Feeling Hot, Hot, Hot: Politics and Transformation in the Global Arctic

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Outline - The Arctic is Hot, Hot, Hot

- Governance and Geopolitics
- Climate Change
- Indigenization
What is the Arctic?

- Both a space (geography) and a place (meaning)
- ‘The Arctic’ is socially constructed
- Many Arctics

- 8 states; 4 million people
- Unique ecosystem
- Complex colonial and imperial histories
- Cold War legacy
- Undergoing rapid transformation
Arctic Governance

- States: among most prosperous in world
  - Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and USA
- Sub-states: e.g. Alaska, Greenland, Nunavut

- Law
  - Domestic (e.g. AWPPA); International (UNCLOS)
- IGOs, regional orgs, alliances, and blocs
  - Arctic Circle Forum, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Barents Regional Council, Nordic Council, Northern Forum, NATO, EU

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Change over 5 years (2014)</th>
<th>Country or Territory</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>Average annual HDI growth (2010-2019)</th>
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The Arctic Council

- Established 1996: Canada played a leading role in its establishment

- First intergovernmental organization to give near equal standing to states and Indigenous peoples
  - 8 Member-States
  - 6 Permanent Participants
  - 6 Working Groups
  - More than 30 Observers
• Growth of Arctic regional agreements
  • 2011 Search and Rescue Agreement
  • 2013 Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response Agreement
  • 2018 Arctic Fisheries Agreement

• Important role for bilateral agreements, too
  • 1988 Canada-US Agreement on the Northwest Passage
  • 2010 Norway-Russia Barents Sea Agreement
  • 2016 Canada-US Arctic Drilling Moratorium
Geopolitics and Conflict

• One terrestrial dispute in entire Arctic
  Hans Island between Canada and Greenland/Denmark

• Maritime boundary disputes
  Arctic states have submitted claims through UNCLOS on their extended continental shelves (200 mile EEZ + "natural prolongation" of seabed)

• Bilateral negotiations
New Challenges

• Growth of interest by non-Arctic states and actors
  • EU, South Korea, Singapore, and India have all sought Observer status on Arctic Council
  • So has China, which has also invested in a new ice breaker, Arctic strategy *(Polar Silk Road)*, polar science and research, and $27bn Yamal natural gas partnership with Russia

• Renewed tensions between Russia and West
  • Resurgent tensions since 2008 due to increased military activities
  • Cooperation has ebbed since annexation of Crimea in 2014, imposition of Western sanctions
  • Increased defence cooperation; questions over expanded NATO role in the Arctic
RUSSIA’S MILITARIZATION OF THE ARCTIC

• In September 2018, Russian military had an exercise called Vostok 2018 involving more than 300,000 personnel in Far North/Far East

Exercise Trident Juncture
• Two week exercise in October 2018 to defend against a “fictitious aggressor” in region between Baltic Sea and Iceland
  • 50,000 troops from 31 NATO and partner countries

Trident Juncture 2018: NATO kicks off largest manoeuvre since Cold War
The drill includes military forces from 31 countries and stretches from the Baltic Sea to Iceland
Climate Change

• Arctic is the “canary in the coalmine” of climate change
• Arctic climate change is exceeding predictions and climate models
  • Changes are occurring sooner and more intensely

• Ongoing catastrophic impacts across Arctic ecosystems, including species migration, extinctions, and systems collapse
- Summer sea ice declining by $\approx 10\%/10$ yrs
- Summer sea has decreased by $\approx 35\%-50\%$
- There will likely be ice-free summers in the Arctic by 2035
• Climate change creates new economic opportunities while harming existing economies and subsistence practices

• Fisheries
• Transpolar shipping
• Destinational tourism
• Mining
• Hydrocarbons

• Traditional Economies
  • Seal hunt
  • Reindeer herding
  • Local/community-based whaling
  • Other subsistence resources
Arctic Fossil Fuels*

- Climate change enabling access to new, offshore fossil fuels
- 13% global undiscovered conventional oil, 30% of natural gas (U.S. Geological Survey 2008)

- Arctic fossil fuels are 50-100% more expensive to extract

- To meet 2°C global warming target in 2015 Paris Agreement “all Arctic [energy] resources should be classified as unburnable” (McGlade and Ekins 2015)
Indigenization

- 400,000 Indigenous people across region
- Dozens of distinct peoples, languages, cultures and histories
- Inhabit 7/8 Arctic states
- Indigenous majority/minority in Greenland, Nunavut, NWT
- Growing Indigenous devolution and self-government
  - Nunavut Land Claim Agreement
  - Norway’s *Finnmark Act*
  - Greenland Self Rule
  - Sámi Parliaments
• Recognition and expansion of the political and constitutional rights of Indigenous peoples
  • Domestically: Expanded constitutional rights; political organizing/activism; land claim agreements; self-governing institutions
  • Regionally: 6 Permanent Participants of Arctic Council; membership in other governance bodies
  • Globally: UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP); ILO Convention 169

• Arctic Indigenous peoples are most empowered IPs in world; ‘rights-holders’ not ‘stake-holders’
Conclusion

• The Arctic is changing in multiple, profound ways
• The Arctic region is at the centre of numerous global issues and areas of public policy that will affect Canada, and the entire world, throughout the 21st century
Thank you!