



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

Governance by conference?

Actors and agendas in Arctic politics.

Beate Steinveg

A dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor – December 2020.



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Abstract

The Arctic has become a core national priority for the Arctic states, and the region has attracted the interest of non-Arctic state actors. Since the 1990s, the Arctic has been characterized by cooperative institutions forming a complex picture of transnational collaboration. Increased interest towards the region, catalyzed by geopolitical changes and the impacts of climate change, has also been accompanied by a growth in the establishment of conferences on Arctic issues. Yet, there has been no systematic examination of the role and functions of conferences in Arctic governance. This thesis contributes to filling this knowledge gap, by examining conferences as a new element of the soft-law dimension of the Arctic governance architecture – operating in the intersection between sovereign states and formalized cooperative arrangements. Through an in-depth case study of the two largest arenas for international dialogue in the region: the Arctic Frontiers (Tromsø) and the Arctic Circle Assembly (Reykjavik), and three mechanisms – actors, agenda setting, and the Arctic governance architecture – as points of influence, the thesis concludes on the functions of conferences within Arctic governance. I argue for interaction through conferences as a solution to the challenges of managing the growing number of agenda issues and governance arrangements, and to balance the interests and activities of new stakeholders with those of Arctic rights-holders.

Firstly, I demonstrate how Arctic issues have developed a global dimension, and that the dynamic and multidimensional platform provided by conferences has contributed to a broader and refocused globalized agenda. While not governing arenas, I establish how conferences blur the line between governance and dialogue. Secondly, the shift in the Arctic agenda has led to changes in who proclaim to be legitimate stakeholders. The involvement of non-Arctic states can prove central for diplomatic relations, and balanced social and economic development of the Arctic. From this, I argue that the political implications of evolving economic interests open a space for conferences. Thirdly, I demonstrate how conferences contribute as linkages among the growing number of elements in the complex Arctic governance architecture. Conferences function as supplements to the Arctic Council and other arrangements – in expanding the agenda, broadening stakeholder involvement, and improving communication and outreach – but are also complementing alternative arenas, fulfilling unique functions within the Arctic regime complex.

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List of Abbreviations

AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
AC	Arctic Council
ACA	Arctic Circle Assembly
ACAP	Arctic Contaminants Action Plan
ACGF	Arctic Coast Guard Forum
ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment
AEC	Arctic Economic Council
AEPS	Arctic Environment Protection Strategy
AES	Arctic Encounter Symposium
AF	Arctic Frontiers
AHDR	Arctic Human Development Report
AIP	Arctic Investment Protocol
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
AMSA	Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment
AOS	Arctic Observing Summit
ASFR	Arctic Security Forces Roundtable
ASSW	Arctic Science Summit Week
ASM	Arctic Science Ministerial
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BRC	Barents Regional Council
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
COP	Conference of the Parties
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPPR	Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response
EU	European Union
IAF	International Arctic Forum

IASC	International Arctic Science Committee
IASSA	International Arctic Social Science Association
ICARP	International Conference on Arctic Research Planning
ICASS	International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPY	International Polar Year
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NF	Northern Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPAC	North Pacific Arctic Conference on Arctic Futures
NRF	Northern Research Forum
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
PPs	Permanent Participants
SAO	Senior Arctic Official
SAR	Search and Rescue
SCPAR	Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals (UN)
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCHE United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

UNCLOS United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

USARC United States Arctic Research Commission

WSSD World Summit on Sustainable Development

WWF World Wildlife Foundation

Introduction

The Arctic¹ was introduced as an international zone of peace in 1987², and while the end of the Cold War reaffirmed the strategic importance of the region (Pedersen, 2019), the term “Arctic exceptionalism” has been used to describe the successful efforts to maintain cooperation and stability in the Circumpolar North (Exner-Pirot & Murray, 2017). The Arctic is characterized by cooperative institutions, forming a complex picture of transnational collaboration (Young, 2005). The Arctic Council, established in 1996 as an intergovernmental forum for cooperation between the eight Arctic states, Indigenous peoples, and non-Arctic observer entities is at the center of the Arctic governance system. It developed from the Rovaniemi Process, following the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (1991), aiming to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council, established in 1993, also added to the institutional framework at the time, consisting of the International Arctic Science Committee (1990), the Northern Forum (1991), the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the West-Nordic Council. The Arctic governance structure has later been supplemented by other arrangements³.

Accordingly, the Arctic has been recast from a geopolitical buffer between two superpowers during the Cold War, to an integrated part of international relations and a focal point of political attention. Largely due to physical, geopolitical, and socio-economic changes (Keil & Knecht, 2017; Koivurova & Nilsson, 2016; Young, 2012a), the region has become a national priority for the Arctic states, and an attractive playing field for non-Arctic state actors. Yet, while transformations resulting from climate change provide for economic opportunities, they also pose serious challenges for the global community. There is need for international cooperation between governments, for knowledge-based decision making, and for industry development to be balanced with the well-being of local communities and environmental concerns (Young, 2014).

Moreover, despite the long track-record of peaceful interactions in the Arctic, and the fact that the region has avoided spill-over from conflicts elsewhere, it has not been immune to geopolitical changes (Byers, 2017; Østerud & Hønneland, 2014; Østhagen,

¹The definition of the Arctic region applied in this project is that of the Arctic Council working group – the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). From this definition, the Arctic includes all oceans and territories to the north of the Arctic Circle, adjacent territories in Siberia and North America, and more southern ocean regions in the Atlantic and Bering Strait. States with territories within the area defined by AMAP are the United States (Alaska), the Russian federation, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark/Greenland. (Source: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, 1998)

²By Soviet President (1990–1991) Mikhail Gorbachev through the Murmansk Initiative, calling for cooperation on environmental protection and scientific research among the Arctic states and other regional actors.

³See Chapter Two, section 2.3.5 for an overview of these arrangements that are part of the governance landscape surrounding the conferences in this study.

2016). The “race to the North Pole” of the 19th Century has not ceased to exist, but has rather shifted from exploration and territorial rivalry to one for resources, and the ”scramble” or ”battle” for the Arctic is a widespread media narrative about the region. Accordingly, the Arctic governance system must adapt to handle emerging issues and incorporate new actors, and it is not evident how to balance the interests of non-Arctic stakeholders with those of Arctic rights-holders (Ingimundarson, 2014). To that end, along with the Arctic drawing increased attention from the international community, there has been a significant growth in the establishment of conferences attending to Arctic issues⁴. In face of emerging challenges, formal and informal forums for cooperation that gathers various stakeholders for discussions are becoming more important.

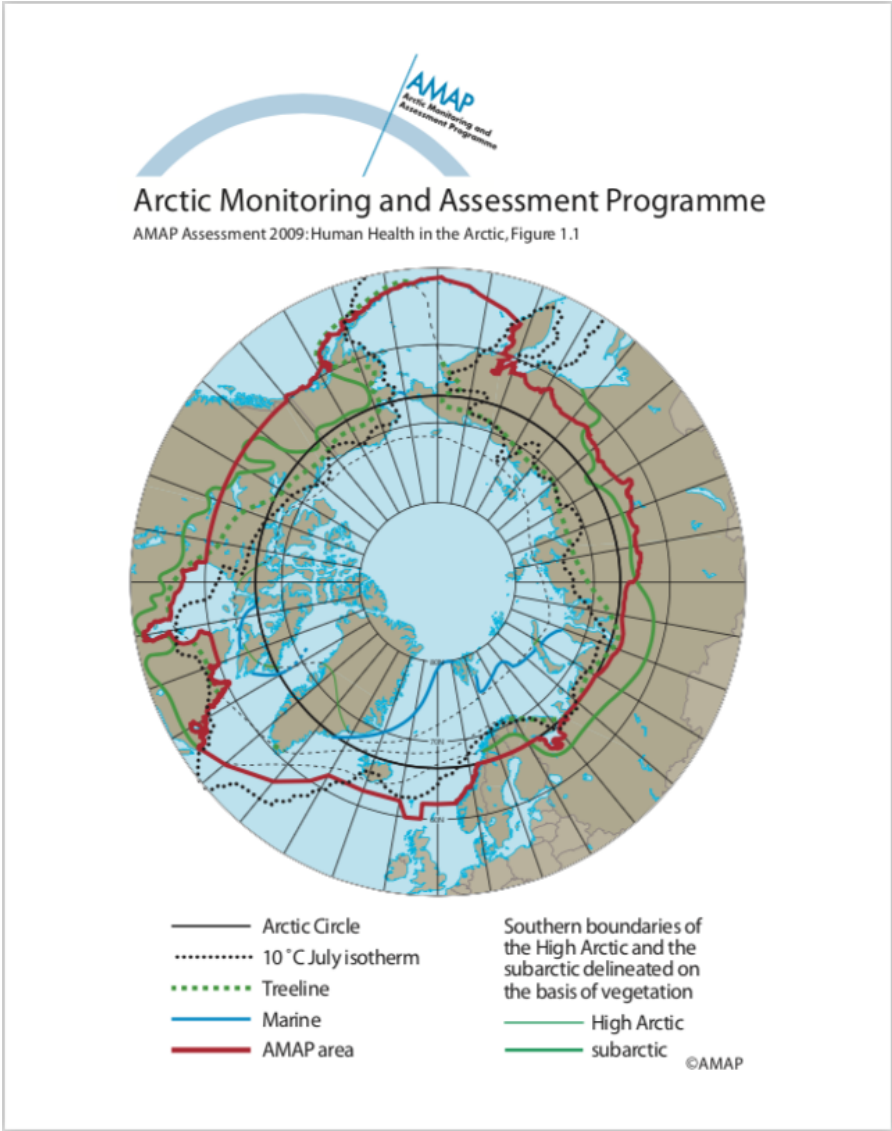


Figure 1.1: Definition of the Arctic region.
 Cartographer / Designer: John Bellamy. AMAP 1998. Published February 10th 2010

⁴Chapter Five presents the development from twenty-something Arctic related conferences at the beginning of the 2000s, to close to eighty by 2020. See also Appendix 8 – Overview of Arctic conferences.

Conferences are central meeting places for cooperation, the exchange of ideas, and for deliberating the geopolitical structure of the Arctic. Yet, the “significance of these forums remains relatively understudied in the literature on Arctic governance” (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 145). This project aims at contributing to fill this knowledge gap, by enhancing our understanding of the functions of, and space for, conferences within Arctic governance. The study sets forth to achieve this objective through a mapping and analysis of the Arctic conference sphere, and from an in-depth examination of the two largest arenas for international dialogue in the region: the Arctic Frontiers (Tromsø, Norway) and the Arctic Circle Assembly (Reykjavik, Iceland).

This study seeks not only to contribute to the Arctic governance literature, but also to the literature on conferencing⁵. Rittberger notes how “conference diplomacy has become a more or less permanent mechanism for achieving policy co-ordination at the international level in a variety of settings” (Rittberger, 1983, 169). This transfers to a growing body of literature on conferencing and internationalism, and how conferences, as political theaters, are staged and performed (see inter alia Death, 2011; Craggs & Mahony, 2014; Hodder, 2015), as well as research on conferences as different spaces for diplomacy where ‘the international’ is realized (McConnell, Moreau, & Dittmer, 2012; Shimazu, 2014). Still, Hodder (2015) calls for an “empirical broadening of the range of conferences under consideration”, beyond traditional spaces of ‘high summitry’ (p. 41-42). To that end, this study aims to contribute with a novel way of understanding the complex nature of hybrid Arctic conferences, and from this, aspire to expand our knowledge about how conferences operate within governance systems in general.

Considering the informal nature of conferences, this study is largely about examining influence without formal authority. Still, conferences blur the line between governance and dialogue, as they are not intergovernmental institutions or government forums, but can be parallel arenas for discussions (Depledge & Dodds, 2017; Babin & Lasserre, 2019). In the Arctic, conferences are platforms for government officials to project their interests in a favorable light – either to accentuate the primacy of Arctic states and peoples, or for outsiders to demonstrate their legitimate interests. There is bargaining taking place between stakeholders, and competition between sites of interaction, that are neglected aspects of Arctic governance (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 157). From this point of departure, I examine conferences from the underlying premise that they have broader effects, as platforms not only for international cooperation, but also for political games. Thus, a fundamental notion is that conferences do not take place in a vacuum, but are part of a constant flow of international structures, processes, and developments. The aim of this study is therefore unraveling the outcomes of conferences and their functions within the Arctic governance structure, rather than focusing solely on the

⁵See section 1.3.2 or Appendix 7 for a review of the literature on international conferencing. See Chapter Five for an overview of the Arctic conference sphere.

events themselves. This examination is performed through three mechanisms – points of influence – considered relevant for the overall purpose of the thesis: actors, agenda setting, and the governance architecture.

The first mechanism is the functions of conferences for different stakeholder groups, and potential contributions to altering the actor composition of Arctic governance. This mechanism is interesting from the assumption that people engage in conferences for a reason, specifically, that actors utilize conferences purposefully to promote their interests and advance their position in the region. This examination can contribute to shed light on the growing number of visible entities and actors engaged in Arctic affairs, their motivations and ambitions, and also whether conferences contribute to broadening the circle of Arctic stakeholders. The second mechanism is conferences as arenas for agenda setting, where I examine whether and how conference activities and initiatives have an influence on the international and regional agenda. This mechanism is included from the interest in examining the broader outcomes of conferences that can be relevant for processes and developments outside the event itself. The third mechanism – the role of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture – combines the two former to enhance our understanding of how conferences fit within broader governance structures, specifically, the Arctic regime complex.

1.1 Research questions

Seeking to fill a knowledge gap in the Arctic governance literature, and in the literature on conferences, this study examines and analyzes the functions of conferences for actors, agenda setting, and as a new dimension within the Arctic governance architecture through answering the research question:

What are the functions of the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle Assembly within Arctic governance, operating in a system of sovereign state interests and cooperative arrangements?

Additionally, to unravel the mechanisms and examine them as points of influence for conferences within Arctic governance, the thesis raises the following research questions:

The functions of conferences for stakeholders and influence on the actor composition of Arctic governance

- What are the main functions of conferences for various actor groups, and do conference engagement contribute to advancing their agency in the region?

- Do conferences contribute to expanding the collective of relevant and legitimate stakeholders in the Arctic?

The contributions of conferences for agenda setting in the Arctic

- Do conference organizers contribute to define central issues and elevate them on to the broader agenda in the region?
- Is conference participation a means to successfully promote issues and make them pertinent in other forums or processes?

The space for conferences within the Arctic governance architecture

- What are key components of the Arctic governance system, and how can it best develop to incorporate emerging issues and interested stakeholders?
- What are the main contributions of conferences within the Arctic governance architectural landscape?

1.2 Research setting and theoretical perspectives

This case study aims at enhancing our understanding of the functions of conferences within Arctic governance, and thus inquires into an under-researched phenomenon. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) advice to commence any research process by defining the universe of cases of which one's case is an element, and then draw a sample from that universe. In this study, the following defining characteristics are applied to narrow down the pool of cases⁶: The size of the conference; issue area and topics addressed (policy, science, business); openness; participants (sectors and nationalities); recurrence and frequency. From this universe of cases (see Chapter Five), the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly were chosen for in-depth examination (see Chapter Six).

The justification for selecting these particular cases is twofold. Firstly, the two conferences were established as policy-science-business hybrids within a realm previously dominated by issue-specific science gatherings. Thus, it is interesting to unravel the consequences of these conferences, designed to fill a need for more complex arenas, for the Arctic governance system. Secondly, while part of the same universe of cases, the thesis sheds light on how Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly are arranged from different philosophies, respectively top-down and bottom-up. These divergent models of organizing are expected to have implications for the functions of the two conferences within Arctic governance, and the thesis seeks to elaborate on the consequences, strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

⁶See Chapter Four for a more detailed account of the case selection criteria, and for the appropriateness of a case study design for the purpose of this project.

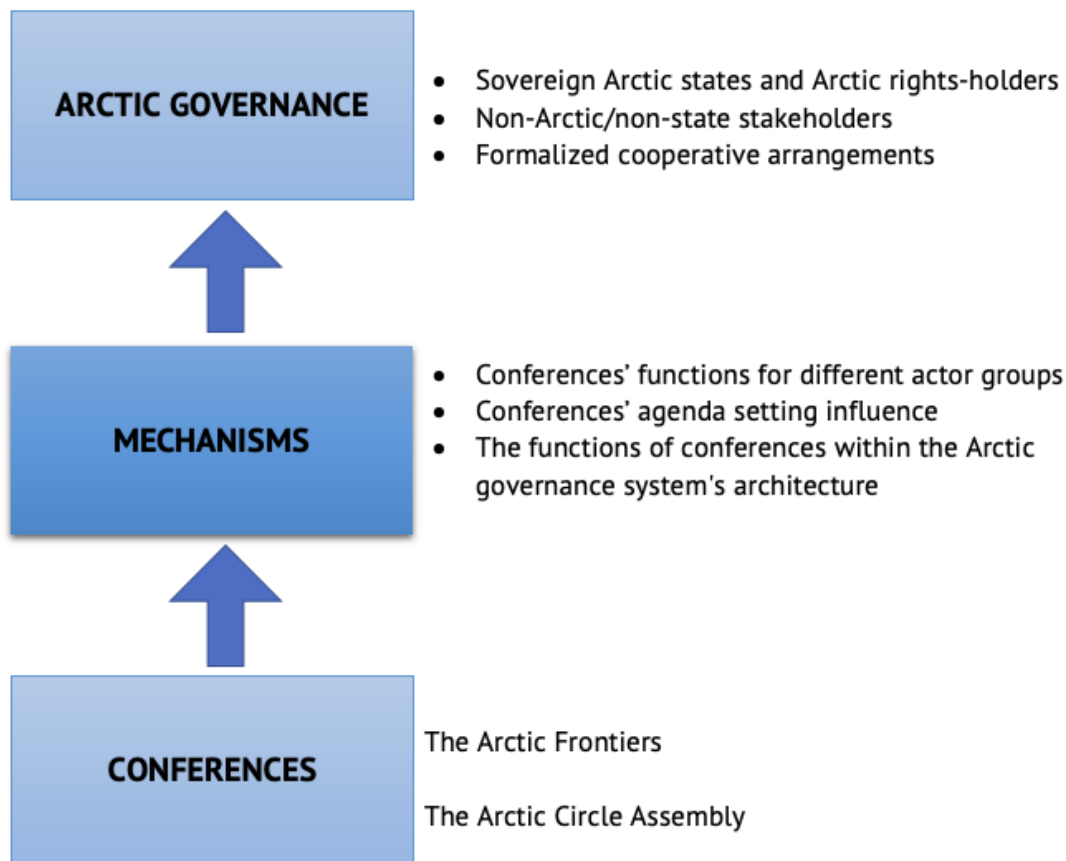


Figure 1.2: Mechanisms for the study of conferences within Arctic governance.

The proposed causal model (Figure 1.2) in the study is that conferences (the independent variable) serve as multipurpose arenas through the mechanisms to produce an outcome within Arctic governance (the dependent variable). The mechanisms approach lead to questions of measurement and causality. Firstly, documenting connections between what takes place at conferences and outcomes for actors, contributions to agenda setting, and functions within the Arctic governance architecture. Secondly, assessing the explanatory power of each mechanism in establishing the dynamics, broader outcomes, and functions of conferences.

To that end, it must be stressed from the outset that the purpose of the study is not to test an hypothesis, quantifying the impacts of conferences, or produce absolute proof supporting or negating their effects. Rather, I intend to examine probable connections between what takes place at conferences and other elements and processes within the Arctic governance architecture. This inquiry is founded on the empirical material gathered for the study. Predominately, statements from the formal interviews conducted with 24 informants from various sectors and nationalities (see Chapter Four, section 4.4.1, or Appendix 3), supplemented with participant observation, informal conversations, a literature review including empirical examinations by other researchers, and documents, reports, policies, and strategies.

For the theoretical framework, there was no dominant ‘mainstream’ perspective found in the existing literature on conferences (see Appendix 7, or section 1.3.2). Rather, depending on the objective of the inquiry, a variety of theories and concepts are applied to the examination of conferences within different fields – e.g. discourse analysis, diplomatic theory, neoliberalism, poststructuralism, social network analysis, Foucault’s governmentality concept, and the concepts of power, legitimacy, and authority. Moreover, studies of international relations have traditionally been preoccupied with state actors, state-based institutions, intergovernmental forums, and sub-governmental organizations (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 145), while the actors comprising the Arctic conference sphere is a more encompassing and heterogenous group.

As such, adapting the same pragmatic approach to theory as previously applied in the conference literature, this study further expands on how to conceptualize conferences through a novel framework consisting of and combining stakeholder theory, the epistemic community framework, the multiple streams framework, and regime theory. In addition, the study finds support in the Earth System Governance literature on governance architectures and regime complexes (e.g. Biermann & Kim, 2020a)⁷. From this framework, through a “multi-perspectival style of inquiry” (Katzenstein & Sil, 2008), I seek to situate Arctic conferences within the larger universe of comparable phenomena. By looking for the usefulness of an explanation, this study applies an eclectic approach to theorizing. The aim is to categorize and interpret the empirical material by using different theories, chosen to complement the mechanisms of interest, in order to understand and explain the phenomenon under investigation: conferences.

By adapting different theories and concepts to the examination of a thus far little explored subject – the functions of conferences within Arctic governance – the thesis aims at enhancing our understanding of how conferences are situated within the broader architectural landscape in the region. The study also seeks to contribute to broadening our knowledge within the field of conference research by providing a novel way of framing – which can inspire to similar use in the future. The theoretical framework is outlined in detail in Chapter Three, but the following sections introduce the three mechanisms of interest, and account for the corresponding theoretical perspectives applied to the analysis. I also elaborate on the rationale behind choosing these particular perspectives, and argue for why other theories have been set aside.

⁷The Earth System Governance Project was established in 2009 and is the largest international social science network on sustainability and governance (Earth System Governance Project, 2019). The project focuses its work through five research lenses: Architecture and agency; democracy and power; justice and allocation; anticipation and imagination; and adaptiveness and reflexivity (Earth System Governance Project, 2018). From this, the Earth System Governance literature encompasses multiple theoretical perspectives and methods — not all of which that are feasible or advantageous paths to follow for this study. The thesis concentrates on the work regarding global governance architectures and regime complexes, which provides a constructive and valuable framework for the study of Arctic conferences.

1.2.1 The actor mechanism

Actors with different geographical belonging and sector affiliation are engaged in Arctic governance, and at conferences. While the Arctic Council's eight member states hold a privileged position in the region, a central question is how the actor composition of Arctic governance develops, following the growing interest of non-Arctic state actors in – and increased global significance of – the region. This thesis examines the functions of conferences for stakeholders maneuvering in this dynamic regime complex, and as follows, whether conferences contribute to altering the actor composition of the Arctic. To inquire into the actor mechanism, the stakeholder typology developed by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997), and the epistemic community framework for policy coordination (Haas, 1992) are applied.

Constructivism could be an alternative to examining the actor mechanism, particularly if the main interest was collective identity formation resulting from conference participation (see Adler, 1997; Wendt, 1994, 1999). However, the main purpose of this thesis is not to look at conferences as forums for the unfolding of competing narratives, or solemnly to interpret peoples' actions as a result of embedded social constructs – ideas, beliefs, norms, or identities filtering how they see the world (Parsons, 2018). Rather, it is to examine Arctic conference engagement as a means for actors seeking to realizing their interests and gaining traction for their priorities in the region. This ties to a fundamental methodological difference in the understanding of how knowledge is produced within social sciences.

While this thesis leans on elements of constructivist thinking, and applies the method of participant observation (see Chapter Four, sections 4.2.2 and 4.4.2), it has not been conducted exclusively as an interpretive ethnographical study. The main objective is not uncovering how people understand the world through social constructs and from this arrive at certain actions (Parsons, 2018, 90), or focus solemnly on how processes such as socialization, persuasion, discourse, and norm infusion explain ways in which international governance develops (Haas, 2002, 74). Lastly, constructivism is set aside for this study due to the core claim that states are the principal units of analysis (Wendt, 1994, 385), and the quest for mechanisms through which actors, particularly states, derive meaning from a complex world (Haas, 2002, 74). Transnational governance on the other hand, is characterized by the state not being the main actor involved in rule making (Kalfagianni, Partzsch, & Widerberg, 2020, 75. See also Rosenau, 2006), and the interest in this study is Arctic conferences as stages for a broad variety of actors seeking to influence and engage in regional affairs.

To that end, the choice of looking to stakeholder theory, which has traditionally been applied within business management scholarship (Freeman, 1994; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Mitchell et al., 1997), but also to identify and classify those with legitimate stakes

in natural resource management (Mikalsen & Jentoft, 2001), is grounded in the interest in identifying and classifying stakeholders, examine how central actors⁸ maneuver in the conference realm, and demonstrate how conference participation is a means for actors to acquire missing attributes to climb the ‘salience ladder’⁹. The salience ladder captures valuable elements of self-interests, and allows for broadening the examination of actor behavior beyond those driven by power, norms, and values. Moreover, the clearly visible commercial element of the two cases makes the stakeholder perspective appropriate. To be discussed throughout the thesis, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are largely conducted as ‘businesses’, competing for ‘customers’ (participants), ‘investors’ (sponsors), and ‘networks’ (partners). There are also sizable industry delegations present at these conferences, and it has been noted by informants how non-Arctic states largely utilize these arenas as business networks.

Additionally, because of the large pool of academics, scientists, and institute affiliated attendees at the two cases, the epistemic community framework supplements the stakeholder theory¹⁰. This perspective also allows for examining the unfolding of the science-policy interplay at conferences (see Chapter Eight). From this, the functions of conferences for actors are determined by identifying and ranking legitimate stakeholders, their interests and motives, and tracing conference participation to outcomes for engaged actors (see Chapter Seven)¹¹. Furthermore, I discuss the extent to which conferences can influence the actor composition of the Arctic, by aiding the inclusion and acceptance of new stakeholders, and as such, function as arenas where other entities than Arctic states can exert authority. The diverging underlying philosophies of the two cases, constructed around contrasting perceptions of who should partake in the discussions on the future of the region, is central for this analysis.

1.2.2 The agenda setting mechanism

Arctic conferences stage numerous sessions addressing a variety of topics deemed important by organizers and/or speakers, and conference programs are not designed isolated from developments and unfolding processes in Arctic affairs or international rela-

⁸In their study of what delegates see as the main purpose of the UN climate conferences, Lövbrand, Hjerpe, and Linnér (2017) use three participant categories: states, observers, and media, where the observer category is broken down into the following sub-categories: Environmental NGO representatives, business representatives, researchers, intergovernmental organization representatives, other NGOs (p. 586-587). These categories resemble the seven stakeholder categories identified in this thesis (see Chapter Three, 3.2.1, and Chapter Seven).

⁹See Chapter Three, section 3.2.1. The concepts ‘legitimacy’ and ‘authority’ are also applied to the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit through an institutional theoretical perspective examining dominating institutional logics and organizational fields by Carter, Clegg, and Wählin (2011).

¹⁰The epistemic community framework is also applied in a study of the politics of academic, climate and geopolitical conferences by Craggs and Mahony (2014), where they ask what role conferences have in the “transmission belt” of international knowledge diffusion, and for the performance of ideological positions and identities.

¹¹This analysis supplements the work of Lövbrand et al. (2017), in their examination of delegates’ reasons for attending the UN climate conferences.

tions. Accordingly, the second mechanism of interest is the extent to which conferences are arenas for defining and elevating central issues, and whether conference participation is a means for actors to promote their priorities and have them picked up in other forums. The multiple streams framework (MSF) is applied to examine the agenda setting mechanism through conferences, in addition to elements from the literature on regime complexes and issue formation. The choice of utilizing the MSF is founded in studies urging for applying the literature on agenda setting within governments also to foreign policy analysis¹² (see inter alia Herweg, Zahariadis, & Zohlnhofer, 2018; Capie, 2010; Mazaar, 2007), and the interest in examining whether conferences can be arenas for the flow of the 'three streams', and function as a 'window of opportunity' for advocates of proposals to push their solutions or draw attention to problems.

The literature on Track II diplomacy (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.2) could have been an alternative approach to the agenda setting mechanism. The concept of Track II diplomacy originated in 1982, and has become a key term to describe methods of diplomacy outside formal governmental channels, and non-governmental, informal, and unofficial contacts and activities between non-state actors, e.g. in East and Southwest Asia studies (Capie, 2010, 294). However, it does not capture central elements which can be obtained from the MSF, such as windows of opportunities, focusing events, political convergence, and the 'garbage can' trait of political processes unfolding at conferences (see Carter et al., 2011). Moreover, the Track II diplomacy perspective attends to issues of conflict resolution and how non-state actors and sub-governmental bodies can address issues that are difficult to attend to through the governmental level (Montville, 2006; Ball, Milner, & Taylor, 2006). Yet, the primary interests concerning agenda setting in this study are in how certain issues are picked up and elevated onto the broader agenda, what makes certain issues grab the attention of policy-makers (while others do not), and whether conferences are arenas for these processes.

The multiple streams framework requires some modification to serve purposefully for the examination of the functions the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle serve within the Arctic governance system. Primarily, elements and central actors from national governments need to be translated to those comprising conference sphere. The main interest is not in the legislative and executive branches of an individual government, but rather in how problems are defined within the community of conference participants, and how issues flowing around at conferences are elevated on the agenda in other processes and forums. As such, the thesis contributes to broadening the applicability of the theories by demonstrating how the three streams of the MSF can be found outside national government systems, and how elements and actors from the MSF work through

¹²There is quite an extensive literature applying the agenda setting framework of Kingdon, and also that of Baumgartner & Jones, to EU policy-making and foreign policy conduct. See inter alia Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008; Princen, 2011; Vanhoonacker & Pomorska, 2013.

conferences to influence agenda setting¹³. Conferences' agenda setting functions are determined by comparing issues promoted at conferences (presented in Chapter Five and Six) with those flowing through other processes in Arctic governance (discussed in Chapter Eight). This includes examples of issues that have either spawned from, or been noticeably advanced through promotion, at the Arctic Frontiers and/or Arctic Circle. As with the actor mechanism, the difference in philosophy behind the organization of the two conferences is significant for how they exert influence on the agenda.

1.2.3 The architecture mechanism

The expanding agenda and increased global attention towards the Arctic, have made the governance landscape more complex. To examine the functions of conferences, it is necessary to understand the surrounding architecture. The third mechanism – the Arctic governance architecture – is defined as in the Earth System Governance project: “the overarching system of public and private institutions, principles, norms, regulations, decision-making procedures and organizations that are valid or active in a given area of global governance” (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 4). The concept of architecture is thus broader than international regimes, which are often distinct institutional elements of a larger architecture, and narrower than the notion of an order, through its focus on a particular issue area (Biermann et al., 2009, 16). This macro-level of governance is not a static entity, but fluid and dynamic, and continuously evolving according to external and internal pressures and governance processes (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 4).

Regime theory and the concept of regime complexes are applied to the examination of the structures in which conferences operate, and how conferences function within both the meso-level of organization – the Arctic regime complex – and at the macro level of governance – the architecture as a whole (Gómez-Mera, Morin, & van de Graaf, 2020, 138). Regime theory is considered relevant for this study in light of the extensive literature on institutional linkages at the international level (e.g. Keohane, 1982; Levy, Young, & Zürn, 1995; Young, 1986, 1996; Keohane & Victor, 2011), the call for producing a governance complex for the institutional arrangements of the Arctic (e.g. Young, 2010, 2012b; Rothwell, 2008; Stokke, 2011; Humrich, 2013) – and, lack of insight into the role of conferences within this structure in the Arctic. For this inquiry, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between a regime and a regime complex (see also Chapter Three).

There are different regimes, e.g. 'elemental regimes', which are explicit international legal arrangements (Raustiala & Victor, 2004, 279), and 'international regimes', defined as a set of “implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982, 186). According to Gómez-Mera et al. (2020) however, both

¹³This has also been noted in other studies of conferences, see inter alia Finkle & McIntosh, 2002; Andresen, 2007; Silver, Gray, Campbell, Fairbanks, & Gruby, 2015.

these definitions are problematic in the context of a regime complex, as the elemental regimes constituting a regime complex can themselves be sets of various instruments. Orsini, Morin, and Young (2013) define a regime complex as “a network of three or more international regimes that relate to a common subject matter; exhibit overlapping membership; and generate substantive, normative, or operative interactions recognized as potentially problematic whether or not they are managed effectively” (p. 29). Thus, for most analysts, a regime complex is not a theory or an attribute, but a system of loosely coupled institutions, and the label ‘regime complex’ is appropriate at any level of analysis, as long as institutions are analyzed as a set rather than as unconnected units or a cohesive block (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 139-140). From this, the purpose of this study is to examine how conferences fit within the Arctic regime complex, as part of the connections among the units comprising this system (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 139).

1.3 Literature on Arctic governance and international conferences

The review of the Arctic governance literature (Appendix 6) exposed the necessity of examining conferences as a potential third dimension of Arctic governance, between sovereign states and cooperative arrangements. Several issues were identified as relevant for the study, in examining conferences within the broader Arctic governance architecture, and the following section in particular emphasizes studies on reform and improvement of the fragmented governance system, to support the argument proposed of the need for more research on the broader functions of conferences in the Arctic. Section 1.3.2 accounts for the wider literature on international conferences (see also Appendix 7), to set the stage for analyzing the conference sphere in the Arctic.

I commence section 1.3.2 with a review of literature on conferences as global sites for interaction, including ‘conferencing the international’, conference diplomacy, and the significance of conferences for the development of international cooperation and coordination. Then, I present literature on a selection of conference series, specifically the World Economic Forum, the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN ‘Earth Summits’ (i.e. Stockholm, 1972, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, and Johannesburg, 2002). The choice of singling out these conferences is founded in the argument that they illustrate the significance of conferences for global interaction and the development of international cooperation on issues where collaborative efforts are necessitated. Furthermore, these realms are related to the Arctic conference sphere (to be presented in Chapter Five), and they are relevant for the analysis of the two cases in the study. The WEF resembles the policy-business interface element at the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle, and global environmental conferences are connected to the scientific component and epistemic community at the two cases, in addition to the emphasis on the Arctic Ocean.

1.3.1 Arctic governance – literature review

The Arctic came into strategic focus during the Second World War, when the interdependence between sovereignty and security intensified (Lackenbauer, 2011, 74). The significance of the region was reinforced with the outbreak of the Cold War, when it became geographically positioned between two hostile superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union. Political studies of the Arctic during the Cold War were dominated by realism, focusing on surveillance, projection of power, military rivalry, superpower tensions, and the strategic importance of the region (Østerud & Hønneland, 2014, 166). The breakup of the Soviet Union gave rise to expectations of cooperation and peaceful development in the Arctic, which was made possible largely because of the inclusion of Russia in Circumpolar partnerships (Berkman, 2012, 125).

In the wake of the 2004 *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*, Young (2009) postulated it would be harder to frame a policy agenda in Arctic-specific terms, and that the circle of actors who considers themselves Arctic stakeholders and demand a seat at the table would expand (p. 427-428). More than a decade later, this description of a more globalized Arctic is accurate. Increased attention towards the region, combined with an expanding agenda, demands an efficient governance regime (Rothwell, 2008). Central scholarly debates developed around questions of who should govern the region, with regards to what issues, and how (Ingimundarson, 2014; Keskitalo, 2012; Nord, 2010). Humrich (2013) presents three paths for improving the Arctic governance architecture. Firstly, those advocating for the creation of legal instruments, e.g. a treaty similar to the Antarctic Treaty. Secondly, those exploring the limits and possibilities of the Arctic Council. Thirdly, scholars identifying regulatory gaps in the span of Arctic governance arrangements, suggesting means to fill them, or proposing improvements to the effectiveness of the institutional interplay.

Resulting from the impacts of globalizing forces and coinciding challenges, the geopolitical importance of the Arctic is thoroughly documented, and the region has gained strategic significance in new ways since the 2000s (Ingimundarson, 2015; Keil & Knecht, 2013; Pedersen, 2019; Wegge & Keil, 2018; Østerud & Hønneland, 2014). The debate around how to improve the Arctic governance structure intensified in 2007, when Russia provoked the other Arctic states by planting its flag on Lomonosov Ridge under the North Pole during a research expedition (Koivurova, 2016). The 2008 US Geological Survey (Brid et al., 2008) added to this turning point in Arctic affairs, by highlighting the region's resource potential, and need for regulatory governance (Dodds, 2010). Russia's approach to the Arctic, and relationship with the other Arctic states, have since interested scholars both in Russia and the West¹⁴.

¹⁴See for example: Baev, 2019; Byers, 2017; Huebert, 2014; Ingimundarson, 2009; Jensen, 2017; Jensen & Skedsmo, 2010; Lackenbauer, 2010; Wilson Rowe & Blakkisrud, 2014.

The Russian flag-planting attracted media attention¹⁵, but also catalyzed political action. The five Arctic coastal states: the United States, Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark/Greenland – signed the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008 to reaffirm their commitment to the Law of the Sea, and assert their unique position to address possibilities and challenges in the Arctic Ocean. Dodds (2014) argues the Ilulissat Declaration was an important pre-emptive strike against growing global interests in the Arctic, and a determination to re-territorialize the Arctic Ocean. The Declaration further gave rise to discussions about the Arctic Five club as a challenger or compliment to the Arctic Council (Rossi, 2015; Kuersten, 2016).

The Arctic being identified as a new geo-economical frontier (High Representative and the European Commission, 2008) triggered the debate around the need for an Arctic Treaty as part of the Law of the Sea branch of international law. The EU deemed it as necessary: “the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic, having as its inspiration the Antarctic Treaty” (European Parliament, 2008, Section 15). The Arctic Five however, did not agree. As stated in the Ilulissat Declaration: “We therefore see no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean”.

This discussion also played out in academic circles. On the one side, Rothwell (2008) argued that the time for an overarching binding treaty framework had come. Koivurova (2008) pointed to the negative consequences of climate change and economical globalization for the vulnerable Arctic human and ecological systems if the Arctic Council continued without a legal mandate. On the other side were those arguing against an Arctic Treaty (e.g. Exner-Pirot, 2012; Stokke, 2007), including Oran Young, who rather proposed the development of a regime complex for the Arctic: “a set of distinct elements that deal with a range of related issues in a nonhierarchical but interlocking fashion” (Young, 2012a, 173).

This debate further sparked inquiries into the necessity to reform the Arctic Council. Created in 1996, it is the principal intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the region. Its members comprise of the eight Arctic states, and six Indigenous peoples’ organizations as permanent participants (Arctic Council, 1996, 2020; Bloom, 1999). In addition, non-Arctic states, intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations have been granted observer status. The Arctic Council was a successful establishment, but the effectiveness and functionalities of the organization have still been questioned (Huebert, 1998; Keskitalo, 2004).

Wilson (2016) presents three visions of the Arctic Council’s future: as a society for Arctic states; a steward for the Arctic; or as a fully-fledged security actor within an architecture including an Arctic Treaty. Koivurova (2010) call for a reform to improve

¹⁵Guardian (2007); New York Times (2007).

the Arctic Council's efficiency and effectiveness for it to function in light of governance challenges ahead. Others have focused on the role of observers and involvement of non-Arctic stakeholders (Graczyk & Koivurova, 2013; Stokke, 2011; Young, 2014). The growing interest from outsiders has also led to studies of the agenda behind their engagement, and consequences of increased activity in the Arctic¹⁶.

Moreover, non-Arctic states engaging in the region poses the question of whether the Arctic should be considered a globally embedded space rather than a distinct political entity, which would question the exclusiveness of the Arctic Eight/Five (Keil & Knecht, 2017). This relates to the contrasting interpretations presented by Young (2013), between those rooted in a neo-realist/geopolitical paradigm, and those within a socio-ecological paradigm (see also Koivurova & Nilsson, 2016). The narrative of the Arctic is relevant in this context. The realist perspective focuses on sovereignty and security, and "who owns the Arctic?" (Byers, 2009). The rhetoric revolves around the emergence of a "new cold war", a "race for resources", "scramble" or "battle" for the Arctic (Griffiths, Huebert, & Lackenbauer, 2011; Pincus & Ali, 2016). The counter-narrative to these sombre postulations about the "region of rivalry" is the Arctic as a "zone of peace" or "territory of dialogue" (Exner-Pirot & Murray, 2017; Young, 2011a).

In summary, Arctic governance is a dynamic field, impacted by the bio-physical changes of the region, as well as international political developments. It combines hard and soft law arrangements, and different stakeholder groups with at times diverging interests. From the establishment of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy in 1991 and the Arctic Council in 1996, the formalization of the governance system culminating with the establishment of the Arctic Council's secretariat in 2011, and the Arctic community has settled within this structure. However, the observer role of the Arctic Council, and who should be considered legitimate stakeholders, are still pertinent issues. The discussion is about what and whom to govern, not how. Thus, the Arctic Council is increasingly challenged by a growing stakeholder pool, bidding for a more meaningful position.

¹⁶See for example: Babin & Lasserre, 2019; Bekkevold & Offerdal, 2014; M. Bennett, 2014, 2015; Depledge & Dodds, 2014; Hsiung, 2016; Offerdal, 2011; Pelaudeix & Rodon, 2013; Peng & Wegge, 2015; Solli, Rowe, & Lindgren, 2013.

1.3.2 International conferences – literature review

Following the main purpose of this study – to situate ‘hybrid’ policy-science-business conferences (see Chapter Five, section 5.6) within the Arctic governance complex – and not necessarily distinguish Arctic conferences from other issue- or region-specific conferences, this is not an exhaustive account of the literature on the full spectrum of international conferences. Rather, a selection has been made regarding some deemed relevant for contextualizing this study. Specifically, what has been the focal points in other studies on conferences that are thematically linked to the Arctic conference sphere?

1.3.2.1 Conferences as global sites for interaction

Conferences are central for the creation and maintenance of international cooperation and collaboration, in areas such as environmental policy, efforts to address the impacts of climate change, peace and security, and economic and social issues. This trend was accelerated following the end of the Cold War, which spurred a rise in the number of international conferences, as it was no longer necessary to block such gatherings on political grounds (Kaufmann, 1996). Conferences became supplements to bilateral diplomacy, and important for the achievement of foreign policy aims, and Kaufmann (1996) argues conference diplomacy¹⁷, more so than traditional means of diplomacy, provides for ‘back-channel’ negotiations or contacts. This unease is also evident among Arctic state actors, who are concerned that conferences could be a ‘back-channel’ into the Arctic governance system for Asian states in particular. This thesis examines whether, and if so how, there is substance to this concern with regards to the activities of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly.

An earlier, related study is that of Rittberger (1983) mentioned in the introduction, who poses the question of whether global conference diplomacy¹⁸ matter in world politics, through an examination of issue-oriented ad hoc UN world conferences as part of the third postwar wave of global institution building. Rittberger argues that an examination of the development of international conferences can contribute to shed light on the transformation of the political system of international relations taking place between the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) and the era of the United Nations. He makes an interesting point in that a multiparty conference engages a variety of formal and informal participants in negotiations, and consists of ‘conferences within the conference’ (p. 170). This finding relates to the interest in examining the significance of side-events and side meetings taking place outside the official program at Arctic conferences.

¹⁷Kaufmann (1996) defines conference diplomacy as “that part of the management of relations between governments and of relations between governments and international organizations that takes place in international conferences” (p. 7).

¹⁸Rittberger (1983) defines conference diplomacy as implying a “multilateralization of diplomatic intercourse through the institution of multiparty conferences” (p. 170).

Going even further back, to the post-World War I era, the term ‘conferencing the international’ is applied within the field of political geography to gain insight into how the different forms of internationalism that developed after the First World War can be understood through their spaces of international conferencing¹⁹ (see inter alia Hodder, 2015). Conferences are understood not only as stages for political theatre, but also sites where internationalism was imagined, negotiated, and contested. Hodder (2015) concludes the case in his study – the World Pacifist Meeting of 1949 – should be considered a stage-managed event, that was “framed, performed, and scripted to project a particular vision of internationalism”. He also calls for expanding the field of study beyond traditional ‘high summitry’ spaces towards a fuller consideration of the varied forms of conferencing, and points to the attraction and unfinished potential of conferencing the international, from the pivotal role of the G8, G20, “Earth Summits”, Climate Change Conferences, or World Economic Forum (p. 48).

Other studies, centered around the nature of conferences, include that of Elton (1983), suggesting that conferences are – or should be – educational experiences. Skelton (1997) questions the nature of contemporary conferences, and argues that most conferences are driven by economic forces – performance and accountability – and have lost sight of their educational potential. In another commentary, Hickson (2006) argues that the value of attending professional conferences is to become and remain professional in the discipline, and discusses the value of various conference activities. Craggs and Mahony (2014) have conducted an interesting study relevant for this thesis, in which they examine academic, climate, and geopolitical conferences as sites for knowledge production, geopolitical and diplomatic performance, and for protest. They apply a broader understanding of conferences (inequivalent to meetings, conventions, and congresses) as “periodic or one-off gatherings of peoples – often professionals, experts and those in positions of power – drawn from diverse places and organizations, with aims of producing knowledge or agreement on particular topics” (Craggs & Mahony, 2014, 415).

This definition aligns with that applied in this thesis. Moreover, several findings in the study of ‘the geographies of the conference’ are interesting for the following discussion of the two cases in the empirical chapters. For one, how the concept of an epistemic community usefully sheds light on the importance of social ties and identities in the creation and diffusion of knowledge, consensus, and authority²⁰ (Craggs & Mahony, 2014, 420). This is attended to in chapters seven and eight. Secondly, the emphasis on conference geographies (beyond the venue) – and how conferences contribute to legitimization by assigning status and power to the host state (Craggs & Mahony, 2014, 422) is of in-

¹⁹E.g. the Round Table Conferences, the Pan-African Congresses, and the International Studies conferences.

²⁰Craggs and Mahony (2014) however also point to the limitations of the epistemic community concept, and warn against considering conferences as waypoints in the production of global knowledge diffusion between distinct epistemic communities. They argue for rather attending to the geographies of competing and clashing knowledge claims, originating in different webs of association (Craggs & Mahony, 2014, p. 420).

terest for this study. The thesis seeks to examine whether and how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle can function as stages for Norway and Iceland to position respectively Tromsø and Reykjavik as central hubs in the Arctic region.

1.3.2.2 The World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum was founded as the European Management Forum in 1971 – a non-profit organization with its headquarter outside of Geneva – and was initially attended by participants from West-European companies (Pigman, 2007). The first politicians were invited in 1974, following founder Professor Klaus Schwab launching his ‘stakeholder model’, arguing NGOs, governments, and businesses can be stakeholders with respect to the same issues, and therefore need to meet at times (Pigman, 2007). This stakeholder model is in sharp resemblance with the philosophy of Icelandic President Grímsson, when launching the Arctic Circle Assembly at the Washington Press Club in April 2013: all who consider themselves stakeholders in the Arctic should be included in the dialogue about the region’s future development (Grímsson, 2013).

The WEF has developed into one of the most important global NGOs, and has become important for shaping global economic and security. It is attended by CEOs, politicians, NGO representatives, and academics (Garsten & Sörbom, 2016). Attracting the most influential international corporations and business leaders, and operating as a platform for networking, influencing, and market exchange, the WEF has also received its fair share of criticism: seen as a cocktail party, a secret society, and as operating in the gray areas of the intersection of politics and business (Garsten & Sörbom, 2016). Accordingly, the World Economic Forum²¹ is linked to the conferences in this thesis through the interest in examining whether they too are perceived to have an elitist character, or whether there are different criticisms associated with these arenas.

Graz (2003) uses the WEF as a case to analyze transnational elite clubs, and applies the concepts of social myths (forged by Georges Sorel) and hegemonic power (from a neo-Gramscian perspective). He argues transnational elite clubs, such as the annual gathering in Davos, provide informal platforms for networking and negotiations, but that their role in the public sphere is limited by their lack of legitimacy and accountability. Graz (2003) concludes the World Economic Forum produces merely managerial outcomes, and calls for engagement with formal processes of political institutionalization and the role of the state.

In stark opposition, Fougner (2008) addresses not the limitations of the World Economic Forum, but the limitations of Graz’ (and others’) argument. From a productive and discursive conception of power, embedded in an analysis of a broader set of

²¹Other scholarly work done on the World Economic Forum is the study by Elias (2013) of how the WEF (founded in neoliberalism) has represented gender issues (from a post-feminist perspective), and the examination of how hosting an event of this kind influences a destination’s image (see Erfurt & Johnsen, 2003).

governmental practices central to contemporary world politics, Fougner (2008) arrives at a different conclusion about the WEF. He points to the successful contributions of the WEF in constituting a global, depoliticized marketplace, how the WEF has contributed to guiding state actions through norms and standards, and has promoted global problem solving through new forms of government. The public-private dimension and the business-policy element of the World Economic Forum are also of interest when examining the two hybrid conferences in this study.

1.3.2.3 UN environmental and sustainability conferences

This pool of conferences is represented by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)²², and the ‘Earth Summits’: the UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002)²³, and the ‘Rio +20 – aimed at reconciling the economic and the environmental goals of the global community. The ‘Earth Summits’ and the COP15 in Copenhagen (2009) are examined by Death (2011) as political theaters and ‘exemplary centers’ for persuading a global audience that political elites are serious about sustainable development or climate change (p. 2).

From this, Death (2011) argues the theatrical dimension of mega-conferences²⁴ (Seyfang, 2003) plays a key role in governing the conduct of global policy, even in the absence of new agreements or environmental regimes resulting from the summit. Death’s argument is founded in the theoretical context of Foucauldian governmentality, but also points to political economy, or neo-Gramscian accounts, which have elements in common with a Foucauldian perspective – emphasizing how summits function as structures for the fixation of political and economic interests through ideological and rhetorical means. However, Death (2011) argues these perspectives are insufficient in that they regard summits as failures unless they ‘change the material balance of power’, which underestimates the importance of their theatricality as a technique for the conduct of global politics and diplomacy.

²²At the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992 two UN conventions were signed: the Biodiversity Convention, and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), which a Conference of the Parties (COP) had to be convened to plan for further development and implementation. The first – COP1 – was held in Berlin in 1995, the second in Geneva in 1996, and the third – producing the Kyoto Protocol – in December 1997. Since, there has been several COP summits, most recently planned: the COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.

²³At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, public-private partnerships were officially introduced as a new tool of global governance, and an official Summit outcome, and thus broke with the prevailing *inter-governmental* system of sovereign states (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 79).

²⁴See also Boyle and Haggerty (2009) for a study of mega-events (e.g. the Olympics, World Exhibitions, and the FIFA World Cup), which finds that they produce a wider international legacy of knowledge, networks, and habits beyond the event itself.

Death (2011) concludes the forms of exemplary government at the summits suggest “an evolving role for multilateral summitry as a technique of global governance”, and that both state and non-state actors can use these stages as sites for advertising and branding (p. 13). Most importantly, this form of government is particularly effective in terms of constructing sustainable subjects and disciplining participation and engagement (Death, 2011, 15). Prioritized actors are those who are visible and high up in the hierarchy, with access to media networks, and cooperative and consensual actors who follow agreed upon rules of conduct. This finding is linked to the interest in examining whether Arctic conferences can function as arenas of global governance, specifically, to promote sustainable behavior and give rise to shared norms and expectations of behavior.

Another study connected to findings presented in this thesis is that of Lövbrand et al. (2017) – concerning actors’ motivations for attending conferences. Informed by anthropological studies, the authors examine the significance of the UN climate summitry in a polycentric regime complex for climate change, focusing on social relationships through the making of ‘global connections’ between local and global forces. Through a questionnaire survey at the UN climate conferences in 2013-2015, the authors unravel what government delegates and non-state observers see as the main purpose of the summit, and their own role at the gathering. Most agree the primary purpose is to negotiate a legally binding climate treaty, but the reasons why people attend largely depend on their affiliation’s interests and personal motivations. While negotiators attend as representatives for their governments, an interesting finding is that ‘influencing global climate policy’ was the least common reason to attend for this group, which rather used the conferences as information channels, for networking, and establishing contacts (Lövbrand et al., 2017, 591). The reasons participants have for attending the UNFCCC is discussed in detail related to different participant groups’ motivations for attending Arctic conferences advanced from the empirical material in Chapter Seven.

The Copenhagen 2009 climate change summit is subject for the study of Carter et al. (2011), where they examine why this conference failed to create international legitimacy and order. The authors demonstrate how there was lack of ‘political convergence’: the degree to which policies on climate change overlapped with other public policy areas (p. 683). Carter et al. (2011) also discuss the lack of a ‘focusing event’ (see also Herweg et al., 2018), resulting in climate change being perceived more as an abstract projection rather than an impending catastrophe, and while climate science was gaining structure, the politics surrounding it was more rudimentary. Most noteworthy for this study, Carter et al. (2011) argue political processes at such summits can be linked to the garbage can model (of Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972), where “problems, policies, and politics sometimes converge, but more often than not attach themselves randomly and independently of each other” (p. 684). This is of interest for the examination of whether and how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle can be arenas for the flow of the three

streams of the multiple streams framework, and thus contribute to the agenda setting process in the region.

Considering their locations and the national interests of Norway and Iceland, the two cases in this study are expected to have a core attention towards ocean related issues. This is also a generally pertinent conference topic. The Rio +20 Summit in 2012 was the first international conference where ‘blue growth’ received mass attention, and in 2015 there was a stream of international conferences (e.g. The Economist Group’s World Ocean Summits, the #OurOcean conferences organized by the US State Department, and the UNFCCC series) on this issue, with participants from policy, environmental NGOs, the financial sector (Barbesgaard, 2018, 130-132). To that end, Silver et al. (2015) examine how four competing discourses about human-ocean relations and the ‘blue economy’ were present at the Rio +20 Summit: the oceans as natural capital, good business, integral to Pacific SIDS, or as small-scale fisheries livelihood.

In addition to the above excerpt of the literature on global environmental policy and sustainability conferences, there are several more descriptive studies on the UN Climate Conferences, especially within law and environmental management, outlining key policy issues under negotiation, the position and preferences of key states and coalitions, outcomes, failures, and possible ways forward (see inter alia Cicin-Sain & Knecht, 1993; Barratt-Brown, Hajost, & Sterne, 1993; Gray, 2003; Andresen, 2007; Dimitrov, 2010; Campbell, Corson, Gray, MacDonald, & Brosius, 2014).

Moreover, Finkle and McIntosh (2002) examines the UN’s population conferences and their role in shaping the policy agenda. Elements from the latter can be applied to the study of Arctic conferences, especially Finkle and McIntosh’s account for the emergence of transnational advocacy networks, how they can exert influence on the decision-making process, and the discussion of expert contributions by NGOs. Transnational advocacy networks differ from international organizations in that they are motivated by values and “principled ideas” rather than professional norms or material considerations. Their purpose is to influence policy outcomes, create new issues, or re-frame old to change the debate. The emergence of interest group coalitions is closely related to the increased complexity of the globalized system.

Lastly, unrelated to the conferences discussed above, but nonetheless relevant for this thesis is the study conducted by Johannsdottir and Cook (2017): a discourse analysis of the Arctic Circle Assembly programs from 2013-2016. They find a strong presence of universities and researchers, followed by representatives from government, industry, and institutions, at the conference. Moreover, discussions are often polarized between environmental, social and economic interests – that is, topics are not discussed from a sustainable perspective. They conclude that many of the sessions include like-minded actors, instead of constructive dialogue evolving between different types of stakeholders.

1.4 Ambitions of the study

Seeing how there is lack of research on the attributes of, or the wider effects of, conferences in the Arctic, this in-depth case study of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly is unique in its kind. The study provides insight into the organizers' ambitions and intentions when arranging the conferences, in addition to examining how these international arenas can serve the broader geopolitical, economic, and diplomatic interests of Norway and Iceland (see Chapter Six). From this, the study seeks to expand the Arctic governance literature, by contributing with research on a new phenomenon – conferences – as elements within this system. Depledge and Dodds (2017) suggest two avenues of further research. Firstly, to examine how far ideas and relations that have been pushed and established at the Arctic Circle since 2013 have traveled. Secondly, to survey presenters and participants at the Arctic Circle, to delimit what they are looking to promote or gain at the forum, the strategies they deploy, and difficulties they face in achieving desired outcomes.

This thesis examines whether conferences serve as purposeful arenas for engaged stakeholders in the Arctic to advance and realize their interests. Thus, while I have not applied the survey method, I hope to convincingly illustrate participants' motivations and expectations for engagement through the interview material presented in Chapter Seven. Secondly, the thesis compares issues promoted at the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle to pertinent agenda items in other processes and entities in Chapter Eight, with the aim to examine connections between what happens at conferences and other developments. This in order to shed light on whether conference organizers and participants can contribute to influence regional agenda setting. Thirdly, also drawing on the Earth System Governance literature, the thesis analyzes what, if any, the functions of conferences are within the Arctic regime complex, and the broader governance architecture.

Despite the contributions presented above – as well as others – Arctic conferences have thus far received less attention among conference scholars. As such, this thesis also aims at contributing to the literature on conferences, by enhancing our knowledge of Arctic conferences, operating in the intersection between sovereign states and cooperative arrangements. The outline of the mechanisms in section 1.2 indicated how this study applies a novel theoretical framework, and thus a new perspective, on conferences, their outcomes, and broader functions.

This project also seeks to make an empirical contribution to the field of conference research. To my knowledge, there has been no systematic mapping of the Arctic conference sphere, as the one presented in Chapter Five (see also Appendix 8). Chapter Five presents the spread of Arctic conferences, their characteristics, dominating topics, intended purpose, and how they have developed over time. The study not only aims to shed light on the growth in numbers of conferences on Arctic issues, but also to link this

evolution to central processes internationally, as well as events in Arctic affairs. This undertaking contributes to situating conferences within the broader governance system. By drawing attention to conferences and developments beyond the two arenas included in the case study, this project aims at fleshing out conferences as a third dimension of a governance architecture. Furthermore, through the examination of two seemingly alike, but in many ways heterogeneous conferences, and their relevance for Arctic policy, science, and business development, the thesis aims to shed light on key aspects of hybrid conferences in general.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The following chapter continues to frame the research by defining the scope of Arctic governance. The theoretical framework of Chapter Three introduces concepts and models through which to analyze and explain the conferences in this study. I present claims about the functions of conferences within Arctic governance, to be explored throughout the thesis. In Chapter Four, the methodological approach and research design applied in the study are presented, and I elaborate on the research setting, the data collection and data analysis processes. Chapter Five commences the empirical part of the thesis. It presents the Arctic conference sphere in detail, drawing up developments from the 1970s, and linking the conference realm to international events and processes.

The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly are presented comprehensively in Chapter Six, focusing on background and organization, strengths and weaknesses of the two arenas. This chapter also establishes the main differences between the conferences, which are relevant when establishing and discussing their functions within Arctic governance. The theoretical framework is applied to the empirical material in chapters seven through nine, respectively focusing on actors operating in the conference realm, agenda setting, and the Arctic governance architecture. Based on the presentation and analysis of the empirical material, Chapter Ten concludes on the functions and outcomes of conferences through the mechanisms, and on the main contributions of this study for the Arctic governance literature and conference research.

Arctic Governance: Actors, processes, and structures

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze how conferences function within the Arctic governance architecture. To that end, the two cases are considered part of a constant flow of processes in the Arctic and in international affairs. This flow includes the actions of international institutions and organizations – e.g. the Arctic Council, the European Union, the United Nations, and NATO. It entails bi- and multilateral relationships, science cooperation, negotiations, task forces, agreements, joint military exercises, and people-to-people cooperation. The chain of Arctic events is also susceptible to changes in national political administrations, state policies, the issuing of strategies, and unilateral actions. Sometimes individuals can spark transformations in the flow and alter how actors interact – illustrated by former Icelandic president Olafur Ragnar Grímsson's initiative to establish the Arctic Circle Assembly.

Accordingly, the Arctic governance architecture consists of a patchwork of institutions and instruments at multiple levels, which are convened around the shared objective of promoting peace and cooperation. The foremost purpose of this chapter is providing background for the study by fleshing out the dependent variable – Arctic governance – in order to situate conferences within this system. The chapter commences with conceptualizing governance and regime complexes, as understood in the Earth System Governance literature and regime theory. This is followed by a presentation of hard-law and soft-law instruments available for states, including formal and non-official diplomatic channels, which is linked to the literature on science (and Track II) diplomacy. This contributes to set the stage for analyzing whether and how conferences can function as arenas for deliberation among actors engaged in Arctic affairs.

Then I turn to the Arctic governance system, discussing the nature of geopolitics, where the classical geopolitical paradigm is pitted against the critical geopolitical perspective, and the view of the Arctic as a global commons. The section proceeds by presenting key stakeholders – the Arctic states, non-Arctic and non-state actors – and their main interests in the region. This is followed by an inventory of organizations, arrangements, and agreements. I focus primarily on the Arctic Council – the salient intergovernmental forum for Arctic cooperation – but also account for other arrangements constituting the system in which to situate conferences: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, bodies for Barents and Nordic cooperation, the Arctic Economic Council, the Arctic Science Ministerial, and the International Code of Safety for Ships Operating in Polar Waters.

Biermann and Kim (2020b) contend that complex institutional settings, seen as governance architectures, have become more widespread in scholarly work in recent years, and argue we cannot make sense of the functions of components of the global governance system without understanding it as a whole. Thus, the purpose of this inventory is to portray a picture of the governance landscape in which the two cases are situated, as suggested in the Earth System Governance literature. The aim is to present the objectives and intents of arrangements and multilateral agreements, and perhaps most importantly: what they do not accomplish. This to unfold how conferences are utilized by other entities in the Arctic governance complex, and how they can function as supplements to the tasks other entities fail to fulfill. This presentation sets the stage for the analysis of conferences through the mechanisms. It questions the ability of excising arrangements and agreements to deal with all emerging issues and interests, and supports the argument that the dynamic and multidimensional platform provided by conferences has contributed to a broader and refocused agenda in the Arctic, and a stage for actors to launch ideas that are brought forward in other processes. Finally, it contributes to the examination of whether conferences have contributed to altering the Arctic governance landscape. Accordingly, of particular interest moving forward are the broader functions of conferences, and their potential significance for interactions and developments, within the Arctic governance architecture.

2.2 Conceptualizing governance and regime complexes

Governance is the sum of many ways *individuals and institutions*, public and private, *manage their common affairs*. It is a *continuing process* through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action taken. It includes *formal* institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as *informal* arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest (Commission on Global Governance, 1995, 4. Emphasis added).

Governance encompasses multiple dimensions, with diverse meanings¹ (Rhodes, 1996), and conceptualizing governance is no straight-forward endeavor. At the most general level, it is the process of interaction and decision-making among actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions (Hufty, 2011, 405). According to Young (1997): “governance arises as a matter of public concern whenever the members of a social group find that

¹Rhodes (1996) summarizes characteristics of governance as: 1) interdependence between organizations, including non-state actors, 2) continuing interactions between network members, caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes, 3) relationships rooted in trust and regulated by rules negotiated and agreed upon by participants in the network, and 4) a significant degree of autonomy from the state (p. 660).

they are interdependent” (p. 3). Interdependence can give rise to conflict and generate collective-action problems, but also emerge as a basis for cooperation leading to interactive decision-making. Interdependence is central for the application of governance in this study, as a key characteristic of relations in the Arctic, where joint efforts are necessary to address governance challenges such as dealing with the impacts of climate change, social and economic development.

Significant changes in the governance literature followed the end of the Cold War, as scholars re-examined the global order and governance processes. In particular, dealing with environmental concerns contributed to the idea of a global civil society, and to systematic consideration of institutional linkages and the ways individual regimes are embedded in larger institutional structures (Charnovitz, 1995; Lipschutz, 1996; Rosenau, Czempiel, & Smith, 1992; Young, 1997). The notion of *governance without government* developed in the 1990s, as an alternative to the top-down governmental control through authoritative decisions with claims to legitimacy. Thus, while government is activities backed by formal (state) authority, governance includes activities backed by shared goals, and the key issue in distinguishing between the concepts is the weight given to social institutions in ameliorating or solving collective action problems (Rhodes, 1996; Rosenau, 1992; Young, 1997).

The theoretical and analytical focus from government to governance entails a shift from structures to processes, and that political authority has become multileveled, operating through network configurations. Private actors and sub-national groups are just as important as traditional centers of authority, which blurs the line between public and private (Walters, 2004). Governance is from this understanding based on voluntary compliance, and conflicts are solved by negotiations (Börzel & Risse, 2010). However, a weak spot in the governance literature is that of accountability (Peters & Pierre, 1998, 228), which is a relevant issue for the discussion of conferences as possible arenas for creating responsible stakeholders (see Chapter Seven). The new governance model seeks to replace political power derived from legal mandates or elected office with an entrepreneurial style of leadership – diffusing the linkage between control and accountability. The question is whether actors can be held accountable if they have limited or no control over decisions and outcomes?

Looking at the Arctic governance system, understood from the characteristics above, many of the challenges today stem from the fact that the Arctic governance architecture reflects conditions prevailing in the 1990s, when Arctic affairs was uncontroversially entrusted to the Arctic states, and the agenda centered around environmental protection and sustainable development (Young, 2019). Since, the impacts of climate change, accelerating unwanted transformations of the Arctic’s biophysical systems, and the potential for resource extraction drawing the attention of great powers such as China, Russia, and the US, have made the Arctic and the global agenda merge with regards

to political economy and challenges of climate change (Young, 2019). This poses the question of the need for an update of the Arctic governance structure, regarding actor involvement, the mandate of arrangements, and role differentiation and coordination.

To embark on the examination of how conferences can contribute to solving these challenges within Arctic governance, it is necessary to establish the lens through which to view this architecture. There are different approaches to the study on international governance, including the Earth System Governance literature, and research on regime complexes² – both in which this thesis finds support. The underlying conviction of Earth System Governance scholars is that international institutions do not exist in a void, and cannot be analyzed without considering the complex web they operate within – which has become referred to as governance architectures (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 1-2). A global governance architecture consists of building blocks (e.g. international institutions/regimes, transnational institutions and networks), structural features (e.g. inter-linkages between institutions, regime complexes, and degrees of fragmentation), and policy responses (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 7).

While drawing on several of these elements, this thesis specifically zooms in on the structural feature regime complexes. Young (2019) argues for regime complex research as being particularly interesting for the discussion of Arctic governance, and this thesis understands the Arctic as a regime complex: “a network of three or more international regimes that relate to a common subject matter; exhibit overlapping membership; and generate substantive, normative, or operative interactions recognized as potentially problematic whether or not they are managed effectively” (Orsini et al., 2013, 29). A regime complex can be usefully conceptualized as an open system that is sufficiently held together to be recognizable, but not completely detached from the rest of global governance (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 138).

In closing, for the examination of conferences within the Arctic regime complex, the Arctic governance system is understood as follows. For one, it is a dynamic process of interaction and attempts at problem solving of shared challenges – evolving as new issues are introduced to the agenda. Questions of interest are whether conferences contribute to altering the way actors interact, and the functions of conferences as arenas for promoting or introducing issues. Moreover, governance comprise a broad scope of actors considered relevant: state and non-state, Arctic and non-Arctic. To be demonstrated throughout the thesis, conferences are arenas for the cooperative and conflictual

²See Chapter One, section 1.2.3, and also Gómez-Mera et al. (2020) or Orsini et al. (2013), for a distinction between a regime and a regime complex, and the difference between an elemental regime (Raustiala & Victor, 2004) and an international regime (Krasner, 1982). See also Levy et al. (1995) for adjusted definition of Krasner’s, arguing for regimes to be “social institutions that consist of agreed upon principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures and programs that govern the interactions of actors in specific issue areas” (p. 274). These are distinct from international organizations (material entities), the broader structure of international society, consisting of “encompassing principles of conduct valid across all issue areas”, and from the world order, which “encompasses the sum of all institutional arrangements operative at the international level” (Levy et al., 1995, 274).

interplay between different actors. Governance is considered a network configuration of interdependent members who interact regularly to manage common affairs and solve collective problems. The remainder of this chapter, and Chapter Nine in particular, zoom in on this element of the definition. I demonstrate how conferences are arenas for the establishment and maintenance of networks, collaboration, and sharing of best practices. Lastly, governance is a system evolved around shared norms, agreed upon rules of conduct, and social institutions, and the thesis examines whether conferences contribute to the establishment of such measures.

2.2.1 Hard law and soft law instruments

Arctic governance comprise of soft law arrangements, such as the Arctic Council, as well as international treaties and conventions – e.g. the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears, and the UNCLOS. States may want to manage relations through hard law because it enhances credible commitments from others by increasing the cost of withdrawal – either by legal sanctions, or by damaging a state’s reputation for violating agreements. Hard law instruments are advantageous because they can have legal effects in national jurisdictions, create mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing commitments over time, and reduce transaction costs of future interactions (Shaffer & Pollack, 2010, 717-718). By contrast, soft law are normative, non-legally binding instruments. Soft law can be considered a tool of compromise, either at a point in time (as the only viable option), over time, or between weak and strong states (Abbott & Snidal, 2000).

The establishment of the Arctic Council as an intergovernmental forum in 1996 illustrates such a compromise. Just five years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States was reluctant towards the creation of an international organization with a legal personality, and only agreed to join after the proposed powers of the Arctic Council had been substantially reduced (Huebert, 2011, 24). The benefits of soft law instruments are that they are easier and entail less costly negotiating processes, there is greater flexibility to deal with uncertainty and for learning over time, and there are lower sovereignty costs for states in sensitive issue areas (Shaffer & Pollack, 2010, 719). Disadvantages are that enhanced state sovereignty is traded for collective oversight, and lower short-term transaction costs and less bureaucracy is achieved at the expense of centralized capacity and stability. Also, while informal arrangements are often preferred when addressing high uncertainty, they are weaker than formal organizations in managing routine problems (Vabulas & Snidal, 2013, 209-211).

2.2.2 Science diplomacy and Track II diplomacy

Diplomacy is one of the tools available for states, both for resolving differences, and as a discourse of recognition and authority to “exclude non-sovereign others” (McConnell et

al., 2012, 804). Diplomatic theory within IR has traditionally followed the realist/idealist divide, where the former consider diplomacy as another form of force in the national interest, while idealists consider it to be a tool for conflict resolution and promotion of peace (McConnell et al., 2012, 805). However, there has been developments towards increased focus on different modes of diplomacy (drawing on ideas of soft-power), and also a broadening of the type of actors engaged in diplomatic practices – expanding the concept of diplomacy beyond ‘high politics’ and state formalities (Ibid).

Science diplomacy is an example of a soft-law instrument applied to the role of science, technology, and innovation in three areas of policy: informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice, facilitate international science cooperation, and using science cooperation to improve international relations between states (Royal Society, 2010, 15). These areas are related to three dimensions of this structure. Firstly, science in diplomacy – the scientific consultations by experts for policymakers. Secondly, diplomacy for science – political and diplomatic initiatives aimed at achieving joint research projects. Thirdly, science for diplomacy – the soft power approach states follow through strengthening their scientific capabilities, achieve attraction, and develop the ability to shape preferences and policy (Royal Society, 2010; Ruffini, 2017).

Accordingly, there are ‘non-official’ diplomatic channels that provide for confidence building and conflict resolution among states – Track II diplomacy – to consider when examining international relations (Feng, 2018, 60). Following the end of the Cold War, Track II diplomacy functioned as an effective testing ground for policy entrepreneurs and the epistemic community to launch new ideas and proposals (Feng, 2018, 61). Track II diplomacy – the process through which the work of sub-governmental bodies assists official leaders – is applied to issues that are difficult to solve at the governmental level, and has been applied to the examination of both cooperative economic development and peace building (Montville, 2006).

In their review of Track II security dialogue scholarship, Ball et al. (2006) emphasize similar contributions: Track II security dialogue processes serve useful sources of advice to governments, they provide ‘laboratories for generating and testing ideas, offers alternatives when progress at the first track level has stalled or deadlocked, and lastly, performs a range of ‘socializing’ functions (p. 179-180). Ball et al. (2006) also summarize the critical side of the debate, where skeptics emphasizes the limits of Track II security processes. Namely, they have become too closely aligned with Track I, they have failed to include the Track 3³, and lastly, the inability to react quickly on pressing issues, and that when Track I institutions develop their own expertise, the need for assistance from the second track is likely to subside (Ball et al., 2006, 181-182).

Moreover, in a study of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Stud-

³Track 3 is defined as those organizations and institutions, including academics and NGOs, who are active in a domain, but that are not directly concerned with influencing official government policies (Ball et al., 2006, 176).

ies, and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, Capie (2010) finds that there is actually little evidence for the claim that Track II networks have significantly altered Track I institutions in East Asia. He demonstrates how the literature in both camps – constructivists and institutionalists who argue Track II networks are important for transmitting norms, promoting cooperation and trust building, and altering state behavior, and the realist literature asserting Track II networks are irrelevant to regional security – are based in the same empirical evidence from research originating in the early and mid-1990s (Capie, 2010, 292-293). Capie (2010) concludes that “sweeping claims about track two’s importance in the formulation of shared norms or the broaching of sensitive political issues do not seem to stand up to closer inspection” (p. 311).

Thus, while there is a large body of literature on non-official diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region, the relevance of Track II diplomacy for this study is found in the specification emphasized by Ball et al. (2006). Namely, while the term Track II has a generally accepted meaning in the Asia-Pacific region as policy advocacy and direct participation in the policy making process, this is not necessarily synonymous with the application of the term in other regions (p. 175). In Europe and North-America, Track II mechanisms are more related to information exchange and the general discussion of policy issues. Conferences can purposefully be examined as arenas for these activities, which this thesis attends to in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Nonetheless, Capie (2010) calls for the need to get a deeper understanding of the interactive relationship between structural change, agents, and norm diffusion, and suggests the literature on agenda setting within governments – i.e. Kingdon’s multiple streams framework presented in Chapter Three of this thesis – can potential offer insight transferrable to foreign policy behavior⁴. From this suggestion, the thesis explores the conference sphere through the three streams of the multiple streams framework, which is applied in Chapter Eight to examine how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly can function as agenda setting arenas for the community of engaged actors.

2.3 Defining the scope of Arctic governance

The Cold War was a conducive period for the internationalism of science and the development of founding initiatives in the history of science diplomacy (Ruffini, 2017, 23). The signing of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy in 1991 can be considered a legacy of this period. Since the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996, the Arctic has been a region of cooperation, where peace and stability prevail despite tensions elsewhere in international affairs. Moreover, the interests of international institutions and organizations towards the Arctic has expanded since the end of the Cold War, which

⁴See also Mazaar (2007) for a demonstration of the utility of the agenda setting framework in examining foreign policy behavior in a study of the Iraq war.

has increased the number of engaged actors – who also partake at conferences. This in sum has contributed to stretching the boundaries of the region, both concerning who are considered Arctic players, and regarding issues on the agenda. As such, the Arctic – formerly envisaged as wilderness – has been reshaped and constructed as a social and inhabited area in need of governing (Albert & Vasilache, 2018, 13). Today, the interplay between governance and governing in the Arctic occurs at multiple levels (see Heininen, Exner-Pirot, & Plouffe, 2015), and a central component of Arctic governance is that it encompasses all levels of law (see Koivurova, Keskitalo, & Bankes, 2009).

Accordingly, there is a multitude of forums in the region working towards common goals – e.g. environmental protection, mitigating the effects of climate change, (responsible) socio-economic development, and community well-being. From this, rather than considering Arctic governance a hierarchy with the Arctic Council on top, the system should be conceptualized as a web, with the Arctic Council in the middle (Exner-Pirot, 2016). This argument is supported by the fact that the Arctic Council does not have the mandate nor the membership to manage the totality of the Arctic regime complex (see section 2.3.5 and Chapter Nine, section 9.3.1). Secondly, by the creation of related bodies, such as the Arctic Economic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, who coordinate their activities around the Arctic Council (Young, 2019).

The purpose of portraying this governance landscape in detail is, as mentioned in the introduction, to provide framing for the examination of the role and functions of Arctic conferences, and to establish their contributions within the Arctic regime complex. The organizations and institutions presented in section 2.3.6 frequent the two conferences in this study, to draw attention to their work, communicate, and gather information. Also, the agreements presented in this chapter are recurrently up for deliberation at conferences, in particular the more recent, such as the Arctic Council Science Agreement. Therefore, these organizations and agreements are a necessary background as part of the framing of this research. As emphasized by Biermann and Kim (2020b), it is necessary to understand the governance system as a whole to grasp its individual components. Therefore, conferences cannot be analyzed and understood within Arctic governance without a comprehension of the other elements in the system.

2.3.1 Geopolitics and visions of the Arctic

In order to situate conferences within the Arctic region, this section accounts for different ways of understanding and interpreting this space. Specifically, the classical and critical schools of geopolitics. The critical tradition developed following the end of the Cold War, and lead to the rethinking of the territorial structure of (geo)politics and power (Dodds, Kuun, & Sharp, 2013, 6). Critical geopolitics is a problematizing approach inspired by Foucault's philosophy that questions the existing structures of power and

knowledge, and seeks to interpret alleged truths of traditional IR-theory (Ó Tuathail, 1999; Dodds, 2000, 2001). In contrast to traditional state-centered strategic analysis, the critical school approaches geopolitics as an ideological and politicized form of analysis (Kelly, 2006; Dodds et al., 2013). From this, critical geopolitics can be defined as:

“the critical sense that world politics is underpinned by a myriad of assumptions and schemas about the ways in which geographical divisions of the world, strategic plans, global images, and the disposition of the continents and the oceans enter into the making of foreign policy and into the popular legitimation of those policies” (Agnew, 2013, 17).

Critical geopolitics focus the level of analysis on the social or decision-making level, as geopolitics is conceived as a ‘practice’ of state actors rather than an ‘international reality’ (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, 1998, 2). Classical geopolitics, as an instrumental form of knowledge and rationality, takes existing power structures for granted, while the critical approach rather questions the existing structures of power and knowledge. For critical geopolitics, knowledge is always situated knowledge, and geopolitics is understood as a broader and more complex term than acknowledged in the traditional school (Ó Tuathail, 1999, 108-109). Furthermore, geopolitics was conceptualized as a form of political discourse practice by Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992), who expanded the conventional understanding of geopolitics as the relationship between the physical environment and the conduct of foreign policy (see also Dodds, 2001). One aim was to expose how ‘spaces’ that favor the world-views of those with power to enforce their knowledge are produced through discourse (see also Medby, 2017). From this spring the premise that categories are socially constructed, and that there are power relations involved in frameworks for understanding phenomena (Ó Tuathail, 1999).

Geopolitics – from the critical approach – is not primarily material or spatial features, but an ideological framework and discourse people use to make sense of their world (Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). This approach is applied by Dittmer, Moisio, Ingram, and Dodds (2011), envisioning Arctic geopolitics neither as environmentally determined, nor as constructed solely within the power/knowledge networks of statecraft, but as a discourse through which they identify two kinds of spatial orderings (p. 202). One is the Arctic as a space, the other is the Arctic as a space of and for state-building and international relations. Accordingly, rather than attempting to explain international behavior from geographical variables and focusing on a state’s policy as determined by its geography and military infrastructure, critical geopolitics provides a broader conceptualization of space and geography – also in the Arctic (Keil & Knecht, 2013, 2017; Østerud & Hønneland, 2014). While classical geopolitics define ‘we’ as a geographically bounded community and its cultural/political version of the truth, the ‘we’ of critical geopolitics is a transnational community of citizens (Ó Tuathail, 1999).

From this, identity is not seen as something a state has, but rather as something constructed and constantly re-negotiated. This is brought into the analysis in Chapter Seven, of non-Arctic states attempting to construct new identities – e.g. as ‘near-Arctic’ (China) or ‘vertical Arctic’ (Switzerland) states – to enhance their legitimacy as stakeholders and partake in developments outside their geographical territory.

Before moving to central actors and governance arrangements, two dimensions of Arctic governance are further relevant for the discussion of legitimate stakeholders, and consequently, for moving forward with the analysis of the functions of conferences. The first dimension stretches from a state-centric view, rooted in an international recognition of state sovereignty and state rights, opposed to those arguing for a larger role for sub-national and non-state actors. The second dimension separates those who, in addition to maintaining the exclusiveness of state actors, also argue for maintaining the exclusiveness of control on Arctic affairs by Arctic actors, from others who see it as a domain also for outsiders claiming to have stakes in the region (Nord, 2016; Pelaudeix, 2015). The issue of legitimate actors accordingly ties to the broader understanding of the Arctic – whether a traditional geopolitical narrative is applied, or whether one acquires a more heuristic understanding of the region as a global sphere (Keil & Knecht, 2017).

According to the classical geopolitical paradigm, “Arctic governance is historically, geographically and legally bound by the interactions between those eight states in a favorable position due to their state territory above the Arctic Circle” (Keil & Knecht, 2017, 8). Geopolitics understood as the nexus between geopolitical variables and political power is the structural manifestation of a political order considered legitimate and effective by major Arctic actors (Ibid). This political order finds its institutional expression in the Arctic Council, where cooperation is based on the logic of intergovernmentalism, and through which the Arctic states work to maintain control over Arctic governance (Ingimundarson, 2014, 195). The Arctic Council thus affirms the member states’ position as leading actors in the Arctic, because of how it is recognized as important by non-Arctic states applying for observership (Byers, 2017, 19).

However, seeing the Arctic Council as the voice of the Arctic states is one approach. Another perspective reckons the Arctic Council to play an important managerial role within the Arctic governance complex as a whole – which also includes arrangements where non-Arctic and non-state actors participate (Young, 2019, 8). Consequently, while the Arctic Eight have long enjoyed dominance and privilege in the region, there is now evidence of an Arctic society characterized by a rather extensive non-state actor cooperation – entities who take part in processes and key multilateral bodies. The classical geopolitical order is challenged by new actors seeking to participate in Arctic affairs, which has led to the diffusion of interests, ideas, and ideals in the region (Keil & Knecht, 2017, 10). If the Arctic is to be considered a global commons, why should the Arctic states be leading in discussions about the region?

2.3.2 The Arctic states

While the Arctic Eight⁵ are linked through their membership in the Arctic Council, they vary in size, population, economic and military capabilities, culture, and values. There are also differences in levels of development of the northern part of the Arctic states, regarding opportunities for education, work, and health services, infrastructure, connectivity, and relations to the federal/state level. For one, Russia is a key player in Arctic politics – holding the largest oil and gas deposits, and is also a great power in terms of military⁶ and exploration capabilities (see inter alia Hønneland, 2020). Russia’s Arctic policy is characterized by duality, and is pursued through two seemingly incompatible tracks: expanding military activities and committing to international cooperation (Baev, 2019). Arctic resources and maritime transport are considered key elements in the future of the Russian economy, and socio-economic development is a core priority in the region (Jensen & Skedsmo, 2010; Solli et al., 2013).

The weight attributed to resource development, and need for foreign investments, expertise, and access to markets, make Russia a “status-quo power” in the region, interested in preserving it as a zone of peace (Exner-Pirot & Murray, 2017, 59). This contributes to explaining the Russian government’s contrasting strategy between the domestic arena, where it does not tolerate foreign involvement, and the Arctic realm, where it is committed to cooperation (Keil & Knecht, 2013, 181). Russia considers the Arctic a realm for promoting a positive image and assuming international leadership (Solli et al., 2013, 236). Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud (2014) find that framing the Arctic as a special zone “allows Russia to maintain positive relations with important Western states (...) in the Arctic, despite challenging relations in other areas” (p. 82).

The Canadian government published its Northern Strategy in 2009, building on four priorities to safeguard the region’s position within a strong and sovereign Canada. The four pillars are: exercising Arctic sovereignty; promoting social and economic development; protecting environmental heritage; and improving and devolving northern governance (Government of Canada, 2009, 2). In 2010, the Canadian government issued an Arctic Foreign Policy, stating: “Given our extensive Arctic coastline, our Northern energy and natural resource potential, and the 40 percent of our land mass situated in the North, Canada is an Arctic power” (Government of Canada, 2010, 4). The emphasis on territorial boundaries and sovereignty can be thought to originate from the disputes over

⁵For more in-depth reviews of Arctic strategies (Appendix 5), see also Heininen, Everett, Padrtová, & Reissell, 2020; Heininen, 2011, 2012; Steinveg, 2014.

⁶Russia has 46 icebreakers and 11 in production, six military bases, 13 airbases, and 16 deepwater ports in the Arctic. In comparison to the Russian fleet, the United States has one heavy and one medium icebreaker. Source: USCG Office of Waterways and Ocean Policy (2017)

the Lomonosov Ridge⁷ (see section 2.3.6.1), the boundary line with the United States in the Beaufort Sea, and the legal status of the Northwest Passage.

The United States was long considered a “reluctant Arctic player” (Huebert, 2011). The limited role of the United States in the emerging Arctic society is explained by Exner-Pirot and Murray (2017) as a result of environmental and scientific cooperation taking shape largely through guidelines rather than binding agreements, with no economic or political costs, or territorial and economic competition. However, the United States became more active in regional governance when other states started publishing Arctic policies, and issued its Arctic Strategy in 2013. The strategy emphasizes three lines of effort: advance the US’ security interests, pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship, and strengthen international cooperation (United States Government, 2013). In June 2019, the Department of Defense (DoD) Arctic Strategy was published, outlining three strategies: building Arctic awareness; enhancing Arctic operations; and strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic (United States Department of Defense, 2019)

The 2019 DoD strategy singles out “competition with China and Russia as the principal challenge to long-term U.S. security and prosperity” (p. 2). It argues “China and Russia (..) are also pursuing activities and capabilities in the Arctic that may present risks to the homeland” and that they “are challenging the rules-based order in the Arctic” (p. 6). Russia is criticized for violating international law with respect to regulating maritime traffic through the Northern Sea Route, and for its military activity: “Russia has gradually strengthened its presence by creating new Arctic units, refurbishing old airfields and infrastructure in the Arctic, and establishing new military bases along its Arctic coastline” (p. 4). The DoD further condemns China’s Arctic policy white paper of January 2018, stating: “Despite China’s claim of being a “near-Arctic state,” the United States does not recognize any such status” (p. 3).

While Russia holds privileges as a sovereign Arctic state, the US moving towards a more zero-sum approach to Arctic security, and becoming explicit in pronouncing its Arctic identity has more pressing implications for non-Arctic states (e.g. China). Thus, there is growing urgency among these actors to develop as stakeholders (see section 2.3.3, Chapter Three, section 3.2.1, and Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2). Conferences are examined as stages for non-Arctic state actors to assert their position in the region before this window of opportunity closes in chapters seven and nine.

⁷Canada, Denmark, and Russia contend the Lomonosov Ridge is an extension of their continental shelf, while the United States argues it is an oceanic ridge, and thus disproves any claim to its ownership (Stimson, 2013). Regarding the Northwest Passage, Canada holds the position that it is part of its internal waters, and thus subject to full Canadian sovereignty. The United States argues it fulfills the legal criteria of an international strait by connecting two expanses of high seas, the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, and because it is being used for international navigation (Byers, 2009, 42). The two states have a long-standing precedence of “agreeing to disagree” on the legal status of the Northwest Passage. However, increased international interest and activity in the region may force the states to settle the dispute for security and environmental regulations in the North-American Arctic.

The small, but strategically positioned states, Iceland and Norway, are home to the conferences in this case study. Norway was the first Arctic state to issue a High North strategy, in 2006, followed by *New Building Blocks in the North* in 2009, *Norway's Arctic Policy* in 2014, and *Norway's Arctic Strategy – between geopolitics and social development* in 2017. Also in 2017, the *New Growth, Proud History The Norwegian Government's Ocean Strategy* was published. These documents illustrate the significance of the Arctic for Norway, in which governments across the political spectrum has invested significant political and economic capital. The Norwegian government has ambitions for the High North to become one of Norway's most sustainable and innovative regions, while at the same time, it is Norway's most important foreign policy interest area. Norway's Arctic strategy is thus an expressed interplay between foreign and domestic policy.

Geopolitically, Arctic-specific issues are important for cooperation with Russia, and economically, the region holds potential in terms of extracting fish, oil, and gas. It is key for Norway to balance its relationship with Russia with having a strong foot in NATO, while at the same time nurturing cooperation with Russia on Arctic-specific matters (Bekkevold & Offerdal, 2014, 826). In addition to the bridge-building function towards Russia, Norway was one of the more forthcoming Arctic Council members in the process of including Asian states as observers in 2013, and was active in making the Observer Manual more welcoming. Norway can be considered an important gatekeeper and facilitator for these states, opening for positive spin-offs in other bilateral, regional, and international settings (Solli et al., 2013, 262).

Iceland is situated between the US and Russia, and functioned as a buffer between the Soviet Union and NATO during the Cold War (Ingimundarson, 2014). The *Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy* (2011) encompasses twelve principles aiming to secure Icelandic interests in the region. The first is "Promoting and strengthening the Arctic Council as the most important consultative forum on Arctic issues and working towards having international decisions on Arctic issues made there". Another key priority for Iceland is securing its position as a coastal state. Iceland has been critical towards the Arctic Five, seeing this grouping not only to undermine the Arctic Council, but also threatening Iceland's interests in the region. Iceland's Arctic Policy focuses on cooperation, ensuring the UNCLOS forms the basis for settling possible disputes over jurisdiction and rights in the Arctic, the strengthening of general security, and prevention of militarization of the region. Other focus areas include climate changes, the well being of Indigenous peoples, economic development, education, and research.

As for the remaining Nordic countries, international cooperation in the Arctic has been a main priority for Finland since the end of the Cold War. Finland's Arctic policy focuses on security and stability, which is considered key to economic development and the welfare of northern people in the region (Prime Ministers Office Finland, 2013, 40).

Finland is not a NATO member, but Russia is its closest neighbor in the east, which necessitates Finland balancing bi- and multilateral relations based on the geographical situation. Finland was one of the initiators of the Arctic Council, along with Canada, and have been active in efforts to strengthen the forum.

Sweden issued its *Strategy for the Arctic Region* in 2011, which lays forth three priorities for the region: climate and the environment, economic development, and the human dimension. Sweden has no coastline bordering the Arctic Ocean, which excludes participation in the Arctic Five, and the government rather emphasizes the Arctic Council as the primary arena for Arctic issues (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden, 2011, 19). Noteworthy, in contrast to the strategies of the Arctic Five, sovereignty is not addressed in the Swedish strategy, which barely mentions security and military engagement in the region. Accordingly, Sweden's national interests in the region are on a lower political level, related to climate change and the environment, than those of the coastal states.

Lastly, although the Faroe Islands achieved home rule in 1948 and Greenland in 1979, they belong to the Danish Realm, making Denmark an Arctic state. In 2011, the *Kingdom of Denmark's Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020* was issued, through which Denmark seeks to play a key role in shaping the future of international agreements and cooperation in the region. Opposed to Iceland and Sweden, the Danish strategy places strong emphasis on cooperation through the Arctic Five forum, which is considered not only important, but also a justified channel for addressing Arctic Ocean issues.

2.3.3 Non-Arctic stakeholders

2.3.3.1 Asian states

Changes in the Arctic have contributed to transforming the region in ways with implications for governance (Young, 2014, 225-226). Thus, it is necessary to consider non-Arctic states and non-state actors when making up an inventory of the Arctic governance system. Common for non-Arctic states is the endeavor to brand itself as a relevant stakeholder, either as an "Arctic neighbor", or "near-Arctic state". The interest in partaking in Arctic affairs is traceable to concerns related to climate change, Polar research traditions, prospects for commercial activities, new shipping transits, and shipbuilding.

South-Korea's primary focus is on environmental concerns and economic opportunities, and is interested in demonstrating how it can contribute with resources within Polar research. Politically, South-Korea emphasizes how being involved in the Arctic is a way to enhance their position in global governance (Solli et al., 2013, 258-259). Singapore, as a low-lying island state, is particularly concerned about rising sea levels. Its position as a maritime hub was central for its Arctic Council observer application, emphasizing scientific research contributions, experience in maritime traffic management, offshore and vessel construction, and oil spill management (Solli et al., 2013, 259).

Analyzing China and Japan's Arctic approaches through Putnam's two-level game and Young's characterization of Arctic stakeholders, Tonami (2014) finds that both states see the Arctic through an economic security lens, but that China is more willing to invest in the region. Japan's history of Polar engagement goes further back than China's, and accordingly, contributions to Polar research and responsibility to protect the environment are Japan's main emphasis (Tonami, 2014, 120). Japan appointed an Arctic Ambassador prior to the 2013 Arctic Council ministerial meeting, when its observer application was up for review, demonstrating its political engagement in the region (Solli et al., 2013, 258). Japan issued its Arctic policy in 2015 (Japan Headquarters for Ocean Policy, 2015), which promotes Japan's strengths in science and technology, but also underlines how Japan will ensure the rule of law, including legal issues related to the Arctic Ocean to be addressed within the existing legal framework (e.g. the UNCLOS), promote international cooperation, respect the rights of Indigenous peoples, and pay attention to security developments in the region.

Noteworthy, the policy states "Japan will participate actively in discussions of expanding the role of observers" in the Arctic Council – indicating Japan is not satisfied with its room for maneuvering through the Council. Another initiative worth mentioning for the purpose of this study is "Enhance Japan's presence by actively participating in the Arctic Circle, Arctic Frontiers, and other international forums related to the Arctic, to communicate Japan's viewpoint and observation and research results" (Japan Headquarters for Ocean Policy, 2015). Thus, the significance of partaking at the Arctic Circle for demonstrating Japan's contributions to the Arctic community, and argue for its stakeholder position, was recognized by the government in the early years of the Assembly.

Regarding Asian state engagement in the Arctic, China is, based on its size and position in world affairs, devoted the most attention both politically and in the media. China is attempting to gain legitimacy as a regional stakeholder through two mutually reinforcing narratives. One territorial, emphasizing China's relatively northern latitudes, vulnerability to climate change, and involvement in Arctic research through state-funded expeditions. The other globalist narrative, puts weight on the Arctic as a maritime, global commons, and the environmental implications of Arctic change (M. Bennett, 2015, 464). In January 2018, the Chinese government published an official white paper, outlining its Arctic policy along four principles: respect, cooperation, win-win results, and sustainability.

The white paper is pronounced in positioning China in the Arctic. It expresses commitment to upholding an institutional and legal framework for Arctic governance, to participate actively in international cooperation, and to maintain a peaceful, secure and stable Arctic order, respecting the Arctic states sovereign rights. The white paper asserts China as an important stakeholder with a right to participate in Arctic affairs under international law, and that governance and use of the region requires participation

and contribution of all stakeholders. The emphasis on international law is important for China, as China benefits from promoting a framework where it has a stronger position than granted by the observer status in the Arctic Council (Koivurova, 2018).

The white paper emphasizes Arctic science, and the importance of protecting the environment and ecosystems. As such, the policy can be an important step in the direction of getting the largest growing industry on board with important measures necessary to address the negative effects of climate change. Yet, a noteworthy feature is the move from emphasizing scientific contributions to commercial ambitions. The white paper proposes building a “Polar Silk Road”, to facilitate connectivity, and sustainable social and economic development. Making the Northern Sea Route into a global and competitive transport route is also a high priority for the Russian government, and considered key in bringing much needed economic prosperity to its Arctic territories (Putin, 2018). The joint interest of these two super powers is of concern for the United States, reflected in the 2019 DoD Arctic strategy previously discussed.

2.3.3.2 The European Union

The Norwegian government began working to get the European Union (EU) engaged in the Arctic through High North Dialogues in the early 2000s (Government of Norway, 2005). These aimed at informing the EU about the importance of the Norwegian High North, and how petroleum from the Norwegian shelf could provide energy security for the EU (Wegge & Keil, 2018, 100). However, when the EU did develop an interest for the Arctic, its perspective was not appreciated from by the Arctic states. The European Parliament started debating the need for an Arctic Treaty, questioning aspects of the Norwegian government’s interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty, and challenging Norway and Canada’s practice of seal hunting (Wegge & Keil, 2018, 100). The EU’s observer application to the Arctic Council was denied in 2009 due to the anticipated ban on seal products, and was further put on hold in 2013, but the EU was then allowed observe Arctic Council proceedings. From this, Wegge and Keil (2018) argue the rise of the Arctic on the EU’s agenda, despite issue-specific controversies, contributed to empowering the members of the Arctic Council.

The European Union has since developed an extensive Arctic policy framework. In 2008, the European Commission issued *The European Union and the Arctic Region*, and in 2012, the communication *Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region*. The EU has ambitions to establish itself as an Arctic player, expressed by emphasizing the member states with territories in the region (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland), and strategic partnerships with the US, Canada, and Russia (European Commission, 2008). In 2016, *An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic* was adopted, to guide the EU’s actions in the Arctic. The policy focused on climate change, sustain-

able development, and international cooperation on Arctic matters. A weakness of the 2016 policy is that it does not address the geopolitical situation in the Arctic. Thus, in 2019, the European Commission signaled there was need for a new policy, due to new challenges in the region, pushing for stronger EU involvement⁸.

Lastly, the EU is a major contributor to Arctic science and research, exemplified by the Horizon-2020 Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020). The Horizon-2020 funded Arctic projects form the EU Arctic Cluster. This network intends to provide guidance and policy-relevant information, to support the EU in advancing international cooperation in responding to the impacts of climate change, and promote and contribute to sustainable development. The cluster includes the EU-PolarNet, where 17 countries are represented by 22 multi-disciplinary research institutions, making it the world's largest consortium of expertise and infrastructure for polar research. Another organization is the European Polar Board, coordinating European Arctic and Antarctic research by promoting multilateral collaborations.

2.3.3.3 European states

European states with observer status in the Arctic Council are France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Their engagement is manifested through Arctic policies and strategies, science and research projects, unilateral and bi-/multilateral cooperation with Arctic states. France has had scientific research teams in the Arctic since the 1960s, and has two research centers – the Jean Corbel Camp and the Charles Rabot Station – in the region. Additionally, in conjunction with German partners, the French Polar Institute runs a permanent joint research station in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard. In addition, France has a high diplomatic polar profile, with an ambassador for Arctic and Antarctic negotiations. Germany pursues a more discrete approach, focusing on scientific research, technical expertise, and commercial interests. In 2013, the Foreign Office issued *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines*, emphasizing both assuming responsibility and seizing opportunities in the region.

The United Kingdom has historical ties to the polar regions, through the contributions of explorers, companies, and scientists, and the UK considers itself an Arctic neighbor (Depledge, 2012). The British government intends to “work towards an Arctic that is safe and secure; well governed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples and in line with international law; where policies are developed on the basis of sound science with full regard to the environment; and where only responsible development takes place” (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013). The Arctic policy focuses on the role of science, an area in which the UK “excels and has an outstanding international reputation”, in addition to the human, environmental, and commercial dimensions, as well as

⁸Stated by Ambassador Jari Vilen, Senior Adviser for Arctic Policy, European Political Strategy Centre at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly in a plenary session titled *Towards a New Arctic Strategy for the European Union*.

defense. Noteworthy, Scotland issued its own Arctic strategy in 2019 – *Arctic Connections: Scotland’s Arctic Policy Framework*, which is discussed in Chapter Seven, when analyzing the functions of conferences for Scotland as a regional non-Arctic state actor.

2.3.4 Non-governmental organizations and institutions

Participation of non-state actors – non-governmental organizations and institutions – is an important component in forming the complex and multileveled Arctic governance system. In fact, part of the governance innovation in the region is the significant opportunities for a broad variety of actors to exercise influence over a number of issues, and NGOs can function as useful avenues of engagement (Young, 2009, 2014). Public-private relationships can prove helpful in addressing a range of international or transnational issues, and are significant when examining the relationship between Arctic and non-Arctic entities. NGOs serve different purposes. They can either be advocacy organizations, e.g. Greenpeace, they can facilitate mutually beneficial cooperation, such as the International Council of Science and the International Arctic Science Committee, or they can preform tasks advancing common interests (Young, 2014, 237).

Many organizations are engaged in the Arctic because of rapid changes resulting from climate change, which is of concern for the global community. The lion’s share of these are working in Arctic science, such as the Polar Commons’s information and data exchange program the Polar International Circle, the Arctic Maritime and Aviation Transportation Infrastructure Initiative, and the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks. Organizations working with natural science in the Arctic include the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the Arctic Council’s working groups. Within the social sciences, central organizations are the Arctic Institute, the Northern Research Forum, and the Arctic Portal. Additionally, many universities in the region (e.g. the University of Lapland and Umeå University) have Arctic centers. Lastly, both the WWF and Greenpeace have Arctic programs.

2.3.5 The Arctic Council

In 1987, Soviet President (1990-1991) Michail Gorbachev famously spoke about the Arctic as a “zone of peace”, and indicated a shift in Soviet Arctic policy. Not only did he propose specific actions to strengthen cooperation on security and scientific research between the Arctic states, but he also advocated for a stronger emphasis on environmental protection. Finland seized this window of opportunity, and in 1989 initiated organized cooperation for environmental protection, building on the growing concern over pollution in the Arctic. This resulted in the Ministerial Conference in Rovaniemi in 1991, commencing the Rovaniemi Process. Also in 1991, the Canadian government proposed economic, social, and cultural cooperation between the eight Arctic states,

which resulted in the signing of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). In 1996, the AEPS was transformed into the Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental forum, by the governments of the Arctic states. Other pieces of the Arctic governance regime complex established at the time include the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) in 1990, the Northern Forum in 1991, and the first Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic was held in 1993.

The Arctic Council's objective was to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction on common Arctic issues, in particular sustainable development and environmental protection. The Arctic Council is frequently praised for its inclusion of six Indigenous peoples groups – the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council – as permanent participants (Arctic Council, 2020). This category was created to provide for “active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council” (Arctic Council, 1996). Decision making is the exclusive right and responsibility of the member states with the involvement of permanent participants, and all decisions are made by consensus.

The Arctic Council's leadership is based on a bi-annual rotating chairmanship between the eight member states. Its permanent secretariat is located in Tromsø, Norway (since 2011), and activities are conducted through knowledge-production entities: working groups, issue-specific task forces, and expert groups. Through its work, the Arctic Council provides support for other international institutions in the larger governance complex, by contributing to knowledge-building, raising capacity to implement international commitments, and by catalyzing stronger regulatory provisions in broader institutions (Stokke, 2014, 778-779).

Observer status can be granted to non-Arctic states, inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, and non-governmental organizations. Observers have no say in decision making, and while they can propose statements, these are rarely prioritized due to time constraints (Arctic Council, 2013; Knecht, 2015). Despite the trivial formal role, the issue of observership has become politicized, and applications have at times created debates between the member states (Young, 2012a, 176). Moreover, once formally accepted, the observer position can be a source of frustration, especially at high level meetings of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs), where observers are treated as marginal participants (Young, 2014, 229-231). Nonetheless, there are variations within the hierarchy of the Arctic Council, and observers are more included in the working groups and task forces, which are dealing with issues requiring non-Arctic engagement (e.g. black carbon, science cooperation, and dialogue with the business community). While not involved in decision-making processes, these entities can influence the agenda by drawing attention to issues through reports and recommendations (Young, 2014, 230-231).

The Arctic Council has many merits, and engagement is a way for member states to consolidate alliances and partnerships. This contributes positively to the security situation in the Arctic, seeing how states are less likely to engage in conflict with their collaborators (Wegge, 2011a, 173). However, the Arctic Council also has shortcomings. Firstly, its mandate is limited as a soft law regime, and the Arctic Council cannot discuss issues related to military security. The Arctic is no longer a peripheral region where environmental protection and sustainable development are the only issues on the agenda. It is necessary to revisit the scope of the Arctic Council – either by broadening its constitutive provisions, or by enabling it to play a coordinating role in managing the other arrangements within the regime complex (Young, 2019).

Secondly, the Arctic Council lacks the effective mechanisms to take into account the interests of and incorporate all non-Arctic states and non-state actors. There are major non-Arctic states and intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the EU) who are dissatisfied with being observers in pursuit of their interests in the region (Young, 2019). Thirdly, the Arctic Council's communication and outreach are subject to critique, in particular limited dissemination of the contributions of the working groups. These three shortcomings of the Arctic Council are attended to in Chapter Nine, when analyzing the role of conferences as supplements within the regional governance system.

In addition, the Arctic Council's organizational and structural limitations have been subject to critique, and accentuation of the need to strengthen the forum is found in all the Arctic states' strategies for the region. Examples are how the Arctic Council is not a treaty based organization, and has no legal mandate to enforce agreements or regulations. The permanent secretariat is not an executive body, but rather fulfills an administrative function in serving the chair. The agenda of the rotating chairmanship tends to be reflexive of domestic priorities, which creates discontinuity between different chairs. Lastly, the Arctic Council has inconsistent and low levels of funding, also for the permanent participants (Exner-Pirot, 2016).

The purpose of cooperation through the Arctic Council is largely about pooling resources and joining efforts, which is reflected in the nature of the binding agreements it has produced, on search and rescue, marine oil pollution, and science cooperation. Nonetheless, these agreements are by no means all-encompassing for regional cooperation. Throughout the thesis, I demonstrate how conferences are used both as supplementary arenas for deliberating these topics, and also for broadening the agenda through discussions of issues that cannot be addressed at the Arctic Council.

Agreement	Purpose and outcomes
<p>Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (the SAR-agreement).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force set up in 2009. • Signed in 2011 (Nuuk Ministerial Meeting). • Entered into force in 2013. 	<p>Parties commit to sharing expertise, personnel, meteorological and oceanographic observations, analysis, forecasts, and warning. Parties must exchange information that can enhance the effectiveness of operations, such as available airfields, ports, and medical facilities, and must collaborate on carrying out joint exercises and training</p>
<p>Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force set up in 2011. • Signed in 2013 (Kiruna Ministerial Meeting). 	<p>Parties commit to maintain a national system for responding promptly and effectively to oil pollution incidents, and whenever a party receives information on a potential spill, notify all states whose interests are affected or likely to be affected. In addition to monitoring, parties to the agreement may request assistance to respond to an oil pollution incident, and the other parties are committed to cooperate and provide assistance.</p>
<p>Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. • Task force set up in 2013. • Negotiations were co-chaired by Russia and the United States. • Signed in 2017. 	<p>The agreement intends to facilitate data sharing and access to research areas across state borders. It is a means to address common challenges, such as effects of climate changes, by making the research process more efficient and accumulative.</p> <p>The status of non-Arctic states was central in the negotiations, who wanted the agreement be a global instrument. Yet, only the Arctic Eight are legally bound by the science agreement</p>

Table 2.1: Agreements negotiated under the Arctic Council

Noteworthy, while the Arctic Council shall not engage in military security, the SAR agreement is within the category of “soft security”, as it involves the coast guards. The Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) was established in 2015 under the US chairmanship of the Arctic Council. This consensus based group focuses on issues of common interest in the Arctic, such as search and rescue, emergency response, and icebreaking. It is considered an important organization when discussing Arctic maritime safety. In 2017, the ACGF held its first operative SAR exercise in Iceland, an important step towards closer cooperation between the member states within an area the Arctic Council was not intended to engage in.

2.3.6 Arctic governance arrangements

This section addresses governance arrangements adding to the workings of the Arctic Council. The purpose of this inventory is to paint the full picture of the architectural landscape in which the two cases are situated, because as noted by Gómez-Mera et al. (2020): it is necessary to take into account the broader institutional environment of any particular institution one aspires to understand the creation, evolution, implementation, or effectiveness of (p. 137). From this, the objective is to examine the functions of conferences, not only as supplements or alternatives to the Arctic Council, but also as platforms for the engagement of other entities, and as links between different components in the Arctic governance regime complex.

2.3.6.1 The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Among the Arctic Eight, geography divides the “Ocean Five” – the United States, Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark/Greenland – from the “Non-Littoral Three” – Iceland, Finland, and Sweden (Griffiths, 2011, 191). Much of Arctic waters fall under the exclusive maritime jurisdiction of the Arctic states. In general, the Arctic states have resolved their maritime boundary disputes peacefully through negotiations, conciliation, and juridical procedures (Koivurova, Kankaanpaa, & Stepien, 2015, 290). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which all the Arctic states with the exception of the United States are party to, is a key treaty in providing the framework for the orderly conduct among coastal states world wide, and also a central framework in outlining interdependencies among the Arctic states. The UNCLOS defines three zones of maritime control of particular interest for Arctic sovereignty: the territorial sea, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the extended continental shelf⁹ (Huebert, 2011). After acceding to the treaty, a state has ten years to submit its claim for an extended continental shelf to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, who makes recommendations on the shelf’s outer boundaries¹⁰. It is in a state’s interest to provide data supporting its continental shelf to be as wide-reaching as possible, as the coastal state has sovereign rights to explore and exploit the continental shelf’s natural resources – a right that does not depend on occupation or expressed proclamation.

⁹See Figure 2.1 – Retrieved from: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/hydrographie-hydrographie/UNCLOS/index-eng.html>

¹⁰Norway became a party to UNCLOS in 1996, Russia in 1997, Canada in 2003, and Denmark in 2004.

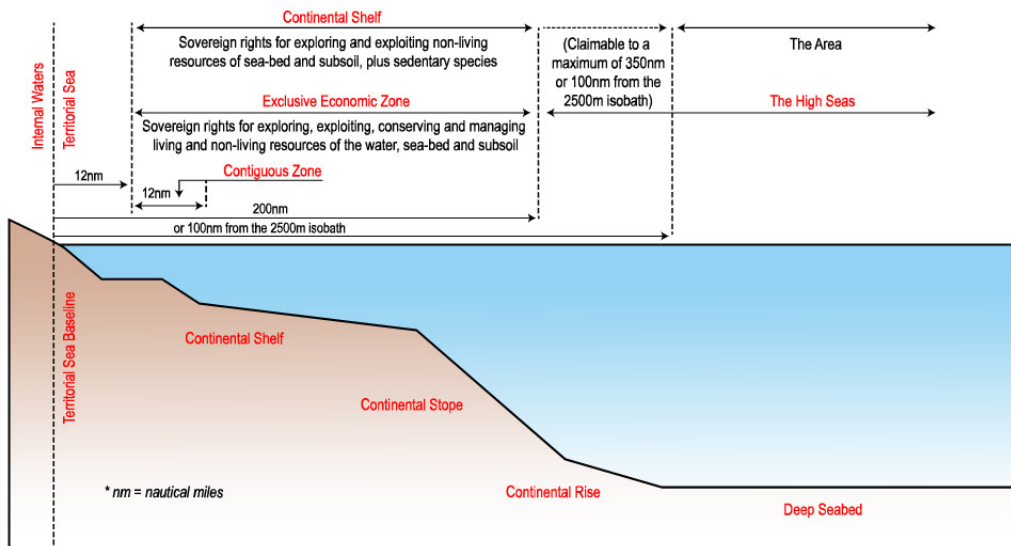


Figure 2.1: Maritime sovereign rights, by zones, under the Law of the Sea Treaty.

The main potential for conflict is over the Lomonosov Ridge, a 1800 km underwater ridge of continental crust, separating the Eurasian Basin from the Amerasian Basin (Cochran, Edwards, & Coakley, 2006). It ranges from Ellesmere Island on the continental shelf of North America, extends to a point near the North Pole, and continues south to a point near the continental shelf of the New Siberian Islands. Russia, Canada, and Denmark/Greenland all argue the Lomonosov Ridge is an extension of their continental shelf (see section 2.3.2). This dispute, as well as expeditions to gather evidence for a state's application to the Shelf Commission, are often referred to in the media as "claims to the North Pole" (Hønneland, 2020, 46). The foremost reason for the interest in this area is the appraisal that large parts of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves are located there (Brid et al., 2008). The ocean can also be viewed as a source of power and prestige, allowing a state to strengthen its position internationally (Valková, 2017, 145). Thus, this is not only a quest for resources, but also a power-play between states, where small players, such as Denmark, stands with equal weight as Russia through their UNCLOS claim. Yet, should Russia perceive it as more beneficial to realize its ambitions outside the UNCLOS framework, the geopolitical situation could change.

2.3.6.2 The Arctic Five

The relevance of UNCLOS for this study relates to the Arctic Five – the Arctic Ocean coastal states: Russia, the US, Canada, Norway, and Denmark. Following the 2007 Russian flag planting on the seabed of the North Pole (see Chapter Five, section 5.6), the Arctic Five met in Ilulissat, Greenland in 2008 with the objective of outlining the sovereign rights of the coastal states, and affirming the role of the Law of the Sea in the process of delineating the outer limits of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean.

The meeting produced a statement of common purpose: the Ilulissat Declaration. The remaining Arctic Council member states and Indigenous peoples were excluded from the dialogue, which led to diplomatic protests from Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. In 2010, the Arctic Five held another exclusive meeting in Quebec, which also led to critique of the Canadian government for not inviting all with legitimate interests in the region.

The Arctic Five further issued a *Declaration to Prevent Unregulated Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean* in July of 2015. Negotiations took place outside the Arctic Council for two reasons. To ensure the involvement of Russia, and because Sweden and Finland are EU members, and thus not in control of their own fisheries policies (Byers, 2017, 17). However, Iceland, the most outspoken critic of the Arctic Five, saw this as an unacceptable action, and summoned the respective ambassadors to explain why Iceland had been excluded. As follows, negotiations expanded to include Iceland, China, the EU, Japan, and South Korea (Exner-Pirot & Murray, 2017, 55). The declaration was intended as part of the official agenda for the 10 year anniversary meeting for the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration, but tensions between Russia and the other signatories prevented it from being addressed. The anniversary meeting was held on May 22.-23. 2018, in Ilulissat. There, governmental representatives from Sweden, Finland, and Iceland, and representatives from Indigenous peoples organizations were present. The meeting was intended to reaffirm the will to peaceful cooperation and delimitation of the Arctic Ocean seabed, and also addressed a framework for enhanced security policy cooperation, an issue that cannot be discussed through the Arctic Council.

2.3.6.3 Barents cooperation

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and opening of relations between Russia and the West, mentioned in the introduction, also catalyzed intensified cooperation in the Barents region (Hønneland, 2020, 14). At the initiative of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was established in 1993, with the signing of the Kirkenes Declaration (Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 1993). This forum for intergovernmental cooperation, at the foreign minister level, was supplemented by a cooperation protocol establishing the Barents Regional Council (BRC), signed by representatives from 13 regional entities in Russia, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, as well as Indigenous peoples – the Sami, Nenets, and Veps. The overall objective of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council is to contribute to stability and prosperity in the region, through supporting and promoting cooperation and sustainable development.

The chairmanship of the BEAC rotates biannually between the four member states. Norway took over the chairmanship from Sweden in 2019, to be followed by Finland (2021 – 2023), with three focus areas: health, people-to-people contact, and knowledge. Both the BEAC and the BRC have working groups and task forces, also

aiming to deepen cooperation on issues relevant to the Barents region. In addition, the International Barents Secretariat was established in Kirkenes in 2008, with the purpose of supporting multilateral activities within the two councils. Other relevant institutions for Barents cooperation are the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, which aims to support Norwegian-Russian projects, and the Kolarctic financing programme.

2.3.6.4 Nordic cooperation

Three bodies are central for cooperation in the Nordic region. The Nordic Council was formed in 1952, by Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Finland became a member in 1955, the Faroe Islands and Åland in 1970, and Greenland in 1984. It consists of 87 elected members of national parliaments, nominated by the party groups (Nordic Council, 2019). The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for formal inter-parliamentary co-operation in the region, created in 1971. The Nordic Council of Ministers is not one unit, but consists of eleven ministerial councils, and the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation. The Presidency is held for one year, and rotates between the five Nordic states. In addition, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland have a vote on the Council (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Lastly, the West Nordic Council, established in 1985, is a parliamentary cooperation between Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. It was founded based on the realization of the shared interests and challenges of these states. Its main objectives are promoting the common interests of the West Nordics, preserving the natural resources and culture of the North Atlantic, and strengthening cooperation between the West Nordic governments (West Nordic Council, 2019). The West Nordic Council cooperates closely with the Nordic Council, and the Nordic Council of Ministers, and became an observer to the Arctic Council in May 2017 (Arctic Council, 2017b). The West Nordic Council is of particular interest in this study, because of the promotion of the close relationship between Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands through the Arctic Circle Assembly organization, to be elaborated in Chapter Six.

2.3.6.5 The Arctic Economic Council

The Arctic Economic Council (AEC) was established under the Canadian Arctic Council chairmanship (2013-2015), held its inaugural meeting in Nunavut in September 2014, and adopted its foundational documents in 2016. As such, it is a more recent addition to the Arctic governance system, which needs to find its place among the other elements. The main addition to the regime complex provided by the AEC is functioning as an organization exclusively devoted to facilitating business development in the Arctic, and business-to-business activities between Arctic and non-Arctic members. The AEC has a five-member Executive Committee, and a Governance Committee comprised of one

business representative from each of the Arctic states and the permanent participant organizations. Membership is open to corporations, partnerships, and indigenous groups with an economic interest in the Arctic. In addition, other stakeholders can participate as non-voting members. Accordingly, the AEC follows Arctic Council structures of Arctic primary membership, and a secondary option for non-Arctic entities, who have no say in decision-making procedures.

The Arctic Economic Council's secretariat was allocated from Canada to Tromsø in 2015, a process driven by Norwegian business interests. The rationale was founded in the potential for synergy effects from having it in the same city as the Arctic Council's secretariat and Indigenous people's secretariat – a triangle further discussed in Chapter Nine. One of the Arctic Economic Council's goals is to "Provide advice and a business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council". The two organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2019, to provide a framework for cooperation and facilitate collaboration (Arctic Economic Council, 2019). The other goals of the AEC are to facilitate responsible business and economic development of the Arctic and its communities; share and advocate for best practice, technological solutions, and standards; and to support market accessibility (Arctic Council, 2014).

The Arctic Economic Council has further taken over the Arctic Investment Protocol (AIP), originally a product of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Arctic (Arctic Economic Council, 2019). The objective behind the AIP was to create a set of universally applicable, but not legally binding, principles, and to build a strong coalition around for them to become self-fulfilling. The protocol mentions local inclusion, local dialogue, Indigenous people's rights, and environmental and scientific basis for decision making. The AEC considers it an important tool, also when it comes to welcoming international companies to the Arctic.

The choice of having the Arctic Economic Council open to all actors, regardless of geographical positioning, is founded in a business way of thinking. Access to the global market and international investors is essential to realize the Arctic's business potential, as the region's own economic base is narrow. At the same time, the AEC is an organization where for the first time, Arctic people and Arctic businesses are in charge. Thus, it is important to ensure that actors coming from the outside use local partners and local knowledge, so the region gets something in return. One example is the AEC's Report on Mining in the Arctic issued in May 2019. It provides guidelines on how to proceed to ensure local inclusion and local contents.

2.3.6.6 The Arctic Science Ministerial

The Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM) from 2016 is interesting in that it, as a closed meeting, uses other conferences for communication (to be discussed in Chapter Nine). The first ASM gathered science ministers from 25 countries, the EU, and representatives from Arctic Indigenous peoples' organizations in Washington DC in September 2016. The purpose was to discuss collective efforts to increase international scientific collaboration in the Arctic, and the outcomes of the meeting, including a Joint Statement of Ministers, were published in the report *Supporting Arctic Science: A Summary of the White House Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting*.

The European Commission, Finland, and Germany arranged the second Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM2) in Berlin in October 2018, coordinated through the Finnish Arctic Council chairmanship. The ASM2 commenced with a science forum to discuss achievements in Arctic science, followed by a meeting of 26 science ministers. The aim was to discuss how to shape the future course of Arctic research, not only generating knowledge and new insight, but also how to translate scientific findings into political initiatives and actions. As with the first ASM, it produced a Joint Statement of Ministers, and a substantial 152 page conference report.

The ASM2 meeting titled *Co-operation in Arctic Science – Challenges and Joint Actions* intended to enhance and develop cooperation under three themes. Firstly, strengthening, integrating, and sustaining Arctic observations; facilitating access to Arctic data; sharing Arctic research infrastructure. This corresponds with the purpose of the Arctic Council Science Agreement: facilitating data sharing and access to research areas across state borders. Secondly, understanding regional and global dynamics of Arctic change. Thirdly, assessing vulnerability and building resilience of Arctic environments and societies (German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2019, 46). The involvement of Arctic and non-Arctic states, political representatives, the science community, Indigenous peoples, and the local community through a process of coproduction of knowledge was considered the main reason for the success of the ASM2¹¹.

The third Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM3) is scheduled for November 2020 in Japan, co-hosted with Iceland. The aim of the ASM3 is to take stock of the progress made by the international community. The government of Japan created a scientific advisory board, as a mechanisms for scientists and researchers' perspectives to be included in the ASM3. The development of the Arctic Science Ministerial meetings is an expression of the increasingly important role science and technology is acknowledged to play in informing decisions.

¹¹ Stated by Attilio Gambardella, Policy Officer in the European Commission at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly in a breakout session organized by the European Commission titled *From the Second Arctic Science Ministerial to the Third Arctic Science Ministerial*.

2.3.6.7 The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters

Shipping, and the prospect of new shipping routes (e.g. the Northern Sea Route and the North West Passage), becomes more pertinent on the Arctic agenda as the sea ice melts. Arctic Ocean management is an example of a “collective goods problem” in international relations, as there is no global government to enforce states to provide the necessary measures for the common good, in this case: environmental protection. However, the international community has shown will for cooperation, manifested in a hard law element to be included in the Arctic government inventory: *The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters*. The Polar Code was negotiated from 2009, and entered into force on January 1st 2017 (International Maritime Organization, 2017).

The Polar Code imposes requirements for safety, pollution prevention, and recommendatory provisions for ships operating in the Antarctic and Arctic, aiming to protect both the environment, workers, and passengers. Getting all of the maritime states to agree on the Polar Code has been described as an innovative advance in government, and stakeholders are already setting their goals for a second phase of negotiations (M. Bennett, 2018). Issues for discussion are applying the Polar Code to fishing vessels and vessels less than 500GT, addressing air pollution, heavy fuel oil (prohibited in Antarctic waters but not the Arctic), underwater noise and gray water, and increasing community and Indigenous engagement (M. Bennett, 2018).

2.4 Summary

This chapter has put forward the definition of governance applied in the thesis, the Arctic governance architecture, and central stakeholders: the Arctic states, and non-Arctic state actors engaged in the region. The chapter has further demonstrated how the end of the Cold War and opening of international relations catalyzed the creation of soft law initiatives in the Arctic, most prominently the Arctic Council. From this, I have discussed soft law instruments available for states, i.e. different diplomatic tracks, and hard law arrangements that contribute to the governing of the region. Besides, there are other indicators of the growing importance of the region, including the issuing of state policies and strategies, Arctic research, business interests, the work of NGOs and advocacy groups, media attention, and university programs and courses focusing on the Arctic. The expansion in the number of conferences attending to Arctic issues is another development in the stream of blooming attention towards the region.

Accordingly, the Arctic governance architecture should not be considered a fixed structure, but rather a changing and dynamic landscape. Besides, this chapter has cast light on the complexity of this system, including the variety of stakeholders involved, and not only state-based instruments and arrangements, but also other entities and net-

works that contribute to shape the Arctic governance architecture. Thus, returning to the conception of Arctic governance as a triangle of sovereign states, hard and soft law arrangements, and conferences suggested in the introductory chapter, this is a simplification. Yet, it is deemed a fruitful image of the system in which this thesis aims to situate conferences, and a useful starting point from which to flesh out the other elements of the Arctic governance architecture. This inquiry is tackled through focusing on three mechanisms, with an interest in analyzing whether what takes place at conferences is a mirror reflection of what other processes in the region, and/or whether it affects these processes and general developments.

The pool of stakeholders engaged in Arctic affairs is a complex and heterogenous constellation with diverging interests, and also different motivations for partaking in the conference sphere. Central questions for positioning conferences within the Arctic governance architecture are: What is the role of conferences for different actor groups, and why do they participate at conferences? How can conferences influence the interplay between rights-holders – the Arctic states, local inhabitants, and Indigenous peoples – and non-Arctic state actors asserting stakeholder status in the region? Also paying attention to the dissatisfaction among non-Arctic states with the observer role in the Arctic Council, the thesis seeks to answer whether activities taking place through conferences contribute to altering the actor composition of the Arctic, by expanding the potential for engagement in the region and involvement of non-Arctic actors. This analysis contributes to exploring the notion that conferences function as a ‘backdoor’ into Arctic governance for actors sidelined in formalized cooperation.

Turning to the second mechanism, the Arctic agenda has expanded from evolving around environmental protection, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, and community well-being to encompass several issues of global interest and concern. Chapter Eight of this thesis examines who influences the agenda in the Arctic, and specifically, to what extent are conferences arenas for agenda setting, in that participants bring with them issues that are picked up and considered relevant by other actors? Does what happens at conferences have implications for other processes and developments?

Agenda developments and changes in the actor composition of the region have influenced the Arctic governance architecture, which has grown increasingly complex. The third mechanism examines the relationship of conferences to the proliferation of governance arrangements in the Arctic. Specifically, Chapter Nine addresses how conferences can supplement, or functioning as alternatives to, the Arctic Council in terms of broadening the agenda (i.e. providing discussions about security and military issues), expanding the stakeholder pool, and aiding communication and outreach activities. Drawing on the Earth System Governance literature, the main objective is to expand our knowledge about the functions of conferences within the Arctic regime complex, and to situate conferences within the broader regional governance architecture.

Theoretical framework and conceptualizations

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework for this study is constructed with a twofold purpose. For one, to aid the conceptualization of aspects deemed relevant for the unfolding of the broader functions of conferences – the three mechanisms of interest. Secondly, to facilitate the overall analysis of conferences within Arctic governance. From this, I seek to situate Arctic conferences within the larger universe of comparable phenomena. The introductory chapter delimited the scope of perspectives, accounting for theories that have been considered but dismissed for analytical reasons. It was indicated that conference scholars have applied different theories, so there was no clear path to follow for the examination of conferences in the Arctic realm (see Chapter One, section 1.3.2 and Appendix 7). Being aware of the complexities of the Arctic governance system under examination, and considering how situating conferences within this architecture is a novel undertaking, I find the analytic eclecticism approach to be beneficial for the purpose of the study.

Analytic eclecticism is “distinguished by the fact that features of analyses in theories initially embedded in separate research traditions can be separated from their respective foundations, translated meaningfully, and recombined as part of an original permutation of concepts, methods, analytics, and empirics” (Katzenstein & Sil, 2008, 111). Thus, rather than testing which theory can best explain the functions of conferences at the intersection between sovereign states and formalized cooperation, I have applied theory inspired by this approach, as a sorting mechanism to discover meaningful patterns in the empirical material (see Rosenau & Durfee, 1995). This in order to provide a broad explanation of the phenomenon – conferences – and to benefit from complementary understandings of the different components – mechanisms – under inquiry. As such, the choice of theories is not arbitrary, but rather, the eclecticism is a result of the research design centered around the three mechanisms through which the thesis seeks to shed light on the functions of conferences within Arctic governance.

Rosenau and Durfee (1995) contend that in theorizing, one should ask: “of what is this an instance?” (p. 3). It allows for moving up the ladder of abstraction, identify a more encompassing class of phenomena of which the observed event is an instance, and see the larger meanings even as one focuses on particular events (Rosenau & Durfee, 1995, 3). Thus, conferences are in this study examined as an element within the Arctic regime complex – as an instance of arenas for international dialogue, cooperation, and contestation. This shifts the center of analysis from the two conferences exclusively, to a broader universe of akin occurrences. That being so, while the richness of the empirical

material is bound to the two cases within the Arctic, the study aspires to contribute to a novel perspective on conferences more generally.

The presentation of the theories in this chapter is structured around the corresponding mechanisms to be examined as points of influence for conferences. To analyze the actors engaged in Arctic governance and the conference sphere, the thesis applies stakeholder theory and the epistemic community framework. This not only to classify different participant groups, but also inquire whether there is a dynamic aspect of conference engagement. The assumption is that conference participation can cause changes in the position and capabilities of individual actors, as well as alter the actor composition of the governance system as a whole. The agenda setting mechanism is analyzed through the multiple streams framework, which contributes to assessing activities and processes taking place at conferences that could influence the regional agenda. Thirdly, the functions of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture is examined through regime theory, regime complexes, and other elements from the Earth System Governance literature.

The rationale for applying these perspectives is further supported in the assertion of Rosenau (2006), who calls for a new ontology for global governance, founded in the notion that states and national governments are no longer the essential underpinnings of how the world is organized (p. 111). Rosenau (2006) addresses the limits of mainstream IR-theories – which has a principal focus towards an anarchical world order and sovereign states (see Waltz, 1979; Grieco, 1988; Mearsheimer, 1995) – in comprehending governance in a globalized space. Specifically, challenges are transnational entities whose activities are not limited by geographical boundaries; decentralized authority vulnerable to the dynamics of change and complexity; and global politics susceptible to the power of small events and initial coalitions (Rosenau, 2006, 169). As such, it is necessary to consider authority as embedded in horizontal networks and non-governmental collectives, not only as vertical hierarchical structures (Rosenau, 2006, 173).

This study applies a framework aimed at eluding some of these limitations of IR-theory in global governance theorizing. Authority as embedded in networks and non-governmental collectives is attended to through the epistemic community framework in Chapter Seven. The heterogenous globalized space, which requires innovative ways of theorizing about accountability beyond the domestic-foreign policy dichotomy (Rosenau, 2006, 173), is addressed through the stakeholder typology, and discussed supported in the Earth System Governance literature and regime theory in Chapters Seven and Nine. Empirically, this notion agrees with the conviction of Mr. Grímsson and philosophy behind the Arctic Circle organization, to be portrayed in Chapter Six. Nonetheless, there are still elements from conventional IR-theories embedded in the perspectives applied. For example, I apply Nye's (2008) concept of soft power, and regime theory and the study of regime complexes can be seen as an expansion of institutionalism. There

are also elements from constructivism in the epistemic community framework and the multiple streams framework, which operate with actors looking to identify problems and sell their ideas.

Having provided background for the reasoning behind the theoretical framework of the study, I now turn to the three mechanisms and corresponding perspectives applied. The rationale behind the sequence of the mechanisms, also in the empirical chapters, is founded in how there can be no agenda setting without actors, and consequently, it is constructive to first lay out the cast of characters and the functions of conferences for different stakeholders. The enlarged group of actors and the globalized agenda combined provide for discussing the Arctic governance architecture – a complex system of entities and arrangements, with overlapping as well as diverging interests and agendas. Through this chapter, I also introduce assumptions about what the theories can contribute to the analysis, and hypothesize about the functions of conferences through each mechanism.

3.2 The actor mechanism

This section aims at providing the basis for developing answers to the research questions posed regarding the actor mechanism in the introduction chapter. For one, do conferences contribute to expanding the collective of relevant and legitimate stakeholders in the Arctic? Secondly, what are the main functions of conferences for various actor groups, and can conference engagement contribute to advance agency in the region? An underlying premise for this discussion is that the Arctic has attracted global attention, and that determining relevant stakeholders based in the argument of Arctic state sovereignty is questionable. This is indicated by how Arctic relations recurrently touch upon the question of legitimate stakeholders – in developing the region, participate in resource extraction, economic development, and decision-making.

The stakeholder theory developed by Mitchell et al. (1997) is adapted and applied to the study of conferences, and Chapter Seven discusses seven identified participant groups: Arctic state representatives; non-Arctic state representatives and other non-Arctic actors; the epistemic community; business/industry representatives; institutions/non-governmental organizations; Indigenous peoples; local/regional representatives. The organizers of both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle work towards bringing science into the policy-making process, and the conferences are arenas seeking to promote the policy–science–business interplay. This makes the epistemic community an interesting participant group to examine closer, which provides a rationale for supplementing the stakeholder theory with the epistemic community framework.

3.2.1 Stakeholder theory

While developed for use in organizational management scholarship, I contend that the stakeholder typology of Mitchell et al. (1997) can be fruitfully adopted to the Arctic governance architecture, and to the examination of stakeholders involved in the conference sphere. The main reason for why this typology is applied at the expense of more traditional IR-theoretical approaches, is the interest in unraveling how conferences can be arenas for stakeholders to acquire attributes – power, legitimacy, and urgency – to advance their position in the Arctic. Mitchell et al. (1997) argue these are the necessary attributes for identifying different classes of stakeholders in a firm’s environment, and I apply them to the identification of stakeholders in the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle’s environment, and to examine how stakeholders operate through conferences to position themselves within the broader governance architecture. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, the two cases are in many ways conducted as a business, competing for ‘customers’ (participants), ‘investors’ (sponsors), and ‘networks’ (partners), which justifies applying this perspective¹.

Regarding the first attribute – power – “a party to a relationship has power, to the extent it has or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian, or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship” (Mitchell et al., 1997, 865). This resembles the relational element of soft-power emphasized by Nye (2008): the ability to shape the preferences of others, and getting others to want the outcomes you want (p. 95). The possibility to obtain power in Arctic governance through conference engagement thus rests on utilizing these arenas as means to achieve leverage in a relationship and one’s desired outcomes in regional developments. The second attribute – legitimacy – generally refers to socially accepted and expected structures or behaviors (Mitchell et al., 1997, 866). While often coupled with power when evaluating social relationships, Mitchell et al. accept Weber’s (1947) proposal that legitimacy and power are distinct attributes, which can combine to create authority, but also exist independently.

They further point to Suchman (1995), who defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574). This recognizes the evaluative, cognitive, and socially constructed nature of legitimacy, and implies it is a socially desired good, larger than the self-perception of a single individual. This study examines conferences as arenas to acquire identity or status through increased legitimacy. The last attribute – urgency – is defined as the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention. Urgency exists when two conditions are met: when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature, and when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the stakeholder (Mitchell et al., 1997,

¹See also Lövbrand et al. (2017) on how corporate actors utilize conferences as ‘business fairs’ (p. 593).

867). The question of urgency is particularly pertinent for Asian states, who need to assert their legitimate claims in the region, before the United States develops a more ‘zero-sum’ approach to the Arctic (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.2).

Notably, features of these attributes contribute to the dynamic character of the stakeholder theory. For one, the attributes are variables, and not a steady state. Secondly, the existence of an attribute is a social construct based on the perceptions of others, and not an objective reality. Thirdly, an individual or entity may or may not be conscious about possessing an attribute (Mitchell et al., 1997, 868). Also, one attribute’s contribution to stakeholder salience depend on interaction with the other. For example, a stakeholder with legitimacy can gain rights through increased power, and can obtain a more prominent voice through increased urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997, 870). Resulting from different combinations of these three attributes, Mitchell et al. (1997) develop a stakeholder typology with classes of actors (p. 873–878).

Those with one attribute are labeled latent stakeholders, and include dormant (power), discretionary (legitimacy), and demanding (urgency) stakeholders. Two attributes make an expectant stakeholder, holding a higher level of engagement and salience, and by combining two attributes moves from a passive to an active stance. This group includes dominant (power & legitimacy), dependent (legitimacy & urgency), and dangerous (power & urgency) stakeholders. Lastly, definitive stakeholders have all three attributes, and operate through formalized mechanisms. Stakeholder groups are also dynamic, as it is possible to increase salience by acquiring missing attributes. Salience is both time and issue dependent, and coalition building, political action, and the social construction of reality are ways of moving up one category (Mitchell et al., 1997, 879). Stokke (2014) further argues that stakeholder salience analysis should take on a macro approach when applied to international governance, and include the broader complex of institutions relevant to a given domain. Thus, evaluating power, legitimacy, and urgency in one institution must consider these elements in other institutions within the same domain (Stokke, 2014, 781).

Table 3.1 illustrates how the stakeholder typology is applied in this study for the classification of participant groups at conferences based on the attributes. In the table, I also propose some assumptions about which actors are expected to belong to the different stakeholder classes. The stakeholder typology is applied in Chapter Seven, which discusses motivations of different actor groups for attending conferences, as a potential means to acquire missing attributes, and the primary functions conferences serve for various stakeholders. Additional questions to be addressed throughout the thesis, and brought into the concluding chapter, are whether there are changes in the stakeholder typology over time, and whether there are connections between a stakeholder’s attributes and position depending on issues on the agenda.

Stakeholder typology		
Mitchell et al. (1997) applied to the study <i>Governance by conference?</i>		
Stakeholder class	Attributes	Actors anticipated to belong in the stakeholder class
Definitive stakeholders	Power Legitimacy Urgency	Arctic state representatives Arctic based institutions and organizations The epistemic community Indigenous Peoples
Expectant stakeholders	Dominant stakeholders Power Legitimacy	Partners and sponsors affiliated with the conferences.
	Dependent stakeholders Legitimacy Urgency	Local and regional representatives Environmental organizations and activists
	Dangerous stakeholders Power Urgency	Non-Arctic actors
Latent stakeholders	Dormant stakeholders Power	Business/industry representatives The media
	Discretionary stakeholders Legitimacy	Future generations
	Demanding stakeholders Urgency	Non-Arctic states impacted by climate change

Table 3.1: Expectations from the stakeholder typology applied to the examination of actors in the conference sphere.

Still, some classifications can be suggested at this point of the thesis, before diving into the empirical material. For one, it is likely that state representatives, institutions, organizations, Indigenous peoples, and individuals geographically situated in the region are *definitive stakeholders* within the Arctic governance regime complex. It is also assumed they are definitive stakeholders at the two cases in this study, seeing how they are hosted in Arctic states. *Dominant stakeholders* – those with power and legitimacy – in the conference sphere are expected to be partners and sponsors. These actors are affiliated with the region, thus legitimate, and hold power through the potential of influencing the organizing, direction, and agenda of the conferences. Should they seek to move into the definitive stakeholder category, they need to acquire urgency to their claim. One question is whether they want or need that, and another is whether visible promotion and engagement at conferences can be a means to obtain the urgency attribute.

Dependent stakeholders – legitimate stakeholders with urgency to their claims – are likely to be local and regional governmental representatives, as well as environmental organizations and activists from the Arctic. They can be seen as legitimate, as they are affiliated with the region, and the urgency attribute is fulfilled by their claims related to community well-being and mitigating the impacts of climate change becoming more pressing. The interesting question is whether conference engagement can be a means for these actors to increase their power within the Arctic community. The *dangerous stakeholders* category – those lacking legitimacy – is one illustration of the usefulness of the typology for the purpose of this study. These are actors holding power and whose claims can be considered urgent because they are of a time-sensitive nature and considered critical to the stakeholder, but who are illegitimate. From the review of non-Arctic state interests presented in Chapter Two, the power of these actors are expected to be in the form of investment capital, and they are expected to have an interest in engaging in development projects in the Arctic. A central question is whether conferences can be arenas for them to argue for their legitimate position in the region.

Moving from expectant to latent stakeholders – holding only one attribute – in the conference sphere, *dormant stakeholders* are expected to be those with (economic) power and capabilities in areas of growing relevance for the region. These can be non-Arctic state actors, or outsider stakeholders from the industry. Secondly, the media is generally viewed as an important agenda setter (Kingdon, 2011), and this thesis examines role of the media at Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly, and how journalists utilize these arenas. *Discretionary stakeholders*, with legitimacy, are hypothetically future generations in the Arctic, and young participants at conferences. However, their urgency is becoming more pressing, and they could be moving into the dependent stakeholder category. Lastly, *demanding stakeholders* with urgency to their claims can potentially be smaller non-Arctic states who are severely affected by the impacts of climate change, expected to utilize conferences seeking to obtain power and legitimacy through coalition formation.

In summary, the application of the stakeholder typology in this study is intended to shed light on the range of actors involved in Arctic affairs and the Arctic conference sphere. It is useful as it indicates the move from government to governance in the region, which entails that private and non-state actors, experts, and networks configurations are important in the processes of coordinating and problem solving within the international community. From this perspective, the thesis examines conference engagement an instrument for actors to acquire attributes to move up a salience category in the Arctic. The purpose of the typology is as such both to categorize actors within the Arctic governance architecture and conference sphere, and also to highlight the dynamic element of conference engagement. However, there may be conference participants that the typology does not capture as well, for example people from civil society without any associa-

tion to formal institutions in the region. Also, the epistemic community is expected to be a significant participant group for uncovering the functions and outcomes of conferences, so there is ground for including the epistemic community framework for policy coordination in striving for a more comprehensive analysis of this group.

3.2.2 The epistemic community framework

An epistemic community is defined as “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area” (Haas, 1992, 3). Haas argues control over information and knowledge is an important dimension of power, and that the diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behavior, which in turn can be a determinant of international policy coordination. Experts play a central role in articulating cause-and-effect relationships of complex problems, shed light on linkages between issues, frame the collective debate, identify the self-interests of a state, or help formulate policies (Haas, 1992, 15). From these definitions and assertions, this actor group is compelling to accentuate in this study. The thesis examines the extent to which conferences function as forums for experts to control information and knowledge, and set forth problems and issue linkages. The thesis also considers whether conferences can be arenas for the diffusion of new ideas and information by an epistemic community, leading to changes in actors’ behavior.

The significance of epistemic communities for policy makers derives from the increasingly complex and technical nature of issues on the agenda. Forces of globalization, including technological advances and threats to security, have made decision-makers turn to specialists to ameliorate uncertainties (Haas, 1992). Again, this is an interesting premise for this study, which examines the role of conferences related to the impacts of globalization in the Arctic. Noteworthy, in attempting to push the boundaries of Haas’ definition, Cross (2013) argues that actors comprising epistemic communities do not have to be those possessing scientific knowledge, but can be governmental or non-governmental actors, scientific or non-scientific. It is professionalism, rather than science, holding an epistemic communities together, facilitating consensus, and enabling persuasion (Cross, 2013, 155). Thus, should there be an epistemic community with significant influence on Arctic affairs operating through conferences, it is not necessarily comprised of people from the scientific community.

Another aspect of potential relevance for this study is how members of epistemic communities share parameters on how to understand the world, and that their perspectives are reinforced and reaffirmed through engagement with their peers. This makes inquiring into whether and how conferences can be arenas for such engagement intriguing. Moreover, an epistemic community can influence knowledge production by fram-

ing the agenda, privileging certain types of knowledge, and by guiding the application of knowledge to specific policy concerns (Young, 2004, 215). To that end, this thesis examines the extent to which conferences can be arenas for an epistemic community to frame the debate and contribute to agenda setting in the Arctic.

Lastly, an epistemic community can be divided into two groups: individual entrepreneurs and institutional knowledge brokers. Individual entrepreneurs are those who through their affiliation with academia and the political sphere can contribute to establishing connections and narrowing the gap between the science and policy communities. Institutional knowledge-brokers are universities, research institutions, NGOs, and entities who participate at various arenas and make up transnational networks. They can have an attention towards the Arctic by virtue of their location, or through an interest in being involved in developments of the region. Many organizations (e.g. the UN, EU, World Bank, and OECD) present at conferences are engaged in “epistemological politics” – taking place in the intersection between scientific knowledge and political power (Alawattage & Elshihry, 2017). The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are from this examined both as arenas for the fulfillment of the policy-science interplay in Arctic affairs, and as arenas for institutional knowledge brokers to engage and expand their networks. The notion that networks of experts can play a role in framing issues for debate and influencing actors’ interests is pertinent for this study, and a perception also found in the agenda setting mechanism – to which this chapter now turns.

3.3 The agenda setting mechanism

The literature review presented in the introductory chapter (see section 1.3.1), as well as the background for the study put forward in the previous chapter, revealed how the Arctic has been transformed from a peripheral region to one of global interest. This is not only true for the expanding stakeholder pool, which prompts the interest in examining the functions of conferences for various actor groups, but also concerns the agenda and issues at the forefront of attention. From this, an interesting question is whether conferences have contributed to the globalization of Arctic issues, and to bringing the global to the Arctic. Specifically, from the definition of agenda setting as “the process of raising issues to salience among the relevant community of actors” (Livingston, 1992), and founded in the multiple streams framework, I raise the question of whether and how conferences are arenas for problem definition, deliberating alternatives, and for coalition groups to push their issues. This in aspiring to answer the research questions posed in the introduction chapter. Do conference organizers contribute to define central issues and elevate them on to the broader agenda in the region? Is conference participation a means to successfully promote issues and make them pertinent in other forums or processes?

Agenda setting is at its most basic “about the recognition of a problem on the part of the government” (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, 120-121). In the 1970s, there was a scholarly development from univariate to more complex multivariate models for agenda setting, contributing to a more accurate theoretical framework (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003). Of particular interest for this study is the “outside initiative model” of Cobb, Ross, and Ross (1976), which “accounts for the process through which issues arise in nongovernmental groups and are then expanded sufficiently to reach, first, the public agenda and, finally, the formal agenda” (p. 127)². Yet, the different styles of agenda setting did not vary as much by regime as by sector, which in the 1980s led to studies about the processes within specific regimes (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, 135). The most referenced is the in-depth study of the United States’ government from 1984 by John W. Kingdon, which has gained prominence as a tool for analyzing the policy process known as the multiple streams framework (MSF).

However, Kingdon’s model has been criticized for being skewed towards unforeseen circumstances, and for failing to adequately address agenda setting stability (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, 138). Deriving from the realization that the agenda setting process involves both periods of stability and dynamism, scholars in the 1990s focused on the activities of agenda setting actors. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) contributed to developing a modified model of Kingdon’s framework, emphasizing the framing of a policy problem, as it influences membership in relevant policy subsystems. For example, if a problem is portrayed as a technical rather than a social question, experts can dominate the decision-making process (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, 139).

In addition, an analytical weakness is that the MSF is only effective *ex post*: it is difficult to employ to predict outcomes. Still, I argue for its usefulness as a framework or tool, because it can beneficially be applied to map out an issue or policy area, in order to identify central events and actors in new areas of research, where processes and key players are not already clearly defined. This is particularly pertinent in this study, of an unexplored field in international relations. Thus, aware of the critiques, the MSF is employed for the examination of agenda setting through conferences. This builds on the argument of Carter et al. (2011), who notes how political processes at summits resemble the ‘garbage can’ model of Cohen et al. (1972), where problems, policies, and politics sometimes convene, but more often than not, attach themselves randomly and independently of each other (p. 684).

3.3.1 The multiple streams framework

The multiple streams framework is structured around the notion that processes relevant for agenda setting are found in the problem stream, the policy stream, and the politi-

²See also the discussion about science diplomacy and Track II diplomacy in Chapter Two, section 2.2.2.

cal stream (Kingdon, 2011). In the problem stream, problem recognition and definition occur when various conditions capture the attention of people on the inside and outside of government. Because problems are considered social constructs, someone has to frame a problem in a certain way for it to receive the attention of policymakers, which makes policy entrepreneurs key actors within the MSF (Herweg et al., 2018). Policy entrepreneurs display many resemblances to the epistemic community, but a key difference is while the former is more preoccupied with selling ideas, the latter focus on identifying problems. The significance of policy entrepreneurs introduces a dynamic element to the MSF, as new people entering key positions may or may not have the same priorities as those holding the office prior. Thus, it is expected that the agenda is subject to change, depending on which experts have access to channels through which to sell their ideas. This study aims at enhancing our knowledge about whether and how conferences can be efficient arenas for the Arctic's policy entrepreneurs to bring problems to policy makers attention, and to gain traction for their prioritized issue areas.

Secondly, the policy stream is made up of alternatives, proposals, and solutions generated by a community of policy specialists (Kingdon, 2011). Here, agenda change can also come from path dependency – the extent to which an idea deviates from previous policy paths – or spill-over from policy in other issue areas with implications through institutional mechanisms (Herweg et al., 2018, 24). For this stream, the epistemic community framework is combined with the MSF in the examination of conferences as agenda setting arenas in this study. The interest is in whether conferences are advantageous arenas for the flow of ideas, alternatives, proposals, and solutions to defined problems generated by the community of experts in what Kingdon calls the "policy primeval soup" (p. 127). Specifically, I examine whether conferences are arenas for policy entrepreneurs to 'sell' their ideas, and whether conferences are arenas for the diffusion of norms and values within the Arctic community.

Thirdly, the political stream consists of swings in the national mood, the public opinion, election results, changes in administration, partisan or ideological shifts, and interest groups' campaigns. Again, there is a dynamic element in this stream, as all these elements are subject to change over time and across state borders. The attention devoted to Arctic challenges can vary substantially depending on the party in power in key states – demonstrated by the Obama versus the Trump administrations in the US. However, for this study, and the inquiry into the functions of conferences within the political stream, the focus is shifted from national features and rather centered around transnational coalition groups, environmental groups' campaigns, the media, and similar actors, and whether conferences can be channels for agenda influencing. Still, these aspects can also differ over time and space. For example, the clout of transnational coalition groups' campaigns is dependent on the dominating discourse within the international community.

The three streams develop and operate largely independent of one another. However, the key to understanding agenda setting and policy change is their coupling – when and how they come together at critical times. Proposals from the policy stream are elevated to the governmental agenda when the political stream opens a window of opportunity, and the timing for an issue becomes favorable (Kingdon, 2011, 172-173. See also Livingston, 1992). With regards to the first stream, Young (2009) argues for a state-change in Arctic affairs in the 1980s/1990s arising from socio-political developments, which contributed to problem definition. These changes were a window of opportunity to raise Arctic challenges on the international agenda, and a variety of collaborative initiatives developed in the region. For example, changes in the political stream, coupled with increased concern for the environment and climate change, paved way for the Ministerial Conference in Rovaniemi in 1991, which commenced the Rovaniemi Process that resulted in the establishment of the Arctic Council (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.5).

In the multiple streams framework, a problem is defined as “conditions that deviate from policymakers’ or citizens’ ideal states and that are seen as public in a sense that government action is needed to resolve them” (Béland & Howlett, 2016, 222). However, all conditions deviating from the perceived ideal state do not automatically receive political attention. Herweg et al. (2018) discuss decisive factors in the agenda setting process, including indicators, feedback, and focusing events – where devoted advocates frame specific conditions in ways that draws the attention of policy makers. Birkland (1998) defines a focusing event as: “an event that is sudden; relatively uncommon; can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater future harms; has harms that are concentrated in a particular geographical area or community of interest; and that is known to policy makers and the public simultaneously” (p. 54).

The 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) can be considered such a focusing event – contributing to altering the agenda. It was, according to Young (2009), the symbol of a second state-change in Arctic affairs, the effects of which has been to tighten the links between the Arctic and the planetary systems. Underlying drivers were a combination of biophysical developments (the impacts of climate change) and socio-economic events (the spread of the effects of globalization to the Arctic). Another such defining event contributing to attracting the attention of policy makers was the Russian flag-planting on the sea bottom of the North Pole in 2007. This thesis examines the role of conferences in the three streams of the multiple streams framework, but also analyzes conferences linked to the focusing events in Arctic affairs mentioned above. The main attraction is inquiring whether conferences can be windows of opportunities “for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their specific problems” (Kingdon, 2011, 165).

The connection from the multiple streams framework to the purpose of the study is moreover found in the closing argument made by Herweg et al. (2018). They list

four issues deserving more attention in future MSF-related research: further theoretical and definitional refinement; more systematic empirical analysis; applying the MSF to non-democratic political systems; and theorize and apply the MSF in global contexts. Specifically, the latter is attended to in this study. Herweg et al. (2018) argue the MSF is particularly applicable to the field of global contexts, due to the fluid conditions in terms of issues and institutions. For example, agenda setting in global institutions (e.g. the Security Council) is fluid due to rotating participation, and variability in problem definitions and focusing events (Herweg et al., 2018, 45). The same can be said about the nature of conferences.

Furthermore, Herweg et al. (2018) contend studies of the strategies applied by transnational activists, acting as policy entrepreneurs by reframing issues, building coalitions, lobbying, and so on, could enrich the MSF (p. 46). While not focusing on activists, this study examines transnational networks of conference participants, who are expected to have motivations for attending conferences, and strategies for the pursuit of their interests and priorities within the broader Arctic governance architecture. In summary, considering the limits of traditional IR-theorizing for comprehending governance in a globalized space mentioned in the introduction, and the call for applying the multiple streams framework outside the analysis of national governments (see also Capie, 2010; Mazaar, 2007), it is deemed compelling for this study. This chapter now turns to the third mechanism – the Arctic governance architecture – which is the larger institutional setting in which actors and entities operate, and through which the agenda setting streams flow. This mechanism thus integrates the two previously discussed, and considers the functions of conferences within the governance web in the region.

3.4 The architecture mechanism

The Arctic governance architecture is characterized by increasing complexity and interdependence, and for examining this system, I draw on theories of institutional interaction and interplay. In the following sections, I lay the groundwork for answering the research questions posed in the introductory chapter. What are key components of the Arctic governance system, and how can it best develop to incorporate emerging issues and interested stakeholders? Secondly, what are the main contributions of conferences within the Arctic governance architectural landscape?

The perspectives applied for analysis are also chosen to provide for an examination of whether and how conferences can increase the likelihood of cooperation by facilitating frequent interaction among engaged actors, and for discussing the role of conferences as alternatives and/or supplements to the Arctic Council to amend some of its shortcomings introduced in Chapter Two, section 2.3.5. Regime theory and research on transnational institutions, networks, and regime complexes, are deemed intriguing for

the analysis of the components and characteristics of the Arctic governance architecture, and the examination of conferences as potential building blocks within this system.

3.4.1 Earth System Governance

As discussed in the previous chapter, institutions do not operate in a void, but rather within larger governance webs. These complex institutional settings have become referred to as “governance architectures” (Biermann & Kim, 2020b. See also Hurrell, 2007; Young, 2008; Biermann et al., 2009; Biermann, 2014). There are three key elements in conceptualizing governance architectures. For one, it is an overarching system consisting of state and non-state actors, transnational networks, intergovernmental institutions, and regime complexes. Thus, it is broader than a single institution, but narrower than an all-encompassing world order. Secondly, governance architectures are institutional settings that shape decisions of actors and institutions that exist and interact in a given policy domain. Thirdly, the impact of an architecture extends to all levels of governance (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 4-5).

The Earth System Governance literature comprises of studies attending to a multitude of elements within the system defined as a governance architecture. A distinction is drawn between an analytical and a normative theory, where the former studies structural variations and explains how governance is conducted, and the latter critiques the status quo and focuses on redesign to improve performance (Biermann, 2014, 36; Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 6). From this literature, research on transnational institutions and networks is appraised relevant for this study, considering the hypothesized nature of the two cases, in addition to work on regime complexes (see section 3.4.3).

Of particular interest is the emphasis on the increased importance of private actors, which raises questions of legitimacy – defined as “the property of a situation or behavior that is defined by a set of social norms as correct or appropriate” (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 86). In modern democracy, legitimacy tends to rely on two pillars: input-oriented arguments (government by the people) – linked to democratic procedures and formalized arrangements, and output-oriented arguments (government for the people) – the effectiveness of institutions (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 86). Criteria for examining the legitimacy of transnational governance are participation and the types of actors involved, transparency, and accountability – e.g. the willingness to accept responsibility (Ibid.).

In evaluating the legitimacy of transnational governance, the literature shows that there are obstacles to provision for equal opportunities for participation, and that there is a lack of accountability to the public (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 88). Should there be evidence of conferences functioning as arenas for governance processes, these issues are expected to be central concerns. Moreover, both the increased power of transnational corporations, and how individuals, celebrities, and social entrepreneurs increasingly in-

fluence global governance (Partzsch, 2018), are intriguing findings to bear in mind when examining the outcomes of the conferences in this study. Are they arenas for such or akin actors to exert influence in the Arctic or internationally?

Another relevant question for this study is whether private actors are democratizing global governance through the involvement of civil society organizations and citizen initiatives, thus providing a space for previously marginalized actors. Specifically, do the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle organizations provide such a space in the region? If so, are there voices promoted at the expense of others? Or, are the two conferences rather mirror reflections of the positions of already dominant actors within Arctic governance? Moreover, a related issue to be considered is that of accountability, and consequences for the democratic process if deliberation is moved out of formal forums comprised of elected officials and into informal meetings on the sidelines of conferences. Lastly, Biermann and Kim (2020b) call for more studies on the interplay between transnational institutions (p. 84). This thesis seeks to contribute with an examination of whether conferences are arenas for engagement among entities in the Arctic, an inquiry founded in regime theory and research on regime complexes.

3.4.2 Regime theory

Regime theory appeared in empirical research and the theoretical debate in the 1970s, and defines a focus in between the broad international structure and the narrow study of formal organizations (Haggard & Simmons, 1987, 492). Within the literature, there is a central difference between an elemental regime and an international regime. An elemental regime is understood as explicit international legal arrangements (Raustiala & Victor, 2004, 279), while an international regime is defined as “a set of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982, 186). However, Levy et al. (1995) demonstrate how this commonly cited definition can be criticized for the lack of intersubjective meaning in the distinction between principles, norms, and rules, and for being too vague in determining the universe of cases (p. 270-273)³. They suggest defining international regimes as “social institutions that consist of agreed upon principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures and programs that govern the interactions of actors in specific issue areas” (Levy et al., 1995, 274). From this, “regimes give rise to recognized social practices in international society”, and are distinct from international organizations, the broader structure of international society, and from the world order (Levy et al., 1995, 274).

³See also Strange (1982), who challenges the validity and usefulness of the regime concept as defined by Krasner for being a passing fixation that will not contribute to knowledge in the long term, being imprecise and woolly, value-biased, for underemphasizing the dynamic element of change in world politics, and for being too state centric and undervaluing the negative aspects of international cooperation.

From a realist perspective, states in an anarchic system fear for their survival as independent actors, and fear that “achievements of joint gains that advantage a friend in the present might produce a more dangerous potential foe in the future” (Grieco, 1988, 487). The central research puzzle in regime theory is searching for factors explaining how utility maximizing actors can cooperate effectively under conditions of interactive decision-making where there are incentives to cheat, but no political authority resembling a government (Young, 1999). The proposed solution is that states succeed in cooperating when and to the extent they are able to form institutional arrangements or sets of roles, rules, and relationships (Young, 1999). The argument is that international institutions, or regimes, affect the behavior of actors by functioning as social institutions with recognized patterns of practice around which expectations converge. This leads to the second order question: How can we explain successes and failures on the part of groups of states that seek to solve collective-action problems through the formation of international regimes (Young, 1982, 1999)?

Assuming state actions are influenced by norms that at the same are considered consistent with the pursuit of national interests, regime theory can be considered an attempt to reconcile the idealist and realist traditions (Haggard & Simmons, 1987, 492). This is reflected in the three schools of thought within regime theory, distinguished by the degree of institutionalism – the view that international institutions matter (Hasenclever, Mayer, & Rittberger, 1997). Realist power-based theories of regimes, which are least inclined to ascribe a significant degree of causal significance to international institutions, but do recognize that regime-based interstate cooperation is a phenomenon in need of explanation. What has become the mainstream approach is the neoliberal interest-based school, which emphasize the role of international regimes in helping states – rational egoists who care for their own absolute gains – realize common interests. Thirdly, knowledge-based theories of regimes accentuates the role of causal and normative ideas by focusing on the origins of interests as perceived by states (Hasenclever et al., 1997).

This thesis is based on an inquiry of whether conferences can contribute to the central research puzzle in regime theory: explaining how utility maximizing actors still manage to cooperate in the absence of an overarching authority. Moreover, regime theory attends to the individual elements within a regime complex, and is relevant for this study from the interest in dissecting the various arrangements surrounding conferences in the Arctic governance architecture. In order to examine whether and how conferences function as connections among the different units – regimes – in the Arctic regime complex, a conceptualizing of this system is called for.

3.4.3 Regime complexes

Regime complex research attends to one of the structural features through which the building blocks of a global governance architecture interact (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 7-9). As such, a regime complex – at the meso-level of organization – is located at a lower level than the governance architecture taken as a whole – which is at the macro-level (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 138). For the label regime complex to be applicable for analysis, institutions must be considered as a set rather than as unconnected units or a cohesive block (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 139), which is the understanding applied in this thesis. Raustiala and Victor (2004) define a regime complex as “an array of partially overlapping and nonhierarchical institutions governing a particular issue-area” (p. 279). Orsini et al. (2013) contend this definition is a useful point of departure but that it has several ambiguous features. Therefore, they propose an alternative definition of a regime complex as “a network of three or more international regimes that relate to a common subject matter; exhibit overlapping membership; and generate substantive, normative, or operative interactions recognized as potentially problematic whether or not they are managed effectively” (Orsini et al., 2013, 29).

Mapping a regime complex requires identifying its units – regimes – and characterizing the connections among these units (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020). Units can be either elemental regimes (international legal agreements), or international regimes (see section 3.4.2). Connections between units in a regime complex emerge from partial overlaps over a given issue area, which can be at the normative or the impact level, and they can be conflicting or synergic (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 139). Consequences of partial overlapping membership add a vertical dimension to the regime complex’s thematic horizontal dimension, and make regime complexes particularly dynamic (Gómez-Mera et al., 2020, 140). As such, a regime complex consists of elements associated by subject matter, overlapping membership, and through potentially conflictual interactions. The Arctic regime complex comprise of treaties, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, non-state actors, international non-governmental organizations, transnational networks, bilateral initiatives, and so on.

There are several treaty regimes, with the Arctic states and non-Arctic states as members, within the Arctic regime complex that cover various issue areas, in addition to the Arctic Council specific agreements (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.5)⁴. Treaties on flora and fauna include the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears, and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The UNCLOS, the UN Fish Stocks Convention, the Polar Code, and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling attend to the oceans, shipping, and fishing. The UN Convention on Climate Change, and the UN Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants are relevant treaties on climate

⁴For an overview of treaties dealing with issues related to the Arctic region, see the Arctic Portal: <https://arcticportal.org/arctic-governance/international-agreements>.

change and the environment. The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, and the UN International Convention on Civil and Political Rights concerns civil, political, and social rights, and lastly, the Svalbard Treaty: sovereignty.

Moreover, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations within the Arctic regime complex include the Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the West Nordic Council, the International Maritime Organization, the UN Environmental Programme, and the UN Development Programme. These are also observers to the Arctic Council. In addition, the Arctic regime complex comprise non-state actors and international non-governmental organizations, such as the International Arctic Science Committee, the International Arctic Social Sciences Association, the International Union for Circumpolar Health, the Northern Forum, and the World Wide Fund.

This overview indicates both the overlapping issue areas attended to by elements within the Arctic regime complex, overlapping membership, and also potential conflictual interactions. For example, the Arctic Science Ministerial, the Arctic Council Science Agreement, and the International Arctic Science Committee are all concerned with science and research in the region. The Arctic states are members to most of the regimes within the Arctic governance architecture, fulfilling the overlapping membership characterization of the regime complex.

In closing, this study seeks to examine whether conferences are part of the Arctic regime complex, and to shed light on the consequences if conferences are shown to be an added dimension to the Arctic governance architecture. Specifically, I examine whether conferences contribute to norm setting, influencing actor behavior and interests, or to make cooperation more likely by influencing how actors interact. Above all, the hypothesized function of conferences as connections among the other elements in the Arctic regime complex is of particular interest. Lastly, an intriguing question is what it means for conferences should it be demonstrated that they do not fulfill functions of significance within their surrounding structures.

3.5 Summary of the theoretical framework

This study aims at examining two hybrid policy-science-business conferences with regards to their functions in the Arctic region. Previous scholars of conferences within different fields and disciplines have applied varied theoretical perspectives, depending on the purpose of the inquiry. Thus, through an eclectic approach to theorizing, this study seeks to add to the body of conference literature by providing a novel way of conceptualizing and analyzing Arctic conferences. This chapter has delineated the theoretical framework of the study, to be applied to the empirical material. Stakeholder theory is applied in Chapter Seven, to categorize the scope of actors involved in the

Arctic conference sphere. I also consider the dynamic aspect of conference participation: whether conferences can be arenas for actors to increase their power, legitimacy, or urgency to claims in the region. I seek to unfold motivations for and outcomes of conference participation for each stakeholder group, and to draw attention towards conflicting interests. Noteworthy, the analysis aims to shed light on whether and how the difference in philosophy behind the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle impacts who are considered legitimate stakeholders in the region, and who benefits from conference participation.

The role of individuals and institutions in producing outcomes of conferences is of interest in this study, and cooperation and knowledge production are expected to be central elements in driving developments forward in the Arctic region. Thus, the epistemic community framework contributes to the discussion of how actors utilize conferences in Chapter Seven. From the premisses of this framework, conferences are examined arenas for experts to disseminate information, and for decision-makers to engage with people that can provide them with necessary information to make good decisions. Moreover, the epistemic community framework also contributes to the analysis of the functions of conferences for agenda setting. Both with regards to the role of experts in framing the collective debate, and whether actors can advantageously utilize conferences to promote their priorities and make them salient in other processes.

The multiple streams framework is applied for the agenda setting mechanism in Chapter Eight. Specifically, I examine the extent to which conferences are arenas for problem definition, for policy entrepreneurs to draw attention to their issues, and for the flow of alternatives, proposals, and solutions to identified problems. I inquire into the role of conferences in political stream, and whether they can influence the broader agenda through the workings of interest groups and coalitions present at these arenas. An interesting question is whether conferences are constructive arenas for the promotion of Arctic issues framed in global terms: collective security, economic issues, climate change, and global warming, which connects to the actor mechanism and non-Arctic actors' engagement in the region through these issues.

When examining the role of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture, the take-away from the Earth System Governance literature and theorizing on regimes and regime complexes is the dynamic and interconnected nature of the global system. Accordingly, the Arctic governance architecture is understood as being in a state flux, consisting of networks of interdependent actors and entities. Focus is also directed towards challenges in Arctic governance, regarding incorporating emerging issues and all interested stakeholders. The purpose of this thesis is inquiring into the potential of conferences in ameliorating these challenges, and whether conferences have a purposeful role in promoting coordination, role differentiation, and synergies – institutional interaction and interplay – among elements in the Arctic governance regime complex?

Research design, methodology, and data

4.1 Introduction

Springing from the theoretical framework, this chapter addresses the methods applied and the methodological approach of the study. In seeking to enhance our understanding of how conferences operate within the Arctic governance architecture, this project has a twofold ambition. For one, it aims at identifying relationships and explain patterns shaping the phenomenon of interest – conferences. Secondly, it seeks to uncover which features of conferences cause them to exhibit outcomes on the dependent variable – Arctic governance. To that end, central objectives throughout the empirical chapters are to uncover salient processes taking place at conferences, and to shed light on how the two cases are connected to events in international and Arctic affairs. On that account, while the aim is not to conclude on the entire sphere of international conferences or arenas attending to Arctic issues, I aspire to highlight features that can contribute to conferences serving purposeful functions within governance systems in general.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I present the research design, where I situate the study within the qualitative research tradition, and discuss opposing methodological camps. This is followed by an account for the case study approach, and its merits and weaknesses. I aspire to indicate how this project – an in-depth case study of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly – benefits from the chosen design, and why it is appropriate for answering the research questions. Then, I elucidate on the research setting, including the process of casing, and the criteria for case selection from the larger population of cases that have been applied in the study.

This leads to the process of data collection, where I discuss how I have applied three techniques: semi-structured formal interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In addition to the case study, a thorough mapping of the Arctic conference sphere has been carried out as part of the project (presented in the following chapter), and this process is described in the data collection section. Subsequently, the data analysis section accounts for how the collected materials have been organized and represented, including transcription, and the system of coding and categories developed through the research. Then, I engage in a discussion of ethical questions raised by the research, deliberating on the issues of confidentiality, anonymity, consideration for third parties, and my position as a researcher. Lastly, I discuss the quality assessment of the study, and the trade-offs and limitations of the chosen research design.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Situating the study within the qualitative tradition

The foremost difference between the quantitative and qualitative research traditions¹ is the of number of cases, which in quantitative research ideally is as large as possible, and the cases examined is viewed as a sample of a potentially much larger universe. Proponents large-N (statistical) analysis tend to criticize small-N qualitative studies for the risk of selection bias (Ebbinghaus, 2005; King et al., 1994; Mahoney & Goertz, 2006). This leads to a second divergence, between the quantitative quest for generalization from the sample to the broader population, and the qualitative ambition to gain deep within-case knowledge (Ragin, 1987). The latter is the main purpose of this study, which provides a comprehensive inquiry into the nature and functions of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle within Arctic governance. However, the study also aspires to shed light on general features of conferences based on findings from the two cases.

Furthermore, in quantitative research, case selection is conducted without concern of cases' value on the dependent variable, and the population of cases is ideally chosen through random selection on independent variables. In qualitative research by contrast, cases are selected where the outcome of interest occurs, which is related to how qualitative researchers weight evidence, often looking for “smoking-gun” observations (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, 239-241). Not only evidence, but also cases are weighed differently. Qualitative researchers consider some to be more important than others, and if a case does not fit the causal model, the researcher seeks to identify why it has taken a different causal path. By contrast, in quantitative research, there are no ex ante important cases, and the failure to explain a particular case is ignored as long as the model provides good estimates for the population as a whole (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, 242-243).

Related, qualitative research often applies a “cause-of-effects” approach to explanation, which for this study entails identifying outcomes of Arctic conferences, and explaining how these are produced by identifying causes within the organization, how the conferences are conducted, and factors in their surroundings. To explain outcomes, qualitative research focus on causation in terms of necessary and/or sufficient conditions. Accordingly, the researcher is interested in whether a condition needs to be present for the outcome to occur – necessary – or that the presence of a condition always produces the outcome – sufficient (Beach & Pedersen, 2013; A. Bennett & George, 2005; Ragin, 1987). The multivariate focus is central in all causal research, which in qualitative studies entails the assumption that individual events do not have a single cause, so it is necessary to include a number of causally relevant factors. Moreover, the concept of

¹For comprehensive insight into the debate between the quantitative and qualitative research traditions, and their respective merits and shortcomings, see for example Brady & Collier, 2004; King et al., 1994; Lieberman, 2005; Lijphart, 1971.

equifinality, or multiple causation – i.e. the notion that there are many causal paths to the same outcome – is strong within the qualitative approach, but is absent in quantitative work (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, 234-236). For this project, it means considering a wide variety of attributes of the conferences, and be open to the possibility that it is not realistic to identify a single way in which the cases produce a specific outcome.

4.2.2 Methodological and epistemological positioning

In addition to the divergence between quantitative and qualitative research methods, there are different understandings – methodological camps – of ways of generating explanatory knowledge within social science research. In other words, there are different logics of the use of methods. The two main methodological perspectives are naturalism and constructivism² – with their distinct epistemological and ontological positions.

Naturalism (or positivism/empiricism) firmly believes there is a Real World – an objective reality outside the subjective minds of the researcher (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). Observations provide information that correspond with the external reality, and these experienced patterns can be explained objectively (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Moreover, observational statements can be tested empirically according to the principle of falsification, and naturalists seek to verify theoretical claims through empirical observations and inductive reasoning. As such, naturalism is epistemologically foundationalist. The aim is to generate general knowledge, rather than insight into particular phenomenon (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). From this perspective, experimental and statistical methods are considered superior.

Constructivism is the most direct alternative to the naturalist/positivist camp. It is epistemologically grounded in hermeneutics, which assumes knowledge about the social world depends on understanding the meanings people attach to social behavior (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, 10). Constructivism argues interpretation and communication are at the core of knowledge generation in the social sciences, which is influenced by cognitive frames in the mind of the researcher, as well as dominant theoretical frameworks in the scientific community (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, 10). Thus, observations and experience, while considered useful epistemological devices, depend on the perspective of the researcher, can be influenced by contextual factors, and are not neutral or consistent (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). Constructivism emphasizes the willfulness of human agency, and that truth lies in the eyes of the observer and the constellation of power that supports that truth. There is value in understanding, and it is more than one way to understand (Moses & Knudsen, 2012)³.

²Blatter and Haverland (2012) distinguishes between three camps: empiricism/positivism and critical rationalism; constructivism/conventionalism and critical theory; pragmatism/naturalism and critical realism.

³In addition to the two main methodological camps, there is scientific/critical realism, which is also epistemologically foundationalist and assume there is an objective reality that plays a central role in the process of scientific knowledge generation (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, 12).

What is central for this study is the two methodological perspectives' view on case studies – which for naturalists is at the “bottom of the hierarchy of methods” (Moses & Knudsen, 2012). It is at best considered a supportive technique to be combined with more “reputable” approaches – experimental and statistical analysis – or can be employed (through for instance process tracing or nested analysis⁴) to confirm presumed causal processes that lie beneath larger-N studies. By contrast, constructivism is less preoccupied with generalization, and does not view the world as singular and independent of the observer. From the interest in explaining particular phenomena, case study is a valued method from this perspective (Moses & Knudsen, 2012).

This study aims to develop an understanding of why actors engage in conferences, their motivations, intentions, and expected outcomes. Thus, it applies the willfulness of human agency element from constructivism. Also leaning on constructivist thinking, it is assumed that the produced knowledge depends on the researcher's understanding of the meaning people attach to social behavior and phenomena. The observations made in the study, including statements made by informants, are considered to be influenced by peoples' background, the context of the interview, and fluid conditions that are not necessarily objective or representative of an absolute truth.

4.2.3 The case study approach

The distinction above, between large-N and small-N analysis, also relates to variable-based opposed to case-centered analysis (King et al., 1994; Lijphart, 1971, 1975; Ragin, 1992) – the latter being the design applied in this study. Blatter and Haverland (2012) describe four characteristics of case-study research: a small number of cases; a large number of empirical observations per case; a huge diversity of empirical observations for each case; and an intensive reflection in the relationship between concrete empirical observations and abstract theoretical concepts (p. 19).

Moreover, there are three distinct variations of case studies: co-variational (COV), causal process tracing (CPT), and congruence analysis (CON) (Blatter & Blume, 2008). A defining characteristic of all varieties is that a large number of diverse empirical observations are collected per case, which are then compared to abstract theoretical concepts. The focus in this study is on a specific kind of outcome –“y-centered research” – assuming a plurality of factors work together to produce the outcome of interest: functions within Arctic governance (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, 80).

Blatter and Haverland (2012) further outline the history of case study methodology, and two different camps with regards to case study research – represented by John Gerring, building on King, Keohane and Verba's statistical template for research design, and Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett's *Case Study and Theory Development in*

⁴See among others Beach & Pedersen, 2013; Lieberman, 2005; Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013.

the Social Sciences (2005), founded in a critical and realist epistemology. The book by Gerring (2007) is grounded in positivistic thought and emphasizes that the goal of case studies is in part to say something about a large class or population of cases. Bennett & George (2005) by contrast, emphasize causal mechanisms in the real world, and that researchers should seek to find traces of the workings of these mechanisms.

This study aims to examine and compare two cases, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle as “an instance of a class of events” (A. Bennett & George, 2005, 17), i.e. conferences, within the Arctic governance system. While the methodological foundation of this study is by and large constructivist, the overall objective is also in part aligned with Gerring’s understanding of the goal of a case study. Namely, from this in-depth comparative analysis of the two cases, to be able to say something about the broader population of interdisciplinary and intersectional conferences.

Lijphart (1971) constructs six ideal types of case studies, and this project fits within the *interpretive case study* category, where cases are chosen because of an interest in the case rather than in formulating general theory (p. 692)⁵. The accessibility of the case(s) is a primary precondition in an interpretive case study, including a comprehensive overview of temporal unfolding causal process, a dense description of critical moments, and deep insight into perceptions and motivations of actors. This was possible to obtain for the cases chosen for this project, and has been uncovered through the interviews, and review of conference programs and other documents.

Reviewing the merits of the case study method justifies the appropriateness for the purpose of this project. Firstly, as demonstrated in the introduction chapter, there is limited knowledge about the outcomes and functions of conferences within the Arctic governance system. This makes the in-depth insight possible to obtain through case studies, which requires a thorough mapping of the phenomenon under examination, a valuable asset for this project. The concept of embeddedness is also useful, which means findings are located historically and culturally, and facilitates an examination of the sequence of events producing an outcome, not just the outcome (Peters, 2013, 149). This notion is a central point in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, on the development of the conference sphere and establishment of the two cases, which is discussed in relation to other events within Arctic affairs.

Further, case study research entails accepting complexity and multiple causations (Peters, 2013, 149). Rooted in the scarcity of previous research on the topic of interest, it is demanding to postulate causal factors that can lead to outcomes. Accordingly, it is necessary to be open to the fact that social outcomes can result from a combination of causal factors, there being different pathways to similar outcomes, and that the effect of the same causal factor can be different in various contexts (Blatter & Haverland, 2012,

⁵From the methodological perspectives discussed above, according to Moses and Knudsen (2012, 136), this type of case study is of little interest for naturalists.

81). Conferences are dynamic arrangements, which makes these valuable aspects of the research design. Related, another strongpoint is the possibility to, within a single case, explore causal mechanisms in detail, look at a large number of intervening variables, and identify what conditions present in the case activate the causal mechanism (A. Bennett & George, 2005, 21). In this study, such detailed exploration is useful for the examination of how conferences function within governance structures.

4.3 Research setting

4.3.1 The population of cases – “casing”

To select cases for this study, a central exercise was mapping out the universe, or population, of potential cases (King et al., 1994). The process of casing entails defining the object of interest and its boundaries (Ragin, 1992, 218). This is not a one-time undertaking, but a continuous activity throughout the research. I started by asking the question of what fits within the universe Arctic conferences. By using online calendars of events, such as that of the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States (ARCUS), the Arctic Portal, the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and websites of Arctic institutions and institutes, I constructed an extensive database of existing (and past) conferences on Arctic issues (see Appendix 8), which has been revisited and updated as the project developed. The result of this mapping is presented in Chapter Five, which addresses the expansion of the Arctic conference sphere from the 1970s⁶.

My initial aspiration with this project was conducting an intermediate-N analysis, in which I compared a number of attributes across a larger selection of cases to identify which combination of these produced a given outcome. However, because of challenges related to entering a new field of research – and time and financial constraints – this proved infeasible. While having collected basic information about a large number of conferences, it would require me to also gather, sort, and analyze extensive data from 20-plus conferences. There was also the problem of defining the *one* outcome to look for in such an analysis. Therefore, the project shifted towards an in-depth, descriptive, and comparative approach, and I began searching for interesting cases within the initial pool – those most likely to shed light on the research question: what are the functions of conferences in a governance system?

⁶The choice of commencing the overview in the 1970s is founded in how this is a comparative case study of two contemporary conferences, rather than a historical account of conferencing in the Arctic. Thus, it is considered appropriate to commence with conferences alike (i.e. science meetings), or paving the way for, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly developing into a hybrid type of conference (discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.6).

4.3.2 Case selection

From the universe of Arctic conferences, I have chosen to conduct a binary comparison. I contend this is a constructive method, founded in the argument that the Arctic conference sphere is a new field of inquiry. There is limited systematized data available on relevant aspects of conferences in the Arctic, such as developments over time, agendas, topics, outcomes, participants, sponsors, and revenues. Therefore, as mentioned, an intermediate- or large-N study is not appropriate at this time. Still, a well-constructed small-N study can function as a building block, providing not only in-depth knowledge about the two cases, but also potentially contributing to hypothesis testing.

Challenges when conducting a binary comparison include the problem of small-N and a large number of variables as potential sources of extraneous variance – which entails including variables that are not relevant for the research. Lijphart (1971) presents several solutions to this problem, such as increasing the number of cases, reducing the property space by combining variables, focusing on comparable cases⁷, or to commit to theoretical parsimony and focus on key variables. The latter strategy is applied in this study, which concentrates on relevant variables founded in the theoretical framework that can contribute to elucidate the effects of Arctic conferences.

The main criteria for case selection are as follows. *Size*: the study distinguishes between conferences, meetings, seminars, and workshops, and focus on larger, international conferences. *Issue area*: the conference must combine policy, science, and business. *Openness*: to examine the democratizing function of a conference, it must be open for all interested parties to attend (however granted they have the necessary resources). *Participants*: the conference must include attendees from a variety of sectors: representatives from politics, science, academia, institutes, organizations, business, local communities, and Indigenous peoples. *Recurrence*: the primary interest is in recurrent conferences held on a frequent basis, not one-time events. The latter criteria is founded in the institutionalist argument, of how international policy coordination depends on expectations, information, communication, and openness among actors in the system (Keohane, 1982, 347).

The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly were chosen as the main cases from these criteria. Notably, they account for a small fraction of the larger sphere of conferences within different fields taking place world-wide annually. The justification of selecting these two conferences are based in their hybrid nature, combining policy, science, and business, which makes them interesting by virtue of the broad agenda and participation of international delegates from various affiliations. Secondly, they are appealing by being competing arenas, thus introducing a marketplace element to the analysis. Thirdly, while sharing a number of practical characteristics, the cases are founded

⁷Comparable are cases that are similar in a large number of important characteristics (variables), treated as constants, but dissimilar in the variables that are examined (Lijphart, 1971, 687).

in different philosophies, and from that serve different functions for both various stakeholder groups, and for the Arctic governance architecture as a whole.

The outset of this project evolved around examining an additional dimension to the realpolitik aspect and cooperative elements in the Arctic. As such, in addition to internal characteristics of the conferences, relational elements are significant for the assessment of their broader functions. Specifically, how the conferences relate to the Arctic Council – the premier forum for regional cooperation – as well as other governance arrangements and individual Arctic and non-Arctic states is of high interest. The cases each bring their own value to the study, by representing different ways of facilitating an informal arena for gathering actors in the interface between sovereign state interests and formalized cooperative arrangements.

4.4 The data collection process

Data for this study have been gathered to enhance our knowledge about the nature, functions, and outcomes of conferences within Arctic governance. To examine the problem statement and research questions posed in the introduction chapter, three aspects are devoted particular attention. Firstly, actors in the conference sphere, specifically organizers, participants, partners, and sponsors (and their motivations and ambitions). Secondly, the agendas of organizers and participants. Thirdly, the outcomes and functions of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture.

To reveal relevant aspects of agenda-setting, a requisite is to open the black-box of entities such as states, organizations, institutions, steering committees, and advisory boards. These bodies do not have an agency by their own virtue, and do not produce outcomes or impact policy without the actors comprising them. It is necessary to identify mechanisms through which the behavior of those who actually produce and consume knowledge is influenced by the forums they participate in. Nor does collaboration happen spontaneous, so actors need to see a potential profit from organizing arrangements for joint benefits – the realization of personal or professional self-interests.

Accordingly, an essential part of this project is to uncover the actors behind systems and structures – who are policy entrepreneurs in the Arctic and agenda setters at Arctic conferences? Who can contribute to bringing issues forward into national strategies and Arctic policies, and/or towards the development of regional or international cooperative arrangements? To examine these elements, relevant data are participation lists and interviews with engaged actors in the Arctic conference sphere and regional cooperation in general.

In addition to the agenda and actors, this project has also examined the outcomes and impacts of conferences within Arctic governance. Outcomes can be understood both in terms of “physical” summaries, reports, or agreements, or as “social” outcomes in the

form of the establishment of relations, networks, and cooperative arrangements. I have also considered to what extent conferences function as a correction to the workings of national states and international organizations with regard to Arctic policy, and whether the intention is to develop common agendas, act on Arctic issues multilaterally and implement concrete actions. Materials examined to inquire into these features were programs, post-conference publications, political speeches, and governmental documents. In addition, media coverage⁸ has been a source of information, to examine the attention given to the conference, and which issues are brought forward to the public sphere.

4.4.1 Interviews

Semi-structured, individual interviews was the main technique for data collection in the project. I conducted a total of 24 interviews, lasting for approximately 45-60 minutes each⁹. Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, i.e. people expected to provide valuable information for the overall objective of the study: to situate conferences within Arctic governance. From this, the interview material is purposefully limited to mostly Arctic state actors. While it would be interesting to inquire into the views of non-Arctic actors, if the conferences were the dependent variable, for this study it was deemed more consequential to rather unravel the perceptions and perspectives of Arctic state actors on how newcomers utilize conferences.

Informants (Appendix 3) were sent a consent form (Appendix 4), and the topics and questions of interest in advance of the interview (see Appendix 1 – Interview Guide). I did not experience anyone refusing to answer any questions throughout the data collection process. To ensure informed consent, I aspired to be as transparent as possible with regards to my background, the purpose of the study, and context the information provided by participants would be situated in. Informants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing an explanation. There were no participants to the study who decided to withdraw. The interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participant, and transcribed for analysis (Appendix 2)¹⁰.

Interviews were conducted throughout the project, mainly in 2017 and 2018, and most were carried out in conjunction with my participation at either the Arctic Frontiers or Arctic Circle Assembly. Striving to ensure full confidentiality and anonymity, participants to the study are categorized by nationality and according to five categories of affiliation. These are: conference organizers; policy/government; science/academia;

⁸This includes the social media accounts – primarily Twitter and Facebook – of the two conferences, which has been useful to reveal the desired official image the organizers seek to portray.

⁹In addition to the (semi-) structured interviews transcribed for analysis, I talked with a number of people, both participants at the conferences I attended, and people involved with institutions or organizations dealing with Arctic issues. I had such informal conversations with both Arctic and non-Arctic actors.

¹⁰Appendix 2 – Codebook – provides an overview of the “Nodes” the interview material has been coded according to. See also section 5.1 — Transcription.

business; and media/civil society/others. Quotes and statements that are not the author's own are indicated by reference to the nationality and affiliation of the informant whose opinion it is. In addition to avoid using participants' names, caution has been applied regarding use of other identifiable information, such as specific job title, name of the affiliated institution or organization, or strongly expressed opinions.

Interviews has been the primary source of information about actors' motives, intentions, and ambitions of engagement in the Arctic conference sphere, and to learn about organizers' overall objectives and expected outcomes of the conferences. Accordingly, some informants were contacted by virtue of their direct affiliation to one of the two cases, as initiators, organizers, members of the secretariat, or representatives from the board of advisors/steering committee. Others were chosen because of their position within academia, science, or government, in addition to being frequent conference participants who could contribute to the examination and analysis of these arenas.

Lastly, the "snowball sampling" strategy was applied, as informants referred to other people of interest, which were contacted with the request to participate in the research. This was not a conscious decision from the beginning, but became part of the study as it developed, and I got in touch with people with thoughts about other relevant informants. This is an advantageous way to collect data in an effective manner, however, it is important to be aware of the risk of oversampling a network of peers, which can lead to bias. This is something I have been cautious about, and checked statements towards other perspectives or sources.

4.4.2 Participant observation

Participant observation was the second data collecting data technique applied. This is a qualitative, interactive, and relatively unstructured method (Guest, Maney, & Mitchell, 2013, 79), which proved useful for this project. I attended the Arctic Frontiers in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and the Arctic Circle Assembly in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019¹¹. Instead of being on the outside looking in, or hearing second-hand recounts, I needed to partake and experience the arenas for myself. This to obtain first-hand insight into what takes place at the conferences, see how they are orchestrated, and what image the organizers wanted to portray to the public. This image could later be contrasted with how the conferences are perceived in the media, and how informants describe the conferences, contrast them with each other, or different arenas. Furthermore, participant observation enabled me to map out relevant questions and to better understand the meaning of my data, as I had a shared experience with my informants.

¹¹At the 2019 Arctic Circle, I also participated as a speaker in a breakout session panel: *Crossroads: Action Now – Arctic Politics: Dealing with the Urgency of Change*. The session was organized by UiT, the Arctic University of Norway, the Maine North Atlantic Institute at University of Southern Maine, the University of Iceland, and the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Participant observation provided information from speeches, in addition to practical details about the venue, exhibitors, sponsors, and networking events. When attending a conference, I took notes about the sessions, and general observations from around the venue, to document contents beyond the title in the program, and the image presented through social media and websites. From this, following the conferences over a period of years allowed for observing agenda developments, which issues remained salient, recurring themes and presenters, and new priorities emerging on the agenda. It provided insight into who had the best speaking time in plenary sessions, who were most visible, and had the largest audience, as well as what is presented – e.g. policy proposals, science reports, or calls for collaboration.

In addition to taking notes from sessions and observations, I also documented the conferences through photographs (which are included throughout the thesis). The purpose of visual documentation was to provide an illustration of the presentations in the plenary sessions – e.g. the length to which non-Arctic states goes to sell themselves as legitimate stakeholders, with a genuine contribution to and interest in Arctic science and research, sustainable economic and societal development, and efforts to combat the impacts of climate change was particular striking. Also, the exhibitions in the halls of Harpa at the Arctic Circle, with science posters, country flags, and stands with information about expeditions were documented with photographs, and included in the thesis. During the conferences, I also used Twitter and the official hashtag of the organizers to follow participants' perceptions of and thoughts about sessions, how the message presented from stage was received, and to get in touch with other participants.

Participant observation moreover allowed for being “embedded in the action and context of a social setting”, which made it possible to capture unwritten rules or norms taken for granted by experienced participants and insiders (Guest et al., 2013, 76). I could observe how people moved around and acted at the venues, which sessions were prioritized by a majority of participants, who were recurrent attendees, and activities taking place outside the program (e.g. side-meetings and networking). For example, the speed at which politicians left after their own speech, and the extent to which conference frequents engaged in their own meetings, were two aspects that in retrospect would not have been satisfyingly uncovered through the interviews.

Furthermore, partaking at the conferences proved an interesting undertaking in revealing some of the major differences between the cases. While I expected to become closer to the Arctic Frontiers – as it is arranged in my home city – than the Arctic Circle, throughout the project, the opposite became reality. The openness and relaxed welcome I received as a researcher by the organizers of the Arctic Circle substantiated the description of the arena by informants. It is an informal setting where people can meet on ‘neutral ground’, and talk more freely without mandates or institutional constraints (this is elaborated in Chapter Nine).

Another notable observation was how my relationship to other participants, including some of the informants to the study, developed through the project, as I gradually became one of the “conference insiders”. With this unique project, I became “the conference researcher” – which allowed me to become closer to the object I was studying, and it was a role that opened doors, both to new informants, information, and chances to talk about my research in other forums and interviews. However, it also posed some challenges to be discussed in the ethical section.

Related, regarding the degree of self-revelation as an observing participant, I was open about my position and motive of attending the conferences – as an observer for research purposes – while spending time at the venues. However, while being fully open to those I engaged with, it would be impossible to inform all 2-3000 participants in the conference setting of my role. This is not considered to be a major ethical problem, as the conferences are public arenas, and no participants are identified in the research without their consent.

4.4.3 Document analysis

The third means for data gathering has been document analysis. At the outset, as part of the “casing” phase of the project, it was applied to obtain an overview of the field – the Arctic governance literature and the literature on conferences – in which to situate the study. This also included searching for conferences online, and examining websites of conferences, workshops, seminars, and meetings attending to Arctic issues, to determine which to include in research. As mentioned in the introduction, the mapping of the conference sphere has been an important part of this project. While calendars of events and archives of individual or groups of conferences do exist, this project has provided a database not only showing the development of Arctic conferences in numbers (Appendix 8), but also an account of conferencing in the Arctic and on Arctic related issues dating from the 1970s (Chapter Five).

Having decided on the two cases, document analysis was applied throughout the research for three main purposes. Firstly, to map out and categorize recurrent and high-agenda topics addressed at conferences in general, and the cases chosen in particular. Secondly, to identify overlaps between conference topics and state priorities in the region. Thirdly, to check statements from the interviews with official statements. For example, if an informant made a claim about a state’s foreign policy interests, I reviewed its foreign policy or Arctic strategy to support or negate the claim.

The document review included previous conference programs, the Arctic Frontiers from 2007, and the Arctic Circle from 2013. This review of programs revealed four categories of stand-out topics: the impacts of climate change and the environment; resource development and management; Northern communities and indigenous peoples;

maritime issues and the Arctic Ocean. These issues have been contextualized in the review of the Arctic policies of the Arctic states (Appendix 5), in addition to non-Arctic states who have produced strategies, e.g. the EU, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and China. These have been collected from Ministry of Foreign Affairs' websites, and can also be found at the Arctic Portal's *Arctic Policies Database* (see also Heininen et al., 2020). When relevant or necessary, I have supplemented with other governmental documents, such as white papers and reports, and I have analyzed political speeches relevant to shed light on Arctic state policies and approaches to regional cooperation.

Lastly, I have also frequented the websites of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly, to follow the official imagery of the organizers, and the language used about the conferences. The websites have also been a source of information about the organizations, stated number of participants, developments in partners and sponsors, the steering committee and advisory board, and the Forums of the Arctic Circle and the Seminars Abroad arranged by the Arctic Frontiers, which I have not been able to attend due to financial constraints.

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 Interviews and transcription

The interview guide for the study was developed with the input from people familiar with conferencing in the Arctic, and ideas about what to look for in search of an impact of conferences. The interviews were transcribed from the recording either immediately afterwards, or within a couple of days. This allowed me to include nuances related to the backdrop of the interview, and tone of the subject. In addition to the transcriptions, statements by informants were sorted into a data sheet, in which they were linked to other sources: official documents, international events, other statements by informants, or theoretical perspectives. This proved very useful both for structuring and for providing discussions and analysis in chapters five through nine.

I also made summaries of interviews that were carried out in the same setting, for example after attending a conference, to allow for revisiting the material, and review similarities and contradictions among subjects with regards to the event and issues discussed. This was presented to my supervisors, to deliberate new approaches or subjects I should contact for more information or alternative perspectives. Throughout the process, I was conscious of the fact that when interviewing English speakers, this was in my second language. When interviewing Norwegians, the translation process when transcribing had to be as accurate as possible regarding the meaning, and not necessarily the perfect formulation in English. Informants' statements used as quotes in the thesis have only been altered to avoid breaking anonymity.

4.5.2 Coding scheme

I used the computer software QSR NVivo12 to transcribe the interviews, and coded the text into themes using “nodes” (see Appendix 2 – Codebook). In the initial phase of the project, I labeled informants’ statements in rough categories (e.g. ‘Arctic Council’, ‘international cooperation’, ‘communication channels’, ‘networking’ etc.), to get a sense of which topics informants were interested in, and which themes to follow. I constructed comparison diagrams, to examine recurrent issues, shared and contrasting issues among informants. The main goal was to use the interview material to shed light on the research questions, to uncover as many elements of the cases as possible, and to situate the conferences within Arctic governance. In the initial phase, there were few challenges of classification, and informants from different affiliations and nationalities tended to bring up quite homogenous topics when discussing the two cases.

The coding scheme was then restructured and refined about mid-way in the project, at the time the mechanisms took form. I revisited the transcriptions of the interviews, and recoded them according to subcategories within each mechanism. What did the informant say relevant for uncovering the functions of conferences for different stakeholder groups in the region? Or, to examine conferences as arenas for agenda setting, and for actors to elevate issues onto the regional or international agenda? How did informants describe the role of conferences in relation to other elements within the Arctic governance structure? This provided very useful, and largely formed the outline for the empirical chapters seven through nine.

In this phase, smaller categories were merged to get a reasonable structure of the codebook. The classification of the interview material became more challenging during the re-coding, and when settling on the final nodes for the codebook. As with ‘outliers’ when working with quantitative data, I came across statements or topics brought up by only one or two informants, which were not brought up, or dismissed as irrelevant, by others. To interpret this data, I used other sources, either documents or my own experiences through participation. Some issues had to be seen in context to the informant’s situation or perspective, and while it did not fall into a general trend, it was still interesting and useful information. For example, journalists I talked to tended to have a different view of conferences than other participants. Thus, while their accounts could not be clustered into large nodes with statements from others, it was interesting pieces of the puzzle when examining the conference sphere.

4.6 Ethical questions raised by the research

While not involving vulnerable groups or highly sensitive information, this research project still raises some ethical questions. In particular regarding confidentiality, the role and responsibilities of a researcher, and how to represent conflicting interests. Confidentiality is underpinned by the principle of respect for participants' autonomy, and entails that identified information about individuals collected through the research process is not disclosed without permission. Anonymity is one way to operationalize confidentiality, and for the researcher to protect participants from accidentally breaking confidentiality (Wiles, Crow, Health, & Charles, 2008, 417-422). When gathering personal data, participants have the right to be informed, and to give their consent. For the consent to be valid, it has to be voluntary, explicit, and informed (Norwegian Centre for Research Data, 2017). Such consent has been ensured in this project (see section 4.4.1).

Informants to the study include participants from the Arctic policy, science, and business communities who hold resources, means of influence, and are well positioned with extensive networks. This is not a vulnerable group. Nonetheless, the informants comprise a rather small pool of people, holding one of few key positions in central institutions. Thus, caution have been applied regarding information gathered about participants' professional situation and relations to colleagues. It would be unethical to use recognizable quotes, especially regarding controversial matters, in a context that could have potentially negative consequences for informants' professional career. Accordingly, the data has been de-personified, and effort has been made to avoid linking informants to identifiable characteristics. However, there is always the risk within small communities that information can be connected to other identifiable sources, thus revealing the identity of informants. This is challenging to control for, but something I have been attentive to in striving to maintain participants' anonymity.

Secondly, fieldwork observation may lead researchers to develop close relationships with participants (NESH, 2016, 23), and a challenge that came up during participant observation was that of defining roles and responsibilities (see also section 4.4.2). By attending the cases in the study, I have gradually become part of the "Arctic conference club". This is not a severe problem with regards to informants understanding my position as a researcher, or related to informed consent. However, it does concern the overall objective of neutrality in research. In striving for impartiality in assessments, I have been conscious of my own values and perspectives, and how my attitudes towards both people and situations discussed must not affect the interpretation of the material collected. Aspiring for non-partisanship, I have also been intentional in balancing informants connected to both arenas, so people affiliated with, or particular supportive of, one of the conferences are not over represented.

The third ethical question concerns conflicting interests – both between the organizers of the two cases, and among different participant groups. The conferences in the study are competing arenas. They strive to attract the highest number of participants, most prominent delegates and speakers, partners, sponsors, and for media attention. This is relevant when assessing statements about “the others”, which must be checked towards alternative sources. Moreover, regardless of my own personal perceptions, I have strived to describe the conferences, their strengths and weaknesses, as objective as possible. Any normative elements in the dissertation are based on arguments founded in empirical evidence.

The issue of conflicting interests is connected to a larger methodological challenge – competing truths about the state of affairs in the Arctic, and how/whether to involve all perspectives. Stakeholders with diverging interests benefit from varying descriptions, and from highlighting aspects promoting their case. For example, some Arctic states are reluctant to involve non-Arctic states in cooperative arrangement, in fear of excessed outsider influence over regional developments. Non-Arctic states have an interest in promoting themselves as legitimate stakeholders. As such, the fact that all actors have an agenda, and that these can be conflicting, is necessary to consider.

Not only the organizers, but also participants have conflicting interests, and can benefit from different descriptions of the region, and from highlighting aspects promoting their view of how developments should proceed. For example, some Arctic states are reluctant to involve non-Arctic states in cooperative arrangements, in fear of excessed outsider influence over regional developments. Non-Arctic states have an interest in promoting themselves as legitimate stakeholders and constructive participants. Environmental organizations use symbols and rhetoric tools, such as “the Arctic as the canary in the coal mine” and “the Arctic as a thermometer for the world” to underscore their point. Businesses on the other hand, emphasize the value of economic and industry development in the Arctic for the region’s inhabitants, however accompanied with how it must be done in a sustainable manner. As such, the fact that all actors have an agenda, and that these can be conflicting, is necessary to consider.

Related, social science research involving people do not take place in a vacuum. Hence, while informed consent has been obtained from all participants in the study, there are still ethical considerations to be made regarding third parties. The interviews conducted have provided information about a much larger number of people than those consenting to participate in the study, and informants have also talked about each other. As such, there is a risk of people feeling exposed or misrepresented if the data is not treated properly (NESH, 2016, 20). To avoid this, I have not only refrained from using statements about “others” unless confirmed by the individual in question, but also been conscious with regards to how I represent different communities, societies, and groups.

Concluding the ethical discussion, I emphasize that all research is political, and

situating the research is in many ways a political statement. It is important to consider where the project is positioned in the conflict between the two conferences, in particular as it is tied to national interests of Norway and Iceland, and seeing how I am a Norwegian researcher. The dissertation can have both positive and negative consequences for the cases, thus I have constantly strived for impartiality and objectivity, to ensure transparency and fairness. At the same time, it would be unethical to engage in censorship. The conference organizers may not appreciate all aspects of how the conferences are portrayed by some informants, or characteristics assigned to them. However, this is considered an inconvenience more than being harmful, and to be outweighed by the broader purpose of the study.

4.7 Quality assessments, trade-offs and limitations

The introduction chapter argued for the contributions of this project. With there being limited systematized data on conferences as arenas for international and cross-sectoral engagement in the Arctic, this study aims at filling a knowledge gap by mapping out the under-researched Arctic conference sphere. The study seeks to make an empirical contribution, by unraveling the nature of two particular cases, to establish both how they fit within the broader system of sovereign states and formalized cooperation in the region, and how they are arenas for stakeholders to pursue their interests and agendas.

Nonetheless, as with any research design, there are trade-offs and limitations when conducting a case study. I argued for the merits of this method with regards to the in-depth knowledge acquired, and how, with only two cases, it is still possible to examine multiple causal mechanisms and consider a large number of intervening variables likely to affect the outcome. Still, a weak-point when studying social phenomena is the issue of limited diversity. It is not possible to observe all potential combinations of attributes in the real world, and thus, one cannot establish with absolute certainty which variables contribute, or not, to the outcome of interest (Ragin & Sonnett, 2005).

Related, while the case study approach is strong in terms of assessing whether and how a variable mattered for the outcome, it is less robust at determining how much it mattered (A. Bennett & George, 2005, 25). This complicates the assessment of whether a condition contributing to the explanation of the case is necessary or sufficient, either for the case, the type of case, or for the outcome in general. As such, one might have to settle for the claim that a variable is a contributing cause to an outcome, which may or may not be necessary (A. Bennett & George, 2005, 26-27). Moreover, a weakness when depending on interviews is that results are shaped by the perceptions of participants (Peters, 2013, 164-165). Still, the number of interviews conducted throughout this project, combined with observation and document analysis, has provided sound opportunity to check statements against other sources, to verify or falsify claims.

Furthermore, when using case study methods, one has to consider the trade-off between the goal of theoretical parsimony, establishing explanatory richness, and keeping the number of cases manageable (A. Bennett & George, 2005, 31), which has also been a factor in this study. As mentioned, it would not have been possible to obtain the type of in-depth knowledge that has been gathered on the two cases for a larger number of conferences within the boundaries of the project. Accordingly, explanatory richness has been the key focus, and the inquiry into the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly reveal features and conditions present at these arenas, which may not be characteristics of conferences with different qualities and/or arranged in different settings. Still, while the challenge of generalizing from small-N studies has been considered, an aspiration is to provide for an understanding of conferences that potentially can be transferable to similar contexts.

Despite having to accept these compromises when conducting a comparative case-study, I hope to have convincingly argued for this project's validity, reliability, and transferability. To strengthen the study's validity, I have aspired to be transparent regarding my own position and how I have interpreted the data. In the empirical chapters, interpretations are presented and discussed in relation to both the theoretical framework, existing literature, and informants' statements. Where alternative interpretations are relevant to consider, these are called into attention. Regarding the reliability of the study, the ambition of this chapter has been to account for the research process, including choice of methods, case selection, the data gathering and analysis processes. I have also discussed my role as a researcher, in relation to the informants to the study, to provide for transparency regarding how the research has been conducted.

In summary, this chapter has situated the study within the qualitative research camp, by discussing the main differences between the qualitative and quantitative traditions, and also providing the methodological stance. Having mapped out the conference sphere through a continuous process of casing, the choice of a binary comparison has been justified with the criteria for case selection, and the characteristics of the chosen conferences. Through the triangulation of data collection methods – interviews, participant observation, and document analysis – it is possible to gain in-depth descriptive and explanatory knowledge about the two conferences within the research setting. I have concluded by discussing the ethical questions raised by the research, and the trade-offs and limitations of the chosen research design.

The Arctic conference sphere

5.1 Introduction

Bringing with me the theoretical framework, methodological approach, and research design of the study, this chapter commences the empirical section. In aiding the overall objective of the study – examining the functions of Arctic conferences within the governance and societal structures in which they are situated – this chapter sheds light on developments within the Arctic conference sphere, and characteristics of the case pool from which the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are selected. It seeks to contribute to answer whether conferences fulfill meaningful functions, or whether the perception of conferences as expensive elite gatherings is accurate. Specifically, the chapter presents the universe of cases – the Arctic conference sphere – by mapping out and providing an overview of arrangements on Arctic issues¹. This review is presented in historical order, focusing on the establishment of the conference and characteristics such as location, size, thematic focus and issues, organizers, the stated purpose of the conference, and noteworthy developments. This is not a thorough account for the various meetings and arrangements held by the Arctic Council². Nor is this overview exhaustive in terms of one-time events, as the study emphasizes developments over time, both in terms of the expanding number of conferences, and how individual conferences have evolved³.

Rittberger (1983) notes that characteristics of the UN-system (i.e. sector-oriented specialized agencies) gave rise to the need for inter-disciplinary, cross-agency, and multi-organizational forms of cooperation in the 1970 and 80s, which led to the UN world conferences (p. 169). The same development – the need for cross-sectoral coordination leading to the development of hybrid conferences – is evident in the Arctic region. Accordingly, in addition to presenting the process of casing conducted throughout the research, this chapter situate the origin and development of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle within broader processes and trends. Throughout the chapter, I seek to demonstrate how different issue areas became more interlinked, the need for information exchange and communication among various stakeholders in the Arctic became more pressing. Specifically, I cast light on the development from mainly scientific and issue-specific arenas, towards the creation of hybrid conferences created to fill a demand for bringing scientific knowledge into the decision-making process, and advancing the science-policy–business interplay. By accounting for occurrences within Arctic gov-

¹Information about the conferences is primarily obtained from their websites.

²See the Arctic Council's document archive.

³See also: Exner-Pirot and Plouffe (2013).

ernance, and examining connections between topics on the regional agenda and those addressed at conferences, I seek to display the broader significance of conferences for developments in the Arctic and internationally.

5.2 Conferences from the 20th Century to the mid-2000s

The first of today's existing conferences were established at the beginning of the 20th Century, but it was not until the 1970s that the number really began to grow. Some of the conferences created at the time were not Arctic-specific at their inauguration, but as the region attracted increased attention from the scientific community, conference agendas evolved to incorporate Arctic related issues. The (Arctic) conference sphere prior to the mid-2000s was mainly dominated by science-oriented arenas, including gatherings in the form of annual science union meetings, and there was little involvement of decision makers or the business community.

5.2.1 Conferences in the 1970s and 1980s

Examples of meetings of science unions are the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea Annual Science Conference originating in 1902, the American Association of Geography Annual Meeting originating in 1904, the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting arranged since 1920, the Society of Exploration Geophysicists Annual Meeting, held in the United States since 1930, and the Western Regional Science Association Annual Meeting, arranged in the United States since 1962.

The European Geoscience Union Annual Meeting, has been organized since 1973 and is the largest European geoscience event, covering topics including climate, energy, and resources. It attracts scientists from all over the world, and in 2018 was attended by 15.000 participants from more than 100 countries. The American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting is the largest earth and space science meeting in the world, hosted in San Francisco, and was attended by approximately 24.000 participants in 2017. The linkages between the Arctic and space are gaining traction within the science community, in particular regarding transferrable technology and infrastructure competence. Thus, this conference is becoming more relevant for Arctic issues.

Nonetheless, these kinds of gatherings with 10-20.000 participants are the stereotype of conferences often criticized for being expensive, time consuming, and not particularly relevant for political processes within international relations. They do not produce a common statement or result in joint efforts on behalf of all attendees. Rather, it is up to the participants to connect and initiate activities amongst themselves. Therefore, these arenas are not the primary interest in this project, which seeks to examine the broader effects of conferences beyond individual participants or institutions.

Table 5.1: Conferences on the Arctic Ocean established in the 1970s.

Conferences on the Arctic Ocean 1970s		
The International Conferences on Port and Ocean Engineering under Arctic Conditions (POAC)	Established: 1971 Arranged biannually Location: rotating	Objectives are to improve knowledge of ice-related problems by having scientists and engineers discuss and exchange ideas, and to have national and international organizations, industries, and research institutes engaged in Arctic and Antarctic work report their activities.
The International Conference and Exhibition on Performance of Ships and Structures in Ice (ICETECH)	Established: 1975 Arranged in 1981, 1984, 1990, 1994, 2000, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. Location: rotating	The theme of ICETECH is performance of ships and structures in ice. In recent years, emphasis has been on global climate change, and has complemented the growing interest in Arctic shipping, oil, gas, and mineral exploration and production in Arctic offshore regions.
The Northern Research Basins (NBR) Symposium and Workshops	Established: 1975 Arranged biannually Location: the eight Arctic states on rotating basis	Resulting from the International Hydrological Program National Committees of the USSR, USA, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden in 1971, which Iceland joined in 1992. The purpose is to foster research of river basins in northern latitudes.
The Arctic and Marine Oil-spill Program Technical Seminar on Environmental Contamination and Response	Established: 1978 Arranged annually Location: Canada	The Environment and Climate Change Canada began the AMOP program to improve the knowledge base and technology for combatting Arctic and marine oil spills. What started out as a technical seminar developed into an international forum.

Table 5.2: Conferences on the Arctic Ocean established in the 1980s.

Conferences on the Arctic Ocean 1980s		
The Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium	Established: 1982 Arranged semi-annually Location: Alaska, US	A forum for information exchange in biology, management, economics, and processing of various fish species and complexes, and an opportunity for scientists from high-latitude countries to meet informally and discuss their work.
The International Conference of Ocean, Offshore and Arctic Engineering (OMAEE)	Established: 1982 Arranged annually Location: United States	An international assembly of engineers, researchers, technical specialists and students in the fields of ocean, offshore, and arctic engineering. It is organized by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in cooperation with local partners of the host cities.
The Conference on Polar Meteorology and Oceanography	Established: 1983 Arranged biannually since 1999 Location: United States	Part of the annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society. Addresses aspects of polar weather, climate and oceanography.
The International Symposium on Cold Region Development (ISCORD)	Established: 1983 Arranged every three years Location: rotating	The objective is to provide cold region experts with opportunities to exchange experiences and knowledge across a wide range of scientific, technological, and cultural disciplines.

The ocean is central in both Arctic policy and Polar science, and in addition to related issues such as shipping, ice, ports, offshore, and polar engineering, the ocean is a dominant focus area in the Arctic conference sphere already from the 1970s. This was also the time of the negotiation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1973-1982), when states were working to establish their rights and responsibilities through a framework of rules and regulations governing the world's oceans. Ocean related issues remains high on the international agenda, and still dominates conference programs within and outside the Arctic. As Table 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate, conferences established in the 1970s and 1980s aimed to gather and engage scientists, researchers, experts, engineers, and technical specialists. There is no explicit mentioning of involving or communicating to policy or decision makers.

5.2.2 Conferences in the 1990s

Similar to the previous decades, the 1990s was dominated by science conferences. However, arenas emerging at this time had a somewhat broader agenda, emphasizing collaboration among participants. The geopolitical landscape changed, and political leaders and heads of states and governments turned their attention to cooperative forums as the Cold War was coming to an end. In 1991, the first ministerial meeting of the Arctic states was held in Finland, commencing the Rovaniemi process. During the 1990s, some of today's main science conferences on Arctic issues emerged, such as the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS), and the Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW). The former has been arranged every three years since 1992, rotating with the International Arctic Social Science Association (IASSA) secretariat.

The IASSA exemplifies collaboration initiated in the Arctic after the end of the Cold War. It was established in 1990s, from a suggestion made at the Conference on Coordination of Research in the Arctic held in Leningrad in 1988. The objectives of the IASSA are, among others, promoting and stimulating international cooperation, increasing participation of social sciences in Arctic research, and communicating and coordinating with other research organizations. ICASS was first arranged in Quebec, Canada, and gathers international researchers to share ideas about social science research in the Arctic. It is attended by indigenous peoples, northerners, decision makers, politicians, and academics. In 2017, the University of Northern Iowa took over the IASSA secretariat, while the 2021 ICASS is scheduled at the Northern Arctic Federal University in Russia. This demonstrates the collaborative efforts in the region, and how science cooperation can be held separate from political tensions. Informal arenas are gaining traction from a broader variety of stakeholders, for reasons of cooperation and collaboration, which can be accounted for by regime theory's emphasis on the complex nature of issues on the agenda and actor interdependence.

Table 5.3: Conferences established in the 1990s.

Conferences established in the 1990s		
The Alaska Forum on the Environment (AFE)	Established: 1990 Arranged annually Location: Alaska, US	The AFE aims to promote a more productive and efficient relationship between government agencies, businesses, organizations, tribes, and the public. It gathers professionals working in the environmental field to discuss projects, processes, and issues affecting people in Alaska.
The North Atlantic Forum Conference	Established: 1998 Arranged biannually Locations: Canada, Denmark, Iceland	The stated purpose is to facilitate sharing of research and best practices in regional development and governance, and to support community, industry and government exchanges across the North Atlantic region for increased collaboration and partnership.
The International Offshore and Polar Engineering Conference (ISOPE)	Established: 1992 Arranged annually Location: rotating	The world's largest conference of its kind (refereed papers). Purposes are promoting technological progress, international technological transfer and cooperation, interdisciplinary academic-industry interaction, and opportunities for engineers to maintain and improve their technical competence.
Polar Marine Science – The Gordon Research Conference	Established: 1997 Arranged biannually Location: California, US	This conference series brings together experts to present and discuss cutting edge research on both polar oceans. The stated objective, with invited speakers and discussion leaders, is to provide an avenue for scientists from different fields to brainstorm and create synergy across disciplines.

The International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP) is another science conference series initiated as the Arctic opened for more cooperation. It was established in 1995, and arranged again in 2005 and 2015. The ICARP is hosted by the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) in cooperation with its partners. The stated objective of this conference series is providing a forward-looking conference, focusing on international and interdisciplinary perspectives for advancing Arctic research cooperation and applications of Arctic knowledge. The third ICARP in 2015 was held because of the realization that with increased scientific, political, and economic interest in the Arctic, there was need for better coordination and agreement around shared objectives across the Arctic states, and with other countries and international programs.

The Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) is another of today's prominent Arctic science conferences. It was first arranged in 1999, initiated by the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and is held annually at rotating locations. The purpose of the ASSW is to provide opportunities for coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among the various scientific organizations involved in Arctic research. In odd-numbered years, the ASSW includes a three-day science symposium, aiming to create a platform

for exchanging knowledge, initiate collaboration, and attract scientists, students, policy makers, and other professionals. In even-numbered years, the ASSW encompasses the Arctic Observing Summit (AOS), with the objective of provide community driven and science-based guidance for the design, implementation, coordination, and long-term operation of Arctic observing systems.

Another science conference of great significance for later developments in the Arctic conference sphere, in terms of bringing research into the policy making process, is the Northern Research Forum (NRF) Open Assembly. The idea was launched by Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, then president of Iceland, in 1998, and the first conference was held in Akureyri in 2000. The NRF Open Assembly was arranged biannually at various locations until 2015. The philosophy behind the NRF Open Assembly was founded in a recognition of the growing need for open discussion and dialogue based on expertise, in order to preserve the Arctic as a politically stable region, despite the rapid and significant environmental, economic, and geopolitical changes, drawing global attention to the region. The objective was to providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to take part in the discussion of issues arising on the agenda. Many of those involved with the NRF Open Assembly were also engaged in developing the Arctic Circle Assembly, launched in 2013 on the same philosophy of broad actor inclusion in the Arctic dialogue.

The review thus far demonstrates progress in the conference sphere during the 1990s, in terms of more diversified stakeholder involvement and broader agendas. The emphasis on facilitating interdisciplinary forums is more noticeable. So are the stated purposes of involving and interacting with the industry, to engage the political realm, and to have an impact on political processes.

5.2.3 Conferences in the early 2000s

The Arctic Ocean, shipping, marine, and maritime topics further dominated in the early 2000s. In addition, climate change and energy related issues rose on the agenda. In 2001, the Institute of the North initiated the Alaska Dialogue, which has been arranged annually since. This is a policy focused arena, gathering around 100 Alaskan leaders for in-depth discussions on key issues for the state. The Institute of the North also hosts an annual Week of the Arctic, which focuses on outreach and learning. It aims to provide a forum facilitating ongoing international dialogue, connecting partners across the Arctic, and to strengthen Alaskan's awareness of the Arctic region. This is in line with the Institute's mandate, which is grounded in Alaskan priorities and perspectives on socioeconomic development, governance and the human dimension, and to share best-practices and connect a circumpolar network of Arctic experts. From the definition of power as possessing resources others need, placing oneself in a key position where actors can coordinate efforts to achieve joint goals is a significant means of empowerment for

smaller players, such as Alaska.

Conferences established in the early 2000s also includes the Symposium on the Impacts of an Ice-Diminishing Arctic on Naval and Maritime Operations, originating in 2001 and hosted by the US National Ice Centre and the US Arctic Research Commission (USARC) biannually since 2007. The USARC consists of seven president appointed commissioners, including research institution, industry and Indigenous representatives, and is chaired by Fran Ulmer, who is an engaged conference speaker and participant. The USARC's principal duties includes developing and recommending national Arctic research policy, and to facilitate cooperation among federal, state and local governments in advancing Arctic research. The USARC holds meetings in public sessions, arranges workshops, symposia and business meetings. It publishes a biannual Report on the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research and a special reports series.

Also in 2001, the Canadian Institute Energy Group's Arctic Oil and Gas Symposium was held for the first time. This has developed into North America's primary Arctic oil and gas conference, and gathers government officials, community leaders and industry players to discuss the opportunities and the constantly evolving political and regulatory climate surrounding project development in the north. There is an extensive spread of petroleum events held annually, dominated by Asian/Middle East locations, but also a large number of American, European, and African conferences. This is a sector particularly suitable for the conference format, as it involves large international companies, state and private actors, and deals with complicated technology under constant development. Thus, the functions of conferences as display windows, market places, and business networks is markedly strong.

Furthermore, the AECO Arctic Cruise Conference has been arranged annually in Oslo, Norway since 2003. The conference gathers the international Arctic expedition cruise industry, government officials, and other stakeholders connected to Arctic cruise tourism. The Alaska Marine Science Symposium has been arranged since 2004, and is Alaska's premier marine research conference. Participants include educators, resource managers, students, and interested citizens. Also in the early 2000s, the International Scientific Conference for students and post-graduates Problems of the Arctic Region was initiated in Russia. The conference is organized by the Polar Geophysical Institute at the Murmansk Arctic State University, Murmansk State Technical University and Murmansk Marine Biological Institute.

5.3 Conferences established 2005 – 2009

In 2005, there was a noteworthy peak in the establishment of conferences addressing Arctic issues. This corresponds with what Young (2009) calls a "second state change" in Arctic affairs, brought about by developments opening the Arctic to global concerns:

the impacts of climate change and the spread of the socio-economic effects from globalization to the Arctic (p. 427). The 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment⁴ is by Young considered a symbol of this change, as it was the first Arctic Council assessment to comprehensively include social science as well as natural science components, to assess the impacts of climate change on socio-economic conditions in the Arctic. Accordingly, the noted shift in the conference sphere in the 1990s, developing towards a more interdisciplinary approach, is also found in established cooperative arrangements. The emphasis on bringing science into the policy making process, and implementing this interplay, were central building blocks for the establishment of the Arctic Frontiers in 2007 and the Arctic Circle in 2013.

The ArcticNet⁵ Annual Scientific Meeting, the largest annual Arctic research gathering in Canada, was one of the conferences emerging in 2005. The stated aim is to be an arena for actors from all fields of Arctic research to showcase their work, to stimulate networking and partnership activities, and to address the global challenges and opportunities arising from climate change and modernization in the Arctic. The pool of participants is very diverse, and include researchers, students, policy and decision makers, representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, northern stakeholders, and the media.

The Polar Technology Conference was also arranged for the first time in 2005, in the United States. Its primary stated purpose is to bring together polar scientists and technology developers to exchange information on research system operational needs and technology solutions that have been successful in polar environments. Participants include representatives from academia, state and federal agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Another conference originating in 2005 was the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Arctic Division Annual Meeting, held in Alaska until 2014. The AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society, and the mission of its Arctic Division is to advance science and innovation in a way that benefits all, and the conference can be considered a potential means to this end. It gathers researchers, wildlife managers, business leaders, rural residents, Alaska Natives and others, with the aim to enable people to respond and adapt to changes.

⁴The assessment was produced by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in collaboration with the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group, and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). Accessible at: <http://www.amap.no/arctic-climate-impact-assessment-acia>.

⁵The ArcticNet is a Network of Centers of Excellence of Canada, that brings together scientists and managers in the natural, human health, and social sciences with their partners from Inuit organizations, northern communities, federal and provincial agencies, and the private sector.

In 2006, the Engineering Institute of Canada organized the Climate Change Technology Conference. The conference was later arranged in 2009, 2013, and 2015. It was promoted as an international forum for the exchange of ideas for the mitigation of, and adaptation to, the impacts of climate change. The High North Dialogue was established in 2006, and is arranged annually at the High North Center for Business and Governance at Nord University Business School, in Bodø, Norway. It is a two-day event, gathering around 250-300 academics, postgraduates, policy makers, politicians, and businesses representatives for the deliberation of various dimensions of Arctic change. There is also a masters/PhD-course arranged in conjunction with the conference. The High North Dialogue, along with the Kirkenes Conference, and the Arctic Frontiers constitute the three main conferences on High North/Arctic issues in Norway.

The first Arctic Frontiers was held in Tromsø, Norway in 2007. It was an initiative of the research company Akvaplan Niva, who serves as the secretariat for the conference, and chairs the steering committee. The main objective was to provide a knowledge base for political decision-making, and for community and business development. Its stated purpose is to function as an international arena on sustainable development in the Arctic, addressing the management of opportunities and challenges to achieve viable economic growth with societal and environmental sustainability. Despite being one of the more expensive Arctic events, participants numbers have grown from around 500 in 2007 to approximately 1500 in 2020. In addition to the five day conference in January, the organizers have held Seminars Abroad at international locations since 2014. The Arctic Frontiers is devoted extensive attention in the following chapters, and not subject to further elaboration in this overview.

In 2007, the first Arctic Energy Summit took place in Fairbanks Alaska. It has since been arranged in 2013 on Iceland, in 2015 in Alaska, and in 2017 in Finland. It was convened by the Institute of the North and sponsored by the US Department of State during the International Polar Year (IPY), and is an endorsed project of the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council. The overarching goal was to create a forum to engage in energy development in the Arctic, and identify best practices, research questions, and potential projects that advance the application of emerging energy technologies and adoption of renewable energy. The desired outcome is to foster benefits to northern peoples, including via non-renewable resource production, while minimizing environmental, social, cultural, and economic risk.

In 2008, a variety of conferences emerged, including new shipping forums, and conferences focusing on climate change (see Table 5.4). By the end of the 2000s, conferences more or less exclusively emphasize involving a multitude of entities in sharing information, making recommendations for actions, and in developing cooperative relations and joint initiatives.

Table 5.4: Conferences established in 2008

Conferences established in 2008	
The Institute for Arctic Policy (IAP) Conference	This conference is a collaboration between Dartmouth College, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the University of the Arctic. IAP brings together representatives of governments, NGOs, indigenous peoples, and scientists to discuss, identify, and prioritize issues and policy-related research and to help develop the agendas for governments to address pressing policy issues. Topics have been climate change and security, the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, climate change and human security and Arctic health.
The Polar Law Symposium	The symposium is arranged at various locations. Its purpose is to examine the implications of the challenges faced by the Polar Regions for international law and policy, and to make recommendations on appropriate actions by states, policy makers and other international actors to respond to these challenges.
The Northern Oil and Gas Research Forum	The forum was established as a biannual meeting with representation from government, industry, academia, Indigenous groups and Northerners from Canada and the United States. It was arranged between 2008 and 2014, focusing on technical, scientific, and engineering research to support management and regulatory processes related to oil and gas exploration and development in the North.
The Arctic Shipping Forum North America	This forum, established in Canada, is the only event in North America dedicated to examining shipping operations in the Arctic and to provide essential information for understanding the challenges of shipping operations in the Arctic.
The ACI's Arctic Shipping Summit.	The ACI Arctic Shipping Summit was established in Montreal, Canada to address topics related to Arctic shipping, such as regulations and requirements from the Polar Code and the Coast Guard. It brings together key industry stakeholders, including ship-owners, managers, solution providers, consultants and technology providers.
The International Polar Tourism Network	This network is arranged biannually at rotating locations. Membership includes university researchers, consultants, tourism operators, government organizations, community members, and graduate students. The stated objective is to generate, share and disseminate knowledge, resources and perspectives on polar tourism, and to support the development of collaboration and cooperative relationships between members.
The Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans International Symposium	The symposium was arranged for the first time in 2008 (Spain), and since in 2012 (Korea), 2015 (Brazil) and 2018 (Washington DC). The stated objective of the symposium is to bring together experts to better understand climate impacts on ocean ecosystems and how to respond by highlighting the latest information, identifying key knowledge gaps, promote collaboration and stimulate the next generation of science and actions.
The International Arctic Change (Arctic Net)	Arranged in Quebec City, Canada, with a follow-up conference in 2017. It attracted around 1500 participants – including researchers, students and decision-makers, and addressed the multiple challenges brought about by climate change and modernization of the Arctic.
The Kirkenes Conference (Norway)	The conference addresses policy, business and community development in the High North. It is arranged annually and attracts around 300 participants, including Norwegian high-level delegates from several government ministries, regional and local politicians, Russian and EU delegates and representatives from research institutions and the industry.

5.4 Conferences established 2010 – 2013

The turn of the decade brought with it another peak in the establishment of Arctic conferences, several of these in Russia. The International Arctic Forum (IAF) “Arctic – Territory of Dialogue” was inaugurated in 2010 (Moscow), and arranged in 2011 (Archangelsk), and in 2013 (Salekhard). This was Russia’s first high-level international platform for scientific discussions, expert exchange of opinions, and for providing recommendations on the Arctic intended to set the stage for further engagement in the region (Mukusch, 2010). In 2016, the Russian government decided that the conference was to become a biannual event, permanently hosted in Archangelsk in odd-numbered years. The conference is attended by representatives at the highest political level, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. The IAF is organized by the Roscongress Foundation, a socially oriented non-financial development institution, and was in 2017 arranged with the support of the State Commission for Arctic Development.

The IAF, together with the Arctic Circle Assembly and the Arctic Frontiers, are considered the “three major Arctic conferences” internationally. In contrast to the others, a personal invitation is required to attend the IAF, and there is also a high registration fee (US\$ 1833 in 2017). Still, the number of participants has grown from 300 in 2010 to more than 2400 in 2017, according to the organizers (Roscongress Foundation, 2017). The 2017 IAF – “People and the Arctic” – brought together government bodies, international organizations, the scientific and business communities. The objectives of the conference are very much in line with Russia’s Arctic policy, with the aims of developing international cooperation, containing the Arctic as a zone of peace, consolidate efforts to ensure the sustainable development of the Arctic, and raising the standard of living for inhabitants of the Arctic.

The Federal Arctic Forum: “Arctic Days”, succeeding the Arctic Days Festival, was established in 2010 when President Putin supported the first International Festival of Non-fiction Films. The conference is arranged biannually in Russia (Moscow / St. Petersburg) by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation. Its main goal is to draw attention to the natural, historical, and cultural sites in the Arctic, to increase touristic appeal of the Russian North, show the splendor of the North, and to have a dialogue on the environmental problems in the Arctic. In conjunction with the Arctic Days festival, the International Scientific Conference “Open Arctic” has been arranged in 2014, 2015, and 2016.

A third Russian Arctic conference emerging at this time, was the International Forum – “Arctic the present and the future”, which has been arranged in St. Petersburg from 2011 to 2016. Participants included representatives of federal ministries and departments, regional authorities, commercial companies, research organizations, and the media. Each year, the forum resulted in a Resolution, containing recommendations

to policy in the field of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

The conferences presented thus far in the chapter have primarily been organized by societies, associations, research institutions, science committees, and institutes. The Russian government is distinctively more involved in the design and administration of their conferences. Also, the stated purposes of the Russian conferences are very much in line with the state's foreign policy objectives, and although including international cooperation, there is a noteworthy expression of strategical positioning. President Putin has repeatedly indicated he wants Russia to become internationally recognized as a global power, and that an active Arctic presence can help achieve this (Exner-Pirot, 2017).

Conferences as display windows for their activities and priorities can be a means to this end. Further, the goal of the Arctic Days, which emphasizes Russian Arctic exceptionalism, is in line with how Russian leaders use references to historical and cultural presence in the region as an identity building mechanism to justify proactive (often resource-demanding) Arctic policies (Khrushcheva & Poberezhskaya, 2016, 555). Accordingly, the utilization of the above mentioned arenas by the Russian government can be considered a means for the powerful state to assert its dominance, control the agenda and, catalyze outcomes to its benefit.

In 2010, the Arctic Futures Symposium, initiated and arranged by the International Polar Foundation, was established in Brussels, Belgium. The stated aim of the forum is to raise public awareness of important developments in the Arctic region. Also in 2010, the Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS) was also arranged for the first time in 2010, in Belfast, Ireland. The internationally rotating conference was since held in Washington DC (2013), Singapore (2015), the Netherlands (2016), and Nova Scotia, Canada (2017). The SOS is organized by the World Ocean Council, and designed to attract leading companies from the diverse range of ocean industries, to addresses priorities for cross-sectoral industry leadership, and collaboration in ocean sustainability. Lastly, the Consortium for Ocean Leadership has held a Public Policy Forum in Washington DC since 2010. This is a day-long public meeting that facilitates ocean policy discussions with representatives from Congress, federal agencies, industry, and the academic research community.

Since 2011, the North Pacific Arctic Conference on Arctic Futures (NPAC) – a joint venture between the East-West Center and the Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) – has been held annually at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. The NPAC is a deviant conference, as it is closed and for invited participants only (approximately 30-35 people). However, each year, papers presented at the conference are published in a series of proceedings – *The Arctic in World Affairs*. Participants representing the public and private sector, and civil society have taken a particular interest in relations among the Arctic states of the North Pacific region (Canada, Russia, and the US) and

Table 5.5: Conferences established in 2011 and 2012.

Conferences established 2011-2012		
The Week of the Arctic	Established: 2011 Arranged 2011-2014, 2017-2018 Location: Alaska, United States.	An initiative by the Institute of the North, aiming to help Alaskans better understand the challenges and issues at stake in the Arctic through outreach and learning, focusing on innovation, design, community, and resilience.
The Arctic Technology Conference	Established: 2011 Arranged in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2016 Location: rotating	This multidisciplinary conference builds on the Offshore Technology Conference, founded in 1969 – the world’s foremost event for the development of offshore resources in drilling, exploration, production, and environmental protection.
The Fletcher Arctic	Established: 2012 Arranged annually Location: Fletcher School, Tufts University, Massachusetts, United States	The Fletcher Arctic Conference aims to create conversation and constructive debate between speakers and participants, and to provide a forum to address the implications of an opening Arctic. Participants include inspiring leaders, innovative business people, expert scientists, and artists from the pan-Arctic region.
The Economist: The World Ocean Summit	Established: 2012 Arranged in 2014, 2014, 2017-2019 Location: rotating (Singapore, United States, Portugal, Bali, Mexico)	Focusing on challenges and possibilities related to the oceans, sustainable management, and the transition to a new blue economy, and the involvement of capital and the private sector. Delegates include global leaders and representatives from various industries, including government, business, NGOs, and academia.

the principal non-Arctic states of the same region (China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea). The importance of sustaining the Arctic as a zone of peace and prosperity in a rapidly changing and unpredictable world is a recurring theme at NPAC.

The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) is a noteworthy conference held annually since 2011. It was established at the initiative of the US European Command and the Norwegian Defense Staff, designed to promote regional understanding and enhance multilateral security operations within the Arctic area. The ASFR, as the NPAC, is a closed meeting between senior military and coast guard leaders from states with coastlines above the Arctic Circle, or significant interest in the Arctic: Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In 2013, the Arctic Observing Summit (AOS) – a high-level international summit – originated in Vancouver, Canada. It has since been arranged in 2014 (Helsinki, Finland), 2016 (Fairbanks, Alaska), and 2018 (Davos, Switzerland). The stated objective is to provide community-driven, science-based guidance for the design, implementation, coordination, and sustained long-term operation of an international network of Arctic observing systems. Moreover, the aim is to optimize resource allocation through coordination and exchange among all involved or interested in long-term observing activ-

ities, while minimizing duplication and gaps. Another internationally rotating conference emerging in 2013 was the International Conference of the IASC thematic network, which has been arranged in Russia, Italy, Germany, Norway, and Sweden, with the aim to develop an understanding for Arctic environmental change.

The Arctic Encounter Symposium (AES), established in 2013, is the largest annually Arctic policy, security, and economics convening in the United States. It was founded by Rachel Kallander – the owner and managing partner of the consulting firm Kallander & Associates, which arranges the conference. The long-term strategy of the organizers is supporting the international Arctic dialogue and action in the US Congress. Thus, the AES is largely an educational platform, for raising awareness and drawing attention towards Arctic issues within the US government, among business leaders, and the civil society. The space created by the AES within Arctic governance is twofold. On the one hand, the organizers aim to be useful for new stakeholders, providing an arena where they can learn the “Arctic 101”, network, and establish a connection to the region. At the same time, the organizers want the conference to be attractive for experts, as a forum where they can obtain new information, and further develop their connections.

Moreover, the organizers seek to center the agenda around a broad theme, and for attendants to leave with information relevant for their work. The AES is a bottom-up conference, and an essential drive for the organizers is to connect back to people and local communities. They want to do something new and create stakeholders in the Arctic, by inspiring people to get engaged, and help them gain new perspectives. The conference has a variety of partners, many of which from Alaska – e.g. the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, the Chugach Alaska Corporation, the Bering Straits Native Corporation, the Alaska Gas line Development Corporation, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Alaska Ocean Observing System, and Alaska Seafood. The AES is also partner with the Arctic Frontiers, a collaboration set up by the Norwegian Consulate General in San Francisco. The organizers of the Arctic Encounter Symposium consider this collaboration and the opportunity to elevate Norway as an example of an advanced Arctic society as beneficial for the mission of the AES.

The Promise of the Arctic was held in Seattle, Washington in 2013, 2015, and 2016. It is a production of Philips Publishing Group, in cooperation with the Institute of the North, and the Alaska Division of Economic Development. The conference focuses on emerging economic opportunities in the Arctic, and was developed to help those involved in maritime transportation, construction, or resource extraction to maximize the economic potential of the Arctic. The conference also addresses environmental best practices being developed to protect the Arctic waters, and how to respond to the economic and cultural needs of native populations. To that end, the industry must proceed responsibly to ensure that economic opportunities are balanced with environmentally sustainable practices.

Several conferences emerged in the Nordic countries in 2013. One example is the biannual Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit, organized by the City of Rovaniemi, the University of Lapland's Arctic Centre, and the Arctic Society of Finland. The conference aims to bring the spirit and contemporary legacy of the Rovaniemi process forward, including close scientific collaboration, people-to-people connections, and networks of business and arts. The 2017 conference was the first major open event to be held during Finland's Arctic Council chairmanship. Furthermore, from 2013 to 2015, the Trans Arctic Agenda was organized by the Centre for Arctic Policy Studies at the University of Iceland, in cooperation with the Northern Research Forum.

The Arctic Patrol and Reconnaissance Conference was first held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2013. The underlying philosophy is the need for collaboration – both regionally and among different platforms: space, air, maritime, and land assets – to deliver enhanced situational awareness and a comprehensive picture of the harsh Arctic environment. The Arctic Exchange in Stockholm, Sweden, also originated in 2013, and was arranged in 2014, 2015, and 2017. The main purpose was to foster discussions, networking and idea generation, structured around interactive sessions and panel discussions.

The second main case of the project – the Arctic Circle Assembly – was held for the first time in Reykjavik, Iceland in 2013. It is marketed as a non-profit and non-partisan organization, aiming to be a global platform bringing together all Arctic and non-Arctic stakeholders interested in the development of the region and its significance for the future of the globe. A secretariat is responsible for organizing the conference, which also has a honorary board and an advisory board. Already the first Assembly gathered around 1200 people – compared to about 500 at the first Arctic Frontiers – and the number has grown to more than 2000 participants from over 60 countries.

Accordingly, this annual conference was by 2019 the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic. It is attended by heads of states and governments, ministers, members of parliaments, officials, experts, scientists, students, entrepreneurs, business leaders, Indigenous representatives, environmentalists, and activists. In addition to the main Assembly, lasting for three days every October, the Arctic Circle has since 2015 arranged Forums on specific areas of Arctic cooperation at various international locations. As with the Arctic Frontiers, this conference is subject to comprehensive review in the following chapters.

There are two elements worth noting regarding developments in the 2010-2013 time period. Firstly, the business/industry component is growing remarkably stronger. The concept of sustainability is coupled with economic opportunities and environmental protection. It is increasingly recognized that to manage the growing interests in the region, while preserving and advancing healthy communities, industry actors must be involved and engaged in this mission. This leads to the second element worthy of attention: the explicit involvement of Arctic local communities. This is detectable when

reviewing the stated purposes, topics, and associated partners of the emerging arenas. However, caution should be applied to the use of wording such as “the human dimension”, “resilient communities”, and “local involvement”, which does not have meaning unless followed by concrete initiatives.

5.5 Conferences established 2014 – 2020

The business element continued to prevail at Arctic conferences also in the second half of the decade. In 2014, the Arctic Business Conference was arranged in Bodø, Norway as part of the Arctic Business initiative, launched in 2013 as a partnership between the Norwegian Shipowners’ Association, DNV GL, Kongsberg, and Equinor (formerly Statoil). The Arctic Business initiative additionally consists of a high-level, invitation-only, Arctic Business Council convening annually, and a permanent Arctic Business Secretariat, based in Bodø. It aims to be an arena gathering knowledgeable players to develop new business opportunities. The Arctic Institute, established in 2011 as a non-profit organization in Washington DC with a network of researchers across the world, partnered with the Arctic Business initiative to boost their communication with business leaders from the Arctic. This collaboration is an example of synergies between research and business created through conferences.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Centre for Science Diplomacy has since 2015 arranged a one-day “Science Diplomacy Conference” in Washington DC. It brings scientists, policymakers, practitioners, and students together around emerging aspects of science diplomacy. In 2017, one of the sessions was on *Intersections of Security & Science in the Circumpolar Arctic*. Key points emerging from this panel were the interests of the emerging “near-Arctic states” in investing in the region. Further, how science diplomacy fits within the complex system of international relations in the Arctic, and that existing partnerships and collaborations provide opportunities for continued scientific cooperation and the incorporation of good science in diplomatic exchanges.

The UArctic Congress was arranged in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2016 by the University of the Arctic (UArctic) and the St. Petersburg University. The conference, titled *The sustainable future of the Arctic*, was attended by 450 participants, representing 200 institutions from 20 countries. In 2017, the World Climate Research Program and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO organized an international conference on sea level research, addressing the existing challenges in describing and predicting regional sea level changes, and regarding quantifying the intrinsic uncertainties. The conference followed 11 years after the first WCRP sea level conference (hosted in Paris in 2006), and three years after the last Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Arctic Conferences

Number of Arctic conferences arranged annually 1999-2019

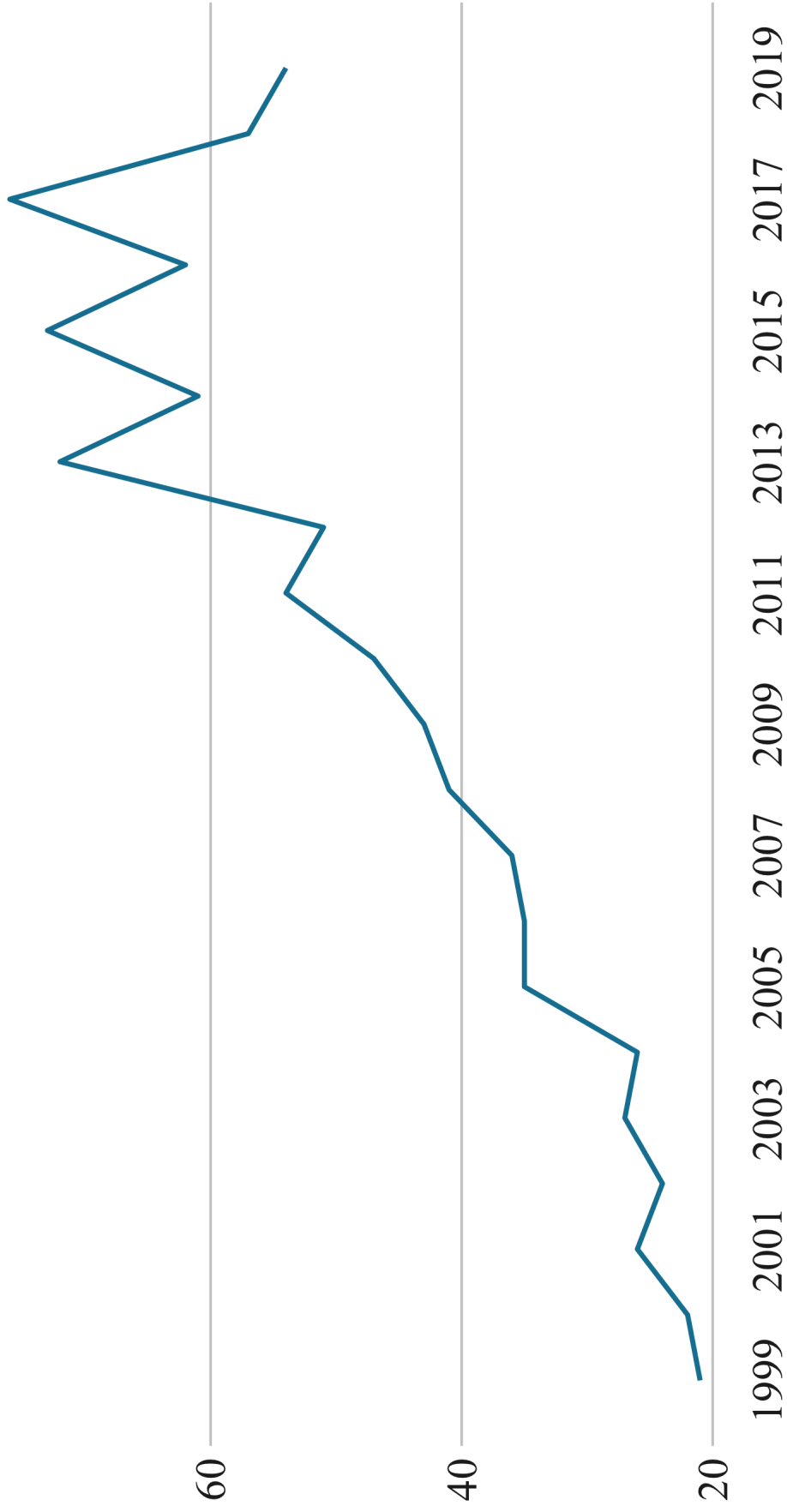


Figure 5.1: Number of Arctic conferences established and arranged annually. Source: Appendix 8.

5.6 The requisite for hybrid conferences

This section examines the growing significance of conferences within Arctic affairs, by considering evolutions within Arctic governance related to developments at conferences. I seek to illustrate how the conference sphere is connected to developments within policy, science, and business in the region, and throw light on elements that opened a window of opportunity around 2007 for the hybrid form of conferences at the center of this study. It should be noted that the Arctic Frontiers has a theme for each year’s conference, and the program is largely designed by the organizers. By contrast, the Arctic Circle has no overarching topic, and the program is largely formed by submitted proposals.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers
2006	The Norwegian government's <i>High North Strategy</i> was issued as the first Arctic state policy.	The AF was initiated to provide for knowledge-based decision-making, and social, economic, and business development.
2007	Controversial planting of the Russian flag on the seabed of the North Pole – leading to a change in discourse from "the Arctic as an empty space" to "a scramble for the Arctic", and sovereignty issues became higher on the political agenda. Norway assumed Arctic Council chairmanship. Focus areas: sustainable resource management, efforts to combat climate change. The International Polar Year (2007-2009) initiated. The Arctic Council issues the <i>Assessment of the Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic</i> .	"The Unlimited Arctic" The policy part focused on balancing human use and ecosystem protection. The science part on food web dynamics and biochemical fluxes in the Arctic Ocean. The policy part is promoted as a policy making conference, while the science section is very technical – resembling a "traditional" science conference.
2008	The Arctic Five signed the Ilulissat Declaration , committing to the legal framework provided by the Law of the Sea in mapping of continental shelves. <i>The European Union and the Arctic Region</i> was issued by the European Commission.	"Out of the Blue" Addressing challenges for oil and gas development in the Arctic. Norway's interest represented by both by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Statoil. The Arctic Council Working Group AMAP had 3 presentations with conclusions from the <i>Arctic Oil and Gas Assessment</i> .

Table 5.6: Developments in Arctic governance, 2006–2008.

In August 2007, a Russian science expedition descended two mini submarines down to the underwater Lomonosov ridge, which Russia claims is directly connected to its continental shelf, and planted a Russian flag there (Guardian, 2007). The dive was called “an openly choreographed publicity stunt”, and “a symbolic move to enhance the government’s disputed claim to nearly half of the floor of the Arctic Ocean and potential

oil or other resources there” (New York Times, 2007). The event was interpreted as a direct claim to the North Pole (Gerhardt, Steinberg, Tash, Fabiano, & Shields, 2010), and following, there was an observable change in the discourse about the Arctic – with sovereignty issues rising on the agenda (Dodds & Nuttall, 2015). From this, 2007 is referred to as a threshold in Arctic affairs (Dodds, 2010), due to changes in the political climate following Russia’s actions – which sparked both controversy, intensified diplomatic efforts (the Ilulissat Declaration – see Chapter Two, section 2.3.6.2), and renewed attention to national military capacity in the region (Wilson Rowe, 2019).

This must also be seen in light of the ongoing processes by the Arctic states to map out their extended continental shelves, wherein they can exercise sovereign rights over the resources of the seabed and subsoil (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.6.1). For example, Canada had since adhering to the UNCLOS in 2003 been engaged in the scientific, technical, and legal work needed to delineate their territorial limits. When the Russian flag planting occurred, then Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter MacKay, stated: “This isn’t the 15th century. You can’t go around the world and just plant flags and say we’re claiming this territory” (Huebert, 2011, 43).

With changes in the political landscape came changes in the Arctic conference sphere, and the main objective became to influence policy and the decision-making process with scientific knowledge. Emerging forums were both interdisciplinary – as different Arctic issue areas became more interlinked – and cross-sectoral – as the need for information exchange and communication among various stakeholders became more pressing. Accordingly, the cases chosen for this study can be considered a hybrid form of conferences, distinct from their predecessors. By bringing stakeholder groups together, and fostering inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral dialogue on the Arctic, they have greater potential to contribute to the science, policy, business interplay.

The initiative of the Arctic Frontiers to provide for knowledge-based decision-making in 2007 came timely, considering the increased interest in the region, and the need for balancing economic development with environmental concerns. This also coincided with the focus of the joint Norwegian-Swedish-Danish umbrella program for their successive Arctic Council chairmanships, as well as the International Polar Year (IPY) research program. Central agenda issues included opportunities and challenges resulting from climate change, the development of sustainable communities, the Arctic Ocean, social and economic issues, and the human dimension. Energy is also a frequenting issue in the Arctic Frontiers’ programs, and was the overarching theme for the 2012 conference, attended by the Norwegian Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Aker Solutions, Conoco Phillips, and other international industry representatives. This ties with a central aspect to be elaborated in the following chapter: the Arctic Frontiers as a channel for the Norwegian government’s interests and priorities.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers
2009	<p>Arctic policy documents issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fundamentals of the Russian Federation's Policy in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and beyond.</i> • <i>Canada's Northern Strategy – Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future.</i> • Norway: <i>New Building Blocks in the North.</i> <p>Denmark assumed the Arctic Council chairmanship. Focused areas: Peoples of the Arctic, IPY legacy, climate change, biodiversity, megatrends in the Arctic, integrated resource management, operational cooperation, the AC in a new geopolitical framework.</p>	<p>“The Age of the Arctic” Two main themes: 1) New opportunities and challenges resulting from climate change. 2) License to operate: Management of the Arctic Seas.</p> <p>Included a separate section on results from the International Polar Year.</p>
2010	<p>Russian-Norwegian Treaty <i>Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean.</i></p> <p>The Arctic Five met again in Quebec, Canada.</p>	<p>“Living in the High North” Main emphasis on changes in strategies for the Arctic and sustainable communities.</p>
2011	<p>Arctic policy documents issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy • The Kingdom of Denmark's Policy for the Arctic 2011-2020 • Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region <p>Sweden assumed Arctic Council chairmanship. Focus areas: The environment, climate change, people, and the ocean.</p> <p>Arctic Council Nuuk Ministerial Meeting (May): <i>Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic</i> (signed). AC permanent secretariat established in Tromsø.</p>	<p>“Arctic Tipping Points” Addressing sea ice and oceanographic perspectives, marine ecosystems and fisheries, socio-economic and institutional perspectives, and people of the North. Attended by large number of ministers, ambassadors, governors, and business representatives.</p>
2012	<p><i>Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps</i> – issued by the European Commission.</p>	<p>“Energies of the High North” Thematically, a shift from primarily emphasizing climate change and the human dimension, towards focusing on energy resources, industrial development, and the development of secure and sustainable energy projects.</p>

Table 5.7: Developments in Arctic governance, 2009–2012.

By 2013, all the Arctic states had issued a strategy for the region, and 2013 is also a central year when examining conferences in relation to political developments. Prior to the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Kiruna in May, there were tensions among the Arctic states concerning how to deal with the six pending observer states, including China. In his opening speech at the Arctic Frontiers in January 2013, then Foreign Minister of Norway, Espen Barth Eide, stated:

“We are happy that more people want to join our club, because this means that they are not starting another club, and that gives us some influence on what topics are discussed in relation to the Arctic” (Eide, 2013).

The growing interest among Asian states to participate in Arctic affairs was part of the reason for the skepticism towards the launch of the Arctic Circle Assembly at the National Press Club in April 2013. The initiator, Icelandic president (1996-2016) Olafur Ragnar Grímsson, described the Assembly as an open tent involving all interested stakeholders, and it was from this perceived by some Arctic state actors as an intended alternative, or even threat, to the Arctic Council. The announcement of the Arctic Circle thus put pressure on the Arctic Council’s members to accept the Asian states as observers at the ministerial meeting in May. It also contributed to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs becoming more involved in the organization of the Arctic Frontiers.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers	Arctic Circle
2013	<p>Arctic policy documents issued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States National Policy for the Arctic Region. • Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013. <p>Canada assumed Arctic Council chairmanship. <i>Development for the people of the North</i> – focusing on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping, and sustainable Arctic communities.</p> <p>Arctic Council secretariat became operational in Tromsø (January).</p> <p>Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna in May. Accepted new observers: China, Japan, South-Korea, Singapore, India, and Italy. <i>Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution in the Arctic</i> (signed).</p>	<p>“Geopolitics and Marine Production in a Changing Arctic”</p> <p>Business forum arranged for the first time: Business development in Norwegian fisheries and aquaculture.</p>	<p>The Arctic Circle Assembly launched in April as an open tent for all stakeholders to participate in the dialogue on the future development of the region and its consequences for the globe.</p> <p>The ACA was met with skepticism from the Arctic states, and by some considered a rival to the Arctic Council, due to involvement of non-Arctic actors.</p> <p>The ACA in October 2013 was attended by 1200 participants, including high-level delegates.</p>

Table 5.8: Developments in Arctic governance, 2013.

The 2013 Arctic Frontiers included a ministerial session, attended by the Foreign Ministers of Norway and Sweden, the Minister of Health of Canada, and the EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. It was also attended by ambassadors to Norway from China and Korea, and governors from Russia and Alaska. The business element became more prominent in the conference sphere, and the business pillar was established at the Arctic Frontiers in 2014. The closer involvement of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in organizing the Arctic Frontiers is visible in the 2015 program and attendance by high-level delegates. The conference, *Climate and Energy*, was also strongly influenced by the industry, with speakers from Conoco Philips, Statoil, the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation, and the Russian Geographical Society. In addition, the format changed, to include breakout sessions and armchair discussions.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers	Arctic Circle
2014	<p>Arctic policy document issued: <i>Norway's Arctic Policy for 2014 and Beyond.</i></p> <p>The Arctic Economic Council was established.</p> <p>Climate issues pushed on the agenda in preparation for the UN COP-21 (2015).</p>	<p>"Humans in the Arctic" Health, environment and society and maritime operational challenges. Coincided with Canadian AC chairmanship program.</p> <p>Business Forum North</p> <p>Seminars Abroad arranged for the first time.</p>	<p>1400 participants.</p> <p>Opening speeches by Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, PM of Iceland, Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland, and Angela Merkel, Chancellor Germany.</p> <p>Country sessions by Finland, the UK, Japan, and France.</p>
2015	<p>The United States assumes Arctic Council chairmanship: <i>One Arctic with Shared Opportunities, Challenges and Responsibilities</i> Focus areas: Improving Arctic Ocean governance, climate change, improving economic and living conditions for Arctic residents.</p> <p>Arctic Coast Guard Forum was established.</p> <p>UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP-21 (December)</p> <p>UN Sustainable Development Goals (adopted)</p>	<p>"Climate and Energy" Timely topics related to the international COP-21 focus. Three main themes: Arctic climate change – global implications, Ecological winners and losers in future Arctic marine ecosystems and the Arctic's role in the global energy supply and security.</p> <p>The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs became involved in arranging Seminars Abroad.</p>	<p>1500 participants.</p> <p>Keynote by President of France, François Hollande: The importance of the Arctic as an arena for international climate action, leading up to COP-21. The Arctic Economic Council presented in plenary.</p> <p>Pronounced presence of non-Arctic states: Country sessions by China, Germany, and Japan. The EU presented its Arctic policy, and a Korean Night was hosted.</p> <p>Arctic Circle Forums Anchorage, Alaska (August) and Singapore (November)</p>

Table 5.9: Developments in Arctic governance, 2014–2015.

The international outreach of the conferences was manifested with the Seminars Abroad (since 2014) and the Arctic Circle Forums (since 2015). The global relevance was further reflected in the push of climate issues on the agenda pending the COP-21 conference in Paris in December of 2015. Both at the Arctic Frontiers with a session called *Towards COP21*, and at the Arctic Circle with French President Hollande as a keynote – in addition to several one-time conferences, seminars, and workshops held in 2015. Accordingly, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle become an arm of international diplomacy for their respective foreign affairs ministries.

This is partly why there is no North-American equivalent to these conferences. In Canada and the United States, international Arctic affairs is for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for the State Department to conduct. These countries are not similarly engaged in advancing a domestic Arctic framework, and Arctic affairs are kept separate from business or civil interests. Consequently, without the European/Nordic model of governmental involvement in the organizing of conferences, North-American forums are more diverse and specific to a single issue or theme. These events can be more mean-

ingful for their particular field, but do not create the international and cross-sectoral gatherings Norway, Iceland, and Russia have developed.

The Arctic Frontiers Plus was established in 2015, aiming to involve the Arctic Council observers in the regional dialogue. Besides this addition to the format, the Arctic Frontiers is generally supportive of the Arctic Council, almost mirroring its structure and agenda, which is also evident through the topics. The Arctic Council chairmanships of Canada (2013-2015) – Developments for the people of the North – coincided with the *Humans in the Arctic* 2014 conference, the 2017 conference *White Space – Blue Future* was concurrent with the United States’ (2015-2017) emphasis on Arctic Ocean governance, and the Finnish (2017-2019) chairmanship focus on connectivity was reflected in the 2018 Arctic Frontiers *Connecting the Arctic*.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers	Arctic Circle
2016	<p>Arctic Council 20 years anniversary.</p> <p><i>An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic</i> issued by the European Commission.</p>	<p>“Industry and Environment” Policy sessions addressed the state of the Arctic, science and technology for the future, and industry and environment.</p> <p>The format of breakout sessions and armchair talks was continued. Topics were the Arctic Council 20 years anniversary, oil spill prevention and SAR, COP21 revisited, the Arctic Economic Council and the futures of Arctic Marine Cooperation.</p>	<p>2000 + participants</p> <p>Keynote by Nicola Surgeon, First Minister of Scotland. Country presentation by Switzerland (pending Arctic Council Observer May 2017).</p> <p>Dominant issues: economic growth, tourism, shipping, international cooperation on safety, security, and emergency preparedness.</p> <p>Arctic Circle Forums Nuuk, Greenland (May) Quebec City, Canada (December)</p>
2017	<p>Finland assumes Arctic Council chairmanship. Priorities: Environmental protection, Connectivity, Meteorological Cooperation, and Education.</p> <p>The IMO Polar Code entered into force.</p>	<p>“White Space – Blue Future” Focus on knowledge gaps about the oceans and the role they will play in the future. Attended by large number high-level delegates – the Prime Ministers of Norway and Finland, Foreign Ministers of Sweden, Iceland and Hungary, and ministers from Denmark and Russia. The industry and NGOs working on the blue-green economy and energy is also strongly represented.</p>	<p>2000+ participants from 60+ countries</p> <p>The Munich Security Conference hosted an Arctic Security Roundtable in advance of the Assembly.</p> <p>Himalaya as the Third Pole in focus. Keynote by His all Holiness, Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew Country sessions by Finland (sharing of icebreakers), Denmark (science and research), United Arab Emirates (energy and climate), India and Poland.</p> <p>Arctic Circle Forums Washington DC (June) <i>The United States and Russia in the Arctic</i> Edinburg, Scotland (December) <i>Scotland and the New North</i></p>

Table 5.10: Developments in Arctic governance, 2016–2017.

In 2016, the Arctic Council celebrated its 20–years anniversary, which sparked discussions about its functions, successes, and weaknesses within Arctic governance. The EU issued a new Arctic policy, and following the UK’s decision to leave the EU in June 2016, Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, held a keynote at the Arctic Circle Assembly in October, seeking new partnerships and alliances in the North Atlantic. The Scottish government further utilized the Arctic Circle organization for this purpose, by hosting a Forum: *Scotland and the New North* in December 2017⁶.

The Arctic Frontiers continues its thematic focus on the ocean, with an Arctic Frontiers Plus session on the Arctic Council’s work on the ocean in 2017, also advancing the blue-green economy discourse spreading internationally. Another development mirrored through the Arctic Frontiers was efforts made by municipalities and regional governments to promote an Arctic identity among inhabitants. The 2017 conference included a session on the *Arctic Capital Tromsø: International Arctic Business Opportunities*, and Tromsø County Council presented on its *Urban Arctic* development program – intended to position Troms internationally as a strong political, economic, and knowledge-based region in the Arctic.

Year	Arctic Policy	Arctic Frontiers	Arctic Circle
2018	<p>Arctic Council Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (signed).</p> <p>Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (signed)</p> <p>White Paper on <i>China’s Arctic Policy</i></p> <p>IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C</p>	<p>“Connecting the Arctic” Addressing the state of the Arctic, technology and connectivity, resilient Arctic societies and business development, healthy and productive oceans, industry, and environment. Topic coincided with the Finnish Arctic Council chair’s priority.</p> <p>Open Arctic arrangements expanded.</p>	<p>Arctic Circle Forums Faroe Islands (May) <i>Arctic Hubs: Building Dynamic Economies and Sustainable Communities in the North</i></p> <p>Seoul, Korea (December) <i>Asia Meets the Arctic: Science, Connectivity and Partnerships.</i></p>
2019	<p>Arctic policies issued: <i>United States Department of Defense Arctic Strategy</i> (June)</p> <p><i>Arctic Connections: Scotland’s Arctic Policy Framework</i> (September)</p> <p>Iceland assumes Arctic Council chairmanship. Priorities: Climate and green energy solutions, the Arctic marine environment, people and communities of the Arctic, and a stronger Arctic Council.</p>	<p>“Arctic Frontiers: Smart Arctic” Plenary program built around five main sessions: The state of the Arctic, blue growth, smart solutions, bridging the gap, and Arctic business prospects.</p>	<p>Arctic Circle Forums Shanghai, China (May) <i>China and the Arctic: Polar Silk Roads - Science and Innovation - Transport and Investment - Sustainable Development - Oceans - Energy - Governance.</i></p>

Table 5.11: Developments in Arctic governance, 2018–2019.

⁶This branding function of conferences for non-Arctic actors, enabling them to make connections to the region through promoting a “near-Arctic” identity, is elaborated in depth in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2. This section also expands on the case of Scotland, and the functions the Arctic Circle has served for this state in particular.

Through 2018 and 2019, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly continues to address contemporary issues, reflecting broader developments within Arctic governance. The Arctic Frontiers thematic focus supports the Finnish Arctic Council chairmanship (2017-2019), emphasizing connectivity in 2018, and smart and resilient Arctic societies in 2019. Iceland took over the Arctic Council chairmanship in 2019, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs was present at the Arctic Circle in both 2018 and 2019 to present on Iceland's visions and priorities.

The geopolitical importance of the Arctic (see Chapter Nine, section 9.2) becomes noticeably more significant around 2018, when China issued a white paper on its Arctic policy, describing itself as a “near-Arctic state” and seeking to build a Polar Silk Road as part of the Belt and Road initiative (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.3). With China's interest in infrastructure investments and project development in the region, in particular on Greenland, United States becomes a more engaged Arctic actor. Lastly, with the remilitarization of the Russian Arctic coast and growing interest of China, the European Union is seeking to expand its involvement in military and security issues in the region⁷. The Arctic Circle is to a larger extent than the Arctic Frontiers an arena for such geopolitical games to unfold, and through the organization, Asian states are provided the opportunity to host Forums to showcase their work in the Arctic.

5.7 The ideal model of a conference

“Development is the synergy between idea development [business], knowledge development [science], and decision-making [policy].”

Having spoken to organizers, participants, and reviewed the objectives of a number of different conferences, there are certain shared overarching goals. Accordingly, from the empirical data material collected throughout the project, an ideal model of conferences has emerged in terms of the functions they *seek to fill*, and the outcomes they *should produce*. Above all, as pointed out by the academic affiliated informant cited above, conferences should be instrumental for promoting the interplay between policy, science, and business. Conferences should advance the linking of issue areas, and contribute to driving developments forward in the region. To that end, organizers need to facilitate two seemingly opposing missions.

On the one side, conference organizers strive to provide the “Arctic-101” for new stakeholders, and create arenas where they can develop a connection to the region's people and communities. This group of participants largely consists of industry representatives, who attends looking for clients, customers, investors, or ideas they might translate

⁷Announced by Ambassador Jari Vilen, Senior Adviser for Arctic Policy, European Political Strategy Centre in the plenary session *Towards a New Arctic Policy for the European Union* at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly.

into business opportunities. Thus, educating and engaging this group is a way to promote sustainable development, and to push initiatives and concrete action. At the same time, organizers aspire to create a renowned science gathering that is attractive to experts. The presence of professionals is pivotal so government representatives can get information and access to resources. The science community come to conferences to share their research, learn about new projects, and expand their networks. To attract world-leading interdisciplinary and subject-matter experts, a conference must have a reputation as a relevant arena, and be applicable for funding to cover travel and participation costs.

The shared objective between organizers, of providing an arena for both new stakeholders and established interests, links to a threefold necessity within Arctic governance. Firstly, it is crucial to educate non-Arctic actors, and encourage a sense of responsibility towards the region, to compliment political and economic interests. Secondly, it is vital to promote the work of, and enable cooperation among, experts, to adequately address the many challenges becoming more pressing. Thirdly, policy makers must be informed, and they must be pushed to implement actions to address new challenges and opportunities in the region. The question brought forward in the following empirical chapters is to what extent the “ideal model” described above is internalized in the two cases of the study, and to which degree the organizers are successful in facilitating cross-sectoral interplay.

However, Fleming and Pyenson (2017) illustrate how the challenge of integrating scientific knowledge into policy is more pronounced in the Arctic. The multidisciplinary Arctic policy landscape, and the international nature of Arctic issues, have created a complex and diverse set of scientific and governmental bodies. This makes it challenging for policy makers to access scientific results, and for scientists to know where to offer their expertise (p. 490). Yet, in the rapidly changing Arctic, it is pressing to accelerate the science-policy translation process. To that end, for science to contribute to the formation of robust policies, it must be part of an iterative exchange where researchers aim to understand policy considerations and engage in the policy process beyond problem description and data production (Fleming & Pyenson, 2017, 490).

Additionally, while integrating the business element into this concoction is a necessity, is also particularly challenging in the Arctic due to structural factors. For one, businesses operating in the region are often very small with few employees. They seldom have the knowledge, capacity, or interest to engage in research and development (R&D) activities. Secondly, larger companies looking to establish a presence in the Arctic might have the capacity and resources to conduct science and R&D activities. Their investments might also be welcomed by regional and local politicians. Accordingly, they have the potential to fulfill the policy-science-business chain. However, their visions and undertakings are not always appreciated by residents, and, depending on the industry, activities may be at odds with environmental concerns.

Lastly, it must be noted that not all conferences are science-policy-business arenas, and not all conferences survive their initial years. The three stand-outs from the overview presented in this chapter are the Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle Assembly, and the International Arctic Forum. General characteristics of enduring conferences are that they are backed by an established science or governmental institution, with an esteemed standing, and extensive network. While not decisive for producing concrete deliverables, the attendance of high-level political delegates, a shared feature of the three conferences mentioned above, contributes to media and sponsor attention, which can be essential for the survival of a conferences. With the competition for attention, sponsors, and participants, smaller conferences that are not able to establish a name for itself, or that are very issue or sector specific, tend to not run for very long. Examples of such are the Polar Data Activities in Global Data Systems (2013 and 2015), the International WCPR/IOC Conference (2006 and 2017), the International Science Conference “Open Arctic” (2014-2016), and the NOAA Fisheries Open Water Meeting (2009-2014).

Another recourse is smaller conferences being merged into larger initiatives. For example, the Trans Arctic Agenda, a University of Iceland initiative from 2013-2015, merged with the Northern Forum Open Assembly in 2015. Secondly, the UArctic Congress was arranged from 2016-2018, and in 2020 hosted by all UArctic higher education members in Iceland, in conjunction with the Arctic Circle Assembly, and as part of Iceland’s chairmanship of the Arctic Council. These are illustrations of efforts to create large-scale benefits, and to include science/academic initiatives into larger, more policy oriented arenas.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of international, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral conferences attending to Arctic issues. The intent was to present on the population of cases, specifically, the evolution of conferences along with other central developments within Arctic and international affairs. The mapping of the Arctic conference sphere has been an essential undertaking of the research, and the process of casing has been ongoing throughout the project. Linkages between conferences and other developments, trends, and processes in international relations are summarized below.

The conference sphere prior to and during the 1970s and 1980s was more or less dominated by science unions’ annual meetings and issue-specific scientific conferences. The oceans was a central theme, which must be seen in relation to the negotiations of the UNCLOS. A similar trend is notable in conference programs and agendas during the development of the mandatory code for ships operating in polar waters – The Polar Code – initiated at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) assembly in 2009 and adopted in 2014. The ocean focus continued in the 1990s, however, the agenda

also broadened, and more attention was given to cooperation and collaboration through interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and multinational initiatives. Two factors contributed to this development. Firstly, increased awareness around, and knowledge about, the impacts of climate change, and a recognition of the need for joint efforts to address this challenge. The latter was made possible by the second factor: the end of the Cold War and opening of relations between the East and the West.

Accordingly, I have demonstrated how a window of opportunity opened for Arctic issues to rise on the international agenda in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The end of the Cold War was a decisive (political) catalyst, coupled with the growing concern for pollution in the Arctic (science). Regarding the latter, the Finnish and Canadian governments were pivotal in the initiation phase of Arctic cooperation, commencing in 1991. Since, the epistemic community consisting of engaged experts from various affiliations has been decisive in keeping challenges in the Arctic on the political agenda. The increased success of experts with regards to drawing attention to important issues within the science community, and push for the engagement of policy makers, the epistemic community perspective's explanatory power is strengthened.

Moreover, a second window of opportunity – for Arctic conferences to expand in number and popularity – opened around 2007. Sovereignty concerns became more prominent, thus generating the need for arenas functioning as communication channels and listening posts. The chronology has shown there were peaks in the establishment of Arctic conferences in 2005, and between 2010 and 2013. The peak noted around the mid-2000s was linked to Young's "second state change" in Arctic affairs, brought about by the impacts of climate change, and the spread of the socio-economic effects from globalization of the Arctic.

The need for bringing scientific knowledge into the policy making process became increasingly recognized, to secure knowledge based business and community development, which was the foundation for the Arctic Frontiers. The interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral character of Arctic conferences was truly manifested by 2013, when the Arctic Circle Assembly was launched. The ambition to create policy, science, and business interplay, in conjunction with local communities and Indigenous peoples, became an integrated element of Arctic conferences. As global industries and non-Arctic states were pushing for involvement in the region, it was recognized that these actors needed to be included in the debate to foster a sense of responsibility and balance between economic development and sustainable communities.

Cases: The Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle Assembly

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that the Arctic conference sphere is a sizable realm, and it has been noted to me more than once that “you could spend your entire life at Arctic conferences”. As that would not be particularly feasible or fruitful, this chapter presents the two cases selected for in-depth examination: the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly. The chapter presents the background and purpose of each conference. It draws attention to the organizers and their ambitions, how the conference is structured, who participates, the partners, outreach activities, and expansions and central developments of the two arenas. The principal objective of the chapter is to inquire into the intentions of the organizers, the underlying philosophies of the conferences, and examine whether and how central features of the two cases can have broader implications within the Arctic governance system.

To that end, the background and purposes of the conferences are connected to political priorities in Norway and Iceland at the time of their creation, and further, the chapter discusses how the arenas function in the interests of the host states. When presenting the cases, alternative perspectives derived from the interview material are applied, discussing both the strengths and weaknesses of the conferences to provide a balanced view. The chapter concludes with remarks about how the different philosophies behind the organization of the two conferences contributes to creating different spaces within Arctic governance. This finding is brought forward in the following chapters, and elaborated with regards to the three mechanisms of interest: actors, agenda setting, and the Arctic governance architecture.

6.2 The Arctic Frontiers

6.2.1 Background and purpose

The Arctic Frontiers was established in 2006 by the privately owned research company Akvaplan Niva AS, which also hosts the secretariat. The conference was first organized in 2007, and is arranged every January in Tromsø, Norway. Up until 2017, the Arctic Frontiers took place at the University of Tromsø (UiT) – The Arctic University of Norway, and from the 2018 conference, at Clarion Hotel The Edge. The stated purpose of the Arctic Frontiers is to function as an international arena, and setting the agenda

for responsible and sustainable development of the Arctic. The conference brings together representatives from government, business, academia, and the local community. According to the organizers, the idea behind the Arctic Frontiers came from the recognized need for an arena to disseminate scientific knowledge and research findings to policy-makers, to advance knowledge based decision-making and social, economic, and business development. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, conferences arranged prior to the mid-2000s were dominantly scientific and issue-specific. The Arctic Frontiers was intended to fill the demand for a national mechanism for bringing knowledge into political processes, and facilitate information exchange across disciplines.

The initiative coincided agreeably with the Norwegian government's aim of pursuing an active High North strategy, and to position itself in the post-Cold War international arena. The Government's primary goals were to ensure political stability and sustainable development of the region, safeguarding Norwegian interests, involve Norwegian businesses in cooperation with Russia, and ensure that the Indigenous peoples take part in decision making processes concerning them (Government of Norway, 2005). These objectives have all been supported through the Arctic Frontiers.

The 2005 High North policy further highlighted the necessity of presenting a coherent picture of High North issues at national and international levels. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers emphasize how influencing the narrative about the Arctic, the understanding of the region, and how it is perceived internationally, are important elements of the conference. Along with the activities of the Arctic Frontiers, there has been a development towards more balanced views and understandings of the region among non-Arctic actors, which I return to in Chapters Seven and Eight.



Arctic Frontiers 2018 policy session at Clarion Hotel The Edge. Photo: Beate Steinveg

As with any new initiative, there were challenges starting up the Arctic Frontiers. In particular the role of Akvaplan Niva as a research company, and uncertainties regarding their motivations and legitimacy. Thus, according to the organizers, it was a highly uncertain project at the outset, and it was not obvious the conference would survive. However, by the turn of the decade, the Arctic Frontiers was established as a renowned arena. The organizers describe part of the conference's survival being attributed to the fact that it is not a promotional arena for Akvaplan Niva, to advance their people and viewpoints. Moreover, the success of the Arctic Frontiers was aided by the Norwegian government's interest in using it as a platform, and involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2014 – which has contributed to professionalizing the conference.

Prior to the Ministry's involvement, the opening session had been conducted by Chairman Salve Dahle, and the Rector of the University, in addition to a representative from the Samii Parliament. There is a notable shift in 2015, when the opening session *State of the Arctic* also included speeches by HSH Prince Albert of Monaco, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Børge Brende, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office in Singapore, Mr. Sam Tan, Chair of the Arctic Council's SAOs Canada, Vincent Rigby, US special representative for the Arctic, Admiral Robert J. Papp, Ian Storey from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development France, Laurent Fabius.

6.2.2 Structure and organization

Connecting back to the agenda setting framework of Kingdon, he distinguishes between actors on the inside and outside of government. This divide can usefully be applied to the organizing of conferences. The initiators, secretariat, and advisory board/steering committee are on the inside. Secretariats are responsible for day-to-day operations, organizing the annual conference, and reporting to the steering committee. Having a say in who are invited as speakers is an asset that gives the secretariat agenda setting influence. However, the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers describes the process of inviting speakers to be carried out in close cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can be potentially limiting for the secretariat's decision making authority, and influence over the program.

The steering committee comprise of people from the partners of the conference, including university and research institute affiliates, local and regional policy representatives, people from national government institutions, and industry representatives. They convene in advance of each year's conference, where they evaluate and discuss previous experiences, future topics, and the general profile of the conference. However, this is a council, in the sense that it provides guidance and recommendations. The board does not have decision-making authority, which ultimately lies with the Chairman of

the steering committee, and until 2019 CEO of Akvaplan Niva, Salve Dahle, who is the main influencer.

While there have been some changes over the years, the Arctic Frontiers has for the most part been organized around five pillars: Policy, Science, Business, Arena, and Young. The policy and science sections have been part of the conference since the beginning. Examining programs from the initial years, there is a strong discernment of two separate conferences. The science part supersedes the policy days, and is very technical. It is science for scientists, and not science for policy. At its creation, the Arctic Frontiers therefore very much resembled the type of issue-specific science conference outlined in Chapter Five, with policy and business representatives convening on separate days of the conference week rather than being integrated in the science sessions.

The business pillar was included at the 2014 conference, as a result of the industry aspect of Arctic affairs becoming more prominent. One of the organizers described how a Finnish delegation from Oulu visiting Tromsø drew attention to the need for a business-to-business arena. The initiative was brought forward to the Troms County Council, a senior partner of the Arctic Frontiers, who got involved in arranging the business pillar. In the beginning, the business pillar was included as an opening of the science section of the conference. However, since 2018, business has been incorporated more in the plenary policy and arena arrangements, which is a positive development in terms of the conference fulfilling a coordinating function. This is an example of the functions of conferences in bringing together actors from different sectors, and thus consolidating the Arctic governance structure. With the expanding range of engaged actors and elements in the Arctic, there is need for meeting points to establish connections, initiate collaboration, and creating synergies.

The young pillar was added in 2016, and is intended to bring together an international community of young scientists, students, and professionals to share knowledge and new perspectives on Arctic development. This program has been developed quite extensively, and now includes an *Arctic Career Seminar* arranged at the University of Tromsø, and *Emerging Leaders*, which facilitates meetings between young professionals, PhD-students, post docs, and senior representatives from academia, business, and the public sector. *Young Ambassadors* is a program where a selected group of Norwegian and international students are invited to participate and communicate their experience from the conference. Lastly is the *Youth Science and Exploration Convention*, *Science for Schools*, and *Science for Kids* initiatives.

The arena pillar was also added to the format in 2016, and consists of workshops, panel discussions, networking sessions, open forums, and cultural and social events. The rationale behind this pillar was threefold, according to one of the organizers. Firstly, it developed from the acknowledgement that delegates come to the conference not only for the sessions, but also to meet colleagues, and to establish and maintain networks. Thus,

the conference needs to facilitate such activities in order to be attractive. Secondly, and related, Tromsø is a remote location. It is easier for delegates to legitimize traveling to the conference if it also provides opportunities to host side events and use the arena for their own meetings. Thirdly, the growing partner network, which consists of national and international bodies, can benefit from coming together in the informal setting provided by the arena pillar.

The Open Arctic arrangements were also initiated as part of the arena pillar in 2016, and the organizers have since worked to incorporate these events into the broader production. Open Arctic arrangements are free for all to attend, and are held in Tromsø during the conference week, and in Tromsø and other Norwegian cities throughout the year. The stated purpose is to create an interest for business development, international relations, and environment related issues in the Arctic and the Norwegian sea. The arrangements further aim to make the Arctic thematic more understandable and relatable, and serves as a means to boost the image of the conference by making it more accessible for the public – thus weakening the elitist trademark.

Since 2016, the Open Arctic arrangements have become more integrated in the city of Tromsø, and through cooperation with the Municipality and County Council, have become part of the policy pillar. This is related to the Municipality’s and County Council’s regional identity projects, respectively the *Arctic Capital Project* and the *Urban Arctic Project*. Accordingly, Open Arctic is an attempt to engage those living in the Arctic in the discussion about the future of the region, making it clear for the local community that when global actors are talking about the Arctic, it concerns them. At the same time, one research institution affiliated informant to the study argues the Open Arctic arrangements as an effort to make the conference more accessible and less elitist have not been completely successful, demonstrated by the low media coverage, and that most people living in Tromsø have a weak connection to the conference.

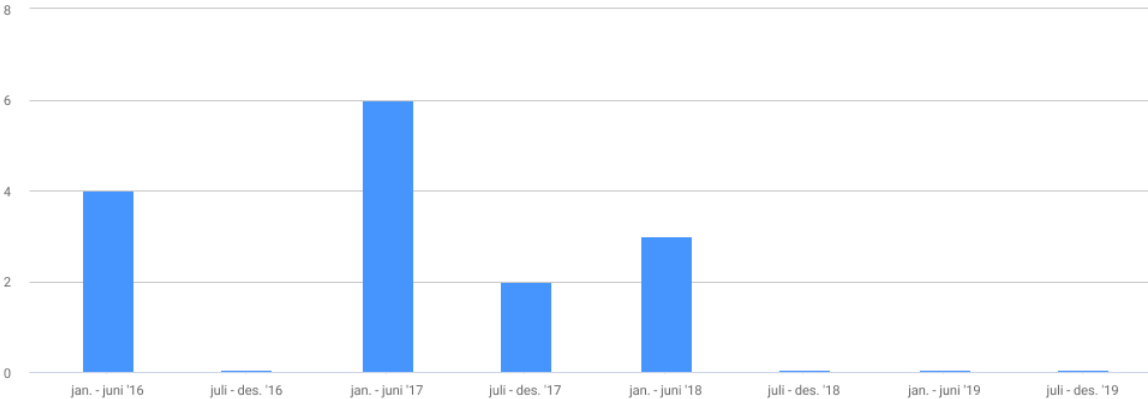


Figure 6.1: Atekst Retriever search for “Open AND Arctic AND Frontiers” in Norwegian newspapers, 2016–2019.

This informant's perception is confirmed by a search in the news archive of Atekst Retriever Norway. From 2016, there are a total of 15 hits on "Open + Arctic + Frontiers", all from the Tromsø-based newspapers iTromsø (local), and Nordlys (regional). Of these, five are commentaries from the conference organizers' the Mayor or Vice Mayor of Tromsø. Accordingly, the efforts to draw attention from the local media, and to stronger engage the civil society, have seemingly not produced the desired results yet.

From 2020, the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers aim to pursue a new strategy, moving away from the pillar format. Rather, the program and other activities, including the workings of the steering committee, is structured around four tracks. Firstly, the emphasis on ocean issues is continued, both as a priority in the North, and in a broader international perspective. The second focus area is society – a large category comprising of governance, technology, and culture. The third category is sustainable business/industry development. Fourthly, the organizers return to the founding idea of the Arctic Frontiers: science diplomacy, and knowledge based policy and decision making. The primary objective of the latter focus area is to develop the conference into a more professional arena with more academic content, and to keep advancing and strengthening the connection between science and policy/governance.

6.2.3 Participation and partners

Members of government, ministers, state secretaries and civil servants, academics, scientists, students, members from the business community, and Indigenous representatives are included in the participant pool at the Arctic Frontiers. The conference organizers aim to attract high-level politicians, as well as representatives from the business community, and allocates resources towards getting relevant speakers and delegates. This is achieved by utilizing the partner network, and through close cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs — e.g. the Foreign Minister issues an invitation to his/hers colleagues.

The organizers seek to attract delegates from Russia, the EU, Northern America, as well as the Nordic countries. The pool of participants has grown substantially from the approximately 500 at the first conference in 2007. In 2017, 1449 participants were registered, of which 1193, or 82%, came from Arctic states. The participation list available online after the 2018 conference contained 1337 participants.

The cost of participation at the Arctic Frontiers is a frustration brought up by the bulk part of informants to the study. One Canadian academic participant describes it as "ridiculously expensive – probably the most expensive Arctic conference there is". The science community is particularly affected by the registration fee, as this group has limited funding and must justify expenses for conference participation to their institution.

This challenge is known to the organizers, but who point to the cost of arranging the conference compared to the relatively low sponsor contributions. A few of the partners contribute with 750.000 NOK yearly, while most bestow 350.000 or 150.000. This revenue is then divided between the secretariat, people working during the conference, and necessary infrastructure for the conduct of the conference.

All prices are in Norwegian krone (NOK). All prices include VAT at 25%.

	Earlybird regular (until 20.12.19)	Earlybird student (until 20.12.19)	Regular	Student
Monday (Plenary and side events)	2000	1600	2500	2000
Tuesday (Plenary, side events and poster session)	2000	1600	2500	2000
Wednesday (Science inc. Tuesday poster session and side events)	950	750	1100	1000
Thursday (Science and side events)	950	750	1100	1000

Figure 6.2: Cost of participation for the Arctic Frontiers, 2020 prices.

The Arctic Frontiers’ sponsor network is an extensive group of national and international partners, who are all members of the steering committee. They contribute not only financially to the conference, but also with their competence, inputs, and connections. Senior partners, who have been involved since the beginning, are Troms County Council, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Conoco Phillips, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ARCTOS research network, The Research Council of Norway, and Akvaplan Niva. Other partners include Tromsø Municipality, the Institute of Marine Research, SINTEF, the universities of Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim, the University Centre in Svalbard, Innovation Norway, the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, and the oil company Equinor (formerly Statoil). In addition, there are associated partners and “friends of the conference”.

According to the organizers, the decision of which partners to team up with has been founded in the initial objective of contributing to community and business development, and to provide a solid knowledge base for decision-making. For the Arctic Frontiers to appear credible and relevant in the international debate about the region, the partners need to reflect this image. In addition to associate partners covering various sectors, the governmental aspect has been important – seeing how much of the activities of the Arctic Frontiers necessitates involvement of regional or national governmental bodies. Lastly, the organizers have an ambition to attract international partners, due to the global character of issues concerning the Arctic and the Barents Sea.



Figure 6.3: Partners and sponsors of the Arctic Frontiers (2020).

6.2.4 Seminars Abroad

Since 2014, as part of the arena pillar, the Arctic Frontiers has arranged Seminars Abroad at various international locations, including in the Nordic countries, the United States, Russia, Canada, and southern Europe. The aim of the organizers for these seminars is first and foremost networking: to promote the Arctic Frontiers internationally and make connections to the conference – in addition to networking for the partner institutions. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been involved in these arrangements since 2015.

The Arctic Frontiers work with embassies in countries where they host Seminars Abroad – to promote Norway and its Arctic policy, interests, and priorities. All Norwegian Embassies are intended to work with High North issues. Thus, Seminars Abroad is described by a government employee interviewed for the study as serving a dual function, where the Norwegian government gets an international platform for its Arctic policy – and the embassies get a pre-designed package on Arctic issues.

Seminars Abroad are furthermore tools to educate less experienced states and actors about the Arctic. For example, regarding best-practices for sustainable development, and, seeing how there are humans living in the region, the necessity of balancing between environmental protection and industry development. Seminars Abroad are also arenas for advancing the primary focus area pushed through the Arctic Frontiers: the ocean. This is exemplified by participation at other international arenas and conferences.

The Arctic Frontiers arranged the *Blue Knowledge for Blue Growth* seminar in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Our Ocean conference in Bali in 2018. The Arctic Frontiers arranged the session *Arctic Ocean and Blue economy* at the 8th Symposium on the Impacts of an Ice-Diminishing Arctic on Naval and Maritime Operations conference in Washington in 2019. Also, the *Knowledge for Ocean Sustainability* seminar was organized in Singapore by the Arctic Frontiers in collaboration with the Norwegian Embassy, National University of Singapore, and Innovation Norway in 2019.

In addition to the functions of educating non-Arctic actors, and advancing thematic priorities, Seminars Abroad has also served the objective of maintaining and improving relations with Russia. In 2015, there were two seminars in Russia, and one organizer points to the impact for the 2016 Arctic Frontiers – where the number of Russian participants was doubled. However, this can also be a result of the softening of the tense relationship between Russia and the West following the Crimea-crisis in 2014, and that it in 2016 simply was more justifiable for Russian delegates to participate in international forums again.

6.2.5 The value of the conference for Norway

A platform for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Arctic Frontiers has been centered around the Norwegian government's priorities in the Arctic region since its establishment. International cooperation is one of the five identified priority areas, first put forward in *Norway's Arctic Policy* from 2014, and underlined as “crucial for development in the Arctic” in *Norway's Arctic Strategy – between geopolitics and social development* from 2017 (p. 15). The 2017 strategy also states that the Government actively utilizes the Arctic Frontiers to engage in dialogue about High North policy, and to set the agenda regionally, nationally, and internationally

(p. 14). The Arctic Frontiers is considered supportive for the “vision of a peaceful, innovative and sustainable north”. One informant to the study affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes the collaboration with the Arctic Frontiers in this way:

“Tromsø is important in an Arctic perspective. It is in Norway’s interest to strengthen the Arctic Frontiers, because it is an important platform. That’s how it [the engagement of a senior advisor in the secretariat] begun – an effort to strengthen the secretariat, professionalize the conference, and working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs system.”

The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are arguably in competition, over sponsors, speakers, participants, and prominence. This mirrors the rivalry between Tromsø and Reykjavik to grab the title as the “Arctic capital”. The informant from the Ministry cited above asserts there is a misconceived war between the conferences, and that it is productive with more arenas promoting important topics. Even so, the interviewee goes on to say “there is a reason for why Norway does not send delegations at the highest level to the Arctic Circle”, underlining the Norwegian government’s priority towards the Arctic Frontiers, and unwillingness to participate at the Icelandic counterpart.

Furthermore, the Norwegian Arctic strategy reads that the Government is concerned with the Arctic Council keeping its status as the central meeting place on Arctic issues, and that parallel forums do not emerge¹. To that end, another government official interviewed for the study points to the difference between the two conferences in their support of the Arctic Council, declaring the Arctic Frontiers a clear winner. The Arctic Frontier’s connection to the Arctic Council was strengthened with the establishment of the Arctic Council secretariat in Tromsø in 2013. The governance structure surrounding the Arctic Frontiers was further enhanced with the allocation of the Arctic Economic Council secretariat to Tromsø in 2015, and the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat in 2016. This quadrat of secretariats – contributing to consolidating Tromsø’s claim to being the Arctic capital – is further discussed in Chapter Nine (section 9.4.1)².

The argument of a competitive element between the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ deeper involvement in the Arctic Frontiers after the launch of Icelandic challenger. In particular demonstrated by the senior advisor appointed to the secretariat in 2015. She worked with Seminars

¹Stated on page 16 of the Norwegian version of the 2017 Arctic Strategy – available at https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/strategi_nord/id2550081 However, this formulation is not included in the English version of the strategy. See Hønneland and Jensen (2008, 159) (in Norwegian) for an analysis of how Norwegian policy-makers construct a flexible policy language to fit changes in Norwegian domestic policy over time. See also the analysis of classical and critical geopolitics in the Arctic by Eklund and van der Watt (2017) for other examples – e.g. the petroleum industry – of issues that are presented different in the Norwegian and English version of the 2014 Norwegian Arctic Policy *Nordkloden*.

²It should also be noted that in June 2020, the Arctic Frontiers issued a press release, announcing Anu Fredrikson, former Director at the Arctic Economic Council, as the new Executive Director of the Arctic Frontiers, starting from October 2020.

Abroad and with strengthening the policy section, by using the Ministry apparatus to attract high-level delegates. International delegates are payed to attend, and the Ministry arranges media trips for international journalists for them to write about the conference. Accordingly, the Arctic Frontiers is a platform through which the Government can promote Norwegian Arctic policy, and advance and safeguard its interests in front of an international audience. It is an arena to showcase Norway as a leading Arctic state and display Norway's accomplishments in a high-technological, well-developed society – “the Arctic capital”. The Arctic Frontiers' function for the Norwegian government is expressed by a Ministry employee cited below:

“It is in Norway's interest to balance the debate regarding environmental protection and resource development. Not everyone know people are living in the Arctic. So they make propositions to ban shipping, or for very strict environmental protection, which makes business activities and infrastructure development near impossible. This is not in Norway's interest. So, the Arctic Frontiers is a platform to correct these impressions, and promote Norwegian interests.”

The salient function the Arctic Frontiers plays for the Norwegian government is undisputed in the collected data material. Firstly, it is substantiated by how the Prime Minister or Foreign Minister attends every year, and how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs works to attract high-level politicians to Tromsø. Secondly, this notion is underpinned by examining the participation lists. In 2017, 879 of the 1449 participants listed on the conference website were Norwegian, which makes up 61%. In 2018, there were 790 Norwegians – 59% – of the total 1337 participants. Thirdly, the statements from three informants cited below – an American institute director, a German institute director, and a Norwegian university associate – illustrate how attempts to direct attention towards Norwegian interests and priorities do not pass unnoticed by participants. International delegates largely consider the conference a display window for the Norwegian government's interests, and as dominated by a Norwegian audience.

“Arctic Frontiers is very thematically focused around Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs priorities. It is useful in that you get an in-depth look at Norwegian, or even Nordic, perspectives. You get an in-depth look at policies relating to the Arctic, business development, and science.”

“The audience at Arctic Frontiers is Norwegian dominated, very Scandinavian dominated. The Arctic Frontiers still follows a bit more of the Arctic Council's structure of members and observers. It is understandable. Because it is Norwegian Foreign Affairs behind it, and they are of course a member of the Arctic Council, so from that point I can understand.”

“The Arctic Frontiers has a distinct ‘Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs ownership’, but should attempt to be more than a Norwegian event. The problem is the need to promote one’s visions and world view of what is important, which is something all conferences suffer from. Regarding the Arctic Frontiers, it’s a shame that this ‘Norwegian image’ has manifested itself internationally. The conference has a problem in its reputation for being very expensive. The participation fee is so high that only Norwegians can attend. I don’t think the intention was to be so provincial.”

However, although a central contributor and agenda setter, the Arctic Frontiers is not a conference by or for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The organizers have stated they do not want the Arctic Frontiers to become a mouthpiece for the Ministry, so it is important to keep the conference as an independent structure, and to listen to a variety of voices and input regarding the direction of the conference. While the Arctic Frontiers would never go against Norwegian policy, the secretariat and chairman of the advisory board still have the final word in decisions. The Ministry’s apparatus is a support system for the conference, with no formal ownership beyond the financial sponsor contribution, according to the organizers.

6.2.6 Strengths and weaknesses

Promoting Arctic issues regionally, nationally, and internationally

The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers realize the stated aims of being “the largest and most important Arctic arena” and having an impact on policy are difficult to operationalize. Still, they consider the number of participants – that people choose to attend despite it being expensive to travel to and stay in Tromsø – in addition to media coverage as measures of success. The organizers contend that the Arctic Frontiers has contributed to building international recognition for the Norwegian Arctic, and has been a central piece in the branding and marketing of the region – putting it on the map regionally, nationally, and internationally.

This merit has been advanced through the extensive partner network consisting of national and international institutions, organizations, universities, and companies – which has contributed to connecting actors within Norway and across the region. In addition, the Arctic Frontiers, as a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary arena, also contributes to wedding issue areas. An example is the advancement of the link between the Arctic and ocean issues. It has been an overarching topic of the Arctic Frontiers since the beginning, and continuous emphasis through conferences has contributed to elevating the issue on the international agenda (to be discussed in Chapter Eight). On the other side, the Arctic Frontiers has also been criticized for over-emphasizing non-renewable energy development in support of Norwegian state interests.

On the local level, a successful endeavor of the Arctic Frontiers is the effort to increase local participation on Arctic issues through the Open Arctic arrangements. They are a positive addition to the format, which over some years can contribute to fulfilling the mission of making the conference more accessible³. Having people engage in matters impacting their living conditions fulfills a democratizing function. Examples of topics from 2018 are the ocean's significance for people in the North, the dichotomy between the commitments through the Paris-Agreement and the continued demand for (fossil) energy, and the problem of plastic waste. In 2019, there were arrangements on international cooperation, the new green economy, who owns the truth, and how to reduce unnecessary plastic in society. On the regional level, the Arctic Frontiers has been the venue for meetings on the sidelines among the members of the Arctic Mayors Forum⁴, illustrating the large-scale benefits of such arenas in enabling stakeholders convening for multiple purposes.



Panel in the opening session of the 2019 Arctic Frontiers.
Photo: Beate Steinveg

³However, as demonstrated in section 6.2.2, there is still some work to be done in order to really engage the local civil society and media.

⁴The first meeting among mayors in the Arctic was held in i in Fairbanks, Alaska in May 2017. The forum is aimed at finding ways for the municipalities of the region to cooperate across borders on issues that affected the people living in the areas. On October 10th 2019, the Forum was formally established when eleven mayors from the region signed the Arctic Mayors' Forum foundation paper at a gathering in Akureyri, Iceland.

Structure

A frequent critique against the Arctic Frontiers is that it is still strongly characterized by the original structure of distinct policy, science, and business days. One governmental affiliated informant asserts this way of organizing makes it like three separate conferences. Other informants have pointed out how it is counterproductive for facilitating interactions between participants from different affiliations, and for creating cross-sectoral synergies. Policy topics, intermixed with business, dominate the first two days of the conference, followed by two days devoted to science presentations.

An informant who is a member of the steering committee describes how the organizers have worked on professionalizing the policy pillar, and later on developing and enhancing the business aspect, while the science part has by and large been neglected. This contributes to the Arctic Frontiers attracting fewer academics, because, as pointed out by an European research institute affiliated informant, they do not expect to get the latest in science. From these observations, the neglect of the science pillar is arguably a shortcoming of the Arctic Frontiers.

It is not in line with the objective of providing policy-makers with necessary knowledge for responsible social, economic, and business development. In this way, the initial intention of connecting policy and science seems strayed, and it appears to have been put more work into legitimizing the conference than improving its quality. Firstly, within the local community through Open Arctic arrangements. Secondly, towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by stressing the high-level part. Thirdly, by promoting the conference and Norwegian interests internationally through Seminars Abroad.

Nonetheless, there have been improvements over the years, with the panels in the policy plenary sessions becoming more diverse, and mixing in scientists and academics with decision-makers and business representatives. It is also, as mentioned in the introduction, something the organizers changed from the 2020 conference with the emphasis on the four focus areas: the ocean, society, sustainable business/industry development, and the science-policy connection.

Elitist character

The Arctic Frontiers is constructed partly from a state-centered thinking (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.1), emphasizing the primacy of the Arctic Eight and Norway's national agenda. The structure contributes to giving the conference its elitist quality, and it is frequently described by informants as exclusive or excluding. The evident projection of the Norwegian government's interests is particularly emphasized by international delegates, who perceive it as a platform for Norway, opposed to Arctic Circle, which is regarded as a global arena. The elitist character of the Arctic Frontiers is noted by a German institute director interviewed for this project, cited below.

“It [the registration fee] excludes scientists. So, scientists are not coming here, with very few exceptions: high level, directors of institutes, invited speakers – because they don’t have to pay. But if they had to pay, they would not go.”

As discussed, the cost of participation contributes to the elitist character of the conference by limiting the pool of participants – especially the number of scientists, students, young researchers, and locals who are able to attend. Related, however not something the organizers can control, is infrastructure and logistics related to flight connections to Tromsø, as well as the cost of accommodation. On the one side, this critique must be weighed against contributions from the sponsors, which are low in comparison to the Arctic Circle. On the other side, according a member of the advisory board and steering committee of the two conferences:

“To the extent I have insight into the budgets, the Arctic Circle is arranged at one third of the cost of the Arctic Frontiers. They do it much cheaper, with less planning, and less people working year-round. It has been too low however, so it will increase. Yet, in both cases, the registration fee is nothing of the total cost. Especially at Arctic Frontiers, it is about 15% of the budget. So, in reality, if they saved 15% of expenses, they could have the conference free. Arctic Circle has done the opposite – they have increased the participation fee, because they see people are willing to pay. Arctic Frontiers started out extremely expensive, then they reduced the price, but no one noticed.”

This insight demonstrates the difference in business model of the two conferences, and how the registration fee impacts the participant composition of the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle. The former is attended by people from Norwegian public institutions, who can have their fee covered, while the Arctic Circle has a larger pool of participants from the business community and a broader range of international delegates.

6.3 The Arctic Circle Assembly

6.3.1 Background and purpose

“Grímsson is attempting to build a center on Iceland – ‘The big Arctic hub for everything’ – through his friendships around the world. So, this conference is very much driven by him as a person and his connections⁵.”

The Arctic Circle Assembly was established in 2013 by then Icelandic President (1996-2016), now Chairman, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson. It has since been arranged over three days every October at the Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre in Reykjavik. Mr. Grímsson first spoke of a new model for Arctic cooperation at a celebration of the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland in 1999 – emphasizing the need for bringing together politicians, scientists, and regional leaders. He also contributed to creating the Northern Research Forum (see Chapter Five, section 5.2.2), which held Open Assemblies in different parts of the Arctic from 2000 to 2011. The initiative of the Arctic Circle came from the apprehension that as the Arctic was becoming increasingly central in global affairs, there was need for a platform gathering all relevant and engaged Arctic and non-Arctic stakeholders interested in the development of the region and its consequences for the future of the globe (Einarsdóttir, 2018).

Mr. Grímsson did not want to create “yet another Arctic forum” where formal state representatives monopolized the dialogue, but rather a model where people from different sectors and strands of society could participate as equal partners (Einarsdóttir, 2018). It has been important for the organizers to brand the Arctic Circle as an *assembly*, not a conference. The latter implies the organizers control the agenda, which at the Arctic Circle on the contrary is a democratic process, developed by those wanting to participate, and topics of their interest. This is also why there is no overarching theme each year, as with the Arctic Frontiers. “We create the platform, participants create the dialogue. That is the basic formula for the Arctic Circle”, Chairman Grímsson stated in an interview with the Journal of the North Atlantic and Arctic (Einarsdóttir, 2018).

The *Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy* issued in 2011 is the only Arctic state strategy explicitly mentioning networking through the priority area: “Advancing Icelanders’ knowledge of Arctic issues and promoting Iceland abroad as a venue for meetings, conferences, and discussions on the Arctic region” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland, 2011, pkt. 11). Thus, a political opportunity opened for Mr. Grímsson’s initiative, which was supported by an economic alliance with Alaskan partners, including Alice Rogoff⁶. Mr. Grímsson announced the Arctic Circle Assembly at the Washington Press Club in April 2013 – well-timed with Iceland’s changing position on the global arena.

⁵ Stated by an American institute affiliated informant interviewed for the study.

⁶ Publisher of Arctic Today (formerly the Alaska Dispatch), and member of the Arctic Circle’s advisory board.

In 2006, the United States withdrew its military forces from the Keflavik airbase, which, coupled with Russia resuming its long-range military aviation in 2007 and encircling Icelandic airspace in 2008, forced the Icelandic government to rethink its strategic options (Ingimundarson, 2015; Wegge & Keil, 2018). While Iceland was working to renew its geostrategic position, the 2008 financial crisis added a need for economic revitalization. These two factors, combined with the effects of climate change, made the Arctic a key component of Iceland's Foreign Policy. Evoking the "new frontier" narrative was a way to draw attention to Iceland's strategic location as a hub in the North Atlantic/Arctic, and its economic viability, especially in areas such as natural resource extraction and trans-Arctic shipping (Ingimundarson, 2015, 84).



Opening session at the 2017 Arctic Circle: *The Arctic in the Belt and Road Initiative*, Lin Shanquin, State Oceanic Administration, China. Photo: Beate Steinveg

The Icelandic government started paying attention to the political, economic, and legal dimensions of Arctic governance, as well as the growing interests of Asian states in the region. In 2012, China and Iceland signed a memorandum on Arctic science cooperation – the former motivated by the aspiration to become an observer to the Arctic Council. 2012 also marked the year for the opening of a new Chinese embassy building in Reykjavik, and the visit of a Chinese icebreaker coming back from an Arctic science expedition through the Northeast Passage (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 143). Arguably the most important element in the bilateral relationship came in 2013, when Iceland became the first European state to sign a Free Trade Agreement with China (Ingimundarson, 2015, 91). The process of deepening economic relations with China was promoted by Mr. Grímsson, so the Arctic Circle initiative was by some considered an attempt to force the inclusion of the Asian states Iceland wanted to do business with into Arctic affairs.

In fact, two months after the Arctic Circle was announced in April 2013, the Icelandic firm Eykon Energy partnered with China's National Offshore Oil Corporation to explore the area around Jan Mayen (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 143).

Iceland also emphasizes the importance of West-Nordic cooperation, which the Arctic Policy describes as a means to “strengthen their international and economic position as well as their politico-security dimension” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland, 2011). Trade, energy, resource utilization, environmental issues, and tourism are all areas where the Icelandic government intend to increase cooperation with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and the launch of an “energy triangle” became part of Iceland's natural resource policy (Ingimundarson, 2015, 91). The West-Nordic Council, consisting of Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands, engages in virtually every issue area, including environmental affairs, economics and trade, education, security, and defense. Depledge and Dodds (2017) discuss whether the establishment of the Arctic Circle was an attempt to ally with small-scale partners and position Iceland “geopolitically as a gateway for the expression of global and marginalized interests in the Arctic” (p. 145).

The review of conference programs and participation at the Assembly for this project substantiates the above interpretation. Alaska and Greenland held country presentations at the initial Assembly. The 2014 plenary program included a West-Nordic Arctic Cooperation session, involving Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and representatives from the West Nordic Council. These smaller states are further represented annually in the program. In 2015, Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands, Aksel V. Johannesen, presented how the Faroe Islands has moved from the periphery to being a central hub in energy and economic development, and in 2016, he addressed future visions for the Arctic. At the 2018 Assembly, the Faroe Islands had several breakout sessions, including one with Greenland and Iceland on growth and infrastructure, and a plenary session with the foreign minister and industry representatives.

The Premier of Greenland spoke in the 2019 Arctic Circle opening session, the government of Greenland organized two other plenary sessions, and several breakout sessions were arranged by Greenlandic institutions, organizations, universities, and municipalities. In the plenary session *Greenland on the world stage*, Mr. Grímsson pointed out the historical moment of having heads of representation for Greenland to Reykjavik, Copenhagen, Brussels, and Washington DC gathered on the same stage. Establishing representation abroad has been important for Greenland, in order to have a voice internationally. Mr. Grímsson also emphasized the significance for the history of global empowerment of Indigenous peoples, and how other countries come to the Arctic Circle to learn about how this process has transpired in the Arctic.



Plenary session – *Greenland on the World Stage* – at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly.
Photo: Beate Steinveg.

The significance of the Arctic Circle in geopolitical strategic terms is also brought forward by a Canadian participant from academia interviewed for this study, who points to how the Assembly – whose logo has six people holding hands – can be seen as a reaction to the exclusion of Iceland from the Ilulissat Declaration and Arctic Five. Iceland did not want to be left out, and answered with creating an explicitly inclusive arena. This perception is underpinned by Iceland’s Arctic Policy, stating the Arctic Council should be the main forum for cooperation, and strongly opposes collaboration among the Arctic Five (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland, 2011). The Arctic Circle’s connection to the Arctic Council was also noted by participants at the first Assembly, described by an informant to the study associated with the Arctic Council cited below.

“The Arctic Circle was established in 2013, and surely there were some skepticism. You could hear that from the Arctic states. In the beginning, people were not sure what it was, and some felt it might be competing with the Arctic Council.”



Arctic Circle Assembly Logo.

Mr. Grímsson saw the need for including states geographically outside the Arctic, because they too are affected by changes in the region. Accordingly, the goal of the Arctic Circle initiative was to create a platform where countries with observer status, or no status, in the Arctic Council could meet on an equal basis with the member states. Thematically, it was not intended as an arena only devoted to science, but also a space for actors interested in the Arctic for political, diplomatic, and economic reasons (Einarsdóttir, 2018). This vision of the Assembly, so openly welcoming Asian states and industry interests into the dialogue, fostered skepticism among Arctic state actors regarding its nature.

Especially, the Norwegian government was not pleased with the establishment of what it considered a direct competitor to the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Council. This has been noted by Norwegian Ministry informants interviewed for the study, but also by international participants. The uncertainties within Arctic governance around the time of the Arctic Circle's establishment is described by an American informant working in the policy–science interface:

“The Arctic Circle really began to take flight at a time when the Arctic Council was deadlocked over the question of whether to admit a bunch of new observers, in particular from Asia. And the President of Iceland, Grímsson, was very adept at saying to China, Japan, Korea, and others, who were waiting to see if they would be admitted as observers: “Come to the Arctic Circle. You are welcome. You will be treated as equals.” And, they did. Of course, they were also invited to the Arctic Frontiers, and a number of other places. Soon thereafter, China, Japan, South-Korea, and others were in fact admitted as observers.”

It is important to note however, that while the establishment of the Arctic Circle might have been a means to advance the geopolitical and economic ambitions of Iceland, it was not by itself instrumental in the acceptance of the six Asian states as observers to the Arctic Council in 2013. Rather, the pressure originated from concerns among the Arctic states of Asian states creating an Arctic forum of their own. The situation is described by three informants who took part in the processes before and during the 2013 ministerial meeting – one Arctic university affiliated, one associated with an Arctic Council working group, and one American diplomat.

“If the Arctic Council could not incorporate the pending observers, they would create their own council. That is why they had to do it then. The press conference to launch the Arctic Circle in April 2013 was one month before the Kiruna ministerial meeting – to attract attention. That was the pressure on the Arctic states: make the decision now. As they did.”

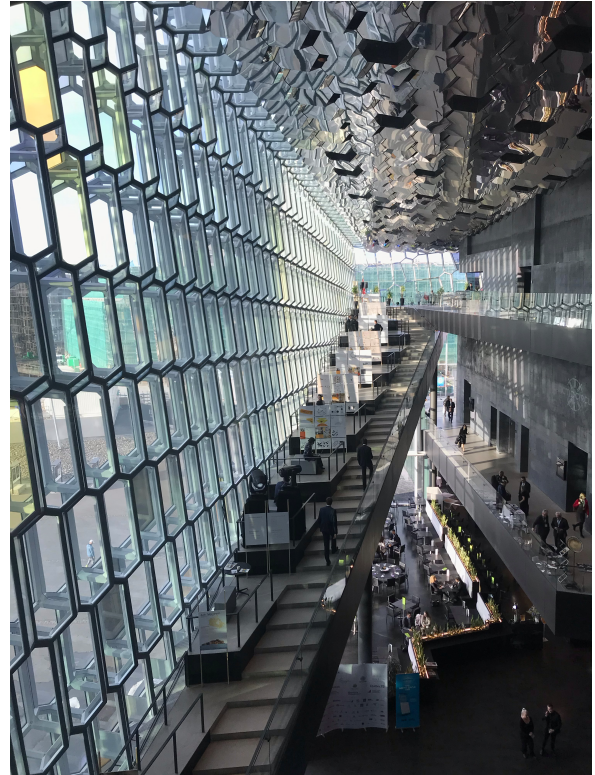
“If the Arctic Council did not include the outsiders, there was a risk of the establishment of a new forum. This was discussed at great lengths, when some of the member states were so critical towards including China and the others. They could have just gone to the United Nations and claimed the need for an Arctic Treaty. Then, the Arctic Eight would be in minority. Before Kiruna, this was a legitimate concern. When they were accepted as observers, the pressure was reduced from China and other states.”

“I don’t think it had much to do with what might have been said by the President of Iceland. Each of the members of the Arctic Council decided to admit these countries for their own reasons. [...] I was there at that meeting. I can tell you honestly, it had virtually nothing to do with what was going on outside of Kiruna at the time.”

6.3.2 Structure and organization

The Arctic Circle, a non-profit organization, is run by a secretariat, has an advisory board consisting of representatives from the partners, and a honorary board. The honorary board is comprised of Chairman Grímsson, Prince Albert II of Monaco, Premier of Québec, Philippe Couillard, US Senator to Alaska, Lisa Murkowski, Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Artur Chilingarov, and Kuupik Kleist. However, founded in the “assembly, not conference” line of thinking stressed by the organizers, the advisory board is not involved in constructing the program. It focuses on strategical thinking around how to develop the Assembly, as well as its framework. Yet, as with the Arctic Frontiers, the Chairman – Grímsson – has veto power in decisions about the program and conduct of the Arctic Circle. Mr. Grímsson should be considered the main influencer, and his role in the organization deserves attention.

The open democratic rhetoric primarily applies to the breakout sessions, for which anyone can sign up. The plenary sessions on the other side, are perceived by informants to the study as designed by Mr. Grímsson, and strategically rigged to attend to his geopolitical interests. Reviewing the programs for the Assembly supports this understanding of the Arctic Circle organization. Speakers at prime plenary time have included country sessions by Britain (2014), France (2014), Japan (2014), China (2015), Germany (2015), and Switzerland (2016) – all looking to manifest themselves as Arctic players – as well as key business interests, such as shipping, resource development, and tourism. The Arctic Frontiers is frequently attributed as an exclusive arena promoting Norwegian interests and priorities. While the Icelandic government is not as close to the Arctic Circle organization as the Norwegian government is involved with the Arctic Frontiers, there is a strategic element of the Arctic Circle as well: advancing Iceland’s geopolitical and economic interests.



The Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavik. Photo: Beate Steinveg

The structure is one of the fundamental differences between the two cases. In the initial years of the Arctic Circle, the program was largely devoted to country sessions: long presentations of states' Arctic visions, with no time for discussions or questions from the audience. This format was criticized, also by the board of advisors, and was altered to shorter and more dynamic plenary sessions, including comments and unfiltered questions from the audience. In addition to the plenary sessions, the Arctic Circle provides a large number of breakout sessions, to which governments, institutions, organizations, universities, think tanks, companies, and others can submit proposals for.

In contrast to the Arctic Frontiers, there is no sector label attached to days or sessions, and policy, science, and business are mixed throughout the three-day Assembly. However, while the Arctic Frontiers is moving away from the pillar structure (see section 6.2.2), Mr. Grímsson stated at a webinar in October 2020 that, adding to the Assemblies, the Forums, and the Mission Councils (see Chapter Eight, section 8.3), virtual events and podcasts would be added as "the fourth and fifth pillars of the Arctic Circle organization". Moreover, the Arctic Circle has been arranged in week-ends, but the organizers made a change to the Assembly in 2019, which was beneficial in terms of having people attend the entire conference. The opening session was moved from Friday to Thursday at noon, and the last conference day was Saturday. This resulted in there being a markedly increase in number of attendants on the final day, as opposed to the small group of remaining participants when the conference ended on Sunday.



Arctic Circle Assembly plenary session, Saturday October 12th 2019.
Photo: Beate Steinveg.

6.3.3 Participation and partners

The Arctic Circle is promoted as attended by heads of states, government representatives, ministers, members of parliaments, experts, scientists, academics, students, entrepreneurs, business leaders, Indigenous peoples, and activists from the growing international community interested in the future of the Arctic. There were approximately 1200 participants from 35 countries attending the first Arctic Circle in 2013. The number has grown from 1500 participants from over 40 countries in 2014, more than 2000 participants from over 50 countries at the 2015 and 2016 Assemblies, to more than 2000 participants from over 60 countries represented at the 2017, 2018, and 2019 Assemblies – according to the conference website.

The Arctic Circle, as the Arctic Frontiers, has been very successful at promoting the role of young people, and their participation is a noted factor by other attendees. The Arctic Circle is partner with several universities, and young researchers are free to submit proposals on the same conditions as everyone else. Informants to the study describe the dynamic format as beneficial for early-career scientists, because discussions and questions from the audience provide good feedback for their work. Also, the Arctic Circle's attraction and reputation within the scientific community contributes to the breakout session audience being interested and active, thus avoiding "scientific tourism" (academics going to conferences and presenting for a small audience of like-minded peers). These features are also described by informants, especially from the epistemic community, as important for driving the dialogue about the region forward.

Admission category	2018 Prices	Admission category	2019 Prices
General admission	450 Euro	Business / Government / Organizations / Representatives	550 Euro
Academic / Scientists / Citizens / Breakout session speakers	300 Euro	Academic / Scientists	450 Euro
Students	100 Euro	Breakout session speakers	350 Euro
Plenary Session Speakers	Free	Citizens	250 Euro
Media	Free	Students	150 Euro
		Plenary Session Speakers	Free
		Media	Free

Figure 6.4: Cost of participation for the Arctic Circle Assembly, 2018 and 2019 prices.

The cost of participation started out as a virtually symbolic sum, significantly lower than at the Arctic Frontiers, but has increased annually. Informants point to the admission fee as contributing to the Arctic Circle’s initial success – because as it was affordable to attend and see what type of arena it was. Still, people continuing to attend the Assembly, despite the increased cost, speaks to the virtue of the business model. Furthermore, in contrast to the Arctic Frontiers, the admission fee covers the entire conference, including lunch and receptions. There are two factors instrumental for the lower cost of participation. One is the underlying aim of providing a democratic platform feasible to attend for as many stakeholders as possible. The other is how Mr. Grímsson utilized his position as president to advance Iceland’s role in international relation, and has been very successful in attracting strong financial sponsors. Partners of the Arctic Circle consists of an international web of collaborators – among them several business and investment actors.



Figure 6.5: Arctic Circle Assembly main partners.

In addition to the main partners, the Arctic Circle has 20 “North–Atlantic strategic partners” – illustrating the importance of the Assembly for Iceland’s positioning, business, and tourism development. These include the Prime Ministers Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland, seafood companies, tourist actors, Icelandic financial

institutions, power and engineering companies. The Arctic Circle further has a long list of international partners, including several universities, the International Arctic Science Committee, the Institute of the North, Indigenous peoples organizations, organizations, and institutions focusing on sustainable development and preserving the environment, as well as companies, e.g. Pt Capital and Google.



Figure 6.6: Partners and sponsors of the Arctic Circle Assembly (2019).

6.3.4 Arctic Circle Forums

Since 2015, the Arctic Circle organization has arranged Forums on specific areas of Arctic cooperation at different locations. The first – on shipping and ports – was held in Anchorage, Alaska in August 2015. It was attended by over 200 political leaders, business, experts, and Indigenous community representatives. The goal was to articulate plans and facilitate partnerships for developing safe, secure, and reliable shipping through the Arctic (see also Chapter Eight, section 8.3). In November 2015, the Arctic Circle and Singapore Maritime Institute, with the support of the Singapore Government, convened a forum where discussions focused on shipping, infrastructure financing, ocean science and research, and global collaboration on Arctic affairs. In 2016, the Arctic Circle organized a Forum in Nuuk, Greenland in May, focusing on economic development for the people of the Arctic, tourism, shipping, natural resources, fisheries, and the empowerment of Indigenous peoples. In December, a Forum in Quebec City addressed the sustainable development of northern regions, regional planning and governance, investments, socio-economic development, and the impacts of climate change.

The first forum in 2017 was titled *The United States and Russia in the Arctic*, and was co-hosted with the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington DC in June. The main questions addressed were the policies and plans of the United States and Russia in the Arctic, and relations with other states in the Arctic and the Asian and European countries seeking an increasing role in the region. In December 2017, a forum was held in Edinburgh, in cooperation with the Scottish Government titled *Scotland and the New North*. It addressed areas of common interest between Scotland and the Arctic, including how to build resilient communities, young people in remote communities and community empowerment, shipping and aviation connections, Arctic seas and blue growth, energy innovations, and tourism.

In May 2018, the *Arctic Hubs: Building Dynamic Economies and Sustainable Communities in the North* Forum was held in Tórshavn in cooperation with the Government of the Faroe Islands. It gathered more than 300 participants from 20 countries, making it the largest international assemble in the Faroe Islands. The agenda centered around Arctic fisheries and responsible use of ocean resources, ocean and air transport, tourism, science and research, and the policies of Asian states. Moreover, the forum addressed cooperation between North Atlantic states – Greenland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Norway, and Scotland – a noteworthy emphasis considering both Iceland’s geopolitical interests, and in view of Scotland’s attempts to make connections and position itself outside the UK after Brexit (see Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2.1).

The second Forum in 2018 was hosted in Seoul, Korea in December, with the Korea Maritime Institute, the Korea Polar Research Institute, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. The event *Asia meets the Arctic: science, connectivity and partnership* centered around Arctic science, connectivity and sustainability, energy, shipping and transport, the role of Asian countries and companies in the Arctic Ocean, and cooperation between Asian and Arctic states in the future of the region.

In May 2019, the Arctic Circle China Forum was hosted in Shanghai by the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People’s Republic of China, in cooperation with the Polar Research Institute of China, the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, and Shanghai Science & Technology Museum. The Forum was also supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. It addressed China’s involvement in the Arctic through the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as dialogue on ocean and marine science, transport and infrastructure, renewable energy, socioeconomic development and stewardship, and Arctic governance. Consequently, through the Forums, the

Arctic Circle organization has extended its reach to major Asian and European cities⁷.

6.3.5 The value of the conference for Iceland

Advancing the geopolitical agenda of Iceland

“Iceland do not use the Arctic Circle platform to the same extent as Norway utilizing the Arctic Frontiers. You don’t hear a lot about Iceland at this conference. It’s a big difference. It was more a personal quest, for Grímsson. And you can see, it wasn’t even him representing the government of Iceland, because he has continued with it after his presidency ended. It was his personal desire.”

While the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is central in the formulation of the Arctic Frontiers’ program, and is involved in inviting high-level delegates to the conference, the Icelandic government does not have the same role in the Arctic Circle organization. This feature is noted by informants – as the Canadian academic cited above. The Arctic Circle is described as a “personal quest” and “personal desire” for Mr. Grímsson, and as an attempt to build an Arctic Hub on Iceland to bolster its geopolitical position – and possible to advance Mr. Grímsson’s legacy. Former president Grímsson’s connections and networks have contributed to drawing attention to the Assembly, and attracting international high level representatives, including prime ministers and presidents.

“I don’t think the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Iceland has been very much involved in setting the agenda or the program. It started as an initiative from the President, without consultation with the Government. But, I think there is good cooperation. The Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister were both speaking at the last conference. There is definitely some sort of support.”

Still, while not formally engaged in the conduct of the Arctic Circle, the Prime Minister’s Office and the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs are partners. Their presence is observed by participants, as the Arctic Council affiliated informant cited above. The partnership supports the principle in Iceland’s Arctic Policy of: “Advancing Icelanders’ knowledge of Arctic issues and promoting Iceland abroad as a venue for meetings, conferences, and discussions on the Arctic region” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland, 2011). Thus, the Icelandic government has been provided an arena for placing Iceland

⁷In 2020, the first Arctic Circle Forum was scheduled for June in Berlin, but was postponed because of the Corona pandemic. In November 2020, a Forum was scheduled for Tokyo, arranged in conjunction with the third Arctic Science Ministerial meeting (ASM3), co-hosted between Japan and Iceland (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.6.6), which was postponed till May 2021. Two additional Forums have been announced with no set date at the time writing: one titled *The Third Pole – Himalaya – Arctic Lessons* in Abu Dhabi, in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates, and the second Arctic Circle Greenland Forum, in cooperation with the Government of Greenland.

on the map, free-riding Mr Grímsson’s project – also after he left the President’s office. The global, open tent approach of the Arctic Circle has attracted a wide range of international participants to Reykjavik, including (Asian) investors and tourists, and it has contributed to manifesting Iceland’s geopolitical position.

The West-Nordic coalition, through which Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands have joined forces to establish themselves as “small but still important”, is the foremost example of positioning efforts taking place through the Arctic Circle. The emphasized selling points are the geopolitical strategic position of Iceland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands’s high competence within renewable energy, and in Greenlandic presentations: the human dimension and Indigenous voices. The impacts of climate change and melting of glaciers on Iceland and Greenland are also advanced as central concerns, seeing how it causes major problems for all nations. These focus areas are in line with the triangle identified by Mr. Grímsson at the outset of his presidency, consisting of areas that Iceland should prepare to engage in for the future: the Arctic, climate change, and clean energy (Einarsdóttir, 2018).

Accordingly, while largely under control of the former president, the Arctic Circle is of geopolitical and economic importance for the smaller of the Arctic states. It is an arena for Iceland to consolidate the West Nordic dimension of Arctic governance together with the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and more recently Scotland (see Chapter Seven, section 7.2.2.1). It attracts global attention to Reykjavik, and by expanding the organization’s outreach through the Forums, the Arctic Circle contributes both to extending an Arctic identity, and to strengthening Iceland’s position internationally.

6.3.6 Strengths and weaknesses

The involvement of former president Grímsson is as pronounced at the Arctic Circle as the Norwegian government’s involvement is at the Arctic Frontiers. Several informants point to how Grímsson’s personal agenda and geopolitical interests are evident through the Assembly’s design, noticeably branding Iceland as an Arctic hub connecting North-America, Europe, and Asia. According to Mr. Grímsson himself when interviewed for this project, the Arctic Circle organization has contributed with three major additions to the Arctic governance structure. Firstly, through the country sessions, non-Arctic states have been provided an international platform to present their visions, policies, and plans for the Arctic. Secondly, sub-national and regional entities have been given a platform to present their perspective and interests, and to act independently of their central governments. Thirdly, the Forums have brought the Arctic dialogue and cooperation into focus outside the region, which contributes to making non-Arctic state actors constructive and responsible partners.

Open and democratic platform: Globalizing the Arctic

The Arctic Circle organizers' primary objective is creating a global and democratic platform that attracts all relevant stakeholders, and, from this, facilitate a dialogue expressing different voices. This aim has been accomplished, and a wide variety of state representatives, institutions, organizations, and individuals gather under the open tent established by Mr. Grímsson in 2013. The Assembly is considered the most important arena for networking among like-minded people in the Arctic. The intention of establishing an “assembly not a conference” is well preserved, illustrated by the growing interests in signing up for breakout sessions, and the relaxed atmosphere described by participants. Nonetheless, this characteristic of the Arctic Circle has both strengths and weaknesses.

The merits of this philosophy are that it includes all interested stakeholders, and encompasses different perspectives in the dialogue. The inclusiveness of the Assembly is pointed out by an academic participant as essential for its success and popularity in terms of the number and variety of people attending. The Arctic Circle manages to attract most of the elite from different sectors, or as described by an informant from the business community: “the right people”. In addition to the epistemic community in the region being given an opportunity to engage with their peers, the Arctic Circle also facilitates the establishment of business connections, and involvement of states and actors on the outside of formal arrangements for cooperation in the region.

This is an apparent asset of the Assembly, because involving non-Arctic state actors in the discussion has an educational element, and contributes to creating stakeholders with a sense of responsibility towards the region (see Chapter Seven, sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.2.1). This is not only advanced through the main Assembly, but also by extending the organization globally through arranging Forums in cooperation with other states and relevant institutions.

“If you listen to Grímsson speak at receptions, he talks about an open and democratic arena. There is another side to this tent approach. The plenary part is not open and democratic, it is controlled. Grímsson has personally designed it, down to single sessions, to safeguard his geopolitical agenda.”

As demonstrated by the quote from the Arctic state institute director cited above, there are critical voices towards the vision of Mr. Grímsson. For one, a flaw of the open tent philosophy is that by promoting the newcomers, it at the same time downplays the visibility and prominence of the Arctic Eight. According to informants from Arctic state science and academic institutions, this is not always welcomed by “those who know best” on how to govern Arctic affairs.

Moreover, since “anybody can say anything”, the Assembly gives a voice to perspectives that can be disconnected from Arctic sovereigns or other rights holders, such

as local communities and Indigenous peoples. The problematic aspect of having non-Arctic actors present about the region is that information can be misleading, thus advance misconceptions about the Arctic. One example is the catchphrase “what happens in the Arctic doesn’t stay in the Arctic”, which implies climate change is deriving from the Arctic. This issue is brought forward in Chapter Eight, on conferences’ significance for agenda setting. The challenge is also illustrated by the Arctic institute affiliated informant cited below.

“I see Arctic Circle as a projection of Iceland’s economic interests in the Arctic – as a geopolitical interest of Grímsson, in connecting subnational governments and non-Arctic states to Arctic in a way that at some point has the potential to displace the Arctic Council and national Arctic sovereignty.”

Another factor is that the approach often results in overlapping themes for breakout sessions, because, as pointed out by an informant from the science community, everyone thinks they need to be present and showcase their work – and has the opportunity to do so. This prompts the question of how long this is feasible in terms of space, as the Harpa’s capacity is about 2000 people.

Lastly, when convened under the umbrella created by the Arctic Circle, the notion of a Bazar, in the words of Depledge and Dodds (2017), becomes evident. There is competition for visibility, and the Assembly is undoubtedly an exhibition stage for stakeholders looking to achieve something within Arctic affairs. So, while being a democratic platform, the Arctic Circle is also a global forum where non-Arctic states and the business community can pay to promote their interests, in particular in the plenary sessions.

Sponsor influence

Related to the Arctic Circle being a platform promoting non-Arctic voices, is the criticism of the Assembly as an arena where it is not the quality of the proposal that matters, but rather standing, influence, and the ability to pay for the best speaking time in plenary sessions. This was particularly noteworthy in the initial years of the Assembly, with grand country sessions by states from outside the region. As noted by an informant from the academic community:

“When Grímsson was still president, and he wanted to attract certain actors. He was making a bit too many promises, which resulted in many country sessions in the initial years. Of course, it helped that he was standing Head of State at the time. That helped a lot in that the conference got attention.”

While the dominance of the country sessions has been reduced after pressure from the advisory board, the sponsors are still largely visible in the program and at the venue, supporting the impression of the Arctic Circle as a marketplace. Moreover, the fact that

the plenaries are designed to accommodate strategic actors and interests means there is less room for the breakout sessions. Participants comment how there are often several breakout sessions they would like to attend simultaneously, or that they wish some of the more informative and constructive panels could have been in the plenary program. The frustration towards the quality of the plenaries in the initial years was expressed by an Arctic state academic informant:

“I don’t find the plenary sessions particularly informative. The country sessions, they are rarely Arctic countries, I always thought was waste of time. All the video messages – who wants to listen to that? They do not have much to add to the discussion. So, I find the plenaries to be a waste of time.”



China Exhibition at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly. Photo: Beate Steinveg

Format, location and venue

“At the Arctic Circle, it is definitely the people who are here. After participating every year, I know many of the attendants, and it becomes easier to pick up previous ideas. This is an efficient arena, due to the large number of participants, because it is compact, and the building is ideal for mingling and networking.”

As demonstrated by the above quote from a business representative, the Arctic Circle’s location, venue, and format are all strong-points. Reykjavik is an advantageous location for bringing together people from North-America, Europe, and Asia. The Harpa concert hall and conference center venue provides for good socializing and networking opportunities, which is highlighted as a substantial strength of the Assembly by all informants interviewed for this study. This relates to the goal of the organizers, of being

a platform for the policy-science interplay, and for implementing the social relevance of science. To advance these ambitions requires attracting different stakeholder groups, in particular the expertise within central fields. It also necessitates knowledge sharing and the exchange of perspectives through dynamic discussions.

To that end, in addition to the beneficial location, the format of the Arctic Circle is a strength. Firstly, the three-day program means it is more likely people stay for the entire conference. Secondly, shorter presentations in the plenary sessions, followed by questions and discussions, contribute to more interesting and fruitful debates. The structure with a mix of all affiliations in every session bulk is also an asset, enabling intersectional engagement. However, for the policy-science interplay to manifest itself, it is essential to present scientific findings for the broader audience, not only in the breakout sessions. As participants can choose which breakout sessions to attend, there is a risk of only informing like-minded people. It also requires governmental, institutional, and organizational participants being attentive, open to learning, and committed to bringing initiatives back to their work.

6.4 Concluding remarks

“To a large extent now, Iceland and Norway are competing to be capitals in the Arctic via their Arctic conferences. So, it is very much an Arctic Frontiers versus Arctic Circle. I think we have this competition for numbers of participants and numbers of sessions, when we should have competition for meaning, impact, and outcomes.”

This chapter has provided insight into the objectives of the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle, the purpose of the conferences, and how they have developed into central pieces within Arctic governance. Building on the discussion in Chapter Five, it has been demonstrated how the establishment of the Arctic Frontiers in 2007 and the Arctic Circle in 2013 should not be considered arbitrary, but rather as initiatives designed to fill specific demands. The following chapters elaborate on the specific functions the two conferences have, for different stakeholder groups, agenda setting, and within the Arctic governance architecture.

The Arctic Frontiers was established due to the realization that there was need for a mechanism bringing scientific knowledge into the decision-making process, in order to ensure knowledge based social, economic, and business development. This was at a time when the Arctic region was drawing increased international attention and interest. Politically: due to the processes conducted by individual states to submit claims for their extended continental shelves, which in turn must be seen in relation to sovereignty concerns, territorial issues, and resource management. Within the science community: the

rapid changes taking place in the Arctic caused by global factors were thoroughly documented, and the severity for taking action was becoming more and more pressing. On that account, a window of opportunity for the Arctic Frontiers was wide open on the international stage, domestically supported by the Norwegian government's advancement towards an active High North strategy.

Likewise, the Arctic Circle initiative was well timed with Iceland's resurgence on the international arena after the 2008 financial crisis. I have put forward an argument for how it has become a platform for advancing Iceland's geopolitical strategic position, West-Nordic, and North-Atlantic cooperation, and for deepening economic relations with China. The creation of the Arctic Circle was expedient in relation to the growing interest in the region from non-Arctic states. With the launch of this new forum in April 2013, the pressure was on the Arctic states to accept the six pending observer states to the Arctic Council at the ministerial meeting in May. While not decisive for the decision to approve the applications, the establishment of the Arctic Circle contributed to the notion that it was necessary to involve the pending observers in a meaningful way before they created a council of their own, or found a "backdoor" into Arctic governance. Accepting Asian states into established structures meant the Arctic Eight could remain in control, and steer the framework for debate and narrative about the region.

A central finding from the analysis of the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle is that they should be considered two different models for arranging a conference, organized respectively top-down versus bottom-up. The former gives primacy to Arctic actors, in particular state representatives, and its policy plenaries have a strong "Nordic touch" – as described by an informant. Significantly, the program is largely designed by the organizers, and proposals are approved in conformity with the overarching theme of that year's conference. By contrast, the Arctic Circle as an open, democratic tent is not just a catchline repeated by Mr. Grímsson. Although the plenaries are under his control, overall, the nature of the Assembly reflects this metaphor. Breakout sessions are constructed of the submitted proposals, and the organizers provide a space for participants to fill with their own agenda. The Arctic Circle is also more global, and through country sessions, has provided a platform particularly useful for non-Arctic states and entities.

The distinct underlying philosophies of the conferences have implications for the understanding of the Arctic as a region for international cooperation. The way the conferences are constructed has consequences for their broader functions within Arctic governance, which is subject for analysis in the subsequent chapters. The participant pool and who are considered legitimate stakeholders shapes the actor composition in the Arctic. Agenda setting is influenced by the organizing and structuring of the conferences. These two features combined are significant for the space the conferences fill within the overarching Arctic governance architecture.

Actors and stakeholders in Arctic governance

7.1 Introduction

The group of “Arctic conference insiders” has been portrayed by organizers and participants as an international network consisting of about 1400 people, who partake in the same processes in the region. Setting aside the accuracy of this number, there is a significant overlap between the pool of participants attending the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly. The previous chapter demonstrated how the organizers create multifaceted meeting places for the development and maintenance of connections among people from a variety of affiliations and countries. However, to establish the broader significance of conferences, it is necessary to deepen the analysis beyond examining them as arenas for networking. To that end, informants to the study were asked questions regarding their motives, strategies, and expected outcomes when attending Arctic conferences (see Appendix 1).

Accordingly, this chapter examines the first mechanism of interest: the functions of conferences for different stakeholder groups, and potential influence on the actor composition of the Arctic region. While “actors” is used as a term covering everyone engaged in Arctic governance and/or in the conference sphere, the category “stakeholders” is more narrowly defined as “a group of people bound together in different relationships by the jointness of their interests” (Freeman, 2010, 5). Stakeholders are purposefully engaged in the region, from a position of (self-) interests, and conference participation is a means to fulfill these interests. The discussion of the functions of conferences for actors is structured around seven identified participant groups: Arctic state representatives; non-Arctic state actors; the epistemic community; business/industry representatives; representatives from institutions/non-governmental organizations; Indigenous peoples; and local/regional representatives.

The overall purpose of the chapter is twofold. Firstly, to unveil ways in which actors utilize conferences, and from this, the functions conferences have for different stakeholder groups (see Appendix 2). Secondly, to examine whether and how conferences can influence the actor composition of Arctic governance. Functions for actors are examined by tracing conference engagement to outcomes for participant groups. This discussion, especially with regards to the epistemic community, is linked to the existing literature on the educational and professional functions of conferences (see Henderson, 2015; Hickson, 2006; Nicolson, 2017). The analysis also builds on the work of Lövbrand et al. (2017), who survey participants at the UN climate conferences from 2013 to 2015, and find people do not primarily attend to contribute to shape or influence the inter-

governmental negotiation process, but that motivations for partaking are as diverse as the participant pool (Lövbrand et al., 2017, 591-594). While common objectives are networking, building interpersonal relationships, learning, and foster a sense of community – states, NGOs, researchers, and business representatives also attend for various affiliation-related reasons, which are linked to findings in this study.

The second objective is linked to how the expanding agenda, with environmental protection dominating in the 1980s being replaced by a multitude of issues that have connected the Arctic to the global, has led to changes in the actor composition of Arctic governance. The chapter examines the extent to which conferences have contributed to these alterations, and the implications of a broader stakeholder pool for the region's rights-holders. This is determined by applying the theoretical framework to the examination of stakeholder power, legitimacy, and urgency, and inquire whether these attributes are subject to change as a result of conference engagement.

Lastly, the marked difference in organization and underlying philosophies of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle highlighted in the previous chapter have implications for the actor mechanism. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers largely adhere to the notion that Arctic state actors should hold exclusive control over Arctic affairs, while the Arctic Circle organization is more open to non-state and sub-national actors also having a say in the discussion about the region's future. From this, the distinction between conference participants geographically situated in the Arctic – rights-holders – versus non-Arctic state and non-state actors who also want to partake in developments, is of particular interest for the analysis in this chapter.

7.2 Motivations and outcomes for different stakeholder groups

7.2.1 Arctic state representatives

Arctic conferences blur the line between governance and dialogue, as they provide not only the opportunity to exchange ideas, but also “a performance space for government officials to project their national interests in the Arctic in a certain light, either, for example, to remind others of the primacy of Arctic states and peoples, or to demonstrate the legitimate interests of other stakeholders from beyond the region” (Depledge & Dodds, 2017, 145). This dual function of conferences, catering for upholding the supremacy of Arctic states and also serving as platforms for outsiders, is articulated in several of the interviews conducted for this study. Thus, while conferences are not governance institutions, they can still be instrumental for people doing governance.

The first stakeholder group addressed – Arctic state participants – comprise of definitive rights-holders in the region, as sovereigns through international law. They hold all three stakeholder attributes – power, legitimacy, and urgency – and conference

participation is primarily a means for exerting their dominance and influence. Specifically, two functions stand out. Firstly, conferences are arenas for the promotion of policies, and to gain recognition for national priorities. Secondly, conferences are arenas for educating the growing pool of non-Arctic actors seeking to engage in regional developments, and to pay attention to their interests and visions.

7.2.1.1 Promote national policy and priorities

“States do not seem to come to conferences for a bi-directional conversation, they are coming for an audience. When you develop a policy, it needs an audience. Arctic states can use conferences to disseminate, or announce the creation of, a policy, which doesn’t have the same effect if it is just on paper.”

“On a general basis, the main purpose [of attending Arctic conferences] is to create understanding for Norwegian High North policy and priorities, and to gain acceptance for the same priorities.”

These remarks, by one informant from academia and one government affiliated informant, highlight the main reason for why state leaders, ministers, and other governmental representatives attend conferences: to promote policies and national interests, and to advance their visions for the region. From this, conference participation can be considered a means to obtain soft power, which rests on the ability to shape the preference of others (Nye, 2008, 95). There is a noteworthy presence of states presenting recently published Arctic policies or strategies at the two conferences in this study. This element is however equally important for, and put into practice by, non-Arctic states.

“You have high level officials or ministers coming from Arctic states to these conferences, talking about what the Arctic Council is doing. So, I think the Arctic states are using both the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle to communicate.”

A related feature of conference presentations, noted by the Arctic Council affiliated informant cited above, is the use of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle by the upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council to announce its program – which is often linked to national priority areas. For example, the Finnish chairmanship (2017-2019) focused on connectivity and education, and Iceland (2019-2021) – as a front runner in the use of geothermal power – emphasized climate and green energy solutions, the Arctic marine environment, and people and communities of the Arctic.

The Russian International Arctic Forum (IAF) provides another example of the promotional function of conferences for state representatives. Russia is interested in a stable and cooperative region, but is challenged by the Western media’s portrayal of Russian rearmament in the Arctic. Through the IAF, the Russian government has a

platform for providing an alternative narrative, emphasizing Russia's peaceful vision and collaborative efforts. While a definite stakeholder in the region, the IAF is still a means for Russia to further boost its legitimacy among the other rights-holders. This is noted by the governmental and academic affiliated informants cited below.

“President Putin hosts the International Arctic Forum. I would say it is a good opportunity for Russia to showcase its Arctic policy to an audience willing to listen.”

“He uses it as a communication channel, about Russian Arctic policy and what his plans are going forward. Russian shipping, oil and gas are issue areas promoted at such conferences. It is a way to show a larger media, or general, audience.”

In addition to promoting policies, conference participation is a means for Arctic state representatives to protect the primacy of the Arctic Eight. They can sustain their position as leaders in the region, and maintain control over the dialogue about the Arctic's future. The inclination to assert “Arctic state supremacy” is founded in the classical geopolitical paradigm, arguing Arctic governance is historically, geographically, and legally bound by interactions among states who are privileged by their possession of territory above the Arctic Circle (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.1).

Accordingly, while stakeholders are bound together by shared interests, Arctic rights-holders are connected through a geographical belonging to the region, and shared historical and cultural ties. Highlighting the divide between Arctic states and non-Arctic actors can have both geopolitical and economic underlying drivers – to protect the sovereignty and entitled rights of the region's inhabitants. One academic informant describes how the Arctic states do not want others telling them how to govern. The informant asserts: “Outsiders are welcome to do science, but the notion that ‘this is our area’ is strongly established among the Arctic states.”

However, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, the classical geopolitical paradigm as a foundation for the political order in the Arctic is increasingly challenged by forces of globalization. This development can potentially reinforce Arctic states' utilization of conferences, as platforms to argue for their sovereignty. One government affiliated informant describes how it is important for the Arctic debate that the main Arctic states participate at conferences. Thus, there is a sense of responsibility, which the informant also describes as concern over what can happen if they do not participate, and outsiders get to control the discussion. As such, the first function of conferences for Arctic state representatives, founded in determination of asserting dominance and maintaining control, leads to the second reason for conference engagement: creating responsible stakeholders.

7.2.1.2 Create responsible stakeholders

“I sometimes hate how we use the word stakeholder so much, but it is kind of the best word, because a stakeholder is someone who is not from that place, but they care. They are engaged, passionate, and working to promote something for the good. So, I guess we are trying to create stakeholders by inspiring them to gain a new perspective, or change their mind about a community, people, or place.” –Conference organizer–

The assumption of an ability to influence behavior in the international system is found within neo-liberalism, with the postulation that the temptation to defect can be dramatically reduced among players who expect to meet again (Keohane, 1984; Putnam, 1988). It is also related to the core research puzzle in regime theory: How utility maximizing actors manage to cooperate in the absence of a government-like authority (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.2). However, as discussed in Chapter Two, accountability is a weak spot in “new governance” systems (Peters & Pierre, 1998, 228). Biermann (2014) contends there are four elements that need to be present to a sufficient degree for an accountability relationship to be present. These are the normative element – a standard of behavior, the rational element – linking those who are held accountable to those with the right to hold them accountable, the decision element – a judgement of whether the standards of behavior have been met, and the behavioral element – allows governing actors to punish deviant behavior of those held accountable (Biermann, 2014, 122).

There is no overarching authority in Arctic governance, and compliance rests on actors adhering to shared norms and agreed upon rules of conduct. Thus, accountability, or responsibility, becomes diffused. Still, Young (2014) contends it is necessary to acknowledge the responsibility outsiders have for the Arctic’s biophysical and socio-economic systems, while it is also possible to argue for the legitimacy of non-Arctic stakeholders’ economic interests (e.g. resource extraction, shipping, tourism) in the Arctic. Accordingly: “any constructive consideration of avenues of engagement between Arctic and non-Arctic states (and various non-state actors) must therefore start from the proposition that we need to think of this as a two-way street” (Young, 2014, 228).

To that end, the Norwegian government finds it important to engage with new stakeholders at an early stage – to promote a common understanding of developments in the Arctic (Bekkevold & Offerdal, 2014). The Arctic Frontiers decisively serves as an arena for such engagement. Furthermore, when interviewed for this project, Mr. Grímsson argued the Arctic Circle taking place every October creates pressure on countries seeking involvement in Arctic affairs to perform as responsible partners, in exchange for utilizing the platform to promote themselves.

“The other side of the coin of inviting China, Japan, Korea, France, Germany, and others to have a country session, is that they agree to be accountable,

to take questions, and present their case in an open international platform.”
“They know, that if they don’t behave responsibly in the Arctic, it is addressed at the next Assembly. In a completely open way, in front of the global media, and an international audience.” – Mr. Grímsson –

In general, large conferences attracting international participants from a variety of affiliations are advantageous for advancing the two-way street interaction as described by Young (2014). Conferences provide the opportunity for outsiders to demonstrate their interests and argue for their legitimacy, while at the same time creating a space for Arctic states to supply the “Arctic-101” to newcomers. Consequently, conferences contribute to creating “responsible stakeholders”. This category can be added to the expectant stakeholder class in the typology of Mitchell et al. (1997) presented in Chapter Three, and potentially replace dangerous stakeholders. If dangerous stakeholders are included in the dialogue in a meaningful way, and their legitimacy is recognized by rights-holders, they become less threatening to the interests of the definitive stakeholders. To that end, conferences can contribute to balancing the interest in partaking in Arctic science and economic developments with a sense of responsibility towards the region’s environment and local communities. This is achieved by promoting the voices, opinions, and perspectives of the region’s inhabitants, something the organizers of both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle aim for, while also allowing non-Arctic state actors the opportunity to express themselves, which is better facilitated through the Arctic Circle.

Nonetheless, caution should be applied when estimating the potential of conferences in altering state interests and priorities. While Arctic states are provided a platform to “educate the uneducated”, and for advancing more balanced views, there is limited evidence in this study for states changing their policies as a result of pressure applied at conferences, which corresponds to what Haas (2002) finds in his examination of the role of UN conferences in constructing efforts at global environmental governance (p. 74). Still, it is not possible to know whether non-Arctic states and/or industry actors would have pursued a more aggressive advancement towards the region had they not been included in the Arctic community. It is also possible that time is a factor, and that this can be observable beyond the span of this project.

Thus, despite the absence of a meaningful accountability relationship as stringent as described above, conferences could be one of several informal diplomatic tracks to achieve collaboration. To repeat the words of former Norwegian Foreign Minister, Espen Barth Eide (see Chapter Five, section 5.6): “We are happy that more people want to join our club, because this means that they are not starting another club” (Eide, 2013). The Foreign Minister was referring to the Arctic Council, but conferences can play a significant supplementing – or alternative – function to the Arctic Council in terms of broadening stakeholder participation in the region (see Chapter Nine, section 9.3). As pointed out by one conference organizer interviewed for this study: “if you visit a place,

you care about the place”, and conferences in this way contribute to extending the Arctic neighborhood, a connection to the region, and a sense of identity.

7.2.2 Non-Arctic state representatives

“Participation by Asian states is a prominent feature of the Arctic Circle Assembly” – Chairman Grímsson (at the 2018 Assembly)

Transnational partnerships is defined as “an institutional cooperation between state and non-state actors from different countries, with the aim to produce political output” (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 79. See also Chapter Three, section 3.4.1). In the context of this study, this contribution from the Earth System Governance literature is linked to the potential provided by conferences for non-Arctic states (and non-state actors) to influence regional developments through the formation of transnational networks at these arenas. This argument is supported by the interview material gathered for the project, where conferences are described as essential platforms for engagement in the Arctic.

Non-Arctic state participants were classified as dormant or dangerous in Chapter Three. Dormant stakeholders are those with economic power and capacities within areas becoming increasingly important for the Arctic (e.g. resource extraction, shipbuilding, transportation, infrastructure development, maritime navigation, satellite communication, and tourism), but because they have limited urgency to their claims, their power potential is not realized. Examples are states seeking to engage in development projects in the region, but who are hindered by Arctic state governments¹.

Dangerous stakeholders are powerful actors with urgency to their claims, who act to secure their interests. While there are no such examples from the Arctic, it is possible that dormant stakeholders could move into this category if they perceive their claims to become more pressing. Lastly, non-Arctic states are also found in the demanding stakeholder category, with urgency as their only attribute. Examples are smaller states in the Himalayan region or Pacific islands states, who are less powerful and not legitimate Arctic actors, but who nonetheless have high urgency because they are strongly impacted by the effects of climate change.

Accordingly, the primary function of conferences for non-Arctic state participants is providing a platform for them to legitimize their presence in the region as relevant stakeholders – i.e increase their salience by acquiring the missing attribute. Conferences gather a broad and diverse audience for non-Arctic states to showcase their activities and capabilities, and explain to Arctic countries how they can be valuable partners. Secondly, conferences are information channels for those sidelined in formalized regional cooperation, to obtain knowledge about Arctic states’ policies, priorities, and visions.

¹This issue is discussed in length in Chapter Nine, with the example of China’s interest in investment projects on Greenland being obstructed by the Danish government in Copenhagen.

7.2.2.1 Legitimize presence and promote capabilities

While Arctic state actors tend to subscribe to a protectionist approach in dealing with Arctic affairs, and a restricted position concerning who can claim stakeholder status, non-Arctic states rather advance the discourse of the Arctic as a global commons. The most prominent example is China, describing itself as a “near-Arctic state” (State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, 2018) – in order to justify its legitimate position in Arctic affairs. According to Biermann (2014), being legitimate is “being in accord with established legal forms and requirements, or of confirming to recognized principles or accepted rules and standards of behavior” (p. 124). From this definition, non-Arctic state actors can become legitimate by following legal jurisdictions, and adhering to the standards of behavior set by the sovereign rights-holders in the region. At the same time, legitimacy as defined in the stakeholder typology (see Chapter Three, section 3.1) is also a social construct, which rests upon a perception that the actions of an actor or entity are appropriate with a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Suchman, 1995, 574).

Thus, legitimacy is about more than following established legal requirements – it is about assimilation and ‘proper behavior’ with a socially constructed system. It is about participation, engagement, and becoming part of the system. To that end, conferences’ primary impact on the actor composition of Arctic governance uncovered in this study is legitimizing the presence of non-Arctic state actors as stakeholders. Conferences are indiscriminatory in terms of membership. After recurrently attending the same arenas over several years, boundaries between Arctic and non-Arctic can be reduced.



Mr. Sam Tan, Minister of State, Singapore at the Arctic Frontiers 2019.
Photo: Beate Steinveg

One example is Mr. Sam Tan, the Minister of State from Singapore. Having presented at the Arctic Frontiers policy sessions in 2013, 2017, 2018, and 2019, and at the Arctic Circle plenary in 2013, 2014, 2018, and 2019, I expected to hear from him as much as any Arctic state representative.

Informants to the study have emphasized conference presentation as an opportunity to gain visibility from the broader Arctic community. One university affiliated participant describes how non-Arctic actors “can actually showcase themselves and take on a role – show their interest, ambitions, and capacities”. Another informant portrays conferences as a “door into the Arctic for Asian stakeholders, in addition to attracting financial investments to the region”. Conferences provide unfiltered stages for non-Arctic states to declare, as China did at the 2018 Arctic Circle Assembly, to be a “very important Arctic stakeholder”. The value of conferences for actors sidelined in formalized cooperative arrangements is well summarized by an informant working in the intersection between policy and science in the region:

“I think when countries come forward and describe what they are doing in the Arctic, it helps Arctic states understand how non-Arctic states can be partners. So, does that help them? Absolutely! Because they are sharing information in a way that is very specifically tailored to something an Arctic state is listening for, to see if someone would be a good partner. So, could they do that in another way? Probably. But what you get at a conference is the condensed version.”

While Asian states are engaged at conferences largely for business, European states’ engagement is attributed to a desire to participate in Arctic science and research. Germany is an example of a state actively taking advantage of the space provided by the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle to manifest its contributions within this field. In 2015, the German government had a country session at the Arctic Circle, addressing research and science cooperation and economic opportunities, followed by a session in 2017 on the establishment and mission of the German Arctic Office. The head of the German Arctic Office was represented at the 2018 Arctic Frontiers, and at the 2018 Arctic Circle, the European Commission, the Finnish Ministry for Education and Culture, and the German Ministry for Education and Research co-hosted a session on the second Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM2) to be arranged the following week in Berlin. Germany’s science and industry contributions to the region, and rationale for conference participation is expressed by the informant cited below:

“We are not an Arctic nation, but I think we are investing more finances into Arctic research than most Arctic states. I think Germany is one of the biggest Arctic research nations in the world. That is the main interest. But, the environment, shipping, fisheries, marine and polar technology are also of

interest. Things the German industry has to offer and contribute with. Using conferences as market places is important for Germany. Making connections to Arctic countries, Arctic companies.”

For non-Arctic states, a well-used formula at the Arctic Circle Assembly is having a country presentation, followed by a report session the next year. This was performed by the Republic of Korea in 2013 and 2014, completed by a “Korean Night” event in 2015. Others who have used this model are the United Kingdom, France, and Japan. Moreover, hosting evening receptions is a branding opportunity provided by the Arctic Circle – available for those willing to pay for it. Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged a “Japan Night” in 2017, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China hosted a “China Night” in 2018. In this regard, the Arctic Circle is considered distinct from the Arctic Frontiers in that Mr. Grímsson has put special efforts towards “playing in the new and small states”, as described by a governmental science research institute affiliated informant. Mr. Grímsson provides a platform for newcomers, contributing both to endorse their presence, and to elevate their competence on Arctic issues. Conference participation is as such a means to climb the stakeholder salience ladder, by obtaining the legitimacy attribute, as well as power, through acquiring skills and building expertise.

Non-Arctic actors are in the process of building transnational coalitions based on their interests, and thus, are potentially able to reshape the distribution of power and alter the rules of the game. The expansion of the Arctic Circle machinery to Forums in Korea (December 2018), China (May 2019), and Tokyo (November 2020) is an example of non-Arctic actors, through their foreign ministries and research institutes, being enabled to showcase their capabilities, and intertwine themselves more in the Arctic community. However, the Arctic Circle’s approach is not always welcomed by Arctic state actors (See Chapter Six, section 6.3.6). Some consider these offensives to be at the expense of the time given to Arctic rights-holders, and others are concerned about the information communicated by non-Arctic actors being misinterpreted by other participants, leading to a faulty image of the region.

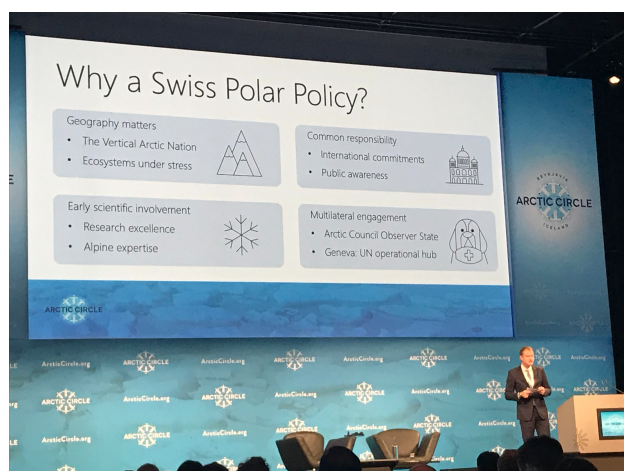
Switzerland serves as example of how conferences can play an important role for those on the outside of existing governance arrangements. Switzerland’s Arctic Council observer candidature was pending for the ministerial meeting in Fairbanks 2017. Prior, it was deemed important to showcase Swiss’ interests, work, and engagement in the Arctic. The Arctic Circle in October 2016 was considered a good opportunity to explain the link between Switzerland and the Arctic (embedded in Swiss polar science and the impacts of climate change), and why Switzerland should be considered a relevant stakeholder. Switzerland had an hour long country presentation in the plenary program, a breakout session, and a large exhibition in the conference building. The Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present at the 2017 Arctic Frontiers.



Exhibition *Swiss Camp* at the 2016 Arctic Circle Assembly. Photo: Beate Steinveg

According to a senior fellow at an American research institute: “The Swiss Arctic Circle 2016 presentation demonstrated to some who were not necessarily convinced that Switzerland was actually serious about this, and might have something to contribute to the Arctic Council.” Switzerland became an observer to the Arctic Council in May 2017.

At the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly, Swiss Ambassador Stefan Estermann spoke in a plenary session, laying forth Switzerland's connections to the Arctic as a “vertical Arctic nation”. The emphasis was, as previous years, largely on justifying why Switzerland has a polar policy, by showing to contributions to Arctic science and research, as well as similarities between the Arctic and Switzerland in terms of geography. The Ambassador further mentioned Switzerland's acceptance to the Arctic Council as an observer, and the country's scientific contributions to the working groups. Swiss polar policy has a bottom-up approach, through science, which the Ambassador emphasized as important for dialogue and cooperation in times of geopolitical tensions in the Arctic.



Ambassador Stefan Estermann, Head of the Sectoral Foreign Policies Division, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly.

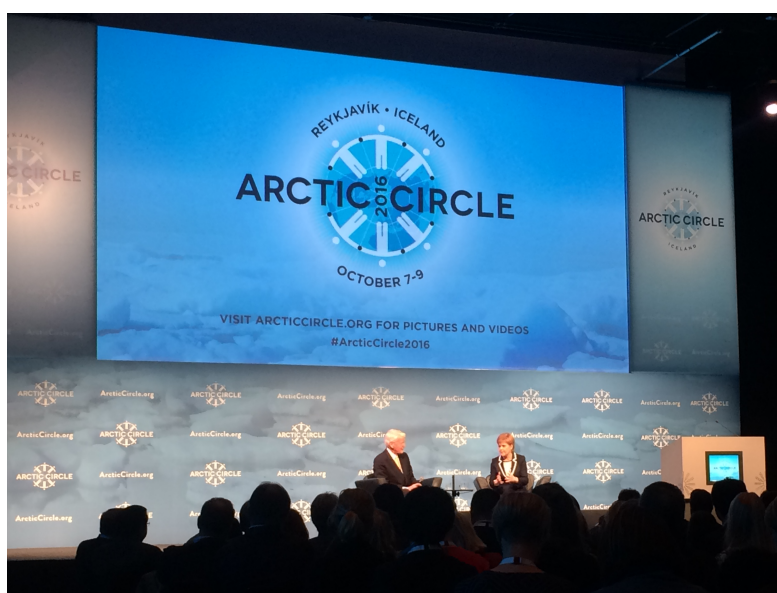
Photo: Beate Steinveg

Beyond legitimization, conference participation can be a means for re-branding, and to initiate new partnerships and alliances, as indicated by an academic informant:

“What the Koreans are doing, what Scotland is doing – they are bolstering their reputation. Demonstrating they have the expertise, they have the capability, demonstrating they are worth the investment.”

The Scottish post-Brexit situation serves to illustrate this function. Scotland, as part of the United Kingdom, had to adhere to the processes of leaving the European Union, catalyzed by the referendum in June 2016. However, the majority of Scottish voters – 62% – did not want to leave the EU (Electoral Commission, 2018), and Scotland was seeking partnerships, and to position itself in the European community following the Brexit referendum. From a geopolitical perspective, the Arctic region was considered one to which Scotland could form closer ties. As noted by an academic informant: “Scotland sees the opportunity to emerge as, and be perceived as, a ‘North-Atlantic country’. In the same way as the Faroe Islands, and Greenland.” The uncertainty following the UK vote to leave the EU is addressed in a 2017 update of the Scottish Government’s Nordic-Baltic Policy (originally from 2014). The importance of continuing to develop bilateral relations is underlined, and with regards to Iceland, the statement reads:

“To promote our relationship with Iceland, we will: continue to work with the Arctic Circle Secretariat based in Reykjavik to bring together Scottish strands of work related to the Arctic, including Ministerial participation at the Arctic Circle Assembly and the hosting of an Arctic Forum in Edinburgh in 2017.” (Scottish Government, 2017a)



Dialogue between Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon and Chairman Grímsson at the 2016 Arctic Circle Assembly. Photo: Beate Steinveg

In 2016, Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, held a keynote speech at the Arctic Circle Assembly, distancing Scotland from the prevalent anti-globalizing forces within the UK, and advancing closer cooperation with its neighbors in the North Sea. The First Minister returned to the 2017 Assembly for a plenary *Dialogue with Chairman Grímsson*, and hosted an Arctic Circle Forum in Edinburgh in November 2017. The *Scotland and the New North* Forum addressed common interests between Scotland and the Arctic. According to a FOI release² on the involvement in the Forum and the Scottish delegates attending the Arctic Circle, the Scottish government spent 3917 pounds (approx. NOK 44.100 / USD 4830) on the delegation to the 2016 Assembly, and 6817 pounds (approx. NOK 76.766 / USD 8400) on the 2017 delegation.

First outlined by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at the 2016 Arctic Circle Assembly, and announced by External Affairs Secretary Fiona Hyslop at the 2017 Edinburgh Forum, the Scottish Arctic strategy was launched on September 23rd 2019, stating:

“Scotland is the closest neighbor to the Arctic States and we have many shared interests and challenges, from renewable energy and climate change targets to social policies and improving connectivity. With the threat of a hard Brexit still possible, it is important we continue to work with our northern neighbors to build strong relationships. Our involvement with the Arctic Circle organization is an excellent opportunity to do this.”

The Arctic Policy Framework emphasizes connections between Scotland and the Arctic, not only geographically, but also cultural and social links, similar challenges, and outlooks. The strategy reads: “Scotland is ready to build bridges that can reinforce our role as a European gateway to the Arctic” (Scottish Government, 2019, 5). The closing section lists what Scotland has to offer the Arctic, including establishing an Arctic unit within the Scottish Government's Directorate for External Affairs. Noteworthy, the strategy reads that: “Ministerial participation in Arctic conferences such as the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavík and Arctic Frontiers in Tromsø, has contributed to promoting Scottish expertise and emphasizing Scotland's appetite for international exchanges (Scottish Government, 2019). However, there is no mention of neither the Arctic Council nor the Arctic Economic Council.

At the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly plenary session *New and emerging Arctic policies*, Paul Wheelhouse, Scottish Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, presented highlights from Scotland's first Arctic Policy Framework³. The Minister described Scotland as the closest European state to the Arctic, repeating the branding phrase “the European gateway to the Arctic”. As the policy framework, geographic,

²Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-17-02746/>

³The Scottish government also hosted two breakout sessions at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly, one titled *Empowering rural and islands communities: a dialogue between Scotland and the Arctic*, and one titled *A Scottish perspective on climate change, climate justice and human rights*.

economic, cultural, and social links between Scotland and the region were underlined. The Minister made two remarks of particular interest for this study. Firstly, how “Arctic commitment is not a geopolitical statement”. Scotland did not vote for Brexit, and the Scottish government is ready to commit to cooperation with the Arctic states and the rest of Europe, to learn and contribute. Secondly, the Minister referred to Scotland’s long engagement with the Arctic Circle, and on a question of Scotland’s room to maneuver outside the UK and EU, he answered that the Arctic Circle is not a political arena, which makes it an opportunity for Scotland to act independently.

Arguably, the Scottish government would not have been able to advance its Arctic policy interests to the extent it has without the Arctic Circle, and other conferences, as arenas to showcase their engagement and make connections. In broader terms, Scotland’s operations through the Arctic Circle illustrates a general function of the organization – also described by Mr. Grímsson. Providing sub-national or regional entities the opportunity to enter Arctic cooperation and promote their interest, independently of the actions of the state or federal government. The autonomy of regional actors is particularly manifested through the Forums, where they are provided a platform to have an independent voice, in addition to the function of the Forums in extending the Arctic dialogue globally.

“The audience at Arctic Frontiers is Norwegian dominated, very Scandinavian. At the Arctic Circle, there are more people from non-Arctic countries. From the beginning, it was very open to non-Arctic countries. The distinction between Arctic and non-Arctic is not made there – it doesn’t matter which country you come from. Arctic Frontiers still follows a bit more like Arctic Council structures – members and observers. It is understandable. Because it is Norwegian Foreign Affairs behind it, and they are a member of the Arctic Council. On Iceland, it is not the Foreign Office, it is the president behind it, who is independent. Arctic Circle is a bit more anarchy.”

As noted by the institute director cited above, there is a significant difference between the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle in terms of Arctic and non-Arctic actor involvement. The contrasting functions of the two conferences in legitimizing the presence of non-Arctic actors as stakeholders is traceable back to their origins. The Arctic Frontiers was established to provide for knowledge-based decision making. Thus, it is largely founded on the idea that Arctic affairs should be conducted by Arctic actors – those with the know-how. Still, there is no official strategy against non-Arctic actor involvement from the organizers. On the contrary, the Arctic Frontiers Plus was established, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to further involve the Arctic Council’s observers.

The Arctic Circle's philosophy, grounded in being a democratic platform involving all stakeholders – also those without territorial belonging – encourages international dialogue between those living in the Arctic and those who wanted to use the Arctic. Mr. Grímsson's vision is that the rest of the world must be invited in to promote development and growth in the Arctic. All stakeholders with an (self proclaimed) interest in the Arctic are considered equally important. The Arctic Circle is as such an arena where various actors, sources of authority, principles, and ideas are welcomed.

7.2.2.2 Listening posts and educational platforms

The second category of informant statements for why non-Arctic states can benefit from conference participation is for information gathering and to educate themselves about the region, which is linked to the creating responsible stakeholders function for Arctic state representatives. This finding is linked to what Haas (2002) concludes is the outcome of the UN environmental conferences: a contribution to a broader shift in international environmental governance through educating elites, exposing them to new agendas and discourses, and providing them with added resources to pursue sustainable development (p. 88). It also aligns with what Lövbrand et al. (2017) find: many government delegates use the UN conferences to inform themselves about climate change (p. 591). By the same token, three issues have been identified in this study: learning from the Arctic region in dealings with climate change; acquiring knowledge of potential markets; and gaining an understanding of Arctic peoples and communities.

Firstly, informants describe how non-Arctic actors tend to view the Arctic through the lens of climate change, as an issue of global concern. Thus, they consider it important to acquire the latest information on developments, and take part in international efforts to combat the effects of climate change. Singapore is under water if the ocean rises with two meters. India wants to learn about ice melting, because it loses its drinking water if the ice melts in Tibet. Accordingly, similar regions in the world are interested in insight about adaptation and mitigation strategies from the Arctic. This connection is exemplified by the *Arctic Lessons for the Himalayan/Third Pole Region* series at the 2013, 2017, and 2018 Arctic Circle Assembly.

Another aspect of conferences as listening posts is found in this participant group's self-interest. Non-Arctic actors can use conferences to position themselves in the Arctic market. For example, a journalist interviewed for this project told about a Korean representative he met at the Arctic Frontiers. Korea was building a research ice-breaker, and the representative participated at conferences to learn about potential markets, and to appraise whether the ice-breaker should operate in the Arctic or Antarctica. Singapore is frequently mentioned as another example, sending delegates to conferences to identify markets for selling materials to the shipping industry.

Thirdly, an important element is conference participation to become responsible stakeholders. While many non-Arctic states have extensive polar research track-records and capacities in relevant industries, their knowledge about Arctic living conditions, local communities, traditional livelihoods, and Indigenous culture might be subpar. The message from Arctic state representatives is time and again: “we have to listen to those who live in the Arctic”. Connecting to the two-way street communication necessary for balancing the interests of non-Arctic actors with the well-being of Arctic communities (Young, 2014), this is a pivotal element to push through conferences.

“I have lost count of the times myself, X and X have attended an Arctic conference to hold the same speech, concerning the same issues: "remember that states own the Arctic", "there are Indigenous peoples living there", "the Arctic is not only snow, ice, and polar bears", and things like that. As well as explaining that if the ice on Greenland melts, it is in fact worse for those living in the south. These stories, that it is those in the south polluting, not those in the north, needs to be repeated. It is a kind of an educational activity.”

This quote is from an academic affiliated informant to the study, who describes efforts to create responsible stakeholders through conferences. It illustrates the necessity of participation by experienced actors for educational purposes. For one, to promote an accurate representation of the region – as one with people in need of livelihood – and not an empty space to be protected like a national park from all social and economic development. Moreover, to devalue misperceptions of the kind that climate change is coming from the Arctic, deriving from the repeated slogan “what happens in the Arctic doesn’t stay in the Arctic.”

“I remember when I was someone new to the issues, you can read all you like, but until you actually go and hear people talking, and you figure out how much people actually care about certain things, and which ones care about what - that is a very valuable thing conferences can contribute to teach.”

Lastly, a related function on the individual level is illustrated by the policy affiliated informant cited above. Newly employed people in institutions and organizations, whether Arctic or non-Arctic, working on Arctic issues need information and insights about the region. Conferences have been described as useful arenas to meet the relevant cast of characters, and to learn about the field.

7.2.3 The epistemic community

The epistemic community, comprising of scientists, academics, professionals, and experts, is a longstanding group of conference participants. They are, like the Arctic state

representatives, for the most part also definitive stakeholders – possessing all three attributes. Those operating in the Arctic are legitimate, they have power through control over information and knowledge, and urgency to their claim by virtue of their expertise. The paramount function of conferences for these actors is to preserve these attributes, by providing arenas for networking, and for the epistemic community to promote themselves as credible experts. Secondly, conferences are ideal arenas for policy entrepreneurs to push their issues and sell their solutions to identified problems (see Chapter Three, section 3.3.1, and also Chapter Eight, section 8.5), thus contributing to agenda setting and establishing the framework for debate.

7.2.3.1 Networking

All informants to the study emphasize networking as the strongest motivating factor for conference participation. This is in line with the objective of the organizers – to facilitate a cost-effective meeting place. It was a key vision of Chairman Grímsson when initiating the Arctic Circle, and is emphasized by the Arctic Frontiers’ secretariat as a desirable outcome. Skelton (1997) maintains academics go to conferences to be seen and make contacts, and Hickson (2006) argues conference networking contributes to developing an epistemic community. Thus, what happens on the margins of the conference is important for this actor group. The weight attributed to the networking aspect is illustrated by three statements from the interviews: by a university employee, an informant associated with an Arctic Council working group, and a research institute director.

“Everything directs academics to conferences: the funding, the system, it goes on your CV. Why do I keep coming to the Arctic Circle? It is the biggest and best attended – everyone comes. There are 10-20 people in the world that wants to have the conversation I want to have. Networking is important. But, why do I care about the networking? I can get co-authors – conferences are the only place where we would ever meet face to face. So, that does make it valuable: you can put a face to a name.”

“You can say that the most important part of the Arctic Circle is the mingling and networking in between. The same is with the Arctic Frontiers – what happens between the sessions, and the side meetings. The side meetings are often what is most important. The conference becomes an excuse to meet.”

“What happens on the side-line of the sessions is the important thing. So, in the same way I don’t go to sessions at the Arctic Circle, this last Arctic Frontiers, I barely went to any sessions. It was all going to other peoples’ meetings. So, out of those activities, it was a meaningful experience. I don’t know what happened at the conference, but I was able to do a lot of different things, find value, and see outcomes in a way the conference doesn’t produce.

There is an elite of the elite that has always been doing this. They don't need the basics, they don't need the new information, they are getting it. What they need is connections, that chance to talk to each other.”

Extending networking beyond meeting the “right people for your niche”, and maintaining and developing relationships, scientist and academics attend conferences driven by the personal-professional quest for co-authors for papers, or partners for projects. This finding lines with Hickson's (2006) argument, of networking at conferences being valuable because it “provides ‘new’ colleagues for coauthoring papers, chapters and books, and organizing convention programs” (p. 467). Conferences provide opportunities to hear experts from various disciplines talk about their latest research. These conversations can be stimulating for academics' future work, and is a chance to discover other people working on similar projects (Hickson, 2006, 465-466).

Accordingly, conference participation is an opportunity for the epistemic community to develop ideas through discussions with international colleagues. It is a chance for them to make a name for themselves as credible contributors, and manifest their stakeholder attributes: power (knowledge and expertise) and legitimacy (integrity). Conferences are also advantageous for meeting people that can lead to employment or research funding. Despite how the Internet has provided for new opportunities for academics to access each others work and correspond across state borders, de Leon and McQuillin (2018) demonstrate that face-to-face interaction still matters for influencing the flow of academic understanding. This feature is emphasized by conference participants, and a university affiliated informant describes how personal relationships is highly important within academia, making interactions the main reason for attending conferences.

7.2.3.2 Agenda setting

Cross (2013) argues authoritative knowledge is a product of social context, and rests on being socially recognized, rather than definitely proven (p. 158). Thus, if an epistemic community is socially recognized, it can persuade others and shape their world views (Ibid.). This aligns with how Nye (2008) describes soft-power as getting others to want the outcomes you want through shaping their preferences. From this, conference participation is a means for the epistemic community to uphold their main source of social power and influence – control over information and knowledge – which again contributes to endorsing their positions. One research institute affiliated informant describes attending conferences as a way to “protect your space in the sandbox”, and to promote the work of the institution. In this way, the epistemic community can contribute to agenda setting and determining the framework for debate.

Moreover, through the expanded networking opportunity conferences provide, a space is created for the epistemic community to develop research ideas with like-minded

people, and consolidate their shared beliefs and common knowledge base. Aided by conference activities, experts develop a consensus around which issues are important, and solutions to defined problems – to which policy makers can respond. This process is described by two informants to the study, both from the academic community.

“In the Arctic, there is a huge epistemic community that has the expertise, and not necessarily government. And influence has become very decentral-ized. Maybe that is a chicken-or-the-egg question: is it because of confer-ences? Which came first: the conferences or the epistemic community?”

“We’re all just a bunch of bees, beating against this massive ball of inertia. And it takes a lot of little bees pushing on this big ball to get it to move. Because it is so much inertia in each of our own government. And when you talk about the disconnect between other governments, it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to get that momentum going, to make a move.”

The agenda setting function of conferences for the epistemic community further sup-ports their external social responsibility: contribute to societal relevant research and knowledge-based policy making. Enabling experts to elevate salient issues and set the framework for debate therefore has broader social and political ramifications. However, this is not a one-time endeavor, and expert contributions need to be an ongoing process. Not only because political administrations change and new people acquire positions, but because of inertia in governance processes in the systems in which conferences are situated, as noted by the second informant cited above.

These challenges make conferences valuable for the epistemic community in ef-forts to influence the agenda, in that they are recurrent events, and provide the opportu-nity to continue pushing issues over several years. However, while this finding derives from examining the two cases in this study, there is nothing indicating that this is a func-tion restricted to conferences the Arctic region. It is just as applicable for other areas where expert input is necessary to provide for knowledge-based policy, societal, and business development (e.g. the UN COP series – see Chapter One, section 1.3.2).

Lastly, there is a difference in organization between the two cases regarding this function. At the Arctic Circle, everyone, regardless of sector belonging or nationality, can submit proposals for breakout sessions. The Assembly has an open-ended approach through which all proposals are accepted within the limits of the conference venue. At the Arctic Frontiers on the other hand, only the science pillar is open for abstract submissions. Also, submissions are reviewed, rated, and has to be within a set of themes decided by the organizers, so the agenda setting influence of submitters is bounded to fit the overarching topic of the conference that year.

7.2.4 Business/industry representatives

Business representatives are stakeholders with (economic) power, and those located in the Arctic have a legitimate presence in the region. The establishment of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) in 2014 contributed to changing the business element within Arctic governance. Through the AEC, this sector was provided a formalized organization facilitating business-to-business activities, for members and partners from the Arctic and world-wide. At the same time, business representatives are, as academics, well-versed in the conference sphere. There are numerous industry specific conferences, also in the Arctic, some of which are presented in Chapter Five.

Regarding the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly however, neither have been praised for managing to fully integrate business. It is difficult to get business delegates engaged, and the conference has to be highly relevant for a CEO to devote his/hers time. The AEC has worked with both conferences, contributing with input to the programs and offered their network, to make the agenda more business friendly. Nonetheless, setting aside the fact that they are not ideal for creating business-to-business opportunities, the purpose of this section is to elaborate on how industry/business representatives *do* operate through the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle, and in turn, how the conferences function for this actor group.

7.2.4.1 Identify market opportunities

“Some businesses are clearly here to do business. They are looking for clients, they are looking for customers, they are looking for investors, they are looking for ideas that they might translate into business opportunities.”

While conference participation is nothing new for the business community, the Arctic region can be unfamiliar territory for many. Thus, as pointed out by the informant from the science community cited above, the primary reason for attending the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle is to acquire knowledge about investment opportunities in this market. An informant associated with the Arctic Economic Council describes how actors who see the opportunity to do business in the region often start out with attending a larger conference. In this way, conferences function as ports of entry, through which industry representatives can familiarize themselves with central political actors, potential partners, local conditions, and specific projects for investment.

In particular, it is noted that Asian industry representatives largely treat conferences as business networks, which is reflected in their country presentations, and the size of their delegations. In parallel, Lövbrand et al. (2017) concludes the UN climate change conferences have turned into a business fair for corporate actors, providing a space for product marketing, benchmarking, and for establishing new contacts with clients and competitors (p. 593).

“For a Chinese delegation visiting Reykjavik, participating at the Arctic Circle, it is likely they will stick around for a few days and also talk with people in Iceland who might be interested in investments from China or a Chinese company, right? So, the conference can be an excuse to do other business.”

Lastly, as noted by the informant working in the policy-science interface cited above, there is an “economies of scale” benefit to the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle, advantageous for the host state and local companies. They can benefit from the international gathering attracting industry representatives from Asia, North-America, and Southern Europe, through the opportunity to enter into new partnerships.

7.2.4.2 Marketing and branding

“The last conference I attended, after a panel I had a gentleman approaching, who was a potential customer. Most probably, if I hadn’t given the speech, not taken the time to go over, that contact would never have been established. Creating long-term revenue for the company. That’s the motivation. Also, to act as the voice of business.”

People-to-people contact is described by informants from the industry/business community, e.g. the one cited above, as valuable for outreach and extending the company brand. Conferences perform the opportunity for such engagement, and thus fulfill a branding function for this stakeholder group. As the industry representative describes, conferences are arenas for promoting the company through presentations or panel participation, and familiarize a broader customer pool with their services or products. Business representatives can create a name for themselves internationally, by advocating what they have to offer in terms of technology and capabilities, which can lead to new contacts and the generation of long-term revenue.

Simultaneously, not only branding the company’s name, but also promoting oneself as a responsible and good citizen is an important function of conferences for the industry. Conferences provide stages from which they can build a reputation as a credible actor, sensitive to sustainable economic development, and the well-being of local communities. This is exemplified by these statements from informants from the business and policy communities.

“I think some companies feel they have to participate in order to give a contribution to the community. I think this is true partly for Statoil for example, that they feel they have to show up – it is related to being a good citizen.”

“Statoil wants to participate at the Arctic Frontiers’ Environmental Forum. Why? Because they want to promote their ‘renewable profile’.”

Conferences can further be used in relation to a product launch, to draw attention to deliverables of a business or organization. The Arctic Economic Council's secretariat has done such targeted approaches at the Arctic Frontiers, the Arctic Circle, and at industry specific conferences. They consider their yearly focus areas, and where best to promote these highlights. For example, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, the world's largest mining conference, was considered beneficial for the launch of the AEC's working priorities in relation to mining. At the 2018 Arctic Circle, the AEC hosted an invitation only arrangement for global business leaders to discuss freedom of trade and investments in the Arctic the day before the Assembly, taking advantage of the number of people already going to Reykjavik.

The marketing function of conferences is illustrated by two examples – the first combining Finland's national and industry interests. At the 2014 Arctic Circle, Finland had a country session attended by the President of Finland and Tero Vauraste, president and CEO of the Arctia group, and, at the time (2015–2017), vice president of the Arctic Economic Council⁴. Arctia Ltd. is owned by the state of Finland, and operates eight icebreakers. However, the utilization rate for these is around 30-40 percent annually, and Mr. Vauraste was a strong advocate (in the media and at conferences) for the sharing of icebreakers – an “Uber system” — to maximize utility and enhance security in the Arctic. This push has been particularly directed towards the United States, which has an outdated icebreaker fleet (USCG Office of Waterways and Ocean Policy, 2017).

At the 2017 Arctic Circle Assembly, Arctia brought the Nordica icebreaker on its way from the *Arctic 100 expedition*, conducted as part of the celebration of Finland's 100 years independence. One reason for the detour to Iceland was showcasing collaboration between research and the industry. Secondly, to promote the idea of sharing icebreakers – which was also addressed in plenary and breakout sessions at the Assembly. Accordingly, through the Arctic Circle, the Finnish company was provided a platform for exposure, and to get more people – from business, governments, as well as researchers – who need icebreakers to reflect on the concept they were advancing. The Nordica was frequently brought up by informants as an example of publicity through conferences with profitable outcomes for a company. Nonetheless, having spoken to Mr. Vauraste, the offensive at the 2017 Arctic Circle, while noted by participants, did not immediately generate revenue for Arctia. He pointed out networking being the main outcome of the Assembly, but also added the prospects of future returns:

“The meaning and importance of being here in a marketing sense, bringing the Arctia name to the conference has a meaning and value. That people remember ‘that was the company that brought the icebreaker’.”

⁴Mr. Vauraste further served as the Arctic Economic Council's chairman during Finland's chairmanship of the organization from 2017-2019.

The US state of Maine's conference engagement is the second example where the industry is heavily involved, and the economic element is a powerful motivator for participation. In 2013, the Icelandic steamship company Eimskip made Portland its logistical hub in North America, which spurred Maine's Arctic interest (Bell, 2016). Government and industry representatives from Maine – the northernmost and easternmost US state – have been frequently present at the Arctic Circle, and using the platform to brand the capital Portland as a “gateway to the Arctic”. Senator Angus King held an opening speech in 2015, where he argued for Maine, being the closest US port to Asia when taking the Northern Route, as a relevant Arctic player.

At the 2017 Arctic Circle, the Department of Transportation hosted two breakout sessions, and the Governor and the CEO of Eimskip participated in a plenary session *The Arctic: A New Territory for Business* with the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade. The 2019 Arctic Circle was attended by Governor Janet Mills, who spoke in a plenary session titled *Dialogue with regional leaders: USA and Russia*. She described Maine as part of the Arctic Circle – as a “port to the Arctic” – emphasizing the interdependence among states in a globalized world. The purpose of renewing and reinforcing trade relations with Greenland and the Nordic countries was a major reason behind the largest delegation from Maine to the Assembly thus far.

In addition to the advantages of conference participation for governmental and industry representatives from Maine, it has also benefited the University of Southern Maine. In June 2018, it signed a partnership agreement with the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (University of Southern Maine, 2018a). The University of Southern Maine cooperates with the University of Reykjavik, and in 2019 launched the Maine North Atlantic Institute to improve connections with North Atlantic countries (University of Southern Maine, 2018b). These partnerships have been advanced through the Arctic Circle, and at the 2019 Assembly, the University of Southern Maine, University of Tromsø, University of Iceland, and Reykjavik University co-hosted three breakout sessions.

7.2.5 Institutions/non-governmental organizations

The epistemic community section addressed the motivations for and outcomes of conference participation for individual academics and scientists. However, representatives from institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be considered a separate group, in that they utilize conferences different from the professional-personal undertakings of the epistemic community. This group range from definitive stakeholders – established institutions and organizations located in the Arctic – to demanding stakeholders: non-Arctic associated organizations with perceived urgency to their claims (i.e. international environmental organizations). The power of legitimate Arctic affiliated in-

stitutions/organizations is through agenda setting, and not decision or policy making, and stakeholders in this group are in competition for attention. Accordingly, conferences serve two main functions: to communicate and promote the work of the institution/organization, and to connect back to the affiliation and the local community.

7.2.5.1 Communicate and promote work

All conference participants are provided an arena for communication, and to promote their work to a larger audience. Yet, this function is emphasized as particularly useful for institutions and organizations, many of which struggle with dissemination. They have limited resources for outreach activities, and are dependent on people actively seeking information through reports, websites, newsletters, or social media. Conferences provide a compact and cost-effective space for institutions and organizations to make themselves known, draw attention to accomplishments, and emphasize prioritized issue areas in their work. Showcasing the work of one's organization through exhibits and by arranging side events is also one of the main reasons for why representatives of organizations attend the UN climate change conferences (Lövbrand et al., 2017, 593). The value of this function of Arctic conferences for university and research institute representatives is signified by two informants to this study:

“In general, I go to Arctic conferences to promote the interests of those I am representing: universities and colleges in the Arctic, and to promote cooperation. This means I go to quite a lot of conferences I personally do not have any need or interest in attending, because I know what takes place there. But you have to attend to speak and show yourself, or, not yourself, but what you represent.”

“I don't think we can ignore that this is a competitive space. Just like any issue-area or region is going to be competitive. I do think we see more cooperative kind of elements in this space than others maybe do. But, I think we are still searching for where collaboration make sense for mutual benefit, and where collaboration isn't just driven by one power structure over a subsidiary.”

Furthermore, with more entities becoming involved in the Arctic, more interests are intermingled into regional affairs. Research institutions compete for visibility, projects, and financing. Non-governmental organizations, such as Greenpeace and the WWF, compete for attention and influence. Thus, conferences are necessary arenas to attend for these actors to promote themselves as thought leaders and active participants. Informants to the study have emphasized activists as particularly successful in utilizing conferences to promote their issues. This is done through activities and media campaigns before, during, and after a conference, taking advantage of the opportunity to

get news coverage. One example is the Nature and Youth campaign set up outside the hotel entrance during the 2019 Arctic Frontiers, protesting the Norwegian government's climate and environmental policy. In a broader sense, participating at the larger international arenas is a way to influence the societal agenda, and the perception of how things should be organized in the region.

7.2.5.2 Connect back to the organizational level

The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle gather a large number of representatives from policy, science, and business. Accordingly, as for non-Arctic actors and the business community, conferences are information channels for institutional/organizational participants. They can acquire insight about ongoing processes and developments relevant for their work. For example, an outcome of conference participation was developed at the High North Dialogue in Bodø, Norway. The Institute of the North – Alaska's Center for Arctic Policy – and the High North Center for Business and Governance at Nord University Business School signed a Memorandum of Agreement, through which they have agreed to cooperate on projects and programs in the Arctic.

Connecting what takes place at the conference to the organizational level and local community in turn contributes to the above-mentioned societal responsibility of the epistemic community, and also of institutes and organizations. This process has been described as “a check on elitism” by an informant. If those with competence on Arctic issues refrain from participating at conferences, those filling their gap might not be knowledgeable, and might introduce things that are not connected back to communities. Thus, there is a responsibility on behalf of the Arctic-state affiliated entities to engage, as described by an institute director:

“I come to Arctic conferences because you have to if you want to do things in the Arctic. Unless there is some decision that we all opt-out, we have to keep coming to these things just because other people are.”

One example of misinformation presented at the Arctic Circle by a non-Arctic state was provided by a Norwegian representative from the scientific community interviewed in the study. At the 2015 Assembly, Germany – sharing a research station in New Ålesund, Svalbard with France – presented a visit to the station with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon prior to the upcoming COP-21 climate meeting in December. The presentation was problematic from a Norwegian perspective, because it undermined the host-role played by Norway at the event. Specifically, the informant was concerned about the perception of non-Arctic actors in the audience, and how the German presentation could confuse the legal status of Svalbard⁵.

⁵Svalbard is an archipelago under the full sovereignty of Norway, but still subject to a special status granted by the Svalbard Treaty of 1920.

7.2.6 Indigenous peoples

“Indigenous peoples in the North have influence through the Arctic Council, structures the Arctic states have constructed. Indigenous peoples are not interested in being used as a symbol, hanging in front of oil platforms, by environmental organizations. On the other side, they are not interested in being overrun by international industry. They also benefit from conferences arranged by people of the North, because Indigenous people are more included than at those organized in Brussels.”

This statement, by a science community informant, illustrates several aspects of Indigenous peoples’ position in Arctic governance and the conference sphere: their position in the Arctic Council, challenges regarding inclusion, and conflicting interests with other stakeholder groups. Indigenous peoples do not benefit the strongest from conference participation relative to other activities, compared to other actors. Most significantly, Indigenous peoples hold a unique position as permanent participants with voting power in the Arctic Council, which is praised for its inclusion of Indigenous peoples in its work and decision making processes.

Conferences by contrast, are described by informants to the study as struggling with incorporating Indigenous peoples in a meaningful way. Their legitimacy in the region is acknowledged, but involvement at conferences is not always optimal. Indigenous peoples should have a seat at the discussion table and a voice from the conference stage. Not to check of a box for “involvement”, but because they are stakeholders more than anyone – as underlined by a conference organizer. At the same time, informants are in agreement that there has been an advancement in this regard. However, this is not only attributed to organizers’ including Indigenous voices in the programs in a more adequate way. It is also a result of the Indigenous peoples’ work to become more involved, and to be allowed to utilize the conference stage for a voice in the regional dialogue.

From this, Indigenous peoples are categorized in different classes in the stakeholder typology applied in the study, depending of whether one considers their position in the Arctic Council or in the conference sphere. In the Arctic Council, they are definitive stakeholders possessing all three attributes. In the conference sphere however, it can be argued they lack power, and are sidelined compared to other groups. Nonetheless, the main functions of conferences for Indigenous peoples are: providing an arena for them to have their voices heard, steer the discussion towards Northerners’ premises, and advocate for the protection of Northern communities in scientific research and industry development. On the other side, the space provided for Indigenous peoples is perhaps equally important for those on the receiving end. While Indigenous peoples’ primary platform for influence and decision-making power is through the Arctic Council, the broader outreach from this organization is limited. Thus, conferences are useful supple-

ments, in particular to reach the non-Arctic audience. The true value of a story, when attempting to change peoples' minds, lies in personal connections and emotions. To hear from someone who lives in the Arctic, based on their history and livelihood, gives more powerful insight and better understanding of the region, opposed to someone reading a pre-prepared script – as emphasized by a conference organizer:

“This is where the power of Indigenous peoples comes in. To hear from someone who lives there, and it is a part of who they are – it makes it hard to forget that speech. That is where the true value is.”

Still, conference participation is not only a question about being given speaking time in the program, but also a financial matter. Indigenous peoples organizations have to choose which delegates to send, and to which conferences. Traveling to Reykjavik or Tromsø, in particular from North-America, can be very costly. Thus, as pointed out by an informant from a governmental organization, conferences are not always as representative for Arctic Indigenous peoples as the Arctic Council must be. This also raises the question of who are given the opportunity to participate at conferences, and the degree to which they are representative for the whole community. Sending representatives to conferences is not an election process, and delegates speaking on behalf of a homogenous group, who share status as Indigenous peoples but perhaps not other values, is challenging from a democratic perspective. While conferences do not have decision making authority, or produce legally binding outcomes, this still raises the question of conferences' elitist, or even oligarchy (“rule of the few”), characteristics.



Aili Keskitalo, President of the Sami Parliament (2013 –), at the 2019 Arctic Frontiers.
Photo: Beate Steinveg.

7.2.7 Local/regional representatives

Lastly, as Indigenous peoples, local and regional representatives are Arctic rights-holders: they possess legitimacy, as well as urgency to their claims. However, concerning power, a point of critique towards the Arctic Council is that while Indigenous peoples have a protected position, there is no room for local or regional representatives – despite how most of the region’s inhabitants are not indigenous. From this, local and regional representatives are categorized as dependent stakeholders within Arctic governance.

Conferences provide a supplementary role in this regard. One of the guiding principles of the Arctic Circle structure is the importance given to sub-levels of government, who participate on equal standing with the same scope and importance given to state representatives (Einarsdóttir, 2018). Examples of sub-federal or sub-national entities utilizing conferences to speak independently and promote their own interests are many, including the previously discussed city of Portland in Maine, representatives from Greenland and the Faroe Islands, who de-facto are under federal rule of the Kingdom of Denmark, as well as Scotland.

The US state of Alaska is another example, demonstrating the benefits of connecting across national state borders to promote one’s voice nationally. Alaska has been neglected by the federal government, and Barack Obama was the first US president to visit the northern state in 2015. Senators, governors, mayors, institute and university representatives, and Indigenous peoples delegates have recurrently participated at the Arctic Circle and Arctic Frontiers. Senator Liza Murkowski has been involved with the Arctic Circle since its inauguration. The Senator uses conferences to emphasize how Arctic issues, such as climate research, defense, and innovations in logistics, are of concern for the entire US population, and that sustainability must be seen in context of the region’s inhabitants, to provide basic infrastructure and food security.

Moreover, the Arctic is not a homogenous region. There are “many Arctics”, and living in northern Canada or Alaska is considerably different from the European Arctic. The international arenas provided by the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are valuable for local and regional representatives to meet colleagues from other Circumpolar communities with similar challenges, to share experiences and best-practices. Conferences are also important arenas for sub-levels of government gain information about what goes on in other states with regards to both practical experiences and concrete developments, as pointed out by a governmental affiliated informant:

“For Indigenous peoples, that’s an important aspect, I’ve seen. To use this as a meeting place to discuss how the mining industry behaves in Canada versus how they behave in Finish Lapland. So, there is definitely a benefit in bringing experiences and best-practices back home, because the Arctic communities are so small.”

Examples of initiatives on the sub-national level to address how collaboration and learning from each other can develop better solutions are found at the two cases in the study. At the 2017 Arctic Circle, the *Going Local* session was arranged by the Institute of the North, Alaska, and the Centre for International Relations, Norway. Mayors from Bodø, Norway, Sermersooq, Greenland, and Akureyri, Iceland presented the Mayors Forum established in Fairbanks in 2017. On the sideline of the 2018 Arctic Frontiers, the mayor of Tromsø hosted thirteen northern municipal leaders to discuss areas of cooperation, knowledge exchange, and cross-border project development.

Nevertheless, as mentioned with regards to Indigenous peoples, the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle have an elitist character. They are dominated by those with the most resources, strategic positions, and most extensive networks. Thus, while Indigenous peoples and locals are provided a stage, they are also challenged by the elitist Arctic Frontiers, talking about the North and not with the North, and Arctic Circle's philosophy of giving anyone the opportunity to speak. The Arctic Circle's approach entails that the perspectives presented can be disconnected from Arctic sovereigns and rights holders, local communities, and Indigenous peoples. There is a dissolution of the center-periphery dichotomy in the Arctic region, which is also imposed through conferences. The elite in the south and non-Arctic actors are moving to the north, while not always being attuned to local and regional concerns.

Lastly, there is a difference between local levels of government and local communities. As one informant noted about conferences: "it's not like anybody of the street can just walk in". The Arctic Frontiers has made an efforts to make the conference more accessible to the public through the Open Arctic arrangements. Still, while this may serve the interest of the organizers in terms of more people developing an understanding of the purpose of the conference, and to reduce the elitist perspective, getting people to engage in the issues and disseminate to the local level is challenging. Perhaps the solution is to start with the youth – something which both conferences are striving at. The Arctic Frontiers with its Youth Pillar and free access for UiT students, and the Arctic Circle's explicit emphasis on involving students in the program and audience.

7.3 Conflicting interests

Before summarizing how different stakeholder groups utilize and benefit from conference participation, and concluding on the impact of conferences on the Arctic governance actor composition, this section addresses two issues. Firstly, the challenge of providing relevant content for the diversified audience attending hybrid conferences. Secondly, conflicting interests between participant groups: Arctic states versus new stakeholders; Indigenous peoples' versus industry interests; and government/industry interests versus environmental organizations.

“We definitely try to make it as welcoming as possible for anyone. We also, on the other side of that, want to attract the experts and have them walk away with new information that they did not know, and connections.”

“Scientists often want to discuss their research at a very detailed level. People from various fields of research are interested in meeting others from their specific field. This turns into a dilemma. You can’t expect generalists to listen to lectures they do not understand, which are only interesting for those working in that exact field.”

These statements from conference organizers interviewed for this study illustrate the dilemma of arranging larger hybrid conferences. The content of the sessions can likely be incomprehensible for non-scientists, resulting in the conference being perceived as a scientist meeting place. This challenge is related to the argument made by Skelton (1997), regarding the weight of economic and administrative concerns when planning and organizing a conference. While organizers generally stress the importance of disseminating knowledge among participants, the learning potential is often limited to a few number of presenters, rather than the people in the audience. Skelton (1997) further argues that new knowledge should “derive from a process of interaction between the presenter and the audience” (p. 70). After this commentary was written, this has been improved through the modern conference setting.

Nonetheless, plenary sessions need to be adapted to a general audience, and information communicated in a comprehensible way. This means that in a “one size fits all” format, the epistemic community comes out short in terms of learning potential. Perhaps the science-specific sessions at the Arctic Frontiers, or some of the breakout sessions at the Arctic Circle, can provide science experts with updates within their field, or bring about fruitful discussions. But, attending larger hybrid conferences is not prioritized by this group based on expectations of acquiring novel information through presentations. As demonstrated, it is more about networking and agenda setting, to develop ideas and projects at home.

Regarding the issue of conflicting interests, while conferences primarily are arenas for interaction and stimulating fruitful discussions, participant groups can have differing priorities – depending on nationality and affiliation. Firstly are tensions between the Arctic states and new stakeholders. On the one side, the state-centric view and those who think Arctic affairs and developments should be in the hands of Arctic right holders. This perspective is supported by the philosophy and structure of the Arctic Frontiers. By contrast, the organizers of the Arctic Circle do not consider stakeholder legitimacy to be geographically bound. Rather, all with self-proclaimed stakes in the Arctic should be able to participate in deliberating the region’s future, including non-Arctic state actors, non-state, and sub-national actors.

From the Arctic/non-Arctic dichotomy, a second conflict line is between Indigenous peoples and northerners opposed to commercial interests. Industry activities within oil, gas, and mining can become at odds with the territorial integrity of Indigenous peoples. Interventions in nature can be harmful for the foundation of traditional livelihoods, such as hunting, husbandry, and fisheries. At the same time, as pointed out by the science community informant in the discussion above, Indigenous peoples “are not interested in being used as a symbol, hanging in front of oil platforms, by environmental organizations”. Conferences can in this way be arenas for developing more nuanced views, of balancing environmental protection, community well-being, and economic prosperity. This function is discussed in the following agenda setting chapter.

Thirdly, government and/or industry priorities frequently stand in conflict with the concerns of environmental organizations. These are primarily issues related to resource extraction and management, illustrated by Greenpeace’s goal to ban oil drilling in the Arctic, and the Bellona Foundation’s ambition of permanently protecting the areas outside the coast of Lofoten, Vesterålen, and Senja in Norway from oil extraction. The Norwegian government considers the petroleum sector to be the most important industry for Norway, and in 2017 awarded a record number of licenses for further exploration of the continental shelf (Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, 2018). This friction was displayed at the 2017 Arctic Frontiers, where the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg met the leader of Nature and Youth Norway in a panel discussion on economic opportunities conflicting with maintaining a sustainable Arctic (Nilsen, 2017).

Lastly, when discussing conflicting interests between participant groups in the Arctic conference sphere, the use of narrative tools and symbols deserves attention. Narratives are used by coalitions to further their strategies, and interest group narratives are indicators of its strategies and tactics (McBeth, Shanahan, Arnell, & Hathaway, 2007). For example, “the Arctic as the canary in the coal mine”, and “the Arctic as a thermometer for the world” have become rhetoric tools for drawing attention to the global severity of the climate change issue. Talking about the Arctic in this way, as a fragile region, makes it difficult to justify industry development. On the other side, if the Arctic is described as connected part of the international system, it makes it easier to argue for integrating the region in the global economy through business activity. These strategies, applied by environmental and business organizations respectively.

The use of symbols, such as the polar bear on a melting ice flake, is evident the Arctic discourse, and brought into the conference sphere. Symbols are to a larger extent used by environmental groups and others arguing for the need to intensify actions to mitigate the effects of climate change. Nonetheless, there are challenging aspects of this strategy as well. It dehumanizes the effects of climate change, rather than focusing on the actual struggles of local communities and Indigenous peoples.

7.4 Conclusions: Broadening the Arctic community

Stakeholders have been defined as a group bound together by the jointness of their interests. Considering the Arctic an interest area, it has been demonstrated that the total pool of stakeholders is extensive. It further be divided into several sub-groups, with both distinct and overlapping interests. While all the identified groups of stakeholders in the region partake at both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle, the data analysis revealed varying motives for conference participation. It has also been demonstrated how the conferences' functionality differ along the range of stakeholders (Table 7.1). The deviating ideologies, structures, and ways of organizing the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle also make them valuable for different stakeholder groups, and cause the conferences to have different impacts on the actor composition of Arctic governance.

The Arctic Frontiers is predominately an exclusive arena for established actors and interests – those already on the inside of regional institutions and organizations. In line with the classical geopolitical paradigm, the Arctic Frontiers creates a space for Norway to display its Arctic policy and interests. The conference is dominated by Arctic state actors, and is used as a platform by the Arctic Council. Others are invited in, but the conference program and agenda are largely controlled by the organizers, and developed in line with the Norwegian government's priorities.

The Arctic Circle is to a larger extent a pluralistic arena, welcoming all voices and perspectives. The open tent provided by the organizers is especially utilized by non-Arctic actors and those on the outside established institutions and organizations to legitimize and position themselves. It has also been demonstrated (through the examples of Switzerland and Scotland) how the Arctic Circle in particular is used by states for promotion. The Arctic Circle is also attended by the epistemic community, for networking and contributing to agenda setting. Partly because of its lower participation cost, and partly because of the bottom-up construction of the breakout session program. The Arctic Circle organizers strive to create a platform for sub-national and regional entities, and is well-attended by this participant group. So is the Arctic Frontiers, and the Arctic Mayors Forum, established in 2018, is one example of how conferences can be used for meetings on the sidelines to discuss shared challenges and best-practices.

Throughout the chapter, it has also been demonstrated how conference participation is a means for stakeholders in the region to climb the salience ladder, by obtaining a missing attribute. Predominately, legitimacy. This is particularly applicable for non-Arctic state representatives. By attending the same arenas recurrently, presenting their work, and advocate for their relevance as players in the region, they can become assimilated into the Arctic community, and considered legitimate stakeholders. It is also possible to obtain the power attribute through conference participation, by making others want what you want, or through control over information and knowledge.

Lastly, conference participation can be a means for stakeholders to acquire urgency, by advocating for their claim. With the United States moving towards a more protectionist position in the Arctic (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.2), the window of opportunity for non-Arctic states to develop as legitimate stakeholders could be closing. As discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.3.5. see also Chapter Nine, section 9.3.2), non-Arctic actors are dissatisfied with their role as observers in the Arctic Council. This suggests they could be using conferences to argue for their urgent claims, especially security concerns, even more extensively in the years to come.

Table 7.1: Summary of conferences' functions for different stakeholder groups

Stakeholder group	Functions of the Arctic Frontiers / Arctic Circle Assembly
Arctic state actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote national polities and priorities, obtain recognition for their visions for the Arctic. • Protect the primacy of the Arctic Eight, consolidate dominance, control the debate and the narrative about the region.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate newcomers by broadening awareness around Arctic issues and correct misrepresentations about the region. • Create responsible stakeholders: balancing economic interests with environmental concerns and local community well-being.
Non-Arctic states and actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimize presence as stakeholders. • Display capabilities and promote themselves as valuable partners for Arctic state actors: Alternative platform to the Arctic Council for observers to have a voice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening posts and educational platforms: learn about Arctic state political developments and priorities, and the realities of local Arctic communities and economies.
The epistemic community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking: personal-professional reputational building to acquire partners for projects, research funding, and discover opportunities for employment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda setting: Take advantage of windows of opportunities. Elevate salient issues and develop consensus around important priorities. • Social power and influence: control over information and knowledge.
Business / Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences as windows into the Arctic market, to identify investment opportunities, and create revenue for the company.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and branding of the company's name and promote the company as a "responsible citizen", engaged in sustainable economic development.
Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate and promote work: broadening outreach and protect position as active participant and thought leader in the region. • Competition for attention, influence, and funding.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfill social responsibility by connecting back to institution/organization/local community.
Indigenous peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have their voices heard and steer the discussion towards Northerners' premises. • Connect with other Indigenous peoples across the Circumpolar North.
Local / Regional government representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplement the Arctic Council: Regional and sub-national entities are treated as equals in the conference sphere. • Connect with similar communities to exchange best practices regarding shared challenges, and initiate collaborative initiatives.

Conferences and agenda setting in the Arctic

8.1 Introduction

“Everyone has a different agenda. Some want to prevent the ice from melting, while others hope it melts as soon as possible.” – Conference participant

Chapter Six discussed the ambitions and agendas of the organizers when designing the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly. With the Arctic opening for more activity, a primary objective of both arenas is to advance knowledge-based policy-making, and a balanced view of sustainable social, economic, and business development with environmental protection. It has further been demonstrated how the conferences are advantageous for the governments of the states in which they are arranged. The Arctic Frontiers is a platform for advancing Norway’s interests – e.g. the oceans, energy, fisheries – internationally. The Arctic Circle, while an arena for multiple voices and perspectives, is also instrumental for advancing Iceland’s geopolitical position and economic interests, including trade, energy, air services, and tourism. Chapter Seven discussed participants’ motivations for attending conferences – ranging from Arctic state representatives seeking to promote national priorities and educate newcomers, non-Arctic actors looking to legitimize their presence as stakeholders, and those utilizing conferences for communication, networking, and branding of a company or institution. Building on the analysis of the two foregoing chapters, this chapter continues the examination of the functions of Arctic conferences by focusing on the second mechanism of interest: agenda setting.

For conferences to contribute within the Arctic governance regime complex – adding to unilateral actions and cooperative arrangements – their outcomes must be relevant for regional and international developments. From this, returning to the agenda setting framework presented in Chapter Three, a key question to be examined is whether what happens at conferences is a mirror reflection of what takes place through other processes in Arctic governance, and/or whether conference activities affect these processes. Agenda setting was defined as “the process of raising issues to salience among the relevant community of actors” (Livingston, 1992, 313). In this study, “the relevant community of actors” (those subject to influence) are actors comprising the Arctic governance system. I alternate between considering organizers as those attempting to “raise issues to salience”, and looking at what takes place at conferences, including the activities of participants, as potentially having an influence on the broader agenda.

The Arctic agenda comprises of a range of different, but intertwined, issues deemed important by central actors within Arctic governance. These were identified through a review of Arctic state policies, strategies, and political speeches, and this document analysis (Appendix 5) revealed convergence around key priorities among the Arctic states (see also Heininen et al., 2020)¹. Shared priorities are international cooperation, governance, climate change, environmental protection, sustainable social and economic development, resource extraction, fisheries, shipping, security and safety, search and rescue, the human dimension, Indigenous peoples' rights, science, research, and education, tourism, and infrastructure.

Moreover, when examining whether and how conferences contribute to defining salient issues within Arctic governance, it is necessary to clarify the understanding of “impact”. Interpreting impact as something having a strong effect on something else is problematic when evaluating the agenda setting function of conferences. Regardless of what takes place at conferences, states do not change their policies (see also Haas, 2002), and institutions do not alter their research priorities. This became evident early in the project. Therefore, agenda setting is regarded as a dynamic process, and I examine the contributions of conferences to the unfolding of iterative agenda change within the flow of Arctic affairs in the broader governance architecture.

To examine whether it is possible to influence the broader agenda through conference engagement, I commence by presenting the Arctic Frontiers' focus on the Arctic Ocean, followed by the Arctic Circle's Mission Council on shipping and ports. These agenda setting efforts are linked to broader debates and processes taking place on the international arena at the time – namely the debate concerning the need for an Arctic Treaty, and the development of the Polar Code within the International Maritime Organization. This discussion contributes to examining the significance of conferences as windows of opportunity.

The remainder of the chapter discuss the role of conferences from the perspective of the multiple streams framework presented in Chapter Three. This analysis is structured around three themes: globalizing the Arctic agenda (problem stream); developing ideas with the epistemic community (policy stream); coalition building, and the policy, science, business interplay (political stream). These themes derive from the articulated strategies of the organizers, combined with the outcomes of the interviews, and converge with the characteristics of an ideal model of a conference presented in Chapter Five.

¹Wilson Rowe (2019) also points to striking similarities in the policy documents issued by the Arctic Five shortly after the Ilulissat Declaration was signed in 2008. The Arctic policies are joint in presenting the region as peaceful, and accentuates climate change, increased human traffic and presence, and the promise of natural resources as drivers of political attention to the Arctic (p. 3).

8.2 The Arctic Frontiers: The Arctic and the ocean

The titles and thematic emphasis in the programs of the Arctic Frontiers tells a lot about the overall agenda behind the conference. Societal and human aspects were promoted through *Geopolitics in the High North* (2013), and *Humans in the North* (2014). The Arctic Frontiers entered a more industrial and ocean oriented period, with the *Climate and Energy* (2015), *Industry and Environment* (2016), and *White Space – Blue Future* (2017) titles. Then, *Connecting the Arctic* (2018), *Smart Arctic* (2019), and *Power and Knowledge* (2020) were conferences under the overarching themes connectivity and knowledge – aiming to promote the Arctic as a connected part of global structures, rather than a remote uninhabited area. This section focuses on the promotion of ocean related issues through the Arctic Frontiers, which has been advanced as a dominant theme, both domestically and internationally, in close cooperation with the Norwegian government.

Norway considers itself a leading ocean state, and Norway's first ocean strategy – *New Growth, Proud History* – was published in 2017. It emphasizes promoting the sustainable use of ocean resources; clean and healthy oceans; and strengthening the role of the blue economy in development policy. The Norwegian government's interest in the oceans was intensified with the turn to the Blue Economy², and Steinberg and Kristoffersen (2018) argue Norway is attempting to position itself as the Arctic Ocean's rightful steward, by bringing its geographical location, cultural-economic history, capacity, and expertise to the fore. One example of activities abroad to assume a dominant position within international ocean management is the launch of a High-Level Panel on Building a Sustainable Ocean Economy by the Norwegian Prime Minister at the World Economic Forum in 2018. The aim is sharing Norway's experience of combining conservation and use of marine resources, and take a leading role in international efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (Norwegian Government, 2018).

The adaptation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by all UN member states in 2015 was a window of opportunity for the Norwegian government, to develop and promote its ocean strategy. Specifically, the wedding of the Blue Economy focus with the SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development – is a way for the Norwegian government to promote commitment to ocean development as evidence for its environmentalist credentials (Steinberg & Kristoffersen, 2018, 142). Another example is found at the fifth Our Ocean conference in Bali in October 2018, where the Arctic Frontiers, together with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Fisheries, hosted a

²See Silver et al. (2015) for a collaborative event ethnography analysis of the use of blue economy at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development ('Rio +20'), and how lack of unity around its meaning and utility led to it being articulated within four competing discourses, depending on the actor group. Representatives of NGOs underscored the oceans as natural capital, business representatives from marine sectors promoted the "oceans as good business", Pacific Small Island Developing States emphasized the oceans as integral to them, while others considered the oceans as small-scale fisheries livelihoods (Silver et al., 2015, 143-149).

Blue Knowledge for Blue Growth side event. Again, emphasis was on sustainable ocean activities in meeting the objectives of the SDG 14, as well as economic growth balanced with conservation of the ocean environment.

Both the Arctic Frontiers conference and Seminars Abroad appear as means towards the Norwegian government's ambition to strengthen the ocean industries domestically, and aspiration of assuming a leading conservationist role internationally. The ocean, or ocean related issues, have been the main theme for the Arctic Frontiers in 2007, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017. The Arctic Frontiers Plus in 2017 was dedicated to the Arctic Council's work on oceans, and in 2019, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a session on *The Blue Economy and the Arctic Council*. The Centre for the Ocean and the Arctic was appointed by the Norwegian government in 2018, to strengthen the knowledge about the blue economy in the North and to help realize SDG 14. It hosted an open event at the 2019 Arctic Frontiers, on exporting Norwegian competence in conservation and use of marine resources. Open Arctic arrangements on *The century of the oceans* were held in 2017, 2018, and 2019, aiming to engage the public in Norway's primary competitive advantage in the global economy.

While the ocean has been the predominant theme of the Arctic Frontiers since its inauguration, the argument is not that the Arctic Frontiers "invented" the link between the Arctic and the ocean. Chapter Five demonstrated how ocean related issues began dominating the (Arctic) conference sphere already in the 1970/80s, which was linked to the negotiations of the UNCLOS. Arctic Ocean issues have prevailed in multiple other forums, and have been a main priority in several Arctic Council chairmanships. Nonetheless, while the Arctic Frontiers has not been the decisive element in establishing the connection between the Arctic and the ocean, it has provided a platform for strengthening the link, and advancing the Norwegian government's principal interest.

These efforts have been aided by developments and processes on the international arena – windows of opportunity. Specifically, the debate around the need for an Arctic Treaty. The Norwegian government contends there is no legal vacuum in the Arctic, and that "the Law of the Sea provides the basic architecture underpinning all ocean governance in the Arctic" (Søreide, 2020). This was stated by the Norwegian Foreign Minister at the 2020 Arctic Frontiers, which has functioning as an arena supporting the Norwegian government in communicating this message. The conference has further contributed to promoting Norway's expertise internationally, for example, by bringing Norwegian experts to Seminars Abroad, and through Arctic Frontiers events focusing on the broad specter of ocean related activities conducted by Norwegian institutions and organizations. This attribute has been remarked both by the organizers, but also other informants to the study. On the other side, it can be considered a legitimizing tool for the Norwegian government, in that focusing on the ocean in broad terms draws attention away from oil and gas exploration, towards sustainable marine resource development.

8.3 The Arctic Circle Assembly: Shipping and ports

The agenda influencing example presented from the Arctic Circle is the establishment of a Mission Council on Arctic Shipping and Ports (hereinafter referred to as the Mission Council). The period from 2009, when the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly adopted *Guidelines for Ships Operating in Polar Waters* to the adoption of the Polar Code in 2014, was a window of opportunity for this initiative to develop. The focus on shipping and ports further accentuates the economic alliance with Alaska underpinning the Arctic Circle since its establishment. It is also in the interest of China, a shipping state that has expressed interest in port development in the Russian Arctic (Chun, 2020), and a country that is very engaged at the Arctic Circle.

The Mission Council was launched at *The Alaskan Arctic – a summit on shipping and ports* Arctic Circle Forum in 2015, and is chaired by Mead Treadwell – Lieutenant Governor of Alaska (2010-2014), and co-chair of the Wilson Center’s Polar Institute. He further presented the initiative at the 2016 Arctic Circle Greenland Forum, the 2016 Arctic Circle Assembly, with Drue Pearce, president of the Alaskan state senate, and Paul Fuhs, vice-chair of the Arctic Circle Shipping and Ports Report³, and at the 2017 Arctic Circle Assembly.

The Mission Council’s website mentions the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Report from 2009, the Arctic Council agreements, and the Polar Code as advancements with regards to setting a safety agenda for shipping. However, it is stated that “shipping in the Arctic Ocean cannot be said to be sustainable without additional measures and investments to ensure safety, security, and reliability”. To that end, the Mission Council is pursuing the establishment of a League of Arctic Ports, and is examining options for an Arctic Seaway Regime. The idea is to build a business model for return on investment in Arctic shipping, while also reducing the risk of accidents and harm on societies and the environment, through delivering safety, security, and reliability functions. The Arctic Seaway Regime included the “Uber for icebreakers” initiative brought forward by Tero Vauraste, president and CEO of the Finnish Arctia Group (see Chapter Seven, section 7.2.4.1) – another window of opportunity for the Mission Council’s policy entrepreneurs.

Since 2015, the League of Arctic Ports has been presented at more than 25 gatherings in Asia, Europe, and North America⁴. In 2018 and 2019, Mr. Treadwell did several advances promoting the Mission Council at various conferences and workshops. Including at the Northern Lights business and cultural event in Ottawa, the High North Dialogue in Bodø, the Symposium on the Impacts of an Ice-Diminishing Arctic on Naval

³The report is a set of founding principles for a league of Arctic and affiliated ports, laying out a basic framework for how it could provide a voice on the positions of Arctic states to the international community. Available at: <https://arcticcircleseawayreport.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/league-of-arctic-ports-founding-principles.pdf>.

⁴Forums the League of Arctic Ports has been presented at include Arctic Circle Forums, Arctic or maritime focused think-tanks, Arctic security discussions, meetings of parliamentarians, the Arctic Council PAME and EPPR working groups meetings, and the Arctic Economic Council.

and Maritime Operations in Washington DC, and at the Arctic360's Low Impact Shipping Corridors Workshop. Mr. Treadwell pushed the initiative in commentaries, and it was written about in Arctic Today, an online news site owned by Alice Rogoff – who is a co-founder and member of the Arctic Circle's advisory board.

Noteworthy, the Mission Council on Arctic Shipping and Ports is described as the “first study effort commissioned by the Arctic Circle” on its website. This description, and a lot of its activities, far exceeds the scope of a non-governmental conference organization. It gives prominence to arguments made by those skeptical towards the Arctic Circle – regarding the role the organizers is aspiring to assume within Arctic governance, and the Assembly's relationship to the Arctic Council. Most significant of the Mission Council's activities is engagement with legislators and parliamentarians across the world on the idea of commissioning an Arctic Seaway Authority, which includes proposed legislation creating a US Arctic Seaway Infrastructure Development Corporation – the SEAL-Act⁵.

Mr. Treadwell spoke before the US Congress House of Representatives⁶ in a hearing titled *The Cost of Doing Nothing: Maritime Infrastructure Vulnerabilities in an Emerging Arctic*, outlining three measures to fill the United States' infrastructure caps (Treadwell, 2019). Firstly, appropriate capital funds for infrastructure, justified by security or economic development. Secondly, create an Arctic Seaway Development Corporation, bringing together states to offer a reliable, voluntary, tariff-based service that will attract and justify infrastructure investment:

“That's the purpose of S. 1177, “The Shipping and Environmental Arctic Leadership Act,” developed by an extensive process at the Arctic Circle and the Wilson Center, with consultations with Arctic states and observing nations from across the globe. Sometimes dubbed “Uber for Icebreakers,” the business plan requires just a small percentage of the traffic served by Suez, diverted to the Arctic, to pay for the icebreakers we need.” (Treadwell, 2019)

Thirdly, Mr. Treadwell argued the US can sell more resources and induce more private capital to invest in the American Arctic, to compete with Russia, which is described as “cleaning our clock in serving global LNG markets from Yamal” (Treadwell, 2019).

Looking at the agenda setting process through the multiple streams framework, this is an example of a problem – increased shipping activity, giving rise to economic challenges, safety, and security concerns – being linked to a solution: a global Mission Council. The linkage is pushed by key policy entrepreneurs – the former Lt. Gov. of Alaska and his allies – working to attract the attention of people in government by bringing the initiative to states with interests in shipping and/or ports development. The

⁵The SEAL-Act was introduced by Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan, and Congressman Don Young. <https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/download/seal-act-one-pager>

⁶Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

engaged actors were successful in taking advantage of the window of opportunity opening in 2009, with the IMO's move to develop a mandatory code for shipping in polar waters, and the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Report.

The policy entrepreneurs pushed the initiative through the platform provided by the Arctic Circle, and considering how the Mission Council's proposals largely depend on public-private partnerships, the Arctic Circle can be regarded an ideal arena for this endeavor. According to Mr. Treadwell, the Mission Council reflects the Arctic Circle as an open NGO, convening like-minded people aiming to promote investment toward safe, secure, and reliable Arctic shipping in a democratic way. As such, this example demonstrates how conference activities can influence the broader agenda, through "the process of raising issues to salience among the relevant community of actors". Conferences have a coordinating function, by creating synergies among various actors and entities operating in the region. This is brought forward in Chapter Nine, discussing the Arctic governance system's architecture.

8.4 The problem stream – Globalizing Arctic issues

Applying the multiple streams framework (MSF) to the analysis of the agenda setting process at conferences entails some modifications. Primarily, expanding the framework beyond national governments to the global governance architecture. Thus, the most relevant question regarding the problem stream in the examination of conferences is not which conditions have been defined as problems to grab the attention of policy makers in government. Rather, of interest is how issues are identified as problems in the Arctic, and framed as something deserving of attention from the international community. In this section, I build a case for how conferences, as part of the flow of Arctic affairs, have contributed to globalizing Arctic issues, and bringing the global to the Arctic. Central for this analysis is the assertion of problems as social constructs rather than objective facts. This in turn makes agency relevant, because someone has to frame a problem in a specific way for it to receive attention (Herweg et al., 2018, 22).

The transformation of the Arctic from a peripheral to globalized region necessitates and has been supported by aim of the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle: creating international arenas. The conferences are designed to be more than local/regional meeting places, which implies the organizers have more far-reaching ambitions regarding agenda influencing. The Arctic Frontiers is branded as "an international arena on sustainable development in the Arctic", taking place in Tromsø, known as "the Gateway to the Arctic", on its website. The Arctic Circle is described as "the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic." Still, the internationalization aspect is articulated somewhat divergent – reflecting the different philosophies behind the conferences.

“When I have talked to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, their vision is for the Arctic Frontiers to be very international. An arena to showcase Norway as a leading Arctic state, and Tromsø as the Arctic capital.”

The above quote is from a Norwegian informant from the science community interviewed for the study. In similar fashion, the Arctic Frontiers is described by informants from various affiliations and nationalities as “a Norwegian arena”, “centered around the priorities of the Arctic Eight”, and as “mirroring the members and observers of the Arctic Council”. While the international dimension is central, it still reflects the interests of the organizers, and the Norwegian government. According to the organizers, the theme chosen for each year’s conference is intended to address a broad issue of universal interest. Even so, the organizers also emphasize that the goal of drawing attention to the conference and Norwegian priorities in the region is equally important. These aspirations were boosted with the senior advisor from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned to the secretariat in 2015 – who was working to extend the conference’s international outreach, and to frame the Arctic as a globally connected region.

The organizers of the Arctic Circle have been more focused on bringing the global to the Arctic, and expanding the regional agenda with whatever issues participants bring to the Assembly. The global interest in the Arctic was, as mentioned in Chapter Five and Six, one of the driving forces behind the Arctic Circle initiative. One informant involved in this process describes how the pressure to include other actors, not just connecting the Arctic states, came following the fifth Northern Research Forum Open Assembly held in Anchorage in 2008. It became evident that the Open Assembly could not grow further within its structure, and then President Grímsson got engaged in developing what became the Arctic Circle Assembly, according to the informant.

The remainder of this section discusses these features of the conferences in detail. First, I focus on how the Arctic Frontiers has contributed to problem definition within non-Arctic states, exemplified by how the organizers and the Norwegian government have worked to influence the European Union’s Arctic agenda and steer it in a direction more harmonious with Norwegian interests. Secondly, I turn to the Arctic Circle organization, providing an analysis of the ways in which it has expanded the Arctic agenda by including global voices, and how it has brought the Arctic to the global.

8.4.1 The Arctic Frontiers: Influencing EU Arctic engagement

When Mr. Grímsson was interviewed for this study, he described how there are many myths and misconceptions about the Arctic – for example regarding living conditions, geography, and prospects for resource extraction. This is partly a result of the fact that the Arctic has only in the last 20-30 years opened up for international cooperation, which means it is an unfamiliar region for many. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers also acknowledge this challenge, and aim to promote a more balanced view of environmental protection and economic development in the Arctic, and to correct misunderstandings about the region and its societies.

The European Union is frequently mentioned in this regard, and is used to illustrate how the Arctic Frontiers has contributed to agenda influencing. Around 2005, Norwegian diplomats proactively started lobbying to get the EU engaged in Arctic affairs (Offerdal 2011, 876 – see also Chapter Two, section 2.3.3.2). These were largely successful efforts. The 2007 Blue Book *An integrated maritime policy for the European Union* was on the whole in accordance with Norwegian views and preferences, and it expressed a recognition of the importance of the EU in developing its relationship to the polar region. Also the 2008 report *The European Union and the Arctic region* had been prepared in close cooperation with the Norwegian government (Wegge, 2011a, 2011b).

However, one university affiliated informant describes a challenge following the EU developing an interest in the Arctic. Namely, the European Parliament being used by environmental organizations to stop all forms of business and industry activities in the Arctic. The informant goes on to argue it is not in the best interest for the Arctic states or northern inhabitants if power structures in the south believe have a perception of the region as one in need of protection from all economic activity. The repeated catchphrase “What happens in the Arctic doesn’t stay in the Arctic” makes it sound like climate change is coming from the Arctic, and implies actions in the North are harmful for the global South. The false North/South dichotomy contributes policy becoming oriented towards protecting the Arctic and restricting social and economic development, without consideration of where emissions are coming from.

To that end, one academic informant calls attention to how conferences play an important contribution to demystifying the Arctic, devaluating myths, and telling stories about actual living conditions. Conferences hosted in Arctic states are described as particularly valuable, because they are better at including the perspectives and voices of local communities and Indigenous peoples. Conferences hosted in non-Arctic states on their end, tend to be based on a more immature understanding of the region – which is neither advantageous for the Arctic states, nor useful for the international dialogue. If people have completely different perspectives, it is impossible to move forward with constructive discussions. So, according to the informant, the more participants attending

Arctic-state hosted conferences, the more likely for the dialogue to become meaningful. This function is also pointed out by an Arctic-state research institute affiliated informant:

“The conference serves as kind of an optics. Beyond optics: it serves a purpose in educating the uninitiated or uneducated. It provides a better platform for broadening public awareness on Arctic issues, and those are good things.”

In line with the argumentation presented above, the organizers of Arctic Frontiers have contributed to balancing the debate, and to having participants develop more nuanced views. It is no longer the perception within the EU that the entire Arctic region must be protected from economic development, or that the two poles can be treated equally. The Arctic Frontiers has provided a platform for demonstrating that there are people in need of a livelihood living in the Arctic, as opposed to the Antarctica. Accordingly, the conference has contributed positively to the debate by providing a more uniform knowledge-base among actors – as noted by a conference participant from academia:

“If you listen to the speeches by leaders from non-Arctic states, they have definitely picked up on these issues. It [conferences] is a very expensive form of adult education.”

The Arctic Frontiers organization has employed several mechanisms to steer the agenda, including bringing international journalists to the main conference, the Seminars Abroad, and other arrangements world wide. For example, in October 2018, the Norwegian King and Queen visited China, accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Trade and Industry, as well as the largest Norwegian business delegation ever – more than 300 participants – on a state visit. The Arctic Frontiers hosted an Arctic session, where they promoted the balanced view of industry and shipping together with science and societal development.

“It is an arena to show and promote your issue, and try to gain acceptance for your cause. Also for Norway. [...] Perhaps deep down, a sense of understanding develops. That is the aim: to have people develop more nuanced point of views. Greenpeace, who think Norway is vacuuming the ocean for all fish can participate at the Arctic Frontiers and get a more nuanced image.”

The agenda setting function of the Arctic Frontiers for the Norwegian government is summarized by the policy informant cited above. On the other side, the Arctic Frontiers is an information channel for Norwegian representatives to learn about what other states think about the Arctic, and what they wish to project. Moreover, bringing international delegates to Tromsø contributes to broadening the perspective of the local private sector and businesses. As mentioned in Chapter Seven, different cultures is a challenge for business-to-business activities. Thus, over time, conferences like the Arctic Frontiers, facilitating recurrent interaction, can contribute to reducing barriers to cooperation.

8.4.2 The Arctic Circle: Global expansion of the Arctic agenda

“The Arctic Circle is really a global platform. In that way, the scope is big, the scope is global. Therefore, it can be argued that it plays a global role. This aim – the scope – is also where you can have the impact.”

The organizers of the Arctic Circle view the problem definition component of agenda setting somewhat different than those of the Arctic Frontiers – which is also noted by participants. The main vision of the Arctic Circle is to extend the discussion about the Arctic to the international community, and to welcome the input from whomever consider themselves stakeholders in the region. As such, it is not about promoting one perspective, but rather to include the global community in formulating the agenda, as described by one informant affiliated with the Arctic Circle Assembly:

“When dealing with a part of the world that is going to be absolutely essential in terms of shipping and transportation, and as a thermometer for the effects of climate changes, who are to say Asian states don’t have as much to say as the Arctic states?”

The Arctic Circle provides a stage for global players to participate in the Arctic dialogue. This is demonstrated by the expansion of new dimensions to the program, over the years including the United Arab Emirates (2017), religious leaders (2017–2019), and the Swedish Crown Princess (2019). Also, Chairman Grímsson has actively included new and small states in the region. For example, according to an informant following this process, after Switzerland’s 2016 country presentation, Grímsson met with the Swiss government at the 2017 Assembly to discuss how to develop the Third Pole Perspective – the Arctic, Antarctic, and Himalaya.

This exemplifies how globalization is an important component of problem definition in the agenda setting process for the Arctic. The impacts of climate change are felt world wide, and other regions have similar problems to those evident in the Arctic. Glaciers are melting in Switzerland and the Himalayas, and sea level rise is a severe problem for small island states in the Pacific. For non-Arctic states, to engage in Arctic issues through conferences is a way into the international dialogue on common challenges and possible solutions. This is manifested by the wide range of different nationalities of participants at the two cases in the study.

The Arctic Circle Forums are particularly pivotal for the mission of bringing the Arctic to the global. They are perceived by people in the Arctic community as a strategic component of Grímsson’s vision for the Arctic. By extending the Arctic Circle organization abroad, providing his services and competence as an Arctic nation to new players, Mr. Grímsson is able to engage a broader range of actors. These non-Arctic state actors in turn become part of his outreach, influence, and global expansion of the Arctic agenda to other areas of international relations.

An example of how the Forums, as an addition to the regional governance structure, have political impact stems from the Faroe Islands Forum in 2018, again regarding the European Union. Mr. Grímsson describes how the newly appointed EU Arctic Ambassador, Marie-Anne Coninx, asked for a meeting with the organization, where she suggested a formalized cooperation between the EU and the Arctic Circle. This was accepted by the organizers, and the EU Commissioner of Fisheries spoke in the opening session of the Assembly that October. The approach to the EU adopted by the Arctic Frontiers contra the Arctic Circle testifies to the top-down versus bottom-up philosophies. The former, and Norway, is looking for control and influencing, while Grímsson intends to create a platform – also for the EU:

“Of course some might classify it as a policy to be open to including the European Union in this dialogue even though it has not so far been accepted as an observer at the Arctic Council. But we realize that the European Union, like China, Singapore, Korea, and others is an important player, partner, and stakeholder in the Arctic.” (Einarsdóttir, 2018)

Mr. Grímsson is also working actively to influence problem definition in other international forums, and to promote Arctic issues on the agenda of institutions and organizations outside the region. One example is his work through the Munich Security Conference (MSC), which is the foremost security network in the West. In between its annual meeting in Munich, the MSC hosts inter-sessional meetings on different topics. Mr. Grímsson has worked to ensure the Arctic got a special regional focus, and events dedicated to the Arctic security series has been arranged since the MSC Arctic Security Roundtable was hosted jointly with the Wilson Center’s Polar Initiative and the Arctic Circle in Washington DC in May 2017. Before the official start of the 2017 Assembly, Mr. Grímsson hosted the MSC to discuss the state of Arctic governance elements, cooperation between the Western states and Russia, and the largest security challenges in the Arctic today (Munich Security Roundtable, 2017).

8.4.3 Summary – the problem stream

Since the 1980s, the epistemic community has been pivotal in drawing attention to the Arctic, aided by structural factors such as the end of the Cold War, and physical transformations from climate change. By the 2010s, the Arctic has become a political focal point for states, and an attraction to scientist and industries, from around the world. Throughout this process, conferences have contributed in the problem stream, as arenas to define central challenges, and to frame Arctic issues as something deserving attention.

This argument is supported by how the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers, working in cooperation with the Norwegian government, were successful in coupling the EU’s growing interest for the Arctic with their own perception of the most pressing challenges.

In this way, the conference contributed to steering the narrative and high-ranking agenda issues. The Arctic Circle organization has contributed within the problem stream in the region, by attracting the attention of a broader range of actors, and introducing Arctic issues to international institutions and organizations. This was exemplified with the expansion of the Arctic Circle Forums, and Chairman Grímsson's work with the Munich Security Conference. Accordingly, conferences have conclusively contributed to a broader and refocused globalized agenda in the Arctic.

8.5 The policy stream – Developing and selling ideas

The contribution of conferences to the process of globalizing the Arctic agenda and bringing the global to the Arctic is closely linked to their functions for Arctic states and non-Arctic state stakeholders. Likewise, the second stream is particularly connected to the epistemic community at conferences, who resemble policy entrepreneurs in the multiple streams framework. These are “advocates who are willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position in return for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive, or solidary benefits” (Herweg et al., 2018, 28). However, a difference between policy entrepreneurs and the epistemic community is that while the former have their priority towards “selling ideas”, the latter is more focused on identifying problems (see Chapter Three). The main argument to be put forward in this section is that conferences are instrumental for developing ideas in the policy stream, where alternatives, proposals, and solutions to identified problems generated by a community of experts float around.

Some modifications are also necessary to examine the policy stream in the conference sphere. According to Herweg et al. (2018): “In the policy stream, policy alternatives are generated in policy communities” (p. 22). A policy community is “mainly a loose connection of civil servants, interest groups, academics, researchers, and consultants (the so-called hidden participants), who engage in working out alternatives to the policy problems of a specific policy field” (Herweg et al., 2018, 22). The emphasis in this study is on the alternatives, proposals, and solutions – ideas – floating around in Kingdon's policy “primeval soup” at conferences. Thus, rather than focusing on implementation in domestic political system, I examine the extent to which ideas pushed by policy entrepreneurs, and problems formulated by the epistemic community, through conferences are kept in the loop of the broader agenda outside these arrangements. This interest is supported in the argument made by Carter et al. (2011), of how the political process at summits resemble a ‘garbage can’ (see Chapter Three).

The key position of the epistemic community in the Arctic is interesting in the examination of conferences in the agenda setting process. Informants from the science community have argued that in more developed policy areas, governments usually hold

the expertise and decisions are made by bureaucrats, while in the Arctic, there is an extensive epistemic community possessing the expertise. This is evident from the central contributions of the Arctic Council's working groups in producing assessments and reports to guide developments in the region. Another indicator is the number actors and nationalities participating in collaborative entities working on polar research, such as the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), and the Fulbright Arctic Initiative. The number of members of the IASC has almost tripled since established in 1990, and the Arctic Science Summit Week hit a record number of 2500 participants in 2018 (Pedersen, 2019, 116).

Furthermore, a significant function of conferences in the policy stream is providing arenas for the Arctic's policy entrepreneurs to draw attention to issues identified as problems, and which they have an interest in pushing on the agenda. Alternatives, proposals, and solutions to defined challenges are put forward by experts, and then considered and modified by the larger group of specialists. Thus, the uses of science in political processes – learning, political, and instrumental – the identified by Weible (2008), all are found in the conference sphere. Of these, the learning use of science for policy is the most prominent. Through an incremental process of defining challenges at conferences, the science community can indirectly affect policy participants's beliefs about causes of problems and preferred solutions. Concerning the political use of science and the attempts of policy entrepreneurs to tie policy ideas to problems, climate research is one example of the use of expert-based information to legitimize policy decisions through the conference sphere. State actors can mobilize around ventures such as the blue-green economy, which, as demonstrated in the beginning of the chapter, is advanced through the Arctic Frontiers (see also Silver et al., 2015 or Barbesgaard, 2018).

Conferences also contribute to boost collaboration and advance the joint research agenda. At annual conferences, the epistemic community can launch ideas and test different ways of framing issues. This iterative process has been described by informants from science and academia as contributing to creating momentum and producing consensus around agenda priorities. Accordingly, adjusting the expectation regarding the agenda setting outcome of conferences, the argument of an industry representative is descriptive: “maybe it is not the role of the conference to execute something, but rather point towards a direction.” On that note, an academic informant describes how it takes the joint effort of the larger scientific community to produce change:

“We're all just a bunch of bees, beating against this massive ball of inertia. And it takes a lot of bees pushing on this ball for it to move, because it is so much inertia in each government. People come together and ideas stew, and if the idea is good, it digests for a while and come back in another forum until it actually reaches proliferation. Sometimes, people can pick up an idea and run with it, but more often than not, it is just these really incremental steps.”

Substantiating this line of reasoning, a conference organizer points out how even universally supported policy ideas need pushing out in detail, and specification of how different actors are going to work with them. The informant goes on to say that “giving people an organized way to develop those thoughts is always going to be a good thing.”

8.5.1 Summary – the policy stream

Regarding the nature of conferences, and their influence in the policy stream, one governance affiliated informant accurately describes how conferences are not “about actual governance”. Rather, they are described as an opportunity for people “to talk quietly on the margins, to get some new ideas, which can be brought to where people actually make decisions, like the Arctic Council.” Nonetheless, while conferences are not governing arenas, they are still arenas for the flow of ideas, proposals, and alternatives to defined problems in the policy “primeval soup”. The epistemic community are pivotal actors for this process through at conferences. They contribute to producing a consensus around central agenda issues, which can be brought forward in other forums and processes. Consequently, in the interviews collected for this study, the unison dismissal of conferences as governing arenas was accompanied by an assertion of how they *are* important for advancing the dialogue.

8.6 The political stream – Coalition building

Having discussed the problem stream, linked to the functions of conferences for Arctic and non-Arctic state representatives, and the policy stream, where the epistemic community is central, this section examines the last stream. The political stream consists of the national mood, and is dominated by interests groups and the media⁷. Building a bridge from the previous chapter on actors in the conference sphere, to the following on the governance system’s architecture, what is interesting when examining the influence of conferences in the political stream is how actors can take advantage of conferences as part of the structures that provide opportunities for them to shape outcomes. Understood as transnational networks (see Kalfagianni et al., 2020), conferences can be utilized as arenas for agenda influencing.

From this, interest groups is one element of the political stream that can benefit from conference participation. Dominant interest groups, who can influence agenda setting by promoting new items, advocating certain proposals, or through negative blocking, are usually found within business and industry (Kingdon, 2011, 47-49). Business representatives can launch projects and advocate their visions from the conference stage, which in turn can advance public-private partnerships.

⁷For studies on conferences focusing on these actor groups: Finkle & McIntosh, 2002; Fomerand, 1996.

One policy informant exemplifies this process by describing how representatives from shipping companies can meet with people from the Arctic Coast Guard Forum at conferences, to figure out how, or where, to house charting data. Or, telecommunication companies trying to expand in the Arctic can meet with relevant governmental representatives to discuss developing the necessary infrastructure. There is no room for this kind of lobbying in the Arctic Council, thus conferences serve as a useful supplement. In addition to business representatives, environmental organizations are dominant interest groups in the Arctic, as they have increased urgency to their claims resulting from the impacts of climate change.

The second most important set of non-governmental actors, according to Kingdon, are academics, researchers, and consultants. As discussed in the previous section, they have significant impact on agenda alternatives, and politicians commonly turn to this group for ideas on how to deal with problems (Kingdon, 2011, 55). Thirdly, the media is significant in the political stream, because it has the power to influence public opinion, and indirectly impact the political agenda by acting as a communicator, magnifying movements, and challenging the status quo (Kingdon, 2011, 57-61).

The power of the media is not overlooked by conference organizers. The Arctic Frontiers invites, and covers the participation fee for, international journalists. The Arctic Circle, which is also attended by a large press corps, is partner with journals, magazines, and news papers. However, the occurrence of neither conference itself is of high news value for journalists. Those interviewed for the study describe that they mainly attend conferences looking for stories, or people who can provide them with information about interesting developments. Accordingly, the agenda setting impact of the media through conferences is related to utilizing the platform to tell other stories, and the media becomes a tool for those able to draw attention to their work.

Beyond these three actor groups, there is another point of influence for conferences in the political stream. Namely, the desired outcome of the organizers to advance the policy, science, business interplay. Founded in the multiple streams framework's postulation that the national mood (influenced by the media) and interest groups' campaigns (including commercial organizations) can influence the political stream, advancing the link between policy, science, and business is a way to influence policy-making.

The science community is present in significant numbers at both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle. With regards to political representatives, the position of former president Grímsson has attracted state leaders and central government officials to the Arctic Circle. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers have worked to attract more high-level delegates, but have not reached the same level of presidential and prime minister attendance. Lastly, while neither the Arctic Frontiers nor the Arctic Circle are industry conferences, business representatives are present. In this way, both conferences have accomplished the shared objective of being attractive international arenas, gathering stake-

holders from various affiliations. The potential of conferences in advancing the policy, science, business interplay is also noted by conference participants:

“Have conferences contributed to implementing the policy-science-business interplay in the Arctic? I would say yes, it brings it closer. It is one element.”

“I’ve seen it work reasonably well. Typically, it is the meetings that take place at the margins of these conferences that I think do the most to advance this kind of partnerships we all talk about: public–private partnerships.”

To measure how and the extent to which conferences are successful at promoting synergies between sectors is challenging. Had the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle not existed, there would be other ways of association for actors engaged in Arctic affairs. Yet, after their establishment, the conferences have fulfilled a function in connecting actors that would not necessarily have met outside these annual gatherings, indicated by the growing number of participants. Especially having policy makers and business representatives engage with the science community, or giving company executives the opportunity to meet decision makers, are described as useful by informants to the study. Providing these actors an opportunity to meet through an informal setting can contribute to the establishment of projects, and be instrumental for driving processes forward.

“A fundamental difference between the two conferences is the structure. The Arctic Frontiers separates science and policy, while at the Arctic Circle, there is a mixture. Why the Arctic Frontiers separates these two sections, is not clear. But it is up to them, their philosophy, and aims.”

“At this point, the Arctic Circle is extremely more successful at than the Arctic Frontiers, because they do not control the breakout sessions. The Arctic Circle facilitates a "tent", under which people can do what they want. While at Arctic Frontiers, they spend a lot of efforts to control, plan, and decide. I cannot see this has contributed to anything positive, as opposed to let the chaos flow the system, if you aim for synergies. Arctic Frontiers almost seems like they are trying to avoid synergies.”

As these informants from academia, who are also members of the board of advisors (ACA) / steering committee (AF), express: despite the shared objectives of the organizers, there is a difference in execution of the conferences that impacts the promotion of cross-sectoral synergies. The structural frames of the Arctic Circle are more advantageous for this mission than those of the Arctic Frontiers. Mr. Grímsson describes the Harpa building as ideal for “locking people in”, and the compactness of the three-day conference increases the likelihood of people staying for the whole event.

By contrast, with the format of the Arctic Frontiers and the science sessions congregated at the end of the conference week, policy representatives are less likely to attend

these presentations. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers have worked on improving the quality of the policy and business sessions, and there have been more scientists in the policy panels. Nonetheless, informants from both science and policy contend the quality and integration of the science pillar is not ideal, and the format is described as “more like three different conferences”.

8.6.1 Summary – the political stream

It has been demonstrated how the two conferences in this study have contributed to attract global attention to the Arctic in the problem stream, and are central playing grounds for the flow of ideas from the epistemic community in the policy stream. Their function in the political stream is however more hazy. Having policy makers respond to the consensus developed by the epistemic community is challenging, and more so: producing coordinated changes within several governments. This finding is in line with that of Haas (2002), who through an examination of constructivist governance through the UN environmental conferences demonstrates that international conferences “seldom have direct causal influences on member states’ behavior” (p. 74).

Nonetheless, Haas (2002) also argues global environmental conferences can have indirect effects causing changes in national policies in the long run, through functions such as placing new issues on the agenda, popularizing issues and raising consciousness, generating new information and identifying new challenges, and promoting mass involvement of new actors (p. 81-85). Thus, where the potential lies for Arctic conferences to influence the political stream in the region, is through interests groups formed around transnational business coalitions, environmental groups’ campaigns, or indirectly through the media influencing the public opinion. Over time, beyond the scope of this project, conferences, utilized as transnational networks, can be potential tools for actors to influence political outcomes.

8.7 Conclusions: Conferences as arenas for “agenda nudging”

This chapter has examined agenda setting at the two largest conferences in the Arctic through the multiple streams framework. The two examples discussed – the promoting of Arctic Ocean issues, and the Mission Council on Shipping and Ports – demonstrated how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle organizations have been successful at elevating issues on the international agenda. In striving to position itself as the Arctic Oceans’ rightful steward, the Norwegian government has been aided by the Arctic Frontiers platform – to give publicity to ocean related activities conducted by Norwegian institutions and organization. The Arctic Circle Mission Council shows how policy entrepreneurs can utilize conference organizations to advance issues, both within national processes,

and to catalyze international collaboration. I have also established that the agenda setting efforts of the organizers were aided by windows of opportunities in the international system at the time of the initiatives. The endeavors through the Arctic Frontiers by the debate around the need for an Arctic Treaty, and the Arctic Circle Mission Council by the developments within the IMO towards the Polar Code.

However, while similar in many ways, the conferences differ in how they are organized and executed, which impacts their agenda setting role in the region. In particular the top-down versus bottom-up approach to program design is significant. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers largely decide the program, through cooperation with partners in the steering committee, which means there is less leeway for outside actors to push issues discordant with the overarching theme. The Arctic Circle's plenary sessions share this characteristic, where the country presentations reflect not only Mr. Grímsson's personal connections, but also who are willing to pay for visibility at the Assembly. The breakout sessions on the other hand, are more democratic and available for anyone to submit proposals. From this, the Arctic Frontiers to a larger extent promotes the agenda and interests of the Arctic coalition of actors, while the Arctic Circle is a platform for a broader network of international stakeholders, their interests, and perspectives.

The chapter has also demonstrated how the significance of conferences differs within the three streams of the multiple streams framework. In the problem stream, conferences function as arenas for actors to draw attention to challenges, and to develop a consensus around central issues to be elevated onto the broader agenda. For the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic state participants, conference engagement is a tool for defining the "right challenges", and control the narrative of the region. The organizers of the Arctic Circle contribute to problem definition by expanding the organization globally by inviting in all interested stakeholders to the Assembly, through the Forums, and by highlighting connections between the Arctic and other regions with similar challenges.

In the policy stream, alternatives, proposals, and solutions to defined challenges flow through hundreds of annual sessions at the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle. The analysis in this chapter supports the assumption of conferences as ideal arenas for policy entrepreneurs to bring conditions to policy makers attention. Still, it is not possible to trace a large stream of direct causal links from what takes place at conferences to policy outcomes, and those pointing out that conferences are not "about actual governance" are correct. The arena is there, facilitating the potential coupling of the streams to open a window of opportunity for agenda change, but states do not change their policies from what takes place at conferences.

Accordingly, regarding the political stream, which is influenced by domestic elements such as the national mood, interests groups, administrations, and legislatures, the impact of conferences is by and large indirect. Non-governmental actors and interest

groups (e.g. business organizations, academics, and the media) can make transnational connections and use these arenas in pursuit of their desired outcome. The influence of conference activities on the political agenda is found through incremental steps over several years. The Arctic Frontiers is perceived as a national platform, centered around the interests of the Arctic Eight. At the same time, the organizers are working actively to bring “outsiders”, such as the EU and journalists, to the conference – indicating that the organizers and Norwegian government consider there to be potential for agenda influencing. Such efforts would not be prioritized if it was not deemed a way of influencing the EU’s agenda. The same goes for the endeavors of the Arctic Circle organizers to involve a constantly expanding pool of participants at the Assembly, as a means to influence priorities and create responsible stakeholders (see Chapter Seven).

Returning to the question posed in the introduction: is what happens at conferences a mirror reflection of other processes in Arctic governance, and/or does it affect these processes? Agenda setting was defined as *a process of raising issues to salience among the relevant community of actors*, and the analysis in this chapter testifies to the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle being instrumental in such a process. Conference activities contribute to problem definition, conferences are venues for the flow of ideas presented by the epistemic community in the problem stream, and also potentially contribute in the political stream – as arenas for coalitions to consolidate and push their issues. Lastly, conferences are arenas for deliberating issues the Arctic Council cannot, such as security and military concerns – a function further discussed in Chapter Nine.

Yet, this chapter has also demonstrated the shortcomings of conferences as agenda setting arenas. Three factors can contribute to improving this function. Firstly, science presentations must be communicated in a way that is comprehensible for decision-makers. Secondly, and related, policy representatives must have a broader mandate when attending conferences beyond advocating for their own interests and priorities. What is presented at the conference must be followed up on the local, regional, and state levels. Thirdly, the organizers of the Arctic Circle claim to create responsible stakeholders by providing an open and transparent platform. However, there is no authoritative agency to enforce what is promised from the conference stage – so who holds them responsible? There is need for transnational advocacy coalitions as well as individuals pushing for implementing change. It can be the media, interest groups, environmental organizations, or local community representatives. It can also be businesses, refusing to engage with actors that do not operate sustainably and in conformity with the well-being of local communities.

Table 8.1: Summary of the agenda setting impact of conferences

Issue	Impact	Indicators / Evidence
Climate change	Consequences of and dealing with climate change is pushed and elevated on the agenda through conferences. It is a common denominator for stakeholders, despite disagreements elsewhere in IR, and catalyzes collaborative efforts.	Dominant topic in programs. Both the AF and ACA were used to build momentum before COP21 in 2015, and for dissemination after the 2018 IPCC report.
Oceans: Shipping, fisheries, Law of the Sea	The AF and ACA have contributed to a closer link between the Arctic and the Oceans by keeping it as an overarching theme. In turn, this has implications for international cooperation on shipping, fisheries, trade, safety, marine governance, coast guard cooperation, and search and rescue.	The Arctic Frontiers' thematic emphasis on ocean related issues since its establishment. The Arctic Circle Mission Council Initiative on shipping and ports.
Business	The Arctic Council is not engaged with business, which opens a space for conferences to fill. There has been a significant development of the business element through the conference sphere. The Arctic Economic Council, established in 2014, is also present at promoted through the AF and ACA.	AF Business pillar from 2014 – partners with energy companies: e.g. Equinor and Conoco Phillips. The ACA partners with large international companies e.g. Guggenheim Partners, and Icelandic partners.
Energy	Conferences are arenas for actors to argue for the legitimacy of oil and gas activities in the Arctic, and to explore clean renewable energy options, and develop the discussion on new solutions.	The AF is used to legitimize the Norwegian energy sector. The ACA is used to promote Iceland's renewable hydroelectric and geothermal energy.
Communication	Focusing on communication understood broadly, including telecommunication and satellites, is a way conferences can have a policy by promoting cooperation in an expensive, but necessary, field for development in the region.	The AF has since 2018 focused on connectivity: "connected and smart Arctic". At the ACA, this is a recurrent topic, and it is reflected in the Assembly's partners.
Indigenous issues	Conferences contribute to involving Indigenous voices in the global dialogue, and are arenas for elevating central issues, e.g. community challenges, health, and mental well-being among the Indigenous population.	ACA 2015 / 2016 on mental well-being in the Arctic.
Arctic security	Through continuously dialogue, conference participation contributed to de-securitizing the discussion, and with no change in the threat level, a consensus developed around this being a non-issue.	The security concept evolved to include human security, maritime security, search and rescue, and coast guard cooperation.
Arctic tourism	Focusing on responsible and sustainable tourism management, conferences have contributed to connecting challenges of tourism growth to sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental development, and to include Indigenous voices.	Tourism is a recurrent topic at both arenas. The ACA has involved experienced Icelandic actors, for the development of best-practices.
The Arctic and space	Conferences contribute to involving actors with relevant competence within space technology to take advantage of experiences transferable to the Arctic region. Conferences also contribute to the linking of issue areas: Safety in maritime operations, telecommunication, data sharing, ice monitoring.	Engaged actors are Group on Earth Observations, European Space Agency, Norwegian Space Center, German Aerospace Center, The Polar Research Institute of China.

Conferences within the Arctic governance architecture

9.1 Introduction

Wedding the two previous chapters, of the actors engaged in the conference sphere and agenda setting, I now turn to the analysis of the governance architecture in which conferences operate. Architecture describes the overall institutional framework of governance — the macro-level (Biermann, 2014, 81). It is an overarching system of institutions, organizations, principles, norms, regulations, and decision-making procedures that are valid or active in a given area of global governance – in this study: the Arctic region. A global governance architecture consists of building blocks, structural features, and policy responses (Biermann & Kim, 2020b, 7. See also Chapter Two, section 2.2).

Arctic governance has been described as a “mosaic of issue-specific arrangements”, a “regime complex”, a “governance complex” (Young, 2005, 2011b, 2012b), a global space of issues and communities (Keil & Knecht, 2017), a patchwork of formal and informal arrangements operating on different levels (Stokke, 2011), and a set of interlinked and overlapping policy fields (Wilson Rowe, 2019). Accordingly, this study zooms in on one of the structural features of the larger architecture: regime complexes, which is understood as larger sets of interrelated and interdependent institutions (see Raustiala & Victor, 2004; Keohane & Victor, 2011). Specifically, a regime complex is located at the meso level, and is defined by Orsini et al. (2013) as a network of three or more international regimes that relate on a common subject matter, exhibit overlapping membership, and generate interaction (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.3).

Resulting from increased international interest towards the Arctic, the governance landscape has become more complex. Two challenges stand out in the debate on how to improve the fragmented structure (Humrich, 2013). How to manage the growing number of agenda issues and emerging arrangements? How to incorporate the expanding stakeholder pool in a constructive way, and balance the interests of newcomers with those of sovereign Arctic rights-holders (Ingimundarson, 2014; Knecht, 2016; Rossi, 2015; Young, 2011a)? The foremost intention of this chapter is examining whether, how, and to what extent conferences influence the landscape in which they are situated. Specifically, I examine the functions of conferences as connections among the units in the Arctic regime complex, as arenas for the unfolding of both cooperation and contestation, and as constructive forums for addressing the challenges outlined above. In doing so, the chapter draws on both research on regime complexes from the Earth System Governance literature, and regime theory. The latter is applied to examine whether conferences contribute to establishing rules and norms influencing actors’ preferences and

behavior, or make cooperation more likely by facilitating frequent interaction among engaged entities (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985; Young, 1986, 1998).

The chapter commences by discussing the geopolitical situation in the Arctic. I focus primarily on Russia and China, to respectively illustrate the functions of conferences for upholding the complex interdependence characterizing the Arctic, and to examine conferences as potential arenas for economic engagement to develop into political influence. Following the discussion of the changing world order, I address the position of Norway and Iceland among the Arctic Eight, and in relation non-Arctic states. This in order to build on the discussion in Chapter Six, and further elaborate on how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly can serve in their host states' interests.

Seeing how the Arctic community of actors has settled on the Arctic Council as the primary entity for regional cooperation, considerable attention is devoted to the functions of conferences as related to this main pillar within the Arctic governance architecture in section three. How conferences correspond to, or conflict with, the Arctic Council came up frequently during the interviews – indicating that when attempting to conceptualize conferences, drawing parallels to, or contrasting with, the Arctic Council was a natural path for informants. I seek to establish how conferences can function as supplements or alternatives in amending some of the Arctic Council's shortcomings: the limited agenda, stakeholder involvement, and communication challenges. Nonetheless, I pursue the overall analysis with the remarks of Exner-Pirot (2016) in mind: "Arctic regional governance is best viewed as a web with the Arctic Council in the middle, not a pyramid with the Arctic Council at the top." Thus, I turn to the functions of conferences for other elements in the Arctic governance regime complex in section four, before concluding by drawing up the space conferences fill within the overall Arctic governance architecture

9.2 Geopolitics – a changing world order

The Arctic as a "zone of peace" has been a prevailing narrative about the region, where actors show outstanding dedication to cooperation, since the 1990s. However, looking at the macro-level of the international system, the global order is shifting (Young, 2019). The United States is more reluctant to assume international responsibility, and its foreign – and Arctic – policy has become more one-dimensional under the Trump administration. There is more emphasis on how Arctic security is threatened by great power competition, than on the economic and environmental challenges emphasized by the other Arctic states (Lanteigne, 2019). Secondly, Russia is investing in its military power, including in their Northern areas. This has implications for Circumpolar relations, and NATO activities and presence in the region. Thirdly, China is emerging as a powerful actor, ready to fill the vacuum left by the United States. Chinese investments

in the Arctic are still limited compared to other parts of the world. Yet, there is an indirect military/security dimension following China's economic interest in the region, with potential political effects.

Regardless of how the Arctic has remained peaceful and stable, these geopolitical changes internationally have implications for regional affairs – as the Arctic is not isolated from global developments. On the alarmist side, informants to the study have argued the geopolitical situation is changing in the direction of the old “block-way of thinking” between the East and the West. This is also the angle most subscribed to in the media. Thus far, stability in the region has largely rested on the complex interdependence among the Arctic states. However, for how long can the region remain shielded from tensions elsewhere? This section presents the state of the contemporary geopolitical situation in and around the Arctic. The purpose is not to provide an exhaustive historical account, but rather to enable the discussion of how we can understand the interplay between global geopolitics and developments in the Arctic, and to situate conferences in this dynamic landscape.

9.2.1 Russia and complex interdependence in the Arctic

Russia considers the Arctic a space in international relations for affirming its status as a great power, and holds a position of military superiority in the Barents region. This impacts relations with the other Arctic Eight – however, who are also beefing up their military presence in the North. Baev (2019) analyzes an interesting feature of Moscow's Arctic Policy: exaggeration and inflated threat assessment, in particular regarding the intensity of external military threats to Russia's interests in the Arctic. The Russian military doctrine from 2014 places the buildup of NATO military capabilities on the top of the list of external dangers. Yet, this discourse is incompatible with the official rhetoric about Russia's commitment to international cooperation in the Arctic¹ – which is “no place for geopolitical games of military alliances”, as stated by President Vladimir Putin at the 2017 International Arctic Forum (Baev, 2019, 26).

When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, the USA, EU, Canada, and other NATO allies responded with economic sanctions. Still, the crisis did not impact relations in the Arctic noteworthy². Research collaboration is one area being upheld after the Crimea-crisis – which has been aided by conference participation. To this point, Arctic Council's Science Agreement (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.5) has not proved very effective in

¹It is possible to identify a slight decrease of intensity in Russia's military activities in the Barents area in 2017-2018. This could be due to resource shortage and cuts in the shipbuilding program affected by Western sanctions, or politically motivated, founded in concerns about pushing Finland and Sweden towards closer cooperation with NATO (Baev, 2019, 34-35).

²With the exception of Canada boycotting an Arctic Council task force meeting in Moscow, and Russian officials not being invited to a pre-meeting to the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum. However, Russia participated in the Senior Arctic Official meeting in Yellowknife in March 2014 (Østhagen, 2014).

amending visa challenges when traveling between the US and Russia. Thus, conferences hosted in other states are described by informants as useful in contributing to interaction among participants in the research community.

Beyond research collaboration, Norway and Russia upheld practical cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as search and rescue, fisheries, and nuclear protection. There were mechanisms in place for these areas, and according to a governmental affiliated informant, conferences played a supplementing role as cooperative tracks. For example, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs' participation at the 2017 International Arctic Forum in Archangelsk was described by the informant as part of the efforts to soften relations with Russia following the Crimea-crisis. Another informant from academia who participated at the Forum noted: "My impression is how willingly, or desirably, Russia wants to engage in the Arctic and invites all eight states – and usually all eight states are represented at some level."

The main explanation for the cooperative spirit in the Arctic, and robustness towards spill-over from conflicts elsewhere, is found in the concept complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 2001, 2012). Complex interdependence is characterized by an absence of hierarchy among issues, which means the political agenda is not dominated by military security, and military force is largely irrelevant. Moreover, the state does not monopolize contact between societies, due to the existence of transgovernmental and transnational channels of contact (Keohane & Nye, 2012, 270). These characteristics give rise to three political processes.

Firstly, issue areas are often separated, so they are less affected by tensions or breakdowns in other areas. Secondly, agenda setting is not driven by threats to security, but rather by mutual problems and opportunities. Thirdly, international institutions are "significant as agenda setters, arenas for coalition formation, and as arenas for action by weak states" (Keohane and Nye 2012, 144). Byers (2017) finds that by 2014, international relations of the Arctic had achieved a state of complex interdependence, which is why the region was not notably effected by Russia's annexation of Crimea. The Arctic's resistance to spill-over from the Crimea-crisis, and – as pointed out by the conference organizer cited below – generally cooperative relations give force to the notion of the Arctic as a "zone of peace".

"Maybe the best example is the Russian participation, not just at Arctic Circle, but in conferences in general. I think the fact that Russia and the Arctic neighbors continue to get a long as well as we all do, given the circumstances, is really quite remarkable."

Given these points, what the media frequently describes as a "new Cold War" falls far short of that era. States involved in Arctic affairs have had the ability to remain cooperative – because it is ultimately in everybody's interest. This is also true for Russia,

who, as emphasized by a governmental organization affiliated informant, is primarily interested in a stable and rules based Arctic where they can pursue their main interest: socio-economic development³. Russia's interests in the Arctic are not threatened in any practical or symbolic way by the other Arctic states, even if they are NATO members (Baev, 2019, 39). The informant goes on to state that the real threat to Arctic security is climate change, and the actual problems are socio-economic. In closing, the Arctic's resistance to spill-over from conflicts elsewhere largely rests on common interests among engaged actors, the ability to separate issue areas, and the role of institutions. Conferences can be added to the latter, fulfilling a function within the regime complex as meeting places for dialogue and trust building, promoting cross-border collaboration, and amending East-West geopolitical tensions.

9.2.2 From economic investments to political influence?

There is need for outside economic investments in the Arctic, and the region depends on resource export and access to the global market. This is expedient for China – an emerging great power. China's Arctic Policy from 2018 emphasizes the development of joint ventures on resource extraction as a central component of its expanding interest in the Arctic (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2018). One example is the China-Russia Yamal liquefied natural gas project. This was the first large scale energy cooperation between the two states after China launched the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. Another example is found on Greenland, which – as opportunities for mining are opening up with the eroding Greenland ice sheet – is emerging as a key component of the Polar Silk Road part of the Belt and Road Initiative. While this represents economic opportunities for Greenland, expanding Chinese economic diplomacy is unsettling for the Danish government, and the United States (Lanteigne & Shi, 2019).

The US Air Force has a base on Thule, holding vital strategic assets for the US' homeland defense. The concern of the Danish and US governments is that China could pressure the Greenlandic government to ask the Americans to leave, or for a Chinese military presence, through economic investments⁴ (Mehta, 2018). The Danish government's unease culminated in the spring of 2018, with the procurement of upgrading the air-ports in Ilulissat and Nuuk, and constructing a new airport in Qaqortoq. The self-rule government in Nuuk shortlisted the state-controlled China Communication Construction Company Ltd. to bid on the project. The foundation of Greenland's autonomy – the Self Rule Act of 2009 – states that matters of security are to be handled by the government

³This argument is also found in the literature, see for example: Khrushcheva & Poberezhskaya, 2016; Wilson Rowe & Blakkisrud, 2014.

⁴Stated by Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, associate professor at the Royal Danish Defense College's Institute for Strategy in an interview with Defense News in September 2018. Later in September 2018, Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen stated in an interview with Arctic Today that: "Greenland's economy is small. It would not take much for one country — China or otherwise — to hold sway over Nuuk" (McGwin, 2018).

in Copenhagen, but gives no definition of security (Breum, 2018). Taking advantage of this, the Danish government declared the airport project as a matter of national security, and intercepted the Chinese bid with their own (Lanteigne & Shi, 2019)⁵.

In this way, the political and national security implications of Chinese economic interests and activities in the Arctic are related to the future of Greenlandic independence (Lanteigne & Shi, 2019), which depends on contributions to boost the economy – inter alia mineral extraction, and airports and ports development. This was pointed out by the Greenlandic delegation to the Arctic Circle Assembly 2019, through the plenary sessions *Greenland is open to business* and *Greenland on the world stage*. The main message was that Greenland do not discriminate between actors in terms of trade, as long as they follow Greenlandic laws and regulations. It was also emphasized however, that should there be security issues, the government of Greenland has close cooperation and a good relationship with authorities in Copenhagen⁶. The Greenlandic example illustrates how the conference sphere is used for political messaging, and that conferences are not isolated from developments in their surrounding governance system.



Greenland presentation at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly. Photo: Beate Steinveg.

⁵There has been a similar situation on Svalbard, where Chinese investor Huang Nubo in 2014 wanted to buy a privately owned property (Pettersen, 2014). However, for 300 million NOK, the Norwegian Ministry of Trade Industry and Fisheries secured the land, which made up only 0.35 percentage of Svalbard's total areal (Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, 2017b). In 2011, Mr. Huang Nubo bid on a 300 km² land on Iceland to build a resort. The bid was blocked by the Icelandic government, with the interior minister stating it would set a dangerous precedent to make an exception to the law on investments by non-European companies (Jackson & Hook, 2011). Chinese investment plans caused concerns on Iceland again in 2017, this time regarding a large farm located next to Geysir Geothermal area on the Golden Circle (Iceland Magazine, 2017).

⁶Stated by Jacob Isbosethsen, Head of Representation, Greenland Representation to Iceland, Reykjavik, at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly in the plenary session *Greenland on the World Stage: Dialogue with Diplomats in Washington, Brussels, and Reykjavik*.

Other examples of geopolitical statements expressed from the conference stage were provided by the European Union and China, also at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly. In the plenary session *Towards a New Arctic Policy for the EU*, the delegation stated that China is a systematic rival for the EU, and that the geopolitical importance of the Arctic, demonstrated by the remilitarization of the Russian Arctic and the growing interest from China, is not overlooked by the EU. This necessitates a stronger EU and NATO presence in the Arctic⁷. China on its end, stated in the plenary session *Asia and the Arctic*, that far or close, we all have to take action to combat the effects of climate change. China is close to the Arctic, and do not intend to rebrand itself, but commit to the “near-Arctic state” identity⁸.

Looking at Arctic governance through the lens of regime theory, the political implications of economic interests in the Arctic opens a space for conferences within this structure. The inclusion of new stakeholders is one of the most pivotal function of conferences. Arctic issues have a global dimension, and how the Circumpolar community involves China, and other Asian/European non-Arctic states, can prove central for diplomatic relations, and balanced social and economic development. Russia’s relationship with the other Arctic Eight demonstrates how conferences can be platforms for dialogue and trust building, to reduce barriers to cooperation between states within and outside of the Arctic. Conferences also provide a stage for non-Arctic state actors to advocate for their contributions to Arctic governance, and necessary presence in the region, as the EU example showed. Or, they can argue for their closeness to the region and Arctic identity, as demonstrated by China.

Once more however, it is necessary to highlight an apparent difference between the two cases in the study. The Arctic Frontiers has a skeptical outlook on China, in line with Norwegian Foreign Policy. Grímsson by contrast, has embraced the broad stakeholder inclusion to the fullest with the Arctic Circle organization, openly welcoming non-Arctic states and business interests. Non-Arctic states (and non-state actors) are provided a platform as equals at the Assembly, and the Forums are an important addition to the governance structure in this regard. Singapore (2015), Korea (2018), China (2019), and Japan (2020) have been hosts for such events, addressing shared interests between Asia and the Arctic. According to Grímsson, these activities gives countries outside the Arctic the opportunity to be more constructive partners in the region, because to use the Arctic Circle platform, they have to be transparent and answer unfiltered questions from the audience.

⁷According to Senator Jean Bizet, President of the European Affairs Committee, and Ambassador Jari Vilen, senior adviser for Arctic policy, European Political Strategy Centre.

⁸Stated by Mr. Gao Feng, Special Representative for Arctic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, when answering a question from the audience about China’s response to US Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo’s speech at the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi May 2019, where he denounced the use of the “near-Arctic state” identity – See Pompeo (2019).

9.2.3 The position of Iceland and Norway

“Iceland is a historical geopolitical meeting point between the East and the West. When the international conflict level increase, utilizing Iceland’s strategic position becomes important also in the future.”

“Tromsø is important in an Arctic perspective. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created the position of the senior advisor to the secretariat of the Arctic Frontiers because they wanted to strengthen the focus on Tromsø in an international Arctic context. It is in Norway’s interest to strengthen the Arctic Frontiers, because it is an important platform.”

These quotes from a Norwegian journalist and a Norwegian government affiliated informant demonstrate how the East-West dimension still features in Arctic affairs, and point to the significant position of Norway and Iceland in this regard. Thus, beyond shifts in the global order and developments in international structures, it is interesting to examine the conferences’ host states when situating them within the Arctic governance system. Norway is a close neighbor to Russia, but also training ground for NATO. Iceland was a strategic cornerstone in the North Atlantic during the Cold War, and is today an international air-transport hub, connecting North America, Europe, and Asia.

The Arctic Circle as an arena to promote Iceland’s economic interests, and Mr. Grímsson’s intention of creating an Arctic Hub in Reykjavik, was discussed in Chapter Six (section 6.3.5). So was the importance of the Arctic Frontier for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in promoting Tromsø as an international meeting place (section 6.2.5). However, what is the role of the two conferences in the broader geopolitical picture in the Arctic? In general, do conferences have a geopolitical function?

The organizers of the Arctic Circle, in addition to providing a platform for non-Arctic states, have worked actively to improve the position of sub-national and regional entities. The emphasis on the Iceland, Greenland, and Faroe Islands triangle as a North Atlantic club also analyzed in Chapter Six is particularly striking. An indicator of the broader effects of this focal point is the aspiration of Scotland to join the alliance – discussed in Chapter Seven. Following Brexit, Scotland wanted to develop partnerships and reposition itself within the European community, and saw the opportunity to emerge as a North-Atlantic state and Arctic neighbor. The Arctic Circle was one arena for the pursuit of these attempts of geopolitical repositioning. Mr. Grímsson describes how the Arctic Circle’s philosophy has contributed to the self-awareness and empowerment of non-state and regional actors:

“The even importance given to regional and national stakeholders has transformed visions within regional territories. Through its structure, the Arctic Circle is changing the landscape of geopolitical involvement of these terri-

tories – which is accepted by representatives of national states and federal structures.”

The Arctic Frontiers has geopolitical relevance for Norwegian cooperation with Russia. Akvaplan Niva has longstanding science cooperation with Russian institutions, and the conference organizers recognize the importance of Russia in a Barents perspective. They point to how the conference being hosted by a research institute, and not a public government structure, is appreciated by Russian delegates. The organizers work with the Russian embassy in designing the program, and to attract Russian participants to the conference – which has been successful as the Russian delegation usually is the second largest following the Norwegian. The large number of academic and student participants from Russia illustrates the importance of people-to-people cooperation and interaction, which is a central element in the overall peaceful relations between Russia and the West.

Conferences are not governance forums, but a journalist interviewed for this project points towards the symbolical political games taking place at these arenas. For example, Norwegian Foreign Minister, Børge Brende, invited the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, to attend the 2017 Arctic Frontiers. At the time, Mr. Brende had not been in Russia since 2014, and had no plans to visit Russia due to the sanctions posed on Russia following the annexation of Crimea. However, while Mr. Lavrov did not attend the Arctic Frontiers, Mr. Brende ended up going to the 2017 International Arctic Forum in March. A government official described this as a somewhat unusual situation, in a time of efforts to soften relations with Russia. Norway and Russia have continuous bilateral Arctic dialogues, and conference participation is something all states consider from time to time. In this situation, as a means of diplomacy.

“Some say it’s important, to keep the process going. Of course, in a time with political difficulties with Russia, it is important to have arenas where you can meet and talk to the Russians, in between, while the conference can address a different topic. Then, it has a function: the face-to-face and informal aspect.”

This quote, from a conference organizer describes the contribution of conferences to geopolitical processes. In the *realpolitik* understanding of interstate relations, where military capabilities and economic might dominate, conferences are insignificant. However, with regards to diplomatic relations, soft power influence, and at lower levels of government, conferences are one of several points of contact among engaged actors. Conferences contribute to keeping processes going, somewhat distanced from tense governmental relationships, and can reduce barriers to cooperation between states and institutions. Thus, their geopolitical function cannot be dismissed.

9.3 The Arctic Council

The Arctic Council has had more than 20 years to assert its position within the Arctic governance architecture. It has contributed to regional peace and stability by advancing cooperation between the member states, Indigenous peoples organizations, and through the years, a growing number of observers. Moreover, the working groups and task forces have produced important scientific research. However, the Arctic Council's successes are not of primary interest for the purpose of the study. Rather, I turn to the gap in the governance architecture mentioned in the introduction: the inadequacy of the Arctic Council to deal with all relevant agenda issues, and take into account all stakeholders. Considering the variety of issues covered through the working groups⁹ and task forces¹⁰, and how the observer status cannot realistically be expanded to entail the same rights as membership, what is the opportunity space for the Arctic Council in the years to come? I argue the Arctic Council has reached a point of satiation within the Arctic regime complex, although as a key unit, and with the expanding list of agenda items and growing stakeholder pool, there is a definite space for conferences to fill.

“There are many positive things to say about the Arctic Council. At the same time, it is also true that while it is necessary, it is not sufficient. Not everything can be done through the Arctic Council, because it is a consensus body. Thus, it is very important to have conferences, as arenas for discussions and as meeting places. But, regarding the outcome of conferences, whether people just talk or if they actually result in something . . . conferences do not always lead to concrete cooperation.”

“It is easy to see that both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are only for supporting and strengthening the work of the Arctic Council. These conferences are not governing bodies, and cannot make decisions. They are only for dialogue and information sharing. So, they will never be able to compete with the Arctic Council in that sense.”

These quotes, from a Norwegian governmental employee and an Arctic Council associated informant, highlight central features of conferences compared to formalized cooperation. Firstly is the line of caution – concerning the absence of concrete outcomes and lack of decision-making authority. Nonetheless, this does not imply conferences are of no value. Rather, as emphasized by the informants, they are important meeting places

⁹Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP); Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP); Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF); Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR); Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME); Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG).

¹⁰Short-Lived Climate Forcers; Arctic Marine Oil Preparedness and Response; Search and Rescue; Institutional Issues; Task Force to Facilitate the Creation of a Circumpolar Business Forum; Black Carbon and Methane; Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention; Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic; Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic; Improved Connectivity in the Arctic; Arctic Marine Cooperation.

for dialogue and information sharing. While this function is for one an expression of how conferences are inferior to the Arctic Council, it is by the other considered a feature making conferences an important supplement.

With regards to the Arctic Council's shortcomings, lack of funding, taxpayer accountability, and the structure of the working groups (Exner-Pirot et al., 2019) are not susceptible to the influence of conferences. Instead, the agenda, stakeholder involvement, and communication activities are more pertinent to consider. In the following analysis of these issues, I continue building the main argument of the study: conferences *do* contribute to the architecture in which they are situated.

9.3.1 Expanding the limited agenda

The Arctic Council builds on legally non-binding consensus. The soft-law regime has been described as “a policy shaping, rather than policy making body” (Young, 2011a, 193), and “a decision-preparing rather than a decision-taking institution” (Haftendorn, 2013, 38). Ingimundarson (2014) argues the Arctic Council is not a body of political authority, or a policy-making instrument. Nor was this the intention, as the Arctic Council was established to “provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction [---] in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic” (Arctic Council, 1996). An infamous footnote in the Ottawa Declaration states: “The Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security”.

A government affiliated informant describes how a lot of the Arctic Council's success as a stability promoting organization rests on keeping security and military issues at arm's length. It has made Russia an engaged actor, and enabled cooperation between the US and Russia. Still, while it is important to keep tensions low in the Arctic, there is need for security discussions. This surfaced in the opening session of the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly. Icelandic Prime Minister, Katrin Jakobsdottir, stated: “Now that we see geopolitical tensions rise, I believe we need to discuss whether the Arctic Council should also be a forum for so-called ‘hard security’. Or if we should have a separate forum for this” (Tømmerbakke, 2019).

This line of thinking is supported by Finland, who has tried to initiate an Arctic leadership meeting on the issue, as well as the EU, which makes a case for a stronger EU and NATO regional security presence. Norway on the other side, contends there are good reasons for the Arctic Council to keep security off its agenda, and also Canada is skeptical of NATO getting more involved in the region, in fear that it may provoke Russia (Tømmerbakke, 2019). Accordingly, until there is a change in the Arctic Council's mandate, if ever, conferences can fill a demand within the Arctic governance structure – as arenas for deliberating military and security issues. This section examines how these topics have been approached through the two cases in the study.

The Arctic Frontiers is thematically¹¹ oriented towards the Norwegian government's priorities, in particular the longstanding interests in the oceans, but also energy issues. Security is predominately approached in the science section, related to human, environmental, and food security. There are a total of 37 sessions from 2007 to 2019 with the word "security" in the title, predominately from 2013. The science part of the 2013 Arctic Frontiers – *Geopolitics and marine production in the changing Arctic* – was organized around three parallel sessions, where the session *Geopolitics in a changing Arctic* addressed Arctic security in a global context; New stakeholders and governance in the Arctic; and the Arctic in a global energy picture. The former attended to how the Arctic states are in the process or redefining their interests and policies in the region, and what it means for Arctic security.

The 2014 *Humans in the Arctic* conference focused on health, food, and water security. The 2015 *Climate and Energy* and 2016 *Industry and Environment* conferences emphasized the Arctic's role in the global energy supply and security: renewable energy, societal aspects of Arctic energy activities, and oil and gas exploration. Through 2017-2019, security was also primarily addressed in terms of food and energy security. In 2019, the day-long breakout session – *Science Diplomacy and Security in the Arctic* – focused on the interplay between global geopolitics and developments in the Arctic, including East-West security, science as a venue for trust building, how to implement the Arctic Council's Science Agreement, and US-China rivalry.

In a discourse analysis of Arctic Circle programs from 2013-2016, Johannsdottir and Cook (2017) found a growing emphasis on energy, science, research, and security in the titles of plenary and breakout sessions. Security issues range from discussions about geopolitical and military issues, to human, social, and environmental security. In 2014 there was an Arctic security plenary session, in addition to four security-oriented breakout sessions, including one titled *Military strategies and defense policies in, and impacts of recent crisis on, security of the Arctic*. This is noteworthy, as it was in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea in February/March that year.

Other topics were geopolitics and regional dynamics in a global world, environmental and human security, local and regional security, (state) sovereignty, and new security actors. The Thematic Network on Geopolitics and Security – a collaborative effort between the UArctic and Northern Research Forum – arranged three breakout sessions on military, security, and defense related topics in 2015, and three in 2016. In 2016, there was also a plenary session titled *Keeping Arctic water safe: International cooperation - safety, security and emergency preparedness* organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nord University.

¹¹Arctic Frontiers themes, 2007–2021: The unlimited Arctic; Out of the blue; The age of the Arctic; Living in the High North; Arctic tipping points; Energies in the High North; Geopolitics and marine production in the changing Arctic; Humans in the Arctic; Climate and energy; Industry and environment; White space – blue future; Connecting the Arctic; Smart Arctic; Distant Connections; Building Bridges. See also Chapter Five, section 5.6.

Before the 2017 Arctic Circle, the Munich Security Conference arranged an invitation only Roundtable in Reykjavik. Participants discussed the state of Arctic governance and cooperation, China's economic investments in the Arctic, and how Russia's building of military infrastructure should be interpreted (Munich Security Roundtable, 2017). At the main Assembly, the breakout session *Arms race, arms control and disarmament in the Arctic - Russian-US dialogue* is an example of a discussion that could not have taken place at the Arctic Council. In 2018, the University of Southern Denmark and University of Loughborough (UK) arranged a session on Arctic security trends and emerging issues, noteworthy attending to Danish-Greenlandic relations, and the impact of great power politics.

What can this tell about the role of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture? For one, there is need for forums where people can discuss security related issues – indicated by the interest in bringing such issues to the conference stage. Moreover, the Arctic Council's agenda is not only limited in terms of issue areas, but also by time-constraints. Conferences are therefore described by informants from both science and policy as useful arenas for the Senior Arctic Officials to meet outside of the twice-a-year gatherings of the Arctic Council for discussions. In particular through the “open tent” provided by the Arctic Circle, where participants can bring with them what topics they please, a wider space is created for deliberation. The same can be said about the Arctic Frontiers, however to a lesser extent as the organizers are more in control of the agenda. The space created by conferences is also available for more actors, leading to the second shortcoming of the Arctic Council for conferences to amend.

9.3.2 Broadening stakeholder involvement

The other limitation of the Arctic Council is involving the pool of stakeholders in the region, which has expanded beyond the initial creators from 1996 (Graczyk & Koivurova, 2013). On the one side, the Arctic Council needs to follow certain structures, and cannot incorporate the observers in the same way as member states and permanent participants. On the other side, the Arctic is a victim of the activities of non-Arctic actors, and there are issues the Arctic states cannot deal with alone – e.g. pollutants, regulating commercial shipping, and fisheries (Young, 2014, 234).

However, Knecht (2016) examines participation in Arctic Council meetings, and finds that observers' participation quotas are much lower than those of member states and permanent participants. Babin and Lasserre (2019) analyze the participation of Asian states in the activities of the Arctic Council, and show that these are “extremely weak and limited by a very restricted status” (p. 10). From this, Rossi's (2015) question of whether an alternative form of Arctic governance can emerge, due to the inability of the status quo to satisfy expanding interests, is compelling.

The suggestion is substantiated by the data collected for this study. The skepticism towards the launch of the Arctic Circle in 2013 has been linked to the growing interests of Asian states in the Arctic, and what the new forum would mean for the regional governance structure, and Arctic rights holders. The nature of the observer role in the Arctic Council contributes to this dubiousness still prevailing. As described by a research institute director: “Those claiming to be near-Arctic states have been incorporated in the Arctic Council, and while it is better to be an observer than not, it is a different role from the full worthy members.”

This indicates that non-Arctic states still need alternative forums to advance their interests in the region. Furthermore, non-Arctic states are issuing Arctic policies and strategies, which is a move outside the observer role, and another indication of the need for new mechanisms. One speaker in the breakout session *A New Arctic Circle Mission Council: The Global Arctic* at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly argued that having informal networks – involving science, policy, business, and civil society – is becoming more important for maintaining peace and stability.

At the same time, there have been some efforts to enhance the participation of observers in the Arctic Council. For example, a new session was introduced under the Finnish chairmanship (2015-2017), where the observers could talk for five minutes each about a chosen topic. One informant from academia describes the session as consisting of impressive comments, demonstrating that the observer states are active in working with environmental challenges in the Arctic. The informant goes on to say: “If they get the opportunity to talk there, conferences might assume a different role.” Still, five minutes is only a fraction of the speaking time non-Arctic states can get at conferences. Thus, I consider the latter postulation unlikely. At conferences, they can actually promote themselves and showcase their interests, capacities, and ambitions in the region. As platforms for non-Arctic actors, it is therefore more appropriate to consider the Arctic Council as supplementing conferences, rather than the other way around.

The shortcoming regarding stakeholder involvement does not only concern non-Arctic state actors. As previously discussed, local and regional governments have no formal association with the Arctic Council, and are not provided the same opportunities as Indigenous peoples’ organizations. One informant previously associated with the Arctic Council describes how the regional level used to be more involved, but Senior Arctic Officials are now commonly from ministries in the capital. This results in meetings becoming very generic, and reports from the Arctic Council’s knowledge producing entities are not disseminated to those with competence on specific issues such as health, education, housing, or infrastructure.

In summary, while the previous section demonstrated conferences as alternatives to the Arctic Council, in that the latter cannot discuss military security, the most significant supplementing function is providing a platform for non-Arctic states and non-state

actors. Indifferent to membership, conferences impact the Arctic governance structure by democratizing the regional dialogue. Conferences allow for network building between international, national, sub-national, non-governmental, and commercial actors.

An Arctic Council associated informant indicated: “there are certainly some who express concern about the number of observers the Arctic Council has today”. Therefore, this outcome is not only beneficial for the frustrated observers who “just have to sit and observe, without anything useful to do”, as described by an informant from academia, but should also be welcomed by the Arctic states. Of the two cases, the Arctic Circle is superior in providing a platform for non-Arctic states to promote and legitimize themselves as stakeholders. This is evident from the conference’s vision, (social) media profile, and is noted by participants:

“Grímsson has been politically in opposition to the founding philosophy of the Arctic Council that “we [the Arctic states] are themselves enough.” “He allows non-elite, non-Arctic actors to talk about the Arctic.”

“I see it as a geopolitical interest of Grímsson’s, in connecting subnational governments and non-Arctic states to the Arctic in a way that at some point has the potential to displace the Arctic Council and national Arctic sovereignty.”

9.3.3 Improving communication and outreach

“I find the Arctic Council is quite mum, on the side of caution in terms of communicating to outside people. The secretariat tries to communicate their work, but I don’t think the governments have much interest in communicating. I always find the working groups to be the biggest black box. Either, it’s too technical, so we think it is something they are not communicating, or we just cannot understand it.”

Thirdly, the Arctic Council – described by an informant as “the unknown Council” – has a communication challenge. One government affiliated informant accounts for the difficult position of the Arctic Council, as a closed club that needs to discuss things in private, while at the same time communicate contributions to regional development, especially the activities of the working groups. Yet, associates with the working groups describe challenges of drawing attention to gatherings where they present results. In particular, topics decision-makers do not want negative publicity about, for example unfavorable health-policy outcomes. While the audience at the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle is not the general public, and outreach is still limited, this section examines how the Arctic Council and its working groups utilize conferences.

“Several of the plenaries have had the secretariat of CAFF or PAME be a facilitator or a speaker, which allows them to describe recent work products

in a way that people sitting in the audience probably did not know about. So, yes, I think it is another way of getting information about the Arctic Council's work out to a broader audience.”

At the 2008 Arctic Frontiers, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) working group presented results from the *Assessment of the Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic*, and the science program included two sessions co-chaired by representatives from the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working groups. At the 2014 *Humans in the Arctic*, the director of the Arctic Council secretariat, Magnus Jóhannesson, led a session on Arctic health issues, with speakers from AMAP, and the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). In 2015, the chair of the SAOs spoke in the policy opening session, and there was a breakout session on the role of AMAP as an Arctic messenger. In 2016, the Danish representative to the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) working group spoke in about the SAR-agreement and oil spill task forces in the policy session *Arctic Oceans: The future of Arctic marine cooperation*.

The Russian SAO spoke in the opening session at the 2017 Arctic Frontiers, which also included an Arctic Frontiers Plus session on *The Arctic Council's Work on Oceans*, with a keynote by the US Chair of the SAOs, Ambassador David Balton, and panelists from PAME, EPPR, and the task force on scientific cooperation, as well as Japan's Polar Ambassador as representative for the observer countries. In 2018, the Arena program of the Arctic Frontiers included a session on the Arctic Council as a model for the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region, with the Canadian SAO, and representatives from AMAP, and SDWG. Lastly, the chair of EPPR spoke at an Arena event in 2019, on *Improved safety and environmentally sound operations in the Arctic Ocean*.

While the AMAP and EPPR are the most visible working groups at the Arctic Frontiers, the Arctic Circle has been used frequently by CAFF – hosting thirteen breakout sessions from 2013 to 2019, three of these together with PAME. Recurrent topics are Arctic biodiversity conservation, sustainability, and invasive alien species. In 2015, CAFF held a breakout session on *Implementing the Recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment* – utilizing the conference for communicating the assessment to a broader audience. Another noteworthy initiative by CAFF, repeated in 2017, 2018, and 2019, is breakout sessions on how to engage the youth in Arctic biodiversity.

This selection of examples demonstrates how the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly are used by Arctic Council associates: SAOs, Chairmanships, and representatives from the working groups and task forces. Additionally, these actors are used by other session organizers as speakers, and in panels. The program review supports the argument that conferences are supplementing channels and larger display windows for what goes on in the region, in terms of science, research, assessments, negotiations, and agreements. Both cases in the study are utilized not only by actors who find the space

provided for them in the Arctic Council to be too crowded and restricted, but also by the Arctic Council itself, for communication and outreach.

This points to a general function of conferences. Through facilitating interaction and information sharing, conferences contribute to ameliorate the problem of limited knowledge about others' motives in the international system (Keohane, 1982). As such, barriers to cooperation are reduced. This has been illustrated by both cases. The Arctic Circle by its mere existence. The hesitance towards the forum and prospects of greater non-Arctic involvement at its launch has receded, and the conference has proven to be supportive to the Arctic dialogue, and the Arctic Council. The Arctic Frontiers illustrates how barriers to cooperation can be reduced through its engagement with Russia, and contributions to involving the Eastern neighbor in the international dialogue.

9.3.4 Differences between the cases

A key finding in the study is that the cases are viewed differently when assessed against the Arctic Council: as the Arctic Frontiers *and* the Arctic Council, and the Arctic Circle *opposed to* the Arctic Council. One of the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers stated: “We are much closer to the Arctic Council way of thinking – the inner circle and the interests of the Arctic Eight – while Grímsson is more open.” Accordingly, while the two conferences belong to the same universe of cases, significant differences shape how they are situated within their surrounding system. It also influences how people conceptualize the arenas within their frames of reference – illustrated by a quote from a non-Arctic science institute director:

“Arctic Frontiers is pretty close to the Arctic Council. The close involvement of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains why it is very much used by the Arctic Council to showcase things, to discuss things, and to meet. The Arctic Circle has a very different approach. The Arctic Circle is not Arctic Council. It was, when it started, seen as competition.”

Four factors in particular are central for how the conferences are perceived within, and exerts influence on, Arctic governance. These are: the philosophy behind the establishment of the conference; the organizers and their (perceived) strategy; social media profile; external activities. Concerning the philosophy behind and establishment of the conference, – the Arctic Frontiers started out as a science-oriented forum, and has always been viewed very positively within the Arctic Council – according to associated informants. Secondly, cooperation with the Arctic Council has been in the Arctic Frontiers strategy all along, and as previously emphasized, the organizers aim to develop synergies between the secretariats. As noted by two government employees:

“The Arctic Council is the foremost forum for cooperation in the High North. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is very concerned about talking positive about and increase the status of this forum.”

“The difference between the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle, seen from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is who best support the Arctic Council – and here, there is a clear winner.”

An important aspect of the Arctic Frontiers is gathering all the Senior Arctic Officials in Tromsø, which not only allows them to meet, but also provides non-Arctic representatives the opportunity to engage with central actors in the region. It contributes to promote Norway as a driving force in Arctic cooperation – as underlined by an American governmental informant, and is a means for the consolidation of the image of Tromsø as the Arctic Capital – as pointed out by a Norwegian government affiliated informant. The Arctic Frontiers’ format gives less space for country sessions, and thus less leeway for non-Arctic states to project their interests. As follows, the conference portrays a closeness to the Arctic Council, and is described by a science institute affiliated informant as mirroring its structure of members and observers.

Looking at the Arctic Frontiers’ social media profile, the conference is described on Twitter as: “Independent pan-Arctic network on policy, business, and science in the Arctic.” The Arctic Frontiers’ Facebook page states: “Supporting independent dialogue, building partnerships, and contributing to discussion on pan-arctic strategies for sustainable development in the Arctic.” Thus, in contrast to the international emphasis of the Arctic Circle, the Arctic Frontiers accentuates being a *pan-Arctic* forum, giving primacy to the communities and actors located throughout the region. Lastly, the activities of the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers are conducted in cooperation with a Norwegian ministry, and in support of Norwegian interests abroad.

“The Arctic Circle was openly established as an alternative, a philosophy the [Norwegian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not like. Although, it is not necessarily the impression that the Icelandic government is behind Grímsson’s vision. They are supportive of the Arctic Council, and less pleased with the Arctic Five.”

The Arctic Circle’s establishment was received with more skepticism by regional actors, as described by the government affiliated informant cited above. Some perceive it was by no means established as an alternative to the Arctic Council, while others are firm in their opinion that it was precisely so. This can be seen related to how the initiative was largely an individual effort of former president Grímsson, and the format with country sessions gives a platform to powerful non-Arctic states. Because of wariness towards the nature of this addition to the regional structure, delegations were limited from Norway

and the United States, and other states refrained from sending their SAOs to the first Assembly. Regarding the organizers' strategy, those involved in the process of establishing the Arctic Circle argue there was no intent of developing an alternative to the Arctic Council, and that the Assembly is nothing more than a supplementing body.

This image – of a supplement – has become more manifested over the years. Still, there are representatives from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who poorly disguise their skepticism towards the Icelandic forum. This is related to the two last factors: the Arctic Circle's social media profile and external activities. Informants have argued the social media profile of the Arctic Circle gives the impression of it being a political gathering rather than a conference. It is described as “the largest international gathering on Arctic issues” on Twitter, and its Facebook page states: “The Arctic Circle is the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic. It is an open, democratic platform.” Opposed to the external activities of the Arctic Frontiers, the Arctic Circle organization has established task forces and mission council's on shipping and ports (from 2015), and the Global Arctic (from 2019). These activities, resembling what the Arctic Council is doing, are not viewed positively by all in the Arctic community.

9.4 The Arctic governance regime complex

In examining the nature and functions of Arctic conferences, this study especially focuses on one structure feature of the larger governance architecture: the regime complex, understood as larger sets of interrelated and interdependent institutions. From the definition by Orsini et al. (2013), a regime complex is a network of three or more international regimes that relate on a common subject matter, exhibit overlapping membership, and generate interaction (p. 29). The Arctic regime complex consists of treaties, intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, non-state actors, international non-governmental organizations, transnational networks, bilateral initiatives (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.3). The interesting question for this thesis is how conferences fit within this myriad of elements.

Having elaborated on the geopolitical situation relevant for the Arctic governance architecture, and attended to the main pillar – the Arctic Council – this section addresses the functions of conferences for other elements in this structure, and how conferences serve as connections among units within the Arctic governance architecture. Firstly, the Arctic Frontiers' contribution to creating synergies between secretariats located in Tromsø. Secondly, I discuss how conferences are instrumental in building momentum before the signing of an agreement, and in the implementation phase of an agreement. Lastly, I look at the Arctic Science Ministerial, a more recent addition to the governance architecture using conferences to affirm its role among the other units.

9.4.1 Creating synergies

High degree of fragmentation is a common characteristic of global architectures (see *inter alia* Biermann et al., 2009; Biermann, 2014; Biermann, van Driel, Vijge, & Peek, 2020). Humrich (2013) concludes the Arctic governance architecture exhibits "cooperative fragmentation", of the three degrees of fragmentation as identified by Biermann et al. (2009) – the other two being synergistic and conflictive fragmentation. While Biermann et al. (2009) consider fragmentation to be a value-free concept (p. 18), it does lead to governance challenges within an architecture (Humrich, 2013). One initiative to promote synergies among entities in the Arctic is the joint locality of the Arctic Council's secretariat, the Arctic Economic Council's secretariat, and the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS). The standing secretariat of the Arctic Council was opened in Tromsø in June 2013, and the Arctic Economic Council secretariat in September 2015. The Indigenous Peoples Secretariat, established in 1994, was relocated from Copenhagen to Tromsø in January 2016.

The process of basing the Arctic Economic Council secretariat in Tromsø was largely driven by Norwegian business interests, and also motivated by the potential for synergies with the Arctic Council's secretariat. It underlines the intention of the AEC – to support the Arctic Council in ensuring sustainable development – as well as the objective of providing business advice and perspectives to the work of the Arctic Council. These objectives were formalized with the MoU signed at the Rovaniemi Arctic Council meeting in May 2019 – which provided a platform for collaboration between the Arctic Council and Arctic Economic Council. According to Tero Vauraste, the outgoing AEC chair when Iceland took over the position from Finland in 2019, the MoU "strengthens the AEC's position as the Arctic Council's preferred partner in issues related to responsible economic development" (Arctic Economic Council, 2019). To that end, having the secretariats in the same city provides for ongoing contact and dialogue.

Looking broadly at the institutional landscape of Arctic governance, this is a strong advantage for the Norwegian government, which has an ambition to create and develop the best ideas in the Arctic. The Arctic Frontiers is considered the most prominent conference for this objective, according to a government affiliated informant. The prominence and support given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Arctic Frontiers is also founded in the location of the three secretariats in Tromsø – which enables the creation of desired synergies between these organizations and the Arctic Frontiers. The triangle is further used as a reasoning for Tromsø Municipality's Arctic Capital project, which the Arctic Frontiers is involved in. The organizers of the Arctic Frontiers have worked to promote Tromsø as an Arctic competence hub and demonstrate the city as the center of Arctic development – an identity the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs wants to consolidate.

9.4.2 Supporting negotiation processes

Another contribution of conferences within the Arctic governance architecture is supporting processes preceding and succeeding the implementation of agreements relevant for the Arctic region. One of which is the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code), which was negotiated from 2009, and entered into force in January 2017. During this period, both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle were used to build momentum around the agreement. Examples of sessions from the Arctic Circle include a breakout session in Britain's large delegation at the 2014 Assembly – on developments in relation to financial, legal, insurance issues, and international regulations. In 2015, the international and interdisciplinary Arctic Options project arranged a breakout session on the *Arctic High Seas: Building Common Interests in the Arctic Ocean*. In 2016, three breakout sessions addressed: legal aspects of the Polar Code, the future of Arctic marine operations under IPCC climate scenarios, and the Polar Code and the UNCLOS.

The Polar Code has featured in the Arctic Frontiers's science part since 2010, when the question was raised of how to meet the growing demand for governance of human activities affecting the Arctic Ocean. In 2011, key aspects of developments within IMO were on the agenda, including the relationship between the envisaged Polar Code and existing IMO conventions, and issues falling outside the IMO's mandate. In 2013, there was a presentation on the adequacy of the Law of the Sea and international environmental law to the Arctic Ocean, and one on challenges in the negotiation process of the Polar Code, including how to resolve conflictual environmental standards.

One of the 2014 Arctic Frontiers' four parallel science sessions was *Shipping and offshore in the Arctic*, including the sub session *Technological challenges and IMO Polar Code*. It contained presentations on the institutional interplay in Arctic shipping, developments in the IMO, and safety and maintenance management of marine operations in the Arctic. The 2016 program included the role of Russia in the decision-making process of the Polar Code, the IMO's work to construct ways to mitigate environmental and human maritime disasters, and requirements imposed on cruise ships by the Polar Code. In 2018, the role of the Arctic Council in facilitating institutional interplay for Arctic shipping was addressed in a featured science talk.

The last topic points to a challenge of the Arctic governance system, with overlapping institutions and organizations needing to coordinate their work. The Arctic Council can contribute, as a tool in international diplomacy and negotiations. However, this overview also demonstrates the role of conferences, which were used during the development and negotiation phase of the Polar Code to keep a larger audience in the loop about the process. Conference presentation is also a way for other actors to express their concerns of the agreement under negotiation, exemplified with the critique of the Polar Code in relation to environmental issues.

Conferences also play a central role after the signing of an agreement. For example, if there are challenges related to how to implement and administrate it, or practical obstacles between states – as with the *Arctic Council Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Science Cooperation*. The aim of the agreement was to facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency in the development of scientific knowledge in the Arctic. Nonetheless, the agreement was no quick-fix for removing barriers for science collaboration, but should be regarded as a new platform for long-term discussions. In a session on science diplomacy at the 2019 Arctic Frontiers, one speaker argued for science as an advocacy coalition, playing a role in creating cooperative institutions and establishing first contact. Moreover, that the challenges of implementing the Science Agreement demonstrate that science diplomacy is at best a supplement, but not a substitute, for regular diplomacy or bureaucratic procedures.

Both the Arctic Circle and Arctic Frontiers have been used as platforms to deliberate the way forward after the agreement was implemented. At the former in 2018, there was a breakout session on *Supporting the implementation of the Arctic science agreement*, organized by the UArctic, the IASSA, and the Science Diplomacy Center at Tufts University. Denmark is the depository government of the agreement, and the Danish SAO, Hanne Eskjær, was present for the discussion of barriers to enforcing the agreement. The need for trust building, challenges related to cooperation with Russia, and clashes of perceptions between the East and West, was further addressed by Frej Sorento Dichmann from the Danish ministry of education and research in an all-day event on *Science diplomacy and security in the Arctic* at the 2019 Arctic Frontiers.

9.4.3 Role clarification

The Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM) (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.6.6) is a conference of science ministers, EU representatives, and delegates from Indigenous peoples' organizations – first arranged in 2016 by the White House to enhance collective efforts towards international scientific cooperation in the Arctic. This is an interesting addition to the Arctic governance architecture. For one, it is a gathering of ministers that resembles many of the features of the Arctic Council. Secondly, it is a closed conference that utilizes other conferences for communication.

The shared objectives with the Arctic Council is evident from the 2018 ASM2 arranged in Berlin. The purpose was to enhance and develop cooperation under three themes: Strengthening, integrating and sustaining Arctic observations; facilitating access to Arctic data; sharing Arctic research infrastructure (German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). The purpose of the Arctic Council *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Science Cooperation* is “to enhance cooperation in Scientific Activities in order to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the development of

scientific knowledge about the Arctic” (Arctic Council, 2017a). The Science Agreement’s articles 5 to 7 address access to research infrastructure and activities, access to research areas, and access to data. In other words, the precise aims of the ASM2.

To that end, in addition to building momentum in the process of negotiating an agreement, conferences are described as useful for introducing new initiatives by an informant associated with the Arctic Science Ministerial. Thus, the second interesting feature about this arrangement is that itself is a conference. However, as a closed meeting of science ministers¹², the constellation has used the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle much in the same way as the Arctic Council: to broaden its outreach and communicate the work of yet another members-only forum in the region. In 2017, the EU Commission DG of Research and Innovation, the Ministry for Education and Culture of Finland, the Ministry for Education and Research of Germany, and the United States Arctic Research Commission hosted a breakout session at the Arctic Circle titled *Increasing international cooperation on Arctic science via Ministerial Meetings*, and the same composition of actors hosted a session at the 2018 Assembly. The Arctic Science Ministerial was also presented in the policy section at the 2018 Arctic Frontiers, as one of several processes engaging diplomatic considerations about the changing circumstances of the Arctic.

At the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly, the breakout session *From the Second Arctic Science Ministerial to the Third Arctic Science Ministerial* was hosted by the European Commission, with speakers from ministries in Finland, Germany, Iceland, and Japan. The purpose of the session was to present the accomplishments from ASM2 in Berlin, hosted by Germany and Finland, and to lay forth the plans for the upcoming ASM3, to be co-hosted between Japan and Iceland. The Arctic Science Ministerial highlight a key function of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle within the architecture of the region – they are arenas linking, and contributing to synergies among, other elements. While it at times can be necessary with closed gatherings, the two conferences in this study fulfills an important role as arenas for including a broader audience and democratizing the dialogue.

9.5 Conclusions: Conferences as mediation links

“The new and different model of bringing together actors from the international community through the Arctic Circle Assembly creates results – it boosts cooperation forward. It helps the Arctic be a constructive, positive part of the world. From my broad perspective, I see the Arctic Circle, within the framework of Arctic governance, being the proof of a reasonable alter-

¹²In addition to science ministers from the 26 participating governments, representatives from around 30 governments, six Indigenous peoples’ organizations, and ten select international organizations were invited to give presentations on the priority topics of the second Arctic Science Ministerial.

native model to the somewhat broken intergovernmental model, which is not delivering results. I think what we have done in the Arctic in recent years is not peripheral in the global evolution – but a core example of what can be done in the 21st Century in solving some of the challenges of our time.”

These are the words of Mr. Grímsson, when interviewed for this study. While obviously partisan in judging the successes of the Arctic Circle, he has an important point concerning the limitations of the traditional model for international cooperation. This chapter has demonstrated how the Arctic is affected by, and reflects, global developments and power structures. It is a geopolitically important region for powerful actors such as the US, Russia, and China — who are also interested in the promised resource potential. The globalization of the Arctic makes the governance architecture more complex, which in turn makes governing more demanding. The economic interests of new stakeholders clashes with political and strategic sovereignty concerns of the Arctic states and rights-holders – exemplified by the case of Greenland. Because of the region’s resource potential and geopolitical position, the search for conflict both in academia and in the media has been fierce. Nonetheless, Arctic cooperation has proved resistant to spill-over from tensions elsewhere – demonstrated by the Crimea-crisis.

The necessity of conferences is contested, and conferences are often faulted for being elite gatherings that do not produce significant outcomes. Their usefulness is deliberated against the cost of arrangement, and negative environmental impacts. Yet, conferences are becoming as accustomed as any other element within the Arctic governance architecture. While conferences do not have decision-making authority or produce binding outcomes, they fill different and important functions. In answering the question posed in the introduction: conferences *are* contributions to the Arctic regime complex.

One research institute affiliated informant working towards policy describes conferences as “intensive seminars on a wide variety of topics, from technology to policy, where people can expand their understanding of issues that might be relevant for their work.” The informant further states: “conference participation probably helps governing – but I don’t see it as changing governance structures.” This statement sums up the analysis in this chapter, from which I propose considering conferences as a constructive piece of the Arctic governance architecture.

The main purpose of conferences is functioning as mediation links – connections – among other elements in the architecture. Firstly, conferences broadens participation, as open arenas for anyone able to pay the registration fee and travel expenses. At the Arctic Circle, and to a lesser extent the Arctic Frontiers, everyone is given the same right to participate, speak, and ask questions – regardless of formal status. Still, conferences are not town meetings, and as pointed out by a government affiliated informant: “It’s not like anybody of the street can just walk in. It’s not completely democratic or transparent” – an important aspect, which is discussed below.

Secondly, complex interdependence is the main explanation for the absence of conflict in the Arctic (Byers, 2017), and conferences are one of the multiple channels of contact and dialogue. Conferences fit well within the consensus driven “Arctic as a zone of peace”, and can reinforce existing structures by providing an informal atmosphere where people can talk without binding mandates. Conferences contribute to keeping momentum going through recurrent interaction among actors, as well as the development of a coherent agenda, a common discourse, and the reinforcement of social practices, and norms of behavior. According to Young (2005), these are all necessary elements for the continued governance of the region.

Thirdly, conferences are considered mediation links as they fill a necessitated space as arenas for role clarification and creation of synergies. The Arctic governance landscape is becoming increasingly complex, and the growing number of engaged entities means institutional branding becomes more important. Both to differentiate ones work from others’, and to attract financial and human resources. For example, conferences provide a platform for the Arctic Science Ministerial to describe what it is doing, and argue for its necessity within Arctic governance. Those looking to engage in business can learn how the Arctic Economic Council can be useful. Scientists can learn about research programs, and opportunities for collaboration or data exchange.

This chapter has demonstrated how, by giving a broader stakeholder pool a platform for entering Arctic cooperation, conferences add a dimension to the workings of the Arctic Council. This model enhances knowledge and boosts collaboration. Conferences expand the structure of Arctic governance, if defined as a structure of cooperation and dialogue. However, while there are positive democratizing effects of the two cases in the study – the Arctic Frontiers’ Open Arctic arrangements, and the Arctic Circle’s explicit involvement of non-Arctic stakeholders – a note of caution is found in the Earth System Governance literature, concerning the legitimacy of transnational governance (see Chapter Three, section 3.4.1). Mr. Grímsson’s vision for the Arctic Circle organization and outcomes from processes taking place through the conference resembles the argument about how private actors contribute to democratizing global governance through the involvement of civil society organizations and citizen initiatives.

On the one side, such activities can provide a space for previously marginalized voices. On the other side, looking at the criteria for examining the legitimacy of transnational governance: participation, the types of actors involved, transparency, and accountability – these are more dubiously fulfilled through conferences. In evaluating the legitimacy of transnational governance, the literature shows that there are obstacles to provision for equal opportunities for participation and lack of accountability to the public (Kalfagianni et al., 2020, 88), findings that this study supports. Related, deriving from the statements below – by a business representative, a non-Arctic foreign ministry employee, and a journalist – the marketplace functions of conferences must be noted.

“I think, actually, for the moment, the problem is there is just too much, and you have to be quite picky where you go and where you don’t, because, as I said, you can spend your life at Arctic conferences.”

“With so many Arctic conferences, there also seems to be a competition between various arenas – for participants, size, and relevance. Is this a necessary development? Everyone agrees on the issues being addressed at these events, so why are they in competition?”

“Rovaniemi and the Arctic conferences there. They are working really hard to become a fourth actor in the conference market - in addition to Archangelsk [The International Arctic Forum], Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle.”

Accordingly, the two conferences create a competitive space in the region. The Arctic Circle has accurately been described as a bazaar (Depledge & Dodds, 2017), where information is traded, certain kinds of knowledge are privileged, and there is competition for attention and visibility. The description is applicable for the Arctic Frontiers as well, however, where the ticket into the marketplace is more expensive. Moreover, there is competition between the two cases in the study, and the establishment of the Arctic Circle clearly had an impact on the regional governance system, for non-Arctic states, and for the Arctic Frontiers organization. As noted by an organizer:

“I’ve been asked about the competition from the Arctic Circle. There is no single project that has contributed more to the growth and professionalization of the Arctic Frontiers than the Arctic Circle.”

I conclude with the argument that, despite this competitive factor – or perhaps precisely because of it – both conferences are constructive elements within the Arctic governance architecture. While fulfilling many of the same purposes, the two cases occupy distinct spaces, and can be viewed as complementing entities. The main function of the Arctic Frontiers is to preserve the established: research collaboration, and connecting science with policy. Within the zone of peace, it is necessary to have an arena where actors can gather to develop the conversation, in order to maintain collaboration and stability. Equally important for maintaining stability, and for driving developments forward, is the primary function of the Arctic Circle: providing a playing ground for new stakeholders. The Arctic Circle organization gives non-Arctic and non-state actors a voice and the opportunity to learn about the region. In this way, it contributes to create responsible stakeholders – which is beneficial for the Arctic states and local communities.

Conclusions – Governance by conference

10.1 Introduction

What are the functions of the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle Assembly within Arctic governance, operating in a system of sovereign state interests and cooperative arrangements?

As indicated in the introductory chapter (section 1.4), this thesis set out to both enhance our knowledge about the functions of conferences within Arctic governance, operating among sovereign states and formalized cooperative arrangements, and also to expand our knowledge about how conferences can serve various functions within governance systems more generally. From this, I posed the above research question seeking to fill a knowledge gap: the lack of insight into the role and functions of conferences in the Arctic. The aim of the study was further to situate Arctic conferences within the larger universe of comparable phenomena. This inquiry entailed establishing the space the Arctic Frontiers and the Arctic Circle Assembly occupy.

It was expected that these conferences do not exist in a vacuum, from the argument proposed by Biermann and Kim (2020b): international institutions do not exist in a void, and cannot be analyzed without considering the complex governance web in which they operate. Therefore, the Arctic governance architecture as a whole, and elements within the regime complex, became of interest. The relational element is also an argument for the value of a study like this. The vulnerable biophysical system of the Arctic is undergoing rapid transformations caused by climate change. The region's social-economic system is drawing attention from a growing pool of stakeholders. There is need for arenas to deliberate challenges and coordinate activities – and, there is need for research on how conferences can meet such demands. Still, while most elements of the Arctic governance system have been subject to analysis, previous studies have not provided insight into the functions of conferences in the Arctic.

The other main ambition of this study was to be conducive to the literature on conferences. Studies of conferences have divergent centers of attention, focus on different outcomes, and scholars have applied various theoretical frameworks depending on the purpose and field of the study (see Chapter One, section 1.3.2 and Appendix 7). This thesis has sought to provide yet a novel framework through which to analyze and understand conferences in the Arctic, drawing on perspectives from outside traditional IR-theorizing to elucidate different elements and nuances of this realm. This framework can possibly inspire to similar application in future studies of comparable hybrid arenas.

From the empirical material gathered for this study, two perspectives on the nature and role of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly became evident. These bear resemblance to the two perspectives on Arctic governance discussed throughout the thesis (see in particular Chapter Two, section 2.3.1 or Chapter Nine, section 2.3.1). On the one side, the two conferences have gained international prominence since their establishment. On the other side, there is skepticism associated with the rise of these hubs for deliberation on science, policy, and business in the Arctic. Also, unanticipated differences between these two seemingly similar cases were discovered throughout the project. Therefore, before bringing back the three mechanisms, I return to the ideal model of a conference, and summarize some of the main differences between the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly – contributing to different outcomes on the dependent variable, Arctic governance.

10.2 Two different models for conference organizing

The ideal model of a conference discovered throughout the study concerns a) the functions the organizers seek to fill, and b) the outcomes conferences should produce. In Chapter Five (section 5.7), I deliberated how the organizers must facilitate two seemingly opposing missions: provide the “Arctic-101” for newcomers, while creating an arena attractive for experts. This was linked to a threefold necessity within Arctic governance. For one, educating non-Arctic state actors and encourage a sense of responsibility to compliment political and economic interests in the region. Secondly, promoting the work of, and enable cooperation among, experts to deal with emerging challenges. Thirdly, informing policy-makers with scientific knowledge, and support actions to address challenges and opportunities. This study has examined two similar, yet in many ways different, conferences. It has uncovered distinct outcomes on the mechanisms of interest, including overall functions within the Arctic governance architecture. I asked to what extent the ideal model is internalized in the two cases, and to what degree the organizers are successful at facilitating cross-sectoral interplay.

The Arctic Frontiers was initiated by a research institute, founded on the ideal of providing for knowledge-based decision making, and social, economic, and business development. While the conference is an arena for advancing knowledge production in the region, the neglect of the science pillar and high cost of participation described in Chapter Six have led to an unfortunate reputation within the international scientific community. The intention of promoting cross-sectional interplay has also been challenged by the pillar format characterizing the Arctic Frontiers until 2019. Moreover, the close involvement of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other partners – e.g. Conoco Phillips and Equinor – has contributed to the conference being constructed largely around Norwegian priorities. The Arctic Frontiers is a platform for the

Norwegian government to promote its interests, and to showcase Tromsø as the “Arctic capital”. The Arctic Frontiers has been described as resembling the Arctic Council’s “members and observers” structure – drawing a distinction between those “on the inside” and “those on the outside” of Arctic governance. The structure and organization benefits the Arctic states, in supporting their claims based on “sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction”. The conference being attended predominately by Norwegian (and Russian and Nordic) participants further curbs the potential educational function of non-Arctic actors described in Chapter Seven (sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.2.2).

The Arctic Circle Assembly, which is largely an undertaking of former Icelandic president Olafur Ragnar Grímsson, is intended to be a global arena – an open, democratic tent. It was established when the Arctic became increasingly central in global affairs, as a platform gathering all Arctic and non-Arctic stakeholders interested in the development of the region. The launch of the Arctic Circle came timely for the attempts of the Icelandic government to reposition itself on the international arena following the 2008 financial crisis. In later years, the profile of the Arctic Circle Assembly and Forums has depicted both Icelandic domestic and global interests. To that point, Mr. Grímsson’s initiative has been described by informants to this study as an attempt to create an economic and geopolitical “Arctic Hub” on Iceland. From its origin and vision, the Arctic Circle is to a larger extent than the Arctic Frontiers a legitimizing tool for non-Arctic state representatives to argue for and justify their presence in the region. There is no primacy given to Arctic states or state actors, and the organizers work actively to promote sub-national and regional voices – e.g. the West-Nordic focus, and the Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands economic triangle. These features of the Assembly attracts non-Arctic actors by providing them a platform to have a voice in the region, which in turn contributes to creating responsible stakeholders.

10.3 Stakeholders and the actor composition of Arctic governance

- What are the main functions of conferences for various actor groups, and do conference engagement contribute to advancing their agency in the region?
- Do conferences contribute to expanding the collective of relevant and legitimate stakeholders in the Arctic?

The stakeholder typology was applied to the examination of actors in the conference sphere. Specifically, to uncover the functions conferences serve for different participant groups. It has contributed to the examination of conference participation as a means for actors to acquire attributes and increase their position and salience within the Arctic community. When actors can expand on their power, legitimacy, or urgency, this in turn

contributes to altering the actor composition of Arctic governance. As such, the stakeholder typology has also shed light on the dynamic element of conference engagement. This section summarizes key findings from the actor mechanism, and puts forward answers to the research questions from the introductory chapter recited above.

For Arctic state representatives, who are definitive stakeholders in the region, conferences serve as channels to assert their dominance and control the debate. Informants have described how the Arctic elite has an obligation to attend conferences and promote Arctic state sovereignty, Indigenous peoples' rights, environmental protection, balanced social and economic development, and to explain that climate change is not coming from the Arctic. Keeping these issues on the agenda is advantageous for the superiority and authority of the region's rights-holders. Moreover, targeting such information towards the new stakeholders in the region makes conferences, as described by an informant: "a very expensive form of adult education". From the perspective of regime theory and institutionalism (see Keohane, 1982; Young, 1986), conferences can be included as an element in the growing interdependence among states, as arenas facilitating communication, for activating coalitions, and for reducing barriers to cooperation.

On the other side of that coin, a key function of conferences for economically powerful and politically 'urgent' non-Arctic states, is one of strengthening their claims to stakeholder status. Accepted as such, they would be less vulnerable should powerful Arctic states develop more protectionist policies towards the region. It was not surprising how these actors seek to argue for their legitimate position, and it was expected that conferences could be purposeful arenas for this endeavor. The extent to which non-Arctic actors and those sidelined in formalized cooperation are provided a platform to express their perspectives and to showcase their interests and capabilities was exemplified by China, promoting its self-defined status as a "near-Arctic state".

Still, a more noteworthy finding was non-Arctic European states that can be added to the demanding stakeholder category in the typology, which was expected to hold smaller non-Arctic states impacted by climate change, and thus with evident urgency to their claims. Nonetheless, additional 'urgent' states discussed in Chapter Seven that can be included are Scotland, seeking to emerge as a "North-Atlantic state" and a "European gateway to the Arctic" following Brexit – thus utilizing conferences to argue for its legitimate position, and to increase its power through forming alliances. Switzerland, promoting itself as a "vertical Arctic nation" utilized conferences actively pending its Arctic Council observer candidature in 2017, which would grant more power and legitimacy in the region. Also, the EU is urgently advocating for more EU and NATO security presence in the Arctic from the conference stage (see Chapter Nine, section 9.2.2) – thus seeking to increase both the power and legitimacy attributes.

Stakeholder typology Mitchell et al. (1997) applied to the study <i>Governance by conference?</i>			
Stakeholder class	Attributes	Actors belonging in the stakeholder class from	Motivations for and outcomes of conference participation
Definitive stakeholders	Power Legitimacy Urgency	Arctic state representatives Arctic institutions/organizations The epistemic community Indigenous Peoples (Arctic Council)	Arctic rights-holders: assert their dominant position in the region. Experts/professionals: control information and knowledge.
Expectant stakeholders	Dominant stakeholders	Power Legitimacy	Conference partners and sponsors from various affiliations.
	Dependent stakeholders	Legitimacy Urgency	Local and regional representatives Indigenous Peoples (Conferences) Environmental organizations/Activists
	Dangerous stakeholders	Power Urgency	Non-Arctic actors Business/industry representatives China (holding power and urgency, becoming legitimate?) Russia (holds power and urgency, losing legitimacy?)
Latent stakeholders	Dormant stakeholders	Power	Non-Arctic actors/new stakeholders within policy and business The media
	Discretionary stakeholders	Legitimacy	Future generations
	Demanding stakeholders	Urgency	Non-Arctic states – Asian and European. Non-Arctic smaller states – Himalayan/Pacific Ocean
			Demonstrate their capabilities in areas of importance for the Arctic. Agenda setting.
			Promote the increased urgency to their claims.
			Obtain position as legitimate stakeholders in Arctic related issues. Obtain power through coalitions with larger/Arctic states.

Table 10.1: Findings from the stakeholder typology applied to the examination of actors in the conference sphere.

So, do conferences function as a backdoor into Arctic governance for actors sidelined in formal organizations? While it has been signified that conferences are arenas for new actors to promote their interests, and constructive arenas in the quest for increased stakeholder salience, this does not automatically transfer into political influence. Yet, there is a question of whether economic investments and strengthened relationships in other areas (e.g. research or business) of Arctic affairs can lead to outsiders obtaining leverage in political decision-making processes over time. This makes the dominant stakeholder class interesting – identified as partners and sponsors to the conferences, holding power and legitimacy. Chapter Three posed the question of whether they want or need to acquire the urgency attribute, or whether they are content with the status quo.

One potential answer is that outside actors with urgency to their claim can partner with the dominant stakeholders, for increased power and legitimacy in the region.

Turning to the epistemic community, conferences primarily function as arenas for networking, searching for partners, co-authors, projects, or other career opportunities. Furthermore, with the Arctic becoming more intertwined in global systems, decision-makers become increasingly dependent on expert advice. To that end, conference participation was confirmed to be both a source of power for the epistemic community, through strengthening its control over information and knowledge, and a means for providing advice to policy-makers, and in this way contribute to agenda setting. Accordingly, conference participation is a means for the epistemic community in the Arctic to remain definitive stakeholders. These were not particularly surprising findings. However, Chapter Three presented the quest for establishing whether the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle are arenas for the fulfillment of the policy-science-business interplay in Arctic affairs. While it can occur, the thesis has also revealed challenging aspects of advancing cross-sectoral integration through conferences – perhaps more so than expected. It is not sufficient to attract participants from different affiliation, but it is also necessary to foster meaningful discussions – which makes meetings on the sideline and side events valuable aspects of a conference.

Business and industry representatives were expected to belong in the dormant stakeholder category – holding (economic) power – which has been confirmed throughout the study. From a professional approach, these actors can advantageously utilize conferences as platforms to promote the company, in search for customers, investors, or business opportunities. In order to increase their stakeholder salience however, conference engagement can be a means to obtain legitimacy, in that it provides an opportunity to argue for the “sustainable activity” and “renewable profile” of the company. Additionally, non-Arctic business delegations can learn about local conditions and the market in the Arctic. This can help them argue for their urgency, as they can target their products and services towards specific circumstances and needs in the region.

Representatives from institutes, institutions, and NGOs attend conferences for the purpose of promoting their work, and discover initiatives they can bring back to their affiliation – which was an expected finding. Noteworthy however, is how their presence at conferences has been described as a necessary “check on elitism” – to connect what takes place at these arenas to the local and institutional level. The lion’s share of these actors are legitimate stakeholders in the region, but conference participation can be a means for them to obtain power, and to advance the urgency of their claims. To that point, NGOs – e.g. Greenpeace and WWF – are described by informants as utilizing conferences in attempts to influence the debate, promote their issues, and to get attention by creating media campaigns. However, because attributes, as stakeholder salience, are dynamic by being time and issue dependent, their urgency is fluid and contingent on the

dominating international discourse. To that end, how conferences can aid the promotion of environmental groups' urgency claims was illustrated by the push of climate issues at conferences pending the COP-21 in Paris in December 2015, and how conferences were used for dissemination after the 2018 IPCC report (see Chapter Five).

Local and regional government representatives partake at conferences to share experiences and best practices with similar communities, and to establish connections with other community leaders. In particular, the Arctic Circle organizers aim to provide a platform where non-state and sub-national actors can participate with equal standing as state government representatives. The Arctic Mayors Forum is example of regional leaders connecting across state borders, founded as a result of the lack of formalized involvement of local communities in Arctic policy decision-making processes. Both the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle have been arenas for such meetings – thus providing important supplements to the Arctic Council, where locals do not have a voice. Conference participation is moreover a chance to attract media attention towards local challenges, which can contribute to raising awareness within power structures at the national level.

Indigenous peoples, by contrast, hold a prominent position in the Arctic Council, while the thesis has drawn attention to how this is not mirrored in the conference sphere, because conferences are not as representative as the Arctic Council must be. Kalfagianni et al. (2020) argue legitimacy needs to be examined more systematically in relation to power, and how these concepts intersect regarding discrimination against vulnerable groups and the privileged position of some interest groups over others in the transnational arena (p. 90). This study has followed this suggestion through the stakeholder typology. To that end, the function, or lack of, conferences have for Indigenous peoples is interesting. Looking at the interplay between Arctic rights-holders and emerging stakeholders, this study has drawn attention to a tendency of conferences to privilege and promote the voices of the elite – those with the most power, resources, and influence – over local communities and Indigenous peoples.

Accordingly, northern residents who are most impacted by decisions about the region are not necessarily those who are best represented at conferences. Rather, it can be those who are willing and able to pay for visibility and speaking time. Conferences are not accessible and inclusive for everyone, and financial and human resources often prevent Indigenous peoples from attending. Traveling is expensive in the Arctic, which introduces a challenge for communities or groups with limited resources, and those given the opportunity to participate are not necessarily representative for the community as a whole. These findings build on the body of research concerning questions of transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and opportunities for equal participation and influence in transnational institutions and networks (see *inter alia* Biermann, 2014).

The disagreement regarding who and what, and partially how, to govern in the Arctic region was presented in Chapter Two (section 2.3). This is relevant for the question of whether conferences contribute to expanding the association of legitimate stakeholders in the Arctic. Within the debate concerning who to govern, some argue Arctic governance is historically, geographically, and legally bound by interactions between states with territory above the Arctic circle. Others challenge this view, and argue for a greater role for non-Arctic states, sub-national entities, and non-state actors. The thesis has discussed and signified how this disagreement also concerns participation in the dialogue at conferences. As such, this element from the governance system has been transferred to, and is being upheld by, conferences. The idea of Arctic state sovereignty is particularly prominent at the Arctic Frontiers, which gives precedence to the Arctic Eight – those with the “know-how”. The Arctic Circle Assembly’s open door policy, aiming to provide a democratic platform for all stakeholders, places it on the opposite side of the debate – benefitting non-Arctic and non-state actors.

Still, despite these features, conferences do contribute to building a sense of community, and facilitate interactions among the growing actor network in the region. Inherently, the cases in this study are arenas where non-Arctic states can participate alongside the Arctic states, and where the state may not be the primary unit. However prestigious in design, the fact that there is no membership to conferences contributes to a democratizing effect. Thus, returning to the question of whether an alternative form of Arctic governance will emerge from the inability of the status quo to satisfy expanding interests (Rossi, 2015), this study has supported an affirmative answer.

This study has further supported the findings of Lövbrand et al. (2017): the reasons for attending conferences are as manifold as the array of organizations and actors present. At the same time, an interesting finding is the extent to which the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly are utilized as communication channels across all stakeholder groups, which supports the hypothesis posed in the introduction chapter: people attend conferences with a purpose. Adding to this is how conferences provide arenas for people to participate in the dialogue on the future of the region and collaborative efforts – if not in political processes. The study has shown that the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly contribute to broadening the collective of relevant stakeholders, and thus shape the actor composition of the region. Conferences do fulfill an important role in the regional governance architecture, and the cases can be a model for cooperation for the international community.

10.4 The agenda setting function of conferences

The functions of conferences within Arctic governance through the agenda mechanism was examined both concerning the activities of the organizers, and actions of participants. The research questions posed to shed light on these aspects were:

- Do conference organizers contribute to define central issues and elevate them on to the broader agenda in the region?
- Is conference participation a means to successfully promote issues and make them pertinent in other forums or processes?

Following the suggestion in the literature (see Mazaar, 2007; Capie, 2010; Herweg et al., 2018) of applying the multiple streams framework (MSF) outside studies of national governments, I examined the flow of the three streams in the agenda setting process at conferences in Chapter Eight. For one, the thesis has uncovered how conferences can be advantageous arenas for problem definition by policy entrepreneurs. Conferences are opportunities for these actors to push issues they deem important, and to draw attention to them from a larger audience. Even so, what takes place at conferences is particularly influential in the second stream of the MSF – the policy stream – where alternatives, proposals, and solutions to the defined problems flow. Through an incremental process at conferences, science can indirectly affect policy participants beliefs with regards to causes of problems and preferred solutions. Within the political stream, interest based coalition groups, transnational networks, and the media are central for agenda influencing. They – just as policy entrepreneurs – can utilize conferences as windows of opportunities to advance their issues.

Looking at the agenda of the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle, they strive to draw international attraction to the conferences, support national economical and geopolitical interests, balance the debate, and correct misperceptions about the Arctic. Specifically, two issues were presented to illustrate how conference activities can be linked to the three streams of the MSF, and that issues advanced at these arenas can be elevated on the agenda in other processes. The Arctic Frontiers' emphasis on the ocean – a key priority for the Norwegian government – is an example of “agenda nudging” through the constant push of an issue over a longer time span. Norway's embrace of the blue-green economy to position itself as the Arctic Ocean's rightful steward is also an example of science and expert-based information used to legitimize political decisions that is promoted from the conference stage. The Arctic Circle advances the interests of central allies (e.g. Alaska and Asian states) through the Mission Council on Shipping and Ports, which is a prominent example of a coalition of policy entrepreneurs from different positions with a shared belief of how Arctic shipping should be governed. These endeavors of the organizers were aided by windows of opportunity provided from

international developments, respectively the debate around the need for an Arctic Treaty to supplement the Law of the Seas, and the drafting and implementing of the Polar Code.

Nonetheless, concluding on the first research question – whether conference organizers contribute to defining central issues and elevate them to the broader agenda – findings indicate that the impact is limited. Neither the organizers of the Arctic Frontiers nor the Arctic Circle are the main agenda setters in the region. This role is rather assigned to a multitude of arrangements within the regime complex, the Arctic Council specifically, as well as individual member states. Still, there are examples of successful agenda setting efforts stemming from conferences. One is Mr. Grímsson’s introduction of Arctic issues in the Munich Security Conference, through the hosting of an Arctic Security Roundtable in 2017. The Arctic Frontiers organizers’ efforts to influence the EU’s approach to the Arctic also testifies to how soft-diplomacy through conferences can be useful for actors seeking to shape the political agenda.

Evidence in support of the second research question – whether conference participation is a means to successfully promote issues and make them pertinent in other forums or processes – is also limited. Perhaps there would be stronger indicators of such an impact if the project had examined a larger number of conferences, and followed them for a longer period of time. There are some examples however, as the one provided from the state of Alaska, where Senator Murkowski is working to attract the attention of the federal government towards Arctic living conditions and how other states are developing their northern region. The Senator is actively engaged at the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly, and her efforts are also aided by the objectives and mission of the Arctic Encounter Symposium (see Chapter Five, section 5.4).

From this, Chapter Eight demonstrated both the contributions and the shortcomings of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle as agenda setting arenas. One limiting factor is the communication challenge between the science community, decision-makers, and business representatives. Secondly, most governmental representatives have been demonstrated to attend primarily to promote their own interests and priorities, rather than with an intention of following up initiatives from the conference at the local, regional, or national level. Related, there is no authoritative agency associated with conferences, so the vision of creating responsible stakeholders and contributing to agenda setting is dependent on the will of actors to oblige to soft-law, norms, and agreed upon rules of conduct. To that end, there is need for strong advocacy coalitions and coordinated interest group campaigns, as well as media attention outside the conference itself.

10.5 Conferences within the Arctic governance architecture

The architecture mechanism focuses on the broader governance structure in the Arctic, and the functions of conferences within this web of actors, entities, and arrangements. The study found support in regime theory and research on regime complexes from the Earth System Governance literature for answering the following research questions:

- What are key components of the Arctic governance system, and how can it best develop to incorporate emerging issues and interested stakeholders?
- What are the main contributions of conferences within the Arctic governance architectural landscape?

To set the stage for deliberating how we can understand the role of conferences in the interplay between global geopolitics and developments in the Arctic, I began Chapter Nine by discussing Russia's position. The concept of complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 2012) was applied to explain the cooperative spirit in the Arctic, and how the region has been isolated from conflicts elsewhere (e.g. the 2014 Ukraine-crisis – see Byers, 2017). Supported in the literature on regime complexes and international cooperation, I have deliberated how conferences can provide forums for dialogue, somewhat distanced from tensions in other processes, contributing to trust-building among engaged actors. In turn, these activities can contribute to maintaining the Arctic as a zone of peace.

Forces of globalization also introduce an interesting tension to the Arctic governance system: the economic interests of outsiders clashing with the strategic sovereignty concerns of Arctic states. The Arctic and the global agenda have merged regarding political economy and the effects of climate change, and thus, Arctic issues have developed a global dimension. Accordingly, the involvement of non-Arctic states can prove central for diplomatic relations, and balanced social and economic development in the region. From this, I argued the political implications of economic interests in the Arctic open a space for conferences, and I gave evidence of how the inclusion of new stakeholders is a pivotal function of conferences. Conferences were further shown to mirror general developments and power structures within the Arctic governance regime complex, and to provide actors an opportunity to exercise influence in a globalized world.

In Chapter Three, I pointed to the findings of Partzsch (2018) regarding how individuals, celebrities, and social entrepreneurs are increasingly influencing global governance, and asked whether Arctic conferences could be arenas for such or akin actors to exert influence in the region. This study has demonstrated that the workings of Mr. Grímsson through the Arctic Circle organization has a fairly extensive influence on Arctic affairs and international cooperation beyond the annual Assembly. For example, how the organization has been expanded globally through the Forums, and has influenced other processes and arrangements internationally. As such, the study supported existing

research emphasizing the increased importance of private actors within global affairs (see also Kalfagianni et al., 2020).

The second main issue discussed in Chapter Nine was the shortcomings of the Arctic Council. The argument proposed was that while the Arctic Council is an important piece of the Arctic governance regime complex, it is not sufficient to take into account all relevant agenda items and actors seeking to engage in the region. From this analysis, the two conferences in the study can constructively be considered as alternatives or supplements to the Arctic Council. Firstly, with regards to expanding the agenda, and providing arenas for discussions of security and military issues. Secondly, by broadening the stakeholder pool, and giving observers the opportunity to extend their outreach. Thirdly, in supporting the Arctic Council, in particular the working groups, in communication activities.

Turning to the research question concerning the key components of the Arctic governance architecture, and how this structure can develop to incorporate emerging issues and interested stakeholders, this thesis has presented the spread of elements comprising the regime complex (see Chapter Two, section 2.3.6, and Chapter Nine, section 9.4). The thesis has discussed, leaning on existing scholarly work (see Chapter One, section 1.3.1), the need for coordination among these arrangements. In approaching the main challenges of the Arctic governance structure – of managing the growing number of agenda issues and arrangements, and balance the interests and activities of newcomers with those of sovereign Arctic rights-holders – I have built an argument for interaction through conferences as a solution.

Conferences are stages for attracting awareness towards salient issues, and from the necessity of involving non-Arctic states, institutions, organizations, and civil society groups in deliberating the region's future – there is a space for conferences to fill within the Arctic governance architecture. Also, Earth System Governance scholars (e.g. Biermann et al., 2009; Kalfagianni et al., 2020) contend it is necessary to include how one initiative relates to other initiatives, and how they influence each other in the institutional architecture, in studies of influence and effectiveness of transnational governance. This thesis can be a potential building block for future research, as it has shed light on the functions of conferences as arenas for interaction among various entities.

Lastly, the marketplace function of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle was emphasized in Chapter Nine, leading to the conclusion that this competitive element contribute to both conferences being necessary arenas within the Arctic regime complex. The main function of the Arctic Frontiers is preserving science and research collaboration, and aiming to connect science with policy to promote knowledge-based decision-making. This is necessary for maintaining collaboration and stability. The Arctic Circle aims to combine local and global perspectives by interpreting the global Arctic as a new geopolitical context, and to situate Arctic issues within the global context and

their broader implications. Moreover, the organizers seek to promote an open discussion among relevant stakeholders, and advance policy relevant research. I argued the primary function of the Arctic Circle – providing a playing ground for non-Arctic actors – is equally important for maintaining stability, and for driving developments forward. The way in which Mr. Grímsson contributes to connecting central actors and facilitating the engagement of newcomers and smaller states also supports the argument that the effect of conferences go beyond just being meeting places. When situating conferences within the broader Arctic governance architecture, and in answering the research question concerning the main contributions of conferences, this thesis has cast light on their purposefulness as additions to the landscape. Conferences add to the soft-law dimension of Arctic governance, and these arenas provide the opportunity for dialogue and cooperation within the regime complex.

10.6 Contributions of the study

The literature review on Arctic governance (see Chapter One, section 1.3.1 or Appendix 6), and conferences (see Chapter One, section 1.3.2 or Appendix 7), revealed how prior to this study, the existing knowledge about the functions of conferences within Arctic governance was limited. Accordingly, by analyzing actor relations, the agenda setting process, and demonstrating how conferences add a dimension to the Arctic regime complex, this study has provided a deeper understanding of an under-examined phenomenon. Through an examination of how conferences operate in the intersection between sovereign states and cooperative arrangements within the Arctic governance architecture, the study has attested to conferences, while not government forums or governing arenas, being arenas blurring the line between governance and dialogue – as suggested in the introductory chapter. While some conclusions are specific to the cases in the study, others are potentially transferable to other realms of global governance.

Throughout the thesis, central issues such as the future of Arctic governance, the shortcomings of the Arctic Council, the role of observers, and geopolitics have been analyzed in relation to outcomes of the two conferences. The study has positioned conferences as valuable elements in what has been described as a fragmented governance architecture. Specifically, conferences do contribute to incorporate emerging agenda issues – as arenas for multiple voices and perspectives – thus functioning as alternatives to the Arctic Council. Conferences have no mandate, i.e. no limitations on which topics can be addressed. The conferences in this study do not have membership, and therefore no restriction on who can participate in discussions. While it is not to say that outsiders should have the same rights and privileges in the region as inhabitants and Indigenous peoples, it is necessary for non-Arctic state actors to also have their voices heard.

To that end, this study has contributed to the Arctic governance literature concerning the need for reform of the Arctic Council, and on the role of the observers. It has indicated how the two cases are arenas for balancing the interests and sovereignty concerns of Arctic state rights-holders with the economic, scientific, and political interests of non-Arctic stakeholders. From this, conferences can be considered a constructive supplement to formalized cooperative arrangements, and expected to play a significant role in the future of the region, as arenas for communication and cooperation among actors with different nationalities and sector affiliations. At the same time, the study has revealed how a potential pitfall of conferences is that they can advantage the loudest voices and privileged interest coalitions over marginalized or vulnerable groups. While not decision-making arenas, the thesis has drawn attention to the shortcomings of conferences regarding issues of accountability and representation.

The second main contribution of this study is to the conference literature, by applying a novel theoretical framework to the inquiry of conferences as a phenomenon within Arctic governance. Stakeholder theory was adapted from organizational management and applied to inquire into the functions the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle have for different participant groups. It was illustrated how conferences are arenas for actors to increase their position and salience, and that conferences can be an opportunity to influence the perceptions of others – which can contribute to creating responsible stakeholders, thus adding a category to counter dangerous stakeholders. The stakeholder typology also sheds light on the dynamic element of conference engagement, not only for the attributes and positions of actors within Arctic affairs, but for the actor composition of the Arctic governance architecture as a whole.

The agenda setting framework, which is commonly used for studies of national governments, also proved feasible for the examination of conferences. While it has been shown that conferences are not the main agenda setting arenas in the region, they can still contribute to relevant processes for agenda change. Through the multiple streams framework, the significance of policy entrepreneurs for regional development was underscored. Conferences can usefully be considered windows of opportunities for these actors, and as arenas for strengthening transnational relationships, promoting arrangements and international agreements, and for the linking of issue areas. From this, the study has contributed to broadening the application of existing frameworks and concepts, by signifying how conferences should be added to the analysis of international relations, and considered as a third avenue for influence alongside the workings of states and institutions. In particular when examining the actions and leeway of smaller states or non-state actors in the system. This study has supported the argument found in the Earth System Governance literature: that transnational networks are central for influence and shaping political outcomes in the globalized world.

The Arctic has been described as a geopolitical playing field, and the interests of great-powers, such as China, Russia, and the United States, in the Arctic is rising. Accordingly, the traditional geopolitical understanding of the Arctic is increasingly superseded by the view of the global Arctic. Still, the Arctic has thus far been shielded from spill-over from conflicts elsewhere. Regime theory proposes that the explanation for how states can cooperate effectively under conditions of interactive decision-making without a political authority is the formation of institutional arrangements, sets of roles, rules, and relationships – i.e. regimes. Conferences have been demonstrated to facilitating international cooperation in the regional governance architecture, characterized by complex interdependence. They are one of multiple transnational channels connecting various entities, and where states are not the only engaged units. Conferences contribute to making cooperation more likely, by establishing connections that other wise would not have been developed. They also contribute as norm-setting arenas, to clarifying roles and relationships, and to the establishment of expectations of behavior – despite the lack of an overarching authority – within the Arctic regime complex.

10.7 Areas for further research

There are alternative ways this project could have developed, and paths I would have liked to pursue. For one, in the initial phase of the project, I had an aspiration of doing a larger-N analysis. As mentioned in Chapter Four, due to lack of available information about a larger number of conferences, and the realization that I would have to collect in-depth data from scratch, this was not feasible within the time and financial limits of this study. However, I still believe this would result in interesting research. One could differentiate between hybrid conferences, as those in this study, and science, policy, and/or business arenas. This could result in more information about the impacts of conferences, and which type of conference is most likely to have broader effects.

Additionally, it would be interesting to do an in-depth study of the International Arctic Forum in Russia. When I commenced this project, it had only been arranged sporadically with a limited number of participants. However, as the project developed, it became clear that this conference – now to be arranged biannually in Archangelsk – is a priority for the Russian government. How the conference is used in the future, as an arena for science diplomacy, the promotion of Russian interests and visions, and to engage, and possibly enchant, the international community, is interesting to follow. Due to the close governmental involvement in this conference, it would be a fascinating case in its own regard. It would however also be compelling to compare it to other conferences in a comparative case study, or a similar approach.

Another area for further research, which would be highly compelling, is to obtain the participation lists from the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly for a period of several years, and do a network analysis of people attending these arenas. What is their nationality, affiliation, and how are they connected to in other ways than through the conferences? This would provide for interesting insight into power structures in the region, and the role of conferences for network building among influential actors, which I have not expanded on. It would also be a means to further trace the broader outcomes of conferences, through initiatives and projects conducted by participants outside the arrangement.

The narrative of the Arctic and the significance of conferences for developing a regional identity is something this project has not expanded into. However, conferences are clearly arenas for the unfolding of different stories and competing truths. It would be interesting to pursue this by conducting a narrative analysis of conference programs, speeches, and the expressions of organizers and participants in the context of governmental documents and foreign policy perspectives. Building on the agenda setting findings of this study, it would cast more light on how actors utilize conferences for positioning on the international arena, and to shape others' realities and perceptions, through constructing and promoting narratives that reflect their aims and values.

Lastly, following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the beginning of 2020, conference research should inquire into the effects of digitalization and the implications of conferences going viral for their functions and outcomes. When conferences are held online, what are the implications for the upholding of the functions that have been established in this study? In particular, facilitating meeting places for initiating new contacts, the conduct of side-meetings, reducing barriers to cooperation, and contribute to balancing the debate. Moreover, this thesis has also touched upon the criticism towards conferences – could the pandemic be fuel to argue for their purposelessness?

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Appendix 2: Codebook

Appendix 3: List of informants

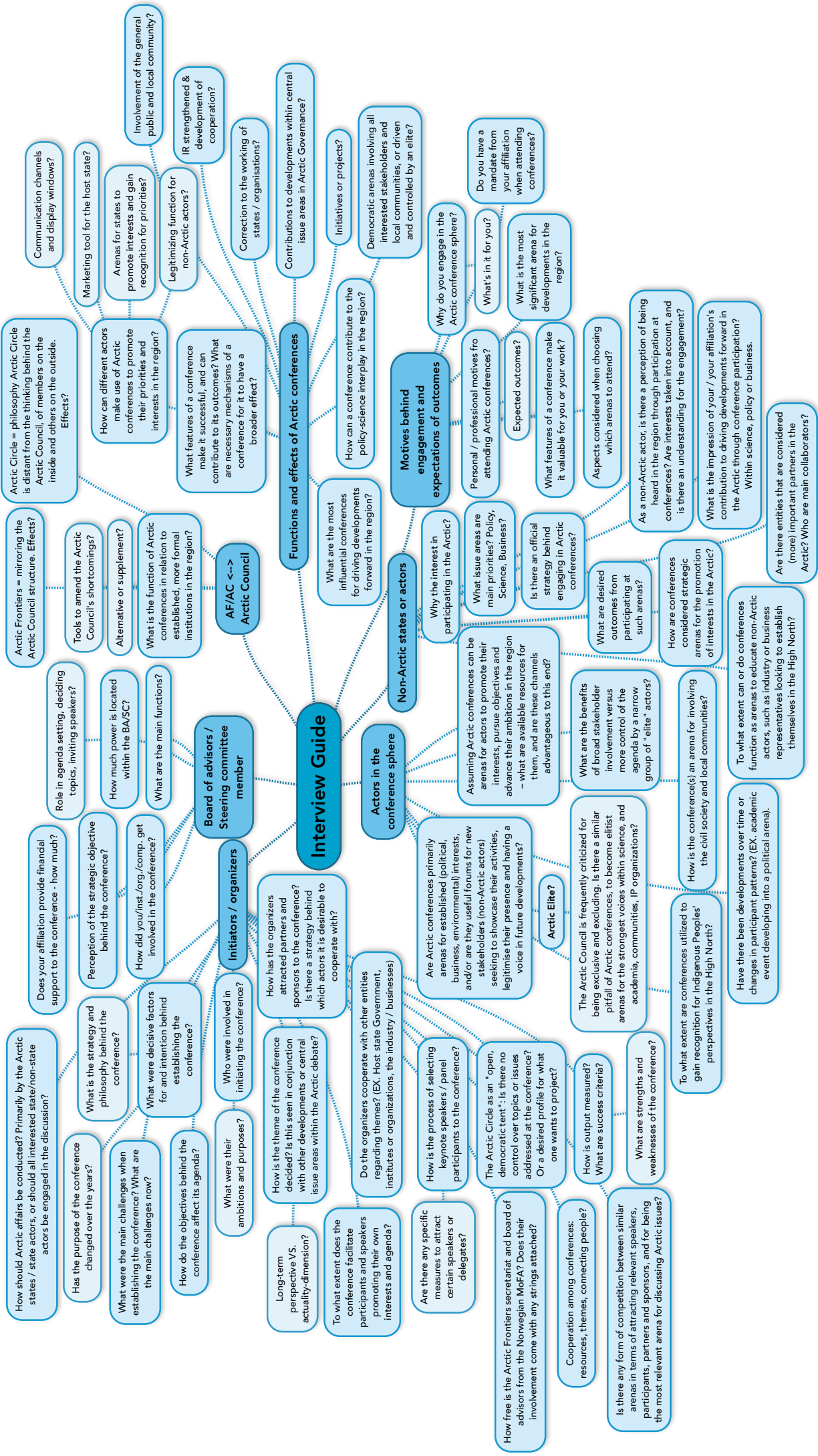
Appendix 4: Consent form for informants to the study

Appendix 5: Arctic state priority areas

Appendix 6: Literature review – Arctic governance

Appendix 7: Literature review – International conferencing

Appendix 8: Overview of Arctic conferences



Appendix 2: Codebook from interviews

Node Name	Topic and description of the node	Files*	References
1) Agenda	<p>Main goal of the Node: As part of the flow of Arctic events, how can conferences impact the broader regional and international agenda? What is their function for other processes in the region, and how do conferences contribute to developments within Arctic governance?</p>	7	8
1A) Agenda of the conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizers' stated strategic purpose, ambitions, and intentions behind arranging the conference. Participants' perceptions about the conference and its contributions to agenda setting. <p>= Establish the space created in Arctic governance by the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle.</p>	13	28
1B) Agenda influencers	Who frames the discussion, influence the program design, and decide which topics to address at a conference? Who contribute to setting the broader agenda through conference participation?	12	15
1C) Developing ideas	Conferences as arenas gathering people to talk about things in new ways: advancing concepts and socializing emerging trends → The role of conferences in making incremental steps to push agenda items and priorities.	10	17
1D) Drive developments forward	The iterative process taking place in the dynamic space facilitated by a conference.	8	14
1E) Internationalization	The increasingly international character of conferences and their role in globalizing the Arctic agenda. From exceptionalism to globalized region. Arctic Frontiers = Seminars Abroad / Arctic Circle Assembly = Forums	10	20
1F) Policy, science, business Interplay	How the conference contributes to facilitating the policy, science, business interplay – creating synergies in the region between actors from different affiliations.	13	26
Examples of agenda influencing	Examples from the interview material of conferences taking part in the general flow of Arctic events. How the conference agenda links to general agenda items in Arctic governance and/or international relations. Issues pushed at conferences being brought forward in other processes in Arctic governance.	16	33

* Files refer to the number of informants – i.e. documents in the NVivo database of transcribed and coded interviews – who have talked about the issue. References refer to the number of times the issue is mentioned in total in the interviews.

<p>2) Actors</p>	<p>Main goal of the Node: How can conferences impact the actor composition of the Arctic region? How do the cases serve the interests of Arctic state actors and non-Arctic state actors? Based on interview questions regarding «Why do you attend Arctic conferences?» «What is the usefulness of conferences for your work?» «Who has the most to benefit from conference participation?»</p>	9	14
<p>2A) Arctic States</p>			
<p>Promote national policies and priorities</p>	<p>Conferences as arenas for states to promote their Arctic policies and priorities, and to gain acceptance for those from other actors within the international system. Conferences as arenas for the Arctic Eight to assert their dominance and maintain control over the dialogue on the state and future of the region.</p>	13	23
<p>Create responsible stakeholders</p>	<p>Conferences as advocacy and educational platforms for the Arctic states to provide «Arctic-101» for newcomers, to promote a sense of responsibility to accompany their interests in partaking in Arctic science, research, resource extraction, and economic development.</p>	8	13
<p>Function of the conference for the host state</p>	<p>The function of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle Assembly for Norway and Iceland. Regarding government involvement and the promotion of national priorities through these arenas, but also tourism, benefits/strains on local communities, and spill-over to local/regional bodies, institutions, or organizations.</p>	16	44
<p>2B) Non-Arctic Actors</p>			
<p>Legitimizing function and Visibility – display work and activities</p>	<p>The legitimizing effect of conferences: providing a platform for non-Arctic state actors to justify their presence in the region as relevant and important stakeholders, and to strengthen their reputation as credible players. Conferences provide a broad and diverse audience for non-Arctic states to obtain visibility, display activities, work, and capabilities in the region, and explain to Arctic state actors how they can be valuable partners.</p>	8	19
<p>Listening posts and educational platforms</p>	<p>Conferences as information channels for actors on the sideline of formal regional arrangements, to gain knowledge about the Arctic states' policies, priorities, and visions – the «Arctic-101».</p>	9	11

1C) The Epistemic Community		5	7
Networking and professional reputation building	The main reason for attending conferences for the academic community is networking and meeting people who are working within their field and share their interests. Conferences as arenas to maintain and establish relationships, obtain partners, discover new projects, sources of funding, and develop their career.	7	17
Agenda setting	The main source of power for the epistemic community is control over information and knowledge – conferences as arenas to maintain and advance power by pushing their research agenda. Conferences as arenas for academics and scientists to develop ideas through discussions with peers.	8	11
1D) Business Industry		6	15
Identify investment opportunities and create revenue	Conferences as arenas for business representatives to acquire knowledge about where financial capital is needed, investment opportunities, and potential partners for projects, and create revenue through acquiring customers, investors, or signing agreements.	6	8
Marketing and branding	Conferences as arenas for industry representatives to promote their company's brand, and to build a reputation as a credible actor in the region, sensitive to sustainable development and the well-being of local communities.	4	8
2E) Institution / NGO		3	4
Communicate and promote work	Conferences as arenas for institutions and organizations to communicate and promote their work to a broader audience, to "protect space in the sandbox" and position as a relevant player and thought leader in the region.	8	9
Connect back to inst. org. local	Conferences as arenas for institutional/organizational representatives to acquire information about processes which they can bring back to their work and local community, thus fulfilling their societal responsibility.	3	4
2F) Indigenous peoples		7	9
Have their voices heard	Conferences as arenas for Indigenous peoples to have their voices heard, and advocate for the protection of Northern communities in processes of scientific research and industry development. Conferences as arenas for the Indigenous community to communicate about living conditions, culture, and tradition to outsiders.	5	5

2G) Local community		9	13
Share experiences and best practices	Conferences as arenas for local government representatives to meet with their equals from communities with similar challenges across the northern region, to share experiences and best practices.	2	2
Example actor constellations	Examples from the interviews of how conferences can have an impact on actor constellations in the region, especially regarding incorporating the constantly growing and increasingly diverse stakeholder pool. How to the cases serve actors in Arctic governance and from the international community: The functions of conferences for different stakeholder groups.	14	30
3) Architecture	Main goal of the Node: How do conferences fit within the larger structure in which they are situated? What is the role of conferences in the growingly complex Arctic governance architecture?	18	37
3A) Arctic Council	Informants' mentionings of the Arctic Council, including general comments, not necessarily connected to the conference sphere.	12	35
AND Arctic Circle	Informant's reference to the Arctic Council in connection to the Arctic Circle: How do the two forums relate to each other? - Competition - Synergies - Alternative - Supplement	15	30
AND Arctic Frontiers	Informant's reference to the Arctic Council in connection to the Arctic Frontiers: How do the two forums relate to each other? - Competition - Synergies - Alternative - Supplement	10	23
3B) Emerging governance arrangements	Conferences' position regarding balancing the activities of the Arctic Council and emerging governance structures evolved around new issues for cooperation. - Binding agreements negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council - The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters - The Agreement on Unregulated Fishing in the Arctic Ocean	7	20
3C) Informal, democratic mediation links	Conferences as the lowest common denominator in Arctic governance – arenas where everyone can participate, regardless of membership status – functioning as mediation links between different elements and actors. Informal forums for dialogue, detached from tensions in other international processes, providing opportunities to keep the cooperative momentum going through amicable interactions.	13	23

3D) Geopolitics	Findings from the interview material within the category of geopolitics, regarding East/West relations in the Arctic.	9	16
Changing World Order	The role of conferences in the changing world order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The declining United States - Russian military buildup - Chinese economic investments 	6	8
Iceland - Norway	The strategic positioning of Iceland/Norway in IR. Iceland = well-positioned hub between North America, Europe, and Asia. Norway = Good relations with Russia.	9	15
3E) Science diplomacy	Conferences as arenas for science diplomacy: using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries, or arenas for states to engage in Arctic science in order to access other areas of Arctic governance.	3	3
Example governance processes	Examples from the interview material of how conferences can have been influential for other processes in international relations and Arctic governance.	18	33
Conference attributes	Informant statements about the two cases in general, or regarding features of a conference contributing to its broader effects.	16	32
Meeting place & Networking	Conferences primary function: facilitating a meeting place for maintaining established connections, and for networking to develop new relationships.	16	28
The Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle	Observations regarding the differences between the two cases in the study.	12	32

Appendix 3: Informants to the study *Governance by conference?* By affiliation and nationality

Nationality	Position
Canada	Research associate
Finland	University professor, and member of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors
Finland	Business organization Secretary Director
Finland	President and CEO
Germany	Research institution director
Iceland	Initiator and Chairman of the Arctic Circle Assembly
Iceland	Arctic Council associated
Norway	Initiator and Chairman of the Arctic Frontiers
Norway	Secretary Leader of the Arctic Frontiers
Norway	Senior official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norway	Senior official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norway	President of research collaborative and member of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors and the Arctic Frontiers steering committee
Norway	Research institute director, and member of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors and the Arctic Frontiers steering committee
Norway	Senior advisor, university
Norway	CEO and member of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors
Norway	Journalist
Norway	Journalist
Switzerland	Scientific collaborator, Department of Foreign Affairs
United States	Chair of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors
United States	Senior fellow at research institute, former ambassador
United States	Chair of research commission, and member of the Arctic Circle Board of Advisors
United States	Executive director, research institute
United States	Vice chancellor (research), university
United States	Conference organizer

Appendix 4: Consent form for participation in the research project

"Governance by conference?"

Background and purpose

This project is a doctoral study at the University of Tromsø (UiT) – The Arctic University of Norway, associated with the research group Arctic Governance, at the Institute for Social Sciences. The purpose is to conceptualize and analyze Arctic conferences, and examine their function within and impact on Arctic governance. The main research question is:

What are the functions of the Arctic Frontiers and Arctic Circle conferences in Arctic governance, operating within a system of sovereign state interests and cooperative soft-law arrangements?

The project is based on a case study of the two largest international conferences on Arctic dialogue and cooperation: the Arctic Frontiers (Tromsø, Norway) and the Arctic Circle Assembly (Reykjavik, Iceland).

Relevant informants to this study include initiators and organizers of Arctic conferences, participants, delegates, speakers, partners and sponsors associated with these arenas.

You are invited to participate in this study, based on your association to this sphere in the form of one or more of the above-mentioned positions.

What does participation in the study entail

Data collection for this study will primarily consist of interviews with key informants, as well as observation through conference participation, and document analysis.

Sensitive person information in the project is limited to name, professional background, work affiliation and nationality. The study will not collect further information regarding family situation or other personal concerns, and no form of confidentiality coated information.

The interviews will concern questions related to the following areas of interest:

- 1) Motives, ambitions and objectives behind engaging in the Arctic conference sphere (either as an organizer, participant, or sponsor/ partner). Of interest is the purpose of participation at Arctic conferences, and expected outcomes of a presence at these arenas. Is, and if so how, Arctic conferences a form of tool for actors in the region?
- 2) Arctic conferences potential function as diplomatic arenas: facilitating interstate and inter-disciplinary cooperation, meeting places to improve international relations, and/or can Arctic conferences function as alternative channels into the Arctic discussion for actors (for instance non-Arctic states) on the outside of established cooperative mechanisms?
- 3) The function of Arctic conferences within other processes and issue areas – role and contributions to central developments in Arctic policy? Based on an assumption that Arctic conferences have an effect beyond their own existence, this project seeks to reveal what aspects of their organizing and nature that can contribute to producing outcomes of significance for the region's development.

Data will primarily be recorded as sound files and notes.

What will happen with the information about you?

All personal information will be treated confidentially.

Information and the data material will be stored on a password secured computer, connected to the University of Tromsø's server. The researcher (Beate Steinveg) will be able to access the data gathered for the project.

Data will be anonymized to the extent it is possible. However, participants may be recognizable in the publication, from their work place, position or role related to the conference.

The project will be finalized in the fall of 2020.

Collected data material will by the end of the project be anonymized. It will be stored on a secure server at the University of Tromsø, and be available for others approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any time, without having to provide a reason. If you choose to withdraw, all information gathered about you thus far will be anonymized.

If you wish to participate, or have any questions regarding the study, please contact:

Beate Steinveg – e-mail: beate.steinveg@uit.no - mobile: + 47 93 05 39 34

Supervisors for the project are:

Professor Hans-Kristian Hernes at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway

Professor Knut Mikalsen at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway

The study has been submitted to, and approved by, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the study, and agrees to participate

(Signed by participant in the study, date)

Appendix 5: Arctic state policy priority areas (summary)

State	Arctic policy document	Priority areas
The United States	<p>US National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)</p> <p>Report to Congress Department of Defense Arctic Strategy (2019)</p>	<p>Three lines of effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue reasonable Arctic stewardship • Strengthen international cooperation • Advance US Security interests <p>Three strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Arctic awareness • Enhancing Arctic operations • Strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic <p>To achieve the DoDs objectives for the Arctic: Defend the homeland; Compete when necessary to maintain favorable regional balances of power; Ensure common domains remain free and open.</p>
The Russian Federation	<p>The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security Efforts for the period up to 2020 (2009)</p>	<p>National interests in the Arctic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Russian Arctic Zone as a strategic resource base for the socio-economic development • Conserve the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation • Preserve the Arctic's unique ecosystems • Use of the NSR as a unified national transport link
Canada	<p>Canada's Northern Strategy (2009)</p> <p>Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy (2010)</p>	<p>Four pillars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising Arctic sovereignty • Promoting Social and Economic Development • Protecting the Environmental Heritage • Improving and Devolving Northern Governance
Norway	<p>Norway's Arctic Policy for 2014 and beyond (2014)</p> <p>Norway's Arctic Strategy (2017)</p>	<p>Five priority areas (2014 & 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International cooperation • A knowledge-based business sector • Broad-based knowledge development • More reliable infrastructure • Better preparedness and environmental protection

<p>Finland</p>	<p>Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)</p>	<p>Four pillars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finland as an Arctic Country • Finland's Arctic expertise • Sustainable development and environmental considerations • International cooperation
<p>Denmark</p>	<p>Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020</p>	<p>Four political objectives for the Arctic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Peaceful, Secure and Safe Arctic • Self-sustaining growth and development • Development with regards to the Arctic's vulnerable climate, environment, and nature • Close cooperation with international partners
<p>Sweden</p>	<p>Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region (2011)</p>	<p>Three priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and the environment • Economic development • The human dimension
<p>Iceland</p>	<p>Iceland's Arctic Policy (2011)</p>	<p>Twelve principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and strengthening the Arctic Council. • Securing Iceland's position as a coastal state in the Arctic. • 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. • Resolve differences that relate to the Arctic based on the UNCLOS. • Strengthen and increase cooperation with Greenland and the Faroe Islands. • Supporting the rights of indigenous peoples in the Arctic in close cooperation with indigenous organizations and supporting their direct involvement in decisions on regional issues. • Building on agreements and promoting cooperation with other States and stakeholders on issues relating to Icelandic interests in the Arctic region. • To use all available means to prevent human-induced climate change and its effects to improve the wellbeing of Arctic residents and their communities. • Safeguarding broadly defined security interests in the Arctic region through civilian means and working against any kind of militarization of the Arctic. • Developing further trade relations between States in the Arctic region and thereby laying the groundwork for Icelanders to compete for the opportunities created as a result of increased economic activity in the Arctic region. • Advancing Icelanders' knowledge of Arctic issues and promoting Iceland abroad as a venue for meetings, conferences, and discussions on the Arctic region. • Increasing consultations and cooperation at the domestic level on Arctic issues to ensure increased knowledge of the importance of the Arctic region, democratic discussion, and solidarity on the implementation of the Government's Arctic policy.

Appendix 6: Literature review – Arctic Governance

Author	Article	Problem statement/contribution	Position on Arctic Governance
<p>Albert, Mathias & Vasilache, Andreas</p> <p>2018, Cooperation and Conflict</p>	<p><i>Governmentality of the Arctic as an international region</i></p>	<p>Discuss how the Arctic is affected by governmental security rationalities, specific logics of political economy and order building, as well as becoming a subject for bio-political rationalizations and imaginaries.</p>	<p>All the main characteristic aspects of governmentality are being projected onto the Arctic region, and these governmental techniques, approaches, and rationalities are closely interlinked. The discourses and practices of governmentality that permeate the Arctic contribute to its spatial, figurative, and political reframing – aimed at making it a governable region.</p>
<p>Avango, Dag, Nilsson, Annika & Roberts, Peters</p> <p>2013, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>Assessing Arctic futures: voices, resources, and governance</i></p>	<p>Reveal connections between how the Arctic is constructed and how the right to decide its future is articulated. <i>Voices</i> are actors who participate in the discursive construction of Arctic futures. <i>Resources</i> are objects upon which actors inscribe values, locating them in the discourse. <i>Governance</i> is structural features through which action is regulated, restricting the range of legitimate actors.</p>	<p>Neither the cast of actors, nor the inventory of resources, nor the structures of governance have remained constant through time. Recognizing how and by whom the narratives are created and how resources become defined is part of understanding the temporal as well as the spatial geographies of the Arctic.</p>
<p>Babin, Julie & Lasserre, Frederic</p> <p>2019, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>Asian states at the Arctic Council: perceptions in Western States</i></p>	<p>Many western media reflect concerns about the interest of Asian States for the Arctic and for the Arctic Council, and the possible loss of influence of the Arctic indigenous communities and States in the Arctic Council. Interrogations about the intentions of these new observers have fed concerns about their possible domination of the agenda of the Arctic Council. What is the attitude of these observers at the AC and are these concerns warranted?</p>	<p>Despite some negative perceptions that remain about the Observers and especially China, the participation of Asian states in the activities of the AC remains extremely weak and limited by a very restricted status. Observers have little weight at the AC meetings, they must respect the sovereignty of the Arctic States, and the AC does not make decisions about Arctic policies. Interest is largely motivated by the prestige gained from being part of the AC through the observer status.</p>
<p>Baev, Pavel K.</p> <p>2019, Journal of Slavic Military Studies</p>	<p><i>Threat Assessments and Strategic Objectives in Russia's Arctic Policy</i></p>	<p>Russia's Arctic policy is structured around two poorly compatible tracks of expanding military activities and committing to international cooperation. Exaggerated threat assessments are advanced to justify the strongly set strategic priority for sustaining investments in building up military capabilities, including nuclear forces.</p>	<p>Baev's analysis supports the paradoxical proposition that in Russian strategic planning and military preparations, the Arctic occupies a more prominent place than it 'objectively' deserves. Russia's interests in the Arctic are not threatened in any practical or symbolic way by its neighbors, even if they are NATO members.</p>

<p>Bennett, Mia M. 2014, Eurasian Geography and Economics</p>	<p><i>North by Northeast: toward an Asian-Arctic region</i></p>	<p>Argues for an expansion of the definition of the Arctic beyond states holding territory above the Arctic Circle, and considers an Asian-Arctic region. The Arctic region is undergoing an eastern shift. The North Pacific Arctic – Northeast Asia’s Arctic near abroad – has emerged as a significant locus of Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean activities in the Arctic.</p>	<p>In the circumpolar north, bilateralism has outpaced multilateralism between North-East Asian and Arctic countries. This is because overall, the Arctic countries remain somewhat reluctant to view South Korea, China, and Japan to be equal political partners in the Arctic even as they actively invite them as economic partners. For the Arctic Council, territory still trumps flows of cargo and capital.</p>
<p>Bennett, Mia M. 2015, Geopolitics</p>	<p><i>How China Sees the Arctic: Reading Between Extraregional and Intraregional Narratives</i></p>	<p>Illustrates how China is building two spatially inconsistent but ultimately mutually reinforcing narratives to earn legitimacy as an Arctic stakeholder: one territorial and one global narrative.</p>	<p>In all regions, the narrative of those on the inside is encountering those of extraregional states. No single state will see its geographical framings dominate the Arctic.</p>
<p>Berman, Paul Arthur 2012, The Round Table</p>	<p><i>Our Common Future in the Arctic Ocean</i></p>	<p>Environmental security offers a holistic context to address the risks and opportunities within law of the sea, as the international legal framework to preserve peace and stability in the Arctic Ocean.</p>	<p>Peace and stability in the Arctic have yet to be established explicitly as ‘common arctic issues’, and such ambiguity has led to persistent discrepancy between public perceptions of a ‘new great game’ and the high level of cooperation among diplomats for the Arctic.</p>
<p>Depledge, Duncan 2012, The Arctic Yearbook</p>	<p><i>The United Kingdom and the Arctic in the 21st Century</i></p>	<p>Paper offering a glimpse into how the Arctic is seen by UK civil servants in the contemporary British government, as well as the challenges they face in reconciling the Arctic with broader global interests.</p>	<p>Suggests how the UK can make a constructive contribution to the region through the development of a formal strategy. The UK will have to work openly and transparently with the Arctic states and peoples if it is to maintain its long-standing presence in the Arctic.</p>
<p>Depledge, Duncan & Dodds, Klaus 2011, The RUSI Journal</p>	<p><i>The UK and the Arctic: The Strategic gap</i></p>	<p>Discusses UK's interests in the changing Arctic, and argues for how the UK needs a cross- departmental, integrated strategic approach that signals its commitment to the region.</p>	<p>The UK should position itself to benefit from emerging opportunities, including scientific and commercial collaboration, while remaining ever mindful of environmental challenges.</p>
<p>Depledge, Duncan & Dodds, Klaus 2014, The RUSI Journal</p>	<p><i>No "Strategy" Please, We're British</i></p>	<p>Explore how the UK's engagement in the Arctic has been evaluated within the context of energy, environment, science, defense, and politics. Conclude with questions regarding the monitoring and evaluation of Arctic Policy in the short and longer term.</p>	<p>There is no space for the UK Arctic Policy: uncertainties remain as to how the policy framework will be measured or scrutinized.</p>

<p>Dodds, Klaus 2010, Political Geography</p>	<p><i>Flag planting and finger pointing: The Law of the Sea, the Arctic and the political geographies of the outer continental shelf</i></p>	<p>Develops an analysis of the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the different strategies used by coastal states to press ‘claims’ to outer continental shelf. Considers other ways of looking at the Arctic as a circumpolar space.</p>	<p>The ongoing attempt of the coastal states to map and survey their continental shelves is one powerful manifestation of that desire for ‘certainty’ and ‘recognition’.</p>
<p>Dodds, Klaus 2013, SAIS Review of International Affairs</p>	<p><i>The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, "Law of the Sea" and Arctic Ocean.</i></p>	<p>Argues the Ilulissat Declaration was an important pre-emptive strike against growing global interests in the Arctic, and a determination to re-territorialize the Arctic Ocean (post 2007 Russian North Pole flag planting)</p>	<p>The Russian flag planting became a symbol of unclaimed space and unruly behavior. The Ilulissat Declaration was signed to reassure and remind that the Arctic Ocean is not <i>terra nullius</i>. There is still work to be done with the Arctic Oceans' legal framework.</p>
<p>Dodds, Klaus 2014, Eurasia Boarder Review</p>	<p><i>Squaring the Circle: The Arctic States, "Law of the Sea," and the Arctic Ocean</i></p>	<p>Two competing conceptions of the Arctic Ocean have circulated since the infamous planting of a Russian flag on the bottom of the seabed in 2007. Ideas of a “scramble for territory” depended on accepting that the Arctic Ocean was a terra nullius. The Ilulissat Declaration 2008 was an explicit rejection of that Arctic vision. Using the Law of the Sea, it outlined the sovereign rights of the five coastal states.</p>	<p>The Declaration was an important pre-emptive strike against growing global interest in the Arctic, and a determination to re-territorialize the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic Council, as the leading inter-governmental organization, remains critical in helping to mediate politically the interests of Arctic and non-Arctic parties.</p>
<p>Dubreuil, Antoine 2011, International Journal</p>	<p><i>The Arctic of the regions: Between indigenous peoples and subnational entities—Which perspectives?</i></p>	<p>Presents a political overview of indigenous peoples with emphasis on their relations with both regions and central states, and the statuses and political relations at work between Arctic regions and their respective central states.</p>	<p>Show that diverse regional situations do not exclude a convergence between indigenous peoples’ interests, although they apparently have a relatively weak regional impact on Arctic states’ policies.</p>
<p>Exner-Pirot, Heather 2012, Arctic Yearbook</p>	<p><i>New Directions for Governance in the Arctic Region</i></p>	<p>Events that led to acceptance of a more robust governance framework; climate change, economic activity, and geopolitical interests.</p>	<p>The limitations to the scope and intensity of potential regional governance frameworks makes it likely that a regional seas agreement will be the endpoint.</p>
<p>Exner-Pirot, Heather & Murray, Robert 2017, Politik</p>	<p><i>Regional Order in the Arctic: Negotiated Exceptionalism</i></p>	<p>Offers a theoretical explanation – the English School approach – for Arctic exceptionalism: successful effort to maintain cooperation in the region despite international competition for resources and territory, and to compartmentalize Arctic relations from external geopolitical tensions.</p>	<p>Explanations for regional stability: Rules- and norms- based order; environmental protection and marine cooperation; extensive non-state actor cooperation – epistemic community; Russia is vested in a stable and predictable regional order; low likelihood of military conflict (history & geography).</p>

<p>Ford, James D., Knight, Maggie & Pearce, Tristan</p> <p>2013, Global Environmental Change</p>	<p><i>Assessing the 'usability' of climate change research for decision-making: A case study of the Canadian International Polar Year</i></p>	<p>Examines the relationship between research conducted as part of a environmental change focused research program (IPY) and the decision-making outcomes that work is supposed to advance. Develops a conceptual model and assessment rubric to evaluate the usability of climate change research quantitatively and systematically for informing decision-making.</p>	<p>While IPY research has made significant advances in understanding the human dimensions of Arctic climate change, key attributes necessary for determining success in linking science to decision-making (pertinence, quality, timeliness) were not captured by many projects.</p>
<p>Graczyk, Piotr & Koivurova, Timo</p> <p>2013, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>A new era in the Arctic Council's external relations? Broader consequences of the Nuuk observer rules for Arctic governance</i></p>	<p>Examines the role of observers in the Arctic Council before the Nuuk ministerial meeting in 2011 and the adaptation of the Observer Manual. The authors also study how, if at all, the Nuuk observer rules might affect the position of the AC in the broader setting of circumpolar cooperation.</p>	<p>Existing observers and candidates are evaluated on the basis that they are not seen as a challenge to Arctic states' and PPs' regional interests. The criteria have a highly political profile: implications for the role of the AC in regional sovereignty and legal discourses. The observer rules will elevate the status of the AC in circumpolar cooperation.</p>
<p>Heininen, Lassi</p> <p>2005, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>Impacts of Globalization, and the Circumpolar North in World Politics</i></p>	<p>Describes and discusses the geopolitical background of state actors outside the Arctic, explores the impacts of globalization and its "flows" upon what have often been closely connected North-South relations. Despite negative side-effects of globalization and climate change, positive outcomes of globalization also exist in the North: the region has become an interesting and relevant area in world politics.</p>	<p>Among the major factors driving the renaissance of the North are devolution of governance to the regional and local levels, the growing geostrategic importance of the region, the emergence of a scientific view of the North as a "laboratory" for study, the presence of a diversity of natural environments and cultures, the growing emphasis on innovations in governance and co-management, and the fact that the North might be a model for good governance.</p>
<p>Humrich, Christoph</p> <p>2013, Global Environmental Politics</p>	<p><i>Fragmented International Governance of Arctic Offshore Oil: Governance Challenges and Institutional Improvement</i></p>	<p>Presents paths to improve the Arctic governance architecture: the evolution of legal instruments; explore the organizational capabilities of the Arctic Council; identify regulatory gaps and propose means to fill them. Contributes to the debate by analyzing the degree of fragmentation, focusing on offshore oil activities.</p>	<p>Arctic governance architecture exhibits "complex fragmentation". It needs to be managed by a joint enabling effort. Layered inclusion, preserving the functions of the Arctic Council and include a variety of Arctic and non-Arctic stakeholders.</p>
<p>Hønneland, Geir</p> <p>1998, Cooperation and Conflict</p>	<p><i>Identity Formation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region</i></p>	<p>Presents various narratives concerning the possibility of creating a common northern identity across the former Iron Curtain.</p>	<p>A new northern identity seems characterized by contrasts and paradoxes, and a new contrasting between East and West seems underway.</p>

<p>Ingimundarson, Valur</p> <p>2009, The RUSI Journal</p>	<p><i>Iceland's Post-American Security Policy, Russian Geopolitics and the Arctic Question</i></p>	<p>Iceland's geopolitical position has been marginalized since the break-up of the Soviet Union, as underscored by the US military withdrawal. During the economic disaster, Iceland focused on societal security instead of territorial defense. Yet the scramble for the Arctic has revived the Northern dimension. Icelandic Arctic discourses now play on the prospects of a renewed strategic relevance, wrought by the impact of climate change.</p>	<p>Iceland's post-American security policy is still in the process of revision and experimentation. Instead of being at the center, as in the Cold War, Iceland is poised to be on the geopolitical margins of a future Arctic Great Power game. Iceland's security discourse is still contingent on territory underscored by a continued emphasis on the Northern dimension, and encompassing a region that still awaits a far more precise definition.</p>
<p>Ingimundarson, Valur</p> <p>2014, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>Managing a contested region: The Arctic Council and the politics of Arctic governance</i></p>	<p>Examines the tension between institutional integration and interstate bargaining in Arctic politics, focusing on the Arctic Council and the role of Arctic and non-Arctic stakeholders.</p>	<p>The logic of intergovernmentalism continues to shape Arctic governance, despite regionalization efforts. The Arctic Council has not been transformed into a body of real authority and regulatory capacity. Arctic Circle = part of the specter of competing clubs.</p>
<p>Ingimundarson, Valur</p> <p>2015, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>Framing the national interest: the political uses of the Arctic in Iceland's foreign and domestic policies</i></p>	<p>Discuss how Iceland's Arctic policies have been framed, developed, and enacted from the early 2000s to the present. Show how the geopolitical importance of the Arctic has – after a post-Cold War hiatus – made the region a core component of Iceland's foreign policy.</p>	<p>The evolution of Iceland's Arctic strategy has been shaped by Arctic geopolitics as well as by key events in Icelandic foreign policy and domestic politics. The current prioritization of the region is based on several interlinked political, economic, and cultural narratives, which have been used to respond to external and internal developments.</p>
<p>Jensen, Leif Christian & Skredsmo, Pål Wilter</p> <p>2010, Polar Research</p>	<p><i>Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses on the European Arctic</i></p>	<p>Identifies Norwegian and Russian official foreign policy discourses on the European Arctic, and how perceived challenges are understood, framed, and presented by the governments. Energy, security, the economy, and the environment are key discursive nodal points.</p>	<p>Energy is regarded to be of vital national interest, but the countries have differing perceptions on international cooperation. As the states have some important common frames of references, a favorable climate for extended future cooperation could be further developed.</p>
<p>Jensen, Leif Christian</p> <p>2017, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>An Arctic 'marriage of inconvenience': Norway and the othering of Russia</i></p>	<p>Norwegian foreign policy toward the Arctic is closely linked to the often vague but central concept of national identity, and the crucial role Russia plays as a 'significant other' to Norway in the North.</p>	<p>Contributes to a better understanding of how post-structuralist IR theory and the concept of national identity can be understood and operationalized when analyzing Arctic foreign policy and IR generally.</p>

<p>Johannsdottir, Lara & Cook, David</p> <p>2017, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>Discourse analysis of the 2013-2016 Arctic Circle Assembly Programmes</i></p>	<p>Largely due to opening of economic opportunities in the changing Arctic, the number of participants at the Arctic Circle Assembly has grown from 1200 in 2013 to over 2000 in 2016. Article address: 1) Who are key stakeholders taking part, 2) What where the most frequently used titles for plenary and breakout sessions, 3) Has there been a change in themes and terms used in the titles over time?</p>	<p>1) Strong voice for universities and researchers, followed by government, industry, institutions. 2) Frequent terms: China, Himalayan, report, lessons, data, law, opportunity. 3) Growing emphasis on development, energy, security, research & science, challenges, cooperation, and business. Polarized discussions between environmental, social, and economic interests. Instead of constructive dialogue evolving between different types of stakeholders, many of the sessions include like-minded actors.</p>
<p>Kaiser, Brooks, Fernandez, Linda & Vestergaard, Niels</p> <p>2016, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>The future of the marine Arctic: environmental and resource economic development issues</i></p>	<p>Describe the four main Arctic marine industries according to the characteristics that drive some aspects of the challenges to development, and explain general challenges, along with examples of tools for managing them in inclusive and sustainable ways.</p>	<p>Arctic examples of development appear to be extractive industries episodic cases of rather than comprehensive, long term policies of other entities. This is supported by the growing disconnect between the global economy and environment which sustains it.</p>
<p>Keil, Kathrin</p> <p>2014, Cooperation and Conflict</p>	<p><i>The Arctic: A new region of conflict? The case of oil and gas</i></p>	<p>Neorealist and neoliberal institutionalist explanations for the state and future of the Arctic region dominate the Arctic debate in IR. This article argues that this debate has hitherto failed to substantiate the actual stakes of the main actors involved. Aims to fill this gap by analyzing the Arctic oil and gas interests of the five Arctic littoral states.</p>	<p>Evidence shows that talk of a new Cold War in the Arctic is overblown. UNCLOS appears to be a suitable and detailed rule collection to govern possible contentious issues. The Arctic Council is an expedient forum for scientific knowledge accumulation, and steps have been taken to involve non-Arctic states. However, the increased accessibility of the region opens one important field of concern: the environmental state of the fragile Arctic ecosystem.</p>
<p>Keskitalo, E. Carina</p> <p>2012, Brown Journal of World Affairs</p>	<p><i>Setting the Agenda on the Arctic: Whose Policy Frames the Region?</i></p>	<p>International events and political processes more than internal dynamics drive agenda setting among governments in the Arctic.</p>	<p>The dominant framing and agenda setting have developed based on specific issues and forces in particular regions, and is related to particular historic developments. This has led to a fragmented view.</p>
<p>Khrushcheva, Olga & Poberezhskaya, Marianna</p> <p>2016, East European Politics</p>	<p><i>The Arctic in the political discourse of Russian leaders: the national pride and economic ambitions</i></p>	<p>Explores how Arctic policy is presented in Russian political narratives. Argues Russian leaders emphasize the state's geographical location and significant contribution to historical exploration and environmental protection of the region to frame Russia as an "Arctic Great Power" which has natural rights to possess and utilize the Arctic's resources.</p>	<p>The logic of "our Arctic, our rules" can justify any necessary sacrifices, and the assertive policy of the state. However, this discursive representation of the Russian Arctic does not correlate with the reality of the country's current interests in international cooperation and its willingness to "play by the rules".</p>

<p>Knecht, Sebastian & Keil, Kathrin</p> <p>2013, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>Arctic geopolitics revisited: spatializing governance in the circumpolar North</i></p>	<p>Argues foreign policy strategies in Canada and Russia are underpinned by a distinct spatial logic that drives state behavior in a fuzzy definition of Arctic territory and accounts for recent region-building dynamics.</p>	<p>In addition to common challenges of environmental protection, sustainable development and indigenous interests, there is a tendency towards more coordination and collaboration also in hard policy areas for the sake of the sustainable development of Arctic commons, as well as peace and stability in the region.</p>
<p>Knecht, Sebastian</p> <p>2016, Cooperation and Conflict</p>	<p><i>The politics of Arctic international cooperation: Introducing a dataset on stakeholder participation in Arctic Council meetings, 1998–2015</i></p>	<p>Analyses a dataset on stakeholder participation in the Arctic Council for all member states, Permanent Participants, and observers in Ministerial, Senior Arctic Officials’ and subsidiary body meetings between 1998 and 2015. The article finds that participation in the Arctic Council varies significantly across meeting levels and type of actors, and that new admissions to the Arctic Council, a source of major contestation in recent debates, do not necessarily result in more actors attending.</p>	<p>Participation in the AC has remained at relatively constant levels throughout its history and overall immune to geopolitical events, institutional reforms, and the increase in number of actors. Observers do not necessarily make use of their opportunity to participate. On average, their attendance is much lower than member states and PPs. Future research on observer influence in the AC should focus on participation and commitment, not just power and interest.</p>
<p>Koivurova, Timo & Heinämäki, Leena</p> <p>2006, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>The participation of indigenous people in international nor-making in the Arctic</i></p>	<p>The norm-making method of soft law provides indigenous peoples with a better opportunity for influential participation than is afforded to them by traditional law-making procedures.</p>	<p>The Arctic Council, with its unique model of participation, could serve as a new model enabling indigenous peoples to find a more reasonable status than that of NGOs in international law.</p>
<p>Koivurova, Timo</p> <p>2008, Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law</p>	<p><i>Alternatives for an Arctic Treaty - Evaluation and a New Proposal</i></p>	<p>Examines the alternative proposals for an Arctic treaty that have been put forward. The goal is to ascertain what is viable and problematic in each. This analysis will help in outlining a new treaty that can accommodate both the political realities in the Arctic and the societal goals pursued.</p>	<p>The structure of Arctic governance seems extremely complex. Since the region hosts such a wide variety of governance arrangements, this has enabled scholars and organizations to come up with a wide variety of proposals for an Arctic treaty.</p>
<p>Koivurova, Timo</p> <p>2010, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>Limits and possibilities of the Arctic Council in a rapidly changing scene of Arctic governance</i></p>	<p>Examines whether the still predominant inter-governmental forum, the Arctic Council, is facing a threat of being supplanted by other forms of governance. Examines proposals for Arctic governance set out by states, the EU, and IPs.</p>	<p>It would be a mistake to think that the Arctic Council could easily be turned into a treaty-based body having regulatory powers. The AC is at a crossroad, it must consider its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to transform its functions in the light of the governance challenges ahead.</p>

<p>Koivurova, Timo</p> <p>2013, Michigan State International Law Review</p>	<p><i>The Dialectic of Understanding Progress in Arctic Governance</i></p>	<p>Addresses how the way the Arctic is perceived in terms of policy and law has changed considerably in recent years, and the network of experts in Arctic international governance "epistemic/ knowledge community".</p>	<p>Within the Arctic knowledge community, the interpretation of what is problematic in Arctic governance (oil and gas) has progressed through dialectical stages of "scramble for resources" to "orderly development" to "somewhat orderly exploitation".</p>
<p>Koivurova, Timo</p> <p>2016, UC Irvine Law Review</p>	<p><i>How to Improve Arctic International Governance</i></p>	<p>Intensified discussion on how to improve Arctic international governance, especially from 2007. Examines three main approaches on how to improve Arctic international governance: Wild West; Responsible, Realistic Evolutionary Approach; Systematic, Planned Approach.</p>	<p>The approach chosen by Arctic states, responsible but traditional, is problematic since it does not provide a solution to the problem of coordinating between different governance mechanisms functioning in their own fields. The systematic planned approach tries to remedy this by bringing more consistency and decision-making power to an institution that could counter the vast challenges facing the region. Might be too ambitious for some Arctic states.</p>
<p>Koivurova, Timo, Kankaanpää, Paula & Stepien, Adam</p> <p>2015, Journal of Environmental Law</p>	<p><i>Innovative Environmental Protection: Lessons from the Arctic</i></p>	<p>Regional environmental governance in the Arctic can offer lessons that might inform governance in other regions of the world. The key feature a successful regional organization should display is the ability to learn and evolve.</p>	<p>Regional organizations positioned in between local, national, and international decision-making processes must engage in ongoing learning and display elements of adaptive governance. The Arctic Council still struggles with the Arctic/ non-Arctic balance.</p>
<p>Kuerstein, Andreas</p> <p>2016, The Arctic Yearbook (Briefing Note)</p>	<p><i>The Arctic Five Versus the Arctic Council</i></p>	<p>Analyzes how the Arctic Council and Arctic Five interact, both negatively and positively, and how they can complement one another to positively address Arctic issues.</p>	<p>The relationship between the Arctic Eight and Arctic Five is not one-dimensional. Rather than being a negative influence on northern international relations, as popularly put forth, the A5 plays a unique and at times constructive role in the region.</p>
<p>Lackenbauer, P. Whitney</p> <p>2010, International Journal</p>	<p><i>Mirror images? Canada, Russia and the circumpolar world.</i></p>	<p>Reflects upon how Canada reads—and constructs—Russian actions and intentions in the Arctic. Challenge is cutting through mixed messaging from government officials.</p>	<p>Unlikely Canada and Russia will be close allies, given historical mistrust, geopolitical interests in other parts of the world, and questions about respective motives. This does not exclude opportunities for bi- and multilateral cooperation.</p>
<p>Lanteigne, Marc</p> <p>2017, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>'Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?' China as a norm entrepreneur in the Arctic</i></p>	<p>China is concerned about being accepted as a regional player given its geography and arguably lack of an Arctic history. As the Arctic becomes more open to scientific and economic engagement, China wants to promote the idea of the Arctic as an</p>	<p>China has sought to develop the identity of a regional 'norm entrepreneur', engaging the Arctic on many levels to promote the norm of partnerships between Arctic and non-Arctic actors to promote positive sum outcomes. Through engagement via</p>

		international space, rather than a strictly regional. To avoid a backlash from the Arctic states and potential exclusion from Arctic development, Beijing cannot effectively be a unilateral ‘norm-maker’ in the Arctic.	several areas and governmental levels, Beijing hopes to succeed in being widely viewed as a ‘near-Arctic state’ which can contribute to new norms, and possibly new regimes, in an Arctic, which shows many signs of becoming further internationalized.
Moe, Arild, Fjærtøft, Daniel, Øverland, Indra 2011, Polar Geography	<i>Space and timing: why was the Barents Sea delamination dispute resolved in 2010?</i>	Lays out possible reasons for why the disputed area was divided the way it was, and answers why the agreement came at this specific point in time. Focuses on perceptions of national interest and the strategic, political, economic and security considerations that may have served as drivers for finalizing an agreement in 2010.	Explanations: Maturing negotiations, Russia’s general effort to tidy up its spatial fringes by finalizing borders and boundaries and Russia’s desire to be seen as a constructive and rule-abiding international actor. No single factor can explain the timing alone, but several indicators that a desire to reaffirm UNCLOS was important.
Moe, Arild & Stokke, Olav Schram 2019, Arctic Review on Law and Politics	<i>Asian Countries and Arctic Shipping: Policies, Interests and Footprints on Governance</i>	Consider the advantages of Arctic sea routes over the Suez and Panama alternatives in light of the political, bureaucratic and economic conditions surrounding shipping and shipbuilding in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.	Japanese & Korean policy documents indicate soberness concerning Arctic sea routes. Maritime-sector bureaucracies responsible for industries with Arctic experience have been closely involved in policy development, more so than in China. Find a clear tendency towards rising industry-level caution and restraint in all three countries. Examination of bilateral and multilateral Chinese, Japanese and Korean diplomatic activity concerning Arctic shipping exhibits a lower profile than indicated by earlier studies.
Murray, Robert W. 2012, The Polar Journal	<i>Arctic politics in the emerging multipolar system: challenges and consequences</i>	Takes a systemic approach to studying the security competition in the high north and argues that, while national interests have yet to lead to intense conflict or the use of force to date, the impending shift from a unipolar to a multipolar system will profoundly affect how states pursue their Arctic claims.	The world moves towards multipolarity and the Arctic represents an area of increased security competition and a potentially conflictual region. Multipolar systems are the most unstable, however, there is little reason to believe tension and strategic positioning will lead to war.
Nilsson, Annika & Koivurova, Timo 2016, Arctic Review on Law and Politics	<i>Transformational Change and Regime Shifts in the Circumpolar Arctic.</i>	Looks at the Arctic as a potential case of a regime shift in a large-scale social-ecological system that includes reinforcing feedbacks, focusing on governance structures.	Calls for reform of the Arctic Council or an Arctic Treaty can be seen as signs that there is a perceived need for change. Knowledge and awareness about environmental change can serve as a potential feedback loop between social and biophysical systems. It has not yet altered the international political structures from the 1990s.

<p>Nilsson, Annika</p> <p>2018, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>The United States and the making of an Arctic nation</i></p>	<p>How US interests towards the Arctic have been formulated in policies and policy statements. Economic development and national competitiveness are recurring frame. The policy discourse has moved from nation-building and military security towards a broader security perspective, with attention to energy supply for the US, and more recently also to the implications of climate change.</p>	<p>Over time, there is a clear shift from reluctance towards Arctic regional cooperation to embracing it. Moreover, it highlights how different stands in relation to climate change have affected Arctic cooperation in the past, and might do so in the future.</p>
<p>Nord, Douglas</p> <p>2010, International Journal</p>	<p><i>The shape of the table, the shape of the Arctic</i></p>	<p>Various parties interested in the future of the Arctic cannot seem to agree who should be invited to negotiations, who should sit permanently at the table and be responsible for identifying key issues and conflict solving mechanisms.</p>	<p>To alternative positions derived from different views on the priority concerns of the region as well as the breadth of the community that should address them: The Arctic Council vs. the Arctic Five.</p>
<p>Offerdal, Kristine</p> <p>2011, International Journal</p>	<p><i>The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence</i></p>	<p>Examines what role the EU seeks in Arctic affairs and how its ambitions overlap with and/or challenge the interests of the region's coastal states, using EU-Norway relations – key priorities, common and diverging interests – as a case.</p>	<p>From lacking awareness of Arctic issues, the EU has developed a knowledge base: provides legitimacy in Arctic affairs. Actors involved in internal policymaking have made conscious efforts not to challenge interests of the coastal states.</p>
<p>Pelaudeix, Cécilie & Rodon, Thierry</p> <p>2013, The Northern Review</p>	<p><i>The European Union Arctic Policy and National Interests of France and Germany: Internal and External Policy Coherence at Stake?</i></p>	<p>The EU has been trying to develop its Arctic policy with more coherence, internally and externally. The EU will require better coordination and a clearer vision of its role to position itself as an effective foreign-policy stakeholder in the Arctic, in particular when new powerful actors like Asian states enter geopolitics and geo-economics. Member states are moving to establish national Arctic policies: France keeps a high diplomatic profile with an ambassador for Arctic and Antarctic, Germany pursues a more discrete approach based on scientific research, technical expertise, and promotion of commercial interests.</p>	<p>Internally, there has been some improvement in inter-institutional coherence. Challenges: ensuring inter-institutional coordination, informing EU institutions about increasingly complex Arctic issues, and fostering dialogue with Arctic stakeholders. External coherence has been improved through the emphasis on cooperation rather than on governance, and a better communication of the existing EU contribution to research and sustainable development in the Arctic. Yet, the EU is still waiting for its admission in the Arctic Council.</p>
<p>Pelaudeix, Cécilie</p> <p>2015, The yearbook of Polar Law</p>	<p><i>What is "Arctic Governance"? A Critical Assessment of the Diverse Meanings of "Arctic Governance"</i></p>	<p>The academic production of knowledge on Arctic governance is characterized by four approaches: pragmatic, prescriptive, functional, and critical. Both multileveled governance and good governance have been used in the context of Arctic research.</p>	<p>The concept of governance has not been very much conceptualized in the Arctic. The four categories of approaches shed light on differentiated use and substantive goals: the probability of implementation; compliance with law; the efficiency and effectiveness of processes; the re-framing of issues at stake.</p>

<p>Pincus, Rebecca & Ali, Saleem H.</p> <p>2016, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>Have you been to 'The Arctic'? Frame theory and the role of media coverage in shaping Arctic discourse</i></p>	<p>The treatment of the Arctic region by media outlets presents an opportunity to engage media and communication studies to provide a theoretically informed perspective on Arctic issues: public opinion is formed via media coverage from southern centers of power; the Internet has expanded communication to and from the Arctic; media coverage plays a key role in translating and presenting science for public consumption.</p>	<p>The ways in which news media present Arctic issues to the public, in particular within the frame of conflict or a 'scramble' for the Arctic, affect public perceptions and opinions about the Arctic region. Frames connect discrete events and shape public perceptions as well as the environment within which policymakers operate.</p>
<p>Rossi, Christopher</p> <p>2015, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>The club within the club: the challenge of a soft law framework in a global Arctic context</i></p>	<p>The Arctic Five has formed a niche governance association, which in addition to effects of climate change and emerging assessments of a global understanding of Arctic issues (Arctic Circle) challenges the Arctic Council.</p>	<p>Gaps in the Arctic governance structure prompts discussions about Arctic Council reform or an Arctic Treaty. A potential challenge to Arctic governance could emerge from the Arctic Circle movement – a soft law version of the <i>pacta teriis</i> principle.</p>
<p>Rothwell, Donald</p> <p>2008, Brown Journal of World Affairs</p>	<p><i>The Arctic in International Affairs: Time for a new Regime?</i></p>	<p>Address some of the challenges facing the Arctic and offers a possible legal solution: An Arctic Treaty in addition to protocols to address specific issues.</p>	<p><u>Opposed to Young / Exner-Pirot:</u> Argues the Arctic regime as a patchwork of soft political responses needs an overarching binding treaty framework: the time for an Arctic treaty has come.</p>
<p>Rowe, Elena Wilson & Blakkisrud, Helge</p> <p>2014, Geopolitics</p>	<p><i>A New Kind of Arctic Power? Russia's Policy Discourses and Diplomatic Practices in the Circumpolar North</i></p>	<p>Aims to examine what the geopolitics of the Arctic looks like from the largest Arctic state. How were narratives about the development of the region received, reworked, and produced in a Russian context? Russian policy actors distance themselves from discourses of Arctic conflict and geopolitical competition, examine how this approach may serve Russia's key interests in the region.</p>	<p>The key tension in the Arctic region is not along the conflict/cooperation axis, but rather lies in the process of delineating between international cooperation and national sovereignty in tackling Arctic problems. The Arctic is somewhat insulated from the difficulties in Russia's broader relations with the West. A result of a concerted effort made by Russian actors and their international counterparts. The region has been successfully 'branded' as a zone of peace and cooperation in the diplomatic framing of the region.</p>
<p>Solli, Per Erik, Rowe, Elana Wilson & Lindgren, Wrenn Yennie</p> <p>2013, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>Coming into the cold: Asia's Arctic interests</i></p>	<p>Argue that the rising interest of non-Arctic actors highlights some interesting questions about how governance in the region will develop and how Arctic states envision the region's global significance. Studies the interests of China, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, and how Arctic states are meeting this increase interest.</p>	<p>Asian states have done little to coordinate their Arctic initiatives, but their approaches have included largely the same emphases: economic opportunities and environmental issues, cooperative scientific research. The Arctic states are not in full agreement of how the Arctic Council should develop, or the Arctic's place in the world: global region?</p>

<p>Stoke, Olav Schram</p> <p>2007, Marine Policy</p>	<p><i>A legal regime for the Arctic? Interplay with the Law of the Sea Convention</i></p>	<p>The idea of a binding legal regime for the Arctic, inspired by the one already existing for the Antarctic, has been articulated by various civil-society organizations, among them International Union for Conservation of Nature and Nature Protection, and the World Wide Fund for Nature. This article outlines some implications of the UN Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) for recent proposals to establish a comprehensive and legally binding regime for the Arctic marine environment.</p>	<p>Given the political impediments to reaching circumpolar agreement on a single comprehensive legal regime— notably the differing interests of Arctic states on such key issues as shipping and oil and gas activities, and the fact that many of the issues of concern are already regulated in global or regional treaties—the best answer would seem to be a flexible approach to norm-building that seeks productive interplay with existing institutions.</p>
<p>Stoke, Olav Schram</p> <p>2011, International Journal</p>	<p><i>Environmental security in the Arctic. The case for multileveled governance</i></p>	<p>Argues the Arctic governance framework is strong and dynamic. Environmental security remains satisfactory in the Arctic, despite rapid environmental changes and increasing economic activities.</p>	<p>Arctic environmental challenges cannot be addressed without contributions from global institutions. Involving non-Arctic states in the AC will expand the set of actors with knowledge about and ownership to the AC's assessments and recommendations, enhancing its ability to catalyze regulatory advances in broader institutions.</p>
<p>Stoke, Olav Schram</p> <p>2014, Strategic Analysis</p>	<p><i>Asian Stakes and Arctic Governance</i></p>	<p>Building on stakeholder management theory, this article examines the salience of Asian stakes in three key areas of Arctic governance: management and use of natural resources; shipping; and environmental protection. Argue that Asian states have significant stakes in Arctic governance, but that their stakeholder salience varies considerably from one issue area to another.</p>	<p>Shipping, climate change and environmental toxics: Asian stakeholders combine power, legitimacy and in most cases urgency. Environmental issues: Asian states are definite stakeholders. In other issue areas – petroleum, minerals, and fisheries – salience of Asian stakeholders will depend on their ability to compete commercially.</p>
<p>Thorhallsson, Baldur</p> <p>2018, Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration</p>	<p><i>A small state in world politics: Iceland's search for shelter</i></p>	<p>The aim of this paper is to determine Iceland's foreign policy options in relation to shelter theory. Iceland has been seeking political and economic shelter ever since the United States deserted it in 2006, by closing its military base, and in 2008, by refusing to provide it with assistance following its economic collapse.</p>	<p>Iceland tried to preserve remnants of the political and economic shelter provided by the US. Iceland deepened its involvement in NATO and started to look closer at Nordic cooperation as a form of political and economic shelter. Iceland sought shelter through new venues of cooperation: The EU, Russia, and China.</p>
<p>Wegge, Njord</p> <p>2011, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>The political order in the Arctic: power structures, regimes and influence</i></p>	<p>Explain the political order in the Arctic, situating his analysis within the broader context of IR theory. Guided by the perspectives of 'hegemonics stability', 'balance of power' and 'Kantian internationalist theory', focus is laid on power capabilities, international regimes, and domestic regime type as independent variables.</p>	<p>The Arctic is a multipolar 'region,' the enduring stability and peacefulness of which can be explained by both the role played by international regimes, and by the balance of power between the 'stakeholders' involved. In this multipolar situation based on respect for international law, smaller Arctic states are the main beneficiaries.</p>

<p>Wegge, Njord 2011, Marine Policy</p>	<p><i>Small State, maritime great power? Norway's strategies for influencing the maritime policy of the European Union</i></p>	<p>Shows how the Norwegian government was able to exercise significant influence on EU maritime policy development, positioning itself as one of the key actors. Identifies causal relationships leading to increased influence for Norwegian actors – particularly in respect to how issues concerning the Arctic became an integrated part of the policy.</p>	<p>Concludes that even though the Norwegian actors had a strategic point of departure, utilizing objective advantages to maximize their own utility, their influence may also have been due to competence and sharing of knowledge. Norway more independently was able to influence the EU to include an Arctic dimension in the final Integrated Maritime Policy.</p>
<p>Wegge, Njord 2012, Arctic Review on Law and Politics</p>	<p><i>The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making</i></p>	<p>Explain the EU's foreign policy expansion in the Arctic through: (1) the internal level – viewing EU foreign policy (EFP) as the product of an “organization;” (2) the state level – in specifically accounting for the role played by external actors, primarily states; and (3) the systemic level – viewing the EU and its foreign policy as dependent on structural conditions within the global system.</p>	<p>the new policy for the Arctic was due in part to a ‘window of opportunity’ brought about by physical and political change in the Arctic. The Commission was able and willing to play a key role as a committed policy entrepreneur. A major challenge for the EU was to unite on a common understanding of the problems and the potential contribution and role of the EU. Norway and Canada were the most influential external actors.</p>
<p>Wegge, Njord & Peng, Jungchao 2015, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>China's bilateral diplomacy in the Arctic</i></p>	<p>Examines (1) What are the most important driving forces in China’s bilateral diplomacy with respect to the A5 plus Iceland? (2) To what degree, and why, has China’s diplomacy towards some of the Arctic states been more successful than towards others? (3) What are the long-term goals of China’s Arctic diplomacy and presence?</p>	<p>Beijing’s utmost concern when it comes to foreign policy still centers on promoting economic benefits and creating a foreign environment conducive to economic growth. Yet, Chinese footprints in the Arctic are adequately established primarily in the field of scientific research, related to environmental concerns.</p>
<p>Wegge, Njord & Keil, Kathrin 2018, Polar Geography</p>	<p><i>Between classical and critical geopolitics in a changing Arctic</i></p>	<p>Developing new knowledge concerning if, how, and to what extent geography matters in international politics. Empowerment of: the Arctic Five (establishing rules and norms for the Arctic Ocean); The Nordic Council of Ministers: Norway, Iceland and Denmark/Greenland; Russia (shipping); European states more prominent standing.</p>	<p>Geographical changes in the Arctic have influenced power relations among several states, and geography is an important factor in IR in the sense of enabling or empowering state actors, in addition to economic, political, legal, and historical factors.</p>
<p>Wilson, Page 2016, Cooperation and Conflict</p>	<p><i>Society, steward or security actor? Three visions of the Arctic Council</i></p>	<p>Argues three visions are presently shaping thinking about the Arctic Council: one envisages it as a society for Arctic states; the second sees the AC as a steward for the Arctic; the third imagines the AC as a fully-fledged security actor.</p>	<p>The premise upon which the first vision is based – conventional state sovereignty – suggests it supporters do not favor any special or unique status for the Arctic region. The second vision, with governance and environmental considerations at its</p>

		How each vision is reflected in the practice of the Council and its members is examined, and what the ongoing tensions within and among these three ways of conceptualizing the AC means for its prospects, and for Arctic politics more generally.	heart, suggests the Arctic must be recognized as a space deserving of special recognition. The third vision rests on the assumption that the Arctic <i>is</i> special and does require a fresh approach that would be best served by a formal, independent, international institution specifically designed, mandated and financed to tackle the challenges presented by climate change in the region.
Young, Oran 1980, World Politics	<i>International Regimes: Problems of Concept Formation</i>	Argues there are extensive descriptive accounts of some specific regimes and some speculative ideas about phenomena such as regime change. But the fundamental character of international regimes remains elusive. Considering the pervasiveness and importance of regimes at the international level, the underdeveloped state of the existing literature on them constitutes a serious deficiency. This essay proposes to take some preliminary steps toward filling this gap by drawing on the studies of resource regimes.	Regimes consists of 1) a substantive component: a collection of rights and rules; 2) a procedural component: recognized arrangements for resolving situations requiring social or collective choice; 3) Implementation: compliance mechanisms. Questions to consider in the analysis of international regimes: Institutional character, jurisdictional boundaries, conditions for operation, consequences of operation, regime dynamics.
Young, Oran 1982, International Organization	<i>Regime dynamics: the rise and fall of international regimes</i>	Consider regimes as social institutions that develop or evolve overtime. How can we account for the emergence of any given regime? What factors determine whether an existing regime will remain operative over time? Can we shed light on the rise of new regimes by analyzing the decline of their predecessors? Are there discernible patterns in these dynamic processes? Is it feasible to formulate nontrivial generalizations dealing with the dynamics of international regimes?	While socially constructed institutions change continuously in response to their own inner dynamics and various political, economic, and social factors. Distinguishes three developmental sequences in regime formation: spontaneous orders, negotiated orders, and imposed orders. Regarding how regimes change once they have become established in specific social settings: internal contradictions, shifts in underlying power structures, and exogenous forces.
Young, Oran 1996, Global Governance	<i>Institutional Linkages in International Society: Polar Perspectives</i>	How can we understand the nature and consequences of institutional linkages at the international level? Types of institutional linkages: embedded institutions, nested institutions, clustered institutions, and overlapping institutions.	With the growing density of issue-specific regimes, it becomes increasingly likely that individual regimes will impinge on each other in significant ways. In part, this is a result of rising interdependence among members of the international society.

<p>Young, Oran 2004, International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics</p>	<p><i>Institutions and the Growth of Knowledge: Evidence from International Environmental Regimes</i></p>	<p>Argues institutions not only reflect ideas prevalent at the time of their creation, but also play vital roles in driving the growth and dissemination of knowledge. Essential to identify mechanisms through which they influence the behavior of producers and consumers of knowledge: (1) framing the research agenda, (2) privileging certain types of knowledge claims, and (3) guiding the application of knowledge to specific policy concerns.</p>	<p>1) International environmental regimes affect the growth of knowledge by structuring research agendas and, consequently, influencing what is studied. 2) International environmental regimes influence the growth of knowledge by privileging certain types of knowledge claims and, as a result, affecting how key issues are studied. 3) International environmental regimes affect the growth of knowledge by guiding applications of knowledge to public issues and, consequently, enhancing the credibility of favored streams of research.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2005, Global Governance</p>	<p><i>Governing the Arctic: From Cold War theater to mosaic of cooperation</i></p>	<p>The overall picture of transnational cooperation in the Arctic is complex; it features a mosaic of issue-specific arrangements rather than a single comprehensive and integrated regime covering an array of issues that constitute the region's policy agenda. Aims to demonstrate how the mosaic of cooperative arrangements emerging in the Arctic differs from what mainstream accounts characterizes as international regimes, and the importance of regional responses to global issues. There are clear signs that what is happening in the Arctic may yield significant lessons for those thinking generally about the future of governance in international society.</p>	<p>The most striking and influential roles of the Arctic's emerging institutional arrangements are generative in character, ex. Arctic Council assessments, and have taken on a variety of programmatic tasks, they have become vehicles for articulating regional interests and for protecting regional actors from the side effects of global processes, they play a role in bringing Arctic concerns to the attention of policymakers outside the region. Concludes the emerging mosaic of cooperative arrangements remains fragile, but that it would be wrong to dismiss the significance of regional cooperation in the Arctic and elsewhere in international society.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2009, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>Whither the Arctic? Conflict or cooperation in the Circumpolar North</i></p>	<p>Examines the implications of the surge of interest and concern in the Arctic, resulting from biophysical changes, for the pursuit of governance in the region. Argues alarmist fears expressed in media regarding growing conflict in the Arctic are exaggerated, but that there are good reasons to reassess current governance arrangements in and for the Arctic and to think creatively about ways to strengthen Arctic governance to make it as effective as possible. Argues for enhancing the role of the Arctic Council, and integrating several issue specific regimes, rather than developing an Arctic Treaty.</p>	<p><u>Does not support the claims of those arguing a comprehensive, legally binding Arctic treaty is required.</u> Argues the case for an effective tripartite governance complex featuring an agreement to set aside without extinguishing claims to extended continental shelf jurisdiction on the part of the littoral states, an effort to adjust the character of the Arctic Council to meet emerging needs in the Arctic, and a push to devise issue-specific regulative regimes to address concerns involving shipping, fishing, and off-shore oil and gas development.</p>

<p>Young, Oran 2009, The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law</p>	<p><i>The Arctic in Play: Governance in a Time of Rapid Change</i></p>	<p>What are the underlying drivers of the recent surge of interest in the Arctic? Who are the legitimate stakeholders in efforts to address these issues? How should we frame Arctic issues for purposes of policymaking? Do we need a specific international agreement for the Arctic Ocean? Would it be helpful to develop a comprehensive and legally binding treaty for the Arctic as a whole?</p>	<p>State change in 1980/90s driven from socio-political developments + state change in mid-2000s resulting from combination of biophysical developments and socio-economic occurrences. The current state change is strengthening the links between Arctic affairs and global processes, an occurrence that is shifting the geopolitical underpinnings of Arctic issues – legitimate stakeholders are no longer just the A8. Policy discourses: geopolitics/political realism vs. ecosystem-based management. Necessary to strengthen the AC, while proceed in a pragmatic fashion with regards to regulatory matters: ocean and fisheries – <u>not develop comprehensive Arctic Treaty or treaty for the Arctic Ocean.</u></p>
<p>Young, Oran 2010, Arctic Review on Law and Politics</p>	<p><i>Arctic Governance- Pathways to the Future</i></p>	<p>Coupled with globalization, biophysical changes are generating a dramatic rise of interest in economic opportunities that many believe will open in the Arctic during the next few decades. Articulate a set of policy-relevant insights through an examination of: What are the underlying drivers of the recent surge of interest in the Arctic? Who are the legitimate stakeholders in efforts to address the issues? How should we frame Arctic issues for purposes of policymaking? Do we need a specific international agreement covering the Arctic Ocean? Would it be helpful to develop a comprehensive and legally binding treaty for the Arctic?</p>	<p>An Arctic Ocean treaty would not solve the problem of safeguarding the marine systems of the far North, even if it was politically feasible. Issues of governance in the Arctic should be framed in terms of the discourse of ecosystem-based management and spatial planning. All legitimate stakeholders, including several non-state actors, should be granted a seat at the table in addressing these issues. Efforts to maintain and enhance the effectiveness of the Arctic Council, while not expecting it to turn into an organization with the capacity to make regulatory decisions or implement and enforce them effectively.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2011, International Affairs</p>	<p><i>The future of the Arctic: cauldron of conflict or zone of peace? (Review article)</i></p>	<p>What should we make of the surge of popular interest in the Arctic? The books discussed in this review article seek to capture attention with provocative statements about an emerging ‘scramble for the Arctic’ (R. Sale and E. Potapov); the prospect of ‘resource wars’ (R. Howard); the ‘Arctic as a battleground’ (C. Emmerson); clashes over ‘who owns the Arctic’ (M. Byers); the likely rise of a ‘great game’ in which global geopolitical forces control the fate of the Arctic; and the risk of a new Cold War breaking out in the Arctic.</p>	<p>Visions presented are more alarmist than alarming. It is reasonable to anticipate that the Arctic basin will become economically, and hence politically, much more important. Mostly, the authors arrive at sensible conclusions regarding this point, despite the attention-grabbing appeal of visions of escalating conflict. We need a coherent narrative to provide a basis for understanding the profound changes eroding the existing order in the region, and for devising innovative governance arrangements capable of ensuring the future of the Arctic as a zone of peace.</p>

<p>Young, Oran 2011, Polar Record</p>	<p><i>If an Arctic Ocean treaty is not the solution, what is the alternative?</i></p>	<p>1) The EU's proposal for an Arctic Ocean framework agreement. The Arctic Five arguing the UNCLOS is broad enough to provide a serviceable framework for addressing most issues. 2) Arctic governance is more fragmented than integrated, and will feature a complex of distinct arrangements. 3) It is necessary to consider drawbacks that often arise in negotiation and implementation of legally binding agreements.</p>	<p>The primary concern of the article is to deconstruct the argument underlying proposals for an Arctic Ocean treaty. What is now emerging in the Arctic is a governance or regime complex encompassing several distinct yet interrelated elements. The biggest challenge regarding Arctic Ocean governance is likely to be to find ways to bring the idea of ecosystems-based management in the Arctic, and at the same time protect Indigenous cultures.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2012, The Polar Journal</p>	<p><i>Building an international regime complex for the Arctic: current status and next steps</i></p>	<p>The transformative biophysical and socio-economic changes now occurring in the Arctic are generating new needs for governance in the circumpolar north. One common response to this challenge, the negotiation of a comprehensive Arctic treaty, is neither feasible nor necessary as a means of meeting these needs.</p>	<p>This analysis turns to the idea of a regime complex, a concept that has become increasingly influential in the broader literature on international cooperation and explores the prospects for the development of an Arctic regime complex. It argues that a number of the elements of such a complex are already in place and that others are coming into focus.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2012, Brown Journal of World Affairs</p>	<p><i>Arctic politics in an era of global change</i></p>	<p>Shifting priorities – new Arctic agenda: global attention, Arctic Ocean issues, managed development, and high politics. Internal challenges: A8/A5/A3. External pressures: non-Arctic states. Regime complex: Polar Code, Maritime Organization (UN), International Arctic Science Committee, ILO /IPs, Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission, association of tour operators. Strategy to ensure balance between peaceful and resilient region in socioecological terms and economic initiatives.</p>	<p>* A reaffirmation of the role of the Arctic Council as the principal high-level forum for consideration of Arctic issues coupled with an effort to strengthen the AC to play this role. * Mutually agreeable mechanism to allow key non-Arctic states to be heard in a meaningful way in dealing with the new Arctic policy agenda. * A vigorous effort to make progress in devising key elements of an interlocking complex of governance arrangements for the region.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2012, Ambio</p>	<p><i>Arctic Tipping Points: Governance in Turbulent Times</i></p>	<p>Interacting forces of climate change and globalization are transforming the Arctic. Addresses the implications of transformation for governance, both through adaptation to changes already occurring and through anticipatory responses to changes likely to occur in the future.</p>	<p>Advocates for the development of an Arctic regime complex, featuring flexibility across issues and adaptability over time, along with an enhanced role for the Arctic Council in conducting policy-relevant assessments and in promoting synergies among elements of the emerging regime complex.</p>

<p>Young, Oran 2013, Book chapter in "Environmental Security in the Arctic Ocean"</p>	<p><i>Arctic Futures: The Power of Ideas</i></p>	<p>Makes the case that the answer to the question of what implication of developments in the Arctic with regards to governance and policy depends on the paradigm or discourse applied as a conceptual framework for interpreting the meaning and significance of changes. Contrasts the neo-realist / geopolitical paradigm with the socio-ecological system paradigm.</p>	<p>Argues we stand at a historic turning point at which rapid change in the Arctic may reinforce the neo-realist focus on issues of security or invigorate the emphasis of the SES paradigm on matters of stewardship. Those who have a long-standing engagement in Arctic affairs have a moral responsibility to play a role in tipping the balance toward the SES paradigm as a way of framing and prioritizing the Arctic's policy agenda.</p>
<p>Young, Oran 2014, Book chapter in "The Arctic in World Affairs. A North Pacific Dialogue on International Cooperation in a Changing Arctic"</p>	<p><i>Navigating the interface</i></p>	<p>Focus on options for enhancing the engagement of non-Arctic states and actors in the affairs of the region, while at the same time protecting the interests of the Arctic states and of the region's permanent residents. Forums that provide informal opportunities for engagement are worth considering explicitly: The Arctic Frontiers, the North Pacific Arctic Conferences, and the World Economic Forum gatherings.</p>	<p>The Arctic is a dynamic region. Biophysical forces are causing transformative change, which triggers the emergence of new socioeconomic opportunities leading to new governance developments. In the globalized Arctic, it is reasonable to acknowledge the legitimacy of outsiders', but also their responsibility. Considerations of avenues of engagement between Arctic and non-Arctic states and non-state actors must start from the proposition that we need to think of this as a two-way street.</p>
<p>Østerud, Øyvind & Hønneland, Geir 2014, Arctic Review on Law and Politics</p>	<p><i>Geopolitics and International Governance in the Arctic</i></p>	<p>The Arctic has evolved from a potential conflict zone during the Cold War to an arena for international cooperation. Since the mid-2000s attention has focused on the conflict potential, this time related to resources. This article looks at how the research literature balances its prospects: the English literature is largely framed in institutional terms, and the French in a geopolitical context.</p>	<p>There is potential for both cooperation and conflict in the Arctic, depending on perspective and focus. Geopolitical importance is again increasing. Major drivers for change: climate change, technological advances, and quest for resources. However, the nature of the Arctic helps reduce the potential for acute state rivalry. Resource exploitation and transport will remain costly for a long time.</p>
<p>Østhagen, Andreas 2016, Arctic Review on Law and Politics</p>	<p><i>High North, Low Politics – Maritime Cooperation with Russia in the Arctic</i></p>	<p>As tensions rose between Russia and the West in 2014, due to the Ukraine-conflict, coast guard cooperation in the Bering and Barents Seas was unaffected. How did the respective bilateral cooperative structures between Norway, the US, and Russia develop, and why were they deemed "too vital to cancel"? Examines how the states have developed cooperative regimes since the 1970s, and subsequently how these regimes have come to constitute the backbone of bilateral management of these vast and invaluable maritime domains.</p>	<p>In both Norway and the US, a conscious decision was made to shelter regional maritime cooperation. This cooperation is subsequently seen in the context of a long-standing bilateral relationship with Russia, as a maritime neighbor, in the low politics of the high north. Maritime cooperation in the coast guard domain does not constitute an area worth securitizing in the context of the broader relationship with Russia. This cooperation was kept separate from other military structures as tensions grew with Russia over Ukraine.</p>

Appendix 7: Literature review – International conferencing

Conference studies in the field of political geography			
Authors	Article	Objective	Theoretical approach
Dalby, Simon (1996)	<i>Reading Rio, writing the world: the New York Times and the 'Earth Summit'</i>	Examines the geopolitical reasoning in media coverage (The New York Times) on the 'Earth Summit' in Rio in 1992 – an important episode in global environmental politics and North-South relations.	Critical geopolitical discourse analysis of foreign policy 'scripts' applied in the coverage.
Boyle, Philip, and Haggerty, Kevin (2009)	<i>Spectacular Security: Mega-Events and the Security Complex</i>	Study of mega-events (e.g. the Olympics, World Exhibitions, and the FIFA World Cup), which finds that they produce a wider international legacy of knowledge, networks, and habits beyond the event itself.	Foucault's work on surveillance, and Debord's emphasis on spectacle to accentuate how mega-events contribute to a wider series of global processes.
McConnell, Fiona, Moreau, Terri and Dittmer, Jason (2012)	<i>Mimicking state diplomacy: The legitimizing strategies of unofficial diplomacies</i>	Examine 'unofficial' diplomacy vis-à-vis the state and international politics. Focus on the relationship between legitimacy, recognition, and diplomacy, and explore the tension between state-centric and non-state diplomatic practices. Calls for more empirical inquiry into non-state diplomacy.	Diplomatic theory. Adapts Bhabha's notion of mimicry to diplomatic discourse through a poststructuralist and performative approach.
Craggs, Ruth and Mahony, Martin (2014)	<i>The Geographies of the Conference: Knowledge, Performance and Protest</i>	Examine conferences as sites for the construction of academic knowledge; as participating in the global diffusion of knowledge; as geopolitical/diplomatic performance; and sites for protest.	Applies the concepts of visibility, performance, and space to argue for the role of conferences in the construction of knowledge, identity, and power relations.
Shimazu, Naoko (2014)	<i>Diplomacy As Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955</i>	Argues the framework of 'diplomacy as theatre' function as a valuable heuristic device to examine the symbolic meanings generated by acts of diplomatic performance, and that there is need for more new ways of making sense of normative legacies of international diplomacy.	Applies 'diplomacy as theatre' as an interpretive framework to examine the Bandung Conference of 1955 as an international diplomatic event.

Hodder, Jake (2015)	<i>Conferencing the international at the World Pacifist Meeting, 1949</i>	Demonstrates how international conferencing was central to the construction of post-war institutionalism, as stage-managed events through which to script and perform alternative visions. Calls for broadening the study of conferencing beyond traditional spaces (i.e. 'high summits').	Internationalism – linked to conferencing as more than high-level summits. Underlines the value of the study of conferences for political and historical geographers.
World Economic Forum (Davos)			
Author(s)	Article	Objective	Theoretical approach
Erfurt, Rolf A. and Johnsen, Julia (2003)	<i>Influence of an Event on a Destination's Image – The Case of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Davos/Switzerland</i>	Study examining how hosting an event influences the image of a destination. The cluster analysis indicates that hosting the WEF changes the image of Davos as a destination for private tourists negatively.	The multi-attribute approach is applied to operationalize the construct 'destination image'.
Graz, Jean-Christophe (2003)	<i>How Powerful are Transnational Elite Clubs? The Social Myth of the World Economic Forum.</i>	Analyzes private authority in global political economy by examining the WEF. Argues the WEF produce only managerial outcomes, and calls for engagement with formal processes of political institutionalization and the role of the state.	Transnational elite clubs: social myths (Georges Sorel) and hegemonic power (Gramsci).
Fougner, Tore (2008)	<i>Corporate power in world politics: the case of the World Economic Forum</i>	Addresses limitations of Graz' (2003) article, and takes a different take on the WEF based on a productive/discursive conception of power, embedded in an analysis of a broader set of governmental practices central to contemporary world politics: efforts to constitute a global marketplace, govern states in accordance with a neoliberal rationality of government, and solve global problems through new forms of governance.	Non-essentialist ontology and non-foundationalist epistemology: conceives power in productive terms, and draws on Foucault's (2007) work on 'governmentality': concerned with the mutually constitutive relationship between government and modes of thought.
Elias, Juanita (2013)	<i>Davos Woman to the Rescue of Global Capitalism: Postfeminist Politics and Competitiveness Promotion at the World Economic Forum</i>	Analyzes how the WEF has represented gender issues and has been left out of the framing. Demonstrates how the WEF has produced an ahistorical, decontextualized, and apolitical appropriation of gender issues.	Neoliberalism and post-feminism. WEF view of gender equality: global problem best solved by market actions.

Garsten, Christina and Sörbom, Adrienne (2016)	<i>Magical formulae for market futures. Tales from the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos</i>	Looks at how the World Economic Forum in Davos relates to the ritualized form of interaction and technologies of enhancement through which it is set up.	Anthropology. Soft power (Nye).
UN special conferences, the Conferences of the Parties (COP), and the ‘Earth Summits			
Authors	Article	Objective	Theoretical approach
Cicin-Sain and Knecht (1993)	<i>Implications of the Earth Summit for Ocean and Coastal Governance</i>	Accounts for the background for the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, describes outputs of the conference, and potential effects on ocean and coastal governance, the main tensions, negotiating processes, and considers current efforts at implementation of its recommendations.	Descriptive study.
Fomerand, Jacques (1996)	<i>UN Conferences: Media Events or Genuine Diplomacy?</i>	Emphasizes three functions of UN conferences: information (creation, dissemination, and sharing of knowledge), monitoring and early-warning, and a normative function – developing “soft law”.	Examines the nature of UN special conferences and their role and functions in the context of multilateral diplomacy.
Haas, Peter M. (2002)	<i>UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment</i>	Review the history of global environmental conferences, and their broader role as policy instruments in constructing efforts at global environmental governance. Finds that the UN conferences have helped contribute to a broader shift in international environmental governance through educating elites, exposing them to new agendas and discourses, and providing them with added resources to pursue sustainable development.	Constructivism / constructivist governance and conference diplomacy.
Gray, Kevin R. (2003)	<i>World Summit on Sustainable Development: Accomplishments and New Directions?</i>	Outlines negotiation issues at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002 in order to assess the outcome: challenges and opportunities.	Descriptive study.
Seyfang, Gill (2003)	<i>Environmental mega-conferences— from Stockholm to Johannesburg and beyond</i>	Reviews the history and evolution of environmental ‘mega conferences’ and outlines six core functions which they seek to perform: setting global agendas; facilitating ‘joined-up’ thinking on environment and development; endorsing common principles providing global leadership for national and local governments; building institutional capacity; legitimizing global governance by making the process more inclusive.	Evaluative framework to discuss the outcomes, achievements, and disappointments of the Johannesburg summit.

Andresen, Steinar (2007)	<i>The effectiveness of UN environmental institutions</i>	Study of the effectiveness of UN institutions: the global conferences on development and the environment, the CSD and UNEP. Finds that the Stockholm and Rio summits score high on agenda setting, and the Johannesburg scores modest. Concludes the significance of this type of global conference has decreased over time.	Four 'soft' process-oriented indicators are applied to discuss the effectiveness of UN conferences: agenda-setting, participation, comprehensiveness, institutionbuilding.
Dirikx, Astrid and Gelders, Dave (2010)	<i>A deductive frame-analysis of Dutch and French climate change coverage during the annual UN Conferences of the Parties</i>	Aims to examine how the five frames defined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) are applied in the climate change coverage of Dutch and French newspapers.	Dependency theory. Framing of issues: conflict, consequences, responsibility, human interest frames.
Dimitrov, Radoslav (2010)	<i>Inside UN Climate Change Negotiations: The Copenhagen Conference</i>	Account for the 2009 Copenhagen summit from the perspective of a government delegate, outlining key issues under negotiation, the positions of key states and coalition, outcomes of the summit, achievements, failures, and assess the current state of global climate negotiations and multilevel climate governance.	Descriptive account of the process, and normative recommendations for the way forward.
Death, Carl (2011)	<i>Summit theatre: exemplary governmentality and environmental diplomacy in Johannesburg and Copenhagen</i>	Examine global summits, e.g. the 2002 Johannesburg Summit and the 2009 Copenhagen COP-15 as "moments of political theatre, performative enactments of legitimacy and authority, and sites for the communication of particular examples of responsible conduct. Summits function as 'exemplary stages' for a global audience, despite the absence (or failure) of new agreements or environmental regimes.	Applies Foucauldian governmentality literature to demonstrate how analyzing conferences as moments of political theatre is critical to understanding how international legitimacy is enacted.
Carter, Clegg and Wåhlin (2011)	<i>When science meets strategic realpolitik: The case of the Copenhagen UN climate change summit</i>	Case study analyzing the failure of the 2009 Copenhagen climate change summit, and examines how both policy and science have failed to legitimate the issue of climate change. Rather, different parties constructed different legitimacies, from different interests.	Sociological literature on power (Stephen Lukes): liberal, reformist, and radical dimensions of seeing power. Combined with institutional theory, dominating institutional logics and organizational fields (legitimacy and authority).

Campbell et al. (2014)	<i>Studying Global Environmental Meetings to Understand Global Environmental Governance. Collaborative Event Ethnography at the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity</i>	Improve understanding of new spatial and institutional relations of conservation, drawing on theoretically informed and empirically substantiated ethnographic research. Link the politics of conservation in localized sites to the politics of decision-making that shape the ideological and practical orientation of institutions for global environment governance.	Research innovation: collaborative event ethnography (CEE) – applied at COP10 to the Convention on Biological Diversity to study the politics of global biodiversity conservation.
Silver et al. (2015)	<i>Blue Economy and Competing Discourses in International Oceans Governance</i>	Examines how the term ‘blue economy’ was articulated within four competing discourses regarding human-ocean relations at the Rio +20 summit in 2012: oceans as natural capital; as good business; as integral to Pacific SIDS; as small-scale fisheries livelihood.	Discourse analysis. Finds large contradictions between the four discourses in terms of the problems identified, preferred solutions, and governance actors.
Lövbrand, Eva, Hjerpe Mattias and Linnér, Björn-Ola (2017)	<i>Making climate governance global: how UN climate summitry comes to matter in a complex climate regime</i>	Through a questionnaire survey at the UN climate conferences in 2013, 2014, and 2015, the authors study what government delegates and non-state observers see as the main purpose of the summit, and their own role. Most agree the primary purpose is to negotiate a legally binding climate treaty, but the reasons why people attend largely depend on their affiliation’s interests and personal motivations.	Informed by anthropological studies: Interpret the multiplicity of meeting activities through the concept of «the making of ‘global connections’ between local and global forces». Examine the significance of the UN climate summitry in a polycentric regime complex for climate change, focusing on social relationships.
Barbesgaard, Mads (2018)	<i>Blue growth: savior or ocean grabbing?</i>	Contribute to the critical literature surrounding drivers behind the political economy of blue resources: examine and give an overview of blue growth solutions to conservation and climate change issues.	Neo-liberalization of nature.

Global conference diplomacy and transnational advocacy network analysis

Authors	Article	Objective	Theoretical approach
Rittberger, Volker (1983)	<i>Global Conference Diplomacy and International Policy-Making: the Case of UN-Sponsored World Conferences</i>	Examines the proliferation of <i>ad hoc</i> conferences within the UN system, which has been characterized as an important component of the 3 rd postwar wave of global institution-building: issue-oriented <i>ad hoc</i> world conferences entailing a wide range of institutionalized follow-up activities (p. 172).	Conference diplomacy: a multi-lateralization of diplomatic intercourse through the institution of multiparty conferences.
Finkle, Jason L. and McIntosh, Alison (2002)	<i>United Nations Population Conferences: Shaping the Policy Agenda for the Twenty-first Century</i>	Examines expansion in population questions: broadening agenda; civil society being formally included in the formulation of international policy etc. and implications – the adequacy of international policy institutions from a simpler era to deal with them effectively.	Transnational Advocacy Networks. - Ways to rationalize the conference process: replace global meetings with smaller thematic or regional meetings for a clearer and more manageable focus?
Routledge, Paul (2003)	<i>Convergence space: process geographies of grassroots globalization networks</i>	Analyzes the People’s Global Action, an international network of social movements opposing neoliberal globalization, to analyze how such movements and groups can be effective in their global ambitions. Demonstrates how convergence spaces are both dynamic systems and spaces of contested social relations.	Proposes the notion of <i>convergence space</i> – negotiated spaces of multiplicity and difference – as a conceptual tool for understanding grassroots globalization networks.
Cooper, Andrew (2010)	<i>The G20 as an improvised crisis committee and/or a contested ‘steering committee’</i>	Examines the G20 as a hybrid project, its weaknesses, and merits. Argues the G20 needs to become a hub of economic global governance, with a more sustained sense of purpose.	Liberal internationalism and realist perspectives. Diplomacy and global governance.
Avelar, Marina and Ball, Stephen J. (2017)	<i>Mapping new philanthropy and the heterarchical state: The Mobilization for the National Learning Standards in Brazil</i>	Uses network ethnography to study policy networks and heterarchies – an organization between hierarchy and network that draws upon diverse horizontal and vertical links that permit different elements of the policy process to cooperate (and/or compete).	Social network analysis and network ethnography.
Nicolson, Donald J. (2017)	<i>Academic Conferences as Neoliberal Commodities</i> (Book)	Exploratory examination of academic conferences based around the social sciences.	Neoliberalism – the neoliberal agenda in relation academic conferences.

Appendix 8
Overview Arctic Conferences

Nr	Name
1	Number of Arctic Conferences
2	AAAS Arctic Division Annual Meeting
3	AAAS Science Diplomacy Conference
4	ACT's Arctic Shipping Summit
5	AECO Annual Arctic Cruise Conference
6	Alaska Dialogue - Institute of the North
7	Alaska Forum on the Environment
8	Alaska Marine Science Symposium
9	American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting
10	American Association of Geography Annual Meeting
11	American Geophysical Union – “Fall Meeting”
12	Annual Alaska Health Summit
13	Arctic & Marine Oilspill Program (AMOP) (1978)
14	Arctic Biodiversity Congress (CAFF)
15	Arctic Business Conference
16	Arctic Business Forum
17	Arctic Circle Assembly
18	ARCTIC DAYS Federal Arctic Forum/ Festival
19	Arctic Encounter Symposium
20	Arctic Energy Summit
21	Arctic Exchange
22	Arctic Frontiers
23	Arctic Futures Symposium
24	Arctic Observing Summit
25	Arctic Oil and Gas Symposium (CI Energy Group, Canada)
26	Arctic Patrol and Reconnaissance Conference
27	Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW)
28	Arctic Security Forces Roundtable
29	Arctic Shipping Forum North America
30	Arctic Technology Conference
31	ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting

Nr	Name
32	ARCUS DC Arctic Research Seminar Series
33	Asian Conference on Permafrost
34	Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) Online conference
35	BIT Annual World Congress of Ocean
36	Climate Change Technology Conference
37	Climate Prediction Applications Science Workshop (CPASW)
38	Conference on Polar Meteorology and Oceanography (1983)
39	Effects of Climate Change on the Worlds Oceans (ECCWO)
40	ESSAS Open Science Meeting on Subarctic and Arctic Science
41	European Geoscience Union Annual Meeting (1975)
42	EU Arctic Forum
43	Fletcher Arctic
44	Forum for Research into Ice Shelf Processes
45	Gordon Research Conference on Polar Marine Science
46	High North Dialogue
47	ICES Annual Science Conference
48	Institute for Arctic Policy Conference
49	International Arctic Change conference
50	International Arctic Forum "Arctic - Territory of Dialogue"
51	International Conference and Exhibition on Performance of Ships and Structures in Ice (ICETECH)
52	International Conference on Ocean, Offshore and Arctic Engineering (1982)
53	International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP)
54	International Conference on Permafrost (1966)
55	International Conferences on Port and Ocean Engineering under Arctic Conditions (1971)
56	International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS) https://icass.uni.edu/history
57	International Forum "Arctic: The Present and the Future"
58	International Offshore and Polar Engineering Conference (ISOPE) (1992)
59	International Polar Tourism Network (IPTRN)
60	International Science Conference "OPEN ARCTIC"
61	International Scientific Conference for Students and Postgraduates
62	International Symposium on Arctic Research (ISAR)

Nr	Name
63	International Symposium on Cold Region Development (ISCORD) (1983)
64	International Symposium on Polar Science (ISPS)
65	International WCPR/ IOC Conference
66	International Workshop on Ice Drilling Technology (1973)
67	Kirkenes Conference
68	Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium (1982)
69	Maritime and Arctic - Security & Safety Conference
70	NOAA Fisheries Open Water Meeting
71	North Atlantic Forum (1998)
72	North Pacific Arctic Conference on Arctic Futures
73	Northern Oil and Gas Research Forum
74	Northern Research Basins Symposium and Workshops (since 1975)
75	Northern Research Forum Open Assembly
76	Nunavut Mining Symposium (1998)
77	Ocean Leadership's Annual Public Policy Forum
78	Polar Data Activities in Global Data Systems
79	Polar Law Symposium
80	Polar Technology Conference
81	Promise of the Arctic Conference
82	Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit Conference
83	Society of Exploration Geophysicists Annual Meeting (1930)
84	Sustainable Ocean Summit
85	Symposium on Polar Science
86	Symposium on the Impacts of an Ice-Diminishing Arctic on Naval and Maritime Operations
87	Trans Arctic Agenda
88	UArctic Congress
89	US Arctic Research Commission Meeting (since 1985)
90	Week of the Arctic - Institute of the North
91	Western Regional Science Association Annual Meeting (1962)
92	World Ocean Summit - The Economist Events
93	World Reindeer Herders Congress

Nr	Year																			Sum			
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		18	19	20
32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
37	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	17
38	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	11
39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
40	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
41	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22
42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
44	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20
45	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	11
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15
47	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	21
48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5
51	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
52	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	21
53	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
54	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5
55	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	11
56	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	8
57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
58	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	21
59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	7
60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
61	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	17
62	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	6

Nr	Year																				Sum		
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		19	20
63	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	7
64	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20
65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
66	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13
68	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	16
69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
71	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	11
72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	9
73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
74	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	11
75	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
76	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
77	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	10
78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	12
80	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	12
81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
82	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4
83	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22
84	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	10
86	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	9
87	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	4
89	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22
90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	6
91	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22
92	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	6
93	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	6

