundary objects because they are designed to be used, hold a purpose and maintain an identity in both social worlds (Cash et al., 2003; Guston, 2001; Star & Griesemer, 1989). Clearly the level of impact that boundary work will have on both sides of the boundary will vary. In some cases, boundary objects may be treated as one small contribution in a mountain of information that informs research or policy decision-making; however, at the other end of the continuum, these products may have the ability to alter practices on both sides of the boundary – introducing the idea that boundary organizations may alter not only knowledge, but the actions of stakeholders.

The concepts of boundary work and the boundary organization have been most developed and applied at the domestic level to explore policy areas such as the environment, agriculture and sustainable development in the American context. At the international and transnational levels, the nature and role of boundary organizations is less developed and has been limited to institutions involved in environmental policy areas – In particular, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity–Subsidiary

Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (CBD-SBSTTA) (Cash 2001; Koetz et al. 2009; Lee et al. 2014; and Miller 2001).

Miller (2001) argues that the study of boundary organizations at the international level requires a “refocusing” of the concept to consider the complex and dynamic nature of the transnational governance environment in which international boundary organizations must operate. He also argues that it is important to consider what this different context means for the role these types of organizations are best positioned to play and the governance features that best support the co-production of knowledge.

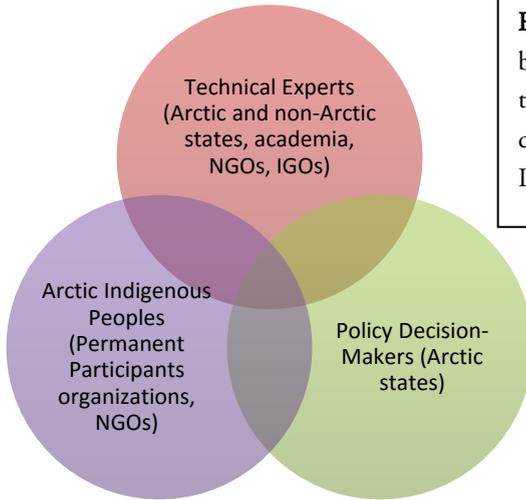
The value and relevance of the boundary organization concept to the International Relations literature is still contested. As a heuristic concept, the boundary organization is not seen to provide enhanced explanatory power over established concepts, such as epistemic communities (Adler and Bernstein 2005; Haas 1992), which has provided a leading theory about the influence of expert communities on international politics. However, the concept of boundary work appears to have more acceptance as a means to articulate and analyze a function within the policy-making process.

In this context, an analysis of a boundary organization is focused on analyzing how an institution is designed to engage different social worlds to facilitate knowledge generation in support of policy making. Furthermore, it provides a lens by which to engage in a normative assessment of how to achieve better policymaking and explore how the governance features of an institution can be best designed to support boundary work. Attention is placed on how an institution is designed to find a balance between science and policy and how cooperation is facilitated between different actors and social worlds. It places the focus on the organization and its design rather than on actors or networks. For example, Cash et al. (2003) propose that by creating mechanisms that facilitate communication and translation across boundaries, the knowledge generated provides the institution with increased credibility, legitimacy and saliency. For the purposes of this dissertation it is the latter interpretation of the concept that is considered valuable to the Arctic Council case study. This framing is directly relevant to the Council because it provides the explanatory power to understand how the Council works and a means by which to more carefully assess the past and present effectiveness of the Council.

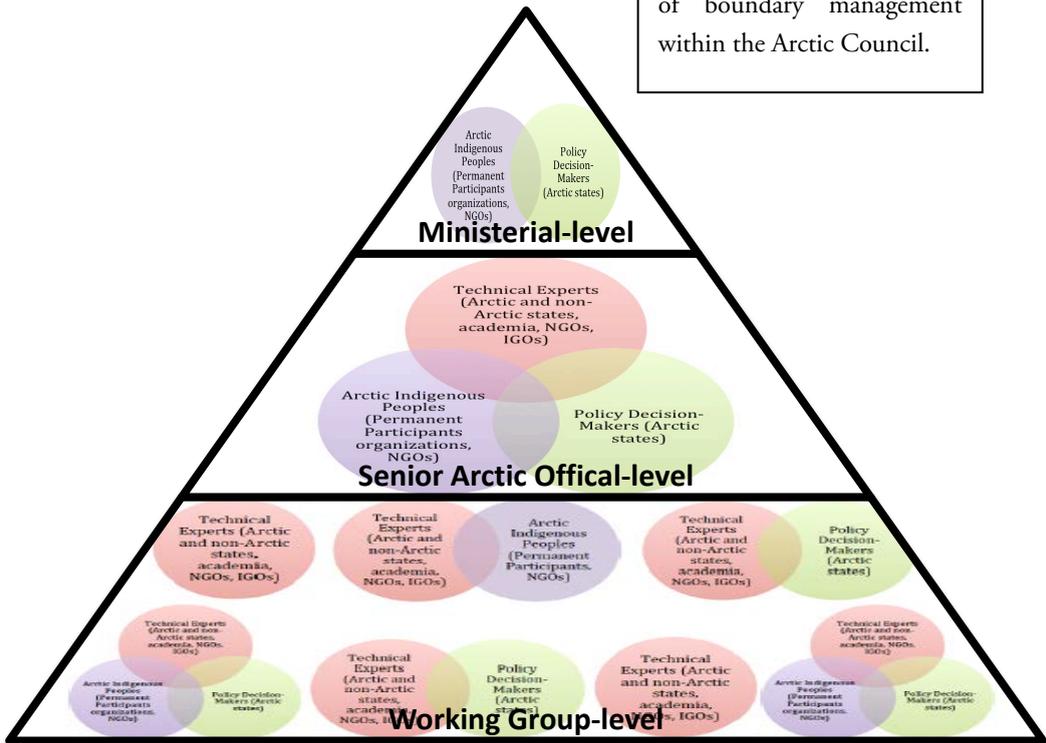
More recently, the boundary work concept has been used to acknowledge and consider institutions that facilitate the integration of other forms of knowledge—other social worlds—such as Indigenous traditional knowledge. These analyses stem from a recognition that multiple social worlds exist to be reconciled and that the co-creation of knowledge and the solutions to the world's many complex issues require the ideas, buy-in, and efforts of many diverse actors. Given the importance placed on the role of Indigenous organizations in the Arctic Council, the integration of the social worlds of Indigenous communities further enhances the potential value of this concept to inform our understanding of how the Arctic Council works.

### **The Arctic Council as a Boundary Organization**

The Arctic Council is a case study that benefits from the explanatory power of the concepts of boundary work and boundary organizations. The application of the boundary work frame highlights some of the unique features of the Council and this concept also provides important insight into how the Arctic Council works. The Arctic Council was designed to meet the classic need to bridge the boundary between science and policy “on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection” (1996). However, from its inception, it was also explicitly tasked with bridging the gap between traditional, state-dominated international relations and the interests and perspectives of the Indigenous peoples of the region. In the early years of the Arctic Council's work, this translated into an implicit need to manage the boundary between Western scientific forms of knowledge and Indigenous forms of knowledge simply because of the actors involved and the priorities that the Arctic Council established. More recently, the need to manage the boundary between Western science and Indigenous forms of knowledge has become more explicit to the point where, in 2015, the Arctic Council released *Recommendations for the Integration of Traditional and Local Knowledge in the Work of the Arctic Council* (2015) that specifically recognize the importance of traditional knowledge in its work and establish a process for ensuring its place in the projects undertaken by the Arctic Council. In other words, an important governance feature of the Arctic Council is the mechanism it has established to manage the boundaries between technical experts, policy decision-makers and Arctic Indigenous peoples (Figure 6-1).



**Figure 6-1:** Managing the boundaries between technical experts, policy decision-makers, and Indigenous organizations.



**Figure 6-2:** Multiple stages of boundary management within the Arctic Council.

Figure 6-2 seeks to highlight that, in fact, there are multiple boundaries that must be managed at different levels within the Arctic Council. Furthermore, the nature of the boundaries that must be managed vary depending on the policy issue being discussed and its stage in the policy process.

By many accounts, the Arctic Council has exceeded expectations and the Council's notable success has been attributed to the production of high quality reports that meet the definition of boundary objects (English, 2013; Griffiths, 2011; Lamb, 2012; Spence, 2013). In fact, recent accounts in academic and popular literature recognize the Arctic Council as the preeminent policy forum in the region. Of course, success and growing attention also prompt discussions and commentary about how the effectiveness of the Arctic Council could be improved. It is evident that the Arctic Council is facing endogenous and exogenous pressures to change. The following section will consider how the Arctic Council experience informs and further advances our understanding of what makes a boundary organization effective.

### **Assessing the Effectiveness of a Boundary Organization**

It is the question of the effectiveness of boundary organizations that Cash *et al.* systematically explore in their article, *Knowledge Systems for Sustainable Development* (2003). They begin by proposing that boundary organizations, and the boundary objects that they produce, must have three tightly-coupled attributes in order to be effective. First, the work must be *credible* to relevant actors. Second, the work of a boundary organization must be *salient*. And finally, the authors emphasize the importance of the *legitimacy* of the organization and the work that it does. This paper will now consider what the Arctic Council experience tells us about how these attributes have been defined.

#### ***Credibility***

In assessing the *credibility* of a boundary organization or its boundary objects, Cash *et al.* directly link credibility to scientific adequacy; however, using the Arctic Council experience as a case study, it is useful to broaden the measure(s) or sources of credibility to include a link to how a broader spectrum of relevant actors perceive the quality of the products and an organization's work. For example, in the context of the Arctic Council, the sources of credibility extend beyond a focus on scientific data or analysis to ensure the

inclusion of traditional and local perspectives. The Arctic is an interesting region because its Indigenous peoples have maintained a strong traditional knowledge base, and have fought hard on many policy fronts to have that knowledge recognized and incorporated into policy decision-making processes (English, 2013; Griffiths, 2012; Koivurova & Heinämäki, 2006; Lamb, 2012)—from wildlife management, to the changing nature of ice, to assessing the impacts of climate change, or to land and water transportation routes. The region's Indigenous peoples have thousands of years of knowledge that can be incorporated to lend credibility to policy decision-making in the region. The work done to establish the Arctic Council recognized the importance of including these voices in the process and the knowledge of these peoples in the work that the Council set out to undertake (Griffiths, 2012; Lamb, 2012). This is what led to the special role of Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council.

Furthermore, in 2013, the Arctic Council announced its intention to establish a Circumpolar Business Forum (Government of Canada, 2013) to ensure that the knowledge and interests of Arctic businesses would also inform the work of the Council. During interviews, those people that conceived of, and supported, the inclusion of business actors consistently took the position that the credibility of the Arctic Council and its work were weakened or brought into question by the absence of business interests and perspectives. Alternatively, others interviewed focused more on how the credibility of the Arctic Council would be enhanced or further strengthened by the inclusion of business. What the Arctic Council experience illustrates is that the source(s) of credibility of a boundary organization can ultimately be defined by a more complex mix of factors than scientific adequacy, including: the issues being addressed, the resulting pools of relevant knowledge (e.g. scientific, Indigenous, business), and the actors that see themselves as having the right to assess or comment on the credibility of the organization.

### ***Saliency***

Cash et al. propose that the *saliency* of a boundary organization emphasizes that the work produced must be relevant to the needs of decision makers. However, defining salience in this way implies that boundary objects are confined to meeting the articulated or conscious needs of decision makers; whereas the experience of the Arctic Council would suggest that the flow of

influence may not be contained to the articulated needs of decision makers and the flow of influence may be less direct. By many accounts, when the Arctic Council was created in 1996, it was of little interest to the eight Arctic states which committed to its creation (Griffiths, 2012; Lamb, 2010, 2012; Young, 2013). From the perspective of governments, it was a symbolic gesture that was intended to signal a new cooperative working environment in the region at the end of the Cold War and provided a platform to discuss certain specific environmental issues of concern, such as marine pollution. In other words, the Arctic Council was given a mandate to work in the areas of environmental management and sustainable development *before* participating governments seriously recognized the importance of having a transboundary institution to perform this function – decision-makers did not see the saliency of the Arctic Council's work.

The path that led to the recognized saliency of the Arctic Council was less direct. It was the release of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) (2005) and the attention it received from the U.S. media that shot the work of the Arctic Council to global prominence. Scientists in various fora had been sounding the climate change alarm bell for well over a decade with very limited popular (and by extension political) traction; however, the very graphic and credible evidence of climate change that the ACIA provided and the active promotion of this report by the region's Indigenous peoples facilitated a new level of public concern (English, 2013; Young, 2013). It was *after* the global recognition of the saliency of this Arctic Council product that the Council, and some might go so far as to argue the issue of climate change, was launched onto the radar screens of Arctic government decision-makers. All this to emphasize that the process by which saliency is determined and who has the power to determine what is salient can be more complex – making the transition from knowledge to action more amorphous and also a process that can happen within a boundary organization, but may also draw on actors and influences outside the organization.

### ***Legitimacy***

The final attribute explored by Cash et al. is *legitimacy*. In their work, the authors focus on the internal process of legitimizing a boundary organization's work – the perception that the process of generating boundary objects is

unbiased, respectful of different values and beliefs, and fairly treats opposing views and interests. The authors focus on how these are important factors to ensuring the internal stability of the organization; however, the experience of the Arctic Council highlights that the perceived legitimacy of a boundary organization by external actors can also be an important factor in determining how effective its members perceive the organization to be. In interviews with representatives of Arctic Council states, Permanent Participants, and Observers, there were a significant number of references to how the Arctic Council enjoys a unique level of legitimacy because of the meaningful governance role established for the region's Indigenous peoples. This enhanced legitimacy, for many interviewees, is linked to the "moral authority" that the Permanent Participants hold and lend to the Arctic Council by participating in its work.

Issues of the Arctic Council's legitimacy were also raised by some interviewees to explain the importance of efforts to include business. In these cases, interviewees focused on the fact that policy actions in the region can have a significant impact on the region's businesses; therefore, using and integrating the knowledge and considering their interests in the knowledge-generation process ultimately supports the success of policy actions. For example, safe shipping policies in the Arctic can focus on standards for ship construction, regulations that guide ship operation, or penalties for negative environmental impacts. All of these are viable policy options from a government perspective; however, business may be able to contribute information to policy deliberation that makes some options more attractive, while others may be exposed as particularly challenging to implement, monitor or enforce.

Again, this suggests that the sources of legitimacy of a boundary organization or a specific boundary object are shaped by a much more complex combination of factors, including the nature of the issue, the process by which knowledge is generated, and who is involved. Furthermore, it highlights that often actors involved in the Arctic Council look for external validation to confirm the legitimacy of the Council and its work.

Overall, what this brief analysis highlights is that the Arctic Council is perceived as effective in its role and this analysis also confirms that, using broadened definitions, this success is directly linked to its credibility, saliency and legitimacy as a boundary organization. The perceived effectiveness of the Arctic Council helps to explain why it has risen up in the global

consciousness as *the* policy forum in the Arctic region, and why a growing number of non-Arctic states, IGOs and NGOs are knocking at the door to gain access and participate in the Council. However, this success has also increased interest and expectations regarding what the Arctic Council can do. With its growing prominence, the Arctic Council has also faced increasing criticism as a slow, opaque “talk shop.” There are a growing number of calls for the Arctic Council to “grow teeth” and focus on creating and implementing binding policy – the Arctic Council is being pushed to be an organization of action.

### **Pressures for Action in the Arctic Council**

In addition to identifying the relevant attributes of an effective boundary organization, Cash et al. conclude that a boundary organization’s effectiveness must ultimately be measured based on its ability to influence “the evolution of social responses to public issues” (Cash et al., 2003, 8086)—in other words, a boundary organization’s ability to provide an effective bridge between the production of knowledge and policy action. This leads the authors to consider the relationship that exists between knowledge and action in boundary organizations. The work by Cash *et al.* indicates that the attributes of credibility, saliency and legitimacy are tightly coupled and they propose there are trade-offs to be made between these attributes in order to maintain the effectiveness of a boundary organization in fulfilling the role of translating knowledge into action. Ultimately, Cash et al. conclude that knowledge produced through a process that is perceived to be credible, salient, and legitimate is more likely to be influential. As a result, they argue that a boundary organization’s success depends on paying close attention to its boundary management functions, in particular facilitating communication, translation and mediation across boundaries (Cash et al., 2003).

In other words, while the work of Cash et al. clearly demonstrates that these types of organizations can play an important role in effectively linking knowledge to action; questions are also raised about whether there are limits to the role that a boundary organization can play in policy action. Can the Arctic Council make the shift from decision-shaping to decision-making as a boundary organization? The boundary organization literature emphasizes that the success of boundary organizations depends on “institutionalizing accountability” on both sides of the knowledge-action boundary (Cash et al., 2003). By definition,

this suggests that actors on either side of a boundary must continue to feel they can justify the Arctic Council's work and support and feel responsible for the knowledge that is being generated, how it is translated, and into what it is translated. In reality, what we see is that efforts to "strengthen" the Arctic Council have weakened the systems that facilitate communication, translation and mediation across the boundaries within the Arctic Council.

Presumably, these recent developments can be addressed by concerted efforts to reinvigorate the communication, translation and mediation functions necessary to support effective boundary management. What seems like a more significant hurdle to overcome is reconciling the attributes identified for an effective boundary organization toward measuring the success of the Arctic Council as it is experiencing increasing pressure to be more action-oriented. In particular, how credibility, saliency and legitimacy are defined for boundary organizations places an emphasis on the process for generating knowledge and policy advice. By extension, the measures of effectiveness are process-oriented – who is involved and how? However, in an organization focused heavily on policy action, it becomes necessary to consider outcome-oriented measures of credibility, saliency and legitimacy – what decision was taken? When will it be implemented and by whom?

In fact, the Arctic Council experience, with its increasing focus on action, highlights that other attributes may need to be introduced to assess its effectiveness. For example, the success of the Arctic Council depends on its authority to make and implement policy decisions. The boundary organization literature is silent on considering the importance of authority or how the relevant sources of authority might change in the transition from knowledge generation to action. In the case of the Arctic Council, it is not surprising to observe that pressure to shift to decision-making results in member states assuming a more central place in the discussions. Although other actors in the Arctic have the authority to commit themselves to certain projects or decisions, our Westphalian system means that only states have been vested with the authority to make public policy decisions for their citizens. As a result, in observing Arctic Council meetings, we see less space being created for boundary negotiation and mediation. The legitimacy of a policy decision is not defined by shared knowledge or co-creation. A state must focus its attention on ensuring that the commitment fits within its existing legislative and policy framework or

assess the consequences of making a transboundary commitment that will result in domestic changes that may require legislative approval.

For example, in the process of preparing the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (2011), the moral or technical legitimacy and credibility that Indigenous and scientific representatives contribute to the Arctic Council and its work becomes less relevant. Therefore, for particular actions or decisions, there is evidence of states seeking to contain the nature or level of boundary negotiation and in some cases they are not open to any boundary negotiation. For example, in 2013 the Arctic Council began work on black carbon emissions standards. It is not insignificant that states agreed to initiate this discussion; however, it is important to note the careful language used and deference that ultimately needed to be shown to officials representing member states in the negotiation of this language. There is no question that science and Indigenous interests were critical in bringing this issue to the table; however, the authority of states and their ultimate responsibility to deliver on the commitments that were made meant that there was little room for negotiation of the substance.

Guston (2001) points out that boundary objects by definition require the consent of actors on both sides of a boundary. By extension, I would argue that the Arctic Council can only maintain the credibility, saliency and legitimacy assumed by a boundary organization as long as actors on each side of the existing boundaries consent to participate in its work and continue to provide their support. This is what instills the organization with legitimacy and credibility. What this suggests is that the pressure for action that the Arctic Council is facing may push it away from its roots as a boundary organization. The decision to maintain processes of boundary communication, translation and mediation in an action-oriented Arctic Council now rests heavily with Arctic states, which means that they have the ability to determine what issues and when in the process other actors can play a meaningful role. The balance of power has shifted significantly and there are early signs that, in some cases, this is making it hard for technical experts and Indigenous organizations to maintain the lines of responsibility and accountability to their respective social worlds.

Furthermore, if we consider those actors that have the authority to make and implement policy decisions, non-Arctic states and businesses have the potential to assume an elevated position in the work of the Arctic Council. In

the lead-up to the U.S. Chairmanship, the United States and other Arctic states consistently called on Observer states to demonstrate their support for Arctic Council work by taking appropriate actions domestically and supporting relevant international laws and policies – recent efforts to get Arctic Council Observer states to support a fishing ban in Arctic international waters being a case in point. Those businesses involved in the recently formed Arctic Economic Council are also very aware of the potential authority they hold collectively to establish and enforce standards within their respective industries – whether it is resource extraction, transportation or tourism. Several interviewees from this emerging group proposed that, under the right conditions and with the appropriate opportunities to influence Arctic policy, they would be willing to draw on that authority to support the policy decisions of the Arctic Council.

## **Conclusion**

Although the analysis of one case, the Arctic Council, cannot conclusively confirm what the limits are to the role that boundary organizations can play in policy action, it does suggest that a boundary organization that is pushed towards policy action will need to consider the impact on the relevant sources of credibility, saliency and legitimacy and assess what other governance attributes, such as authority, may be relevant to measure the organization's effectiveness. Furthermore, it is reasonable to point out that the pressures the Arctic Council is experiencing are applicable to other regions and policy areas. This would suggest that further research to consider the generalizability of this analysis to other organizations could be a valuable contribution to the boundary organization literature.

A future line of inquiry that could benefit the Arctic region is to come back to an observation by Cash et al. that knowledge systems can be supported by multiple organizations; therefore, perhaps it is more useful to focus on the boundary management functions (2003, p. 8090). This logic could be extended to encourage analysis of the broader network of institutions in the Arctic that support the full policy cycle – from policy development to implementation, monitoring, enforcement and evaluation. What other fora in the region provide spaces for boundary management or policy implementation? How does this network of institutions work together (or not) to support environmental

management and sustainable development? This is another rich area for future research that could further advance the boundary organization literature.

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# 7

## One Arctic ... But Uneven Capacity: The Arctic Council Permanent Participants

*Jim Gamble and Jessica M. Shadian*

When the Arctic Council first came into being twenty years ago, its very configuration served as a sign of the times. The Arctic Council was established in the infancy of a post-Cold War world filled with a widespread sense of optimism for global peace. Alongside the political reunification of the East and West – boosted by the telecommunications revolution and heightened global economic connectedness – were newly emerging political bodies from NGOs to substate and transnational actors all hoping to also participate in an emerging new global order. The Arctic Council, in particular, acknowledged the significance of the region's subnational and transnational Indigenous groups and took the unprecedented step of including 3 (which grew to 6) permanent Indigenous participants (PPs) at the negotiating table of the Arctic Council.

Since those early post-Cold War years, the world has changed. Optimism for global peace is lower and the Arctic Council is entering into its own period of 'Westphalianisation' (Olsen and Shadian, 2016), namely through the creation of binding agreements by the 8 Arctic states under its auspices. The processes leading to those agreements did not require participation by the 6 PPs or local Northern governments and though a number of the PPs participated in many of the discussions, in some instances they were absent altogether.

While the Arctic Council can be seen as moving towards becoming a conventional intergovernmental (Arctic Council Home Page) regime, the political power that subnational Arctic regions and the Arctic Council's PPs have attained in Arctic and global governance cannot be set aside. Subnational and Indigenous Arctic governance can be found in a wide range of institutional

forms, from land claims agreements and legislation for greater Indigenous political autonomy, to cultural rights in the European Arctic and self-rule in Greenland (Olsen and Shadian, 2016), Indigenous corporations, as well as a host of subnational governments, all of which are increasingly acting on the global level on their own accord. In most cases, the connections they all possess extend far beyond the borders of the Arctic Council and are interwoven into the complex and immense fabric of Arctic politics. While there may be only one Arctic political region at the global intergovernmental level, the Arctic is very much a region of regions. This paper focuses on these complexities and current trends through the rise of and current challenges for the Arctic Council's PPs.

### **Who are the PPs?**

When the Arctic Council was signed into being in Ottawa in 1996 the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC, later to become the Inuit Circumpolar Council), the Saami Council, and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation (later to become the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North - RAIPON) became formal Permanent Participants (PPs). At the end of the first Canadian Chairmanship, in the Iqaluit Declaration of 1998, the Aleut International Association (AIA) was added as the fourth PP, then, in the Barrow Declaration of 2000 which signaled the end of the first United States Chairmanship, the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) and Gwich'in Council International (GCI) became the fifth and sixth Permanent Participants. The rules and procedures allow for a maximum of seven PPs, but since 2000 the six have remained the same.

The Arctic Council's Permanent Participants (PPs) are as varied as the people, geographic regions, and cultures they represent. What they do have in common, however, is the challenge of representing their constituencies and contributing to the work of an ever expanding Arctic Council which continues to grow in global importance and in many cases has grown faster than the PPs have been able to adapt. Arctic Indigenous organizations, however, have a long history of being actively involved in intergovernmental affairs long before the establishment of the Arctic Council. The Arctic's Indigenous organizations were active at the Arctic regional level throughout the AEPS process, the precursor to the Arctic Council, as well as the international level through their historical

engagements with the United Nations and other international fora (e.g. Shadian, 2014).

In the years leading to the establishment of the Arctic Council, policy makers, and scientists began to realize that Indigenous knowledge could not only be useful, but in many cases was essential to understanding the Arctic. During that time, Indigenous Peoples were increasingly becoming land owners and rights holders through various types of new legislation including land claims agreements, differing forms of self-rule, and greater cultural autonomy. Concurrently, consultation, negotiation, and agreement with the people who lived on the land were becoming matter of domestic law in various states and, at the international level, the process which eventually led to the passage of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was underway. When the Declaration was adopted in 2007, 144 states became signatories which included almost all Arctic states (Russia abstained, the US has agreed to lend its support, and Canada pledged its support.<sup>1</sup>

In part due to those realities, the belief that Indigenous peoples should participate in the processes of Arctic governance reaches back to the Rovaniemi Process (the earliest iteration of the future Arctic Council). When the Rovaniemi Process was formalized into an agreement among the eight Arctic states, thereby establishing the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the three original Indigenous organizations became Observers. As stated in the Rovaniemi Declaration: "In order to facilitate the participation of

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<sup>1</sup> The UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was originally adopted by 144 states including 5 of the Arctic States. The U.S. and Canada voted against and Russia abstained. Since then President Obama has stated that the U.S. will "lend its support to the declaration" (Cultural Survival International. January 2011. 'VICTORY!: U.S. Endorses UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' URL: <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/united-states/victory-us-endorses-un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples>). In 2016 Canada's Indigenous and Northern Affairs minister, Carolyn Bennett announced, "We are now a full supporter of the declaration, without qualification. We intend nothing less than to adopt and implement the declaration in accordance with the Canadian Constitution." (Fontaine, Tim. 2 August 2016. 'Canada officially adopts UN declaration on rights of Indigenous Peoples' *CBC*, URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canada-adopting-implementing-un-rights-declaration-1.3575272>). Russia has not endorsed the declaration.

Arctic Indigenous peoples the following organizations will be invited as observers: the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Nordic Saami Council and the U.S.S.R. Association of Small Peoples of the North” (Rovaniemi Declaration 1994). The precise definition of *observer*, however, led to much debate and its definition was left ambiguous at that time. Although the Arctic states acknowledged that the Indigenous participants should be granted a special status, what exactly that would look like in terms of Arctic governance was not clearly known. There was no existing document or reference stating specifically how this status would differ from that of other observers, for instance, including NGOs and non-Arctic states. The central question was whether ‘special status’ inferred that the Indigenous representatives were merely special participants or whether it would give them equal standing as part of the managerial board (Shadian, interview with Pagan, 3 September 2010 in Shadian 2014: 119).

This ambiguity reflected differing views among the eight Arctic countries. The United States, for instance, was concerned that as separate participants, Indigenous peoples would be gaining double representation in the AEPS process. Essentially, Indigenous groups would be represented by their respective state governments and then a second time through their own organizations. Russia, for its part, supported the idea that Indigenous groups should have some type of special status, but it did not feel that this should entail managerial status. Canada, on the other hand, gave full support to the notion that Indigenous groups’ special status entitled them to management status and representation on the management board of the eight Arctic countries (*ibid.*).

The working groups of the AEPS also found themselves in the middle of this debate. In 1995, for example, the CAFF Working Group held a regular meeting of its management board, which consisted of government representatives of the eight Arctic countries. According to a founding member of CAFF, Jeanne Pagan, the Indigenous participants were not invited to this particular meeting, because at that time they were not viewed as part of the management board. The documents did not specifically deny them full and equal representation, but they did not affirm it either. The Canadian representative at the meeting stated that he had been instructed by his government to leave the meeting if the Indigenous peoples were not invited. Canada demanded that the Indigenous organizations have formal

representation, even though the Senior Arctic Officials at that time had not clearly determined how to define 'special status' (ibid.).

Despite those uncertainties surrounding the particularities of participation, during that period it was further recognized that the Indigenous organizations taking part in the AEPS would benefit from having their own secretarial body. In 1994, the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) was subsequently created to assist the Indigenous observer organizations in their work in the AEPS. The main task of the IPS was communications and coordination. Two years later the AEPS was enlarged and mandated with additional responsibilities following the establishment of the Arctic Council. The role of Indigenous peoples' organizations was also expanded when the category of Permanent Participant (PP) was created. The PPs were endowed with full consultative status and a seat in all Arctic Council matters. The new PP powers, however, reached just short of having an actual vote which would put them on exactly equal footing with the Arctic states.

The notion that the PPs have a seat but not a vote, however, requires context. In reality, the Arctic Council operates on the principle of consensus. Subsequently, only a no vote that breaks consensus matters. Therefore, while the PPs are unable to break consensus and keep an initiative from moving forward there has yet to be an occasion when one or more of the PPs has serious reservations about an initiative before the Arctic Council that was not, at least, discussed in an attempt to resolve these concerns. Any reservations that a PP articulates are usually addressed in earlier discussions, either bilaterally or multilaterally, in an effort to reach a full consensus by the time that an item reaches the table.

That particular format for Arctic Council governance worked very well, for the most part, during its first fifteen years. During that time, global attention to the Arctic, where there was attention, largely centred on climate science and the role of the Arctic for understanding global environmental change. While many countries believed in the importance of the Arctic to understand climate change, it did not compel globally powerful states to seek formal Observer status. The traditional workings of the Arctic Council, however, began coming into question soon after Arthur Chilingarov planted a tiny titanium flag on the bottom of the North Pole in August 2007. Soon thereafter, at the sixth Ministerial meeting in Tromsø, Norway in 2009, there was an unprecedented

number of applications for Observer status. Recognizing that the Arctic was becoming a region of increasing geopolitical importance, the Arctic Council responded by not only bringing in a number of globally powerful states including China and South Korea as Observers, but further, the Arctic Council states under its auspices began to sign a number of binding treaties to deal with emerging issues in the Arctic. Along with those treaties came the making of new Arctic Council task forces and a surge of working group projects which, combined, out-stretched the capacities – intellectual and monetary – of the PPs to adequately participate in the work of the Arctic Council.

### **In Search of Capacity: Thinking outside of the Arctic Council Box**

As the geopolitical importance of the Arctic has continued to grow significantly over the past 7 years, the Arctic Council has, in its efforts to keep pace, also become increasingly statist and state-centric in its thinking. With new powerful non-Arctic states joining as Observers the Arctic Council has gone to great lengths to ensure that the 8 Arctic states are taking the lead in governing the region. The PPs, as such, have had little choice but to equally attempt to expand their own engagements alongside an expanding Arctic Council and to be a part of the growing number of activities and projects. Such engagement, however, requires a steady flow and a significant amount of resources. This includes not only the fiscal resources required but greater human capacity as well so that the PPs can be present during all Arctic Council discussions on matters that affect Indigenous communities throughout the Arctic. The greatest challenge facing the PPs is acquiring the resources necessary to find, recruit, support, and retain those with the proper knowledge and expertise.

To put the growing demands on the PPs into perspective, there are currently 39 Observers as of May 2017 (the signing of the Fairbanks Declaration). This does not include the EU which continues to have ad hoc Observer status. Observers now participate in Arctic Council activities. The Arctic states, under the auspices of the Arctic Council, have passed three legally binding Agreements: the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic; the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic; and the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. The Arctic Council itself also has created an Oil and Gas Regulators Forum and an

Arctic Coast Guard Forum. All of these new Agreements and forums are in addition to the already pre-existing 6 working groups, not to mention the task forces and expert groups that are created during specific chairmanship periods. And, within each of these groups there are individual projects. While the human and financial capital of the PPs vary greatly, it is simple enough to see that the Arctic Council is increasingly evolving into a major intergovernmental regime which requires entire domestic (with legal, political and other forms of expertise) departments dedicated to engaging with all of the activities of the Arctic Council. That, however, is far from the reality of the PPs' capacity to engage.

Aleut International Association (AIA), for instance, is neither the largest of the PPs nor is it the smallest. Its office includes three full time staff members and in-kind donations of staff time from various regional entities. It is physically impossible to attend the large number of meetings associated with Arctic Council activities. At the same time, the Arctic states make the case that the participation of Arctic Indigenous peoples is vital to the work of the Arctic Council. Reaching back to the time of the inception of the Arctic Council, the first Iqaluit Declaration stated that it "Request[s] Arctic States to consider the financial questions involved in securing the participation of the Permanent Participants in the work of the Arctic Council and in the operations of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat" (Arctic Council 18 September 1998). Since that first declaration, every subsequent one has made mention of support for the PPs.

As the Arctic Council expands well beyond its founding form, the very real question of how to properly support the participation of the PPs so they can adequately engage in the work is reaching an all-time high for all involved with the Arctic Council. While this question remained largely unaddressed for most of the Arctic Council's institutional history, things began to change when attention to the Arctic Council began to increase globally. The first concrete effort to address PP capacity began during the Icelandic chairmanship in 2004 when a comprehensive report was undertaken. That report recommended, among other actions, the establishment of a PP support fund which would be financed by the Arctic states. The report also recommended an operating balance of \$1,000,000 USD. During the Swedish chairmanship (January 2013) which followed, another report was funded by the Walter and Duncan Gordon

Foundation, the Oak Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation which put forward two main recommendations. The first was to establish a task force during the Canadian chairmanship which would propose practical measures to address the challenges for the PPs over the long term, including revisiting the idea of a PP core fund. The second recommendation was for the Arctic states to make short term commitments to support the PPs in all of the activities of the AC during the Canadian and U.S. chairmanships. The recommendations were followed-up with the Kiruna Declaration of 2013, signaling the end of the Swedish chairmanship. The Kiruna Declaration specifically stated that the Arctic Council will identify “approaches to support the active participation of Permanent Participants, and to present a report on their work at the next Ministerial meeting in 2015”(Arctic Council. 15 May 2013). That Declaration carried into the Canadian chairmanship, which led to a number of steps towards establishing PP capacity and support.

### **Defining Capacity: The Canadian Chairmanship**

For the most part, the discussions concerning PP capacity have concentrated on finances. While financial capacity is critical (to date, none of the PPs have consistent, long-term funding), PP capacity and support is, in fact, much broader. Finding an equitable solution, therefore, has been complex. The six PP organizations, for instance, all vary greatly in size, structure, and how they are funded. Further, the PPs have varying relationships with the Arctic states in which their memberships reside. The relationship that the Aleut International Association (AIA) has with the United States, for instance, is different than what the Saami Council experiences with the Norwegian government in terms of support. In terms of government support, AIA receives travel support for attendance at Arctic Council events from the U.S. Department of State and also receives in-kind and limited financial support from entities within its region. Beyond that, all funding is obtained through grants and those are primarily for specific projects. Funding for administrative functions has historically been difficult to obtain.

Despite the particularities of each of the PPs, the underlying reality is that they all face similar challenges in being able to both adequately participate in and contribute to the work of the Arctic Council as well as to be able to serve their constituencies. Addressing these common challenges can be beneficial to

all of the PPs. On the whole, the PPs have concluded that there is a lack of capacity to adequately support necessary capacity building. This includes the ability to raise money to participate in Arctic Council projects.

During the Canadian Chairmanship another new study was funded by the Government of Canada which stopped just short of making firm recommendations. That study once again examined the concept of creating a PP core fund. It also looked at the potential support that might be derived from the Arctic Council Observers and what that support would look like. With the release of the report, a one day workshop was held in conjunction with the first SAO meeting of the Canadian Chairmanship in October of 2014 in Yellowknife. That workshop concluded with a decision to establish a small committee to examine and make recommendations on four areas of focus: 1) Observer funding of PP working group projects and an examination of potential exceptions to the “50% funding rule”<sup>2</sup>, 2) to consider PP participation at the beginning of Arctic Council projects, 3) enhancing capacity through an examination of business efficiencies in the Arctic Council, and 4) explore additional Arctic Council Secretariat resources to support the PPs (Arctic Council, 4-5 March 2015).

Concurrent with the efforts of the Canadian Chairmanship, the idea of a PP core fund was also brought up by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)—an Arctic Council Observer organization. WWF suggested that a fund should be established that would be administered by the six PP organizations through the IPS (WWF, 24 March 2014). WWF, at that time, also committed to contributing monetarily (with the expectation that others would similarly do so thereby ensuring that no one organization has undue monetary influence) to such a fund to improve PP capacity. In March 2015, a three-day PP support and capacity “summit” was held in Whitehorse. The workshop, which was also funded by the Government of Canada, brought

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<sup>2</sup> Article 7.5 of the Arctic Council Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies states “Observers may propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant but the total financial contributions from all Observers to any given project may not exceed the financing from Arctic States, unless otherwise decided by the Senior Arctic Officials.” It is also called the 50% rule.

representatives from all six of the PP organizations together with the idea of examining how a PP core fund would actually work in practice (Arctic Council, 3-17 2015). Also attending were representatives from the Government of Canada and the IPS, which organized the workshop. In addition, there were presentations from potential funders including the Gordon Foundation, Tides Canada (also representing the Arctic Funders Group), and the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) on the Arctic Council's Project Support Instrument (PSI) (ibid).

The meeting concluded by determining that, in fact, two types of support funds were needed: 1) A core fund designed to contribute to PP administrative expenses which would be designed to allow a contributor to generally support the work of all of the PPs within a simple and transparent way, and 2) A project support fund which would allow contributors to donate funds to specific areas of interest (e.g. Arctic marine issues), or to PP organizations located in certain geographic areas (e.g. Beaufort Sea) (ibid). The concept was that the core fund would be distributed to each PP organization equally, but that PPs would apply for project support funds and that funding decisions would be made by a governing body, potentially the IPS Board. The meeting also produced a PP 'Agreement in Principle' on the founding of the funds, draft language regarding the meeting outcomes for the Iqaluit Declaration, and a work plan for moving forward (ibid).

At the 9<sup>th</sup> AC Ministerial meeting held on 24-25 April 2015 in Iqaluit, the following language was included in the final Iqaluit Declaration:

Acknowledge that the work of the Arctic Council continues to evolve to respond to new opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, reaffirm existing mechanisms and commit to identifying new approaches to support the active participation of Permanent Participants, and welcome the work done by Permanent Participants to establish a funding mechanism to strengthen their capacity. (Arctic Council, 24 April 2015)

During the Ministerial meeting the PPs also held a side event with the Arctic Council Observers to outline the plan for the two PP support funds and to discuss the role that Observers might play in the support of the Fund. The criteria for Observer status in the Arctic Council calls for a political willingness

and financial capacity to support the work of the PPs in the Arctic Council. Thus it was believed that part of the solution to PP support and capacity would fall with the Observers (Arctic Council, 3-17 2015).

### **Clarifying the Capacity Gaps and Looking To Fill Them: The US Chairmanship**

Since the Canadian chairmanship, specific points have been identified as necessary to increase PP capacity. The points range from increased ability to pay staff salaries and the ability for staff to attend relevant Arctic Council meetings, to paying administrative costs of the PP organizations, to the need for increased ‘deep’ expertise by PPs in specialized research areas. The PPs also feel that increased partnerships among their organizations are necessary, including a more collaborative culture so they can share services (which requires a strong level of trust) and thus make their financing and expertise go further.

In general, the PPs agree that there is a need for greater human resources to provide the necessary capabilities and competencies to be full participants. In terms of expertise, there is a need to increase their overall capacity so that all PPs can be better prepared and able to bring Arctic Council projects and priorities to the working groups and to the Arctic Council table. The PPs also agree that there is the need to find ways to create closer collaboration with the Observers as well as the Arctic States. Due to inconsistent and unreliable funding, the PPs may not have the necessary means to create and implement forward-looking strategies for their work internally (which includes being present for activities at home while at the same time being full participants on Arctic Council projects). Inadequate resources also result in insufficient outreach including fostering broad (global) knowledge of what the PPs are and what they do (including the role they play at home, on the Arctic Council, and internationally).

Since the 9<sup>th</sup> Arctic Council Ministerial meeting Declaration which called for an examination of a specific funding mechanism for the PPs, the idea of a PP Fund has achieved considerable progress in terms of its vision, technical detail, and in becoming a reality. Since this meeting, a body of literature has been developed by the PPs themselves as well as from independent bodies (e.g. Arctic Council, 24 April 2015; Arctic Council, 3-17 2015; Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation January 2013; Gamble 2015; Gamble 2016; Gordon Foundation and Arctic Council, October 2015). The literature, on the whole,

sets out to better understand the needs of the PPs and the value that they bring to the Arctic Council. By laying out this foundation it is possible for the PPs to build future work off of their ongoing work that has been carried out throughout the history of the AC.

Those efforts were followed by a business plan which was developed by the PPs and a number of consultants who were hired specifically for this purpose (Arctic Council, 5-6 October 2016). The business plan identifies mechanisms and a path forward for both short and long term support for the PPs (*ibid.*). Funding from the Arctic Funders Collaborative and other non-governmental funding sources (including the Arctic Council Observers) has also been secured to develop and implement a marketing, fundraising, and fund governance development process.<sup>3</sup> Through the process of developing a business plan three specific elements were determined in regards to establishing the Fund:

1. Sweden was identified as the best domicile for the funding mechanism because of favorable foundation and tax arrangements which will allow contributions to be received from funders and distributed to the PPs;
2. The fund would be established as an endowment with a fundraising goal of \$30,000,000 USD to insure that the PPs will receive annual distributions that are meaningful, consistent, and sustainable; and
3. Bylaws, rules of procedure, and policies would be created in order to provide a necessary buffer between the funding and the Arctic Council, while at the same time ensuring transparency, accountability, and the use of established best practices for fund management (*ibid.*).

By establishing the Fund as an endowment, funds would be able to be distributed while leaving the principle untouched. Endowment earnings would then be distributed to the six PPs, less inflation proofing and administration. Governance of the fund will follow best practice and ensure legal acceptance, management, and distribution of funds while making sure that local and international laws are recognized and obeyed.

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<sup>3</sup> The primary marketing is towards Arctic Council Observers with no conditions except that the PPs, as a group, can decide if there are contributions that would not be accepted for a particular reason. The idea is to build an endowment in which, after a certain funding level is reached, the PPs will be funded from the interest earned on the fund. For that reason, undue influence is not considered an issue.

## **Conclusion**

The Arctic Council will likely continue to be consumed with state-centric politics going into the future. One of its biggest contributions to international regime building, however, has been its early move to bring the region's Indigenous peoples to the negotiating table. If the Arctic Council hopes to maintain this achievement, implementing what it set out to do at the time of inception is necessary; it must find an adequate means to support full PP participation. Though the specific goals and objectives of the PPs for their participation on the Arctic Council are varied, they all include the need to protect the interests of their communities, facilitating the robust inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council, actively partnering in projects so that communities are involved in the work that is intended to serve them, promoting cross-border cooperation among Indigenous peoples, and supporting local initiatives so that they can receive attention within the Arctic Council.

Accomplishing those goals requires all PPs to travel to meetings and to be physically present in all activities of the Arctic Council. It also requires performing outreach about Arctic Council work to their constituencies. Increasingly, however, the PPs are also required to access specialized expertise in a variety of areas as well as administrative and operational support and further, in order to make PP contributions reflect the needs of their communities, they must be able to attract local experts and coordinate between Indigenous organizations within their regions, as well as with the other PPs. Likewise, the long term viability of PP organizations requires that they be able to attract the next generation of Indigenous leaders.

In working toward these objectives, the PPs bring a very high level of value to the Arctic Council, improving the outputs and deliverables and making the Arctic Council unique among intergovernmental fora. With ever increasing global attention towards the Arctic and the work of the Arctic Council in particular, the PPs need a sustainable, predictable, and consistent funding mechanism to support their work. In the Saami language "Álgu" means "beginning" and so, with the recently named Álgu Fund, the Permanent Participants hope to foster a new beginning in which they can more fully benefit from and contribute to the work of the Arctic Council. With the inauguration of the fund at the Fairbanks Ministerial Meeting, which marked the end of the

2nd United States Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Council took a giant step towards overcoming the hurdle of support and capacity for the Permanent Participants, so that the next twenty years can be marked by a more robust collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic.

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## 8

### Ukiuqta'qtumi—Hivuniptingnun: One Arctic, One Future

Nadine C. Fabbi, Jason C. Young, and Eric W. Finke

*We are changing history from the time when the Arctic was seen as a place open to whoever of the world powers got there first, and the people of the Arctic were seen as mere objects of this process ... With our Arctic policy in place, we the Inuit want to carve in rock that we are no longer just objects of history – we are to be subjects of the future history of the Arctic.*

– Hans-Pavia Rosing, first president,  
Inuit Circumpolar Conference, 1985

*We are “One Arctic” and together we help forge “One Future” for our people.*

– Duane Smith, president, Inuit Circumpolar  
Council (Canada), 2014<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the international Inuit association was changed from Inuit Circumpolar Conference to Inuit Circumpolar Council in 2006 to avoid confusing the name with an actual meeting.

## **Introduction**

On 24 April 2015, the United States assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the second time since the founding of the organization. And, for the first time in the 20-year history of the Arctic Council, a theme was adopted for the two-year chairmanship – “One Arctic.” According to then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, “One Arctic” was inspired by the Inuit theme “One Arctic, One Future,” a phrase long used by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) to guide its own vision for the Arctic.

How we understand regions or territories, how space is defined and who is implicated in those definitions, has recently become the subject of much analysis. This is particularly true for a range of social, technological, and environmental processes that are now disrupting the stability of long-term geographical imaginations of the world, including the Arctic (Mirsepassi, Basu, & Weaver, 2003). Many researchers have argued that these shifts offer an opening for new perspectives to be better included in dominant understandings of international relations and policy (e.g., Appadurai, 2000; Gibson-Graham, 2003). Political geographer John Agnew (2005) asserts that it is imperative that we begin to think about world regions differently and ask ourselves whether the way we are conceptualizing world regions is “helpful rather than harmful to understanding a dynamic and complex world” (p. 561). In other words, how we understand regions matters.

If the Arctic is one region with one future, how can that future be inclusive of the many different stakeholders in the region? How might this vision of common futurity alter, or at least challenge, the relationships of nation-states with one another and with Indigenous organizations and peoples? To deal with the critical issues affecting the Arctic region today, from climate change to building human capacity, Arctic nation-states and Indigenous organizations need to work together and on an equal basis. As Rosing states in our first epigraph, Arctic Indigenous peoples are no longer the subjects of history. They have instead become actors in the future history of the Arctic, the “subjects of the future history of the Arctic” (Rosing, 1985, p. 19). Equal status for the Indigenous organizations on the Arctic Council was the Council’s original vision, although it has yet to be realized. Even as the Permanent Participants push for the full integration of traditional and local knowledge into all activities of the Council, they continue to struggle with capacity issues (Fabbi, 2015;

Young, 2016). What does the U.S. chairmanship, as understood through the theme of One Arctic, tell us about the progress being made toward working with Arctic Indigenous peoples as “actors” in the future history of the region?

By analyzing the theme of the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council – One Arctic – we can gain some insight into how successfully the Arctic Council is achieving this goal. This paper traces the evolution of the Inuit theme of One Arctic, One Future from its origins to its role as the first thematic selected for an Arctic Council chairmanship. It explores the intention and aspirations of the ICC in developing the concept of One Arctic, the intention of the United States in adopting that theme, and how the concept of One Arctic may inform our future understanding of the region and thereby contribute to international relations more broadly.

### **Inuit Reframing of the Arctic**

During the Cold War, the Arctic served as a stage for international geopolitics and bipolar tensions between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their allies (Chaturvedi, 2000). In a post–Cold War world, one could argue that the Arctic is emerging as a distinct entity in international relations based on a regional sense of identity. A new worldview, specifically an Inuit worldview, is challenging conventional concepts of territory, security, and social justice, and providing new understandings of world regions (Cameron, 2015; Tester & Irniq, 2008). For example, in Canada the Inuit have remapped the Arctic along cultural lines (use and occupancy) in an effort to ensure that all Inuit benefit from future policy implementation (Henderson, 2009; Marcic, 2000). At the international level, the Inuit are promoting a concept of the Arctic based on cultural cohesion and shared challenges, in part to gain an enhanced voice in international affairs (Watt-Cloutier, 2005; Wilson & Smith, 2011). The Inuit are remapping the Arctic region and shaping domestic and international policy with implications for the circumpolar world and beyond. While the impact and influence of the Inuit has been significant, it has not been sufficiently understood in the field of international relations.

Agnew integrates new concepts of space used in geography into international relations theory. In *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*, Agnew (2005) insists that territoriality is only one type of spatiality “or way in which space is constituted socially and mobilized politically” (p. 161). While the

state may exercise a centralized power, there are also “diffused powers” (p. 161) that can exercise influence. He describes that in this way, “power is generated through association and affiliation rather than through command or domination” (p. 161). Agnew's work lends understanding to how the Inuit, as non-state powers, are reconfiguring territorial representations of space and thereby effectively challenging centralized power both domestically and internationally. Political theorist Nancy Fraser (2009) extends Agnew's work by adding a social justice dimension to the political concept of space. Fraser argues that justice is not solely about the *what* of justice (the issue or the content), but is importantly also about the *who* of justice (the people affected): boundaries determine whose voices will be heard. Fraser argues that international groups and organizations are forming to address social justice issues that increasingly fall outside the parameters of the nation-state. Fraser called this the “politics of framing” (2009, p. 22).

Inuit concepts of space, at the domestic and international levels, are inherently linked to social justice – the rights of Inuit and Inuit communities. Land claims are perhaps the most common way the Inuit have engaged in remapping the Arctic region, but this is just the beginning. For example, in 2009 Inuit in Canada named their region Inuit Nunangat, meaning the land, sea, and ice, which had implications for international law (Saul, 2008, p. 302). And they have released two declarations that arguably serve as Inuit foreign policy or guiding documents for Inuit and nation-state relations: *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Arctic Sovereignty* (2009) and *A Circumpolar Declaration on Resource Principles in Inuit Nunaat* (2011). These declarations link space to community rights. For example, *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Arctic Sovereignty* challenges conventional geopolitics in the Arctic and the monopoly that nation-states claim in international relations (Fabbi, 2012); the 2011 declaration presents Inuit space as a distinct region in its very title. If foreign policy is the way in which nation-states engage in a political dialogue, then these two declarations are an effort by Inuit to assert equal standing in the international dialogue concerning the Arctic. Both declarations reframe Western concepts of territory and refer to international customary law as the tool by which the Inuit will ensure their rights. However, this is not a recent occurrence. Inuit began to conceptualize Arctic space at the founding meeting of the Inuit Circumpolar Council in 1977.

### ***Establishing a Framework for the Circumpolar World***

Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk Speech is often referred to by scholars as the first time the Arctic is described as a distinct region. Less well known is the fact that Inuit had established a global framework for understanding the Arctic a decade earlier. When the Inuit met internationally for the first time,<sup>2</sup> they advocated for a cohesive international Arctic policy to holistically guide the future of the region and its people. Eben Hopson, Inupiat leader and mayor of North Slope Borough, Alaska, organized and chaired the first meeting of Inuit leaders in Barrow in June 1977.

The purpose of the conference, as summarized in the proceedings, was to develop an international Arctic policy that would take up the range of issues faced by the Inuit (ICC, 1977a, para. 3). Hopson sought to ensure justice for the Inuit, encourage the settlement of regional land claims, develop strong local governments, and devise a strategy for working effectively with oil companies (Hopson, 1977). The resolutions of the conference established the Inuit as "one indivisible people" and declared the "wholeness of the homeland" of the circumpolar region (ICC, 1977b, Summary & Resolutions, 77-01). Over 50 delegates from Alaska, Canada, and Greenland agreed to form an international Inuit organization to "study, discuss, represent, lobby and protect" Inuit interests "on the international level" (ICC, 1977b, Summary & Resolutions, 77-01). The culmination of the economic collapse of the early 1980s, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, shook the foundation of the world order at the time, providing an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to secure a place in domestic and international relations (d'Anglure, Morin, & Frost, 1992), an opportunity well understood by the Inuit. There is no question that Gorbachev laid a critical foundation for understanding the Arctic as a unique region and that his message, as a global leader, received widespread attention and consideration, ultimately leading to the development of the Arctic Council. However, it is also critical to remember that the Inuit were already organizing

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<sup>2</sup> Inuit first met internationally at the First Arctic Peoples' Conference in Copenhagen in 1973 with other Indigenous peoples from the Arctic and sub-Arctic; 1977 marked the first time the Inuit held their own international meeting to create an international organization that would address Inuit-specific needs.

internationally and establishing the framework for what would be an Inuit Arctic Policy.

## **6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC, 1992, *Ukiuqta'qtumi Hivuniptingnun – One Arctic, One Future***

### ***Inuit Concepts of One Arctic, One Future at the 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly***

According to the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the One Arctic theme was inspired by the theme of the 2014 General Assembly of the ICC in Inuvik, Inuvialuit, Northwest Territories—“*Ukiuqta'qtumi Hivuniptingnun—One Arctic, One Future.*” However, Inuit use of this theme goes back even further to the 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, Canada, in 1992,<sup>3</sup> several years in advance of the founding of the Arctic Council. The 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC and Elders' Conference was also the first meeting to include the Inuit from Russia, making the One Arctic, One Future theme all the more relevant. According to Mary Simon (1996), president of the ICC from 1986 to 1992, the words *One Arctic* reflected the goal of the conference to develop and draft a comprehensive Arctic policy and to reflect the identity of the Arctic as the homeland of the Inuit.

The theme, One Arctic, One Future, was referred to repeatedly at the General Assembly. The president of ICC Alaska, Eileen Panigeo MacLean, opened the General Assembly by reminding delegates and guests of the brief 15-year history of the organization and its evolution “from a conceptual vision of Inuit unity into a respected and effective organization representing Inuit interests at the highest international levels” (ICC, 1992a, p. 9). In the opening remarks of the General Assembly, both the deputy mayor for Inuvik and the chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation noted the vision and symbolism of the theme. Vivianne Hunter, deputy mayor for Inuvik, was the first to provide welcoming remarks. She urged,

Inuit and other citizens of the Arctic Circle countries must work together on solutions to their physical, safety, social, and self-actualization problems and dreams. The people here have an

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<sup>3</sup> Since its founding in 1977, the ICC has hosted at total of 12 meetings, the most recent being in 2014. General assemblies are held every four years. The 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will be held in Barrow, Alaska, in 2018.

excellent opportunity to show the rest of the world how a little cooperation can go a long way to achieving goals and practical solutions for our common problems and interests. Then we will surely have “One Arctic, One Future.” (ICC, 1992a, p. 16)

Roger Gruben, then chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, told the Assembly, “Our theme, ‘One Arctic – One Future,’ is symbolic of the unity all Inuit share and which is essential to Inuit success in meeting the challenges we face in the rapidly changing North and the world” (ICC, 1992a, p. 17). Special guest presenters included James Ross, chief of the Mackenzie Delta Gwich’in, who argued for the inclusion of all Arctic Indigenous peoples in the theme of One Arctic. “The theme of this conference, ‘One Arctic, One Future,’ is not complete without the involvement of all Arctic people who are committed to the future preservation of our Arctic environment .... Your decisions during the conference will shape Arctic policy on the environment and economic and political development” (ICC, 1992a, pp. 66–67).

One of the great accomplishments of the 1992 General Assembly was the document *Principles and Elements for a Comprehensive Arctic Policy*. The “Principles and Elements on Circumpolar Regional Cooperation” section begins with “One Circumpolar North” (ICC, 1992b, p. 28):

From both an aboriginal and environmental perspective, the Arctic and sub-Arctic areas of the north circumpolar world form a *single region* in which many states and peoples are found. This region includes the Inuit homeland, which *transcends* the geographical boundaries of northern Canada, United States (Alaska), Greenland, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Siberia). Other Arctic countries include Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. (emphasis added)

By reframing the Arctic in this way, not as simply the northern regions of the Arctic nation-states but instead as its own distinct space, the ICC had accomplished a rethinking and restructuring of global space that would lend itself to more effective policy implementation.

### ***Nation-State Concepts of One Arctic, One Future at the 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly***

A number of nation-state delegates also attended the 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC in 1992, and in several cases these delegates appeared to ascribe quite

a different meaning to the One Arctic, One Future theme. For example, the Honourable Tom Siddon, then Canada's minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, stated,

Your theme at this conference is "One Arctic, One Future." If I were to select the most compelling link between the Arctic and the rest of the world today, it would surely be "one environment."

The long-term management and protection of the environment is a crucial objective of the ICC. Canada remains committed to working directly with Arctic Peoples, through Greenplan [*sic*] and Arctic Environmental Strategy initiatives.

We are also part of the Circumpolar Declaration for the Protection of the Arctic Environment, which was signed by the eight Arctic nations in 1991.

In all of these initiatives, the knowledge and involvement of local people, particularly the native populations, are essential. (ICC, 1992a, p. 20)

Yet Canada's Green Plan for a Healthy Environment does not mention the ICC at all. It uses the word *Inuit* only once, and then only in reference to representatives of the Beverly-Kaminuriak Caribou Management Board. The section titled "Preserving the Integrity of our Northland" states that Canada "shares the Arctic region with seven other countries" (Environment Canada, 1990, p. 10). Further, the Green Plan states that "The challenge of protecting the environment so that it can continue to support economic growth, while sustaining the people and the diverse resources on which they depend, is shared by all circumpolar nations" (Environment Canada, 1990, p. 92). Nowhere in the Green Plan did Canada mention the ICC or any Inuit entity being among the "nations" that share the region with Canada. And while the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy recognizes the assistance of the ICC as an Observer, its language conveys that the eight Arctic nation-states see themselves as solely capable of its protection and preservation. At the time, Canada and Minister Siddon seemed to have regarded Arctic peoples more as wards of the state to be protected than as partners or actors in managing the Arctic.

Desiree Edmar, assistant undersecretary of Polar Affairs for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm, Sweden, made much the same statement,

discounting the Inuit concept of self-determination in the Arctic as unrealistic and unachievable:

This brings me back to the concept of circumpolarity. “One Arctic, One Future” is the theme of this General Assembly. The future cannot be developed by one Indigenous nation or one government alone. It is only in partnership, through a constructive dialogue and creative cooperation, that we will be able to carry this enormous task forward. In this work, the Swedish government is fully prepared and ready to make its contribution. (ICC, 1992a, p. 63)

Thus, at the 1992 General Assembly of the ICC, there seemed to be a clear distinction between how its theme was understood by Inuit delegates and how it was applied to state agendas.

### ***Inuit: One Future – One Arctic, 1996***

Following the 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and her tenure as president of the ICC, Mary Simon was appointed Visiting Chair of Northern Studies at Trent University for the 1992–1993 academic year. As part of the Trent University Northern Chair Lecture Series, Simon gave a series of lectures focusing on the challenges facing the Inuit and proposed solutions. The lectures were compiled into a volume aptly titled *Inuit: One Future – One Arctic*. The lectures focus on the history of the development of the ICC, the development of an Arctic policy and its key principles, the role of environmental issues in international affairs, the status of Inuit education in Canada, and the inherent right of the Inuit to self-government.

In her first chapter on the history of the ICC, Simon describes the developments and influence achieved by the organization in just a few short years. She recalls how the first meeting of the Inuit in 1977 truly created a sense of unity and oneness for Inuit: “I was at that founding conference and it was one of the most exciting times of my life. There was so much excitement and energy – a real sense of unity and spirit. I remember so vividly the feeling of being one big family, one people with a common responsibility and a common future, even though we lived in different countries. For us, the Arctic was *one* country” (Simon, 1996, p. 15, emphasis added). In his review of her book, Peter Clancy (1997) made a special reference to the title, noting that *One Future – One Arctic* provided a frame of reference for the “the universality of

Indigenous political rights across the polar region” (p. 350). Indeed, Simon’s book was the first by an Inuk, providing a decidedly northern perspective on Inuit political organization and mobilization. There is no question that the attention the lectures received as part of the Northern Chair Lecture Series, and later with the publication of *Inuit: One Future – One Arctic*, further embedded what Clancy called the “international dimensions of Inuit politics” (p. 350).

### ***12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC, 2014***

The 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC was held in Inuvik, Canada, under the call of “*Ukiuqta’qtumi Hivuniptingnun*, One Arctic, One Future.” According to *ICC Canada’s 2014–2015 Annual Report*, “This theme [‘One Arctic, One Future’] encapsulated ICC’s broadest efforts to promote cooperation and unity among the world’s circumpolar peoples and was a celebration of today’s Inuit culture, knowledge, spirit and hope” (2015, p. 4). The report included significant mention of the importance of the theme and of maintaining a united voice and vision for the Inuit circumpolar region. Duane Smith, president of ICC Canada, noted in his opening remarks: “Through our efforts as a united voice, we let the global community know what our vision is for Inuit Nunaat ... We are “One Arctic” and together we help forge ‘One Future’ for our people” (ICC Canada, 2015, p. 3).

Following the transcript of Smith’s welcoming address, the report includes a section on the history of the ICC and a reminder of the founding vision of Eben Hopson. Hopson’s well-known remarks from the inaugural ICC meeting, where he describes the Inuit as a nation, are then quoted: “We Eskimo are an international community sharing common language, culture, and a common land along the Arctic coast of Siberia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Although not a nation-state, as a people, we do constitute a nation” (Hopson quoted in ICC, 2014a, pp. 10–11). The introduction goes on to explain why, according to Smith, the 1992 theme of “One Arctic, One Future – *Ukiuqta’qtumi Hivuniptingnun*” was repeated for the 2014 meeting. Smith is quoted as saying that “ICC leadership wanted to emphasize and demonstrate Inuit unity. Unity amongst Inuit is even more crucial at this time” (p. 15). Similarly, Nellie Courneyea, then chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, stated,

One Arctic, One Future is how we work together to make a long-term investment in the responsibility of looking after our

homeland. We come from different countries, but it's really one people. No matter what happens in the future, and we felt this right from the beginning. Politicians and larger country initiatives come and go but the Inuit are always going to be there. (p. 15)

Courneya points out that the declaration sends out “nationally and internationally the message that Inuit involvement must be a priority in any decision-making affecting the Arctic” (pp. 16–17).

The Kitigaaryuit Declaration (2014) of the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly reaffirms Inuit are “one people” (para. 1) living in the “shared Arctic homeland of *Inuit Nunaat* since time immemorial” (para. 1) as declared in the 2009 *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* (para. 1). The re-establishment of the thematic One Arctic, One Future comes, as Smith pointed out, at a critical time for the Inuit: 2014 marked not only an upsurge in global interest in Arctic resource extraction but also an increase in Inuit debates over their own policy approaches to this development (Bell, 2014; Wilson & Smith, 2011). As ICC Canada noted,

In the context of this extensive change process, a clearer and more unified Arctic voice has emerged. The voice of Arctic peoples has gained a significant presence on the world stage in part through the prominent work of the 8-country Arctic Council and through other major bodies such as the ICC, which itself has constituted a key representative voice at meetings of the Arctic Council. (2015, p. 4)

### **U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and the Theme of One Arctic**

In April 2015, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to the Arctic Council Ministerial at the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, Canada, on the day of the United States' assumption of the chairmanship of the Arctic Council. There, Secretary Kerry announced the theme of this U.S. chairmanship to be “One Arctic.” Kerry explained, “The theme of our chairmanship is ‘One Arctic,’ which is a phrase long used by the ICC, which embodies our belief that the entire world – not only the Arctic, not only the eight here plus, but the entire world shares a responsibility to protect, to respect, to nurture, and to promote the region (Kerry, 2015, para. 3).

On its surface, Secretary Kerry's use of "One Arctic" appeared to honor the ICC, its mission, and its accomplishments, but a deeper reading reveals less consideration. Not only did Kerry drop the second half of the phrase ("One Future"); he went on to say that it is not just Inuit or the ICC, nor the eight Arctic nation-states, but the *entire world* that must have its say in the preservation of the Arctic and its way of life. It was perhaps honorable that Kerry called upon all the nations of the world to share stewardship of the Arctic region, and pragmatically it is true that the changes occurring in the Arctic are the result of the decisions made and actions taken historically by the industrialized nation-states. However, Secretary Kerry's words dismissed Inuit stewardship of the Arctic and their willing responsibility for their own future. Nowhere did he credit the ICC, Inuit people, or other Arctic residents as having any role with or making any contribution to that future. He used the word *Inuit* only once in reference to the theme One Arctic having been used by the ICC. And his singular use of the word *Indigenous* occurred only in terms of supporting Canada's efforts to improve the lives of its Arctic Indigenous people. While Indigenous Arctic peoples will benefit from some of the initiatives described by Secretary Kerry, Indigenous peoples themselves did not seem to be among his priorities.

Secretary Kerry's speech lay in stark contrast to statements from prior Arctic Council chairs. For example, during its 2013–2015 tenure, Canada appointed Leona Aglukkaq, an Inuk leader from Nunavut, as minister for the Arctic Council, signaling to all Arctic Council members Canada's intention to give its Arctic residents a strong hand in determining their future. During its 2011–2013 tenure, Sweden stated,

In the Arctic region Sweden strives to ensure that Indigenous peoples have greater scope for preserving and developing their identity, culture and traditional industries and facilitate their traditional knowledge gathering and transfer. *Active* participation in decisions affecting them is required if Indigenous peoples are to be able to meet future challenges. (Arctic Council, n.d., para. 3, emphasis added)

During its 2009–2011 tenure, Denmark included "Indigenous peoples and local living conditions" ("Denmark Assumes," 2009, para. 5) among its top priorities.

Overall, Secretary Kerry's speech challenges both the notion of an Arctic homeland for the Inuit and their desire for self-determination, while promising they can trust the nation-state members of the Arctic Council and the rest of the world to see to their needs. Only the years yet to come will tell us if Arctic peoples should have relied upon that promise.

Yet it seems that Inuit were not displeased with the decision of the United States to adopt an Inuit theme for their chairmanship. In the *ICC Canada's 2014–2015 Annual Report*, President Duane Smith confirmed that the Inuit “will support the transition of the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council from Canada to the United States – and we noted with pleasure that the U.S. Chairmanship has used our Inuvik General Assembly theme of One Arctic One Future” (ICC Canada, 2015, p. 2). In contrast, it seems that some representing the U.S. chairmanship and the Arctic Council forgot the association between the U.S. thematic and the ICC. For example, in the month the United States assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council, Fran Ulmer, chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, wrote an editorial for *Science* called “One Arctic,” which described the Arctic Council, current issues, and the theme of One Arctic. Nowhere in that editorial did she credit the Inuit for the theme or explain its deep history and meaning.

### ***Ukiuqta'qtumi hivuniptingnun: The Inuktitut Translation***

*Ukiuqta'qtumi hivuniptingnun* is roughly translated as “toward our future in the Arctic.”<sup>4</sup> *Ukiuqta'qtumi* can be translated as “in the Arctic.” In Inuktitut, the Inuit language, the idea of Arctic is created by adding *ukiuq* (winter) with *taq* (tends to be or tends to have) and *tuq* (the person or thing that does an action). Taken together, these word chunks<sup>5</sup> produce *ukiuqtaqtuq*, which means “the place where it tends to be winter,” or the Arctic. The *mi* at the end of the word translates to “in,” “on,” or “at.” Therefore, *Ukiuqta'qtumi* translates

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<sup>4</sup> This translation was determined in a discussion between co-author J. Young, Inuktitut language instructor Mick Mallon, and Alexina Kublu, former Official Languages Commissioner for Nunavut.

<sup>5</sup> Inuktitut is an agglutinative, meaning that words are composed of many morphemes that are strung together yet maintain their individual meaning. Linguists that study Inuktitut refer to these morphemes, as well as certain combinations of morphemes, as ‘chunks’.

to “in the Arctic.” *Hivuniptingnun* may be translated as “to our future” or “toward our future.” *Hivuniq* means either “fore-part” or “future.” The latter part of the word, *ptingnun*, means “to our” or “toward our.” Therefore, *hivuniptingnun* means “to” or “toward our future.” Combining the two Inuktitut words then translates to “toward our future, in the Arctic.” However, when the United States assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the theme was reduced to simply One Arctic.

Thus, two important concepts that were part of the original Inuit theme of One Arctic, One Future are missing from the 2015–2017 Arctic Council theme: the concept of futurity (*hivuniq*) and that of possession (*ptingnun*). The absence of these concepts raises interesting issues. First, the future orientation of the phrase is significant given Inuit thinking about the connection between past, present, and future generations. For example, at the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ICC in 2014, Terry Audla, then president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, gave a moving speech urging the Inuit to slow down and to take the long view in working with southern governments and development companies in making decisions for the future of the Arctic. This notion of futurity is referred to throughout his address. Audla begins by quoting Hans-Pavia Rosing of Greenland, who decades earlier had declared that the Inuit are no longer objects of history, but rather are “subjects of the future history of the Arctic.” Audla asserts that given the world’s current thirst for oil, the Inuit must continue to be in control of their future:

We are the subjects of the future history of the Arctic (ICC, 2014b, para. 30)... We must reflect on lessons of the past, our traditional knowledge and scientific research of the present day to inform our decisions for the future (para. 40)... Let’s allow ourselves time to remember how we came to gather here, time to think creatively, and, time to reflect on the significance of what we are doing – for our One Arctic and our One Future. (para. 42)

This emphasis on futurity is also built directly into *Inuit Qaujimaningit* (IQ), or Inuit knowledge.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the concept of futurity is central to many

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<sup>6</sup> Terry Audla’s speech, “Inuit Traditional Knowledge and Science,” given in January 2014 at a conference on Arctic research in Berlin, provides an excellent explanation of

debates over how IQ should be written. The term is more commonly described as *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* or *Inuit Qaujimanituqangit*, both of which include the noun chunk *taqaq*. This chunk means “which has been around for a very long time” or “longstanding.” Inuit thinkers have argued that the chunk was included to make IQ conform more to the Western term *traditional knowledge*, and that, as a result, it places too much emphasis on the old or traditional nature of Inuit knowledge (Arnakak, 2002, 2004; Tester & Irniq, 2008). They argue that this detracts from the ways in which Inuit knowledge continues to change and adapt to current life in the Arctic. In fact, one of the central tenets of IQ is the principle of *qanuqtuurnarniq*, or resourcefulness and improvisation (Arnakak, 2002). This principle emphasizes the ways in which Inuit knowledge is constantly improved upon to ensure that there is a continuous link between the knowledge of ancestors, present conditions, and the ability of Inuit to care for future generations. The IQ knowledge system itself thereby forges an intrinsic link between knowledge of the Arctic and normative principles of caring for the future of the Arctic given changing conditions. By rendering these politics of futurity invisible, the Arctic Council theme erases a key aspect of Inuit perspectives on policy.

Second, removing the possessiveness in the One Arctic theme (*ptingnun*) diminishes the Inuit role as longstanding and primary inhabitants of the region. For the Inuit, the Arctic is a homeland. They have constantly used the naming of places to reassert their sovereignty, and the inclusion of *ptingnun* within the Arctic Council theme is no different. The invocation of the name *Inuit Nunangat* has a parallel function: the chunk *-ngat* at the end of *Nunangat* implies possession of the land by Inuit. This direct connection between Inuit and their land is consistently referenced in speeches, reports, and declarations by the ICC. It is similarly referenced in ICC’s 2009 foreign policy, *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*.<sup>7</sup>

The One Arctic idea is routinely debated in both contemporary popular discourse, including media, and scholarly literature; critics ask, is there really

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IQ. A transcription of this speech is archived on the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami website at <https://www.niyc.ca/media/speech/inuit-traditional-knowledge-and-science>.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on the 2009 ICC Declaration as foreign policy, see Fabbi, 2012.

one Arctic, or is it more accurate to refer to many “Arctics”? Steinberg, Tasch, and Gerhardt (2015) use current academic theories to argue that there is no one, undivided Arctic. Rather, the Arctic is best understood as a social or polar imaginary. In their review of *Contesting the Arctic: Politics and Imaginaries in the Circumpolar North*, Nicol et al. (2016) note the decade-long struggle by the international system to fit the Arctic into the Westphalian system, given the many intersecting interests, issues, and governance systems. The authors describe the concept of One Arctic, whether used by the ICC or the United States for its chairmanship of the Arctic Council, as a way to imagine Arctic spaces or a polar imaginary as one of many tropes that might inform Arctic scholars (p. 170). The reviewers laud the book for bringing “academic geography” (p. 171) to the study of North and for not privileging any one of the “many imaginaries they identify” (p. 171), including Indigenous statehood. However, as the reviewers note, “Different imaginaries support different polities, governance aspirations, cultural identities, and economic goals” (p. 171). Again, how we understand the Arctic matters. Do we imagine the Arctic as we wish it to be, or as the people of the Arctic envision their place in the world?

In his article “‘One Arctic’ or Many?” Wilfrid Greaves (2016) strongly argues that both the ICC and the United States under its chairmanship of the Arctic Council have it wrong. He challenges the term *One Arctic* as an attempt to mask “the diversity of opinions, priorities, and defining features” (para. 3) of the region. He argues that there is no one Arctic, and that, in fact, efforts to “unify the Arctic risk homogenizing meaningful differences” (para. 12). However, this brings us to another complexity of the Inuktitut writing of *Ukiuqta’qtumi hivuniptingnun*; although there are certainly undertones of Inuit sovereignty built into the term, it actually describes there being *one future* in the Arctic rather than *one Arctic*. The Inuktitut therefore is not descriptive of the current conditions of the Arctic itself, or an attempt to homogenize those conditions. Instead, it is a pragmatic recognition that many external conditions are affecting the Arctic, and that Arctic peoples and nations must work together to respond to those threats and produce a common future. As a result, the Inuktitut version of the theme places more stress on the importance of a coalitional and future-oriented politics, rather than on the question of whether the Arctic can be described as a single political entity. *Ukiuqta’qtumi*

*hivuniptingnun* bypasses questions of the current singularity of the Arctic as a *region*, and instead emphasizes that Inuit must be recognized as partners in the production of one future within that region.

## **Conclusion**

As Barry Zellen (2009) has argued, there have always been two Arctics: “the Arctic as defined by the nation-state that has encroached upon it, and the Arctic as defined by the people that are Indigenous to the region” (p. 323). His message is that how we define and understand the Arctic as a region is critical for international relations today. The Western world has attempted to conceptualize the Arctic as a region ever since Mikhail Gorbachev spoke of it in Murmansk. What is less known is that Inuit were developing a concept for the Arctic a decade before. During the late 1960s, when the demand for energy and natural resources sparked a renewed interest in the Arctic (d’Anglure, Morin, & Frost, 1992), Inuit began to mobilize politically to have a say in the future of the region. As a result, Inuit were the first to envision the Arctic both as a distinct region and their homeland. By way of declarations and participation at international meetings, they argued that they ought to have a major role in determining the future of their region.

The Arctic is the world’s last geopolitical frontier. It challenges conventional notions of territory and introduces Indigenous epistemology into global understandings of space, place, security, and sovereignty. International relations can go one of two ways: it can continue to push the agendas of the nation-states, or it can take this current opportunity to hear from the people who call the Arctic their home and collaborate with them to bring about a jointly crafted vision for its future. *Ukiuqta'qtumi hivuniptingnun – One Arctic, One Future* – is a deeply Inuit perspective on how Indigenous peoples and nation-states might come together within supportive and respectful coalitions to ensure a positive future for those who live in the Arctic. It is important that nation-states not lose this message through casual adoption of Inuit linguistic terms and policy translations.

## Acknowledgments

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# 9

## **International Relations Theory and the Evolution of the Arctic Council**

*Daniel Pomerants*

The Arctic Council holds a prominent position in regional governance in the circumpolar north, advocating for environmental protection strategies while including the voices of many state and non-state actors. Originating out of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was first approved in 1991 to coordinate common environmental concerns affecting Arctic neighbours, the Arctic Council has transformed the AEPS from a non-binding agreement without legal personality concerning environmental protection into an international institution with a permanent secretariat that has helped generate legally-binding agreements between member states (Bloom 1999, 712; Koivurova 2012, 134). In effect, what began as a forum for dialogue concerning environmental issues in the region with the AEPS in 1991 has in a short time evolved into a research forum without legal personality or enforcement capabilities for environmentally-protective mechanisms but has also slowly gained a level of permanence. Furthermore, these changes have led to growing interest in sustainable development, cultural protection, and commercial shipping from the eight Arctic states, six Permanent Participants (including the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council, and the Aleut International Association), and permanent Observers (which now include China, India, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom and Germany) (Dodds 2013, 29).

While these changes are incremental, they signal that the Arctic Council is becoming a more complex, permanent institution beyond its original mandate as set out in the 1996 Ottawa Declaration. It was here that the eight sovereign

Arctic states (including the United States, Russia, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, and Canada) agreed that the Arctic Council would only be a high-level intergovernmental forum aimed at facilitating non-binding environmental cooperation among them, without much permanence or legal personality (Bloom 1999, 714). Yet, with the establishment of a permanent secretariat, as well as a legally-binding agreement on Arctic search and rescue, the Arctic Council, though still without legal personality, is becoming more institutionally-durable. How do we explain such changes?

International relations theory helps shed light on these evolutionary developments, particularly in considering the role, utility, and ultimately the function of the Arctic Council as it begins a third decade facilitating cooperation amongst various state and non-state actors in a rapidly changing environmental and geopolitical landscape (Wegge 2011, 165; Wilson 2015, 55-56). Some authors, like Wegge (2011), among others, take a more materialist stance focusing on the capabilities of states in explaining order broadly conceived, which for Nord (2006) and Pedersen (2012) particularly concerns the pivotal role the United States has had in determining the competency, structure, and function of the Arctic Council, and whether a new mandate is in its future in order to be responsive, effective, and legitimate as a high-level intergovernmental forum. Other recent scholarship (Wilson 2015) suggests that focusing on the material power of states does not offer the most complete picture of the dynamism of Arctic governance, so looking into the explanatory power of the English School of international relations theory with its greater focus on ideational elements might be helpful.

In turn, this chapter suggests these theoretical contributions, though necessary in explaining the evolution of the Arctic Council, are individually insufficient in explaining the current role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council as climate change becomes more prevalent and as new actors join. Rather, one cannot simply discount either material or ideational explanations, but must take account of both of these. As such, this chapter sheds light on whether the Arctic Council's original purpose needs to be rethought in this new, dynamic geopolitical context. It suggests that neither material nor ideational explanations should be privileged or ignored given the prominent position the United States has in the region and the historical development and evolution of the Arctic Council itself.

## **International Relations Theory and International Institutions**

International institutions, generally speaking, are frameworks constructed by “instrumentally motivated” and “utility-maximizing” agents seeking to promote or protect their own interests in an effort to influence an outcome (Duffield 2007, 4-5). In that respect, they can include “relatively stable sets of related constitutive, regulative, and procedural norms and rules that pertain to the international system, the actors in the system, and their activities” (Duffield 2007, 2). Much of the theorizing about governance and political order in the circumpolar north has relied mostly on the former, focusing on the material capabilities of states, and only recent scholarship on the subject has focused on the latter, or, the ideas that shape international politics in the region. Scholars like Young (1998), Byers (2010), and Griffiths, Huebert, and Lackenbauer (2011) tend to focus much more on the material interests of states in explaining the potential for conflict or cooperation in the region, whether that be through the introduction of regimes based on international legal doctrine, discussions over sovereignty and borders, or how individual countries should be acting in the region.

Wegge (2011) suggests however that some of this previous scholarship on international relations literature relating to the Arctic lacks in its explanations of material capabilities a focus on political order specifically which renders it slightly silent on the role of power politics in maintaining order in the region (165). In effect, Wegge combines the perspectives of the aforementioned authors by incorporating hegemonic stability theory, balance of power theory, and Kantian internationalist theory to suggest that material capabilities as they relate to power, regimes, and domestic politics render the region multipolar (Wegge 2011, 172-173).

In terms of the context within which institutions like the Arctic Council thrive in such a region, Wegge suggests that international regimes, including the Arctic Council which contributes to stakeholder balancing, thus also contribute to peace in the region. However, these explanations only go so far in explaining the role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council by foregoing theoretical analyses of the institution itself, and focusing on broader, contextual patterns and trends. Chater (2015) begins to move away from this more contextual theoretical analysis by suggesting that the specific evolution of the Arctic

Council is best explained by neoliberal institutionalism, as opposed to functionalism or neorealism. This is because great powers (not non-state actors) remain the most influential agents in this evolution, with the Arctic Council, as part of a larger institutional governance framework in the circumpolar north, essentially acting as a medium through which economic and environmental cooperation occur (Chater 2015, 241). Though Chater does not necessarily advance neoliberal institutionalist explanations about theory in this case by focusing on the empirical realities of institutional change at the regional level, his explanation supports previous theory, and this, too, is important.

In another recent article theorizing the evolving context and evolution of the Arctic Council for governance in the circumpolar north, Wilson (2015) applies the central tenets of the English School of International Relations theory to the region based on emerging geopolitical realities. Wilson moves the focus away from questions of power and capabilities, and towards the ideas that shape international politics at the regional level. In this respect, she suggests that there are three main perspectives that shape interpretations of the Arctic Council's role, utility, and function: it can be seen as a society, as a steward, and as a security actor (Wilson 2015, 56). The first perspective sees the Arctic Council functioning as a society that allows states to engage with, and for, each other according to their common interests in the region, placing greater emphasis on state sovereignty (Wilson 2015, 56). For Wilson, the Arctic Council thus could resemble a society of states in the way envisioned by Hedley Bull, with a focus on states acting on their common concerns through rules and institutions they helped to create, thus helping to maintain order in an anarchic international system lacking a global sovereign (Bull 1977, 13; Wilson 2015, 56). In this way, it limits who is able to participate in discussions in that it is a forum established mainly by (and for) Arctic states, with a commitment to international law (though mainly soft-law), and somewhat ad-hoc and limiting financial structures. This means the Arctic Council continues to be unable to implement environmental protection recommendations despite excellent research but all within a framework that supports and reinforces the idea of Arctic state sovereign interests amidst pressure from other countries to join (Bull 1977, 13-14; Wilson 2015, 57-58).

Wilson also suggests that the Arctic Council can be seen as a steward for the region: as a manager focused on the relationship between humans and their

environment, and namely for the purposes of environmental protection, thus acknowledging the Arctic region as requiring some form of special action, beyond simply state responses, due to its environmental and human distinctiveness (Wilson 2015, 59). Important to this process is an institution that helps govern relations, and the working groups would be considered integral to such governance. However, this role of steward is fairly limited since Arctic governance is still dominated by states that can choose to not abide by recommendations or guidelines which are non-binding, and because there are no enforcement mechanisms or penalties. This undermines in some ways the voice and ability of Indigenous groups as original stewards of the region and hinders efforts at developing a common understanding of what stewardship actually means (and does), and how the Arctic Council can facilitate this.

Lastly, Wilson suggests that the Arctic Council can be viewed as a security actor. This is the least tenable of the three perspectives that are described because the Ottawa Declaration prohibits the Council from dealing with matters pertaining to military security. Thus, dealing with security matters would involve a complete reconfiguration of the Arctic Council from an institution geared toward environmental protection and sustainable development (Wilson 2015, 63). This is complicated further because this explanation also depends on which actor addresses ideas about security. For example, and as Wilson admittedly notes, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) sees security as an evolving military matter, but Arctic states see the current state of uncoordinated international legal mechanisms, soft law, and institutions as adequately capable of handling most areas of concern without such securitizing dialogue (Wilson 2015, 64-65).

However, what Wilson does incredibly well in this regard is highlight the nuances associated with conceptions of the Arctic Council that oscillate between understandings of the institution as something more material, as other authors have discussed, and something more ideational, which is new. As such, she reflects on the difficulty international relations theory has with comprehending the role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council and its objectives. In other words, studies of the machinations of the Arctic Council need not be exclusively material or ideational; both are necessary and useful.

## **The Arctic Council and Empirical Reality**

Wilson's analysis offers an important critique of previous work on the Arctic Council and the context within which it exists through a theoretical lens that has not been applied previously. Much analysis of the Arctic Council has focused more on the evolution of the Arctic Council or the geopolitical context in which it finds itself, interested mainly in the state interests involved. Part of the reason for this might be that the focus was very much on the role of states. For instance, Pedersen (2012) offers an interesting characterization of the development of the Arctic Council chronologically over the course of three different time periods, beginning with state activity prior to 1996 and the creation of the Arctic Council, after its creation and peaking with the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008, and ending with a focus on 2009 to the present (Pedersen 2012, 152-153).

Pedersen notes that prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, security issues dominated most discussions between Arctic states, as the region was militarized and divided between the Soviet Union's Arctic interests and those of Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the United States as members of NATO (Young 2012, 166). As Young (2012, 166) suggests, the region was a "prominent theater of operations for nuclear-powered submarines and manned bombers carrying cruise missiles," and acted as "prime locations for the deployment of increasingly sophisticated early-warning systems." It was considered necessary to secure the region from the enemy with potential conflict, not cooperation, in mind. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, activities changed to include more cooperative measures focused on research and development, underpinned by Gorbachev's calls for an Arctic zone of peace and fruitful cooperation in 1987 (Nord 2006, 297). This culminated in the creation of a number of agreements and organizations, not the least of which was the AEPS in 1991, the Northern Forum in 1991, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in 1993, and the Arctic Council in 1996 (Nord 2006, 297; Young 2012, 166).

The AEPS is particularly important in this case because it emphasized objectives and mechanisms that sought to reduce environmental pollution, including reductions in everything from oil and metal contaminants to radioactivity and acidification, but also because it was eventually absorbed into the Arctic Council (VanderZwaag, Huebert, and Ferrara 2001, 144). In turn,

what was once a heavily militarized region became a region of cooperation geared towards the maintenance of what Young calls “resilient socioecological systems,” which focus on environmental protection as well as the welfare of the peoples living there (Young 2012, 167). This would eventually form the conceptual basis upon which the Arctic Council would be founded.

This is a significant turning point because the AEPS, the first agreement negotiated by all eight Arctic states coming out of the Cold War, was a way of building reciprocated trust among the members while simultaneously advocating for international cooperation and protecting the environment (Koivurova 2012, 133). This agreement, signed in Finland in 1991 at the behest of the Finnish government, suggested the timing was right for its signing based on the importance of preventing environmental degradation in the north through research and based on improved relations between states (VanderZwaag, Huebert, and Ferrara 2001, 144). This was not, however, a legal commitment, but a political one, structured to accomplish five main objectives including: the protection of the Arctic ecosystem, the sustainable use of natural resources, the accommodation of Indigenous peoples’ cultural values and practices as they relate to Arctic environmental protection, the consistent review of research related to the environment in the circumpolar north, and the elimination of pollution (Bloom 1999, 713).

This is an important point because it was very clear at the outset that the United States preferred an organization without legal personality at its inception. Such reluctance was based on a variety of concerns ranging from an unwillingness to contribute financial resources to an institution that could potentially be accommodated within existing frameworks to avoid duplication, to strategic concerns that the “operation of a multifaceted Arctic Council might interfere with Washington’s established security and defense-oriented approach to the region,” to concern that policy-making authority would be devolved to non-state actors in too great a degree (Bloom 1999, 714; Nord 2006, 301). In other words, the US had indicated that it did not want the Arctic Council to extend its mandate beyond what the AEPS was already instituted to provide; opposing any permanence to the institution itself, maintaining a focus on multilateral environmental protection with no binding decisions and no

discussion of security-related issues, and with funding and leadership rotating between countries (Nord 2006, 305).

In other words, the US made it clear that the Arctic Council should operate as an intergovernmental forum with state interests in mind, thus rejecting equal status between states and non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations and Indigenous groups, though their views in discussions would remain crucial to the decision-making processes of the Council (Nord 2006, 305). The political significance of the period prior to 1996 was thus characterized mainly, for Pedersen, by Arctic state acquiescence to the American vision that the Arctic Council become a non-legally-binding forum focused specifically on environmental protection and sustainable development (Pedersen 2012, 152-153). This meant that the Arctic Council had to be more voluntary than formal or binding like a treaty, and it had to be project-oriented rather than institutionally permanent. Environmental protection was to be given distinct priority in line with the AEPS and its working groups (and limited in its sustainable development role), security issues were not to be discussed, and the eight Arctic states were to be the primary actors (Nord 2006, 306-307).

There was also much more discord leading up to and culminating in the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008. The five Arctic littoral states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) sought to create their own forum aside from the Arctic Council to discuss matters of high-politics that were not supposed to be discussed at the Arctic Council (Pedersen 2012, 149). This was going to include questions of sovereignty and sovereign rights, natural resources, and other jurisdictional questions that only involved the coastal states bordering the Arctic Ocean but there were major foreign policy differences between the Arctic states. In particular, the United States preferred the potential that an Arctic Five forum provided for political matters, though not necessarily independent or separate from the Arctic Council itself. They held this opinion for two main reasons: the United States was worried that other Arctic states and Permanent Participants would be excluded and ostracized from discussions relevant to them and because “the Arctic Ocean region was increasingly perceived as a prospective petroleum area of interest and a transit area for international shipping” with a distinctly economic focus (Pedersen 2012, 153). In turn, the US became more critical of the Arctic Five forum and more

receptive to promoting the Arctic Council as the primary Arctic institution to deal with Arctic-related matters, including climate change and the associated social and economic changes. This is basically where things stand today, with the Council still dominated by states, and the United States in particular.

### **Conclusions: Shifting Priorities, Greater Theoretical Advancement?**

What the Ottawa Declaration accomplished was thus significant in terms of Arctic governance, especially because the Arctic Council continued to operate similarly to the AEPS while augmenting the role that Indigenous peoples have in the region's decision-making processes, particularly as it relates to intergovernmental cooperation, despite the fact that the entire process still only operates through soft law which remains non-binding and non-treaty based (Koivurova 2012, 133; VanderZwaag, Huebert, and Ferrara 2001, 142). This also speaks to the new empirical realities the Arctic Council finds itself in, as it must not only navigate the vicissitudes of inter-state relations, but the complexity associated with six organizations which represent the Arctic Indigenous peoples with Permanent Participant status, as well as non-Arctic observing members' (both state and non-state) participation in Council discussions and at the level of the working groups. These illustrate changes in an empirical reality that still need to be discussed and which have not been well understood theoretically in the context of the Arctic Council.

What has occurred is a preoccupation with Arctic matters as concerns of high politics, as matters of a solely interactional, international nature between states. As such, this is what affects the policy agenda of the Arctic Council—not to its favour as a burgeoning institution in the affairs of both states and non-state actors, and suggesting very little about the Arctic as an environmentally-sensitive region for whose protection the Arctic Council was originally established.

In acknowledging the complex nature of governance in the Arctic region and within the Arctic Council itself, some of the authors discussed (including Pedersen, Griffiths, Huebert, and Lackenbauer, Byers, and Wegge) all but confirm Young's (2012) suspicions about what a new Arctic policy agenda might look like. For him, it would be centered around four main themes: the prominence of the Arctic in global affairs more generally; that Arctic Ocean

concerns are perhaps the most important environmental issues that should be of focus to decision-makers; that sustainable development as a core guiding principle in governance is becoming secondary to managed development; and that Arctic concerns are best left to states (2012, 167-170). While this focus has partially shifted attention away from more terrestrial matters (such as the health of residents, pollutants, and contamination) to marine matters including the creation of binding law, this particular focus on states and their interaction amidst global economic forces (in particular, a focus on the Arctic Five rather than the eight members of the Arctic Council), Young notes, reduces the impact and influence of the inhabitants of the region (2012, 168). This is why it is so intriguing that Wilson takes a different approach. International relations theory largely lacks a standardized definition around the specificities associated with this type of institution that continues to evolve and grow beyond material explanations that take ideational explanations about that experience less seriously.

As I have suggested here, understanding the evolution of the Arctic Council in theoretical terms entails bridging the gap between both material and ideational approaches specifically because both are necessary but neither are sufficient in explaining its development into a more permanent institution with a variety of actors involved. It is true that the impact the United States has had and will continue to have in determining the role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council is important, but so are the ideas and interests of Permanent Participants and Observers; their impact is less well-understood.

This may change as contexts change, but ultimately the most radical form of change in the Arctic Council's ability to act with some consequence beyond research would be if an Arctic Treaty of some form were established amongst Arctic countries which would create more equality amongst its members (Koivurova 2010, 152). This may not happen very soon so expectations for what the Arctic Council can become must be tempered by the sobering reality that powerful and influential interests dominate conversations at the forum, and will continue to do so, perhaps not always balancing the need for environmental protection with development. As such, there are more theoretical questions than answers about how to perceive the changing role, utility, and function of the Arctic Council as an institution for peaceful regional governance.

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# 10

## The Arctic Council and the “One Arctic”: A Historic Stocktaking of Some Circumpolar Challenges, Dilemmas and Inconsistencies

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At the Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit on 25 April 2015, the United States assumed the chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the second time. To reflect “the U.S. commitment to a well-managed Arctic, marked by international cooperation” (US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, 2014), the US State Department defined the overarching guiding theme of the period to be: *One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges and Responsibilities*. Under this umbrella, three focus areas were given special attention: *Arctic Ocean Safety, Security and Stewardship*, *Improving Economic and Living Conditions in Arctic Communities*, and *Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change*. All of these issue areas should be implemented “in partnership between the other Arctic States and the Permanent Participants” (ibid).

Of these program items all but the overarching theme of the One Arctic are concrete, substantive and immediately applicable. The One Arctic is left undefined leaving a certain dose of uncertainty as to its very meaning. However, the definitional darkness is not complete, and its parameters can be circled in by recapturing the *historic context of its own birth* and by way of its *own*

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<sup>1</sup> The viewpoints expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the stand of the Norwegian Scientific Academy for Polar Research.

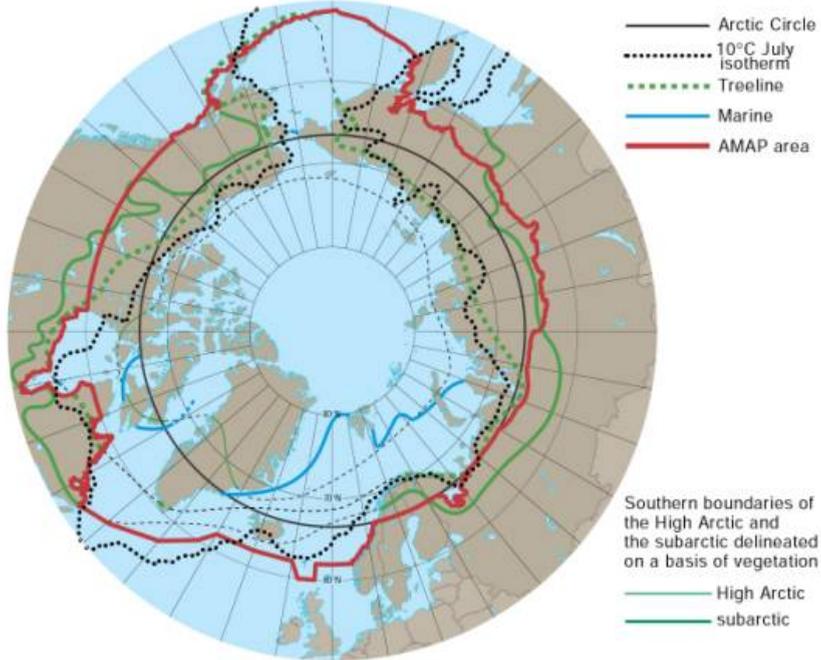
*statement*. The concept was formulated in *the context of politics* for a *political entity* by a *political actor* to serve *political objectives* through *political projects* and to be implemented on equal *political terms*. Thus, the content of the One Arctic is defined within the realm of regional politics. In light of its own statement, the concept invites to be interpreted at face value as a geographical term. The Arctic is a region – One of a kind – to be defined by a set of geophysical characteristics that are domestic to the region. On this premise, the concept refers to regional geography in some version and/or scope.

The assumption of this chapter is that the notion of the One Arctic most likely contains elements from both spheres emerging at the intersection of regional politics and geography. To form a basis on which to assess the origin and preconditions of the concept, the aim is to recapture the interplay of politics and geography existing in the region prior to the second US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

### **The Geographic Arctic and the One Arctic**

The Arctic has long been the object of multiple definitional attempts, but none of them has ever achieved universal acceptance. The oldest and most common definition focuses on solar radiation, defining the Arctic as the area north of the Arctic Circle which encircles the area of the midnight sun. Defined by this criterion, the Arctic is about 21 million square kilometers in extent – making up 8 percent of the Earth’s surface. This definition excludes, however, sub-regions like the Bering Strait, the White Sea, the southern part of Greenland and Hudson Bay (See Figure 1). In most expert opinions, these areas are as much “Arctic” in natural conditions as most of the areas north of the Circle. For this reason, Moira Dunbar characterized the Arctic Circle – a purely astronomical concept – “to be meaningless from most points of view” (1966: 4). In line with this critique, multiple alternative criteria have been suggested and used: the tree line, the 10°C July isotherm, the continuous permafrost, the marine boundary between cool and warm waters, etc. Out of these alternatives, a fairly long-lived assumption has been that the limit of the treeline is more meaningful from the point of view of human activity than any of the climate ones (ibid). But this definition also suffers from weaknesses. Among other

**Figure 10-1: The Geographic and Elusive Arctic and Arctic Ocean (AMAP)**



things, it includes parts of the temperate zone (see Figure 10-1). In short, the application of most single definitional criteria do not suffice to include all geographical areas hosting polar characteristics in the concept of the Arctic or, for that matter, to exclude areas featuring the characteristics of the sub-Arctic and temperate zone. In definitional terms, the Arctic is elusive and elastic, and resists delimitation as one unified region hosting all polar characteristics, i.e. cold temperatures, extensive snow and ice cover, continuous permafrost, polar darkness, lack of nutrients, etc. (AMAP 1998: 117). This state of affairs is left to the Arctic Council (AC) to handle.

### ***Definitional Attempts by the Arctic Council***

The *Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program* (AMAP) of the AC has defined the Arctic to fit scientific as well as political needs. The AMAP provides a two-step approach for defining a core geographical area to be used by all scientific disciplines, whereas the boundaries between 60°N and the Arctic Circle are decided by the individual countries in locations of their own liking

and preferences. Here, AMAP applied multiple scientific (the treeline and the 10°C July isotherm), political and pragmatic criteria to reach consensus across societal sectors and between eight states. The result is a hybrid definition in which the AMAP has succeeded in making “One” geographical Arctic, but at the same time, has made the region into a patchwork quilt of quite different areas, including parts of the sub-Arctic and temperate zone. By so doing, the Arctic has been increased by some 11.3 million square kilometers as compared to the size of the area north of the Arctic Circle.

The Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) of the Arctic Council adopted the AMAP definition lock, stock and barrel in the *Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment* (AMSA). In this study the five Arctic coastal states were allowed to define their own Arctic waters for the purpose of data collection efforts. By this definitional procedure, Arctic waters span a variety of different sea areas—waters of no, few and multiple polar characteristics (see Fig.1). Using this definition, the AMSA-study concludes that the busiest shipping waters of the Arctic are those of the ice-free Norwegian and Bering Seas—those of the sub-Arctic and temperate zone. Non-ice strengthened fishing vessels were reported to be responsible for a sizable part of this total (AMSA, 2009: 16-23). Broadly-based and politically-influenced definitions of the Arctic Ocean have thus far included blue water oceans that have been sailed for centuries and where the operational parameters are well known to the shipping industry. What makes the Arctic a true shipping and exploitation challenge are its domestic characteristics. This suggests that politics are poor in determining meaningful operational geography. The applied challenges for Arctic navigation rests with the Arctic Ocean proper.

Traditionally, the southern boundaries of the Arctic Ocean proper have been drawn at the exit areas of the Arctic Ocean along the Barents continental shelf edge from Norway to Svalbard, across the Fram Strait between Greenland and Svalbard, down the western margin of the Canadian Archipelago and across the Bering Strait (see Fig.1). By this definition—which enjoys widespread support—the total area of the Arctic Ocean proper is 11.5 million square kilometers (ACIA, 2005: 26). The Arctic as defined by AMAP and AMSA is about 33.4 million square kilometers in extent, out of which 60% is defined as Arctic waters. The AMAP-area located to the south of the Arctic Circle is the

size of the Arctic Ocean proper, or more than 17 times the size of France (643 427 square km).

The irony is that, *in politics*, Arctic waters are increasingly being defined to move southwards, adopting more and more ocean territory from the sub-Arctic and the temperate zone, whereas in *natural processes* Arctic waters shrink in extension as they move northward. Franklyn Griffiths pinpoints the shrinking: “The Arctic itself is moving north. As the Earth continues to tilt on its axis relative to the sun, the Circle shifts some 15 meters north each year. More obviously, in rendering the region steadily more accessible from the south, global warming also moves tree lines and isotherms north, albeit at varying rates depending on the location. As an icy milieu the Arctic is shrinking. The north is being denorthified” (Griffiths, 2012: 2).

### **The Political Arctic and the One Arctic**

The Arctic states, also called the Arctic Eight, are defined as touching or having territories north of the Arctic Circle. These states are the sole decision-makers of the Arctic Council, but on certain occasions they have split in two groups based on their geographical location north of the Arctic Circle. One group – the Arctic Five – are littoral to the Arctic Ocean, counting Russia, United States, Norway, Canada and Denmark (Greenland) whereas the other group – the Arctic Three, comprising Finland, Sweden, and Iceland – have coasts on other bodies of water. This geographical difference has produced differences in political participation in regional politics over the last eight years.

The split first showed on 28 May 2008, when the Arctic Five met in Greenland at the invitation of the Danish government to negotiate and agree on the so-called *Ilulissat Declaration* regarding the legal foundation of the Arctic Ocean. The meeting prompted an immediate protest from the Inuit Circumpolar Council, which underscored its legal right as a Permanent Participant to the Arctic Council to be present at the negotiating table when regional issues are being discussed. Iceland also expressed concern at being excluded from the Greenland meeting as a permanent member of the Arctic Council. The voices of protest, however, were controlled.

Two years later, in March 2010, a new meeting of the Arctic Five was summoned in Ottawa at the invitation of the Canadian government to discuss new ways of thinking about economic development and environmental

protection in the region. This time the reaction of the Arctic Three became more vocal, explicit, and public. The Foreign Minister of Iceland expressed dissatisfaction at not having been invited for a second time. Finnish and Swedish officials made similar remarks, whereas some representatives of Arctic Indigenous peoples bluntly asked if the Arctic Five was trying to assume leadership in the governance of regional affairs at the expense of the Arctic Eight and the Permanent Participants (Nystø, 2010: 22). At the end of the meeting (and to the surprise of many), then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saw it fit to warn the coastal states against the practice of inviting just a few of the Arctic states to these meetings and advised that future discussions on regional issues should include all states with legitimate interests in the region. This truly represented a political “One Arctic reaction” that may have moved the Icelandic government from vocal protests to political action.

In 2011, the Icelandic government claimed publicly that Iceland is “the only country” among the Arctic Eight that is located both “entirely within the Arctic region” and “in the center of the North Atlantic Ocean” (Heininen, 2011: 33-35). This move sided firmly against the Ministerial meetings of the Arctic Five. In support of its own government, the Icelandic Parliament passed a Resolution to secure “Iceland’s position as a coastal state within the Arctic region,” promoting the view that the Arctic “should not be limited to a narrow geographical definition but rather be viewed as an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters” (Althingi, 2011: 1). In these moves, geographical definitions became international politics, aiming to extend the Arctic Five to become the “Arctic Six” and leaving Finland and Sweden to become the “Arctic Two.”

As suggested in Figure 10-1, if the AMAP and AMSA definitions are applied, Iceland is located “entirely within the Arctic region” and, as such, qualifies as a coastal state. The obvious counter-argument is that those definitions are issue-specific and made for scientific and applied purposes only, and are not meant as inputs to redefine established geography. The corollary of this is that the Arctic Council operates with two categories of Arctic waters: Arctic *ocean* waters, which are located north of the exit areas of the Arctic Ocean, and Arctic *maritime* waters which are located south of the same exit areas. The latter surround the Arctic Circle, which was used as the primary criteria to decide who should become Arctic states and full members of the

Arctic Council and who should not (see Figure 10-1). Since both categories of waters are defined as *Arctic*, the conception of a One Arctic may be confused.

The practice of the Arctic Five to meet separately continued. At the invitation of the Danish government, officials from the littoral states met in Nuuk on Greenland on 24-26 February 2014 to discuss interim measures to prevent unregulated fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean and related scientific matters. This time the meeting took place between the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs). Neither the Arctic Three nor the leaders of the Permanent Participants were invited. However, in the resulting *Nuuk Declaration*, the SAOs accepted “that other States may have an interest in this topic” and opened up “a broader process involving additional States beginning before the end of 2014” (*Meeting on Arctic Fisheries*, 2014: 2). The concepts of “other States” and “additional States” made no explicit distinction between non-Arctic states and the Arctic Three, which only got involved by way of an omnibus invitation. What is more, the Declaration explicitly recognized “the interests of Arctic residents, particularly the Arctic Indigenous peoples,” by committing “to integrate scientific knowledge with traditional and local knowledge” (ibid: 1). Although the differences in treatment added to the annoyance that had been building in Icelandic political quarters over the years, the reaction from that Arctic state seemed more subdued this time.

Fran Ulmer has pointed out that “the Arctic Eight are still working well together” in that “there is more political alignment in the Arctic than in many other places,” and that the member nations share “remarkably similar goals” (Ulmer, 2015: 1). In recent years this has led the Arctic Council to unanimous decisions on two binding multilateral agreements on *Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* in 2011 (SAR-agreement) and the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic* in 2013 (MOPPPRA-agreement). A third agreement, to increase international scientific cooperation, will be signed at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks in May 2017, and in 2014 the Council agreed on the establishment of the *Arctic Economic Council* to facilitate economic development in the region. In cases of this kind, the Arctic Eight have performed as One in political participation, which has increased the political significance of the Arctic Council.

These successes notwithstanding, the concept of One Arctic faces natural and socio-economic challenges. Neither the SAR nor the MOPPPRA agreements make explicit recognition of the vastly differing environments of the Arctic region. Bader, Carlson, and Bouffard, point out that in implementing those agreements there is a need to recognize that the circumpolar Arctic is subdivided into at least “three Arctics” differing in natural challenges and socio-economic conditions: the North American, the European and the Asian Arctics. The authors conclude that the SAR and MOPPART agreements do not explicitly acknowledge that the Arctic presents North American responders and security operators with a physical and human landscape that is far more austere and challenging than that which confronts their counterparts in the European Arctic. As a consequence of the differences between the two Arctic regions, it is essential to set different expectations and acknowledge different levels of capabilities (Bader et al., 2012: 12). “Because the two agreements are championed as models for future instruments,” they explain, “it is critical that the omissions of Arctic diversity be rectified in these existing documents and that the physical and social differences in the Arctic be recognized at the commencement of new negotiations for additional agreements” (ibid: 13). In our context, the diversity reflected in the notion of “Multiple Arctics” has to be acknowledged and worked into the conception of the One Arctic to make regional governance effective.

From 2008-2014, two parallel fora individually and collectively propelled progress in building a system of Arctic governance. As has been noted, “while political and security matters are off the table at the Arctic Council, there are no such restrictions when the Arctic five meets” (Depledge and Dodds, 2011: 76). Whereas the agenda of the Arctic Council is mostly restricted to environmental protection and sustainable development, studies show that the Arctic Five has more of an open agenda and incentives to cooperate in a broader range of issue areas, including sovereignty, resource development, shipping, biodiversity and governance (Brosnan, Leschine and Miles, 2010: 180-202). In the 1990s, the US in particular was reluctant to involve itself in the creation of new multilateral fora. After years of friendly pressure, not least from Canada, the US gave in to it on the explicit condition that the agenda should be restricted to environmental protection and security (Griffiths, 1999: 179-204). In this way, the “law of the least ambitious program” (Underdal, 1982) set the agenda and

scope of action of the Arctic Council. In building a useful governance system for the region, the Arctic Five seems to have taken the role of a “supplementary forum” to compensate for and overcome the self-imposed limitations of the Arctic Council. The two fora seem to behave like close cousins in regional management.

### **The Politics of Non-Arctic States and the One Arctic**

Non-Arctic states – those located south of the Arctic Circle – may apply for and be granted a seat as Observer in the Arctic Council on certain conditions. The applicant state shall have demonstrated an interest in and ability to support the work of the Arctic Council (*Arctic Council Rules of Procedure*, 2013: 14). At the same time it has to recognize the Arctic states’ sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the region, and accept that the right to vote on Council matters rests solely with the Arctic Eight. Thus, although Arctic Council Observer states at present make up 44% of the world population (3.2 billion); their decision-making role at the Arctic Council is highly limited. This, according to representatives of Observer states, should be reconsidered because “the Arctic encompasses all political, economic, social, environmental and climate change-related challenges facing the global community...., (and) it is clear that Arctic states cannot overcome those challenges by themselves alone,” Justin (Jong Deog) Kim, the director general of the strategy research division at the Korea Maritime Institute recently noted (Kim, 2016: 52). This “requires active participation and promotion of understanding among Arctic states and Observers, which could be better facilitated if a well-organized plan was in place that allowed for the utilization of Observers’ capabilities.” To achieve this, Kim suggests that the Arctic Council’s Rules of Procedure and Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies should “be complemented and specified to make a more clearly designed and transparent model for Observer involvement” (ibid: 53). To be more specific, let us briefly address the expressed interests of two of the more prominent Observer states to the Arctic Council: the United Kingdom (UK) and China.

#### ***The United Kingdom***

Although the UK is not an Arctic state per se, Duncan Depledge and Klaus Dodds (2011) insist that it should be acknowledged as “part of the sub-

Arctic and clearly influenced by the physical geographies and climate systems of the High North, such as the ‘Arctic Oscillation’ (73).” This is deemed important because the North Atlantic is likely to be among the first areas to feel the effects of climate change in the Arctic. Based on this premise, Depledge and Dodds (2011: 1) define the UK to be a *geographical proximate state to the Arctic* – a state that in geographic and political terms is closer to and more affected by developments in the region than most other non-Arctic states. The underlying assumption is that the UK should have a stronger say on Arctic decisions than Observer states with a more distant location.

Of immediate concern to UK interests in the region is the growing relevance of the Arctic Five. “Since 2008, the five Arctic Ocean coastal states have ... met to assert their exclusive role in the governance of the region, to the detriment of the relations with non-coastal states ... who are angered by their exclusion,” Depledge and Dodds argue (2011: 76). “More regular meetings of the Arctic Five would ... undermine the role of the Arctic Council, potentially reducing its relevance to Arctic issues beyond coastal state jurisdiction.” Accordingly, they conclude that “any further sidelining of the Arctic Council could be a significant blow to the UK’s ability to have a voice in Arctic affairs (75).” Against this backdrop, the UK is calling for more effective engagement between Observers and the Arctic Council, and welcomes moves to formalize the role of the Observer states which, in turn, clarifies expectations. The UK, however, is said to be extremely reluctant to having its voice reduced in regional affairs, claiming that “the Arctic states have sought to hold the rest of the world at arm’s length” in the region (ibid: 4). In realizing that the Arctic states are in the driver’s seat, and acknowledging their sensitivity, the UK government has been hesitant to formulate a strategy for the Arctic. In 2013, it published a *Policy Framework for the Arctic*. As stated by the Head of the Polar Regions Department, Jan Rumble: “We have walked a bit of a fine line, in terms of not saying that it is a strategy, but making sure that we are clear on what we want to get out of the Arctic, why we are engaged in it and what our priority areas are” (UK Parliament, 2012: 182).

## **China**

China’s Arctic policy relates to the Arctic Ocean proper when it comes to sea routes, strategic minerals and hydrocarbons and to a certain extent also to

environmental issues. These three elements are interconnected in that sea ice melting due to climate change opens up possibilities for harvesting resources on the continental shelf and the deep sea bed, as well as providing fresh transportation options in terms of navigable sea routes. As Chinese foreign policy expert Anne-Marie Brady observes, “China sees opportunities more than risks in Arctic climate change” (2014: 3).

Official members of the Chinese government have, for the last six to seven years, claimed that China does not have an *Arctic Strategy*. According to Observers, however, it appears to have an *Arctic Agenda*. Expert opinion expects that China will seek a greater role in determining both the political framework and legal foundations of future Arctic activities (Jakobson, 2010: 1). On 21 June 2011, two years before China got accredited Observer status at the Arctic Council, Vice Minister of the Chinese State Oceanic Administration Chen Lianzeng made it clear that the overall goal of China’s five year polar plan was to increase China’s “status and influence” in polar affairs to better protect its “polar rights” (Brady, 2014: 2). At the same time, it is actively using trans-regional issues to underscore China’s official position that it is a *near-Arctic country* rather than an ordinary non-Arctic country. This came to expression in the speech of Hu Zhengyue at Svalbard in 2009, where he stressed the need for increasing cooperation among Arctic and non-Arctic states because climate change and international shipping made *regional* Arctic issues inherently *inter-regional* (Jakobson, 2009: 9).

How does the apparent interest of Observer states to become more actively involved in regional affairs resonate with the policy of the U.S. second chairmanship? To date, the U.S chairmanship has demonstrated an open mind and positive attitude about the need of involving Observer states in trans-regional issues, stating explicitly that “it is vitally important that the Council **strengthen** its cooperation and engagement with accredited Observers and outside entities and ... to raise the awareness of the Arctic and its role in the global ocean and climate system, ... [and] to educate and inform the public worldwide that the Arctic should matter to everyone” (*One Arctic, US chairmanship 2015-2017*). This attitude came to expression in the process following the 2014 meeting of the Arctic Five in which both Arctic and Observer states were invited to influence the outcome. The same kind of cooperation was initiated in April 2015 when the Arctic Council’s *Framework*

for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions was implemented. Four months later, on 31 August 2015, President Barack Obama shared the same mindset “on the many challenges [that] the Arctic presents” at the Glacier Conference in Anchorage which attracted representatives from nineteen different nations (quoted in Lawson, 2015: 3). Explicitly underscoring that the Conference was not an Arctic Council meeting, the State Department invited the foreign ministers in attendance to a special session dedicated exclusively to the three focus areas of its own chairmanship. Following the conference, the State Department issued a *Joint Statement on Climate Change and the Arctic* on behalf of the United States, the attending Foreign Ministers, and other representatives from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Poland, Singapore, Spain, and the United Kingdom, all of which are accredited Observers to the Arctic Council (ibid: 3, quoting from the White House Press Release on 1 September 2015). Conferences of this kind define a supplementary way of involving Observer states more actively in the implementation of Arctic agendas without changing the existing decision-making system of the Arctic Council as laid out in the Rules of Procedure and Observer Manual.

### **Summing Up: The Politics of Geographical Definitions**

Throughout the existence of the Arctic Council, political participation in regional affairs has been decided by *geographic location*, defining who is in and who is out in regional decision-making. This *politics of geographical definitions* (Østreng, 2014: 3) has moved in waves.

The first wave – *the Birth period* – began with the Canadian proposal of establishing an Arctic Council in 1993 and culminated three years later with its actual establishment by the Ottawa Declaration. In this period the “law of the least ambitious program” formed the agenda and *geography* decided who should have a say or not. Those states blessed by nature to touch on or have territory north of the Arctic Circle became full members of the Arctic Council, and those south of it were kept “at arm’s length” by Arctic states when it came to managing regional affairs (Depledge and Dodds, 2011: 75).

The next wave – *the Skirmish period* – lasted from 2008 to 2014 and once again all political participation was based on geography. North of the Arctic Circle, the Arctic Eight split in two – the Arctic Five and the Arctic Three – on

the basis of who had shores along the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic Five stood out as the core group of decision makers in that they secured participation both in the Arctic Council and in their own separate forum. In this period the concept of the One Arctic seems to find little encouragement or grounding in regional practice. Arctic decision-making was split in two. South of the Arctic Circle, the group of non-Arctic states seem to have been involved in an undeclared jockeying of positions among themselves. Some Observer states defined themselves as geographically and politically closer to Arctic decision-making than Observer states located further away. In this jockeying of positions, the top rung is held by states defining themselves as *proximate to the region* and *near Arctic states*, followed by “ordinary” Observer states located further to the south, with a final group of non-Arctic states without Observer status whatsoever. In this period, the preconditions to shape regional politics into the perspective of a One Arctic seemed poor.

Whether we have embarked on a third wave – a *Redefinition period* – remains uncertain. There are signs, however, that it may be in its initial phase. Increasing acceptance for broadening agendas emerging at the intersections between the Arctic Five and Arctic Eight, and broadening participation in trans-regional issues between Observer states and Arctic states/Permanent Participants, are visible indications. If these signs are real and enduring, the Redefinition period started out in the aftermath of the 2014 meeting between the Arctic Five and coincided briefly with the second U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, underscoring shared opportunities, challenges and responsibilities for all parties involved to fulfill the vision of One Arctic. The intrinsic meaning of this vision seems to be based on a wish to strengthen and broaden the participatory and partnership elements of regional politics to reduce conflict and enhance effectiveness, thus producing the benefit of a well-managed Arctic. In so doing, the role of geography in political participation has to be played down to build bridges between different geographical actors, in particular between the Arctic Five and the Arctic Three and between the Arctic Eight/Permanent Participants and the Observer states. Such bridging is aimed at reducing conflict – internal and external – and at optimizing the effective use of all available capabilities to the benefit of Arctic management. From this perspective, the One Arctic concept is in need of a redefinition period to simultaneously adapt to the reality of “Multiple Arctics.”

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# ONE ARCTIC

## The Arctic Council and Circumpolar Governance

This volume of essays, written when the Arctic Council was celebrating its twentieth anniversary under the theme of “One Arctic” and the leadership of the United States’ second chairmanship, discusses the evolution of the Council as a political forum. Tracing key developments in the formation of the Council, identifying recent directions in intergovernmental policy and decision-making, and assessing how the Council engages with its membership, the contributors offer important insights into how the recent North American chairmanships by Canada (2013-2015) and the United States (2015-2017) identified and articulated new pathways for Arctic cooperation. Significant changes in the Arctic over the past decade make it necessary to reassess some common assumptions about the nature and direction of the Arctic Council and how it fits within the larger arena of international relations. As the chapters in this book reveal, the idea of “One Arctic” can serve as a lens through which to interrogate more closely how Arctic states, Indigenous rights-holders, other stakeholders, and the Arctic Council itself produce and transform divergent Arctic imaginaries.

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