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An Arctic Boom of Policies & Strategies

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Briefing Note

An Arctic Boom of Policies & Strategies: 32 and Counting

Lassi Heininen

Traditions are neither mandatory *per se*, nor do they commit you. However they easily remind and engage you about something to be interested in and follow. As the theme of the first Arctic Yearbook, in 2012, was “Arctic Policies and Strategies” – including a summary of the existing policies of the Arctic states, the first articles on interests and emerging policies of the Asian and European non-Arctic states (China, France, Japan, Poland, Scotland, Singapore, UK), as well as Inuit engagement in regional Arctic politics – the Yearbook has since then followed the theme (e.g. Lackenbauer 2013 on India; Olsen & Shadian 2016 on Greenland; Rahbek-Clemmensen 2016 on Denmark; Lim 2018 on China; Basse 2019 on Germany, and several analyses on the EU).

Indeed, there has been, and continues to be, a clear tendency and progressive process, almost like a race, to update existing policies by the Arctic states – as Canada, Russia and Sweden recently did, and as Finland is in progress – and by the first non-Arctic states – as Germany did – to adopt/approve, or aim to release, the first Arctic policy by non-Arctic states – as Scotland recently did, and a few others are in process and progress. For example, as the newest Observer State of the Arctic Council Switzerland, representing a ‘vertical Arctic’ due to its high altitudes, is working on a Swiss Polar White Paper aiming to acknowledge the activities and initiatives of Swiss research institutes in the Arctic (Arctic Council, 2020) and introduce the country’s long and extensive experiences in polar and glaciological research. There is also discussion and proposals for Poland’s engagement in the Arctic, due to a “long-established tradition of Polish research in the area” (in Svalbard), and to adopt Arctic policy, as well as recommendations for the formulation and substance of such policy (e.g. Łuszczuk et al., 2015). As well as, there is a devoted article to the Indian Arctic policy (Pronina et al., 2020), though India has not, yet, adopted an official Arctic policy. Finally, the first comprehensive, systematic analysis of existing policy documents of the Arctic and non-Arctic states, Indigenous peoples’ organizations and the Arctic Council was released in early 2020 (Heininen et al., 2019).

Following from this tendency, there are, again, good reasons for the Arctic Yearbook to write about the theme. This briefing note first, presents an overview/summary of the comprehensive analysis, and second briefly describes the recently updated and new policies and discusses them in the context of the analysis.

Before that as a personal observation I have a strange feeling (some others might have experienced the same) that though having broad research interests in IR, studies on Arctic policies was not my choice, but more the topic chose me. As a young researcher at the TAPRI international research project (on alternative development and security) my task was to focus on national approaches and interests of the smaller Arctic states (Canada, Denmark including Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), when senior researchers concentrated on the great powers (Soviet Union, USA). As an outcome, there was one of the first articles (Heininen, 1992) on national interests and agendas, but no explicit policies yet, of these Arctic states. This was updated and expanded to include the Russian Federation and the USA for the Barents Region's international conference where the Finnish initiative for the European Union's Northern Dimension was launched (Heininen, 1997). The next phase was the first comparative study and analysis of the policies/strategies of the eight Arctic states (after Sweden had approved its national Arctic strategy in May 2011) and that of the EU (Heininen, 2011) to be used as a handbook for policy-shaping/making. It was followed by a developed version (Bailes & Heininen 2012), a detailed inventory of the Arctic states' policies (with Hanna Lempinen) ordered by the Swedish foreign ministry as background material (not published) for the Kiruna Vision (2013) at Sweden's Arctic Council chairmanship, and the above-mentioned summary for Arctic Yearbook 2012. As if this would not be enough, I was also leading the 2019 comprehensive study at IIASA.

Comprehensive study and analysis on Arctic policies

In spite of these articles and publications on intergovernmental cooperation, governance and institutions, geopolitics and Arctic policies, and the resource potential¹, there were only a couple of studies/overviews on the priorities of the Arctic states' national interests in addition of the classic book, *The Circumpolar North* by Armstrong et al. (1978) in the late 1970s. Among others, the article by Brosnan et al. (2011) on (how cooperation and conflict appear in) the Arctic strategies of the five Arctic Ocean littoral states, and the articles of Arctic Yearbook 2012 on the Arctic Council Observer states (e.g. Plouffe, 2012 on France; Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2012 on China; Tonami & Watters, 2012 on Japan; Depledge, 2012 on UK). There was no in-depth analysis on the national policies of the Arctic Council Observer States (as non-Arctic countries), policies of Arctic Indigenous peoples' organizations (as Arctic Council Permanent Participants), or the Council's Ministerial meeting declarations.

These gaps in research related to Arctic governance and politics, as well as a lack of comprehensive study and analysis of all state and non-state policies, and Arctic Council declarations, were seen as an opportunity for the Arctic Futures Initiative (AFI). As a new-generation research project at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the aim was to provide a holistic and systematic analysis of policies and practices, and deliver decision support with options that balance environmental protection, economic prosperity and societal well-being for the rapidly changing Arctic. However, the AFI was terminated by the IIASA Directorate in summer 2019, and therefore only its flagship project, *Arctic Policies & Strategies – Analysis, Synthesis and Trends* (by Heininen,

Everett, Padrtova and Reissell) was managed to be completed.² It is a comparative, deep, systematic study and analysis of existing policies and priorities of the Arctic states, Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, Arctic Council Observer states, and AC Chairmanship programs & ministerial declarations.³

Altogether 56 policy documents as the primary references – national policies/strategies, chairmanship programs, and declarations covering the years 1998-2019 – were coded and analyzed. This large number of different source materials of Arctic policy documents have not been analyzed before. Relevant variables were selected as indicators (and sub-indicators), with altogether 14 indicators – (re)defining & (re)mapping, human dimension, governance, international cooperation & treaties, environmental protection, pollution, climate change (these three together also consisted of a super-indicator), security, safety & SAR, economy, tourism, infrastructure, science & education, and implementation. The texts of the documents were coded according to the indicators (except (re)defining & (re)mapping and implementation) as a quantitative method. Each policy document was analyzed (using applied system analysis), compared and searched for similarities & differences (striking, relevant, fragmentation), and priorities based on explicit, as a qualitative method. Then policies with priorities in each category were compared and discussed with each other. Finally, based on all this, and combining quantitative and qualitative methods, new/emerging trends were identified and briefly discussed in the context of existing Arctic narratives, perceptions and discourses.

Interesting findings of the policy documents

There are several relevant and interesting findings of these policy documents which I briefly summarize here according to the five categories of the study: Arctic states, Indigenous peoples' organizations, Arctic Council (AC) Observer states, and AC chairmanship programs and ministerial declarations.

The most-quoted indicators of the **Arctic states'** policies (adopted in 2009-2013) are governance, environmental protection including pollution and climate change, economy, international cooperation, and the human dimension. This is more or less according to the official priorities of these states' policies: economy/economic development, environmental protection, international cooperation, security/stability. The fact that governance and international Arctic cooperation, as well as international treaties (for example for maritime safety), are emphasized by all can be interpreted to mean political support for current geopolitical stability and Arctic Council work. At the same time, security *per se* is fragmented, as 'hard security' is emphasized by Canada, Iceland and USA, and 'comprehensive security' by Canada and Finland.

Economic activities and trade are explicitly emphasized, although fields are fragmented, and transportation & shipping, mining and tourism as priorities are striking. The private sector is explicitly mentioned by all, while the government and public sector are depicted as the most important. The human dimension is referenced with a good number of quotes, though not among official priorities. A striking similarity is that climate change is defined as the major research driver, when pollution is rarely mentioned. Although research is emphasized, education is neglected and mostly framed as attainment for economic reasons. Implementation is explicitly mentioned and planned by all, except Canada.

Finally, the term ‘Arctic’ is used in all policy-documents (also ‘North’, ‘circumpolar’), though there is fragmentation in describing the region (e.g. strategic, fragile, vulnerable, unique, remote), and a global perspective is explicitly mentioned in half of them.

The policy documents of Arctic **Indigenous peoples’ organizations**, as Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, are fragmented, as they come from different directions and do not necessarily cover all the indicator fields in full detail. *Arctic Athabaskan Council’s Arctic Policy* (2017) sets out nine principles of partnership of a new Shared Arctic Leadership Model to provide advice on new ambitious sustainable conservation goals for the Arctic, and social and economic priorities of Indigenous peoples living in remote Arctic communities. The policy priorities of *Inuit Arctic Policy* (2010), supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council 2018 Declaration, are health & well-being of the Inuit (especially children), environmental protection, governance of their homeland, *Inuit Nunaat* i.e. the rights of Inuit to their self-government, and being active in international cooperation and supported by international agreements & organizations (UN, AC). Those of the *Sami Arctic Strategy* (2019) are to act as a robust and reliable partner in policy- and decision-making on Arctic issues, to ensure the right to choose, to address climate change and environmental protection, and to deploy Sami Indigenous knowledge and science.

There is a striking similarity that all policy documents explicitly address issues broadly surrounding Indigenous – individual and collective – rights, although in different contexts, both as a part of the human dimension, and also related to governance, both broadly and in detail. The importance of the international cooperation (and treaties) is much highlighted for Indigenous rights and self-governing. Unsurprisingly, all the documents emphasize the rights of Arctic Indigenous peoples to use and utilize the resources of their homelands, as well as the importance of ‘traditional knowledge’. Unlike, the indicators of environmental protection, pollution and climate change are not explicitly covered by all documents; instead the Sami Strategy has critical comments on *green colonialism*. Scientific findings are seen to be produced and developed further in partnership, as the Gwich’in report states.

All in all, there is an impression that these are nations, who are proud, conscious, and know what they want and how to accomplish that.

Among the **Observer states** of the Arctic Council, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, PRC (China), ROK (South Korea), Spain and UK had all adopted (in 2013-2018) an Arctic policy/strategy by summer 2019. As the European Union, though it has adopted a couple of Arctic policies, is not a permanent observer, it was excluded in the analysis.

The most-quoted indicators are science & education, environmental protection including pollution and climate change, international cooperation & treaties, and economy, more or less according to the official priorities/policy goals of these states’ policies. Science & education, including research infrastructure (stations & vessels), formal networks (IASC, UArctic) and knowledge-creation (e.g. the Italian *Tavolo Artico* group), is emphasized by Netherlands, ROK and Spain; environmental protection, including pollution and climate change, by France, Germany, Italy, PRC and UK; international cooperation by all, except Netherlands, in particular by Germany, Japan; and economy by France, PRC, ROK and UK (e.g. France’s Roadmap includes economic opportunities for French companies). Correspondingly, the human dimension, security, including sovereignty and defense, and tourism are among the least-quoted issues.

Finally, an interesting finding of the nine policy documents, which are more current than those of the Arctic States, is that they also use the term ‘Arctic’ indicating a wish to become Arctic ‘stakeholders’. There is fragmentation to either include self-identification toward the Arctic, as France, PRC, UK do, or exclude it.

Concerning the **Arctic Council chairmanship programs** (in 1996-2019) a relevant finding is that the official priorities in the programs are focusing on the environment, climate, and the Arctic Council main functions, environmental protection and sustainable development. Correspondingly, based on the coding the programs’ focus are on governance, international cooperation and the human dimension (e.g. health, culture). A bit surprisingly, there are no formal or public evaluation processes explicitly mentioned.

When it comes to the **declarations of the Arctic Council ministerial** meetings, they do not include explicit priority statements, and therefore can be analyzed based on section headings. In general, the prioritized issues are around the main functions of the Council, environmental protection and sustainable development. These include biodiversity and balance between environmental protection and economic activities, as the scientific community is heard in climate action. Also health, governance & international cooperation are explicitly mentioned.

As a summary according to the coding of the 56 policy documents, the overall lists of priorities of the three main categories of stakeholders are the following:

Arctic states: governance, environmental protection included pollution and climate change, economy, international cooperation, human dimension;

Indigenous peoples’ organizations: Indigenous rights, reflecting human dimension and governance, international cooperation, right to use resources, traditional/Indigenous knowledge;

Observer States: science & education, international cooperation, environmental protection included pollution and climate change, economy.

New and emerging trends

Based on the analysis of these policy documents and their priorities it was possible to identify, formulate and analyze what might be new and emerging trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics in each category (five lists of trends), as well as what might be new overall trends (see, Heininen et al., 2019: 249-253). It is necessary to note here that the task was what are new and/or emerging trends implicitly or explicitly included the existing policies and strategies, not current and existing trends. For example, the high geopolitical stability of the Arctic is not included, as it is no new trend but the current state of the region (e.g. Heininen, 2018) and explicitly mentioned by national policies and highlighted in the ministerial declarations (e.g. Rovaniemi, 2019; Fairbanks, 2017) as the first preamble.

Based on the five lists of new trends (of all categories) the new and emerging overall trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics are the following:

First, an ambivalence or paradox of Arctic development whenever a balance is been sought between environmental protection & climate change mitigation and new economic activities due to ‘political inability’; second, state domination supported by geopolitical stability & sovereignty vis-à-vis globalization based on international treaties, UNCLOS & maritime law and UN

declarations regarding Indigenous rights and self-determination; third, focus on science, as to lean on scientific research & international cooperation in science, for problem-solving due to the pressure of the rapidly advanced climate change and the above-mentioned paradox; and fourth, new interrelationship between the Arctic and Space (e.g. digital security, meteorology, WMO) due to climate change, globalization and the global economy.

Recently updated policies by Arctic states

As mentioned earlier, there continues a clear tendency and progressive process by the Arctic states and a few non-Arctic states (AC Observers) to update existing Arctic policies/strategies. Among the Arctic states, Canada, Russia and Sweden have recently approved/adopted a new policy document, which I briefly describe and discuss, without systematic analysis, here in the context of the 2019 comprehensive study.

Canada

An updated Arctic and Northern Policy Framework was approved and released by the Canadian Government in September 2019 (Government of Canada 2019). This document, promised several years earlier, was delivered after a few years of cooperative work and consultations (regional and interest-based roundtables, and a public submissions process) with the Inuit, First nations, Metis, and other Northerners, as well as territorial governments and the governments of Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is explicitly mentioned, even emphasized, that these have “contributed to this framework together” and that the framework “has been co-developed for the North, in partnership with the North, to reflect the needs and priorities of the North”.⁴ Consequently, the document is said to give a “shared vision of the future where northern and Arctic people are thriving, strong and safe... [and] a roadmap to achieve this vision”.

The 2019 Arctic and Northern Policy Framework was described and analyzed, also critically, in the Arctic Yearbook 2019 (Kikkert & Lackenbauer, 2019) soon after the launch. In addition to the well-grounded note, I have a few observations. Structurally the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework differs from most national Arctic policy documents: The foreword and a shared vision “Our vision” are followed by substantial discussion on “Our past”, including impacts of colonialism, history of the modern self-determination; “Our present”, including impacts of climate change and global warming, existing robust rules, norms and institutions, Canada’s long-standing sovereignty over, the global consciousness of and growing global interest towards the Arctic, as well as multi-dimensional description of the state of the “strong” people & communities, “comprehensive” infrastructure, “strong, sustainable and diversified” economies, science & Indigenous knowledge, environmental protection, global context, safety & security & defence, Indigenous youth of Canadian Arctic & North); and “Our future”, including reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, global leadership, promotion of sustainability, safety and security of the Arctic & North. After this long introduction, there are the goals and objectives of Canada’s Arctic & Northern policy, as well as next steps as conclusions.

The goals and objectives consist of, on the one hand, the long list of goals (8) from human health and security of Indigenous people and sustainable economies to knowledge-guided decision-making, resilient northern ecosystems and a rules-based international order (also Kikkert & Lackenbauer, 2019), and on the other hand, each goal has a list of objectives (from 4-6 to 12). In addition, in the beginning of the document there is another long list of matters - nurture healthy

families & communities; invest in energy, transport and communications infrastructure; create jobs, foster innovation and grow arctic economies, support science, knowledge and research; face the effects of climate change and support healthy ecosystems; ensure that Canada and our northern residents are safe; restore Canada's place as an international Arctic leader; and advance reconciliation and improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples – which are mentioned to be “clear priorities and action sets out by the federal government and its partners”.

It is a bit unclear first how these two long lists of eight matters – “clear priorities” and “goals” – relate to each other, then after a more careful study it is possible to find out that the eight points (of the both lists) match with each other, though the wording and order differ. More importantly, it is neither clear which are real priorities, nor it is explicitly mentioned or discussed how to implement those objectives, only promised that “[t]he next phase of framework co-development will focus on implementation, invest strategies and governance”.

Following from this, when comparing the 2019 priorities/goals to the four priority areas of the 2009 Canada's Arctic policy there are a few clear differences: first, human dimension, in particular “reconciliation with Indigenous peoples”, is more in focus in the 2019 framework document than that of 2009; second, unlike, the 2009 document focuses more on environmental protection and climate change; third, the 2019 policy document focuses less on sovereignty than the previous one, albeit states to ensure the safety, security and defence of northern and Arctic residents, and emphasize the importance of rules based on international order in the Arctic.

In summary: comparing to the overall priorities of the Arctic States' policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 comprehensive study and analysis, Canada's updated policy is more or less in line with them. It emphasizes more human dimension, in particular health and safety, and Indigenous peoples, and less international cooperation and economy. Following from this, it is logical that concerning the new trends state domination is not emphasized, but rather human health, Indigenous rights and reconciliation. However, the ambivalence implicitly influences the updated policy, as there are no clear priorities on environmental protection vis-à-vis economic activities.

Russian Federation

An updated “Basics of the State policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period till 2035” was approved by the Decree of the President (No. 164) in March 2020. This is the third policy document with the same kind of structure in the series of the Russian Arctic state policies since 2008. The document (based on an unofficial translation) is rather short and reduced, and mostly consists of several lists of matters (interests, goals, directions, tasks, objectives, challenges, implementation mechanisms and indicators).

The document consists of several lists. The first one is a list of following Russia's national interests in the Arctic: ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity; protecting peace, stability and mutual partnership in the Arctic; attainment of high quality of life; developing the Russian Arctic zone as a strategic resource base; developing the NSR as a competitive national transport & communication; and environmental protection and protection of traditional lifestyle of Indigenous peoples. That is followed by a list of the Russian state's policy goals in the Arctic: better quality of life of the Russian Arctic population; acceleration of economic development; environmental protection; implementation of (mutually beneficial) international Arctic cooperation; and

protection of the Russian national interests (in the Arctic). Among the issues of the both lists are high quality of life and well-being of the Russian Arctic population, environmental protection parallel to (economic) development (of the Russian Arctic zone) and that of the NSR, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia, and peace and (mutually beneficial) cooperation in the Arctic.

After these, there are lists of (main) development tasks covering social issues, infrastructure, science & technology, international cooperation, protection of the population, ensuring public security, that of military security, and border defense. Finally, implementation mechanisms and key (performance) indicators for the implementations are described with details, though without budget figures.

As the first observation, there are no explicit priorities mentioned, instead on the one hand, national interests of the Federation in the Arctic, and on the other hand, the goals of the state policy of Russia in the Arctic (see above). When trying to identify common factors of the interests and the goals, it is possible to interpret the following priorities of Russia in the Arctic: high (better) quality of life of the Russian Arctic population, including Indigenous peoples; acceleration of (economic) development of the Russian Arctic zone, including the Northern Sea Route (NSR); environmental protection of the Arctic; peace, stability and (mutually beneficial) Arctic cooperation; and protection of Russia's national interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity in the Arctic.

Another observation is that based on the lists of "development tasks" safety and security are high on the agenda, which can be interpreted to refer to the comprehensive security concept. Unlike, the 2008 and 2013 state policies were more focused on economy and infrastructure.

In summary: comparing to the overall priorities of the Arctic States' policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 comprehensive study, Russia's updated policy is mostly in line with them, though it emphasizes more safety & security, and less economy and infrastructure. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the updated policy supports state domination based on geopolitical stability and sovereignty, unlike focus on science is emphasized.

Sweden

An updated strategy for the Arctic region, "Strategi för den arktiska regionen" was approved by the Swedish Government in September 2020 (Regeringens skrivelse 2020/21:7).

In the updated strategy, the Swedish Government recognizes six theme areas – international cooperation in the Arctic, security and stability, climate and the environment, polar research and environmental protection, sustainable economic development as Swedish business interest, and security of good living conditions – as priorities.

Comparing to Sweden's first Arctic Strategy (2011) there is a striking difference that, though both documents have long lists of objectives and promises what Sweden/the Government will aim or do, the 2011 policy was minimalist with three priorities, and the 2020 one is with doubled number. From the priorities, international cooperation, security and stability, and polar research are new ones, though international cooperation and research (science) were among the most quoted indicators of the 2011 policy. Using a qualitative method a striking similarity is that the human dimension is much highlighted by the two policies.

Concerning the updated policy there are a few observations: First, Indigenous peoples' culture and reindeer herding is been discussed as part of good living conditions, and interestingly, knowledge exchange (among Indigenous peoples) is one of the highlighted aspects. Second, among international, institutional networks, in addition of the obligatory Arctic Council, Barents Region, Nordic cooperation and the EU, the Saami cooperation and cooperation with Germany (bilateral cooperation) are explicitly discussed. Third, security & stability, including a separate section of strong national defense skills, is explicitly discussed and (re)defined as a new priority. Here China is emphasized as the most important factor of the increasing interest by non-Arctic states trend, the two other security-political trends are the increased interests towards Arctic resources, and a new military dynamics in the Arctic. Fourth, Arctic (or polar) research is explicitly discussed, and thus tied, with environmental protection, which is logical. Biodiversity is highlighted, as well as nuclear safety, as a continuity Sweden's environmental politics and scientific community's interests. Finally, if the 2011 policy document thoroughly described that there are "many ties linking Sweden to the Arctic", the 2020 one takes that as granted, as a natural fact.

In summary: comparing to the overall priorities of the Arctic States' policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 comprehensive analysis, Sweden's updated policy is mostly in line with them, though security and defense is more emphasized, as well as biodiversity. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the updated policy supports focus on science, tries to seek a better balance between environmental protection and economic activities, and explicitly mentions the Arctic and Space (satellites).

Updated and new policies by non-Arctic states

Among non-Arctic states, which have recently approved/adopted an updated policy document on the Arctic, are France and Germany, as Arctic Council Observer states. And Scotland has adopted its first Arctic policy. I will describe and discuss these three policy documents. In addition, I will briefly discuss the 2016 Arctic policy of the EU, though the Union has no permanent observer status of the AC, but is an important Arctic stakeholder and seeking to update its Arctic policy.

France

A policy document "France and the New Strategic Challenges in the Arctic" was approved in autumn 2019. This is neither a real policy document nor updated version of France's (first) Arctic policy, "The National Roadmap for the Arctic" (approved in 2016). This is more a brochure kind of publication to refresh the French vision on the Arctic region/Arctic matters, in particular from a strategic point of view, released by the Ministry for the Armed Forces.

The French brochure emphasizes the growing geostrategic importance of the Arctic for example, by stating that "it may one day become an area of confrontation". Followed from this, France's activities and the action of the French Ministry for the Armed Forces (with details and in figures) is logical in the region. Though, the 2016 National Roadmap emphasizes economy and France's economic interests in the region, as the highest priority, it also includes a chapter on defense and security issues with several recommendations, and sovereignty is explicitly mentioned. Behind is "Enhancing legitimacy of France in Arctic affairs" as one of the four main areas. In addition, the 2016 policy is also a strong statement on behalf of the EU and its legitimate involvement present

in the Arctic (Heininen et al., 2019: 194-200) Unlike, the 2019 brochure briefly mentions France contributions to an inclusive Arctic governance and French non-military activities in the region.

In summary: as the main focus of France's short 2019 document is defense and security issues, not comprehensively national interests, there is no sense to compare it to the overall priorities of the AC Observer states' policy documents.

Germany

An updated "Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines: Assuming Responsibility, Creating Trust, Shaping the Future" was adopted in August 2019 (The Federal Government 2019).

According to the Federal Government, there are seven influential factors and fields for Germany in the Arctic: consistent climate and environmental protection, as the Arctic is a "kind of early warning system for global warming"; international cooperation, in particular in the Arctic Council context and the UNCLOS legal framework; security policy dimension aiming "to preserve the Arctic as a largely conflict free region" despite increasing "non-cooperative behaviour in view of overlapping interests" worldwide; cutting-edge research (promoting knowledge and resilience as a "prerequisite for sustainable development in the Arctic"), where Germany "with a strong profile in polar research... is an international actor in the High North", including the Arctic Ocean; safeguarding sustainable development, in particular in resource exploitation for example, "seeking to work together with the Arctic states on balanced and sustainable solutions for safe shipping" and making Arctic tourism sustainable; and involving the local and Indigenous population among others by respecting and recognizing the Indigenous peoples' "right to freedom and self-determination", and welcoming them in the Arctic Council's decision making "as an equal party".

According to the policy document "The future of the Arctic deserves our full attention", due to its vulnerability and influences of the global climate, which is said to constitute "grounds for assuming responsibility and taking action". Among others, Germany is committed "to integrating the Arctic into a diversified resource security system as well as to safe and environmentally friendly shipping", and aims "to prevent conflicts (of interest) and potential crises in the Arctic". Applicable shipping and transit rights must be protected. Further it is committed "to ensuring that NATO and the EU also devote more attention to the Arctic and its significance in terms of security policy", and "rejects any attempt to militarise the Arctic" (The Federal Government. 2019: 41-42).

As an interesting observation the updated Arctic policy is more focused than the 2013 policy document "Guidelines of the Germany Arctic Policy: Assume Responsibility, Seize Opportunities" with a list of eleven issues that the federal government seems to be interested in. According to the quantitative analysis based on coding the most discussed were International cooperation, (maritime) Governance and Economy (Heininen et al, 2019: 201, 206). A striking similarity of the two documents is that environmental protection, climate change, and international cooperation continues as priorities, if interpreted the factors & fields of the 2019 as priorities. Economy is still in a focus, though in the 2019 document it is explicitly discussed under sustainable development. Correspondingly, a difference is that security, science and Indigenous peoples are defined as new priorities.

In summary: comparing to the overall priorities of the AC Observer states' policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 comprehensive analysis, Germany's updated policy is mostly in line with them, though emphasizes more security policy and Indigenous peoples, and less

economy. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the updated policy supports focus on science, and internationalization of the Arctic, and maybe seeks prefers sustainable development pre to economic activities.

Scotland

Scotland approved its first Arctic policy, “Arctic Connections. Scotland’s Arctic Policy Framework” (Scottish Government 2019), in September 2019. Scotland did this, though it is (still) officially a part of UK, and UK updated its policy towards the Arctic, including Scotland, in 2018. As both UK’s Arctic interests (Depledge, 2012), and “costs and benefits in publishing a formal Arctic strategy” for Scotland (Johnstone, 2012) were discussed at Arctic Yearbook 2012, it is fair to describe and discuss Scotland’s formal Arctic policy here.

The Scottish Government’s plan is to take action under its Arctic policy framework in the following areas (ibid: 42-44), which could be interpreted as priority areas: first, “Scotland looks to North” based on peoples’ history and cooperation between Scotland and Arctic nations dating back centuries. It states that “Our Arctic work provides further momentum to the Scotland is Now campaign, which seeks to project Scotland as a progressive and dynamic nation that does not hesitate to take the lead on key global challenges” (ibid: 9). Second, “Education, Research and Innovation” based on a long tradition of Scottish universities and research centers of “producing world-class science on the Arctic”, and aiming “to be even more closely involved in multi-disciplinary research that addresses Arctic issues”. Third, “Cultural Ties” based on peoples’ history and using culture as a powerful vehicle “by building on the strong cultural links between Scotland and the Arctic region... [to] strengthen connections between people, empower communities through creativity and be leaders in encouraging international dialogue”. Fourth, “Rural connections” as “Remoteness is a common feature of the Arctic region and many parts of Scotland” (more than 90% rural and 96 inhabited islands) with many challenges from transport to digital connectivity and the provision of medical services.

Fifth, “Climate change, Environment and Clean Energy”, as the Arctic and its melting glaciers illustrates the devastating impact of global warming. “Combined with other environmental threats – such as pollution, sea level rise and erosion – climate change poses a serious threat to ecosystems and biodiversity on a global scale”. An answer could be renewable energy and decarbonisation bringing economic benefits, and therefore the Government works with industries on the energy sector to “ensure that the benefits of our transition to a net-zero economy are maximized”. Among successful renewable energy projects is the world’s largest floating offshore wind array in Scotland. Sixth, under the title of “Sustainable Economic Development” the policy document encourages to work with Arctic countries and peoples to “devise solutions that are ecologically accountable and combine increased prosperity with greater equality” based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The document states that Scotland signed up the goals as one of the first countries. As well as, it states that Scotland is aiming to become “as a leading space nation... building more small satellites than any other place in Europe”, much needed in the Arctic experiencing inadequate satellite coverage.

As the first observation, and the most political notion, the policy document states that “Membership of the EU has greatly benefited Scotland’s cooperation with Arctic countries”, and therefore, “The UK’s exit from the EU poses a serious risk to Scotland’s domestic and international interests, including around Scottish-Arctic relations” (ibid: 6-7). Concerning the

politicized relations with the UK interestingly, the 2018 UK policy notes that “although the UK is not an Arctic states, we are its nearest neighbor, with Lerwick in the Shetland Islands closed to the Arctic Circle than it is to London” (UK, 2018: 2; also Heininen et al., 2019: 233). Actually, the Shetland Islands belongs to Scotland as one of its council areas, and consequently, Scotland’s Arctic policy also notes that its “northernmost islands are closer to the Arctic Circle than they are to London” (Scottish Government, 2019: 5).

Another observation is that young people in the Highlands and Islands region are interpreted to show a “strong sense of belonging and a desire to work in their communities”, which the document finds as an idea for a Scottish-Arctic dialogue. Further, the notion of using culture as a powerful vehicle in the policy includes an interesting proposal of a Scottish-Arctic Laboratory for cultural policies, meaning that Scotland and Arctic countries “can work together to promote equality through culture and creativity”. They may even try to find “solutions to remove barriers to taking part in cultural life, enabling all citizens to participate and be creative, irrespective of their background and personal circumstances”. The historically and culturally close relations between Scotland and Iceland are explicitly discussed by mentioning the Wellbeing Economy Governments group with the two governments as founding members, which “seeks to apply the principles of economic wellbeing to practical and scalable policy approaches”.

Finally, based on this geographical fact and Scotland’s close links to the Arctic, historically, culturally and otherwise, the Scottish Government “intends to strengthen the foundations of a long-standing two-way discussion with its Arctic partners... [and] to share Scottish expertise while underlining our desire to learn from others” by building a new platform for policy and knowledge exchange.

In summary: all in all Scotland’s Arctic policy is substantial and political, and shows a strong interest towards engagement with the Arctic states, as also emphasized by First Minister Sturgeon at Arctic Circle Assemblies. Interestingly, it both highlights immaterial aspects (e.g. culture) and includes several concrete examples (e.g. Scottish-Arctic dialogue). Comparing to the overall priorities of the AC Observer states’ policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 analysis, Scotland’s policy is mostly in line with them. Scotland however emphasizes more clearly culture and sustainable economies, and brings in rural connections and remoteness as common features of the world’s northernmost regions. The policy also includes self-identification toward the Arctic region, as the UK also does. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the Scottish policy supports a focus on science, tries to seek a better balance between environmental protection and economic activities, and explicitly mentions the Arctic and Space (satellites).

European Union (EU)

As the first EU policy (Communication) on the Arctic stated that the European Union “is inextricably connected to the Arctic region” (EU, 2008), there was “a perceived need for strengthening the Union’s position and presence in the High North, and the EU aims to become a real Arctic player” (Heininen, 2011: 65). Followed from this, A Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy (EU, 2016a: 38-39) states, as a part of the priority on cooperative regional orders, that “the EU has a strategic interest in the Arctic remaining a low-tension area”. This is echoed by the statement of the latest EU’s 2016 Arctic policy that the Union “has a strategic interest in playing a key role in the Arctic” (EU, 2016b). In summer 2020, the EU was seeking to update its Arctic policy and asked inputs in that from the members states and their decision-

makers. In October 2020, the EU Commission announced that a new policy was decided to aim for 2021.

According to the 2016 integrated Arctic policy “the EU should engage with the region” on three priority areas: climate change and safeguarding the Arctic environment, promoting sustainable development in the Arctic, and supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues. These are in line with the 2008 policy’s priorities (protecting and preserving the Arctic environment and its population; promoting sustainable use of resources; and contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance). This shows on the one hand, a continuity of the EU policy in the Arctic region and Arctic affairs, and on the other hand, leans on the EU’s reputation of having “always prided itself on its soft power – and it will keep doing so” (Mogherini in the EU 2016 Global Strategy).

As an interesting observation, unlike the 2008 policy’s notion of an inextricable connection to the Arctic, the 2016 policy recognizes the Arctic states’ contributions “to foster peace and stability through cooperation and the application of the rule of law”, echoed by the EU Global Strategy to have “a strategic interest in the Arctic remaining a low-tension area” (EU, 2016a). Behind this are a few geopolitical facts: three EU member states (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) and two European Economic Area members (Iceland, Norway) are among the Arctic states, and Greenland, a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, has the status of the Overseas Countries Territories associated to the Union. Following from this, there is a paradox and obviously a weak point for the EU’s self-esteem, that the Union does not have, yet, the status of a (permanent) observership of the Arctic Council.

Another observation is that the Union contributes to the goal of strengthening its soft power by enhancing “work on climate action and environmental research, sustainable development, telecommunications, and search & rescue, as well as concrete cooperation with Arctic states, institutions, Indigenous peoples and local communities” (EU, 2016b). In political rhetoric, this statement could be interpreted to represent EU’s new moral language and geopolitical discourse on Arctic governance. Finally and importantly, in addition to the (above-mentioned) geopolitical facts, and despite the existing Arctic policies and the non-Observer status at Arctic Council, the European Union much affects the Arctic region being a global actor in international climate negotiations, one of the biggest funders of Arctic research, and the biggest market area for Arctic fisheries, among others (Bailes & Heininen, 2012: 84-97; also Airoidi, 2008).

In summary: if the text of the 2016 EU Joint Communication would be coded according to the 12 indicators (excluding (re)Mapping/(re)Defining, and implementation) of the 2019 analysis, the most quoted ones would be economy, climate change, and science & education. Thus, comparing to the overall priorities of the AC Observer States’ policy documents, based on the coding of the 2019 analysis, the EU policy is more or less in line with them. Concerning the new trends of Arctic governance, the 2016 EU policy supports focus on science, and could be interpreted to challenge the “Ambivalence of Arctic development” trend by seeking a better balance between environmental protection and economic activities, at least in political rhetoric.

Conclusions

As critical comments to conclude the overview of the 2019 comprehensive study & analysis is that the most-quoted indicators accord more or less with the official priorities/policy goals of the

states' and Indigenous peoples organizations' policies. Climate change, as a threat multiplier, is the driver, a uniting and merging factor, as well as the main reason for focus on science, as one of the overall trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics. At the same time, there is ambivalence or paradox in Arctic development, as another trend, due to the rapidly advanced climate change (in the region). There are also relevant interrelations between the new overall trends and major narratives, such as ambivalence vis-à-vis race for resources/state domination vis-à-vis geopolitical stability & state controlled development/focus on science vis-à-vis climate ethics/Arctic & Space vis-à-vis 'Global Arctic'.

From the updated policies of the Arctic states, Canada is more or less in line with the overall priorities of the Arctic States' policy documents (based on the coding of the 2019 comprehensive study & analysis), though it emphasizes more human dimension, in particular health and safety, and Indigenous peoples, and less international cooperation and economy. Russia is also mostly in line with them, though it emphasizes more safety & security, and less economy and infrastructure. As well as Sweden is mostly in line with them, though security and defense is more emphasized, as well as biodiversity. From the updated policies of non-Arctic states, Germany is mostly in line with them, though emphasizes more security policy and Indigenous peoples, and less economy. Scotland's first policy is mostly in line with them, though emphasizes more clearly culture and sustainable economies, and brings in rural connections and remoteness as common northern features. Finally, the 2016 EU policy is more or less in line with the overall priorities of non-Arctic states, though the Union consists of three Arctic states.

In spite of the focus on science, and explicitly discussed synergy between scientific and Indigenous knowledge to tackle climate change, as well as (long) lists of priorities, goals and objectives, states' policies on the Arctic reflect hesitation, when facing and trying to solve grand environmental challenges and the wicked problem (combination of rapid climate change, pollution and declining biodiversity). They reveal the existing 'political inability' to act – to act now. In maintaining the achieved constructive cooperation and high geopolitical stability, which are, so far, surprisingly resilient, would support the tackling against climate change and pollution in the Arctic region, if only that would be put as the most important priority. This kind of a 'best practice' would be mutually and globally beneficial, and could be a foundation for 'political ability' to make a paradigm shift in mind-set in world politics, as a precondition for problem solving globally.

Notes

1. These represent first focus of existing social sciences literature on the Arctic, and another focus is covered by multidisciplinary studies on the globalized Arctic as a part of global dynamics in the environmental, societal, political and economic spheres.
2. The project was co-funded by IIASA and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and supported by Arctic Circle and INAR at University of Helsinki.
3. The expectation was to understand how perceptions of the Arctic have changed; how different actors behave, and define, address, prioritize issues around relevant factors; identify the common/shared interests, and dynamics of the interplay, of stakeholders, and how their behaving impacts the Arctic region and the entire globe; and finally, based on that determine policy consistency, identify new/emerging trends, and discuss them with

narratives and perceptions of Arctic governance & geopolitics. In the background was the social relevance of science, and the importance to implement the interplay between science, politics and business.

4. Unfortunately, the online version does not have page numbers.

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