Introduction: a power perspective on Arctic governance

I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule –
From a wild weird clime, that lieth, sublime,
Out of Space – out of Time.
(Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Dream-Land’ (1844))

From the days of the Greek cartographers dreaming about Ultima Thule at the edges of the known world, the cold reaches of the northern hemisphere have inspired grandiose caricatures of risk and opportunity. The region is often imagined from a distance as sublime, exceptional and prone to extremes. Out of space and out of time, as Poe put it, the circumpolar North is frequently envisioned as fundamentally apart from the complexities, indeterminacies and intricacies of life and politics in other parts of the globe.

We see some of this exceptionalism in the application of dichotomies to the Arctic: the Arctic will either be preserved as humanity’s last wilderness, or plundered by coastal states jealously guarding their natural resource treasure chests. All Arctic states are completely equal in Arctic governance, or the USA and Russia dominate militarily and diplomatically against a veneer of regional multilateralism. The region must be on the brink of a new cold war (a common media representation) or saturated with warm, comprehensive cooperation (a counter-representation by Arctic states, including Russia).

This book avoids testing the outer extremes of these ‘either/or’ dichotomies about the cross-border politics of the Arctic. Rather, the volume seeks to pose and explore a question that sheds light on the contested, but largely cooperative, nature of Arctic governance in the post–Cold War period: how have and how do relations of power matter in shaping cross-border cooperation and diplomacy in the Arctic? By illustrating relations of deference, plumbing episodes of controversy, and highlighting the quiet ‘work’ of various kinds involved in sustaining and expanding cooperation.
in the Arctic, I hope to show how dynamic and layered with power relations Arctic cooperation itself is. Acknowledging the exercise of power without positing the existence of open conflict allows us to consider how Arctic cooperation is constantly shored up through various kinds of context-specific performances and broached and resolved contestations, rather than a static output of stale agreement.

The chapters that follow are analytical windows on how relations of deference and dominance – and the disciplining logics, representations and norms produced within and maintained by these power relations – shape Arctic cooperation. The cases presented and associated concepts borrowed from geography, international relations (IR) and science and technology studies (STS) are chosen to sensitise readers to important aspects of power in the region that may matter in a more generalised sense (applied to other similar cases in the Arctic) or abstracted (as features of governance in the Arctic or global governance more broadly). However, the book’s primary aim is to be selective, rather than encyclopedic, and concrete, rather than abstract, even if this leaves reassembling some of the broader lines on Arctic governance to the conclusion (and to further research).

The first chapter that follows provides background for readers unfamiliar with the Arctic context. Subsequent chapters are each meant to function as a window on power relations. Chapter 2 explores how defining/representing the Arctic region matters for securing preferred outcomes. The examples used to illustrate framing include a deeper exploration of how ‘outside’ geopolitical strife is handled in circumpolar cooperation, the place of non-Arctic states in the Arctic Council and the 2013 debate over new permanent observer applications, and the longstanding and ongoing balancing act between conservation and economic development in the region. Chapter 3 examines how circumpolar cooperation is marked by regional hierarchies and draws attention to the various kinds of roles available to those active in Arctic governance. Chapter 4 examines how Arctic governance has become a global social site in its own right, replete with disciplining norms for steering diplomatic behaviour. The chapter draws upon Russia’s role in the Arctic Council as an extended case study. Chapter 5 looks at how Arctic cross-border governance can be understood as a site of competition over the exercise of authority, and uses the examples of science-political and indigenous diplomacy-state diplomacy interfaces at high-level Arctic Council meetings to illustrate how the performance of authority is varied, contested and certainly not only reserved for State actors.

This introductory chapter provides an argument for why an analytical focus on power in Arctic governance is a productive choice. It also provides a set of definitions on how power is understood here. Secondly, we turn to the seemingly simple question of ‘where is the Arctic’ and
review both cartographical/natural-science-informed understandings and where the boundaries of governance are drawn in political practice. Next, existing research on cross-border cooperative politics of the Arctic is reviewed, with an aim of highlighting the strong scholarly baseline and teasing out where this book’s power perspective and selected cases make a contribution. The chapter structure and the related propositions about power in Arctic governance that the chapters highlight are then presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief note on methods, sources and the approach to theorising utilised in the book.

Why power? And how is the concept applied here?

A look at power relations sustaining and shaping Arctic cooperation and governance is timely. Broader scholarship in IR and critical geopolitics has illustrated well the key shifts that have taken place in global politics since the end of the Cold War. It is against this background of shifting power landscapes that Arctic cross-border cooperation has expanded.

The anxiously defensive black-and-white dichotomies about Arctic politics presented above tie into a wider uncertainty about how to interpret and cognitively map the post-Cold War world. As scholars working in a critical geopolitics vein have illustrated, the end of the Cold War dissolved a geopolitical imaginary of the globe as neatly divided between two superpowers. In this imaginary, the Arctic was a frozen front between the United States and the Soviet Union (Dittmer et al., 2011; Powell and Dodds, 2014; Steinberg et al., 2015). Lines of interest, cooperation and conflict that are exceedingly more complex and intertwined have replaced the Cold War geopolitical images of a spatial ‘Iron Curtain’ and a world divided, but stable, between the forces of Communism and democracy (Murphy et al., 2004; O’Tuathail and Dalby, 1998). The rumpled geopolitical backdrop of the post-Cold War years was important to reframing the Arctic as location for innovative forms of cooperation. The post-Cold War period saw the establishment of the circumpolar Arctic Council and the Council of Baltic Sea States, and formalised structures for cross-border contact in the Barents region of the Nordic Arctic (discussed in detail in Chapter 1).

Simultaneously, the impacts of globalisation and new networks of interest, influence and interaction have vastly broadened the range of actors and sites of politics that need to be taken into any account of global politics (Held and McGrew, 2002). Some argue that the nature of political power itself has been transformed by rapid post-Cold War globalisation, with economic interdependence, international institutions and new technologies rendering military force and deterrence less useful and
other forms of influence more important or efficacious (e.g. Deudney, 2006; Keohane and Nye, 1989; Nye, 2002; Pape, 2005; Paul, 2005).

In some ways, power as relations of dominance and deference fell out of the analysis of IR in the first heady decade of theorising around a new post-Cold War liberal world order (for more on this critique, see Neumann and Sending, 2010). Global governance suddenly seemed mostly about processes of learning, spread of norms, deliberation, and persuasion amongst motley groups of non-governmental organisations (NGO), business and State representatives. Power, when addressed, was primarily the power of discourse to shape the thinkable and the doable rather than the existence of inequality between relevant actors. The unequal power relationships and exclusions within seemingly democratic or open global governance policy networks were largely overlooked until recently and are now the focus of a burgeoning research programme (Davies and Spicer, 2015; Seabrooke and Henriksen, 2017).

However, these lacunae probably tell us more about IR as a discipline than about how global politics has been perceived and understood by those active on global issues. Goddard and Nexon (2016) argue that sub-disciplinary battles within IR have set up an attending and odd dichotomy with military might and Realpolitik (‘hard’ power) on the one side and the liberal institutional order, attraction and marketplace of ideas (‘soft power’) on the other side. This obfuscates the fact that the institutions of liberal order are, of course, also marked by the dynamics of dominance and subordination, as well as contestation, and that relationships of power are often upheld by simultaneous deployment of soft competencies and hard resources.

The growing scholarly interest in bringing to light the performance of power in situations within the liberal world order and unmarked by military or open conflict is an analytical cue I pick up on to analyse the cooperative politics of the Arctic. Rather than trying to theorise what power is in today’s global political landscape (or who has power), I draw upon IR scholarship suggesting that we need to look at the performance of power and what power does in practice (Guzzini, 1993; Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Cooley and Nexon, 2013). More recent work in political geography and critical geopolitics points us in the same direction with calls for attention to how geopolitical framings mould the world they represent. This entails directing greater attention to the everyday political practices and techniques of actors in global governance that constitute the performance of ‘geopower’, and draw sustenance from and sustain certain geopolitical representations (Thrift, 2000: 381; Mamadouh and Dijink, 2006; Muller, 2012; Jones and Clark, 2015). Practices of ‘geopower’ that can matter in facilitating the circulation and increased purchase of certain representations include techniques of mapping; cultural propagation in films and art; organisational routines; and, I would add, the practices
of diplomacy (Dodds, 2010; Jones and Clark, 2015; Muller, 2012; Wilson Rowe, 2015).

The understanding of power relations within the liberal order that I utilise in the chapters that follow can be illustrated more specifically by three questions. What are we looking for? When are we looking? And where is the arena in which power relations are playing out?

First, what we are looking for is the successful deployment of relevant competence vis-à-vis other actors in a governance field, resulting in a heightened direct or indirect capacity to shape outcomes. As Adler-Nissen and Pouliot argue, potentially valuable structural assets, such as military might or geographic vastness or diplomatic finesse, do not automatically bring power, as it ‘requires constant work to turn structural assets into power in practice.’ This work involves positioning yourself as a ‘competent player’ by seeking to shape the rules of engagement, engaging in social negotiation to achieve recognition for a desired position or preference within the governance field and, finally, shaping outcomes by successfully deploying the competencies that have been privileged in that policy field and/or by capitalising on the relations established via social negotiation (Adler Nissen and Pouliot, 2014: 6).

All of these steps, which can occur simultaneously or consequentially, direct our attention towards governance actors successfully or ineffectively ‘performing power’ rather than ‘having power’. Power is therefore manifested in relations that secure/maintain positions of influence and deference, but those relations require work, and what counts as an effective performance of power will be historically contingent and context-dependent (Neumann and Sending, 2010).

When we look for power is a tricky question, as the power relations that are constituting a particular site of governance probably saturate the site in constant and subtle ways. However, power relations are easier to identify from an analytical perspective at key moments where the status quo is contested in some sense or another. This helps us denaturalise and highlight the effects of power, even if these effects are also present at moments less obviously oriented towards securing deference.

The question of where Arctic governance takes place seems at first glance straightforward. However, even from a purely natural-science or technical perspective, the question of where the Arctic is remains tricky. Some rely upon the lines of latitude with which our cartographic practices have encircled the globe. In this perspective, the Arctic is simply everything above the ‘Arctic Circle’: 60°N latitude. Natural-science-based definitions include using the varying extent of the tree line (the maximum point beyond which trees will not grow) or using average soil temperatures (the isotherm) (see Dodds and Nuttall, 2015 for a detailed discussion of these factors and delimitations).
For the purposes of this book, however, it is more relevant to trace the
different ways that the Arctic has been defined in political practice. At
times, these definitions have relied heavily on the natural-science-based
definitions outlined above. At other times, the idea of ‘what’ or ‘where’
the Arctic is have been fascinatingly fluid and contested, depending on
the political context and constellation of actors at hand. For example, in
defining the eight countries of the Arctic Council, Iceland was included
even though its coastline falls below the 60° latitude line above which all of
the other Arctic Council member states are present. Or – to take another
example – in vying for its permanent observer status to the Arctic Council,
China worked to increase its relevance by forwarding the notion of itself
as a ‘near Arctic’ state, introducing a new cognate to the geographical con-
ception of Arctic space. Likewise, the American state of Maine picked up
on China’s near Arctic category in conjunction with its lobbying to host an
Arctic Council Ministerial during the US chairmanship (2014–2016) and
attendant efforts to position itself as a key gateway for Arctic shipping.

We see the same variations in Arctic definitions at the domestic level.
The Russian internal definition of the Far North long included an important
equivalency caveat. Russian policies were directed to both the ‘Far North’
and ‘areas equivalent to it.’ This expanded category of the North included the
landlocked Tuva republic found on the same latitude line as Amsterdam,
simply because of its distance from federal centres of power, harsh climate
and limited economic opportunity (Blakkisrud and Hønneland, 2006).
The Norwegian usage of the High North can be as narrow as the land and
sea territories above 60°N or nearly the entire state of Norway, given the
country’s ‘northness’ in a global perspective (Jensen, 2013).

As we will see in subsequent chapters, these definitions of what
an ‘Arctic issue’ is (and where the Arctic is) are often an output of
power relations and contestation. How natural-science-based or other
definitions are activated by political actors has consequences for who
the policy audience is, which kind of policy actors belong, and what
kinds of knowledge and statements are deemed relevant and appropriate
in a policy debate. Arctic politics can remain stubbornly, surprisingly
regional or can be global in scope. Keil and Knecht (2017) suggest we
should consider the Arctic as a global embedded space criss-crossed by
different kinds of imagined communities, while Depledge and Dodds
suggest we should think of Arctic politics as a ‘bazaar’ (2017) with both
formal centres and unregulated peripheries or markets of ideas. Young
has argued for understanding Arctic cooperation as a ‘mosaic’ making up
a broader regime complex (Young, 2005).

To capture the element of fluidity of the boundaries of Arctic govern-
ance and the intersection of global, local and national politics with Arctic
regional politics, I suggest we conceive of the object of study in this book –
Arctic cross-border cooperation – as consisting of many intersecting
and some overarching policy fields. I make this choice as the literature on policy fields in global governance allows us to bring a certain rigour to considering power relations within – and between – policy fields. Furthermore, policy fields can easily encompass the many actors of global politics today – from indigenous peoples’ organisations through scientists and to NGOs, as well as State representatives – without losing sight of the enactment of power relations amongst these diverse field participants.

For example, the eight-country Arctic Council has a broad mandate and ‘gathers’ many issues that belong to other global or local policy fields, from global climate change to local economic development, into one conversational clearing house. I suggest that the Arctic Council can therefore be usefully analysed as one umbrella policy field in its own right, without necessarily requiring a strong focus on the institutional aspects of the multilateral forum (an already well-researched topic; see below). At the same time, the issues discussed in this umbrella field are clearly embedded in other global/local/national policy fields and associated networks. To take one illustration, the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment produced by an Arctic Council Working Group (WG) identified many of the regulatory gaps that were important in developing the Polar Code to regulate ice-covered waters, negotiated by Arctic and non-Arctic states alike within the International Maritime Organization (Brigham, n.d.).

The notion of a policy ‘field’ draws upon sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work, as interpreted by IR researchers. In this perspective, a field delineates a particular realm of interaction with internal rules about appropriate behaviour. Sending (2015) argues that fields in global governance should be understood as organised around concepts of governance on which actors can hold different conceptions. What unites them is a ‘thin’ interest in what is at stake and (more or less) agreed-upon ways of approaching the problem. To find a global policy field, we need to look for agreement about what is at stake and a shared sense that this problem should be governed – not necessarily agreement about what the governance outcome should be.

The notion of overlapping or nested Arctic policy fields serves to delimit the scope of study in this book, while retaining the sense that these cross-border policy fields are intimately connected to both local and national settings and other global governance issues. We can thus conceive of cross-border Arctic cooperation as consisting of an ecosystem of ‘policy fields’ that have important overlaps, shared contours or key disjunction from other more local, national, regional or global policy fields relating to Arctic governance issues. This helps to overcome the problem of ‘scalar fix’, which can be understood as the analytical shortcomings that result from the standard scholarly practice of identifying a ‘scale’ of governance (local, national or global) at the start of a study. Fixing the scale first can easily overlook or exclude important intersections between these levels of socio-political life (Hakli and Kallio, 2014).
Overcoming the scalar fix is especially important in an Arctic context, as a key aspect of setting the Arctic agenda is determining the scale at which or location where the problem will be and should be addressed (and, by extension, who will play a key role in addressing it) (Shadian, 2017). So, rather than assuming that the problems addressed at regional or international levels are intrinsically ‘international’ or ‘regional’ ones, we seek to denaturalise and explore how and why these problems are addressed through cross-border efforts. This approach to scale speaks to Monica Tennberg’s suggestion that we analyse the Arctic through a ‘politics of relationality’, following actors navigating Arctic politics within and across various temporal and spatial dimensions with a focus on the management of change (Tennberg, 2015).

A second important wager that speaks to this book’s focus on power relations is that ‘fields’ are sites of equality and inequality – and have outer delimitations. Not all field participants have equal access to and facility in wielding the resources that matter to that particular policy field. The argument is that within this field there are, of course, all actors (networks, organisations, country representatives, business and so on) that characterise global governance. However, not all of these actors are equally well-positioned to ‘play the game’. Agents in a field occupy unequal positions, and control over relevant economic, social and symbolic resources is usually unevenly distributed, causing various ‘player[s] to play the game more or less successfully’ (Pouliot, 2010: 34). The field, and its particular constellation of unevenly distributed resources relevant to maintaining power relations, also has an outer edge. Nexon and Neumann (2017) argue that the edge of a field is where we notice the features and effects of the field (over participant behaviour or outcomes) tapering off. Thus, to take an example from Chapter 5, when the Arctic Council is unable to agree on if and how to represent itself as a group at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties in Paris in 2015, one could argue that the edge of an umbrella Arctic policy field, greatly concerned with regional climate change, has yet to extend its policy field boundaries to the global climate policy field. By contrast, dealing with the global challenge of persistent organic pollutants, actors within the Arctic policy field have indeed exerted substantial and coordinated influence (Leonard and Fenge, 2003; Selin, 2017), which would indicate strongly overlapping circumpolar and global policy fields.

How does this approach fit in? Intellectual traditions and knowledge gaps

The compelling political nature of the Arctic – its indigenous sovereignties meeting state governance, management of a rapidly changing
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physical environment, and of intersecting national boundaries and transnational ecosystems, resources and legal regimes – has attracted a good deal of rigorous scholarly attention. Contributions to research on the cross-boundary relations of the Arctic come from many different social-science fields. This is important as it brings variety – and varied analytical wagers and pursuits – to the table. In other words, the scholarship discusses similar political phenomena in quite different ways as the authors are also engaged with their respective disciplinary communities.

Despite key disciplinary differences, it is perhaps most constructive to think of extant scholarship on cross-border cooperation as grouped around objects of study, even if various disciplinary angles are taken and methods used. These contributions to analysing the politics of the circumpolar north fall along three main lines.

*Regional Arctic institutions/legal frameworks/regimes*

One might argue that this research is focused on the following questions. What are the legal and institutional governance structures in the Arctic? How do they connect with global or other regional legal and institutional structures? And how well/sufficiently do they function to address specific governance challenges, singly and in concert?

Legal and political science scholars have analysed to what extent governance outputs interact with other existing legal regimes, draw upon different sources of legal precedent, promote particular norms or are sufficient to the policy problems at hand (e.g. Bankes and Koivurova, 2014; Beyers, 2014; Koivurova and Alfredsson, 2014; Humrich, 2017; Jensen, 2015). Pan-Arctic social and economic assessments also tend to include useful overview chapters on ‘governance’ that present formal Arctic political structures; their competencies; and challenges relating to the division of responsibility between non-regional governance and national, local and indigenous governance structures (Nymand Larsen and Fondahl, 2015; Poelzer and Wilson, 2015). The Arctic Council itself as a political institution has garnered a particularly high level of attention and generated strong scholarship (Dodds, 2013; English, 2013; Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014; Nicol and Heininen, 2013; Pedersen, 2012; Rottem, 2013). Local, cross-regional diplomacy and people-to-people contacts has also garnered attention (such as Olsen and Shadian, 2016; Tennenberg, 2012).

On a similar note, a focus on the development and effectiveness of regimes has long been a key contribution from the Arctic political science community (Hoel, 2015; Honneland and Stokke, 2010; Young, 1998). Regimes can be understood as sets of rights and rules around a policy object and patterns of interaction that make the regime not just a formal structure,
but also a social institution within which expectations converge (Young, 1998; Krasner, 1982). Early studies of Arctic regimes examined the membership/participation structure of new regimes and also how the regimes define a policy issue or the mandate of the regime (broad or narrow) (Caron, 1993; Stokke, 1990; Young, 1998). The regime-theory literature does engage explicitly with questions of power, and the definition utilised is that power is demonstrated through overt exercise of will or willingness/ability to walk away from an established regime. However, a key aspect of regime-building theory is that, while regimes are pushed forward by entrepreneurs or exogenous ‘shocks’, new regimes usually only come about if they are attractive to all relevant parties (Stokke, 1990: 61). We therefore rarely see the overt demonstrations of power anticipated in regime theory.

A more recent turn in these institution-/law-focused studies of Arctic governance is assessing how the intersecting and complex web of governance structures is efficient or suited to purpose. Should Arctic governance be harmonised, with such overlaps and repetition removed or rationalised (Koivurova and Molenaar, 2009), or organised differently to take active advantage of the multiple levels of government involved in Arctic questions (Stokke, 2011)? One can also understand the complexity and fragmentation of Arctic politics as bringing about important possibilities for enmeshing Arctic questions in key broader fora across the globe (Stokke, 2015: 329).

Studies of regime complexity elsewhere in the world have noted that it creates useful ambiguities that are often actively guarded or promoted by states. Key politics, therefore, happen at the interstices of overlapping regimes and, with the sheer complexity of the obligations entailed in and produced by regimes, a higher reliance on personal relations and cognitive shortcuts is promoted (Alter and Meunier, 2009). As discussed above, the aim of this book is to understand better the power relations that undergird the informal politics of the interstices of Arctic policy complexity, and the resources, representations and positionings involved in delivering a performance of competence that matters in Arctic politics. In other words, the book draws upon the insights and findings of this literature on Arctic institutions and regimes, but does not seek to add to our understandings of the formalities, efficacy and shortcomings of governance structures and governance outputs.

**Articulating and pursuing Arctic interests**

A second set of contributions focuses on the interests identified as ‘Arctic’ by states (and other non-state actors as well). State interests are often understood from both a realist perspective, in which a state’s interest in territory, sovereignty or security is taking as given analytical starting
points, and a constructivist approach, which seeks to unpack what premises, actors and inter-state dynamics produced a set of interests. Many of the studies focusing on state-level Arctic politics and interactions among states in the Arctic have focused on security questions – both broadly construed (e.g. Heininen, 2015; Hoogensen Gjørv et al., 2013; Huebert et al., 2012; Sergunin and Konyshev, 2015; Wegge, 2010) and more specifically focused on the military preparedness and capacities of Arctic states (e.g. Blunden, 2012; Kraska, 2011; Zysk, 2011). Several studies have examined the positions of key Arctic states (Jensen, 2013 and Jensen, 2015 on Norway; Wilson Rowe, 2009, Laruelle, 2013 and Sergunin and Konyshev, 2015 on Russia; Griffiths et al., 2011 on Canada). There is also growing attention to the roles played by indigenous peoples’ organisations, non-state actors and non-Arctic states in shaping Arctic governance (Knecht, 2017; Shadian, 2014; Spence, 2016; Wehrmann, 2017). This book builds upon the scholarship illustrating the various positions and interests of key Arctic actors and seeks to understand how these interests fare when brought into the social space of Arctic cross-border governance. Why do some actors (and their interests) matter in shaping cross-border cooperation while other interests and actors do not? What relations of power undergird whose interests count most?

Discourse and representation

A third strand focuses on long-lines studies of changes in how the region is represented, including how particular understandings of its problems (and of the region itself) are ‘talked into being’ (Neumann, 1994; Jensen, 2013; Keskitalo, 2004; Keskitalo, 2007; Tennberg, 2000) or shored up by certain kinds of geopolitical framings and cartographic representations (Aalto et al., 2003; Dittmer et al., 2011; Powell and Dodds, 2014; Steinberg et al., 2015; Wilson Rowe, 2013a). On a related note, several scholars have carried out research on the new kinds of identities fostered by new regional framings, including on the individual level. This line of enquiry is exemplified by Hønneland’s work on the ‘Barents Generation’ of cross-border actors in the European North (2013), Shadian’s work on the emergence of an Inuit polity (2014) and Medby’s work on Norwegian ‘Arctic’ identity (2014), among others. This focus on representation/identity-building also includes important contributions on the material aspects used to produce and shore up these representations. Several scholars have sought to highlight the material/technical resources available to the State in making the Arctic land, sea and seabed legible for statecraft (Dodds, 2010; Luedtke, 2013; Strandsbjerg, 2012; Stuhl, 2016).

In this strand of research, power is generally seen as embedded within and exercised by these discourses and representations because they
define (to greater and lesser degrees) the realm of possible actions and speakable words in a given setting. As outlined above, there are growing efforts in both political geography/critical geopolitics and international relations to build upon this existing scholarship. In a critical-geopolitics vein, there have been calls for greater attention to the concrete power relations involved in constructing geopolitical representations – and closer study of how these representations are brought to bear on cross-border relations in practice. The Bourdieu-inspired research on global policy fields in IR discussed above is likewise meant to capture the disciplining effects of discourse, while dedicating greater analytical attention to the improvisational and instrumental ways in which policy field actors navigate and improvise against and along the limits of discourse.

While these studies are valuable in mapping and analysing key governance outcomes, none aims to take a systematic and theoretically informed look at how power relations are enacted, maintained and contested in the production of Arctic cross-border governance. This book seeks to address this small, but important, lacuna by bringing to light some key manifestations of power relations in circumpolar cooperation.

Four propositions on power relations and the structure of the book

Although the chapters that follow seek to unravel or question some of the established narratives of Arctic space and politics as a window onto power relations, Chapter 1 aims to initiate readers new to circumpolar politics. This background chapter looks at the longer lines of different governance actor groups in the region and introduces Arctic regional governance over time, with emphasis on the cross-border politics of the 1990s and onwards.

The subsequent chapters explore four propositions about the development and maintenance of power relations in key cases of Arctic cross-border cooperation. Chapter 2 takes a bird’s-eye view of power in Arctic governance by exploring the proposition that power relations are manifested in and shaped by the definitions and representations of Arctic policy objects and the region more broadly. The chapter illustrates how ‘framing’ is about laying the ground for policy actions. In other words, a robust policy frame will address what the problem is and its causes, who can do something, and who should do something. The politics of framing is approached from three angles. The first examines how key political actors worked to shore up a cooperative frame of the Arctic region in a time of geopolitical crisis outside the Arctic itself, following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. From there, we move on to a more granular policy scale seeking to see how particular types of representations of the Arctic matter for specific political outcomes. The two remaining case
studies look at concrete consequences for what kind of actors seem to belong in Arctic politics, and focus on debates around the participation of non-Arctic states and business representatives in Arctic governance.

Chapter 3 explores relationships of power that come from occupying certain kinds of advantageous positions. The proposition explored here is that as policy fields come together and endure, some actors will find themselves in occupation of a more advantageous position for securing desired outcomes because of effort and success in defining what matters in the policy field. This discussion is informed by an emerging literature in international relations seeking to come to grips with the function of hierarchies in global politics. In an Arctic context, we could see forms of hierarchy in achieving a ‘club’ status, for example the ‘Arctic 8’ (members of the Arctic Council) vis-à-vis the rest of the world, or the politics of being an ‘Arctic power’ or a leading Arctic state. Questions include: How do ‘global powers’ matter in regional development? And what kinds of creative status seeking can be pursued – and recognised by others? The roles of Russia, the United States and Norway are explored as cases of hierarchies amongst states in Arctic Council diplomacy, and hopefully further research will pick up on this line of thinking to extend the conceptualisation of hierarchy to other key actors in the Arctic region, such as indigenous peoples’ organisations and NGOs. Chapter 3 does, however, also look at questions of hierarchy in cross-border people-to-people relations, examining a circumpolar (Canada-to-Russia) development project and a health-focused cooperation within the Nordic Arctic. Here we will see how roles of students and teachers had been intrinsic to these projects of the 1990s and early 2000s – and protested by the target audiences in Russia.

Chapter 4 looks at the informal workings of power by examining what is accepted as a legitimate statement, policy concern or actor in the Arctic Council. We also explore what kind of interventions and persons fall outside the remit and how these exclusions are effected or maintained. This line of enquiry envisions global governance policy fields as social spaces with ‘place-specific’ norms and ways of enforcing these norms (Wilson Rowe, 2015). Acknowledging that performances of power – including developing and enforcing norms – have an inherently ‘local’ and setting-specific aspect is important to grounding broad statements about power in global governance. The proposition about power here is that Arctic cross-border cooperation plays out in an environment that has social constraints and norms. These constraints allow for the performance of Arctic diplomacy to more and less successful degrees, and shape the behaviour even of the ‘great powers’ in the region. Chapter 4 seeks to illustrate some of these key social constraints by examining how Russia – a major Arctic country by geography – has been disciplined by these constraints and also sought to transform them.
In Chapter 5, we explore how power relations are malleable and constantly refined/redefined, especially between different ‘kinds’ of actors. To get at this sense of the different forms of influence that can be exerted – without positing that non-state actors engage in global governance in fundamentally different ways than state actors – we will be utilising the concept of authority. Authority can be broadly construed as the capacity to secure deference from others by using whichever forms of capital or relations of power lend themselves to that particular policy field. The chapter suggests that a systematisation of what counts currently/at a given moment as authoritative performance (civic epistemology) can be a useful tool to borrow from science and technology studies when the classic IR tool – a genealogy of the field – is too difficult to carry out (which I hazard is the case for the complex ecosystem of the cross-border Arctic policy fields of today, although particular strands of these fields or actors could benefit from a genealogical analysis). To get a sense of the kind of authority that science diplomacy actors may achieve in Arctic governance, we zero in on high-level diplomatic debates over how to draw the line between knowledge and policymaking at the Arctic Council. Likewise, to understand some aspects of the authority sought and exercised by the Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council, I summarise some of the key diplomatic interventions made by indigenous peoples’ organisations at Arctic Council high-level meetings.

The concluding chapter seeks to account for how the windows on power presented in each chapter can perhaps be reassembled into a broader view (and where this remains empirically or analytically challenging).

**Note on methods and use of theory**

In attempting to get at this relationally, situationally enacted exercise of power, IR theorists have engaged in their own ‘practice’ turn, arguing that it is not enough to look at state rhetoric, stated interests or potential resources to understand power. Rather, to grasp the workings of power one needs to look at an entire range of power performances (Sending, Neumann and Pouliot, 2015). This often involves field work in multilateral or bilateral settings and/or extensive qualitative interviews with field participants about discussions, outcomes and roles of the various participants in a policy field. Fieldwork or physical presence can be important for understanding the non-verbal performance of power. For example, at the climate success meeting in Cancun in 2010 after the debacle the previous year in Copenhagen, the ‘unanimous’ decision in the UNFCCC process was only achieved by simply overlooking the vocal objections of Bolivia as the country’s representatives sought – and
failed – to gain the attention of the chair as she invited celebration and applause (Lahn, 2016).

I had the privilege of conducting field research on cross-border people-to-people cooperation between 2003 and 2004 within a Canadian-sponsored development project promoting dialogue around natural resource management in the Russian North (see Wilson, 2006). The findings of this fieldwork are discussed in Chapter 3. I have also had informal discussions with Arctic policy actors at regional conferences, such as Arctic Circle and Arctic Frontiers, and in various gatherings of stakeholders at my workplace in Oslo and abroad, where discussions often go under Chatham House Rules. A broader challenge, however, with fieldwork in IR or on diplomacy is that key settings may often be closed to researchers with an active political-science agenda. Interviews and archival, media and policy document analysis, however, can help fill the gaps (Schia, 2013).

The volume revisits and interprets anew an interview set with 105 Arctic cross-border actors. These interviews took place between 2004 and 2017. Especially intense periods of formal qualitative interviewing took place in 2004 (resulting in Wilson, 2007a, b), 2007 (resulting in Wilson Rowe, 2009), 2011 (with Helge Blakkisrud, resulting in Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud, 2014) and 2013 (with Per Erik Solli and Wrenn Yennie Lindgren, resulting in Solli et al., 2013). These interviews were focused on Arctic actors from Russia, Norway, the USA and Canada, with a few interviewees with Finnish and Danish backgrounds as well. Gaining insight into practices – not just what is said but what is done and how – is a difficult pursuit. Given the conscious and unconscious commitments and tacit knowledge involved in diplomatic practice (or any practice for that matter), interviewees may often have difficulty reflecting on the implicit underpinnings of their daily, regular activities. Consequently, throughout I have taken a method cue from Vincent Pouliot (2010) and have asked Arctic policy field participants to reflect on other field participants’ practices (their relative efficacy and intention) rather than just their own. In interpreting the interview sets, I have frequently kept an eye out for intersubjective agreement, indicated by more than one interviewee sharing an interpretation of a policy event or stakeholder.

Access to documents was an important source for triangulating data, and the policy documents of the Arctic coastal states are analysed in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the minutes from SAO meetings have been an important source of information (albeit probably highly filtered) about closed-door meetings. Nonetheless, the minutes most often report on disagreement and monitoring converging views, although the level of detail varies by chairmanship. On more controversial points, it is not always easy to determine which country or Arctic Council participant
voiced concern or slowed a process. However, it has been possible to connect these indicated but not fully written-up disagreements to statements and perspectives from interviews.

An important analytical tool there, given the long timescale of documents now available online in the Arctic Council archives, is tracing the extent to which ideas that are introduced at early meetings in chairmanships succeed or fail to gain followers at subsequent meetings. The Arctic Council ministerial meetings that take place every two years are not usually marked by a lot of decision-specific diplomatic work. The Arctic Council is very much like many sites of global governance in this regard. The aim of the high-level civil servants representing their countries at more frequent intersessional meetings of multilateral bodies is to clarify options and texts so that little remains to be decided by top-level politicians. Much of this involves removing the brackets that are put around text or policy options or decisions around which disagreement remains. Removing ‘bracketed texts’ either involves reaching agreement by making needed adjustments or giving up on having the text included.

Table 1 Comparison of bracketed text on point 7.2.10 from an SAO meeting preceding a ministerial meeting (PAME, 2015b) to the final version of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (PAME, 2015a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brackted text, two alternatives</th>
<th>Final text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Advance the development of]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Implement] a pan-Arctic network of marine protected areas to strengthen marine ecosystem resilience and contribute to human wellbeing, including traditional lifestyles, within the broader context of Ecosystem Approach. (e.g. LME Strategic Objectives, data sharing, risk assessments etc) [monitoring and climate change)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop [Advance the development of] [Implement] a pan-Arctic network of marine protected areas, based on the best available scientific knowledge, to strengthen marine ecosystem resilience and contribute to human wellbeing, including traditional lifestyles, within the broader context of Ecosystem Approach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Develop a pan-Arctic network of marine protected areas, based on the best available knowledge, to strengthen marine ecosystem resilience and contribute to human wellbeing, including traditional ways of life.
In rare occurrences, one or several country representatives may elect to push the issue to the ministerial or top-political level for decision and debate. The debate about admittance of additional observers to the Arctic Council, explored in Chapter 2, is one such rare example of a key issue remaining undecided and set for resolution at a ministerial meeting format.

Finally, a brief note on theory and how it is understood and used in this book. Theories and concepts generated by other case studies of global governance (or in other fields, such as psychology) are important to bridging the gaps of what is known, or can be known. I draw these theories primarily from the interpretivist social science tradition, in which interests, identities and cognitive frames are not immutable givens (even if they are only occasionally the object of active reflection by those enacting them). It is important to note that the abstracted ideas I utilise in this book are not put to use in the sense of ‘grand theory’ (Swedberg, 2014). I do not expect the abstracted ideas I utilise to predict that similar situations in Arctic governance would play out in similar ways. Rather, I employ them as sensitising theories that can point us in research directions and help us delimit data-gathering strategies. In other words, the book engages in theorising by bringing hitherto underused concepts generated by research on other global policy fields and empirical findings on Arctic governance into productive, if not predictive or generalisable, conversation.