

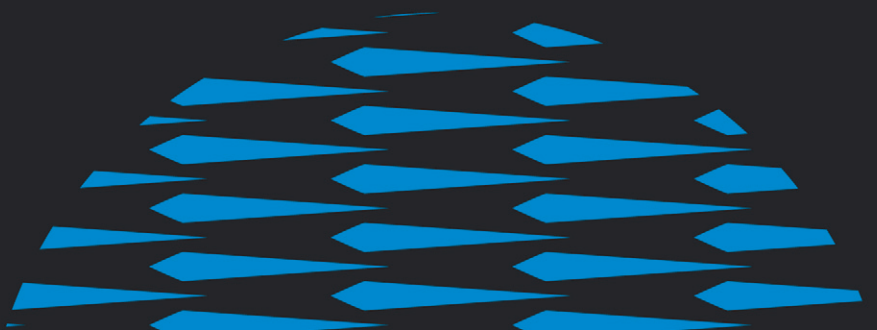


EMERALD POINTS

**POLITICS AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NORTH  
AMERICAN ARCTIC**

Examining the Regional  
Consequences of Climate Change

**ROMAN S. CZARNY  
MAGDALENA TOMALA  
IWONA WROŃSKA**



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Examining the Regional  
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BY

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emerald  
PUBLISHING

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India  
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-717-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-716-6 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-718-0 (Epub)



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment
AEPS	Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy
AGP	Arctic Governance Project
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program
ANFP	Arctic and Northern Policy Framework
CARC	Canadian Arctic Resources Committee
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
CLCS	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
ECS	Extended Continental Shelf
IASC	International Arctic Science Committee
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Conference
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
NWT	Northwest Territories
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
PCIJ	Permanent Court of International Justice
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TFSDU	Task Force on Sustainable Development and Utilization
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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# INTRODUCTION

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.*

*—from Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities*

The quotation from Charles Dickens’ book may best describe the situation of the Arctic today. On the one hand, it has become a crossroads of international politics and the center of attention for the whole world, but on the other, the region is undergoing such profound changes and at such an alarming rate that fairly soon it may be altered forever and beyond repair. It is good to be famous, but it is possibly better to be prominent for all the right reasons.

It may well be true that the Arctic is still a very mythical region, but it has recently certainly come to the forefront of world affairs. The area is going through a very important if not dramatic transformation due to climate changes which always heralded some change of direction for humanity. It is the climate indeed that is the most characteristic feature of the Arctic. The impending global warming, in a way, has brought globalization to the Arctic, which does not serve well the people living there and drastically changed the environment. The region has become famous because of the rapidly changing weather patterns. The Arctic has also served another purpose: it has brought to humanity the awareness of interconnectedness of everything that is occurring on our planet. Changing weather also made other issues very visible to the global community and especially to those in the region or close to it. Solving them seems to require a concerted effort of all interested parties, or possibly the whole world, and it remains to be seen if the damage can be mitigated or reversed at all. The problems include a plethora of concerns which will be discussed throughout this book.

Generally speaking, the new developments require a novel approach, as humanity, at least in the living memory, has not yet faced this kind of issues

being equipped with pertinent knowledge. Historically, the warming period brought people to the Arctic, and the cooling era brought them demise in the region. We all seem to understand that on the one hand, the new forthcoming features provide opportunities, but on the other, they pose serious challenges. As usual, a challenge can be turned into an opportunity, while an opportunity may involve several challenges. Hence, on the principle of dualism, these two notions can be alike at any given time and simply exhibit two different aspects of the same issue, depending on the person who perceives and evaluates them. One could say that they can be agathokakological in nature, i.e. composed of both good and evil. As Baruch or Benedict de Spinoza said,

*One and the same thing can at the same time be good, bad, and indifferent, e.g., music is good to the melancholy, bad to those who mourn, and neither good nor bad to the deaf.*

*(Spinoza, 1677)*

It almost goes without saying that the topic of the Arctic is very current, if not pressing and imperative, as evidenced by the growing interest in the region and the number of publications devoted to it. It seems to be further complicated by a multitude of unpredictable determinants. The Arctic is undoubtedly very complex and multifaceted. Since we have hardly a way of knowing what the future holds, the case of the Arctic has been flooded with a growing body of commentaries, resolutions, predictions, calls to arms, and above all – the promises of unspeakable riches for some.

The state of relations between countries in the Arctic is the result of conflicts, rivalry, or cooperation between them. In the literature of international relations, we can find studies analyzing the course of these phenomena in the Arctic. On the one hand, we can point to works that address issues of cooperation in the Arctic. For example, Y. Hirose emphasizes the importance and need for ecological cooperation, despite the threats in the region, resulting from the possibility of conflict over the region's natural resources, territory, the rights of Indigenous peoples, and international business (2018, p. 38). A similar position is presented by D. Scrivener, who in his article focuses on the period from 1996 to 1998 – as a transition phase in the process of circumpolar Arctic environmental cooperation. He stresses the importance of the eight States forming the Arctic Council (Scrivener, 1999). A. Østhagen, on the other hand, emphasizes cooperation across maritime borders despite the discrepancy between the aspirations and reality of pan-Arctic cooperation (2020). An interesting approach to an Arctic cooperation is presented by O. Young in a document prepared in connection with the Fourth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Rovaniemi from August 27 to 29, 2000. It

points out the key issues for an Arctic cooperation, such as the institutionalization of cooperation on the model of the Antarctic, effective governance in the Arctic, and cooperation with international organizations. In addition, O. Young presents recommendations for the Arctic Council to strengthen and consolidate the activities of this organization (2000). John Higginbotham of the Centre for International Governance Innovation suggests that in order to improve the economic development, the North American Arctic States should start forming alliances. By forming a united front, they will be stronger in attracting private sector (Weber, 2018). On the other hand, research on rivalry and conflict in the Arctic occupies an important place in the literature. Elena Wilson Rowe analyzes this sphere, focusing on the perception of the Arctic in the press media. She draws attention to popular headlines in the press, such as “The Race for the Arctic,” “The New Cold War,” which show this territory as a source of potential conflict (2013). As K. Keil notes, gas and oil play a key role in relations between the five Arctic States, and gaining access to them implies confrontation between Arctic stakeholders (2014, pp. 162–190). In turn, Mikkel Runge Olesen points out that the only possible conflict may emerge between Russia and the West. At the same time, he also recognizes that China, the most influential non-Arctic player, does not currently have sufficient reasons to initiate conflict on a military level (2017, p. 3). It is also interesting to see the Arctic in the literature as a space of competition and an arms race. For example, L. E. Flake highlights the role of Russia as the only non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Arctic riparian state, which undoubtedly has the greatest influence on the possibility of disputes in the region. He draws attention to two of the most serious issues of conflict, namely: the designation of the seabed and the right to navigation (2015).

These publications show the complexity of relations in the Arctic region. Many authors note this dichotomy, usually pointing to the opportunities and dangers arising from mutual relations between state and nonstate actors involved in Arctic affairs. For example, O. Young in his book *Arctic Politics: Conflict and Cooperation in the Circumpolar North* stresses the extreme importance of the region not only for natural scientists but also for the social sciences because of the complex relationships both in the subjective and objective sense (1992, p. X). I. G. Brosnan, on the other hand, has undertaken in his work to study the possibilities of cooperation in the Arctic on the basis of strategic declarations of five Arctic States. He identifies areas that should foster the development of cooperation, such as scientific research, Indigenous peoples’ sovereignty issues, environmental issues, resource development, and maritime transport. Despite these incentives and benefits of Arctic cooperation, he stresses that Arctic conflict is by no means inevitable (Axelrod et al., 2011). According

to O. Young, the biophysical changes taking place in the Arctic are a premise for reassessing the effectiveness of existing arrangements and asking for new forms of Arctic governance. In his article, the author advocates an effective tripartite cooperation set of solutions including an agreement to repeal without expiration, the claims for extended jurisdiction of the continental shelf by littoral states, adaptation of the Arctic Council to meet emerging challenges in the Arctic, and a desire to develop regulatory systems to address the problems associated with shipping, fishing, and offshore oil and gas extraction (2009). The dilemma between cooperation and rivalry is addressed by T. L. Palosaari in the article "The Amazing Race: On resources, conflict, and cooperation in the Arctic." The author shows the factors determining the peaceful development of cooperation in the Arctic which contrast with the Arctic race for resources in the region. He compares the significance and weight of Arctic problems, emphasizing that the international community should focus on solving human and environmental security problems instead of addressing the issue of borders or military capabilities (2012).

An interesting approach is presented by M. Łuszczuk, who in his work *The Evolution of International Roles in the Arctic* indicates the stages of development of the Arctic as an environment of international roles. He proposes to explain the periodization of the development of the Arctic in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries as a regional subsystem of international relations, identifying four stages of the development of the Arctic: the Arctic as a territory of conquest, the Arctic as a space of competition, the Arctic as a sphere of cooperation, and the Arctic as an arena of challenges (Łuszczuk, 2015). The above research shows that international relations in the Arctic can and should be analyzed, taking into account the consecutive stages and current structure, which lead from conquest, through cooperation, to rivalry in the region. Thus, game theories can explain the relations between the subjects (players).

As usual, what is so promising for one may spell disaster for the other. The warming Arctic does not bode well for the traditional way of life of the Natives; the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources together with intensifying maritime traffic on the once pristine seas cannot be good for the environment, and the climate changes seem to be threatening the status quo of the whole planet. In essence, opportunities and challenges are really in the eye of the beholder, to paraphrase the famous saying, and only time will eventually evaluate which category is going to come on top, and for whom. As with all things unknown, there has been much speculation of the possible outcomes of the dynamically developing situation.

The Arctic is a space where one can observe indications of cooperation and conflict. The question can be asked, which option will win? Palosaari et al.

indicate that it is more beneficial for the Arctic States to focus on the environment and population of the region, but Olsen or Flake notice the factors which clearly herald conflict between the players. In this context, the key approach used in this book will be J. Nash's equilibrium theory.

Game theory is one of the basic tools for scientific analysis of social phenomena. John Nash's "prisoner's dilemma" consists of a two-player nonzero sum game in which each player can gain by betraying his opponent, but both will lose if they do betray (see Table 1).

It is worth noting that in this concept the conflict strategy prevails over the peace strategy. Within the prisoner's dilemma, there are four options:

- (1) Cooperation/cooperation ( $-1m - 1m = -2m$ )
- (2) Cooperation/conflict ( $0m - 10m = -10m$ )
- (3) Conflict/cooperation ( $-10m + 0m = -10m$ )
- (4) Conflict/conflict ( $-5m - 5m = -10m$ )

A rational approach, based on obtaining the greatest possible benefits, tells players that they should betray. Only one option out of four provides for Nash's equilibrium. It is a situation in which both players cooperate with each other. An important element that should be emphasized in the context of relations between States is that as a result of cooperation both gain. As M. Wajzer points out,

*In political science it is used in studies of electoral and legislative behavior, in analyses of processes of forming political coalitions and in examining issues related to democratization, national security and armed conflicts.*

(2018, pp. 61–70)

Therefore, this approach will be used in the work in two ways.

Firstly, the theoretical approach will allow for the analysis of Arctic partners' behaviors in subsequent rounds of the "Arctic game." The approach of

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**Table 1. The Payout Matrix in the Prisoner's Dilemma Concept.**

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	B – conflict	B – cooperation
A – conflict	–5; –5	–10; 0
A – cooperation	0; –10	–1; –1

---

Robert Axelrod will be used in this aspect, who invited academics from all over the world to participate in the tournament for computer programs playing the prisoner's dilemma. The obtained programs varied in terms of complexity, initial behavior, reaction to the opponent's action, etc. The results showed that in multiple games, selfish strategies provided on the average very small winnings compared to the more altruistic ones. This is due to the fact that it pays off for the States to work together to find a compromise which satisfies the conflicting parties. On the other hand, a strategy in which one of the players betrays is profitable, but only short-term. One player who deceives his partner in the first round gains an advantage over the other. However, as simulations carried out by R. Axelrod showed, selfish games gave very poor results in subsequent rounds. It will, therefore, be important to show the relations between the Arctic States over time, i.e. since the early 1990s, when we can talk about a new stage of relations between the States in the Arctic not only in the context of their own coalition but also relations with other entities (Axelrod et al., 2011).

Secondly, when analyzing the literature on the subject, one should pay attention to the issues of coalition and division axes in the Arctic. The two-block system, which prevailed in this region since World War II (WWII) until the fall of the Berlin Wall, divided the region into the American and Soviet zones of influence. The symbolic fall of the "Iron Curtain" changed the situation in the region. First of all, we are now dealing with a multilateral system, which allows for various possibilities of cooperation, rivalry, and conflict between state and nonstate actors. Second, multilateralism encourages the establishment of a coalition; hence the various manifestations of the coalition, such as the Arctic Five, the Arctic Eight, non-Arctic States, and others, can be identified in literature. The aim of the analysis will be, first of all, to examine the coalition capabilities of the three North American Arctic entities in terms of cooperation in the field of environment, sustainable development, Indigenous peoples, and others.

A comparative method of analysis will be useful to identify a space of common or divergent interests of the United States, Canada, and Denmark.

As a result of the analysis, it will be possible to point to one of the axioms indicated by John F. Nash, which could be a good arbitration scheme:

- (1) The axiom of rationality – the solution should be found in the negotiation set;
- (2) The axiom of independence – the States hold on to their goals;

- (3) Axiom of symmetry – the symmetrical problem of negotiation should determine the result which does not distinguish between the parties concluding the agreement; this axiom reflects the equal potential and negotiation skills of the players;
- (4) Axiom of independence from unrelated alternatives.

The question can be asked: does rivalry outweigh cooperation in the North American Arctic or is it the other way round? do the entities manage to gain the benefits of cooperation?

One can pose the hypothesis that the States and Arctic actors should cooperate with each other in the light of the prisoner's dilemma of obtaining tangible benefits, but the more probable, and definitely more possible variant of no such cooperation or breaking the cooperation is rivalry, which in the short term gives an advantage over other players, but in the long term causes losses.

The analysis of the behavior of international relations entities in the Arctic will allow comparing the areas of cooperation and rivalry. It will, thus, make it possible to identify the best development strategy for the region.

In our work, we should like to adopt an interdisciplinary approach. As Barry Buzan and Mathias Albert indicate,

*International Relations occupies the middle ground, being comprised of two rather vague terms: international, which at least hints at actors other than the state; and relations which opens the possibility of more than just politics.*

(2017, p. 4)

We would like to emphasize that the nature of the study concentrates on international relations and covers political, economic, and societal aspects of the main players. Thus, it makes an opening for international relations as a multidisciplinary construction through involving state and nonstate actors, including the specific Indigenous population, which is important for building international cooperation in the region.

The structure of the book is based on the parameters of the game theory. Hence, Chapter 1 outlines the arena of the game: The North American Arctic. It starts with describing the geographic features of the Arctic and explains the effects of climate change as a predominant factor that influences growing international attention to the region. It also explains the status of the Arctic within the frame of international law. The North American Arctic experiences similar effects of climate change as the whole Arctic but has distinctive

political, social, and economic features which might determine cooperation or competition.

Chapter 2 captures the leading subnational and national players or decision-making bodies in the North American Arctic and analyzes their powers and policies. The analysis proceeds in two stages. The first stage focuses on subnational governance in Canada, Denmark, and the United States. It attempts to present the value of devolution of power that allocated more responsibilities to subnational governments, thus significantly transforming the governance in the North American Arctic in the last 50 years. The second stage of the analysis pays attention to national strategies and policies developed by the North American Arctic States in the last decade. The two intertwined Canadian strategies of 2009 and 2019, Denmark's 10-years strategy of 2011, and the first presidential strategy of the Barack Obama administration launched in 2013 will be primarily examined.

Chapter 3 indicates in which areas countries are seeking and giving up cooperation. It should also be stressed that the analysis will cover the period from 1990 to 2020, i.e. a period of 30 years in which we will examine how entities behave when one of the parties refuses to cooperate and whether the others still want to cooperate or follow the first entity. Such an approach will allow us to estimate to what extent we are dealing with a stable region and indicate its development possibilities. In addition, it will also allow us to examine whether the same processes are taking place at international level as in the case of individual decisions.

To sum up, it can be emphasized that the study will allow for both subjective (selection of areas of cooperation and competition in the Arctic done by the authors) and objective analysis. The latter will make it possible to identify those entities that seek to achieve their own benefits or those that aim to cooperate across borders.

Although the book draws from many sources, some established scholarly, and some less so, and employs many opinions through quotations – the syntheses, conclusions, and general statements are authors' own, for which we take full responsibility. The authors are aware that this work is far from exhausting the subject because tomorrow may bring a set of completely new issues; neither is it a blog, especially in view of the everyday dynamic developments in the Arctic. Some specialists may find the book lacking in depth, be it experts in international law, meteorologists, or military historians, but the work is addressed to the general audience, educated but not necessarily well-informed, and equipped with notes for students and enthusiasts of the subject.

*As Jerome K. Jerome (Jerome, 2018, p. 28) said in 1946: "Dear Reader, You and I are each the center of the universe in our respective opinions. You,*