

UDC: 332.021(98)(045)

DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2020.39.195

## Overview of Arctic Policies and Strategies\*

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**Abstract.** The scientific report *Arctic Policies and Strategies — Analysis, Synthesis and Trends* delivers a holistic analysis of the policies, strategies, and declarations of relevant Arctic stakeholders, and new / emerging trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics at the 2020s. The analysis, using quantitative and qualitative methods, is based on a coding of the text of 56 policy documents (in 1996–2019). It considers how different Arctic actors address issues around the following indicators: human dimension, governance, international cooperation, environmental protection, pollution, climate change, security, safety, economy, tourism, infrastructure, and science & education. The study shows that the most-coded quotes of Arctic States' policy documents relate to Governance, Economy, International Cooperation, Human Dimension, and Environmental Protection included Pollution and Climate Change. Those of Indigenous Peoples Organizations explicitly address issues surrounding Indigenous rights, Governance and 'Traditional knowledge.' The most-quoted indicators of Observer states are Science & Education, International Cooperation and Economy. The overall trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics are: i) Ambivalence of Arctic development, incl. 'political inability,' whenever a balance is sought between environmental protection and economy; ii) The domination of states within the Arctic territory due to geopolitical stability and sovereignty vis-à-vis globalization; iii) Focus on science for problem-solving due to climate change; iv) Close interrelationship between the Arctic and Space (digital security, meteorology) due to globalization and rapidly advancing climate change in the Arctic.

**Keywords:** *policy & strategy, Arctic, state, indigenous people's organization, analysis, trend.*

### Introduction

The first comparative studies and analysis of Arctic strategies were published at the early-2010s: Discussion how cooperation and conflict appear in the Arctic strategies of the five Arctic Ocean littoral states [1, Brosnan J.G., Leschine T.M., Miles E.L.], and the first comprehensive inventory and comparative study on the national policies and strategies of the eight Arctic states, as well as the European Union [2, Heininen L.]. These studies belong to the first focus — inspired by intergovernmental cooperation, governance and institutions, geopolitics, the resource potential — of existing social sciences literature on the Arctic. The second focus is covered by multidisciplinary studies on global-related issues and the globalized Arctic as a part of global dynamics in the environmental, societal, political, and economic spheres (e.g., *Globalization and the Circumpolar North* 2010; *Governing Arctic Change: Global Perspectives* 2016) [3, Heininen L., Southcott C.].

Though there are a couple of brief overviews on the priorities of the strategies of the Arctic Council (AC) Observer states, there have been no in-depth analyses of the national strategies and policies of the Arctic states and the Observer States (as non-Arctic countries). Neither studies and analyses on policies of Arctic Indigenous peoples organizations (as Arctic Council Permanent Participants) and declarations of their conferences, nor the AC Ministerial meeting declarations, nor con-

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\* For citation:

Heininen L. Overview of Arctic Policies and Strategies. *Arktika i Sever* [Arctic and North], 2020, no. 39, pp. 195–202. DOI: 10.37482/issn2221-2698.2020.39.195

nections between national strategies and AC chairmanship programs of the Arctic states between the national strategies and. These various gaps in research related to Arctic governance and politics were seen an opportunity for the Arctic Futures Initiative, a new-generation research project coordinated by International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). Its main aims were to provide a holistic and systematic study & analysis of existing policies and practices, and deliver decision support with options that balance environmental protection, economic prosperity & societal well-being for the rapidly changing Arctic, as well as support public & private policymaking in both Arctic states, among residents & civil societies, and in non-Arctic countries.

The Analysis and Synthesis Reports on Arctic Policies, Strategies & Programs Project (2018–2019) is, and was, the main scientific activity of AFI. As its flagship project it was a comparative, deep, systematic study and analysis of existing policies of the Member States, Observers, Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council (AC), and AC documents, i.e. their priorities and how they are been implemented, as well as Arctic Parliamentarians' declarations, programs of major Arctic forums (e.g. Arctic Circle Assembly). The expectation was to understand first, how perceptions of the Arctic have changed; second, how different actors behave, and define, address, prioritize issues around relevant factors; third, 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 third, based on that determine policy consistency, identify new / emerging trends, and discuss them with narratives and perceptions of Arctic governance & geopolitics. In the background is, first, social relevance of science, and to implement the interplay between science, politics and business.

As the Arctic Futures Initiative was terminated (by the IIASA Directorate) in summer 2019, only the first phase of the aimed project, *Arctic Policies & Strategies – Analysis, Synthesis, and Trends* was managed to be completed. This scientific report was carried out by Prof. Lassi Heininen, Dr. Karen Everett, Dr. Barbora Padrtova and Dr. Anni Reissell. It was co-funded by IIASA and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and supported by Arctic Circle and INAR at University of Helsinki.

### **Methods**

As the primary references 56 policy documents – national policies / strategies, chairmanship programs, declarations – covering the years 1998-2019 were coded and analyzed. They come from the following categories of actors: Arctic States, Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, Arctic Council Observer States, and AC Chairmanship programs & Ministerial declarations. This large number of different source materials have never analyzed before.

In the beginning, relevant variables were selected as indicators (and sub-indicators), altogether the following 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. Then the texts of all these documents were coded according to the indicators (except (Re)defining & (Re)mapping and Implementation) as a quantita-

tive method. Current policy of each actor 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 of the actors in each category compared and discussed with each other. Finally, based on all this, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, new / emerging trends were identified, formalized, and briefly discussed in the context of existing narratives, perceptions, and discourses.

#### Outcomes & Results of the analysis

There are the following relevant and interesting findings of the recent policy documents (adopted in 2009–2013) of the **Arctic States**. They all use the term ‘Arctic’, fragmentation in describing the region, global perspective explicitly in half. As overarching official priorities: Economy / economic development, Environmental protection, International cooperation, Security / Stability — among most-quoted indicators are Governance, Environmental Protection (incl. Pollution and Climate change), Economy, International cooperation, Human Dimension.

The fact that governance and international Arctic cooperation, as well as international treaties (e.g., 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. Private sector explicitly mentioned by all, and government and public sector are depicted as the most important. Human dimension is with 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 rarely mentioned. Although research is emphasized, education is neglected and mostly as attainment for economic reasons. Finally, implementation is explicitly mentioned and planned by all, except Canada.

The policy documents of Arctic Indigenous peoples’ organizations, as **Permanent Participants** of the Arctic Council, are fragmented, as they do not cover all the indicator fields in full detail, as they come from different directions. *Arctic Athabaskan Council’s Arctic Policy* (2017) sets out nine principles of partnership of a new Shared Arctic Leadership Model to provide advice on two important topics: first, “New ambitious conservation goals for the Arctic in the context of sustainable development”, and second, “The social and economic priorities of Arctic leaders and Indigenous peoples living in remote Arctic communities”. The policy priorities of *Inuit Arctic Policy* (2010), supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council 2018 Declaration, are first, health & well-being of the Inuit, in particular their children, and environmental protection; second, governance of their homeland, *Inuit Nunaat* meaning the rights of Inuit to their self-government; third, being active in international cooperation, and being supported by international agreements and organizations (e.g. UNs, AC). Those of the *Sami Arctic Strategy* (2019) are first, “Acting as a robust and reliable partner on Arctic Sami issues”; second, “Ensuring Right to choose”; third, “Addressing climate change and environ-

mental protection”; fourth, “Deploying Sami Indigenous knowledge and science...; and finally, the Saami Council as a partner in policy- and decision-making on Arctic issues.

There is a striking similarity that all policy documents explicitly address issues broadly surrounding Indigenous — individual and collective — rights, although in different contexts on the one hand, and on the other hand, those of governance — both broadly and in detail -, as well as the importance of international cooperation. 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 not explicitly covered by all documents, instead the Saami Strategy has critical comments on *the 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, consciousness, and know what to want and how to accomplish that.

Among the **Observer States** of the Arctic Council there are France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, PRC, ROK, Spain and UK, who have adopted an Arctic policy or strategy (UK has updated its policy, or ‘framework’, the documents of Netherlands and Spain national strategies for the both polar regions). India, Poland, and Switzerland are in a process. As the European Union, though it has adopted a few Arctic policies, is not a permanent observer it was excluded the analysis.

One of the relevant and interesting findings of these nine policies / strategies, which are more current documents (adopted in 2013-2018), is that they all use the term ‘Arctic’ indicating a wish to become Arctic ‘stakeholders’, and though there is fragmentation to include or exclude self-identification toward the Arctic, France, PRC and UK do so. The most-quoted indicators are Science & Education, Environmental protection (incl. Pollution and Climate change), International cooperation & treaties, and Economy. It is more or less according to the official priorities / policy goals of these states’ national policies: Science & Education, incl. research infrastructure (stations & vessels), formal networks (IASC, UArctic), knowledge-creation (e.g. the Italian *Tavolo Artico* group), is emphasized by Netherlands, ROK and Spain; Environmental protection (incl. Pollution and Climate change) by France, Germany, Italy, PRC and UK; and Economic activities by France, PRC, ROK and UK, e.g., France’s Roadmap includes economic opportunities for French companies & emphasize on environmental challenges. Correspondingly, Security, incl. sovereignty and defense, is among the least-quoted issues, though explicitly mentioned by France, Germany, Japan, PRC, and UK.

Concerning the Arctic Council **chairmanship programs** (in 1996-2019) there is a relevant finding that there are no striking similarities in official priorities, which are focusing on the environment, climate, and AC functions. Based on the coding the focus of the programs is on governance, international cooperation, and human dimension (e.g. health, culture). A bit surprisingly there is no formal or public evaluation processes explicitly mentioned.

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

As a summary according to the coding of the policy documents the lists of priorities of the Arctic States, the PPs (Indigenous Peoples), and the Observer States are the following:

Arctic States: Governance; Environmental protection, included Pollution and Climate change; Economic activities; International cooperation; Human dimension;

Permanent Participants: 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; Economic activities.

### *New and emerging trends*

Based on the analysis of the Arctic policies / strategies of Arctic States, Permanent Participants, Observer States, and their priorities lists of new and emerging trends of Arctic governance and geopolitics of the five categories are the following.

Arctic States: State domination, Ambivalence of Arctic development, Focus on science, and Political inability;

Permanent Participants: International treaties on Indigenous rights, Indigenous rights to self-determination and self-government, and focus on science;

Observer States: Arctic stakeholders, Global Arctic, Ambivalence of Arctic development, and Focus on science.

It is needed to note that these are new and/or emerging trends, not current ones. E.g., the high geopolitical stability of the Arctic as the current state of the region (e.g. Heininen 2018) is not included, as it is not a new trend.

Finally, based on these lists there is one more list, new and emerging overall trends. The new and emerging overall trends are the following:

First, an ambivalence of Arctic development, as a balance is being sought between environmental protection & climate change mitigation, and new economic activities ('Political inability');

Second, state domination supported by geopolitical stability & sovereignty vis-à-vis globalization based on international treaties, UNCLOS & maritime law, and UN declarations esp. regarding Indigenous rights & 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 & the Arctic development paradox); and

Fourth, new interrelationship between the Arctic and Space (digital security, meteorology, WMO) due to climate change, globalization, the global economy.

### Conclusions

As critical comments to conclude this overview is that the most-quoted indicators accord with the official priorities / policy goals of the states' and Indigenous peoples organizations' policies. Climate change, as a threat multiplier, is the driver and a uniting and merging factor. There are 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'.

In spite of the focus on science — mostly meaning natural sciences and technology, less so social sciences, as well as scientific and Indigenous knowledge to lean on in tackling climate change, which requires international and global action, there is hesitation and 'political inability' to act. An ability and ethics, based on the tradition of Enlightenment, are however, needed to overcome the ambivalence and find a balance (between economic activities & environmental protection bound with stability), stop the hesitation, move into action and explore practical solutions for solving the wicked problems — governments need an assistance in this.

In maintaining the achieved constructive cooperation and high geopolitical stability, which seems to be resilient, would support the Arctic becoming a 'Best practice' for stability-building in world politics. And this could be a foundation for 'political ability' to make 'paradigm shift' in mind-set as a precondition for problem solving.

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Received on April 03, 2020