UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

Doctoral Programme in International Studies
2024

Mario Giagnorio

The Actorness of the European Union in Arctic Policymaking

Doctoral Programme in International Studies

FINAL DISSERTATION

The Actorness of the European Union in Arctic Policymaking

Ph.D. Candidate
Mario Giagnorio
Student number: 219542

Supervisor:
Prof. Anna Casaglia
Co-supervisor:
Prof. Marc Lanteigne

XXXVI Cohort 2020-2023

Thesis submitted to the School of International Studies, University of Trento, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Studies

Cover image generated with *Canva - Generatore Immagini AI*
(https://www.canva.com/it_it/generatore-immagini-ai/)

Contents on this dissertation are licensed under a Creative Common Attribution
Non-Commercial – No Derivatives
4.0 International License, except for the parts already published by other publishers.

University of Trento
School of International Studies
https://www.sis.unitn.it/
via Tommaso Gar, 14 I-38122 Trento
sis@sis.unitn.it

Abstract

No longer a distant frontier, the Arctic has become a space of concerns and opportunities for the people living in the region, as well as for external actors, due to climate change and increasing possibilities to further exploit Arctic resources. The EU is present in the region through its Arctic Council Member States, namely Sweden, Finland, and the Kingdom of Denmark (by virtue of Greenland and the Faroe Islands). However, the EU often appears to struggle to achieve the necessary legitimacy, identity, and strategies to be accepted as a credible Arctic actor.

By combining the international relations theories of constructivism and critical geopolitics, this dissertation investigates the EU's 'actorness', defined as an actor's capacity to imagine its own and others' roles in a policy context. Furthermore, this research proposes a revised use of the concept of actorness as a tool to understand the formulation of foreign policies, rather than their impact or effectiveness. Through extensive document analysis and the conduction of qualitative interviews, this study sheds light on how the actorness of the EU Commission, the EU Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the EU Arctic Member States coherently constructs the EU's capabilities to participate in Arctic governance, highlighting the convergence or divergence of their Arctic policies.

This dissertation's results show that the EU's limited role is coherent with its Arctic Member States' support for intergovernmental governance, and with the contradictory goals that all of them share – such as balance between environmental protection, exploitation of energy resources, and Indigenous Peoples' rights. These

conclusions suggest that Arctic governance is a complex matter for both the EU Institutions and the Arctic Member States, whose primary responsibility for the region's welfare also suffers from fragmented visions of their roles in, and objectives for, the Arctic.

Disclaimer

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted before to any institution for assessment purposes.

Acknowledgments

The doctoral program and this dissertation have provided me with the opportunity not only to deepen my knowledge of the EU, foreign policy, and the Arctic, but also to connect with individuals who have generously dedicated their time and resources to my growth. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Anna Casaglia, and my co-supervisor, Professor Marc Lanteigne, for their unwavering support, invaluable feedback, and patience. I also extend my thanks to the School of International Studies for enabling me to travel and work, as well as to the ARENA Centre for European Studies (University of Oslo) for welcoming me during my research visit. In particular, I am grateful to Professor John Erik Fossum for his supervision during my stay in Oslo. My special thanks go to Professor Francesca Odella and Professor Michele Nicoletti for their support and for giving me the opportunity to work as a tutor for their courses and projects. I am also thankful to Professor Roberto Poli for placing his trust in me. I would also like to thank all the professors from the School of International Studies who have supported me throughout the years.

During my years as a doctoral student, I have been fortunate to meet wonderful friends and companions. I want to thank my colleagues from the School of International Studies and all those who have supported me, regardless of the distance—my childhood and university friends, and the new friends I was lucky to meet along the way. I am deeply grateful to my family and relatives, who have always stood by my side. Their presence made the most challenging days of this journey easier to face and the good days even better. Finally, I would like to thank my mother and my grandmother, to whom I dedicate my efforts and this work.

Table of Contents v

List of Figures and Tables x

Preface: 1
The Actorness of the European Union in Arctic politics

Chapter I
The European Union as an Arctic actor: Theoretical puzzles and political challenges

1.1 The history of the EU's engagement in the Arctic 7

1.2 Revisiting actorness: research questions and hypothesis 12

1.3 The Arctic we (want to) see: actorness and geopolitics 20

1.3.1 Images of the Arctic 22

1.4 Contributions 30

Chapter II
The debate on the EU as an international actor in the Arctic: A constructivist-oriented literature review

2.1 Introduction 33

2.2 The EU's foreign policy in a states' world: a short historical background 35

2.3 The EU's foreign policy and the Arctic context: a constructivist review of realist and liberal theories 38

2.3.1 The EU, realism, and Arctic politics 39

2.3.2 Liberal institutionalism and EU intergovernmentalism in Arctic cooperation	44
2.4 EU actorness studies and the case of the Arctic	48
2.5 Bretherton and Vogler's constructivist path to actorness	55
2.6 Recent developments of Bretherton and Vogler's model of actorness	59
2.6 Conclusions	63

Chapter III
Actorness as Imagination and Capability Construction: Constructivism and Critical Geopolitics in Foreign Policy Analysis

3.1 Introduction	65
3.2 Defining constructivism in eclectic actorness studies	66
3.3 An actor-centred, constructivist definition of actorness	74
3.4 Operationalising actorness from the perspective of actors' imagination	77
3.5 Complementing actorness and foreign policy analysis: the contribution of critical geopolitics	84
3.6 Conclusions	87

Chapter IV
Analysing the EU's Arctic Policy: A Case Study of Role Construction

4.1 Introduction	89

4.2 A case study approach for explaining the EU's Arctic (foreign) policy	91
4.3 Discourse and Thematic Analysis in the EU's foreign policy	97
4.4 Sources and materials: investigating the production and reproduction of roles in policymaking and policy implementation	102
4.4.1 Documents	102
4.4.2 Interviews	104
4.5 Interpretation of narrative data: a matter of consistency	106
4.6 Limitations	107
4.7 Conclusions	110

Chapter V
An Arctic policy in the making:
The European Union and Arctic politics between 2008 and 2015

5.1 Introduction	113
5.2 The Communication on The European Union and the Arctic Region	115
5.2.1 Protecting and preserving the Arctic and its population	115
5.2.2 Promoting sustainable use of resources	117
5.2.3 Contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance	118
5.3 The 'outer' Arctic State: Denmark	120
5.3.1 A peaceful, secure, and safe Arctic	120
5.4 The proactive Arctic actor: Finland	127
5.4.1 The Strategies for the Arctic region	127

5.5 The Arctic awareness of Sweden	131
5.5.1 The Swedish priorities for the Arctic	132
5.6 Towards an Arctic policy for the EU	136
5.8 Conclusions	141

Chapter VI
Constructing roles in a changing Arctic
The EU's policy for the Arctic from 2016 to 2021

6.1 Introduction	143
6.2 An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic	144
6.2.1 Climate Change and Safeguarding the Arctic Environment	144
6.2.2 Sustainable Development in and around the Arctic	148
6.2.3. Supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues	154
6.2.4 The European Parliament's Resolution and the Council's Conclusions on the integrated European Union policy for the Arctic	156
6.3 Sweden's new strategy for the Arctic	161
6.3.1 The international dimension of Arctic governance	161
6.3.2 International security	163
6.3.3 Sweden's environmental priorities	167
6.3.4 Polar research and environmental monitoring	169
6.3.5 Sustainable economic development and business sector interests	170
6.3.6 Ensuring good living conditions	171
6.4 The new Finnish strategy for the Arctic	175

6.4.1 Climate change, mitigation and adaptation	175
6.4.2. Inhabitants, promotion of wellbeing, and the rights of the Sámi as an indigenous people	177
6.4.3 Expertise, livelihoods, and leading-edge research	179
6.4.4 Logistics and infrastructure	181
6.5 A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic: the 2021 update of the EU's Arctic policy	182
6.5.1 Opportunities, concerns and security challenges in the Arctic	183
6.5.2 The novelties 2021 Joint Communication: A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic	186
6.6 Conclusions	191

Chapter VII
Interpreting actorness: The construction of the EU's role in the Arctic

7.1 Introduction	193
7.2 EU actorness in Arctic politics between 2008 and 2015	194
7.2.1 Positioning the EU in an increasing politicised Arctic	195
7.2.2 Different scales of governance: political differentiation in the EU's Arctic sphere of influence	203
7.2.3 Capability: constructing the EU's role in a 'new' Arctic arena	210
7.3 Establishing the EU as an Arctic actor: continuity and discontinuity in the EU's Arctic policy between 2016 and 2021	216
7.3.1 What opportunity for the EU in Arctic politics?	217
7.3.2 Transforming the scale of governance?	222

7.3.3 EU capability in a 'different' Arctic 226

7.4 Evaluating actorness through consistency 232

7.5 Conclusions 237

Conclusions 241

Bibliography 257

Appendix 297

List of Figures and Tables

Table 1.1 The EU's policy for the Arctic Region: a chronological overview 11

Fig. 1.2a The Arctic Region Defined by the Arctic Council Working Groups 13

Fig. 1.2b Map of the Arctic Administrative Areas 16

Fig. 1.3.1.a Bioclimatic subzones of the Arctic territory according to the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group (Arctic Council) 24

Fig. 1.3.1b Permafrost with 10 °C July Isotherm and Sea Ice Extent 27

Fig. 1.3.1.c Claims over the Arctic continental shelf 29

Table 4.3 Discourse and Thematic Analysis 101

Preface

The Actorness of the European Union in Arctic politics

As the global climate changes, politics needs to adapt to the new environment. The Arctic is one of the regions most visibly affected by ongoing environmental transformations, becoming a symbol of the global consequences of the impact of human activities on the planet's climate. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the world, contributing to rising sea levels and increased greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Partially because of this phenomenon, the Arctic has shifted from a peripheral region to an area of economic opportunities, with states, international organisations, and private actors interested in energy resources, but also in the control over strategic sea routes. The Arctic has thus far experienced a period of peaceful cooperation that began at the end of the Cold War, with regional fora such as the Arctic Council promoting research, environmental monitoring, and search and rescue coordination. However, the full Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has drastically altered the relationships between Russia and the other Arctic states – the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Canada, and the United States. The European Union (EU) recognises the various strategic elements on the region, including climate change but also the Arctic as and economic and geopolitical arena. Therefore, the EU aims not to be a passive spectator but to influence the complex governance of the region, which encompasses several states and a wide range of issues.

The EU presents itself as an Arctic actor and geopolitical power (EU Commission 2021), trying to create an Arctic identity beneficial to itself but also

accepted by Arctic and non-Arctic actors. Yet, International Relations (IR) scholars might not agree on what being an actor means, both in ontological (what is an actor?) and evaluative (how to study an actor?) terms. Traditionally, IR scholars have focused more on systemic analyses, where the structure of the international community – represented by power relations built upon material and ideological factors – explains the actors' behaviour. Within systemic analyses, IR scholars explain actors' behaviour, success, and failures with reference to the distribution of capabilities and actors' compliance with the established order of the international community.

However, as will become clearer in the following chapters, the study of foreign policies' effectiveness presents theoretical and methodological problems. The explanatory and predictive powers of systemic analyses are limited by elements such as multi-causality, or simply by the unintended consequences of (hopefully rational) actions. In the chaotic world of international politics, what is visible and investigable is actors' behaviour, how they justify it, and how they evaluate the course of their policies – not the structure of the international community. These considerations lead to a focus on policymaking and the actors' cognition, rather than on the international system.

Within the domain of IR, theorists have often traditionally studied international affairs from a state-centric approach, placing them to the core of theories, models, and analyses – not without contestations. State-centric IR theorists justified their choice because only states wield the sovereign power necessary to produce foreign policies, which are assumed to be reproduced within international and non-state organisations (as far as great powers are concerned). At first glance, the legal structure of the EU might endorse such an assumption, since the EU's foreign policy has remained intergovernmental – and the EU's Arctic policy falls under the EU's foreign policy.

Yet, IR scholars have also started to acknowledge that international organisations can influence power over states' decision-making processes and their behaviour, by virtue of their resources as well as on the grounds of their own values. Indeed, the EU can influence the course of Arctic politics through its Cohesion Policy, which concerns regional development, and frameworks such as the Northern Dimension policy, which promotes international cooperation in areas that go beyond traditional foreign policies such as military security. Starting from this perspective, the question to answer is not whether the EU is an international actor or not – at least, not anymore – but what the EU institutions and the Arctic member states (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) expect the EU to do in the Arctic, and at what level Arctic governance should take place – local, state, EU, or regional.

It is difficult to identify what 'goods' the EU is seeking in the Arctic, and what 'goods' it can provide which others cannot. Perhaps the question should be reframed to focus first on what the Arctic means to the EU, and only then on what the EU aspires to achieve in the region. Consequently, this dissertation centres on investigating the EU's actorness, rather than its capacity to pursue effective policies – being effectiveness the result of the interaction between actors and their environment, more than a property of policymaking *per se* (Klose 2018). In the context of this research, actorness indicates the actor's capacity to imagine its own and others' roles in managing political issues. In the specific case of the EU, investigating actorness means not only to understand how the EU institutions (the Commission, the Parliament, or the Council) constructs its role and aspirations, but also if other institutions and Member States ascribe to the EU a similar or different role. Accordingly, the study of actorness addresses the main problem of the EU's foreign policy, i.e. if and how the EU can speak as a "single voice" (Macaj and Nicolaïdis 2014) despite its shortcomings

and structural difficulties – an issue also examined by other IR and EU integration theories.

This dissertation aims to contribute to IR and Arctic studies in two ways. First, it conceptualises actorness as a tool for foreign policy analysis – most suitable in interpretivist IR studies – where the study of actors' views, values, and identities is placed at the centre of the investigation. As a concept, actorness was traditionally linked to the construction of actors' capabilities, as well as to the impact they have on other actors' behaviours. By drawing from IR constructivist theories, this dissertation strengthens the application of actorness to foreign policy analysis and actor-centred IR studies. Second, this research aims to integrate the different readings of the EU's behaviour as an Arctic actor. Like the concept of actorness, the study of the EU's Arctic policy has often been conducted through similar but theoretically fragmented perspectives – arguably, the theoretical and methodological issues concerning actorness studies have hindered the possibility of integrating the different approaches to the EU's actorness in general, and to the EU's Arctic policy in particular.

This dissertation integrates different approaches to actorness by highlighting their shared theoretical homogeneity, particularly the constructivist and interpretivist ontology that underpins both actorness studies and the literature about the EU's Arctic policy. The results show that, through theoretical criticism, it is possible to formulate a concept and model of actorness that overcomes significant weaknesses in actorness studies: namely, theoretical and empirical fragmentation, and disengagement with IR theories. This issue is particularly relevant for EU studies, where scholars have often embraced the rhetoric of the EU's sui generis nature to circumvent theoretical problems and comparisons with other political entities. The trade-off, however, is the emphasis placed on actors at the expense of systemic analyses. To further strengthen

the chosen actor-centred approach, this dissertation draws from Critical Geopolitics, which focuses on how actors construct their relationship with their environment and understand the environment itself, thereby justifying their aspirations, goals, and roles.

Focusing on foreign policy analyses, this research goes beyond the view of states and political entities as 'black boxes,' a perspective usually adopted in systemic, deterministic IR studies. By combining the views of the EU institutions, the Arctic member states, and local actors (cities, involved in the EU's policies), this dissertation aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how the relationships between these actors impact the actorness of the EU as a whole. Through the analysis of documents and interviews, the dissertation provides a historically informed picture of how the EU's actors have interacted, what they have aimed to pursue, and why Arctic policies present constitutive obstacles to integration and effectiveness at both the state and EU levels.

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters which can be grouped into two main parts. The first chapter introduces the readers to the background against which the EU has started to formulate its own policy for the Arctic, the meaning and contribution of critical geopolitics to understanding Arctic politics, and the research question and hypothesis that this dissertation answers. The second chapter offers an extensive literature review of IR theories, actorness studies, and how they combine into the study of Arctic politics. The third chapter presents the core of the research, i.e. the revision of the concept of actorness from an explicit, actor-centred constructivist perspective; it also provides a detailed explanation of otherwise ambiguous concepts, such as imagination. The fourth chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the investigation, and the benefits and limits of the chosen approach to study actorness and the EU's Arctic policy – the case study.

As far as applying the concept of actorness is concerned, the fifth and sixth chapters focus on the two main periods of the EU's Arctic policy, the time between 2008 and 2015, and between 2016 and 2021 respectively. This division not only enables in-depth studies, but also comparisons between periods when the EU's Arctic actors have developed, changed, and deepened the understanding of their roles in the region – highlighting the common denominator of actors' cognition, worldviews, and agency, as shown in the seventh chapter. The final section concludes the dissertation with more articulated considerations about the results of the research, how actor-centred constructivism strengthens actorness studies, and how actorness can better contribute to IR studies as a tool for foreign policy analysis.

Chapter I

The European Union as an Arctic actor:

Theoretical puzzles and political challenges

1.1 The history of the EU's engagement in the Arctic

This dissertation investigates how the EU has constructed its policy for the Arctic region, a region that "has not achieved a prominent place on the EU's both domestic and foreign policy table over the last two decades" (Raspotnik and Stępień 2020, 138), despite the transformation of the Arctic from a peripheral region to an area of economic opportunities and environmental concerns. By studying the construction of the EU's policy for the Arctic, this thesis deepens the knowledge about the EU's construction of its role in the region as an Arctic actor, and why the policy for the Arctic seems to be secondary. This chapter provides a historical overview of the EU's policy for the Arctic, and it illustrates the complex characteristics of the region though geopolitics. Most importantly, the chapter sets the rationale for the investigation and highlights the research gaps that this dissertation aims to fill.

As Andreas Raspotnik and Adam Stępień observe, the EU and many of its Member States have a considerable history in the Arctic, which covers a period longer than twenty years – even with reference to the date of their article. The EU started its engagement in the Arctic region between the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the EU and the Arctic countries initiated a process of cooperation meant to reduce the tensions that characterised the region during Cold War. In 1993, the European Arctic States and

the European Commission began to cooperate in the Barents region, establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (intergovernmental) and the Barents Regional Council (regional). In the same year, the European Parliament also became a member of the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians (CPAR), whose Standing Committee promoted the formation of the Arctic Council, established in 1996 and which has been the main forum for Arctic politics up to now. The Arctic Council enabled cooperation and coordination among the Arctic countries – Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.

Despite its intergovernmental structure, the Arctic Council is open to cooperation with non-state actors, particularly the Arctic Indigenous Peoples. The Arctic Council has welcomed non-Arctic states as observers (such as Italy, Germany, and South Korea among others) and, with regards to the EU, the Arctic States adopted the 2002 Barrow Declaration, which reads: "[The Arctic Council n]ote[s] with appreciation the interest of the European Union in activities of the Arctic Council and look forward to cooperating with the European Commission on matters related to the Arctic and the European Union's Northern Dimension" (Arctic Council 2002, p. 8). By the end of the decade, and more precisely in 2008, the EU released its first Communication about the Arctic region. Scholars and researchers consider 2008 as the watershed of the EU's engagement in the Arctic, since "it was not until the commission's communication on 'The European Union and the Arctic region' that the contours of systematic and coordinated strategy on the Arctic started to emerge" (Weber and Romanyshyn 2011, 852).

Against the expectations of the early years of Arctic cooperation, the EU Institutions and the Arctic States started to show different ideas about regulating activities in the region of the region. For example, the Arctic States became sceptical

about the EU's role in the region after the European Parliament's proposal for an Arctic Treaty, or the EU 2009 regulation on seal products. Canada and Russia rejected the EU's application, but Canada stopped vetoing the application after the World Trade Organisation's ruling in the case back in 2014 and after the completion of the EU-Canada Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement (Garcés de Los Fayos 2015). However, Russia stopped the application in response to the EU's sanctions adopted after Russia invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula, further delaying the approval – since unanimity is necessary for applications.

It must be noticed that the EU has acted as an *ad hoc* observer for the Arctic Council in several occasions over the years, which resulted in a close cooperation with, and participation in, the activities of the Working Groups. The deterioration of the EU-Russia relations and the outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine have made the EU's accession impossible for the next years – as well as the accession of new states as observers. It is not sure when, how, or if the Arctic States will overcome the impasse within the Arctic Council, given the impossibility to predict how long the war will last and what the relations between the North-Atlantic cluster and Russia will look like in the aftermath.

In 2012, the EU released a second Communication "[setting] out the case for increased EU engagement in Arctic issues" (EC 2012, 2). At the same time, the EU's Arctic Member States did not remain passive. Njord Wegge stressed the role played by the Swedish Council presidency in defining the role of the EU for the region, in accordance with the Arctic Council and its interest in preserving the main role of the Arctic States (Wegge 2012, 22-8). At the same time, other scholars have also noticed that the EU Arctic Member States "kept the EU at arm's length in all discussions," (Pieper *et al.* 2011, 241) in the early stages of the EU's involvement in the region.

Matters slightly changed after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which led the Member States (and not only the Arctic ones) to support the development of a common strategy for the Arctic (Riddervold and Mai'a 2019, 56).

Yet, this close cooperation did not solve another problematic feature of the EU's policy for the region, i.e. its fragmentation. Indeed, in 2016, The European Commission released a third communication promising *An Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic*[1]. However, scholars noted that the EU's policy might be more integrated than the previous one only from a supranational perspective: little attention was paid to the Arctic policies and initiatives of the Member States, including the non-Arctic ones,[2] (Stępień and Raspotnik 2016, 443). By the end of 2021, the Commission published the latest communication aiming to strengthen the EU's external diplomacy in the Arctic, marking a new step towards its Arctic actorness with more divisive, ambitious goals – such as the suspension of extractive activities in the Arctic. Such a choice indicates contradictions, explained in the following chapters, as well as divisions among the Arctic States: Norway has always opposed any action aiming to limit or stop extractive activities, while Finland backed the EU's position in its 2021 strategy for the Arctic. Nevertheless, problem of the EU's fragmented, ambiguous policy for the Arctic region remains. As Andreas Raspotnik and Adam Stępień observe, "no single Arctic strategy has been developed that would

[1] The problem of fragmented policies was not new. In 2007, the European Commission released a Communication about an Integrated Maritime Policy. In the document, the Commission mentioned the Arctic just to remark on the extension of Europe's coastline, and to foreshadow the release of the Commission's report on the Arctic Ocean. However, the Staff Working Document anticipated more information about the Commission's vision for the Arctic. More specifically, the document reads that "[t]he diversity of the issues raised relating to the Arctic Ocean make [sic] requires an integrated, cross-sectoral approach for the report" (Commission Staff 2007b, §7.3).

[2] Indeed, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the Netherlands have also produced their own strategies for the Arctic, being they also observers at the Arctic Council. The Czech Republic, Estonia, and Ireland had also applied for the observer status – but any decision has been delayed after the pause of the Arctic Council and the suspension of the cooperation with Russia, whose approval is necessary for the success of the application.

comprehensively guide EU Arctic action in all regionally relevant sectors and boost regional awareness in the centres of European power," (Raspotnik and Stępień 2020, 140), even after the 2021 Communication.

Table 1.1 **The EU's policy for the Arctic Region: a chronological overview**

EU Institution	**Document and date of release**
European Parliament	Resolution on Arctic Governance (2008)
European Commission	Communication on The European Union and the Arctic Region (2008)
Council of the European Union	Conclusions on Arctic Issues (2009)
European Parliament	Resolution on A Sustainable EU Policy for the High North (2011)
European Commission and High Representative of the EU	Joint Communication on Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: Progress since 2008 and Next Steps (2012)
European Parliament	Resolution on the EU strategy for the Arctic (2014)
Council of the European Union	Conclusions on Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region (2014)
European Commission and High Representative of the EU	Joint Communication on An Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic (2016)
Council of the European Union	Conclusions on the Arctic (2016)
European Parliament	Resolution on An Integrated EU Policy for the Arctic (2017)
Council of the European Union	Conclusion on the EU Arctic policy (2019)
European Parliament	Resolution on the Arctic: opportunities, concerns and security challenges (2021)
European Commission and High Representative of the EU	Joint Communication on A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic (2021)

1.2 Revisiting actorness: research questions and hypothesis

Through the lens of actorness, this dissertation examines whether the EU institutions and its Arctic Member States share a common understanding of the EU's role in the region or not, through the analysis of their policies and strategies for the Arctic. Then, it investigates how the ideas about the EU's role have shaped the EU's policy for the Arctic. While the EU is considered to be an Arctic actor through geographical position and political influence, less attention has been paid to the essential traits of actors, i.e. their agency. By doing so, this dissertation sheds light on the EU's actorness, meaning the "entity's capacity to imagine and realise roles for its sense of 'self' in (specific contexts of) international affairs" (Klose 2018, 1148). The assumption underpinning this research rests in the tradition of foreign policy analysis, which builds upon the idea that everything "that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in *human decision makers acting singly or in groups*" (Hudson 2005, 1). Consequently, investigating the views of the EU institutions and the Arctic Member States is necessary to identify the causes behind the alleged weakness and marginality of the EU's policy for the Arctic region.

Usually, scholars have described 'actorness' as the expression of those features that lend the status of actor to an entity (Drieskens 2017, 1537). Such a definition is far from being exhaustive, since it depends on the very idea of political actors and theoretical frameworks that researchers adopt – as shown in the second chapter. Actorness has usually been defined in one of four ways: *presence*, which is understood as how the actor is perceived by third parties; *coherence*, which involves values, procedures and outcomes; *consistency* among policies; or *capability*, which focuses on the actor's instruments to purse objectives (Rhinard and Sjöstedt 2019, 7). Most of these criteria are present in the concept of actorness proposed by Bretherton and

Vogler, which they develop in their monograph *The European Union as a global actor* (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 2006) and through their studies of EU external policies (Bretherton and Vogler 2013).

Fig. 1.2a **The Arctic Region Defined by the Arctic Council Working Groups**

Source: Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

However, as observed by Drieskens (2017), actorness studies have lacked theoretical unity and produced fragmented research agendas and findings, and studies about the EU as an arctic actor are not an exception, as detailed in the review of the literature. Scholars also disagree on the problems affecting actorness studies. Some argue that further research is needed with regards to empirical applications of the concept. Scholars have called for a "more (systematic) analysis of actorness itself [since] it remains empirically underexplored" (Niemann and Bretherton 2013, 264). At the same time, others observe that studies on actorness "seem principally driven by empirics rather than theory. As a result, some kind of cottage industry has flourished around actorness, generating a multitude and variety of criteria and frameworks" (Drieskens 2017, 1537). This study of the EU's actorness in Arctic politics aims to combine both theoretical developments and direct application of the concept of actorness.

This dissertation will adopt, and further develop, Bretherton and Vogler's model, being the one that better lends itself to actor-centred studies of foreign policies on the ground of its constructivist theoretical underpinning. Bretherton and Vogler articulate their conceptualization according to a threefold scheme: opportunity, presence, and capability. Opportunity is related to the external environment and its role in constraining or enabling the pursuit of goals in relation to third parties' expectations. Presence means the ability to exert influence in the external environment, unintentionally (as the result of being). Finally, capability consists in the ability to capitalize on presence or respond to opportunity, and it is defined as the internal dimension of external actions (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 5; 2006, 24-9). However, the two authors never explain what actorness is besides the combination of the three cornerstones, which they never employ analytically or systematically (Wolf 2008,

213). If so, actorness might be equated to capability. Considering their understanding of capability, an analytical model of EU actorness should appear as follows:

> EU actorness, represented by its capability, depends on how it capitalises on:
>
> (a) opportunity
>
> (b) presence

In order to employ the concept of actorness in a more analytical and complete fashion, I consider actorness as a manifestation of agency rather than one of the cornerstones. I start from Stephan Klose's aforementioned definition of actorness as "an entity's capacity to imagine and realise roles for its sense of 'self' in (specific contexts of) international affairs", a capacity that hinges upon internal and external sets of expectations about roles, creative actions, social and material resources (Klose 2018, 1148). Then, I consider Bretherton and Vogler's definition of capability as the actor's ability to capitalise on presence or respond to opportunity. Consequently, the model changes into the following:

> EU collective actorness, i.e. its capacity to imagine and realise roles for itself manifested through its capability, depends on:
>
> (a) opportunity
>
> (b) presence

According to Bretherton and Vogler and Klose's definitions, capability is the only subjective element referring to the actor considered or studied. The concept of opportunity in particular is structuralist in nature, assuming the international system to be the independent variable explaining the EU's behaviour in international politics. The concept of presence has been interpreted from a legalistic and bureaucratic

perspective. This mixture of structuralist and actor-centred can be explained in the light of the debate within constructivist schools that dominated the field when Bretherton and Vogler published their work, as explained in the second and third chapters. However, I argue that their attempt to create an over-comprehensive model stretching from structural and agent-based theories makes it difficult to apply in analytical fashion, as well as being the result of theoretical ambiguity – as illustrated in the next chapters.

Fig. 1.2b: **Map of the Arctic Administrative Areas. Arctic Centre, University of Lapland**.

Credit for the border data: Runfola D, Anderson A, Baier H, Crittenden M, Dowker E, Fuhrig S, et al. (2020) geoBoundaries: A global database of political administrative boundaries. PLoS ONE 15(4): e0231866. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0231866

To make the model better suited for foreign policy analysis, I propose to make the other two cornerstones as subjective as capability is, to show how actors can capitalise on opportunity and presence in a theoretically consistent fashion, highlighting the role of agency in the analysis of the EU's policy for the Arctic. To make opportunity and presence more actor-centred and related to the chosen actor, this dissertation combines them with concepts borrowed from critical geopolitics, i.e. positioning and scale respectively. As further deepened in the dedicated theoretical chapter, the act of positioning reveals the actor's perception of its role in each area or issue. In other words, positioning shows how actors construct their opportunity to act, and how their positioning might collide with other actor's positions. The concept of scale is linked to presence, since actors exist within networks and decision-making systems that assign decision-making powers to specific actors, or at specific levels – systems that can change, but that are also resistant to change. The concept of scale therefore refers to the level of decision-making where actors can, or aspire to, construct their policies. In the case of the EU and its Member States, scale is defined or influenced by the EU's multilevel governance system.

Therefore, the model of actorness I propose becomes as follows:

> EU collective actorness, i.e. its capacity to imagine and realise roles for itself manifested through its capability, depends on the convergence of the EU's institutions and Member States' views of:
> (a) opportunity, which the EU actors' construct through their positioning;
> (b) presence, which the EU actors' shape through their view of the appropriate scale of governance.

By adopting Klose's definition of actorness, it is possible to better integrate the constructivist concept of identity into the model. Indeed, Bretherton and Vogler build their study upon identity, defined by "shared understandings about the nature of an entity" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 39); here, identity becomes part of the definition of actorness itself, in the form of imagined roles for the EU. Consequently, this dissertation establishes a relationship between actorness (imagination and role-making) and how actors display actorness in relation to their opportunity (external context) and presence (legal structure and competences) while constructing their capability. My study on EU actorness contributes to theoretical unity and empirical accumulation of knowledge about the EU's foreign policy, addressing the criticism raised by Drieskens on the one hand, and Niemann and Bretherton on the other.

After theory, comes the hypothesis, which stems from Klose's definition of actorness. By starting from actorness as a process in which roles are constructed, I search for shared understandings between the EU institutions and the three Arctic Member States that should lead to a more coherent (or integrated) formulation of the EU's goals for the Arctic. This hypothesis is also grounded in the summary of the political context of the Arctic presented before (Section 1.1), where it appears that the EU has suffered from lack of knowledge of the region and would have benefited from closer cooperation with its Arctic Member States. Accordingly, the lower status of the EU's policy for the Arctic and its fragmentation should either represent:

- *H1*: convergence of ideas (positioning, scale) leading to coherent views of the EU's role in the Arctic;
- *H2*: fragmentation of ideas (positioning, scale) leading incoherent views of the EU's role in the Arctic.

If the first hypothesis is confirmed, the EU's policy for the Arctic would result to be in step with the EU's aspirations for the region, aspirations that gather the views of the EU's institutions and Arctic Member States. On the other hand, if the second hypothesis is confirmed, the absence of a shared understanding of the EU's role in the Arctic would explain why the EU's policy for the Arctic has not achieved a prominent place on the EU's policy table as lack of consistency and coherence among the EU's actors. In this case, there should be a neat and clear distinction between the EU's interests and the Arctic Member States', with the EU being limited to secondary policies

There are also limitations to consider. This dissertation focuses on the relationship between the EU Institutions and the Arctic Member States, which are the primary actors in the region according to the EU's documents and the established Arctic organisations. By doing so, my research narrows the focus on the EU's creation of its role to the detriment of the other Member States who have developed strategies for the Arctic region and that are observers at the Arctic Council – for example, Poland, Spain, France, Germany, and Italy. On the one hand, the study includes the Conclusions released by the Council of the European Union, which includes the ministers of all the Member States: from this angle, the voices of the EU's non-Arctic Member States can be considered included, even though they are not studied in their peculiarity. The role of non-Arctic Member States deserves attention and represents future venues for new research about actorness, but Denmark, Sweden, and Finland represent the focus of this study – surely limited but privileging an approach akin to area studies.

Indeed, the geographical dimension not only can complement actorness studies, but it is also a key component of Arctic social and political studies. This study

aims to provide detailed knowledge about a specific European region and its policies. The choice to focus on the EU Institutions on the one hand, and Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, was also due to the structure of Arctic politics and organisations, particularly the Arctic Council, where the three EU Arctic Member States play a major role that the EU acknowledges. Indeed, they are the ones that have the primary responsibility for the Arctic, and their Arctic policies and territories can be directly affected by the EU's policies and strategies. Therefore, this dissertation provides an in-depth study of the relationship between the EU and this specific cluster of its Member States, which are the ones that links the EU to the Arctic region.

1.3 The Arctic we (want to) see: actorness and geopolitics

The previous section has introduced the concept of actorness, enriched by geopolitical concepts to improve the focus on subjectivity and agency. This section shows why the combination of actorness and geopolitics is necessary to better investigate the making of the EU's foreign policy, especially in the case of the Arctic. To begin with, geopolitics is particularly relevant for the current European Commission[3] and its Communications about the Arctic, where terms such as 'geopolitical power', 'geopolitical competition', 'geopolitical landscape' have become increasingly present – mostly in the 2021 Communication. Yet, there a difference between how the EU Institutions employ the term geopolitics and the geopolitical approach adopted for the analysis.

[3] Indeed, the Von der Leyen Commission began its term by presenting itself as a "geopolitical Commission" (Von der Leyen 2019a), whereas Jean-Claude Juncker had previously characterised his Commission as 'political' (Keating 2021).

Geopolitics is a broad discipline that came to light with two purposes, i.e. "defining and defending European state territoriality" (Cowen and Smith 2009, 25). Geopolitics may also "attempt to trace the casual connections between the conditions which are naturally provided and social practices and customs, as well as the method of securing a livelihood" (Hagan 1942, 478). Traditionally, geopolitics been employed normatively or predictively, i.e., as a scientific tool to formulate a set of prescriptions – an attitude indeed closer to power politics (Østerud 1988, 191-2). Generally, the EU and its policymakers understand geopolitics as expressions of power meant to influence the behaviour of rivals in a hostile international community (Gstöhl 2020, 1), and as the preference for structural and systemic approaches over actor-centred ones (Valenza 2021, 2). Geography is a central component of the EU integration processes, since the accession of Members re-shape the EU's extension and sphere of influence, and its foreign policy.

From this perspective, the EU seems more concerned with geopolitical order rather than geopolitical discourse. Such a view of geopolitics is closer to International Politics, the other subfield of IR, rather than Foreign Policy Analysis.[4] However, the nuanced relationship between power and geography can be better highlighted by the study of foreign policy through critical lens. Scholars of geopolitics have indeed moved beyond materialism and determinism, investigating how political actors construct their relationships with the space they occupy and how these relationships are reproduced through systems of meaning – geopolitical discourse. This approach

[4] Yet, the concept of 'power' is not in contrast with the constructivist approach of here adopted, even though power is usually considered to be central to realism and to 'realistic views' of the world, in opposition to those which aim to change it. The current High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy explicitly stated that "Europeans are beginning to realise that we have to learn to talk the *language of power* if we want to be able to take our destiny in our hands" (EEAS 2020; emphasis added). However, to put in Carl Schmitt's terms, power is a concept central to politics as such: what changes is how scholars study it.

constitutes the critical version of geopolitics, which Pami Aalto (2002, 150) defines as "the construction of political spaces and especially the symbolic and material (territorial) boundaries delimiting them." A critical understanding of geopolitics is crucial in Arctic political discourse, since different constructions of the region imply different sources of political legitimacy.

The EU is a primary example, in the case of the Arctic. The EU can construct its proximity to other states and region through shared values, regardless of their physical proximity – or vice versa. Or, the EU can adopt policies that aim to address the (assumed) specificity of the regions they target (Nitoiu and Sus 2018, 2-3). The relation between the EU and the Arctic is defined by geographical proximity and principles about peaceful cooperation and environmental protection, principles shared with the other Arctic States. Yet, the EU has been depicted as an external actor in need to be socialised to the 'Arctic norms', be they rules either about cooperation (as for the controversial proposal about a treaty for the Arctic), or about animal welfare or extractive activities in the region. The structure of the EU can also be problematic, if cooperation needs to be maintained at the intergovernmental level. The exclusionary or hostile discourses about the EU, as seen in the dedicated chapters, show that geopolitical discourse is key to understanding political hegemony in the region and ordering practices (see Dalby and Ó Tuathail 1998) in the forms of institutions and regimes shaping Arctic politics and cooperation.

1.3.1 Images of the Arctic

The borders of the Arctic are constantly constructed – as is any other border – but the Arctic clearly shows the interplay between nature and politics. In the 2008 MEMO/08/726, the European Commission used the term 'Arctic' to refer to the areas

north of the Arctic Circle,[5] comprising both land and maritime territories – the Arctic Ocean in particular – belonging to Denmark (through Greenland), Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway, Russia, the US and Canada" (European Commission 2008). The Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland (Finland) also enlists climatic, geographical, land, maritime, as well as cultural and political definitions for the region.[6] Following latitude, the Arctic Centre presents three criteria to set the borders of the region: the areas where the monthly average temperature does not exceed +10°C throughout the year; the tree-line, i.e. the areas where the coniferous forests leave the floor to tundra and glaciers; and the permafrost line, which is uneven and also likely to change as the average global temperature rises.[7] However, the Arctic borders

---

[5] The Arctic Circle is set at latitude 66 ° 33'N and it "delimits the Arctic in terms of solar radiation", meaning that above the Circle there should be areas where there should be "at least one day without daylight in the winter and at least one nightless night in the summer (The Arctic Centre, "What and Where is the Arctic?", https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion, last retrieved on 19th December 2022).
On the same page, the Arctic Centre specifies that the phenomena of the 'darkest day and brightest night' do not occur in all the areas above the Arctic Circle, "because the surface of the earth is uneven, and the light refracts in the atmosphere". Therefore, against what is popularly believed, the Arctic Circle does not coincide with the areas where the Polar Day and the Polar Night occur.
As clarified by Chris Burn (1995), if the Arctic Circle coincided with the borders of Polar Day and Night, it would be set at 84° 33' North. There is no land at that latitude, therefore human activity is not affected by long-lasting days and nights. Below those coordinates, people experience long-lasting twilight.

[5] Physical delimitations are not enough to unify the borders Arctic. Unlike the EU and other countries, the Canadian government has set its Southern border of the Arctic at 60° latitudes, as displayed in the 2004 Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) and by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Oslo and Helsinki are situated roughly at the same latitude, but they are not necessarily perceived as Arctic cities.
However, the Finnish government has presented Finland as an Arctic country in the latest version of its own strategy for the region – even though Northern Finland is a subarctic region, as the Arctic Centre of Lapland reports from a scientific perspective (The Arctic Centre, "Multi-coloured Arctic", https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion, last retrieved on 19th December 2022).

[6] The Arctic Centre, "What and Where is the Arctic?", https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion, last retrieved on 31st January 2024.

[7] The risks associated with permafrost thaw includes environmental hazards and damages to infrastructures. In 2020, a fuel tank in Norilsk (Russia) collapsed and spilled circa 21,000 cubic metres of fuel (diesel) into the soil and surrounding rivers, and investigations seem to converge towards a single cause – melting permafrost (Shapovalova, 2020: "Oil Spill in Siberia: Are We Prepared for Permafrost Thaw?", https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/oil-spill-siberia-prepared-permafrost-thaw/, last retrieved on 19th December 2022).
In 2022, as The Barents Observer reports, Nornickel (the mining company that owned the tank) declared that the operations to clean rivers and lakes were "satisfactory", while environmental activists recorded

defined by these criteria are already changing, since global warming alters global temperatures and trends. The borders of the Arctic region might become more political and less attached to what we now consider to be characteristic of the region.

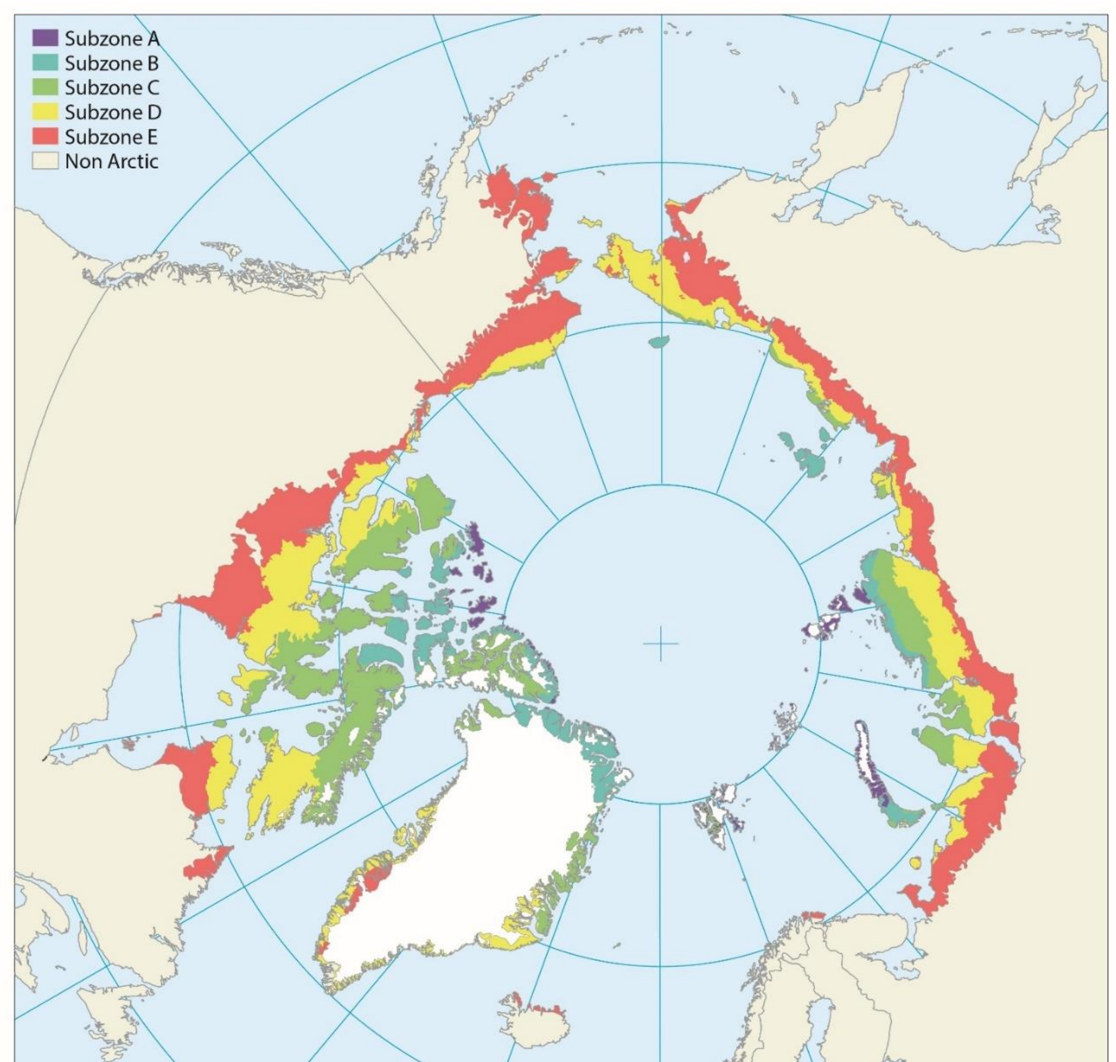


Fig. 1.3.1a **Bioclimatic subzones of the Arctic territory according to the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group (Arctic Council)**

Source: owned by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group. Published in the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, Chapter 9 (2013)

a video showing the presence of oil in the water (Staalesen, A. 2022: "Two years after huge Arctic spill, river water in Norilsk is still red from diesel fuel" https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/2022/06/two-years-after-huge-arctic-spill-river-water-norilsk-still-red-diesel-fuel, last retrieved on 19th December 2022).

A natural element that has strong political relevance is the Arctic Ocean, which has long dominated the imaginary of a region often described as "an ocean surrounded by continents" (Byers 2014, 112). From a 'naturalistic' perspective, the Arctic Centre illustrates the criteria to determine the 'Arcticness' of sea areas through their ice cover. However, this criterion also suffers from climate change[8]. In the case of the Arctic Ocean, the political aspects are even more crucial, since defining maritime borders and their extensions is central to the interests of the Arctic coastal / littoral states (Denmark, Canada, Norway, Russia, and the United States), due to the implications for control over sovereign waters and natural resources.

The borders of the Arctic Ocean have been sources of tension that marked "[t]he return of a geopolitical Arctic" (Raspotnik and Stępień 2020, 133), as it will be better discussed in the fifth and sixth chapters. In 2007, Russia planted a flag on the Arctic seabed, raising concerns among other Arctic states, and especially Canada, which had already noted the incremental militarisation of the Russian Arctic coasts. This act was largely seen as symbolic support for Russia's claim that its Northern continental shelf extended to the North Pole, asserting ownership over the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges. In the same years, tensions with Russia extended also to fisheries, with Russian and Norwegian fishing vessels clashing in the then-disputed areas of the Barents Sea (Piskunova 2010, 851). Despite the political concerns about security in the region, the disputes were managed through the legal framework of the

[8] In November 2022, the National Snow and Ice Data Centre reported that the average Arctic Sea ice extent was 9.71 million square kilometres, which is "the eighth lowest in the satellite record for the month" (https://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/2022/). According to the Centre, the ice extent in the Barents Sea remained below average, in step with a steady decline of 4.8% per decade from 1979 to 2022. Because of global warming, these 'scientific borders' of the Arctic will change soon, leaving more room for cultural and political definitions of the region.

United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea, or even solved through legal means – as in the case of the Barents Sea Treaty, which Russia and Norway signed in 2010.

The Arctic lands have also gained more importance, challenging the image of the Arctic as a maritime frontier and offering the one of the Arctic as a space to inhabit and develop. With regards to the EU, the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) are a clear example of the second image. The NSPA regions include the Swedish counties of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen, and Västernorrland, and the north-eastern Finnish regions of Lapland, Oulu, Central Ostrobothnia, Kainuu, North Karelia, Etelä-Savo, and Pohjois-Savo. Once a peripheral area, the NSPA has increased in importance as the EU and the Arctic Member States have paid increased attention to the region from a 'low-politics' perspective, which focuses on social welfare, economic and infrastructural development, and cross-border cooperation.

With regards to the Indigenous communities, they also shape the Arctic region and its borders. According to the criteria enlisted by the Arctic Centre, the cultural borders of the region are set by the presence of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples, who have subjected to the colonisation of the Arctic countries. As far as the focus of this dissertation is concerned, the Sámi and Greenland's Inuit populations are extremely relevant. The Sámi inhabit the European Arctic along Northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and Russia; Inuit constitute the 88% of Greenland's population – roughly 56,000 inhabitants. In total, the Indigenous Peoples represent roughly the ten percent of the whole Arctic population, which amounts to approximately four million people. They are present in seven of the eight Arctic States – Iceland being the only exception. However, censuses are not accurate because of the varying definitions of who can be considered an Indigenous person, as I will illustrate in the case of Finland.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic have long contested the borders created as the result of colonisation. The Sámi have also continuously declared that they constitute one people whose unity should not be obstacles by state borders. In the 2022 Váhtjer (or Gällivare, in Swedish) Declaration, the representatives of the Sámi people stressed how the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of borders impacted their societies. With reference to borders, the Sámi Council therefore declared that they must "ensure that the borders will never be closed to the Saami again," (The Sámi Council, 2022).

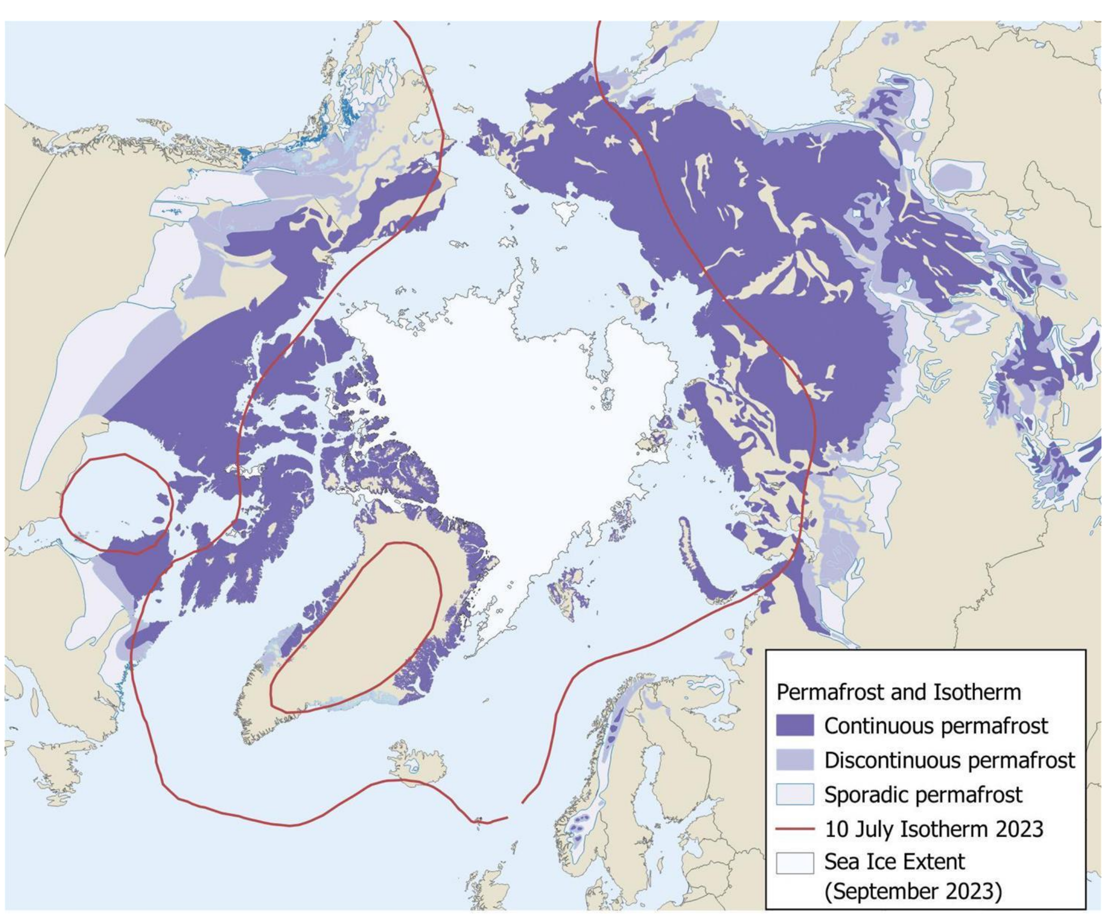


Fig. 1.3.1b **Permafrost with 10 °C July Isotherm and Sea Ice Extent**

Source: Arctic Centre, University of Lapland.
Credits to:

- Map: Arto Vitikka, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland;
- Permafrost and sea ice data: National Snow and Ice Data Center;
- July 10 C isotherm from USGS (2023).

The Sámi have challenged the definition of sovereignty in the Arctic, as it will be discussed in the dedicated chapters. The Indigenous Peoples' perspective on political legitimacy in the Arctic region shows that the current borders reproduce power relations across the region and within state borders, as in the case of Indigenous Peoples' impossibility to own land in Russia, since they cannot negotiate with the government and can only rent lands – unlike Canada, where the Indigenous Peoples are considered as sovereign nations (Giagnorio 2020).

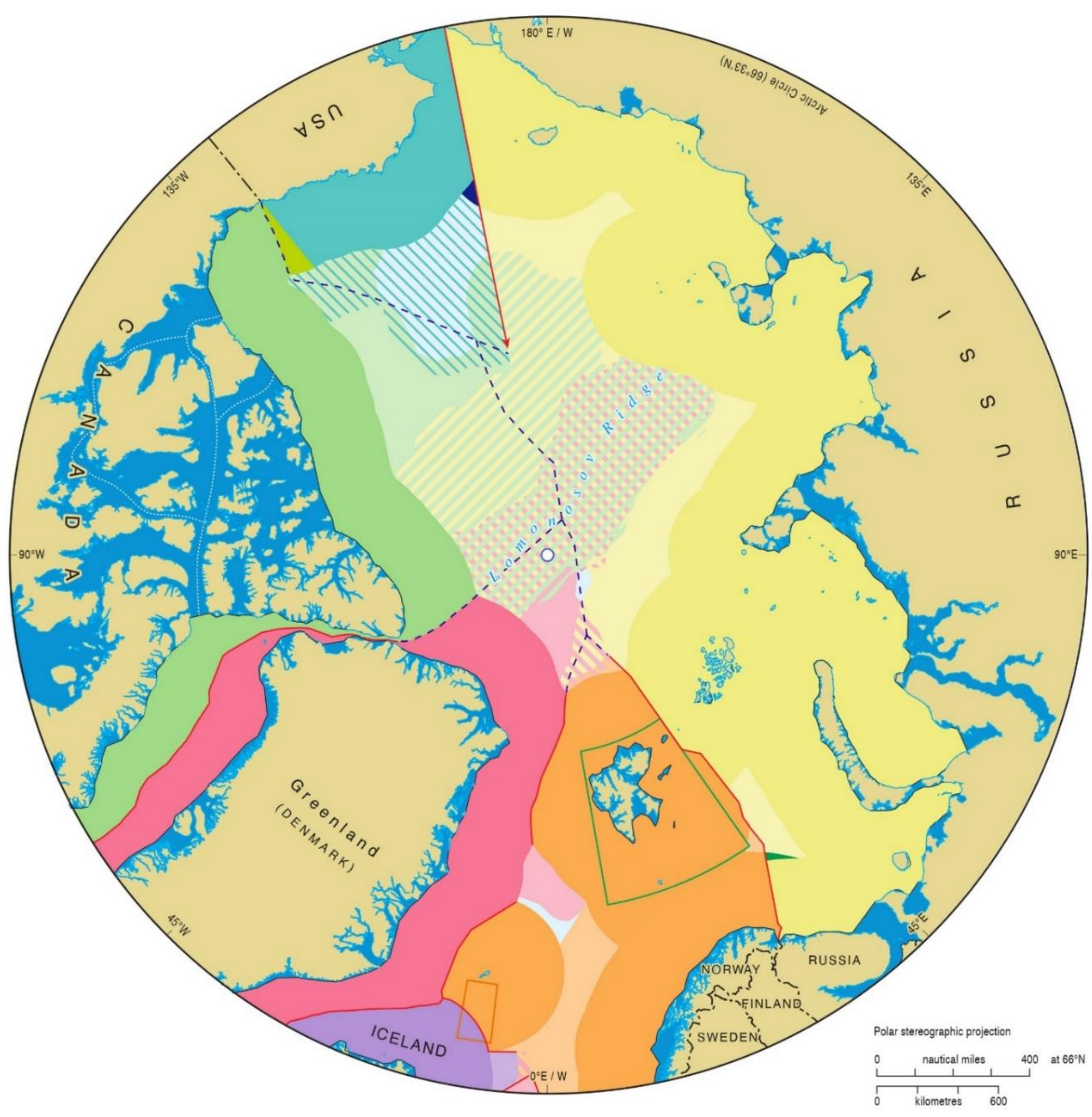
Geopolitics bends geography, as the non-Arctic states show in their attempt to justify their involvement in the region through discourse: for example, in its 2018 Arctic Policy, the Republic of China presented itself as a 'Near-Arctic State', justifying its interests in the region because the region's climatic changes directly affect both Chinese ecosystems and industries[9]. However, the increasing tensions between the North-Atlantic countries on the one hand, and Russia and China on the other, and the outbreak of the full Russian war against Ukraine, have transformed the Arctic relations and undermined the view of the Arctic as an exceptional space. The narrative of the exceptionality of the Arctic revolved around the idea that the Arctic was "not subject to the same (geo)political dynamics as other parts of the world," (Østhagen 2021, 56), an idea reflected in the capacity of Arctic States to cooperate in the region despite their conflicts – especially with regards to the United States and Russia. The pause of the

[9] The State Council of the People's Republic of China (2018), China's Arctic Policy, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm, last retrieved on the 20th August 2024. The term 'near-Arctic state' was in use since about 2010. For example, as Mia Bennett reports, "[i]n January 2013 at the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø – just four months before the observer applications would be decided in Kiruna – the Chinese Ambassador to Norway used precisely that nomenclature to describe China, underscoring his country's geographic proximity to the north" (Bennett 2015, 654). In 2015, the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister – at that time, Zhang Ming (张明) – gave a six-point speech at the Arctic Circle conference in Reykjavík, where he also positioned China as near-Arctic State (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Iceland, http://is.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zbgx/kjjl/201510/t20151018_3164910.htm, last retrieved on the 20th August 2024). The 2018 policy formalised China's informal positioning in an official policy document.

Arctic Council in 2022 and the suspension of cooperation with Russia drastically altered the ground for cooperation in the region between rivalling powers. To quote and paraphrase Alexander Wendt, the Arctic is what decision- and policymakers make of it.

Fig. 1.3.1c **Claims over the Arctic continental shelf**

Source: IBRU: Centre for Borders Research, 27th January 2023, https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/ibru-borders-research/news-and-events/boundary-news/ibru-releases-new-arctic-maps/



In conclusion, Geopolitics is crucial in Arctic politics and discourses about the region. A geopolitical reading offers a framework to understand how actors justify their intervention in the region, in what matters, and with whom, and what they consider to be the Arctic, therefore complementing the study of actorness. Through this combination, I address Andreas Raspotnik's position, according to which "the essential question is not whether or not the EU already is a geopolitical actor (*it is*), but rather how its actions beyond its borders are manifested by its geopolitical visions (sometimes), narrated differently by the Union's various institutional actors" (italics in original; Raspotnik and Østhagen 2021, 1151). However, I argue that the two questions are intrinsically connected, and in need for a unified theoretical framework.

1.4 Contributions

This dissertation takes a further step towards the study of the EU as an actor. From an empirical level, it analyses the process through which it constructs its role in the region in its foreign policy – and why the policy for the Arctic seems to be secondary. On a theoretical level, this dissertation accomplishes to objectives: first, it reconceptualises Bretherton and Vogler's work Bretherton and Vogler started their studies of actorness from a constructivist perspective, constructivism is the starting point of this investigation of actorness. However, as illustrated in this research, Bretherton and Vogler's view of constructivism appears to be underdeveloped, mixing systemic approaches and actor-based perspectives. Bretherton and Vogler do not engage with constructivist literature, nor they position themselves in constructivist debates, or theoretical debates in general. The consequence of this choice is the creation of a model that lends itself to atheoretical or eclectic approaches, at odds with its constructivist origins.

Second, this dissertation recalibrates Bretherton and Vogler's work and view of actorness, abandoning the structuralist elements that shape, and hinders, the application of their model. While the two authors "explicitly reject a policy analysis approach to understanding EU foreign policy," (White 2004, 46), this dissertation challenges Bretherton and Vogler's view, showing that their concepts and models better suit foreign policy analysis and the study of political (human) actors. This objective represents the main challenge to Bretherton and Vogler's study and its most recent applications, but it also represents the natural convergence between constructivism and other IR and EU integration theories, which have increasingly integrated a Foreign Policy Analysis approach in their explanations of the EU's foreign policy

At the empirical level, this work aims to provide a historically informed analysis of the relationships between the EU Institutions and the Arctic Member States, and their evolution. It demonstrates that the EU has been able to create a role for itself in the region, and that there is continuity between the EU and its Arctic Member States' policies, both with regards to positive and problematic aspects. It also shows that, over time, the EU and its Arctic States have progressively converged towards a common understanding of the roles to play in the region – roles that are constantly evolving, but that show that there are diplomatic dialogues at the EU-level. These findings enrich the understanding of the EU's policy processes, and further confirm the compatibility with Bretherton and Vogler's model with Foreign Policy Analysis – provided important theoretical adjustments.

Chapter II

The debate on the EU as an international actor in the Arctic:

A constructivist-oriented literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter revisits the debate over the European Union in international relations theory and discourse, actorness studies, and Arctic politics from a constructivist perspective, paving the way to the theoretical framework of this research. Is the EU an international actor, and, if so, what kind of actor? These questions have long been relevant in the literature, even though the EU has reshaped European politics and world affairs. The EU wields a huge economic power, but it often struggles to construct a common foreign policy, since the decision-making in foreign policy has always been intergovernmental: the European Council (composed of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States) or the Council of the European Union need to adopt a Decision unanimously. Therefore, one of the main questions regarding the EU foreign policy is whether it somewhat represents a collective voice and the interests of the EU as a whole, or the positions of few, strong states. However, as the EU integration process deepened, scholars such as Lisbeth Aggestam began to investigate the action of the EU rather than its 'nature', starting a "conceptual shift in the EU's role and aspirations from what it 'is' to what it 'does'" (Aggestam 2008, 1).

So, the question is now: how does the EU behave as a single actor? How do the EU's institutional actors narrate the EU's action and role externally as well as internally, even in unexpected ways? For example, Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks

(2001, 143-61) observe that officials of the EU supranational institutions do not automatically embrace views in favour of more Brussels-centred governance, nor do they champion more pervasive roles of supranational institutions. Indeed, the officials' preference might be shaped by different types of socialization occurred in their career paths – whether, for example, they first served in their states on in the EU institutions.

The answers to the problems of the EU's foreign policy and actorness are fragmented, like EU studies tend to be. Researchers of EU integration history have often privileged "microstudies of small and isolated episodes in integration history rather than seeking to explain the broader pattern of development" (Piers Ludlow 2010, 24). Katharina Holzinger and Frank Schimmelfennig (2012, 302) observe that studies related to EU differentiated integration have often produced "undertheorization" and "overconceptualization". In the case of the EU's foreign policy, Karen Smith underlines the tendency to "compartmentalise" aspects of the decision-making process, the development of the EU institutions, the 'Europeanisation' of the EU Member States' foreign policies, as well as the impact of the EU on international affairs (Smith 2010, 336-9). Similarly, the literature about EU actorness is fragmented, since scholars of EU actorness seldom discuss the theoretical assumptions of (EU) actorness research (Drieskens 2017, 1537). As explained here, the main reasons behind this phenomenon are related to the history of IR as a discipline and the negligence of theoretical-ontological questions, especially in relation to international politics and the EU's foreign policy.

The chapter is outlined as follows: the following section briefly illustrates the evolution of the EU's foreign policy, and the structure of the EU's apparatus for its external relations. Second, I explore the theoretical debates in the discipline of IR and how they impact the study of the EU's foreign policy, and how research about the EU

converges towards a constructivist or ideational approach – especially in the case of Arctic politics. After that, I talk about the origin of the concepts of actors and actorness, stemming from the incapacity of traditional IR theories to integrate the EU in their models, and how the concepts have been applied to the case of the Arctic. Finally, I introduce the concept of actorness as developed by Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, which builds upon constructivism and which has only been applied to the EU's Arctic policy recently (Jouhier 2024), but without addressing the theoretical weaknesses of their concept and model of actorness.

2.2 The EU's foreign policy in a states' world: a short historical background

The Arctic policy of the EU is part of its foreign policy. From a formal perspective, the 2012, the 2016, and the 2021 Communications about the EU's Arctic policy were presented by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – at the time of the 2008 Communication, the High Representative had not been established yet since the office was created with the Lisbon Treaty (come into force in 2009). Then, the monitoring, management, and development of the Arctic region involve Arctic states external to the EU. For example, the Northern Dimension policy include Norway and Iceland, as well as Russia – whose participation was suspended after its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Not all the Arctic issues fall under the label of EU's foreign policy, such as rural policy programmes for the Northern territories of Sweden and Finland. Yet, the policies for the Arctic region are international and transnational in nature.

The foreign policy of the EU has always been experimental, and a challenge for IR scholars. As Karen Smith underlines, asking why the EU member States act collectively in foreign policy is a central question in IR, since it is the extension of one

of the basic questions behind IR research: why do states cooperate (Smith 2010, 331), and why at the EU level? What does it mean to cooperate as a union of states, in Arctic politics or elsewhere? Unlike states, IR scholars have long debated the nature of the EU in relation to the 'established' actors of international politics, therefore they also ask what the EU is and what is to be expected from it. If foreign policy is seen as "primarily about the definition of *ends* […] then the idea of a 'European foreign policy' runs into difficulty because it needs to be linked to the identification and pursuit of 'European interests'" (Allen 1998, 44, italics in original). Realist and liberal scholars tend to consider the EU's behaviour as a 'dependent variable' that mirrors the interests of states and governments, while constructivist and globalist scholars do not write off the existence of a shared sense of identity as Members of the EU, or the role of supranational institutions in identifying the EU's ends.

The EU's foreign policy is complex because of its history and role in the process of EU integration. After the end of the Cold War, the Western European countries initiated a process of gradual economic and political integration that led to the EU. In 1951, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed the Treaty of Paris and created the European Coal and Steel Community (1951). Then other two 'communities' followed: the European Economic Community (1957) and the European Atomic Energy Community (1958), but the process towards the establishment of strong supranational institutions was hindered by the different aspirations of the Members of the Communities. In particular, the French Prime Minister Charles de Gaulle intended to create "a united states of Europe of which France was to be the focal point" (Soetendorp 1999, 16). After failing to isolate and weaken Germany's economy and political structure, de Gaulle sought to establish an intergovernmental political cooperation to coordinate the foreign and defence

policies of the Communities, following the so-called Fouchet Plan. Yet, Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands rejected the French proposal, since it would have favoured the dominant position of France in the Communities (Soetendorp 1999, 19).

In the 1970, the ministers of foreign affairs of the Communities started the European Political Cooperation (EPC), on the grounds of a report presented by Belgium (Davignon Report). The EPC consisted of informal, intergovernmental consultations that was later formalised in the Single European Act in 1986, after a series of ameliorations (Copenhagen Report, 1973; London Report, 1981). As an intergovernmental matter, the EPC maintained the unanimity rule. The EPC became the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1993 with the Treaty on the European Union (Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992), in which the CFSP constituted the second of the three pillars of the EU, together with the three European Communities (first pillar) and Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs (third pillar). The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) eliminated the three-pillar structure and bestowed legal personality to the EU – making it a legal subject under international law.

Thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU became capable of negotiating and concluding international agreements with respect to its competences as assigned by the treaties (even in areas that do not belong to the EU's exclusive competences). Surely, the treaty does not solve the issues about EU integration and the EU's foreign policy, and they never will because the questions might stem from rigid theoretical assumptions – assumptions that have soften over time, integrating constructivism. This chapter's review of IR theories and EU integration will therefore illustrate how the Foreign Policy Analysis and the study decision-making process have become integral components of IR and EU theories.

2.3 The EU's foreign policy and the Arctic context: a constructivist review of realist and liberal theories

Compared to political philosophy and political science, the discipline of international relations is far more recent and developed throughout the challenges of the twenty-first century, from the World Wars to the fall of the Soviet Union – and the establishment of the EU. The history of international political thought goes far back the establishment of IR as an academic discipline – as we can see in Thucydides and his *The Peloponnesian* War for the Western tradition, or Confucianism in the Chinese empire, for example IR has grown in the twentieth century. However, the field of IR is 'theoretically tired' after decades in which theoretical debates have turned into feeble "contests over the truth status of assumptions" (Lake 2013, 580) – the so called three or even fours Great Debates about the main paradigms of IR, i.e. realism, liberalism, and constructivism, and, recently, critical theory.

The study of EU actorness stemmed from the impossibility to bridge the reality of the EU and the integration process with IR theories. Yet, the problems of EU actorness studies are, to a degree, related to the ones concerning theoretical research in IR – whose main paradigms are still adopted to investigate the nature of Arctic politics, diplomacy, and the EU's behaviour. However, constructivism may offer a way to overcome the divide, since it "is not itself a substantive theory of international relations [but] it is a philosophy of science category that has a number of consequences for theorising international relations" (Jørgensen 2004, 16; see also Wendt 1999, 193). In this regard, it will be helpful to show how IR theorists and researchers have increasingly included constructivist views – specifically, the role of ideational politics – and foreign policy analysis in their work – especially with regards to the EU and the Arctic.

2.3.1 The EU, realism, and Arctic politics

Among the traditional theories to international politics, as already mentioned, realism has been indeed the most problematic for the study of the EU. The main traits of realism are usually considered to be power politics (Barkin 2010, 17) and the rationality of actors, often united under the auspices of materialism, state-centrism, and anarchy, where anarchy is the result of a lack of an ordering principle of hierarchy that would be provided by a central government (Collard-Wexler 2006, 399). Realists view states as the main actors (or even the only ones) and international institutions and organizations as tools to pursue states' interests. As a result, they challenged views of the EU as an actor on its own. Over time, on the other hand, realist approaches have been extensively questioned both in the process of EU integration and the explanation of the EU's behaviour in international politics.

As mentioned, power politics and rationality are the main assumptions of realism. Power politics assumes that "international relations are unified by their central claim that the distributions of power and interests, or changes to those distributions, are fundamental causes of war and of system stability," (Lemke 2008, 774) – picturing state relations as zero-sum games. Rationality is also central but nevertheless ambiguous. Unlike power politics, rationality seems to be a far more elusive concept that realist scholars – and IR theorists in general – often keep ambiguous. Indeed, it is seldom clear whether realist scholars refer to Schmidt and Wight call the "rational actor assumption" and the "observer rationality assumption": the first "refers to properties of the actors that are the subject of study [while the second] refers to potential for an accurate (objective) study of the subject matter," (Schimdt and Wight 2022, 162) – so, an ontological perspective on the one hand, and an epistemological view on the other.

Consequently, it would be misleading to depict the realist school as monolithic, since it presents important differences among approaches. The ways realist scholars define these two concepts define their position within the school. Classical realism focused on power politics, but it aimed to study historical and psychological aspects of elites. According to classical realists, power may be a psychological relationship between actors, and related to the actors' worldviews – or attitudes that were assumed to be part of human nature. Such a view is better expressed in Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (1948). However, IR scholars challenged the classical approach as they started to question the scientific account of the approach, which was hindered by "historical or psychological approach to state behaviour," (Joseph 2015, 5), developing what was later called neorealism – or structural realism. While Morgenthau rejected the positivistic idea of science, or at least argued that it could not be applied to politics (Schimdt and Wight 2022, 163), neorealist scholars started to explain international relations as the results of the international system, where states are seen as rational units competing in an anarchical environment where international institutions are subjected to states – and where the actors' systems of beliefs are put aside, since they do not fit the materialist and ahistorical understanding of survival-oriented decision making (Brooks 1997, 446; Collard-Wexler 2006, 400; Meibauer 2023, 350).

Structural realism, as proposed by Kenneth Waltz, posits that systemic concepts are necessary explanations for the outcomes of actors' decisions (i.e. foreign policies), but that they also lack specific content that hinders any form of predictions (Waltz 1979, 70). Waltz does not aim to study foreign policy, but the structure of the international society without reference to the characteristics of the units acting within the system to privilege positionality over agency. From his perspective, the political

structures of international politics stem from a process of constant abstraction that simplifies the researchers' investigations. According to Waltz, the behaviour of states (the most important units of international politics) is rewarded or punished by the structure that they create through interactions (which can result in anarchical and hierarchical orders), but that are constituted by the distribution of their capabilities (whose change determines the change on the given structure).

To further strengthen its systemic approach, Waltz aimed to create a model that does not require the ontological assumption of states as rational actors. He aimed to avoid any sort of decisionism – the doctrine assuming the impossibility to constrain political decisions by predefined rational expectations – and "he removed the foreign-policy maker from consideration" (Bessner and Guilhot 2015, 102). The rejection of the rational actor assumption serves the purpose to study international politics without resorting to the individual level of analysis, i.e. focusing on particularistic variables such as leaders' personalities, traditions, and culture (Waltz 1979, 79-101). By doing so, Waltz aimed to make the (scientific) theory of IR synthetic but indeterminate – which means advancing "incomplete causal explanations" in Waltz's words (Donnelly 2019, 916). However, "his theory only makes sense if it assumes that states do act rationally and follow the demands and incentives of the structure of the system" (Schmidt and Wight 2022, 159), especially considering the microeconomic foundation of his theory, which assumes the rationality of actors. Furthermore, proponents of systemic approaches might challenge this view, arguing that Waltz's theory is not genuinely systemic, given its reliance on individualistic assumptions about the units of the system (states) and the dichotomy between national and international levels, which stands in contrast to relational approaches (Donnelly 2019, 916-7).

With regards to the EU, structural realism could not successfully predict, or at least explain, the transfer of competences to the supranational level without 'external pressures' that characterised Europe during the Cold War. Within the realist framework, international cooperation is also indeterminate (depending on an ever-changing social structure) as well as fragile and feeble: states are assumed to be self-interested and (should) avoid interdependence (also view as vulnerability), abandoning cooperation if the other parties benefit from the relative gains of the cooperation more than they do. However, the EU is a system that presents elements of anarchy with strong institutions, and where states have been cooperating despite asymmetric gains, as in the case of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): the CAP has usually been to the advantage of states like France, but the EU structural funds have supported the development of less economically strong and influential states such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain (Collard-Wexler 2006, 400-2). Arguably, the common efforts of the EU Members need to be sustained by the belief that this kind of behaviour is fair, in opposition to assumptions about antagonistic behaviour. It is true that the EU might have benefited from the support it received after the end of the Cold War – which realist scholars did not necessarily expect (Mearsheimer 1990). However, this element further reinforces the feebleness of ahistorical models.

Over time, realist researchers shifted their attention towards EU policymaking, as neoclassical realism emerged. Neoclassical realism emphasises the role of domestic politics and interests, "how different domestic variables channel, mediate, and redirect policy responses to external ("systemic") pressures and incentives" (Simón 2017, 191). Unlike neorealist scholars, neoclassical realists "identify a broad range of unit and sub-unit variables that can intervene between systemic stimuli and foreign policy responses" (Ripsman 2017), most likely in response to the critiques regarding the blac

box model. According to neoclassical scholars, the implementation of policies can indeed be affected by domestic actors like parties and institutions, the public image and perceptions of political leaders, the relationships between leaders and society – in other words, non-material factors that were usually soon only as intervening variables in structural realist scholarship (Smith 2000, 35; Toje and Kunz 2012, 5). Therefore, realist scholars tend to assume that states project and pursue their interests through international organisations, including supranational entities (Koch 2009, 433). Consequently, even from a neoclassical realist perspective, the EU cannot act as a strategic actor, but it is a tool to explain state behaviour in the international arena.

Structural realism has been further challenged, also with regards to Arctic politics. On the one hand, as Kathrin Keil observes, realist assumptions about anarchy, security, and power politics might have indeed failed to explain the cooperation between the Arctic States continued until the outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine, within the framework of the Arctic Council. Indeed, other tensions, e.g. the dispute about the border between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean (which ended in 2010), were settled through diplomacy and abiding by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. According to Wegge (2012), the persistence of cooperation might suggest that institutions such as the Arctic Council have shaped the behaviour of the Arctic states. Yet, new tensions rose after the Russian annexation of Crimea, alerting both the Baltic and the Arctic states. Cooperation in the Arctic continued, fuelling the narrative of the Arctic as an 'exceptional' space enabling cooperation. Realist scholars have argued that powers such as the U.S. might have wanted to avoid the escalation of the conflict, rather than relying on the Arctic Council institutional power. However, domestic factors might matter to in understanding governments' behaviour (Rahbek-Clemmensen 2017) and their foreign policies.

2.3.2 Liberal institutionalism and EU intergovernmentalism in Arctic cooperation

As the international arena evolved, the limits of realism started to emerge. In the 1960s and the 1970s, scholars started contesting realist features such as state-centrism, which ignored the growing phenomena of regional integration and transnationalism, and the increasing role of non-state, sub-state, and trans-state entities (Wæver 1996, 150). The revival of the liberal, or pluralist turn, in IR focused on the growing interdependence of economic systems and international institutions – and the European Communities were an example of it. Consequently, liberal/pluralist scholars emphasised the composite nature of states, which could not be considered unitary, coherent actors that are assumed to act rationally, meaning that the necessity to reach consensus among different groups, offices, and institutions might require compromises that undermine the state's foreign policy (Viotti and Kauppi 2000, 7-8).

IR institutionalism – like realism and constructivism – "is better characterized as a theoretical tradition that gives particular attention to a discrete set of substantive themes that are analysed with a distinct combination of analytical concepts and methods" (Fioretos 2011, 370-1). According to Christopher Ansell (2021), the main trait of institutionalism is the persistence of institutions and their capacity to shape policies enabling or constraining states behaviour. Institutionalism is usually divided in three branches: historical, rational choice, and sociological, to which it is possible to add formal institutionalism (focusing on the role of law) and constructivist rationalism (which focuses on the role of norms and discourse) in the study of the EU Institutions' design and power (Jenson and Mérand 2010, 76). In the case of the EU, the role of institutions was emphasised by the 'supranationalists', who argued that EU officials were the driver of EU integration, and that the power of supranational actors

depended on their institutional power (Schmidt 2018, 1546), which has grown after the Lisbon Treaty.

However, as Daniel Thomas observes, the "EU Member States have been extremely reluctant to transfer decision-making authority for foreign and security policy to supranational European institutions," (Thomas 2011, 340). Thomas also argues that the current EU foreign policy is more de-Europeanised than Europeanised – if Europeanisation is understood as "exchange of information and an attempt to arrive at a common understanding and a common approach," (Thomas 2021, 619) – even though the Russian War against Ukraine might have counterbalanced this trend. De-Europeanisation might occur when the Member States directly violate fundamental norms or values of the EU (and the current Hungarian government might be a strong example of this tendency), or if they oppose the EU on several policies or areas or even "the structural disintegration of collective policy-making institutions" (Müller et al. 2021, 525). According to Thomas, de-Europeanisation would foster the theory of intergovernmentalism, in terms of explanation of the EU's decision-making.

Intergovernmentalism is a theory of EU integration that challenged the institutional/supranational approach. Formulated by Andrew Moravcsik, liberal-intergovernmentalism focuses on the role of the Member States' economic interests, rather than expected spillover effects of cooperation (increasing political unity from cooperation in non-political policy areas) or the power of supranational institutions (Schmidt 2018). Moravcsik's influential concept of liberal-intergovernmentalism depicts the process of EU integration cooperation as hinging upon (i) the primacy of societal (economically powerful) actors on (ii) the formation of the *preferences* of states, whose behaviour is also the result of (iii) interdependent policies at international

level – where states preference may converge or compete (Moravcsik 1997, 516-21; 2018, 1651).

From the intergovernmentalist perspective, the states' preferences are central and based on rationality, but they are not determined by assumptions about the nature of the international community or at least not only by distributions of material resources, since these preferences are the results of interactions with groups having interests in the formation of specific policies. Liberal-intergovernmentalist scholars therefore consider EU integration as "the outcome of cooperation and competition among national governments," (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1115), which are influenced by domestic economic groups.

Liberal-intergovernmentalism has also evolved through time. As Vivien Schmidt (2018, 1548-9) observes, the majority of new intergovernmentalist do not consider the EU officials of supranational institutions to be subordinate to the Member States. On the contrary, they note that the Member States try to actively limit the role of the European Commission through the creation of new institutions, such as the European Central Bank, where they are more represented than the Commission, or even exclude it – even though they do not assume that the Commission is inherently a driver for supranational governance (as per Hooghe and Marks 2001). Most importantly, neo-intergovernmentalists assume that the Member States do not (necessarily) seek to wield coercive power but rather persuasion and legitimation – however, asymmetry in power cannot be ignored in decision-making, be it ideational, institutional, or economic. For example, Germany refused to intervene in the post-2007 Greek financial crisis as long as it did not threaten its national interests – the existence of the single currency – and it could do it because of it position as the

"strongest economy in Europe" (Schmidt (2018, 1549) was reinforced by the EU's institutional design.

In the case of the Arctic, the role of institutions is limited with regards to the Arctic Council and the EU supranational institutions. Despite the stability of the region and the role of the Arctic Council and international law in shaping states' behaviour, Arctic cooperation has "remained purely intergovernmental with no independent competencies and thus, although enabling cooperation and policy coordination between states, have altogether re-territorialised rather than de-territorialised the Arctic," (Knecht and Keil 2013, 179-80). The structure of Arctic cooperation reinforced the role of the sovereign Arctic states in the regional governance. Indeed, this cooperation did not bring about reforms that could strengthen the Arctic Council, which is a forum, or other hard-law instruments despite of any proposal to expand its competences since its establishment. Consequently, the EU's policy for the Arctic has also been influenced by the Arctic States' ambition to maintain Arctic cooperation at an intergovernmental level, acknowledging the primary role of the Arctic States – which is however contested from different points of view, as explained in the following chapters.

However, with regards to liberal-intergovernmentalism and the EU's policy for the Arctic, the situation is ambiguous too. On the one hand, the EU's foreign policy is intergovernmental in nature, but the EU's supranational institutions have been its main proponents. As Njord Wegge observes, scholars have criticised liberal intergovernmentalism for overlooking "the long-term effects of political integration on the formation of preferences among member states [and for] overemphasizing the role of the Council in policy formation as opposed to the roles played by the Commission and European Parliament," (Wegge 2015, 534). It is unclear if the EU's

policy for the Arctic is suffering from de-Europeanisation processes, even indirectly. Nevertheless, even if that was the case, both institutionalism and intergovernmentalism highlight how the EU Institutions and Members' construct the EU's role through (not only its) foreign policies, and how these policies hinge upon the actors' aspirations and cognition of domestic and international political dynamics. The emphasise placed on role-construction processes bridges IR theories and actorness studies – as they are understood in this dissertation.

2.4 EU actorness studies and the case of the Arctic

In the 1970s, scholars of IR started to question traditional assumptions about the study of foreign policy and international politics, in particular state-centric views. During the evolution of IR theories and the emergence of the EU, there were also scholars who decided to break with theoretical frameworks that could not fit the development of new forms of polity and political or regional orders. This is the case of actorness studies, which assumed that the emergence of the European Communities could challenge the established tenets of IR theories, especially the realist ones. In this context, the concept of 'actor' became increasingly important in IR, but it is more controversial than it might first appear. The definition is ambiguous and contested, while it plays a necessary role in identifying the entity operating in the current political context - where states are not the only entities capable of pursuing political goals on a large scale. IR and social scientists had already used the term 'actor' before, but Gunnar Sjöstedt notes that, when scholars tried to attribute the label entities such as international organisations, they did not mean to elaborate a general definition.

Sjöstedt observes that IR scholars often refer to 'actors' without defining it or starting from a more biased perspective – in particular, because they identified it with

a nation or a state (Sjöstedt 1977, 5). In this regard, Nils Hoffmann and Arne Niemann (2017, 30) observe that states are (still) the benchmark for actors' properties, remarking the long-lasting debates in the theories and practices of IR. The concept of actor indeed differs from definitions of 'subjects of international law', even though they can both be used in reference to states and non-state entities (Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove 2010, 550), as well as individuals.[10] In addition, both actorness and personality lie upon actions, since legal personality "denotes the ability to act within the system of international law as distinct from national law" (Dixon 2007, 113). The two dimensions are not disentangled, but they belong to different fields of studies: the former impacts on rights and obligations under international law, while the latter has come to refer to the policy-making cycle, (agenda-setting, formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation).

With the growing role of the European Communities and the deepening of the EU integration process, the pioneers of international actorness, Ann Cosgrove and Kenneth Twitchett, championed the study of 'non-state actors' when they introduced the concept in 1970. They aimed to study the international roles of the United Nations and the then-European Economic Communities, and what enabled them to act on a global level. Cosgrove and Twitchett identified the following elements as essential features of actors: autonomous decision-making power; their impact in international relations; the significance their members attribute to them (Cosgrove and Twitchett 1970, 12–14, in Drieskens 2017, 1536).

In the same period, Sjöstedt proposed to define actorness as 'actor capability', meaning "the 'ability to function actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in

[10] All of them are subjects under the international law, meaning that they can advance claims before international courts, or they may have obligations stemming from international law. Most importantly, they can stipulate treaties that constitute laws for the parties involved, but this not the case of individuals.

the international system',” (Sjöstedt 1977, 16). Sjöstedt's reflection was centred around the capacity of the EC to articulate interests and to mobilise resources towards common goals. Consequently, he stressed the necessity of capabilities for decision-making and networks of implementation agents (Rhinard and Sjöstedt 2019, 4), but he was criticised for his preeminent interest in the domestic dimension (Niemann and Bretherton 2013, 265). Despite Sjöstedt's intention to develop a general understanding of the actors, Asle Toje (2008, 204) labelled Sjöstedt's definition “self-serving” because “it is tailored to the strengths of the EC/EU”.

In the 1990s, Joseph Jupille and James Caporaso proposed one approach with the aim to identify a standard of actorness, despite the lack of theoretical consensus on its meaning. They aimed to find a middle ground between realist and intergovernmentalist on the one hand, and the supporters of the view of the EU as a polity on the other. In order to do so, Jupille and Caporaso proposed four main criteria “that are observable, continuously variable, and abstract from any particular institutional form” (Jupille and Caporaso 1998, 214). The first is recognition – be it diplomatic or *de facto* – on behalf of external entities. In the case of the EU, which lacks sovereignty that is distinguishable from its member governments, recognition is achieved whenever third parties interact with the EU supranational institutions. The second criterion is authority, meaning legal competences. The third element is autonomy, reflected in institutional distinctiveness and independence – discretionary goal formation, decision-making and implementation. The last one is cohesion, in terms of values (compatibility of basic goals), tactic (harmonisation or coordination of different goals), procedures (to manage possible tensions and disagreements, such as in the case of the ‘loyalty clause’ of the EU Treaties), and policy outputs (Jupille and Caporaso 1998, 215-219).

Jupille and Caporaso propose an atheoretical definition of, and approach to, actorness, but its application has proved to be cumbersome. Indeed, Lisanne Groen and Arne Niemann acknowledged this problem and reformulated the model in their study on the EU and the Copenhagen climate accord. They chose to omit *recognition* and *authority*, and reduced *cohesion* to three features, as they focused on effectiveness. Their study showed the dependence of EU actorness on the convergence, or divergence, of interests between the Commission and the Member States (Groen and Niemann 2013, 310; 319). In previous research, Arne Niemann and Jeannette Mak (2010) stressed the continuity between interests, preferences and norms from a constructivist perspective. However, theoretical considerations seem to be absent in their study on the role of the EU Presidency in Copenhagen, without further investigation on the role of norms, expectations and identity.

So far, research on EU actorness in the Arctic presents atheoretical and liberal-intergovernmentalist trends. Pieper *et al*. (2011) applied Jupille and Caporaso's criteria to the study EU actorness in the region. Their study shows that Arctic issues are so different from one another that the role of the EU varies from case to case, especially when national interests prevail over the EU's. However, the main limitation of their approach is the unbalanced focus on the EU external recognition, their legal authority on maritime affairs and borders. The inflation of criteria hinders further systematic analyses, and aspects such as tactical and output cohesion are overlooked. Therefore, the (absence of) dialogue between the EU supranational institutions and its Member States are not sufficiently deepened.

From an atheoretical perspective, Andreas Østhagen (2013) does not develop a specific definition of actor and actorness for his study of the EU in Arctic governance. However, Østhagen observes that the EU's Arctic policy cannot be

considered as the mere sum of the EU (Arctic) States' interests, with regards to the initial phase of the EU's political engagement in the Arctic international governance. Rather, while considering the interests of the Member States (as in the case of the European Parliament's proposal for an Arctic Treaty), the EU's Communication highlighted "the positive contributions the EU can make to a topic of growing international interest" (Østhagen 2013, 84-5). Østhagen also stressed the need for more coordination between supranational institutions and Member States of the EU, as well as the necessity for the EU not to "tackle the region at large": the EU had, and has so far, aimed to influence the region as a whole, rather than its own geographical sphere (Finland and Sweden), with consequences on the EU's perceived legitimacy in the region, as well as effectiveness (Østhagen 2013, 85-6).

From a more, explicitly critical perspective, Andreas Raspotnik (2018) published one of the most comprehensive studies on the EU and the Arctic, adopting a critical geopolitical approach. Unlike other authors, he preferred adopting the concept of geopolitical subject, drawing from the work of Pami Aalto. From their perspectives, subjectivity is displayed by the "goal-oriented ordering of territories and political spaces, extending from one's own sphere of sovereign rule to broader regional contexts" (Aalto 2002, 148). The preference for the term 'subject' over 'actor', as Aalto puts it, is grounded on the fact that the former frames an entity as capable of both acting and abstaining from actions, when necessary (Aalto 2002, 148). Yet, the meaning of the term 'subjectivity' might be broader than actorness and its focus on how political entities construct their goals.

Raspotnik argues that the concept of subjectivity enables the development of a "conceptual scheme for theoretically informed and systematic comparison with other

geopolitical powers[11]". In this regard, Raspotnik distances himself from the *sui generis* assumptions about the EU. Such a choice represents a step to go beyond what Michelle Cini calls the "insularity of EU studies", due to the difficulty of theory-driven US research – the most prominent in IR – to categorise the EU on the one hand, and due to the empirical approaches adopted by EU scholars to the detriment of theoretical development on the other (Cini 2006, 42-3). The problem of the insularity of EU studies is particularly pressing in the case of Bretherton and Vogler's work, as illustrated in the next sections.

However, from a constructivist perspective, it is not necessary for scholars "to use a design that makes comparisons across countries possible" (Jørgensen 2004, 17) because social constructions are actor-specific. By adopting a constructivist approach to both IR and EU studies, the references to a specific nature of the EU become unnecessary to justify the focus on the EU as a whole, or on the role played by the different sub-national, national, and supranational institutions. In step with such a consideration, I argue that the concept of 'actor' is not less powerful than 'subject', and that it avoids any ambiguity with 'legal subjectivity' – considering also that actors can refrain from actions, just like Aalto's 'subjects'.

The work by Raspotnik is important also for his highlights on the EU's policymaking. Raspotnik observes that the EU has so far not attempted to harmonise the different Arctic policies – if possible. On the other end of the issue, the Member States may not be inclined to this kind of action either, since the European Commission has not adequately argued why there should be not just an integrated, but a common

[11] Raspotnik (2018), chapter 2: The thought experiment referred to as geopolitics: The EU as a Geopolitical Subject

Arctic policy.[12] At the same time, they also advocate for more cooperation with the EU non-Arctic States, considering that climate, energy and infrastructure issues tend to be perceived as a common concern.[13] Yet, as underlined at the beginning of the chapter, the need for more coordination and cooperation does not necessarily lead to a more centralised Arctic policy – taking also into consideration the different policy areas that constitute the Arctic policies.

On the ground of his critical perspective, Raspotnik emphasises relationality, narratives and identities. He indeed stresses that "the EU is constantly defining itself in relation to its Member States, its neighbours and its complex bilateral and multilateral relations".[14] The attention he pays to narratives and identities in critical geopolitics converges with social constructivism. Amongst the approaches, only the one proposed by Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler (1999; 2006) seems to provide a constructivist foundation of the process of identity formation, even though they focus more on agency than the ontology of the EU – in step with the 'spirit' of actorness studies. However, from a constructivist perspective, the concepts of actor and actorness bridge IR and EU studies.

2.5 Bretherton and Vogler's constructivist path to actorness

[12] Raspotnik (2018), chapter 5: "An action in the making: the EU's Arctic policymaking process" 5.4 'In a 'policymaking' nutshell. References to Raspotnik's monograph are reported through footnotes since the digital copy I purchased does not have page numbers.

[13] Raspotnik (2018), chapter 7: A European geopolitical subject in the Arctic?

[14] Raspotnik, A. 2018. *The European Union and the Geopolitics of the Arctic*. Chapter 2: "The thought experiment referred to as geopolitics", 2.2 'Geopolitics by Europe': The EU as a Geopolitical Subject

The 1990s were a dynamic moment for constructivist theorization about IR and EU actorness, and for the development of the *sui genesis* approach to the EU. While Jupille and Caporaso took an atheoretical path, Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler aimed to build the concepts of actor and actorness from theory, specifically constructivism. Bretherton and Vogler developed their concepts of actor and actorness from a constructivist view, which has often been seen as a middle ground between rationalism and materialism, (employed by realists and liberalists) and interpretivism and subjectivism (Adler 1997; 2002, 95). One of the most influential constructivist scholars in the late 1980s and the 1990s was Alexander Wendt, who contributed to the legitimation of constructivist scholarship, and whose work is crucial to understand the limitations of Bretherton and Vogler's constructivism.

In an article dating back to 1987, Wendt exposed the agent-structure problem and the solutions offered by IR theories – in particular, neorealism and world-system theory. The problem had long been identified by social scientists, who have always had to deal with tensions between voluntarism on the one hand and determinism on the other, or individualism as opposed to holism (Carlsnaes 1992, 245). However, "Wendt deserves credit for bringing an explicit awareness and discussion of the agent–structure problem to the forefront of social theory in IR" (Rivas 2010, 213). As Wendt summarises, the agent-structure problem depicts two tenets of the social life and social research:

- "Human beings and organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live";
- "Society is made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors" (Wendt 1987, 337-8).

Wendt underlines that the agent-structure problem is both ontological and epistemological, opposing the tendency to reduce one of the units (the agent or the structure) to the other, making one of them the 'primitive' (Wendt 1987, 339). Over the course of his production, Wendt embraced a scientific view of constructivism,[15] which follows Waltz's primary interest for the field of international politics. In other words, Wendt does not embrace the agent side of the dilemma, but the structural – even though he tried to circumvent the problem by making states the agents, rather than decision-makers.

Wendt's position aims to justify the assumption that states are unitary actors that can be studied as elements of a system, without considering such a unity a mere theoretical construct or a metaphor (Wendt 1999, 196) – which would invalidate his ontology and lead back to the studies of elites, bureaucracies, group interests, and masses. In his work *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt argues that states are agents on their own and that cannot be reduced to their individual members by virtue of their corporate agency (Wendt 1999, 193-99) – or, in other words, that "states are people too" (Wendt 2004, 291). Wendt argues that states are "homeostatic structures that are relatively enduring over time," (Wendt 1999, 238), related to, but independent from, their internal societies: regimes might change, but states remain. Wendt also argues that states possess identities and interests by virtue of corporate agency – the main interest being their own reproduction.

However, Jorge Rivas criticises Wendt on the grounds of the assumptions of scientific realism. Scientific realism posits that social phenomena are independent from the mind, but that complete, objective knowledge of these occurrences is not possible (Rivas 2010, 208-9). Rivas rejects Wendt's argument that it is possible to

[15] Here the latest development of his work about using quantum theory to unify physical and social ontologies will not be developed.

maintain a subjective ontology, which assumes that social structures "are collective phenomena that confront individuals as externally existing social fact" (Wendt 1995, 75), and an objective epistemology, which should be able to ensure a positivist knowledge to social phenomena. Such a view of 'realism' better exemplifies the constructivist position, and interests towards the agent and their motivations, without claiming that it is possible to reduce two sides of the agent-structure problem to one of the two – especially from the perspective of foreign policy analysis.

Constructivist scholars have also criticised Wendt's systemic constructivism, which favours abstraction to the detriment of human actors. Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2016) notices how Wendt's structural positions diminish the role of symbolic interactionism, which values of interactions among human actors in the construction of the social self – a social 'identity'. However, Adler-Nissen states that a symbolic-interactionist approach "is not interested in motivations or intentions when it comes to analysing the social and political; the fundamental building blocks of social life are not individuals but social interactions" (Adler-Nissen 2016, 37). Such a position offers limited contribution to the understanding of policy processes, and to the definition of an actor-centred constructivist approach focusing on human decision-makers.

Bretherton and Vogler never truly address constructivism as either a theory of IR, or a substantive theory, as discussed in the next chapter. The two authors only observe that IR scholars have usually analysed actors from either behavioural and structural perspectives, and illustrate their limitations. The two authors argue that an exclusive focus on internal factors – and, indeed, on behavioural criteria generally – to be inadequate in assessing actorness," (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 16) without analyses of the international structure. Indeed, both the dimensions are needed to investigate and evaluate "the overall impact of the EC/EU' on world politics"

(Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 2-3), as already expressed in the first edition of *The European Union as a Global Actor*. At the same time, Bretherton and Vogler acknowledge that structuralist explanations cannot consider the uniqueness of the EU as an organisation and the ideologies that led to its emergence (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 28; 2006, 20) – despite conceding that problems faced by the EU in terms of coherence are "analogous to those affecting any pluralistic political system" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 32). The two authors do not discuss the EU's 'ontology' but its agency – a crucial element for actorness as well as constructivist scholarship, including systemic constructivism.

However, the focus on agency brings Bretherton and Vogler closer to foreign policy analysis than Wendt's constructivism. Scholars of actorness focus on agency and capability. Gunnar Sjöstedt equated being an actor with the quality of "actor capability", which measures the "capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system" (Sjöstedt 1977, 15; 16). For most of their work, Bretherton and Vogler considered agency the very core of actorness, stressing volition and the capacity to organise purposive actions. From Bretherton and Vogler's perspective, capability constitutes "interconnection between structure and agency which is of interest in a study of the evolving identity, roles and actorness of the EU" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 22). In this sense, actors' capability manifests a temporary answer to temporary configurations of what they perceive themselves to be, because of constant interactions and negotiation – i.e. the actor's (foreign) policy.

This view is at odds with Bretherton and Vogler's interest in measuring the impact of the EU in world politics. Indeed, "the foreign policy analyst is less concerned with explaining and evaluating policy outcomes and more concerned to understand and to explain the policy process itself – how policy emerges, from whom or what,

and why" (White 2004, 46). By doing so, it is possible to integrate the aspect of identity, which Bretherton and Vogler define as "shared understandings about the nature of an entity" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 39). From a systemic view, regardless of its constructivist foundation, such a definition of identity is not applicable, but it becomes crucial in the analysis of the EU's (not only) foreign policy.

2.6 Recent developments of Bretherton and Vogler's model of actorness

More recently, Stanislaw Jouhier has adopted Bretherton and Vogler's concept of actorness has also been adopted to study the EU's external 'engagement' and actorness in Arctic politics (2024), grounding his study on the work by Chad Damro, Sieglinde Gstöhl, Simon Schunz. In their edited volume *The European Union's Evolving External Engagement* (2018), the three authors have further developed Bretherton and Vogler's concepts, but they focused on the EU's engagement in international politics. In their work, Schunz *et al.* define engagement

> "as any form of interaction – whether through deliberate action or not – between the European Union, that is, EU institutions and bodies or EU member states acting on behalf of the EU, and the outside world, typically third countries or international organizations and regimes, but also non-state actors" (Damro *et al.* 2018, 6).

In the view of Schunz *et al.*, engagement follows actorness, which however they do not define without reference to its three components (see also Gstöhl and Schunz 2023). They indeed draw from Bretherton and Vogler's concept of actorness and operationalise it through a better specification of Opportunity, Presence, and Capability – as discussed in the next chapter. However, they do not place the

dimension of identity and shared understanding of one actor's (the EU) roles and, in Klose's terms, imagination, at the centre of their analysis. The choice of the authors is compatible with their interest in the evolving dynamics of the EU's external relations, defining its engagement; the choice also reflects the view that multiple factors intervene in the different stages of policymaking, which is seldom a linear process, and which never takes place in isolation from other decision-making activities. Yet, as I argue in the next chapter, such an eclectic approach further enhances the fragmentation of actorness studies.

Damro *et al.* also introduce the concept of political will, which they define as being "essentially about the convergence of interests and/or ideas of the member states and the EU institutions" (Damro *et al.* 2018, 251), and as one of the elements determining the extension of the EU's engagement in a policy area. According to this formulation, political will can indicate actorness, but I argue that the concept of identity – as one' role – better captures the convergence of ideas emerging from the process of imagination upon which actors make sense of their roles, and construct their capabilities. Therefore, the definition of actorness that Klose proposes enables researchers to narrow the operationalisation of opportunity, presence, and capability down to their actor-centred meaning.

Jouhier's paper presents a different version of Bretherton and Vogler's model, where 'external perceptions' replaces capability (Jouhier 2024, 6). The concept of external perceptions represents the EU's reputation and, in the specific case of the paper, the

> "successes of its research and science diplomacy within the Circumpolar Arctic and its ability to deliver on socioeconomic development in the European Arctic [as well as] the EU's barriers to

> being recognized as a legitimate Arctic player, including its clear-cut limits and controversial proposals and policies" (Jouhier 2024, 26).

However, I argue that substituting capability with external perceptions does not enhances the model, since external perceptions are already included in the concept of opportunity in the original work by Bretherton and Vogler. The elimination of capability risks reducing the capacity to study actorness, if it is understood as the construction of one entity's role and goals to pursue.

In 2023, Gstöhl and Schunz also included Klose's view of actorness in their work, emphasising the importance of role conceptions – Klose even "suggests theorizing about the EU's international emergence as a role-making process" (Klose 2018, 1146). The two authors extended their study to the EU's role in the Arctic as part of the Global Spaces of EU actorness – and role performance, which arguably replaces the concept of effectiveness. On the grounds of their findings, Gstöhl and Schunz also argue that "the higher the EU's degree of actorness (including favourable opportunity but especially a strong EU presence and coherence among member states), the more likely it is that it can successfully align role performance and conception," (Gstöhl and Schunz 2023, 1250).

The two authors' position partly converges with the one adopted in this dissertation, and their findings seem to preliminarily support my research hypothesis, except for role performance (here not examined). However, while they also suggest that "EU role conceptions can be examined by investigating the Union's self-expectations of its 'appropriate' foreign policy behaviour," (Gstöhl and Schunz 2023, 1240), they do not combine Klose's definition of actorness with Bretherton and Vogler's cornerstones of the concept. In step with the purpose of integrating actorness

studies from a constructivist perspective, this research rather aims to develop a model that combines the two and that not only improves the operationalisation actorness, but also better captures the process of EU policy-making – and *political imagination*.

The work done by Schunz *et al*. provides a better understanding of the cornerstones of actorness mean, especially presence, and the late development of their work also integrates the concept of role – necessary for foreign policy analysis. However, their approach is eclectic and pragmatic, as discussed in the following chapter. Eclecticism and pragmatism have their advantages in a field like IR, which is 'exhausted' by theoretical wars and where parsimony and elegance do not reflect the layered, interconnected causes behind a single phenomenon. At the same time, eclecticism and pragmatism are possible when different theories share, even to different degrees, the same ontologies. As I will argue in the next chapter, this is the case of constructivism, which has been increasingly integrated into classical IR theories on the grounds of ontological affinity and, to some extent, similar epistemologies.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has offered a review of the literature addressing the EU in international politics and Arctic affairs, paving the way to the presentation of this dissertation's constructivist framework to study EU's actorness in Arctic governance in the form of foreign policy analysis. After highlighting the divide between IR and EU researchers on the ground of the theoretical debates, this chapter has shown the debate around the concept of actorness, i.e. the clear-cut divisions between 'traditional' scholars and EU researchers, where the former focused on theory while the latter favoured empirical research. However, the atheoretical scholarship of EU studies has led to fragmentation

in the field. Consequently, one the aims of this chapter was to enhance continuity between IR and EU studies, by criticising and rejecting claims on the '*sui generis* actorness' of the EU through constructivist criticism.

Fragmentation appears also as inflation of concepts, and EU scholars also offer different diagnoses for their theoretical fragmentation. William Paterson, Neill Nugent, and Michelle Egan observe fragmentation both in theoretical and empirical research, and they trace this tendency back to young scholars' preference – or, some might say, young researchers' only option in particular contexts - for theoretical contributions (Paterson *et al*. 2010, 409). However, Drieskens (2017) underlines that, despite the absence of consistent theoretical debate in EU actorness studies, empirical research has flourished – in step with the general attitude of research about the EU. These opposite diagnoses suggest that the absence of theoretical debates might also lead to difficulties in identifying the reason behind the sprouting of so many branches in the EU studies' family tree. Therefore, I have opted to stress theoretical and conceptual continuity, especially between actorness and geopolitics, rather than propose new concepts – in the name of integrating concepts of actorness.

Chapter III

Actorness as Imagination and Capability Construction: Constructivism and Critical Geopolitics in Foreign Policy Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework adopted to investigate EU actorness in Arctic politics by turning Bretherton and Vogler's concepts into (constructivist) tools to study the formation of foreign policies. As it has been shown, Bretherton and Vogler do not discuss the meaning of constructivism, nor its ontological and epistemological issues. I here embrace an actor-centred definition of constructivism, which focuses on how (human) actors construct their role in a political context and react to others' identity-building processes. My theoretically grounded investigation relies on the need for a better-organised theoretical framework, in accordance with Thomas Kuhn's (1970) claim that advancement of knowledge is possible only within the limits of a paradigm. Yet, at the same time, I reject Kuhn's radical claim that scientific paradigms are incommensurable and incomparable (Kuhn 1970, 103) – being incommensurability a property of different ontologies, while classical theories of international relations share a common one, as explained in this chapter.

The chapter unfolds as follows: in the first section, I justify the choice for constructivism not as in opposition to realism and liberalism, but in response to scientific realism – which is yet founded upon ontological and epistemological similarities between the three 'main' schools of IR. In the second section, I introduce the definition of actor-centred constructivism, choosing the 'agent side' of the agent-

structure problem of social theories. After that, I propose to combine Stephan Klose's definition of actorness and Bretherton and Vogler's conceptualization, arguing that Klose's focus on imagination and role construction better specifies the meaning of actorness and its relationship with the actors' construction of capabilities. Finally, I operationalise the cornerstones of actorness – opportunity, presence, and capability – considering the actor-centred definition of actorness, and through the geopolitical concepts of positioning and scale. In the re-formulation of Bretherton and Vogler's concept and model of actorness, critical geopolitics plays an essential role, and it is akin to constructivism.

3.2 Defining constructivism in eclectic actorness studies

The promise of constructivism, as either a middle-ground or a rejection of binary thinking, would be to balance these two polarities or to include what structural analyses often exclude. However, constructivism is often depicted as ontologically opposed to realism and institutionalism, rather than as a gateway between subjective and objective IR – even if more centred on actors than the 'world out there'. For example, in the case of the Arctic,

> "[i]n contrast to neorealist and neoliberal institutionalist reading, one can discern a number of discursive signs of a shared Arctic geopolitical understanding, and possibly even identity projects amongst Arctic states. For example, policy strategies emphasise shared security and non-security threats and challenges, and especially the Arctic coastal states have stressed their shared responsibility and "stewardship" of and for the Arctic" (Knecht and Keil 2013, 180).

Ten years later, however, the discursive signs on the Arctic have changed. Military concerns for the region have increased, even though the region is out of the military radar now, despite – or also thanks to? – Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, which results in NATO and Russia bordering along their Nordic and Arctic borders [to a much greater degree than before the two states' admission]. The Russian full invasion of, and war against, Ukraine had resulted in the pause of the Arctic Council, but it has not fuelled military tensions – however, the concerns about human security and hybrid warfare have long been increasing, even before 2022.[16] Consequently, the 'Arctic discourse' that apparently justified a constructivist approach to the study of Arctic (foreign) policies – as opposed to power politics – has also transformed.

On the grounds of these considerations, there is the need to define what constructivism means, and its relation to the study of foreign policies. With regards to IR competing approaches, the literature review has shown that (neo)realism and (neo)liberal institutionalism do not exclude ideas (beliefs, identities, norms) and their explanatory power – nor, constructivism ignores 'material' elements like the distribution of military capabilities. Rather, the contention stems from different views of how ideas influence policy outcomes, how ideas constitute the social world, and the epistemological implications of different ontological perspectives.

[16] The concept of hybrid threats refers to hostile actions – taken by either state or non-state actors – that aim to exploit the vulnerabilities of the other actors through mixed tactics (diplomacy, technology, espionage) without resorting to traditional warfare. Hybrid threats may increase tensions and undermine collective efforts to maintain the Arctic a peaceful area as if they were forms of gas-lighting, reducing not only mutual trust but also polarising the debate – whose unfolding is already being compromised by information warfare, manipulation, and disinformation. Heather Conley and Colin Wall argue that "[y]ears of repeating the mantra "High North, low tension" have delayed an appropriate response and possibly distorted the priorities of Arctic policymakers so that an excessively high tolerance for malign activity may have developed" (Conley and Wall 2021, 4). From this perspective, the idea of a peaceful Arctic – or the incapacity to hold actors accountable for actions – has resulted in developing policies that have left security aspects out in favour of a precise view of the Arctic order – despite the emergence of (weak) signals of different trends in the region.

To establish the theoretical framework, I start with a question: do Bretherton and Vogler need constructivism? Indeed, Bretherton and Vogler position themselves as constructivist but neglect any discussion about constructivism, nor they discuss the core differences between constructivist approaches and the other schools of IR. Consequently, the model also lends itself to non-constructivist or atheoretical applications or reformulations. Simon Schunz, Chad Damro, and Sieglinde Gstöhl's work *The European Union's Evolving External Engagement* (date?) indeed abandons the constructivist theoretical foundation of Bretherton and Vogler's model, in favour of an approach defined as analytical eclecticism.

In their work, Schunz, Damro and Gstöhl adopt a pragmatic approach that "propagates theoretical pluralism" (Schunz *et al*. 2018, 7), and that reflects a tendency to suspend inter-paradigm debates, also due to theoretical uncertainty – but, more importantly, uncertainty about the foundation of knowledge. Schunz, Damro, and Gstöhl draw from pragmatist sensitivity and philosophy that Jörg Friedrichs and Friedrich Kratochwil (an important name for constructivist research), presented in their 2009 article "On Acting and Knowing: How Pragmatism Can Advance International Relations Research and Methodology". In their article, the authors start from the assumption that the debate on the IR scholars still pursue futile "traditional epistemological quest for the incontrovertible foundations of scientific knowledge" (Friedrichs and Kratochwil 2009, 701), while eclecticism is "grounded in social reality" and it is more suitable for "problem-driven research" (Damro *et al.* 2018, 29). However, this kind of eclecticism is less inclusive than it is usually presented, as explained later in this section, because it is founded on ontological and epistemological compatibilities – which group realism, liberalism, and constructivism together in opposition to scientific realism.

According to Nuno Monteiro and Keven Ruby (2009), scholars of IR might adopt three foundational positions: instrumentalism, social constructivism, and scientific realism. However, in their criticism of any foundationalist instances, Friedrichs and Kratochwil trace pragmatic attitudes in IR and EU studies, as in the case of Andrew Moravcsik – the champion of liberal-intergovernmentalism. Friedrichs and Kratochwil argue that Moravcsik had adopted a pragmatist approach when he proposed his Theory Synthesis approach, which stems from assuming that "[t]he complexity of most large events in world politics precludes plausible unicausal explanations" (Moravcsik 2003, 132). Moravcsik states that theories that share a set of coherent assumptions can contribute to a more thorough understanding of political and social phenomena, without necessarily sharing "a full range of basic ontological assumptions [and] fundamental ontological matters" like the units considered, or their forms of interaction (Moravcsik 2003, 132). However, Moravcsik's position is still foundational: under what conditions are theoretical pluralism and pragmatism possible?

Here, I embrace the view according to which eclecticism, pluralism, and pragmatism are possible on the ground of ontological compatibility between realism, institutionalism, and constructivism, under the umbrella of constructivism. As Jonathan Joseph argues, the main opposition is not between constructivism and realism, but between scientific realism on the one side, and constructivism and critical theory approaches on the other – which is the side of interpretivism. In Joseph's words, scientific realism is a philosophical standpoint that establishes positivism (Joseph 2007, 345) but not necessarily empiricism – which limits reality to what is observable and measurable ('objective') by reducing the factors that influence phenomena occurring in "the world out there". From this perspective, Joseph considers classical

IR theories to be ‘empirically realist’, but not necessarily rooted in a scientific realist philosophy: in the case of neorealism, Joseph argues that “Waltz embraces an actualist philosophy that focuses on the level of events, but ignores the level of the real – those unobservable social structures, causal processes and generative mechanisms that produce the events” (Joseph 2007, 348). In this regard, empirical inquiry is necessary but not sufficient for a scientific account of research because ‘superficial’, apparent “forms or phenomena, and our experiences of them, then, do not exhaust the real” (Wight and Joseph 2010, 11).

On the grounds of his scientific realism, Joseph argues that the social is something far bigger than the individuals that make societies, since the social stems not only from the conscious activities of the actors, but also from the unintended consequences of their actions and thoughts. In addition, individuals are born in societies whose rules, values, and material conditions shape and constrain the behaviour of their members often in an unconscious fashion. One might argue that even transformative actions, including radical revolutions of legal orders, is influenced by unconscious elements of actions that are structural. In this regard, Joseph observes “that constructivism cannot deal with such issues because it cannot go beyond a social ontology of intersubjective relations or social practices” (Joseph 2007, 358). Far from being dismissive towards constructivism and its aims, Joseph’s reflection shows the conditions for analytic eclecticism, i.e. the need for shared ontologies and epistemologies.

The arguments presented in this section seem to confirm what Jérémie Cornut observes with regards to Sil and Katzenstein’s position that realism, liberalism, and constructivism are complementary in pragmatic, i.e. problem-driven, research. Cornut underlines that Sil and Katzenstein do not offer a sufficient explanation for the

possibility for realist, liberal, and constructivist theories to complement one another while excluding critical IR theories – feminist, post-structural, and postmodern theories, for example (Cornut 2015, 53-4). Noting Joseph's arguments, the tensions between the three "main" schools of IR do not stem from different ontologies, nor *necessarily* from different epistemologies placed on different positions within the structuralist-behaviouralist spectrum – which is better known as the agent-structure problem. Rather, the aims make the difference: within this opposition, researchers are expected to determine what the independent variable is (the agent, or the structure), especially if they pursue scientific investigations in which variables can be isolated and the hypotheses tested and reproduced – for example, by identifying recurring patterns of behaviour.

In addition, Cornut also argues that it is necessary to specify what the contribution of each theory to an eclectic study is. In this regard, Sil states that (analytical) eclecticism "puts the burden on the investigator to demonstrate how and why the choices and actions of agents reflect, reproduce, or transform emergent patterns of social norms and structures" (Sil 2009, 650). Consequently, the researcher is expected to justify their approach. However, Bretherton and Vogler embrace a constructivist approach, positing that social reality is produced by shared meanings, but their justification is insufficient. Indeed, one of the most prominent constructivist IR scholars, Stefano Guzzini, presents two main problems related to constructivist scholarship, i.e. the already mentioned eclecticism and redundancy.

Redundancy is a subtle foe. Guzzini argues that redundancy occurs when constructivists do not add anything but "some face lift to already existing approaches," (Guzzini 2000, 148), such as arguing that ideas have an impact on politics as much as material aspects of reality. For example, David Dessler points out that the structure of

international relations is inherently social even for neorealist scholars, who assume that state behaviour is constrained by material factors as well as anarchy, which is "an ordering principle that is as much a part of the 'shared structure of knowledge' in international politics as any of the norms, values, or identities that constructivists emphasize in their explanatory accounts" (Dessler 1999, 127). Indeed, Waltz's *Theory of International Relations* "entails atomistic assumptions about states being the basic units and 'structure' being composed of external relations between units. Ultimately structure is nothing more than such interactions" (Joseph 2010, 52). Consequently, when Bretherton and Vogler claim to assign a great role to identities, defined as "shared understandings that give meaning(s) to what the EU is and what it does," (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 26), they do not clarify what they mean or how their claim makes their approach different from realism and liberalism.

Therefore, what is constructivism, and what is its contribution? Guzzini defines it "*in terms both of a social construction of meaning (including knowledge), and of the construction of social reality*" (Guzzini 2000, 149; italics in original). As Craig Parsons observes, "constructivist scholarship argues that we cannot access something we should want to know about action without paying attention to interpretive social constructs like ideas, norms, practices, identities, or discourse" (Parsons 2015, 504; 2018, 75). Guzzini insists on the reflexive character of constructivism and rejects naïve empiricism that holds that observation is value-free, and he opposes radical idealism which overshadows social practices in the construction of knowledge (Guzzini 2000, 160). Here, the definition of constructivism that I embrace posits that constructivism indicates an interpretivist theory according to which actors behave according to the role that they construct for themselves in accordance with how they perceive their environment to be – a role that constitutes their social identity.

Consequently, constructivism holds that the study of actors' intentionality narrows the investigation of the social world to intersubjectivity, how they interpret or manipulate it, and how they make sense of their successes or failures. In this regard, constructivism has an empiricist foundation that focuses on specific actors and contexts, rather than on inferring general laws of behaviour – which might exist, but they might run deeper than the actors' consciousness and views of the world, and that might be out of researchers' reach, who themselves are particular actors placed in particular spatiotemporal contexts. Indeed, researchers cannot observe the entirety of reality, especially when they cannot distance themselves from the system in which they are placed. On the grounds of these considerations, I agree with Ole Wæver, and argue that constructivism enables researchers to see the objects of research "as constructed by the separate theories" of realism and liberalism (Wæver 1996, 174).

In this dissertation, I adopt Sabine Saurugger's definition of actor-centred constructivism as an approach whose aim "is to understand how worldviews, which provide the cognitive background in which actors evolve, are at the same time used by actors to strategically achieve their goals" (Saurugger 2013, 896). In the case of the EU, actor-centred constructivism highlights the importance of actors beyond EU institutions – whereas constructivist scholars tend to exclude or diminish "the role of member states and member-driven decision processes," (Gehring and Urbanski 2023, 134). An actor-centred view should not imply a reduction of the agent-structure problem to one of the two polarities. Rather, such an approach takes into consideration the irreducibility of agents and structures to one of the two elements, and the indeterminacy that constitutes IR as a field of research. Therefore, I argue that actor-centred constructivism integrates actorness studies and IR theory with foreign policy analysis.

3.3 An actor-centred, constructivist definition of actorness

Recently, Stephan Klose has turned to social interactionism to propose a more constructivist definition of actorness. Drawing on the work of social psychologist George Mead, Klose defines actorness as "an entity's capacity to imagine and realize roles for its sense of 'self' in (specific contexts of) international affairs," a capacity that hinges on internal and external sets of expectations about roles, creative actions, and social and material resources (Klose 2018, 1148). While I do not employ cognitive or socio-psychological approaches, I adopt Klose's definition because it is compatible with that of Bretherton and Vogler, despite Klose's assertion that social interactionism better supports Jupille and Caporaso's emphasis on domestic cohesion (Klose 2018, 1148) – a concept that also appears in Bretherton and Vogler's 2013 article.

More precisely, I argue that Klose's definition strengthens the role of identity that Bretherton and Vogler deemed as central in their view of actorness. According to Klose the "ability to generate a coherent role aspiration, in this light, depends on the convergence of domestic role expectation" (Klose 2018, 1148), which relates to the "shared understandings about the nature of an entity" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 39). In this regard, it becomes clear that while Jupille and Caporaso emphasise the domestic cohesion of the EU, Bretherton and Vogler also stress the need for common views about what the EU is and what it is expected to do. I also argue that the concept of imagination better suits the study of role-construction in the form of capability-construction, which deals with the EU's decision-making process and capacity to bring about change in international affairs.

The concept of political imagination risks being too broad to be useful or applicable, without suitable determinants. Indeed, imagination might refer to crucial qualities or capacities such as anticipatory or predictive abilities, which have become

increasingly relevant for foresight, forecasting, backcasting, and future-oriented methods of governance in general – even for Arctic politics (see European Commission 2021b). Or, it might refer to policy creativity, which is also a crucial component of policy-making. To combine it with Bretherton and Vogler's conceptualisation, and to operationalise it, this research offers a definition of imagination as the combination of opportunity and presence, and how actors employ them to construct their capability.

In addition, Klose also considers the role of creative action, which enables actor to defy prescribed roles – which is one of the main limitations of sociological institutionalism (Knight 1992, 15) – and highlights the role of agency over effectiveness. Effectiveness has been central to the study of actorness. In addition to Sjöstedt (1977), Gehring, Urbanski, and Oberthür also define actorness as the capacity of an entity to act effectively in its own right, by influencing others' behaviour. In the case of the EU, this aspect of actorness is manifested when the Member States renounce their decision-making power and control over resources, to transfer them to the EU (Gehring *et al.* 2017, 729). Bretherton and Vogler slowly but steadily abandoned the definition of actorness as capability as well, privileging effectiveness. Indeed, in their 2013 article, the two authors started considering capability as "a contributory rather than determining factor" (Bretherton and Vogler 2013, 381) of actorness – without providing a clear or comprehensive definition of the concept.

However, identifying actorness with effectiveness raises other issues, since the mechanism linking actors' capabilities and external effects are not clear, nor necessarily dependent on capability. In this regard, Daniel Thomas (2012) shows the problem of coherence between the EU and the Member States' positions, and EU effectiveness. In his study, Thomas illustrates that the choice of the EU and its

Members defended their position against the US campaign for International Criminal Court 'non-surrender agreements' via moral and legal claims. However, those claims were far less efficient than American threats to withdraw military support from some states. Thomas also observes that the EU's decision not to resort to threats or other ways to compensate those States. Therefore, Thomas criticises the link between domestic dialogue and external achievement as well, arguing that internal agreement-

> "may be necessary for the EU to exert its influence abroad, but it clearly is not sufficient in a multi-centric world where many others do not share the EU's collective policy preferences and are ready to deploy vast resources in pursuit of their goals" (Thomas 2012, 472).

In addition, studying the effectiveness of the EU policies in relation to actorness implies distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary effectiveness, as Thomas observe. For example, researchers can neither exclude that incoherent policies might produce unintended positive consequences for the actors considered, nor that hostile events can produce positive impacts on the grounds of how actors make sense of them – *and vice versa*. In the case of the Arctic, for example, the EU's Regulation on seal products produced numerous consequences (including precluding the Union's bids for formal observer status) that are difficult to evaluate, but it was the result of internal increasing regulations and bans that the EU needed to harmonise – as discussed in the fifth and seventh chapters. As in the general case of sanctions, the problem is not whether they are effective *per se*, but rather "identifying the factors that influence their effectiveness," (Morin and Paquin 2018, 47).

In sum, Klose better articulates Bretherton and Vogler's actorness and constructivist perspective, while also maintaining the focus on how actors construct their capabilities rather than their effectiveness. His definition can create a connection

among the three cornerstones of actorness, since actors' imagination impacts opportunity and presence, or even shapes them – stressing that the actor's imagination extends to other actors' roles and the social structure where actors operate. Then, his definition of actorness offers three steps to operationalise research on EU actorness: analysis how the EU imagines to respond to events; investigation on the attempts to fulfil its imagined role; and the implications of this activity (Klose 2018, 1145-50). As far as capability is concerned, by starting from the definition of actorness as capacity *to imagine one's own role* in a context and (and hopefully *realise it*), it is possible to establish explanatory relationships between the three concepts and to order them – to illustrate how capability means to capitalise on opportunity and presence, as Bretherton and Vogler affirm.

3.4 Operationalising actorness from the perspective of actors' imagination

By adopting Klose's definition of actorness and embracing actor-centred constructivism, it becomes necessary to operationalise Bretherton and Vogler's concept from an actor-centred perspective. Among the three concepts proposed by Bretherton and Vogler, opportunity is the most 'problematic' with regards to actor-centred approaches, at least at first sight. Bretherton and Vogler refer to 'opportunity structure' to indicate the external ideational context, and they affirm that it is supposed to capture the dynamism of international politics (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 23). However, Bretherton and Vogler's understanding of opportunity as a structural concept does not convey information about the nature of said structure, nor it indicates how actors construct it or are affected by it.

The concept of opportunity is a cornerstone of policy-cycle studies and foreign policy research, including studies on the EU's Arctic policy (Wegge 2012). William

Gamson and David Meyer affirm that political opportunities are not only there for actors to exploit them, but also for actors to construct them. More specifically, they define such a construction "as a struggle over meaning within movements" (Gamson and Meyer 1996, 289). Gamson and Meyer analyse political opportunity from the perspective of movements, but their considerations on behaviour and opportunities apply to political actors. Therefore, the concept lends itself to indicating the capacity of actors to create their opportunity by making sense of their role in a specific context without necessarily being (only) structuralist in nature.

Within the field of international politics and IR, Benjamin Most and Harvey Starr include opportunity in their work *Inquiry, Logic, and International Politics* (first in 1989 and in the following editions of their book), together with the concept of Willingness. Most and Starr indeed proposed the two concepts by building on the work of Harold and Margaret Sprout, who dedicated their careers to the study of the impact of environments and contexts in international affairs. According to David Criekemans, the Sprouts were extremely influential in introducing Political Geography in the U.S. Political Science and IR *curricula* (Criekemans 2022, 157-9), even though their names is seldom known or "rarely mentioned in the histories of the field" (Specter 2023). Their work began in the form of what can be defined a traditional geopolitical approach, which emphasises material dimensions such as the size of a state and the impact of geographical elements for the efficient administration of the state, which Harold Sprout believed that could "enable the student of public policy to make predictions regarding the results to be expected from any line of governmental policy adopted or under consideration," (Sprout 1931, 442). During the 1960s, however, the Sprouts (as well as other IR scholars, as recalled in the previous chapter), started to distance themselves from realist scholarships, including their own works. They

abandoned deterministic approaches in favour of more human or behaviour-centred perspectives which placed human reasoning at the centre of political analysis (Criekemans 2022, 163) which they called “cognitive behaviouralism”.

The Sprouts presented cognitive behaviouralism as “the simple and familiar principle that a person reacts to his milieu as he apperceives it – that is, as he perceives and interprets it in the light of past experience” (Sprout and Sprout 1957, 314). From this point of view, the Sprouts’ thought does not mirror the so-called debate between traditional realist and behaviouralists, where the former had been accused by the latter of not being ‘scientific enough’ on the grounds of their high dependency on historical examples (Schmidt 2013, 14). In step with constructivism, they do not assume any aprioristic or theory-driven motivations behind human action, but they distinguish between “psychological environment” and “operational environment”, the former being the image of a context that actors create, or “mental maps” (Starr 2013, 435), and the latter being the material and ideational setting that limits the possibilities of actors (Sprout and Sprout 1957, 314).

With regards to opportunity, I draw from the definition of *psychological environment* that the Sprouts give – which emphasises actors’ imagination and creativity over fixed roles or claims to accurately represent the structure of the international arena, regardless of how this image informs actors. Indeed, William Gamson and David Meyer do not assume that actors necessarily evaluate opportunities realistically (in the less academic understanding of the term). The two authors acknowledge that actors tend to present “a systematic optimistic bias exaggerating opportunities and underestimating constraints,” and they observe that such an attitude is crucial “to sustain a collective action frame that includes the belief that conditions can be changed,” (Gamson and Meyer 1996, 289-90).

The second concept adopted by Bretherton and Vogler is presence. This concept is meant to capture the "structural power of the EU", which means "the ability of the EU, by virtue of its existence, to exert influence beyond its borders" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 22). The two authors argue that, in their view, presence "does not denote purposive external action, rather it is a consequence of being" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 26). Bretherton and Vogler (2006, 25). Presence starting from David Allen and Michael Smith's 1990 article on the impact of Western Europe (the European Community). Allen and Smith articulate the concept in broader aspects, which do not coincide with what Bretherton and Vogler consider presence to be: for example, they state that presence can be seen a quality of international arenas, where institutions and decision-makers create their expectations upon other participants in a specific area. At the same time, Allen and Smith (1990, 22) also argue that presence is not limited to actors, but that it "can be a property of ideas, notions, expectations and imaginations" – and I emphasise the last element of the list.

This second cornerstone appears to be more ambiguous and less effective than opportunity on two levels. First, Allen and Smith define presence also in terms of legitimacy and capacity to mobilise resources, which Bretherton and Vogler place under the category of capability. Second, from Allen and Smith's perspective, presence is related to the concept of opportunity, since their article deals with how international arenas enable or constrain political behaviour. This similarity might be present even in Bretherton and Vogler's conceptualisation, which is only smoothened by framing presence as 'non purposive' – even though such a definition is ambiguous.

Other scholars have proposed a more precise reading of Bretherton and Vogler's concept of presence, to make it easier to identify it – and potentially less akin to opportunity. In their work on EU actorness, Damro *et al.*'s (2018) choice to consider

presence in terms of the impact of the EU's *acquis communautaire* – which is the legal and policy cumulative body of the EU (Damro *et al*. 2018, 16-7; Schunz and Damro 2020, 126) conditioning the behaviour of the Member States and external entities when existent or relevant for a specific issue. While considering presence as non-purposive, Damro *et al*. (2018, 16) describe presence as "potentiality of external effects".

Considering the constructivist and ecological perspective, presence should indicate the capacity of the EU to have an impact on other actors' psychological environment and consequently their behaviour by existing as an entity with an identity. In other words, it is a capacity of the actor taken into consideration, and it becomes visible as other entities start to attribute to the EU specific roles on the grounds of its values. To be effective, an actor's presence needs to be part of a system that makes it significant for others – therefore, the actor whose presence is considered needs to engage with others. The meaning of presence therefore does not stem from mere existence, but rather from the purposive action of participating in international politics where third parties can construct expectations upon an actor, and *vice versa*. Without participation in a system, the existence of one actor is meaningless to the others: its existence can be part of the operational environment, but not the psychological.

Building upon Klose and Schunz *et al*., I propose to consider presence as the sets of expectations that actors build upon themselves (and others) resulting from both the legal structure, which determines core values and competences, and level of action. Therefore, rather than considering the 'potential external effects' of an actor's legal and institutional structure, I stress the policymakers' cognition and understanding of actors' competences or capacities. By doing so, the concept of presence maintains a connection to opportunity, but it stresses a different level of decision-making and mutual understanding of one actor's role. While opportunity identifies what an actor

aspires to do in a given context, presence indicates how an actor can act or is expected to act, or how they can act or are supposed to act.

In the case of the EU, I also argue that presence should not refer only to the external environment but also to the domestic one; and, that it should refer not only to the EU's treaties, but also the legal structure of the EU (Arctic) Member States, i.e. the impact of their constitutional and legal systems inside the EU and its decision-making processes. In the case of Arctic politics and governance, Denmark is particularly relevant from this perspective, since the Arctic lands of Greenland and the Faroe Islands enjoy high degrees of autonomy in domestic areas of interests such as sustainability – even though Denmark still holds two key portfolios, namely foreign affairs and defence, and has of course the capacity to influence other relevant sectors such as the economic and judicial. The three EU Arctic Member States operate both as EU members and Arctic States; they bargain in both the EU's institutional framework and in the Arctic institutions; they need to be considered by EU Institutions according to their own specificity – for example, the former Danish opt-out regarding the defence policy, repealed in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Finally, after opportunity and presence, there is capability, which consists in the ability to capitalise on presence or respond to opportunity, and it is defined as the internal dimension of external actions (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 5; 2006, 24-9). In Bretherton and Vogler's main works, capability constitutes the "interconnection between structure and agency" which is of interest in a study of the evolving identity, roles, and actorness of the EU," (Bretherton and Vogler 2006, 22). The two authors further specify the meaning of Capability for actorness, articulating an actor's intentionality through five requirements: (i) shared commitment to a set of overarching values and principles; (ii) domestic legitimation of decision processes and priorities

relating to external policy; (iii) the ability to identify priorities and formulate policies; and (iv) the availability of, and capacity to utilise policy instruments, consisting in diplomacy, negotiations, economic tools and military means (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 38).

Yet, over time, Bretherton and Vogler have reduced its dimension from four points to two, keeping the ability to formulate priorities and develop policies, and the availability of and capacity to utilise policy instruments, and eliminating references to shared commitment to sets of common values and to the domestic legitimation of priorities relating to external policy (Bretherton and Vogler 2013, 381). The two authors included the aspect of coherence, which is threefold: vertical, horizontal, and institutional – which are especially meant to fit the case of the EU's foreign policy. The first one indicates the degree of convergence among the Member States' foreign policies, and between the Member States and the EU's. The second one deals with different policy sectors and issues that might be in tension with one another – for example, use of Arctic lands and Indigenous People's rights, or animal welfare and Indigenous People's industry, as illustrated in the empirical chapters. The third type of coherence describes the mechanism of the EU's internal policy coordination. Despite the references to the EU's system, such an approach does not determine a *sui generis* approach, which is not mentioned in the 2013 article – and it is unnecessary because of the definition of actorness elucidated here.

At the same time, the choice to narrow capability down to two aspects is not problematic, if the other two excluded elements become embedded in the definition of actorness. The definition of shared values and domestic legitimacy relates to the decision-makers' imagination and construction of their role. These aspects are especially when the actor considered is the EU, which maintains a distinction not only

between EU and national political and legal structure, but also between a common EU identity and the national ones. By adding the criteria of coherence, Bretherton and Vogler take into consideration how the different aspects of the EU's policymaking need to converge to coordinate the EU's action – yet, I argue, not to assure effectiveness, but a specific role. From the perspective of coherence, the definitions of opportunity and presence from an actor-centred perspective provide a better connection between the two concepts and capability, presenting a stronger explanatory relationship among them in terms of capability construction.

3.5 Integrating actorness and foreign policy analysis: the contribution of critical geopolitics

The operationalization of the three cornerstones of actorness conducted so far offers a more constructivist understanding of what to research, but it does not provide specific concepts to identify the elements through which the EU constructs its role in the Arctic. Here, I take a step further by adding concepts from critical geopolitics which can complement the study of actorness, and how opportunity and presence lead to capability construction. The relationship between Geopolitics (as a discipline) and IR has often been ambiguous. On the one hand, it is true that scholars are increasingly paying attention to the geopolitics of the Arctic, considering the actual and prospective implications of climate change - from trade to military security. On the other hand, academics have noticed a troubled relation between political science – including EU studies – and geography, urging to reinforce the link between policymaking and the construction of political spaces (Raspotnik 2016; 2018, 2019; Lambach 2022) especially from a critical perspective. Phil Kelly defines critical geopolitics as more concerned with decision-making processes (Kelly 2006, 30-31) and political

discourse, rather than scientific inquiries and policy prescriptions. Pami Aalto (2002, 150) defines critical geopolitics as “the construction of political spaces and especially the symbolic and material (territorial) boundaries delimiting them”.

However, as in the case of constructivism and IR theories, Ó Tuathail and Agnew notice that discourse is the constitutive element of both classic and critical geopolitics. Through discourse, “intellectuals of statecraft ‘spatialize’ international politics in such a way as to represent it as a ‘world’ characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas,” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992, 192). Consequently, critical geopolitics does not unveil or focus on ‘something new’ or diametrical to realist geopolitical discourse. Such an assertion might collide with a specific view of critical geopolitics as in opposition to classical geopolitics and its imperialist historical goals – at least as manipulated in imperialist narratives and practices. Rather, critical geopolitics is here seen through a constructivist lens – as a social activity which constructs the psychological environments of political actors. Indeed, “[t]o designate a place is not simply to define a location or setting. It is to open up a field of possible taxonomies and trigger a series of narratives, subjects and appropriate foreign-policy responses” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992, 194).

‘Positioning’ and ‘scale’ are the geopolitical concepts that can better link opportunity and presence to foreign policy making and analysis, and they provide a better understanding of capability construction. Positioning and scaling are categories which capture space-making practices employed by political actors. By positioning themselves and others, actors reify the Arctic space and “imbue it with meaning” (Lambach 2022, 2914). The act of positioning is understood “in terms of perceptions of status, power and aspirations for oneself and for others in that region” (Scott 2012,

611). One example is Sweden, which had to construct its Arctic identity externally and especially internally despite being geographically part of the Arctic.

Positioning is playing an important role in Arctic discourse, as more states 'brand' themselves as legitimate regional stakeholders and actors. Vesa Väätänen and Kaj Zimmerbauer have analysed the Arctic discourse of Japan and France, through which they position themselves as states "linked to the Arctic" even if they are not Arctic States (Väätänen and Zimmerbauer 2020, 378-379). When representatives of states that are distant from the Arctic, at least according to maps, argue that they are affected by changes in the region or that a warming Arctic is a global concern, they justify their involvement, or aspirations to participate in Arctic affairs by redrawing the boundaries of the region and its relevance for the international community, and through institutions such as the Arctic Council. Väätänen and Zimmerbauer findings suggest that the Arctic region "as a distinct territorial space is being reproduced but simultaneously 'stretched' (or 'expanded') and reconstituted as well" (Väätänen and Zimmerbauer 2020, 385).

The concept of scale is related to the interpretation of presence given in this theoretical framework. Scale indeed "provides an organisational framework for human perception and action" in a given territory (Agnew 1997, 100), which is exemplified by the EU's multilevel legal structure. In the EU integration process, scale has been a crucial dimension of the integration process, since the representatives of governments had to negotiate the competences of the community (Bachmann 2015, 690). In addition, scale also indicates "processes of spatial ordering, shaping, exclusion, and other 'power tools' in so far mostly domestic settings" (Prys-Hansen *et al.*, 2023). From this perspective, Scale meets Presence as a process of imagining and

understanding how the EU is to act, and at what level action should take place according to EU law.

On the grounds of Klose's view of actorness, the definitions of positioning and scale provided here meet and further operationalise the definition of opportunity and presence from ecological and constructivist perspectives. They indeed explain how identity – defined as role emerging through imagination, relationships with other actors, and meaningful actions – is constructed and leads to the formation of capability. As Sybille Reinke de Buitrago (2020, 98) observes, "[i]dentity constructions link up discursively with political space and spatial constructions", impacting the formulation of policies and shaping political behaviour. Actors create narratives where they position themselves and others as legitimate or illegitimate participants in Arctic governance, and where they present the level at which it is appropriate for them to act. Therefore, through Positioning and Scale, actors make themselves "intelligible [for the] community of communicators or storytellers with whom one identifies" (Agnew and Muscarà 2012, 151).

3.6 Conclusions

Scholars of EU actorness have started paying more attention to the concept of actorness proposed by Bretherton and Vogler, presenting different approaches and applications of it. Starting from theory, I have revised the concepts of actor and actorness that Bretherton and Vogler proposed for the EU. By adopting an actor-centred definition of constructivism, I justified the adoption of a definition of actorness that is not a synonym of capability, but rather explains the process of capability formation in a systematic fashion. In addition, by renouncing to the identification of actorness as effectiveness, the study of actorness can better focus on the actor that

operates and its psychological environment, rather than the several external factors that can also escape the capacity of the actor to consider all the elements that can hinder or support their political actions.

To successfully link the narrative dimension of actorness to the geopolitical concepts of positioning and scale are intrinsically related to the construction of the Arctic region and the Arctic discourses, and they are therefore crucial elements for the construction of Arctic identities – roles that actors imagine and perform. The concepts of scale and positioning benefit Bretherton and Vogler's conceptualisation of actorness in two ways. First, they give more specific geopolitical content to opportunity and presence, which would be otherwise vague, and better. Second, they establish explicit connections between the external environment and the actor's agency beyond structure-oriented assumptions.

Chapter IV

Analysing the EU's Arctic Policy:

A Case Study of Role Construction

4.1 Introduction

The study of EU (international) actorness leads to researching the EU's foreign policy, and how it is produced. Except for behaviouralist approaches, IR theories have privileged the study of the international structures and how it determines state behaviour, to the detriment of domestic-level decision-making processes (Smith 1986; White 1999). Christos Kassimeris (2009, 86) observes how this choice is particularly evident in the case of small powers, whose behaviour is more easily explained with reference to their (lack of) military capabilities and to the structure of the international community – in other words, the equilibrium of great powers.

In contrast to such a view, as Jennifer Milliken observes, the study of foreign policy aims to explain the effect of the political elites' discourse in the production of policies and in the consequent policy practices, where meanings are reproduced (Milliken 2001, 139; 149). As explained in the first chapter, I explain the process of the construction of the EU's capability in the Arctic starting from its actorness, i.e. the act of imagining the EU's role in a specific domain, according to the following model:

> EU collective actorness, manifested in the forms of Capability, depends on the convergence of the EU's institutions and Member States' views of:
>
> (a) Opportunity, which the EU actors' construct through their Positioning
>
> (b) Presence, which the EU actors' shape through their view of the appropriate Scale of governance

According to this model of actorness, the EU's identity stems from the *shared understanding* of what role the EU actors aspire to do as they construct their Arctic strategies or policies. Therefore, EU identity is not here equalised to a single aspect (such as the Treaties and their norms), but rather a process in which the EU institutions and Member States define mutual roles and expectations over time. Indeed, Schunz and Damro (2020) affirm that the "perception and framing of an 'event' or constellation might lead to the understanding that external engagement is desirable and that it is to be conducted by the EU and not by the member states" – or vice versa (Schunz and Damro 2020, 129).

In the study of imagination (the processes of assigning meaning to oneself, other actors, and their environment, and of creating ways to achieve their goals), discourse plays a crucial role and "[l]anguage is seen as a rich source of analysis rather than 'just' words" (Larsen 2004, 62). Discourse Analysis operates with the assumption that the (social) world is of our making and that language itself should be the object of researchers' analysis – language as a means of communication, not as a phenomenon possessing mechanisms that extend beyond social cognition, and that govern the formation of words (in which, of course, also views of the world play an important role). With reference to what Schunz and Damro say about external engagement, the research aims to highlight that the EU's Arctic policy represents a struggle over

meanings and expectations on different roles of what Arctic actor the EU should be – without pathologizing conflicts between actors, but considering it as the default setting that makes communication necessary.

On the grounds of the actor-centred constructivist framework, the actors' purposes are expected to stem from the conception of their role, environment, and nature of governance, rather than from an impersonal international structure – which, as shown in the previous chapter, is more ideational and actor-dependent than assumed to be in traditional IR theories. Starting from these considerations, the study does not treat Positioning and Scale as 'variables' in the positivist meaning of the term, nor it aims to identify patterns of behaviour which need to be tested to study what boosts or hinders effective political actions, or social determinants of actor's behaviour.

This chapter unfolds as follows: first, I explain and justify the research design of this research, i.e. the case study. Moving from an actor-centred perspective, the case study offer the possibility to deepen the knowledge of a specific issue and the worldviews of the actors involved, without attempting to identify patterns of behaviour beyond the context of the research. After that, I discuss the methodology, Discourse and Thematic Analysis, and the method of interpretation of the data drawn from the main materials – documents and interviews – highlighting advantages and limitations of both methods and materials.

4.2 A case study approach for explaining the EU's Arctic (foreign) policy

To borrow the words of Brent Steele, actor-centred constructivism sees actors as capable of "seeking out structures that give meaning to their action", in a process that is influenced by the social context in which actors are situated and that "develops with no guarantees" (Steele 2007, 27). However, constructivist scholars do not own specific

sets of tools to carry out 'constructivist research', and "debates among methodology remain active among constructivists" (Jackson and Jones 2012, 104). Methods, however, are strictly connected to the purpose of the investigation and to the theory guiding the researcher. Max Weber (1958) introduced the difference between understanding (interpretative) and explaining (causal, mechanist), which is particularly relevant for the field of IR since, as Martin Hollis and Steve Smith (1991, 196) argue, "International Relations is heir to two traditions, the scientific and the hermeneutic". In the case of this research, actor-centred constructivism leans towards hermeneutics, since it aims to highlight actors' behaviour according to their worldviews.

With regards to the purpose of social sciences, Martin Hollis states that researchers need not only to investigate actors' intentions but also the reasons behind their actions. More specifically, Hollis affirms that the role is the *explanandum*, the passive element to be explained by an *explanans* – or more *explanantia* (Hollis 1977, 74). According to Robert Brown, the act of explaining a phenomenon might assume nine different meanings, the main two being clarification and deduction: researchers can better explain phenomena by improving and clarifying concepts, or they can demonstrate the logical relations between hierarchical propositions. Clarification has been covered in the theoretical framework, while deduction is not directly applicable to this research while still being somewhat implicit. In addition, among the other types of explanations that Brown lists, there is one particularly relevant that better captures the sense of this research, which is the explanation of actors' reasons.

Brown defines the explanation of reasons as the study of the actions that the actor(s) intend(s) to take or that they have taken, if the researcher can assign those actions to individual agents or members of groups. Brown argues that the explanation

of reasons requires the researcher to collect information and evidence about the actors' goals, the capacity to formulate an argument explaining their action, and how the argument affected the decision to act (Brown 1963, 44; 103-4). The analysis of reasons differs from the study of intentions, which tend to refer to the unintended consequences of actors' actions and to identify the "intentions" of the person whose actions are to be explained. Brown also notes that the study of intentions does not need to refer to actions, since actors can abstain from doing something that they would like to do – however, most social actions imply intentionality. Considering this dissertation's focus on the production of foreign policies rather than their effectiveness, I argue that the study of the agents' imagination and consequent capability formation is more compatible with the explanation of the actors' reasons rather than their intentions.

In step with the purpose of this research and its theoretical foundations, the case study method represents the most suitable approach to investigating EU actorness and explaining how its Arctic (foreign) policy. From a theoretical perspective, the premises of the case study method make it compatible with the constructivist ontologies and epistemologies. In particular, Robert Yin defines case studies as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2003, 8; 18). Gary Thomas (2011, 513a) defines cases as constituted by "[a] practical, historical unity" (the subject of the study) and "[a]n analytical or theoretical frame" (the object of the study). The historical unity might be an individual or a group, an event, institutions, or even policies "that are studied holistically by one or more methods" (Thomas 2011a, 513). In this case, the EU's actorness in Arctic governance represents the subject of the case study. On the other hand, the analysis of the EU Institutions and Arctic Member States' policies for the Arctic region constitute

the object of the study – to be investigated through the methods of foreign policy analysis and Discourse Analysis in particular, as explained in the following section.

The case study approach is not immune from criticism – especially from those who aim to employ methodologies and approaches and focus on the capacity of methods to produce generalizable results[17] (Thomas 2011a; 2011b). Bent Flyvbjerg summarises the doubts against the utility or effectiveness of case studies in five points: context-dependency (as qualitative inferior to context-independency), scarcity of cases, limitation to hypothesis-formulation, bias confirmation, and low generalisation (Flyvbjerg 2006, 221). For these reasons, the case study method has also a troubled relationship with theory – which is expected to be formulated by induction or abduction on the grounds of numerous observations, or to be confirmed through empirical testing. In the case of Bretherton and Vogler's concept of actorness, their ambiguous use of terminology such as theory and model lend their approach to both 'positivist' and interpretivist criticism – which can be combined with their unclear constructivist approach and the purpose of constructivist theory in their study.

For example, Thomas Gehring *et al.* criticise Bretherton and Vogler for not elucidating "the relationship between the component parts of their triad of opportunity, presence and capability", which is necessary to understand how they causally

[17] The criticism related to case studies is similar to the one addressing 'area studies' approaches and area-based knowledge. Like the case study offered here, these approaches revolve around the intensive study of a specific geographical area (whose delimitations can be subject to debates). According to Kenneth Prewitt, the two main difference between the two concerns the focus of the researcher: area studies scholars produce knowledge about an area, while scholars adopting the second approach use knowledge produced with regards to a specific area, but they also apply it to phenomena occurring outside of the area, or transcending it (Prewitt 2002, 8). However, area studies scholars often need to resort to comparative approaches for their results to be applicable. Matthias Basedau and Patrick Köllner argue that, in the case of comparative area studies, researchers might often encounter 'traditional' problems related to their research design and the use or formation of concepts. With regards to research design, the problems mainly concern the usual challenges of comparative studies (such as maximisation of the number of cases, or preference for small-N comparisons). As far as concepts are concerned, the two authors notice that scholars can often create labels and concepts about a specific area without consulting previous relevant work, producing redundant concepts for similar phenomena (Basedau and Köllner 2007, 116-20).

contribute to actorness (Gehring *et al*. 2013, 850) – to be fair, they extend the same criticism to Jupille and Caporaso. With regards to generalization, the lack of causal relationships weakens the application of the model, especially in hypothetico-deductive investigations since it also lacks a general theory that meets the necessary criteria to construct, develop, and appraise theory to identify a specific phenomenon – i.e. the role of identities and shared understandings in explaining EU actorness through the identification of controllable variables. However, in the context of a case study of foreign policy, Klose's definition of actorness and Bretherton and Vogler's 'cornerstones' (Opportunity, Presence, and Capability) indeed enables the collection of (a limited amount of) data that manifest the phenomenon of intentionality in decision-making.

The choice for qualitative case study is not meant to bypass the issues of rigour, even though the design of a qualitative case study might raise criticism from positivist approaches as well. Qualitative epistemologies might elude the typical design of scientific studies, especially in terms of validity, reliability, together with generalisation (Kvale 1995, in Tobin and Begley 2004, 389). In opposition to positivism, Egon Guba argues that the naturalistic core of qualitative research is not suitable for those criteria of a study's trustworthiness, which he replaces with: "credibility", which replaces internal validity; "transferability", rather than external validity; "dependability", instead of reliability; and "confirmability", as a substitute for objectivity (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 219). While the debate over the 'fairness' or 'authenticity' of a qualitative case study has not reached a clear conclusion, it is still possible to provide a justifiable construction for qualitative research.

The criterion selected for the construction of this dissertation's case studies is 'goodness'. According to Jan Arminio and Francine Hultgren, the goodness of

qualitative research is based upon six elements: philosophical foundation, methodology, transparency about data, the representation of the researcher(s) and the participants' voices, clarity about the interpretation process and the presentation of the insights, and possible recommendations for other researchers (Arminio and Hultgren 2002, 450). Tobin and Begley observe that the criteria of goodness might present qualitative research as more static and linear than it usually is, and that the concept risks complicating the methodological debate over the validity of qualitative research by surrendering "to the consumerism of methodolatry" (Janesick 2000, in Tobin and Begley 2004, 391). However, the concept of goodness helps make the study as intersubjective as possible – i.e. suitable for "communication between people and shared understanding over individual knowledge and concepts of objective knowledge" (Calhoun 2002). With regards to the goodness of the case study, the issues related to the philosophical foundations have been addressed in the previous chapters, this chapter covers the other aspects.

With a comment on the design of the case study proposed in this space, the study of the EU's Arctic policy has been divided into two temporal frameworks, enabling a cross-time comparison of actorness between 2008 and 2015 on the one hand, and 2016 and 2021 – where the 2016 represents the watershed between the initial stage and the 'integrated approach' of the EU towards the region – as well as marking a time of increasing uncertainty in the Arctic region. The two time periods provide the possibility to compare the same actors in evolving contexts, highlighting the role of the actors' view of their roles in the formulation of their policies and the EU's policy.

According to Thomas' classification (Thomas 2011a, 515-7), this research is mainly retrospective and diachronic, i.e. it gathers data about decisions made in the

past but also it is open to detect change over time up to the present – where the event has not reached a conclusion, as in the case of the policies for the Arctic. In this regard, the study largely employs a combination of primary and secondary sources, which both enable the understanding of the EU's vision for the region and comparisons between the EU's intentions and their evaluations, or just perceptions from an external perspective.

In addition, the participation in conferences and networking activities have helped me gather information and perceptions about the political dynamics – as, for example, who is invited to speak, the etiquette, and who talks during breaks and informal moments. Even though these pieces of information might not be directly employed for several reasons, such as privacy and anonymity, they can help better formulate research questions as well as evaluations of Arctic politics. Nevertheless, they contribute to witnessing the incessant transformation of Arctic politics – and of politics in general.

4.3 Discourse and Thematic Analysis in the EU's foreign policy

This section is dedicated to Discourse Analysis, the sources, and the analysis of, data. In the study of foreign policies, the use of Discourse Analysis is related to the development of interpretivism and social constructivism in International Relations. With respect to this dissertation, Henrik Larsen (2004, 69) argues that the study of "representations of actorness are central for the study of the EU, since they can be said to constitute the point of departure for further inquiry into EU foreign policy from a discourse perspective". Larsen draws his approach from Jennifer Milliken's conceptualization of Discourse Analysis in its application to IR research, according to which discourses are forms of communication (mainly verbal and textual, but not

limited to these typologies) that serve as “systems of representation” which constitute the ‘intelligible world’ of the actors (Milliken 1999).

From Milliken and Larsen’s perspective, actors resort to discourse to justify their positions and actions, producing a frame of legitimacy that justify certain courses of actions to the detriment of others. The other side of the coin is therefore the need to pay attention to rival discourses, and the effort to preserve and perpetuate specific meanings that reproduce discourses and consequent practices by eliminating alternatives (Larsen 2004, 67; see Milliken 1999). With regards to the reproduction of meanings and their contestation, Discourse Analysis enables to shed light on how actors construct their roles and shape the EU’s Arctic policies.

To ensure the goodness of data collection and interpretation, I couple Discourse Analysis with Thematic Analysis to reduce the degree of solipsistic subjectivity (see Jonsen and Jehn 2009, 124) and maintain intersubjectivity. Thematic Analysis consists of “identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes” (Guest *et al*. 2012, 7). Thematic Analysis can be applied to study documents, speeches, and interviews from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Since Thematic Analysis requires the development of (macro-level) themes and (micro-level) codes to interpret texts, researchers consider Thematic Analysis to be quantitative method that can be employed here to complement qualitative analyses. However, I employ it in a qualitative fashion. The themes need to highlight the discursive actions that actors employ to establish and constitute geographical spaces: reification; inscription of meaning; communication of boundedness between inside and outside; relation to other spaces (Lambach 2022, 294-5). When actors reify a space, they refer to it as a distinctive object and represent it on maps accordingly. When they inscribe meaning to a space, actors articulate all the elements that make the

given space what it is and not something different – and, arguably, also the reasons linking themselves to that space.

The themes and codes need to explain how the EU Institutions and Arctic Member States construct Opportunity and Presence through discourse practices that their Positioning and views about the Scale of governance display. Since Positioning and Scale constitute the themes, I will adopt a set of sub-questions to define the codes to be applied to the analysis. The questions are drawn from Douglas Nord's study of the Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council. According to Nord (2016, 10-3), there are six main questions regarding the general governance of the Arctic: (i) who is to govern? (ii) what is to be governed? (iii) where is the governance to take place?; (iv) when is governance to operate?; (v) how is governance to function?; (vi) why is governance necessary?. As shown in the table *Discourse and Thematic Analysis in the EU's foreign policy* (Table 4.3), the 'geopolitical questions' constitute the codes through which the actors' Positioning and proposed Scale of governance emerge as themes. The analysis of the documents and the interviews was conducted manually, which made the use of codes and themes even more necessary to reduce the degree of subjectivism.

The meaning of the 'geopolitical' questions that Douglas Nord proposes is not as transparent as it would seem at first glance – but it is close to critical understanding of the term. The first one refers to two divisions: the first one concerns the opposition between the definition of Arctic issues as falling under the states' competences or if they pertain to regional or international institutions. Then, the division between those who claim that the Arctic is a primary concern of the Arctic states, and those who advocate more inclusion in the regional governance. The second question is strictly related to the latter division: it mirrors the cleavage regarding international

governance, i.e. if it is needed only for what is beyond states' authority, or if it needs to include issues such as economic development and Indigenous rights. The third query views the debate on the constitutive nature of the Arctic – if mainly maritime or terrestrial – and the consequent focus of Arctic policies. The fourth one asks if the international governance of the Arctic should merely support the Arctic States and their policies, or if a broader system of governance is needed. In the light of increasing common concerns for the region, as well as the de-territorialized dangers threatening the Arctic (such as pollution), this question is extremely relevant. In the specific case of the EU, it touches the ambiguities related to the subsidiarity principle and its interpretations (see also Koivurova *et al*. 2010, 6).

The fifth question deals with the operationalisation of Arctic governance. The current international legal framework is considered as sufficient by the Arctic States; others claim that the peculiar environmental and social features of the region require *ad hoc* measures. This type of regional governance would be more exclusive, with negative consequences for non-Arctic states or entities. In addition, it leads to a more intense debate on the direction to which policymakers must point, especially in entities such as the EU. The sixth and final question is meant to make explicit the reasons that drive actors to participate in the governance of the Arctic region, what they want to achieve, to prevent and why their contribution matters for the welfare of the region (Nord 2016, 10-13).

Table 4.3 **Discourse and Thematic Analysis**.

EU Actorness	
Imagined role of the EU (The EU's identity)	• Shared commitment to a set of overarching values; • Domestic legitimation of decision processes and priorities relating to external policy
Discourse and Thematic Analysis	(Documents; Speeches; Interviews)

Cornerstones of Actorness (from Bretherton and Vogler, 2006)	**Themes** (Critical Geopolitics)	**Codes** (Nord's geopolitical questions, 2016)
Opportunity	**Positioning**	Who is to govern?
		What is to be governed?
		Why is governance necessary?
Presence	**Scale**	Where is governance to operate?
		When is governance to operate?
Capability		How is governance to function?

In the interpretative process, the first, second, and sixth questions (who, what, and why) have been assigned to 'positioning', since answering them clarifies the reasons driving the Arctic actors to legitimise their role in the region and how inclusive Arctic governance should be. The answers to the third and fourth questions (where and when), on the other hand, shed light on the Arctic actors' view of the political competences relevant for proper Arctic matters and the appropriate level of political intervention – i.e. the scale of governance. Finally, answering the fifth question (how is governance to function?) shows the actors' capability, which are therefore seen as

consequent to their positioning (which enables actor to make sense of the ‘external opportunity’) and proposed scale (which reflects their legal structures and how the actors interpret them) for Arctic governance.

4.4 Sources and materials: investigating the production and reproduction of roles in policymaking and policy implementation

The analysis of discourse in policies involves two aspects: first, the investigation of systems of signification, where policymakers construct the target of their action in a way that also justifies their intervention; second, the study of the reproduction of those meanings in the implementation of said policies (Milliken 2001, 138). However, the implementation of the Arctic policies concerns several matters and levels of external and domestic governance, whose individual investigation exceeds the scope of the research. Therefore, in the first place, the analysis aims to study the Arctic policies to unveil the systems of signification, and how the policies reflect the roles that EU Institutions and Arctic Member States assign to themselves. Here, the main sources of information are documents and interviews.

4.4.1 Documents

In this dissertation, documents represent the main sources of discourses about the EU’s role in the Arctic. By studying documents, researchers try to answer the question: “[*w*]*hat kind of reality is this document creating, and how does it do it?*” (Atkinson and Coffey 2011, 81; italics in original). Documents refer to a variety of elements that “include advertisements; agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event

programs (i.e., printed outlines); letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers (clippings/articles); press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organisational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records" (Bowen 2009, 28-9). In the case of policy research, Carol Cardno includes also subsidiary documents, which comprise "procedures, regulations and reports" (Cardno 2018, 627). In addition, I include documents produced by policy advisors and scholars, who have either cooperated in the production of the texts or have already studied them.

With regards to subsidiary documents and policy documents in general, Paul Atkinson and Amanda Coffey point out that documents "also refer to other documents" and so researchers "must therefore look beyond separate texts, and ask how they are related" (Atkinson and Coffey 2011, 86). In other words, they refer to intertextuality. Charles Bazerman identifies six ways to analyse intertextuality: direct and indirect quotations; mentioning of a person, document, or statements; comment or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise invoked voice; using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents; using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents (Bazerman 2003, 88-9). Intertextuality is relevant for materials related to the implementation, or the construction, of the policies. When available, these materials[18] are included in the discussion (chapter 6 and 7), where documents such as the *Public consultation on streamlining EU funding in the European Arctic* (2014) and its *Results* (2015) better highlight the existence of common or competing views over Arctic governance. The relevant documents are reported in the Appendix.

[18] See Appendix for a complete overview of the document materials.

4.4.2 Interviews

The second typology of data stems from elite interviews, a term that here indicates policymakers, diplomats, as well as professionals working in the offices implementing the Arctic policies of the EU and the Arctic Member States. While sociological studies have often dealt with more vulnerable groups (Neal and McLaughlin 2009), interviewing politicians and advisors offers a first-hand insight into the practice of politics, providing a picture of "who the carriers of ideas and norms are", as well as "how their power relations shape the policy outcomes under scrutiny" (Saurugger 2013, 898). Interviews are also necessary to complement Document Analysis and show what documents do not tell. Indeed, scholars are aware that discourses may be manipulated and not unveil the 'authentic' identity of an actor, limiting the analysis to the surface of events.

The interviews conducted for this research are seven[19], and they were held with representatives of the EU Institutions and specific Arctic Member States. The interviewees received the questions in advance together with the (draft) abstract of this dissertation. The interviews were semi-structured, and the questions reflected the interests about actors' views on their positioning and scales of Arctic governance. However, the questions were not the same for everyone, to better address the roles and positions of the interviewees. According to Laura Empson, this choice reflects a "romantic" view of interviewing that, unlike the neo-positivist approach, privileges the construction of "rapport, trust and commitment between interviewer and interviewee" (Empson 2018, 64) to the detriment of consistent protocols aiming to reduce biases

[19] See Appendix. The number, of course, does not reflect the total number of rejections or interviews that had been agreed in the initial contact, but that were not conducted afterwards for reasons like the interviewees' work schedules.

and forms of influence – an approach with limited effectiveness when applied to elites (Empson 2018, 65).

The interviews have been contacted via email and interviewed either online or *vis-à-vis*, or even in a written form. The length of the interviews has varied from twenty minutes up to two hours, depending on the availability of the participants – which was often influenced by the relationship established during the interview. Indeed, in some cases, empathy broke the barrier created by physical or biographical distance, as some of the interviewees were willing to engage in more detailed conversations that went beyond what could give the impression of a detached work that aimed to use small parts of their experiences as simple material to confirm or test research hypotheses. Empathy also helped bypass the difference between academic language on the one hand, and practitioners' vocabulary on the other. At the same time, critical distance was maintained through the reference to documents, and discussion about official positions and events.

Elite interviews, and interviews in general, raise the issue of data protection. When contacted, the interviewees have been informed of the use of their information and protected by anonymization. A few interviews have been recorded with the consensus of the participants, and the recordings have been destroyed after the approval of the transcription. Other interviews were manually transcribed, and the interviewees were asked to approve the transcription of what has been deemed relevant for the dissertation. The procedure has been approved by the University of Trento's *Supporto Privacy* office, ensuring the compliance with the University's procedures and the EU law on the matters. In accordance with privacy law, the interviewees were granted the possibility to modify the transcriptions until the submission of the dissertation. The list of interviews is placed in the Appendix.

4.5 Interpretation of narrative data: a matter of consistency

The data about actor's positioning and scale need to display the convergence or divergence of ideas, which can be described either in terms of consistency or coherence. Bretherton and Vogler used both the terms in their early works, but the late Bretherton and Vogler integrate consistency with cohesion, which ends up meaning three different aspects: (i) vertical coherence, which is "the extent to which the bilateral external policies of the Member States are consistent with each other and complementary to those of the EU" – formerly 'consistency' (Bretherton and Vogler 2013, 382; 2006b, 10); (ii) horizontal coherence, indicating "tensions between policy sectors that impede effective policy formulation and implementation" (Bretherton and Vogler 2013, 383); and (iii) institutional coherence, which "refers to the Union's internal policy coordination procedures" (Bretherton and Vogler 2013, 383). However, the role of coherence was particularly relevant with regards to the effectiveness of the EU's policies and their implementation – whose proportional relationship has been shown not to be supported by empirical evidence (Thomas 2012, 471-3). Consequently, the convergence and divergence of ideas constituting the shared view of the EU's role is here labelled as consistency.

In relation to Discourse Analysis, the point of convergence of ideas denotes the EU Institutions and Arctic Member States' common sense about Arctic governance, where common sense indicates the elements "limiting possible resistance among a public to a given course of action […] and creating reasonable and warranted relations of domination" (Milliken 2001, 147). From a different, but related perspective, common sense also shows the genealogy of a discourse, showing the possibility and impossibility of some practices according to the system of significance operating in a specific spatial or temporal context (Milliken 2001, 157). Genealogies can therefore

offer a picture of historically informed relations between ideas and actions (Kowert and Legro 1996, 485-97).

Therefore, the analysis of consistency in relation to positioning and scale, and how they construct capability in response to opportunity and presence, displays the genealogy of the Arctic discourse within the EU. In this regard, the analysis mainly deals with actors' representation and creation of systems of significance. As far as practice is concerned, most of the information about the production and reproduction of meaning emerges in policy-making practices. However, the available documents do not report the social dynamics that emerge in decision-making processes, be they formal or informal. These issues lead to the considerations reported in the last section of this chapter, i.e. the limitation of this dissertation.

4.6 Limitations

The analysis of documents presents limitations related to the very nature of the object, as well as the organisations considered. First, documents present temporal limitations, especially in terms of their publication – for example, the absence of the Conclusions on the EU's 2021 Communication by the EU Council. Second, the documents are the results of political compromises. Indeed, Paul Atkinson and Amanda Coffey stress that documents are not 'trustable' and transparent sources of information: on the one hand, it is true that documents are "social facts", in the sense that "they are produced, shared and used in socially organised ways" (Atkinson and Coffey 2004, 58). Also, researchers might not be able to "learn through written records alone how an organisation actually operates day-by-day", and in particular "routines, decision-making processes, or professional practices" (Atkinson and Coffey 2011, 79). While

interviews present the same risks and limitations, they might offer a deeper insight into the political life of an organisation.

The higher number of limitations, however, apply to interviews. To begin with, Robert Mikecz (2012) defines access and trust as one of the most challenging aspects of interviewing elites. In the case of political elites, context matters – where context refers to how much politicians are accessible to citizens, which also depends on schedules, priorities, and timing (including electoral turnovers). In the specific case of this research, the Swedish and the Danish 2022 elections, and the 2023 Finnish elections have complicated the access to politicians. In the specific context of the sudden Danish 2022 elections, most of the interviews had been cancelled or postponed because of the electoral campaign, or the potential interviewees could not be reached. Events such as the Arctic Frontiers conferences (May 2022 and January 2023) offered opportunities for contacts. However, the low number of interviews collected allows them to be used more as material complementing documents.

Second, the type of interviewer matters. Mikecz argues that the "positionality of the researcher is especially important not only in getting access to elite interviewees but also to establish rapport with them" (Mikecz 2012, 484). For instance, Hunt *et al*. observe that, when conducting interviews, the "American nationality was a definite advantage in gaining access" because it "aroused curiosity and the feeling that one must be cordial to foreigners" (Hunt *et al*. 1964, 62). From this perspective, nationality can enhance the perception of academic neutrality and objectivity, which can help researchers "negotiate access problems" (Welch *et al*. 2002, 624). In the case of this research, my Italian nationality sometimes determined some curiosity in the interviewees, but some of them had already happened to work with Italians or Italian representatives on Arctic matters. However, the age gap and the distance, as well as

the atmosphere of informality might have helped create a sense of openness – strengthened by reassurance about skipping sensitive topics such as security or the future of the Arctic Council.

Skipping sensitive topics was another important limitation, but necessary for the sake of the dissertation. When interviewing political elites, researchers need to consider that they might not be able to deepen specific themes, on the ground of their sensitivity (here, for example, military security or issues related to Indigenous People), or for personal hostility. With regards to the outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine, politicians and administrative personnel have often been reluctant to be interviewed, fearing the leak of sensitive information. Yet, researchers may also be hindered by the fact that "[o]fficeholders are coping with a torrent of communication and demands for their time. There are growing anxieties about saying the wrong thing" (Marland and Lennox Esselment 2019, 686). In some cases, the absence of a specific interest in military security was the condition to hold interviews. However, documents such as Sweden's 2022 report on *Deterioration of the security environment – implications for Sweden* can offer supplementary information without being invasive or exposing interviewees to risks for their positions.

Researchers also need to adapt to the expectations of the interviewees, and to be aware of "the interviewees' norms of behavior and etiquette", in order "to gain their trust and create rapport" (Mikecz 2012, 483). The necessity to ensure a formal informed consensus (through signing forms and sending a copy of identity documents, for example), have collided with the habits of the interviewees, or distort the perception of the time needed for the interview, resulting in potential interviewees declining my requests. In addition, the interview does not take place on a level playing field: researchers engaging with political elites cannot ignore the aspect of power,

which can directly affect their performance and data collection. Indeed, the procedure to contact potential interviewees was adjusted in cooperation with the *Supporto Privacy* office, because the initial version turned out to be cumbersome and discouraged some of the people that had been contacted.

A final remark about power relationships and their reproduction regards the Indigenous People of the Arctic – both the Sami and the Inuit communities. Even though this dissertation focuses on the EU – a non-state actor –, it still operates within the framework of actors capable of producing those rules and actions that are commonly understood as foreign policies. Their views have been included in the discussions of the case studies through the available documents that have been published over the years – especially in relation to the EU and the projects addressing the EU-Sápmi knowledge gaps. The documents of the Indigenous Peoples offer important highlights over conflicting narratives about sovereignty over the region and the implementation of policies for Arctic governance (for example, the case of green colonialism in Arctic territories).

4.7 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the construction of the case studies and their justification for the investigation of the EU's Arctic policy. With regards to the discipline of IR, Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman state that case studies and the use of qualitative methodologies meet the specific – *sui generis*, they say – nature of IR and its phenomena, whose complexity and discontinuous development hinder the formulation of models and the application of statistical methods (Bennett and Elman 2007, 171). The case study method is particularly suitable within the framework of actor-centred constructivism and the necessity to explain actors' reasons that shape their behaviour.

This chapter has also justified the use of Discourse Analysis, coupled with Thematic Analysis, to investigate the construction of roles in Arctic governance. The EU's Communications and documents, and the Arctic member States' strategies for the Arctic region constitute the primary sources of data on actors' Positioning and Scale of governance, together with the interviews. The structure of Arctic governance implies this kind of two-level study: indeed, while Larsen primarily focuses on discourses at the EU level, Arctic governance is mainly an intergovernmental cooperation where the EU has no direct influence, and where the EU hardly has exclusive competences that can be decided mainly in Brussels.

This chapter has better shown how opportunity and presence can serve as *explanantia* of Capability, when operationalized through the concepts of Positioning and Scale. By analysing the materials as explained in the Table 4.3 *Discourse and Thematic Analysis in the EU's Foreign Policy*, the two case studies of the EU's Arctic policy (2008-2015 and 2016-2021), highlights the EU's actorness – i.e. the construction of a common view of what the EU should do in the Arctic region – and the elements to answer the research question: how does the EU construct its role and capabilities for the governance of the Arctic?

Chapter V

An Arctic policy in the making:

The European Union and Arctic politics between 2008 and 2015

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the development of the 'Arctic discourse' of, and within, the EU and how this has impacted the construction of the EU's capabilities between 2008 and 2015, which constitutes the first phase of the EU's 'awakening' as an Arctic actor. In October 2008, the European Parliament released a resolution on Arctic governance, where it stated that the EU needed to develop "a standalone EU Arctic policy" to better address the increasing importance of the Arctic in international politics, as reported by the Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (§28-31). The European Parliament called for an EU Arctic policy that respected the indigenous populations and their livelihoods, boosted cooperation on cross-border issues, (especially with regards to maritime safety); and to promote "future cross-border political or legal [frameworks ensuring] environmental protection and sustainable orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreement over resources and navigable waterways in the High North" (European Parliament 2008, §7).

On the grounds of these goals to achieve, the Parliament asked the EU to discuss "international treaty for the protection of the Arctic, having as its inspiration the Antarctic Treaty" (EP 2008, §15), even though the two areas present major differences: Antarctica is a continent upon which no state wields sovereign power, and it is considered a space that can "be used for peaceful purposes only" (the Antarctic

Treaty, §1); the Arctic is a region encompassing the territories, both lands and waters, of the Arctic States, with disputes over the status of specific areas like the Northwest Passage between the U.S. and Canada. Therefore, an Arctic treaty would be grounded on different bases, and would be limited by the states' will to exert sovereign powers on specific issues, or areas of the region. The Parliament's proposal sparked controversies, since "Norway and other coastal states felt that their interests as managers of the region were challenged" (Offerdal 2011, 868). In May 2008, Denmark had proposed the other four Arctic Coastal States to meet in Ilulissat (Greenland), where they signed the homonymous declaration. Through the Ilulissat Declaration, the Arctic 5 stated that the Arctic was a region where sovereign states abide by international law and could solve controversies through political means (Dodds 2013) without further legal frameworks.

In November 2008, the European Commission released its first specific Communication for the region. In the Communication, the Commission pictures the Arctic environment and regions as "vital and vulnerable components" of the global climate system, and as exposed to threats raised by the increasing accessibility of the region's natural resources. From their perspective, the Commission sees climate change as a "threat multiplier" that can be managed by cooperating "with Arctic States, territories and stakeholders" (European Commission 2008, §1). To address the Arctic political issues, the Commission announced three pillars, divided into policy objectives and proposals for actions: protecting and preserving the Arctic in unison with its population; promoting sustainable use of resources; and contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance.

5.2 The Communication on The European Union and the Arctic Region

5.2.1 Protecting and preserving the Arctic and its population

The Commission identified three areas for action to the protect and the preserve the Arctic: environment and climate change; support to indigenous peoples and local population; research. In the first place, the Commission called for action aiming to prevent and mitigate the harmful impact of climate change, as well as to adapt to the "inevitable changes" (European Commission 2008, §2.1), by developing a holistic approach. As countermeasures against climate change, the Commission proposed assessing EU policies and multilateral agreements about environmental protection, followed by the aim to strengthen the international commitment to preserve the environment. Then, the Commission proposed to enhance dialogue with NGOs and the Arctic stakeholders, to promote high environmental standards. When it comes to pollutants, the Commission supported the monitoring of chemicals in the Arctic and efforts to reduce and avoid persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals.

The Commission emphasised the necessity to reduce the risk of radioactive release in the region, which had been exposed to radioactive contaminants because of the atmospheric nuclear tests conducted until 1980. Russia conducted most of the nuclear tests in the Novaya Zemlya archipelago – between the Barents Sea and the Kara Sea – from 1955 to 1990 (in the atmosphere, underground, at sea or underwater; AMAP 2015, 3). At the time of the first EU Communication, Russia had also started to build its first floating nuclear power station, which has been operative in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (in the Eastern Arctic Ocean) since 2019. To respond to disaster through prevention and preparedness, the Commission argued that its Monitoring and Information Centre could enhance the EU's ability to face disasters in the Arctic environment. The Commission declared to support the conclusion of an

agreement on emergency prevention and response within the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which was signed by Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden in 2008.

Then, the European Commission stressed the importance of the welfare of marine mammals, an issue is directly connected to the support of Indigenous peoples and the local population. The EU was particularly concerned with seals' welfare, which the Sámi and the Inuit communities have been hunting for centuries or millennia. During that period, the EU was already working on a ban on seal products that was enforced in 2009.The European Communities had already started banning specific seal products since 1983, harp and hooded seal pups' skin in particular, "not resulting from traditional hunting by the Inuit people" (Council Directive 83/129/EEC 1983, §3). Through the 1991 and 1996 Regulations, and the 1992 Directive (known as 'Habitats Directive'), the Communities continued to strengthen its regulation on seal products and the preservation of their environment. Outside of the EU, the Council of Europe (CoE) adopted a recommendation (Hossain 2013, 154-5) to contrast the documented cruelty that "generated a public morality debate in Europe" (CoE 2006, §9). However, the discussion about the ban spread EU-wide in 2007, with Belgium and the Netherlands adopting a national ban and Canada opposing it. At the same time, Austria, Croatia, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom were also adopting restrictions.

The European Commission positioned also promoted research, which is a fundamental tool for diplomacy in Arctic politics and to cooperate with the Arctic Council. The EU underlined the importance of scientific cooperation that, despite the efforts, had produced insufficient data to "assess future anthropogenic impacts". The European Commission wanted to employ scientific research to formulate appropriate

policies through the study of the Arctic environment, placing science within its policymaking (EP 2008, 5), revealing a germ of Science Diplomacy – better articulated in the 2016 Communication, and in the next chapter. In addition, the Commission included space observation and measurements via the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, a programme where the European Space Agency and the European Environment Agency participate. Within the Arctic policy, space technologies play a crucial role not only to assess the impact of climate change, but also to ensure the security of civilians (especially when operating in Arctic waters) for transports and weather forecasts. Scientific and cross-border cooperation are therefore connected and essential for the development and the exploitations of the region.

5.2.2 Promoting sustainable use of resources

The Arctic is not only a litmus test for climate change, but also a place where people live and whose resources can be exploited. The European Commission focused on hydrocarbons and fishery, which represent the major resources of the region. As far as hydrocarbons are concerned, the Commission acknowledged that they represented an important factor for energy security, even though extractive activities had to respect strict environmental standards – also considering the limits for intervention in the case of environmental disaster (such as oil spill) in cold waters. When it comes to extractive activities, the EU's position expressed a delicate balance between environmentalism and energy security, but also the interests of countries such as Norway – which is the only Arctic oil and gas producer that might be directly affected by the EU's policies, as part of the European Economic Area (EEA). In 2006, the Norwegian government had also published a white paper to assess the coexistence of various economic activities (from oil extraction to fishery) with regards to their impact on the

environment. However, the Norwegian government could only propose an integrated management of its portions of the Barents Sea, only hoping "that, perhaps sometime in the future, it would be possible to put in place a joint total and integrated management plan for the whole of the Barents Sea" (Jensen 2007, 248), including Russia.

After hydrocarbons, the European Commission focused on fishery and transports. Fishery is the most relevant policy area, connecting the sustainable management of resources to the Commission's view of multilateral governance of the Arctic. In the 2008 Communication, the European Commission dedicated little room to fishery, but it positioned itself as a stakeholder on the grounds of its consumption of Arctic fish, expressing the necessity to ensure the sustainability and the regulation of fishing activities. Therefore, the European Commission proposed a preventive action: the establishment of a regulatory framework relevant for those areas of the Arctic high sea now covered by ice, but likely to be accessible in the near future. The Commission proposed to create a framework in step with the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing* by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as to extend the mandate of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), on the grounds of the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in North-East Atlantic Fisheries (adopted in 1980).

5.2.3 Contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance

In the Communication, the European Commission strongly focused on the international dimension of the Arctic. Considering the physical and political geography of the region, the European Commission could better justify its participation in Arctic governance by emphasising the need to ensure a) security and

stability, b) stricter environmental management, and c) a sustainable use of resources at the international level. However, enhancing the international dimension of Arctic cooperation does not necessarily mean to alter the established order: despite the invitation of the Parliament, the European Commission did not suggest drafting an international treaty for the protection of the region. By doing so, the Commission acknowledged that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea provided sufficient instruments and guiding principles to solve disputes – among which the Commission enlisted the definition of the continental shelf around the North Pole, as well as the claims over the right of free passage of ships in the Northwest Passage.

As far as the other proposals for multilateral governance are concerned, the Commission focused on integrating frameworks to better manage Arctic ecosystems. In addition, it proposed to reflect on the possibility of further regional and cross-border cooperation programmes, to strengthen the cooperation with the Arctic states and universities. While adding new features and tools for the Arctic region, these proposals did not challenge the sovereignty of the Arctic States. The Commission included Greenland in its proposals (yet, not the Faroe Islands), mainly mentioning support in terms of funds for education and vocational training, but also the quotas for fisheries in Greenlandic waters. With regards to the Arctic Council, the European Commission announced its intention to apply for formal Observer status to "[e]nhance input to the Arctic Council in accordance with the Community's role and potential" (European Commission 2008, 11). However, as mentioned earlier and discussed in the next sections, Canada and Russia did not accept it to send a political message – indeed, as an Observer, the EU would not have any role in the decision-making anyways, but only assist the work of the Arctic States. However, it is possible to argue that the formal

observer status would consolidate the Union's identity as an Arctic stakeholder and role in the work of the Arctic Council.

5.3 The 'outer' Arctic State: Denmark

The EU's interest in Arctic affairs impacted its Arctic Member States, which started releasing their own strategies or policies for the Arctic. The Kingdom of Denmark was the first Member State to publish a strategy, during its Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2009-2011). The Kingdom holds a peculiar position in the construction of the EU's actorness in Arctic politics because of its internal differentiation. Indeed, the Arctic territories of the Kingdom belong to Greenland and the Faroe Islands, which are not part of the EU. The Kingdom released only one comprehensive strategy for the Arctic, valid for the period 2011 to 2020 (the new one has not been published yet) – but there was also a document released in 2008, called *Arktis i en brydningstid: Forslag til strategi for aktiviteter i det arktiske område*, available exclusively in Danish (Heininen et al. 2020, 60).

5.3.1 A peaceful, secure, and safe Arctic

The first section of the Strategy opens with the issues of peaceful cooperation and regional stability. The Kingdom's 2011 Strategy deals with challenges and opportunities related to climate change. As far as the challenges are concerned, the Strategy acknowledges that global warming poses threats to the peoples of the Arctic by changing the basis of both their lifestyles and cultures. For example, the change in the fish distribution may have an impact on the productivity of Arctic fish industries. By the time the Kingdom released the Strategy, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration observed that large numbers of fish species from the South-western Barents Sea (i.e. cod, beaked redfish, and long rough dab) had moved

northwards (Fossheim *et al.* 2015, 77-8). Together with fishery, the Strategy deals with Greenland's melting ice sheets, which contribute to the global rise in sea levels.

At the same time, the Kingdom recognises that a changing Arctic opens both shipping routes and economic opportunities: the document mentions the U.S. geological survey about the Arctic fossil energy resources, and it estimates that "ships sailing between East Asia and Western Europe could save more than 40% in transportation time and fuel costs", as well as CO_2 emissions. However, it also acknowledges that "increased economic activity and renewed geopolitical interest in the Arctic results in a number of key challenges to ensuring a stable, peaceful and secure region characterized by dialogue, negotiation and cooperation" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 9).

The Kingdom highlights that "the Arctic is not a legal vacuum" since it "has been inhabited for thousands of years, in contrast to the Antarctic which is uninhabited" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 13). Here, the Strategy clearly references the European Parliament's proposal for a treaty to protect the Arctic environment at the international level. The Strategy does not picture the legal framework of Arctic governance as fragmented, but rather as rich, insisting on the fact that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 (UNCLOS) "contains detailed regulation of for example navigational rights and management of resources" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 13). Therefore, the Strategy establishes the preeminent role of the Arctic States and their jurisdiction over the maritime territories.

The Strategy emphasises its role as an Arctic Coastal State and the 2008 Ilulissat Conference, after which Denmark and the other four Coastal States (Canada, Norway, Russia, and the United States) signed the homonymous Declaration "to enshrine close cooperation in developing the Arctic into international law" (Kingdom

of Denmark 2011, 13). Indeed, the Strategy states that even though the Law of the Sea "lays a solid foundation for coastal states' cooperation on the development of the Arctic, there may be a continuous need for more detailed regulating [*sic*] of certain sectors" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 13). Despite the recall to multilateral cooperation, the Kingdom of Denmark underlines the intergovernmental dimension of governance, whose Scale reinforces the organisational framework of the nation-state.

As a Coastal State, the Strategy of the Kingdom dedicated its first section also to boundaries and the extension of the continental shelf. According to the Strategy, the Kingdom started a project to support the claims about the continental shelf. However, the document emphasises the cooperative dimension of the project, which involved the Kingdom and the other Arctic States, from Sweden to Russia. An example of pacific resolution I the latest dispute over territorial claims with Canada regarding Hans Island – *Hans Ø* in Danish, *Tartupaluk* in Greenlandic. The dispute over the small, inhabited island between Canada and Greenland was resolved in 2022, when Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark agreeing to 'split' the island in half after almost fifty years of contention, and after a lot of bottles of Canadian whisky and Danish flags had been left on the island to claim the ownership of it. By underlining cooperation and the role of international law, the Strategy reinforced the vision according to which the Arctic States are the main responsible for regional (maritime) governance, and that further frameworks are not needed.

The Strategy also deals with the issues concerning maritime safety, considering the increasing navigation in Arctic waters as well as extractive activities: indeed, extreme weather conditions and the low population density of the Arctic may hinder prompt rescue missions or intervention in case of natural disasters. In the case of maritime security, the document positions all the three parts of the Kingdom as

essential for the attainment of the policy objectives. Most importantly, the Strategy reinforces the state-level Scale of governance: the actions to be taken respect the sovereignty of the Arctic States and the already established organisations. For example, the Strategy reads that the Kingdom needs "to introduce binding global rules and standards for navigation in the Arctic and it is a high priority to reach agreement on a global regulation of shipping via the IMO [the International Maritime Organization], cf. Ilulissat Declaration" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 18). In case of failure, "the Kingdom will consider implementing non-discriminatory regional safety and environmental rules for navigation in the Arctic in consultation with the other Arctic states" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 18). The Strategy also mentions the introduction of a Polar Code to be adopted by the IMO, expected to enter into force between 2013-14. However, the Polar Code became operative only in 2017, and will be presented in the next chapter.

Last, but not least, the document dedicates a section to the exercise of sovereignty and surveillance. The Strategy reads that the "[e]nforcement of sovereignty is exercised by the armed forces through a visible presence in the region where surveillance is central to the task", and that such a task is a primary concern of the Kingdom even though the NATO treaty covers the Danish Arctic (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 20). In the document, the enforcement of sovereignty is constructed as an act of Positioning, in the sense that reinforces the perceptions of Denmark's status and power legitimacy in the Arctic. Back in 2009, the Danish Ministry of Defence had already stated that the designation of Arctic Response Force would "contribute to increase the Danish expertise in the area and will be deployable in Greenland or in international tasks undertaken in an Arctic environment" (Danish Ministry of Defence 2009, 12).

The Kingdom of Denmark considers the Arctic a region of opportunities, with regards to extractive activities as well as tourism. In particular, the Strategy aims to ensure that Greenland continues its “successful licensing policy and strategy of competitive tenders in the oil and gas sector”. The Document also pursues the cooperation with Norway and Canada as far as the mineral sector is concerned, prioritising “fora such as the Arctic Council’s working groups” (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 25). In addition, the Strategy also sets energy and climate policies “to significantly increase the harnessing of renewable energy sources”, the exploitation of hydropower plants in Greenland (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 30) in particular.

The Strategy focuses not only on fishery, but also on hunting as “an integral part of the Arctic community” (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 30), lamenting that the larger international audience do not know how hunting is regulated and the pressure over Greenland’s seal-hunting industry due to people’s concern about seal hunting and breeding, as well as whaling, throughout Europe and North America. The Strategy underlines that whaling activities in Greenland are regulated by the International Whaling Commission – which include exemptions for Indigenous Peoples.

The Strategy presents both Greenland and the Faroe Islands as crucial for research activities: as far as Greenland is concerned, it “offers so many unique opportunities for research in nature, geography, biology as well as the interplay between nature and humans” (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 30). With regards to the Faroe Islands, the Strategy reads that its location enables the study of the changing ocean currents. Research activities are essential to establish cooperation agreements, networks, and to access funds, including the EU’s. The following section of the Strategy, *Development with respect for the Arctic’s vulnerable climate, environment and nature*, sets the goals to understand the impact of climate change and protect the

environment through impact assessments, monitoring programmes, and models of the Arctic climate.

Yet, research is important also in terms of education and development of skills to employ in local industries and to address societal needs such fighting de-population: even though the Strategy does not mention it, the Arctic Human Development Report reads that between 2000 and 2004, the size of Greenland's population did not change "because the natural increase of the country's young population was offset by the same amount of net out-migration" (Heleniak and Bogoyavlensky 2014, 57). Therefore, the Strategy also includes cooperation to achieve health and social coherence among the three parts of the Kingdom.

The final section of the Strategy deals with external relationships in the Arctic context. The Kingdom places the role of the Arctic Council at the centre of regional governance and cooperation. In particular, the Strategy reads that the Kingdom should strengthen the role of the Arctic Council until it shifts "from a 'decision-shaping' to a 'decision-making' organisation", since it is "the only relevant political organization that has all Arctic states and peoples as members" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 52). Accordingly, the Strategy states that the Kingdom will consider meeting the Arctic Coastal States only for issues that concern them such as the delimitation of their continental shelf. At the same time, the then Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Villy Søvndal, stated that the Kingdom of Denmark was "look[ing] forward to welcoming the EU in the very near future" (Arctic Council 2013c).

The Strategy insists on climate change-related issues that will heavily impact the conditions of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples and their human rights. Among the issues potentially affecting the welfare of indigenous peoples, the Strategy also enlists the influence of third parties – including the EU. Considering the 2008 Communication

by the European Commission, the Kingdom acknowledged the initiative of the EU and aimed to influence the EU policy process, to ensure that the EU's policies do not undermine the economic activities of the indigenous peoples. At the same time, Denmark positions itself as aligned with the EU with regards to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The document also mentions Greenland and the Faroe Islands' environmental policies and goals, but the two have autonomy in those areas and do not need to be negotiated with the EU – consequently, the EU has no direct competences, nor authority in Greenland and the Faroe Islands' policies.

The objectives of the Kingdom's strategy can be seen as more enhanced version of the goals established for the Danish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2009-2011). In the related document, the Kingdom highlighted its priorities: first, the well-being of people of the Arctic, and then the continuation of research collaboration and the study of megatrends in the Arctic, following the example of the International Polar Year initiative; protecting the environment (focusing on climate change and biodiversity). After that, the Danish chairmanship aimed to develop an integrated management of resources, which was a "cornerstone" of the successive Norwegian (2009-2009), Danish, and Swedish (2011-2013) Chairmanships, and referred to the exploitation of natural resources in a sustainable way, as well as cooperation on preparedness and prevention. Finally, the Chairmanship document stressed the importance of maintaining the role of the Arctic Council as a "to promote sustainable development for the Peoples of the Arctic and the Arctic States" (Arctic Council 2009c, 8).

5.4 The proactive Arctic actor: Finland

In the time frame considered for this chapter, Finland was the most active of the three Arctic Member States. Finland released two strategies for the Arctic region: the former was published in 2010, while the other in 2013. The two documents reflect two different ways to position Finland and its role in the region: the 2010 Strategy focuses mainly on the aspect of external relations in Arctic policy" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 57), while the 2013 document "examines the possibilities for bolstering Finland's position regarding the Arctic region; the creation of new business opportunities; the Arctic environment and the region's security and stability; the position of the northern parts of Finland; international cooperation; and Arctic expertise in the widest sense of the term" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 7). Considering the richer production of Finland, in comparison with the Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden, the following sections mainly focus on the relationship with the EU and international and cross-border cooperation, which is the focus of the Strategies – especially in the first one.

5.4.1 The Strategies for the Arctic region

The 2010 Strategy focused on the international dimension of Finnish interests and policies. The document underlines that the Arctic and its climate play a crucial role in the stability of the global weather and climate. Aware of the fact that the Arctic was not isolated from the rest of the world, Finland stressed that "climate change and other environmental hazards are not contained by national borders" and that "international cooperation for prevention is vitally important" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 13-4). The international dimension of environmental safety includes also regional aspects, especially as far as nuclear safety is concerned, considering that

the “Kola peninsula has the world’s greatest concentration of nuclear reactors” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 16). Considering the regional dimension of security, the 2010 Strategy proposed a more international and regional vision.

The international and regional dimensions shape the Finnish proposals and goals in different aspects. To begin with, Finland brands itself as an expert in Arctic know-how. In step with the other Arctic States, Finland’s Strategy emphasised the importance of research, but the document is not limited to environmental issues. The document frames Finland and the Finnish companies as attractive to Russia and its companies’ needs, especially on the grounds of Finland’s knowledge of its neighbour. Second, the Strategy underlined the necessity for universities to develop stronger international programmes and agreements, to increase the competitive value of research. To strengthen the role and the potential of research and higher education, the Strategy urges universities to make use of both national and EU funds (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 21-2).

The international dimension stretches from research to infrastructures, with regards to the sea routes – including the Northeast Passage. The Northeast Passage lies within the Russian exclusive economic zone, and it is defined as the strait along Siberia, from the Barents Sea to the Pacific Ocean. As the Strategy reported, Russia considers itself to be entitled to collect fees for the right of passage and icebreaker services. Despite not being a coastal state – or maybe because it is not – Finland stated that it was in its interests that transport fees “must not become obstacles to traffic; instead, they should be used to support the safety of shipping” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 27). However, the Strategy also includes domestic aspects related to the national transport system in the Northern areas, which would be further deepened in the 2013 version of the Strategy.

The international dimension also concerns the Saami population and their rights. Indeed, the Strategy read that Finland, as well as the other Nordic/Norden countries adopted the 2007 UN *Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous Peoples* – unlike Canada and the United States. Canada had voted against the Declaration but endorsed it in 2010, and committed to the implementation in 2016. The U.S. also voted against the Declaration, but it ratified the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in 2016. The 2010 Finnish Strategy mentioned the work about the preparation of the Nordic Saami Convention, which came to light in 2016. As the Strategy reported, the spirit of the Convention was international, since it aimed to strengthen and support the Saami populations' rights "irrespective of national borders" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 32). Indeed, the Saami live across the Scandinavian peninsula, Finland, and Russia, and respecting their rights implies international cooperation.

With regards to the EU, Finland dedicated an entire chapter to the EU's Arctic Communication, detailing the relevant aspects and implications for Finland, as well as the EU as a whole. However, the Strategy proposed a model of governance where the EU supports the action of the Arctic states and the regional or local actors through funds and financial instruments. In particular, the Strategy referred to the Northern Dimension policy, the interregional cooperation (Interreg) and cross-border cooperation programmes as tools to develop the Barents region from a regional perspective (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 48-51). In sum, the 2010 Finnish Strategy for the Arctic region is therefore consistent in terms of Positioning and Scale. Finland perceived itself as an internationalist actor in the region, focusing on cross-border cooperation and working to ensure that Arctic politics would not turn into a tool to exclude international actors – especially with regards to shipping. At the

same time, Finland opted to maintain the already established framework of governance, strengthening the intergovernmental dimension of Arctic politics.

The same position was kept in the 2013 Strategy. On the one hand, the document explicitly labelled Finland as an *Arctic Member State* of the EU, whose status provides the country the "opportunity to generate and disseminate comprehensive information on the Arctic sorely needed by the Union" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 13). The 2013 Strategy came after the release of the second Communication by the Commission, published in 2012, in which the Commission tried to better justify its role in Arctic cooperation. The Finnish Strategy acknowledged the work done by both the Commission and the Parliament, expressing its commitment "to support the formulation of the EU's policy towards the Arctic and the reinforcement of its role in the region" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 47). However, the document prioritised "the efforts to influence the Council Conclusions to be issued in response to the Commission's Arctic Communication" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 47), where the Member States have more power – in matters falling under the EU's foreign policy.

Accordingly, the Strategy underlined the necessity for Finland to cooperate with Sweden and Denmark so as "to clarify the EU's role in the Arctic" and its policy for the region (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 61). The document also included Finland's support for the Commission's application as an Observer at the Arctic Council, but it must be noted that the Observers need to support the Arctic States and their objectives. The other objectives are all related to Finland's Positioning as an Arctic expert and internationalist actor. First, the Strategy underlined the importance of establishing the EU Arctic Information Centre in Rovaniemi, the capital of the Finnish region of Lapland. Second, to better finance the EU's cross-border cooperation

programmes and funds for 'internal' programmes for Arctic areas such as Northern Periphery and Pohjoinen/Nord.

The 2013 Finnish Strategy continued to present Finland as an expert whose competences were beneficial for sustainable development, the protection of the environment, competitiveness of Finnish industries and research (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 7; 17). In addition, the document expanded the interests of Finland to Arctic-related areas beyond tourism, traffic, and transport: the 2013 Strategies included data communications and digital services; energy industry and renewable resources; maritime industry and shipping; mining industry and clean technology. From this perspective, the document developed the previous objectives, rather than changing the target of the Strategy. The 2013 Strategy therefore reinforces the country' attention towards regional and cross-border cooperation where local actors (should) play a major role.

5.5 The Arctic awareness of Sweden

Considered the 'reluctant' Arctic State, similarly to the United States (see Huebert 2009; Sörlin, 2014) Sweden released its first Strategy as it was taking over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the first time. Sweden had to construct its identity as an Arctic state and find a place for the Arctic in its policies. During the twentieth century, Sweden gradually lost interests in the area despite the resources of the Svalbard islands (called *Spitsbergen* until 1925), especially as the price of coal dropped. At the same time, the Swedish Northern regions saw a decrease in its population, as more workforce was needed in the central and Southern areas. After the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in 1924, negotiated in Versailles in the aftermath of the First World War, Sweden accepted Norwegian sovereignty on Svalbard. During the

Second World War and the Cold War, Sweden was mainly concerned with its relationship with Finland and the Baltic area, leaving the Arctic out of its radar (Sörlin 2014).

Consequently, the Strategy justifies Swedish Arcticness and interests in the region, underlining the increasing importance of Arctic resources in the global market. On the grounds of its geography, Sweden highlights the role played by its mining industries and its forests as a renewable type of resource. Even with regards to the cultural ties, the section does not fully develop the relationship between the government, the Saami population, and the Arctic. However, the fourth section of the document is entirely dedicated to the Swedish priorities and objectives for the Arctic. Therefore, I will now deepen that section, which sheds further light on Sweden's Positioning in terms of role and expectations for its role in the region's governance.

5.5.1 The Swedish priorities for the Arctic

Like the Kingdom of Denmark, Sweden released its policy for the Arctic region as it held the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. In the document, Sweden focuses on maintaining the balance between low political tensions in the region and the challenges posed by climate change, in step with the work of the Arctic Council. In particular, the document reads that "Sweden should stress the importance of an approach based on security in its broadest sense and that the use of civil instruments is preferable to military means" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011, 23), in step with the spirit of multilateralism and solidarity shaping the narrative of both the Swedish foreign policy and Arctic politics. To emphasise the role of the Arctic Council, the Strategy underlines the consensus reached within the forum about the unity of economic,

environmental, and social development. Sweden released the strategy in time for the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, after long being a ‘reluctant’ Arctic State.

Then, the Strategy articulates the main areas of intervention according to Sweden: climate and the environment; economic development; the “human dimension”. With regard to the environment, the Swedish Strategy highlights the role of the Arctic Council in compiling research and disseminating knowledge on the impact of global warming in the Arctic has compiled research and environmental monitoring, arguing that “the Arctic Council can raise the bar as regards international climate efforts” (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011, 26) – strongly emphasising how the role of the Arctic Council is not limited to the local dimension of regional governance.

With respect to the efforts of the international community, the Strategy also advocates for a global climate agreement about impure carbon particles (soot) and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, as also emphasised in the Strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark, the pollution affecting the Arctic is produced outside of the region: therefore, global regulations are essential to ensure a fair economic development in the region – which is still polluting, but that has so far not been responsible for the transformations in the region. However, Sweden acknowledges that pollution occurs also at local levels, and that its prospective harm needs to be taken into consideration. the increasing extractive activities in the region in maritime areas and in the Arctic territories. In this regard, the Strategy calls for stronger cooperation at the level of the Arctic Council as well as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, governing the cross-border nature of Arctic issues.

As far as economic development is concerned, Sweden mentions the role of the EU’s cohesion policy and funds as part of the Cross Border Cooperation policy. The

Cross Border Cooperation started in 2007, within the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. With reference to the Arctic region, the Strategy mentions the Kolarctic financing instrument, whose purpose in 2007 was to support the national projects in the areas of cross-border cooperation. However, the Kolarctic programme started back in 2000, as a sub-programme of the 'Interreg' initiative, which aims at favouring and strengthening regional cooperation.

Considering the extractive activities carried out by Norwegian and Russian companies, the Swedish strategy framed the exploitation of the region as a window of opportunity for Swedish companies in the mining and petroleum sectors – environmental assessments. With regards to economics and environment, Sweden also considered the aspects related to shipping and maritime security. Despite presenting shipping as the most efficient way to transport goods in terms of energy and cost efficiency, the Strategy reports that shipping-related emissions had increased over time, and that they were projected to maintain that trend. In addition, as underlined by the other strategies, shipping also increases the risks of incidents that endanger both people and the environment, showing one of the constant problems of Arctic policies, i.e. balancing economic development and protection of the region.

Sweden underlined the importance of the region in relation to energy security. The Swedish document clearly states that, while national energy industries might have interests in the region, the government is not involved in the issues related to further extraction of fossil fuels in the increasingly more accessible sea areas of the Arctic. In addition, the document stated that prospective exploitation of fossil fuels from the Arctic would be beneficial in terms of energy security, for Sweden as well as the EU. The main concern for Sweden is the respect of high environmental standards, and the document underlines the need to invest in renewable energy too.

However, the way to pursue renewable energy production risks colliding with Sweden’s commitment to respecting human rights and democracy, in the case of exploitation of Northern territories that belongs to Sápmi – the territories comprising Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia where the Sámi populations live and conduct traditional activities such as reindeer husbandry (see Chapter 1). On the one hand, the Strategy acknowledges the Saami’s rights to see their culture respected and protected, especially in terms of survival of their languages. The document recognises the Sámi herders’ rights to continue all the activities related to hunting and husbandry. However, as in the case of the windmills in Northern Norway, the efforts to implement the green transition goals and to develop the region risk conflicting with the Sámi herders’ interests and needs. In the case of Sweden, the strategy does not mention how to balance green transition in its Northern territories and the protection of Saami territories. However, similarly to what stated in the previous paragraphs, this contradiction unveils the difficult balance between protection and exploitation of the region’s resources.

The Swedish Strategies further articulated the objectives of Sweden’s Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which was also in continuation with the Kingdom of Denmark’s (the previous one, held between 2009 and 2011). The Swedish document for the 2011-2013 period emphasised the country’s focus on environmental protection and climate change. In particular, the Swedish Chairmanship concluded the Arctic Ocean Review project, started in 2009, aiming to update the legal framework for the protection of the Arctic marine environment. Most importantly, the Swedish chairmanship led to the establishment of the Arctic Council’s permanent secretariat in Tromsø, in order to strengthen the Arctic Council (Arctic Council 2013f).

5.7 Towards an Arctic policy for the EU

The Member States influenced the development of an EU's Arctic policy even before they developed their own strategies. In December 2008, the Council of the EU adopted preliminary conclusions on Arctic issues. As mentioned in the first chapter, the Council of the EU is one of the legislative bodies of the EU, which co-decides on the Commission's proposals together with the Parliament. However, the Council is an intergovernmental institution representing the Member States' governments. With regards to the 2008 Communication, the Council of the EU adopted a Conclusion, which is a non-binding document expressing the position of the Member States' executives about specific topics. Usually, the Council adopts conclusions in policy areas not falling under the EU exclusive competences. In the draft of the conclusion, the Council stated to welcome the Communication as "a first layer of an EU Arctic Policy" (Council of the EU 2008, §1). In 2009, the Council of the European Union again welcomed the "gradual formulation" of an Arctic policy, requesting to receive a report on the work by the end of June 2011 (Council of the EU 2008, §23). In 2012, the Commission released a Joint Communication entitled *Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps*, further elaborating its Positioning in the Arctic.

With regards to the step forwards an EU Arctic policy, the document proposed three reasons motivating the EU's action in the region: knowledge, responsibility, and engagement. As far as knowledge is concerned, the document reiterated the EU's Positioning as a promoter of science with respect to protecting and preserving the Arctic and its population. As for the 2008 document, the 2012 Communication emphasised the dangers of climate change and the role of science in understanding the impact of global warming in the Arctic. In particular, the Joint Communication

highlighted the role of space technology to better monitor the evolving situation in the Arctic, to strengthen communication, and to ensure safe shipping. The Communication explicitly mentioned the role of the European Space Agency (ESA) and it included a Working Staff document named *Space and the Arctic*, where the ESA enlisted the priorities of the EU in the region.

In relation to climate change, the section dedicated to responsibility provides a stronger Positioning, presenting the EU as a responsible importer and user of Arctic resources. Accordingly, the Commission attributed to the EU the role of a contributor to sustainable development and to sustainable management of resources. By adopting the perspective of responsibility, the Commission presented itself as a more normative actor. As Anna Antonova (2016, 80) observes, the normative aspect of the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) is related to the normative aspirations in environmental policies that the European Parliament strongly encourages, as shown by the Parliament's proposal for a treaty to protect the Arctic environment. Together with the exploitation of resources, the document argued that the EU is also a provider of technology, which establishes a double form of engagement in the Arctic – presenting the EU not only as an actor which must act responsibly, but also as an actor that can make a difference in regulating the Arctic.

In 2011, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution called *A sustainable EU policy for the High North* – even though, as explained in the first chapter, the term is ambiguous and does not necessarily apply to the Arctic as a whole (traditionally, it refers to the Northernmost areas of Norway). In the Resolution, the European Parliament emphasised the need to construct a coherent Arctic policy defining "both the EU's priorities and the potential challenges" (EP 2011 §8). However, the construction of coherence and consistency did not merely depend on the Commission,

but also on the Arctic States' Positioning and Scale, which presented as many ambiguities as the European Commission's in terms of priorities and strategies to pursue policy goals.

Another crucial aspect was the EU's relationship with the Arctic Council. In 2009, the Council of the EU expressed its encouragement for the Commission and Italy in their application as observers at the Arctic Council, which the Council considered "as the primary competent body for circumpolar regional cooperation" (Council of the EU, 8 December 2009, §17). However, the European Commission's application was rejected twice, in 2009 and 2013: despite the support of the Member States, Canada rejected the EU's application on the grounds of the Regulation on Seal Products (Regulation 1007/2009, the so-called ban on seal products). The Regulation was implemented in 2010 and it allowed the import and commercialisation of products that fell under the 'Inuit exemption', i.e. goods derived from hunts carried out by indigenous communities (Regulation 1007/2009/EC, art. 3). However, there was a discrimination between indigenous communities. As Nikolas Sellheim observes, the Greenlandic products were still allowed in the EU market even though Greenland lacked a robust framework for animal welfare, and even though Greenlandic seal hunts exceeded those conducted in Canada (Sellheim 2016, 143).

With respect to the ban on seal products, the 2012 Joint Communication stated that the EU would respect the final decisions of the World Trade Organisation – which would be in favour of the EU. Nevertheless, the Commission, the Parliament and the Council started working to amend the 2009 Regulation. In 2015, the EU adopted the Regulation 2015/1775 and amended the article three of the previous 2009 Regulation, introducing a new condition to place seal products in the EU market: that "the hunt is conducted in a manner which has due regard to animal welfare, taking into

consideration the way of life of the community and the subsistence purpose of the hunt" (Regulation 2015/1775/EU, art. 3). By amending the Regulations, the EU adopted a conciliatory approach while maintaining its stances in favour of animal welfare.

The Parliament also softened its proposals. Back in 2010, the Parliament had proposed an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic that threatened the primary role of the Arctic States and their sovereignty in the region. In 2012, the Parliament changed its vision in terms of legal framework, acknowledging that the Arctic enjoyed a sufficient number of treaties and instruments for a strong system of governance, from the UN Law of the Sea to The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001). By doing so, the European Parliament embraced the vision for the region promoted by the Arctic States, even though it maintained its emphasis on non-state actors and their role in Arctic governance.

Finally, in 2014, the European Parliament and the EU Council adopted a resolution and conclusions with regards to the 2012 Communication. The Council expressed the positions of the three Arctic States, in particular Finland and Sweden's – as expressed in the Arctic Strategies, as shown in the next paragraphs. In the same period, the Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council reinforced the idea of the Arctic Council as an international forum, even though primarily intergovernmental, in step with the Finnish strategies released in 2010 and 2013. In 2013, indeed, the Arctic States welcomed the European Commission's request at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna (2013). However, they deferred the decision to approve it until the resolution of the disagreement between the EU and Canada over seal products regulation. Despite these tensions, the Arctic Council allowed the EU to attend the meetings and the activities of the working groups without prior invitation. In its 2014

Conclusions, the Council of the EU requested Canada to solve the dispute that deferred the EU's accession.

After the resolution and the decision of the WTO, Canada stopped vetoing at the 2015 Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council – before which the EU and Canada concluded their Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement (CETA), marking a stronger cooperation between the two actors. However, in 2015, Russia blocked the EU's application, as reported by the European Parliaments Directorate General for External Policies (Garcés de los Fayos 2015, 2). The Russian decision took place in the context of the increasing tensions with the EU and the U.S. because of the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Syrian civil war (started in 2011), where Russia sided with the president Bashar al-Assad whose regime was sanctioned by both the U.S. and the EU to stop violence against civilian protesting in the last moments of the 'Arab Spring'.

More importantly, the EU's response to the Ukraine crisis was the one more harmful for Russia, since the EU's sanctions heavily affected Rosneft, the most important oil production company of Russia, as they "targeted Arctic offshore and shale oil technologies" (Aalto and Forsberg 2015, 228). The worsening of international relations, also gradually reflected in the work of the Arctic Council. Indeed, Finland expected that the "EU's application not to take more than a few months" (Arctic Council 2013d) after the 2013 Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council. However, Russia vetoed the EU's application and, as Finland reported at the 2015 Ministerial Meeting, the EU would continue to be participate in the Arctic Council's works as an *ad hoc* observer, with the "hope that the obstacles to the EU's full observer status will be removed as soon as possible" (Arctic Council 2015) – which might be impossible in the current situation.

5.8 Conclusions

This first stage of the EU's policy for the Arctic region has proven challenging for all the actors involved – not only the EU and the construction of its legitimacy in the region, but also the different understandings of the Arctic States. Within the EU, the EU Council appeared to be more concerned with the coherence between the EU's foreign policy goals and the Member States', while the Parliament focused more on the policy instruments and their coordination, after its missteps – such as the proposal for an Arctic Treaty. In 2014, the Parliament also encouraged the work of the Commission, calling for a more coherent policy, arguably in terms of better definitions of the EU's Positioning and interests, as well as "more effective synergies between existing programmes", in particular with regards to cross-border cooperation – in which extended from the Northern Dimension to the European Neighbourhood Instrument, which is part of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy (EP 2014 §27). These suggestions seemed to indicate that the EU needed to become more influential in soft policy areas, and through already established policies. As a collective actor, the EU needed to balance the positions of different actors, which enjoy different mandates, represent different interests, and work in different Scales of governance – in order not to develop a coherent role.

Chapter VI

Constructing roles in a changing Arctic

The EU's policy for the Arctic from 2016 to 2021

6.1 Introduction

In April 2016, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy released the Joint Communication entitled '*An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic*'. As the title of the Communication suggests, the main objective of the 2016 document was to pave the way towards more coordination regarding EU policies impacting the Arctic region, whose complexity exacerbates overlapping issues – from sustainable development and human rights to sovereignty issues, from the objectives of the EU's institutions to the national interests of the EU non-Arctic Member States. To better integrate the EU's goals and instruments for the governance of the Arctic, the Council of the European Union and European Parliament requested the European Commission to develop an EU policy which was integrated and coherent – especially with regards to the use of EU funds.

In 2016, the EU published also its *Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. The document, signed by the High Representative Federica Mogherini, replaced the *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World* (2003) and sets the EU's objectives to navigate "times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union" (EEAS 2016, 7). According to the *Global Strategy*, the EU needs to pay attention to the Arctic regional specificities and

dynamics – as well as other regions' peculiarities – to balance "global pressures and local pushback" (EEAS 2016, 10). As stated in the *Strategy*, the EU needs to cooperate with its Arctic Member States and EEA partners showing "a strategic interest in the Arctic remaining a low-tension area, with ongoing cooperation ensured by the Arctic Council, a well-functioning legal framework, and solid political and security cooperation" (EEAS 2016, 38-9).

Therefore, the objectives of the EU need to be read with the goal of integrating the Arctic region and its governance structure into the EU's global role – maybe reducing the tendency of tackling the Arctic at large, as Østhagen (2013, 85-6) observes with regards to the previous EU's actions. Like the previous documents, in the 2016 Communication, the Commission identified three areas that represented the EU's priorities and areas of intervention: climate change and the safeguard of the Arctic environment; promoting sustainable development in and around the Arctic; supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues. For each of them, the EU proposed different policy responses, that will be now examined.

6.2 An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic

6.2.1 Climate Change and Safeguarding the Arctic Environment

The transformations of the Arctic, driven by rising global temperatures, are a primary concern for the EU, especially for the Union's non-Arctic members. In its Communication, the European Commission highlights the dangers posed by the release of carbon dioxide and methane as ice and permafrost thaw, which can exacerbate the damage caused by fossil fuel combustion. The document emphasizes that the transformation of the Arctic endangers the global climate in multiple ways, including the global food chain, affecting both humans and animals. To address the

issues arising from climate change, the 2016 Communication outlined a strategy focused on research, climate mitigation and adaptation, and environmental protection.

In terms of research, the policy document indicates that the EU aimed to fund Arctic-related research through the Horizon 2020 programme, which ran from 2014 to 2020, with funding around EUR 200 million (approximately USD 217 million). Specifically, EUR 40 million was allocated under the 2016-17 programme for Arctic research, focusing on integrated systems of observation to study Arctic climate and weather from both environmental and socio-economic perspectives. Additionally, the document references financial instruments such as the European Structural and Investment Funds and the EU-PolarNet initiative. The EU-PolarNet is a consortium of twenty-five European research institutions (twenty-two at the time of the Communication) collaborating with partners from Canada, Russia, and the United States. Regarding space programmes necessary for monitoring, the Communication underscores the role of the Copernicus programme and the Commission's intention to implement the Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System, a multinational research infrastructure for pan-Arctic monitoring (European Commission 2016a, 6).

Space and environmental monitoring are integral to the EU's objective of fostering international and multilateral cooperation in the region, particularly through Science Diplomacy. In general, Science Diplomacy indicates all the practices whose purpose is "to maintain, cultivate, deepen and prolong relations" (Kaltofen and Acuto 2018, 11). In particular, the EU's approach in 2016 to scientific cooperation can be considered a form of *science for diplomacy*, i.e. use of science to create diplomatic relations, but also the *science in diplomacy* approach, i.e. employing scientific advice in diplomacy so as to shape political objectives – especially within the Arctic Council,

even if indirectly and even during times of tensions by focusing on non-conflictual relationships (Hsu 2011), which was essential for Arctic cooperation until 2022.

Closely related to international cooperation are climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The 2016 Communication emphasizes the critical need to implement the UN Paris Agreement (2015) to prevent global temperatures from rising more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, aiming to keep the increase below 2°C. However, these efforts, even if fully executed, will not mitigate the consequences of past and ongoing pollution, making adaptation strategies essential. The principles of the Paris Agreement also apply to the Arctic. During the US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2015-2017), the U.S. Department of State also organised an international Arctic conference in Alaska (GLACIER – Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience) in 2015. At the conference, President Obama stated "that the United States recognizes our role in creating this problem, and we embrace our responsibility to help solve it" (Office of the Press Secretary of the White House, 2015) – until the Trump Administration.

The international community's attention towards climate change and global fostered international cooperation and actions for the environmental protection of the Arctic. In the Iqaluit Declaration, the Arctic Council (2015a, 5) affirmed the intention to work to implement the Paris Agreement, which was an essential commitment since the Arctic region had been mostly invisible in international environmental agreements. Indeed, Sébastien Duyck underlines that the global and international nature of pollution and climate change might hinder the adoption of measures that respect the specificities of each region. In addition, Duyck observes how the distinction between industrialised and developing countries hinders international actions for the Arctic region, since the UN targets the issues concerning developing countries while the

industrialised countries' needs fall under their domestic competences (Duyck 2015, 3). However, the conditions for EU-US cooperation changed after 2016 with the election of President Trump. In 2017, the Trump Administration announced the American withdrawal from the Paris Agreement – marking a radical change in the US' positioning.

The Trump Administration's energy and climate policies heavily impacted the U.S.' position on climate change in the Arctic Council. However, the new policy and rhetoric on climate change did not prevent the legally binding agreement on strengthening international scientific cooperation in the Arctic, which was signed in 2017 in Alaska, and entered into force in 2018, which was in line with the intentions of the Obama Administration (Sakharov, 2018, 73). At the same time, the US started a series of international conferences called *Arctic Science Ministerial* in Washington, which has taken place every two years in 2016 – in Berlin in 2018, in Tokyo in 2021 (postponed because of the COVID pandemic) and in St. Petersburg in 2023, where "there were no foreign speakers" (Berkman 2023) – signalling important limits of science diplomacy in light of the need to maintain cooperation in the Arctic by sharing common values – i.e. the respect of international law.

With regards to environmental protection, the Communication reaffirms the EU's intention to fully respect, and advocate for, the provisions of UNCLOS obligating all the states to protect and preserve the marine environment. The Communication expresses the EU's intentions to protect of biodiversity through the establishment of marine protected areas in the Arctic region, and to create a legal instrument under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas in the Arctic

international waters – i.e. the *Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean*, signed in 2018 and entered into force on 25th June 2021.

Finally, the 2016 Communication underlines the need to "to prohibit or phase out the use of persistent organic pollutants in the environment between now and 2020" (European Commission 2016a, 8) through the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and the ratification of the 2013 Minamata Convention on the prevention and reduction of global emissions of mercury. The Communication also stresses the need to implement voluntary measures (such as the Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling by the International Maritime Organisation's Guidelines for the Control) and the ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments (2004) by all the signatory parties. The Communication also highlights the EU's commitment to cooperate with its Member States and all the Arctic stakeholders, as well as those who are part of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the OSPAR Convention) to guarantee the adoption of the best security standards to prevent incidents in the region. Considering these interests, the Communication states that "the EU should therefore welcome the Arctic Council Agreement on Cooperation on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic" (European Commission 2016a, 8) – which was adopted in 2013.

6.2.2 Sustainable Development in and around the Arctic

While climate change poses global threats, it also opens possibilities to invest in the Arctic region and exploit its seafood, mineral, oil and gas resources, and shipping potential – and the balance between the view of the Arctic as a region to protect and a

region where to live is difficult to find. The 2016 Communication of the EU takes into account the regional specificities of the region, such as its sparse population, the absence of transport links in the Arctic wide areas (from roads and railways to flight connections), with important implications for "the educational, health, linguistic and cultural needs of Arctic communities," (European Commission 2016a, 8). The development of the Arctic territories is also part of the objectives of its Cohesion Policy, which aims to reduce social and economic differences among EU regions. At the same time, the Communication acknowledges that the European Arctic territories and maritime areas hold "significant potential to support growth in the rest of Europe [but] the EU does not currently have a complete north-south traffic connection" (European Commission 2016a, 9). Therefore, the Communication insists in the need to cooperate with Iceland, Norway, and Greenland.

With regards to the non-EU Arctic countries, the 2016 document states that the EU's actions include the use of financial instruments, the application of EU law that applies also to the EEA area, and the support for the Barents-Euro Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension policy framework. In addition to the cohesion policy, the Communication mentions the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg), as in the previous EU documents and strategies released by Finland and Sweden. In the 2016 Communication, the document refers to the Interreg North Programme, the Botnia-Atlantica Programme the Baltic Sea Region Programme, and the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme – which enhance the Karelia and Kolarctic cross-border cooperation programmes – developed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument. Again, as far as transports are concerned, the Communication highlights the necessity to develop infrastructure projects through more coordinated financial instruments, to

meet the requests of the relevant national and regional actors (European Commission 2016a, 9).

Economic development requires energy, whose accessibility cannot be taken for granted – as shown by the crisis following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, the 2016 Communication already mentions energy issues – and the need to rely on clean energy – and the potential of the Arctic for the sector thanks to wind power (both on- and off-shore), ocean energy, geothermal energy and hydropower (European Commission 2016a, 9). However, as discussed later in this and in the following chapters, energy production enters in conflict with the indigenous peoples' rights concerning the use of Indigenous lands and their traditional activities, such as reindeer husbandry. The windmills in the Norwegian Sámi lands provides an example of such conflictual needs and rights to be balanced, with the Norwegian Supreme Court ruling that the construction of turbines and wind farms violated the Saami rights in 2021 – which led Norway's Oil and Energy Minister Terje Aasland to apologise in 2023, even though solutions for the coexistence of windfarms and reindeer husbandry might be difficult to achieve (Buli *et al*. 2023).

Consequently, sustainable development and innovation pose several questions, but they remain central to the EU's policy. According to the Communication (European Commission 2016a, 10), the new technologies should concern the production of material suitable for the Arctic extreme winter conditions and the enable efficient energy production – especially renewable energy – that might be employed even outside of the Arctic region. In this regard, the Communication stresses the importance of the Horizon 2020, which included the InnovFin 28 ('EU Finance for Innovators', by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank Group) and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Consequently, the

programmes supported Arctic-related research and increase the possibilities for innovative technologies to access the (EU) market.

In this regard, the Communication stresses the importance of achieving outcomes "with commercial potential" that yet "ensure social and environmental protection and could contribute to the development of 'Arctic standards'" (European Commission 2016a, 10) – with a minor mention of Arctic traditional knowledge. The document also points out that the InnovFin programme could support even the small and medium enterprises in their efforts to innovate their business (European Commission 2016a, 10). The focus on small business and cooperation is not only related to the EU's cohesion policy, but to the view of Arctic international and regional cooperation as based upon research and economic ties. However, as mentioned with regards to the Indigenous Peoples, development needs to consider the voices of those who are often defined as 'stakeholders' – a controversial label, often rejected by the Indigenous communities on the grounds of being 'right holders' (Shadian 2017, 51).

In the 2016 Communication, the Commission and the EEAS consider the European Arctic (extending from Greenland to the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago) as a region "suffering from underinvestment" (European Commission 2016a, 11). To address regional issues, the Communication established the European Arctic Stakeholder Forum, which aims to enhance and support multilevel cooperation and coordination, especially in terms of economic programmes providing EU funds for the Arctic region. According to the Communication, the forum was intended to be temporary and open to Iceland, Norway, and Greenland, taking place in 2017 under the title *Knowing, Developing and Connecting the Arctic*. However, as stated in the Communication, the European Commission intended to establish a series of annual meetings – the EU Arctic Forum – and dialogues with representatives of the Sámi

populations, hosted by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE). The first forum was later organised in Umeå, Sweden, in October 2019. Additionally, the Communication mentions the Interreg Northern Periphery and the Arctic Programme as tools for authorities and stakeholders to network and "facilitate the exchange of information, plan and coordinate calls for proposals and monitor the impact of programmes on the region" (European Commission 2016a, 11).

Within this framework, the Communication reiterates the role of tools such as the Investment Plan for Europe and institutions like the European Investment Bank. The Communication suggests that the European Investment Bank "could invest in cross-border projects between Sweden, Finland, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Iceland, which have significant development potential" (European Commission 2016a, 11), with the support of the European Investment Advisory Hub and Project Portal, as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This strategy aims not only to utilise EU funds but also to attract private investments in Arctic-related projects.

The 2016 Communication pays particular attention to space technology, which complements the need to develop transport infrastructure through surveillance and monitoring programmes, such as those offered by the EU Copernicus programme. Additionally, the Communication mentions the European Global Navigation System (Galileo), which became operational by the end of 2016. The document also reports the European Commission's interest in "a possible proposal to support the next generation of Government satellite communications in the context of the upcoming Space Strategy or European Defence Action Plan" (European Commission 2016a, 12). Indeed, in the 2016 Communication Space Strategy for Europe, published in December, the Arctic is mentioned concerning the needs of the Copernicus Programme

to monitor regional changes (European Commission 2016b, 5). As is often stressed in policy documents for the Arctic region, space technologies are crucial for safe and secure maritime activities, especially due to the prospective increase in traffic in the Arctic Ocean once the Arctic waters become ice-free during summer, a scenario that might become real by 2030 "even under a low emission scenario" (Kim *et al.*, 2023). The preparation for an ice-free Arctic during summer reflects the weakening of the rhetoric about the Arctic as a pristine area, which has not yet been completely abandoned, as shown in the case of the European Parliament later in this chapter.

However, the Arctic maritime routes raise not only maritime security concerns but also political issues. In this regard, the Communication states that the EU "should also support international efforts to implement the International Polar Code covering shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in Arctic waters, including enhanced Search and Rescue" (European Commission 2016a, 13). The Polar Code is not a treaty but a technical instrument that entered into force in January 2017, signed under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The Polar Code includes regulations for both the Arctic and Antarctica. The IMO started the process of constructing the Polar Code after publishing its 2009 *Guidelines for ships operating in polar waters*. The Polar Code requires both mandatory and recommendatory provisions to enhance shipping safety and prevent pollution, as well as training requirements. The adoption of the Polar Code represented an important milestone, as states had adopted measures for navigation in Arctic waters since the 1980s, leading to confusion and fragmentation and prompting a series of efforts by the IMO, which had already adopted its first guidelines for the Arctic in 2002 (Jensen 2016). However, the application and introduction of the Polar Code into national policies and the general preservation of the Arctic environment require a robust system of cooperation for developing

standards, leading to the final part of the 2016 Communication dedicated to international cooperation.

6.2.3. Supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues

According to the 2016 *Global Strategy* and the previous Arctic policies, the EU's main interest is to maintain the Arctic as a region of cooperation and negotiation – not necessarily 'exceptional', but resilient to changes in international politics. In the Communication, the European Commission reiterates the role of science diplomacy and frames science "as a catalyst to support a common understanding, enabling jointly agreed solutions to be reached and foster peaceful cooperation" (European Commission 2016a, 13). Science diplomacy is therefore depicted as essential for both Arctic and non-Arctic states and actors to participate in Arctic governance. Research involving ocean issues is crucial, and the Communication states the Commission's intention to include the Barents Sea in developing a multi-resolution map of the seas and oceans around Europe. The document also stresses the role of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) in the process of sharing data at the international level, also to enhance the 'Blue Economy' sector, estimating that accessible data might "improve productivity by over EUR 1 billion a year" (European Commission 2016a, 16).

Regarding international cooperation and law, the Commission reaffirms that "the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides a framework for managing the Arctic Ocean, including the peaceful settlement of disputes" (European Commission 2016a, 14). Concerning Arctic governance, the Communication underlines its intention to cooperate with the Arctic Council and its expectations regarding its Observer status. According to the 2016 document, the "EU should also

engage with the Arctic Council on issues relating to stewardship of the seas including by participating in the Arctic Council Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation" (European Commission 2016a, 14). Cooperation with Canada, Russia, and the United States might extend beyond the Arctic Council, as well as with China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore.

loser to the EU, there is cooperation with Greenland (EU-Greenland Partnership), Iceland, and Norway, particularly through the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension policy, as well as the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Additionally, the Communication stresses the EU's involvement in the Arctic through the UN Conventions and its agencies – even though it does not mention the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the EU Foreign Affairs Council mentions the EU's support for the Declaration in its 2017 *Conclusions on Indigenous Peoples*. In this regard, the Communication highlights the European Commission's hosting of the annual EU Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue, which consists of meetings with representatives of Arctic indigenous peoples to foster cooperation regarding human rights. The meetings, welcomed by the EU Foreign Affairs Council in 2014, were, however, regular rather than annual until the 2016 Communication. Previously, the European Commission hosted a series of mostly regular meetings, as stated in the 2008 Communication, which took place in Brussels in 2010, in Tromsø in 2011, and again in Brussels in 2013.

The Communication underlines the EU's engagement with Arctic Indigenous Peoples and its support for them and Arctic local communities via financial instruments and funding programmes such as Territorial Cooperation programmes (part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument) and the Northern Periphery. However, representatives of the Sámi communities (as well as other regions of the

European Arctic) have often highlighted the complexity of EU programmes and their rules, and their consequent inaccessibility. In particular, the report of the Saami Council (European Commission 2017, 89) for the EU Arctic Stakeholder Forum evaluates the Horizon 2020 programme as "too complex and to [*sic*] resource demanding to undergo" for small institutions and communities.

In 2017, the European Commission and the European External Action Service established the position of the EU's Special Envoy for Arctic Matters. The Special Envoy, equivalent to an ambassador, is expected "to drive forward the EU's Arctic policy, enhance cooperation with partner countries and other interested parties, improve coordination between the different EU institutions, mainstream Arctic issues in policy-making, and promote and publicise the EU's Arctic engagement externally[20]". The first Special Envoy was Marie-Anne Coninsx, who previously served as the EU's Ambassador to Canada from 2013 to 2017. The second Special Envoy was Michael Mann, starting from April 2020 to September 2022, when Clara Ganslandt took over the position. Although the position was not part of the EU's strategy, the appointment had positive effects on communication with other Arctic actors and their diplomatic agencies, as discussed in the following chapter.

6.2.4 The European Parliament's Resolution and the Council's Conclusions on the integrated European Union policy for the Arctic

The Council of the European Union released its Conclusions on the Joint Communication in June 2016, while the European Parliament released its Resolution in 2017. The Parliament's Resolution presents more explicit and ambitious objectives,

[20] EEAS, EU Special Envoy for Arctic Matters Clara Ganslandt, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-arctic_en#45734, last accessed on 13th December 2023.

based on the non-binding nature of the document. While the 2016 Joint Communication presents a more difficult balance between environmental protection and the exploitation of Arctic resources, the Parliament leans towards stronger environmentalism. In particular, the European Parliament "calls for a ban on oil drilling in the icy Arctic waters of the EU and the EEA and for promotion by the EU of comparable precautionary standards in the Arctic Council and for Arctic coastal states" (European Parliament 2017, §14). As in the case of the proposal for an Arctic Treaty, the European Parliament caused controversies with Norway – the only country the EU could influence with a ban – whose representatives described the ban as not only merely 'symbolic' but also 'alarming' (Finne 2017; McGwin 2017). Before the resolution was approved, the Parliament voted down a motion calling for a total ban on oil drilling in the Arctic EU/EEA jurisdiction (Bertrand 2017), and the call for a ban on drilling in icy waters became more symbolic than the previous motion. Indeed, most European Arctic waters are ice-free because of the Gulf Stream, and Norway had similar measures already in force even for areas such as Svalbard, which is not part of the EEA area (Raspotnik and Stępień 2017). However, while the Parliament's proposal did not have immediate repercussions, the 2021 Joint Communication adopts a similar position.

The European Parliament's Resolution also highlights the increasing "geopolitical importance" of the region (European Parliament 2017, §J), listing the opportunities and risks unveiled by climate change and the warming of the Arctic. However, the document reports that "by 2015, the Russian Federation had established at least six new bases north of the Arctic Circle, including six deep-water ports and 13 airfields, and has been increasing the presence of ground forces in the Arctic" (European Parliament 2017, §M). At the same time, the Resolution stresses the

necessity to maintain EU-Russia dialogues and cross-border cooperation through unspecified "selective engagement" (European Parliament 2017, §30). Along with Russia, the European Parliament expresses its attention towards Chinese interests in the region – the People's Republic of China would release its Arctic policy the following year, claiming to be a 'near-Arctic state' with legitimate interests in the region – which might conflict with the EU's if Sino-Russian relations strengthen. In particular, the Resolution (European Parliament 2017, §61) asks the Commission to monitor the possible effects of the free trade agreement between Iceland and China signed in 2013 and entering into force in July 2014. Specifically, the European Parliament asked the Commission to focus on the impact that the agreement might have on sustainable economic development and the EU market (European Parliament 2017, §61).

The Parliament's position towards Iceland and China must be read in light of Iceland's withdrawal from the EU accession process. The accession failed because of disputes such as those about fishing quotas – not part of the EEA agreement – that prevailed over benefits such as accessing the EU's structural funds. The Icelandic government feared that joining the EU would have further compromised the national economy, already depressed by the 2008 crisis – Iceland suffered from "the largest banking collapse in history" (Dams et al. 2020, 21). In 2015, Iceland decided not to join the EU. Even though the country's economy was recovering, scepticism about the EU's assistance and regulations remained.

Unlike the European Commission's attempt, the European Parliament's Resolution is not as 'integrated' or comprehensive. As Andreas Raspotnik and Adam Stępień (2017) underline, the document presents common problems of the Parliament's resolutions, such as being "more a collection of unrelated paragraphs,

rather than a coherent policy statement", an outcome also due to the fact that Arctic governance is "a fairly marginal issue in the EU policy-making. Only a few MEPs have substantial regional knowledge and interest in the Arctic, able to properly assess the multiplicity of issues under debate" (Raspotnik and Stępień 2017). This practical criticism supports the idea underpinning the study of foreign policies, i.e. the role of decision-makers and the ways they construe their political environment – in this case, through limited knowledge of the area and its issues. However, Raspotnik and Stępień also highlighted that Members of Parliament from the Arctic states considered the economic development of the region as a crucial interest for the EU. Indeed, the Resolution stresses "the importance of continuous and sufficient funding for the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas in order to tackle permanent handicaps such as sparse population, harsh climate conditions and long distances" (European Parliament 2017, §21) – in step with the Joint Communication.

In its Conclusions, the Council emphasises the importance of a "well-coordinated Arctic policy" that "will contribute to the EU's engagement in an increasingly strategically important region" (EU Council 2016, §2), and that will have relevance "from a foreign and security policy point of view" (EU Council 2016, §2). In this regard, the 2016 Conclusions underline that the Arctic States are still the main actors in the region while also acknowledging the importance of multilateral and regional cooperation (EU Council 2016, §3) – such as the Transatlantic Ocean Research Alliance, as well as the already established Arctic fora and policy frameworks like the Northern Dimension.

Multilateral cooperation and global issues 'upgrade' the scale of Arctic governance. The Conclusions highlight the EU's relevance in negotiations for the agreement to prevent unregulated fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean since fishery

"falls under the EU's exclusive external competence" (EU Council 2016, §9). However, the Conclusions also mention the importance of the Paris Agreement and "the need for urgent global action to reduce and prevent the significant risks posed by climate change and environmental impacts in the Arctic region caused notably by global activities" (EU Council 2016, §6). On one hand, the emphasis on the 'international' sources of pollution affecting the Arctic eases the pressure on the Arctic States and the responsibilities related to the exploitation of Arctic resources. On the other, it increases the importance of a larger dialogue – with "respect for participants' standing and competences", as noted in the case of the Arctic Stakeholder Forum (EU Council 2016, §7) – including the Arctic Indigenous peoples in the process, as well as the local communities (EU Council 2016, §4). In addition, the Conclusions notes "the important role played by EU Member States in the Arctic Council as members and observers in promoting cooperation in the Arctic in accordance with their respective status (EU Council 2016, §11). These statements by the Council seem to reflect a more differentiated view of the Arctic – 'exceptional', but not necessarily isolated from the rest of the world or the EU.

In 2019, the Council of Foreign Affairs adopted a second resolution on the EU's Arctic policy in light of its Conclusions on the Oceans and Seas (2019) and on Space Solutions for a Sustainable Arctic (2019). In the Conclusions regarding the Oceans and Seas, the Council acknowledges the impact of climate change in the Arctic due to human activities. In the Conclusions on Space Solutions, the Council suggests "that the Commission and the High Representative consider updating the 2016 Joint Communication to take account of the new challenges and opportunities, including as regards space solutions, in the Arctic, and the growing international interest" (EU Council 2019a, §17). Similarly, in the 2019 Conclusions on the EU Arctic policy, the

Council states to be looking "forward to an update of the EU Arctic policy set out in the 2016 Joint Communication on the integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic" (EU Council 2019c, §5) – which would occur in 2021.

6.3. Sweden's new strategy for the Arctic

After the EU's 2016 Communication, the Swedish government also presented "a new integrated approach to Arctic policy" in response to "the rapid developments in the region" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 5). In 2016, Sweden presented a 'new environmental policy for the Arctic', which mainly advocated for "stronger climate efforts", "better protection of biodiversity and ecosystems", and "sustainable use of resources" (Swedish Ministry of the Environment and Energy, 2016). However, the new document further elucidated those purposes. The 2020 strategy further elucidated these purposes by considering the importance of political changes in the region, particularly due to climate change and an increased presence of non-Arctic states (such as Observers at the Arctic Council) and the EU's initiatives. The Swedish strategy sets six priorities to address Arctic issues: international collaboration; security and stability; climate and the environment; polar research and environmental monitoring; sustainable economic development and business interests; and securing good living conditions (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 6).

6.3.1 The international dimension of Arctic governance

International cooperation is the primary element, viewed as a necessary condition to achieve local, regional, EU, and global environmental goals. However, as emphasized in the 2016 EU Council's Conclusions, international cooperation rests on formal hierarchies established by international law, which Sweden considers foundational for

Arctic cooperation. This is underscored by Sweden's assertion that "[t]here is not international law vacuum in the Arctic", with reference to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea in particular (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 12). Sweden acknowledges the rights and duties of the five Arctic coastal states – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the US – regarding Arctic internal waters and territorial seas, probably referencing the dispute over the status of the Northwest passage which, as said later in the document, must be dealt with "in accordance with the law of the sea" and "by diplomatic means" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 23). The strategy also underlines the rights and duties within their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and continental shelves – which are more detailed in the strategy's section about security.

While emphasising the role of the eight Arctic states in the protection of regional stability, the strategy underlines the necessity to better cooperate with the non-Arctic States "in order to deal with the challenges in the Arctic that are of a global nature," (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 12). As in the case of the IMO's Polar Code and the Svalbard Treaty (mentioned as the Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen). With regards to the EU Member States, the strategy underlines Sweden's desire "to see broad engagement from all of the EU's membership", particularly those with observer status in the Arctic Council. It also notes the UK's continued importance in Arctic issues post-Brexit (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 18). Additionally, the strategy acknowledges the UN human rights conventions and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which have significant domestic and international implications for Sweden.

Indeed, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) released a legal opinion according to which Sweden had violated the rights of

the Indigenous Peoples. The rights of Indigenous Peoples are particularly relevant concerning the relocation of the Swedish town of Kiruna and the exploitation of Arctic territory through wind farm construction. The discovery of Europe's largest deposit of rare earth metals in Kiruna, announced in early 2023, further complicates matters. However, Indigenous Peoples' rights were not mentioned in the "investigation into the permit-granting processes and the Mineral Act, which has been commissioned to ensure sustainable mineral and metal supply in Sweden" (Bituin Eriksson 2021). Consequently, the blurred distinction between international issues and domestic obligations under international law might impact the Sweden and the EU's plans for a sustainable economic development of the Arctic.

Regarding the EU, the Strategy dedicates a larger session to the EU than the one present in the 2011 document. In the 2020 Strategy, Sweden "attaches great importance to the engagement of the EU in the Arctic" and "active participation and its contributions to the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 18). The strategy highlights the ties between Sweden and the EU, referencing the 2019 EU Arctic Forum in Umeå (the capital of Västerbotten County), and stressing the importance of updating the EU's Arctic policy while focusing on environmental protection, sustainable development, and international cooperation. The then Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström, also remarked the importance of the forum in her speech at the 2019 Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council.

6.3.2 International security

The strategy recognizes that international cooperation is not guaranteed, given rising international tensions between Arctic states and aspiring actors in the region. It

acknowledges the fading exceptionalism of the Arctic and the necessity to "maintain the rules-based world order, which is part of the foundations for international security and stability, also in the Arctic" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 18). However, the Strategy underlines the steady militarisation of the region, especially the Russian side of the Arctic since the region "is seen as a key area for early warning and for the global strategic nuclear weapon balance" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 23). According to the strategy, preserving cooperation would reduce the possible outbreaks of conflicts, or their escalations.

Sweden's participation in NATO exercises, and its impending accession to NATO, represent potential sources of tension, particularly with Russia. The strategy notes that NATO has responded to the Russian behaviour through a series of military exercises – called *Aurora* – in which Sweden also participated – something that the strategy for the Arctic does not mention. In 2017, the Swedish Armed Forces took part in the Aurora exercise to increase and strengthen the military capabilities of the Swedish *Totalförsvaret* ('total defence'; see Simons *et al*. 2019 and *Second Line of Defense*[21]) – which is the name of the security bill approved for the time frame 2021-2025. According to the bill, the Swedish defensive objectives need to be taken into consideration considering the "deteriorated international situation" (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2020, 100). So, while in the one hand Sweden wants to avoid conflicts, the *Totalförsvaret* affirms that "the overall security context has deteriorated in the light of military reestablishment and an assertion of sovereignty by several states in the Arctic. This development is led by Russia" (Swedish Ministry of Defence 2020, 22).

[21] The links reported in the academic and newspaper articles are not operative anymore: https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/activities/exercises/aurora-17/; https://www.government.se/articles/2017/09/swedisharmed-forces-exercise-aurora-17-will-increase-military-capability

The strategy also highlights the destabilizing effects of climate change on Arctic security, since the increasing accessibility of the region might lead to greater interest in exploiting its natural resources – with reference to the 2009 survey about the estimated reserves of oil and gas in the Arctic seabed, as well as minerals. In this regard, the strategy highlights the existence of competing claims about the Arctic States' continental shelves (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 22-3), which have gained relevance recently. Indeed, the UN Commission appointed for the definition of the Continental Shelf approved most of Russia's seabed claim in the Arctic Ocean in February 2023 – while it has not processed the Danish and Canadian claims on the overlapping, claimed sea areas (Hager 2023). Russia had previously submitted its claims in 2001 and, after the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) rejected them, Russia submitted its claims in 2015. In August 2023, the UN Commission submitted some recommendations about the outer limits of its continental shelf, considering that "the final outer limits of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean may depend on continental shelf delimitation with neighboring States" (UN CLCS § 31; 32). However, since these recommendations are not legally binding, the delimitation process remains uncertain, and Russia has accelerated militarization of its Arctic regions.

The security dimension also concerns human rights and non-Arctic states, specifically China. Even though the Swedish Arctic Strategy does not delve into China's influence, the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI, 2022) has deeply analysed the role of Chinese economic statecraft from a geo-economic perspective. The FOI observes that Chinese diplomats and businesses consider the Nordic region as a suitable area to promote the Republic of China's core interests and image, which are increasingly at odds with the values shaping Arctic governance such as the respect

of human rights and international law. Oscar Almén and Christopher W. Hsiung, the authors of the FOI 2022 report, stress that Sino-Swedish relations have been worsening. In 2020, then, Swedish companies such as Hennes & Mauritz (known as H&M) halted all the purchases of cotton from the Chinese region of Xinjiang, a territory in the North-West of China where the Republic of China has been accused of perpetrating violence against the Muslim minority of the Uyghurs. Almén and Hsiung report that the Communist Youth League, the youth movement of the Chinese Communist Party, opposed the measures that H&M took, resulting in a boycott campaign. Even though the government of the Republic did not actively support the boycott, Almén and Hsiung underlines how economic statecraft is not necessarily present in official documents, so that states can undermine foreign business activities through "[u]nspecified threats of retaliation" (Almén and Hsiung 2022, 47).

Likewise, scientific cooperation, trade, and business investments might be related to values, state interests, and mutual trust. Back in 2010, Sweden allowed the Republic of China to open a meteorological station in Kiruna, followed by the North Polar Ground Station in 2016 – the first Chinese satellite station outside China (Chen 2016). However, Almén and Hsiung underline that scientific cooperation has security implications that cannot be ignored as distrust increases. Space observation and satellites are both essential to human security and military capability. In 2022, the Norwegian Police Security Service accused a researcher at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø of being a Russian spy, working in programmes investigating "subversive actions by hostile states that fall below the threshold of formal conflict" (Braw 2022). In the case of Swedish strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot exclude prospective cooperation between China and Russia, given the Chinese efforts

to strengthen its navy (2020; 23). However, despite China's increased global and Arctic ambitions, several Arctic projects has not been carried out, or they failed[22].

6.3.3 Sweden's environmental priorities

The strategy emphasizes the Swedish government's environmental concerns and objectives to counter the effects of climate change and human activities, such as ocean acidification – objectives related to the preservation of good living conditions for the people of the Arctic. The strategy emphasises the needs to limit global emissions of greenhouse gases, protect the marine environment and biodiversity, and to pursue a "global non-toxic circular economy" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 30). The document also underlines that those objectives are in line with the UN Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, adopted in 2015, and the crucial need to include the representatives of the Indigenous Peoples "in concrete cooperation drawing on traditional and local knowledge, including in the work of the Arctic Council" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 30). However, the inclusion and respect of Indigenous Peoples' claims may be disrupted by efforts to populate, develop, and exploit the Arctic.

The strategy acknowledges the consequences of a warming Arctic in terms of thawing permafrost and ice, which release greenhouse gases, and diminishing ability to reflect sunlight from the Arctic in space – causing further absorption of sunlight and consequent warming – and increasing sea level, which will heavily affect coastal cities around the globe. Sweden aims to "take a lead in the implementation of the Paris

[22] Several Chinese projects are yet to be realised or fully implemented, such as the Polar Silk Road. Among the Chinese failed projects in the Arctic, there are examples such as the aluminium smelter in Iceland (2015) and the plan to open a uranium and rare earth mine in Kvanefjeld (Greenland), which Almén and Hsiung (2022, 27-8) consider "unlikely to proceed" as a result of the 2021 elections, won by the environmentalist, leftist party *Inuit Ataqatigiit*.

Agreement, which will guide the Government's work in the Arctic" – an objective shared by the EU as a whole. According to the strategy, "Sweden's ambition is to be the world's first fossil-free welfare state" by reaching zero net emissions of greenhouse gases (i.e. the balance between greenhouse gasses produced and removed from the atmosphere) by 2045 and negative emissions thereafter (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 32). The strategy emphasizes the Arctic Council's role, involving both Arctic States and Observers, in influencing global greenhouse gas emissions, since most of them are largely responsible for global emissions. According to the 2020 document, the composition of the Arctic Council "contributes to the Arctic Council's possibilities of exercising influence on the world's aggregate greenhouse gas emissions" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 32).

However, the 2023 report by the UN warned that the intentions and efforts of the international community were insufficient to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement (maintaining the global temperature increase well under 2° C, and preferably under or up to 1.5° C). In particular, the UN report stresses that "rapidly narrowing window to raise ambition and implement existing commitments in order to limit warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels" and that states need to shift to "renewable energy while phasing out all unabated fossil fuels, ending deforestation, reducing non-CO2 emissions", underling that "just transitions can support more robust and equitable mitigation outcomes, with tailored approaches addressing different contexts" (UNCCC 2023, key finding 6, 7, 8). Considering all the aspects of pollution and how they affect the living conditions in the Arctic, the strategy also mentions the need for global regulations and control over chemical waste and pollution, which can reach the Arctic through air or water currents (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2020, 34) – in this regard, the strategy acknowledges that "considerable emissions also occur in the Arctic" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 34).

6.3.4 Polar research and environmental monitoring

As highlighted throughout this dissertation, research and scientific cooperation are essential to understand how to address the needs of the Arctic region and implement the proper measures for mitigation and adaptation. The strategy underlines the Arctic and non-Arctic states' interests in researching the Arctic and the enormous costs of polar research, which can be smoothened through international cooperation and programmes. With reference to international cooperation, the Swedish strategy mentions the role of research in the implementation of the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda, in particular *combating climate change and its impacts*, *life below water* and *life on land* (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 38), as well as the role of the Arctic Council.

At the Scandinavian – or Norden – level, the strategy draws attention to the Arctic Five, a network of five Arctic universities across Finland, Norway, and Sweden (Luleå, Rovaniemi, Tromsø, Oulu and Umeå), which constitutes "the largest knowledge node concerning Arctic research and development; together its parties have more than 90 000 students and 4 000–5 000 research students" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 38). In addition, there is the University of the Arctic, a consortium operating since 2001 and including universities and research institutes from both Arctic and non-Arctic states – also Italy, through *Società italiana per l'organizzazione internazionale* (SIOI) since 2018 – and the North2north exchange programme, which extends to all the eight Arctic states, plus Scotland and France.

Within the framework of scientific as well as cultural cooperation, the strategy dedicates a section to knowledge exchange between scientists and Indigenous Peoples and the need "not only […] to preserve the culture and identity of the Indigenous peoples but also because that knowledge can help to increase understanding of and find solutions to various global challenges" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 40-1). In this regard, the strategy mentions the cooperation between the Saami Parliament and the Swedish Biodiversity Centre and cooperation with state and Sámi museums – which, as reported during the 2017 EU Arctic Stakeholder Forum, started requesting Sámi artefacts stored outside of Sápmi, even though "most of the museums do not have acceptable facilities to store the items in required conditions," (Saami Council 2017, §2.1).

6.3.5 Sustainable economic development and business sector interests

The Strategy articulates Sweden's objectives for sustainable development with reference to the UN 2030 Agenda, specifically the goals 'decent work and economic growth', 'sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure', 'sustainable consumption and production', 'combat climate change and its impacts', and 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources' (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 44-5). According to the strategy, this means that the Swedish government needs to implement measures for sustainable energy use, sustainable fisheries, sustainable transport and infrastructure, sustainable tourism, and extraction of ore and minerals for the transition to fossil fuel-free technologies.

With regards to minerals, as the strategy remarks, the mining industry is extremely relevant for the Swedish economy. Indeed, the document defines Sweden as "Europe's foremost iron ore producer by far, and is also one of Europe's foremost

producers of other base metals as well as of precious metals" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 44-5). The strategy mentions that "the Swedish mining industry has drafted an ambitious agenda for completely fossil-free mining operations by 2045" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 50). Yet, greenhouse emissions might not be the only problems to be addressed, and the relocation of the town of Kiruna exemplifies the problems related to economic development and industrial growth in the Arctic region. Indeed, the town will be relocated by 2026 because the iron mine risks making the buildings fall into the ground. In addition, the representatives of the Saami foresee further complications for the indigenous communities and business since mines and railways interfere with the reindeers' habitat and food resources. Human activities add up to global warming, which affects also heritage sites of the Sámi communities because of the movement of the treeline to higher latitudes (Saami Council 2017, §2.1). These problems exacerbate the issues related to the exploitation of the Arctic region and its strategic relevance.

6.3.6 Ensuring good living conditions

According to the strategy, Sweden's main objective is to enable people to stay in the Arctic. The issue is particularly relevant for young women who move south to study or to find jobs. Keeping people in the Arctic, or making the Arctic attractive, is necessary to balance the region's ageing population and low birth rates – and, as often underlined during the 2023 Arctic Frontiers conference, to ensure the presence of workforce to sustain business. Ensuring good living conditions therefore means to develop the Arctic cities from different perspectives, such as free time and culture[23],

[23] The cultural dimension is strategically relevant for creating connections between Arctic and non-Arctic political actors, especially at the sub-national level. During the 2023 Arctic Frontier Conference, I could participate in the panel organised by the mayors of the Arctic cities, and I had the opportunity

so as "to get people to stay, move to or move back to the region" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 54). The document specifies four dimensions where the Government(s) should intervene: digital infrastructure, gender equality, young people, and indigenous people.

Digitalisation is crucial for work, research, and the business sector, requiring investments in space industries as satellites and telecommunications are necessary to ensure high-speed and high-quality connectivity. This connectivity supports not only economic activities such as tourism but, more importantly, healthcare. Indeed, the long distances between cities and natural elements such as mountains hinder the possibilities for people, especially the elderly, to receive proper and adequate treatments. As the strategy highlights, healthcare has been crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020-2022, but the event also showed the weak points of health care systems around the globe. These aspects must be taken into consideration as climate change, the disruption of animal habitats, and new interactions between humans and animals lay the groundwork for the rise of new forms of bacteria and viruses, and new pandemics. Together with the elderly, the strategy acknowledges the needs of the youth – whose respect is central for the economic and demographic development of the region through education and employment, housing and leisure, and freedom from discrimination[24] (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 56).

---

to speak with the representatives of the city of Bodø (Norway). Bodø has been selected as the European Capital of Culture 2024, and it had long built ties with the Italian region Veneto – a factor which facilitated the conversation, since Veneto is my region of origin. The cultural ties date back to the 15th century AD/ACE, when Pietro Querini's ships wrecked at Røst, in northern Norway, in 1432. Querini is thought to have popularised stockfish in Veneto, known in Italy as *Baccalà alla vicentina*, being Vicenza Querini's hometown. The focus on culture is also crucial in order to attract people, especially from the Southern regions of the Arctic countries – yet, this might cause further problems with the Saami communities, since populating the Arctic implies expanding cities and exploiting the Arctic wide areas.

[24] Discrimination might appear as gender inequality, discrimination against indigenous peoples, and discrimination against minorities such as the LGBT+ community – especially in the Russian Arctic. The Russian Federation has passed several laws against behaviour that undermines so-called traditional values and views of family structures, whose rhetoric has been exacerbated by the 'anti-West'

In step with the focus on human rights, there is the issue of gender equality, central to the Swedish foreign policy: Sweden was the first country to explicitly introduce a feminist foreign policy in 2014, which revolved around the girls' and women's three 'Rs': Rights, Representation and Resources (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018, 11). The strategy also mentions the feminist foreign policy[25] at the beginning of the section dedicated to international cooperation, together with Sweden's "support for the rules-based world order, human rights, democracy, the principles of the rule of law" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 12) and "the implementation of the 2030 Agenda" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 54). The strategy mentions gender equality projects "to foster the dialogue on gender equality in the Arctic and to build networks between experts and stakeholders in the region" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 55) – including the Sámi communities.

The strategy states that "the Sami Parliament has been commissioned by the Government to map and analyse Sami society from a gender equality perspective" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 54). The issue of gender equality and inequality within the Saami communities is however nuanced and often influenced by past colonial practices, when 'Scandinavian' customs were forced upon the indigenous communities. However, "[w]ithout critical reflection, 'Indigenous communities can, in the name of sovereignty and tradition, replicate and perpetuate heteropatriarchal neo-colonial agendas and practices instead of decolonization'" (Kuokkanen, 2019,

propaganda – according to which homosexuality constitutes evidence of the decline of 'Western' societies. These three types of discriminations can intersect, with harmful impacts on the population of the Arctic even when they move outside of the region as results of the colonial past, as in the case of Greenland and Denmark – recently in the spotlight because of the issues related to non-consensual insertions of intrauterine devices in Inuit women as measures to control the birth rate in the 20th century.

[25] After the 2022 general elections, the Swedish government abandoned the label 'feminist' with regards to its approach to foreign policy, even though the short- and long-term implications of such a choice are uncertain.

221, in Asztalos Morell 2021, 38), with detrimental effects over individual human rights.

With regards to decolonisation, the strategy concludes the last section focusing on Sámi traditional ways of life and activities, and rights. The document deals with reindeer husbandry in particular – mentioning also hunting and fishing, as well as crafts. The Swedish strategy highlights the importance of reindeer husbandry, which the Swedish Constitution preserves for the Saami only, and acknowledges the fact that "reindeer husbandry requires access to suitable calving grounds, functioning migration routes with resting pastures and central connected seasonal grazing areas for each season" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 56). The strategy stresses the importance of the indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making processes and for a that directly affect them, to fill knowledge gaps and ensuring "that traditional knowledge is made visible and comes to use" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 56). However, this section dedicated to the Swedish strategy shows the difficulty to balance economic development and traditional Saami activities – and rights. Finally, the strategy acknowledges "abuse, violations and racism" that the Sámi suffered and endured, and how "injustices still affect the relationship between different Sámi groups and between Sámi and the Swedish State" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 56). In this regard, Sweden established a Truth Commission in 2021, with the purpose to investigate and shed light on the abuses and injustices perpetrated against the Saami by the Swedish government.

6.4 The new Finnish strategy for the Arctic

The goals and policies articulated in the 2021 strategy reflects the goals of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, held between 2017 and 2019. The Chairmanship document and the latest strategy explicitly reinforce the image of Finland as an Arctic country. According to the Strategy, Finland's Arcticness is the sum of many parts, from universities to diplomacy, and all of them contributes to the position of Finland as an 'Arctic expert' in regional and cross-border cooperation, which are essential aspects of the Arctic policies of each state interested in the region – making them inevitably international and foreign. The 2021 strategy (which extends to 2030) offers a comprehensive view of Finland's objectives for the region, articulated in four main priorities, with reference to the UN 2030 agenda, already mentioned in the Chairmanship document: climate change, mitigation and adaptation; inhabitants, promotion of wellbeing, and the rights of the Saami; expertise, livelihoods and leading-edge research; infrastructure and logistics.

6.4.1 Climate change, mitigation and adaptation

The common denominator of the strategies is the transformation of the Arctic region due to climate change and the related risks, from rising sea levels and more extreme weather phenomena even outside of the Arctic region, to algal blooming in the Arctic that affect marine and human health and lives alike. Yet, the Finnish strategy states that "the Arctic region is changing permanently" and that "[r]educing the emissions of black carbon (soot) will help mitigate climate change across the globe" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 26) – at the same time, "[i]n Finland's view, the opening up of new fossil reserves in Arctic conditions is incompatible with attaining the targets of the Paris Agreement and associated with economic uncertainties and

risks" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 26). Such a statement marks a difference between Finland and the Arctic Coastal States – in this case, Canada, the United States, Russia, and Norway – which aim to continue the exploitation of the Arctic fossil fuels. However, this position reflects the EU's, as seen in the section dedicated to the EU's 2021 Communication on the Arctic.

The strategy highlights the role of science in Arctic politics, to which it adds the necessity to take "traditional Sámi knowledge into account in decision-making related to climate policy" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 27). The strategy emphasises the role of the EU's Structural Funds, the Just Transition Fund, the EU's Green Deal, and the COVID-19 pandemic recovery package in supporting the 'ecological shift' through more funds backing projects such as fossil-free transport. At the same time, the strategy gives importance to the Arctic Council's Working Groups, as far as monitoring the effect of climate change is concerned. The strategy also mentions the 2017's commitment of the Arctic Council's Permanent Members "to reduce black carbon emissions by between 25% and 33% by 2025[26]" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 27). However, the pause of the Arctic Council and the energy crises have led the Arctic States and Observers to different paths in terms of energy production and exploitation of the Arctic.

[26] In 2015, the Arctic Council created an expert group on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM) to implement the *Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions*, which is a non-legally binding agreement created during the Canadian chairmanship between 2013 and 2015. In 2017, the Arctic States and the Observers adopted the goal to reduce emissions of black carbon by 25-33% below 2013 levels by 2025 – however, the environmental impact of wars will likely hinder the collective efforts to reduce carbon emissions globally. In 2021, EGBCM recommended several measures applying to different sectors, from diesel-powered sources to solid waste and agriculture. The EGBCM's 2021 "report puts specific emphasis on identifying policy level actions that are likely to affect the emissions until 2025 and beyond", taking into consideration that the effect of policy initiatives will be visible only gradually (EGBCM 2021, 8) – as the Finnish strategy remarks (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 30).

6.4.2. Inhabitants, promotion of wellbeing, and the rights of the Sámi as an indigenous people

The 2021 strategy takes stock of the declining population of the Arctic, recognising the impact of demographic changes – also related to the gender imbalance already mentioned in the Swedish strategy, since women often move out of the Arctic to study and work. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy strongly remarks the need for equal access to education and its role in sustainable development and community resilience, preventing also social exclusion – in particular for Saami communities. In addition, the document underlines the effect of the pandemic on unemployment and strategic sectors like tourism, which in turn causes significant economic and social problems at individual and community level.

In terms of resilience, the strategy insists on the importance of citizens' participation and engagement in decision-making at the local level as well as at the Arctic Council, with particular attention to gender and minorities' issues. Consequently, digitalisation becomes central to Finland's policies for the Arctic region. With regards to work, Finland underlines that the economic transformation of the region hinders the Sámi's traditional activities (reindeer husbandry in particular), a problem which adds up to "discrimination and lack of access to social services provided in their language" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 36; 43). All of these issues contribute to worsening of the mental health of the populations of the Arctic.

The special focus on mental health – especially for the Sámi population – is articulated around aspects such as "collisions between the traditional and modern culture, especially among young people" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 36) and border control, which particularly affected the Saami communities and

families during the COVID-19 pandemic and relative lockdowns. Indeed, the (colonial) borders of Sápmi (the traditional area of the Sámi communities) comprise the territories from Northern Norway to Russia. The strategy makes it clear that "cross-border cooperation and the elimination of border obstacles, particularly on Finland's borders with Sweden and Norway, are essential issues" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 43). However, within the 2022 Váhtjer Declaration, the Sámi Council also states that, considering the pandemic and its safety measures:

> "[a]lthough we are one people, we feel how we our community is divided by borders, kept apart by the states of which we have become citizens. Our cross-border community is not prioritized by these states, and we cannot take anything for granted. Rights that we have won can be lost again in a moment if we do not vigilantly defend our gains and interests. This is why coming together is more important now than ever; we must strengthen Sápmi and ensure that the borders will never be closed to the Saami again" (Saami Council 2022).

The strategy acknowledges the role of the Arctic Council as a platform and framework for cooperation with indigenous peoples and their representatives – being the Saami Council one of the permanent members of the Arctic Council, for example, as well as in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, where a Working Group of Indigenous Peoples had been present since 1995. However, the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the government might be complicated by ongoing racism and issues related to delays or failures in implementing laws respecting the Saami rights[27]. As in the case

[27] The relationships between the Finnish state and the Saami community might be complicated, especially with regards to identity issues. As Reetta Toivanen observes, in Finland "being a member of the electoral roll has in practice gained considerable strength as the ultimate proof of being a real Sámi" (Toivanen 2022, 217), unlike other Norden countries like Norway. According to the Finnish Law on

of Sweden, the strategy underlines that the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Saami "to address historical events and to engender reconciliation and trust between the indigenous Sámi people and the Finnish government" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 44). It becomes therefore clear that the distinction between Arctic 'domestic' and 'foreign' policy is blurred and that the two are increasingly intertwined as they deal with transnational issues – especially in a (post)colonial setting.

6.4.3 Expertise, livelihoods, and leading-edge research

The strategy explicitly talks about the opportunities offered by climate change (opportunities defined as paradoxical) and the increasing accessibility of the region, whose harmful consequences need to be mitigated by adopting sustainable development principles and approaches by companies from both Arctic and non-Arctic countries. In this regard, the document reads that "expertise related to operating in cold conditions and understanding of the Arctic conditions make Finnish businesses a natural partner in developing the Arctic economy" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 48). In addition, the strategy stresses the need for economic diversification and technological development, also favouring migration to the North

Saami Parliament (1995/974), a fundamental criterion to establish who can claim to be Saami, so as to vote or be elected in the Saami Parliament, is self-identification, together with either (i) having at least a parent or grandparent whose native language is Saami, or (ii) being a descendent of a person registered as a mountain, forest, or fishing Lapp; or (iii) having at least a parent that has, or could have, been registered as an elector for an election to the Sámi Delegation or the Sámi Parliament (Toivanen 2022, 217). Yet, the Saami Parliament's electoral committee can reject applications of people who were not enrolled if the committee considers them as not respecting the criteria listed above. In 2015, the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland ruled that some of the people that identified as Saami, but that had been rejected by the electoral committee, had to be added to added to the electoral roll, emphasising the principle of self-identification – that is yet subjected to perception of what being Saami and indigenous mean, often with 'pre-modern' characteristics associated to the term (Toivanen 2022, 220; 223). In June 2022, the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted the opinion that the interference of the Supreme Administrative Court violated the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and specifically the article 5(c) of the Convention.

(Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 49). As stated in the EU and Sweden's documents, Finland acknowledges the strategic relevance of, and essential for, digitalisation and space technology for better communication and monitoring activities (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 52).

The strategy underlines the role of fishery and aquaculture. When it comes to the exploitation of Arctic resources, fish is often overlooked but important on a global scale – and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) remarks the need for sustainable aquaculture, in the face of the increasing international demand for food as well as the limited capacities to guarantee food security – one example being the grain crisis after the outbreak of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. With regards to fishery, the Finnish strategy highlights its role in preparing the *Nordic Roadmap for the Blue Bioeconomy* and adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers – the inter-parliamentary body of the Norden countries – and stresses the importance of "products obtained from fish and its side streams as well as from seaweed," (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 52). Seaweed might become an essential part of the Norden, or at least Scandinavian, economies, considering the potential role of red algae in reducing the methane emissions from cows – and the impact of animal farming on the greenhouse gas emissions (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2023).

As far as tourism is concerned, the strategy presents sustainable options such as favouring tourists' longer stays, rather than huge amount or increasing numbers of visitors, with the help of better transportation systems. In this regard, the Finnish government argues that "[t]he promotion of cross-border transport and tourism cooperation between neighbouring countries will contribute to a positive trend in tourist mobility, length-of-stay and the amounts of money spent in the Arctic" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 52). However, the document considers the

social aspects and impacts of tourism, and it underlines the fact that “[c]ooperation with the Sámi people and other local inhabitants in the Arctic region is essential in order to develop sustainable and responsible tourism” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 52). All things considered, developing the Arctic region means investing in several research areas.

Research is crucial for Finland to maintain its Arctic expertise. The 2021 strategy considers both climate change and defence as aspects that need technological development and international scientific efforts. The document enlists networks such as the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the Arctic University (UArctic), the Arctic Five network, and its Arctic Centre, as part of the University of Lapland placed in Rovaniemi (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 58). In step with the ‘Science Diplomacy’ and evidence-based policy approaches, the Finnish strategy states that “[r]esearch will be actively applied to assessing the change in the Arctic region comprehensively, and it will provide research evidence to support decision-making” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 61). However, the strategy indicates “the significant fragmentation of Arctic funding as a problem” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 59) which implies that the financial instruments might need to be better coordinated to avoid a “silo effect and discontinuity” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 59).

6.4.4 Logistics and infrastructure

The major recurring themes in Arctic policies are transports and monitoring, as a response to mitigate climate change – or at least the effects of human activities on the environment – and to develop the region economically and socially. The strategy emphasises the need to ensure international cooperation in the Arctic and Barents

region. However, the construction and maintenance of transports is expensive, and increasing movements lead to more emissions, while being central to all the elements necessary to develop the Arctic region. At the same time, better connection can reduce the impact of transport via flights, central to the core aim “is to mitigate climate change” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 65). The document also mentions the UN International Maritime Organization’s ban on use and carriage of heavy fuel oil (HFO) in the Arctic adopted in 2020, and proposed by representatives of Finland, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United States (Comer *et al*. 2020, iv). The ban will be enforced from July 2024, and the strategy states that the industries’ “work on replacing heavy fuel oil with alternative fuels must continue before the ban enters into force,” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 66).

6.5 A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic: the 2021 update of the EU’s Arctic policy

The years 2020 and 2021 represented a time of updating and increased cooperation for the EU’s Arctic policy. In 2020, while Sweden was working on his policy update, the European Commission and the European External Action Service launched a public consultation “to re-examine the role of the EU in Arctic affairs and update the 2016 Joint Communication on an integrated European Union policy” (European Commission-Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries 2021, 3). In October 2021, after Finland published its strategy, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union presented the update to the 2016 Communication, shortly after the European Parliament’s resolution titled *The Arctic: opportunities, concerns and security challenges*.

In this section, rather than summarising the documents, the focus will be given to the innovative aspects of the policy, i.e. geopolitics, hydrocarbon regulations, and strategic foresight – as far as the European Commission is concerned. Indeed, while aspects such as research, international cooperation, and climate adaptation/mitigation establish continuity with the 2008, 2012, and 2016 Communications, new positions need emerges together with new goals. However, before diving into the new Communication, this section presents an overview of the European Parliament's resolution.

6.5.1 Opportunities, concerns and security challenges in the Arctic

The resolution touches the aspects of cooperation and (in)security. First, the Parliament argues the necessity to maintain a rule-based order in the Arctic, since the respect of international law ensures "predictability and stability in the region" (European Parliament 2021, §9). Consequently, the European Parliament "repeats its call for the EU and the Member States to play a stronger role in the effective implementation of international conventions and calls on the US to ratify the UNCLOS" (European Parliament 2021, §9). However, it also acknowledges the security issues related to Russia and China: as far as the former is concerned, the resolution states that violation of "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its peaceful neighbours" and that enlists its consequences, such as "blocking freedom of navigation in the Azov, Black and Baltic Seas, all of which cannot be disregarded when assessing the future scenarios for maintaining current peaceful coexistence in the Arctic" (European Parliament 2021, §AE). In particular, the European Parliament "[r]egrets that Russia, instead of emphasising the benefits of cooperative engagement,

has adopted a much more competitive, even confrontational, perspective on the Arctic" (European Parliament 2021, §18).

With regards to China, the Parliament underlines the Chinese ambitions of becoming a "polar power" through its positioning as a 'near-Arctic state' and aspirations to become a regional stakeholder, and through its cooperation with Russia – especially in the context of the Polar Silk Road, which is an extension of the larger 'Belt and Road Initiative[28]' – "are a cause of great concern" (European Parliament 2021, §AE). In 2018, the European Parliament had defined the Belt and Road Initiative "including China's Arctic Policy, [as] the most ambitious foreign policy initiative the country has ever adopted, comprising geopolitical and security-related dimensions and therefore going beyond the claimed scope of economic and trade policy" (European Parliament 2018, §F). Over time, the EU Institutions have expressed criticism against the project, and China positioned itself as a competitor – or, at least, the trust in the Chinese rhetoric has declined to a critical point, as in the case of Sweden and Finland. Even though the risk of military conflicts in the Arctic is currently low[29] (European Parliament 2021, §15), scientific cooperation and data sharing have become problematic since information can be used for military purposes, and financial instruments can be directed to support military actions rather than research – showing the limits of science diplomacy, as well as the non-neutrality of scientific information and new technologies.

[28] Launched in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative is a diplomatic project central to the current Chinese foreign policy, consisting of financial investments to create or boost transport infrastructure, so as to strengthen the Chinese influence in Asia, Europe, and Africa through trade. The Initiative brought about divisions in the EU as well. In 2023 the Italian Prime Minister announced that Italy, the only G7 country to have taken part in the Initiative in 2018, was leaving it.

[29] Rather than direct military confrontation, the major risks are now represented by hybrid warfare, and potential spill-overs of other European conflicts into the Arctic or the Baltic region.

The increasing tensions might compromise rights protected under international law, such as freedom of navigation. Always with regards to Russia and China, the European Parliament's resolution states that the Northern Sea Route (running from Novaya Zemlya to the Bering Strait) "has become a source of geopolitical tensions and environmental concerns" (European Parliament 2021, §24). In particular, the document "condemns Russian actions that restrict navigation rights in the Northern Sea routes by designating them as internal waters under its complete sovereign control, by creating regulatory and administrative barriers to foreign navigation" (European Parliament 2021, §27). The Parliament also acknowledges that need of the EU Member States to develop their own icebreaker programmes, which are inferior in number compared to Russia and China (European Parliament 2021, §25). Consequently, the picture painted seems to be more conflictual than desired, requiring more cooperation among EU Institutions and Member States.

The tension with China affects the exploitation of Arctic resources too. According to the document, the European Parliament perceives the Arctic and its raw materials as crucial to become increasingly independent from Chinese rare-earth metals, necessary to cut off fossil fuels from the EU's energy resources (European Parliament 2021, §27) – placing both Greenland and Sweden in a stronger position. At the same time, the resolution stresses the necessity to include the Arctic Indigenous Peoples in the decision-making processes affecting them, and it underlines the fact "that all activities in the Arctic region, including management and sustainable use of Arctic natural resources, should respect the rights of and benefit indigenous peoples and other local inhabitant" (European Parliament 2021, §47; 49). However, the balance between development of the region and rights of the Indigenous Peoples presents difficulties, as shown in the previous sections.

Finally, the European Parliament underlines the importance of the EU as a global actor in the Arctic and the necessity to have “more Arctic in the EU”. From the Parliament’s perspective, such a statement means that the EU “should actively engage in policy dialogue, react to the growing strategic importance of the Arctic and continue to play its role as an accepted and credible actor in the Arctic”, which implies “respecting the unique set of existing Arctic consultative forums and successful governance framework mechanisms” (European Parliament 2021, §58).

6.5.2 The novelties 2021 Joint Communication: A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic

The 2021 Communication paints a picture dominated by competition, power politics, and insecurity – in which the EU participates as a ‘geopolitical’ power (European Commission 2021b, 1; 2; 16). However, the document does not picture tensions in the Arctic as a matter of military crises, even though it mentions Russia’s military activities in its own Arctic territories. Rather, the European Commission presents the warming of the region as the greatest threat to stability and (human) security as environmental transformations make the region prone to episodes of fuel spills – as the one occurred near Norilsk, in Russia, in 2020.

The Commission stresses the impact that its Green Deal and the ‘Fit for 55’ package of proposals are expected to have on its foreign and Arctic policy. The Communication underlines the responsibility of the EU as a producer and consumer of Arctic oil and gas and, for the first time, the Communication posits that “the EU is committed to ensuring that oil, coal and gas stay in the ground, including in Arctic regions” (European Commission 2021b, 10). Before, such statements were more common in the resolutions of the European Parliament, ‘freer’ to engage with more

controversial positions towards Arctic politics, while the Commission presented more pragmatic approaches to the region – especially considering the impact on the relationships with Norway. The position of the EU Council is not known yet, since its conclusions on the Arctic have not been published so far. While, on the one hand, "some Member States are likely to support the Commission's spirit" (Stępień and Raspotnik 2021, 10) such as Finland; on the other, there are states like whose companies benefit from extractive activities in the Norwegian and American Arctic, like the Italian oil company ENI[30] – potentially causing divisions as far as the economic development region is concerned.

However, the statement is problematic for several reasons. As Adam Stępień and Andreas Raspotnik (2021, 10) observe, the commitment of the EU to non-extractive activities depends on several factors such as the feasibility of the green transition and the international community's will – not to be taken for granted, considering the importance of countries whose wealth hinges upon oil. The outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine also led Russia to increase its oil exports to China and India, while the EU replaced Russia with the US and Saudi Arabia – and Norway. At the same time, the pricing crisis following the end of the lockdowns also contributed to the EU's needs to diversify its energy supply and dependence from partners. Diversification means to rely on renewable energy too, but the immediate strategy to face the consequences of the sanctions against Russia led to major consumptions of oil whose emissions impact the Arctic, even if not extracted *in loco*.

[30] ENI (*Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi,* 'National Hydrocarbons Board') has been active in Norway since 1965. By the end of 2022, ENI announced the discovery of new gas fields in the Norwegian Barents Sea. At the same time, ENI also operates in the North-American Arctic, where it has acquired the full shares of the Nikaitchuq and Oooguruk fields, situated placed along the Alaska North Slope. The Biden administration approved a new drilling project ('Willow') on Alaska's North Slope in March 2023, reconfirming the decision of the Trump administration.

Then, the Communication does not make any distinction between oil and gas, which is also considered to be "a possible transitional fuel on the path towards carbon neutrality, as it is associated with generally lower carbon emissions and smaller environmental impacts during extraction" (Stępień and Raspotnik 2021, 10). As far as distinctions are concerned, the Communication does not specify the Arctic borders – in light of the many definitions and views of the Arctic. For example, "Norwegian actors have stressed that the Barents Sea cannot be defined as a 'typical' Arctic area, due to much milder climate conditions" (Stępień and Raspotnik 2021, 11). Therefore, the position over banning extractive activities in the Arctic needs further specifications and will likely raise controversies over the future economic development of the region.

Third, talking about future, the Communication mentions the use of strategic foresight "to better understand the security implications of the climatological changes in the Arctic region". The Von der Leyen Commission wanted the Vice-President of the Commission Maroš Šefčovič "to strengthen our culture of evidence-based policymaking" through a special "focus on long-term trends and identify areas in which policy, research and technological developments are most likely to drive societal, economic and environmental progress" (von der Leyen 2019b, 5). Foresight belongs to the methods employed within the field of Futures Studies, which is a discipline devoted to explore what the future(s) can be. The EU has defined foresight as "the discipline of exploring, anticipating and shaping the future to help building and using collective intelligence in a structured, and systemic way to anticipate developments[31]". However, such a definition synthetises different approaches to Futures Studies and *Futures Literacy*, and it is not exhaustive in defining what

[31] European Commission, Strategic Foresight, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight_en. Accessed on 13th December 2023.

foresight means[32]. What is relevant is the use of exploration of the future scenario and science to inform decision-makers and justify the actions to be taken. The objective of the EU is to anticipate the consequences of emerging trends and to identifies ways to achieve a desired scenario in a constantly changing world – where, for example, international efforts to promote carbon neutrality are compromised by wars.

The 2021 Communication mentions the 2021 Strategic Foresight Report called *The EU's capacity and freedom to act*, which is its second Strategic Foresight report. In the report, the Commission "presents global trends, uncertainties and choices that will shape Europe's future. The report provides the context for possible policy responses" (European Commission 2021c). The report is also built upon the 2021 *Science for Policy Report*, a document released by the Commission's Joint Research Centre. The report insists on the need to substitute fossil fuels to ensure good living conditions for the future. In the case of the Arctic, the use of strategic foresight in relation to climate change can offer a more justifiable framework, since the scientific community share the unanimous awareness that the transition to fossil fuel-free economies is necessary to prevent scenarios in which climate change and extreme weather exacerbate problems like migration from areas of the world closer to the equator and tropical regions, as well as within the borders of the great economic

[32] As Riel Miller, Roberto Poli, and Pierre Rossel observe, the practice of foresight "is formally premised on the unknowability of the future and hence attempts to be more systematic in imagining futures that are not constrained by projecting the past" (Miller et al. 2018, 56). Such a statement reflects a different vision of the ontologies of the future, which can differ from linear perspective ruled by causal relationships that have clear temporal patterns; or, they can take into account the limits of scientific precision, which requires scientists to narrow down the variables to control – re-proposing the arguments and the visions explored in the third and fourth chapter of this dissertation. On the other hand, forecasting consists in extrapolating data that refer to past events, or that are built through the knowledge of the past – with the implicit or explicit assumption that the future is somewhat in continuity with the present (whatever the 'present' is) and what the past was (or what we think the past was). Therefore, using methodologies for exploring and anticipating the future can bring to different results on the grounds of the data that have been used and how they were organised, such as probabilistic models. In addition, constructing short-, medium-, or long-term scenarios require different methods, data, and imaginative skills.

powers. However, "scientific knowledge, as objective as it strives to be, is far from inspiring homogeneous national choices" (Ruffini 2017, 124), and this problem becomes visible in the different ideas over the economic development of the Arctic – even though an 'underdeveloped' region might be easier to regulate than other whose equilibrium depends upon established economic orders.

The discourse about the future inevitably leads to the question: a future for whom? From the perspective of sustainable development, the idea is to preserve "the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[33]" while meeting the needs of the present generations. However, the present generations are the ones making the decisions shaping the future, and they do not necessarily explain what 'future generations' are: dealing with people that will be born in the next years and will be able to vote in a couple of decades is different from dealing with ideas about people that will be born in the next century – and, within the field of Futures Studies, reflections about what to have a long-term plan means increasingly challenge methodologies and the ethics of decision-making processes (Tarsney 2023).

In addition, the will to anticipate and shape the future raises questions related to the legitimacy of those in charge of decision-making – in the language of politics, these are questions about sovereignty over the Arctic and its future. The issue is relevant with regards to the Indigenous Peoples in the European, Russian, and North-American Arctic, their aspirations and projects for the future in a post-colonial context, but also in a moment in which human-driven climate change will impact traditional resources, lifestyles, and (business) activities. At the same time, the exploitation of Arctic resources to ensure a sustainable future (in the form of windmills, for example)

[33] World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future*, Chapter 2, section 1.

can reinforce forms of ‘green colonialism’ – see Chuffart *et al*. (2021); and Normann (2021). Consequently, the use of strategic foresight can better inform decision-making, but also shows the complexity of Positioning as a political actor in the region.

6.6 Conclusions

Between 2016 and 2021, the EU and its Arctic Member States have deepened their ties and coordination with regards to setting goals and common positions. Unlike the previous stage, the documents emphasised the need for more investments in the region and the consolidations of strategies to develop the region. The social dimension of policies seemed to prevail, raising more issues about the exploitation of the region, climate justice, and the respect of Indigenous People’s rights. To some extent, this second period shows the complexity of Arctic issues even for Arctic States when attention shifts from high politics to matters not directly related to security. However, international insecurity is also rising, even though the documents stressed the importance of maintaining cooperation and stability in the region. It is unclear whether the Council of European Union will release its Conclusions, or when, or what the course of the EU’s policy will be after the outbreak of the Russian war against Ukraine, or after the 2024 elections. Nevertheless, the two periods considered in this dissertation offer enough elements to reflect on the EU’s actorness in the Arctic region, and how to explain the differences that have appeared over time.

Chapter VII

Interpreting actorness:

The construction of the EU's roles in the Arctic

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the EU Institutions and its Arctic Member States' discourse as it emerges from the documents of the actors, as well as the results of the interviews held. The aim is to explain the construction of EU Capability, starting from the definition of actorness – the capacity of a political actor "to imagine and realise roles for its sense of 'self' in (specific contexts of) international affairs" (Klose 2018, 1148). According to the model proposed in this dissertation, political actors construct *capability* by combining their perception of *opportunity* and *presence*: Opportunity refers to how the actors position themselves in a political context, justifying who needs to govern, what needs governance, and why. Presence refers to the actors' legal competences, set by the EU treaties but also negotiable on the grounds of the actors' understanding of the appropriate Scale of governance.

According to my reconceptualization of Bretherton and Vogler's model, capability hinges upon:

> (a) opportunity, which the EU actors' construct through their positioning
>
> (b) presence, which the EU actors' shape through their view of the appropriate scale of governance

On the grounds of this model and the theoretical assumptions behind it, convergence or divergence of ideas about opportunity-positioning and presence-scale lead to either coherent or incoherent/fragmented views of the EU's role respectively. Therefore, this chapter first presents the analysis of the documents referring to the 2008-15 period, followed by the 2016-21 period. The two sections are divided into subsections referring to opportunity, presence, and capability. After that, the chapter discusses the consistency of the EU Institutions and the Arctic Member States' actorness, showing the existence of a coherent set of expectations about the EU in relation to an established structure of governance and the pillars of Arctic governance – yet also how they are not fixed and changes in step with shared actorness, i.e. imagination about what to do in the Arctic, and who needs to do it.

The results reported here are coherent with the most recent interpretations of difficulties related to Arctic governance, but they also show that the 'problems' are diffused both vertically and horizontally. Furthermore, the findings show that internal coherence does not lead to effectiveness – which is also a term that needs to be specified. Therefore, the study of actorness reveals to be more fruitful in terms of foreign policy analysis, which is closer to actor-centred constructivism than effectiveness-oriented research.

7.2 EU actorness in Arctic politics between 2008 and 2015

Until 2008, the EU enjoyed a momentum in which Arctic cooperation encouraged "the development of an Arctic policy in the European Union and the Arctic states" (Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region 2008, §28). Apparently, the external context seemed to favour the development of a EU policy. Yet, until that moment, the Arctic states had cooperated within the Scale of intergovernmentalism,

without the intention to attribute binding powers to the Arctic institutions and fora. The politicisation of the Arctic led to confrontation over visions for the governance of the region, since increasingly more actors started debating the structure of Arctic governance and their roles in it – i.e. their Positioning and their Scale of governance. The same issues emerged within the EU as well, since the EU institutions, and the Parliament in particular, proposed different views of Arctic governance that challenged the positions of the Arctic States and the intergovernmental structure of Arctic politics.

7.2.1 Positioning the EU in an increasing politicised Arctic

This section highlights what role the EU institutions and Member States attribute to the EU, i.e. its positioning, by asking who governs the Arctic, what is to be governed there, and why governance is necessary. The first question refers to two competing positions: on one side, supporters of states and state-centric approaches; on the other, there are promoters less state-centric framework of governance including international, and non-state, actors, such as the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. In other words, the first act of Positioning deals with the construction of political legitimacy. In the case of the EU, there is a distinction between the 'fully-fledged' Arctic states and the EU institutions, which are either intergovernmental or supranational – representing the EU as a whole. This aspect is crucial because, as it emerges from the interviews, the Arctic Communication (be it the 2008, the 2016, or the 2021 one) "has been written for the European Union as a whole and it does contain a number of compromises, which were needed in order to ensure that the text would by and large be acceptable to all" (Interview n°3). Consequently, an initial aspect

emerges: the EU, as such, is more and distinct from the Arctic states, while being an Arctic actor.

In the 2008 Communication, the Commission presented the EU as "*inextricably linked* to the Arctic region […] by a unique combination of history, geography, economy and scientific achievements" (European Commission 2008, 2). In the introduction, the European Commission detailed the connection between the EU and the Arctic, to position itself not only as an actor, but also as stakeholder – by virtue of the 'Arcticness' of Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, because of the cooperation with the EEA Arctic States, and thanks to the EU strategic partnerships with the US, Canada and Russia as well. At the same time, the European Parliament was more assertive and, in the 2008 document, it mentioned the Arctic Council primarily to stress the fact that the EU Member States and EEA states constituted the majority of the Arctic Council. Yet, in the 2009 Conclusions, the EU Council remarked that the Arctic Council was "the primary competent body for circumpolar regional cooperation" and, while supporting "the applications by Italy and the Commission to become permanent observers in that body" (Council of the EU 2008, §17), the EU Council also stated that "the EU should actively seek consensus approaches to relevant Arctic issues through cooperation also with Arctic states and/or territories outside the EU […] as well as with other relevant actors with Arctic interests" (Council of the EU 2008, §18).

In the 2011 Resolution, however, the Parliament acknowledged "the important role of the [Arctic Council] as the foremost regional forum for cooperation for the whole Arctic region" (EP 2011, §45), favouring and supporting the efforts of the Arctic States to strengthen and improve the administrative and political tools of the forum (EP 2011, §45). Consequently, over time, the Positioning of the Parliament met the positions of the Council of the EU which, being a "[v]oice of EU member

governments", had always emphasised the role of the Arctic Council since the early stages of the EU's Arctic policy. In the first Conclusion (2009), the Council of the EU acknowledges and "welcomes the gradual formulation of a policy on Arctic issues to address EU interests and responsibilities, *while recognising Member States' legitimate interests and rights* in the Arctic" (Council of the EU 2009, emphasis added). With regards to the question 'who is to govern?', the strategies enable us to analyse the views of the Arctic states beyond the Conclusions of the Council of the EU. Nevertheless, the Parliament still remarked that states are not the only actors in the Arctic, enlisting not only international organisations and indigenous peoples, but also *sub-state authorities*. In addition, the Parliament advocated for the framework existing at that time to be "further developed, strengthened and implemented by all parties concerned" (EP 2011, §42).

At the level of the Member States, the positions related to the EU are more fragmented, but the Arctic Member States agree that the EU is distinct from them in terms of 'Arcticness'. The Strategy of the Kingdom deals with the EU under the voice called *Close cooperation with our international partner*s. The Kingdom recognised that the EU had "*interests* in the Arctic in the form of, among others, research and fisheries and has *indirect influence* on the Arctic through e.g. its environmental laws" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011, 52. emphasis added). From its perspective, the EU is an actor capable of influencing the Arctic and contributing to the region's governance – without necessarily being 'Arctic'. This kind of Positioning mirrors the domestic differentiation of the Kingdom and its geography, and consequently 'what' of the Arctic should be governed through coordinated political actions, and it is better explained in the following section.

With the example of Finland, the Finnish documents positioned the country as a truly Arctic state and actor, and framed the whole nation as 'Arctic'. Indeed, despite not having any coastline on the Arctic Ocean and recognising specific concerns and issues relevant for the Arctic Five, Finland constructs its Arctic identity in its terrestrial dimension: "much of its territory lies north of the Polar Circle. Lapland, Finland's northernmost province, *is an essential projection of Finland's Arctic image*" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 8, emphasis added). The 2013 Strategy reads that "**Finland is an Arctic country** [.] The Arctic identity of Finland has been shaped by climate, nature, geography, history and experience. *Finland as a whole is a truly Arctic country*: after all, one third of all the people living north of the 60th parallel are Finns" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 17; bold in original; emphasis added). By doing so, Finland goes beyond the focus on external relations adopted in the previous strategy to adopt a comprehensive approach leading to the "reinforcement of the country's Arctic position" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 18). The Finnish case shows how geopolitics bends geography, and that historical ties and culture shape the borders of the region more than geographical definitions. As illustrated by Figure 1.3.1a and Figure 1.3.1b in the first chapter, most of the country does not meet the current (and unstable) geographical criteria to define Arctic areas. The climate of Lapland is not Arctic but subarctic, and most of the country lies outside of the 10° isotherm line – as for September 2023. The Arctic Circle line therefore plays an important political role.

Sweden does not differ from Finland, in this regard. The second section of the Strategy constitutes an act of positioning that balances the image of Sweden as a 'reluctant' Arctic actor. The section presents six dimensions that connect Sweden to the region: history, security, economics, climate and environment, research, and

culture. The historical ties and the research are somewhat interconnected, since Sweden had always displayed more exploratory and scientific interests in the North, rather than strategic (Sörlin 2014, 151). As far as security is concerned, Sweden remarked that

its commitment to the region's security increased after the Nordic Declaration of Solidarity and the Swedish unilateral declaration of solidarity. The Nordic declaration, adopted in 2011, involved Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway (the Norden countries, as explained in the first chapter) and aimed at complementing the existing EU/Euro-Atlantic security frameworks – such as, for example, the Solidarity Clause of the EU, as for the article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, which allows the EU to assist a Member in case of natural or artificial disaster, or terrorist attack. The Swedish declaration commits the country itself to actively help the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, and the United Kingdom, in case of attack or disaster (Sweden 2008, Government Bill 2008/09:140).

As far as the EU is concerned, however, the distinction between Arctic states and actors is clear. The Swedish Strategy reads that the EU is "closely interlinked in terms of the geographical proximity of EU Member States and the Arctic region", and because its policies "have a *direct bearing* on the Arctic region" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011, 10, emphasis added). Like Sweden, Finland states that "[t]he European Union is closely linked with the Arctic region owing to political, geographical, economic and scientific factors. Three EU Member States – *Denmark, Sweden and Finland* – are Arctic States" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 11). At the same time, the Finnish strategy also states that the EU is relevant for, and involved in, Arctic governance on the ground of its policies and their impacts, as well as its external influence. Finland indeed underlines the importance of the EEA

agreement, and recalls the 2009 Icelandic application for EU membership, which the Icelandic government ended in 2015.

Finland further specifies the 'qualitative' difference between the Arctic states and the EU. The Finnish Strategy considers the EU "*an Arctic player*" whose "Arctic policy is part of both the Union's internal policies and its external relations" (2010, 44; emphasis added). In the 2013 update, Finland affirms that the EU "plays a key role" in its Arctic policy (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 15), considering that the EU "is *closely involved* with the Arctic region through political, geographical, economic and scientific developments as well as through *the Northern Dimension*" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013 19, emphasis added). Being an Arctic player is however different from being an 'Arctic state', and it implies the existence of political and legal hierarchies to be respected.

With regards to why governance is necessary, at the EU level, one of the main drivers for political intervention in the Arctic is climate change. In general, the documents (the Strategies of the Arctic States, the Communications of the Commission, the Resolutions, and the Conclusions) present the view of the Arctic region which must be environmentally protected as well as developed. Consequently, the States and EU institutions need to ensure the balance between two conflicting aspects (environmental protection and economic growth) and among conflicting interests (from oil extraction to animal welfare). However, the documents do not specify how to construct this balance, apart from underlining that the companies operating in the Arctic need to respect the highest environmental standards.

The documents released by the EU Institutions and Arctic Member States present research and international scientific cooperation as one of the reasons to nurture multilateralism in the Arctic. All the strategies consider the role of the EU from

the perspective of funds and financial frameworks to support research, in addition to the more limited national resources. According to the documents, EU funds can boost the aspects of research in relation to security (through satellites and integrated communication systems), the development of technologies suited for the Arctic environment, and environmental monitoring. The EU funds and frameworks can contribute to all these three aspects, which present local, national, and transnational dimensions which cannot be easily separated in practice. Indeed, research and cooperation for maritime security requires integrated systems of surveillance and data-sharing, which requires platforms and financial resources. Local enterprises and private businesses benefit from EU funds and cross-border cooperation. Finally, environmental monitoring is, by definition, a transnational issue, especially nowadays and in the Arctic, where migrations of animals and pollution take place regardless of national borders. Through its regulation, the EU can control the impact of pollutants that can reach the Arctic at the level of its Member States, potentially increasing the possibilities of positive environmental outcomes beyond one state's borders.

The aspect of military security is crucial, but not in a traditional sense – at least in the early 2010s. Indeed, the context in which the EU institutions started to develop their policies was perceived as potentially conflictual, hinting at prospective crises and tensions as the Arctic environment changed. All the strategies of the Member States stressed that the Arctic was not an area of conflict, and that it was in the interests of all the Arctic States to maintain peaceful relations. In this regard, they emphasised the role of the Arctic Council in stabilising the relationships between the Arctic States and the role of international law as a tool to solve disputes – especially as far as the Arctic Coastal states are concerned. However, as the international situations deteriorated with the Crimean Crisis, the relationships between Arctic actors worsened too, especially

with regards to non-state entities and private actors – as in the case the Russian oil company Rosneft, targeted by the EU's sanctions in reaction to Russia's military behaviour.

As a result, neither the EU's communications, nor the Member States' strategies, ascribe a regulatory function to the EU, and they exclude military security from Arctic governance – which is the essential feature of the Arctic Council, according to the second footnote of the Ottawa Declaration (Arctic Council 1996). From this perspective, military cooperation functions as a tool for civilians' security only. In its 2011 Strategy, Sweden argued that "security policy challenges in the Arctic [were] not of a military nature", because the consequences of climate change would lead to public crises due to extreme weather, and the necessity to preserve favourable conditions for people's well-being and the Arctic economy (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011, 14). Consequently, the issues that justify political intervention in the Arctic mostly relate to climate change and 'marginal' aspects of policy.

On the other hand, in its Strategies, Finland remarked that Arctic issues and governance are not limited to maritime affairs, and it declared that the Arctic Council constituted the "foremost cooperation structure encompassing the entire Arctic region" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 9), positing the main way of governance. While recognising that some issues should be discussed by the Arctic Coastal States, the Strategy states that the relationship among the 'Arctic 5' (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) should not lead to the weakening of the Arctic Council. Such a position helps reinforce the role of the EU, which is stronger in the Arctic and sub-Arctic territories compared to the Arctic Ocean. Accordingly, state-centric those who position themselves as 'governing actors' might hold different views on whether Arctic governance should revolve around transboundary issues or

national interests, or even whether that Arctic governance should also deal with aspects such as economic development and environmental protection. The differences reflect the geography of the states, as well as their Positioning.

Consequently, the EU's role combines both maritime and terrestrial issues, but the latter are far more stressed. The European Parliament, in particular, invited the Commission to "focus on socio-economic and environmental issues [believing] that this strategic choice is integral in ensuring legitimacy and local support for the EU's Arctic engagement" (European Parliament 2014 §2). Both the European Commission and the Council of the EU emphasised then the importance of supporting the 'terrestrial issues' of economic development, transports, and logistics – especially at the level of cross-border cooperation. With regards to the Northern Dimension policy, it is inevitable to operate at the terrestrial layer and to attribute some roles to the EU, considering that, from this perspective, the EU is mainly a terrestrial actor, but it can also support solutions to maritime issues.

7.2.2 Different scales of governance: political differentiation in the EU's Arctic sphere of influence

Asking where and when Arctic governance means to tackle the issue of scale, even though the two questions sound different at first glance. According to Douglas Nord, asking 'what' is to be governed means to ask if Arctic governance regards only the matters falling under state sovereignty or also transboundary issues. This question is closely related to the 'when' and 'where' questions. With regards to 'where', Nord considers the divide between those who consider Arctic politics to be concerned with only maritime affairs or also terrestrial issues. Such a divide reflects the different positioning of the Arctic States, such as Denmark and Finland and Sweden. Denmark,

as one of the Arctic Coastal States, supported the idea of closer dialogues between Canada, Norway, Russian, and the U.S., an idea which resulted in the Ilulissat Declaration. With regards to ‘when’ Arctic governance is needed, Nord distinguishes between supplementary governance, which leaves most of the competences to the individual Arctic States, and comprehensive governance, which is meant to create an integrated and coordinated system of decision-making.

The Arctic Member States, including the three EU members, have mostly embraced the supplementary governance approach. On the other hand, in the first released Resolution, the European Parliament supported the comprehensive approach, pointing out that the UNCLOS did not contain any specific norms or indications about the law of the sea in areas covered by ice before the increase in regional temperature. In addition, the Parliament underlined that the US did not ratify the UNCLOS, implying that the Arctic was “not governed by any specifically formulated multilateral norms and regulations, as it was never expected to become a navigable waterway or an area of commercial exploitation” (European Parliament 2008 §D; F).

Based on such a view, it is possible to understand why the Parliament suggested “that the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic” (EP 2008 §15). However, the Commission did not share the same view. The Commission acknowledged that “[t]here is no specific treaty regime for the Arctic”, but it reiterates the role of the UNCLOS and international or multilateral environmental agreements in Arctic governance, even when they do not explicitly mention the region (European Commission 2008, 9). According to some authors, an Arctic Treaty is not only undesirable for the Arctic states (which rejected the proposal of the European Parliament in 2008), but also not feasible for the region.

Oran Young argues that hard-law instruments present important limitations since they do not enable the parties to adopt flexible solutions for problems emerging in rapidly changing contexts, which is problematic as far as environmental agreements are concerned.

Through the example of the Antarctic Treaty, Young observes that instruments such as treaties are cumbersome as they force the parties involved "to protracted debates over the addition of new protocols to the original treaty" (Young 2011, 332). From this perspective, a treaty for the Arctic environment might backfire, considering that the effectiveness of the Arctic Council is often analysed or related with regards to setting environmental standards and best practices (Smieszek 2019). Also, Young underlines that the adoption of a treaty raises the issues of inclusion and exclusion in a region that will be increasingly accessible and where non-Arctic actors will have a strong environmental impact – for example, because of the exploitation of new shipping routes (Young 2011, 332). Consequently, the view of the Arctic states prevailed, even though the Arctic Council's states signed two legally binding agreements regarding aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (2011) and oil spill prevention (2013).

Both the Swedish and the Finnish Strategies (especially the 2010 one) focus on the Arctic mainly from the perspective of external relations, focusing on the international framework of cooperation. In all the strategies of the three Arctic States, Arctic governance is primarily a matter of support for the Arctic states. As it merges from the documents and the literature, Finland and the other Arctic states consider "the Arctic Council as the main forum for addressing Arctic issues" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2013, 14), implying its commitment to a specific method to cooperate and administrate Arctic areas. The case of the 'opening' of the Arctic

Council is indicative: during 2013, under the Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the eight Arctic States accepted the application of new observers, including China. Finland remarks that observers need to be "committed to the goals of the Council", as also stated in the 2013 Kiruna Declaration – which means that (formal) Observers need to work in support of the Arctic States – confining the activities to within the Working Groups, and define their contributions to Arctic science cooperation.

The case of Denmark is the most relevant with regards to scale and presence. The Kingdom of Denmark constructed a different view of its relationship with the EU, because of its internal differentiation – since Greenland and the Faroe Islands are not part of the EU. The Arctic Strategy of the Kingdom does not mention cross-border cooperation in the Arctic and Barents areas, and the related EU programmes, since it is not part of them. Yet, as it emerges from an interview, there were some specific problems:

> "[i]n 2011, the Danish minister wanted a strategy, and we needed it quickly. Yet, we were not completely satisfied because it dealt with both external and domestic affairs: from our point of view, the strategy should not cover internal affairs. This time[34], the focus will be on external relations. It will be a different document" (Interview n°7).

Consequently, aspects related to the specific 'terrestrial' issues (infrastructure and transports) result not to be relevant for the Kingdom of Denmark, which focuses on international (scientific) cooperation and maritime affairs. These limitations hinder the

[34] The interviewee referred to the upcoming new strategy of the Kingdom, relevant for the period post-2021.

influence of the EU in the 'Danish' Arctic but are nonetheless relevant for the Swedish and Finnish Arctic regions.

The scale of governance proposed by Finland, Sweden, and the Kingdom of Denmark had been clear since the Conclusions of the Council of the EU. In the case of Finland, which produced the most articulated documents with regards to the EU, the first Strategy reads that "[w]ithin its jurisdiction, the EU can look after and support the Member States' interests as efficiently as possible when Arctic issues arise in various international organisations" – where Arctic issues may stand for freedom of navigation, prevention of discriminatory practices, and the ways entities operating in the Arctic exploit regional resources (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 45). In 2011 Ministerial Meeting at the Arctic Council, the Finnish Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava stated: "I believe we all would benefit from a permanent observer position granted to the EU" (Ministry for Foreign Affaris of Finland, 2011). On one hand, this statement is in step with the need for coherence and cohesion in the EU's foreign policy, which was one of the main objectives of the Lisbon Treaty.

On the other, the Arctic Member States' support was meant to reinforce the primary role of the Arctic States, and the complementary role of the EU. In the 2011 Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt affirmed that they "need[ed] the Commission to be on the same wavelength as the three Arctic EU member states. That would facilitate internal EU deliberations" (Arctic Council 2009b). Sweden's view aimed to reassure the Arctic States that were sceptic about the involvement of the EU, since it had "not always demonstrated the necessary understanding of Arctic conditions and concerns that we all believe is a prerequisite for informed decision-making on Arctic issues" (Arctic Council 2009b).

By stating so, the Swedish Minister wanted to socialise the EU to the rules of Arctic politics by participation.

With regards to where Arctic governance should take place, the main divide here did not appear between the EU and the Arctic Member States, but between the two Arctic terrestrial states (Finland and Sweden) and the Arctic Coastal State (Denmark). In the programme adopted for the 2009-2011 Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Kingdom did not refer to the EU but mentioned the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, in which the five Arctic coastal states declared that they hold a specific position in Arctic governance, on the grounds of their sovereign rights over the Arctic Ocean. However, the Declaration was a source of tension also among Arctic States, as observed in the Finnish Strategy.

Being the Arctic Council an intergovernmental forum, Finland and the other Arctic states affirm the preeminent role of the Arctic states. However, not every actor agrees on such a view. For example, the Inuit organisations started to see Arctic governance as "a very complex governance system, where authority and power is exercised in various levels and with various mandates and legal or non-legal basis" (Koivurova 2010, 220-1). The European Parliament expressed similar positions, but there was a hard debate among the Arctic States, some of which were also acting to prevent the fragmentation of regional governance by other Arctic States. During the 2008-2015 period, the Arctic States also debated the possibility to open to new non-Arctic observers, which they did – except for the EU, which remained an *ad hoc* observer. As the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs remarked during the 2015 Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council, the participation of new observers "plays an important role in underpinning the Arctic Council as the primary forum for policy making in the region," (Arctic Council 2015b).

At the local level, the EU can influence the region through its Cohesion Policy, thanks to the process by which the Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian Northern cities and counties established the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) in 2004. Indeed, the NSPA does not have specific policies for the Arctic region, but that represents the local level of Arctic governance – directly affected by the EU's policies and financial frameworks. Representing regions and cities, "[t]he NSPA supports the Smart Cities and Communities Initiative, fully acknowledging the important role cities and communities play in helping the EU to reach its climate change targets" (NSPA 2013). The NSPA shows that the EU can influence the Scale of governance through its Presence – and support for activities that might not directly concern Arctic high politics.

During this period, the NSPA did not strongly position themselves as 'Arctic actors', even though they underlined they're being the "European interface to the Arctic and to North-West Russia" (NSPA 2010). In this regard, they focused on the necessity for the EU to invest in the region also because of its resources, and they underlined the importance of the EU's Cohesion Policy, and on the need to formulate "long term regional development rather than quantitative short-sighted fulfilment of objectives at the project level,"[35] – voicing a differents of governance for the Arctic cities and regions. Consequently, local Arctic actors insist on the importance of the EU to support urban development.

[35] NSPA, Position on the legislative package of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

7.2.3 Capability: constructing the EU's role in a 'new' Arctic arena

As the previous sections have shown the EU and its Arctic Member States' positions, as well as their scale of governance, this part explains the construction of capability. In general, the EU and its Arctic Member States aim to protect and preserve the Arctic together with the rights of the local populations and the Indigenous Peoples; to promote sustainable use of resources, to economically develop the region; and to contribute to multilateralism and international cooperation for a peaceful Arctic. As the 2008-2015 period was important for the construction of a specific structure of Arctic governance, this section is essential to understand the different phases of the construction of the EU's 'Arcticness'.

In general, the actors agree on the view according to which *the Arctic States* need to cooperate and that they have the primary responsibility for the region, rejecting international regulations that would have created a specific authority for the Arctic. In its first Strategy, Finland (2010, 45) argued that the "[c]reation of a comprehensive Arctic regime [wa]s not necessary", while there was the need to assess the implementation of the existing treaties and the possibility to expand, modify, or to create supplementary agreements or protocols. With regards to the EU, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden all expressed their support for the EU's accession to the Arctic Council as an Observer. that "should not represent the Arctic States in the Arctic Council, because it would leave us at a distance" [36] (Interview n°7). All these positions

[36] However, Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis (2019) argue that the U.S. should oppose the European Commission's application, on the grounds of the fact that the European Commission is a supranational organisation, while only "non-arctic states, inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, global and regional non-governmental organizations" can apply for the Observer status. They also argue that the interests of the EU are already represented by the EU Arctic Member States and the EEA States, which is yet not (necessarily) accurate. However, it is unclear, for example, if it means that institutions such as the Council of the European Union could qualify, since it is intergovernmental and it holds the relevant competencies for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy. In that case, the Commission would still be represented, since the High Representative of the Union is both the Vice-President of the

were consistent with the visions and ideas that the Council of the European Union expressed in the 2009 Conclusion, specifically regarding the support of the "*appropriate* international bodies, such as the Arctic Council, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)" (Council of the EU 2009, 2, emphasis added)".

Between 2011 and 2013, Sweden held the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, during which the Arctic States placed the permanent secretariat in Tromsø (Norway), as declared in the 2013 Kiruna Declaration – the secretariat had already been established in 2011, after the Danish Chairmanship, whose creation was "actively" promoted by Denmark (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, 12). In this way, the Arctic States accomplished what Finland had deemed necessary in its 2010 strategy. Indeed, Finland had argued that the creation of a permanent secretariat would strengthen the Arctic Council and the works of its institutions. However, the Arctic states would need a "binding, intergovernmental agreement and consensus between the Member States" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 39) within "an informal body which has no legal authority to bind its members" (Bloom 1999, 718).

By strengthening the Arctic Council, the EU Arctic States remarked the main difference between Arctic States and Observers, a difference significant for the EU supranational institutions as well. According to the 2013 Rules of Procedure, applicants need to accept the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Arctic States, the international legal framework already established, as well as the values and interests of the Arctic Indigenous People. In the document *Vision for the Arctic*, adopted during the Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Arctic States declared that:

European Commission and the president of the Foreign Affairs Council, as well as the head of the External Action Service.

> "Membership in the Arctic Council is and will remain for the Arctic States with the active participation and full consultation of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples Organizations. Decisions at all levels in the Arctic Council are the exclusive right and responsibility of the eight signatories to the Ottawa Declaration".

According to these views of Arctic cooperation, the EU cannot act as a primary actor – if we consider actorness only from the perspective of 'high' politics. Nevertheless, the EU funds for the Arctic region play a crucial role in international cooperation and to sustain necessary, but costly, aspects of Arctic governance. To start from research, promoting scientific international cooperation was one of the major interests shared by the European Commission and the Member States, which advocated for more funds and financial instruments to invest both in projects related to climate change and in strategic sectors (space industry, safe shipping, telecommunications). The EU allocated €200 million of EU funds to research projects in Arctic matters, especially under the Horizon 2020 financial programme. In addition, the EU funds were also important to strengthen relationships between Arctic areas and the EU institutions. For example, the EU provided Greenland with EUR 25 million (roughly 27 million US dollars, according to current exchange rates), per year to sustain policies dealing with research, energy, and education – which the Kingdom of Denmark had identified as a priority for social welfare and well-being, also for the 2014-2020 financial period (European Commission 2012, 18).

The EU funds have a key role at the domestic level as well. An important example of the complementary role is the EU's Cohesion Policy, which constitutes an essential financial framework for investments with the goals to improve the living conditions of the Arctic populations (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011, 31).

The 2012 Commission's report on the Arctic policy highlights the role of EU funding in cross-border cooperation, which was actively championed by Finland. In particular, the EU documents, the Swedish and the Finnish strategies, the Kolarctic and the Karelia programmes. The Kolarctic programme covered Lapland (Finland), Norrbotten (Sweden), Finnmark, Troms, and Nordland (Norway), the Murmansk Region, the Arkhangelsk Region, and the Nenets Autonomous District. The Karelia programme covered the sub-Arctic areas of the Barents region, which was another cross-border cooperation programme including the EU Arctic Member States and Russia. The Kolarctic and Karelia programmes underline the terrestrial dimension of the EU's Arctic engagement, which is in line with the positions of Finland and Sweden.

In the 2012 Commission's report, the measures to protect the Arctic and contribute to the Saami's rights through funds were the most detailed. First, the EU has supported the actions at the local level, providing €1.14 billion (€1.98 billion, including EU Member States co-financing) for the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework. The programme financed cross-border cooperation, including projects to support Saami and their industries through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Interreg IVA North, the Botnia-Atlantica, and the Sweden-Norway Interreg IVA programme. The Commission also included specific measures for Saami peoples and businesses in the North Sweden and the Mid-North Sweden programmes. In addition, the EU financed the Northern Periphery Programme (including not only the Norden Countries and Greenland, but also Ireland and the United Kingdom), which had a budget of €59 million, of which EU funding amounts to (€35 million of which were EU funds). Within the framework of the Arctic policy, the EU included the transnational Baltic Sea Region Programme, through which it financed projects (such

as the Bothnian 'Green Logistic Corridor') to increase the connections between the Barents region and the Baltic area.

Together with the Kolarctic and Karelia programmes, the Commission underlined the role of the Northern Dimension policy and partnerships, in step with the Finnish Arctic Strategy. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the Northern Dimension policy was first introduced in response to the geographical transformations of its borders after the accession of Sweden and Finland, since the EU acquired Arctic territories. The Northern Dimension is a joint policy including the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia. In the early stages, the Northern Dimension presented action plans that

related to environmental issues (2001), public health and social well-being (2003), but it was revised in 2006 and expanded with partnerships on culture, transport and logistics in 2009. Starting from the 2010 version of its Arctic Strategy, Finland expressed its intention to ensure that the Northern Dimension became the "central tool of the EU's Arctic policy in terms of external relations" (Office of Prime Minister of Finland 2010, 44).

The Northern Dimension policy was important mainly with respect to the protection of the Arctic populations, since the Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) was then "entering in its operational phase, with the identification (for future endorsement by the partners) of an infrastructure network and potential priorities on transport related projects" (European Commission 2012, 17). With regards to the Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being, the Commission reported the development of a plan to target social and public health issues in the Arctic region, specifically in the areas of prevention of drug addiction and child development – especially with respect to Indigenous People. As far as the protection of the

environment is concerned, the report of the Commission highlighted the role of the Environmental Partnership, especially in nuclear cleanup programmes – upon which Finland had focused in its 2010 Strategy – and wastewater management, particularly in the Russian municipality of Arkhangelsk.

From the perspective of scale, the revised Northern Dimension is important because it also established the biannual Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum, whose first session was organised the European Parliament in 2009. However, as made clear in the final statement of the forum, the parties agreed that the Parliamentary Forum should have remained a forum, without aiming to become a new institution for Arctic governance (Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum 2009, §2). Considering the fragmentation of institutions and programmes related to the Arctic, such a decision might favour coherence and consistency of Arctic policies: at the parliamentary level, there are already several conferences, such as the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, and the Barents Parliamentary Conference. On the other hand, such a decision maintains Arctic governance more at the intergovernmental level.

The Regulation on seal products deserves a special mention, considering the harmful consequences it has on the EU's applications as an Observer at the Arctic Council. While controversial, the EU acted within its competences and not differently from other states, as reported in the fifth chapter. In the words of Nikolas Sellheim (2015, 283), "the primary goal of regulation 1007/2009 is the harmonisation of the EU's internal market with regard to trade in seal products". However, the ban reportedly affected the Inuit population of Greenland as well – which, despite being outside of the EU, is still part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Consequently, in its Arctic policy, the Kingdom of Denmark presented the ban on seal products as a case "where

the laws, traditions, cultures and needs of Arctic societies are neglected" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2011, 52). Indeed, Inuit individuals and representative organisations also filed against the EU, arguing that they had not been sufficiently represented in the decision-making and that the unclear regulation hindered sealers from obtaining the requested certifications (Hossain 2013, 156-7). The negligence took place even though the Commission had stated its intentions to "[e]ngage Arctic indigenous peoples in a regular dialogue" and to "[c]onduct dialogues with indigenous and other local communities traditionally engaged in the hunting of seals" (European Commission 2008, §2.2, 5). Nevertheless, the WTO settled the dispute in 2014 rejecting the claims against the ban, which the EU still amended in 2015.

7.3 Establishing the EU as an Arctic actor: continuity and discontinuity in the EU's Arctic policy between 2016 and 2021

Between 2016 and 2021, the EU and its Arctic Member States further developed their views about Arctic governance and their role in the region. While the political priorities for the region were similar to the previous period, a few changes in terms of positioning and scale emerged, with the potential to strengthen the role of the EU with regards to its Arctic Member States – mainly Sweden and Finland, where the EU has domestic competences and instruments that directly affect their Arctic territories. While Denmark has not published its updated strategy for the post-2021 period yet, the interviews have stressed that the Arctic territories of the Kingdom aim to maintain the EU at a distance while cooperating with it – in their views, the Danish strategy should exclusively deal with international matters.

At the same time, especially in the Swedish and Finnish Arctic territories, actors such as the 'Northern Sparsely Populated Areas' (NSPA) have gained

increasing relevance as the EU and the Arctic States developed specific policies for the region, and they "brand themselves as 'gateway' to the Arctic" (Gløersen 2022, 14), claiming to play a crucial role for the development of the region, with important implications in terms of Scale of governance – strengthening the local level and the role of the EU. In particular, the EU's role in Arctic politics emerges both in the form of supporting scientific research and providing financial support for its Arctic territories, especially in Finland and Sweden.

7.3.1 What opportunity for the EU in Arctic politics?

The 2016 EU's Communication did not alter the positions about the structure of Arctic cooperation, but it did state that an important number of Arctic issues – mainly environmental concerns – "can be more effectively addressed through regional or multilateral cooperation. This is why EU engagement is important" (European Commission 2016a, 2). Similarly, the European Parliament underlined the EU's status as a "global actor" which has the duty "to support the protection of the Arctic" (European Parliament 2017, §A). In 2021, the Communication stressed the same point, i.e. that the EU's role in the Arctic was related to regional and international issues, while leaving the primary responsibility for the region to the Arctic states. However, the European Commission clearly affirmed that the EU "is in the Arctic. As a geopolitical power, the EU has *strategic* and *day-to-day interests*, both in the European Arctic and the broader Arctic region" (European Commission 2021b, 1; emphasis added). In this regard, the European Parliament also praised the role of the Arctic Council (European Parliament 2021, § C; D; E; 3), recognising the robustness of Arctic governance and its capacity to endure the pressure deriving from the international tensions and crises elsewhere (at least until 2022).

The positions of the European Commission and Parliament reflect the views of its Arctic Member States, in continuity with the established system of governance: as reported in the *Summary of the results of the public consultation on the EU Arctic policy*, the European Commission acknowledges that the respondents "highlight the importance of maintaining existing governance structures for international and regional cooperation", such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the EU's Northern Dimension policy (European Commission 2021b, 9). In the 2020 update, the Swedish strategy reads that "[t]he *EU is part* of the European Arctic *though* [sic] *the three EU members* Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The Arctic is also in the EU's neighbourhood" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, p. 18). Arguably, the author(s) of Sweden's Arctic Strategy meant that the EU is part of the Arctic *through* the three Arctic Member States.

The Swedish strategy considers the three Arctic states as the main linkers connecting the EU to the region, with the consequent considerations about what is necessary to do in the Arctic – i.e. supporting the Arctic States. Likewise, Finland states that the EU "is an important and constructive Arctic actor and has potential for assuming a more active role in this respect", while also suggesting that it "should pursue more coherent Arctic policy, and its institutions should allocate sufficient resources, including personnel resources, to the coordination and implementation of the Union's Arctic policy" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 23) – even though the strategy also admits that the Finnish funding framework is fragmented (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 59).

Regarding research, which remains the most important tool to participate in Arctic governance, the EU and the Arctic Member States maintain their support for the role of scientific cooperation under the form of science diplomacy. Indeed, as

underlined in the 2017 *Summary report of the Arctic stakeholder forum consultation*, the Danish government praised the EU's efforts and commitment to joint research programmes, which both increase knowledge about the region and the Arctic actors, favouring cooperation even when tensions between the participants were present (European Commission 2017, 19). Finland also remarked that "The European Union is an important partner for the Arctic Council in supporting Arctic science and observations, mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable development" during the 2019 Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council (Arctic Council 2019b).

However, it is also true that scientific cooperation requires underlying trust, which has been compromised by aggressive and belligerent behaviour outside of the Arctic region as well as in its surroundings. Military insecurity has affected the positions of the Arctic actors, with the EU Institutions, Sweden, and Finland agreeing on the fact that the EU is an Arctic actor and criticising Russia and China's hostility. The European Parliament stated that Russia's violations of its neighbours' sovereignty and territorial integrity threatened peaceful cooperation in the Arctic, as well as China's Belt and Road Initiative (European Parliament 2021, §AE; AF). More importantly, in step with such a view, the European Parliament also "encourages the EU to partner with its like-minded allies where appropriate in order to ensure proper coordination in the region" (European Parliament 2021, §61), with reference to the American Arctic Security Initiative, and Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. While the Commission adopted a more neutral tone, the 2021 Joint Communication still underlines the increasing concerns related to Russia's military behaviour in the Arctic.

Like the European Parliament, Sweden also argues that "like-minded partners and the EU [should] cooperate and act together" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2020, p. 23). The Swedish strategy reads that the government aims to "to safeguard the *special role and position of the Arctic states* in promoting peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic region, mainly by strengthening cooperation in the Arctic Council" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, p. 5; emphasis added). However, granting stability in the region also implies exclusionary practices, which requires the main actors to scrutinise and evaluate external interests, rejecting potential threats. This position is now directed at Russia, an Arctic State whose legitimacy as a trustful partner is questioned. The Swedish government firmly states that the legitimacy to act in the region depends upon values and trust, whose breach risks compromising the very nature of Arctic governance. Therefore, Sweden monitors "the development of the security situation in the Arctic, including detecting and countering attempts to *exert influence in* and *destabilising* the region" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, p. 21), with reference to Chinese and Russian partnerships in the Arctic.

Even though Finland does not employ the expression 'like-minded', its strategy defines actors threatening security in the Arctic neighbourhood as undermining Arctic security and cooperation. In step with EU institutions and the Kingdom of Sweden, Finland establishes the necessity to preserve stability in the region and the risks posed by China and Russia (maybe in more diplomatic tones), linking Arctic security to Baltic and European security (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 18). As far as security is concerned, while Finland mentions risks of conflicts of interest between China and other great powers, it articulates the risks that Russia has posed for its and European security since the annexation of Crimea, which is not explicitly mentioned in the Swedish strategy – but which is present in other security documents, as seen in the previous chapter.

However, while cooperation with like-minded partners is grounded on the respect of international law, the Arctic actors disagree on the measures to implement the strategic and day-to-day Arctic issues. Indeed, the European Commission clearly expressed its intentions to reduce or stop extractive activities in the region, in the name of the "region's unique pristine environment" (European Commission 2021b, 10). On the contrary, Norway and the United States have intensified their intentions to further exploit the Arctic fossil fuel reservoirs (Brzozowski 2021; Kelly 2023; Jensen 2023, Friedman, L. (2023) – the United States had stopped drilling activities under the Obama Administration, but President Trump promptly removed the ban. Finland expressed its support for the EU's position, but others were disappointed about "the ban on drilling in the Arctic, because it is mainly about Norway: the EU cannot tell Russia what to do, so it will be more about Norway, for which the Barents Sea is important. They would not endanger it. It looked like a step back to 2008" (Interview n°7). In this regard, some interviewees argued that the main problem is "the narrative of the Arctic as a pristine land. If you look at pictures of the Arctic, there is hardly a human being, and usually it is an Indigenous person or group" (Interview n°7). Consequently, while sharing values with other Arctic states, the EU's position as a protector of the Arctic environment collides with some of its partners' interests – and risks being a weak tool to pressure or influence the behaviour of the Arctic states.

With regards to what is to govern in the Arctic and why, the answers to the questions do not substantially differ from the previous strategies, being climate change the main concern for the EU Institutions and the two Arctic Member States. However, it appears that the EU Institutions and Arctic Member States shared views about what the EU's position should be in the Arctic and how to respond to increasing concerns over regional security and climate change – even though the EU actors still need to

better govern the contradictions of the green transition, sustainable development, and respect of the Indigenous Peoples' traditional lifestyles and businesses. Yet, it is possible to see that the Arctic Member States emphasise the established state-centric and intergovernmental structure of Arctic governance, where the EU should act as a distinct actor and in support of the Arctic Council – which leads to investigate the EU's Presence and Scale of governance in Arctic affairs.

At the same time, the interest in securing good living conditions, or developing better ones especially in response to climate change, leads to consider who can better intervene or support the aspects of Arctic politics that fall outside of the category of 'high politics' – with the exception of the Kingdom of Denmark, which aims to maintain its Arctic policies at the level of international relations, without reference to the use of EU funds for economic development. In this regard, the differences between the three Arctic states have important implications for the Scale of governance as well, since the EU's economic power becomes relevant for a specific area of the European Arctic where the EU's funds are needed – and where they are meant to be used to ensure that the are no economic gaps within the EU borders, which is one of the main objectives of EU integration and the EU's core values.

7.3.2 Transforming the scale of governance?

During the 2016-2021 period, the EU did not undergo any treaty reform, unlike 2008-2009. Consequently, the legal structure remained the same as in the 2008-2015 timeframe. However, the way to address the Arctic issues from both a more local and a more international level, rather than merely regional, might have helped reinforcing the role of the EU both with regards to maritime and terrestrial Arctic issues, and with

regards to the EU's financial instruments for local actors at the subnational level – apart from hard security concerns, which mainly are the purview of the Member States.

To begin with the definition of the Arctic issues as primarily maritime or terrestrial, during the time between 2016 and 2021 the Arctic actors started paying more attention to issues related to sustainable development, human and animal welfare, and the need to better regulate the flow of people across the region. The European Parliament affirmed that the Arctic was a region that suffered from underinvestment (European Parliament 2017, §F), implying not only the necessity to regulate the Arctic, but to intervene and promote activities in the region, from business to culture, as well as transports and health care system. The strategies of Sweden and Finland also underlined the importance of issues such as mental health and the impact of climate change on the populations of the Arctic. Consequently, fishery and navigation appear to be parts of the aspects that define the politics of region and not its main features, and only the Kingdom of Denmark aims to narrow Arctic politics down to international affairs – on the grounds of Greenland and the Faroe Islands' interests. The impact of such a view of Arctic governance becomes visible in the position papers of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas.

In those documents, the representatives of the Swedish and Finnish Arctic counties underline the role of the EU and the necessity to ensure communication between the EU and the local populations. In 2019, before the summit in Umeå (Sweden), the NSPA states that "[t]he Arctic region remains economically vulnerable due to the lack of own critical mass of people and capital, although the European Arctic is comparatively populated and advanced with Arctic know-how" (NSPA 2019). This position echoes the view of the European Parliament, which later encouraged the creation of an "investment platform which would facilitate closer economic

cooperation between the EU and Arctic economies, in collaboration with the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund (European Parliament 2021, §40). From this perspective, it becomes clear that Arctic regional cooperation takes place at the local level, and that EU and state institutions need to support the action of local actors – considering also the great importance attached to local autonomies in the Norden countries, especially Finland, as presented in the first chapter.

For the NSPA, the EU's Cohesion Policy is simply essential but, as far as the 2021-27 EU Multiannual Financial Framework is concerned, the NSPA laments that the risk that the areas belonging to the network might suffer from the cap mechanism, which is a form of adjustment reducing the amount of funds per Member State, including Finland and Sweden. In particular, the NSPA argues that the EU "safeguard the legal status of the European Arctic and clarify the regional exempt from the national capping mechanism" (NSPA 2020, 1). Yet, the role of the EU's funds or funded programmes are relevant also to the Danish Arctic territories – with yet limited use or knowledge of them. As reported by the European Commission in the *Summary report of the Arctic stakeholder forum consultation*, representatives from Greenland argued that the "[t]here seems to be a substantive knowledge gap regarding the possibilities with the EU programs" (European Commission 2017, 54). Consequently, the role of the EU, even if as a facilitator, is crucial for Arctic small-scale politics.

With regards to high politics, it is also necessary to underline the importance of binding agreements that regulate the Arctic maritime issues – a way of dealing with Arctic politics that have challenged the views of some Arctic states. One clear example is the International Agreement to Prevent Unregulated Fishing in the High Seas of the Central Arctic Ocean, signed in 2018 and entered into force in 2021. The agreement involves the Arctic Coastal States (Canada, Iceland, the Kingdom of Denmark,

Norway, the United States and the Russian Federation) and the main consumers of fish in the Northern hemisphere, i.e. China, Japan, South Korea and the EU. The US started the negotiations for the agreement in 2007, but it did not immediately find a suitable platform to discuss it: apparently, within the Arctic Council, "[t]here was strong support for building on and considering this issue within the context of existing mechanisms" (Arctic Council 2007, §11.4). At the same time, some of the Arctic coastal states rejected the EU's proposal to extend or adjust the mandate of North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, so that it could include the Central Arctic Ocean (Schatz *et al*. 2019, 205). Over time and negotiations, the Arctic states agreed on the legally binding nature of the agreement.

The International Agreement might represent a different view of Arctic governance, which places the EU in a stronger position compared to the earlier stages of its Arctic policies. While the EU might be considered a terrestrial Arctic actor, its exclusive competences in the conservation of marine biological resources (falling under the Common Fisheries Policy), and its geographical proximity to the region, enabled the EU to participate in the negotiation for the 2018 Agreement. In addition to its legal competences over biological resources, the EU was also considered an entity with "real interests" in the Central Arctic Ocean, though this term is not clarified in the above-mentioned treaty (which states that the Agreement should be open to those who display such an interest), nor in Article 8 of the Fish Stocks Agreement (1995) from which the concept was borrowed. The definition of "real interests" might be primarily related to commercial fishing, but scholars also argue that making sense of this term is a "political project" since it can include or exclude the interests of Indigenous communities (Dodds 2019). According to Annika Nilsson and Miyase Christensen, "the Arctic Ocean fishing moratorium illustrates how Arctic governance

has become increasingly framed as a global concern" (Nilsson and Christensen 2019, 112), in contrast to the previous legally binding agreements on aeronautical and maritime search and rescue (2011), oil spill prevention (2013) and scientific cooperation (2017).

The global dimension directly benefits the role of the EU, which can also act as a proxy for its Arctic and non-Arctic states that aim to participate in the region's governance. However, the International Agreement represent the only case of such a form of international, legally binding, governance for the Arctic Ocean – an issue which is not preeminent in the EU's 2021 Joint Communication, which dedicates more attention to the impact of the EU Green Deal for the region, in terms of benefits for the people living in the Arctic, sustainable development, and infrastructure.

7.3.3 EU Capability in a 'different' Arctic

Over the period between 2016 and 2021, the EU institutions and Arctic Member States consolidated their positions and scale of governance, in step with their positions and scale of governance, as well as their policies and frameworks. Indeed, the documents reiterate the importance of the established frameworks for governance, such as the role of the Arctic Council at the regional and intergovernmental levels, the Northern Dimension and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council at the 'domestic' level or with regards to cross-border cooperation. Apart from the reorganisations of the EU's Interreg, the actions of the EU reflected its supportive role for local and state actors, and for regional cooperation. The EU Institutions such as the Commission and Parliament developed more assertive positions with regards to environmental protection and the need to operate with like-minded partners, the more articulated policies regarded areas where

the EU had already proved to be needed by financially supporting general policies with effects on Arctic issues.

Research is a crucial expression of capability, and it represents one of the most important diplomatic tools in Arctic governance (European Commission 2021b, 4). In 2016, the EU focused on providing funds for Arctic related research under the Horizon 2020 programme, maintaining them at the same level allocated during the previous decade, and with "a budget of EUR 70 million[37] for the period 2018–2020" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 39). The EU established the EU PolarNet initiative, a consortium for polar research for the period between 2015 and 2019 – which was renewed in 2020 (EU PolarNet 2) till 2023. The consortium has operated with Canada, Russia, and the United States, and coordinates "the EU Polar Cluster, consisting of the European Polar Board, the Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System and 21 EU-funded Polar projects" (European Commission 2021b, 13; Focus 6). The EU PolarNet has also focused on projects involving the Arctic Indigenous Peoples, who have become more visible and active during the 2016-2021 period – considering, for example, the increasing importance of post-colonial reconciliation in Finland and Sweden. The relationships between research, Indigenous Peoples, and the EU are yet potentially undermined by the lack of knowledge about the EU and its mechanism, as underlined throughout the chapter.

Consequently, research is central but potentially problematic, if it does not consider the perspective of the Sámi communities both with regards to access to EU funds and conduction of research. To fill the knowledge gap between the EU and the Sámi people, the EU promoted the homonymous project *Filling the EU-Sápmi knowledge gaps*, which took place between 2019 and 2022. The project was developed

[37] Around 76 million dollars, according to the current exchange rates.

as part of the EU's Cohesion Policy, and it can be interpreted as the consequence of the EU's commitment "to **engage with Arctic indigenous peoples** and **local communities** [through] the Territorial Cooperation programmes and the programmes under the European Neighbourhood Instrument" (European Commission 2016a, 15; emphasis in original). Indeed, the project was promoted under the funds for the Interreg Nord, and the Regional Council of Lapland, the Sámi Parliament in Norway, the County Municipality of Troms and Finnmark, the region of Norrbotten, and the region of Västerbotten. The project aimed at increasing awareness about the Sami civil society and industries at the EU level, as well as offering a targeted trainee programme about the EU. The project culminated in the creation of a think tank, the EU-Sápmi *Jurddabeassi*, composed by Sámi experts.

The establishment of a Sámi think tank comes after the emergence of problems related to the green transition, which revolves around not only decarbonisation, but also social justice. The EU strategies, through the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, aim "to maintain and develop robust and competitive communities, promote entrepreneurship, foster energy-secure communities, and promote and develop cultural and natural heritage" (European Commission 2016a, 15). As illustrated in the previous chapters, the exploitation of Arctic natural resources presents conflicts between industries, strategic energy interests, and the respect of the Sámi's traditional activities. The problems and contradictions among objectives are present both at the EU and state level, therefore it does not necessarily represent a source of 'illegitimacy' of the EU *per se*. Rather, it shows that the conflicts between Sámi issues and the Arctic states' goals can be reproduced at different levels.

With regards to research and the reproduction of colonial practices, the Sámi Council has co-led the publication of the *Roadmap to decolonial Arctic Research - a*

toolkit to support EU policymakers. In the document, the authors denounce that the priorities and criteria guiding research, especially climate-related projects, "are often less relevant or may be harmful from an Indigenous perspective" (Hermann *et al*. 2023, 19). According to this view, research conduct in the Arctic is hindered by "the methodical need to work on particularly detailed research questions often brings about a lack of embedding results into the societal context". In addition, the *Roadmap* suggests that projects "should not solely be of interest to external researchers or research institutions but should include needs-based and problem-focused objectives that are relevant for the Indigenous community of concern" (Hermann *et al*. 2023, 28). Furthermore, the document argues that the reform of the European Research Council perpetuates colonial or culturally insensitive practices by promoting or supporting individual achievements, rather than collaboration (Hermann *et al*. 2023, 37). Consequently, while research and science diplomacy remain at the core of Arctic-related initiatives, there is an increasing demand for research to be relevant for the people with whom researchers need to collaborate, in the name of their human rights – championed not only at the level of EU institutions, but also at the Member States' level.

Similarly, Sweden and Finland also focus on research and the need to better integrate different funding frameworks, and they see the EU as a financial provider. In the 2020 Strategy, the Swedish government states that several countries, including Sweden, "have pressed for the EU to provide more funding for Arctic research and higher education" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 39). Finland also underlines that, "[i]n international research funding, EU programmes play the most important role, such as Horizon Europe and Copernicus" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 59), while also highlighting the "primary importance" of "research

evidence synthesised under direction of the Arctic Council" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 58). Consequently, the EU and the Arctic Member States reinforce the view of the EU as an economic supporter for research, and this view is reflected in the Arctic States' interests in securing EU funds.

Yet, research has implications also for state security, as in the case of geo-localisation, undermining the conciliatory role of science diplomacy (Almén and Hsiung 2022, 27). As stated in the Finnish 2021 document, "Arctic research in support of security and national defence will be developed through international cooperation on a multilateral and bilateral basis. EU programmes will be tapped to strengthen research funding" (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 61). It is worth noting that Finland has also opposed Chinese attempts to gain influence in strategic and military areas. In 2018, the Finnish Ministry of Defence stopped the plan of the Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration to purchase the Kemijärvi airport, in Lapland. Apparently, the reason behind the purchase was to conduct scientific research, but the delegation of the Arctic and Antarctic Administration included an assistant military diplomat. In the end, the attempt failed because the airport could not be sold under the EU law (Fravel *et al.* 2021, 15). As a result, scientific research might be dependent on mutual trust, rather than a facilitator – requiring relationships with either 'like-minded partners' or with actors that are not explicitly hostile against the EU.

Beyond research, the EU positions itself as an environmentalist actor. As far as environmental policies are concerned, the policies mentioned in the Communications and the Arctic Member States' strategies do not propose Arctic-specific instruments, but build upon broader EU policies, such as the *Fit for 55* package (the EU's policy proposals to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030) or the Paris

Agreement, as well as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nevertheless, the EU supports or takes part in regional actions such as the Arctic Council's actions to reduce black carbon and methane emissions, acknowledging its responsibility "for 31% of CO_2 and 16.5% of black carbon emissions from maritime transport in the Arctic" (European Commission 2021b, 9). Such positions might appear insufficient or distant from the needs of the Arctic region. However, they reflect the awareness that most of the pollution affecting the Arctic is generated outside of the region, as in the case of (micro)plastics. From a different perspective, it is possible to say that "[s]everal of the EU's central policy areas and relations have a clear Arctic dimension" (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020, 18), and that it is possible to influence the region without Arctic-specific measures, being the Arctic and its inhabitants connected to the rest of EU's policies. According to this interpretation, the EU does not necessarily need to create further frameworks or policies, but to integrate them with more awareness about their effects on the Arctic.

As mentioned in the sixth chapter, the main novelty in terms of environmental protection stems from the call for reducing or stopping extractive activities in the Arctic region. This controversial position has long been part of the European Parliaments' proposals which have raised concerns among the Arctic states, like the call for an Arctic treaty did. However, the 2021 Communication embraces both the narrative of the Arctic as a pristine area, and the need to be credible in pursuing the so-called green transition. Among the three Arctic Member States, Finland seems to support the European Commission's position: even though the Finnish strategy prioritises adaptation rather than 'prevention', the document explicitly reads that "the opening up of new fossil reserves in Arctic conditions is incompatible with attaining the targets of the Paris Agreement and associated with economic uncertainties and

risks” (Office of the Prime Minister of Finland 2021, 26). However, according to the interviews, the EU’s call risks being symbolic or a form of moral positioning that does not shield the EU from other forms of criticism – such as the EU’s interests in minerals present in the region. Indeed, the green transition implies further exploitation of resources, consequent urbanisation, and the overall transformation of the region – with potential conflicts between the Arctic Indigenous Peoples and those who aim to populate the Arctic.

In general, the 2016 and 2021 EU Communications have consolidated the supportive role of the EU, while also highlighting that the Arctic States do not necessarily possess coherent goals and instruments for the region. Over time, the relationship between the EU institutions and Sweden and Finland has strengthened, especially because of the direct impact that EU policies and law have on the two Member States’ Arctic territories – and the local communities in particular. On the other hand, the relationship with Denmark is crucial as well, and the EU will need to consider the international dimensions of the Arctic that will likely be placed at the centre of the Kingdom of Denmark’s next strategy. While military security in the region gains more importance, Sweden and Finland’s accession to NATO might hinder the evolution of the EU has a security actor. Yet, there is little room for speculations, especially while waiting for both the EU and the US elections, and the change thy might bring in terms of new actors, new visions – and, therefore, actorness.

7.4 Evaluating actorness through consistency

The previous sections have demonstrated how EU institutions and Arctic Member States have constructed their opportunities, and presence, through their positioning and views on the appropriate scale of governance. This section presents considerations

regarding policy consistency, which is essential to identify a shared understanding of the EU's role among its actors. By applying the revised version of Bretherton and Vogler's model of actorness, it becomes evident that while EU institutions and Arctic Member States often share similar positions, they occasionally disagree on the scale of governance. The EU's self-perception may appear tenuous, especially when compared to the rhetoric surrounding resource competition and Arctic-related military conflicts. However, as Stępień and Raspotnik observe, "the Arctic resides within the realm of 'soft policy' – not written into the Treaties, with no distinct budget line, no set rule book on how to protect or develop the Arctic," (Stępień and Raspotnik 2021, 13). This statement describes not only the EU's Arctic policy, but also the approaches of the EU's Arctic Member States, as evidenced by the interviews and, more importantly, the analysed documents.

This aspect is crucial, since the relevant point for the application of the revised concept of actorness is to challenge the assumption that the EU has been "unable to convince the Arctic states of why the Arctic actually needs Europe,".[38] With regards to the 2008-2015 timeframe, the EU's capabilities for the Arctic region were modelled according to a specific view where the EU played a supportive role. The preference for state-friendly scales appears more sharply with reference to the preservation of the *status quo* in terms of legal frameworks and institutions, particularly regarding the role of the Arctic Council. Ambiguity was, and still is, present. The EU appeared to play a key role in the Member States' Arctic policy; yet, as stated in the 2013 Finnish Strategy, there was a need to clarify and reinforce the European Union's Arctic policy – a statement with implications for both 'who' is necessary for Arctic governance, and

[38] Raspotnik, A. 2018. *The European Union and the Geopolitics of the Arctic*, Chapter 7: A European geopolitical subject in the Arctic?

‘why’. However, most of the policies, be they at the EU or state level, did not establish action plans and, regarding the Swedish and Finnish territories, strategies focused on creating a framework for actions to be carried out by local and private actors. Therefore, there was a shared understanding of what the EU could do in a region where the main state actors did not have integrated or concrete strategies either.

For the 2016-2021 period, the construction of EU capability reflected the consolidation of the EU identity as an Arctic actor, through its role as a supporter of the established governance structure – which is yet influenced by transformation in the region, or by changing perceptions of Arctic issues. Indeed, the Arctic Council shifted its position towards the agreement on the *Agreement to Prevent Unregulated Fishing in the High Seas of the Central Arctic Ocean*, accepting a binding agreement involving non-Arctic relevant partners or powers. The adoption of the *Agreement* demonstrates that the views of the Arctic states are permeable, and that negotiations in terms of scale of governance are possible. Yet, given the soft character of Arctic issues, some areas might not need further EU-level control, but planning and coordination of existing resources.

Aspects related to the scale of governance were more fragmented during the 2008-15 period. With regards to the role of Parliamentary institutions, efforts to maintain established institutions and fora for the Arctic can be interpreted as an attempt to preserve a consistent state-centric scale of governance – in the form of intergovernmentalism – within the EU. The case of the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum is indicative, considering that it was created within the framework of the Northern Dimension that Sweden and, especially, Finland deemed as a central tool for external relations. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the choice makes sense from the perspective of not duplicating the organisations already

established in which the Parliamentary dimension was present – such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which hosts a biannual parliamentary conference, and the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians. However, the case of the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum might show the divide between intergovernmentalism and 'parliamentarism' at the EU level – which is amplified in Arctic governance.

Therefore, despite the presence of several inter-parliamentary institutions in the Norden countries, intergovernmentalism appears to be the main feature of Arctic politics. As Michał Łuszczuk observes, both the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians and the Barents Parliamentary Conference have limited or hard-to-identify impact on the Arctic Council and its work: the former is an Observer, while the latter has no relationship with the Arctic Council. The case of the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians shows that they were in a weak position, compared to governments (Łuszczuk 2015, 9-10), even though the Conference initiated the process that led the Parliament and the Commission to formulate policy instruments for the Arctic. The Arctic States were indeed "fighting hard to maintain control over Arctic governance through a focus on intergovernmental cooperation and sovereign state interests" (Ingimundarson 2014, 195). The EU institutions policies became increasingly coherent with the Member States' Arctic foreign policies, including the Parliament – which yet emphasises the role of non-state actors.

The allocation of EU funds also shows a direct link between positioning and scales in the formation of the EU's capabilities, grounded in the convergence of these two aspects. The Commission presented the role of the EU as a contributor to the region in different policy areas, increasing the visibility of the EU in Arctic politics and governance. At the same time, the three EU Arctic States, Norway, and Russia could benefit from specific funding programmes without changing the established

frameworks of governance or without committing to transform the scale of Arctic politics.

An important aspect emerges from the different geographies of the EU's Arctic sphere of direct influence, namely the internal fragmentation of the EU and its Arctic States, without resulting in 'confusion' about the Arctic or internal conflicts. Regarding the Finnish and Swedish territories, the EU is important in supporting regions, counties, cities, and local actors through its funds and the Cohesion Policy. Conversely, the Kingdom of Denmark views the Arctic solely as a matter of foreign policy, since Greenland and the Faroe Islands aim to exclude external actors from their domestic affairs. Consequently, the next EU's Arctic policy might present forms of specialisation where terrestrial and maritime affairs are both equally considered as essential for the Arctic. By accepting the coexistence of different visions of Arctic governance, it is possible to understand the limitations about the capacity to imagine a univocal role of the EU.

It is also important to underline that, over time, the EU has constructed forums or adopted initiatives to share objectives – and, arguably, to legitimise its position as an Arctic actor as well as its policies. The interviews highlighted the beneficial results of appointing the EU's special envoy for the Arctic. Indeed, as an interviewee said:

> "[o]ne thing that was good for us was the appointment of the Special Envoy for the Arctic. Suddenly there was a face, there was a representative that made everything less confusing. It made a big difference for us. We are outside of the EU, and in the last eight years we have tried to build a partnership with the EU, that we see as an important actor in the Arctic" (interview n°7).

The establishment of a dedicated office appears to be important in terms of interactions and perception of possibilities for cooperation about Arctic issues. This finding stresses the importance of human actors and interactions in the process of policymaking, suggesting further venues for research from an actor-centred perspective. The existence of an Envoy for the Arctic might have helped the policy process, but further investigations is needed – for example, 'ethnographic' studies about the mechanisms shaping the relations between diplomats, and how socialisation influences the content of the EU's policy for the Arctic.

7.5 Conclusions

How do the EU institutions and Arctic Member States construct the EU's role in Arctic politics? According to the research model, the EU's actorness depends on a shared understanding of its role in Arctic governance. Interviews and documents reveal that the European Commission faced two main issues during the studied periods. First, there was the fragmentation of objectives at the EU level or with EU support, resulting in the EU's Arctic policy being a collection of "umbrella policy statements, rather than [an] overall policy framework" (Stępień 2015, 251). Upon closer examination, Arctic Member States also did not present comprehensive policy frameworks, and their positions also consolidated over time.

The analysis shows that EU institutions' views have converged towards a governance scale closer to the Arctic States, emphasizing the role of intergovernmental fora and the established legal framework in the Arctic. The actors maintained a certain degree of inconsistency, which is not surprising. A perfect degree of coherence is unrealistic or might be valid for a specific point in time. As Arctic states interpret environmental issues more restrictively, controversial issues like bans on extractive

activities in the Arctic have become more accepted at the EU level, including among Arctic Member States. In general, the interviews suggest that the 2021 EU's Arctic policy update was more welcome than the previous versions, reflecting the existence of increasing convergence of ideas about Arctic governance – at least between EU institutions and Arctic Member States.

The analysis of the two periods, 2008-2015 and 2016-2021, shows that the EU's Arctic policy is affected by the efforts of EU actors to construct the EU's role. Between 2008 and 2015, the Arctic Member States were more concerned with ensuring that the Arctic States were the primary responsible for the region, to the point that they consolidated the bureaucratic apparatus of the Arctic Council. During that phase, the EU was perceived as an external actor to be socialised to the rules of Arctic cooperation. From 2016 to 2021, the Arctic States started to approach Arctic issues beyond concerns about their sovereignty and to focus more on social affairs and cooperation, where the contribution of the EU has been praised or even deemed as necessary for stronger policies for the Arctic region. Thus, the EU's role emerged and was consolidated without being considered hierarchically inferior.

At the same time, these results align with the perception that the Arctic "has not achieved a prominent place on the EU's both domestic and foreign policy table over the last two decades" (Raspotnik and Stępień 2020, 138). The EU's capabilities are coherent with the supportive role for the Arctic states and the Arctic cities. At the same time, the Arctic Member States' policies also reflect their uncertainty about the region and its needs – uncertainty also mirrored by the political and institutional fragmentation. Consequently, despite the criticism that the EU has long faced, the construction of the EU's Arctic policy has showcased some of the weak points that also the Arctic States share with non-Arctic actors, and the difficulties that all of them

share in the construction of their roles Arctic actors. The main difference consists in the fact that Arctic States' legitimacy as actors is not questioned despite the weaknesses of their policies, due to the state-centric design of Arctic politics – mainly challenged by the Indigenous Peoples.

In conclusion, the EU's policies and strategies reflect the complexity of identifying specific policies for a region that may primarily suffer from idealization and romanticism, such as Arctic exceptionalism. The fall of this exceptionalism has shown that Arctic politics is influenced by international and domestic politics, as well as other regions. The limits of the EU's action seem to be related to the soft-power character of Arctic issues, rather than a divide between EU's objectives and its Arctic Member States. The main cleavage appears to regard the role of non-state actors in specific policy sectors. While maritime and security affairs seem to fall more specifically under the Arctic states' competences, the EU and its institutions are more capable of influencing terrestrial issues related to sustainable development and local governance.

Conclusions

Is there a shared understanding of the EU's role in Arctic politics? On the one hand, the EU is not always able to speak as one voice in international affairs, reflecting longstanding issues of developing a common EU foreign policy on numerous matters in addition to the Arctic. The EU's policy for the Arctic presents problems that are related to the collective nature of the EU and the intergovernmental character of its foreign policy which, according to Zajac (2015), reflects the gap between the 'political idealism' (i.e. the normative approach) of the EU supranational institutions and the national interests of the EU Member States.

On the other hand, the EU has been able to develop a "collective responsibility to act" (Maurer, Whitman, and Wright 2023), an ideational element that shapes the Member States' behaviour even though the decision-making of the EU's foreign policy is intergovernmental – and even when the results are not as optimal as realists would expect to justify the existence of such a regime. Such a norm has emerged over time and has enabled the EU to construct a shared view on how to support Ukraine against the post-2022 Russian invasion, for example (Maurer, Whitman, and Wright 2023, 223; 224; 236; Krasner 1982, 194). In this sense, the EU's foreign policy "reflects a sense of what EU institutions and national governments consider 'appropriate behaviour' for a certain role that they collectively ascribe to themselves – as 'the EU'" (Sedelmeier 2004, 125).

A glimpse of this collective actorness has started to emerge in the EU's visions for the Arctic, especially in the forms of soft policy instruments – funds for research and sustainable development, and cooperation for security and surveillance

programmes. This collective understanding of the EU's role mirrors the collective understanding of the Arctic, which the Arctic States also developed over time, sometimes adopting ambiguous positions or even participating in Arctic governance 'reluctantly'. It is true that, in the early stages, the EU Commission did not want "to step on the toes of any of the Arctic states" (Raspotnik and Stephen 2012) and, over time, the EU Parliament, also left its (mis)conception of the Arctic, recognising that "the Arctic region is not to be regarded as a legal vacuum, but as an area with well-developed tools for governance," (EP 2012 §42). Yet, the Arctic Member States presented the same contradictions in terms of environmental protection, economic development, and Indigenous People's rights – as well as financial fragmentation, as observed in the Finnish 2021 strategy. These contradictions are present and reproduced at all the levels of Arctic politics and reflect the diversity of views for the region.

Soft policies, therefore, represent the current common denominator for Arctic governance – with the exceptions of economic sanctions and *ad hoc* legally binding agreements. Being the EU (as well as states and organisations in general) "a conglomerate of different institutions and actors", it is inevitable that "the EU has to always agree on the lowest common denominator" (Raspotnik and Stephen, 2012). However, the common denominator is not a fixed point, especially in light of the diversity of the EU Arctic Member States – not only in terms of Arctic geographies and competencies, but also the centrality that Arctic matters have for the Arctic actors themselves. Soft power represents the Arctic states' preferred approach too, strongly emphasising the intergovernmental scale of Arctic politics. At the same time, the EU has strengthened its position as a financial supporter, especially for research, with the Arctic states pressing the EU for the provision of more funds – as stated in the Swedish 2020 strategy.

With regards to the Arctic Council, the three Arctic Member States have been consistent in their support for the EU's application as an Observer at the Arctic Council, but it means that they also displayed consistency in their will to ensure that the role of the Arctic Member States would remain preeminent. As also discussed in an interview, the choice to preserve the role of the Arctic States against more supranational 'interference' stems from the necessity of avoiding more influence from non-Arctic states and bodies, which the EU would represent (Interview n°8). On the grounds of this consideration, a nation-state type of scale also reinforces the positioning of those Arctic States which consider the Arctic as their primary concern and try to exclude external actors, or to reduce their influences.

Consequently, the combined actorness of the EU institutions and Arctic Member States converge towards supportive roles, in a region presenting specific features that might not need extraordinary instruments for governance – or that is too politically heterogeneous for a common strategy. In an increasingly hostile international context, the EU has contributed to the functioning of a soft system of international governance, but also to its own Arctic territories. Indeed, "[t]he Commission is using [the Technical Support Instrument] to support national governments and regions including sparsely populated territories, in addressing the challenges, and finding opportunities" (EU Commission 2022). The EU employs the Technical Support Instrument to assist the Member States in the implementation of the necessary reforms. In 2022, the EU Commission indeed approved reform projects for Finland "*[s]upporting implementation capacity of sustainable green development in the European Arctic Northern Sparsely Populated Areas*". Consequently, even if the EU plays a supportive role, it can influence the course of the Arctic policies – in step

with its competences and in cooperation with subnational actors, circumventing its long-established problems of 'higher' international politics.

At the same time, while the EU has been criticised for its interests in Arctic politics, other Arctic actors firstly interpreted its engagement in an anti-state sovereignty fashion, as in the case of the Indigenous Peoples. On the one hand, Klaus Dodds argued that when the Commission states that the EU is *inextricably linked to the Arctic region*, it implied that the Arctic States cannot exclude the EU from the region, and that Arctic politics needs the EU. In particular, Dodds highlights the specific Positioning of the EU and the construction of the Arctic as a political space. Indeed, in 2008, the EU positioned itself as an actor involved in Arctic politics from both a territorial and relational perspective, the European Union being an "actor-network" not bound by geographical criteria such as the Arctic Circle and Ocean (Dodds 2013b, 200). At the same time, Dodds argues that, by virtue of such a claim, the Commission also implied that "geographically proximate states and Indigenous peoples/northern communities alone cannot be allowed to speak for current and future configurations of the Arctic" (Dodds 2013, 200).

On the other hand, as Timo Koivurova underlines, the Inuit peoples were disappointed by the fact that "the coastal states defined themselves as sovereigns with stewardship role also over 'livelihoods of local inhabitants and Indigenous communities'", (Koivurova 2010, 208). The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) then issued a declaration in 2009, trying to present their self-determination is able to "set limits to sovereign States" (Koivurova 2010, 209): as reported in the Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic, the Inuit communities argue that "[s]overeignty is a contested concept" and that "[o]ld ideas of sovereignty are breaking down as different governance models, such as the European Union, evolve" (ICC 2009

§ 2.1). From this perspective, it is possible to argue that the intergovernmental scale of governance reproduces power relations that the EU's engagement might help reduce – as in the case of the recent cooperation between the EU and the Sámi.

In sum, since a definitive evaluation of the EU's effectiveness in Arctic politics cannot be drawn, the focus on the EU's actorness in Arctic politics has shown the constitutive fragmentation of Arctic policy along all the levels here considered. Far from being an exclusive problem of the EU, and far from being a sign of 'defective' policy design, the EU and the Arctic States' actions in the region needs to balance opposite values or rivalling policies, such as sustainability and economic development, mitigation of global warming and adaptation. In other words, Arctic discourses reflect different interests and understandings of the region, both inside and outside the EU. The supportive role of the EU might provide the necessary tools to address the needs of the region and its inhabitants, while also influencing the course of policies through specific conditions. From this perspective, even if the EU does not aim to centralise or further integrate policy programmes, it can nevertheless construct an influential role in Arctic governance.

The main contribution of this study could be summarised in a sentence: *Arctic politics might be fragmented, but actorness studies should not be so*. The literature review has demonstrated the inflation of theoretical and atheoretical approaches to actorness, presenting similar criteria for the study of the EU – specifically in the case of the Arctic. This research aimed at systematizing concepts and models of actorness by starting from a constructivist approach and further strengthening it. As a concept, actorness relates to the capacity of an actor (specifically the EU, in the literature) to participate in international politics in a purposive, meaningful – hopefully impactful – way. However, Bretherton and Vogler "explicitly reject a policy analysis approach to

understanding EU foreign policy," (White 2004, 46), despite it being the key to understanding how identity influences the construction of capabilities and the differences between psychological and operational environments.

The concept of actorness deserves particular attention, being the central element of this dissertation as well as contested concept in IR and EU studies. As Edith Drieskens (2017) observes, there is a divide between those who consider the concept useful and those who find it cumbersome or detrimental to EU studies: the former might use it to justify the uniqueness of the EU, while the latter might argue that there is lack of clarity in the way the term is employed, and the manifestations of actorness investigated. This dissertation has sought to avoid the problems posed by both standard actorness studies – in particular claims about the EU's uniqueness – and the theoretical fragmentation of the field aiming to create insights about the EU's policy-making that are possible through theoretical refinement and advancement. As a consequence, this dissertation as also progressed from the insularity of the EU studies, bridging theories of integration and IR theories to explain the EU's foreign policy.

More specifically, theoretical analysis and a review of the literature have demonstrated that the concept of actorness is compatible with both IR theories and Foreign Policy Analysis. This assertion proved most problematic, as it directly challenged Bretherton and Vogler's model from two angles: systemic evaluation as opposed to analysis of policy-processes, and effectiveness as opposed to role-construction. Arguably, the indirect influence of Alexander Wendt's constructivism and the influence of structural realism might explain Bretherton and Vogler's rejection of pure actor-centred perspectives, as well as the aspiration to move beyond the duality of IR perspectives with regards to the agent-structure dilemma. However, the literature review as shown that this duality might be the reflection of certain aspirations of IR

scholars to create systemic approaches that still rely on human qualities, regardless of any effort to make them (appear) non-decisionist. If the duality between system and actors falls and, any model of actorness then needs to re-conceptualise the role of human agency and perceptions.

The integration of concepts drawn from critical geopolitics – positioning and scale – has been crucial to better understand the influence of ideational elements in the construction of the EU actors' role for the Arctic region. Critical geopolitics also strengthen constructivism, which Bretherton and Vogler refer to without addressing its issues in their conceptualisation – in particular the difference between scientific constructivism and actor-centred constructivism. Here, I have followed the view according to which "actors in international politics make decisions based upon what the world appears to be and how they conceive their role in it" (Viotti and Kauppi 2000, 217). Such an understanding of constructivism makes Bretherton and Vogler's approach more compatible with Klose's definition of actorness as role-making and role-construction.

The study of the EU actors' positions and preferred scales of governance demonstrate that the process of role-construction does not concern the EU institutions only. As Björn Lyrvall – Sweden's former Ambassador for Arctic Affairs – said, "not every Swede recognizes that we are an Arctic country, not even those who live in the North" (Dingman 2019).[39] The Swedish population had also long "purposely take[n] a distance from the Arctic region [and] regarded the Arctic Circle as the Arctic border"

[39] The date reported here does not appear on the article's page (http://www.genderisnotplanb.com/bjoern-lyrvall) but on the Twitter page of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which also posted the interview last retrieved on March 2023 (https://twitter.com/swemfa/status/1201874070268198912?lang=de). As an anecdote, I have also happened to discuss with Swedes why Sweden was an Arctic state during the doctoral programme, since they did not know that Sweden was in the Arctic region and have always perceived the Arctic as a distant area.

(Lidström 2018). By positioning itself as an Arctic actor, Sweden organises specific policies for the region against the “legacy of an old social initiative aimed at making Sweden and Swedes equal, regardless of geographical position [to the potential detriment of any] Arctic perspective” (Lidström 2018). Consequently, while the Arctic States are legitimate Arctic actors on the grounds of sovereignty, their actorness cannot be derived from their geographical positions or from legal instruments only. Rather, their actorness also reflects who they perceive themselves to be and what goals they should achieve in the region – which indicates how opportunities are constructed from an actor-centred perspective.

Scales of governance provide further information about actors’ narratives and the impact that each actor’s existence has on the behaviour of others. Scales show how actors negotiate they preferred level of cooperation and decision-making, and how they realise their goals – and if there are contradictions between their positions and objectives. For example, Annika Nilsson and Miyase Christensen (2019, 9) observe that while claims about the environmental protection of the Arctic are presented as a matter of global interest and responsibility, the measures to implement and adapt fall under the competences of the Arctic States – from this perspective, scale becomes a matter of responsibility and accountability. From an actor-centred view, scales also become a matter of negotiation and influence, and actors can strategically pursue their goals by centralising or decentralising the policy process. This aspect is especially true within the multi-level system of governance that is the EU. However, scales and the concept of presence do not refer to static elements, but to the ever-changing narratives that actors constantly construct – in the form of different interpretations of norms, or even as new proposals and new rules.

The theoretical framework proposed here may enable generalization of actorness studies beyond the EU, regardless of any claims about the EU's sui generis nature. The *sui generis* assumption has had impactful consequences on EU studies (Warleigh 2006, 32), such as theoretical inflation and fragmented perspectives. William Phelan notes that IR scholars have been vague about the nature of the exceptionality of the EU and, unlike international legal scholars, have avoided comparisons which might clarify or justify their assumption (Phean 2012). This research does not tailor the criteria for actorness to a specific entity and, while the results are specific to the case study, the approach to actorness extends to different actors – here the same method has been applied to both EU Institutions and Member States, combining the results of the analysis to the study of the EU's actorness. Moreover, this dissertation tries to avoid conceptual inflation and redundancy by focusing on an existing concept of actorness. These two problems have been common both in constructivist research and actorness studies, resulting in theoretical fragmentation and incomparability, further contributing to comparative EU and actorness studies.

The integration of EU actorness studies might benefit the studies of EU policies – and of the EU's policies for the Arctic, in this specific case. Andreas Raspotnik and Kathrine Stephen had already underlined that the EU is "a conglomerate of different institutions and actors," (Raspotnik and Stephen, 2012) and that consequently that "the EU has to always agree on the lowest common denominator". Through an actor-centred, constructivist view of actorness, this observation becomes the starting point for ontologically coherent analyses – free from the need to search for effectiveness, since it is not a property of actorness as defined here. Consequently, the actor-centred approach adopted in this study overcomes the traditional theoretical distinction

between realist, liberalist, and constructivist scholarships, but it does so on the grounds of the three schools' ontological compatibility – not necessarily reflected in methodological affinity. Therefore, this dissertation defends an explicit constructivist perspective, rejecting (a)theoretical eclecticism.

Indirectly, this dissertation has emphasised the social interactionist dimension of constructivist research, especially with regards to interviews – even though this aspect results as underdeveloped in favour of more comprehensive approaches. Indeed, as reported in some of the interviews (n°1; n°7), the EU has benefited from the establishment of the EU's Special Envoy for the Arctic, since EU's partners could finally have someone to talk to with regards to specific issues. However, institutions such as the Parliament do not have a dedicated office, and an interviewee has found the physiological turnover as an obstacle to smooth communication about Arctic politics. Consequently, research might further investigate the impact of Arctic dedicated offices in the formulation of the EU's Arctic policy.

This research shows that, within the EU, the tensions between global, regional, and local issues and the implementation of policies are reproduced in the different identities and roles of the EU institutions and Members, held together by law – and its interpretation, which falls under the creative action of the actors. The Arctic has been a peripheral area whose politics is being impacted by major political transformations whose politicisation unveiled different identities, i.e. conflicting understandings of one's own role in Arctic politics. Far from being a problem, the variety of positions and scales first shows that collective actors and complex organisations cannot easily reduced to unitary entities, reinforcing the constructivist understanding of political actors; second, it highlights that the political construction of an area of governance is the result of the mediation between positioning and scales of governance.

This study presents both limitations and potential new venues for research. The main limitation regards the impossibility to include all the EU Member States that aim to participate in Arctic politics and cooperation, either as Observers at the Arctic Council or as states with their own strategies for the region. The construction of the EU's role as an Arctic actor is not limited to the interactions between the EU Institutions and the Arctic Member States, and new studies might also need to address possible conflicts among the EU's objectives and other Member States's interests in the region. The case of Italy, and the licences for exploring for extractive activities, might indeed collide with the EU's position as an environmentalist actor and its proposal to stop the extraction of oil and gas in the Arctic (Giagnorio 2023). There is also the need of further studies about if non-Arctic Member States might exploit the EU membership to better justify their engagement in the region, or if they consider the EU to be an obstacle to their involvement in the Arctic. However, the focus on the Arctic Member States has produced more systematic knowledge about their understanding of the region.

This study is centred around the EU Member States, but relations with the other Arctic States should be considered in future studies about actorness and the analysis of the EU's foreign policy. In the case of the Arctic, relations with Norway are crucial for the EU to nurture its ties with an important partner, and Norwegian diplomats have expressed their positions over controversial proposals regarding the extraction of fossil fuels in Arctic waters. The voices of the Arctic States were also important in the beginning of the EU's Arctic 'journey', as seen in the case of Sweden but also Canada. The EU had to adjust its policies and its role as interactions provided more room for discussions, negotiations, and even transformations of previous ideas. This dissertation has included those voices but privileged the focus on the EU Arctic Members to focus

on its decision-making processes. The inclusions of more voices and external actors might be more feasible when investigating a specific set of issues, or for periods that are narrower than the ones considered in this dissertation.

The small number of interviews also constitute a limitation, even though the richness of their content has balanced the impossibility of reaching out to more policymakers and experts. Since the dissertation revolves around human decision-makers and foreign policy analysis, this research would have benefited from more interviews. However, as explained in the methodological chapter, the logistical problems that hindered the conduction of interviews has been compensated by the analysis of policy documents, which enabled the study of more controversial aspects – such as security. On the grounds of the interviews, new studies might focus on the role played by the Special Envoy and how they have positively influenced the relationships between the representatives of the Arctic States. From a social-constructivist perspective, the role of diplomacy needs further considerations.

Perhaps it would suffice to say that, despite the inevitable limitations, this research has reached the purpose of providing a theoretically coherent framework to define and investigate actorness. Yet, the aim of this work is not to be a solipsistic project, and both the theoretical advancement and the empirical findings can pave the way to further research. Starting from theory, as already stated, this dissertation might constitute the basis for theoretically grounded studies of the EU's foreign policy, even from a comparative perspective. One aspect that deserves attention is the role of norms and their contestation in Arctic politics and foreign policy – and, therefore, geopolitical discourse – with regards to the EU and its legitimacy in Arctic cooperation.

The EU, or some of its institutions, has challenged some aspects of Arctic cooperation, provoking the reaction of the Arctic States – as in the case of the proposal for a regional treaty and the regulations on seal products. These forms of (even involuntary) contestation were weaponised and turned them into exclusionary discourses and practices, making the EU appear as the non-socialised external partner in search for its place in the region. However, the analysis of the documents reveals that the Arctic States, at least the EU Members, are still constructing their actorness, and that they do not necessarily share the same degrees of Arctic identity – 'Arcticness'. The fragmentation of policies and funds show that the construction of Arctic policies is difficult regardless of the nature of the entities considered. The reaction of the Arctic states might have been mostly due to the need to protect their idea of cooperation in a then peripheral but highly securitised area. Through the analysis of foreign-policy and geopolitical discourse, future research can further investigate the foundation of the Arctic States political identity and how they construct their role in the region.

From this perspective, the issue of actorness is related to identity. As any identity, Arcticness is an ever-evolving construct, an interplay between geographical positions and meaning that actors create about the space where they are placed. Again, the EU might not substantially differ from other Arctic States such the United States and Sweden – the 'reluctant Arctic states or citizens' – but also Iceland. Indeed, the Arctic island "was late in discovering how an Arctic dimension to its foreign policy could raise international interest in the country," (Hansson and Hauksdóttir 2021, 164), which occurred only in response to the US military forces leaving the country in 2006 – as a sign that there was no need to defend the country. Yet, Iceland's Keflavík air

base is still used for temporary NATO missions of policing and surveillance – since Iceland does not have its own military forces.

This note on Iceland leads to the other aspect that needs to be investigated, primarily security. Security has been a point of contention, because of the idea of Arctic exceptionalism that shaped the narrative about Arctic politics and diplomacy, but also because of the ideas underpinning Arctic cooperation since its inception – the exclusion of military issues from the Arctic Council. The first footnote of the Ottawa Declaration is explicit about the fact the forum "should not deal with matters related to military security", following the spirit of Gorbachev's Murmansk speech held in 1987. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the Arctic countries and the two rival powers – the United States and Russia – wanted to 'de-securitise' the Arctic, and "Gorbachev's focus on non-military (or 'soft') security issues in the region contributed to a toning down of the military (or 'hard') security rhetoric" (Åtland 2008, 290). In light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the aspects of security and rivalry happening in the Arctic – but not because of problems related to Arctic issues – cannot be excluded from the Arctic States' foreign policies. However, military security issues had been creeping in various ways onto the Council's agenda even before 2022, including military contacts and adjacent discussions such as regarding search and rescue.

According to the revised model of actorness proposed here, the questions would revolve around positioning in Arctic Security and scales of decision-making. With regards to the EU, Finland and Sweden have already shown their willingness to include the EU as a partner, a 'like-minded' actor, opposing Russia and China in their strategies and policies for the Arctic. However, the possibility of de-Europeanisation of the EU's foreign policy and security policy might hinder any further attempt to create bodies for collective decision-making – which would nevertheless need the EU

treaties to be reformed and upgraded, but such a scenario is very unlikely to materialise in the near future. The accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO might also weaken the need for more EU integration in security matters, at least with regards to Arctic affairs. Regardless of what Arctic security is going to look like in the next years, the issue might become more present in the political strategies for the region.

The Indigenous Peoples also challenge the Arctic States' sovereignty and the borders of the Arctic,and provide their own specific views of sovereignty. They also challenge the idea of legitimacy in a region whose inhabitants were subjugated to colonialism, and whose territories are affected by policies that affect their territories, undermine traditional industries, and that might disrupt communities – such as border controls. There is the need for further research about the integration of the Indigenous Peoples' voices in the EU's domestic and foreign policies for the Arctic. The Saami's institutions and organisations are not present in the EU's decision-making to the same degree of the Member States, but this dissertation has already included also sub-national non-state actors, like the Arctic cities and the Northerns Sparsely Populated Areas, which challenge state-centric approaches to the study of the EU's policies. Consequently, a stronger focus on the Indigenous Peoples not only represent a natural extension of this study, but also expand the areas of research.

This dissertation does not centre on a single policy area of importance to the Arctic, but rather provides an overview of the strategies for the region. While this choice may have limited the in-depth analyses of specific and politically relevant issues – transportation, or the national and EU space policies, which are likely to become increasingly strategic – the primary objective of this study was to provide a renewed theoretical framework for (EU) actorness studies. The framework and model of actorness here developed integrates the concept into broader debates within

international relations and EU theories about the EU’s foreign policy form an actor-centred perspective. Additionally, this dissertation sought to trace the construction of the EU’s role over the years and in different areas, focusing on the components of its decision-making and policy processes rather than specific policies of the region. Future studies, however, might delve deeper into the EU’s actorness and capabilities in specific sectors, considering the inherently international nature of most Arctic issues.

Bibliography

Aalto, P. (2002). A European Geopolitical Subject in the Making? EU, Russia and the Kaliningrad Question. *Geopolitics* 7(3): 142-74.

Aalto, P., and Forsberg, T. (2016). The structuration of Russia's geo-economy under economic sanctions. *Asia Eur J* 14, 221–37, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-015-0446-6

Abel, T. (1948). "The Operation Called Verstehen". *American Journal of Sociology* 54, (3), 211–18. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2770547.

Adler, E. (1997). Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), 319-363. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066197003003003

(2002). Constructivism in International Relations. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T., Simmons, B. A. *Handbook of International Relations*, SAGE Publications Ltd.

(2013). Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions, and Debates. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T., Simmons, B. A. *Handbook of International Relations*, SAGE Publications Ltd.

Adler-Nissen, R. (2014). Symbolic power in European diplomacy: the struggle between national foreign services and the EU's External Action Service. *Review of International Studies* 40(4):657-681. doi:10.1017/S0260210513000326

Aggestam, L. (2008). Introduction: ethical power Europe?. *International Affairs* 84 (1), Pages 1–11, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00685.x

Agnew, J. (1982). Sociologizing the geographical imagination: spatial concepts in the world-system perspective. *Political Geography Quarterly* 1(2), 159-66.

(1994). The territorial trap: The geographical assumptions of international relations theory. *Review of International Political Economy* 1(1): 53-88.

(1997). The dramaturgy of horizons: geographical scale in the 'Reconstruction of Italy' by the new Italian political parties, 1992 – 95. *Political Geography* 16(2):99-121.

Agnew, J., Muscarà, L. (2012). *Making Political Geography, Lanham*, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Airoldi, A. (2008). The European Union and the Arctic: policies and actions. Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen.

Allen, D. (1998). 'Who speaks for Europe?: The Search for an effective and coherent external policy. In Peterson, J., Sjursen, H. (eds.) *A common foreign policy for Europe? Competing visions of the CFSP*, Routledge.

Allen, D., Smith, M. (1990). Western Europe's presence in the contemporary international arena. *Review of International Studies* 16(1): 19-37.

Almén, O., Hsiung, C. W. (2022). China's economic influence in the Arctic region: The Nordic and Russian cases. *Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut* – Swedish Defence Research Agency, Report no: FOI–R--5326—SE.

AMAP (2016). AMAP Assessment 2015: Radioactivity in the Arctic. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Oslo, Norway. vii + 89 pp.

Ansell, C. (2021). Institutionalism. In Riddervold, M., Trondal, J., Newsome, A. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises*. Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51791-5_7

Antonova, A. S. (2016). The rhetoric of "responsible fishing": Notions of human rights and sustainability in the European Union's bilateral fishing agreements with developing states. *Marine Policy* 70, 77–84, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.04.008

Arctic Council (1996). *Ottawa Declaration*.

(1998). *Rules of Procedure*.

(2002). *Barrow Declaration on the occasion of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council*.

(2007). *Final report, SAO meeting in Narvik, Norway, November 28-29 2007*.

(2009a) *Tromsø 2009 Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Speech*.

(2009b) *Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Carl Bildt, at the 6th Session*

of the Arctic Council in Tromsö on 29 April 2009.
(2009c) *The Kingdom of Denmark. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2009-2011*.
(2011a) *Address by Premier of Greenland, Kuupik Kleist on behalf of Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland*.
(2011b) *Presentation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr Carl Bildt, on the Swedish Programme for the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council*.
(2013a). *Vision for the Arctic*.
(2013b). *Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies*.
(2013c) *Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council, 15 May 2013, Kiruna, Sweden. Intervention by the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Villy Søvndal*.
(2013d) *Statement by Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland*.
(2013e) *Speech by Lena Ek, Minister for the Environment*.
(2013f) *Sweden's Chairmanship Programme for the Arctic Council 2011–2013*.
(2015a). *Iqaluit Declaration in the occasion of the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council*.
(2015b) *Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council – 24 April 2015 – Iqaluit Intervention by the Danish Foreign Minister*.
(2015c) *Statement by Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland*.
(2015d) *Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting Iqaluit April 24, 2015. Statement by Sweden*.
(2017a) *Statements from the Kingdom of Denmark at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting*.
(2017b) *Statement by the Foreign Minister of Finland at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting*.
(2017c) *Statement by the Swedish Foreign Minister at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting*.
(2017d) *Finland's Chairmanship Program for the Arctic Council 2017-2019*.
(2019a) *Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark.*
(2019b) *Statement by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of Finland.*
(2019c) *Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.*

(2021a) *Ministers speech - Kingdom of Denmark.*

(2021b) *Ministers speech – Finland.*

(2021c) *Minister's Statement – Sweden.*

Arminio, J. L., Hultgren, F. H. (2002). Breaking out from the shadow: The question of criteria in qualitative research. *Journal of College Student Development*.

Asztalos Morell, I. (2021). Indigenous Gender Justice with a focus on Sámi Reindeer Herding in Sweden. *Juridica Lapponica* 48.

Atkinson, P. A., Coffey, A. J. Atkinson, P., and Coffey, A. (2004). Analysing documentary realities. *Qualitative research*, *3*, 77-92.

(2011). Analysing documentary realities. In Silverman, D. (ed.) *Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, p. 56-75.

Bachmann, V. (2015). Global Europa, ESPON and the EU's regulated spaces of interaction. *Journal of European Integration* 37(6), 685-703.

Barkin, J. S. (2010). *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory*. Cambridge university press.

Basedau, M., and Köllner, P. (2007). Area studies, comparative area studies, and the study of politics: Context, substance, and methodological challenges. *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, *1*, 105-124.

Bazerman, C. (2003). Intertextuality: How texts rely on other texts, in Bazerman, C., Prior, P. *What writing does and how it does it*, Routledge.

Bennett, A., and Elman, C. (2007). Case study methods in the international relations subfield. *Comparative political studies*, *40*(2), 170-195.

Bennett, M. M. (2015). How China sees the Arctic: Reading between extraregional and intraregional narratives. *Geopolitics*, *20*(3), 645-668.

Berkman, P.A. (2023). Statement From The Chair to Preserve The Arctic Council. *High North News*, https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/statement-chair-preserve-arctic-council, last accessed on 3oth January 2024.

Bertrand, P. (2017). European Parliament rejects total ban on Arctic oil drilling. *Euronews*, 17 March, https://www.euronews.com/2017/03/17/eu-parliament-rejects-total-ban-on-arctic-oil-drilling. Accessed on 16 march 2023.

Bessner, D., and Guilhot, N. (2015). How realism Waltzed Off: liberalism and decisionmaking in Kenneth Waltz's neorealism. *International Security*, 40(2), 87-118.

Bituin Eriksson, A. V. (2021). No green future without securing indigenous peoples' rights, 30th July 2021. *Stockholm Environment Institute*, https://www.sei.org/features/no-green-future-without-securing-indigenous-peoples-rights/, last accessed on 30th July 2024.

Björkdahl, A. (2002). Norms in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Reflections. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 15(1), 9-23, doi: 10.1080/09557570220126216.

Bloom, E. T. (1999). Establishment of the Arctic council. *American Journal of International Law*, 93(3), 712-722.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, *9*(2), 27-40.

Brattberg, E., Rhinard, M. (2013). Actorness and effectiveness in international disaster relief: The European Union and United States in comparative perspective. *International Relations* 27(3): 356–374, doi:10.1177/0047117813497298.

Braw, E. (2022). Norway's Russian spy scandal should be a warning to all universities. *Financial Times*, 1st November 2022, https://www.ft.com/content/92d17129-5ece-41fd-812d-c406b16a8831, last accessed on 30th January 2024.

Bretherton, C. and Vogler, J. (1999). *The European Union as a Global Actor* (1st ed.), London: Routledge.

(2006). *The European Union as a Global Actor* (2nd ed.), London: Routledge.

(2013). A global actor past its peak?. *International Relations* 27(3): 375–90, doi:10.1177/0047117813497299.

Brooks, S. G. (1997). Dueling Realisms. *International Organization* 51(3), 445-77.

Brown, R. (1963). *Explanation in social science*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Print.

Bruun, H. H., and Whimster, S. (2012). *Max Weber: Collected Methodological Writings*, London: Routledge.

Brzozowski, A. (2021). Norway's new government unimpressed with EU's Arctic drilling pledge, *Euractiv*, 15 October, https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/norways-new-government-unimpressed-with-eus-arctic-drilling-pledge/. Accessed on 03 August 2023

Buli, N, Solsvik, T., Fenton, S. (2023). Norway wind farms at heart of Sami protest violate human rights, minister says. *Reuters*, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/norway-wind-farms-heart-sami-protest-violate-human-rights-minister-says-2023-03-02/. Last accessed on 3oth January 2024.

Burn, C. R. (1995). Where does the polar night begin?. *Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, *39*(1), 68-74.

Byers, M. (2014). Cold Peace. Arctic Cooperation and Canadian Foreign Policy. In Battarbee, K., Fossum, J. E. (eds.) *The Arctic contested*, Peter Lang, 2014, ISBN: 978-2-87574-206-3.

Busch, A. V. (2023). Role Spillover: Roles' Impacts across Contexts and the EU's Struggle for Arctic Council Observer Status. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *19*(4), orad022.

Börzel (2018). Researching the EU (Studies) into demise?. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25:3, 475-485, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2017.1411385.

Calhoun, C. (2002). *Dictionary of the Social Sciences: Intersubjectivity*. Oxford University Press.

Carbone, M. (2013). Between EU actorness and aid effectiveness: The logics of EU aid to Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Relations* 27(3): 341–355, doi: 10.1177/0047117813497300.

Cardno, C. (2018). Policy Document Analysis: A Practical Educational Leadership Tool and a Qualitative Research Method. *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice* 24(4), 623-640.

Carlsnaes, W. (1992). The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis. *International Studies Quarterly* 36(3), 245-70.

Checkel, J. T. (1998). The constructivist turn in international relations theory. *World Politics* 50(2), 324-48.

(2009). Why comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change. *International Organization* 55(3), 553-588.

Chen, N. (2016). China's First Overseas Land Satellite Receiving Station Put into Operation, Chinese Academy of Science, 16th December 2016, https://english.cas.cn/newsroom/archive/news_archive/nu2016/201612/t20161215_172471.shtml. Last accessed on 30th January 2024.

Chernoff, F. (2009). Defending foundations for International Relations theory. *International Theory* 1(3), 466–477, doi:10.1017/S1752971909990133.

Christiansen, T. (2002). The role of supranational actors in EU treaty reform. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(1), 33-53, DOI: 10.1080/13501760110104163

Christiansen T., Falkner, G., and Jørgensen, K. E. (2002). Theorizing EU treaty reform: beyond diplomacy and bargaining. *Journal of European Public Policy* 9(1), 12-32, DOI: 10.1080/13501760110104154

Chuffart, R., Raspotnik, and A., Stępień, A. (2021). Our common arctic? A more sustainable EU-arctic nexus in light of the European green deal. *The Polar Journal*, 11(2), 284-302, DOI: 10.1080/2154896X.2021.1978757

Cini, M. (2006). The 'State of the Art' in EU Studies: From Politics to Interdisciplinarity (and Back Again?). *Politics*, 26(1), 38-46. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9256.2006.00249.x.

Coffey, L., Kochis, D. (2019). Why the U.S. Should Oppose Observer Status for the European Union in the Arctic Council. *Heritage Foundation*.

Collard-Wexler, S. (2006). Integration Under Anarchy: Neorealism and the European Union. *European Journal of International Relations* 12(3): 397–432.

Conley, H. A., Wall, C. (2021). Hybrid threats in the Arctic: Scenarios and policy options in a vulnerable region. *Hybrid CoE Strategic Analysis*, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats.

Comer, B., Osipova, L., Georgeff, E., and Mao, X. (2020). The international maritime organization's proposed arctic heavy fuel oil ban: Likely impacts and opportunities for improvement, *International Council of Clean Transportation*. White Paper.

Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (2008). *Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Fairbanks, the United States of America, 12-14 August 2008* – Conference Statement, SAO Meeting, 19 - 20 November 2008, Kautokeino, Norway, https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/items/15bac26c-b33d-4168-ab75-4a819b818512

Corbetta, P. (2003). *Social Research. Theory, Methods and Techniques*. London: Sage.

Cornut, J. (2015). Analytic Eclecticism in Practice: A Method for Combining International Relations Theories. *International Studies Perspectives*, 16(1), 50–66, https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12072

Council of Europe (2006). *Recommendation 1776 on seal hunting*. Strasbourg: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Council of the European Union (2008). *Draft Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic region* 16826/08

(2009). *Council conclusions on Arctic issues*, 2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting. Brussels, 8th December 2009.

(2014). *Council conclusions on developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region*, Foreign Affairs Council meeting. Brussels, 12 May 2014.

(2016b). *Council Conclusions on the Arctic*, 10400/16. Brussels, 20 June 2016.

(2019a). *Council conclusions on Oceans and Seas*, 13996/19. Brussels, 19 November 2019

(2019b). *Council conclusions on "Space solutions for a sustainable Arctic" – Adoption*, 13996/19. Brussels, 21 November 2019.

(2019c). *Council Conclusions on the EU Arctic policy*, 14952/19. Brussels, 9 December 2019.

Cowen, D., and Smith, N. (2009). After geopolitics? From the geopolitical social to geoeconomics. *Antipode*, *41*(1), 22-48.

Criekemans, D. (2022). *Geopolitics and International Relations*, Brill: Nijhoff.

da Conceição-Heldt, E., Meunier S. (2014). Speaking with a single voice: internal cohesiveness and external effectiveness of the EU in global governance. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(7), 961-979, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2014.913219

Dalby, S. and O' Tuathail, G. (1998) *Rethinking Geopolitics*. Routledge.

Damro, C., Gstöhl, S., Schunz S. (2018). *The European Union's Evolving External Engagement: Towards New Sectoral Diplomacies?.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Dams, T., van Schaik, L., Stoetman, A. (2020). *Presence before power*. Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Dean, K., Joseph, J., Roberts, J. M., Wight, C. (2006). *Realism, Philosophy and Social Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dessler, D. (1999). Constructivism within a positivist social science. *Review of International Studies*, *25*(1), 123–137. doi:10.1017/S0260210599001230

Dingman, E. (2019). We sometimes say that gender equality is not only right; it's smart, https://www.genderisnotplanb.com/bjoern-lyrvall.

Dixon, M. (2007). *Textbook on International Law*, 6th edition. Oxford University Press.

Dodds, K. (2019). 'Real interest'? Understanding the 2018 agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. *Global Policy*, 10(4), 542-553.

(2013). The Ilulissat Declaration (2008). *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 33(2), p. 45-55, The Johns Hopkins University Press, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26995399.

(2019). *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction* (3rd edition). Oxford University Press.

Dolata, P. (2020). *A Balanced Arctic Policy for the EU*, Policy Department for External Relations Directorate General for External Policies of the Union PE 603.498 - July 2020.

Donaldson, R. H., Donaldson, J. A. (2003). The Arms Trade in Russian–Chinese Relations: Identity, Domestic Politics, and Geopolitical Positioning. *International Studies Quarterly* 47(4):709–732, https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0020-8833.2003.00285.x

Donnelly, J. (2019). Systems, levels, and structural theory: Waltz's theory is not a systemic theory (and why that matters for International Relations today). *European Journal of International Relations*, 25(3), 904-930. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066118820929

Drieskens, E. (2017). Golden or gilded jubilee? A research agenda for actorness. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(10): 1534-1546, doi:10.1080/13501763.2016.1225784.

Dunne, T., Hansen, L., and Wight, C. (2013). The end of International Relations theory?. *European Journal of International Relations*, *19*(3), 405-425. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113495485

Duyck, S. (2015). What Role for the Arctic in the UN Paris Climate Conference (COP-21)?, *Arctic Yearbook* 2015, available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2685638

Elsig, M. (2013). The EU as an effective trade power? Strategic choice of judicial candidates in the context of the World Trade Organization. *International Relations*, *27*(3), 325-340. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813497301

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Iceland 驻冰岛使馆 (2015). *Keynote Speech by Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming at the China Country Session of the*

Third Arctic Circle Assembly, http://is.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zbgx/kjjl/201510/t20151018_3164910.htm, last retrieved on the 20th August 2024.

Empson, L. (2018). Elite interviewing in professional organizations. *Journal of Professions and Organization*, *5*(1), 58-69.

Eriksen, E.O., Fossum, J. E. (2004). Europe in search of legitimacy: strategies of legitimation assessed. *International Political Science Review* 25(4): 435-459.

EurLex, Legal Personality of the Union,
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/legal-personality-of-the-union.html, last retrieved on 1st of May 2023.

European Economic Community (1983). The council directive 83/129/EEC of 28 March 1983 concerning the importation into member states of skins of certain seal pups and products derived therefrom. Official Journal L91, 9.4.1983.

(1985). The council directive 85/444/EEC of 27 September 1985 amending council directive 83/129/EEC concerning the importation into member states of skins of certain seal pups and products derived therefrom. Official Journal L 259, 01.01.1985.

(1989). The council directive 89/370/EEC. Official Journal L 163, 14/06/1989.

(1991). The council regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 of 4 November 1991. Official Journal L 308, 09/11/1991.

(1992). The council directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Official Journal L 206, 22 July 1992.

European Commission (2007a) .Integrated maritime policy – Blue Book Action plan", https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52007SC1278&from=EN

(2007b). Commission staff working document - Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union {COM(2007) 574 final} {COM(2007) 575 final} {SEC(2007) 1279} {SEC(2007) 1280} {SEC(2007) 1283}

(2008a). *Climate change and international security*. Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council.

(2008b). *The European Union and the Arctic Region*, Brussels, COM(2008) 763 final.

(2011). Communication on External Dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy. Brussels, 13.7.2011, COM(2011) 424 final.

(2012). *Developing a European Union policy towards the Arctic Region – Progress since 2008 and next steps*: *joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council*. Publications Office, 2012, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/4310

(2016a). *An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic*. Brussels, 27.4.2016, JOIN(2016) 21 final

(2016b). *Space Strategy for Europe*, Brussels, 26.10.2016 COM(2016) 705 final.

(2016c). Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy.

(2017). *Summary report of the Arctic stakeholder forum consultation to identify key investment priorities in the Arctic and ways to better streamline future EU funding programmes for the region*, Publications Office, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/34903

(2021a). *Summary of the results of the public consultation on the EU Arctic policy*. Publications Office, 2021, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/623044

(2021b). *Joint Communication on a stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic*. Brussels, 13.10.2021, JOIN(2021) 27 final.

(2021c). *Strategic Foresight Report: The EU's capacity and freedom to act*. Secretariat General, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium.

European Parliament (2008). *European Parliament Resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic Governance* P6_TA(2008)0474.

(2011). *A sustainable EU policy for the High North – European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2011 on a sustainable EU policy for the High North* P7_TA(2011)0024.

(2014). *EU strategy for the Arctic – European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 on the EU strategy for the Arctic*, P7_TA(2014)0236.

(2017). *An integrated EU policy for the Arctic – European Parliament resolution of 16 March 2017 on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic*, P8_TA(2017)0093.

(2021*). European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2021 on the Arctic: opportunities, concerns and security challenges*, P9_TA(2021)0413.

European Union (2009). *Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on trade in seal products* (Text with EEA relevance).

Treaty on European Union (Consolidated Version), Treaty of Maastricht, 7 February 1992, Official Journal of the European Communities C 325/5; 24 December 2002 EU (European Union). 2010.

Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 26 October 2012, OJ L. 326/47-326/390; 26.10.2012.

(2015). *Regulation (EU) 2015/1775 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 October 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products and repealing Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010* (Text with EEA relevance).

European Union External Action Service (2020). HR/VP Borrell in India: "Europeans are beginning to realise that we have to learn to talk the language of power", 16th January 2020, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hrvp-borrell-india-%E2%80%9Ceuropeans-are-beginning-realise-we-have-learn-talk-language-power%E2%80%9D_und_en, last accessed on 4th February 2024.

EU Special Envoy for Arctic Matters Clara Ganslandt, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-arctic_en#45734. Last accessed on 30th January 2024.

Finne, A. (2017). Warns against EU proposal about banning oil drilling in the Arctic, *High North News*, 21 February, https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/warns-against-eu-proposal-about-banning-oil-drilling-arctic. Last accessed on 07 July 2023.

Fioretos, O. (2011). Historical Institutionalism in International Relations. *International Organization*, 65(2), pp. 367–399. doi:10.1017/S0020818311000002.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

(2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219–245.

Fossheim, M., Primicerio, R., Johannesen, E., Ingvaldsen, R. B., Aschan, M. M., and Dolgov, A. V. (2015). Recent warming leads to a rapid borealization of fish communities in the Arctic. *Nature climate change*, *5*(7), 673-677.

Fossum, J. E. (2001). Identity-politics in the European Union. *Journal of European Integration* 23(4): 373-406, doi: 10.1080/07036330108429109

Fossum, J. E. (2003). The European Union: In Search of an Identity. *European Journal of Political Theory* 2(3): 319-340.

Fravel, M. T, Lavelle, K., and Odgaard, L. (2021). China engages the Arctic: a great power in a regime complex. *Asian Security*, DOI: 10.1080/14799855.2021.1986008

Friedman, G., and Starr, H., (1997). *Agency, Structure, and International Politics: From Ontology to Political Enquiry*. London: Routledge, Print.

Friedman, L. (2023). Biden Administration Approves Huge Alaska Oil Project. *The New York Times*, 12 March, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/12/climate/biden-willow-arctic-drilling-restrictions.html. Accessed on 16 March 2023.

Friedrichs, J., Kratochwil, F. (2009). On Acting and Knowing: How Pragmatism Can Advance International Relations Research and Methodology. *International Organization* 63(4):701-31, doi:10.1017/S0020818309990142

Fjellestad, M. (2016). Picturing the Arctic, *Polar Geography* 39(4), 228-38, doi: 10.1080/1088937X.2016.11816127.

Gamson, W. A., and Meyer, D. S. (1996). Framing political opportunity. In McAdam, D., McCarthy, J., Zald, M., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, Cambridge University Press.

Garcés de los Fayos, F. (2015). The Outcome of the Ninth Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, At a Glance 05-05-2015, European Parliament – Directorate-Generale for External Policies. European Union

Gautier, D. L., Bird, K. J., Charpentier, R. R., and Grantz, A., *et al*. (2009). Assessment of undiscovered oil and gas in the Arctic. *Science*, *324*(5931), 1175-1179.

Gehring, T., Oberthür, S., and Mühleck, M. (2013). European Union actorness in international institutions: why the EU is recognized as an actor in some international institutions, but not in others. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51(5):849-65, doi:10.1111/jcms.12030.

(2017). The European Union as an inadvertent great power: EU actorness and the Ukraine crisis. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, *55*(4), 727-743.

Gehring, T., and Urbanski, K. (2023). Member-dominated international organisations as actors: a bottom-up theory of corporate agency. *International Theory* 15(1), 129-53.

Giagnorio, M. (2020). Indigenous voices and security in the Russian North: An interview with Kara K. Hodgson, PhD candidate at the Arctic University of Norway. *New Eastern Europe*, 19th May 2020: https://neweasterneurope.eu/2020/05/19/indigenous-voices-and-security-in-the-russian-north/

Gløersen, E. (2022). Research for REGI Committee – Cohesion Policy in Northernmost Regions of the EU. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. Brussels.

Government of Canada (2013). *Global Affairs Canada: Canada stands up for seal products – Belgium and the Netherlands must justify their ban at the WTO*, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/topics-domaines/disp-diff/seal_facts-phoque_info.aspx?lang=en. Last accessed on 30th January 2024.

Groen, L., and Niemann, A. (2013). The European Union at the Copenhagen climate negotiations: A case of contested EU actorness and effectiveness. *International Relations*, *27*(3), 308-324. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813497302

Gstöhl, S. (2020). The Geopolitical Commission: Learning the 'Language of Power'?. *College of Europe Policy Brief,* February 2020.

Gstöhl, S., Schunz, S. (2023). Governing Global Spaces: the roles of the European Union and other major powers. *Journal of European Integration* 45(8), 1234-54.

Guest, G, MacQueen, K. M., and Namey, E. E. (2012). Introduction to applied thematic analysis. *Applied thematic analysis* 3(20),1-21.

Guzzini, S. (2000). A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, *6*(2), 147-82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066100006002001

(2013a). *Power, Realism and Constructivism*, 1st edition, Routledge.

(2013b). The ends of International Relations theory: Stages of reflexivity and modes of theorizing. *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3), 521-41, doi: 10.1177/1354066113494327.

Guilhot, N. (2015). Portrait of the realist as a historian: On anti-whiggism in the history of international relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, *21*(1), 3–26: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113516812

Hagan, C. B. (1942). Geopolitics. *The Journal of Politics 4*(4), 478-90.

Hager, J. (2023). Russia's claim to North Pole territory officially confirmed, *Polar Journal*, 21st February 2023, https://polarjournal.ch/en/2023/02/21/russias-claim-to-north-pole-territory-officially-confirmed/. Last accessed on 30th January 2021.

Hansen, P. E., and Hauksdóttir, G. R. T. (2021). Iceland and Arctic Security: US Dependency and the Search for an Arctic Identity. In Depledge, D., and Lackenbauer, W. (eds), *On thin ice: Perspectives on Arctic Security*, 162-171. Distributed by the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN).

Heininen, L., K. Everett, B. Padrtova, and Reissell, A. (2020). *Arctic Policies and Strategies: Analysis, Synthesis, and Trends*. Laxenburg: International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.

Hermann, T. M., Brunner Alfani, F., Chahine, A. *et al*. (2022). Roadmap to Decolonial Arctic Research: CO-CREATE Comprehensive Policy-Brief to the European Commission, https://phaidra.univie.ac.at/o:1653557

Hettne, B., and Söderbaum, F. (2000). Theorising the Rise of Regionness. *New Political Economy*, 5(3), 457-472, doi: 10.1080/713687778.

Hettne, B. (2005.) Beyond the 'new' regionalism. *New Political Economy* 10(4), 543-571, doi: 10.1080/13563460500344484.

Hoerner, J., Stephenson, P. (2012). Theoretical perspectives on approaches to policy evaluation in the EU: The case of cohesion policy. *Public Administration*, *90*(3), 699-715.

Hoffmann, N., Niemann, A. (2017). EU actorness and the European Neighbourhood Policy. In Schumacher, T., Marchetti, A., & Demmelhuber, T. (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315691244.

Hoffmann, S. (1959). International Relations: The Long Road to Theory. *World Politics* 11, 346–77.

(1977). An American Social Science: International Relations. In Derian, J. (ed.) (1995) *International Theory: Critical Investigations*, Palgrave Macmillan London.

(1982). Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe Today. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21 (1): 21-38, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1982.tb00637.x

Hollis, M. (1977). *Models of man: philosophical thoughts on social action*, Cambridge University Press. Print.

Hollis, M., Smith, S. (1991). *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon. Print

Holzinger, K., Schimmelfennig, F. (2012). Differentiated integration in the European Union: many concepts, sparse theory, few data. *Journal of European Public Policy* 19(2), 292-305, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2012.641747.

Hooghe, L., Marks, G. (2001). *Multi-level governance and European integration*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Hooghe, L., Marks, G. (2019). Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century. *Journal of European Public Policy* 26(8), 1113-1133, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711.

Hossain, K. (2015). The EU ban on the import of seal products and the WTO regulations: neglected human rights of the Arctic indigenous peoples?. *Polar Record* 49(2):154-66. doi:10.1017/S0032247412000174

Hudson, V. M. (2005). Foreign policy analysis: Actor-specific theory and the ground of international relations. *Foreign policy analysis*, 1-30.

Huebert, R. (2009). United States Arctic Policy: the reluctant arctic power. *University of Calgary, The School of Public Policy–University of Calgary Publications Series*, 2(2).

Hulse, M, (2014). Actorness beyond the European Union: Comparing the International Trade Actorness of SADC and ECOWAS. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52(3), 547-565, https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12111

Hunt, W. H., Crane, W. W., and Wahlke, J. C. (1964). Interviewing political elites in cross-cultural comparative research. *American Journal of Sociology*, *70*(1), 59-68.

Hsu, J. (2011). Backdoor Diplomacy: How U.S. Scientists Reach Out to Frenemies, *LiveScience*, 08 April, https://www.livescience.com/13638-science-diplomacy-soft-power.html. Last accessed on 11 July 2023.

Ingimundarson, V. (2014). Managing a contested region: the Arctic Council and the politics of Arctic governance. *The Polar Journal*, 4(1), 183-98, doi: 10.1080/2154896X.2014.913918

Jensen, L. C. (2007). Petroleum discourse in the European Arctic: the Norwegian case. *Polar Record* 43(3):247-254. doi:10.1017/S0032247407006559

Jensen, N. (2023). Norway should push for a global moratorium on deep-sea mining, Financial Times, https://www.ft.com/content/2f19e165-5580-4161-addf-bdaff878e787. Last accessed on 03 August 2023

Jensen, Ø. (2016). The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters: Finalization, Adoption and Law of the Sea Implications. *Arctic Review on Law and Politics 7*(1), 60–82. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48710410

Jenson, J., and Mérand, F. (2010). Sociology, institutionalism and the European Union. *Comparative European Politics 8*, 74-92.

Jepperson, R. L., Wendt, A., Katzenstein, P. J. (1996). Norms, identity, and culture in national security. In Katzenstein, P.J. (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York, N.Y: Columbia University press.

Joseph, J. (2007). Philosophy in International Relations: A Scientific Realist Approach. *Millennium*, 35(2), 345-359. https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298070350021401

(2010). The International as Emergent: Challenging Old and New Orthodoxies in International Relations Theory. In Joseph, J., Wight, C. (eds.) *Scientific Realism and International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230281981_3

(2015). Realism and Neorealism in International Relations Theory, in Gibbons, M. T. *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, first edition, published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. DOI: 10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0864

Jonsen, K., and Jehn, K. A. (2009). Using triangulation to validate themes in qualitative studies, *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 4(2),

Jouhier, S. (2024). The European Union's Capacity to Act in the Arctic: Charting Degrees of EU Actorness in the European and Circumpolar Territories, *EU Diplomacy Papers 2/2024*.

Jupille, J. and Caporaso, J.A. (1998). States, agency and rules: the European Union in global environmental politics, in Rhodes, C. (ed.), *The European Union in the World Community*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner: 213–229.

Jupille, J., Caporaso, J. A., Checkel, J. T. (2003). "Integrating Institutions: Rationalism, Constructivism, and the Study of the European Union.", *Comparative Political Studies* 36, (1–2), 7–40, doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414002239370.

Jørgensen, K. E. (2004). Theorising the European Union's foreign policy. In Tonra, B., and Christiansen, T. (eds.) *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester; Manchester University Press.

Kaddous, C. (2008). Role and position of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the Lisbon Treaty, In Griller, S., Ziller, J. (eds.) *The Lisbon Treaty. Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Europaforschung* (ECSA Austria) / European Community Studies Association of Austria Publication Series, vol. 11. Springer, Vienna, p. 205-21, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-211-09429-7_8

Kaltofen, C. Acuto, M. (2018). Science Diplomacy: Introduction to a Boundary Problem. *Global Policy* 9, 8-14.

Kassimeris, C., (2009). The foreign policy of small powers. *International Politics* 46, 84-101.

Kauppi, N. (2010). The political ontology of European integration. *Comparative European Politics*, 8(1): 19-36.

Keating, D. (2021). Von der Leyen's Not-So-Geopolitical Commission, *Internationale Politik Quarterly,* https://ip-quarterly.com/en/von-der-leyens-not-so-geopolitical-commission. Last accessed on 31st January 2024.

Keil, K. (2014). The Arctic: A new region of conflict? The case of oil and gas. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 49(2), 162-90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713482555

Kelly, D. (2023). Norway and EU Clash Over Arctic Oil and Gas, *Energy Intelligence*, 26 January, https://www.energyintel.com/00000185-ef67-dcb8-a59f-ffe79f440000. Last accessed on 03 August 2023.

Kelly, P., A. (2006). Critique of Critical Geopolitics, *Geopolitics* 11(1), 24-53, doi.org/10.1080/14650040500524053

Kenealy, D., and Kostagiannis, K. (2013). Realist Visions of European Union: E.H. Carr and Integration. *Millennium*, *41*(2), 221-246. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829812464571

Kleine, M., Pollack, M. (2018). Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Its Critics. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(7): 1493–1509.

Klose, S. (2018). Theorizing the EU's actorness: Towards an interactionist role theory framework. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(5), 1144–1160.

Knecht, S., Keil, K. (2013). Arctic geopolitics revisited: spatialising governance in the circumpolar North. *The Polar Journal*, 3:1, 178-203, DOI: 10.1080/2154896X.2013.783276

Knight, J. (1992). *Institutions and Social Conflict*. Cambridge University Press. Print.

Koch, M. (2009). 'Autonomization of IGOs'. *International Political Sociology* 3(4), 431–48.

Koivurova, T. (2010). Sovereign States and Self-Determining Peoples: Carving Out a Place for Transnational Indigenous Peoples in a World of Sovereign States. *International Community Law Review*, *12*(2), 191-212. https://doi.org/10.1163/187197310X498598

Koivurova, T., Kokko, K., Duyck, S., Sellheim, N. and Stępień, A. (2010). EU Competencies Affecting the Arctic. EP/EXPO/B/AFET/FWC/200901/LOT2/04. Brussels: Directorate- General for External Policies, European Parliament. Available at: www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2010/433793/EXPO-AFET_ET(2010)433793_EN.pdf.
(2012). The present and future competence of the European Union in the Arctic. *Polar Record* 48(4), 361–371.

Koivurova, T., Kopra, S., Lanteigne, M., Nojonen, M., Śmieszek, M., and Stępień, A. (2020). China's Arctic Policy. In T. Koivurova, and S. Kopra (eds.), *Chinese*

Policy and Presence in the Arctic (pp. 25-41). Brill Nijhoff. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004408425_004

Kowert, P. and Legro, J. (1996). Norms, identities, and their limits: a theoretical reprise. In Katzenstein, P.J. (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York, N.Y: Columbia University press.

Krasner, S. D. (1982). Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables. *International organization 36*(2), 185-205.

Kratochwil, F. (2008). Constructivism: what it is (not) and how it matters. In della Porta, D. and Keating, M. (eds.) *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences, a pluralist perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 80-98.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago press.

Kuldkepp, M., Marklund, C. (2015). Norden beyond Norden–region-work in the margins. *Ajalooline Ajakiri. The Estonian Historical Journal*, (3).

Lake, D. A. (2013). Theory is dead, long live theory: The end of the Great Debates and the rise of eclecticism in International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, *19*(3), 567-587. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113494330

Lambach, D. (2022). Space, scale, and global politics: Towards a critical approach to space in international relations. *Review of International Studies*. 2022;48(2):282-300. doi:10.1017/S026021052100036X

Larsen, H. (2004). Discourse analysis in the study of European foreign policy. In Tonra, B., and Christiansen, T. (eds.) *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester; Manchester University Press.

Lemke, D. (2008). Power Politics and Wars without States. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4), 774-786. Retrieved June 25, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25193849.

Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lidström, J. (2018). *Umeå – a part of the Arctic*, 2nd July 2018, https://www.umu.se/en/feature/umea-counts-as-the-arctic/. Last accessed on 31st January 2024.

Lipponen, P. (2015). *A Strategic Vision for the North*: *Finland's prospects for economic growth in the Arctic region*. Confederation of Finnish Industries.

Ludlow N.P. (2010). History Aplenty: But Still Too Isolated. In Egan M., Nugent N., Paterson W.E. (eds.) *Research Agendas in EU Studies*, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, London: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230279445_2

Lütz, S., Leeg, T., Daniel, O., and Woyames Dreher, V. (2021). *The European Union As a Global Actor: Trade, Finance and Climate Policy.* Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.

Luukkonen, J. (2015). Planning in Europe for 'EU'rope: Spatial planning as a political technology of territory. *Planning Theory*, 14(2), 174-94, https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213519355.

Macaj, G., Nicolaïdis, K. (2014) Beyond 'one voice'? Global Europe's engagement with its own diversity, *Journal of European Public Policy* 21(7), 1067-83, doi:10.1080713501763.2014.912148

Marland, A., and Esselment, A. L. (2019). Negotiating with gatekeepers to get interviews with politicians: Qualitative research recruitment in a digital media environment. *Qualitative Research*, *19*(6), 685-702.

Marsili, M. (2022). Arctic Security: A Global Challenge. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 26(2), 139-158. https://doi.org/10.1177/09735984221120299.

Maurer, H., Whitman, R. G., and Wright, N., (2023) The EU and the invasion of Ukraine: a collective responsibility to act?. *International Affairs* 99(1), 219–38, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiac262

McGwin, K. (2017). Norwegian groups make a last-minute lobbying effort to EU legislators on Arctic oil drilling, *Arctic Today*, 13

March, https://www.arctictoday.com/norway-makes-a-last-minute-lobbying-effort-to-get-the-european-parliament-to-drop-a-proposed-objection-to-arctic-oil-drilling/. Last accessed on 16 March 2023.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (1990). Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. *International Security*, *15*(1), 5–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981

Mearsheimer, J. J., Walt, S. (2013). Leaving theory behind: Why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3), 427–457, doi:10.1177/1354066113494320.

Meibauer, G. (2023). Neorealism, neoclassical realism and the problem (s) of history. *International Relations*, *37*(2), 348-369.

Mikecz, R. (2012). Interviewing elites: Addressing methodological issues. *Qualitative inquiry*, *18*(6), 482-493.

Miller, R. (2018). *Transforming the future: anticipation in the 21st century*. Routledge.

Milliken, J. (1999). The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods. *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2), p. 225–54.

(2001). Discourse Study: Bringing Rigor to Critical Theory. In Fierke, K. M., Jørgensen, K. Erik. (eds.) *Constructing international relations: the next generation*. Sharpe.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (2011) *Speech by Under-Secretary of State Laajava at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk*. https://um.fi/speeches/-/asset_publisher/up7ecZeXFRAS/content/alivaltiosihteeri-laajavan-puhe-arktisen-neuvoston-ministerikokouksessa-nuukissa. Last retrieved on 11th September 2024.

Molenaar, E.J., Koivurova, T., Tedsen, E., Reid, A., and Hossain, K. (2014). Introduction to the Arctic. In Tedsen, E., Cavalieri, S., Kraemer, R. (eds.) *Arctic*

Marine Governance, Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-38595-7_1

Monteiro, N. P., and Ruby, K. G (2009a). IR and the false promise of philosophical foundations. *International Theory* 1(1), 15-48. doi:10.1017/S1752971909000050 (2009b.) The promise of foundational prudence: a response to our critics. *International Theory* 1(3), 499–512, doi:10.1017/S1752971909990236

Moravcsik, A. (1997). Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics, International Organization 51(4): 513-553, stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2703498.
(1999a). A New Statecraft? Supranational Entrepreneurs and International Cooperation. *International Organization* 53(2): 267–306.
(1999b). 'Is something rotten in the state of Denmark?' Constructivism and European integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6(4): 669-681.
(2003) Theory synthesis in international relations: real not metaphysical. *International Studies Review*, *5*(1), 131-136.
(2018). Preferences, Power and Institutions in 21st-century Europe. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(7): 1648–1674, doi: 10.1111/jcms.12804.

Morell, I. A. (2021). Indigenous Gender Justice with a Focus on Sámi Reindeer Herding in Sweden, *Lauda*, https://lauda.ulapland.fi/handle/10024/64607

Morin, J. F., and Paquin, J. (2018). *Foreign Policy Analysis A Toolbox*. 1st edition. Springer International Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61003-0.

Most, B. A., and Starr, H. (2015). *Inquiry, Logics, and International Politics*. University of South Carolina.

Müller, P., Pomorska, K. and Tonra, B. (2021). 'The Domestic Challenge to EU Foreign Policy-Making: From Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation?'. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(5), pp. 519–534. doi: 10.1080/07036337.2021.1927015.

Neal, S., and McLaughlin, E. (2009). Researching up? Interviews, emotionality and policy-making elites. *Journal of Social Policy*, *38*(4), 689-707.

National Snow and Ice Data Centre (2022). Lingering open water areas, *Arctic Sea Ice News & Analysis*, 5th December 2022, https://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/2022/. Last accessed on 31st January 2024.

Nengye L., Elizabeth, K., and Henriksen, T. (2017). *The European Union and the Arctic*, Leiden: Brill

Niemann, A., Mak, J. (2010). (How) do norms guide Presidency behaviour in EU negotiations?. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *17*(5), 727–742. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501761003748732

Niemann, A., and Huigens, J. (2011). The European Union's role in the G8: a principal–agent perspective, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18(3):420-442, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2011.551080.

Niemann, A., Bretherton. C. (2013). EU external policy at the crossroads: The challenge of actorness and effectiveness. *International Relations* 27(3), 261–275, doi: 10.1177/0047117813497306.

Nilsson, A., Christensen, M. (2019). *Arctic Geopolitics, Media and Power*. Routledge, London, DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429199646

Nitoiu, C., and Sus, M. (2019). Introduction: The rise of geopolitics in the EU's approach in its eastern neighbourhood. *Geopolitics*, *24*(1), 1-19.

Nord, D. C. (2016). *The Changing Arctic: Creating a Framework for Consensus Building and Governance within the Arctic Council*. Palgrave Macmillan US.

Normann, S. (2021). Green Colonialism in the Nordic Context: Exploring Southern Saami Representations of Wind Energy Development. *Journal of Community Psychology* 49(1), 77-94.

Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum (2009). *Final Statement*.

Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (2012). *Position on the legislative package of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020*.

(2019). *Position on EU Arctic policy for the EU Arctic Forum in Umeå*, NSPA Steering Committee. 2 October 2019.

(2020). *Position on 2020 Public Consultation on the EU Arctic Policy*, NSPA Steering Committee, 1 October 2020.

Offerdal, K. (2011). The EU in the Arctic: In pursuit of legitimacy and influence. *International Journal* 66(4): 861-877, doi: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23104398.

Office of the Prime Minister of Finland (2010). *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2010*.
(2013). *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013*, Government resolution on 23rd August 2013.
(2015). *Growth from the North How can Norway, Sweden and Finland achieve sustainable growth in the Scandinavian Arctic?*
(2017). *Action plan for the update of the Arctic Strategy*.
(2021). *Finland's Strategy for Arctic Policy*.

Ó Tuathail, G., Agnew, J. (1992). Geopolitics and discourse: practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy. *Political geography* 11(2), 190-204.

O' Tuathail, G., Dalby, S., and Routledge, P. (1998). The geopolitics reader. Routledge.

Paasi, A. (2003). Territory, in Agnew, J. A., Mitchell, Katharyne, and Ó Tuathail, G. (eds.). *A Companion to Political Geography* 109–22. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Parsons, C. (2010). How – and how much – are sociological approaches to the EU distinctive?. *Comparative European Politics* 8(1): 143-159.
(2015). Before eclecticism: competing alternatives in constructivist research. *International Theory* 7(3), 501–538, doi:10.1017/S1752971915000135.
(2016). Ideas and power: four intersections and how to show them. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(3), 446-463, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2015.1115538.
(2018). Constructivism and Interpretive Theory. In Lowndes, V., Marsh, D., Stoker, G. (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Palgrave.

Paul, M. (2021). A New Arctic Strategy for the EU: Maritime Security and Geopolitical Signalling, SWP Comment 2021/C 17. *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, doi:10.18449/2021C17.

Penrose, J. (2002). Nations, states and homelands: territory and territoriality in nationalist thought. *Nations and Nationalism* 8 (3): 277-297.

Paterson, W. E., Nugent, N., Egan, M. (2010). Hastening Slowly: European Union Studies — Between Reinvention and Continuing Fragmentation In Egan M., Nugent N., and Paterson W.E. (eds.) *Research Agendas in EU Studies*, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, London: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230279445_2

Peterson, J., Sjursen, H. (1998). *A common foreign policy for Europe? Competing visions of the CFSP*. Routledge.

Peterson, J. (2001). The choice for EU theorists: Establishing a common framework for analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 39: 289-318. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00578.

Phelan, W. (2012). What is sui generis about the European Union? Costly international cooperation in a self-contained regime. *International Studies Review* 14, 367–385.

Pieper, M., Winter, M., and Wirtz, A. (2011). The European Union as an Actor in Arctic Governance, *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16(2):227-242.

Piskunova, E. (2010). Russia in the Arctic: What's lurking behind the flag?. *International Journal*, *65*(4), 851-64.

Pollack, M. (1997a). 'The Commission as an Agent'. In Nugent, N. (ed.) *At the Heart of the Union. Studies of the European Commission*, Basingstoke: Macmillan
(1997b). Delegation, agency, and agenda setting in the European Community. *International Organization* 51(1),99-134. doi:10.1162/002081897550311
(2015). Theorizing EU Policy-Making. In Wallace, H., Pollack M. A., Young, A. (eds.), Policy-Making in the European Union, 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prys-Hansen, Burilkov, A., and Kolmaš, M. (2023). Regional powers and the politics of scale, *International Politics*, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-023-00462-8

Ragin, C. C., and Becker, H. S. (1992). *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge university press.

Raspotnik, A., Stephen, K. (2012). Further Steps Towards a Comprehensive EU Arctic Policy: Is the EU Getting There?. *The Arctic Institute*, https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/comprehensive-eu-arctic-policy/, last accessed on 31st January 2024.

Raspotnik, A., Stępień, A. (2017). The European Parliament Heading towards Icy Waters – Again, *ArCticles*, 10 April 2017.
(2020). The European Union and the Arctic: A Decade into Finding Its Arcticness. In J. Weber (ed.), *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: The High North Between Cooperation and Confrontation* (p. 131–146), Cham: Springer.

Raspotnik, A. (2016). The European Union and its Northern frontier: European geopolitics and its Arctic context, Doctoral Dissertation, Universität zu Köln.
(2018). *The European Union and the Geopolitics of the Arctic*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Raspotnik, A., Østhagen, A. (2021). What about the Arctic? The European Union's Geopolitical Quest for Northern Space, *Geopolitics*, 26:4, 1150-1174, DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2019.1670643

Rathbun, B. (2008). A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism, *Security Studies*, 17:2, 294-321, DOI: 10.1080/09636410802098917

Reinke de Buitrago, S. (2020). China's Aspirations as a "Near Arctic State": Growing Stakeholder or Growing Risk?, in Weber, J. (ed.) *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: The High North Between Cooperation and Confrontation*, Springer Cham.

Rhinard, M., Sjöstedt, G. (2019). The EU as a Global Actor: A new conceptualisation four decades after 'actorness'. *The Swedish Institute of International Affairs*, UI Paper No. 6.

Riddervold, M., Mai'a, K. (2019). Reactive power EU: Russian aggression and the development of an EU Arctic policy. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, *24*(1)

Ripsman, N. (2017). Neoclassical Realism. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies.* Retrieved on 21st August 2024, from https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-36

Risse, T., Wiener, A. (1999). "Something rotten" and the social construction of social constructivism: a comment on comments. *Journal of European Public Policy* 6(5): 775-782.

Rivas, J. (2010). Realism. for Real this Time: Scientific Realism is not a Compromise between Positivism and Interpretivism. In Joseph, J., Wight, C. (eds.) *Scientific Realism and International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230281981_12

Rosamond, B. (2007). European integration and the social science of EU studies: the disciplinary politics of a subfield, *International Affairs* 83: 1, 231–252.

Rowe, E. (2018). The European Union and the Geopolitics of the Arctic. Andreas Raspotnik. 2018, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. 240, *Polar Recor*d 54(4): 301-302.

Rösch, F. (2013). Realism as social criticism: The thinking partnership of Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau. *International Politics* 50**,** 815–829: https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2013.32

Ruffini, P. B. (2017). *Science and Diplomacy: A New Dimension of International Relations*. Springer Cham

Sakharov A. (2018). Shift in the United States Climate Policy and the Arctic Council Agenda. *International Organisations Research Journal* 13(1), p. 66–79. (In Russian and English.) doi: 10.17323/1996-7845-2018-01-04

Saurugger, S., Mérand, F. (2010). Does European integration theory need sociology?. *Comparative European Politics*, 8(1): 1-18, doi.org/10.1057/cep.2010.1

Saurugger, S. (2013). Constructivism and public policy approaches in the EU: from ideas to power games. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(6): 888-906, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2013.781826.

Schatz, V. J., Proelss, A., and Liu, N. (2019). The 2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean: A Critical Analysis. *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, *34*(2), 195-244. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718085-23342015

Schimmelfennig, F (2012). Constructivist perspectives. In Jones, E., Menon, A., Weatherill, S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Print.

(2018a). Liberal Intergovernmentalism and the Crises of the European Union, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(7): 1578–1594, doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12789

(2018b). European integration (theory) in times of crisis. A comparison of the euro and Schengen crises, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(7), 969-989, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2017.1421252

Schmidt, B. C. (2002). On the History and Historiography of International Relations. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T. and Simmons, B. A. (2002) *Handbook of International Relations.* London: Sage.

(2013). On the History and Historiography of International Relations. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T., Simmons, B. A. *Handbook of International Relations*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Schmidt, V. A. (2016). The New EU Governance: New Intergovernmentalism, New Supranationalism, and New Parliamentarism. IAI Working Papers 16 – 11 May 2016.

(2018). Rethinking EU Governance: From 'Old' to 'New' Approaches to Who Steers Integration, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(7), 1544-1561, https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12783

Schmidt, B. C., and Wight, C. (2023). Rationalism and the "rational actor assumption" in realist international relations theory. *Journal of International Political Theory*, *19*(2), 158-182.

Schmitter, P. C. (2009). The Nature and Future of Comparative Politics. *European Political Science Review* 1(1), 33–61. doi:10.1017/S1755773909000010.

Schunz, S., Damro, C. (2020). Expanding actorness to explain EU external engagement in originally internal policy areas. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(1):122-140, doi: 10.1080/13501763.2018.1561742.

Schunz, S., De Botselier, B., and López Piqueres, S. (2021). The European Union's Arctic policy discourse: green by omission, *Environmental Politics*, 30(4), 579-599, doi: 10.1080/09644016.2020.1787041.

Scott, D. (2012). US Strategy in the Pacific – Geopolitical Positioning for the Twenty-First Century. *Geopolitics*, 17(3), 607-628, doi: 10.1080/14650045.2011.631200

Scott, J. (2002). Baltic Sea regionalism, EU geopolitics and symbolic geographies of co-operation. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33(2), 137-155, doi:10.1080/01629770200000021.

Second Line of Defense (2017). Exercise Aurora 17: Sweden Focuses on Deterrence, 30th September 2017, https://sldinfo.com/2017/09/exercise-aurora-17-sweden-focuses-on-deterrence/. Last accessed on 30th January 2024.

Sedelmeier, U. (2004). Collective Identity. In Carlsnaes, W., Sjursen, H., White, B. (eds.), *Contemporary European Foreign Policy*, SAGE Publications.

Sellheim N. (2015). The goals of the EU seal products trade regulation: from effectiveness to consequence. *Polar Record* 51(3):274-89. doi:10.1017/S0032247414000023

Shadian, J. M. (2017). Reimagining Political Space: The Limits of Arctic Indigenous Self-Determination in International Governance?. In Keil, K., Knecht, S. (eds.) *Governing Arctic Change*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-50884-3_3

Shapcott, R. (2004). IR as Practical Philosophy: Defining a 'Classical Approach'. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *6*(3), 271–291. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2004.00140.x

Sil, R. (2009). “Simplifying pragmatism: From social theory to problem-driven eclecticism,” *International Studies Review* 11(3), 648–652.

Simón, L. (2017). Neorealism, Security Cooperation, and Europe's Relative Gains Dilemma. *Security Studies*, 26:2, 185-212.

Simons, G., Manoylo, A., and Trunov, P. (2019). Sweden and the NATO debate: views from Sweden and Russia. *Global Affairs*, 5(4-5), 335-45, DOI: 10.1080/23340460.2019.1681014

Sjöstedt, G. (1977). *The External Role of the European Community*. Westmead UK: Saxon House.

Smieszek, M. (2019). Evaluating institutional effectiveness: the case of the Arctic Council, *The Polar Journal*, doi: 10.1080/2154896X.2019.1618554

Smith, S. (1986). Theories of Foreign Policy: An Historical Overview. *Review of International Studies* 12(1), p. 13- 29, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097063

(1999). Social constructivism and European studies: a reflectivist critique. *Journal of European Public Policy* 6(4): 682-691.

(2000). International Theory and European integration, 33-56. In Kelstrup, M. and Williams., M.C (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community*. London: Routledge.

Smith, K. E. (2010). The European Union in the World: Future Research Agendas. In Egan M., Nugent N., Paterson W.E. (eds.) Research Agendas in EU Studies, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. Palgrave Macmillan. London: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230279445_2

Soetendorp, B. (1999). *Foreign policy in the European Union: theory, history and practice*. Longman.

Spectre, M. (2023). Apostates from Realism: Harold and Margaret Sprout, Princeton, and Geopolitics: 1931–1965. *Global Studies Quarterly* 2, 1-12.

Sprout, H., Sprout, M. (1931). Political Geography as a Political Science Field. *American Political Science Review* 25 (2): 439–42

(1957). Environmental Factors in the Study of International Politics. *Conflict Resolution* 1 (4): 309–28.

Staalesen, A. (2022). Two years after huge Arctic spill, river water in Norilsk is still red from diesel fuel". The Barents Observer, https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/2022/06/two-years-after-huge-arctic-spill-river-water-norilsk-still-red-diesel-fuel. Last retrieved on 19th December 2022

Starr, H. (2013). On Geopolitics: Spaces and Places. *International Studies Quarterl*y 57, 433–439

Steele, B. J. (2007). Liberal-Idealism: A Constructivist Critique. *International Studies Review* 9, 23–52, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2486.2007.00644.x

Stępień, A. (2015). Internal Contradictions and External Anxieties: One 'Coherent' Arctic Policy for the European Union?. *The Yearbook of Polar Law Online*, *7*(1), 249-289. https://doi.org/10.1163/2211-6427_011

Stępień, A., Raspotnik, A. (2016). *The EU's new Arctic Communication: not-so-integrated, not-so-disappointing?.* ArCticles.
(2021). Continuity with Great Confidence: The European Union's 2021 Arctic Policy Update, *The Arctic Institute*.

Swedish Ministry of the Environment and Energy (2016). *New Swedish environmental policy for the Arctic.*

Swedish Ministry of Defence (2020). Main elements of the Government bill *Totalförsvaret* 2021–2025-Total defence 2021–2025 (English version)
(2022). *Deterioration of the security environment – implications for Sweden*.

Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011). *Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region*.
(2018). *Handbook: Sweden's feminist foreign policy*.
(2020). *Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region*.

Sörlin, S. (2014). The reluctant Arctic citizen: Sweden and the North. In Powell, C. R. and Dodds, K. (eds.) *Polar Geopolitics? Knowledges, Resources and Legal Regimes*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Tarsney, C. (2023). The epistemic challenge to longtermism. *Synthese*, *201*(6), 195.

The Arctic Centre. “What and Where is the Arctic?”, https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion, last retrieved on 19th December 2022.

The Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands (2011). *Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020.*

The Saami Council (2017). *The Sámi Arctic Strategy: Securing enduring influence for the Sámi people in the Arctic through partnerships, education and advocacy*.
(2022). *Váhtjer Declaration*.

The State Council of the People’s Republic of China (2018). *China’s Arctic Policy*, https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm, last retrieved on 20th August 2024.

The White House. *Remarks by President Obama at the First Session of COP21*, Office of the Press Secretary, 30th November 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/30/remarks-president-obama-first-session-cop21, last accessed on 31st January 2024.

Thomas, D. C. Thomas, D.C. (2011). Explaining EU Foreign Policy: Normative Institutionalism and Alternative Approaches. In: Thomas, D.C. (eds) *Making EU Foreign Policy*. Palgrave Studies in International Relations Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230307360_2
(2012). Still Punching below Its Weight? Coherence and Effectiveness in European Union Foreign Policy. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 50(3): 457-74, doi:0.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02244.x.
(2021). ‘The Return of Intergovernmentalism? De-Europeanisation and EU Foreign Policy Decision-making’. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(5), pp. 619–635. doi: 10.1080/07036337.2021.1927013.

Thomas, G. (2011a). A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *17*(6), 511-521. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411409884

(2011b). The case: generalisation, theory and phronesis in case study. *Oxford Review of Education* 37(1), 21-35, DOI: 10.1080/03054985.2010.521622

Tobin, G. A., Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48: 388-396. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x

Toivanen, R. (2022). Protecting indigenous identities? An example of cultural expertise on Sámi identity. *Legal pluralism and critical social analysis* 54(2-3), 210-230.

Toje, A. (2008) The European Union as a Small Power, or Conceptualizing Europe’s Strategic Actorness. *Journal of European Integration*, 30:2, 199-215, DOI: 10.1080/07036330802005425

Toje, A., and Kunz, B. (2012*). Neoclassical Realism in European Politics: Bringing Power Back In*. Manchester University Press.

Tonra, B., and Christiansen, T. (2004). The study of EU foreign policy: between international relations and European studies. In Tonra, B., and Christiansen, T. (eds.) *Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy*, Manchester. Manchester University Press.

Triollet, R., JRC Annual Report 2021, Foreman, A., Barry, G., Alvarez Martinez, A.F. and Mondello, S. editor(s), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-51231-8, doi:10.2760/53296, JRC128620.

Turner, S. P., and Regis A. F. (1981). Objective Possibility and Adequate Causation in Weber’s Methodological Writings. *The Sociological Review* 29(1), 5–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1981.tb03019.x.

United Nations General Assembly (1982). *Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

Valenza, D. (2021). The Trap of Geopolitics: Rethinking EU Strategic Communication. *College of Europe Policy Brief*, March 2021.

Verdun, A. (2003). An American/European divide in European integration studies: bridging the gap with international political economy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10(1), 84-101, DOI: 10.1080/1350176032000046958.

Viotti, P. R., and Kauppi, M. V. (2000). International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond, 3rd ed.. Allyn and Bacon.

Von der Leyen, U. (2019a). *Speech in the European Parliament Plenary Session*, Brussels.
(2019b). *Mission letter to Maroš Šefčovič*, Brussels, 10 September 2019.

Väätänen, V., Zimmerbauer, K. (2020). Territory–network interplay in the co-constitution of the Arctic and 'to-be' Arctic states. *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 8(3), 372-389, doi: 10.1080/21622671.2018.1559759

Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill.

Warleigh-Lack, A. (2006). Towards a conceptual framework for regionalisation: Bridging 'new regionalism' and 'integration theory'. *Review of International Political Economy*, 13:5, 750-771, DOI: 10.1080/09692290600950639.

Warleigh-Lack, A., Van Langenhove, L. (2010). Rethinking EU Studies: The Contribution of Comparative Regionalism. *Journal of European Integration*, 32(6), 541-562, doi: 10.1080/07036337.2010.518715.

Weber, M. and Rossi, P. (1958). *Il metodo delle scienze storico-sociali*, Einaudi.

Weber, S., Romanyshyn, I. (2011). Breaking the ice: The European Union and the Arctic, *International Journal* 66(4): 849-860.

Wegge, N. (2012). The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making. *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, 3(1) p. 6-29, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48710161
(2015). The European Union's Arctic policy. In Jensen, L. C., and Hønneland, G. (eds) *Handbook of the Politics of the Arctic*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. available from: https://doi.org/10.4337/9780857934741

Welch, C., Marschan-Piekkari, R., Penttinen, H., Tahvanainen, M. (2002). Corporate elites as informants in qualitative international business research. *International business review*, *11*(5), 611-628.

Wendt, A. (1987). The Agent–Structure Problem in International Relations Theory. *International Organization* 41, 335–70.

(1991). Bridging the Theory/Meta-Theory Gap in International Relations. *Review of International Studies* 17: 383–92.

(1992). 'Anarchy is what States Make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics'. *International Organization* 46: 391–425.

(1995). Constructing International Politics. *International Security* 19, 71–81.

(1999). Social Theory of International Politics, Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

(2000). On the Via Media: a Response to the Critics. *Review of International Studies* 26: 165-80.

(2004). The state as person in international theory. *Review of International Studies* 30(2), 289-316, DOI: 10.1017/S0260210504006084

(2006). Social Theory as Cartesian Science. In Guzzini, S. and Leander, A. (eds.) *Constructivism and International Relations,* London: Routledge, 181–219.

White, B. (1999). The European Challenge to Foreign Policy Analysis. *European Journal of International Relations*, *5*(1), 37-66. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066199005001002

White, B. (2004). Foreign policy analysis and European foreign policy. In Tonra, B., and Christiansen, T. (eds.) Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy, Manchester; Manchester University Press.

Wight, C. (2004). State agency: social action without human activity? *Review of International Studies* 30(2), 269–280.

Wight, C., Joseph, J. (2010). Scientific Realism and International Relations. In: Joseph, J., Wight, C. (eds.) *Scientific Realism and International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230281981_1

Williams, M. C. (2004). Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics. *International Organization* 58(4): 633-665.

Wind, M. (2000). 'Sovereignty, Anarchy and the Law in Europe: When Legal Norms Turn Into Political Facts'. In Kelstrup, M. and Williams, M. (eds.) *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community*, p. 106–30. London: Routledge.

Wolf, S. (2008). Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, The European Union as Global Actor (2006). *German Law Journal*, 9(2): 211-215.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our Common Future*.

Wunderlich, J.U. (2012). Comparing regional organisations in global multilateral institutions: ASEAN, the EU and the UN. *Asia Eur J* 10, 127–143, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-012-0324-4.

Wæver, O. (1996). The rise and fall of the inter-paradigm debate. In Smith, S., Booth, K., Zaleweski, M. *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge University Press.

(1998). The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations. *International Organization,* 52(4), 687-727. doi:10.1162/002081898550725.

(2000). The EU as a security actor 250-294. In Kelstrup, M. and Williams., M.C (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, and Community*, London: Routledge, 2000.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd edition, Sage Publications.

Young, O. R. (2009). Whither the Arctic? Conflict or cooperation in the circumpolar north, *Polar Record* 45(1): 73–82, doi:10.1017/S0032247408007791.

(2011). If an Arctic Ocean treaty is not the solution, what is the alternative?. *Polar Record* 47(4):327-34. doi:10.1017/S0032247410000677

Zajac, J. (2015). The EU in the Mediterranean: Between its international identity and member states' interests. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 20(1).

Åtland, K. (2008). Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk initiative, and the desecuritization of interstate relations in the Arctic. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *43*(3), 289-311.

Łuszczuk, M. (2015). Inter-Parliamentary Institutions & Arctic Governance. Arctic Yearbook, https://arcticyearbook.com/arctic-yearbook/2015/2015-scholarly-papers/131-inter-parliamentary-institutions-arctic-governance

Østerud, Ø. (1988). Review essay: the uses and abuses of geopolitics. *Journal of Peace Research*, *25*(2), 191-99.

Østhagen, A., (2013). The European Union: an Arctic actor?. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 15(3): 71-92.

Østhagen A. and Raspotnik, A. (2019). Why Is the European Union Challenging Norway Over Snow Crab? Svalbard, Special Interests, and Arctic Governance, *Ocean Development & International Law*, 50(2-3), 190-208, doi: 10.1080/00908320.2019.1582606.

Appendix

Arctic policies and related documents 2008-2015

EU Institution	Document and date of release
European Commission	• Climate change and international security (2008) • **Communication on The European Union and the Arctic Region (2008)**
European Parliament	• Resolution on Arctic Governance (2008) • Resolution on A Sustainable EU Policy for the High North (2011) • Resolution on the EU strategy for the Arctic (2014)
Council of the European Union	• Draft Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic region 16826/08 (2008) • Conclusions on Arctic Issues (2009) • Conclusions on Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region (2014)
European Commission and High Representative of the EU	• **Joint Communication on Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: Progress since 2008 and Next Steps (2012)**

Arctic Member States	Document and date of release
Denmark	• Tromsø 2009 Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Speech • **The Kingdom of Denmark. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2009-2011 (2009)** • **Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011– 2020 (2010)** • Address by Premier of Greenland, Kuupik Kleist on behalf of Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland (2011) • Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council, 15 May 2013, Kiruna, Sweden. Intervention by the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Villy Søvndal. • Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council – Iqaluit Intervention by the Danish Foreign Minister (/2015)

Finland	• Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2010) • Speech by Under-Secretary of State Laajava at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk (2011) • **Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)** • Statement by Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland (2013) • Growth from the North How can Norway, Sweden and Finland achieve sustainable growth in the Scandinavian Arctic? (2015) • Statement by Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland (2015)
Sweden	• Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Carl Bildt, at the 6th Session of the Arctic Council in Tromsö on 29 April 2009. • Presentation by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr Carl Bildt, on the Swedish Programme for the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2011) • **Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region (2011)** • **Sweden's Chairmanship Programme for the Arctic Council 2011–2013 (2011)** • Speech by Lena Ek, Minister for the Environment at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (2013) • Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting Iqaluit – Statement by Sweden (2015)

Arctic policies and related documents 2016-2021

EU Institution	**Document and date of release**
European Commission and High Representative of the EU	• **Joint Communication on An Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic (2016)** • Space Strategy for Europe, Brussels (2016) • Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016) • Summary report of the Arctic stakeholder forum consultation to identify key investment priorities in the Arctic and ways to better streamline future EU funding programmes for the region (2017) • **Joint Communication on A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic (2021)** • Summary of the results of the public consultation on the EU Arctic policy (2021)
Council of the European Union	• Conclusions on the Arctic (2016) • Conclusion on the EU Arctic policy (2019) • Council conclusions on Oceans and Seas (2019) • Council conclusions on "Space solutions for a sustainable Arctic" (2019)
European Parliament	• Resolution on An Integrated EU Policy for the Arctic (2017) • Resolution on the Arctic: opportunities, concerns and security challenges (2021)

Arctic Member States	*Document and date of release*
Denmark	• **Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011– 2020 (2010)** • Statements from the Kingdom of Denmark at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting (2017) • Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark (2019) • Ministers speech - Kingdom of Denmark: Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (2021)

Sweden	• Speech at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA (2017) • Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (2019) • **Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region (2020)** • Minister's Statement – Sweden: Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (2021)
Finland	• Action plan for the update of the Arctic Strategy (2017) • Statement by the Foreign Minister of Finland at the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting (2017) • **Finland's Chairmanship Program for the Arctic Council 2017-2019** • Statement by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of Finland (2019) • **Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2021)** • Ministers speech – Finland: Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting (2021)

Other Arctic-related Documents

External Institutions	**Document and date of release**
Arctic Council	• Barrow Declaration on the occasion of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council (2002) • Final report, SAO meeting in Narvik, Norway (2007)
Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region	• Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (2008)
Northern Sparsely Populated Areas	• Position on the legislative package of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 (2012). • (2019). Position on EU Arctic policy for the EU Arctic Forum in Umeå, NSPA Steering Committee (2019). • (2020). Position on 2020 Public Consultation on the EU Arctic Policy, NSPA Steering Committee, 1 October 2020.
Saami Council	• **The Sámi Arctic Strategy: Securing enduring influence for the Sámi people in the Arctic through partnerships, education and advocacy (2017)** • Váhtjer Declaration (2022)

Anonymised interviews		***Mode***
Held and collected between November 2021 and July 2023		
Interview n°1	Arctic Delegation of the Danish Parliament	Online
Interview n°2	Arctic Delegation of the Danish Parliament	Online
Interview n°3	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Finland	Written
Interview n°4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Finland	Written
Interview n°5	Expert in the European External Action Service	In person
Interview n°6	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Kingdom of Denmark	Online
Interview n°7	Mission of the Faroe Islands to the EU in Brussels	Online