

## **Regional and Transnational Actors for Arctic Governance**

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Arctic governance and cross-border activities do not solely belong to nation-states and national governments. While the roots of the regional actors' involvement can be traced back to the postwar decades, globalization, transnationalism, regionalization, and new types of public-private partnerships have paved the way for the strengthened presence of a wide range of actors including subnational governments (SNG) and their alliances of various forms, NGOs, and epistemic communities. Besides being directly engaged in interaction with international partners (both governments and non-state actors), these actors can also influence the planning and implementation of national policies.

While delivering services and functions delegated to them by the central governments, Arctic SNGs can propose and promote their own policy initiatives through various formal and informal channels. The international activities of SNGs are often analyzed through concepts such as multi-level governance (focusing on power vertically among many levels of government and horizontally across multiple quasi- or nongovernmental organizations); the 'two-level game' (referring to the negotiation processes at the international and domestic levels demonstrating the interconnectedness of foreign policy with domestic approval); and paradiplomacy (referring to subnational governments' and non-state actors' activities in international affairs). The paradiplomacy research has traditionally focused on causes, motives, layers, and consequences of SNGs' international affairs, the institutional and legal framework for such activities, and the relationship between SNGs and central governments. While the main body of paradiplomacy literature has focused on the North American and European subnational governments, research concerning the Arctic has increased in recent years.

There are different types of international platforms supporting cross-border cooperation between the Arctic and northern regions and cities. Besides the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council introduced in chapter 6, the Northern Forum (NF) can be identified as an important venue for inter-regional cooperation. NF was established in 1991 but its roots go back

to the 1970s. NF strives for sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life in the North. It has had a status as an observer in the Arctic Council since 1998. While the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 posed a major challenge to the organization (Finnish Lapland halted the implementation of its chairmanship program) of which the secretariat is in Yakutsk, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), this is not the first time of turbulence. At the end of the 2000s and at the beginning of 2010s many SNGs that had played crucial roles in the organization (including Alaska, the former host of the secretariat) left NF, making it a predominantly Russian organization. However, some of the non-Russian regions returned to NF and helped to revise its strategy.

Other multilateral cooperation schemes include the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, which bring the Nordic parliaments and governments together. Meanwhile, the representatives of northern regions of Norway, Finland and Sweden collaborate under the auspices of the North Calotte Committee and the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas Network. Many of these regions also belong to the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission. In the North American Arctic, interregional collaboration is supported by the Pacific Northwest Economic Region: Arctic Caucus, for example. The proposal to establish the Bering Pacific Arctic Council in 2019 is a newer initiative. However, the ongoing war will surely affect the implementation of the proposal.

Many Arctic cities have participated in the activities of the World Winter Cities Association of Mayors (the Northern Intercity Conference of Mayors until 2004), the Livable Winter Cities Association, and the Winter Cities Shake-Up. However, the greatest attention has recently been paid to the Arctic Mayors Forum (AMF) established in 2019. AMF was established because the national policies are often decided in the capitals of the Arctic countries, which are located outside the Arctic. AMF aims to have observer status in the Arctic Council to make the voices of the Arctic people better heard and understood within the Arctic Council. One of the major challenges even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, was to include Russian Arctic cities in the AMF. Now the inclusion of mayors from the largest cities in the Arctic seems a distant possibility, calling into question some of the initial motivations and goals of the AMF.

Science and education have played a significant role in the post-Cold War Arctic cooperation, governance, and diplomacy. Science has been high on national Arctic agendas and science-based decisions and policies have been demanded by governments. At the same time, University of the Arctic (UArctic, network consisting of universities, colleges and other research and educational organizations) and International Arctic Science Committee (IASC, non-governmental organization founded by national scientific organizations both from Arctic and non-Arctic states) have developed as science-driven transnational actors facilitating international cooperation, supporting the work of the Arctic Council and its members, and helping to raise awareness concerning the Arctic issues.

While the role of private sector and indigenous actors and organizations are explained in detail in subsections of Chapters 6 and 7, it is necessary to emphasize the role of NGOs and other transnational actors in the field of Arctic environmental protection, for example. Whereas some of these actors are based on or solely focus on the Arctic, others (e.g., WWF and Greenpeace) are acting globally and covering the Arctic among many other regions.

Subnational entities, academic communities, and NGOs are envisioned as actors who can play pioneering roles in Arctic cooperation when it becomes possible again (in one form or another). If the ongoing war is prolonged, however, it is possible that the development of regional and transnational actors in Arctic governance will be asymmetrical, taking on very different identities and characteristics between Russia and the seven other Arctic states.

**For more on this, read...**

Sellheim N and D R Menezes (eds), *Non-state Actors in the Arctic Region* (Springer 2022)

Kuznetsov A S, *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy: Subnational Governments in International Affairs* (Routledge 2015)

Axworthy T S, S French and E Tsui (eds), *Lessons from the Arctic: The role of Regional Government in International Affairs* (Mosaic Press 2020)