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Arctic international relations: new stories on rafted ice

In October 1988, an Inupiaq hunter saw that three grey whales were trapped in the sea ice off of Point Barrow (Nuvuk), Alaska. These younger ‘teenage’ whales were on a migratory route between Arctic waters and the warm seas of southern California and Mexico, but they had failed to leave their northern feeding ground in time and had become trapped. The North Slope community immediately set to work attempting to break the ice and create breathing holes for the trapped whales. An attempt to borrow a barge from the nearby oil and gas development at Prudhoe Bay failed. As attention to the whales’ plight and the villagers’ efforts grew, national resources were brought in to cope, with whale biologists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency lending assistance.

Eventually, the issue went international. The United States State Department contacted the Soviet Union to secure the cooperation of two icebreakers stationed in the Russian Far East – the *Admiral Makarov* and the *Vladimir Arseniev*. Over the course of several days, Soviet icebreakers rammed the tough ridge of sea ice attempting to make a path through the Arctic sea ice.

Federal authorities had closed the airspace above the ships, thinking that the Soviets would appreciate all efforts made to ensure secrecy during their volunteer effort in American waters. However, the spirit of glasnost was in the air and the American media were invited aboard the Makarov to take a look. One of the ship’s officers, Vladimir Morov, told American reporters that the Russian audience was following closely too: ‘Our whole country is watching, just like everyone else. We love animals, just as anyone’ (Mauer, 2010).

By the time a channel of ice-free water was opened, the whales had been given names in both English (Bone, Bonnett and Crossbeak) and Inupiaq (Putu, Siku and Kanik). One whale died during the wait, but it was hoped that the two surviving, but weakened, whales had escaped via the channel opened by the Soviet icebreakers and resumed migration.



Figure 1 North Slope (USA) villagers passing a Soviet icebreaker, flying a Soviet flag in 1988.

‘Operation Breakthrough’ received high levels of media attention and was also the object of critique from those who found the use of resources disproportionate to the likelihood of successful survival for the whales or the importance of the effort (Archer, 1988).

The whale rescue incident brings into focus many of the actors, ideas and physical elements that continue to shape Arctic politics today. Migratory species, interlinked Arctic ecosystems gathered around the narrowing circumference of the globe, and vast distances challenged the ability of one country – even a global superpower – to bring its ‘own’ military/coast guard resources to bear. The Soviet icebreakers were the best alternative. Local indigenous villagers – inspired by the animals’ plight and relations to the whale extending back to mythological timescales (Bodenhorn, 1990) – took action. The problem triggered the application of resources and expertise from the national level. The quick mobilisation of resources possibly drew steam from the campaigns of environmental NGOs that had sought to limit commercial whaling and had used the whale as a flagship ‘charismatic megafauna’ in their campaigns to raise global environmental awareness (Epstein, 2008).

This book is designed to give us insight into how power relations have been important to structuring and sustaining cross-border Arctic cooperation and cooperative governance of the region. Taking a close look at power necessitates jostling and unpacking established narratives about regional history and key actors. This chapter, however, aims to provide readers less familiar with Arctic settings with important background

and, therefore, draws upon established narratives and classifications that later chapters may re-examine. We begin with an introduction to various Arctic actor groups in a brief historical context. The difficulty of keeping these actor groups separate from one another underlines the complexity and interconnectedness of Arctic governance today, and it is on this topic of Arctic multilateralism and cross-border innovation that the chapter concludes. In preparing the ground for the contemporary chapters that follow, a lot of the richness of detail that historians of the Arctic have brought to light is, by necessity, glossed over. Hopefully, however, the referenced works used in this brief long-lines look at the Arctic past will point the curious reader in the right direction for comprehensive historical works.

Politics on rafted sea ice: a bird's eye view of Arctic political actors

This section introduces actor groups in a historical perspective, rather than trying to use a chronological approach that pulls these actor groups into particular eras. Of course, the emphasis on actor groups may delineate too sharply among them, just as a purely chronological approach could gloss over the different ways in which key historical events or eras were experienced by differently positioned actors at the time. However, the focus on actors serves the book's purpose well given the emphasis on power relations (which are manifested among individual actors and sets/kinds of actors). Secondly, the emphasis on actor groups in a historical perspective – and in the more contemporary chapters that follow – encourages us to see how Arctic politics today is shaped by layers of historical experience that are authored and narrated from multiple perspectives.

Indigenous peoples and their organisations

The high northern latitudes of the globe have long been occupied by humans, and one could argue that the region's political history started with them. The peopling of the Americas is believed to have occurred via a land bridge between today's Chukotka in the Russian Far East and today's Alaska at the height of the last ice age, although the theories of how America was populated are frequently revised and revisited (Schweitzer, Sköld and Ulturgasheva, 2015). Much of the world's ocean water was then bound up in ice, which exposed new tracts of land connecting the continents. In the North American Arctic and Greenland, the archaeological record and Inuit oral histories document occupation by the mysterious Tunii people, who are understood to have been distinct from

and displaced by a twelfth-/thirteenth-century migration of Inuit from Eurasia and Alaska (McGhee, 2006). The migration and success of the Inuit people over a wide range of territory that came to be encompassed by the emerging Russian, Canadian, American and Danish states were later a key element underlining the regional nature of the Arctic and challenging the primacy of state borders in the international politics of the Arctic (English, 2013; Shadian, 2014).

In the Nordic and Russian Arctic, many of the indigenous peoples also shared – and many continue to share – traditions surrounding a reliance on reindeer herding, in addition to the opportunities for fishing, hunting and gathering afforded them in their particular territories. The state borders that grew up around Saami territories in today's Nordic Arctic also served to catalyse cross-border Saami connections, starting in the 1950s. These organisations, like the Inuit Circumpolar Council, made a similar contribution to a conceptualisation of the Arctic as a region that transected state borders (Vik and Semb, 2013).

It is important to keep in mind that the indigenous Arctic has long been a place of mobility and interconnection, even as North–South ties remained non-existent, weak or contested (see Dodds and Nuttall, 2015; and McGhee, 2006 for a circumpolar discussion). Historical interconnections in the Bering Strait are an interesting example of this (Fitzhugh and Crowell, 1988). While the Cold War period made the expanse of Arctic seas separating Alaska and Chukotka seem like an insurmountable geopolitical distance, the Bering Sea had, for indigenous communities, been no obstacle. Kinship ties, visits, trading routes and marriage journeys criss-crossed the region.

For example, the Inupiat living on Big and Little Diomed Islands had cousins, friends and trading partners on each island and up and down the Alaskan and Russian coasts. Residents of Big Diomed Island regularly traded and intermarried and visited residents of Little Diomed. Even as these territories became gradually more incorporated into the new 'motherlands' growing up on both sides of the Bering Sea, the travel and interconnection continued across the 2.4-mile separation. The school-teacher on Little Diomed recorded 178 people visiting in a six-month period during 1944 (Alaskaweb, 2015). However, as the uneasy alliance of the Soviet Union and the United States grew chillier after the end of the Second World War, and eventually cooled into the strategic stand-off of the Cold War, these longstanding connections and visits ceased, and travel between the islands was no longer permitted.

Reactivating these kinship and language ties across a geopolitically significant border was an important catalyst in the active Arctic region-building of the immediate post-Cold War era. In John English's wonderful account of the history of the Arctic Council, he describes the first North American Inuit delegation to travel across the 'Ice Curtain' of the Bering



Figure 2 Big and Little Diomed Islands and the Alaskan and Chukotka coasts.

Sea to Chukotka in the waning days of the Soviet Union in 1988. The delegation was inspired and led by the Inuk leader and later Canadian Circumpolar Ambassador Mary Simon, and was part of a broader exploration of the ground for interconnected, innovative forms of circumpolar governance. Moments of the joyful, tearful reunion, which also brought together some family relations who had been separated for four decades, took place in the border-crossing Inupiaq language of the Bering coasts. This was to the consternation of the English-speaking KGB ‘listeners’ assigned to monitor the delegation (English, 2013).

Likewise, the ICC had always kept an empty chair for the Russian Inuit of Chukotka (Chukchi) since the organisation was first established in 1982. The aim of the newly founded organisation had been to bring together all the Inuktitut-speaking peoples of the Arctic – the Inuit people – to develop a shared voice. The driving forces behind this increased political organisation were growing interest in the Arctic’s natural resources (oil, gas, mining) and an increasing impact from global environmental movements, such as the anti-whaling movement, on Arctic communities (Shadian, 2014). The Chukchi finally joined a meeting of the ICC in Iqaluit in 1988.

Similar international organisations were established by the Saami people (Saami Council, founded in 1956), the Athabaskan peoples of the North American sub-Arctic (Arctic Athabaskan Council in 2000), the Aleut International Association (1998), Gwich’in Council International (1999) and the indigenous peoples of Russia (RAIPON, 1992). These

organisations vary in their staffing and ability to represent their interests in all forums (see Knecht, 2017, for an overview of Arctic Council participation), but are generally active in the UN Forum for Indigenous Peoples and meet in the Arctic Council as ‘Permanent Participants’. We return to the topic of the diplomacy of indigenous organisations in the international Arctic in Chapter 5.

While indigenous contact with ‘outsiders’ between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had generally been based around mutually beneficial exchange of goods (Dodds and Nuttall, 2015), the intensity of contact between indigenous peoples and ‘outsiders’ increased with the advent of modern states extending and asserting their sovereignty over their putative Arctic ‘backyards’ in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as we shall see below. These colonial efforts included the growing use of native lands for non-renewable resource extraction (Mitchell, 1996; Berger, 1985), religious conversion processes (Balzer, 1999), extension of law and justice (Grant, 2002), residential schools, medical care (including isolation of those with infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis) (Shkilnyk, 1985), and forced relocation and settlement policies (Marcus, 1995; Damas, 2002; Vitebsky, 2005). The effects of this internal colonialism and the rapid social and economic disruption that accompanied it continue to be felt (for scholarly works on these dynamics, see Alfred, 1995; Mitchell, 1996; Shkilnyk, 1985; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; Vitebsky, 2005).

A passage from Hugh Brody’s book *The Other Side of Eden* gives one vivid illustration of the colonial legacy. Brody was collecting interviews for a film in northern British Columbia, amongst the Nisga’a people. He decided to interview an artist assisting with the film, George Gosnell, about his experience in the residential school system in the 1950s. Gosnell recounted his travel to St George’s residential school; the first night in a huge dormitory too frightened to sleep; the incomprehensibility of the sole language used, English; and the four times he was strapped across the hands with a belt for speaking his Nisga’a language. He said:

I don’t why the residential school ... I don’t know why they had such far distant places for education. To get torn apart from, from your parents and your brothers and your sisters to educate us ... they made us forget our own language ... And then in the summer, after the school was finally finished with our one year, spending our time in the residential school was over, we came back on the train. Again the trip took three days. I got off the train. I looked in my mother’s face. And I used English. She asked me why I used the English. I told her that’s what we went away for.

(Brody, 2000: 170–172)

George Gosnell relearned Nisga’a languages at the insistence of and with help from his parents. During this interview, the film’s sound recordist had searched desperately to eliminate what seemed like a source of background

noise in the room. Listening to the recording later, they realised that the noise they had picked up – a faint beating – had been the sound of George Gosnell’s heart suddenly pounding as he recalled, thirty-five years later, his return home and his mother’s shock that he could only speak English to her. It is important to keep in mind that it is against this legacy of colonialism, and partly in pursuit of its redress, that internationally active Arctic indigenous organisations engage in cross-border politics.

Commercial actors

The Arctic gradually moved out of the realm of myth and into a realm of opportunity for European kingdoms, as Spain, Portugal, England and others built out their status as maritime powers. The quest for a sea route to China, as well as rumours of the riches of the New World, encouraged sailing into the relative unknown (Craciun, 2009). Many of the early explorers were supported by consortiums of business actors, often interconnected with royal or political patronage, and military actors as well. Frobisher was patronised by Elizabeth I with the equivalent of £80 million in today’s currency, while William Barentsz, whose sixteenth-century exploration reshaped the map of the Arctic from Spitsbergen (today known as Svalbard) to Novaya Zemlya, was supported by wealthy Dutch merchants (English, 2013). Barentsz’ travels and reports, followed by William Baffin’s journey of 1615, did much to undermine the hope that the Arctic would present new trade routes to China or any other easy opportunities for transit and riches. The next phase of Arctic exploration, therefore, had the emphasis on national glory, heroism and science, rather than the prospect of great riches, and we return below to this era in connection with the State.

The Arctic colonial periphery has long supplied more southerly markets with valued goods from the fur trade of the past to the diamonds, oil and gas, and fish of today. For example, the comparatively temperate Arctic Norway – with its long coastline and robust seafaring traditions and sea-based trade routes – has centuries-old connections southwards. Portuguese vessels plied Arctic fisheries off the Lofoten Islands to fish cod. Additionally, the pursuit of whales and other migratory marine mammals brought European whalers and hunters to the Arctic archipelago of Spitsbergen (Pederson, 2006). Likewise, trading in furs and the quest to map the eastern edges of the Russian empire pushed Russian actors towards the outer edges of the Eurasian Arctic in the 1730s and 1740s (Bonhomme, 2012). Exploration was often succeeded either by the establishment of State-supported trading monopolies, such as the Hudson Bay Company, or by missionary-controlled contact with outsiders, as we saw develop in Greenland.



Figure 3 Hudson's Bay Company Building in Apex, Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Companies became an especially prominent feature of the Soviet and now Russian (again) Arctic. Industry and exploitation of the Arctic's natural resources were seen as important pursuits in Stalin's 'revolution from above' to promote Soviet economic independence and prosperity (Rowe, 2013; Bruno, 2016). Mining and metallurgy became key parts of this from the 1950s onwards, followed by an oil-and-gas era in Siberia from the 1970s. The Russian Arctic is highly urbanised – an anomaly in the otherwise small-community Arctic landscape. These towns are 'one-industry' cities (*monogorody*) with industries that typically took responsibility for education, community health, pensioner travel, and support and accommodation. While these State–business relations have been rapidly changing in the post-Soviet Arctic, the companies remain the touchstone for how corporate citizenship and environmental and social responsibility of new companies are assessed (Kelman *et al.*, 2016; Wilson Rowe, 2017b).

Business interests and related forms of new or different activity in the Arctic have also served to highlight weak spots or disagreement in international law. Canada, the United States and the Northwest Passage provide an interesting example in this regard. The USA adheres to the doctrine of the freedom of the seas and characterises the Northwest Passage as an international strait, whereas Canada seeks to define these as internal waters (Elliot-Meisel, 2009). One of the contested

voyages was the 1969 'Manhattan Voyage', in which the Humble Oil Company (later Exxon) wanted to take a modified oil tanker through the Northwest Passage. The company requested customary permission from the Canadian Government, which was granted. By contrast, the USA announced that it would send an icebreaker into the Northwest Passage to accompany the commercial tanker, but did not ask permission in light of the US assertion that the passage is an international strait

Navigating relations with business and consideration of different economic possibilities has also been a key aspect in asserting or winning greater degrees of self-determination. The considerations Denmark and Greenland weigh as they tackle the question of full economic independence for the Arctic island state illustrate this well. Like many Arctic national/local economies, Greenland is characterised by a narrow economic base and a reliance on natural resources (Bertelsen *et al.*, 2015). Full independence for Greenland from Denmark will be highly dependent upon diversifying the economic base and gaining additional sources of income beyond fisheries and hunting, tourism, raw materials and land-based industries. The questions of what kind of economic development opportunities (large vs small scale; extractive vs renewable) should be pursued – and what kind of actors should represent Greenlandic interests – are hotly debated in Greenlandic society (Nuttall, 2015; Wilson, 2015).

Today, corporate actors are arguing for an increasing place at the table in questions of Arctic economic governance. Financial actors/banks who lend money to key Arctic projects play an instrumental role in setting and enforcing various standards of relevance to the Arctic natural and project environment (Alto and Jaakkola, 2015). More specific to the Arctic itself, the establishment of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) in 2015 and the new Arctic Investment Protocol, forwarded by a working group at the World Economic Forum, are two key new initiatives (see Chapter 2 for more on this).

States and their representatives

It seems almost strange to need to introduce 'states,' as they are the taken-for-granted building block of most IR scholarship. However, when it comes to the Arctic, especially the cold reaches of the Eurasian and North American North, the State could almost be considered a newcomer. The expansion of the State – in earnest and with the aim of pursuing sovereignty through the incorporation of indigenous lands and peoples into the polity – happened as late as the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in the American and Eurasian Arctic. The growth of the State into the Arctic was accompanied and facilitated by the presence of military, police and military-related activities (Grant, 2010). This expansion also involved

generating State-friendly knowledge of the region (for example, through cartography and census-taking) and establishing physical presence and ways of monitoring or maintaining vision over the Arctic region, largely through scientific and military endeavours (Wråkberg, 2013).

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries also saw a new phase of exploration in conversation with the State more directly, rather than the broad consortiums representing various economic interests that drove previous phases of exploration. Sir John Franklin, and later Fridtjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen and Robert Peary are prominent names in this regard. For example, Franklin's journeys with the *Erebus* and *Terror* in 1845 were motivated in part by the British empire's naval strength. The thirst for exploration also connected to an increasingly literate British public, eager to consume reports of distant land and imperial heroism. This reading public was a market for publishing revenues, and a key audience for narratives of imperial greatness and national identity (English, 2013: 47–48).

The disappearance of Franklin's crew and ships sparked rescue expeditions throughout the late 1840s and 1850. The location of the sunken ships was deemed a mystery until Parks Canada divers identified the wreckage in 2014. However, local Inuit had long told stories of the boat their great-grandparents had collected items from for years before it was eventually crushed and sank – and of the journalists, cavalry officers and other explorers to whom they had tried to show the resting place of the *Erebus*. In fact, the Inuktitut placename given to where the ship was eventually found translates to English as 'the boat sank here', and appeared on a map of Inuit testimony collected by an American explorer as early as 1867 (Ducharme, 2017). The obstinate overlooking of Inuit knowledge about the *Erebus*' whereabouts as reliable information for over 147 years, and the downgrading of Inuit knowledge and contributions in the initial reporting of how the *Erebus* was 'found', are vivid examples of the knowledge politics of the Arctic. We return to this question of knowledge and authority in Chapter 5.

During the Cold War, the Arctic had heightened significance as a military theatre in the stand-off between the era's two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union. Young (1985: 61) points to geography as an important feature here, noting that it was 'hard to ignore the facts that the United States and the Soviet Union [were] immediate neighbours in the Arctic (western Alaska and eastern Siberia are only 57 miles apart at the Bering Strait), that the shortest route between the two superpowers [was] across the North Pole'. The Arctic became dotted by a range of early warning sites and radar listening stations. These characteristic, space-age-looking facilities were called – in North America – the Distance Early Warning (DEW) Line. The DEW Line, which was built in the 1950s and rejuvenated in the 1980s, increased threat awareness in

the Arctic (Young, 1985). Similar kinds of radar listening stations are still active along the Norwegian–Russian border. At the same time, the performance of national ‘softer’ security functions was also an opportunity for cooperation and drew upon some of the same kinds of resources that could be applied in a hard security logic. For example, in 1988, Norway and the Soviet Union signed a bilateral agreement on search and rescue in the Barents Sea, which specified procedures and methods of cooperation in the event of maritime accidents (Archer, 1988).

These early State–military cooperative agreements also point us to an important feature of Arctic governance. Dodds and Nuttall (2015: 41) coin the term ‘legalization’ of Arctic space to capture the growing layers of soft and hard law, produced specifically for the Arctic or for global application with important Arctic repercussions. At the end of the Cold War, the only multilateral agreements in place specific to the Arctic were the Svalbard Treaty and the 1973 Polar Bear Convention, which was originally an initiative of the Soviet Union (Roginko and LaMourie, 1992; Young, 1992, 1998). The development and ratification, by most Arctic states, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 was also another key milestone for the legal harmonisation of interests amongst the Arctic coastal states (Harders, 1987). At a recent Arctic conference, the Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende described UNCLOS as the ‘Constitution of the Arctic’ (Nilsen, 2017). Gerhardt *et al.* (2010) suggest that the key legacy of UNCLOS is the definition of various zones of ocean space (exclusive economic zones close to the coast, outer continental shelf, high seas and so on), and a specification of a suite of rights and responsibilities of users.

The framework was provided by UNCLOS for Norway and the Soviet Union/Russia to identify and negotiate overlapping claims about extended continental shelves in the Barents Sea (see Beyers, 2014, for an overview of the various overlapping claims and their process towards resolution). Long-term bilateral negotiations resulted in the 2010 Barents Sea Delimitation Agreement. Likewise, the USA (albeit as a non-signatory to UNCLOS) and the Soviet Union/Russia had an overlapping claim in the Bering Sea resolved in 1990 under these same principles. Although the agreement was never ratified by the Soviet Union because of dissent in the Russian Parliament (the Duma), both countries operate with respect to this agreement (Berbrick, 2015). Arctic states’ public respect for the practices and frameworks identified in UNCLOS has been an important resource for counteracting the occasionally popular notion of the Arctic as ‘ungoverned’ and undergoing a ‘scramble for resources,’ as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

The migratory nature of many Arctic species also brings a layer of international law to the Arctic. Norway and Russia had long cooperated on fisheries-management of joint stocks in the Barents Sea (Hønneland,

2013), utilising international frameworks (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea standards, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement) to inform the establishment of fishing quotas (Churchill, 2015). For example, the harvesting of whales is managed through the International Whaling Commission, which was established by the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling in 1946 (Churchill, 2015). These same whales – and many other Arctic plants and animals – are also covered by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (better known as CITES).

Scientists

Scientific knowledge and endeavour have been intimately intertwined with Arctic states' pursuit of sovereignty over their own territories. In their examination of scientific debates in early modern England, Shapin and Schaffer famously asserted, 'solutions to the problem of knowledge are solutions to the problem of social order' (1985: 332). In many ways, this description of early modern England holds true today and also points us in the right direction for understanding the relationship between science and politics in the international and national Arctic as well. As Sverker Sörlin has argued, the relative scarcity of people and the absence of major agriculture and settlements made scientific activity an even more important marker of State presence in the Arctic than elsewhere in the world. He cites, for example, Norway's slogan for visibility on Svalbard as 'flag-waving, hunting/fishing and research' ('flagg, fangst og forskning') (2013: 7).

However, the international nature of the scientific disciplines and the interconnected nature of Arctic ecosystems have been push factors for international cooperation (Bravo and Sörlin, 2002). Western scientists were long hindered from understanding the specificities of Arctic Ocean circulation patterns because of incomplete access to physical data from the Soviet/Russian Arctic (Harders, 1987; Brosnan *et al.*, 2011). These patterns included the Transpolar Drift, which brings ice from east Siberia across the North Pole and into the Atlantic Ocean via the eastern shores of Greenland; and the Pacific Gyral, which is a clockwise rotation above the North American Arctic (Harders, 1987). These ocean-spanning circulation patterns make any pollution originating in national coastal waters (or in polluted rivers flowing north) an international problem. The work of scientists, albeit restrained by the strategic stand-off of the Cold War, was essential to documenting how some environmental problems were indeed crossing borders within the Arctic, including the challenges of migratory species and regionally driven atmospheric issues, such

as 'Arctic haze' from the burning of fossil fuels in a cold environment (Friedheim, 1988).

Cooperative efforts have long been made to supersede these access and data challenges, as well as to seek to combine resources in the high-cost, high-technology fields of oceanography, geology, mapping and so on (see Lajus, 2013, for an example of international field stations around the White Sea). The International Polar Year (IPY) was first carried out in 1882–1883 and involved the cooperation of scientists from twelve countries in establishing twelve international research bases in the Arctic. This tradition continued at regular intervals, even taking place as the 'International Geophysical Year' at the height of the Cold War in 1957–1958, and most recently with a diversity of natural- and social-science activities in the period 2007–2009 (Elzinga, 2013). In 1972, the USA and the USSR signed an agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection (Harders, 1987), which included clauses on exchange of information on marine pollution prevention and cooperative study of Arctic ecological systems. However, despite an emphasis on scientific work as an area of potential cooperation in the Cold War Arctic, and strong national communities of knowledge relating to Arctic science, the direct military and industrial applications of some fields (oceanography, upper-atmosphere physics and Arctic engineering) limited in-depth sharing of data and scientific expertise (Stokke, 1990: 28; Young, 1985: 177–178).

Scientific efforts have been important for states in building sovereignty, as they allow them authoritatively to claim to 'know' their own Arctic. Science, as we will see in Chapters 3 and 5, is also one of the most important diplomatic 'coins' that can be used in the cooperative forums of Arctic governance today. This is not to say that scientific findings are political or that scientists are biased. Rather, the point is that states have long been reliant upon building both political and knowledge orders and, therefore, the activities of statecraft and producing, managing and applying knowledge should be understood as closely intertwined.

NGOs and their representatives

Historically, many of the non-state and non-commercial actors present in the region had a religious mandate. Moravian, Russian Orthodox and Catholic representatives sought converts and took responsibility for residential schools, but also engaged in linguistics (including producing orthographies for translating the Bible) and collected physical observations of the Arctic as hobby scientists typical of the time (Bravo, 2005).

In more recent history, NGOs of various stripes have played an important role, often through their ability to provide input and assist in processes in ways seen as relevant by other actors in the policy field. Mainstream environmental NGOs, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and scientific organisations, such as the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), have been longstanding participants in the politics of the Arctic Council, and many other NGOs have observer status as well. Seconding scientists to Arctic Council WGs and otherwise providing inputs into ongoing science diplomacy efforts are a key activity in this regard.

The role and presence of NGOs in the Arctic policy field remains somewhat understudied. Duyck (2012) notes that NGOs may play an important role in linking different levels of governance or by rallying public support in national contexts. Wehrmann (2017) suggests that on certain technical issues, such as oil-spill prevention, NGOs may be important at early stages but are increasingly seen as irrelevant if not able to provide specific, technical expertise on the issues at hand. She also notes that NGOs may have better access to and influence within the Arctic Council WGs, as opposed to task forces established by the Arctic Council states to facilitate binding agreement on an Arctic issue (Wehrmann, 2017).

Environmental organisations have also been decisive in promoting a vision of the Arctic that emphasises the region's global environmental significance to a greater degree than some Arctic governments and indigenous governance organisations would themselves emphasise. Greenpeace – an NGO that has not gained observer status at the Arctic Council – has drawn attention to their standpoints through dramatic branding of its core positions. It has done this notably in connection with the Arctic oil and gas sector, seeking to block oil exploration activity with activists in kayaks or by boarding the Russian *Prirazlomnoye* platform (Palosaari and Tynkkynen, 2015). The impact of its efforts to sway global audiences has, at times, put the organisation at odds with local Arctic actors. For example, Greenpeace, in cooperation with high-profile celebrities such as Brigitte Bardot, was instrumental in raising the seal hunt as an issue of concern, later resulting in the European Union's ban on seal-product imports (Airoldi, 2014). The 1980s campaign highlighted graphic images of seal cubs clubbed to death, their blood spattered across the white Arctic snow (Wenzel, 1991).

For Inuit communities, the seal hunt and trading of seal furs were longstanding, key elements in a sustainable, mixed economy of the North. Seal fur was an important source of cash and also a source of cultural continuity, as it made livelihoods based on traditional activities financially rewarding. The European market's 1982 trade ban on seal furs from harp seal and hooded seal pups resulted in collapse of this Arctic

economy (Wenzel, 1991), even though an exception had been made for the indigenous hunt. Greenpeace later apologised for this unforeseen impact on an Arctic sustainable economy, and its cooperation with indigenous organisations is growing, but still frequently rocky, as a consequence (Kerr, 2014).

Letting the lines cross: actors in Arctic governance today

The astute reader may have noticed that the actor categories described above were challenging to keep disentangled from one another. In any one section about a particular actor, nearly all of the other actor groups required mention in order to deliver a sensible account of key trends and events. In the post-Cold War period of cooperation, the actor picture becomes even more interconnected in fascinating ways, and the power relations involved in these interconnections is a topic that the subsequent chapters explore. We see indigenous organisations and states seeking to ‘sing from the same songsheet’ to maximise their success, businesses hammering out regulations to be ratified by states, NGOs working with the finance sector to promote responsible development of the Arctic and so on.

In 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev gave his famous ‘Murmansk speech’, in which he outlined how tension in the Arctic region could be decreased and cooperation increased (for an analysis, see Åtland, 2008). A series of events drew attention to the environmental vulnerability of the Arctic. Radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl disaster and sulphur dioxide from Soviet nickel smelters, as well as the oil spill from the *Exxon Valdez* and the loss of the Soviet nuclear submarine *Komsomolets* in April 1989 in the Barents Sea, highlighted the fragility of Arctic ecosystems (Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014).

The immediate post-Cold War years witnessed the establishment of the many new forums and network. The Northern Forum was launched in Alaska, bringing together regional (sub-state) governments, indigenous organisations and engaged academics (Young, 2002). The Barents Euro-Arctic Region and Council brought together a similar set of actors at the Nordic/Russian Arctic level. The establishment of IASC highlighted the potential and desire for more cooperative work in the Arctic, while the debate over which countries belonged in the forefront of the initiative highlights an early tension between the participation of ‘Arctic’ and ‘non-Arctic’ states to which we return in Chapter 2 (Stokke, 1990; Śmieszek, 2016).

The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was launched from Finland in 1991. The strategy focused on new opportunities to address the problems of Arctic pollution. Many of the pollution issues to

be addressed tied into testing, transport, storage and decommissioning of nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered vessels, and thus were only possible to address in the radically changed post-Cold War geopolitical climate (Roginko and LaMourie, 1992; Keskitalo, 2004). The AEPS focused on six key pollution issues: (1) acidification in the Arctic; (2) persistent organic pollutants (POPs); (3) oil pollution in the Arctic (from vessels, offshore development); (4) radioactivity in the Arctic; (5) heavy metal pollution through long-range atmospheric transport; and (6) the monitoring and conservation of flora and fauna (Scrivener, 1999; Caron, 1993).

Later the AEPS became absorbed into/served as a partial structural basis for the Arctic Council in 1997 (Scrivener, 1999). The five Arctic Council WGs came directly from the AEPS: AMAP, PAME, the Working Group on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR), and a sustainable development working group. This last group had been contested by those concerned that including a sustainable development group would water down the environment/conservation focus of circumpolar cooperation. However, the sustainability focus was championed by the ICC and they carried the day (Scrivener, 1999).

Today, the Arctic Council remains a forum, increasingly referred to as an intergovernmental forum (see Olsen and Shadian, 2016, for a discussion), rather than a formal international organisation. It has enjoyed significant success in promoting innovative scientific assessments of the region and in influencing international environmental policy processes. Just as important, it has become a meeting place where states' interests and policy framings of the Arctic have become largely harmonised (see Chapter 2) and where the indigenous peoples of the region have made visible their rightful place in shaping Arctic governance (see Chapter 5).

However, as this book will illustrate, not all actors are equal in cooperation, even in more open or networked forms of cross-border cooperation. Rather, certain positions, resources and interests can matter more in shaping outcomes, and these reflect (and amplify) power relations. Turning our attention to a theoretically informed concept of power politics adds important insights to our existing understandings of Arctic politics, allowing us to see how cooperation is dynamically maintained and contestation managed. Building out this argument about power and contestation within cooperation in Arctic regional governance is the main task of the coming chapters.