Circumpolar International Relations and Geopolitics

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A key component of social welfare is a sense of economic, environmental, and political security. In today's globalized world, cooperation across national borders is becoming increasingly important to foster this security. It may help to decrease political tension and military confrontation and thus increase stability in a region. It can also promote human development and democracy, strengthen the role of civil society, and it is a necessary part of environmental protection (*1-2*).

Starting in the late 1980s, international cooperation in the Arctic has increased to the extent that a new regional identity is emerging, with numerous political initiatives and new fora. This chapter describes this new "Age of the Arctic" (*3*) by focusing on three main themes. The first is the increasing circumpolar cooperation by indigenous peoples organizations and subnational governments: North meets North. The second theme is region-building with nations as major actors, focusing on the Arctic Council. The third theme is the relationship between the Arctic and the outside world. Two questions cut across these themes: How important are Arctic cooperation and the new international political structures for northern peoples and societies? And how can the new regional identity be used in facing globalization and in forming new kinds of north-south relationships?

Historical background

Relations between peoples across the Arctic started long before any state with national interests came to the North. National borders are a rather new phenomenon associated with the colonization and militarization of the region. Early networks and crossroads of cultures included frequent traveling, exchanges of goods and experiences, trade, marriages, migration, and mutual visits (*4*). For example, a thousand years ago Scandinavian peoples created networks of communication between the North Atlantic, northern Europe, and Russia, with east-west as well as north-south trade connections.

The European North has an especially rich tradition of regional social, cultural, and trade relations between indigenous societies and other settlements. People not only traveled between different parts of the region but also came from the North Atlantic and Western Siberia via the Northern Sea Route (*5*). Regional interaction continued after national borders were established, mostly independent of southern economic and political centers. One example is the local border peace treaties between Kainuu, Sweden, and Vienas Karelia, Russia, in the 17th and 18th centuries. Another is the Pomor trade between northern Norway and the White Sea area in the 18th to 20th centuries.

The Bering Strait area has also served as a crossroad of cultures and peoples for centuries. Interrupted only between 1948 and 1988 by the Cold War, frequent travels and mutual visits between the two continents, trade, marriages, and occasionally warfare created an interacting network between indigenous societies, which both the US and Soviet governments acknowledged.

The Cold War period

World War II brought more international activities to the Arctic, mostly based on the military. The Cold War period that followed effectively decreased circumpolar connections again as the region became divided between two rivals: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, which includes five of the Arctic states: the United States of America, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway) and the Warsaw Treaty

Organization led by the Soviet Union. Finland and Sweden were non-aligned.

During this period, state control also reached the northern seas, when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea gave coastal states the right to establish exclusive economic zones up to 200 nautical miles out to sea and to protect ice-covered waters within them (*6*). Canada and the Soviet Union declared claims of sovereignty in the two northern passages, Canada over the waters of the Northwest Passage and the Soviet Union over the Northern Sea Route.

International cooperation in the North was not totally frozen, however. As is discussed later, indigenous cooperation continued and became more institutionalized. There was some international scientific cooperation, including the International Geophysical Year in 1957/8 and both the International Congress on Circumpolar Health and the Northern Sciences Network under UNESCO's Man in the Biosphere Programme, which started in the early 1980s (*7*).

There was also some institutionalized inter-governmental and regional cooperation in the Arctic during the Cold War. For example, the North Calotte Committee within the Nordic cooperation brought together the northernmost counties of Norway, Sweden, and Finland to cooperate in trade and tourism. An example of civic activity was the triennial North Calotte's Peace Days, which became a forum for cooperation between people in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Soviet Union aiming to promote peace and disarmament (*8*). In the North Pacific, transborder cooperation between counties and provinces started in the 1970s in the context of international conferences between Hokkaido in Japan, Alberta in Canada, and Alaska in the United States. One example of multilateral international treaties relevant to the Arctic is the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears reached in 1973. The general state of the northern cooperation in the late 1970s is well summarized in the first comprehensive political and economic overview of the Arctic, "The Circumpolar North: A Political and Economic Geography of the Arctic and Sub-Arctic" (*9*) from 1978, which indicated that there was a "paucity of international relations in the Arctic" (*10*).

Emerging cooperation

Times were changing, however. Northerners began to consider the potential of the circumpolar North as a means of re-establishing horizontal connections across the Cold War political divide. The Arctic states also developed an interest in northern issues and Arctic cooperation. For example, in the 1980s, a number of bilateral agreements on scientific and environmental cooperation between the Soviet Union and other Arctic states were signed. In October 1987, a speech by the then Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in Murmansk gave the initial impetus for the current inter-governmental cooperation in the Arctic (*11*), leading to the so-called Rovaniemi process and the creation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991.

The Murmansk speech

The so-called Murmansk Speech by President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union is often regarded as the initiating event for current regional cooperation in the Arctic. It had still the Soviet rhetoric on peace but reflected more the processes of glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union through its six proposals. The first two were about establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in northern Europe and reducing military activities. The others discussed confidence-building measures in northern seas, civilian cooperation in developing natural resources, coordination of scientific research, cooperation in environmental protection, and opening the Northern Sea Route to foreign ships.

Many western leaders welcomed the spirit of the "Murmansk Initiative" but saw some of the proposals, especially those on arms control, as one-sided and therefore were suspicious (*12*). The speech, however, was an early indicator of change in the closed nature of the Soviet North and thus made possible a real turning point for the Arctic. For example, traveling across the Bering Strait recommenced with a friendship flight in June 1988 (*13*) and governments and civil actors were encouraged to consider a broader and more institutionalized pattern of international cooperation in the circumpolar North.

Partly due to the positive impact of the Murmansk speech, most of the proposals have been successful. As a result of this, the end of the Cold War was accompanied by the rebirth of connections between northern peoples and societies, and the dawning of a new era of Arctic international cooperation.

While the Murmansk speech opened a door for new connections, the collapse of the Soviet Union permitted a dramatic change in the circumpolar North, as Cold War tensions gave way to an atmosphere of eagerness, even excitement, to cooperate internationally and regionally. A new kind of regional dynamics was thereby created in which the state-centric and military issues that had dominated Arctic geopolitics ceded ground to more human-oriented concerns (*14*). When we include cooperation in environmental protection, indigenous peoples' affairs, and science, this trend can be described as region-building. The transition since the Cold War has also involved large-scale utilization of natural resources and the globalization of the Arctic, with its relevant impacts, which have attracted the interest of major international environmental organizations towards the region. New conflicts over the environmental impact of resource use and trans-boundary pollution illustrate the complexity of current interests in the region (*15*). Meanwhile, the still heavy military presence indicates the North's continuing strategic importance.

Indigenous peoples as transnational actors

Most Arctic indigenous peoples are minorities in their countries. Therefore the trend of internationalization is logical when they want to make their legal position as an indigenous people clear and assert their right to self-determination against unified states (see also *Chapter 6. Legal Systems*).

For example, the Sápmi homeland of the Saami people is divided by the national borders of four different unified states. In 1980-81, the Alta movement against the harnessing of the Alta River in northern Norway mobilized Saami across the national borders to reassert their identity as an indigenous people and to strengthen their demands for self-determination in order to achieve the "collective right to decide their own future" (*16*). Although this radical transnational movement lost its fight over the dam, it spawned a national awakening, especially among young Saami and Saami artists. One visible result can be seen in the national symbols shared by all Saami, including the Saami flag and the national day, symbolizing the determination that the national borders should not undermine self-interpretation (*17*). The Saami as one nation is thus a natural pan-national actor (*18*). This fits with the global trend towards treating indigenous peoples as international actors and subjects, with a population and a territory, and a right to self-determination.

There are more connections and deeper cooperation between the different indigenous peoples of the Arctic, for example between the Saami and the Inuit Circumpolar Concerence. Another example can be found in the assistance across the Bering Strait initiated by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (*19*). One institution

Categories of International Actors in the Circumpolar North (*96*)

1. Unified states (i.e. governments, parliaments and state organisations such as the army):
   Canada, Denmark including the Faroe Islands and Greenland as Home Rule entities, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the U.S.A.
2. Intergovernmental organisations (IGOs):
   e.g. Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and its Regional Council, Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers, North Atlantic Marine Mammals Commission (NAMMCO)
3. International non-governmental organizations (INGOs):
   e.g. Arctic Athabaskan Council, Arctic Leaders' Summit, Greenpeace International, International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Northern Forum (NF), Northern Research Forum (NRF), Saami Council, Winter Cities Association
4. Sub-national governments (i.e. provinces, counties and municipalities, indigenous peoples' organisations and civil organizations in one country)
   e.g. RAIPON
5. Trans-national corporations (TNCs): e.g. mining, and oil and gas companies

North meets North

There is currently an intensive growth in cooperation involving indigenous peoples and sub-national governments across the Arctic. This is partly based on traditions of social and trade networks among northern peoples and can be interpreted as a renaissance of pan-Arctic cooperation. In the background is also the idea that northern regions share special features that set them apart from other areas of the world, making it important to have a dialogue among local and regional decision makers and with politicians at the national and international levels.

Indigenous peoples and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

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On May 17, 2004 the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) entered into force and with this the obligations that a coalition of indigenous peoples from the circumpolar Arctic helped to craft will be implemented. The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from POPs – chemicals, such as PCBs and DDT – that persist in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms, and are toxic to humans and wildlife. In implementing the convention, governments will take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment.

Through research, public education, and coordinated advocacy and lobbying, Inuit influenced these international negotiations out of all proportion to their numbers. This fact is important internationally, for what Inuit and other indigenous peoples have done in the global POPs process can be repeated in additional global environmental negotiations that address Arctic concerns, such as climate change and ozone depletion, and perhaps even biodiversity conservation.

In 1988, there was little appreciation beyond the Arctic countries of the extent and significance of transboundary pollution relating to persistent organic pollutants. Together with the the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) POPs Protocol, the Stockholm Convention reflects Arctic science and Arctic political concerns voiced nationally and internationally by Arctic residents, particularly indigenous peoples, and the collective and individual efforts of the eight Arctic states. The very existence of these instruments illustrates that Arctic indigenous peoples are capable of defending their ways of life through international environmental and public health negotiations between states. Their involvement in the Stockholm process is likely a harbinger of things to come as economic globalization and climate change bring the circumpolar Arctic to the attention of decision makers in states far to the south (*28*).

responsible for this is the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat which supports their activities in the Arctic Council. Another is the Arctic Leaders' Summit, which gathers indigenous leaders in common efforts on health, environment, and cultural diversity, as well as in pushing governments to take needed legislative and economic steps.

Although the Saami Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference contributed to the Rovaniemi Process since almost its very beginning, the involvement of indigenous organizations was neither automatic nor clear for some time. For example, the indigenous peoples organizations that had participated in the AEPS were not made founding members in the September 1996 declaration establishing the Arctic Council as the AEPS' successor (*20*). Rather, the ICC and the Saami Council, together with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), were designated Permanent Participants. The same position was later accorded to the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, and the Gwich'in Council International.

The status in international cooperation enjoyed by the Arctic Council's Permanent Participants is rare, if not unique, for indigenous peoples. It has opened many doors and created a platform for discussing human development and sustainability with the governments of the Arctic countries. The indigenous peoples' representatives, however, are not equal to the governments as they are also citizens of the states of those governments (*21*). Moreover, they have only very limited financial resources to support their participation in the meetings of the Council and its Working Groups.

Generally seen as peacefully inclined, northern indigenous peoples can thus be important actors in reducing tension in the Arctic, but their homelands are often of strategic importance, both in military terms and as a result of their natural resource endowments. These therefore attract actors with varying interests from outside the region. Environmental damage from past and present military and industrial activities, coupled with the fact that national interests often differ greatly from those of the indigenous peoples, have also made environmental protection a sensitive international issue in the Arctic and put it on the foreign policy agendas of the unified states (*22*).

The northern indigenous peoples have also actively pushed international work on environmental protection, in close collaboration with working groups under the AEPS and the Arctic Council. For example, they acknowledged the

work of the Arctic Monitoring Assessment Programme in identifying the impacts of pollution in the Arctic (*23*) and used it to push governments to sign the global Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (see box on page 210 and *Chapter 9. Human Health and Well-being*). This can be seen as a success story of fruitful cooperation between northern indigenous peoples and the Arctic scientific community (*24-25*). Recently the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and the effects of climate change on northern traditional livelihoods have featured prominently in this collaboration.

Not all efforts to highlight Arctic concerns in international fora have been particularly effective, however. This was the case, for example, with the negotiation of the recent Johannesburg Declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which does not include the Arctic (*26-27*). Moreover, competition, even conflicts, between indigenous peoples and particular member states may continue in the context of the Arctic Council, especially when trying to define "sustainable development" in the Arctic.

Inter-regional cooperation

Sub-regional governments have become increasingly active in developing contacts across national borders. One example is the International Association of Mayors of Northern Cities, connecting cities and towns from ten different countries. Another is the Northern Forum.

The Northern Forum was established in November 1991 and represents sub-national or regional governments. In 2004, this circumpolar organization had 19 member regions drawn from eleven countries including Mongolia, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. This wide geographical coverage can generate controversy, as the Northern Forum is not an exclusively Arctic organization and it is sometimes difficult to identify interests shared by all member regions. Representation of northern indigenous peoples is weak within the organization, except from some of the Russian member regions. For example, Nunavut and Greenland, both of which have a majority of indigenous peoples, are not members of the Forum.

The Northern Forum represents its member regions in international fora. For example, the United Nations has officially recognized it as a non-governmental organization, and it is among the permanent observers of the Arctic Council. The Northern Forum and the Arctic Council can be seen as contrasting entities. The Arctic Council does not have a regional level or include representation of sub-national units of the circumpolar countries, unlike northern indigenous peoples organizations which have the status of Permanent Participants. In the Northern Forum, indigenous peoples constitute a small minority of both the constituency and their representatives. This discrepancy may limit the role that the Forum can play in deepening inter-regional cooperation.

Projects within the Northern Forum are aimed at sustainable development and cooperative socio-economic initiatives among northern regions. For example, the project on Reindeer Herding Management provides training to workers in order to improve the quality of reindeer meat and to develop related products. The project on a Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism, which collects and analyzes best practices relevant to sustainable Arctic tourism, is run jointly with the Arctic Council (*29*).

Governance, which deals with relations between regional authorities and central governments, is not discussed in the Northern Forum's latest action plan, perhaps indicating that this is a sensitive question and also that the work of the Northern Forum is directed more at practical and concrete matters than at broader foreign policy concerns. This lack of experience of international relations may limit deeper international cooperation relevant to sustainable development. Some of the member-regions, such as Alaska and the Sakha Republic, however, have been very active on the international stage, acting in part independently of their countries, while the Finnish Province of Lapland has even manifested its own regional "foreign" policy (*30*).

A visible example of local bottom-up cooperation across the national borders is the close connections between the Finnish town Tornio and the Swedish municipality Haparanda creating the twin town, or Euro-City of Haparanda-Tornio. This can be seen as a laboratory on how a border, or a borderland, influences the identity and culture of a society and region. This cooperation has in fact promoted integration across the national borders in the Nordic countries and been used as a model for inter-municipality cooperation in Europe.

Trend summary

Arctic cooperation, including new international and regional organizations and fora, has offered northern peoples and societies useful channels for sharing information and platforms for discussing and planning activities together. Further, being active in international cooperation on many levels, the North is becoming better known and its voice more clearly heard in capitals and in other regions. The need to have a northern voice in international relations and southern capitals has been important in establishing cooperation among northern regions and for indigenous peoples working across national borders. These new forms of international cooperation outside national governments, however, highlight different interests and can sometimes cause tensions. Deeper pan-Arctic and inter-governmental cooperation is relevant for promoting sustainability and human development in the region, and can also create better capabilities for coping with the challenges of globalization.

Region-building

Since the late 1980s, there have been many attempts to define the Arctic as a distinct international region (*31*). This has involved establishing organizations and institutions that specifically deal with northern issues, often with the dual aims of building trust after the Cold War and promoting environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic. The initiatives fall into three categories: intergovernmental circumpolar-wide cooperation, subregional cooperation, and academic cooperation. The endeavor provides new platforms and channels for dialogue between the unified states and has the potential to secure a stronger voice for Arctic interests in a global context. Arctic region building is part of an important trend in international relations and represents a new geopolitical approach; rather than seeking to control through the exercise of power, it focuses on achieving a socially stable and environmentally sustainable order.

The Arctic Council and its basis in the Rovaniemi process

Intergovernmental Arctic cooperation officially started in 1989 with the Rovaniemi process in the wake of Mikhail Gorbachev's Murmansk speech. At the first ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland, of the eight Arctic states, which also included three northern indigenous peoples organizations, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was signed in June 1991 (*32*). The initial focus on environmental protection gradually expanded to related fields, notably sustainable development. In 1996, the Arctic states replaced the AEPS with the Arctic Council as a high-level intergovernmental forum for Arctic international cooperation that would include as Permanent Participants a certain number of transnational northern indigenous peoples organisations.

The idea of some kind of circumpolar political body had been suggested some twenty years earlier and was taken up again at the end of the 1980s in a study by Canadian non-governmental organisations. It proposed an umbrella-type political forum for governments, indigenous organizations, and different interest groups, and was paralleled by an official Canadian initiative to create an Arctic Council (*33*). However, the establishment of a functioning Arctic Council took longer than its supporters anticipated, due to divergent opinions over its structure, procedures and financing, and concerning the relative status to be accorded to different types of participant organizations. Debate also proved to be protracted over the Terms of Reference for the Sustainable Development Program, centered around how, if at all, to articulate a framework vision for the Council's work on sustainability in the Arctic (*34*).

Almost concurrently, parliamentarians from the Arctic countries with an interest in Northern affairs began to collaborate and the first Parliamentary Conference concerning the Arctic regions and cooperation was held in 1993. One output was the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR). A primary aim of both the Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Region and the Standing Committee was to support the establishment of the Arctic Council, and later, to stimulate as well as promote its work in areas such as human development in the Arctic.

As the environment-related working groups of the AEPS were subsumed by the Arctic Council, one of its two main areas of attention would naturally be the health of Arctic ecosystems, including human populations, and thus the identification, reduction and elimination of pollution, as well as nature conservation. The previously uncertain future of the AEPS's Task Force on Sustainable Development was eventu-

Arctic Council Structure and Activities

Ministerial meeting	
Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs)	
Arctic Council Secretariat (provided by the Chair state)	
Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (Copenhagen)	
ACTIVITIES	
Cross-Cutting Themes	
Sustainable development / *Capacity-building* / *Traditional knowledge*	
PROGRAMS	**SELECTED PROJECTS AND OUTPUTS**
Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) Secretariat – Oslo	*Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report* (1997) *AMAP Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues* (1998) *AMAP Assessment* Reports (2002) *Arctic Pollution 2002 Report* (2002)
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group (CAFF) Secretariat – Akureyri	Strategy for Conservation of Biodiversity in the Arctic Region Circumpolar Protected Area Network (CPAN) UNEP/GEF-funded project ECORA in the Russian Arctic *Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation* (2001)
Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR) Secretariat – Ottawa	*Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic* (2002) Emergency prevention/source control management project, Apatity Vodokanal
Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) Secretariat – Akureyri	*Review of existing international instruments relevant to pollution of the Arctic marine environment* (1996) Regional Program of Action for protection of the Arctic marine environment from land-based activities GEF-funded project to support the Russian Federation's National Program of Action-Arctic Arctic Waters Oil Transfer Guidelines Strategic Plan for the protection of the Arctic marine environment
Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Secretariat – Ottawa	Future of Children and Youth in the Arctic Co-management of marine resources in Arctic areas Cultural and ecotourism Survey of living conditions in the Arctic (SLICA) International circumpolar surveillance system for infectious diseases Sustainable reindeer husbandry Product development and processing in the sustainable reindeer husbandry Sustainable development in northern timberline forests Telemedicine Arctic transportation and infrastructure experts network *Arctic Human Development Report* (2004)
Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP)	Multilateral cooperative project for phasing out of PCB use and management of PCB-contaminated wastes in the Russian Federation (RF) Reduction/Elimination of emissions of dioxins and furans in the RF Environmentally sound management of stocks of obsolete pesticides in the RF Reduction of atmospheric mercury releases from Arctic states Implementation of cleaner production, eco-efficiency and environmental management systems in the Norilsk Mining and Metallurgical Company *Fact sheets* on POPs, heavy metals and radioactivity
Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (**ACIA**) (AMAP-CAFF-IASC) Secretariat – Anchorage	Scientific report, synthesis document, and policy recommendations (Autumn 2004)

Source: David Scrivener

ally resolved with its transformation into the Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) (*35*), with the effect that promoting sustainable and human development became a new priority, expressed through activities such as disseminating information, encouraging education and research on sustainable development, and promoting interest in Arctic-related issues (*36*). This wider mandate also included discussion on transportation and communication, i.e. how to create a connected Arctic, and initiatives in telemedicine and infrastructure. In this way, the agenda has broadened considerably in a fairly short period of time,

Arctic Council - Participants

Member-States	Permanent Participants	Observers		
		States	International Organisations	Non-governmental Organisations
Canada	Aleut International Association	France	Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)	Advisory Committee on Protection of the Seas (ACOPS)
Denmark (+Greenland/Faroe Islands)	Arctic Athabaskan Council	Germany	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Association of World Reindeer Herders
Finland	Gwich'in Council International	Netherlands	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	Circumpolar Conservation Union (CCU)
Iceland	Inuit Circumpolar Conference	Poland	Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)	International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)
Norway	RAIPON*	United Kingdom	Northern Forum	International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA)
Russian Federation	Saami Council		North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)	International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH)
Sweden			UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE)	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
USA			UN Environment Programme (UNEP)	University of the Arctic
			UN Development Programme (UNDP)	Worldwide Fund for Nature Arctic Programme (WWFAP)

* Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North

Source: David Scrivener

with the Arctic Council and its working groups conducting a large number of projects covering many, diverse fields (*37*). This has, of course, created new challenges, as financial and staff resources for the projects and their coordination remain severely limited.

Although the Arctic Council is a high-level forum for international co-operation between governments and indigenous peoples organizations, little effort has been made, so far, to give the Council any regulative functions. Based on a soft-law agreement, it is essentially an international advisory body providing support to the governments that are seeking consensus-based solutions to common or shared problems in the Arctic. Sensitive issues, such as security policy, are excluded from the agenda of the Council, whose founding Declaration states that it "should not deal with matters related to military security" (*38*) (see box on page 215). Issues dealing with the utilization of natural resources, especially marine mammals, have also been avoided. The domination of the unified states in the Arctic Council and their continuing differences over these delicate issues largely explains their exclusion from the official agenda.

Protests and activities of environmentalist organizations directed against nuclear dumping and consumptive uses of marine mammals, and those of indigenous peoples against mining and forestry in the North, had already created conflicts between indigenous peoples' organizations, national and regional authorities, local entrepreneurs, and industry in general. In this context, the Rovaniemi Process and the AEPS can be interpreted as a sophisticated mechanism whereby central governments could regain control over international cooperation and reassert the primacy of their interests as sovereign states (*39*). From the perspective of northern indigenous peoples, the Arctic Council can be seen as an international mechanism through which to connect circumpolar environments and thus understand them better (40).

There are some critical questions for the Arctic Council that could act as a barrier to deeper international cooperation. There has been concern about the balance between promoting environmental protection – in which the cooperation has its roots – and other goals, as witnessed by the protracted debate over adopting the Council's Sustainable Development Programme. Another critical question concerns how the participation of both non-indigenous inhabitants and indigenous peoples of northern regions can be strengthened. Another important issue concerns the extent to which the Arctic Council

Bi- and trilateral initiatives on nuclear safety

Military security is not included in the mandate of Arctic Council, which has limited ability to deal with environmental issues connected to military activities. Instead, bi- and tri-lateral initiatives have been much more significant, especially between the United States and Russia, and Norway and Russia, dealing with nuclear safety in the Russian North. The Joint Norwegian-Russian Expert Group and the priority research project of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council on radioactive pollution related to the military were forerunners (*41*). They were supported by the joint United States-Russian announcement on environmental protection cooperation in the Arctic signed by Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin in 1994, the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, and, financially, by the US Congress.

These were followed by the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation as a forum for dialogue and joint activities among US, Russian, and Norwegian military and environmental officials. This cooperation was established in September 1996, almost at the same time as the Arctic Council, with the main aim to create technological methods and equipment for military-related environmental problems especially dealing with the Arctic. That the Arctic Council does not deal with matters related to military security and that the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation was created at almost the same time suggest that the United States, Russia, and Norway, having common interests and overlapping expertise in military-related environmental threats in Northwest Russia, had a shared interest in preserving their own rather tight control over the handling of these issues and keeping them off the agenda of the Arctic-wide multilateral cooperation (*42*).

can, or indeed should, become the "voice of the Arctic" in global political fora – a matter of both capacity and political will.

Moreover, there has been neither real collaboration nor a division of labour between the Arctic Council and the interregional cooperations of the Northern Forum, merely a few joint projects. Though sharing similar aims, the interaction of the two bodies is affected by tensions in center-periphery relations in the Arctic states and differing attitudes towards the role of northern indigenous peoples' organizations (*43*). Meanwhile, the activities of the Arctic parliamentarians and their gatherings have helped to draw some of the highest decision makers and lawmakers of the Arctic states into intensive international cooperation in, for example, considering human development in the region.

Nordic cooperation: old tradition with new Arctic initiatives

Region building is not a new activity in the North. Neither is it focussed only on circumpolar cooperation. For example, the five Nordic states started institutionalized cooperation in the 1950s based on a shared history and similarities in culture, as well as shared values on social and health security, equality, openness, environmental protection, and peace. The Nordic countries often work together in international fora and they created a passport union in the 1950s. In relation to the European Union, however, it has been split. Denmark, Finland and Sweden are EU member states, while Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands remain outside the union; Greenland was a member but has left. The Nordic states are also split in relation to NATO membership.

In relation to the Arctic, Nordic cooperation resulted in an initiative for inter-regional cooperation between the northern-most counties of Norway, Sweden, and Finland to promote the North Calotte as a political concept (*44*): established in 1967, the North Calotte Committee gained official status under the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1971, and is now called the North Calotte Council.

More recent is the cooperation between nations of the North Atlantic, with the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland affirming "Western Norden" as a region. It was institutionalized through the establishment of the West Nordic Parliamentarian Council in 1985, now called the West-Nordic Council.

According to the new common Nordic strategy, one of the main aims is to promote pan-Nordic interests, develop Nordic integrity and create higher Nordic utility, objectives which apply also to neighboring regions, including the Arctic (*45*).

The Barents Region: an alternative to a military conflict zone

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region was established in 1993 as a new kind of international forum for multilateral and bilateral cooperation. The Kirkenes Declaration (*46*), the founding document, is not a legally binding international

agreement and cooperation has focussed on practical issues along the national borders between the Nordic countries and Russia (*47*). The fields of cooperation are environmental protection, economy, science and technology, regional infrastructure, indigenous peoples, human contacts, culture, and tourism.

The main idea behind creating the Barent Euro-Arctic Region was to develop a new kind of cooperation in the former "military theater" of the European North that would cut cross the former Iron Curtain and create opportunities for cooperating with Russia (*48-49*). The ultimate aim was to increase stability in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration, when Russia was still mostly seen as the "Other" (*50*).

This cooperation has a two-level governing structure: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the Barents (Euro-Arctic) Regional Council. This was a new, even innovative, design in the Arctic when dealing with relations between states and regions, especially in light of the fact that the region was established by six state governments and the Commission of the European Union. The regional cooperation included a working group of indigenous peoples with the Saami, the Nenets and the Veps; this later became the common Working Group of Indigenous Peoples for both councils. However, the Saami were neither enthusiastic about the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional cooperation nor have they been active in it. The major reasons have been fears of neo-colonialism and their minor position in the cooperation (*51*).

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) includes 5,941 million inhabitants (in 2001), and 4,314 million of them live in the Russian side. The surface are of the Barents Region covers 1,755 million sq.km. (for more information see http://www.barentsinfo/org). The member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation. The member sub-national regions of the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council are Finnmark, Nordland and Troms from Norway; Norrbotten and Västerbotten from Sweden; Kainuu, Lapland and Northern Otsrobothnia from Finland; and Arkhangelsk, Karelia, Komi, Murmansk and Nenets from the Russian Federation.

A major limitation of this initiative is that the official cooperation does not cover the Barents Sea, which makes the Barents Region somewhat artificial as a region. This reflects the strong national interests of Norway and Russia in competition over the rich natural resources of the Barents Sea continental shelf. Bilateral negotiations in search of an agreed boundary line have continued for many years, and a bilateral agreement of the delimitation is possible in the near future. Security policy is also excluded from the cooperation, attesting to the legacy of the Cold War and the highly sensitive strategic role of the ice-free reaches of the Barents and Norwegian Seas. At the same time, many aspects of the practical cooperation do include the Barents Sea and address security-related issues such as nuclear safety.

If the main aim of the initiative was to decrease tension through transboundary cooperation, then the first ten years of cooperation can be taken as a success as the Barents Sea has emerged from a period of high tension into a phase of international, mostly inter-regional cooperation (*52*). Other more concrete achievements include the opening of a new international border crossing between Finland and Russia, and the framework agreement reached in May 2003 on a Multilateral Nuclear Environment Programme in the Russian Federation (*53*). Environmental cooperation has been rather successful in terms of agreeing on environmental action programs and allocating funding, while progress in business and economic cooperation has been slow.

The Barents Euro-Arctic regional cooperation has attracted many civil organizations and voluntary groups as an avenue for bottom-up activities across national borders in various areas including culture and the media, and women's issues such as, a network of crisis centres for women. Recently, official cooperation has also focused more on trans-boundary issues relevant in everyday life, such as organized crime and the trafficking in drugs and humans (*54*). That some regional and indigenous actors feel they have no real means to influence the process, however, complicates its consolidation at the popular level. Moreover, many of the regional actors involved have been frustrated by the many dreams and the barriers to achieving concrete results.

The Bering Strait: indigenous initiatives paved the way

Cooperation in the Bering Strait provides quite a contrast with the Barents Region. The cooperation between Alaska and Chukotka and other parts of the Russian Far East started in the late

1980s as non-governmental and local community initiatives, which was supported by the governments of both sides, on not only common political, economic, and cultural issues, but also facilitating people-to-people and family connections across the Bering Strait. The indigenous peoples and their organizations played a key role (*55*) with events on traditional knowledge and on stewardship of the Bering Sea environment. One of the basic ideas is to promote resource management in indigenous communities in Chukotka, especially of whale, polar bear and fisheries, and to help scientists to collect data, for example on the harvesting of whales (*56*). One concrete result of the cooperation is the 1992 Alaska-Chukotka accord for visa-free travels for Inuit of the region (*57*).

Environmental protection was another driving factor, and includes an agreement on the conservation of polar bears and an idea to create an international park in the Bering Strait area. The National Park Service's Shared Beringian Heritage Program was initiated but an agreement to establish a Beringia Park has not yet been signed. There are also several structures for scientific cooperation in the region, including the Barrow Arctic Science Consortium to support research infrastructure on both sides. The University of Alaska has been active in promoting the transition to democracy and a free market of the Russian Far East economy through the training of entrepreneurs, business managers, and government leaders (*58*).

The initial euphoria over the Bering Sea collaboration, especially at the political level, decreased in the mid-1990s when Chukotka experienced political changes and severe economic problems. The process now involves mainly economic cooperation, and that between peoples. Infrastructure improvements, particularly in communication and transportation, are important for trying to improve relations across the Bering Strait, especially from the point of view of Alaska, which for 40 years has been boundary rather than a crossroads (*59-60*). Although the tradition of contacts has been important, the main driving force, at least from the US side, has been commercial interests in tourism and trade between the two continents (*61*).

Unlike the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, there is no international body for an institutionalized inter-governmental or regional cooperation in the Bering Strait region. On the other hand, there is an intercontinental network for contacts and cooperation that is flexible and based on bottom-up local and regional activities. These contemporary contacts represent both a revival of pre-Cold-War indigenous contacts of the first half of the 20th century, as the awareness of those travels plays an important role, and also as an innovation *(62).*

The Arctic as a knowledge-based region

In addition to political cooperation, the end of the Cold War made possible increased scientific cooperation across borders. Earlier activities, such as the Second International Polar Year in 1932-33, did not leave any permanent institutionalized arrangement, and the current international scientific work in the circumpolar North began in the 1980s. At first it was mostly based on bilateral cooperation and international research projects on the Arctic. There was also some university cooperation in the context of the North Calotte Universities and the Circumpolar Universities Conferences.

Closely connected to the Murmansk Speech and its call for scientific co-operation, the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) was founded in 1990. As the first circumpolar scientific organization, its aim was to encourage and facilitate international cooperation on Arctic research in all disciplines. The IASC was

The International Arctic Science Committee

Boris Segerståhl

The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) is a non-governmental organization with members from 18 countries. The members are national science organizations covering all fields of Arctic research. Each national member provides ongoing contact with its Arctic science community and draws on this structure to identify scientific priorities. IASC does not provide direct funding for research projects, but supports networks to implement international projects. An important feature of many projects is that they are multidisciplinary. Once a year, the International Arctic Science Summit Week is organized in one of the member countries.

IASC's influence on research planning and priorities is not based on economic power but on scientific credibility, and recommendations are evaluated nationally before funding decisions are made in member countries. However, a growing need for international collaboration has led to a situation where priorities set by IASC have a fairly strong influence on research policies in many countries.

The Northern Research Forum

Boris Segerståhl

The Northern Research Forum (NRF) started in 1999 as a forum for dialogue on northern issues between politicians, civil servants, business people, NGO-activists, and academics. It is based on ad-hoc work rather than an organizational structure. Discussions on relevant contemporary issues take place at biennial open meetings. These have discussed themes such as "Northern Economies in the Global Economy", "Innovation in Northern Governance" and "Applying the Lessons of History." The aim is to avoid dividing issues along traditional sectors or disciplines and also to deal with delicate issues. Other aims are to promote policy-relevant discussion and to emphasize the social role of research (*63*).

followed by other international scientific and academic fora, such as the International Arctic Social Sciences Association, the University of the Arctic and the Northern Research Forum.

Scientific assessments conducted by the working groups of the AEPS/Arctic Council activities have also brought together scientists from different countries using the Arctic as a common ground for cooperation. Another International Polar Year is planned for 2007-08, with a focus on the importance of the Arctic and Antarctic in the Earth system and their connections, for example to global climate.

Trend summary

Region-building in the circumpolar North is taking place both regionwide and in several sub-regions. At the pan-Arctic level, the Arctic Council serves as a governmental platform for discussing environmental cooperation and sustainable development. Correspondingly, the Northern Forum gathers regional and local governments across the Arctic but has limited indigenous participation. Promoting civility and sustainability, region-building is relevant both Arctic-wide and at the sub-regional level in the North. It might even be one of the most relevant new trends in international relations, and thus the most important observation of this chapter. It includes a range of actors and can be taken as a step towards regionalization, based on bottom-up activities. A common theme in all these efforts is the desire to create a new approach to the geopolitics of the North.

The Arctic and the outside world

Traditional security policy, especially military security, and issues surrounding natural resource exploitation dominated the relationship between the Arctic and the outside world during the Cold War. With its end, global geopolitics entered into a new phase, with implications for the Arctic. This changed situation has contrasting features. While a single superpower now enjoys a hegemonic position amongst states, we also see the rise of new international non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations, and ethnic and religious groups, which act globally and challenge the unified state system.

The Arctic is also affected by intensifying globalization. Earlier influences in areas such as the utilization of marine mammals, trade and control of that, militarization, and long-range pollution combine with several newer factors. For example, large-scale hydrocarbon exploitation has increased and brought the transnational corporate presence to the Arctic. Advances in information flow and communication technology make the region less "remote," while climate change illustrates the Arctic's vulnerability to global environmental change. Northern indigenous peoples are being integrated into the global indigenous world.

The Arctic retains its high strategic significance in security matters for key military powers like the United States, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. Its rich natural resources and potential transportation routes also make it strategically relevant economically for many other countries. However, by the turn of the millennium, intergovernmental and regional cooperation had largely replaced military competition as the defining feature of circumpolar geopolitics.

From military confrontation to international cooperation

The 20th century brought the first wars into the circumpolar North and with them a general militarization of the Arctic. The Cold War transformed the region first into a military flank, then a military front or even a "military theater," denominated by the nuclear weapons systems of the United States and the Soviet Union. For example, the maritime strategies of the two superpowers made the northern seas, especially the ice-free reaches of the Barents, Norwegian,

and Greenland Seas, not only a military front but also a target of both the Soviet and the US militaries (*64-66*).

The Arctic situation illustrates the use of geography for military purposes, which is often called the technology model of geopolitics (*67*). The Arctic was a critical area as it offered the shortest flight routes for US and Soviet long-range bombers and missiles between Eurasia and North America. Sparsely populated, it was, and still is, also attractive as an area in which to test new weapons systems and conduct military training exercises – for example, low-level flights - thereby serving as an arena for the high technology arms competition of the Cold War period (*68-69*).

Against this background, numerous ideas and proposals for arms control and confidence-building in the Arctic and northern seas were put forward, but formal East-West agreements rarely embraced this region in any direct way, as illustrated by the lack of any concrete negotiations in response even to the military security aspects of Gorbachev's 1987 "Murmansk Initiatives"(*70*).

The end of the Cold war period and the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the consequent dissipation of East-West tension, were followed by cooperation and partnership, even some sort of euphoria of peace and friendship. This enthusiasm was strengthened by concrete actions for arms control, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In the 1990s, global and regional security arrangements were in transition. Though there were quantitative reductions in the armouries, especially nuclear, of the major powers, economic and technical developments led to an emphasis of quality over quantity.

By the turn of the century, the military presence in the Arctic had contracted, and there was less tension; meanwhile, increasing international cooperation on civilian and some military-related issues generated a greater sense of stability and cooperative security (*71*). The very meaning of security was also being extended beyond traditional concerns with "military" threats to focus on environmental and societal problems such as health, cultural survival, freedom of expression and security of communication (*72*). Security is complex, however, and still includes nationalistic and militaristic aspects *(73)*, as can be seen in dealing with actual or potential environmental problems stemming from military activities (see box).

The military and the environment

The intensive military presence in the Arctic has had a direct impact on the environment. Examples include the pollution by the radar stations of the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW Line) in the Canadian North (*74-76*). There have also been accidents, such as the crash of the American B-52 bomber in 1968 in Thule, Greenland, and the loss of of the Kursk nuclear submarine in 2000 in the Barents Sea (*77*). There is also indirect influence, i.e. environmental risks and impacts on socioeconomic development. This is very much the situation in the Barents Sea area, which has the largest concentration of nuclear weapons and reactors, and other military facilities in the circumpolar North (*78-79*). This presents a new kind of challenge for international cooperation in the Arctic.

Despite the end of the Cold War, and the increase in regional cooperation being crafted in the region, the Arctic has retained its high military-strategic significance, especially as an under-ice deployment and hiding area for submarines carrying ballistic missiles and for those that "shadow" them. These guarantee the possibility of revenge strikes by nuclear weapons,

and could transfer tensions or armed conflict in other parts of the world to the Arctic. Additionally, climate change in the future will increase the ice-free areas of the Arctic and create new possibilities for military patrolling, for example in the Canadian Arctic archipelago.

The phenomenon of "less quantity and more quality" is a relevant factor in the large and sparsely-populated northern regions. It has led to fewer military bases, troops and radar stations. In parts of some regions such as the Barents Sea, the Kola Peninsula, and northern Norway, however, the military presence has intensified, and includes nuclear-weapon deployments and military activities such as intelligence work, training, and testing (*80-81*). Also, Alaska has come to play a strategically key role as a deployment area for the underground silos of missile intercepters and associated communication systems of the United States' National Missile Defense system (*82*). There are also plans for more intensive use of the US air base and radar installation in Thule, Greenland. These developments can be interpreted as a re-militarization of the Arctic.

The Arctic in global environmental issues

The Arctic has been described as an environmental linchpin (see *Chapter 1. Introduction*). This vision seems relevant at a time when global problems, such as long-range air and sea pollution, radioactivity, and climate change create challenges for northern peoples and communities, for example concerning food security. The vision is even more relevant because potentially effective responses to such global challenges can only be realized through international cooperation between governments and sub-regional and civil actors. This is not an easy task, however. Both global and Arctic-based environmental problems are closely connected to industrialization, the utilization of natural resources, and the military, and thus with fundamental interests of the unified states such as welfare, economic growth and security.

The Arctic could play a critical role in global environmental issues for two reasons: First, the Arctic has been a "laboratory" for science, including research on the environment, for several decades. The emerging intercourse between science and traditional knowledge may further strengthen the knowledge base this provides. Second, the current inter-governmental Arctic cooperation started with environmental protection and has already created some useful models for future action, as mentioned earlier in this report. The global relevance of this knowledge and "know-how" in region-wide decision making is sufficient to merit sustained efforts to communicate it to the outside world.

Northern dimensions

During the late 1990s, the "Northern Dimension" became a political term and policy focus in both the European Union and Canada. There has also been a corresponding political discussion in Russia about the need for a long-term northern policy (*83*) as well as a more academic one about the need to redefine the role of the Russian North as a geostrategically important resource reserve (*84-85*). The Northern dimension is thus becoming a metaphor for new kinds of relations between the capitals and the northern peripheries of the Arctic states.

Initially adopted in 2000, the EU's Northern Dimension Action Plan is a framework and a process for continuing dialogue on cooperation between the EU and its neighbors, especially the Russian Federation, and for co-ordination, even management, of cross-border cooperation across the EU borders (*86-87*). The main aim is to increase stability and civic security, to enhance democratic reforms, and to create positive interdependence and sustainable development. Special focus is on the threats posed by pollution to Arctic nature and the health problems affecting people living in the North (*88*). The EU framework covers a geographically broad and diverse area, ranging from Greenland in the west to Northwest Russia in the east, and from the Arctic to the southern extremity of the Baltic Sea. The Second Action Plan – for 2004-06 focuses more on human resources and social issues, such as education and public health, and on the environment than was the case with the first action plan.

Canada launched the Northern Dimension of its foreign policy in 2000. The main objectives are to enhance the security of Canadians and northern peoples, to ensure Canada's sovereignty in the North, to establish the circumpolar North as an integrated entity, and to promote human security and sustainable development (*89*). These objectives are well in line with other discussions on northern issues in Canada, such as the role of indigenous governance and the geopolitical, legal and economic implications of climate change (*90-91*).

The processes of the two Northern

Dimensions are different. In Canada, its procedure is based on three simultaneous consultation processes: in the federal government, between that and territorial and provincial governments, and with non-governmental organizations and stakeholders (*92*). The EU's Northern Dimension has been mostly developed by the EU institutions in a process between the EU member-states and partner countries, each with their particular emphases. In this process, the partner countries and Greenland have had an almost equal voice and have been able to take initiatives (*93*).

The northern dimension has also been adopted as a new item in the political dialogue between the EU and Canada, which signifies at least a potential for using these initiatives as a way to cooperate on global and regional challenges (*94*). Both Northern Dimensions, however, are basically constrained by limited funding. In the EU, the enlargement of 2004 may mean less interest toward the North (*95*). Another challenge for the EU's Northern Dimension is its lack of strategic priorities.

Trend summary

The Arctic is still of high strategic importance but there has been a shift from quantity to quality in military strategy and presence and greater emphasis on the region's rich natural resources in the global scale. Climate change and related sea ice thinning will probably bring intensified civilian transportation and military activities in the Arctic Ocean, complicating the security situation. The new international Arctic cooperation has had little direct bearing upon traditional security policy. It has, however, much greater importance in relation to the challenges and opportunities presented by economic development and climate change.

"Northern Dimension" policies carry the potential for a new kind of relationship between the Arctic and political centers in the south, even if the concept is still in a formative stage. To have the Arctic as a "cross-cutting issue, mainstreamed within each key-priority" would emphasize the role of northern societies and thus form new and more fruitful kinds of north-south relations.

Key conclusions

The circumpolar North cannot be insulated from developments at the global level but it also has its own special regional dynamics based on post-Cold-War political changes. International relations in the Arctic are based on both intergovernmental and inter-regional cooperation. Consequently, the region deals closely with internationalization and globalization at the same time as it shows strong signs of region-building and regionalization. Its many international institutions create possibilities for the North to become an active player in world politics with constructive ways to implement its experiences and fresh ideas.

Three main themes define the current stage of international relations and geopolitics in the Arctic. The first is the intensive inter-regional and often circumpolar collaboration amongst indigenous peoples, sub-national governments, and civil organizations. This can be seen as a renaissance of pan-Arctic cooperation as it builds on traditions of social contacts and trade networks between northern peoples and societies. The new international actors have created special regional dynamics in which transborder cooperation is a realistic possibility and constitutes a new resource for development. This is partly connected to political and institutional changes in northern governance, bringing more self-determination and autonomy. As both a precondition and a result of these developments, Arctic geopolitics have moved from state domination and militarization towards a more human orientation.

The second theme is region-building, which includes defining the Arctic as a distinct, comprehensive region. This has mostly been a top-down, state-dominated activity aimed at relieving tension and fostering stability, but it also includes bottom-up initiatives, illustrated by activities in the Bering Strait area. Pre-conditions for region-building have been the declining relative importance of military-based security and the more acute awareness of the often common objectives of environmental protection and human development.

The third theme concerns the changing nature of relations between the Arctic and the outside world as the military significance of the region is being supplemented by its strategic role in the global economy, based on its rich natural resources. Northern economies are increasingly integrated into the globalized world economy and the importance of northern regions may grow with the increased demand for strategic minerals and oil and gas, with larger companies with more capital taking an interest in the region, and with technology creating

easier access to raw material sources. This integration is driven more by major states and transnational corporations than by regional actors. Within a broader concept of security that includes the environment and economy, security policy retains a critical role. It includes issues related to the sovereignty of unified states and the maintenance of their jurisdiction over natural resources and transportation, as well as the Arctic's continuing military-strategic significance.

In summary, globalization is increasingly bringing new actors to the Arctic at the same time as international cooperation is becoming more intensive in northern regions. Together with new Northern Dimension initiatives, these raise the possibility of changes in circumpolar geopolitics by the 2010s. Defining the new relationships between the Arctic and the outside world and finding new approaches are politically important as well as scientifically interesting.

Gaps in knowledge

The two most important gaps in knowledge of the subject of this chapter are the following:

First, despite slowly increasing attention to regional cooperation in the literature on Arctic development, there is a need for more research adopting a comprehensive circumpolar approach that would complement the still dominant national perspectives.

Second, there has been similarly little debate amongst scholars or other stakeholders over how human and environmentally sustainable regional development are facilitated or constrained by security policies and military activities in the region. Even though it might usefully inform our understanding of sustainable development in the Arctic, defining and addressing security from a regional perspective has been a difficult, or even taboo, issue.

Chapter summary

International cooperation in the post-Cold-War Arctic has increased at many different levels. This includes governmental cooperation in the Arctic Council but also new fora for cooperation among indigenous peoples, sub-national governments, parliamentarians, civil organizations and in research and education. Since the late 1980s, the Arctic has increasingly been recognized as a distinct region. This region-building is one of the most important trends. Its focus on social stability and environmental sustainability can be seen as a wish to create a new geopolitical approach. It also helps to secure for Arctic concerns a visibility and arguably even a voice on the international scene, especially in environmental matters. The Arctic is still a theatre of military preoccupations, but these now have to share center stage with the often common predicaments of its inhabitants, embedded as they are in the region's rich yet vulnerable environment.

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