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Peopling the State:

Arctic State Identity in
Norway, Iceland, and Canada

Ingrid Agnete Medby

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Geography, Durham University

2016

Abstract

As increasing levels of attention are directed northwards to the rapidly changing Arctic region, states and stakeholders from near and far position themselves in anticipation of what is yet to come – challenges and opportunities, Arctic futures. For the eight Arctic states with territory north of the Arctic Circle, this has prompted new emphasis on their ‘Arctic identities’: political claims of homelands and histories through which formal credibility and authority are consolidated and normalised. However, as a space that has often been imagined in terms of distances, frontiers, ice, cold, and snow, Arctic identity narratives are a matter of re-interpretation, re-negotiation, and re-imagination of the ‘nation-state’, who and where ‘we’ are.

While emotive statements of identity may or may not resonate with electorates, what has hitherto been less explored is how these work within the state itself to condition political practice. That is, how a formal title of Arctic statehood is understood, related to, and subsequently enacted by those tasked with its everyday performance – indeed, the everyday practices through which the ‘Arctic state’ emerges as such. Recognising the state as an idea(l) that only ‘materialises’ as an effect of practice arguably necessitates attention to those performing said practices – state personnel.

To this end, I here introduce the concept of ‘state identity’ discourses in order to explore how state representatives’ articulations of identity are bounded in spatiotemporal terms, and yet, are always relational; the Arctic state comes about through encounters at all scales of interaction, from the international to the intimately personal. With reflections from state representatives in three of the eight Arctic states – Norway, Iceland, and Canada – I argue that we need to acknowledge the numerous subjectivities, stories, and relations through which the Arctic state comes into being, thereby ‘peopling’ the state.

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Statement of Copyright

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List of Abbreviations

A8	Arctic 8, i.e. the eight members of the Arctic Council: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Russia, the USA, and Canada.
AHDR	Arctic Human Development Report
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (WG)
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (WG)
CLCS	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UN)
C.i-xxi	Canadian interviewee 1-21
C.AAND	Canadian Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
C. DIAND	Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [at the time of the interviews, C.AAND; since 2015, INAC]
C.FATD	Canadian Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development [since 2015, Global Affairs Canada]
C.Gov't	Canadian Government
C.INAC	Canadian Indigenous and Northern Affairs [previously C.AAND and C.DIAND]
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EU	European Union
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
IR	International Relations
I.i-xii	Icelandic interviewee 1-12
I.Gov't	Icelandic Government
I.MFA	Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NWP	Northwest Passage
NWT	Northwest Territories
N.MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
N.MTIF	Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
N.Gov't	Norwegian Government

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N.i-xvi	Norwegian interviewee 1-16
PM	Prime Minister
ROLCO	Rule of Law Committee for the Ocean
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America
WG	Working Group (of the Arctic Council)

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the generosity of the participants who shared their time, reflections, and stories with me. For the sake of anonymity, I can only hope my deep gratitude will reach each one of them; the conversations held in offices and on phones are what has made the thesis, and what opened my eyes to seeing the state for its people. Therefore: thank you, *merci*, ᐱᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ, *giitu*, and *takk!*

I have thoroughly enjoyed the three years of working on the project at Durham University thanks to a fantastic social and professional network here. Firstly, I cannot thank my three supervisors enough: Phil Steinberg, Angharad Closs Stephens, and Andrew Baldwin – without your support, encouragement, meticulous reading, and feedback this thesis would never have been. My rather poor poster at the Arctic Frontiers conference nearly four years ago certainly had personal ‘impact’ I could never have anticipated!

And secondly, my time in Durham has been shaped by wonderful colleagues and friends. Between Skylab and the Manley room, there are sadly too many to name here who have all been part of my life the last three years. I consider myself incredibly lucky to have been part of the fantastic research community here and will miss it dearly. Some of those who have been particularly helpful in the completion of this thesis are Sarah Hughes, Peter Forman, Andrew Telford, John Morris, Johanne Bruun, Jessica Benjamin, Ruth Machen, Chris Stokes, and Kate Coddington; though these are but a few of those whose support and friendship have carried me through the process.

Beyond the office, Andreas Raspotnik, Andreas Østhagen, Berit Kristoffersen, Jenine de Vries, Honza Kerver, and the DMass have in various ways provided much-needed support, coffee, distractions, feedback, proofreading, laughter, and encouragement in just the right measures.

I am also very lucky to have a family who have always encouraged me to follow my interests, ask questions, and go out exploring to keep on learning. Kalola, mamma, pappa, mormor: *tusen takk* for always being there, for being part of *my* story of identity and an Arctic home.

Finally, to my constant source of strength and support, my love and gratitude goes to Philip Garnett.

Chapter One

Introduction

It was July, and the Norwegian capital was in the middle of a heatwave. Having passed through the necessary security checks, I entered a slightly cooler but nearly empty ministry. It was in the midst of the summer holidays, and most governmental buildings and offices stood empty as the numerous officials, bureaucrats, and state administration employees attended to other, more sunshine-related business. “We should all be at the beach”, the secretary noted, as she led me to the office of my interviewee, just back from vacation.

The climatic absurdity of my questions – “do you feel like you have an Arctic identity?” – were not lost on either of us, as he thirstily and sweatily poured us both the second, or third, glass of bottled water, supposedly from Norwegian glaciers. Nevertheless, Fridtjof Nansen – the famous Norwegian Polar explorer, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, author, scientist, and nationalist – looked down upon us as we spoke, frozen in time within a picture frame, oblivious to the sweltering heat. It transpired that, indeed, the interviewed official did identify both himself and Norway as ‘Arctic’. Arctic statehood was something of which to be proud, “actively promoted” by the government through policy and education; it was heritage and future for the Norwegian nation-state, status, legitimacy, and power.

However, he hesitated – unexpectedly, the official pointed out my northern accent: we may all be Arctic, but I, the researcher, was ostensibly “more Arctic” than him – and deferred to me. Decision-maker or not, state representative or not, identity is ever contextual, relational, and fluid. Practices of Arctic statehood may be officially performed by a seemingly faceless state apparatus, yet it is the myriad of humans making up this whole, and all their social, everyday, personal, and random encounters, through which identity is formed. Imaginations of the north – and with that, the presence of people, including myself, in and of this Arctic territory – lie at the core of an Arctic state identity.

Catching my own reflection as the ministry’s doors swung shut behind me, I realised that the abstract notion of statehood had just reached out and enveloped me, the young researcher clutching her dictaphone, in its constant process of becoming through discourses and words, imaginaries and identities. A practice through which the Arctic state materialised its presence had just been performed in that hot office, and unwittingly I had become an actress on the stage of statehood myself.

What this brief vignette begins to illustrate is how an idea of Arctic state identity is subjectively mediated in encounters and situations – and, indeed, how this idea may also mediate the encounter and situation itself. Understandings of identity work to position and order relations at all scales of interaction, from the international to the intimately personal. As discourses, state identities are both products and productive of political practice – constructing a sense of shared meaning among those tasked with performing the seemingly unitary Arctic state. In other words, articulations of state identity are not just *representations* of beliefs or meanings, but in the process of relational articulation identity and meaning are actively *made*.

The vignette also alludes to what initially led to this thesis' conception: the observation that on the one hand, national identity plays an important part in political rhetoric; but on the other, a changing geopolitical context led to a shift in the framing thereof. This geopolitical change was the surge in international attention to the Arctic region and the ensuing political positioning that has followed through the last decade. As climate change is 'opening' the region, sensationalist journalists and commentators have not hesitated to forecast a new 'scramble' to the Pole. And while much is hyperbole, there is no denying that the once peripheral region has taken centre stage due a broad range of 21st century concerns: Environmentally, the Arctic region is warming faster and more dramatically than global averages; economically, it is hoped both to hold large quantities of undiscovered hydrocarbon resources and to provide a transpolar route to Asia; and politically, it is one of few spaces in the world where governance and border delimitations are yet to be fully consolidated. Moreover, as is frequently repeated at Arctic-themed events: "what happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic"; changes at the Pole reverberates also at the Tropics – be they environmental, economic, political or otherwise. As such, language and imagery with roots in colonial scrambles for territory and Cold War strategies are today re-signified in a complex world of global interconnectedness.

Consequently, the eight states with territorial claims in the region have been prompted to re-affirm their position as 'Arctic states': the privileged few with claims to sovereignties in the region. One of the ways in which this geographically based, politically significant positioning takes place is through the reiteration of Arctic national identities, thereby fusing Arctic statehood with Arctic nationhood. However, as the Arctic has never been more than peripheral at best to the national 'homeland' in any of these, official identity narratives are presently undergoing a process of re-interpretation for new spatialities. What has stimulated my curiosity was this seeming

discrepancy between a *national* Arctic identity (Medby 2014) and that which was articulated by representatives of the *state*.

A mismatch between political rhetoric and popular opinion is not uncommon – indeed, the former may well be a deliberate attempt to change the latter – and no doubt ought to be a target for critical scrutiny. However, in observing officials' framing of Arctic policies and strategies in patriotically emotive ways, I was less interested in the well-recognised illusionary nature of the nation-state's hyphenation and the political power inherent in mobilising, or indeed constructing, national identity for public support. Rather, what intrigued me at the project's outset – and still does – is how these representatives of the state *themselves* view and articulate their countries' identities; and in particular, how their understanding of this identity may then construct a particular position for their respective state – a position for action. The ways in which representatives of the Arctic state understand its identity as such may have significant consequences for how the region comes to be approached, governed, exploited, or protected. The potentially significant political implications of identity should therefore not only refer to voter opinion, but also that of those elected and appointed to represent the former. Considering their sense of identity means considering who they fundamentally see themselves as representing – who is included as much as who is excluded. Not least in a time when achieving broad political participation is arguably proving increasingly challenging, the latter's communication and connection with the wider society is ever more crucial. As it is through the manifold actions and practices performed in the name of the Arctic state that it 'materialises' as such – that the abstract idea of Arctic statehood comes to hold tangible and concrete effects on people's lives – the aforementioned understandings of identity matter. In short, my interest lies in how identity is interpreted and articulated by those whose job it is to represent the state on a daily basis, and in turn, what the implications may be for political practice.

These questions have guided by pursuit of insight the last three years and constitute the central concern of this thesis, as this chapter begins to introduce. Here, I briefly lay out the concept of state identity, the empirical context of the Arctic, the study's research questions and agenda, and finally, a road-map of the thesis ahead. Through the following, I wish to show that notions of shared identity matter – not *only* among the electorate, but also among those we often overlook as simply performing the state. Cast as state agents, their roles are often analytically reduced to flat, caricatured characters; that is, robbed of their subjective, emotional, corporeal, and fallible humanity, and their numerous interconnected subject-positions beyond the office. In other

words, by questioning *their* understandings of statehood and identity, I wish to contribute and add to a ‘peopled’ view of the Arctic state (see e.g. Jones, 2007; Kuus, 2014) – a view that acknowledges that spatialised state identities work to precondition practice also among those tasked with enacting them. Moreover, focusing on the rapidly changing Arctic, I aim to show how even ‘new’ spatialities, or fluid spaces that do not fit the traditional conceptualisations of the ‘homeland’, are made sense of through familiar discourses of identity. That is, how a potentially politically contestable space has been ‘solved’ by invoking the shared and familiar – thereby constructing a field of manoeuvre in and from which state officials may (confidently) operate.

While some answers have transpired, as the following chapters will reveal, plenty more questions have also arisen. Hence, I start this thesis as I will also end it: filled with wonder about something as commonplace, taken-for-granted, criticised, and, as some would have it, anachronistic as the idea of the state.

Conceptualising state identity

It is not just the Arctic but the world as a whole that has gone through profound changes during recent decades, ranging from rapid globalisation of neoliberal ideologies to dramatic climatic changes. Economic and environmental forces are but two that led some to argue for a move beyond what they considered an outdated academic state-centrism (see e.g. Brenner, 1999; Moisió and Paasi, 2013a). This premature excision of the state from political analysis has fortunately been replaced by a more nuanced view today – not least as the Arctic region has been neatly carved up as eight, distinct state spaces in recent years. Current scholarship shows renewed interest in the state, and in particular ongoing processes of restructuring and redistribution of authority (see Sassen, 1996; Brenner *et al.*, 2003; Flint, 2003; Brenner, 2004; Moisió and Paasi, 2013a). That is, how state processes and powers may reach out far beyond both normative and geographical borders (see e.g. Allen, 2011); and vice versa, how non-state (or ‘societal’) processes permeate state practices too. After a year of news headlines dominated by a migrant crisis, a climate change agreement, and heinous acts of terror – all of which were clearly international issues with clearly *national* responses – the state seems as relevant as ever.

Changes to the ways states operate are arguably demonstrative of a changing (and inherently changeable) *idea* of statehood. I here follow Abrams (1988) in arguing that the state must be understood primarily as an abstract idea applied to political practice. It is as an effect of these

practices that what we perceive as the state emerges (Mitchell, 1991, 2006), for example through the above responses of border controls, treaty negotiations, and military acts. These practices are not just a matter of ‘high politics’; the state also comes into being through the banal and prosaic experiences of everyday life (see e.g. Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Corbridge, 2005; Painter, 2006; Jones and Merriman, 2009). As in the opening vignette, the Arctic state is not an intangible agent in and of itself, but is encountered through conversations in hot offices, pictures on walls, and holiday-yearning officials. While the singularised statements in and from that very office may have differed through the years, they nevertheless, together, form an effect of the state – evident of political discourses¹ that condition their utterance. As Mitchell (2006) has argued before me, it is to the techniques and practices that give seeming coherence to the multivalent, abstract state we need to pay attention – unpacking how the ideology of the ‘nation-state’ comes to provide a structuring framework for relations of power.

This *idea* of the state – what it is, does, and should do – may be undergoing change in today’s world; but, importantly, this is equally the case within it as amongst those viewing it from the outside (see e.g. Moisio and Paasi, 2013b). Just like so-called state discourses may play out or be contested at other sites (e.g. Lai and Yeung, 2003; Mountz, 2004), contestations and extra-state discourses also feed back to those tasked with developing policy (Sharp, 1993); state practitioners are not isolated from that which takes place outside their offices. Even Arctic state officials go on holidays abroad with their families, drink the same bottled water, endure the same heatwaves, and read the same newspapers as the rest of society. The practices through which we perceive the state are not that of a singular, rational agent, but must be understood as the idea’s performance by a range of actors – all of whom have their own subjectivities, experiences, and interpretations of the world around them. The role as state official is but one of several subject-positions inhabited throughout the day; and so, their choices in the field of possible practices are not *only* a result of what we immediately think of as formal political discourses. In other words, in order to

¹ My use of the term ‘discourses’ will be elaborated in Chapter Two. In very brief, however, I draw on a Foucauldian understanding of discourses as developed initially in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972, see also 2002). Crudely summarised, I understand discourses as unacknowledged conditions for what may be meaningfully said, done, and thought. While never fully accessible to our analysis (as we stand *within* them in the present), they surface as e.g. statements – what is said, not said, done, not done; and, importantly, despite ordering relations, discourses are always open to change and contingency. In a circular manner they produce and are a product of practices and knowledges – interlocking, overlapping schemata of meaning that order human relations (see e.g. Kendall and Wickham, 1999). This is also indebted to Judith Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’ in understanding discourses as performative, constituting that which they name as they are ‘cited’, or performed in iterative ways (Butler, 1999, 2011).

understand the state, it is not enough to acknowledge that it is a “mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is” (Abrams, 1988, p. 82); we must also interrogate the understandings that guide those enacting said political practices, those unwittingly bearing the mask. The state is, after all, an effect of practices enacted through relationships between places, institutions, and *people* (Desbiens, Mountz and Walton-Roberts, 2004; Jones, 2007).

It is worth noting that focusing on the people of the state, state officials, is not to say that they are to be considered somehow above a society over which they ‘rule’, as has arguably been the case through many decades of political analysis (Kuus, 2008). Rather, it is precisely the point to move away from this binary conceptualisation to show how state officials too are *embedded* in society, for better or worse; and how their heterogeneity, too, may impact the ways in which the state emerges. Although it will of course differ how attuned any given official may be to the on-goings outside their office window – i.e. how much interaction there is between the state and the society – they will nevertheless always be a *person* too; and this is the point: they *differ*. While so obvious it verges on jejune, it is at present found lacking in much scholarly debate, including in geography, where for example Jordhus-Lier (2012) argues there is a relative silence on the state as employer and boss. With such great effort to bring the political to the masses, to let alternative voices be heard, to acknowledge the emotive and embodied, those spending their working hours in governmental offices have seemingly been forgotten there, left in an essentialised and de-humanised role. Not only does this obscure the multifaceted and fragmented way the state comes into being, but it also reifies an ethically problematic view of the state’s cold and calculative rationality – a view that, in turn, suggests this is how they *should* perform their role as representatives thereof. Also state officials are subject to contemporary discourses, both political and otherwise. Their agency does therefore not lie in making, shaping, or changing discourses *per se*; but, I argue, they each hold a relative level of individual agency in how state discourses are translated into statements and practices. That is, in the field of limited, possible action within discourse, they choose their specific line of action based on a range of conscious and unconscious convictions and interwoven subject-positions.

Recognising that the state comes into being by practices performed by people, it follows that a key concern is what said people understand their, i.e. the state’s, practices *ought* to be. Emotionally powerful and politically potent, discourses of national identity are not just influential among the represented but also those representing the state. While there is no doubt that many politicians use (or even construct) notions of national identity for these reasons – mobilising

political support – it is too simplistic not to consider how they may themselves be influenced by tropes of ‘who we are’, and ‘how we act’. The belief in the ‘nation-state’ – that is, a congruent societal community and political organisation contained within territorial borders – may be critiqued by countless scholars, but nevertheless remains a foundational myth held on to by many. No doubt, this is also a belief held by those whose wages are earned representing and performing said myth on a daily basis. Hence, I argue that there is a need to interrogate the identity discourses, these foundational understandings of statehood, that permeate within the state, among those representing it, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of what practices are rendered possible or impossible – the practices through which, in turn, the state emerges as a material reality in the world.

The way I use the term, *state identity*² refers to the identity discourses that permeate amongst those representing the state (which, in turn, arguably conditions the way in which the state emerges as such through their practices). The use of the term ‘identity’ does not mean what the state essentially ‘is’, but rather the conceptualisations that fix these constantly becoming effects as a seemingly stable entity: the state. Identity discourses are therefore not just descriptive of what/where/who the state ‘is’, but actively *make it*. These discourses work to spatially and temporally stabilise an ever evolving, abstract idea; when practice comes to be seen as a performance of ‘who we are’ it becomes unquestionable – a transcendental ‘truth’. Unpacking identity discourses, these spatial and temporal dimensions form its constitutive framework: In the case of the state, a delimited territory, environment, or geography; and a narrative, history, or linear progression from the past through the present to the future. In the case of the Arctic, this spatiality is anything but that of an obvious territorial ‘homeland’, and hence presents identity’s ‘core’ by viewing it from the periphery. Moreover, as with the vignette’s official, identity is always relationally constituted: His relation to the other altered his own sense of identity, and consequently, his sense of entitlement to speak and act. A state’s identity relations thus also play out amongst two individuals within four office walls. Indeed, state relations take place at all scales, from the international – via the regional, the national, and the sub-national – to the

² Although some scholars, in particular within International Relations (IR), have theorised ‘state identity’, this has primarily referred to a conceptualisation of the state as an agent in and of itself (Epstein, 2011), see Chapter Two. As should be clear from the above points, my interest instead lies in the (national or otherwise) identity that state officials perceive their country and/or citizenry to have.

intimately personal³. State identity discourses come about through relations, and function as an ordering mechanism whereby the state is *positioned* within said relations, in turn structuring power and authority. These discourses, I contend, are worthy and in *need* of our attention, as they guide and naturalise operationalisations of state powers; this is what I aim to give them in the context of the Arctic.

State identity in the Arctic context

The opening's state official labelled me as 'Arctic', which seemed to offer him an unspoken meaning behind my presence in his office that day. While much can (and will⁴) be said about my positionality as a researcher in the present project, he was right in assuming a personal interest in my doctoral project. Although my own sense of identity is a separate matter than the present study, it was indeed recent rhetorical developments that stimulated my initial curiosity: With increased international attention – ranging from climate concerns to petroleum prospects – both my hometown and I have 'become' Arctic. First the north was labelled as Arctic, then the state as a whole, based on national territories and oceanic areas north of the Arctic Circle. However, as a recent label, neither Norway nor the other seven Arctic states have traditionally been considered as Arctic *nations*, despite what current rhetoric may suggest. In other words, tropes of national identity have not tended to centre on the states' Arctic characteristics (in fact, the opposite has often been the case – trying to establish a southern-facing identity); and moreover, the Arctic areas within each state have often been considered its periphery, hinterland, or frontier.

Ever since the Arctic truly entered both public and political consciousness roughly a decade ago, however, there have been active performances of Arctic statehood by the eight states with claims to the title: Norway, Sweden, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Russia, Canada, and the USA. Media has thrived on headlines of record low sea ice-covers, flag plantings, undiscovered petroleum promises, an Olympic torch relay, and starving polar bears, to mention but a few

³ Indeed, these scales could be demarcated in a number of ways: they are but illusory constructions with political implications (Marston, Jones and Woodward, 2005). Nevertheless, scales work as politically significant ordering categories, constructing an understanding of the state as 'above' society and encompassing 'lower scales' (e.g. the region, city, family) and are therefore not to be excised from academic analyses but examined (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002; Kaiser and Nikiforova, 2008). It is precisely because politics are scaled (e.g. in the international, national, and sub-national) by practitioners themselves that we need to question how and why these come to be accepted and naturalised.

⁴ See Chapter Three.

events that have brought the Arctic to southern audiences. As ever more actors are voicing their (paradoxical) interest and concern, the position of the region's eight states has been emphasised and re-emphasised through various statements and performances – that is, as the privileged holders of knowledge and executors of power, the rightful stewards of Arctic space. Perhaps more so than in any other region in the world, the Arctic is at present undergoing efficient and rapid 'statisation'. State territoriality is here enacted through the segmentation of space into national units of not just land-based territory but also oceanic spaces of relative authority based on international law⁵. Intertwined with such practices of law and formal border-delimitations, the abstract effect, Arctic statehood, comes about and takes on meaning through discourses of national identity. That is to say, among the performative acts on behalf of the eight Arctic states is a re-interpretation of identity, which in turn works to spatially and temporally position said state in regional relations of practice and power.

By wedding formal Arctic statehood to cultural Arctic nationhood, territory is wedded to population, and “an almost transcendental entity, the nation-state” is manufactured (Mitchell, 2006, p. 180) – the ‘Arctic nation-state’ – “appearing as a structure containing and giving order and meaning to people's lives” (ibid.). As noted, this ideological construct is politically powerful, and aids in generating support for what may otherwise be considered controversial; and importantly, *also* “giving order and meaning” to the lives of state officials: The conviction that you represent not just a space but a people fundamentally alters your approach to a given political question. Although large parts of the Arctic region are uninhabited oceanic spaces, the imaginary scripting of it as inherently part of the ‘homeland’ opens up and closes down possible practices. Moreover, as noted, it works to position said state – at least in the eyes and minds of its practitioners – within relations of power both with other states as with other spaces, institutions, and people. In other words, these identity discourses naturalise a certain, seemingly stable order⁶. This order, in turn, implies and conditions conduct. For example, an Arctic state is expected not

⁵ Specifically, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). All eight states have confirmed their adherence to it (and except the USA, ratified it), and consequently the submission and processing of claims have happened quickly through the last decades, leaving the Arctic region as a space of *states*.

⁶ With an interest in how state and identity discourses work to naturalise and spatialise international affairs, my study is situated within a rich tradition of critical geopolitical scholarship (see e.g. Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Kuus and Agnew, 2008; Dodds, Kuus and Sharp, 2013a). This, in turn, is heavily indebted to poststructural thought and theorists – as will be elaborated in Chapter Two. However, suffice it here to say, as neatly summarised by Knecht and Keil (2013, p. 187), scholars of critical Arctic geopolitics “oppose traditional views on the ‘power over geography’ and instead focus on the ‘geographies of power’”; in this case, how spatialising the Arctic state conditions relations of power and political practice.

just to hold rights, but also important responsibilities to act when relevant issues arise; which action is deemed the ‘correct’ one is limited by, *inter alia*, perceptions of ‘who’ and ‘what’ said state inherently ‘is’ and should ‘be’. These perceptions are of course highly dynamic and contested, but nevertheless, the state wears a veil of seemingly stable characteristics (from which patriotic pride often springs forth).

The Arctic region is a particularly fascinating stage upon which to observe the active performance of state identity, as it is anything but a typical territorial space of states. Its physical characteristics – largely oceanic/fluid, partly uninhabited and frozen (for now) – it is imaginarily spatialised and re-spatialised to fit new political contexts. It is a region that is frequently described in terms of ‘rapid change’, and yet, it is increasingly scripted as ‘unexceptional’, state space (see e.g. Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt, 2015). In a region where challenges to the current state system could, potentially, have truly come to the fore, it has instead become an example of the exact opposite: the most ‘un-traditional’ territory has become ‘statised’ in the most traditional ways. Thus, it epitomises the interweaving of stability and change – a changing space demonstrating the stability of the state-idea; or, a changing state-idea demonstrating the peaceful stability of the Arctic. The question then arising is rather what, how, and why change is taking place, on whose terms, understood how. In the Arctic, the re-scripting of identity – the application of ‘known’ identity discourses to this ‘unknown’ space – has been productive in spatialising it as a *certain* space, normalising it as a *certain* field; in other words, *fixing* it in the midst of flux.

The active re-interpretation of identity, connecting the Arctic to the national and applying the latter’s ‘truisms’ to the former, is more pronounced in some of the Arctic states than others. Likely due to the status and advantageous position ‘Arctic statehood’ may grant otherwise ‘peripheral’ or ‘small/medium power’-states, the thesis’ three case studies – Norway, Iceland, and Canada – have stood out in this regard. There, Arctic ‘*nationhood*’ and identities have been employed in political rhetoric (and performance) to strengthen their Arctic statehood conferred by their latitudinally based membership in the Arctic Council⁷. Hence, it seemed only fitting that it was Fridtjof Nansen who looked sternly down upon the mentioned interview: Not only is he a

⁷ The Arctic Council is, in brief, an inter-governmental organisation in which the eight states with territorial claims north of the Arctic Circle constitute the members. It is a consensus-based body with no formal decision-making capabilities. It is, however, an important norm-setter and forum for interaction. Not least, it is often praised in its inclusion of indigenous peoples’ organisations as ‘permanent participants’ that have to be consulted by the state representatives, and the increasing number of non-Arctic states granted ‘observer’ access (e.g. Graczyk, 2011; Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014).

symbol of Norway's polar past, but he was also actively involved in the 'struggle' for national independence from Sweden – a struggle based on the 'uniqueness' of the Norwegian identity. Similar examples could be mentioned from the study's other two states, ranging from the banal to the spectacular. The three share this active, state-level cultivation of Arctic identity; yet, they also illustrate highly different ways in which Arctic statehood has been embedded in identity discourses. These differences will come out through the empirical chapters, but suffice it here to say that their histories, geographies, political contexts, and demographics offer three cases of Arctic state identities that may seem similar in sharing basic elements, but include idiosyncratic interpretations of the meaning thereof. State identity therefore provides a useful conceptual framework for investigation, but in order to gain an understanding of how it plays out in practice, how it affects and is affected by relational contexts, we need to acknowledge its inherent multivalence as it is adopted across time, space, and people.

By offering an analysis of Arctic state identity, my aim is to bring in (at least some of) the many *people* of the state in order to shed light on facets of the state that often tend to slip beneath our radar. Doing so, the thesis provides a different entry point to Arctic geopolitics, adding to our understanding of how this rapidly changing region is approached and responded to politically. Emphasising the relational and contextual, demonstrating how seemingly limiting boundaries of discourse actually open up a whole field of *possibilities*, it should also be stressed that the concept of state identity does not provide prescriptive answers as such. Rather, it offers an alternative way of seeing the Arctic state – of hearing its statements, seeing its performances, and feeling its effects – as a product of a range of subjective statements uttered from 'within' it. In this way, I hope to contribute to new questions being asked and new discussions being had; I hope to destabilise academic debates about Arctic geopolitics in order to push towards a new equilibrium, where anthropogenic change is met with anthropologically informed politics.

Research agenda of Arctic state identity

From the above vantage point, the thesis aims to gain an understanding of how practitioners of statecraft – that is, broadly defined the state's officials and representatives – conceptualise and articulate their own (nation-)state, its identity, and how this in turn opens up a limited field of practices through which the state emerges as such.

Ingrid A. Medby

Focusing on three of the so-called Arctic states – Norway, Iceland, and Canada – the thesis has two principal objectives. Firstly, the thesis seeks to build an understanding of Arctic state identity, by examining how state representatives' views on state identity are based on both geography and history, space and time; and yet are always relational and contextual. Secondly, the thesis will examine how state identity discourses may influence political practice by said representatives. As such, the study's relevance goes beyond the Arctic *per se*, offering the concept of 'state identity' as a way in which to 'people' our conceptualisations of the state.

The way in which the conceptual framework is operationalised is by means of interviews and formal statements by officials in a wide range of positions from across the three states. Altogether 49 interviews were conducted and analysed in relation to more formal texts (e.g. selected key Arctic policy papers). Allowing officials to reflect and narrate the story they wished to tell, the aim is to push beyond the reiteration of formally authored statements. This does not mean attempting to find some deeper 'truth' – despite complete confidentiality, the interviewees were still very much speaking from their professional positions – but rather it opens up a space for the people of the state and their subjective articulations of meaning.

In sum, the thesis' contributions are both empirical and theoretical. As outlined above, although analyses of Arctic geopolitics are often critiqued for state-centrism, the people of the state and the role conferred by this subject-position are often left unquestioned. The 'people in the Arctic', so often argued to be absent or unheard in decision-making, are therefore faced with a highly asymmetrical 'other' in relations of power in and over the region. By allowing the state a greater level of humanity, and acknowledging the subjective and fallibility inherent thereto, the thesis remains a hopeful one. Political discourses in general, and Arctic state identity discourses more specifically, may condition what is possible, but nevertheless, these are *possibilities* – of change, of resistance, of creativity, of a *better* Arctic future. By approaching the Arctic state differently, we may therefore open up for new discussions and debates.

This is also where I seek to make a conceptual contribution, by expanding the way in which we approach and analyse the state to include its myriad of people: acknowledging their relative agency as state practitioners, and demonstrating the importance of identity discourses also within the state apparatus. While the study is situated among recent work that seeks to bring anthropological accounts into dialogue with political geography (e.g. Megoran, 2006; Jones, 2007; Antonsich, 2011; Kuus, 2014), what it adds is the concept of state identity: that is, an

understanding of how and why identity discourses may matter ‘within’ the state too – highlighting the interweaving of the ‘micro’ and the ‘macro’ of statehood. The individual practitioner and the state are mutually constitutive in ways that cannot be theorised with a sole focus on either.

Moreover, focusing on state identity and practitioners’ own stories thereof adds an aspect of that has frequently been omitted due to practical reasons: the personal and subjective meaning-making practices of the state ‘self’.

The thesis

While this introductory chapter has sought to situate the study and highlight its key aims, the following (Chapter Two) focuses on the ontological premises upon which the framework of state identity is built. It elaborates on the thesis’ conceptual underpinnings of statehood and identity, showing its relation to political geography and poststructural thinking, in particular Foucauldian thinking on discourses and Butler’s performativity. Upon this theoretical foundation, state identity is defined as interlocking relations at different scales and in different contexts. As statements, they are articulations or manifestations of discourses through which certain state practices become possible or impossible, necessary or superfluous, supported or controversial.

The methodological operationalisation of the theoretical framework of state identity follows thereafter (Chapter Three). As discourses do not lend themselves to a straightforward analysis, I explain my usage of interviews (and certain texts) as tools with which to explore these, through articulations and statements of subjective understandings of positioning within discourses. This also includes reflections on the process of data collection, analysis, and writing up, and my own presence throughout the study and thesis. The thesis is structured as three separate case studies of Arctic state identity, and so the rationale behind the contextual foci – Norway, Iceland, and Canada – is here laid out.

The three states in question each form the ensuing empirical chapters (Chapter Four: Norway, Chapter Five: Iceland, and Chapter Six: Canada). They all follow the same basic framework of state identity. That is, structured around the insights offered by the interviewed officials, alongside more formal texts, they start with understandings of Arctic state spatiality: how spatial imaginaries work to construct a notion of the state for these individuals – a state-space to which they and the people they represent ‘belong’. If spatiality is one leg upon which identity rests, the other is temporality: how linear narratives are drawn from the present to reach both backwards

and forwards, to the past and future, to construct a seemingly stable essence of the state. Arctic state identity is in all three cases defined and articulated in international, national, sub-national, and personal terms, forming the basic structure of the chapters. That is, state identity relies on positioning among other states (the international), distinguishing from others (the national), and simultaneously, bringing together internal difference (the sub-national), and resonating with people (the personal). Importantly, none of these ‘scales’ work over or under the others in a vertical manner; rather, they are intricately interwoven aspects of the self – contextually defined against the ‘other’ of the hour – that may overlap, run parallel, or contradict each other. In so doing, the state becomes both subjective and contextual – an acknowledgement that must be reflected in the way in which we analyse the practices through which it is realised. The six sub-themes do not receive equal weight in each case, but the states are also not presented as directly comparative cases. Rather, I wish to show how state identity may be premised on similar abstract themes, but manifest in varied ways both across states and across people. Certainly, they are not to be read as generalisable cases but as examples of ways in which Arctic state identity is articulated relationally and contextually.

Finally, in the concluding chapter (Chapter Seven), I draw together the findings from across the three states and their respective practitioners’ articulations and understandings of state identity. Here, I return to what I hope has transpired from this introduction, namely the importance of expanding what we think of as the state to include its peoples and their understandings of identity. With this recognition of the personal and relational mediation of the state, the present study provides but one avenue of research through subjective articulations of discourses. Thus, drawing this to a close also means outlining the contours of an exciting new field of potential research, and concluding with some remarks on how and where I hope this thesis, this story of state stories, may contribute to debates both within and beyond the discipline.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework of State Identity

In order to study discourses of Arctic state identity, the concepts of discourse, the state, and identity all need unpacking, before being brought together in a theoretical framework. To this end, I offer in this chapter, firstly, the theoretical bases for the subsequent chapters and analysis, and position the thesis in its conceptual context: in short, within a body of work on statehood and identity – primarily in human (and specifically, political) geography, while also drawing on thinking beyond the discipline, in line with an aim of moving past binaries and boundaries of meaning. As such, the study speaks particularly to scholarship drawing on poststructuralist thinking, with an aim of contributing to conversations of critical social sciences more broadly.

In addition to contextualising the study, the purpose of the chapter is to start outlining the contours of its primary contribution to the above academic conversations: the concept of ‘state identity’. As the term suggests, this entails engaging with literature on both the state and identity. Hence, following a discussion of the thesis’ theoretical premises – that of poststructuralist discourse and performativity – and position among work in political geography and critical geopolitics, the chapter proceeds by sketching out relevant approaches to, firstly, the state and statehood as an effect of practices. This includes consideration of concepts with which it is frequently bundled together: territory/territoriality, the global ‘system’ of states, sovereignty, power, and the nation – including its ‘practitioners’, state officials. Leading on from the state’s ‘people’, I lay out a short overview of relevant work on identity, focusing particularly on that of national identity, ideas of nationalism, and the formation of a collective ‘self’. Here too relevant concepts are briefly discussed, including national space, the ‘homeland’, and environments; narratives and temporality; relationality and the constitutive other; ‘essences’; difference and diversity; and finally, the individual within the collective.

Bringing together the state and the discussed concepts of identity, the framework of ‘state identity’ takes shape. The way in which I use ‘state identity’ is as discourse that is bounded in spatiotemporal terms, but also flowing in and through relations. These relations – or interactions, encounters – are never static, never fixed, but lead to ever renewed articulation and citation of

said discourse. This is distinguished from ways in which a similar term may feature in e.g. international relations (IR) or political science, and instead finds its place among political geographical work arguing for a ‘peopling’ of the state and related concepts. Here and in the following chapters, I order relations in four heuristic scales: the international, national, sub-national, and personal. These are presented in brief as the structure of the study’s findings and analysis, opening up for their subsequent methodological application in the three empirical cases of Norway, Iceland, and Canada.

Discourse and a critical approach to political geography

The thesis’ focus on the discursive situates it among much current work in human geography drawing on poststructuralist thinking. Poststructuralism, as an “intellectual movement” rather than a ‘theory’ (Woodward and Jones, 2009, p. 571), has been profoundly influential in critical social sciences in general – for example, destabilising taken-for-granted binaries and essentialist concepts of e.g. power, representation, and space (ibid.). The concept of discourse – as in that of Arctic state identity – has been widely adopted as part of this theoretical current, though the ways in which it is applied also differs greatly. What accounts thereof do share, however, is a common root in philosophical debates about language and its relationship to ‘reality’ – generally seeing language as one of many forms of representation that serve to interpret and, in so doing, *produce* said reality (Howarth, 2000; Campbell, 2009). As a general explanation, Campbell (2009, p. 166) summarises discourse as a “specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible”. More specifically, the way discourse is here employed draws on Michel Foucault’s early work, in particular his accounts in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *The Order of Discourse* (1981). In the former, he defines discourse as “a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; [...] it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined” (1972, p. 117). A statement refers to an expression or representation – here including both linguistic and non-linguistic articulations and practices – within a ‘formation’ such as that of (Arctic) politics (see e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1994; Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2003). The interest lies in these ‘conditions’ that serve to govern what *can* be expressed: “the rules that determine which statements are accepted as meaningful and true in a particular historical epoch” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 12) – in other words, how discourses of ‘Arctic state identity’ in this case

delimit what can and cannot be said and done. The implication is that through discourse, ‘reality’, a certain view of the world, is naturalised and stabilised at the expense of other ways of seeing (Campbell, 2009; Butler, 2011); and, as in the case of Arctic relations, potentially foreclosing alternative ways of being.

Notably, practices and statements are here understood in a broad sense, pointing to the performativity of discourse. That is, through their naming, enactment, and so on, discourses produce that of which they ‘speak’ (Butler, 1999, 2011; also, Campbell, 1992; Bialasiewicz *et al.*, 2007); here, the Arctic state is shown as emerging through its performance. These practices and statements, the Arctic state’s performance, are therefore products but also *citations* of discourse: iteratively, by invoking statements past and future, each work to reify and stabilise it as ‘truth’ (Butler, 2011). That is not to deny that there exists a reality ‘outside’ of discourse (the pre- or non-discursive), and certainly should not be read as ‘everything is language’, but rather calls attention to our position as always *within* discourses ourselves; even so-called ‘material reality’ only ever becomes so through our interpretation and designation as such⁸. Moreover, ‘performance’ here is not meant in a theatrical sense as limited to deliberate acts for an external audience, but as that which produces the subject itself, its actor (see Gregson and Rose, 2000). Rephrased in the context of the present study, the numerous ways in which discourses of Arctic state identity come to be performed is that which *constitutes* the Arctic state – or, specifically, as returned to below, its many state ‘performers’, state personnel. These discourses are neither externally imposed on individuals nor internally determining their thought; rather, they condition what can possibly be meaningfully thought (or enacted, expressed, and so on) (Foucault, 1972, p. 209). Agency does therefore not lie in a deliberate construction of discourse(s) *per se*, but in the specific ways in which it is enacted by subjects who, importantly, always find themselves positioned within numerous discourses and relations at once; this saturation of subject-positions always inherent to any relation is what can potentially destabilise discourse and open up for change (Gregson and Rose, 2000). It is this relationship of discourses, the forceful *interplay* of the

⁸ Recent scholarship in human geography and beyond is paying increasing attention to the non-representational and the affective. In a simplified sense, some of this may be read as the pre- or non-discursive – the challenge here lies in articulating what exists prior to or beyond articulation without thereby stabilising or fixing its meaning (see e.g. Thrift, 2007; Anderson, 2009). Non-representational thinking has pointed to what exceeds expression, to look not for what meanings lie ‘behind’ statements, but rather the meaning in the practice itself, produced *by* practice. This has directed attention to how also identities are formed not only through language, symbols, etc., but also through everyday practices, habits, and creativity that cannot easily be demarcated within (conscious, accepted) rules or norms.

material and ideal, that is of particular interest (Foucault, 1972, p. 209; see also O'Farrell, 2005, p. 81). As in the present study, analysing discourse therefore entails questioning the foundational premises of what has come to be seen as 'natural' or 'true' – not only what an Arctic state identity may 'be', but how and why it *becomes* so.

The methodological implications of the above are further elaborated in the following chapter, but worth noting here, the discursive approach to political relations places the study among geographical scholarship in the sub-discipline of political geography and the related critical geopolitics⁹ – aiming to expose assumptions underlying seemingly common-sense categories of political-spatial analysis, one of which is the state (see Dalby and Ó Tuathail, 1998; Atkinson and Dodds, 2000; Campbell, 2009; Agnew and Muscarà, 2012; Agnew, 2013b). In so doing, attention is directed to how political spatiality – such as that of territory, borders, regions (e.g. the Arctic), etc. – are *produced* through discourse, favouring the worldviews of those with the power to enforce their particular knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Moreover, seeking to ask how and why certain geopolitical narratives becomes normalised, or how discursive practice spatialises politics (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Ó Tuathail, 1996), critical geopolitics has in recent decades provided a disciplinary bridge to engage with related scholarship in e.g. IR. Succinctly explained by Knecht and Keil (2013, p. 186), whereas 'classical' geopolitics is concerned with "power over geography", the 'critical' aim is, in contrast, to interrogate "geographies of power"; this, in order to avoid reifying, stabilising, or 'fetishising' "a particular spatial arrangement and ignoring ongoing processes of spatial production, negotiation, and contestation" (Sparke, 2005, p. xiv). In other words, the study sits among scholarship driven by an emancipatory ideal of disrupting dominant and prescriptive ways of seeing the world to ask how it may be otherwise, how we may see otherwise, and how we may understand otherwise.

Even more specifically, the study finds its place among 'critical *polar* geopolitics': a field that has emerged in recent decades with the 're-politicisation' of the region (in large part due to climate

⁹ See e.g. Murphy et al. (2004) on the relationship between political geography and geopolitics. In particular the latter holds problematic historical connotations of the discipline's early involvement in endeavours of colonisation and racism (see e.g. Foster, 2006; Sparke, 2009). Geopolitics is more frequently employed in vernacular and media, usually referring to geographical dimensions of (state) power (Painter and Jeffrey, 2009, p. 196), and international politics relating to contested territory (particularly, political violence). More significant here, however, is that critical geographers have re-appropriated the term 'geopolitics' in the *critique* of assumptions of a causal relationship between space and politics.

change) (see e.g. Gerhardt *et al.*, 2010; Dittmer *et al.*, 2011; Dodds and Powell, 2013; Sörlin, 2013b; Bruun and Medby, 2014; Powell and Dodds, 2014; Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt, 2015). In particular, it focuses on e.g. how states come to hold the privilege as the key Arctic ‘players’, how the Arctic has come to be seen as first and foremost a region of states, and how alternative modes of politics, governance, and *being* are discursively foreclosed¹⁰. Questioning how and why Arctic space is discursively produced as it is, therefore matters; in short, “the way actors re-imagine Arctic territory [...] shapes their foreign policy behaviour and responsiveness to new risks and opportunities” (Knecht and Keil, 2013, p. 186). However, more than this, the implications reach beyond that of the Arctic, beyond that of the state; critically *destabilising* that which through discursive practices seems to have taken on solidity, materialised (Butler, 2011), allows a glimpse of the production rather than product, its *materialisation* and *spatialisation* – Arctic or not – and finally, a glimpse of our own continuous process of becoming: political subject and ‘self’ in and through discourses.

Statehood and state effects

The state – both as an institution and an ideal – is undeniably undergoing structural change, some of which may erode or reconfigure its capacities (see e.g. Brenner *et al.*, 2003; Brenner, 2004); nevertheless, it still remains the primary political organisation, bearing tangible consequences for millions of lives around the world. For the above political geographers too it therefore persists as a key category of analysis; indeed, motivating research to understand how and why it remains so – in this case, the how and the why of ‘Arctic statehood’.

Attempting to define the state, in the first place, is less straightforward than it may seem, however. A common place to start (if, for no other reason, to critique it) is Max Weber’s famous assertion that a state is “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory” (1946, p. 46). However, as noted, the state – and our conceptualisations thereof – is continually changing, and so the definition first presented by

¹⁰ One example of an alternative governance arrangement that is frequently suggested, and just as frequently categorically rejected due to it being ‘wrong’ based on dominant ‘knowledges’, e.g. international law, is the potential of an ‘Arctic treaty’ (à la the Antarctic Treaty). In this case, spatialities of the oceans, seafloors, and continental shelves – knowledges of cartography, oceanography, geology – *produce* the Arctic as a certain type of area requiring a certain type of politics (see e.g. O. R. Young, 2012; Young, 2011; also Powell, 2008 for discussion of the notion of an ‘Arctic commons’).

Weber in 1918, with its emphasis on “force” (or violence), is arguably less useful today. Accepting that states are both spatially and temporally contingent, Michael Mann (1984, 1993) expands on Weber’s definition by suggesting four characteristics in common to states: a set of institutions and personnel; some political centrality; boundaries that define the territorial limits thereof; and a monopoly of coercive power and law-making ability. Again though, as Painter (2006) points out, classical state theories such as these tend to characterise the state in one of three ways: functions, mechanisms, or spatiality – all of which are problematic and disputable. In practice, there are no functions that belong exclusively to the state, no mechanisms that cannot be questioned (such as their “monopoly” or legitimacy), and no bordered territory that is either fixed or incontestable (Painter, 2006, pp. 756–757). Moreover, each of these characteristics will inevitably vary both inter- and intra-state. And yet, despite the many reasons for scepticism of seemingly clear-cut definitions, despite the state’s elusiveness (as Whitehead (2008, p. 416) admits, causing geographers a great deal of anxiety through the years), such reified ideas about what the state ‘is’ persist with a high level of both social and political potency. Again, understanding *how* and *why* this is so – not least in a rapidly changing Arctic context – is the present study’s point of departure.

Trying to locate this elusive ‘core’ of the state, peeling away layer after layer, it becomes increasingly clear that it may be exactly this – the numerous *layers* of interacting individuals, institutions, ideologies, imaginaries – that *defines* it, makes it, and invests it with power (much like an onion...) (see e.g. Pierson, 2011, p. 2). As Foucault (2007, p. 109) considered in one of his lectures: “After all, maybe the state is only a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction whose importance is much less than we think. Maybe”. However, the key point here is that we *do* think it holds importance, which thereby *gives* it importance – gives this ‘abstraction’ materiality through the compositional practices attributed to it. According to Philip Abrams’ (1988) influential paper, it is therefore the *idea* of the state as an ideological power that ought to be the object of analysis. For him, there is a distinction to be made between the system of institutional practice, the ‘state system’, and the reification of this system, ‘the state-idea’; in his words:

The state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is. [...] The state comes into being as a structuration within political practice; it starts its life as an implicit construct; it is then reified – as the *res publica*, the public reification, no less – and acquires an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice (1988, p. 82).

In a related vein, Timothy Mitchell (1991, p. 94) adds that the state should be studied as “the powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist”. As such, he differentiates himself from Abrams by arguing that seeing the state as an ‘ideological construct’ obfuscates its very ‘real’ and very material “structural effects”, including institutions such as bureaucracies, schools, armies; and moreover, seeming to provide an external framework for the social world (ibid.).

Building on the above, Painter (2006, p. 758) offers the following definition of the state: “an imagined collective actor in whose name individuals are interpellated (implicitly or explicitly) as citizens or subjects, aliens or foreigners, and which is imagined as the source of central political authority for a national territory”. He discusses how everyday life becomes “statized” in prosaic ways, concluding that although “[t]he state is not a structurally coherent object or even a rational abstraction”, it is *actualised* through “countless mundane social and material practices within and outside the institutions conventionally referred to as the state apparatus” (Painter, 2006, p. 771). Among these countless practices that actively make, unmake, and remake statehood¹¹ are those of the personnel tasked with its everyday running, as they in their daily work within the institution contribute to its ‘actualisation’. That is not to say that theirs are the only practices that bring the state into being, but is rather a recognition that if state and society are *not* to be seen as separate ‘spheres’, *not* to be understood in binary terms, then the ways in which they *too* become interpellated – as state personnel; indeed, ‘the state’ itself – influence how it comes to be performed. The inherently anthropological element of statehood is returned to further below, but in short: following the above and recalling the performativity of discourse, the way in which Arctic statehood comes into being is, in the end, an *effect* of the numerous performances thereof, the numerous times it is invoked through practice; and so, the question of *how* it is performed is also a *why* it is performed in this manner. Or, in other words, what is really at stake when examining how discourses of Arctic state identity are articulated by its personnel is the reification

¹¹ Joe Painter uses the word ‘stateness’ as a translation of the French ‘*étaticité*’ [‘state-icity’], explaining that the obvious candidate, ‘statehood’, “refers almost exclusively to the recognition of a state in international law”; in contrast, the former offers “an approximation for the senses conveyed by *étaticité*” (Painter, 2006, p. 755). For the purposes of this study, however, ‘statehood’ is used, pointing to ‘Arctic statehood’ largely being a title with its root in international law (as conferred by e.g. latitudes and territory). Indeed, the focus here is how ‘legal’ statehood may or may not interweave with notions of identity among those working *within* the formal institution of the state – how one discourse may reify or rupture another.

of an idea – an idea of what it means to ‘be’ and ‘represent’ an Arctic state, and how this in turn conditions what it possibly *can* be.

From state space to spatialisation, from territory to territorialisation

Among the most obvious, most material, ways in which the state is effected is that of territory. No more natural or tangible than the state itself, however, territory too is a practice and process: territorialisation, or the rendering of space as bordered *state* space. Returning to Weber’s and most classical understandings of the state, its “given territory” – or its bounded spatial extent – is foundational to conceptualisations of the state and sovereignty (Walker, 1993, p. 135; see also Appadurai, 1996). Post-Weberian writers have built on his definition by highlighting the inextricably material and ideological aspect of territories: “the state does not *have* a territory, it *is* a territory” (Poggi, 1990, p. 22). Consequently, examining state territories is not just a matter of physical boundaries and materiality, but as argued by Sack (1983, 1986), also their ideological basis – control of space may be a more palatable proxy for direct control of people (who so happens to live in said space; see also Ch. 1 in Foucault, 2007). In this manner, territory – or the idea thereof – serves to distinguish states from other social organisations, allowing them their specific spatially defined power (Mann, 1984). If the state, then, simultaneously *is*, controls, and gains power from its bounded space, geographers’ primary contribution to studies of the state is highlighting both inter- and sub-state spatial differences, but more fundamentally, states’ territoriality (Jones, Jones and Woods, 2004, pp. 20–21). Sack explains territoriality as the *process* of connecting space and society – a “device to create and maintain much of the geographic context through which we experience the world and give it meaning” (Sack, 1986, p. 219). It is this practice of using and instrumentalising bounded space for specific outcomes that has led to states’ primacy in politics, as well as their supposed ‘containment’ of power, wealth, culture, and society (Taylor, 1994). In a time when some argue that globalisation is weakening states’ power, the notion of territory therefore remains valuable for both economic and strategic reasons; not least, it is integral to the promotion of a ‘natural’ territorial, state ordered world (see e.g. Taylor, 1994; Forsberg, 2003). In the Arctic context, it is the state’s claim to territory¹² above the

¹² Interestingly – and a recurring point throughout the study – the states’ Arctic space, their territory, is many places ‘unconventional’; rather than land, *terra firma*, the Arctic is largely oceanic: liquid, frozen, moving, and certainly not simple to physically border.

latitude of the Arctic Circle that, indeed, confers its title as an ‘Arctic state’ and membership in the Arctic Council; it is seemingly (Arctic) territoriality that *produces* (Arctic) statehood.

Recognising territory as productive – foundational to statehood – points to its iterative nature; as the state itself, space ‘stabilises’ as territory through its discursive performance. Elden (2010a, also 2009, 2010b) refers to territory as a “political technology”, comprising practices of measurement and control: a means of ordering the world not only economically and strategically, but also technically and legally (see also Agnew and Corbridge, 1995). Adding to this, Antonisch (2011) calls for a ‘peopling’ of territory – or rather, a concept of ‘territorial’ space – pointing to the inherently social practices of life and “living together” that are foundational to the way in which space and place are understood. It is through such practices that the idea of the state as a fixed, spatial, sovereign unit – clearly bordered, containing a society – is reified (Agnew, 1994, pp. 76–77, see also 1999, 2010; Walker, 1993). According to Agnew, academic analyses are also complicit in the state’s reification when not challenging the above assumptions; that is, falling into what he has termed “the territorial trap”, research becomes one of these practices of territory and statehood (*ibid.*). In contrast, critical geographers highlight territory’s conceptual contingency based on both historical context and spatial conceptualisations; the latter of which, largely guided by contemporary practices of e.g. measuring, mapping, and boundary-drawing (see also Harley, 1992; Livingstone, 1992; Thrift, 1996). Strandsbjerg (2010, 2012) coins the term “cartopolitics” to discuss how cartographic practices prescribe a certain understanding of space, and in turn, a certain political approach. Indeed, as will be returned to below, cartographic practices are thereby not just foundational to the state, but also to understandings of space as territorial ‘homeland’; ideas of national identity and ideologies of nationalism are hard to conceive of without maps (see also Thongchai Winichakul, 1997; Kaplan and Herb, 2011). And crucially, an acknowledgement of *practice* means recognition of *practitioners*:

[S]tate territoriality, conceived of as an ongoing process or state project, is something that is inherently produced, transformed and contested by a variety of state personnel. People within the state apparatus shape the terrestrial extent of policies, organizations and areas of jurisdiction and, in doing so, illustrate the social production of state territories. The practices and identities of state personnel are, equally, influenced by the territorial fabric of the state, which conditions their work (Jones, 2007, pp. 3–4).

Following the above, also conceptualisations of the Arctic rely on maps depicting it as such; that is, practices and knowledges underlying said map’s production and consumption. In this manner,

Arctic statehood – latitudinally defined – is not merely *represented* by cartographic lines, but *produced* by the lines drawn, printed, and read by people, as the following chapters will illustrate.

A ‘system’ of state sovereignty and power

Neither borders nor territories can be conceived of without something ‘outside’ them; and statehood, Arctic or not, is only ever meaningful among others. Formal statehood, as in international law, relies on external recognition, and Arctic statehood too is defined as inclusion in a region of other states. Paradoxically, globalisation – with increasing global interdependency and increasingly porous borders – has not led to a waning of state sovereignty – to the contrary. As Giddens (1985, p. 284) pointed out over three decades ago, a heralded demise of the ‘nation-state’ is “the great illusion of our times”. Instead, globalisation is redefining states’ forms and functions, potentially ‘unbundling’ hitherto interlocking concepts, such as that of territory and sovereignty (the latter, returned to below) (Sassen, 1996). However, though certain previous state prerogatives have now been transferred elsewhere – be it to private corporations or supranational organisations – the state retains primacy as the ‘neutral’ level from which others seemingly flow above, below, across, or beside; linguistically, the *inter-*, *intra-*, *sub-*, *supra-*, *trans-*, and *multi-* are all subservient prefixes dependent on their adjective, the *a priori* ‘national’ / ‘-state’. Again though, while these may seem to only modify the ‘root’, the state, the modification points to the nature of the modified itself; the state is *constituted* through relations at all scales. In this case, speaking of Arctic statehood – or even more specifically, Arctic state *identity* – means speaking of both other Arctic and non-Arctic states, inclusion and exclusion, similarity and difference.

More than anything, the Arctic is seen as a multistate region; though regions are no less slippery to define than states (see Fawn, 2009; Knecht, 2013). Even broadly defined as characterised by varying levels of interdependency (e.g. social, economic, political) between states in “relative geographic proximity” (Nye, 1968), regions too serve to organise space in units; in Gilbert’s (1988, p. 222) terms, regions are an “instrument for action”, enabling or disabling political behaviour based on said proximity (and frequently, a notion of similarity). As such, regions are no less than states products of a range of practices; and indeed, “[t]here is nothing intuitively obvious about the idea of treating the Arctic as a distinct region”, as stated by the authors of the *Arctic Human Development Report* (Einarsson *et al.*, 2004, p. 17; see also e.g. Østhagen, 2012). And yet,

we *do* treat it as a singular circumpolar region of states, and through its treatment as such, other conceptualisations, other ways of seeing, are foreclosed.

Despite not being ‘intuitive’ or natural, membership – in regions or more generally in the international ‘system of states’ – is foundational to statehood, tied to legitimacy and sovereignty as conferred by international law. In contrast to politics’ inherent contestations and compromises, law is often imagined as absolute, objective, and incontestable. Indeed, as Weber put it nearly a century ago, the “given territory” is significant for its containment of what he phrased “legitimate use of force”; force notwithstanding, the ‘legitimate’ here points to one of the fundamental concepts underlying the ‘nation-state’: sovereignty. In brief, the idea – often dated to 1648’s Treaty of Westphalia – is that each state is to hold exclusive authority to govern within their territory, which in turn supposedly contains a singular people, a ‘nation’ (see e.g. Mountz, 2013 for discussion). Of course, it is not just territory that merits unpacking as per above, but equally so nation and authority are far from neutral and far from inconsequential. Indeed, congruent borders of people and land, as well as exclusive authority has never been more than an ideal and illusion; one that is ever more clearly so in an increasingly interdependent world (Flint, 2009). And yet, nationalism – the ideology of such congruence (Gellner, 1983) – is both persistent (see Closs Stephens, 2013) and highly influential in the conduct and *acceptance* of statecraft, a point returned to below. Similarly, the concept of sovereignty is, as argued by Agnew (2005, p. 437), inadequate “not only for its ignoring the hierarchy of states and sources of authority other than states, but also because of its mistaken emphasis on the geographical expression of authority [...] as invariably and inevitably territorial”. He proposes instead ‘effective sovereignty’ as a means of analysing different ways in which centralised authority and territoriality combine in contextually contingent ‘regimes’. Taking her cue from contemporary re-conceptualisations of sovereignty, Jessica Shadian (2010) brings the discussion to the Arctic context, showing how the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) are part of a post-Westphalian redefinition of sovereignty: one that is tied less to bounded state territory, but centres on collective political identity, institutions, and governance, also for non-state entities. Sovereignty in this sense is indeed also tied to physical land, but as symbolic of cultural identification of a polity rather than that of territoriality (see also Shadian, 2012, 2013). As such, it may in analytical terms indeed be inadequate, but remains significant ideologically – if only as an idea to actively react against or to actively redefine, as is arguably exemplified in *A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration of Sovereignty in the Arctic* (ICC, 2009). Legitimacy to govern (‘without interference’ aside in a globalised world) is in this manner

increasingly divorced from legality, as recognised in international law, and from state territory *per se*; instead it becomes a matter of *practices* of governing authority and their acceptance (Connolly, 1991; Wilson and McConnell, 2015; Jeffrey, McConnell and Wilson, 2015). Hence, whether tied to territories, polities, or something else, what is at stake when discussing sovereignty and legitimacy more broadly – for Arctic states as for others – is the accepted authority to govern, to make decisions, and more fundamentally: power.

Power is, arguably, at the very heart of most studies of social relations, including this; it is an “elementary concept”, and the “connection between agency and power is of the first importance for social theory” (Giddens, 2012, p. 277). As Giddens (*ibid.*) goes on to explain: “Power’ in this highly generalized sense means ‘transformative capacity’, the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them”. In contrast to classical (e.g. Machiavellian or Hobbesian) theories of state power, where domination is exercised deliberately *by* an actor *over* another (Agnew, 2013a), power is here not to be understood as possessed – or even possessable in the first instance. Neither is it, in a more structuralist vein, dispersed in networks such as class systems of labour and production (Allen, 2003). In both of these cases, what is witnessed is the *effect* of power; in Foucault’s terms, both acts of domination and social structures are merely its “terminal forms”. Instead, power should be understood as:

the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; [...] and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (Foucault, 1978, pp. 92–93).

Throughout his work, Foucault makes the case that power is not restricted to political institutions or actors, for example, but that “it is multidirectional, operating from above and from below” (Calhoun *et al.*, 2012, p. 293). Neither an ‘object’ to be held nor a tool to be employed, power is a *relation*: forces *between* objects and subjects. And, moreover, this relation is not necessarily negative, not necessarily oppressive or dominating, but rather, it is *productive*: where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault, 1980). As seen in the above quote, the state apparatus is an institutional ‘embodiment’ of a strategy (or of ‘practices’, in Mitchell’s terms) through which power may be institutionalised, targeted, ‘take effect’; or, rephrased, it is a means to order these multidirectional multiplicities of force relations, to attempt to stabilise them in material, societal

outcomes (*inter alia* domination and class systems...). While it may be at its most obvious when the force becomes one of violence, power is arguably more intense and more durable when it runs silently, unnoticeably through the mundane repetition of institutionalised practices, such as that of democratic statecraft (Parsons, 1963). Notably, the practices of which the (contemporary democratic) state is an effect also encompass those of ‘convincing’ a public that they *want* to be led by said institution (Ringen, 2013). Whereas Foucault tends to ‘decentre’ the individual in his analyses – pointing instead power relations at the scale of the state institution and population *en masse* – practices such as the active convincing and accepting above bring attention to the inherently human in political relations. Drawing on Foucault’s notion of self-regulation, for example, Jones (2007, p. 37) thus makes the case for “attention to the decentred, poly-vocal and peopled character of political power”. That is, never fixed nor static, these are relations that flow through all scales of interaction, continually performed. In the case of the Arctic state too, it is the capability to act – a positioning in relations of political power – that is at issue in the articulation and enactment of a state identity as such.

The state as nation, national, ‘peopled’

People, polity, population, and the ‘poly-vocal’ all point to what in Weber’s formulation was the state’s first component, its “human community”. Returning to 1648’s Westphalia too, one of the fundamental aspects of statehood was the *nation*; in fact, so fundamental that the two – state and nation – are today frequently conflated, merged, and hyphenated: a linguistic symptom of an idea of political consequence (Sparke, 2005, p. xii; see also Antonsich, 2009). In short, to borrow Anderson’s (1983) term, a nation may be defined as “an imagined political community”. It is ‘imagined’ not because it is ‘false’, but “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983, p. 5). Through their imagining, and through the acts that may follow such deep-felt ‘communion’, nations serve as “key elements in the creating and sustaining of a world of states” (Storey, 2001, p. 50); the two become seemingly inextricably linked, instrumentalised, in an ideology of ‘nation-states’ (see e.g. Barth, 1969; Breuilly, 1996). It is this insight that leads some scholars – frequently categorised as the modernist school of thought – to see nations as an *invention* of the ‘sovereign’ state (see Painter and Jeffrey, 2009, pp. 148–152): a tool in a nationalist quest for congruence between people, territory, and governance (Gellner, 1983; see also Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Hechter, 2000; Penrose, 2002). And no doubt, the sense of community *is* politically potent, potentially generating strong

(and even volatile) sentiments linked to national belonging (White, 2000), which means that a discussion of national identity cannot be divorced its political implications (Guibernau, 2004). However, while scholarly debates have centred on whether states beget nations or vice versa, in practical terms the temporal boundaries of self-identified community and governing institution/territory tend to blur – often, each reinforce the other. There is no denying that several practitioners of statecraft have sought to construct (and homogenise) national ‘communities’ through the ages; but equally so, several collectives have actively sought to gain statehood. Hence, emphasis less on the question of states for nations *or* nations for states, and more on how they are *both* part of the discursive reification of the other is here the aim; in other words, how notions of Arctic nations reinforce that of the state and how notions of the Arctic state reinforce that of the nation.

It is worth noting though that not all nations – as self-identified groups of people – hold nationalist aspirations; that is, not all such collectives seek sovereign statehood with the governing institutions and bordered territories that it implies. In fact, within the boundaries of any one state there are in most, if not *all*, cases more than one nation. In the Arctic context this is brought to the fore, with indigenous groups¹³ that may identify within, across, and wholly separate from state borders. With Arctic *statehood* having become synonymous with membership in the Arctic Council, the latter is “an organisation *sui generis* in that the body is not purely intergovernmental, but also authorises a number of non-state members, particularly Indigenous groups” (Knecht, 2013, p. 167). However, as the distinction between ‘member’ and ‘participant’ implies, the state retains the privilege of decision-making through voting (Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014); the permanent participants are to be ‘consulted’, but otherwise the onus is on state representatives to listen and, as their title suggests, *represent* their many nations. Similarly, other sub-state collectives – regions, municipalities, and so on – are all expected to have their views represented by the state, their identifications rendered no more than ancillary. In other words, a level of diversity is accepted, even expected, within the state; however, only insofar as its many heterogeneous elements serve to constitute the whole. Much as the illusion of a ‘nation-state’ provides an ideological foundation for a world of states, Arctic statehood too is premised on its people,

¹³ In Canada, one of the state’s three recognised indigenous groups is indeed the ‘First Nations’. In Norway, the President of the Saami Parliament, in contrast, has had to defend and define the use of the term ‘nation’ (and specifically ‘national day’ celebrations) to stress the non-nationalist, non-separatist nature thereof (Keskitalo, 2015).

including their diversity. Performing the Arctic state means consulting and representing – paradoxically, the *inclusion* of non-state actors strengthens state claims to legitimacy and authority.

A point frequently missed from academic discussions of how the nation (or plural *nations*, as above) may be instrumental to statehood, however, is that the state is not only representing people, but also represented *by* people. The effects and practices through which the abstraction becomes ‘real’ is that of numerous people: politicians, bureaucrats, civil servants, diplomats, advisors, and so on – all of whom may also imagine *themselves* as part of the community, part of the nation. Of course, a formal, political title of Arctic statehood may not necessarily mean a felt sense of Arctic nationhood (see Medby, 2014b); however, the point is rather that dismissing the nation as simply a deliberate construction for political purposes easily overlooks the influence the same imagination of community and belonging may have on those tasked with enacting the state on a daily basis. Often in political analyses, referrals to ‘people’ is limited solely to a population defined in *opposition* to the state: a seemingly apolitical mass, who never really interacts with what seems a wholly nonhuman state, bar through pens on ballot papers once every four years or so. Even when the role of state personnel is acknowledged, they are often cast as separate and autonomous from civil society, as a demarcated, near-homogenous group with specific interests based on their sole characteristic as ‘elites’ (e.g. upholding a class/capitalist system) (e.g. Weber 1946; Miliband, 1969; Mann, 1984).

Given the impossibility of any clear-cut definition of the state, attempting to draw a line between where ‘it’, or its ‘elites’, ends and so-called ‘society’ begins is not only arbitrary (see Jones, 2012), but also becomes part of a reification of a problematic state idea (see e.g. Agnew and Corbridge, 1995) – one based on discursive binaries of state/society, politics/publics, which may potentially breed deference, disengagement, and even disenchantment. Consequently, political geographers have more recently made a concerted effort to move away from an excessive preoccupation with “the top echelons of the state apparatus”, and give attention all the important political practices that happen outside these imaginary boundaries (Dodds, Kuus and Sharp, 2013b, p. 7). And to be sure, bearing in mind the above discussion: Not exclusive to acts of the state, “power in its exercise goes much further, passes through much finer channels, and is much more ambiguous” (Foucault, 1980, p. 72). However, acknowledging the importance of those beyond the state ‘apparatus’ should not mean dismissing the latter altogether. Following Mitchell (2006, p. 170), “we must take seriously the elusiveness of the boundary between state and society, not as a problem of conceptual precision but as a clue to the nature of the phenomenon”.

In other words, it is not a matter of moving across the discursive borderline – analysing *either* the state or society – but rather, there is a need to examine the line itself: how and why it has become so, persists as such, and what it *does*. Merely shifting the balance of academic preoccupation to privilege non-state actors risks reifying the very same binaries. Instead, for a fuller understanding of the state and its practices, a reconceptualisation of social entanglement is arguably needed: one that recognises the multitudes of relations in which all subjects find themselves (and *defines* themselves, gains their subjectivities), which all bear influence on the way in which the state comes to be seen, felt, and even enacted.

Acknowledging that state practices are inherently social, relational, enacted by *practitioners* means that there is a need for ‘peopling’ conceptualisations of the state (Jones, 2007; Kuus, 2008). While defining state personnel is far from straightforward, using a working definition of those identifying as professionals at the state or federal level is one step away from an unhelpful treatment of a homogenised group of actors as ‘elites’, seemingly above or beyond society (see e.g. Woods, 1998; Smith, 2006). And indeed, while political geographers tend to accept states and territories as produced rather than pre-given (though the finer details of how and why remains debated, see e.g. Brenner *et al.*, 2003), limited attention has hitherto been given its frontline ‘producers’ (bar studies of particularly high-profile leaders). Nevertheless, this may be changing as ‘state insides’ are increasingly recognised as diverse and influential in its external enactment – including the myriad of bureaucrats, civil servants, and politicians who will most likely *not* have their names written in history books (e.g. Herzfeld, 1992; Peck, 2001; Le Grand, 2003; Kuus, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2015).

Arguing for a ‘peopling’ of the state, Rhys Jones (2007, p. 4) directs attention to “a state apparatus and territory that is continually negotiated and translated by those individuals working within its organizations and boundaries”. He notes three interrelated themes for such a ‘peopled’ understanding of the state: Firstly, the importance of the identities of state personnel; secondly, the relationship between these and organisational aspects of the state apparatus; and thirdly, the link between the state as a peopled organisation and its territorial form (Jones, 2007, p. 15). Key here is their *interrelatedness* in that people, organisation, and space all co-constitute each other in mutually reinforcing ways. In this sense, the composite idea of ‘the nation-state’ may matter not only for its instrumentalism in reifying the ‘state system’, but also for providing state personnel with meaning and purpose as they go about their work. On the one hand, the mundane and prosaic ways in which the state comes to be *felt* may affect them too in equal manner as they go

about their everyday life (see e.g. Jones and Merriman, 2009; Merriman and Jones, 2016); while, on the other, a professional position may also influence their understanding of own identity (Neumann, 2005, 2007; Dittmer and McConnell, 2015). Either way, as ‘representatives’, the question of state personnel’s conceptualisations of own state – what and whom they are *representing* – is pertinent to the ways in which it comes to be actualised. To appreciate the state as performed through a range of practices, to appreciate that state power flows through relations at all scales, it is also necessary to appreciate its performers, practitioners, and how they relate to themselves, their state, and their ‘others’ – how they see the state’s identity.

Identity

Identity, in its most basic, dictionary-defined meaning, refers to the individual or unique characteristics by which a person or thing may be recognised (Harper Collins, 2012); it refers to ‘sameness’ across time, ‘selfhood’ and ‘who you are’ (Dubow, 2009). It is a concept that has attracted much social scientific attention, and seen shifting conceptualisations of the human subject from the Renaissance through Modern thought to today (ibid.). Before bringing the state back into conversation in the final concept of ‘state identity’, it is therefore worth placing the study in its theoretical context also when it comes to work on identity.

While dictionaries may still bear the influence of humanist conceptualisations of identity – there being a unique and unchanging core of the ‘self’ – social scientists today generally agree that any individual will always represent a multitude of different social groups and individual characteristics at any given time, making identity both contextual and multifaceted (e.g. Jameson, 1991; Yaeger, 1996). Influential to and contemporary with many poststructuralist thinkers in the 20th century, psychoanalytic theory has contributed to furthering conceptualisations of identity, recognising it as an inherently social and continuous process: identity more as *identification*, never achieved but always sought. And, moreover, if identity is understood as “our sense of ourselves as individuals and social beings” (Bondi, 1993, p. 86; see also Fearon, 1999), and our sense of belonging to social groups (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63), then it follows that identity is also deeply political (see Pile and Thrift, 1995). Although there may never in reality be a singular and stable way in which the self is defined, what matters more is that there is often a *belief* in such; its social and psychic contingencies matter little if the ‘essence’ of who we are (or believe ourselves to be) is perceived as under threat. More than a mere belief or myth, however, identity may then be

defined as a discourse in that it comes about through a set of ‘acts’ (or statements, citations, practices) that all serve to regulate the meaningful production of new ones. As such, identity is an iterative process through which the subject gains *subjectivity* through the innumerable relations in which they are temporarily positioned – the performance of identity discourses (Butler, 1999). And rather than what subjects or collectives ‘are’ in and of themselves, identity is defined by its discursive boundaries; that is, negatively defined not as much as ‘being’ as what it is *not*. This constitutive outside, negative excess, and ‘other’ of the self, however, is never wholly external (Connolly, 1991); it is intrinsic to the performance of said identity, and may thereby also be that which disrupts, unsettles, and changes the self and changes discourse.

In what follows, aspects of identity discourse are presented, all of which feature in the further elaboration of ‘state identity’ in the final section of the chapter. While the concept is purposely distinct from national identity, with a focus on perceptions *within* the so-called ‘state apparatus’, literature on the nation are here both relevant and influential. That is not to privilege one specific collective identity (or rather, one subject-position) over any other, but to highlight how the two are intrinsically tied to each other in an ideology of hyphenation. And, more pertinently, it highlights that perceptions of identity – national, state, or otherwise – are always a result of a multitude of positions and relations, though also bounded and regulated by their discursive boundaries. To this end, aspects of identity are discussed below in an order parallel to that of the state: Firstly, its spatiotemporal boundaries – homelands and histories – or identity’s equivalents of ‘territory’ and ‘legitimacy’; and secondly, relations through the constitutive other or outside, the collective ‘self’, internal diversity or dissonance, and, finally, the individual. As will be clear, the performance of and *through* these relations, within and across these boundaries, has important implications politically – not least, the emergence of the Arctic state.

Spatiality

In addition to the above acknowledgement of identity as socially derived, geographers have directed attention to its inherent spatiality; an understanding of self tends to encompass an implicit relative positioning in the world (Keith and Pile, 1993, p. 27). And, as a geographically defined region, Arctic identity is clearly also a question of Arctic spatiality: *who* is Arctic is also about *where* is so. Not only is identity produced in (and by) particular spaces, but perceptions of space are also influenced by identity (Massey, 1993, p. 155) – in turn, bearing implications for how space, such as the Arctic, is understood, used, inhabited, and what practices are rendered

possible or impossible – how the world is ordered (see Said, 1979). Despite this, it is only relatively recently that the spatiality of identity has been interrogated beyond that the aforementioned seemingly pre-given ‘territory’ (Agnew, 1994, p. 55). With contemporary societal challenges such as climate change and globalisation, however, the interrelation of identity, geography, and politics are increasingly attracting analytic attention (see Neumann, 1998; Herb and Kaplan, 1999; Ferguson and Jones, 2002, pp. 1–6). According to Agnew (1998, 2013b), this is also one of the sub-field of critical geopolitics’ primary intellectual contributions: how the fusion of territory and identity has shaped the modern world into states – and indeed continues to do so (see also Rembold and Carrier, 2011). It is this political potency that has led some to argue that identity provides state representatives with a "convenient tool" (Brass, 1979, p. 91) for coordinating, mobilising, and legitimising political aims (Breuilly, 1996; Ting, 2008, p. 475). The mentioned relative positioning, for example, is of political consequence: positioning not just in space but also in relations of power – even through spatial metaphors such as ‘Western’, ‘marginal’, ‘native’, and so on (Bondi, 1993, p. 99; see also Smith and Katz, 1993; Shapiro, 1997).

Although most perceived identities include such a relative positioning in the world, an inherent spatiality, it is brought to the fore in that of national identity. Fusing social and spatial belonging, group membership and location, it is – as per above – deeply entangled with the state in the illusion of the ‘nation-state’ and the ideology of nationalism (see Thongchai Winichakul, 1997). Here, the above state ‘territory’ is translated to ‘homeland’, legal boundaries to affect and emotion, and soil to that from which family trees and histories may grow; it is the land of the people, and the people of the land. More than merely human histories, also the nonhuman and the relations *between* the two, inseparable from each other, constitute spatial experiences – such as that of the ‘homeland’ and Arctic (Massey, 2005, p. 138; also Clark, 2011; Squire, 2016). Nature, natural forces, and environments are undoubtedly a factor in shaping e.g. livelihoods and social interactions – in turn, influencing the development of group identities, connecting society to the space it occupies (Soja, 1971, p. 33). Hence, emotive attachment goes beyond ‘empty’ space, bordered topographies on maps, to also encompass its climate, flora, fauna, weather, mountains, oceans, and so on – a belief that all of these elements are deeply connected to, even shaping, ‘who we are’. In this manner, perceptions of identity do not just play into how these "materially heterogeneous connections" of a given space are interpreted, but are also inversely affected by these, such as in the formation of political identities (Featherstone, 2008, p. 32). In

other words, people are both influencing and influenced by space. In classical geopolitical reasoning – and not uncommon to present-day rhetoric and vernacular either – this argument has served as the premise for environmental determinism, and even racism: that is, a supposed *causal* relationship between geography, collective character, and nations’ position in the world (Dijink, 2002, p. 11). Tales of cold and harsh climates ‘shaping’ strong people, for example, are not just a matter of the past, but feature as romantic visions of Arctic nation-statehood in political rhetoric today – as will be elaborated in subsequent chapters. Integral as it may be for people’s perceptions of themselves, the way in which identity becomes spatialised is therefore neither natural nor unproblematic (*ibid.*); claims of national soil may not only be fertile for conflict in and of itself, but may also serve as stable ground for the reification of asymmetric power relations and hegemonic views of the world. And, moreover, if spatially defined, identity discourses become bounded and regulated also by *physical* boundaries; inclusion and exclusion come to be determined by said claims to space; what can be meaningfully said, thought, and done all contingent on locational and relational positioning.

Temporality

Positioning is not only about place, however, but also about time; identity discourses are bounded both spatially and temporally. As noted, identity in its basic sense is about that which remains *identical* through time – internal sameness in the face of external change. In the case of national identity, it is as much about *where* people are (from) as about how they came there, are there, and remain there: past, present, and future. Trust in the continuity, constancy, and reliability of both own self and “the surrounding social and material environments of action”, is what, in Giddens’ (1991, p. 92) terms, confers a sense of “ontological security” (see also Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2008). For the collective – nation, state, or both – this means a narrative of a shared past, through a shared present, to a shared future in a seemingly linear progression. As such, the Arctic state and peoples have ostensibly *always* been such, regardless of the novelty of brands and titles. Drawing on Benjamin’s concept of “homogenous, empty time”, Anderson (1983, p. 24) explains how a sense of “simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present” and co-existence among people who may never meet, yet imagine themselves to move through history *together*, is fundamental to national identity. In a manner similar to that of geography, history takes on a seemingly causal role as that which has ‘led’ the nation to where it is and where it is going; it constructs a path that extends both backwards in forwards in time – one not to veer off from. As such, the temporality of identity discourse also serves to regulate the production of new

statements thereof: the way in which identity is to be performed must 'cite' performances past (Butler, 2011). What comes to be remembered and what comes to be forgotten is therefore a matter of political importance; the telling of stories (Cameron, 2009, 2015) and engineering of history (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) may serve to materialise identity discourse in the shape of events and monuments – touched and touching the collective 'self' (Ahmed, 2004) – in turn, reifying the nation, the state, and relations of power.

While national historical narratives, and their telling and re-telling, have attracted ample attention both in geography and beyond, somewhat less attention has until recently been granted national *futures*. Clear in the Arctic context, the re-narration of the past as a *polar* past of glory, expeditions, discoveries, and victories is arguably always as a derivative of the narration of polar futures – futures based on anticipation, hopes, and fears of what is yet to come (e.g. Emmerson, 2010; Dittmer *et al.*, 2011; Arbo *et al.*, 2013; Dodds, 2013a; Depledge, 2016). As a road that extends backwards through time, the present articulation of identity also serves to lead forwards; that is, what is the future of the collective 'self' is only such today, the future is highly *present* in its momentary coming into being. The future, through practices of preparation, pre-emption, anticipation, therefore materialise in the here-and-now (Anderson, 2010a, 2010b, Adey and Anderson, 2011, 2012). Once more, the future is thereby a product of the present – not in a pre-determined sense, but in that it only ever *exists* in the now, is performed into being today. Argued by Guibernau (2013), group identification – such as that of the nation – allows the individual to transcend own sense of inevitable mortality through the collective continuity of a whole. This antidote to nihilism, she argues, is the greater gain to be had when giving up pre-group autonomy – the reason why people *choose* group identification. However, if the 'self' as such is only ever produced through interaction (Butler, 2015; Kelz, 2016), lives past and possibilities of lives future are instantaneously imprinted on the subject even before it gains its subjectivity; the seeming linearity of time is, rather, a present articulation – one among many that together form a sense of continuity through their iteration, a discourse. It is in this manner that 'being' Arctic, discourses of Arctic identities, is always an enactment within boundaries of time, of histories and futures that in the present intersect – an intersection at which the Arctic state may come into being.

Others and outsides within

Even if identity discourse may be regulated by spatiotemporal boundaries, the way in which it comes to be articulated and enacted is always a matter of relationality – constantly negotiated and re-negotiated based on who one is defining oneself against (e.g. Keith and Pile, 1993, p. 27). Just like where is Arctic is as much about where is not – and how it has become so, is so, and will continue to be so is as much about how is not – Arctic identity is an articulation of relational difference. For a nation to be a nation, a group to be a group, there must be *other* nations, other groups, against which to define it. As Anderson (1983, p. 7) explains, “even the largest of them [nations] encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind”. If it *were* coterminous with humanity writ large, it would hardly be a nation; its boundaries are that which gives it meaning. As seen even its most basic definition, identity is about the ‘unique’, about that from which something or someone may be recognised, distinguished; in other words, it is about that which is different. As per above, subjectivity or ‘self-hood’ is produced in the realisation of externality, in being affected by others – equally so for the individual as the collective (Ahmed, 2004). Anderson (1983, p. 7) continues that it is the sense of “deep, horizontal comradeship” among those included in community, defined against those excluded, “that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (ibid.). Obviously then, identity – inclusion or exclusion – is potentially highly political, with possible implications even for life or death. In a time when the ‘adoption’ of identity is increasingly seen as a choice (Guibernau, 2013), that of the nation still remains closely tied to formal state membership, citizenship, and as such – while, on the face of it, based on conscious consent and political participation – is often a result more of kinship and birthplace (Isin, 2012). The above horizontal comradeship or “fraternity” (Anderson, 1983, p. 7) is thereby articulated in terms of the familial: national identity is *more* than a passport – it is about bloodlines and heritage, ancestry that, once more, extends both backwards and forwards in time.

Some identities may then be externally imposed, others adopted; however, even though subjectivity is constituted by its ‘outside’, *which* and *how* subject-positions come to be inhabited and performed are not pre-determined. However, the performance of identity discourse is not necessarily deliberate or even conscious, not ‘for’ an external audience, but rather the enactment of codes and practices that are prior to the subject and beyond agency; subjective agency lies in which practices are to be enacted how, when, where, and against whom. This also means that

identity's 'other' – that which negatively defines who *is* by not being so – is not an absolute, incomprehensible, capitalised Other, but a constitutive one; one upon which identity depends in its constitution and enactment (see R. J. C. Young, 2012), and one which, paradoxically, simultaneously serves to threaten and strengthen the self (Connolly, 1991, pp. 65–67). In this sense, there is also always otherness within; in its definition, its articulation, identity discourse also implicitly states what it is not, who is not, and draws its own discursive borders relationally, contradistinctively. Being Arctic is wanting of meaning without the non-Arctic, the north without the south. Regardless of the relational reliance, however, difference and otherness often becomes a devaluation in the assurance of own self-certainty, even own superiority (Connolly, 1991), which in turn play into relations of power. Again, identity is political, a discursive positioning, and thereby conditions the practices through which the 'self' or the collective is relationally performed into being; it is through relations – actively, continuously *relating* – to other nations, other states, other people that identity takes on meaning.

The defining 'essence'

Based on the above – innumerable relations and positions – a sense of a distinguishable 'essence' of the 'self' or the collective is produced. For a group, such as the nation, what such an essential core may be not only differs between them, but is dynamic and contextual – as relational as the 'other', once more. In theorising nationalism, the question is often posed as 'what *kind* of nationalism', or what are the purported defining characteristics necessary for inclusion. While some have developed typologies (e.g. Hechter, 2000), chronologies, or even binary, often normative, distinctions between e.g. civic and ethnic identities (see Özkirimli, 2000; Spencer and Wollman, 2005), others emphasise the role of, *inter alia*, language, religion, descendancy, values, and so on. More often than not, however, several of these are present at any time, and lose or gain importance through interaction (Oakes, Haslam and Turner, 1994; Brubaker, 2006). When one or more of these become politicised in a project of nationalism, they may be what determines inclusion from exclusion, with deep implications for lives lived both within or outside the group's newly constructed limits. In the Arctic as elsewhere, what comes to be defined as the quintessentially so reveals less about the region or community *per se* and more about those doing the defining and the context in which it matters. If (or as) specific identificatory factors become accepted 'knowledge', a baseline of belonging, some of identity's dynamism is lost, becoming fixed, unifying that which ought to remain plural, in turn potentially determining what is seen as legitimate, meaningful, even possible.

That being said, identity is more than its 'hot' manifestations and instrumental engineering for political purposes. It is also, as a discourse, reliant on its iteration and reiteration, 'flagging' and invocation in the everyday; 'banal' (Billig, 1995), reminding members of their group through the everyday and unnoticed: "The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building" (Billig, 1995, p. 8). Geographers and others have built on and expanded Billig's concept of "banal nationalism", pointing to for example the role of popular culture and the everyday, the subjectivity of 'banality', and various other contexts identity may register without conscious engagement (see e.g. Edensor, 2002; Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011; Benwell, 2014; Paasi, 2015) – also among those in positions of statecraft (e.g. Sharp, 1993). Moreover, as part of the everyday (though not entirely without conscious engagement, one would hope), education plays a key part in instilling said 'knowledge' about the community, including the aforementioned history and geography, national spatiotemporality. School curricula, textbooks, and museums – the latter, equally for pedagogical aims as patriotic and affective ones – are important aspects of how both emotive membership and political citizenship are also taught (e.g. Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010; Benwell, 2016). Regardless of the deliberation behind them or their reception, symbols thereby function to normalise a certain worldview, materialise a discourse. In this way, symbolic representations may take on certain agency in evoking one discourse amidst another, evoking practices, and evoking one subject-position over another. 'Arcticness', for example, may take on added meaning and become part of the fabric of normality; through its constant reminding to the point of invisibility it becomes also incontestable.

Diversity and dissonance

Representations, symbols, territories, and tales may all form part of an identity discourse, and yet neither their enunciation nor reception is universal. Just as they are relational, they are subjective, and may work to unify a nation while simultaneously highlighting its relative disunity. As above, what may for some be 'banal', may for others be 'hot'; focusing on everyday life instead brings to the fore how nationalism is both contingent and complex (Jones and Merriman, 2009), and meaning is always contextual – read and negotiated through diverse subjectivities (Mavroudi and Holt, 2015). Affective symbols, such as the flag, are powerful in part due to their ambiguity and malleability to interpretation by different people in different places (Guibernau, 2013). Irrespective of how homogenous any collective may seem, or how stringent boundaries of

inclusion/exclusion may be, there is always inevitably a level of diversity, of heterogeneity; the aforementioned other within is thus not confined to a definitional antipode, but also the internal disruptions to a straight narrative. A degree of diversity may not be surprising in large groups, but also in small groups (and even within the ‘self’) there is dissonance and contradiction. And indeed, a level of difference is not unequivocally a challenge to identity, but may on the contrary be *necessary* thereto; ideas of tolerance and multiculturalism, for example, can serve as one of the above defining ‘core’ values of an identity (Antonsich and Matejskova, 2015). In that case, difference tends to be articulated as *diversity*, framed not as a threat but an advantage – potentially instrumental to neoliberal governance (e.g. Mitchell, 2003; Matejskova and Antonsich, 2015). Hence, just as the state’s constituent parts, the ‘sub-state’, may serve to reinforce the larger whole, so may practices and celebrations of the nation as avowedly ‘multi-’: cultural, lingual, racial, religious, and so on.

In contrast to what advocates for diversity highlight as its normative benefits, however, its institutionalisation, inculcation, and importance to identity can also become a way of controlling difference – of defining what difference is *acceptable* difference, where the line is drawn between the multiple within and the abject without (Brown, 2008). The adoption, appropriation, or even suppression of so-called sub-national identities within or *beneath* the ‘nation-state’ can work as a “colonisation of the mind” (Nandy, 1998, p. xi; Dirlik, 2002), whereby one particular group, one worldview, one way of identifying is favoured and reified – its alternatives foreclosed (Calhoun, 1997, p. 98). In other words, whose voice is heard and whose difference is accepted are also questions of power, serving to position – hierarchically, asymmetrically – in relations that run internal to a group. Ethnicity, or indigeneity, is but one of the many ‘multiples’ – though in the Arctic context of particular relevance. As discussed above, ‘inclusion’ and ‘partnering’ with indigenous groups – seen as *within* a state, rather than traversing them – paradoxically functions to strengthen the claim of the national (discussed in Medby, 2014a); and indeed, conceptualised as “more Arctic” than their non-indigenous co-nationals, their ‘difference’ provides added weight to the whole (Medby, 2014b). Accordingly, relations internal to what may be constructed as a unitary group may be instrumental if difference is of the ‘right’ kind, but may also produce hierarchies and power relations within. In either case – whether celebrated or lamented – the articulation of difference, integral to any identity, is also a positioning: a drawing of boundaries that define inside and outside – who may speak and act, how and when.

The subjective in the collective

It is not only various constituent ‘sub-groups’ within a group that may challenge the collective and collective imaginaries; the same can be said for each identifying individual. And this is also an argument for focusing on the everyday aspects of identification: everyday life will inevitably be as varied as each person living it. In arguing that gender is only one category among many along the “axes of power relations” (others including race, ethnicity, class, etc.), Butler (1999, p. 7) makes the case that identity is a misnomer in the singular case, but that this plurality is also what simultaneously constitutes it as such. In the case of the ‘national’ too, it is in reality but one of numerous subject-positions. It is their combination that produces the ‘self’, subjectivity: a recognition that also points to its processual production, always unfinished and unfixed, as new combinations are made, new encounters unfold – as life does. Theories of identity tend to focus on either personal or collective identity; and while, as noted, the former has been increasingly recognised as socially produced, less has been written on what it really means to consider the collective as a *collection* of singularities (see Brubaker, 2006). In other words, how do individual subjectivities – based on multifarious subject-positions – filter into the enactment of the collective; and vice versa, how does the collective filter into the enactment of the subject itself. Rather than seeing the individual subject as autonomous from the collectives to which they view themselves as belonging, the point is rather the inextricability between these various ‘categories’. For example, the implication is that identifying as a daughter, granddaughter, sister, student, writer, runner, dog-lover, European, Norwegian, and so on may *all* play into how the self *and* how collectives come to be understood, and subsequently enacted through words and actions. In order to fully follow through a ‘peopling’ of concepts and their production, e.g. the state (Jones, 2007; Kuus, 2014) and territory (Antonsich, 2011), ‘people’ too must be conceptually deconstructed into its constituent parts: the person. In the end, identity is a matter of relationality at *all* ‘scales’; the micro and the macro, the tree and the woods, are but different foci – in order to understand the functioning of the whole, there is a need to understand its parts.

Conceptual framework of ‘state identity’

While much has been written on both (national) identity, on the one hand, and the state, on the other, there have hitherto been few attempts to bring these into conversation with each other. With the concept of ‘state identity’, the aim here is to bring together the discussed concepts of

discourses, identity, and statehood in order to understand how identity discourses may feature *within* the so-called ‘apparatus’, among those effecting the state abstraction into material being on a daily basis.

A concept of state identity can be found in certain constructivist scholarship of IR (see e.g. Wendt, 1992; Biersteker and Weber, 1996; Wendt, 1999; Mitzen, 2006; Steele, 2008; Larsen, 2014) – however, often referring to an identity of an anthropomorphised state with agency in its own right (e.g. Wendt, 2004; however, see Lomas, 2005). As the eponymous hallmark of IR more generally, the focus tends to be on how states, as ‘black boxes’, interact and relate at the scale of the international – often as thinking, speaking, opining actors in and of themselves. And though the social construction of the image of a coherently acting state is often recognised, the level of analysis remains at that of the ‘system of states’ and foreign policy behaviour (e.g. Campbell, 1992; Kassinova, 2001). Reviewing a growing body of political scientific work on identity, Fearon (1999) makes a distinction between literature on group and individual identity: the former referring to membership in various groupings of states (e.g. middle-powers, Western, NATO, the Arctic Council, etc.) (see also Wendt, 1994); whereas the latter, to the distinguishing features of a specific state or its ‘type’. Adding to this, a state’s “identity can refer also to that package of attributes the possession of which makes something a state and not some other kind of thing” (Fearon, 1999, p. 34), in other words the believed essence of statehood; and finally, the seemingly constant properties that make a state remain ‘itself’ even after a complete turnover of population and staff. Notably, however, studies tend to adopt one of the given perspectives, thereby missing their interrelatedness: how memberships, ‘types’, statehood, and continuities all intertwine in mutually constitutive ways. And, while the ways in which identity has featured in political analyses are varied, they seldom deal with identities among the individuals ‘inside’, enacting the state – namely, its widely defined personnel.

Recognising the need to understand the human behind the development of foreign policy specifically, IR’s cognate academic field of foreign policy analysis enabled new questions and new answers by “drawing heavily on the works and methods of scholars not normally consulted by political scientists” (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, 2002, p. 21). These borrowed insights came from, *inter alia*, organisational and social psychology, highlighting the social dynamics at play also in so-called elite decision-making. Here of particular relevance, Holsti (1970) introduced ‘national role conceptions’, arguing the importance of interrogating “policymakers’ own definitions of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their

state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems” (ibid. p. 254-256). Even though this and subsequent work building thereupon (Kaarbo, 2003; Cantir and Kaarbo, 2012) have added to the analysis of international state behaviour by pointing to elite conceptions, few would question the analytical categories: how and why conceptions of both the international level as ‘outside’ and elites as ‘above’ come to be normalised; and moreover, what it would truly entail to consider elites as *people* beyond their professional title.

In both anthropology and sociology, the people within the state institution have received considerably more attention. This is exemplified by the aptly titled collection *The Anthropology of the State* (Sharma and Gupta, 2006) and its broad range of contributors, although in fact the relevance and research focus of the collection exceed the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology. In considering the state as a cultural artefact, anthropological accounts highlight its inherently human foundations¹⁴. In sociological studies, Weberian (see e.g. Weber, 1946; Waters and Waters, 2015) and post-Weberian work on bureaucracy have been influential and have contributed to theories of the inner workings of institutions (e.g. Du Gay, 2000; Crozier, 2010; Peters, 2010). The present study is deeply indebted to these insights; however, it differs from them in at least two regards: Firstly, while anthropology tends to hone in on the individual, sociology zooms out to the collective. Here, in contrast, the aim is to bring together the micro and the macro, the individual and the collective, in order to highlight how they both constitute each other. Arguably, just as little may be said about a subject without its surrounding discourse, little may be learnt about institutional workings without an acknowledgement of their inherently heterogeneous, contradictory, and subjective constituents. And, secondly, the present study foregrounds identities’ consolidation in space and time, its spatiotemporality; as such, it remains firmly embedded in geography, and it is here it aims to make its primary contribution.

Political geographers, approaching these topics from a slightly different angle, are increasingly attuned to identity, relationality, and the political power of the affective: thereby gradually ‘peopling’ concepts and analyses. Wanting to pry open the ‘black box’, Müller (2012) employs

¹⁴ The anthropological influence in academic engagement with the state is not limited to the acknowledgment of its inherently social, human character, nor is it a return to political science’s concern with ‘political culture’/-behaviour (e.g. Almond and Verba, 1972); it also extends to the adoption of ethnographic approaches to research, whereby attention is granted the *whole* range of human interaction and conduct of life that plays into the state and statehood (see e.g. Hansen and Stepputat, 2001; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad, 2005; Megoran, 2006; Sharma and Gupta, 2006).

actor-network theory to show how humans and nonhumans co-produce and co-perform political organisations, and outlines a research agenda for critical geopolitics – including more attention to the production and circulation of geopolitics and geopolitical knowledge within organisations, institutions, and agencies. Drawing on insights from e.g. the above noted anthropology, others have contributed to a more nuanced view of the production of not only geopolitical knowledge and policy, but also subjectivities – seeing politics as ‘lived’ through the mundane and everyday, and indeed, seeing it as ‘peopled’ (see Peck, 2001; Mountz, 2003; Jones, 2007, 2012, Kuus, 2008, 2013, 2014, 2015, Clark and Jones, 2011a, 2011b). As mentioned, increasing attention is being directed at the inner workings of the state and other institutions, including those of bureaucrats and the many ‘invisible’ parts of the ‘machinery’ (e.g. Herzfeld, 1992). In this regard, insights from feminist geopolitics have been highly valuable, as it “challenges the scales of geopolitics and refocuses on the mundane, everyday reproductions of geopolitical power” (Massaro and Williams, 2013, p. 567; see Dowler and Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2004; Mountz, 2004; Dixon and Marston, 2011). So far in political geography, however, the permeability of institutional (and social) boundaries and their related identities have not led to a sustained effort to explore how subjective entanglements of subject-positions at all scales come into play in the articulation of ‘self’ and of discourse pertaining to statehood; in other words, how the performance of the state idea – through discourses of state identity – bears traces of the state’s people, who, importantly, are always *more* than personnel, *more* than elites.

It is to this irreducibility of human identity that the present study turns with the concept of ‘state identity’ discourse. As it is here used, it refers to how those *within* the state – personnel at the state/federal level – articulate discourses of their state’s identity: articulations that are, importantly, always *relational*, always excessive to conceptual boundaries of the state, but nevertheless, internal thereto through its many articulators. The aim is therefore to explore how these articulations (broadly defined) are both spatiotemporally regulated and inherently relational; what the implications may be for political practice; and, in turn, how the insights gained may contribute to a fuller understanding of the state.

Bringing the concept of state identity to the empirical case of Arctic states and statehood, the present study is concerned with how state personnel within Arctic states – specifically Norway, Iceland, and Canada, as further elaborated in the following chapter – come to understand the identity of own state and self as ‘representative’ thereof. Starting with the spatiotemporal

regulation of discourse, Arctic state identity is then explored across scales¹⁵: heuristically ordered through international, national, sub-national, and finally, personal relationality. That is, firstly, the way in which spatialities – geographies and environments – of Arctic identity are described and defined; and secondly, how temporalities – histories and futures – thereof adds to a ‘frame’ within which Arctic identity may become political practice: a stage upon which the performance thereof may play out. This performance, however, is never a solo act, but the result of co-actors’ interaction and the relations *between* them. To this end, Arctic state identity is explored as it is stated into being at scales of the international, membership in an international region; national, as key to an essence of the community; sub-national, as tied to relative northerness and indigeneity; and personal, as personnel’s own sense of ‘self’ within and beyond their state office walls.

Finally, based on the preceding discussion, the research questions guiding the study are the following:

1. *How do state personnel in Norway, Iceland, and Canada articulate discourses of their state’s ‘Arctic identity’?*
 - a. *How does the spatiotemporality of state identity discourses serve to regulate the production of these articulations?*
 - b. *How are state officials’ articulations relationally mediated across scales from the international to the national, sub-national, and personal?*
2. *How, in turn, does state identity’s discursive positioning condition possible political practice for those tasked with enacting the state?*
3. *Finally, how may the concept of ‘state identity’— exploring identity discourses within a ‘peopled’ state —contribute to our understanding of the state (Arctic or otherwise)?*

¹⁵ This is not to reify scales or scalar thinking, however. The seemingly vertical conceptual ordering of scales has come under geographical scrutiny – and criticism – as part of the move to destabilise taken-for-granted categories and binaries, in particular those involved in discursive positioning in relations of power (see e.g. Marston, 2000; Brenner, 2001; Moore, 2008). Their usage here is primarily heuristic, as a frequent means of ordering understanding of the world and politics, while also pointing to their interrelatedness; indeed, demonstrating how these scales are *not* real, but continually overlap and intertwine.

Chapter Three

Operationalising State Identity

With an aim of analysing discourses of Arctic state identity, this chapter flows directly from the study's theoretical framework. Here I lay out the project's methodological approach, based on the epistemological premises of a poststructuralist understanding of discourse. The chapter's title does therefore not signal the start of something new, but should rather be seen as an intermission, as research questions are translated into research practice.

The chapter starts by returning to discourses, focusing on how they may be studied through statements and articulations. In particular, I employ a Foucauldian analysis of discourse as opposed to a more strictly linguistic approach. In the case of this study, the focus *is* on language in verbal and written form, but in the sense that language simultaneously represents and produces meaning – that language is, in and of itself, practice. Following this, the choice of case studies, three Arctic states, is briefly presented, stating their particular selection. Importantly, the study is neither a comparative nor generalisable one, but rather offers three examples of how state identity may be articulated amongst state personnel. This leads on to the more concrete processes of data collection. Firstly, I discuss document analysis as a first step and a means of collecting 'background' data upon which further questions could be asked. Secondly, I discuss interviewing as method and my use thereof. For the latter part, I elaborate on interview sampling, settings, questions, language, etc.; before turning to data analysis, including brief discussions of transcription, coding, 'writing-up' and presentation of findings. Finally, I note my own positionality throughout the study: as a researcher, a northerner, and – just like the study's participants – situated within discourses and relations through which identity is formed.

Analysing discourses

Returning to the concept of discourse, this has gained high currency in contemporary thought; and for some, this has meant a dilution of the concept – an all-encompassing and vague term that is slippery to define and even more so to study. My understanding of the term is, as noted in the

previous chapter, indebted to Foucault's thought – in particular as offered in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) – although he was reluctant to offer any methodological blueprint. Secondary readings and uses of his work differ in their interpretations of how discourses may be analysed, and so a few words on my methodological approach follow.

Drawing on Kendall and Wickham's (1999, p. 42) method of *using* Foucault's notion of discourse, the first step is recognising "a discourse as a corpus of 'statements' whose organisation is regular and systematic". In other words, discourses of Arctic state identity may be analysed as 'rules'-based statements. Importantly, 'statements' are here not merely linguistic, spoken word, but also practices and thoughts; they are the surfacing of meaning. Following this, one may identify the rules of production of statements, the rules delimiting what may meaningfully be 'stated', the rules that create spaces for new statements, and finally, the rules ensuring that practice is simultaneously material and discursive (*ibid.*). The latter step refers to the inseparability of discourse and materiality – understanding discourses not as "a group of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49; see also Hardy and Thomas, 2015). In other words, paying attention to what articulations *do* rather than merely what they supposedly intend to communicate. The study's focus, then, pertains to the 'statements' of Arctic state identity that together form an ordered discourse: *how* are these relationally articulated; what do they *do* in terms of positioning in relations of power; how do they work to *delimit* but also *engender* new statements (again, statements here also as practices); and finally, what does this productive but bounded force mean for the way in which the Arctic state comes into being?¹⁶.

It is here also worth reiterating that in contrast to some of Foucault's critics, I do not see an incommensurability with his work and a focus on individual subjects' statements. These enunciations are that which, seen *together* with other enunciations (broadly defined), both form and are formed by a discourse. In order to analyse discourse, "we must first discover the law operating behind all these diverse statements, and the place from which they come": who is speaking, from which institutional sites, and from which relational position is the enunciation made (Foucault, 1972, pp. 50–52). As he elaborates elsewhere, "[i]t would of course, be absurd to deny the existence of the individual who writes and invents. But I believe that [the individual]

¹⁶ See p. 52: these are merely slight re-wordings of the research questions guiding this study.

takes upon himself the function of the author” (Foucault, 1981, p. 59) – that is, a specific subject-position within discourse from which they may ‘write’. “Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined” (Foucault, 1972, p. 55). Hence, what the present study interrogates is articulations by the state official – a certain subject-position – *of* and *from within* a discourse that constitutes them as such.

Research setting: Three Arctic states

The study’s empirical setting for articulations of state identity discourses is the Arctic. More specifically, I focus on three Arctic states: Norway, Iceland, and Canada. However, discourses of state identity are not confined only to these particular spaces; rather, the Arctic provides a current geographical locus for explicit state-level articulations of identity.

As largely oceanic, even intermittently frozen, the Arctic is an atypical ‘territory’ – until recently, imagined as little more than the white cap covering the top of the globe. Yet, today it is undergoing quick and highly traditional ‘statisation’ in the midst of dramatic climate change. That is, in the face of increasing international attention, including calls for designating it as a ‘global commons’ or subjecting it to an Antarctic-like treaty¹⁷, the eight states with territorial or oceanic/continental shelf claims above the Arctic Circle (approximately 66°34’ north) are eagerly carving it up in neat units of authority. These eight are Norway, Sweden, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Russia, Canada, and the USA; as formally titled Arctic states, they make up the members of the exclusive Arctic Council¹⁸. Although each state’s relationships with the Arctic differ, they are currently all busily jumping through the various hoops of constructing their versions of Arctic statehood. The practices of statecraft employed for this purpose are therefore contextually specific, but nevertheless converge around a common positioning as the eight privileged holders of ‘true’ Arctic knowledge, rights, and responsibilities. A significant part of this positioning is the articulation of identities as such: rhetorically coupling Arctic statehood with Arctic nationhood. As this is often more explicit in the Arctic context than elsewhere, it is a space

¹⁷ See footnote 10, p. 27.

¹⁸ See footnote 7, p. 18.

particularly apt for studying the wedding of statehood and identity in a discourse of state identity. However, as a space that does not quite 'fit' the typical mould of a national territory, the Arctic necessitates some rhetorical re-shaping. By challenging assumptions of the 'homeland', this process of identity's re-articulation reveals much about the 'rules' according to which statements of identity discourse may be uttered. In other words, pushing against the boundaries of what can and cannot be meaningfully said or done within state identity discourses, it shines a light from the margin upon the core of what the state is imagined to be.

Norway, Iceland, and Canada were chosen as the study's three cases due to these states' officials' particularly active and vocal use of identity-based rhetoric in relation to Arctic issues and politics. My initial interest was in how such rhetoric and their related geographical imaginaries were employed in order to deliberately construct a platform from which to launch policy, which would then ostensibly gain support based on patriotic sentiment among the electorate. However, it soon transpired that this top-down construction of national Arctic identity provided a rather crude explanation of the ways in which political statements are made. A similar ambivalence and contextual relativity as I had witnessed among young citizens in one Arctic state, Norway (see Medby, 2014b), was also apparent among those professionally representing the Arctic state on a daily basis. Identity is not just a means towards the political *end* of statecraft, but is instead implicated in the *process* as practitioners too find themselves within discourse. Thus, the three case studies – all with similarly vocalised Arctic identities, yet identities that are articulated in highly dissimilar terms – provide entry-points into not just what the state does but, more fundamentally, why and how 'it' does anything at all.

Although the study does not employ a comparative methodology *per se*, it does offer three cases that may be contrasted on the basis of their superficially related articulations of Arctic identities that nevertheless manifest idiosyncratically. Their differences are in part due to their relationships with the Arctic, which are both historically and geographically varying. However, for all three the Arctic title provides a privileged status for otherwise 'small/medium power'-states, and thus, an opportunity to be heard and seen internationally (see de Carvalho and Neumann, 2015). These differing Arctic relationships are elaborated on by means of interwoven analysis of statements in the presentation of each empirical case in the subsequent chapters. Nonetheless, a few words of introduction to the three empirical cases are here in order to shed light on the choice of specific foci:

The first of the three, **Norway**, holds claims to both land and sea territory in the Arctic, which means that in addition to belonging to the Arctic eight (A8) they are also among the more exclusive five Arctic Ocean littoral states. Political rhetoric around the Norwegian involvement in the ‘High North’ tends to be framed in national or even international terms. That is, even though Northern Norway (the only region actually above the Arctic Circle) does receive particular attention in policy pertaining to the Arctic, the emphasis is still on it being a concern at a higher scale than the sub-nationally regional; tellingly, it is the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (N.MFA) that holds the coordinating role of Norwegian Arctic policy. With an indigenous Saami population in the north, the ‘Norwegianisation’ of the region has a problematic legacy linked to historical assimilation processes at the behest of the state (e.g. Hønneland, 2011). However, the Norwegian Saami Parliament is today an active political player – also in the Arctic Council with the transnational Saami Council as a Permanent Participant¹⁹. It is also worth noting that in addition to the Saami people (who span four states), there are also several hundred thousand non-indigenous northerners to whom the question of level of governance is equally pertinent. Moreover, the Norwegian government’s Arctic involvement is inextricably bound together with, on the one hand, strategic concerns relating to bordering Russia (with memories of a tense Cold War²⁰); and, on the other, commercial interests relating to potential petroleum resources in the north (Norway’s economy being, first and foremost, hydrocarbon-based). The last decade’s governments have stood by the assertion that the Arctic is their “number one strategic priority” (N.MFA., 2014b). Indeed, today the Arctic has become regarded as both the country’s “source of future wealth and claim to historical greatness” (Emmerson, 2010, p. 7; see also Burgess, 2001; Eriksen and Neumann, 2011).

Moving westwards, **Iceland** provides a different example of an Arctic state. Despite being the only Arctic island state, they do not hold claims to an extended continental shelf to the Arctic Ocean, meaning that they are actually not considered an Arctic coastal state. In fact, in terms of latitude, only a small island off the north of the main island is even north of the Arctic Circle, allowing some to cast doubt on Iceland’s authority to speak on questions of the Arctic whatsoever. However, this is a critique the Icelandic government has publicly refuted repeatedly.

¹⁹ The Arctic Council has six indigenous peoples’ organisations holding status as Permanent Participants. In very brief, this means that despite not having formal voting rights (as the states do), they have to be ‘consulted’ on all matters (see Koivurova and Heinämäki, 2006).

²⁰ Norway is an active member of NATO, and presently the previous Norwegian PM, Jens Stoltenberg, serves as the organisation’s Secretary General.

As they argue, they are located in the middle of oceanic streams going to and fro the Arctic Ocean, and therefore arguably *more* implicated in Arctic matters; and, with a historical fishery based economy (and related identity), any exclusion from ocean-related discussion is inevitably wrapped in controversy (I.MFA., 2011, p. 1; Ingimundarson, 2011; Dodds and Ingimundarson, 2012). Hence, for the Icelandic state, the impetus to assert their Arctic statehood and identity has become tied to wider discourses of independence. Furthermore, the (very) small nation – with no indigenous population and only just over 300,000 inhabitants – was arguably faced with a sense of identity crisis in the wake of the severe financial one (Bennett, 2012). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Arctic has here become imbued with economic significance – including the way in which identity in relation thereto tends to be framed – and a stronger sense of an Arctic future than a past. This renewed focus may, then, offer an interstice in the Icelandic narrative where the Arctic may gain salience (e.g. Oslund, 2011; Loftsdóttir, 2014).

Finally, charting further westwards along the Arctic Circle around the southern tip of Greenland, **Canada** offers yet a third example of Arctic state identity. Like Norway, it holds claims to both land and sea territory above the Arctic Circle, but here it has historically tended to be framed as a ‘frontier’ and wilderness, both geographically and culturally removed from the nation at large. By the majority southern-residing population, the Canadian North was – and to an extent still *is* – distant and exotic, a place of dreams and imaginaries, mythical and dangerous, accessible only to heroic explorers and the local Inuit (Grace, 2001; see also Hillmer and Chapnick, 2007a; Baldwin, L. Cameron and Kobayashi, 2012). In contrast to Norway again, distances are much wider, the climate much harsher (with no Gulf Stream), and connections between the North and South much less developed. The country’s colonial past still runs through Canadian relations today. Still, the ‘frozen’ North holds an important symbolic value for the nation’s distinctiveness – as defined both against the former empire, Great Britain, and now the southern-lying USA (e.g. Cairns *et al.*, 1999; Keskitalo, 2004; Bone, 2009). While historically and symbolically important, the Arctic has today, once more, gained increasing material and strategic value to the country – in particular, as a stage upon which to perform sovereignty, rhetorically linked it to the protection of homeland and people.

The three cases all bring something different to the study. As qualitative case studies, the “guiding philosophical assumption is that in-depth understanding about one manifestation of a phenomenon (a case) is valuable on its own without specific regard to how the phenomenon is manifest in cases that are not studied” (Verschuren, 2003; see also Gerring, 2007; Baxter, 2010, p. 82). In other

words, each state represents distinct versions of state identity discourses – pointing to the contextually contingent nature of what is constructed around the shared conceptual framework. And, as will become clear, despite each case being analysed as one in their separate chapters, they soon turn out to be made up of a multitude of cases: numerous people who may coalesce as representatives under the flag of their respective state, but nevertheless occupy their subject-position there in different ways. That is not to revert to paralysing relativism, but rather to break away from black-boxing generalisations (see Flyvbjerg, 2006). The conceptual framework of state identity discourses may therefore be transferable, but with the recognition that the way in which the bole and boughs are foliated will always be contextual and relational – acknowledging the potential for the different, the multiple, the inherently contradictory of any given discourse.

Research data

Documents

Having identified the empirical cases upon which to focus, selecting and delimiting data followed. In addition to more general background reading on each Arctic state, the primary stage of data collection (and subsequent analysis of discourse), started with key policy documents relating to each state's Arctic policies through the most recent decade. While this was limited in scope, the aim was to narrow down themes that could then be further pursued in interviews. As such, it was an essential step of the study, considering that strategy or policy papers must be conceptualised “as both containing and making imaginative geographies; specifying the ways ‘the world is’ and, in so doing, actively (re)-making that same world” (Bialasiewicz *et al.*, 2007, p. 411). Moreover, these documents were valuable for gaining a more holistic understanding of articulations that were delivered in different contexts and to different audiences (see Kuus, 2008, p. 2074), and provided invaluable background knowledge.

In the case of Norway, these documents²¹ were: *The High North Strategy* (N.MFA., 2006), *New Building Blocks in the North* (N.MFA., 2009), *The High North: Visions and Strategies* (N.MFA., 2011b), *Norway's Arctic Policy* (N.MFA., 2014a), and *The Future North* (N.MTIF, 2015). For

²¹ When possible, I cite the English versions of documents used, as long as these do not leave out the relevant point (even when shortened). However, when conducting the reading I would firstly read the original, Norwegian version (as it is also my first language).

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Iceland, the most relevant documents were fewer: *Iceland in the Arctic* (I.MFA., 2009) and *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy* (I.MFA., 2011). And finally, for Canada, the main papers were: *Canada's Northern Strategy* (C.DIAND, 2009) and *Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* (C.FATDC, 2010). Clearly, the Norwegian government, and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are the most active of the three in the textual documentation of their Arctic statehood²². In addition to these formal reports and policy papers, this primary stage also included locating and reading relevant political speeches and written statements, focusing on the most recent decade. This limited analysis was by no means intended to be exhaustive; however, it facilitated honing in on the regularities and structures in some of the statements that together form discourse²³.

Moreover, it provided a useful point of departure for the further conduct of the research, in particular in the identification of discursive contestations and irregularities between different modes of statements (see e.g. Rothbauer, 2008). Finally, familiarity with some of these texts was instrumental to the establishment of rapport and researcher credibility in the subsequent stage of the study, interviewing state officials.

Interviews

Discourses do not reside in individual texts or practices, but in the intertextuality *between* different modes of statements (Phillips and Hardy, 2002, pp. 3–4). And meaning, not least in terms of identity, is produced relationally; it is intersubjective. Therefore, textual analysis only provided a first step to be followed by semi-structured interviews with some of the key producers of state-statements, namely state personnel. The motivation was to challenge the narrative coherence of officially produced, proof-read, and audience-targeted documents. In contrast, an interview is an encounter through which ambiguities, inconsistencies, and contingencies may be explored. In Gill Valentine's (2005, p. 111) words, interviews aim "to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives. The emphasis is on considering the meanings people attribute to their lives and the processes which operate in particular social contexts". Here, the relationship between the researcher and researched is interactive; that is, data is *co-*

²² See Neumann (2007) for an interesting account of how, in the case of the N.MFA, speech-writing serves as a means of internal ministerial identity-construction; in the intensive *co*-production of texts, the state's diplomats 'speak with one voice'.

²³ As I am not the first to conduct discourse analysis of these documents, my understanding is also indebted to a host of other writers. In particular, Leif-Christian Jensen's extensive work on the Norwegian government's High North-discourses merits acknowledgement (see, inter alia, Jensen, 2006, 2007, 2012; Jensen and Hønneland, 2011; Jensen and Skedsmo, 2010), and was indeed an initial source of inspiration in the conception of the research idea in 2011.

constructed, as ‘my’ questions became “co-owned and co-shaped in the unfolding interactivity of questioning, answering, listening and conversing” (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, p. 129).

Defining my sample, ‘state personnel’, posed an obvious challenge considering the difficulty of defining the state itself. In the broadest sense, it could include all publicly employed professionals; however, I was interested in those employed specifically at the national/federal level, and, importantly, would identify *themselves* as state personnel²⁴. This meant focusing on those working either in the government or civil service, elected or appointed. Apart from this restriction, though, the criteria were left purposely open in order to gain insight *across* the state, from a wide range of different positions, different ministries/departments, levels of seniority, partisanship, and so on. The choice to limit the research only to the state/national – in the Canadian case, the federal – level was deliberate, even though articulations of Arctic identity would likely be different among people at e.g. county, provincial, or territorial levels of governance. In particular in Canada, the less centralised, federalised political system no doubt has implications for identity and sense of community²⁵; while e.g. foreign policy is among their responsibilities, the day-to-day well-being of Canadian citizens is often considered that of provincial and territorial governments. However, as previously noted, the study explicitly seeks an understanding of how and why the Arctic is becoming ‘statised’ amid potentially competing governance arrangements. Hence, the view from the capitals and ‘core’ of the state institution – from the ‘centre’ to the ‘peripheries’ (see Shields, 1991) – was here key. Indeed, the interest lies exactly in how those residing far therefrom and tasked with policies seemingly irrelevant thereto understand the meaning of representing an ‘Arctic’ state. Furthermore, the sampling was devised as linking directly to the study’s epistemological premises: primarily illustrative rather than universally representative, but nevertheless telling us something more generally about the people of the state (Mason, 2002; see also Valentine, 2005; Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010).

²⁴ I use state personnel, representatives, officials, employees etc. interchangeably, as the nuances are not of relevance in this particular instance. This is not to deny that there are significant variations between these, not least in terms of professional autonomy; however, as my interest in discourses that permeate *across* all of these variations, they are referred to together. Notably, I avoid using ‘elites’ unless citing others, as this, in my view, reinforces static and binary conceptions of state/society, with/without power. Instead, I see power as flowing in and between, always in motion, and certainly not ‘held’ by anyone or anything ‘above’ others (see Woods, 1998). Etymologically, the term is related to the ‘elected’, which is less problematic, but nevertheless ill-fit for my focus also on the appointed.

²⁵ See especially pp. 166 and 174 for further discussion of Canada as federal, bi-national and –lingual, and ‘multicultural’. This was also something several Canadian respondents reflected on (e.g. C.v as quoted on p. 176).

The strategy for purposive interview recruitment was a combination of “maximum variation” and “snowball” sampling (Tracy, 2013, pp. 135–136): Firstly, I emailed widely to publicly available addresses – including both general governmental, parliamentary, and ministerial ‘post-boxes’ and those of individuals. And secondly, this snowballed through avenues opened up by this initial contact, social networks, and with the assistance of so-called ‘gatekeepers’ – that is, initial points of contact to whom the research was presented first (Tracy, 2013, p. 71). The fact that many were referred to me by an own colleague added to the credibility of the project, and was likely a factor in their candour. However, it is worth noting that due to the method of recruitment and the relative niche nature of the topic, those most likely to respond or be referred were often those already somehow involved with or interested in Arctic matters – potentially therefore holding a stronger sense of ‘Arctic identity’ than the average bureaucrat. Again though, the purpose was never to make universal claims that would apply across the state, but rather to illustrate the subjective and individual of those within it.

Altogether, I spoke to 49 state officials across the three states: 16 in Norway, 12 in Iceland, and 21 in Canada. These represented 20 ministries/departments, the Norwegian and Icelandic parliaments (*Stortinget* and *Alþingi*), and the Canadian Senate (see Appendix B). Moreover, they represented a wide range of positions, from advisors to ministers, and included both indigenous and non-indigenous people. The majority of the interviews took place face-to-face in three rounds of fortnight-long ‘fieldwork’ from June to December 2014 in the respective states’ capitals. As noted above, conducting these primarily in the capitals was chosen not only based on practical reasons; it was with an aim of hearing the voices of those perhaps based far from the Arctic but tasked with its representation. However, that is not to deny the cost of focusing primarily on those based in the states’ capitals; voices from what often is, or at least used to be, considered peripheral, from the far North, play an important role in the ways in which the state comes into being – in the case of Arctic identity, perhaps even more so than otherwise. And, indeed, when it comes to the conceptualisation of an Arctic identity specifically, the North and Northerners’ presence as *part of* the state is highly significant; something that was often mentioned in interviews, as shall be returned to in later chapters. In other words, the accounts offered here are mostly, though with some exceptions, articulated *as* but not *in* the Arctic (though in an Arctic state, notwithstanding). The first round of interviews, in Oslo, was conducted during a stay for a summer course at the University of Oslo (‘A Changing Arctic’), while the latter two, in Reykjavik and Ottawa, were timed to coincide with the two conferences *The Arctic Circle Assembly* and Arctic

Net's annual *Arctic Change*. This meant that in addition to timely access, I had the opportunity to observe officials' interaction with colleagues, academics, and the general public. Thus, without conducting ethnographic analysis *per se*, I benefited from experiencing the social practices of the subject who represents the Arctic state. In all contact, a thorough introduction to the project was enclosed (and repeated at the start of each meeting), and a formal consent form was signed²⁶. The latter stipulated, *inter alia*, the option to withdraw at any time before, during, and after interview participation, and ensured complete confidentiality.

Due to the limitations of my time in the 'field', 18 of these interviews were conducted over the phone. Although there are drawbacks to this – such as not being able to use or read body-language, and not knowing the surrounding setting – the convenience also meant that I was able to speak to more people, and especially more senior staff who otherwise were too busy and less likely to invite a researcher to their offices. Despite it not being the preferred mode, telephone conversations actually turned out to have their advantages too: Just like I did not know their setting, neither did they know mine, which potentially added comfort and some dialogues flowed more naturally.

The research settings, then, ranged from the offices of the interviewees, various ministries, the hallway of the Canadian Senate, conference venues, coffee shops, and my own home (the latter in the case of telephone interviews, that is). In some cases, I had to go through numerous security checks, show my passport, and have my bag scanned; while in others, candid conversations were had over busy cafeteria lunches. Some settings seemed wholly irrelevant to the content of the responses, while on other occasions the surroundings became an actant in structuring the conversation: maps on walls, figurines on window-sills, and not least – as in the thesis' opening vignette – the weather played into the way in which answers were formulated (see Dunn, 2010). In three interviews (all of which with Canadian officials) I unexpectedly found myself outnumbered – by the presence of an additional unexpected respondent, a note-taking observer, or both. All of this clearly had a bearing on the dynamics of the conversations that took place; not least, identity and a subject-position as representing the state are inevitably articulated differently when there is another occupying a similar position present – the performance becomes a double-act. The social construction of meaning in these settings – including who is allowed to speak

²⁶ Both the consent form and the project as a whole have been subject to ethical approval at Durham University prior to the research taking place.

when, on what topics – could merit a whole thesis on its own. Nevertheless, without discounting the significance of these contingencies across the interviews, all of the above point to the unavoidable fact that each research encounter *always* will be (and *should* be) different – just as I argue each person, among the people of the state, is.

It is worth noting that interviewing so-called ‘elites’ has implications for the researcher-researched relation²⁷. There are a range of particular challenges relating to, *inter alia*, power, authority, and access (see Kuus, 2008, 2014, 2013). Conventional methodological literature tends to caution that this often means that the power relation is ‘flipped’; that is, unlike in many other interview settings, the researcher is not necessarily the one with the advantage of superior knowledge or authority. However, while it is true that any interview will differ depending on its participants, this cautioning advice relies on a problematically static and structural conception of power, at odds with the otherwise poststructural underpinnings of the study (Smith, 2006). As Smith (2006) points out, relative power is never ‘held’ by either side; and so, a more sophisticated understanding of ourselves within dynamic and complex relations is needed. As I will return to, there were several cases where the interviewees deferred to me, apologised for (supposedly) inferior knowledge, or even constructed shared identities within the interview room’s four walls against an external, absent ‘other’. Furthermore, notwithstanding the initial challenge of establishing contact and credibility with potential respondents (in particular in Canada, where the need for ‘gatekeepers’ was clear), the relative ease with which I gained access to state officials is likely linked to the project’s specific cases. Although I argue that a binary distinction between state and society is always counter-productive, there are different levels of interaction between elected and electorate, government and citizens, depending on the state in question. All three case studies are *relatively* ‘equal’, e.g. in terms of class, wealth, influence, and so on; and not least, they are all relatively small states, so political decision-makers are arguably less segregated from their co-nationals. Additionally, my own identity may have meant that I, too, was less sensitive to hierarchies that others might have identified and heeded differently. Thus, while I maintain that many of the insights offered are transferable, the methodological approach may not be ubiquitously applied: the *illustrative* nature of the cases is echoed once more. In other

²⁷ See footnote 24 on ‘elites’, p. 61.

words, political and societal culture matter, and contextual contingency is a theme that runs throughout.

With an emphasis on the relational co-construction of meaning, maintaining a level of flexibility and improvisation was key to facilitate the enunciations of subjective understanding (see Latham, 2003). As such, the interviews were semi-structured, organised as content-focused and “ordered but flexible questioning” (Dunn, 2010, p. 110). The first couple of interviews followed a list of pre-formulated questions, but I soon moved to using an ‘interview guide’ in the shape of a mind-map (see Appendix A). Like the weather, this nearly illegible ‘map’ often took on an unexpected function as conversational ice-breaker. This allowed transitioning between and across themes and topics in a far more organic manner, depending on the direction in which each respondent wished to take the conversation. Some required more ‘prompts’ than others, and the effort was always there to articulate unambiguous and non-leading questions; some refinement of the technique – how and when to ask what – was also undertaken underway. Overall, however, the topics covered in each interview in all three states remained close to the ‘map’, even if the order in which they arose varied.

Every interview was recorded by means of a digital audio recorder, and notes were never taken during the meeting itself (notes on surroundings, body language, etc. were taken immediately ad-hoc). This meant that, on the one hand, conversation flowed more naturally, and I could both read and use non-verbal language when conducting face-to-face interviews. On the other, the visual presence of an audio recorder may potentially also alter the researcher–researched relationship, serving as a reminder of the formality of the situation. However, the majority of state officials was well-acquainted with these in their daily work anyway; as one pointed out upon my gratitude for his time, speaking to journalists, researchers, and students is part of his job as civil servant. Also highly important to facilitating these conversations was the assurance of absolute anonymity and confidentiality, as aforementioned. This means that although they clearly spoke from a certain professional position, they nevertheless did so in a personal capacity, on the condition of their comments not being attributable to them. While allowing more candour and comfort, there are also costs connected to completely anonymising the respondents: the ‘people’ of the state, the thesis’ main concern, can thereby not be linked to their own individual backgrounds and characteristics. As such, one limitation of the present study is the loss of some individuality, and some of the rich experiences of not only state ‘people’ but each *person*. Although I argue that subjectivities matter, these are purposely maintained largely in the abstract

in the case of each singular respondent. In order to write about the heterogeneity and diversity inherent to state institutions the point is not to go deeply into each individual's story, but rather pointing to there *being* such individual stories at all. And indeed, in analysing discourses the concern lies in how these permeate across and within these diversities, contrasts, and subjectivities. As such, said individual characteristics and backgrounds are there, acknowledged as exactly that: uniqueness that *everyone* has, each in their own unique way, that assemble in the multifaceted enactment of the state. As noted above, there is no doubt that e.g. position, policy-foci, training, and so on all influence how identity comes to be articulated; but rather than attempting to make any generalisable claims about the various positionalities within the state, the thesis instead seeks to highlight the identities emerging across these. Therefore, in subsequent chapters I have used an initial letter to indicate the state (N/I/C) and a number for each interviewee; the only exception being a few potentially attributable personal comments where not even a correlatable number is offered.

As a study that concerns itself with discourse as it surfaces through verbal and written language, it is important to note that the interviews were conducted in two: Norwegian, the first language of the Norwegian officials as well as mine; and English, the first language of most (but not all) of the Canadians, and the second for the Icelanders and me (see Smith, 1996, 2003). There are a host of interesting observations to be made about this – such as how, in the thesis' opening vignette, my own accent became an actant in the conversation, changing both our relation and the officials' sense of self constituted within this relation. Mastering the use of a language, knowing the rules of the relevant language game (see Wittgenstein, 1965), is to (seem to) be in control; and so, in some of the Icelandic interviews the power-relation between the member of the so-called 'elite' and the student, me, became temporarily unsettled by unequal English-skills. On a couple of other occasions, Icelandic officials demonstrated their school-taught 'Scandinavian' (usually a mix of Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian for usefulness), which served to construct a bond, a *shared* identity between us, two members of the Arctic. In the case of the Norwegian interviews (and some of the texts and speeches used), all translations are done by me, and all potential errors of course my own. Where relevant, I have included the Norwegian term in brackets. For the other two, I have corrected grammar in a few instances for clarity, but generally let their enunciations stand as they were uttered; the exception being where repeated or self-corrected words/phrases have been edited out, indicated by bracketed dots. Generally, though, every articulation has been left as close to the original as possible, maintaining nuances of accent and vernacular – both for

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the obvious ethical reasons and for allowing the voice of the person *within* the state to be heard, my guiding aim throughout.

Data analysis

All recorded interviews were transcribed, in most cases immediately after the meeting. This allowed me to make notes throughout the generated texts of relevant observations, such as gestures, tone, and setting. Although transcription is time-consuming, it proved a highly useful way of re-engaging with the data: “Immersion in the data provides a preliminary form of analysis” (Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997; Dunn, 2010, p. 121). The above points on translation are here also relevant: While the transcripts themselves include all hesitations, repetitions, “umm”s, “err”s and so on, these are not presented in the thesis unless deemed of particular relevance. As above, there are clear merits to exact citation, such as maintaining personal style, but there are equally problematic aspects to be considered. In particular, I was concerned with keeping all quotes non-attributable, and conscious of the potential imprecision of informants speaking in a secondary language. Therefore, maintaining the communicated meaning was here more important – looking at statements not for each individual sign employed, but for how the signs work *together* to construct meaning (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). As a stylistic choice, in order to avoid potential ambiguity in the presentation of quotes, double quotation-marks indicate a verbatim citation, whereas singular are so-called scare quotes (for concepts etc.). Inevitably, transcription is in itself a form of translation, transforming an interpersonal encounter into text. As such, transcription is both interpretative and representational, and even more so when transitioning for the third time into the thesis (Green, Franquiz and Dixon, 1997). In the process, authorship moves from the statement’s first speaker to its second listener, me, speaking it anew on these pages (before it is, again, re-interpreted by a third: the reader).

After their textual conversion, the interviews were analysed in much the same way as the aforementioned policy documents. That is, using thematic coding, they were analysed for ‘rules’ of discursive statements, patterns, and relations of meaning. The codes were a combination of emic and etic: both theoretical and empirical background knowledge clearly informed my analysis, but the organisation into an ordered system was the result of the patterns that emerged subsequently (see Cope, 2010; Waitt, 2010). I used the computer software QSR NVivo10 for data organising purposes – the analysis itself was manual, but the process of ordering and re-

ordering, 'sifting and sorting', was aided by the electronic tool (Welsh, 2002; see also Peace and van Hoven, 2010). The number of times the codes (or 'nodes') merged, broke apart, were re-named or even deleted bear testimony to the iterative nature of the analytical process. In the end, the codes allowed me to construct a structural framework of what I have called discourses of state identity. Importantly, however, this is a means of structural *organisation*: it is in no way prescriptive, but one way of presenting the study's findings; above all, this particular structure was chosen for its usefulness to both analysis and presentation. Returning to the previous chapter on the study's theoretical premises, it should be clear that the six sub-themes are born within a family of academic literature pertaining to identity. In brief reiteration, the following three empirical chapters are all structured by the following six sub-headings: (1) spatial, (2) temporal, (3) international, (4) national, (5) sub-national, and (6) personal relational positioning of state identity. Without reifying scalar hierarchies, structuring the findings in this particular manner was helpful for my own reading, and so I hope it will for my readers too.

What is clear from the above is the fact that I, as a researcher, had (and still have) an active role in the project that is far from performing the 'neutral observer'. As per above, structuring findings in a particular conceptual framework – the process of 'writing up' the research findings to the present thesis – has been more than a mechanical process of summarising statements; the writing has itself been integral to the analysis and production of knowledge – giving Arctic state identity *form*. In other words, research writing is never a 'reflection' of reality, but is actively part of constituting it (Mansvelt and Berg, 2010; see also Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1997). And, as Phillips and Hardy (2002, p. 2) remind us, "in using language, producing texts, and drawing on discourses, researchers and the research community are part and parcel of the constructive effects of discourse". As such, I have throughout the project been highly conscious of the fact that researching Arctic identities may reinforce or even construct them. For example, more than one interviewee pointed out that the topic was not something they had consciously reflected much on previously, but following my email they had become cognisant of their own Arctic identities in a new way. Therefore, rather than attempting to write myself 'out', glossing over the fact that any interpretation is inevitably subjective and situated, the aim is to remain reflexive of my own situated positionality throughout (see Haraway, 1991). Nevertheless, no amount of caveats can ever achieve complete transparency of the interpretative process of transforming interview statements to thesis statements, simply because there *is* no such thing complete access to one's own subjective positionality constituted within competing discourses (Rose, 1997). This means

that the knowledge produced, the ‘truths’ proclaimed, are my own. Although the authorship of the interview statements lies with the interviewees, the authorship of the thesis statements lies with me, recognising the particular responsibilities that comes with this acknowledgement.

In this regard, as disclosed from the first pages onwards, it is worth noting that I am *from* the Arctic (Northern Norway) myself, and from the research idea to its completion I have had more than a professional interest in the topic. On the one hand, this has given me a deeper understanding of some of the issues at hand, which I believe have far outweighed the challenges that are inevitably inherent to personal investment in a research project²⁸. On the other, the study’s focus on state officials, and their articulations of identity, has meant that I have also maintained a level of distance throughout. In particular in the conduction of discursive analysis, it is paramount to strive for as extensive background knowledge as possible (Neumann, 2008, p. 64), while simultaneously attempting to suspend preconceived assumptions (Kendall and Wickham, 1999). With the added focus on specifically identity, cultural and linguistic familiarity is an important asset (Sylvan and Metskas, 2009). As Powell (2010, p. 76), amongst others, cautions, there is a potential pitfall in trying to “understand the North by using narratives imported from the South”. Of course, my previously attained personal and academic knowledge of the Norwegian case has undeniably far outweighed that of the Icelandic and Canadian. However, being aware of this, I have invested a lot in my own education towards an improved cultural understanding of the countries, and the (admittedly short) immersion that the fieldwork provided was therefore highly beneficial for more than the pragmatics of interview logistics. Hence, while I do believe it is important to bear in mind, my background should not have a negatively skewing effect. On the contrary, some Icelandic and Canadian officials used my Norwegian nationality as a conversational ‘hook’ in the explanation of their understanding of Arctic statehood. And, conversely, my northernness served to both construct similarity and dissimilarity (as in the opening vignette) in the relations between researcher and researched, as I will return to in the following chapters.

Finally, in terms of my situatedness, I return to the chapter’s start, namely poststructuralist theory as the study’s conceptual foundation. No research question arises, nor is any study conducted, in an intellectual vacuum (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2010, pp. 70–72); and so, my

²⁸ That being said, even though not all PhD researchers choose to study something so ‘close to home’, I have yet to meet anyone who is not deeply personally and emotionally invested in their thesis projects.

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positionality is equally the result of the everyday negotiation of identity that takes place as, *inter alia*, a student, researcher, academic, teacher, female, foreigner, and so on. In the end, this is the case for me, just as it is for the people of the state; rather than seeing this multitude and internal heterogeneity as a hindrance to 'objective truth', it is as an asset that allows us to see the multifaceted nuances of subjective 'truths'.

Chapter Four

Norway: The Way to the North

As a nation of seafarers and fishermen, Norwegians have always lived off the sea. Polar exploration is an integral part of our national identity. 80 % of maritime traffic in the Arctic passes through Norwegian waters. Almost 90 % of our export revenues come from resources and economic activity and in our sea areas. Our long coastline, traditions and innovation go hand in hand.

(Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, 2015)

The first of three cases, Norway provides the starting point for exploring how discourses of Arctic state identity are relationally articulated by its representatives, and how these discourses serve to position and condition the political practices through which the Arctic state emerges as such. It is a country that has always been defined by its northernness, ‘The Way to the North’, leading explorers and travellers to the edge of known land. Today, its ‘High North’ continues to be among the Norwegian government’s highest political priority areas. With a long and rich coastline that extends into Arctic waters and the Arctic archipelago Svalbard under its sovereignty, Norway holds a status not only as one of the A8, but also as one of the more exclusive five littoral states. Furthermore, with an indigenous Saami population and a long history of polar exploration, an identity as ‘Arctic’ should not be controversial. However, historical involvement and economic interests do not necessarily translate to a sense of Arctic identity; and, a formal title of Arctic statehood does not necessarily translate to a sense of Arctic community, belonging, and homeland. On the contrary, Norway’s Arctic policy and political engagement prompt continual contestation and negotiation – indeed, continual contestation and negotiation of who, what, and where is to be ‘represented’ the ‘essentially’ Norwegian is. For representatives of the state, their professional position is therefore an ongoing process of *positioning* both their state and themselves *in* and *as* Arctic; Arctic statehood is not ‘held’, but always becoming through its practitioners’ practices and articulations.

Drawing on the insights from interviews with 16 Norwegian state personnel in a broad range of positions and levels, this chapter explores their multifaceted articulations of Norway's Arctic state identity. It is organised in the framework of six sub-themes of state identity: Firstly, primarily articulated as a geographically based title, Norway's Arctic spatiality serves to position the state and anchor identity in what may be an Arctic 'homeland'; and moreover, an Arctic environment, climate, and coastline. Secondly, Arctic state identity is also firmly situated temporally, with a backwards gaze, where history is remembered and re-narrated to fit a polar present; in turn, re-imagining a seemingly eternal Arctic 'self' that transcends from the past to the present, and crucially, to an anticipated Arctic future. Together, the spatiotemporality of Norwegian discourses of Arctic state identity conditions statements and performances thereof – it is the seemingly stable 'core' of identity discourses. However, the way in which officials pronounce and practice the Arctic state may be delimited but not pre-determined. Rather, Arctic state identity's articulations are relationally mediated and defined at various scales; and, vice versa, articulations may themselves relationally position the state for practice.

As a state amongst states in the international community, Arctic statehood is simultaneously one of A8 membership and one of exclusive status, rights, and responsibilities. Nationally, an Arctic state identity is viewed through the lens of pre-existing tropes of the Norwegian 'essence' or deep-rooted self. Nevertheless, also within the 'national', there is difference: An Arctic state is only the sum of its parts, and only certain parts of Norway may be officially defined as north of the symbolic Arctic Circle. Moreover, questions of indigeneity interweave with statements of national and sub-national 'selves', adding alternative articulations of who, what, and where is 'Arctic'. Finally, understandings of state identity also percolate through a multitude of subject-positions inhabited by its performers; and so, Norway's Arctic state identity too is understood, explained, and enacted as a result of the wide range of people whose task it is to represent and perform it. Interweaving insights from interviews with more general points on Norwegian culture, economy, history, and politics, as well as official rhetoric as presented in documents and speeches, the chapter thus seeks to offer the story of Norway as *Arctic*: How "the Way to the North" (Gundersen, 2013) is re-imagined and re-narrated as the High North itself – how the Arctic state is pronounced as such by its practitioners.

Spatialities of Arctic identity

A formal title of Arctic statehood is, first and foremost, based on claims to territory north of the Arctic Circle, and the resultant membership in the intergovernmental Arctic Council. An Arctic state identity is thereby inherently spatial; and perhaps unsurprisingly, geography tended to be among the first factors mentioned in interviews on the topic:

The formal, geographical link is that we are one of, first and foremost, one of five coastal states around the Arctic Ocean; we border what we have delimited as the Arctic Ocean. And we have territories in – exactly where the Arctic border runs, that can be discussed, but there is no doubt that Norway, with both Northern Norway and not least Svalbard²⁹, has areas that are part of the Arctic [...] It defines us in terms of foreign policy, security policy, and implicitly also defence policy, that we – our geography – it is our identity. That is, we are a country far, far north with large ocean areas; limited land area, but still. In an Arctic context, that defines our cooperation patterns, how we act, and more (N.i).

A state identity as Arctic is therefore articulated as geographically based on latitudes, territories, and oceanic continental shelves. What is particularly interesting in regard to the latter, traditionally sovereign statehood is closely connected to territory or *land*, but when Norwegian officials speak of Arctic statehood as a consequence of ocean areas, implying rights tied to continental shelves under UNCLOS, the seabed becomes implicitly rendered 'land-like', even potentially part of the Norwegian 'homeland'. That is, in addition to – around and between – Svalbard and Northern Norway, as the above official pointed to, it is Norway's ocean areas that are frequently highlighted as its primary source of Arctic identity. However, instead of invoking imaginaries of the fluidity and indeterminacy of the ocean, Arctic space becomes imagined as the seafloor, as land-like ground:

[T]he Law of the Sea is what counts here, and that is based on nation-states. [...] And the continental shelf, that is a mountain formation extending from land, outwards; it is continuous – which pertains to

²⁹ As established in the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty, Norway holds sovereignty over the Svalbard archipelago, albeit subject to certain stipulations. For example, all signatories of the Treaty (currently 42 states) have equal rights to engage in commercial activities there (e.g. coal mining). There are also limitations pertaining to taxation, law, pollution, and militarisation. A recent controversy has related to whether Norway may claim the 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone under UNCLOS in the sea around Svalbard (e.g. for fishery rights), as the Treaty was worded prior to the creation of UNCLOS. The town of Ny-Ålesund is generally considered the world's northernmost permanent civilian settlement. In the largest settlement, Longyearbyen, there are at present approximately 2,100 inhabitants; though most are Norwegian, around 40 nationalities are represented thanks to a highly international researcher community (Governor of Svalbard, 2012).

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the coastal states that manage them. So, Norway as a coastal state has a continental shelf with oceanic areas seven times the size of the land (N.vi).

Solid, *beneath* the depths, where flags may be planted (see Dodds, 2010b), and large oil platforms may be built: concrete structures where Norwegian workers of today may live (see Eriksen and Neumann, 2011). Not only does such a conceptualisation slot Arctic space into a territorial imagination of a planet covered in state-units, but it links the Arctic to ideas of ‘national space’: the emotionally laden space that is seen to be integral to the very essence of its people, the nation’s ‘home’. In other words, the way in which many Norwegian state personnel spoke of the basis of Arctic statehood and identity was one of a ground in which an Arctic identity is solidly rooted: land that so happens to be covered by sea.

Linking Arctic space, the ocean, and subsea continental shelves to ideas of ‘home’ does not just potentially increase public support for politics, but also conceptually transforms a seemingly distant, ‘empty’ space to a place with meaning and content for state practitioners too (see Knecht and Keil, 2013). That is, in addition to seeing the Arctic as lines on a map, it is thereby ‘filled in’ with an environment – an environment that is imagined as not just shaped by the Norwegian nation’s harvest and usage, but also itself *shaping* the nation (see Dijink, 2002). Imaginations of an Arctic environment may include climates, landscapes, topographies, temperatures, livelihoods provided thereby, and so on. A Norwegian Parliamentarian explained:

I have often participated in international meetings with European top politicians, where you sort of use Norway’s Arcticness, with sparse habitation and high mountains and deep fjords and snow and headwind and steep hills and all of that [...] Those kinds of things are raised in these kinds of meetings to create legitimacy and understanding, but also to brag of Norway by emphasising this, because in certain areas we are at the front (N.ii).

In this manner, firstly to an external audience, ‘Arcticness’ becomes synonymous with environmental characteristics with which the entire nation may identify; lines between periphery and core are blurred. Just as ideas of homeland are extended northwards into the sea, Arctic space is extended southwards, as its characteristics stretch across invisible lines of latitude, rendering it malleable and always relative. As Homi Bhabha reminds us, something as mundane as the weather “encourages memories of the ‘deep’ nation” (1994, p. 243). Battling wind and weather, coldness and harshness, is something with which ostensibly all Norwegians may identify: a stable, indisputable core of ‘Norwegianness’. This imagery may also serve to provide meaning to

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Norwegian state personnel, rendering the Arctic familiar, known, drawn closer through the senses. For another official, closeness to nature not only reminds Norwegians of being Arctic – it shapes them as such:

[In Norway] You live, sort of, closer to nature somehow, to the natural forces; that is part of giving you heightened awareness. That is, when you live in a place [...] where you feel the Arctic weather conditions, you are constantly reminded of it. Sort of like I feel myself [in Southern Norway] that the climate is absolutely part of shaping a person and identity, I think, to a very high degree (N.iii).

She further elaborated on how she believed this might influence political practice and Norwegian behaviour more generally:

[W]hen you meet others, from other countries, who do not have that, sort of, hard nature, right; then you notice that it affects our character, yes, our identity, how we look at things. And I think this closeness to nature means that we have more respect for nature... (N.iii).

In a similarly environmental-determinist manner (Livingstone, 1992), another explained that the political focus on sustainability and environmental protection may likely be traced back to an identity as “a ‘fishing-and-hunting people’, and in a way, an acknowledgement that you have to take care of both nature and resources” (N.iv). In this manner, identity discourse’s spatiality, its seeming ‘rootedness’ in nature and environment, provides Norwegian state personnel with a framework of political practice and behaviour: an ‘undisputable’ explanation for why Norwegians are as they are and act as they do – why *they* perform politics the way they do.

In addition to the noted harsh conditions of Norwegian nature – such as coldness, winter, and an inhospitable climate – ‘Arcticness’ was also often described by state representatives as *coastalness*. In other words, closeness to nature means closeness to the ocean, and thus, also the Arctic Ocean. Notably, however, Norwegian space was neither here described as the ocean itself, but the land touching the ocean, and the resources and conditions for life it brings back on solid Norwegian soil. On the topic of Norwegian and Arctic identity, one official reflected:

The Norwegian identity also includes a winter identity; and the transition between that winter identity and the Arctic is not far. At the same time, the coastal identity that we’ve had, and have, in Norway through many, many years – with all the trade and livelihoods of the mixed society when we conducted both agriculture and fishery – that is also not very far from, well, the Arctic coastal activity that we

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have. So, I feel that there are gliding transitions and that they aren't necessarily in opposition to each other (N.ii).

Hence, the ocean matters mainly for its utility to Norwegian livelihoods; as another succinctly phrased it: "the entire High North policy has its source in the usage of the *resources* that lie in the High North. In the sea, that is, with the fish that we have managed for a long time" (N.v). This point echoes the Minister of Foreign Affairs' opening statement, linking current resource extraction – including that of potentially controversial petroleum – to what has '*always*' been, and what supposedly lies at the heart of Norwegian life and livelihood, the *essence* of Norwegian identity, intrinsically tied to Norwegian geography. A geography that is more than 'just' land, it is the geography of national *life*.

Despite the clear promotion of Norway as an Arctic state to an external audience, and despite the discursive linking of oceanic space, nature, home, and the Norwegian character, many of the officials acknowledged that the term 'Arctic' still rung of distance to most Norwegian. As one official with extensive Arctic experience speculated:

So, clearly, most people in Norway, I think the majority define themselves as a country far north. However, using 'Arctic identity' or that Norway is an 'Arctic state', exactly those words, I am a bit uncertain about. Because, 'Arctic', in itself, is a foreign word in the Norwegian vocabulary, and it is not used so much; but that people have a strong identity of being a coastal state, near the coast, and having a northern identity, of that I am quite certain (N.vi).

As such, an *Arctic* identity is seen as a new label on what was already there, already part of being Norwegian. As others pointed out, relative northernness is also likely to determine how strongly the Arctic is seen to relate to people's everyday lives (a point returned to in relation to national heterogeneity below):

I think it depends, perhaps, on where in Norway you are. [In Northern Norway] they live in it every day. They have the polar night, and all the things you typically associate with the Arctic. So, for them it's completely normal, I think. I think, perhaps, you think less about it in central eastern Norway and southern parts of the country. But... it depends how you phrase the question, because I think, there is no doubt that we are a coastal state, that we lie far north, and that that comes with very particular challenges (N.ii).

Again, identifying as Arctic is rooted in geography, but geographical northernness is always relative; it matters more when faced with those who are ‘south’. “We are a sea nation and much of the sea is in the north; but, of course, the Arctic identity is perhaps stronger in the north and along the coast” (N.iv). Here, the cited official’s view on identity’s contingency on geographical proximity mirrored that found among Norwegian youth in a previous study: namely, that relative northernness (as well as context and social relations) matters greatly to your sense of Arctic identity (Medby, 2014b). However, in *outsiders’* eyes, all of Norway is “the country that is far north and cold” (N.vii). Inherently relational, also Arctic spatiality is defined against an external ‘other’; for Norwegian state officials, this means that it may be an identity that matters more when abroad, faced with colleagues who do not come from Arctic states. Viewed from Brussels, Washington, or London, even Lindesnes – the southernmost tip of the Norwegian mainland – is far north, and *all* Norwegians are northerners, including the suit-clad bureaucrat who may never have ventured to higher latitudes.

In addition to longitudes and latitudes, language is equally highly significant for how Arctic state identity is spatially situated. As the above cited official pointed to, ‘Arctic’³⁰ is a foreign term of Greek etymological origin (Wangenstein, 2005), and hitherto a name not often used in domestic policy. By a foreign denomination, the Arctic seems designated to the discursive field of foreign policy. Although any clear domestic/foreign policy binary may be outdated in today’s increasingly interconnected world (for example, where Arctic politics clearly relate to both), Neumann (2001) reminds us that such a distinction still continues to determine conditions for action (see also Agnew, 1994). This binary division, illusory or not, is echoed in both popular and official discussions about the Arctic. As an interviewee acknowledged, it is “a question of definition that is politically very important” (N.vi). Likely in an attempt to avoid unfavourable linguistic connotations and associations³¹, Norwegian officials have, in place of ‘the Arctic’, tended to favour the term ‘*nordområdene*’: Literally, ‘the northern areas’, but usually translated as ‘the High North’³². As scholars before me have pointed out, this denomination is more spatially malleable

³⁰ ‘Arktis’ (n.)/‘arktisk’ (adj.)

³¹ On the topic of such disadvantageous associations, one interviewee was concerned that a common misunderstanding about the Arctic was the following:

“Many think that it is dark and cold and boring and... nothing exciting happens. There are polar bears and Eskimos and igloos, right. But it is so much more than that. It is – I think people sometimes forget about the fish and oil and gas and such; they think more about polar bears. I think so. Ice and polar bears and cold and darkness” (N.ix).

³² Where the original source/interview in Norwegian used ‘*nordområdene*’, I follow the government’s example in translating it to the ‘High North’, although – as the literal translation- ‘the northern areas’ arguably holds a slightly different connotation (which is important in its reception by a domestic, Norwegian-speaking audience).

than the Arctic (Skagestad, 2010; Wærp, 2014; see also Keskitalo, 2004); it is less clearly demarcated by latitudes, temperatures, or treelines, but rather as a north relative to an undefined south. Approaching a definition, the report *Future North* (N.MTIF, 2015, p. 31) describes it as the following: “High North policy has a broader geographical impact area than North Norway. Attention has been turned to the large sea areas in the north, to Svalbard and the Arctic”. As this seems to suggest, the ‘High North’ serves to emphasise the Norwegian ‘part’ of the Arctic, including the portion of Nordland County stretching slightly south of the Arctic Circle. Or, in Sörlin’s words, it is “political rhetoric designed to make the territories north of Norway’s Scandinavian mainland seem just a continuation of home” (Sörlin, 2013a, p. 9). By contrast, employing ‘the Arctic’ term emphasises the international dimension of political practice in the circumpolar north.

Recently, however, Norwegian officials have increasingly been employing the ‘Arctic’ term over the ‘High North’ in order to facilitate their participation among international peers (N.i). Interestingly, when asked, the interviewed officials’ explanations of the two terms’ distinction were strikingly inconsistent, demonstrating their ambiguity, and hence, contextual malleability. For one official, ‘the Arctic’ was “more tied to such Arctic Council-work; institutional” (N.viii), i.e. foreign policy. For another, the two terms were “overlapping”:

[B]ecause the High North is primarily in the Arctic; at the same time as the High North stretches, perhaps, a bit further than the Arctic. The Arctic is, really, north of the Arctic Circle, strictly speaking, but that is more of a, perhaps, technical view. A popular view is that it can vary a lot. It can run much further south, in fact, than the Arctic Circle; but others can also think that it runs much further north, actually. So, I think it is overlapping. And... it depends a lot on where you ‘stand’ when the question is asked (N.ii).

Ambiguous at best, his concluding sentence sums up on the (lack of any real) distinction between the two: it depends on who, where, is defining and distinguishing, for what purpose. Arctic statehood (and with it, an identity as such) is – as internationally recognised statehood writ large – defined by distinction and difference, including something as seemingly ‘natural’ as spatial position. Also geography and physical location are only given *meaning* within discourse; when state personnel speak of the Arctic, it is already bound by the parameters of all its possible preceding and succeeding pronouncements. Placing Norway as ‘in’, ‘of’, ‘over’, and so on positions the state not just on maps, but also in relations of political power (e.g. Bondi, 1993, p. 99). Nominal,

relational, and relative terms all conjure certain geographical imaginations, and consequently, serve to position for political practice both *in* and *as* Arctic.

Temporalities of Arctic identity

Discourses of Arctic state identity are not just positioned in space, but also necessarily in and through *time*. While Norway's Arctic statehood *per se* may not be new, the status and attention that it presently brings certainly are. Nevertheless, identity is imagined, understood, and articulated as *stable*, with roots in the past that will grow and transcend into the future. The triple-tome *Norsk Polarhistorie* [Norwegian Polar History] opens with the acknowledgement that although Norway did not become an active 'polar nation' until the late 1800s, there is a common conception "of an unbroken Norwegian Polar tradition dating back to the Viking era – at least" (Drivenes and Jølle, 2004, p. 9). Repeatedly in interviews, officials explained Arctic statehood as a re-labelling of something that was *already* there: be it the coastal, fishery, environmentalist, seafaring, northern, or wintery state identity (or perhaps, all of them at once). In other words, it is not a matter of constructing a *new* identity for Norway, but rather re-imagining the 'nation-state' to fit its Arctic title, securely placing an Arctic aspect within the national narrative. Northernness and coastalness, for example, take on added meaning, just like pre-existing identities of being a small state, a 'peace nation', or other Norwegian historical tropes are transferred and extended to what it may mean to be an Arctic state too. Uncomfortable questions of 'who we are' and 'who we *want* to be' – indeed, 'who "we" really are' – are thereby avoided, and the Arctic is seemingly seamlessly sewn into the fabric of the national narrative. The state's Arctic label may not be relevant at all times and in all contexts, but this does not make it any less 'true', any less 'eternally' so:

[Being an Arctic state] does not define everything the Norwegian state does, [but] it is a permanent condition that we cannot change by government or [political] direction. It is, kind of, we are there and it is who we are. We are an Arctic nation. That everyone in Norway feels that every day – at least on a day like this!³³ – that I do not think, but that is how it is (N.i).

³³ "On a day like this" refers to the heatwave that swept through the capital at the time of the interview, as presented in the thesis' opening vignette. With 35 ° Celsius or more, the topic of Arctic identity in a sweaty office in Oslo gained a whole new layer of complexity (or, rather, irony).

Arctic statehood is thereby adopted as part of Norwegian statehood, domesticating and normalising a novel title, meaning that the Norwegian political approach thereto is, and should be, precisely that: typically, essentially Norwegian. That being said, the interpretations of what, exactly, that might mean are as numerous as its interpreters. Either way, Norway's Arctic statehood is, today, articulated by its practitioners as always having been so and always being so, transcendental of the present – present politics, governments, and people (see Guibernau, 2013) – and so, immortalised through discourses of the 'nation-state's' identity.

Historically, Norway has undeniably been seen as peripheral: at the edge of Europe, small, impoverished, and under Danish or Swedish rule for centuries. Although the situation today is very different – not least after the discovery of oil in Norwegian waters (and subsequent wealth accumulation³⁴) – this self-perception arguably still holds considerable political sway, also in the Arctic context. Norwegian history is re-interpreted as an Arctic history too, where being on the edge of Europe translates to being northern, and being northern translates to being Arctic. As Brende's opening quote exemplifies, the historically symbolic Norwegian fisherman is re-cast in a new role, harvesting new resources, but for the same nation. And, going even further back, the seafaring Norwegian Viking is discursively connected to an ocean on which he is unlikely to ever have ventured, as a metaphorical embodiment of the nation's past. The Arctic Ocean or coast is, therefore, as any other coast of Norway, meaning that life and livelihoods tied thereto may be, at least, metaphorically imagined: "I think most people think, whether it is the Arctic or the common western coast or southern coast, it is *Norway*" (N.ix). Political practices are then explained, and justified, as a result of the nation's linear historical trajectory, always upwards and forwards.

Of course, the Norwegian agenda – with responsible exploitation of resources, to summarise – is very much rooted in Norway, or the Norwegian, as a hunting and fishing nation, explorer nation; and there has always been a connection between Norway as a polar nation, a research nation, that wanted to exploit resources. They have historically also gone hand in hand (N.x).

³⁴ Surplus tax revenues from the petroleum sector go into Norway's Sovereign Wealth Fund (commonly referred to as 'the oil fund') – a fund that was initially set up in 1990 to manage the effects of volatile oil prices, but which now is also intended to manage the effects of the anticipated decline in petroleum revenues in the future. Valued at approximately USD \$840 billion, it is one of the largest stock owners in Europe. Tied into debates about Norway's moral values, the Fund has strict criteria for the companies in which to invest, and has recently been actively divesting from 'environmentally unethical' coal production companies (Rimmer, 2016).

For Norwegian officials, Arctic state practices, irrespective of how innovative or ground-breaking they may be, are articulated as a consequence of the past; carrying Norway's Arctic identity forwards means also looking backwards.

An Arctic (or indeed, polar) past for Norway is not only a case of re-interpreting stories of past Norwegian glories to fit a new context, but also of re-adjusting the focus of *which* stories are to be remembered. Polar explorers, particularly Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen, have re-gained their status as “national heroes” (N.iv); though never forgotten, the interest in the two men has clearly increased in tandem with Arctic interest more generally. As one official viewed it, the interest was “alive again today, with the immense focus [in Norwegian society] on winter sports, expeditions, celebrating that which ties us to the polar region” (N.vi). Far from coincidental, the height of past Norwegian polar exploration coincided with the Norwegian national independence movement, roughly from the late 19th century into the start of the 20th. This meant that the two contemporary ‘national heroes’ also played part in shaping the image of what and how Norway and Norwegians are and ought to be. “When we became an independent nation, it was achievements in [the Arctic] that, sort of, created a national consciousness and pride in being able to do something unique on our own” (N.vii). In their time too, history – particularly stories of pre-Danish Viking ‘glory’ – was re-imagined as forming links in an unbroken chain of not only Norwegian nationhood but also of the aforementioned polar tradition; as the Norwegian polar historians rhetorically ask:

May it be connected to the fact that the conducts of Nansen and Amundsen were written into the great story of Norway, where an urge for travel and adventure – the eternal unrest in the blood for unknown land and unknown ocean – was often traced back to Leiv Eriksson³⁵ and explorers of his calibre in a distant past? (Drivenes and Jølle, 2004, p. 9 my translation).

Fridtjof Nansen, in particular, was politically active in the promotion of an independent Norway, and his extensive writings were (and are) significant for the national identity that supposedly awakened at the time. For example, publicly known as an adventurer, intellectual, and national superstar, his choice of skis as mode of transport across Greenland was deeply ideological – representing the archetypically Norwegian (Wærp, 2010). To this day, Norwegians, including

³⁵ Note the use of specifically Leiv Eriksson as a national symbol. As the offspring of a Norwegian Viking émigré, later travelling onwards to Greenland and Newfoundland himself, he never set foot in the country; and importantly, he is also considered Iceland's most important national hero, a point that resurfaces in the following chapter (see p.120).

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officials, jokingly define themselves as “born with skis on our legs” (N.vii). Narrating his later expedition to the North Pole, Nansen furthermore proclaimed that like “our ancestors, the old Vikings”, Norwegians are characterised by both “love of adventure”, and need to discover (Nansen, 1897, pp. 3–4; quoted in Eglinger, 2010, p. 11). In this manner, the Arctic came to be imagined as a space where distinctive Norwegian qualities and values could unfold (Drivenes and Jølle, 2006), not dissimilar from more recent political rhetoric. Also present-day political practice in the region is discursively placed within narratives of historical nationalism; something of which practitioners of statecraft are highly aware, as today too, distinctive Norwegian qualities and values – whatever they may be – are to be performed on the polar stage.

The national identity construction in which these ‘polar pioneers’ actively took part in their time – leading the way for an independent Norway that could stand on its own feet (or skis!) – also resonates today in Norway’s Arctic engagement:

[I]t generates pride that we have had big names who also ‘break through the sound-barrier’ internationally; who have been part of putting regions of the world on the map, and who have been part of taking the lead when it comes to gathering knowledge and exploring those areas that, for many, until not very long ago were unknown and difficult to understand the scope and details of... So, in that way, I think that the polar history, those people’s relations, has contributed very positively to our nation’s identity construction (N.ii).

Certainly, as international superstars and frontrunners, the remembrance of these polar explorers resonates with a Norwegian quest for status and international recognition:

Because of those – that is, Nansen and Amundsen – we have felt like a ‘great power’ when it comes to those types of things. I think that probably matters a lot for how we think about the High North; not least, it has contributed to a Norwegian self-esteem that is a bit bigger than it has reason to be! (N.xi; followed by laughter).

Being a ‘polar pioneer’-nation metaphorically brings together Viking pioneers to Greenland, explorer pioneers to the poles, and, for example, petroleum pioneers, drilling further and further north – or conversely, environmental pioneers, setting the standards of sustainability for others to follow (Jensen, 2006). Either way, Norway’s polar past is linked to the present-day quest for political status in and through its Arctic statehood. By its practitioners, both the polar past and present are articulated as demonstrative of how a small, peripheral state may prove itself a political leader.

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In a seemingly linear historical trajectory from past through present, leadership is key to what Arctic statehood is imagined, projected, and anticipated to mean also for Norway's future. After all, the re-kindled political interest in polar pasts and current Arctic positioning in the region are, arguably, derivative of hopes (and fears) of what is yet to come (Dodds, 2013a). Imagining a shared polar past is foundational for imagining a shared polar future, both for voters and state personnel, and thus influencing political ambitions:

Our entire history and our entire identity rest a bit on – it isn't on surfing tropical waves; it rests, in a way, on accomplishments in the north. That this follows us in our way to handle the policy area, that I definitely believe, without being very aware of how. But that it somehow affects us, that I do believe; I think it affects us mainly positively (N.vii).

Imagined as both Norway's "source of future wealth and claim to historical greatness" (Emmerson, 2010, p. 7), the Arctic provides a space in which the 'nation-state' may *finally* play out its latent character of grandeur. As the government's *High North Strategy* (2006) was subsequently summarised:

The Government's ambition is for Norway to be a *leader* in the field of knowledge in and about the High North [...]; for Norway to be at the *top* of the league in key areas of economic activity and the *best* steward of the environment and natural resources in the north (N.MFA., 2011b, p. 25 emphases added).

In slightly less grandiose terms, it also aims to be a credible and reliable *partner*, and of course, the emphasis remains on international cooperation (N.MFA., 2014b). The ambitions are thus not necessarily to be a 'great power' as defined by traditional (military) capabilities, but rather, a '*good* power' – including, importantly, the moral connotations of the word (Neumann and de Carvalho, 2015). This 'good' statehood means leadership within the framework of international law and intergovernmental cooperation – a role as benefactor rather than ruler. And, as such, it adds to the image the state arguably wishes to project: "Norway lies in the north, and when we then, additionally in a way, are at the front on these questions, it is part of complementing the larger picture that outsiders may have of our country" (N.ii). Undoubtedly, it also speaks to the picture Norwegians and, as here, the state's political representatives may have of the country – both its present self and its role in the future – in turn, creating an impetus for the political performance of leadership in more than one way.

Connected to the projection of a desired future is preparedness, as ostensibly “new opportunities are opening up and important challenges need to be met” (N.MFA., 2014a, p. 8). More than merely an exercise in prediction and forecasting, it is also a matter of *promoting* desirable scenarios; by imagining an Arctic future for Norway it may, eventually, materialise. With a focus on the three northernmost counties, the report *Future North* presents a range of potential futures for the region. Kriss Rokkan Iversen poetically opens its final chapter with a narrative through past and present:

In the beginning the ice created the land. And so the north-facing tapestry of our age extends into the future, just as white and open. Where new weft threads will be woven in. Where patterns in new colour combinations will take shape. Where the future in the north will appear. Woven by the people who call the north country our home – now and in 2050 (N.MTIF, 2015, p. 148).

The report does not aim to soothsay, but to present a range of potentialities. Concluding, it states: “All the methods used to look into the future show that there is considerable potential for increased value creation in Northern Norway, but also that such growth will not happen by itself” (N.MTIF, 2015, p. 153). Although it is not a prescriptive text, its objective is to improve knowledge informing decision-making, and importantly, motivate behaviour for growth. The range of imagined futures laid out, with the related necessitated actions and various variables, therefore become futures contingent on political practices. Moreover, in conjunction with the publication of the 2014 *Arctic Strategy*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian government also announced the allocation of funds under the ‘Arctic 2030’ grant scheme: “The purpose of Arctic 2030 is to promote Norwegian interests and contribute to realizing Government priorities for the Arctic” (N.MFA., 2014a, p. 38). In other words, it aims to fund the practices that may, in turn, bring into being a specific desired future. And so, preparing for the future – or possible futures – constructs imaginaries with tangible, present-day implications, including what kind of political action is deemed right. The role and identity imagined for Norway in e.g. 2030 or 2050 takes on teleological significance in decision-making today; the “north-facing tapestry” does not just tell the tale of Norway and the north – it weaves it into being.

Anticipation for the future underpins Norwegian Arctic engagement today, as it arguably does for most actors in the region (Dodds, 2013a; Steinberg, Bruun and Medby, 2014; Depledge, 2016). An exercise of active commitment, predicting and planning for this Arctic future(s) is not just

pragmatic, but *symbolic*. One official argued how discussions of future offshore petroleum-extraction, for example, were made difficult: “reality isn’t interesting because there is so much symbolism tied to the question” (N.iv). However, in the Arctic, building knowledge – that is, understanding the Arctic ‘reality’ – is an important component of positioning the state as a legitimate stakeholder, and as such, a symbolic practice in and of itself. It is no coincidence that the 2014 *Arctic Policy*’s sub-heading reads: “Creating value, managing resources, confronting climate change and fostering knowledge” (N.MFA., 2014a), the four being interlinked rather than distinct. For example, in the chapter on “broad-based knowledge development”, the connection is highlighted: “Knowledge and competence are crucial for the development of businesses in the north” (ibid. 2014a, p. 29). There is no such thing as a-political science nor knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Indeed, it is on the basis of knowledge-creation that also many non-Arctic states are currently legitimising their role in the region, not least as climate change plays out there most visibly (see e.g. Steinberg, Bruun and Medby, 2014). Research, science, and knowledge are *currency* in the Arctic political sphere, and the earlier quote of leadership in the field is therefore also a matter of ability to act and influence, of power. Just like research, exploration, and resources were seen to go “hand in hand” historically; “you still see these connections: Connections between Norway’s research agenda; what we are interested in economically and strategically. There isn’t only altruism in the Norwegian research agenda [...]” (N.x). To be sure, “Norway will be a leader in knowledge about the north, for the north and in the north” (N.MFA., 2014a, p. 26). Strategic science is nothing new in the Arctic (nor elsewhere, for that matter). In fact, Arctic (environmental) science was “contingent, in its formative phases around the mid-twentieth century, on state concerns about sovereignty, natural resources and national security” (Doel *et al.*, 2014, p. 79). Scientific knowledge was, in some respects, a secondary gain. Holding the most advanced knowledge and technology facilitates action in and of itself, of course, but it also facilitates political status and power. Importantly, here it means that also Arctic statehood and identity are intimately tied to knowledge, thereby necessitating certain political practices relating thereto. For example, which studies are publicly funded and which are not becomes a strategic and symbolic question. For Norway and its representatives, being an Arctic state thus means: “a responsibility both to research, gain more knowledge, and work actively on behalf of ourselves and also the great global society” (N.ii). Discourses of Arctic identity within the Norwegian state are therefore situated within narratives that extend backwards and forwards in time: a path for practice that may be broad; but nevertheless, a path that is directed, bounded,

and governed by rules of traffic that the Norwegian state's conductors must respect in order not to be overtaken, overrun.

International Arctic identity

Discourses of Arctic state identity may be spatiotemporally situated, positioning the state for political practice. However, this positioning necessarily happens within *relations* at a variety of scales – from the global to the national, the local to the intimately personal. Although such scales are but heuristic devices, they are nevertheless arguably instrumental for the ways in which the state's practitioners approach their daily task of governance and bureaucracy. Not least, statehood, in general, relies on external recognition and affirmation from the wider world of states; Arctic statehood is no different.

When reflecting on Norway's claim to a title of Arctic statehood, most of the interviewees soon turned to the wider international meaning thereof: The Arctic as a multistate region in which Norway holds a 'principal' role. As noted, 'the Arctic' is often associated with the international circumpolar north, formally linked to membership in the intergovernmental organisation the Arctic Council and adherence to UNCLOS: the two main pillars of the Arctic regime of governance (see Medby, 2015). Not only a result of Norway already holding said title, *active* membership in this regional regime – such as through the aforementioned knowledge-production – is something that itself results in recognition and legitimacy in the region. In other words, Arctic statehood is only possible and meaningful alongside fellow Arctic states, defined against the non-Arctic 'others', in a global system of states. Thus, an identity as an Arctic state is simultaneously produced *by* said state-centric, circumpolar imagination as *re-producing* and re-affirming it. Participation in international cooperative initiatives and fora, such as the Arctic Council (and thereby active participation in and re-production of the 'state system' (see Abrams, 1988)), is something that characterises much of Norway's political practices. As a small state, and as such a 'small power' internationally, the quest for recognition and influence is fundamental to Norwegian foreign policy (see de Carvalho and Neumann, 2015). As one high-ranking official explained, when faced with the question of why no EU-membership, participation in the Arctic Council served as a counterweight to an otherwise potentially uncooperative, negative image by demonstrating that also Norway knows how to "play ball" (N.xii); and, consequently, be a full-worthy member of the international community. As such, the state's Arctic identity runs parallel

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to being a worthy member of a system of states – a system out from which a state official is born, and within which this subject’s practice becomes possible and takes on meaning.

Although seemingly unquestionable, iterative re-affirmation of commitment to the region is instrumental to Norway’s Arctic image and credibility as one of the eight states – a re-affirmation that, at least in one official’s view, could sometimes be excessively zealous, positioning Norway not just *among* the other seven but *above*:

We have a very large Arctic territory, and Norway is a country that uses – compared to how big we are, at least in population numbers and such – a lot of resources on Arctic collaboration. [...] Well, per capita there is no one that uses as much resources and money as Norway does. And that gives us influence, right [...] But it also gives us some, kind of, annoyance from the other countries that we take too much ownership, too much of this cooperation, and it becomes too Norwegian (N.x).

As another official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained, the Norwegian government “highly deliberately” *uses* its High North-focus as a way of demonstrating internationally that “we are not the largest nation in the Arctic, but at least we are a *leading* nation in the Arctic” (N.i). Here, the previously noted historical narratives of Norway as pioneering, an Arctic leader through time, become interwoven with international identity and its active demonstration. The above quotes show a particular state level understanding of what it *means* for Norway to be an Arctic state, and importantly, what kind of behaviour this should lead to in order to communicate this meaning to others. Consequently, Norwegian state personnel’s understanding of Arctic statehood as an *active* status in need of re-assertion influences decisions on e.g. state investment, political focus, research funding, skills development, and so on. In other words, it is an identity that requires political performance as such in order to be meaningful; the identity is performative (see Butler, 2011).

Certainly, one aspect of Arctic statehood is, as mentioned above, a drive to play a key role both together with as well as *among* the other Arctic states. Therefore, being one of the Arctic states was described as “placing us in a position where you are perceived as important, and the decisions we then make in this policy area will also be important for how other countries see us” (N.iii). For Norway, the privileged position as an Arctic state therefore provides an opportunity to play out a long-coveted role: “it is a dimension where Norway can, sort of, assert itself” (N.iii). Adding to this hierarchy of Arctic states, where Norway’s fiscal commitment and active role are perceived

to grant it a leadership role among the remaining seven states, is Norway's status as one among only four others with extended continental shelves in the Arctic Ocean under UNCLOS:

There is kind of an 'A' and a 'B team' in the Arctic Council, as there are five states that have borders to the Arctic Ocean, and Norway is one of those [...] So that is, in a way, the 'A team': those who have direct interests and territories in the Arctic Ocean; while the other states – with areas north of the Arctic Circle, but no border to the Ocean – they are kind of part of this game without participating to the same extent (N.x).

In more than one way, then, the specific way the Norwegian state enacts its Arctic statehood can be traced back to a pre-conceived desire for importance and influence for a small country on the edge of Europe. Here, the aforementioned spatiality of its identity – rooted in subsea continental shelves – is connected to international standing and role, and therefore a specific spatial imaginary that serves Norwegian officials well to emphasise.

Much Norwegian national pride is also often built around precisely this: the sense of it being a peripheral country of only 5 million inhabitants that 'punches above its weight' internationally in political, economic, and moral terms. An example of this is the annual awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, an event that attracts global attention, and thus also serves to broadcast an image of Norway as a key player in global peace-building. When, in 2010, the Nobel Committee's decision to award the Prize to a Chinese political dissident, Liu Xiaobo, resulted in a cold shoulder from the Chinese government towards the Norwegian, subsequent political relations between the two – including China's awarded permanent observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013 – were frequently framed as Norway's attempt to re-gain its peaceful, peace-making, and peace-promoting image. As Johnsen (2015, p. 116) points out, although the Nobel Peace Prize Committee is formally independent of the Norwegian government, the Prize's resultant attention to the state "is actively used to present Norway as a good power through various practices and performances". Likely, the only way of thoroughly thawing relations with China would be a full apology from the Norwegian government – something which they firstly, are not in a position to make as formally not involved; and secondly, would damage the state's international standing as a champion of human rights and morality (Nilsen and Øgrim, 2015). Hence, the assumed Norwegian role among other states is closely connected to identity and image. As one state agent phrased it: "[Identity] is, kind of, about the experience you get from seeing your reflection in others" (N.viii). Somewhat paradoxically, Norway's highly active role in

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is often framed in similar terms, fighting for peace. Demonstrative of this active role, the former Norwegian Prime Minister (PM) Jens Stoltenberg, under whose Labour government (2005-2013) the first *High North Policy* was born, at present serves as the organisation's Secretary General. The tension that exists between simultaneous commitments to peace and defence, arguably leaving Norway today as an "ambivalent ally" (Rottem, 2007), is rhetorically 'resolved' through an emphasis on e.g. NATO as an example of multilateralism and cooperation. When the topic of defence arose in interviews, it tended to be an example of typical international *misunderstandings* about Norway:

There's a perception that we – and this is something that surprises me abroad; at home I don't think there's any particular perception of Norway being this way... – that we are drastically increasing our military capacity [*'oppruster'*] [...] across the board; but this is force, military force that is meant to be used in the north, though for the entire kingdom (N.i).

In other instances, Norway's participation in NATO was described as important for putting the High North on the organisation's agenda (N.xiii); just as vice versa, Norway's presence in the High North was described as important for putting environmental concerns on the international agenda (N.i). The maintenance of the state's international image is as relevant in Arctic political engagement as elsewhere. However, analysing the above only in terms of deliberate political framing is here too simplistic; rather, the seeming resolution of tension between armament and peacefulness reached through an image of responsible internationalism that equally serves to guide officials in their everyday work – indeed, give it meaning.

The idealised image of Norway as a benevolent peace nation, and the particular exceptionalism that comes with it, also percolates into its Arctic bilateral, neighbour relations. Many officials noted a sense of pride in Norway's 'exceptional', peaceful relationship with Russia throughout history, including the successful continental shelf delimitation agreement between the two in 2011: "a diplomatic victory for both states, which many states have a lot of respect for" (N.iv). For some, the unusually positive relationship with Russia, and the state's response to the Ukraine crisis, contributed to Norway's identity as the above "mediator and peace nation" (N.iii) and an international image as a "rational and relatively sober actor" (N.xiii). Interestingly, although the noted polar past (e.g. of explorers and adventurers) was often mentioned, the Cold War era – when, arguably, the Arctic added to Norway's geopolitical significance – was often absent from discussion. In one official's terms, however, the Soviet border had at the time contributed to

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Norwegian national identity, which today allows “that we maintain defence on the level we do” (N.xi). Not just among interviewees, but also in official policy papers, the Norwegian–Russian relationship is framed in positive terms: “the mistrust that marked the Cold War years has to a great extent been replaced by normal, good neighbourly relations” (N.MFA., 2011b, p. 9). Although there is an admittance of “demanding challenges because of differences between our respective political and administrative cultures” (ibid.) (among them, democracy and human rights), the overall framing remains, unsurprisingly, diplomatic. What is more surprising is that this relationship – a “mainstay in Norway’s High North Policy” (ibid.) – was not seen as having noteworthy influence on Norwegian identity, despite being almost defining of its political engagement there through decades. Rather, pre-1990 hostilities were brushed off as a mere historical hiatus: “You have many centuries of history, with neighbourhood and trade in the north, which we now have re-vitalised in the last 25 years” (N.xii). Although differences and tensions are by no means forgotten, the way in which specifically Arctic relations are narrated are demonstrative of Norwegian self-perceptions of peace, morality, and optimism; again, laying out a demarcated field of what may be Norwegian Arctic political practice.

Conceptualising the Norwegian state’s identity, its political role in the community of states, as based on moral values and scripting it as a benefactor fosters a sense of superiority. Indeed, in national narratives generally, a sense of exceptionalism and devaluation of ‘others’ seem ubiquitous (Connolly, 1991), closely tied to patriotism. As one interviewee commented on Norway’s relationship with Russia³⁶:

Norway has been very interested in creating as much neighbourly cooperation with Russia as possible in order to, sort of, increase understanding and lower tension. The whole Barents region project has been a way of ensuring more contact with Russia, more economic contact, more environmental cooperation; altogether try to influence Russia in the direction of a kind of Western mind-set; sort of, we probably wish that Russia will become a bit more like us, both in [environmental] management and mind-set, so that they will be easier to have as a neighbour (N.x; followed by laughter).

³⁶ Interestingly, a strikingly similar opinion was expressed by a US State Department Official in a study by Philip Steinberg (2016) – arguably pointing to lines of division (and Norwegian–US connections) that has less to do with geography than with history and culture:

“A difficulty for the Russians is learning how to be part of the community. The old Soviet ways of doing things still seem to be ingrained in them ... I think part of it is the Russian mindset, and getting past that ... In some ways, it’s like [the Russians] have to learn to play nice with others, and the Arctic may be the place to do that” (US State Dep’t Official 2010, cited in Steinberg, 2016, p. 185).

Despite Arctic statehood being based on membership – and in some ways thus a ‘social identity’ – the above shows that it does not necessarily, always lead to a shared identity among all members at all times and in all settings (Steinberg, 2016). That is, a formal Arctic status may be defined as being one of eight, but primarily against the remaining actors that do not fall into this group; a definition more against outsiders than together with insiders, more of difference than similarity (Connolly, 1991). Cooperation on shared concerns may therefore be instrumentally beneficial – and some interviewees speculated that there might be a shared identity among indigenous peoples or those facing similar challenges, such as vast distances and cold climates. However, the political differences within the group of states were described as too stark for a shared, circumpolar identity, rather allowing Norway to take the lead; that is, all eight might have Arctic identities, but not the *same* Arctic identity. And hence, Norway’s identity prescribes Arctic political cooperation that recognises and maintains national difference, national interest, and a certain level of Arctic state diversity.

Differences aside, when faced with *non*-Arctic states and stakeholders, membership in the privileged group of eight bestows added status and importance to Norwegian officials’ perceptions of their own state. Whereas the role as Arctic leader may be controversial among the other Arctic states, there was no question that this was seen as justified in relation to ‘outsiders’; indeed, the way in which state representatives articulated Arctic statehood *necessitated* such a role. In this manner, discourses of Arctic identity prescribe certain behaviour, that of a leader with both great rights and great responsibilities³⁷. With an increasing number of actors vying for observer status in the Arctic Council, and several states recently having gained so, one official explained:

“multilateral cooperation in the High North is highly necessary, but it will still be the states that *are* Arctic states that have the greatest interests in these areas, and that *should* have the greatest interests in these areas” (N.xiii). She continued that, in her view, non-Arctic states held “purely economic interests”, and therefore it was crucial that the Arctic states ensure concerns relating to “minorities, the climate, pollution, etc. – that [which] we have traditionally seen as important” were also taken into account. Others noted that although Norway would always welcome “open dialogue” on Arctic matters, decision-making was the prerogative of those with territory in the

³⁷ The claim to, and need for, displaying leadership in an Arctic environmental context comes up in both the Icelandic and Canadian chapters too. In particular Canadian officials tended to speak of this in terms ‘stewardship’. While the related ‘*forvaltning*’ was used by Norwegian officials too, it has a slightly different meaning, with closer associations to ‘management’ than those tied to colonial histories in Canada.

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region (N.i). Accordingly, seeing Norway as having been bestowed an important international function as an Arctic state does not just enable influence but also *requires* certain practices.

Norway's Arctic statehood, being part of a region, was not just explained as enabling and entailing the practices *in* the Arctic and its related political fora, but also as holding consequences beyond region-specific topics. The status and influence mentioned above could thereby transcend to other political arenas; in short, being an Arctic state is, for Norway, internationally important, and more often than not, internationally beneficial. In the words of a high-ranking official:

[The Arctic] are areas that there is interest in, where Norway clearly has something to offer [...] In diplomatic relations it is always important to have something to offer, to have some specialties that others are interested in – what we do, so they do not just have to answer questions from us about things we are interested in that they have more insight into. So, in that way it is an important asset for Norway (N.xii).

For him, it was in this manner instrumental as a bargaining chip in international negotiations for a state that is otherwise small – both in physical size and political power. Thus again, it resonates with an identity of being small while wishing to be recognised, heard, and listened to. In the words of a Parliamentarian:

I would say [being an Arctic state] affects us because I think all nations, all people, want to be a bit bigger and a bit more significant than you often realistically are. And Norway, as a tiny country – at least in terms of inhabitants – that we are here an actor in the 'great game', with everyone from the US to Russia, China; yes, I think that can make you 'inflate' a bit too (N.xiv).

In sum, then, the Arctic region is an exclusive international group in which to be a member-state. Among Norwegian decision-makers, this is primarily considered a privilege that allows the state to enact an aspired-to role as important, influential, a *leader* among other states – chiming well with national pride, patriotism, and identity discourses of what Norway is and should be. Importantly, however, it is not a privilege to passively hold, but one that is actively re-iterated, enacted, and performed; an Arctic state identity is as much a process at, as a product of, the international scale.

National Arctic identity

While Arctic statehood may be formally conferred through a position within the international system of states, it is an identity that is also tied to the state's distinctiveness in said system. Returning to the point of diversity amongst Arctic states' identities, the Norwegian version thereof is emphasised also in how it is idiosyncratically this – Norwegian. Moreover, with the mentioned spatiotemporal anchoring, the state's Arctic coastal identity, with the related historical fisherman or seafarer, is connected to the nationalist movement for Norwegian independence at the turn of the century, based on the argument of Norwegian *distinctiveness* – first from the Danish, and then the Swedish (Burgess, 2001; Eriksen, 2002; Tønnesson, 2009). In recent decades, similar arguments and imagery – e.g. represented by trolls and pre-industrial romanticism at the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer – have been used against EU membership (Eriksen and Neumann, 2011). Although independent statehood was achieved in 1905, it was arguably in the late 1960s that Norwegian society truly transformed. The discovery of oil, or 'black gold', in the North Sea led the formerly impoverished, ruralised country to become one of the world's wealthiest petroleum producers – the narrative often framed as an 'oil fairy-tale' (Kristoffersen and Young, 2010). Nevertheless, a national self-perception based on *struggling* for both subsistence and independence persists, and features in Norwegian politics even today³⁸(see Eriksen and Neumann, 2011). Neatly drawing together the above spatiotemporality in an articulation of the nationally Arctic Norway, one official eagerly explained³⁹: "Polar history has been very central to building the Norwegian identity from the 17th-18th century, with the focus on skiing, on winter – that which made Norway *special* in relation to the union with Denmark" (N.vi). While this particular 'struggle' may already be won, its continuous re-formulation in other contexts – e.g. struggling to be heard in intergovernmental fora – means that there is always *some* kind of common hardship through which the nation may unite for the sake of the state. Hence, it is a discourse of state identity that is simultaneously articulated as precarity and victory – an identity of the *uniquely* Norwegian Arctic worthy of protecting. Interweaving an Arctic identity with that which has *distinguished* Norway through past and present, connects it with

³⁸ Norway's 'quasi-postcolonial' self-perception – with a persistent emphasis on independence and sovereignty as seemingly still under threat from a more powerful (mirage of an) 'empire' – is not wholly dissimilar from what shall be seen in the subsequent chapters' presentations of Icelandic and Canadian identity discourses.

³⁹ Anecdotally, the emotional here also became material: I left that particular interview with a stack of books, brochures, and official publications pertaining to polar Norway – state-level statements in material form that travelled with me, the researcher, outside the institution and outside the state.

a certain level of self-perceived exceptionalism as e.g. a ‘peace nation’, an environmentally conscious state, and the (moral) superiority of the welfare system and relative social equality. In other words, Norwegian pronouncements and performances of Arctic identity discourses cannot be separated from discourses of Norwegian identity more generally; the Arctic is enunciated through the national and the national through the Arctic.

Norwegian identity discourses of environmental stewardship – and indeed, exceptionalism at this – clearly connects to the previously noted “closeness to nature”, and is part of constructing a specific role for Norway in the Arctic too. It is a matter of patriotic pride that the term ‘sustainable development’ [*bærekraftig utvikling*] can be traced back to the UN report *Our Common Future* (1987) produced under former Norwegian PM Brundtland’s leadership. It has become a term frequently employed – not least in Arctic contexts, and not only by Norwegians (see Kirkby, O’Keefe and Timberlake, 1996). So frequently, in fact, that it is verging on clichéd in Arctic political rhetoric; certainly, it is a key term for political credibility, regardless of specific content (if any at all). In the 2011 *High North* white paper, the Norwegian government summarised one of its main priorities as ensuring environmental management that “provides a basis for sustainable use of resources” (N.MFA., 2011b, p. 25). The more recent *Arctic Policy*’s introduction by PM Solberg is headlined: “a sustainable future” (N.MFA., 2014, p. 3, 2014, p. 3). And, in the words of one of the interviewees, “today, the Norwegian identity [is tied to] us being the nation that exploits natural resources but in a sustainable way” (N.x). As a country that prides itself on its ‘green’ accomplishments of the past and its ‘green’ agenda for the future – such as a high renewable electricity supply from hydropower – it is no small paradox that the majority of its export revenues come from fossil fuels (see Rimmer, 2016 for ‘ethical’ Norwegian divestment from e.g. coal companies). Interestingly, however, an environmental identity is discursively maintained also in this context – often defined against Russia: “we are, perhaps, better at managing the areas than for example Russia, etc., I do believe that; and we are also very preoccupied, so to speak, with showing that off” (N.ii). Leif Christian Jensen has introduced the term “discourse co-optation” to refer to Norwegian officials’ appropriation of environmentalist arguments in order to gain support, for example justifying petroleum extraction with ‘if we don’t, Russia will (and in a ‘dirtier’ manner)’ (Jensen, 2006, 2012). Often, the two sides – environmental sustainability and economic development – are not presented as mutually exclusive in official rhetoric, but as an area in which Norway can truly shine as it ‘sustainably develops’:

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[W]e have had a, sort of, leadership in relation to climate research and in relation to resource exploitation – that is, the new resources, oil and gas, etc. – and we have managed to raise interest for the High North globally, and particularly in Europe, abroad (N.v).

What is here framed as Norway's exceptionally responsible (or, 'sustainable') approach to a potentially internationally controversial practice consequently becomes part of patriotic pride, and resonates with the noted desire for international status and recognition. It simultaneously renders said practice palatable, uncontroversial (even something to be proud of!), illustrating how identity discourse may frame political practice in specific ways, in turn allowing or disallowing it to take place. While an Arctic identity as a 'sustainable' actor therefore conditions practices, it remains open to interpretation what or whom is in need of being sustained.

The environmentalist identity discourses in Norway are not Arctic-specific, however, but a matter of a pre-existing self-perception extended and re-interpreted to fit a new political context. Rather than casting the Arctic as an exceptional space in need of unique approaches, it is thereby framed it as 'just another' part of Norway: making Norwegian Arctic political practice nothing but 'business as usual'. The views among the interviewees on specifically Norwegian environmentalism in the Arctic were as mixed as their political and professional positions – but, importantly, corresponding with their views on the topic of environmental protection elsewhere too; Arctic space is not unique. Whereas some, as above, praised Norwegian concerns for nature, others were more critical of a Norwegian identity as natural steward being transposed to the Arctic. A Parliamentarian elaborated:

I think the, let's say, 'oddball' Norwegian mind-set: that we are best and we are best at environmental protection, and we are a bit careful – in my head, really, a bit over-preoccupied with it, and a bit too, perhaps, a bit too environmentally conscious [...] I feel that [...] is just continued into the Arctic (N.ix).

For him, the Norwegian political identity of environmentalism was ill-fitted for the contemporary Arctic, and yet continued to hold a strong impact on practice – in his terms, making them "almost fanatically preoccupied with those things" (N.ix). Another Parliamentarian with a similar opinion on the need for Arctic oil extraction – "accepting that it will be a while until you get new resources, etc., and therefore Norway should also, of course, make use of the natural resources we have and earn money from them" (N.xiv) – also acknowledged the inherent symbolism of the debate:

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Not that I am personally in favour of it, but if there is one nation on this Earth that could, perhaps, have limited oil extraction based on a climate reasoning, so to speak, and had the economy to miss that income etc., then that is Norway, right. And also, to show the importance of taking care of the climate and environment – among others, because of the Arctic (N.xiv).

As he further continued, there is also symbolic power in the opposite:

[T]he extraction we conduct is more secure and safer than in many other countries. But also, not least, this will create more employment and a lot of activity in our High North areas, and that I think is important in order to secure a claim to the areas also in the longer-term (N.xiv).

In this manner, existing understandings of Norwegian identity are continued into Arctic politics – re-interpreting the new to fit within a familiar frame. Depending on which specific enactment of identity gains favour – e.g. acting as steward versus (sustainable) extractor – certain political practices are necessitated while others are ruled out. Either way, through seemingly stable identity discourses Arctic policy is Norwegianised and normalised; the state official's subject-position remains the same, and if nothing else, the everyday performance of said position is 'sustained'.

The normalisation of Arctic statehood for Norway, and linkage to identity, is not just a matter of explicit, deliberately framing statements. As members of Norwegian society, state officials too are reminded in 'banal' ways of Norway's Arctic title through the most mundane and everyday (Billig, 1995). In Sörlin's (2013a, p. 9) words, Norway maintains an "active polar lore" and "boasts about its national polar explorers and stresses its polar identity, even in the form of a 'banal nationalism' manifest in the daily posting of temperatures for both the South and North Pole in Norway's largest daily, *Aftenposten*". Certainly, in media – both national and international – Arctic headlines crop up with increasing frequency. Many of the interviewed officials pointed out that this frequent reminding, surely, influences Norwegian self-perception. However, as one added:

I also think it is very vague [...], and I sort of see 'the Arctic' being spewed out everywhere. And I think – like you, you live in the UK and so have I done – that, perhaps, places that are not part of 'The Arctic', there it becomes, maybe, sort of mythical; it is something very exotic, something fun to talk about (N.ii).

Hence, the present popularity of all things Arctic may, rather than remind of proximity, be a tell-tale sign of actual feeling of distance – a trendy but *empty* label. Yet, as a label without content, the Arctic once more becomes commonplace, ordinary, *normal*. In another official's view, the Norwegian public was mainly aware of their Arctic statehood due to three interlinked issues: climate change, oil extraction, and spectacular nature: "ice, walruses, polar bears, and all sorts of things up there that people think are great to see, great to visit" (N.x). Again, it is the *exotic*, albeit an approachable, reachable exoticism, that generates awareness and interest; and, consequently, generates potential for patriotism. Even if perhaps seeming impersonal to *individual* Norwegians, symbols and news-stories of the Arctic thus become part of the transcendently shared national, existing within and alongside in the nation's "homogenous, empty time" of the present (see Anderson, 1983). For state personnel not working directly with Arctic issues, it also means that it is a title, an identity, encountered through the everyday. It is an identity that becomes articulated through social relations, be it with colleagues, neighbours, or friends; and so, a sense of representing an Arctic state comes about through a number of channels. How Arctic statehood, then, is envisioned to be practiced is intrinsically entangled with and within these other channels; the performance of Arctic state identity will always also be an enactment upon the national stage.

With these reminders of Norway's 'Arcticness' follows the acknowledgement that, despite frequently being deferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arctic politics has an important domestic dimension; however, a dimension that frequently masquerades under various aliases ranging from Northern Norwegian regional politics to coastal management, environmental protection, or resource extraction.

[Y]ou can of course put a lot into the Arctic or High North identity, or inside that bubble, that would have been there regardless of us having those labels on it, right. Now we have a label; now we can say when we build a new ice-breaking research vessel that it is an Arctic investment, but [before] we would have just called it marine research. So, we didn't have – we had perhaps done it anyway, but we hadn't, sort of, had a 'hook' for it (N.i).

As he continued, however, the re-branding exercise did more than allocate decision-making responsibilities to specific ministries and more than facilitate public support for politics – it *necessitated* certain practice of "filling the strategy with concrete content":

Building an [Arctic] identity, you build a brand – that is, Norway: a brand – which requires that the state – the state administration, government and Parliament – have to deliver something within it. So it

drives development. And then, some might say that nothing has happened; and there's probably something to that, but I think less would have happened if one hadn't chosen to have this 'heading' (N.i).

Notably, it is not just a matter of politicians' deliberate framing in order to influence the electorate in a top-down fashion (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Breuille, 1996); as the above shows, these understandings also influence the options available to politicians themselves – in this case, of what sort of politics should follow an Arctic 'brand'. Identifying as living in, belonging to, or *representing* an Arctic state thus also comes with a package of responsibilities and rights that need to be respected through practice.

Sub-national Arctic identity

Having acknowledged the domestic dimension of Arctic statehood for Norway – the 'national' scale through which any Arctic identity is articulated – it follows that, by formal latitudinal definition, it is actually *Northern* Norway that bestows the state its Arctic title. Generally defined as the three northernmost counties (of the mainland; Svalbard is a different matter⁴⁰) – Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark – Northern Norway has historically been seen as peripheral, even backwards. Indeed, in medieval times Norway's far north was, on the one hand, largely unknown (and uninteresting), while on the other, imbued with myths and superstition – something which in the early modern period no doubt contributed to the convictions that allowed abhorrent witch-burnings to take place, primarily in Finnmark (Hagen, 2006, 2014; see also Vaughan, 1982). Although such perceptions (and practices!) have fortunately changed, certain negative stereotypes may still persist to an extent:

That joke about not needing Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark that you perhaps encounter occasionally in Southern Norway, it sort of lies there as a sub-current: that not much is created here, there is a lot of whining, and a lot of people on benefit. Yes, I think that still persists a bit; that you, kind of, joke about it and that some also, perhaps, mean it (N.xv).

More generally, Aarebrot (1982) suggests that Norway has managed to maintain a relatively high level of national heterogeneity without regional conflict, making it an interesting case of

⁴⁰ See footnote 29 on the case of Svalbard, p. 72.

territorial identity politics. His explanation is that “no regional rallying points seem to exist” (Aarebrot, 1982, p. 108); even the seemingly stark division between proponents of the Danish-related written norm of *bokmål* versus the more historically rooted *nynorsk* is, in the end, a matter of the same language, and not necessarily clearly spatially divided (albeit the Saami languages are seemingly absent). With a highly centralised political core and rapid economic growth, he argues that Norway is therefore a country of peripheries, itself historically seen as peripheral to Europe. Drawing on an identity as a peripheral, small state may indeed be a powerful factor for domestic coherence – arguably, a defining feature of the Norwegian ‘nation-state’ since its formative years (and with it, an “obsessive” quest for status) (Leira, 2015). One official explained that finding a “voice to generate pride outside of what has traditionally been considered Norwegian nationalism” was hindered by precisely this:

Norway has a very strong concentration of power, I think, so to speak: ‘the Oslo cauldron’. And, I think Norway is a very conformist society, everything from the media etc., which is very conformist; you have a very similar mind-set (N.xiv).

Nevertheless, as Northern Norway was the first nominal region within Norway in the 19th century (Niemi, 1993; Tjelmeland, 1996), it was from the outset a mental construction with a double meaning: expressing both a domestic distinction worth recognition and a wish for equality and integration (Fulsås, 1997; see Arbo, 2015, pp. 27–29). Hence, a Northern Norwegian identity – whether it is backwards, conformist, or proud – is a sub-identity of the national, implicitly constituting the larger whole in its insistence on recognition; and with it, also Norway’s Arctic.

Even if sub-*national* identities only make sense within an overarching nation, Northern Norway is increasingly being labelled as Arctic, which, as previously discussed, holds immediate connotations of a circumpolar north rather than the state-specific (and, again, ‘the High North’ bridges the two). It is the territorial basis of legitimate Arctic statehood for Norway – something of which the government is highly aware. Leaving no room for doubt, PM Solberg starts her introduction to the 2014 *Arctic Policy*: “Every time I visit *Northern Norway*, I am inspired by the dynamism of the people and industries in the region”. This is followed by: “We need to address key challenges today to equip the *High North* to meet the demands of the future”; and, two paragraphs below: “The *Arctic* is Norway’s most important foreign policy priority” (N.MFA., 2014, p. 3 emphasis added). Although this is quoted from the official English translation of the Norwegian policy, it is worth noting that in the original Norwegian text she only uses “Northern

Norway” and “*nordområdene*” in her introduction, leaving “*arktis*” to the report’s authors. Nonetheless, it is a tip-of-the-hat to the northernmost counties and communities, acknowledging their importance for the ‘nation-state’ writ large. Similarly, most officials were careful to acknowledge Northern Norway’s particular importance; and “the region of opportunities” [*mulighetenes landsdel*] was a recurring denomination. Many contrasted current optimism with the aforementioned stereotypes of provincialism, explaining how the region (and perceptions thereof) has changed rapidly from being “a subsidy-drain” (N.xvi; N.xi), “outskirts”, and “outpost” (N.xvi):

[W]hen you are in Northern Norway, the first thing you notice is a strong optimism, a lot of vitality, many plans, a lot of discussion about opportunities that can be used. So, that makes me think that the North Norwegian self-perception is changing; this connects to how it has traditionally been: namely, a self-reliant and strong people in a robust region (N.xii).

For the northernmost part of the country, the Arctic title thus means an elevated status, and domestic recognition from the political centre. Indeed, the hitherto peripheral region is, in the Arctic context, at the very heart of things. For state officials, this necessitates a certain level of political attention and effort; their credibility hinges on their successful demonstration of sensitivity to people higher on the northern hierarchy. Interestingly, a number of the interviewed officials also explained their own professional engagement with the Arctic region as a result of their own northernness or (at times tenuous) connection to the region. That is, as state personnel, also *their* professional and personal subject-positions are formulated within discourse, where relative northernness means relative claim to authority to act, speak, and perform the Arctic state.

Domestically, then, there is an internal hierarchy of ‘Arcticness’ correlating with relative northernness that nevertheless maintains Northern Norway as a sub-category of, or region within, the Norwegian state. Any north/south difference thus remains within the boundaries of acceptable diversity within the (Arctic) state, part of tolerable (even beneficial) national heterogeneity. Despite regional pride in that which distinguishes each ‘periphery’ – be it accents, traditional costumes, or local dishes – Norway’s level of heterogeneity is in many ways low, as the earlier description of it as “a very conformist society” (N.xiv) pointed to. Researching what is perceived to define ‘Norwegianness’, Vassenden (2010) found that, in addition to formal citizenship and cultural traits (such as language, values, religion, etc.), ethnicity (and often, specifically whiteness) is still considered an important factor. In terms of values, a large-scale cross-national study found that Norwegians tend to prioritise those of democracy, equality, and

community (Larsen *et al.*, 1995): all values that support a unified ‘nation-state’ with little room for deviance *beyond* the national norm of diversity. It follows that the High North policies are, at the end of the day, nation-wide in relevance and at the level of the state, rather than promoting local differentiations. Indeed, the sub-heading of the 2014 *Arctic Policy* closes with “Developments in the Arctic concern us all” (N.MFA., 2014). Its predecessor, the 2011 *High North Policy*, even more explicitly stresses that, although it builds on a number of preceding policy papers, some of which are also more regional in scope: “This is not a ‘North Norway-paper’ nor a regional policy treatise. The *High North Policy* is about strengthening Norway’s position in the north by drawing on experiences, knowledge, and resources from the entire country” (N.MFA., 2011a, p. 9). In the opinion of some northern interviewees, this is more due to laziness on the part of local, northern politicians than any desire of appropriation from a centralised state (N.xvi), whereas other southern interviewees praised the “extremely active Northern Norway” with which e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs frequently collaborate on Arctic matters abroad (N.vi). Either way, justifying particular investment in the north to the rest of the population was on the whole seen as uncontroversial: “there is very strong support for the High North policy being a *national* initiative, but [acceptance] that it demands, of course, extraordinary investment in Northern Norway” (N.xvi). The only controversy, one noted with a smile, is “between the cities in the north [...] competing for resources and entrepreneurship” (N.iv). State expenditures specifically in Northern Norway – even “extraordinary” ones – may in this manner be, as one official phrased it, “legitimised a bit more pragmatically” (N.xi): By designating it as Norway’s Arctic ‘part’, the same investment would not be called for in other regions, though the revenues therefrom would still be expected to benefit the larger whole. The practical, material implications of “filling the Arctic brand with content” (N.i) thereby become contingent on the national economy and politics writ large:

One says that, yes, there are a lot of exciting things in the north; it can become a very important region also in order to lift the whole Norway into the future, with everything that lies there. However, at the same time, there’s the everyday reality. So, when it comes to tough prioritisation in budgets and other things it is often a fight for resources (N.ii).

A prefixed part of the national whole, Northern Norway clearly gains status and attention (and, of course, investment) as a result of the increasing interest in the Arctic. In return, other regions may too, in concert, claim belonging to an Arctic state. In other words, articulations and enactments of a state identity that firmly places Northern Norway *within* the larger whole are

instrumental for the way Norway may act as Arctic; and, indeed, prescribes a certain northern political engagement on regional, national, and international scales.

A domestic hierarchy of ‘Arcticness’ and authority is not just a matter of relative geographical northernness, however, but also holds an ethnic component: that of indigeneity. In an international Arctic context, an indigenous population – as either actively participating in political fora or part of the supposedly represented citizenry – no doubt adds weight to claims of Arctic state credibility (at least as long as the relationship is perceived as fair). Norway is home to a portion of the indigenous Saami people, and roughly the northern half of the country falls within the Sápmi region (also referred to as ‘the North Calotte’), which also includes parts of Sweden, Finland, and Russia. In the *Arctic Policy*’s summary, the Norwegian government estimates that there are 80-100,000 Saami people spread across the four states, the largest portion of whom reside in Norway, graphically illustrated with a reindeer and two *lavvos* (N.MFA., 2014, p. 70). However, there is no official registration of Saami people – indeed, *defining* who is and who is not after centuries of interaction is problematic (Larsson and Buljo, 2013) – and so, Statistics Norway reports that “no one knows how many Saami people there are” (Statistics Norway, 2014). In order to register for a vote in the Saami Parliament [*Sámediggi*], a person has to self-declare as fulfilling one of three criteria: speaking Saami as the primary language at home; having a parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent who does/did; or having a parent who is already part of the electorate. At the most recent election in 2013, approximately 15,000 people were registered to vote (Saami Parliament, 2013); though, of course, voting-rights and identity are not necessarily synonymous. As is clear from the criteria, being able to register as a Saami voter with only one great-grandparent having spoken Saami (and the fact that these criteria are expected to be self-enforced), the boundaries of indigeneity/non-indigeneity are largely based on self-perceived identity. Indeed, despite the roughly estimated 10% indigenous population in Northern Norway, many would argue that with a little genealogical effort, most Northern Norwegians would be able to find some ‘Saami blood’ in their pasts; and, certainly, politicians therefrom expressed pride in the “diverse population” (N.ii) of which they were both part and representatives.

However, although indigeneity comes with a certain status in the Arctic contexts today, finding ‘Saami blood’ in the roots of the family tree was historically considered a source of shame. Recalling that Norwegianness is often defined, *inter alia*, based on ethnic whiteness, and that linguistically the two main alternatives discussed are usually *bokmål* and *nynorsk*, it is clear that in some respects, the Saami (as well as other minorities) remain outsiders within the Norwegian

nation if not the state. Historically, from the 1800s' Norwegian 'national awakening', the state pursued a deliberate Norwegianisation assimilation policy of the Saami people. Rights to citizenship and property were, for example, tied to Norwegian language abilities. State policies gradually changed from the end of the Second World War, but the true political awakening of a Saami identity was arguably a result of the 'Alta case' in the late 1970's and into the 80's. The conflict, based on Saami and environmental opposition to hydropower development in the Alta-Kautokeino river stretch, eventually led to increased Saami rights; and in 1989 the Norwegian Saami Parliament was opened (Saami Parliament, 2015). Furthermore, the year before, §108 (then §110b) was added to the Norwegian Constitution, stating that: "The authorities of the state shall create conditions enabling the Saami people to preserve and develop its language, culture and way of life" (see Skogvang, 2015). Clearly, the situation has improved drastically through the last three decades, but, as with the region too, stereotypes and prejudices may be hard to change. Pre-empting the annual media display of resentment towards the Saami national day (on 6th February; distinct from the Norwegian on 17th May), President Keskitalo of the Saami Parliament explained that the Saami are "a people without its own state. [...] The term 'nation' refers to the perception of community; that we see ourselves as one people". She further continued that "it is not an expression of Saami wanting a state of their own; such an idea or ambition does not exist", but rather a trans-border celebration of "ourselves, our language, culture, and shared history"; importantly, marked by "unity and festivity, not exclusion and division" (Keskitalo, 2015). In terms of Arctic politics, the Saami Council represents the Saami in all four countries as one of six 'permanent participants' in the Arctic Council, meaning that they need to be 'consulted' on all matters (see Graczyk, 2011; Graczyk and Koivurova, 2014). As an intergovernmental forum, many have praised the Arctic Council's idiosyncrasy on this inclusion (Knecht, 2013); however, voting rights remain a state privilege, and thus, the Saami residing in Norway are also formally represented through the Norwegian delegation. How, exactly, a Saami identity stands in relation to a Norwegian, or indeed Arctic, is beyond the scope here (see e.g. Gaski, 1998); nevertheless, more than one of the interviewees explicitly identified themselves as Saami too (as I return to below), and all recognised the important role they played for Norway's Arctic relations:

They are extremely competent [*'dyktige'*]; we [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] have a close cooperation with them [...] And it is clear that it is extremely important to get their experience and have concern for the indigenous interests (N.vi).

Playing an extremely or even “phenomenally important role, of course” (N.vii), there is widespread agreement that the Saami people have a particular standing in Arctic policy-matters. Of 15 strategic priorities, number 14 reads: “The Government will seek to ensure that Norway’s High North policy continues to safeguard the culture and livelihood of indigenous peoples” (N.MFA., 2011b, p. 40). However, it is also clear that in policy-making reality, it presents particular challenges; for one official, it was the *main* challenge of Arctic politics: “the conflicts of interest that can arise from the meeting of desire for economic development and for maintaining indigenous traditions and knowledge; traditions, knowledge, language, and culture” (N.viii). Referred to as the “local democracy in the Arctic” (N.ii), the Saami were recognised as the ones who would be “left with the positive – that is, part of the positive things, hopefully, if we do this well – but also the negative consequences if we do this badly” (N.vii). And yet, the central, majority ‘we’ remains in opposition to the peripheral, minority ‘they’; the former with agency to act, the latter primarily to *react*. “They are important voices that means a lot, perhaps, for each nation’s development of policy [...] and as such, also internationally” (N.ii). In other words, the Saami and other indigenous peoples have an important role in Arctic politics, but in terms of the way in which Norway’s Arctic statehood is *enacted*, they are consultants more than performers; their own performance and political practice are designated to a separate discursive field beyond that from which the state official gains subjectivity, and their identities beyond that of the state.

Personal Arctic identity

Domestic difference of relative ‘Arcticness’ is not just a matter of identifying with regional or ethnic components of the respective state territory or citizenry, however; it may be broken down even further – to the intimately personal and individual. That is, while the state is often conceptualised as a unified whole, it is in reality made up of its numerous practitioners; the Arctic state comes into being as such as an effect of the practices of a range of Arctic state officials (amongst these practices, their statements thereof in interviews...) (see Abrams, 1988; Mitchell, 2006; Painter, 2006; McConnell, 2016). As I have hitherto argued, these gain their own subjectivity through, *inter alia*, their specific position as representative of the state – i.e. as defined *within* discourse; however, recognising that there are discursive ‘rules’ delimiting their performance of this position is not to say that their performance is predetermined. Each politician, bureaucrat, civil servant, citizen, and resident of the Arctic state of Norway holds a certain level of agency in their understandings and subsequent enactments of identity discourses.

In the end, the relations through which Arctic state identity comes to be enunciated also include relations to the *self*: the personal, emotional, and embodied subjectivity that arises from the innumerable range of subject-positions of which the ‘state official’ is only one. And importantly, the multifarious, interlocking, conflicting, and ambiguous facets of anyone’s sense of self are all influential in how the Arctic aspect comes to be understood, and how it comes to be performed.

For several of the interviewed officials, their own sense of Arctic identity was contingent on direct contact with the title; that is, the frequency of encounters with Norway-as-Arctic serve to remind thereof. This means that the state personnel working specifically on Arctic issues in their everyday routines are likely to hold a different perception than the (southern, non-Saami) ‘man on the street’. While drawing any binary between state personnel and (the rest of) society is arbitrary, some interviewees noted that there may be a distinction between professional and private identification with the Arctic. Reflecting on Arctic identities in Norway in general, several pointed to their own engagement with the topic as important for their own relation to the region:

Everyone has a relationship to this [the Arctic], but I don’t think, like, that it is, sort of, a central part of the national identity; I’m very unsure of it being that anymore. Perhaps that I – for us working with the Arctic, perhaps it can [be]. We are of course interested in it. We have read all these books and, like, know this history and such because it is a field that interests us (N.x).

The adoption of Norway’s Arctic statehood as an integral part of an identity may therefore be based on a more general national-Norwegian narrative, but still be recognised as a *state* identity. In other words, a professional identity of what it means to represent and politically enact Norway’s Arctic statehood may develop asymmetrically from the imagination of (an Arctic) community. Indeed, for some it may be an identity felt stronger at work, ‘in’ the state, than at home. With the caveat, again, of it likely being different in the north, an Oslo-based Parliamentarian jokingly described Norway being an Arctic state as “a politician-thing” (N.ix). Another noted, more seriously, that the Arctic was something that “many politicians care about and relate to” (N.xv). A third official rhetorically questioned international media’s influence on Norwegian identity: “It depends on who defines the Norwegian self-perception: Is it the ‘elite’ in Oslo, like me, or is it most people?” (N.vi). She continued that whereas “we at the authority-level are very aware” of the current interest in and implications of Norway as an Arctic state, “most people are not particularly concerned with what big newspapers or big central think-tanks in the

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UK or Belgium write about the Arctic” (N.vi). The professional role and responsibility of representing the ‘nation-state’ as a whole was explained by another:

As a politician, and often in central positions in the state administration, you know that you have a position that is bigger than yourself; and then that requires you to lift your gaze, and not just be self-centred in the decisions and judgments you make (N.ii).

For him it was a responsibility of his job as an elected official; for another it was a result:

I think that politicians have [...] sort of a bit bigger overview, perhaps, than the population. That sort of goes for all issues, but also typically on topics like this, where the population is more concerned with the concrete, singular issues that, perhaps, also affect them, but politicians to a larger degree see the whole picture on those types of things (N.xiv).

Either way, working at the state-level – and even more so, working directly with Arctic-related topics – may foster a heightened sense of Norway’s ‘Arcticness’. As such, the concept of ‘state identity’ is useful to explore perceptions of own state – own employer and that which is to be represented through action and policy. Moreover, it is an understanding of own role as a representative of *people’s* interests – even if they, perhaps, are considered less aware of having such. What these officials then see this entailing – their own role as employed by and *as* the Norwegian (Arctic) state – becomes crucial for the way it is translated into tangible political action.

Although the above shows how some hold a different conceptualisation of professional and private, state and national identity, any clear boundary between the two are more often than not blurred. While some of those cited above viewed their own role as ‘leading’ a nation, thereby having better overview and better knowledge, others also unhesitatingly spoke of themselves as Norwegian nationals, members of the community of people also beyond the governmental office. As aforementioned, state officials are also influenced by media and popular discourse (Sharp, 1993), and no doubt bring much of their out-of-office self with them in their everyday professional interactions. Hence, an often absent aspect of political analysis is the significance of state personnel’s self-perceptions as such for the ways in which they choose to perform their role. Consequently, the *personal* accounts of Arctic identities among the interviewed state officials are more than anecdotal: they are illustrative of the personal, subjective, emotional, and human behind political practice, and as such, behind the state. One high-ranking official spoke of her own

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interest in the polar regions as passed down through her mother from her grandmother, “who was not intellectual, but a single mother working in a can-factory where Amundsen was one of the heroes” (N.-). Family and personal background were recurring themes when officials reflected on identity, even in their professional roles:

Because I am born, have family, and have spent a lot of time in Northern Norway, I have a completely different identity and emotional attachment to Northern Norway and to the Arctic than people who do not have that background; of that I am completely sure (N.xii).

A third interviewee reflected further on the intersection of professional and personal identity, not as in conflict but as co-constitutive:

[M]y identity is very tied to being a *Finnmarking* and having a multicultural background; that is, I am both Norwegian and Saami, and have always lived in that tension. And I am, of course, also now a representative for the state, the country, Norway. And obviously that influences my mind-set and my approach to very many of the High North-questions that I have been part of dealing with in some way or another (N.-).

As the above quotes illustrate, identity is a constellation of many factors, and the personal and subjective ought not to be underestimated as influential also for the way state officials view themselves, their role, and their country. Furthermore, the above forces a reassessment of common views of monolithic de-humanised states. The Arctic state emerges as a result of the practices enacted by, *inter alia*, its myriad of representatives. Thus, the above reveals its *human* side – ‘peopling’ the state (Jones, 2007) – and how these state officials’ *own* understandings of identity may, indeed, play an important part in the way in which the Arctic state is politically practiced into being.

Conclusion

The Arctic state of Norway is through the statements of its practitioners, the performances of its actors, coming into being. *How* it is enacted, and so, how it becomes ‘real’ in the world, is conditioned by the underlying discourses of identity among said practitioners: state identity. Norwegian state personnel are simultaneously producing and a product of the state as such – active in the (re-)production of the discursive state system from which they, themselves, gain

their subjectivity. In their words and practices, Norway, 'the Way to the North', is re-articulated not just 'to' but *as* the North itself.

Norway has been defined by its spatiality, its northerness, since long before it gained sovereign statehood as we know it. Its geographical character, and the social characteristics that were believed determined to follow, formed a basis for nationalism and eventual statehood in the early 20th century: an independent state for an independent people that is marked by the cold struggle for existence at the very edge of Europe... Norwegian identity has therefore long been closely connected to the north, and an extension to 'the High North' and the Arctic seem hardly more than matters of terminology. What has traditionally been seen as typically Norwegian – be it dark winters, Vikings, skiing, or polar explorers – is today being re-interpreted by its many representatives as demonstrative of its Arctic 'essence'. Hence, an Arctic identity for the Norwegian state becomes embedded in the country's spatiotemporal narrative: It leads to political enactment that corresponds to prevailing geographical imaginaries – based on latitudes, temperatures, environments, and nature writ large. And, as an identity that gains its seeming stability from rootedness in Arctic space, however imagined, it is simultaneously firmly 'rooted' in the temporal narrative of the 'nation-state' – an Arctic identity becomes incorporated in stories of nationalism and history, memory and the linear progress of the national community. Illusory or not, the idea(l) of the (Arctic) 'nation-state' is powerful *also* amongst those tasked with representing it on a daily basis; if a stable core of 'who we are' is *believed* to be true, it sets the parameters of practice.

Norway's Arctic state identity may then seem stable, fixed, and rooted in time and space, history and geography. However, the way in which discourse translates to statements and practice may be delimited, but will always be relationally mediated by the range of subjects who are doing the stating and practicing. Across scales, from the international to the national, the regional to the personal, the innumerable relations and encounters in which state officials find themselves condition how the Arctic state comes into being. Internationally, Arctic state identity is conceptualised as one amongst eight. Defined against non-Arctic 'others', states and stakeholders, the A8 is a group as defined by e.g. territorial latitudes and Arctic Council membership. However, there are also significant differences between them, and for Norwegian state officials this is often articulated as grounds for Norwegian 'leadership'. With shared rights and responsibilities amongst the eight 'stewards', they describe the Norwegian state's contribution as one of peace-keeping (morality) and sustainability (environmentalism). Hence, images of

Norwegian identity more generally are transferred to the Arctic context, and in the process domesticate an otherwise ‘distant frontier’. Nationally too, the Arctic thus becomes enmeshed in wider identity discourses of not just who they are, but who they want to be as a ‘nation state’; and, importantly, what sets them apart as such, the *uniquely* Norwegian hue of Arctic identity. However, Arctic state officials do not just conceive identity as defined against other states or with a national community; an Arctic state is also premised on its Arctic *parts*. At the regional or local level, appropriating an Arctic identity is therefore contingent on relative northerness *within* the state and indigeneity (in Norway’s case, identifying as Saami). While all of Norway’s representatives may wear their Arctic ‘hat’ in Brussels, for example, their authority to speak ‘for’ rests on their ability to demonstrate respect and ‘consultation’ with those higher on the latitudinal hierarchy. Moreover, relations within the state administration itself matter, where the more knowledge, interest, and everyday contact with Arctic policy were described as leading to stronger awareness of Arctic identity. In this manner, Norway’s formal Arctic statehood comes to be articulated also through the individual – incorporated into subjectivity that exceeds the particular subject-position of representative of the Norwegian ‘nation-state’ – and relations both to others and to the self. Familial ties and private interests filter into the interviewees’ own sense of ‘Arcticness’. Defining also *themselves* within discourses of Arctic state identity, personal narratives are interwoven in the spatiotemporal seams: stories of grandmothers and polar explorers, blood-lines, and summer holidays in the north were told as thin but strong threads in the fabric of Norway’s Arctic statehood. And indeed, if, as above, an Arctic identity is understood, *connected* with, through the well-known feeling of cold, it becomes at once both nationally shared and intimately, bodily personal.

In the end, the practices through which the Norwegian Arctic state comes into being are conditioned by discourses of state identity, delimited and defined in time and space. However, the everyday ways in which they are performed and pronounced are contingent on its heterogeneous performers, the *people* of the state, and the innumerable relations in which they conduct themselves and their state. By listening to *their* articulations of identity, as seen from *within* the state, we may gain a more nuanced understanding of political meaning-making and subsequent practice: an understanding that allows the Arctic state of Norway humanity, multiplicity, and subjectivity, ‘peopling’ our understanding of the Arctic state and statehood writ large.

Chapter Five

Iceland: The Land of Fire and Ice

So why this chilly name for a volcanic island with frequent eruptions? In Landnáma, the book of settlement in Iceland, it says that one of the first Vikings to travel to the island, Floki, who followed his ravens, climbed a mountain and saw beneath him a fjord full of drift ice. Hence, the name Iceland. The drift ice and our harsh climate is a reminder to Icelanders that we are an Arctic nation.

(Iceland's Prime Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, 2013)

Following the Arctic Circle westwards from Norway as the Vikings did, you reach the youngest of the Arctic states, Iceland: the second case through which to explore state officials' articulations of Arctic state identity. Despite its frosty name, the country's political relationship with the Arctic is of a much more recent date than that of its eastern and western neighbours. In fact, it barely stretches north of the Arctic Circle, and its Arctic title has been one of recent adoption. Iceland is also the smallest of the A8 both in terms of land and population. With a relatively homogenous citizenry of just over 300,000, and as an island situated on Europe's periphery, Iceland would seem to provide a case study of a nation *par excellence* (Pálsson and Durrenberger, 1996, p. 1). And yet, it is also a land of contradictions and contrasts, east and west, fire and ice. Considering how the Arctic fits into Icelandic identity is even less straightforward, as it has previously not been part of the Icelandic national-historical narrative. Despite this (or perhaps exactly *because* of this), economic and political interests are presently re-shaping the state's sense of self – a sense of being Arctic (Dodds and Ingimundarson, 2012, p. 22). As such, Iceland provides a contrasting example to its Norwegian neighbour in the east and the Canadian further west, by presenting Arctic statehood as something explicitly forward-looking and future-oriented – a new oceanic connection for the island-state, and new political connections for its state personnel. Yet, although its articulation is different, idiosyncratically Icelandic, discourses of state identity here too work to condition the way in which the state materialises as an *Arctic* state.

This chapter is based on reflections by 12 Icelandic state personnel on the meaning of Arctic identity and statehood. As in the previous chapter, their articulations are presented under the six sub-headings of state identity discourses, as spatiotemporally bounded but relationally mediated through relations and encounters. These are presented alongside official statements from relevant policy documents and speeches, as well as relevant supplementary background on the state. Spatially, Iceland's Arctic statehood is one of islandhood, and moreover, frequently explained through oceanic currents and connections. Arguing for Iceland contestably being "the only country wholly within the Arctic" (Skarphéðinsson in I.MFA., 2009, p. 7), officials tend to favour definitions that go beyond latitudinal lines to contextually defined geographies. Nature, environment, climates, and their related livelihoods serve to translate the foreign to the known – drawing imaginaries of the Arctic to (and fro) the island through winds, streams, and dynamic flows. While the temporality of an Icelandic Arctic identity is, as noted, more anticipatory than what is seen in Norway and Canada, it is here too narrated – or, rather, Iceland's national narrative is *re*-narrated to fall into line with an Arctic present and future. Sagas, Vikings, and myths of the past are all enlisted in the story of Arctic Iceland – a story that is told by different people in different contexts, and as such, always one that takes its shape, its distinct unfolding plotline, in and through relations. For the youngest state among the A8, Arctic statehood ties into broader questions of independence, international relations, and nation/statehood. And indeed, not just defined with and against other states, the practices of Arctic statehood – performances of identity as such – are considered, by its practitioners, as that of nation-statehood more generally, one aspect of the inherent *meaning* of 'Icelandicness'. The idiosyncratic and unique, the perception of own state's 'character', is therefore also articulated through what it means to 'be' Arctic. Unlike Norway and Canada, Iceland does not have an indigenous population, and its regional or local differences are minor. Therefore, what in the other two is referred to as a sub-national 'scale' through which Arctic state identity may be both contested and consolidated is in Iceland less pronounced. However, here too intra-national diversity can be seen – as societal roles, professions, and 'traditional' localism serving as a bridge to indigenous identities elsewhere in the circumpolar north. These all come to the fore, are all articulated and performed, by the various people whose task it is to perform it. And so, finally, *their* subjectivities come into play as they enact the Arctic state. It is through their enunciations of identity that the Arctic state of Iceland takes on meaning, takes on agency; and the 'Land of Fire and Ice' flickers and glides *through* encounters, through relations, through the human subjects who all bring the discursive into being.

Spatialities of Arctic identity

Iceland's position as an Arctic state and full member of the Arctic Council is a matter of geographical position in the world. Around the table are the circumpolar states: those with territory north of the Arctic Circle. And yet, a closer look at the map reveals that the Icelandic 'mainland', or main island, lies south thereof (see Appendix C). Only a small, uninhabited island, Grímsey, provides latitudinally defined Arctic soil on which to base its statehood as such (Harding and Bindloss, 2004, p. 41). In contrast (and contestation), the official governmental view is, however, that "Iceland is the only country wholly within the Arctic" (I.MFA., 2009, p. 7) – but based on criteria other than cartographic gridlines. Indeed, there is a number of different ways to define the Arctic, something which has been a key point of emphasis for Icelandic officials since the state's exclusion from Arctic fishery-related negotiations in 2008 (see Dodds and Ingimundarson, 2012). Their position on the matter is that the ocean – stretching northwards, and flowing around the country, enveloping it – *connects* it to the Arctic. However, as its continental shelf claims under UNCLOS do not extend as far north as the Arctic Ocean proper⁴¹, it is not considered among the five Arctic littoral states – to much political dismay in Iceland. When the Icelandic Parliament, *Alþingi*, in 2011 agreed on a resolution on their Arctic Policy (I.MFA., 2011), a more 'correct' definition was prioritised in several of its 12 principles. Indeed, the third priority reads:

Promoting understanding of the fact that the Arctic region extends both to the North Pole area proper and the part of the North Atlantic Ocean which is closely connected to it. The Arctic should not be limited to a narrow geographical definition but rather be viewed as an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters (I.MFA., 2011, p. 1).

According to the *Alþingi*, it is clearly the Icelandic government's task to ensure that others understand what is 'fact', namely that Iceland truly belongs. This sense of unfair exclusion was a recurring topic among the interviewed officials:

I have to insist that when it comes to Iceland's position in the Arctic, then our view is that we are, of course, completely inside the Arctic. We have the [world's] northernmost capital, and [...] we are almost the only country that is entirely within the Arctic. And that means that all the inhabitants in Iceland, in this way, are Arctic inhabitants, so to speak (I.i).

⁴¹ Notwithstanding the ambiguity of determining where one ocean ends and another starts.

And indeed, according to the ‘centrepiece’ of Iceland’s Arctic Council Chairmanship in 2002-2004, the *Arctic Human Development Report* (AHDR 2004, pp. 17–18; see also AHDR-II 2015), *all of Iceland is well within the maps’ exclusive coloured lines; lines that are drawn not only according to latitudes, climates, and biomes, but also based on broadly inclusive cultural, political, and social criteria, as employed by the Arctic Council’s variously focused working groups (WGs) (ibid.). Across WGs and academic disciplines, competing ‘cartopolitics’ – that is, cartographic practices that produce a spatial reality to which political practice can be applied (Strandsbjerg, 2012) – are here bundled together in an ‘overarching’, inclusive definition of the region. For Iceland, full inclusion (and thus, full recognition of their Arctic statehood – also as coastal) is therefore contingent on specific Arctic spatialities and knowledges. The promotion of these take place both to domestic and international audiences, and in the process, re-scripts both the region and the nation-state (Dodds and Ingimundarson, 2012, p. 27; see also Offerdal, 2014). As such, Iceland’s Arctic spatiality is an active process: ‘becoming’ Arctic through the successful recognition as such by others, and indeed, by its own inhabitants and practitioners – ‘becoming’ Arctic not just as an outcome of spatiality but through a process of spatialising anew both the region and the state.*

One of the non-latitudinal criteria that is sometimes used for drawing Arctic boundaries is that of temperature, namely the ten-degree July isotherm; and indeed, for Icelandic officials, it is not just latitudes that confer an identity tied to the Arctic, but also Arctic nature, environment, weather, and climates. In a no less environmental-determinist fashion than that of Norwegian identity narratives, the Icelandic character is said to be shaped by the hardship of survival in an inhospitable climate (Vasey, 1996, p. 149); even the landscape’s “rhythms and clangs” are said to influence the people (Hastrup, 2010, p. 197). For one Parliamentarian, nature not only connects Icelanders, like herself, to their inherent ‘Arcticness’ but also to the other Arctic states:

I feel very strongly how my nature, somehow – my inner energy, my nature – is very strongly connected and bound to this country [...] it’s just *different energy*. I don’t know how to... I’m not sure if it’s the weather or the nature, or... But the Nordic, the Arctic countries they have all different landscapes [...] but still, it’s just the atmosphere, the people, the mentality. Cool on the outside and very wild on the inside sometimes! (I.ii; followed by laughter).

Noted by several of the interviewees, nature is what unites the group of eight despite their differences: “When you have a common – even if it’s only a common physical feature like the aurora borealis and the long dark winters and these glaciers and snow – then that of course helps

to have this circumpolar identity” (I.iii). Arctic statehood is here understood as *more* than latitudinal: it is *natural* and environmental – spatialities that in turn unite and *define* people. For Icelandic officials, representing an Arctic state is therefore about *more* than pragmatic border-drawing; it is about the space within these borders from which the community of Icelanders seemingly gain their essence, character, and ‘self’.

Imagined as that which has *made* Icelanders ‘who they are’, closeness to nature is also the channel through which an Arctic identity explained as emerging – a channel of comprehension, and a channel in need of protection. For one interviewee, her Arctic identity was mediated through familiar environments: “*ice*, you know, the glaciers; it’s also a part of us. Arctic, glaciers, it’s somehow the same. You *connect* with it somehow” (I.ii). This ‘connectedness’ is one of supposed attunement, making Icelanders ‘receptive’ to their environments: “The nature is very much a big part of all of us in Iceland, I would say. So we are very *aware*” (I.ii). This, in turn, serves as an argument for authority in the Arctic, as well as for environmental authority against ‘distant’, quota-setting Eurocrats (Einarsson, 1996a). Political emphasis on environmental protection is, indeed, often linked to imaginaries of *unique* Icelandic nature that has shaped a *unique* Icelandic people (Dibben, 2009, p. 143; see also Waage and Benediktsson, 2010). And with nearly all of their energy production coming from renewable sources (Statistics Iceland, 2013), primarily geothermal energy and hydropower, pride in being ‘green’ was widespread in state officials’ explanations of the Icelandic identity: “It is of course very important for Iceland to be a clean country – without any smoke, without any nuclear waste, without any other kind of waste. Clean. That is really a huge issue for Iceland” (I.iv). Numerous times, Iceland’s particular role as an Arctic state was articulated as serving as guardians of oceanic environments, protecting it from less environmentally conscious actors. In this manner, a self-perception as a people of nature was extended to one of a people of *Arctic* nature. As one official explained, “in the Arctic cooperation we bring to that table the same principles as we apply elsewhere. [...] Sustainability is something that goes through everything we preach and all our policies” (I.v). In other words, for Icelandic officials, an Arctic state identity is *part* of what it means to be Icelandic; performing Arctic statehood means performing the Icelandic – deeply rooted in the nature of the nation.

Perhaps in Iceland more so than in any other Arctic state do natural *forces* play a crucial role in the conceptualisation of place, landscape, and homeland. Massey’s (2005) “migrant rocks” are in

Iceland epitomised as the ever moving tectonic plates upon which the island travels⁴². In contrast to a crack that pulls *apart*, their particular geographical position was articulated as one of *connection*: “The position of Iceland is in-between the West and East. And actually, the crack, it goes through Iceland, so we are completely, you know, *both sides*” (I.ii). Or, as another explained it, Iceland has a paradoxical position of dual marginality that becomes centrality: “We are on the outskirts of Europe; we are also on the outskirts of the US. So, we’re in a quite interesting place geographically” (I.vi). The mid-Atlantic placement has now, in the so-called “age of the Arctic” (Osherenko and Young, 2005), grown a third branch, extending not just east and west but *north* – across the Pole to Asia. Notwithstanding sober assessments of actual transpolar shipping potentials (e.g. Humpert, 2013), many Icelanders evidently see the island’s spatial position as one of great promise: “If you take a longer-term perspective, I think we are looking towards seeing a new kind of Mediterranean Sea: a sea that will be open for shipping, for transport, for resource exploration...” (I.vii). A sea of *connection* rather than separation is a polar imaginary with a long history – one promoted not least by the Icelandic-Canadian Vilhjálmur Stefánsson (further elaborated on below; Dodds, 2010a; Steinberg, 2016). And while the Mediterranean analogy may, at the time of writing, come with its own problematic baggage, the role envisioned for Iceland is one of a shipping hub, a node within a network of economic, cultural, and political flows and connections. As such, Iceland’s ‘islandness’ is not one of separation or isolation, but one that is ever more connected by the waves along its shores (e.g. Mountz, 2015). These connections are not merely those of transversal *above* the fluid depths, but the oceanic currents, streams, and mobilities themselves – circulations that matter for shipping but also climates and marine life: “we have to protect this area [the Arctic] – even though it is not just outside, the closest to the coast – because the Arctic streams are from the North Pole to Iceland” (I.iv). Or, as another state representative succinctly explained Iceland’s Arctic identity: “that’s quite clear, the connection, because the ocean’s currents go back and forth and we are dependent on that. That’s one of the main [reasons] behind the identity of Iceland in the Arctic” (I.viii). In other words, conceptualisations of Icelandic Arctic identity is one of ever dynamic processes where the human

⁴² Also worth mentioning, volcanic forces, erupting from the tectonic caesura, as recently as in the 1960s gave birth to new Icelandic territory: the small island Surtsey (Gimlette, 2009). Interestingly, it is named after the Norse fire giant, Surtr, thereby linking the country’s most recent development to myths from its distant past (Halink, 2014b).

and non-human constitute each other, constituting identities (see Massey, 2006; Squire, 2016), in, of, and by Arctic spatialities. Hence, despite its seeming constancy, articulations of identity are equally about being as *becoming*, an ever evolving process of claiming and inhabiting space that in turn claims and inhabits images of the national self too.

The oceanic flows and currents that envelop the country, flowing to and fro the Arctic Ocean proper on either side, have a particular place in Icelandic identity narratives. With them, they bring the above noted harsh weather conditions as well as rich fish stocks upon which Icelandic society historically has been dependent. While the Arctic *label* may be new, an island identity – much like the Norwegian coastalness – is deeply seated. The majority of Icelanders' settlement along the coast is one such result of a 20th century transition from agriculture (Eggertsson, 1996) to fishery (Brydon, 1996, p. 38; Hafstein, 2000, p. 95). To this day, fish and fish products remain the country's most important export (Hermannsson, 2005; BBC, 2013; Mingels, 2014). For several state officials, it was precisely this intersection of geographical position and subsistence that makes Iceland Arctic:

Because of where Iceland is situated, in the middle of the North-East Atlantic, and [that] we are living on the ocean, that makes us an Arctic nation, in my mind, first and foremost. And the dependence of the Icelandic economy and the Icelandic society on the fishing and fishing activities is huge. [...]

Iceland, as such, is part of the Arctic because of this connection to the ocean (I.viii).

For another, it was this wealth of natural resources that “creates a character of a nation” (I.vi). The aforementioned exclusion from the exclusive group of five Arctic littoral states is therefore contested not just for pragmatic concerns, but is also closely connected to Icelandic self-perception as inherently connected to the sea. Control of their own fishing zones and quotas has come to symbolise historical struggles for independence and nationalism (Bergmann, 2014); a struggle that even sparked the so-called ‘Cod Wars’ with Britain in the 1970s (Kristinsson and Nordal, 1996, p. 104; Pálsson and Helgason, 1996, p. 63), and more recently straining relations with the EU (Robert, 2014). As one official explained the significance:

Even if they were not real wars, they're still conflicts – they're sort of like wars of independence, like grabbing your destiny, achieving independence. So, it's very much at the core of Icelandic foreign policy, identity. And more so than just the economic activity; it's of course an extremely important economic activity, but it's a little bit *more* than that (I.vii).

For Icelandic officials, their Arctic statehood, including their connection (if not their coast *per se*) to the Arctic Ocean, thereby takes on added meaning, symbolic of the very essence of the

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Icelandic nation-state. In their articulations, the ocean is not an ‘empty’, unclaimable space, but rather the nation’s fields of subsistence. Ensuring their influence in Arctic matters is, in other words, closely linked to patriotism and international status for the island state; it is the active performance of authority in matters of the seas, and as such, the active performance of what it means to be Icelandic.

Today, Icelandic lives and livelihoods are connected to nature in yet another way: the rapidly growing tourism industry (Kristinsson and Nordal, 1996, p. 106). Not just a space in which to root the state’s identity, “its landscape is big business, from the geological pyrotechnics of ash-spewing volcanoes to northern lights rippling above glacial wildernesses” (Barracough, 2012, p. 79). As many of the respondents pointed out, a formal title of Arctic statehood also translates to a brand that *sells*:

If you asked a person, ‘Why do you want to visit Iceland?’ the answer is nature. So, I think that can easily be related to branding Iceland as an Arctic county, because the Arctic, I would imagine in the minds of people is nature, ice (I.v).

An opportunity seized by marketing companies, it only takes a stroll down Laugavegur, Reykjavik’s main shopping street, to see nature-based activities advertised as ‘*Arctic*’ adventures, such as glacier walking, northern light chasing, and midnight sun golfing. As one official viewed it, their Arctic identity was previously unrecognised simply because it was:

something you just have; you don’t need to label it. But we have been labelling ourselves, and we have been trying to identify more who we are, through the growth of the tourism. We have, for sure, and been very focused on our strengths and what we can show, what we can do, what we can ‘sell’, if we can call it that... So maybe our identity is becoming more focused through tourism (I.vi).

In this way, the booming tourism industry, the outsider’s gaze, has influenced the ways in which the Icelandic view their *own* landscapes and nation-state (Sæþórsdóttir, Hall and Saarinen, 2011). For Icelandic state officials too, a daily stroll to work along Laugavegur thus serves as a reminder, albeit banal and unnoticed (Billig, 1995), of living in, being from, and representing the *Arctic* state of Iceland: an island of connections but separations, of relatedness but uniqueness – land embraced by ocean, and a dynamic space with seeming agency to form its people and guide their practices.

Temporalities of Arctic identity

Statements of identity discourses are not just spatially bound but also temporally so; an Arctic state identity is not just about *where* ‘we’ are but also how ‘we’ *came* there, *are* there, and will *stay* there. Formal titles aside, Iceland’s Arctic identity is therefore presented as one of seeming continuity and constancy – something that has ‘always’ been and ‘always’ will be, bound within the frames of national history. While each individual of the national community, and each individual within the state administration, may pass as generations change, the Arctic state of Iceland is imagined as transcendental of mortal strains (see Guibernau, 2013). The novelty of its Arctic ‘label’ – something pointed out by many interviewees – is therefore viewed as primarily an issue of linguistics:

If you look at us just as a country, being an Arctic country – I don’t think that we have, maybe, that we are very aware of, every day, in our daily lives, that we are an Arctic nation. We just are and always have been. So, we don’t think so much about it (I.vi).

In similar ways, all interviews on the topic of Arctic identity weaved in and out of discussions about Icelandic identity more generally; neither can be separated wholly from the other. As such, it is not just the above geography that is re-interpreted as *Arctic* geography, but also history: an *Arctic* history for the Icelandic ‘nation-state’ that progresses in a seemingly linear manner from an Arctic past, through an Arctic present, to a national Arctic future.

As state personnel spoke of Arctic histories, a process of *re*-narrating, *re*-interpreting the Icelandic state was taking place. Historically, there was not merely a lack of interest in associating Iceland with the Arctic, but actually an active and deliberate *disassociation* therefrom (Loftsdóttir, 2014). Through much of Iceland’s past, emphasis has been on their distinction from what was considered the ‘uncivilised’ and non-white Greenlanders, their neighbouring ‘dependent’ subjects under the Danish crown. And, while much has changed, not least in the attractiveness of an Arctic title, certain contradistinctions persist; in the words of one Icelandic Parliamentarian:

In one area you have a very civilised nation with a very strong welfare system, and in the other one you have a settlement of Eskimos [sic.] that are dealing with social problems of a scale that is really foreign to us (I.ix).

When, in 1905, Icelanders were portrayed alongside Greenlanders in the Danish Colonial Exhibition, protests broke loose; in 2008, a strikingly similar reaction followed the banking ‘fall’,

as financial anxieties turned into fears of being classified as the ‘wrong kind’ of people (Loftsdóttir, 2012). The sense of having to define themselves, to set the Icelandic apart and prove their worth, indeed connects to their historical past; the modern Icelandic state only dates back to 1944, when independence was achieved from the then Nazi-occupied Denmark (Karlsson, 2000; Bergmann, 2014, p. 6). For historians, “in Iceland and many other peripheral societies of the colonial order, the primary scholarly task was not so much to understand others but to be understood *by them*” (Pálsson and Durrenberger, 1992, p. 313). Nevertheless, Icelanders proudly claim the world’s first proto-democratic parliamentary assembly (I.Gov’t, 2014), dating back to the end of the Icelandic settlement period in the 10th century (Byock, 2002, p. 3). As historians today point out, though, equating this with *statehood* is anachronistic (Karlsson, 1994, p. 108); as is speaking of an independent Icelandic *nation* at the time (Hastrup, 1984, p. 240). There is no clear academic consensus on when the latter, a self-conscious community of ‘Icelanders’, emerged⁴³ – part of the challenge being linguistic: in Icelandic, there is only one word denoting both ‘people’ and ‘nation’, *þjóð*, potentially leading to premature assumptions of ‘nationhood’ (Karlsson, 1994). In contrast, following the island’s settlement, its inhabitants remained closely tied to the main source country, Norway, both politically and culturally (Hastrup, 1984; Karlsson, 1994, p. 112). It was as a result of the Dano-Norwegian unification in the 14th century that sovereignty over the Icelandic dependency was transferred to Denmark (as were the Greenlandic and Faroese) (Halink, 2014b, p. 3). Retrospectively, some authors have claimed that during the colonial time, the independent Icelandic nation was merely ‘fast asleep’ (Karlsson, 2003, p. 199). Be that as it may, the Icelandic nationalist movement for independence emerged, as in much of Europe, in the 18th century, which was what *politicised* Icelandic difference (Hálfðanarson, 2000, p. 12). This perceived difference, politically entangled with independence and statehood, is also what marks Icelandic political relations in the Arctic. As national history is re-scripted as Arctic history, struggles for freedom and international recognition too are transferred to the Arctic context. Hence, despite a recent ‘Arctic awakening’, and a recent adoption of an explicit Arctic identity, state officials’ enactment thereof extends backwards in time, to political struggles that seemingly defined a people, and forwards to continued assertion of the Icelandic self.

⁴³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, as academic dissensus on what precedes the other is widespread – a scholarly debate on which many careers have been built – nations from states, or states from nations? (see e.g. Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1986, 1991; Özkirimli, 2000; Guibernau, 2004)

Unlike the case of its neighbour, Norway, and indeed many of the other Arctic states, Iceland cannot construct regional credibility on the basis of a long history of polar exploration. Just as historical associations of identity were drawn to ‘developed’ eastern and western societies, rather than the closer Greenland, Icelandic travellers at the time rarely ventured towards the frozen north: “The identity has been much more [...] as a hub in the middle of the Atlantic. Northwards we have not had any polar explorers [...], so our thoughts have not been so very strong towards – northwards” (I.x). Interestingly, however, William Stephenson – born to Icelandic parents in Canada and raised in the US in the late 19th century – re-appropriated some of his parents’ identity, taking the Icelandic name Vilhjálmur Stefánsson before exploring parts of the Canadian Arctic (Pálsson, 2000, 2004). He gained fame as the ‘Blond Eskimo’ at the time; though, whether he was ever actually considered Icelandic remains disputable. However, his nominal legacy has today made it back to Iceland, for example adorning Akureyri’s Arctic research cluster in the form of the Stefánsson Arctic Institute. He is, as pointed out by an interviewed Parliamentarian (I.iv), the closest Iceland comes to a polar explorer of their own. In his time, Stefánsson was complicit in an imperial enterprise that was both gendered and racialised (Pálsson, 2004) – but, importantly, a *European* enterprise of exploration of which Icelanders’ history books also script themselves as part, thereby placing Iceland on the binary side of empire and modernity, rather than that of the colonies (Loftsdóttir, 2009, 2010a). Another seafaring ‘explorer’ who is more uncontroversially considered Icelandic is Leifur Eiríksson, who, though never venturing as far north as the Arctic *per se*, is believed to have ‘discovered’ America when reaching the shore of today’s Newfoundland (I.iv)⁴⁴. Although neither Vilhjálmur nor Leifur quite provides Icelanders with an iconic national ‘hero’ of Arctic identity, the new ways in which their names are invoked highlight a shift of focus: an Arctic focus. In other words, when state officials employed their names as signifiers in Iceland’s Arctic identity, it is not a *new* national history that is spoken into being, but a re-interpretation, a re-signification of what was there. And, as such, their enactment of political practice happens within the boundaries of history – although ‘history’ may not be what it was historically, yesterday, or before it became ‘*Arctic*’ history.

By narrating an Arctic *present* as grounded in an Arctic past, a solid foundation is also laid for the construction of an Arctic future. Opening the annual Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik in

⁴⁴ However, this is ‘uncontroversial’ only insofar as that many Norwegians claim him as ‘theirs’ based on his parental descent and the relationship between the ‘countries’ at the time; see p. 81 in the previous chapter.

2014, former PM Gunnlaugsson started by looking back: “For centuries, Iceland’s economic and social well-being and livelihood has been shaped by the natural riches and climatic conditions of the North”; weaved through current issues and Arctic affairs; and ended by looking ahead: “You will probably take from my remarks here today that I remain optimistic on the present and future prospects of the Arctic – and I am” (Gunnlaugsson, 2014). Discourses of Arctic identity may seem to have temporal branches through history and into the future, but that is also *all* they are: extensions from the *present*. For the Icelandic state, hopes and fears of what an Arctic future may bring have concrete consequences for political practices *today*⁴⁵. This is not unique to Iceland, of course, as arguably most Arctic positioning, interest, investment, and current politics are based on what is yet to come (Dodds, 2013a). For Icelandic officials, preparing for Arctic futures is to be prioritised in the present. When entering a coalition government in 2013, the chairmen of the Progress and Independence Party, Gunnlaugsson and Benediktson respectively, asserted:

The government will direct efforts toward making Iceland a leading force in the Arctic [...] Preparations will begin to take advantage of opportunities created by the opening of Arctic sea routes and emphasis placed on having projects related to this located in Iceland (I.Gov’t, 2013).

One example of such preparations and political positioning is the recent strengthening of ties with China. When China’s icebreaker ship, the *Xue Long* (or ‘Snow Dragon’), became the first to cross the Arctic Ocean from China in 2013, it was Iceland that was its destination. Iceland is also the first European country to have signed a free-trade agreement with China in 2013. According to the former Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, this provides an opportunity to solidify Iceland’s position as an Arctic shipping hub (Valdimarsson, 2013). While potential access to natural resources and new shipping routes are high on the agenda in Iceland as elsewhere, it is even more so the resultant *attention* to the state that most clearly influences forecasts of its own future. As *others* are positioning themselves for Arctic futures, it allows Icelandic officials too a new role, added importance, and ability to influence internationally:

After the Cold War ended, our position was maybe not as clear [as previously]; and our part in the world, you could say in the ‘world vehicle’, was not as clear. But it’s growing again, in a new way, as a part of the Arctic. And that’s a good thing for us. We are getting new positive focus, and that’s a good thing (I.vi).

⁴⁵ On the presence of the future, and anticipatory action as making of geographies through pre-emption, precaution, an/or preparedness, see e.g. Anderson (2010a, 2010b)

In other words, it is current anticipation, current planning, and current hopes that are driving reassessments of the state's identity. By reading the past and present through Arctic glasses, the plotline of Iceland's Arctic identity is clear enough to condition the political practices through which it is to become reality – discourse stated, performed, and materialised as the Arctic state of Iceland.

As the national narrative of Iceland's Arctic state identity extends before us, its state representatives spoke of how they, today, are enacting politics of preparation – among these, ensuring Iceland's active participation in the region's sustainable development (however defined). Similar to what in Norway has been referred to as an “opportunistic adaptation” – that is, the rhetorical and cognitive decoupling of climate change from the opportunities gained therefrom (Kristoffersen, 2015) – many Icelandic officials see the environmental changes in the Arctic (and beyond) as *potentials*: new shipping routes, new resources, new powers. Seemingly at odds with the above self-ascribed identity as particularly ‘green’ and close to nature, early stage hydrocarbon exploration is currently taking place on the Icelandic continental shelf. As one Parliamentarian explained:

If this goes well, we won't start drilling until – I think it's at least ten years. So it's a long term plan. But, anyway, we have to be prepared, and have a plan before this happens, and know exactly where we stand – legally. And like I said, have good cooperation, good political connections; just, you know, to be part of it, *the making of the future of the Arctic* (I.ii, emphases added).

As she explained it, the future is facilitated by what is done today. Moreover, it is an active performance of more than just resource capabilities – it is about Arctic state identity more generally, demonstrating their active participation in a circumpolar region of states. Although no commercially viable finds are certain, another politician stated that “*if* there is something, and if it's a ‘no man's land’, we have interests, and we don't want to be outside the club” (I.iv). In other words, the political preoccupation with inclusion or exclusion from Arctic affairs, and indeed international affairs more broadly, becomes tied also to activities such as resource extraction. However, the potential of Icelandic hydrocarbon discoveries may matter less for economic reasons than for symbolic ones – the symbolism tied to actively *rejecting* their extraction could, in some officials' views, be precisely the kind of Arctic state performance that Iceland should pursue, reflective of their identity as such to an external audience:

Our nation is, you know, one of the better-set nations in the world; our living standards are really high. And it would be something that the rest of the world – rest of the universe even – would notice,

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if we said that ‘well, we’re not going to pursue our interests when it comes to oil, because it’s just environmentally really irresponsible to do it’. So, that would be a role that would matter much (I.ix).

Icelandic political desires to matter, to gain recognition, and to influence in Arctic relations here play out within the matrix of identity discourses’ temporality and spatiality, histories and geographies, futures and natures. The stories of the past, of *who* Icelanders feel they are, guide the actions towards the “making of the future” (I.ii) of this space – whether it is to be exploited or protected – as preparations in the present.

Whether the Arctic is seen as a challenge or opportunity for the Icelandic state, or a bit of both, these are nevertheless primarily articulated as challenges and opportunities of the *future*. For state officials, this means, as above, political preparations, but preparations that are often not yet of tangible consequence to their compatriots. Some therefore claimed that the political focus on the Arctic “needs to be explained, because it is not on the short-term list” (I.iv); it is not of immediate concern to the population, which in turn matters for the way in which identity is perceived outside governmental quarters.

I suppose maybe the Arctic will become more important for Iceland in the future, and the public will become more aware of it; that it’s something that is important for us. But on the other hand, [...], we’re having so many problems here in Iceland; or at least people are more concerned with the internal problems and the economic situation than they maybe are about the Arctic itself (I.xii).

In other words, an Arctic identity is here recognised as contextual – for the time being.

Moreover, it is also conceived as primarily economic and pragmatic, identification as a secondary effect of Arctic statehood’s *material* effects in Icelandic society. As many interviewees noted, part of the challenge of truly enacting their Arctic role – both to domestic and international spectators – came down to strains of being a small state, having to make tough budgetary prioritisations:

We have the skeleton of an elephant – when it comes to the infrastructure of the nation we have to have the same facilities that three or four million-people nations have to have – but we only have the skin of a mouse. So we have to stretch it, you know, in some areas we have to stretch it over that skeleton (I.ix).

The same Parliamentarian continued, however, that recent economic growth in the country (following the financial crash), now allowed for “more topics than just one in our political debate [...]. I could easily see that our Arctic role becomes more something that the public would be aware of and would be voting [...] along those lines” (I.ix). Again though, it is a matter of both

future possibilities and contingencies. For one politician, it was precisely this *contingency* that was the problem in articulating Iceland's Arctic statehood as something with which the average Icelanders would identify:

I think that there is a lot of interest, but also a lot of uncertainties. When you talk about the opportunities that the Arctic is creating, what are you talking about? For some, it's only a new way of reaching China [...]. For others, the cooperation itself is an opportunity [...]. So, I'm not sure we are agreeing when we talk about opportunities in the Arctic, that we are focused on the same things (I.vi).

Nevertheless, for state personnel, preparing for future political practice, an identity as representing an Arctic state is already highly relevant: "attention to the Arctic and the economic interests are not very close to us now, but of course *we* have to look to the farther future" (I.iv). And, looking ahead, *all* interviewees were of the opinion that the Arctic "will only develop in the direction of being a bigger and bigger topic" (I.v). Thus, representing the Arctic state of Iceland means supposedly seeing the bigger picture, the longer lines of the seeming linear progression of the 'nation-state'; one that is, 'always' has been, and 'always' will be Arctic. These lines lead *ahead*, providing a bordered path of possible political practices to be followed. The articulation and enactment of identity, Icelandic and Arctic, is therefore one of both limitations and potentials as its numerous people perform the *Arctic* state of Iceland into being through encounters and relations.

International Arctic identity

Iceland's Arctic state identity may be discursively bounded by time and space, but the way in which it is stated into material being is also, always, relational. In other words, an identity as an Arctic state may be articulated as historically and geographically rooted, thereby dis/allowing certain practices, but the ways in which it becomes performed, *which* practices are performed, is in and through encounters and relations. For a state whose existence as such – its statehood – is of a recent date, less than 75 years, performing identity means asserting it: proof of de-colonial ability to participate as an independent state among states. In the Arctic context too, state identity is tied to international recognition, to asserting that the metaphorical seat at the Arctic Council table is, indeed, fully theirs. The aforementioned state-level outrage at their exclusion from the negotiations among the five Arctic littoral states on the *Ilulissat Declaration* (2008) was therefore more than spatial, being an island state, and more than temporal, having a long fishery history: it was also deeply internationally relational. The absence of an invitation to participate in this

particular meeting was soon translated to absent invitations to ‘high politics’ and cooperation more generally.

For Iceland, like Norway, being a (very) small state means added reason for international collaboration and active participation in intergovernmental fora, such as the Arctic Council. It is this, internationally recognised Arctic statehood, that in the words of one respondent “gives us a role in the society of other countries” (I.vi). That is, it sets them apart from some while placing them beside others; it is a title both of belonging and separation from other states, which, in turn, guides political practices accordingly, including with whom to cooperate, negotiate, and align themselves. And indeed, as per above, ever since gaining independence from Denmark, Icelandic foreign policy has been marked by a drive to shed its former label as an ambiguously positioned ‘dependency’ – to be seen as an *equal* actor in Europe and beyond (Hermannsson, 2005, pp. 125–127). Formal independence of statehood aside, first British and then US military forces maintained a presence in the country after the Second World War and through the Cold War; the latter of the two remaining there until 2006 (Loftsdóttir, 2010b, p. 10). It is here worth noting that one such international organisation in which Iceland is an active member is NATO – hosting exercises such as the aptly named ‘Northern Viking’ and ‘Northern Challenge’ – while being the only member with no standing army of their own⁴⁶. Highly visible international military practice is therefore one way in which abstract Arctic statehood bears material effects on everyday life in Iceland; as one interviewee noted: “We have exercises on that yearly – that brings into the minds of people here that we are [...], definitely, on the border of the frozen north and the warmer south” (I.x). Such international cooperation on e.g. matters of defence, in effect sharing or ‘outsourcing’ responsibilities, shows how sovereign independence may only reconfigure and redistribute dependence to other sectors and scales. Nevertheless, Icelandic independence, however defined, was a theme running through all state personnel’s descriptions of Icelandic identity – both in the Arctic and beyond. As one explained it, gaining “sovereignty as an independent republic” first and foremost meant the ability to join various international organisations; he proudly listed a number of which he considered Iceland to be a *founding* member – among these both NATO and the Arctic Council (I.iv) (see also I.MFA., 2011, p. 4). Indeed, when asked about Icelandic identity, he emphasised that they are “very proud of being a member

⁴⁶ Iceland does, however, have a coast guard that performs many similar functions, as well as a security force. Additionally, defence is one sector in which Iceland and Norway have maintained historically close ties, and the latter contributes to e.g. surveillance etc.

of the family of nations”; moreover, he stressed that “we are *Europeans*, and [...] we are [a] proud, independent people” (I.iv). Interestingly, however, when it came to potentially joining the EU in the years following the financial crisis, their initial accession negotiations were put to an abrupt halt: the country wished to remain fully independent – European while not EUropean. Not least, the consideration of EU accession brought to the fore differences in the internal state (or ‘elite’) narratives of what this might *mean* (Clark and Jones, 2012); in the end, Icelanders decided that the cooperation facilitated by membership in the European Economic Area (EEA) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was, as for Norway, sufficient. With an identity discursively located in the intersection of inclusion and independence, Icelandic Arctic relations too is an ongoing process of being heard through conversations, being seen in *interactions*:

The Arctic Council, for Iceland, is very, very important – both because it is easier that your voice will be heard, and also easier that you can have an effect on some decisions in the direction that you think is good for your country. So, my personal view is that because of limited manpower in Iceland, regional conventions or agreements are where our voice is best heard, and it is the most fruitful way to bring forward the view of Iceland (I.viii).

As another interviewee explained, “many politicians, they see an increased role for Iceland as being a player in the Arctic field”, because, among the relatively few Arctic states, “Iceland is in many ways among equals” (I.xi). Hence, for Icelandic state personnel performing Arctic statehood, Arctic identity is an international act – it is political practice for the national *through* the international. Arctic statehood is a title defined *with* some, *against* some; and it is in the process of its definition, both affecting and affected in state *inter*-action, that the self – the Arctic state of Iceland – becomes relationally produced on the scale of the international.

International political participation as ‘proof’ of Icelandic independence – indeed, proving its identity as a *state* – has meant that *non*-participation, non-interaction, becomes akin to an identity crisis. As one interviewee explained, when the US troops left a decade ago, “some Icelanders felt that that was somehow a loss of importance, of geopolitical importance; so when you had this increased discussion of the Arctic, that sort of replaced that a little bit” (I.vii). As such, the current international interest in the Arctic has provided not just a sense of renewed geostrategic importance (Ingimundarson, 2008, 2009), but also a confidence boost – a reaffirmation of identity. Returning once more to the 2008 exclusion from the group of Arctic littoral states, the *Parliamentary Resolution Iceland’s Arctic Policy* (I.MFA., 2011) not only prioritised the recognition of Iceland as coastal, but more ominously stated that, in the case of continued five-state exclusivity,

“it can be asserted that solidarity between the eight Arctic States will be dissolved” (ibid. 2011, p. 5). In other words, for Icelandic officials, ‘tiers’ of Arctic statehood, and a position of subordination beneath the five, are not acceptable; Arctic state identity may be performed relationally but not inferiorly. External recognition is, therefore, paramount to Arctic state practice and Arctic state identity:

It is also through this kind of international cooperation that we have, sort of, developed our identity as an Arctic country. I think it is quite natural, as identity is not always what you decide, but how other people view you and how you view other people (I.iii)

Identity, in other words, happens through *contact*; it is the ‘impression’ left by others that produces an identifying collective, a reactionary alignment, such as that of a state (Ahmed, 2004). In another interviewee’s words, Iceland’s full Arctic inclusion was nothing but “normal”. He suspected previous exclusion(s) might have been due to internationally controversial Icelandic whaling practices, but that they would “never accept not being informed and not being in it” (I.x). Connecting Arctic debates to that of whaling links it with another symbolic and emotionally charged struggle, which many Icelanders perceive as a challenge to their self-determination and sovereignty (Brydon, 1996, p. 26). As feelings rehearse associations from other exclusions, other relations – such as whaling disputes and declaration negotiations – they serve to align the Icelandic state in the present as a sensing, feeling collective (Ahmed, 2004). In this manner, through relations that extend also to other issues and topics – to perceived ongoing struggles of independence and nation-statehood – Iceland’s Arctic state identity as based on inclusion, full-worthy membership in the region, is rendered obvious, incontrovertible, and rightfully theirs in emotionally charged ways: nothing but *normal*.

While active participation and political inclusion among the other Arctic states is foundational for Iceland’s Arctic state identity, being ‘in the club’ is also always about who is not; for Iceland, being one of the A8 is an advantageous status among non-Arctic ‘others’. This active partaking means, in the words of one respondent: “the Arctic states, they will lead in the Arctic. They will have the rights in the Arctic, and they will set the rules. So other countries, they will not be *leading*, but they will of course *play with*” (I.ii). In other words, for the small country on the periphery of Europe, Arctic statehood spells international influence and even potential leadership as part of a group. It also attracts foreign investment and business, undoubtedly welcome in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008. As hosts with an Arctic card on their hands, Icelandic officials can keep the invitation to non-Arctic others’ involvement conditional: “Of course it’s an

opportunity, but it must be based on our premises [...]. They are *guests* in Iceland. And, as they are guests in Iceland they must comply with Icelandic legislation. Without any exemptions” (I.v). One official explained that although the privilege to make decisions in the region should remain with the A8:

Because this is a huge area – it’s very remote, sparsely populated, dark hours during half of the year, things like that – you need all kinds of support to do whatever you want to do. So, a close cooperation – be it China, be it India, be it Singapore, the EU, whatever – you should encourage a cooperation about special things like that in there, but I would not like to see those as full-fledged members of the Arctic Council; I think that would be, quite simply, a step towards destroying what the Arctic Council is (I.viii).

Thus, its title as ‘Arctic’ is *useful* for the Icelandic state; paired with increased interest and opportunities for Iceland, Arctic statehood means the privilege of having a say in Arctic matters and setting the rules of the game. One Parliamentarian explained that, in the eyes of non-Arctic states, “it makes us a better-looking dance partner”; being an Arctic state serves as “a ticket” to be used in diplomacy (I.ix). Hence, the interviewee pointed to a recognition of his own state’s superiority of political influence and consequent devaluation of ‘others’ (Connolly, 1991), though in a highly specific setting – also recognising that in other settings, the Arctic advantage could serve the otherwise disadvantaged small state well. An internationally defined title, Arctic statehood as *membership*, means having an equal say among some states (often considered greater and more ‘powerful’), and even more of a say than others; it is about the ability to influence in and through international relations – about political power. And, the exercise of said political power through inter-state relations – both being impressed upon and leaving impressions on others – is that which in turn, as an *effect*, produces its subject: the Arctic state of Iceland.

National Arctic identity

Belonging to a circumpolar region, an international group of eight with certain shared identifiers, also means that discourses of Arctic state identity holds an element of that which sets it *apart* – that which makes Iceland uniquely and independently Arctic, an Arctic state in its own right. As seen above, the island identity of living by, on, off, and *with* the sea creates both an Arctic identity that is different, based on *their* national narratives, and moreover, provides a specific role for Icelandic within the group. Being an Arctic state does therefore not just mean circumpolar similarity, but “it means specificity – you have something special to provide” (I.v). When

reflecting on their particular role in the Arctic, fishery, shipping, and ‘green’ energy were repeatedly mentioned for the Icelandic state. Additionally, some considered Iceland’s contribution to the Arctic cooperation to be cultural: “since we are very well-known as the ‘country of books’ or something, the land of the sagas” (I.ii). Their historical literary tradition is indeed an important aspect of Icelandic national identity; even at the time of independence, the country’s nationalist movement was highly philologically oriented (Halink, 2014a). The strong emphasis on canonical Icelandic texts, such as the Sagas, the *Íslendingabók*, and the *Landnámabók* (see e.g. Hastrup, 1984), has meant that literacy and language have become important aspects of Icelandic identity more generally (Sizemore and Walker, 1996); Icelanders often describe themselves as a highly poetic people (Hastrup, 2010, p. 197). “Iceland is proud nation, which is proud of its past, of its history, of its literature, and the culture. And even – it is proud of its language, which is isolating [it from] people from other areas” (I.iv). That which may, potentially, be isolating is here also something of which to be proud – the peculiarity of island state-ness (see also Steinberg, 2005; Mountz, 2015). And, speaking of their Arctic political relations specifically: “being this small nation with its own language on an island, that affects your outlook a little bit” (I.vii). In this manner, the ‘essentially’ and ‘uniquely’ Icelandic is transferred to their role in the Arctic – carving out an identity for themselves *within* the region, carving out an identity that is Icelandic in the Arctic and Arctic in Iceland.

In part linked to Iceland’s spatiality, a ‘peripheral’ island, and in part to its history, a young state, what was above referred to as potential isolation more often than not was articulated in terms of independence – perhaps the most consistently recurring theme across interviews. Described as the hallmark of Icelanders, independence was considered a value they brought with them to the Arctic context: “We’re independent, we make our own decisions, and no one will tell us what to do. I think that’s sort of like the core of the Icelanders” (I.xii). As noted, shedding its label as a Danish ‘dependency’ was, indeed, at the very ‘core’ of the nationalist movement at the turn of the 20th century – a movement that was heavily influenced by contemporary colonial counter-movements elsewhere – and continues to influence Icelandic politics today (Ellenberger, 2009, p. 99). And again, Icelanders’ ostensible connection to nature is one way in which a *need* for independence is explained, and a way in which its unique, national Arctic identity is articulated:

Involved in the feeling of wanting to be independent there’s also that we are a people who need a lot of freedom. I think that comes from being brought up in an environment where you are totally free. [...] You have a lot of space; you run; you start by sleeping outside when you are a kid, when you are a few

months old. And then, when you start running around, and you have something between your ears to control what you're doing, then you start running around free in the streets and in the nature. And that also makes a country that is brought up like that (I.vi).

The desire to set themselves apart internationally, to prove themselves as independent, was also what came to the fore in the pre-crash so-called 'conquest' of the Danish capital's property market at the time (Loftsdóttir, 2010b, p. 11), i.e. the former quasi-colonial seat of power.

Our identity as a nation, it is, you know, it is Nordic, but we are different. There is more individualism, and it's regarded as somewhat positive to be able to stand on your own two feet, to not be dependent on others, and to not receive benefits (I.ix).

Thus, there is a parallel notion of Icelanders being both different, distinct, unique in the international system while *also* wishing to be seen as equals, take part, and be fully included (Adler-Nissen and Gad, 2014). At times, there may be a tension in the intersection of internationalism and individualism: "We're a small nation, but we want to have a big voice internationally. I think that's sort of like how we *want* to be – I'm not so sure if we can" (I.xii; followed by laughter). The Arctic region provides one such arena in which Iceland can enact this *desired* identity – holding influence greater than physical size. The Arctic Council, for example, requires unanimous consent among its eight members for any decision to be made, regardless of size or economy: one state, one vote. Although, for Icelandic officials, this desire is more of A8 membership than leadership, there are clear parallels to the Norwegian quest for status in and *through* the Arctic (see de Carvalho and Neumann, 2015). Through relations not only to other states but also to *itself*, the Icelandic Arctic state is "imagined" as a co-existent, co-living, co-working community (Anderson, 1983); the collective gazes inwards, becomes *aware* of own being. It is here, in the confluence of the particular and universal, *the* state and statehood, that the Icelandic Arctic state identity is carved out through words and actions.

The above act of gazing inwards, becoming aware of one's own 'Arcticness', happens also by mere glances – the unconscious act of seeing but not quite noticing. Through visual iteration, the Icelandic reflection as *Arctic* becomes normalised. That is, although Icelandic Arctic state identity may be explicated first as formal lines of geographies, histories, and international relations, the way in which it becomes interwoven with previous-held national identity discourse also happens through the everyday, banal, and prosaic (e.g. Edensor, 2002; Painter, 2006; Benwell, 2014). There may be no allegorical Arctic flag *per se* hanging unnoticed outside the *Alþingi* (see Billig,

1995), but that is not to say that there is any shortage of ‘banal Arcticness’ to be seen. The aforementioned stroll through Laugavegur, where Arctic *branding* seems the norm, is one such way in which the nation too is inadvertently reminded of their title of Arctic statehood, even if they may not be the target audience for the advertisement. As the unnoticed backdrop of everyday life in Reykjavik, the signs, posters, and advertisements all contribute to the creation of what the former President proudly called “a dynamic Arctic village” (Grímsson, 2014a). Moreover, the active cultivation of an image for an external audience is also internally effective, becomes a source of pride and eventually reproduced to domestic audiences as celebrations of heritage; “they [Icelanders] need witnesses to confirm their identity” (Einarsson, 1996b, p. 229). In one official’s terms, it was clear that through such Arctic labelling, “people become more aware of their heritage than they were otherwise, because it becomes a merchandise to sell to tourists” (I.ix). However, in a more cynical vein, the instrumentality of the previously cited diplomatic “Arctic ticket” (I.ix) may be equally recognised as such in touristic enterprises by Icelanders themselves:

Clearly there is some attempt here in Iceland to cater to the image, or to a brand or something exotic, and... you see a polar bear outside. We don’t have polar bears! We get one every five years and we shoot them when they come ashore; they’re a threat, they’re not native (I.vii).

The same state official continued by describing how the puffin has become something akin to a national mascot, when the veritable national bird is a far more common one, not “very exciting or exotic” (I.vii): the gyrfalcon (also to be found on the Icelandic coat of arms). And in a similar manner, the much publicised Icelandic belief in elves and ‘hidden people’, the *húldufolk*, has been described as the nostalgia for the ‘pure’ or ‘traditional’ Icelandic identity in a modernising world (Hafstein, 2000). However, as the interviewee remarked somewhat drily, “Icelanders themselves sort of cater to that a little bit: ‘yeah, we all believe, 60%, 80%, believe in elves’. And, basically, it is a lot of nonsense, but maybe harmless” (I.vii). While neither puffins nor elves are specifically Arctic, their promotion from exotically rare (or, indeed, imaginary...) to exotically ‘representative’ is another example of how the national community is alerted to own distinction by the presence of the *non*-national – tourists, businessmen, and other visitors – and consequently nurtures said distinction. In similar ways as will be seen in the next chapter on Canada, the myth of northerness – in Iceland tacitly embodied in Vikings, polar bears, and puffins alike – takes on meaning far beyond the souvenir shop. At times spectacular, but more often banal, Iceland’s Arctic state identity is thereby ‘flagged’ to visitors and residents on an everyday basis. While the

reception of such reminders may vary (Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell and Dodds, 2011), for many their iteration leads to seeming inconspicuousness and insignificance – boring familiarity as what may have once been exotic or exciting becomes folded in with daily life and routines (see e.g. Anderson, 2015). Hence, for representatives of an Arctic state, as others, the title may soon form part of the fabric of daily life, the *background* to the conduction of activities both professionally and privately (see e.g. Sharp, 1993). As such, ‘being’ an Arctic state comes to constitute the Icelandic; just like vice versa, ‘being’ Icelandic comes to constitute the Arctic state – one discourse depends on the other, consolidates and reproduces it, as lives and practices are enacted in and *through* the realities for which they form the premises.

Sub-national Arctic identity

Unlike the other Arctic states, the physically small and relatively homogeneously populated Iceland does not have a clear north–south divide or hierarchy of ‘Arcticness’. As a case in point, when the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2013-15) stated their priority as “Development for Northerners”, many Icelandic officials felt that the concept of ‘Northerners’ was “foreign [...] it does not relate to us” (I.i). However, this absence of a distinct ‘north’ supports the aforementioned assertion of ‘full’ Arctic statehood: “there is an awareness [among the Arctic states] that you have different situations in different countries. And when it comes to Iceland, then we are the only one [...] completely *within* the Arctic” (I.i). The absence of geographically determined ‘levels’ of ‘Arcticness’ was upon reflection one of the reasons why some believed that the name *Norðurslóðir* may resonate more with the Icelandic public than ‘the Arctic’ (I.xii). This is a terminological distinction closely related to the Norwegian preference for *nordområdene*⁴⁷ where the more relative, international northernness is emphasised in order to avoid any disadvantageous connotations of the Arctic denomination; and indeed, it is something with which the entire island state may more easily identify.

That being said, Iceland’s second largest and northernmost town, Akureyri, is home to what one interviewee termed an “Arctic cluster” (I.vii): two Arctic Council WG offices, the Stefánsson Arctic Institute, a university with much Arctic-focused research, and a municipal government that actively participates in the Northern Forum – an organisation composed of sub-national or

⁴⁷ Also literally ‘the northern areas’, or in English usually translated to ‘the High North’, see pp. 76-78.

regional governments across northern countries. Whereas he did not think the average Akureyri-inhabitant necessarily considers themselves any more 'Arctic' than other Icelanders, he mused that local politicians and researchers were likely to be *professionally* more in tune with Iceland's Arctic role. In Iceland, difference of domestic 'Arcticness' may therefore not be a matter of latitude *per se*, but of involvement and contact. Similarly, many stressed that a sense of Arctic identity was contingent on their direct engagement therewith in their everyday work. For some, it was the change of government in 2013 and its scrapping of an EU membership bid that marked the start of Arctic prioritisation: "turning the ship towards the Arctic, away from the EU" (I.ii). For others, it was the financial crash that led to a change of focus towards nearer, neighbouring countries and "looking inward"; "the attention went from conquering the financial markets to cultivate your garden" (I.iii). Indeed, some considered it a tactical manoeuvre driven primarily by President Grímsson: "after the collapse of the Icelandic banks, he changed the compass; he changed the navigation, and began these Arctic issues!" (I.iv). Either way, as with the above discussion of popular, banal, and everyday reminders of the nation-state's Arctic title, it is through its iteration that it becomes normalised, embedded in an understanding of the self. Hence, for state personnel too it is through practice, and not only geographical markers, that abstract Arctic statehood takes on meaning and materiality, and an identity as such becomes 'statements' broadly defined. Moreover, it shows that state identity is expressed not only through relations at international or national scales, but is also differentiated within these. Defined together with other state practitioners who may be closely involved with Arctic matters, or conversely, against those not, a sense of being, performing, practicing Arctic state identity is always mediated through encounters.

Relationally differentiated articulations of Arctic identity *within* the Arctic states are not merely geographical, however; as seen in the case of both Norway and Canada, they are also ethnically defined: indigeneity was universally described (in words, if not in actions) as '*more Arctic*': more legitimacy and authority with which to speak on the topic of Arctic identity. Iceland, however, is the *only* Arctic state with no indigenous population⁴⁸. This was mentioned by most of the

⁴⁸ Furthermore, there are low levels of immigration to Iceland, and with a relatively homogenous population the island state would seemingly provide a textbook example of a 'nation-state' (Pálsson and Durrenberger, 1996, p. 1). However, as should be clear from the discussion, many Icelanders may hold a strong national identity as such, but that is not to say that there are not challenges to dominant imaginaries. Ruptures, fissures, and alternative ways of being, and of identifying, exist in Iceland as elsewhere. Indeed, as elsewhere, the assumption of national-state homogeneity and unity is always deeply political (Sparke, 2005; Antonsich, 2009).

interviewees as setting them apart in Arctic political contexts, making certain political issues less relevant to them: “we try to be informed on this Arctic [Council Working] Group that we are in. But it is very much [focused] on the Inuit population, on populations that we don’t have, on problems that we don’t have” (I.x). In other words, what may be nationally articulated as coherence of Arctic identity – the lack of national heterogeneity – may in a circumpolar setting also be what hinders it. Explaining Iceland’s Arctic identity as based primarily on their maritime activities, another official offered the following qualitatively defined differentiation of what it means to represent an Arctic state:

But we are not an Arctic nation as the indigenous people in Alaska or in Canada or the Saami people in Norway and in Scandinavia. [...] That’s my view on that, because if you look around you here in Iceland it’s more Western style living, and we are not dealing with these different kinds of groups, indigenous groups, or indigenous rights and things like that. One nation in the country (I.viii).

Although some saw this reason for ‘less’ Arctic involvement – and indeed, identity – on behalf of the Icelandic state, others described a closer affinity to indigenous peoples than some of the Arctic states due to their history as a Danish dependency:

Because [Icelanders] see [indigenous peoples] perhaps in a similar situation to what Iceland was once in, and also, their livelihood is very much tied to fishing and hunting, so... [...] And like, Iceland is very supportive of Greenland having independence, and that is based on this historical experience of Iceland, [and] this notion of language, preserving the language, which has been very much the case here in Iceland [...] That is also very important about how you develop your own identity, with a distinct culture and language and history and things like that. [...] That is very important in this Arctic cooperation if it is to be of benefit to everyone (I.iii).

Indeed, many of the state personnel cited Iceland’s close cooperation with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, for example in the West Nordic Council, as complementary to the work within the larger Arctic Council (see also Konradsdóttir and Nielsson, 2014). “There is a special cooperation between these countries; you could call this cooperation a smaller Arctic cooperation” (I.vi). However, recalling Iceland’s ‘post-dependent’ drive to position themselves on the binary side of Western (‘developed’, ‘civilised’, ‘modern’, and so on) societies, paternalism may remain close below the surface in current sub-circumpolar relations too: “we are also quite much aware of them [Greenlanders] being socially a little bit deprived and wanting to help them” (I.x). Nevertheless, local or traditional identities, if not indigenous *per se*, were a topic highlighted by many; for instance, speaking of the inclusion of ‘Traditional/Indigenous Knowledge’ (a concept

that has gained high political importance both within and beyond the Arctic Council), another interviewee conceptualised it as “in principle the same in Iceland that we call the ‘local knowledge’” (I.viii). Although its integration in and with ‘science’, such as in Arctic Council WGs, was described as difficult (yet, rewarding), Iceland’s ‘relatedness’ was also by others described as based on such similarities: local, everyday, and lived experiences of sparse populations, vast distances with lacking infrastructure, harsh climates, and their ensuing challenges (I.xi). In this manner, Arctic identity is, like the region, always *contextually* defined. Arctic *state* or not, it is interpreted, translated, and defined both within and across state borders – through relations that cannot be defined only as that of a state among states, but also those of people among people.

Personal Arctic identity

Having recognised that state identity is articulated and enacted not just between states, but within and across, through relations that far exceed geographical boundaries and historical narratives, an acknowledgement of the *subjective* follows. That is, the performance of discourse may be limited, but not determined, and hence the individual performer has a key role to play (see Jones, 2007). In other words, Icelandic discourses of Arctic state identity – discourses *within* the state – materialises as an effect of practices and articulations by its personnel (see Abrams, 1988; Mitchell, 1991). Of course, a position as representative of an Arctic state is but one of innumerable subject positions in which a given official finds themselves through any given day; their agency lies not in *making* discourses as a deliberate and singular act, but in their conditioned ‘citation’ thereof, which in turn materialises it (Butler, 2011). Nevertheless, this is where the above point about professional versus private identities as ‘Arctic’ again emerges as a way in which to make sense of one’s own job, own role, in the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) of Iceland; importantly, a community of which politicians and bureaucrats too imagine themselves as members. They too conduct lives beyond their governmental offices; and although, as above, some may have particular attachments to the Arctic due to their professional experiences, they too digest the framings of Arctic topics by e.g. media (Sharp, 1993; Woon, 2014) and commercial actors. Their understanding of how this relates to them and what it entails for their job matters for the subsequent enactment thereof. A personal sense of identity is therefore powerful, also in policy-making:

You come from a certain place, and you are influenced when you grow up and when you live here; you are influenced by media, of course, and by nature, and by just being here. [...] When you become a politician you are a person with your experience and your education; of course you put it all together and you reflect what you are. You can't be anything else. So, I think that yeah, your identity and who you are and what you are, it [influences] how you play the politics and your views on the world, of course (I.ii).

Interestingly, some of the interviewees identifying as state personnel explicitly did *not* identify as part of the country's 'elite': "when Iceland was booming, the elite here got very self-confident and arrogant" (I.iii). He continued that, initially, his own involvement in Arctic matters was based mainly on personal interest, describing how his colleagues used to refer to it as his "pet project" before it was made a priority for the Icelandic state (I.iii). Another explained how her identity was different from that of her own grandparents, parents, and their generation (including the Icelandic President) due to societal changes "also changing the perception of who we are and all of that" (I.vi). Her sons, in turn, are now growing up with the Internet, which she mused creates yet another identity in relation to a global society, reminding them of Iceland being Arctic; previously, there might not have been any need to define it as such. Yet another interviewee drew on her experience of living abroad for a period in her youth – making her aware of the special Icelandic, Nordic, or even Arctic "energy" based on closeness to nature and the natural forces, as mentioned above (I.ii). In this manner, the formal geographical definition of Arctic statehood – lines on maps – becomes also deeply personal; an identity discourse becomes *felt* through corporeal experiences, embodied by the individual members of the state.

One individual whose role in the performance and promotion of Iceland's Arctic identity cannot go unmentioned, surfacing as a topic in most interviews, is the former President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson⁴⁹. Interestingly, before becoming Iceland's longest serving head of state, 20 years as such in 2016, he started his career with a doctorate (and eventual professorship) in political science, specialising in how the inherited ideas from the nationalistic independence movement continue to matter in Icelandic state discourse (Grímsson, 1978). Perhaps not surprisingly then, his rhetoric – also on Arctic matters – tends to draw on patriotic notions and sentiments. For example, in a speech on the topic of glaciers and global ice loss, he stated the following:

⁴⁹ At the time of the interviews in 2014, he was still President of Iceland. It is therefore beyond the scope here to assert anything about the current President, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, who was elected in late June 2016.

My father was still a young shepherd chasing sheep in Icelandic valleys when the famous Norwegian discoverers, Amundsen and Nansen, made their pioneering Arctic journeys. Together with their Icelandic-Canadian colleague Vilhjálmur Stefánsson, they embodied, in the early decades of the 20th century, a spirit of discovery that was widely admired. So fresh in living memory were their explorations that the generations which celebrated the independence of Norway and Iceland saw them as their respective national heroes (Grímsson, 2014b).

All at once, he thereby rhetorically linked nature with history, international connections with national identity, and even his own familial ties (see also Grímsson, 2015). Although the role of the President in Iceland is ostensibly of a ceremonial character, many saw him as far from politically passive or neutral:

I think, well, the President that we have now has actually changed the role of the President. He used to, he was not involved in politics before; then the President was a figurehead; he was a representative of Iceland, but he was not directly involved in politics. We now have a President who [...] [is] a politician, really, and when he became President, gradually sort of changed the role of the President (I.xii).

With a smile, the interviewee continued that Grímsson's Arctic involvement was one of his own projects – one with which the public (and indeed, the government) may or may not always be quite on board (I.xii). Also the previous President, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir (the world's first directly elected female head of state), had her own particular focus, "Icelandic culture and heritage", whereas Grímsson's "focus has been more abroad, and our situation as a nation among nations" (I.vi). One Parliamentarian suspected that his marked Arctic focus might be a matter of him "looking towards his legacy" (I.ix); another thought it was "because he does not want to discuss his earlier speeches" about specifically the 'Business Vikings' blamed for bankrupting the country (I.iv). Whatever the motivation, he was during his presidency highly active in the promotion of Iceland as Arctic: *open* both for diplomatic cooperation and business, both included and *inclusive* of external others. One notable example is the *Arctic Circle Assembly* in Reykjavik (Dodds, 2013b, p. 341; Pettersen, 2013): an annual large-scale international conference, now in its fourth year running⁵⁰. On the one hand, domestically, "this conference – it's a big conference – it sends a very powerful message to the Icelandic people: that we get all these visitors and guests, participants, to the conference because we are an Arctic nation" (I.iii). On the other, some

⁵⁰ This also coincided with the time of my interviews in Iceland, i.e. October/November in 2014.

considered it primarily an exercise of reaching outwards, promoting foreign diplomacy, investment, and resource exploitation, making it irrelevant to e.g. her own work on environmental matters – it was primarily a *presidential* exercise (I.xii). A ceremonial representative or not, the President is of course an individual whose views are more public than many occupying offices in the numerous state ministries, agencies, and so on. His specific articulation of what it means for Iceland to be ‘Arctic’ therefore matters for its publicity, its illustration of an *individual’s* agency, and perhaps here most significantly, its reactionary effect among other state practitioners. That is, among those I interviewed, their own articulations of Arctic state identity were frequently explained in relation to his. And finally, bringing the chapter full circle, Grímsson is an individual who all at once exemplifies how Arctic state identity materialises through statements of geographies and histories, percolating through relations with other states, the national community, within said community, and even to the personal sense of self. Clearly then, any scalar separation of relational forces is but heuristic; in practice, relationalities flow in, through, between, over, and under, always exceeding any one ‘scale’s’ limits: embodied senses of harsh weather become national homelands, emotional ties of family becomes historical narratives of independence. Hence, the person within the state – President or bureaucrat, politician or civil servant – all come to practice their meaning of Arctic state identity in ways that bear traces of *them*: of their subjectivities, interests, feelings, and passions. And so, the way in which Iceland emerges on the world stage as an Arctic state is always an effect of the numerous actions of numerous people who all perform it as such.

Conclusion

While the stage for Iceland’s political practice as Arctic may be set by geographical boundaries, the plot by historical narratives, the way in which the performance unfolds always exceeds any script by playing out not just *by* actors, but *between* them, across them, through relations that are – like the region – in constant flux. The people of the state, each member of the Icelandic state apparatus, therefore all have a role to play in how the Arctic state of Iceland comes into being; and yet, their role is conversely also a product of said play itself. Hence, a discourse of state identity does not merely ‘reveal’ itself through relations, but is an *effect* of them – the ‘Land of Fire and Ice’ becomes simultaneously embodied, articulated, practiced, and iterated; and as such, takes on materiality through the *people* of fire and ice.

Iceland, a small and ‘peripheral’ island state is, as its elemental nickname suggests, a country of contrasts – and pride in being such. Its geographical position on the intersection of east and west has now taken on added meaning as a third lead ‘opens’, across the Pole to Asia. Iceland may not have continental shelf claims in the Arctic Ocean proper, but nevertheless their position is, in the view of its many practitioners, ‘wholly within the Arctic’. As oceanic currents move from the Arctic on its eastern side and to it on its western, they are arguably enveloped by Arctic oceanic waters. For Icelandic state officials, it is clear that drawing oceanic boundaries on flowing waves is as arbitrary as latitudinal gridlines – the ocean moves, flows, and *connects*; it provides the fish stocks the Icelandic people has relied on for centuries past and the shipping routes they may potentially rely on for years to come. Thus, the island is simultaneously scripted as isolated and connected due to its place in the sea, simultaneously driven by politics of independence and internationalism. As an Arctic island state (and self-declared coastal state) it is clearly not just fire and ice, but natural forces more generally that has come to define them in the minds of its personnel – ‘being’ Arctic, for them, connects to what it means to be Icelandic; and vice versa, being Icelandic connects to the Arctic.

The way in which Icelandic state personnel articulate Arctic identity is here, as elsewhere, described as a matter not only of space but time, not only of geography but history. While Iceland’s Arctic title and engagement is of a more recent date than its eastern and western neighbours, officials narrate it both through past and present, and most importantly in this case, to the future. That is, the linear progression from a polar past is constructed through re-interpretation of Icelandic historical narratives more generally, but even more explicitly in Iceland than in the other two cases, this is a plot that has yet to reach its climax; we are still only in the prologue. Anticipation and positioning for the future Arctic Iceland is, however, already taking place, already having tangible effects on practices of politics, as well as life in Iceland more generally. The future is only *future* in the present, with *current* hopes and fears, and *current* practices of building and investing.

Iceland’s Arctic state identity is therefore delimited in time and space – even if these are pronounced as *yet to come* and in constant movement. For Icelandic state personnel, Arctic identity is thereby stated, cited, enacted within spatiotemporal frames; however, the ways in which it is done so is always relational. That is, it is through relations that these statements are made and become meaningful. In fact, it soon becomes clear that *relations* themselves, the ever flowing movement of forces of co-existence, is what produces any spatiotemporal frame, a regime of

Arctic state legibility, to begin with. As seen above, such relations flow through all scales all at once, demonstrating how heuristic scales are in practice entangled and intertwined. For Icelandic state officials, representing an Arctic state means, firstly, an international role as a state among states. For a state with less than a century of sovereignty, *independence* remains a primary political drive – but, importantly, independence through recognition and cooperation. This seemingly paradoxical political position comes to the fore as Arctic – providing an opportunity for the state to simultaneously stand *apart* as different while standing *with* as member. Unlike their Norwegian colleagues, however, Icelandic officials speak less of ‘leadership’ in the Arctic, and more of membership – though, *full* membership through recognition of their coastality. This ‘standing apart’ runs through much of Icelandic notions of national identity too, emphasising the idiosyncratic and uniqueness that supposedly defines a people.

As the Arctic title gains exposure in Iceland, it becomes embedded in said uniqueness of the community’s imagination of self. Through its continual iteration and re-interpretation, Arctic statehood is domesticated in manners both banal and spectacular, and seen, if not necessarily always consciously registered, both by voters and politicians, citizens and visitors. As ‘Arctic’, Icelandic symbols take on added meaning, just like vice versa; Arctic symbols come to be re-signified as, also, Icelandic. That being said, symbols, signifiers, and Arctic identity more generally are not received in a universal manner. The Icelandic population may be small, just over 300,000 people and even less so employed in the state administration, and relatively homogenous, but here too there is diversity within. In contrast to the other two cases, however, Iceland does not have any clear geographical divide between north and south, and it does not have an indigenous population. In the case of Arctic identity, this relative national coherence is, ironically, described by some as making them feel ‘less’ Arctic than some of their international counterparts. However, here local traditions and livelihoods serve as a lens through which to understand and connect with indigeneity. Furthermore, national diversity of ‘Arcticness’ in Iceland may for some be more a matter of involvement and contact with relevant issues.

Clearly then, an Arctic state identity is contextually but also *subjectively* articulated: the *subject*, the Icelandic state practitioner, articulates it in and through the relational positions which they transiently inhabit. Narrating the story of Arctic Iceland, they draw upon emotions, experiences, corporeal senses, and bloodlines; the story becomes interwoven with personal stories, or rather, is *constituted* by numerous such. Home translates to territories and family to histories. Identity as the Arctic state of Iceland materialises, becomes a ‘fact’ in the world, through its innumerable

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invocations by its many performers, the *people* of the state, as they move in and through relations; relations that, in turn, constitute not just the Arctic state but the state official – positioning them as subject, and conditioning them to act.

Chapter Six

Canada: True North Strong and Free

Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty over the Arctic. We either use it or lose it. And make no mistake, this Government intends to use it. Because Canada's Arctic is central to our national identity as a northern nation. It is part of our history. And it represents the tremendous potential of our future.

(Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, 2007)

Canada provides the third and final case of statements of Arctic state identity discourses. The above quote has been widely cited, but nevertheless epitomises official Canadian rhetoric about the state's relationship to the Arctic over the last decade. At first glance, there are many similarities between Canada and the previous two cases: It has a relatively small population, often promotes itself as a 'peace nation', and is a young country in terms of independent statehood. Additionally, Canada's Arctic statehood is frequently linked to past 'glories' of polar explorers, myths of the 'frontier', and its indigenous peoples in the North. And indeed, there is no doubt that the official level wishes to project an Arctic identity on the international stage. However, underneath a surface of similarity, the Canadian case also offers contrasts and contradictions – a North for the South, an identity that is not 'theirs', and both geographical and mental distances that are hard to bridge. As the Arctic is today gaining material and strategic value to the country, imaginations of the past intermingle with the new; the northern 'frontier' takes on new meaning, presenting new threats and opportunities to the Canadian state and nation.

With the reflections of 21 Canadian state officials in a wide range of positions and departments at the federal level, this chapter completes the series of three Arctic states. In keeping with the framework, their statements of Canada's 'Arctic identity', as well as official publications and background material, are organised under the six sub-themes of state identity discourses. As will be clear however, headings and frameworks may be the same, but the way in which discourse is

articulated is an ever evolving relational process, and in this case, distinctly *Canadian*. And indeed, geographies of Arctic statehood are here a process, *making* it Canadian – of territorialising the ‘frontier’, and drawing the periphery discursively, if not always infrastructurally, towards the centre. More than lines on a map, it is the characteristics of the space that become linked to ideas of identity – cold, ice, and snow as characteristics of Canada and Canadians. Connected to territorialisations and domestications of Arctic space, ice plays an agential role – its solidity comes to stand in for not just land but ‘homeland’, grounds upon which to place ‘boots’. The state of Canada is ostensibly the outcome of its Northern history – one marked by explorers, colonisers, and ‘brave men’ – Sir John Franklin’s doomed voyage serving as a recent ‘reminder’. More than this, however, the presence of indigenous peoples in the region, predating that of Europeans ‘discoverers’, serve political claims of jurisdiction and sovereignty. And if Iceland’s international articulation of Arctic state identity centred on ‘independence’, Canada’s would be on ‘sovereignty’. In contrast to the former, Canadian Arctic future(s) are not as evidently promises as also *threats* – to sovereignty more than anything, as an unknown space where unknown ‘others’ necessitate Canadian state ‘stewardship’. Not unlike Norway, Canadian officials see their role as that of a ‘middle power’: demonstrating *within* international fora such as the Arctic Council their leadership, morality, and uniqueness. This Canadian uniqueness is in part imagined to come from its ‘northernness’, seemingly distilled to its very essence in the North: an identity *all* of Canada may assume, defined against transatlantic or southern ‘empires’, and visually invoked as polar bears on postage stamps and Inuit iconographies on souvenirs. However, the domestic heterogeneity of Arctic identity is in Canada starker than in the previous states. With a northern and a southern population whose paths seldom cross – indeed, as there *are* no paths – both geographical and ethnic divides come to the fore in Canada. A country that prides itself on its multiculturalism – and which, even in its southern ‘core’, is characterised by two distinct nations joined in an often tense coexistence – Canada is only gradually dealing with past injustices against its own indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, identity is not just articulated in relation to communities but also to the subjective self. In Canada as elsewhere, the way in which Arctic identity is felt, understood, interpreted, and performed is inevitably influenced also by the subject *doing* so. That is, for each practitioner of statecraft – one of many practicing the state into material being – what it means to represent the Arctic state of Canada becomes interwoven with their own subjectivities, extending beyond office walls. In this manner, the ‘True North’ is not just sung as a chorus of anthems or orchestrated political displays, but through the everyday enunciations by the many people of the state ensemble, as Canadian Arctic identity comes into being.

Spatialities of Arctic identity

Although most Canadians have never visited the Arctic proper, it is a space that features prominently in national conceptualisations of Canada and Canadian identity. Colourful lines on maps, in classrooms as in governmental offices, show Canadian territory shaped as a wedge (see Appendix D), most of which lies north, pointedly peaking at the pole. Although this depiction is not uncontested – Canada’s UNCLOS submissions are still not complete – it is a powerful image of Canada’s vast geography⁵¹, showing just how significant a part of which lies north of the Arctic Circle. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, on the question of Arctic statehood and identity, many officials responded along the lines of “it’s geographical, obviously. I think there is a shared sense of ownership of the North” (C.i). However, as was evident also in the previous two chapters, what and when space becomes Arctic space is defined not only by the topic at hand, but also by interest, positionality, and context; in the words of one official:

[W]e still have to define what we mean when we talk about the North and the Arctic every time we go in front of a new audience, or even just – the topic might change. [...] It means different things to different people. There’s nothing homogenous about the North or the Arctic (C.ii).

What or *where* is ‘Arctic’ is therefore, on the one hand, defined by issue topic; but, on the other, the deployment of the term may itself define the topic and what is deemed relevant for discussion. As many Norwegian and Icelandic officials explained, using ‘*nordområdene*’ or ‘*nordurslóðir*’ [both, literally ‘northern areas’] respectively serves as a way in which to circumvent connotations of, *inter alia*, spatial distance and difference; in Canada, a similar terminological selectivity is even more apparent. There, ‘the North’ is the favoured term to broaden discussions, extending it southwards and making it more relational, while simultaneously narrowing it to a strictly domestic Canadian focus. That is, separate from foreign policy agendas, and disassociated with the Arctic Circle delimitation, ‘the North’ is generally agreed upon among officials as comprised of the three northernmost territories (as opposed to the ten provinces) – the Yukon, the Northwest Territories (NWT), and Nunavut – or roughly ‘north of 60th [degree]’. As such, officials are aware of the overlapping (but not identical) geographies of the North and the Arctic, but the use of either may largely guide what kind of politics is enabled or disabled. Articulating an Arctic state

⁵¹ Canada has the second largest territory in the world, exceeded only by Russia, another Arctic state.

identity – or conversely, a Northern state identity – is clearly a citation of a spatially bounded discourse, but *how* said space is articulated, in which terms, potentially reconfigures the production of new statements and practices, of alternative ways of performing the state.

However, an indigenous official *from* ‘the North’ expressed his discontent with the term: “I don’t think it’s a proper way of describing it, I think it would be better to describe it as ‘Arctic’. At least the people will understand more, you know, what you’re talking about” (C.iii). For him, it was too vague, and he continued: “There was another term, one that comes down to jurisdiction that they use – it’s certainly negatively affected us a number of times. It’s called ‘north of 60th’” (C.iii). As he spoke, he continuously pointed and referred to a circumpolar map laid out in front of us (see Appendix D), and traced northern latitudes to my hometown in the Norwegian Arctic; his sense of spatial identity was clearly one of east–west connections rather than north–south. In his statements, “they”, the *others*, referred to the Canadian government and officials belonging to a space that he clearly felt that he does not: Ottawa and the South. Although drawing the line at the 60th, instead of the 66th, northern latitudinal line may seem more inclusive, it does, after all, *draw a line*. Cartographic practice (here, connected to “jurisdiction”) – the knowledges that go into the act of drawing said line – is thereby complicit in producing a *border-able* and distinguishable ‘North’ as a “spatial reality” to which policy may be applied (see Strandsbjerg, 2012). And, moreover, the numerous administrative and practical implications of this line are what, in turn, produce the effect of territory, *produce* a Canadian ‘North’ (see Painter, 2010). The provinces’ northern parts – what some refer to as the “forgotten north” (Coates and Morrison, 1992) – are thereby omitted from critical discussions, despite potentially sharing similar cultures, livelihoods, challenges, and/or biomes (also Bennett *et al.*, 2016). Another official also pointed to this as problematic:

[E]ven Canada’s provinces which are south of 60th, there are very northern parts of those provinces that have conditions that are Arctic-ish [...] So it’s a bit confusing, it’s hard to [define the North/Arctic]. It’s remoteness, yeah, and harsh climate. And, sort of, northern Quebec, northern Manitoba – you know, there’s polar bears in northern Manitoba, but they’re not considered Arctic! (C.iv).

Clearly, neither the Arctic, with its numerous contextual definitions, nor the North, a term that remains relational to a south, are fixed, universally agreed upon spaces. In the words of former PM Harper: “the land of the North is endless and so are the possibilities. Our biggest dreams are at our highest latitudes” (2014a). And indeed, perhaps what may be considered northern (if not

capitalised) really *is* endless, with definitions that shift and change as dreams do. Articulations of Arctic state identity among Canadian personnel were therefore unwaveringly geographically based, initially seemingly obviously defined by lines and border. And yet, it was soon evident that the geographical base itself is anything but stable. Nevertheless, though their specificities are contextually contingent, spatialities of state identity clearly serve to demarcate topic of discussion, line of action, production of statement. *Where* we speak of, dream of, and *where* we draw that line inevitably condition the practices pursued and performed by those ‘within’ the state ensemble; the line circumscribes political possibilities.

Distant as the Arctic may be both geographically and imaginatively, *all* of Canada holds the title of Arctic statehood, and *all* of Canada is a northern country in relative terms. As the main point of reference from which to distinguish Canada, and Canadian identity, has shifted from the British empire in the east to the American ‘superpower’ in the south, a sense of *northern* uniqueness has taken on added meaning:

Canadians, they compare themselves with the United States for better or worse, and the big comparison is south–north. So, we’re north of the United States and so we always think of ourselves as northerners. That doesn’t necessarily mean the Arctic; I think the Arctic represents what we think of ourselves in terms of being northern, being different, and being, I guess, harder in terms of putting up with the winters (C.ii).

As the Peace Arch near the US–Canada border proclaims, the two states are “Children of a common mother” and “Brethren dwelling together in unity”; and so, for the Canadian ‘little brother’, its proclaimed difference (from an arguably unfavourable family reputation) – e.g. as above, “northern [...] hardier” (C.ii) – has become a “comforting mythology” (Cohen, 2008). Identifying as *northern* – relative and relational – thereby becomes a way in which to approximate the Arctic. Arctic statehood is translated to northern statehood, in turn drawing the distant and separate towards the familiar, folding into a sense of Canadianness:

And I do think that because it transfers or it connects to the Arctic, that it also makes thinking about what would be more properly an Arctic, or an adjacent to the Arctic, sense of what our cultural and national identity is easier to the people who don’t have the experience of what it is like to live up there or to be up to there to identify with it. Because there is kind of transference through that term, north, and a feeling that, you know, because we are north of so many others, we get to participate in feeling

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‘northerly’, even though there are those in Canada who are as far north of here [Ottawa] as we are of Florida! (C.v).

Spatiality is, in other words, also a matter of where you are *not* – identity, who you are not. Northernness and Arcticness merge, blur, and mutate in the imaginations of those who call it ‘theirs’ before ‘home’. The space, the region, comes to matter and comes to be felt when faced with others – those from further south, those not members of the Arctic. Then, *all* Canadians, all people *within* the state, become northern and become Arctic; *all* of Canadian state space becomes ‘Arctic state’ space.

Discontent, as the previously cited Northern official, with the inability of lines on a map to convey any *sense* of a place – what a place is like, feels like, looks like – the Canadian geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin developed a method of calculating what he called *nordicité*, or ‘nordicity’ (1978). In brief, level of nordicity is determined by ten climatic, social, and cultural variables, all assigned numerical values, or ‘polar units’, which are added together to a score of northernness – the maximum being the North Pole with 1000 polar units (Bone, 2009, p. 290). According to Hamelin’s system, the dividing line between Northern and Southern Canada lies at 200 polar units, and higher values are further classified into Near, Middle, Far, and Extreme North – all part of his extensive new Northern vocabulary and neologisms (some more useful than others) (Chartier, 2007). Some 50 years after Hamelin first developed the concept of nordicity, Canadian state personnel similarly spoke of the meaning of ‘being’ an Arctic state as *more* than a consequence of cartography. There may be incremental ‘levels’ as you move northwards, but for them too it was through climate – cold, ice, snow – that they connected with their Arctic statehood, despite physical distance from the Arctic Circle:

I think the identity of Canada as a northern nation – as a very cold, and our winter climate – is a huge, a very, very strong national identity. [...] Canadians know winter. And because we have a strong winter here, even in the South, they think of themselves as a northern country (C.vi).

Most noted that even though this does not mean Arctic conditions *per se*, southern winters provide an imaginary bond to more northern spaces. “I think it might blur; like, ‘Arctic’ might blur into Canadian vastness and wilderness. A lot of Canadians [are] very proud of the wilderness and the uniquely Canadian – the vastness as well” (C.vii). The romanticism tied to the Arctic – as a pristine, vast wilderness that supposedly epitomises the quintessentially Canadian – thereby blurs

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into national identity narratives in the South that are equally patriotic as nostalgic of a pre-urban, pre-industrial time:

[I]t gives me, as a Canadian, a sense that in this country there's a lot of space still; there's a lot of wildness, which I identify with as a Canadian. And that wildness is in the Arctic. Now, if you talk to an Inuk, they would not say that it's wild, 'it's our home; we don't consider it as wilderness; it's our place'. But to me, it's important to know that in the world there's still very wild, unspoilt places (C.viii).

In other words, not dissimilar to the ways in which Norwegian and Icelandic officials articulated what it means, for them, to 'be' Arctic, those in Canada also explained it as *felt* through corporeal senses: environmental and climatic conditions, winter, and cold that, in turn, seemingly shape a people, and shape identity. Here, it is the iterative encounter not with 'the other' but with other *space* that produces a collective sensory 'surface' – a national Arctic community that gains its self-consciousness through the seemingly universally experienced cold (see Ahmed, 2004). And yet, for Canadian officials, the Arctic is primarily a *symbol* for the national cold; the region itself remains distant and intangible, only to be understood through mental and sensory proxies. For southern, non-indigenous Canadians, including most Ottawa-based state officials, 'being' Arctic therefore requires translation – one that may be corporeal and climatic more than linguistic. "This idea about what the Arctic and the Far North is all about is just so – it's kind of the extreme of how we try to identify ourselves" (C.ii). The seemingly foreign 'frontier' of extreme colds, extreme winters, extreme winter dark, and extreme summer light thus becomes just that – extremely Canadian: a caricatured, distilled essence of who, where, and how the national 'we' came to be.

While Canadians' imaginations of Arctic space as vast distances and cold environments bear similarities to those of Norwegian and Icelandic officials, their descriptions thereof differed in their emphasis on Arctic land, or land-*like* qualities, as opposed to the previous cases' explicit engagement with the Arctic as *ocean* (or even, seafloor). Canadian officials too spoke of UNCLOS and international shipping, but the ocean was scripted as *around*, outside, the state:

[W]e are a nation that goes from sea to sea, which is part of our country's slogan is 'a mare just a mare', which is 'from sea to sea'. But we all say now from 'sea to sea to sea', because we recognise the Arctic Ocean as also very, very important as one of Canada's oceans (C.ix).

The geographical differences between the state and the previous two are clearly a factor, as both Norwegian and Icelandic everyday lives are marked by coastalness and islandhood respectively. In contrast, the majority of Canadians are landlocked in the South, and the sea marks the edges and finitude of a vast state territory⁵². Thus, UNCLOS and the Arctic oceanscape more generally matter to Canada, but more in practical than emotional terms.

[Y]ou know, [continental shelf submissions under] UNCLOS will take decades to resolve, but in a way it doesn't matter, because it doesn't – it's not, you know, what we end up with is going to be very much an Arctic Ocean controlled by the Arctic states with perhaps a small area in the middle that remains high seas or, you know, ocean areas that would be common heritage (C.x).

However, there is more to it than differences in geography, not least when considering that Canada actually has the world's longest coastline – a quantitative argument for spending taxpayers' money in the North that serves politicians well: “With 40 per cent of our landmass in the North, and more than 160,000 kilometres of Arctic coastline, Canada is a Northern country” (Harper, 2014a). In fact, it was not long after Harper entered office in 2006 that he asserted sovereignty over the Arctic archipelagic waters in the Canadian North, specifically the Northwest Passage (NWP) (Byers, 2010; Byers and Baker, 2013). In brief, the Canadian government claims this is internal waters based on historical usage (granting Canada full jurisdiction), while the American maintains that it is an international strait (leaving it open for international transit) (Pharand, 2007; Bartenstein, 2011; Elliot-Meisel, 2009; Griffiths, Huebert and Lackenbauer, 2011; Steinberg, 2014). For Canada, the NWP holds particular symbolic significance for national identity and statehood. Not only does the search for this mythicised passage feature prominently in the nation-building narrative of Canada's ‘frontiers’ and settlement (as I return to below), but it has also come to symbolise the aforementioned need for distinctiveness next to the USA. This came to the fore in 1969, when the American *SS Manhattan* transited without formally granted permission, spurring vigorous Canadian debate about sovereignty. This specific example was also brought up by an official as he discussed how identity was “defined maybe in antagonism against another country” (C.xi):

⁵² However, see Vannini *et al.* (2009) for an interesting discussion how a Canadian re-conceptualisations, a re-continentalisation, may take place as the Arctic thaws – an example of the co-production of the social and material, a “process of transformation of Canada into a peninsular body encompassed within a larger archipelagic entity: a place more intimately attuned to its immense (and growing) coastal and insular routes.” (Vannini *et al.*, 2009, p. 121)

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Even though the US is our closest ally, it doesn't take long in Canada to stoke, you know, the very feeble fires of nationalism when you talk about the US doing something that might be seen as un-Canadian, for example. And, in the late '60s when the US sent an icebreaker through the Northwest Passage without really asking our permission, then Canadians were like, 'well, this is our Arctic; how dare they do that!' and so on and so forth. And certainly from a political perspective that's also part of the discourse, as I'm sure you've seen – especially with [Harper's] government (C.xi).

For him, it was this incident that marked the start of Canada's concerted efforts to assert and protect Arctic sovereignty; for others, it was the transpolar Soviet threat during the Cold War. As such, Arctic waters hold an important symbolic significance also for Canada and Canadian statehood writ large, but the way in which it is framed in officials' statements is not oceanic – it is *internal*; or in other words, it matters as between, connected to, or *like* land (perhaps an archipelago, see Vannini *et al.*, 2009). As in Harper's opening quote, Arctic statehood means *use* of Arctic space. Spatially conceptualised as territorial terrain, political approaches thereto are demarcated – said use becomes that of 'boots on the *ground*'.

The above claimed 'historical usage', upon which Canada's claims to full jurisdiction of the NWP is based, is that of Inuit use of the waters when frozen solid (i.e. 'land-like'), thereby ostensibly justifying Canadian territoriality. Under UNCLOS, governance of sea-ice is ambiguous, only covered by the singular Article 234, leaving it open to interpretation (e.g. Kraska, 2014). For Canadian Inuit, however, rights to ice – or in climate change debates, "the right to be cold" (Watt-Cloutier, 2015) – are deeply connected to lives and livelihoods: meanings that are not easily (if at all) translated into formal international law:

When the Law of the Sea Convention was put together [...], they had no conception at all whatsoever how can you own the water, how can you have the rights to the ice when you cannot live on the ice. But, the fact is we have, we still have a lot of people alive today who were born on the ice, belonging, who belong to this area (C.iii).

Anthropologists have extensively documented not only Inuit use and travel routes on sea-ice, but also the ways in which ice is understood and known (see Krupnik *et al.*, 2010; Aporta, Taylor and Laidler, 2011; Aporta, 2011). What is clear both in their work and the above citation is that frozen water may be known, inhabited, used; however, in Inuit conceptualisations, it is not simply 'like land' – the ice has its own particular materiality that cannot easily be equated with sheer, UNCLOS-instrumental solidity. Nevertheless, the simplification, rendering sea-ice

seemingly static and territorial, is one way in which non-Inuit, non-Northern state representatives translate an otherwise, for them, illegible spatiality. The official cited above continued that even as climate change is changing the physical conditions of the space and ice becomes less reliable, it does not change rights, livelihoods, or attachments:

You're still using it; even if it was frozen ice and then it's melted, you're still using it. And you're still relying on your economy, because your economy – it moves back and forth on those channels and things in there, nature which happens to be a food source or a clothing source. So, your attachment [is] to the [space] – from the top, down to the bottom of the ocean (C.iii).

Thus, Inuit's spatial identity may very well be tied to 'watery' spaces; the Canadian politicisation and subsequent interpretation of this identity, however, is not theirs. Rather, the point that the Canadian North, including its waters, is and has been inhabited and used ostensibly "since time immemorial" (C.DIAND, 2009, p. 9) is one of the Canadian government's key arguments for sovereignty (Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt, 2015; for a historical view of 'colonising' ice, see Craciun, 2010) – despite the fact that Inuit imaginations (or experiences) thereof may be wholly different (a point returned to below). As the above quote clearly states: Arctic space *moves*. And yet, in most Canadian state articulations of Arctic identity and spatial belonging, it is rendered frozen and static – a space that may be bordered and delimited, as it simultaneously, paradoxically itself delimits how said identity may be performed, practiced, and stated into political reality. In other words, the spatial imaginary of Arctic 'ground' may in officials' conceptualisations be static, moved *across*, and devoid of agency – yet, it is precisely through the discursive attempts of fixing it that Arctic spatiality asserts its agency, guiding and conditioning the actions of those by whom it was articulated as such.

Temporalities of Arctic identity

The citation of identity discourse is not only a matter of positioning the Arctic state in space but also in time. Identity, the *who*, is articulated as both *where* and *how*: homeland and narrative, geography and history. Statements of said discourse are thereby regulated by its spatiotemporal boundaries: state officials' articulations of identity cannot only be of territory in and of itself, but is the story of 'us' *in* and *on* this territory. Statements hence become interwoven in the long lines of national narratives, leading ever progressively, linearly towards a national future for the Arctic state of Canada. Indeed, throughout the narrative, identity is that which remains seemingly stable,

providing a sense of ontological security as the world around the Canadian ‘nation-state’ changes (Giddens, 1991) – a national ‘self’ that transcends the mortal transience of individual lives (Guibernau, 2013). In this sense, a state cannot ‘become’ Arctic – it has seemingly always been so. Although, as in both Norway and Iceland, the explicit iterations of an Arctic state title are of a recent date in Canada, it is not articulated as a *new* (Arctic) Canada. Rather, it is discursively moored to that which was already there, the weatherworn pillars of ‘Canadianness’, a narrative that is familiar and deeply embedded in a national sense of ‘self’. With selective emphasis on historical events and stories, the Arctic present changes its hue and becomes the ‘result’ of a re-dyed past. Canada’s history as a resource and settler colony weeps into present-day relations with the North. And pronouncements of ever threatened sovereignty in the Arctic resonate with a deep-rooted sense of that which defines the nation as ‘strong and free’, its historical achievement of independence. It is no coincidence that Canada’s *Northern Strategy* is subtitled by “Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future” (C.DIAND, 2009): Arctic statehood is framed as passed down through time (and indeed, *passing* into the future), connected to the familial, and is explicitly a relation of ownership. Excerpts from speeches by then-PM Harper feature throughout Canada’s *Arctic Foreign Policy*, among them:

In exercising our sovereignty...we are not only fulfilling our duty to the people who called this northern frontier home, and to the generations that will follow; we are also being faithful to all who came before us... (C.FATDC, 2010, p. 4).

Thus, as a birth-right, passed down *from* generations *to* generations to come, opens up and closes down avenues of action – leading to avenues of, for example, paternal sovereignty (Dodds, 2012) or stewardship – the responsibilities of bearing rights: “The Government of Canada recognizes its responsibility to preserve and protect Canada’s rich Northern heritage in the face of new challenges and opportunities” (C.DIAND, 2009, p. 39). As such, the present of Arctic statehood for Canada is premised on its past, and importantly, is consequential for a future as such. And, for Canadian state officials, this entails an enactment of politics, performance of identity, which may seem new in shape and form, but still fits into the temporal frames of identity discourse – a new citation of the old, a *re*-iteration of discourse.

Tracing Canada’s current Arctic statehood backwards through time means staking out a new path through stories of the past: one that meanders through the in-betweens and backgrounds of the national narrative, in turn, highlighting and foregrounding the Arctic – centring the margins of

Canadian history. History is neither objective nor static; it is not just ‘what happened’, but an active selection of how to represent and how to remember a specific past in light of the present. Public memory is actively shaped and nurtured through ceremonies, displays, and commemorations. The memorialisation and construction of national heritage register not only as symbolically significant, but through affective sensibilities that often have racialised modalities (Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010). For example, at the time of the interviews in Ottawa, at least four separate venues displayed artefacts from Sir Franklin’s doomed expedition to the NWP (see below), pedagogically placing these within a broader context of Canada’s Arctic history, nature, and culture. Museums – in this case, e.g. of Nature and History – are not only a celebration of the past, but ‘education’ of children and adults alike. Indeed, education often plays a key role in the construction of a national sense of historical past (see e.g. Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). In the words of Edward Said (2000, p. 176), the study of history is “far from” [...] a neutral exercise in facts and basic truths”, but rather “a nationalist effort” in order to “construct a desirable loyalty”. Although some point to a deliberate ‘elite’ construction and subsequent inculcation of the population with national sentiment (e.g. Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983), it is also true that those who grow up to become state personnel are subject to the same histories of ‘Canadianness’.

Our history books, and particularly the history that I grew up being taught, focuses a lot on the importance of the North, and why people from Europe came to Canada in the first place: Looking for a Northwest Passage, looking for resources that tended to be in the North of the country. So, I think kids in Canada grow up with a lot of stories about the North. I think a lot... not quite romantic notions about the North, but certainly a fictional sense of how important the North is to Canada; maybe fictional is the wrong word – it’s more a narrative sense, maybe would be a better word for it (C.v).

In Canada, each province and territory has a high degree of independence in developing school curricula⁵³, but across them, educational institutions are instrumental in the formation of national citizens (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006; Benwell and Dodds, 2011). Not least, national histories are taught as facts to be learned, memorised, and tested. Potentially resonating ever more powerfully when framed to localised histories and contexts (e.g. Benwell, 2016), Canada’s Arctic

⁵³ Not only due to the federal system of governance, the high level of provincial autonomy is also tied to Canada’s history as a collection of colonies of both the British and French empires. The inclusion of Québec and Francophone Canada is important for national identity more generally, as will be returned to below in the discussion of sub-national identifications.

history might be taught differently in Nunavut than Alberta, but is nevertheless subsumed within the Canadian. The provision of education, albeit de-centralised, is often seen as one of the moral responsibilities of a state alongside welfare more generally⁵⁴ (Taylor, 1994) – also continuing into adulthood, as experts ‘teach’ and inform citizens. There may therefore be some political deliberation behind historical framings; but equally, there may be a conviction amongst many practitioners of statecraft that they have a moral duty to provide education for the nation at large. One interviewee explained that justifying state spending in the Canadian North to the public was happening through “a big effort to *educate* Canadians as to the value. [...] it’s kind of like the ‘last frontier’, and let’s do it right” (C.ix, emphasis added). He further continued that this effort was, by and large, successful, and increasingly happening through schooling:

And, I know, school textbooks aren’t being re-written every day, because they’re now going online a lot of them; but there are more and more resources online, and we have resources for telling the story of the North and the story of indigenous Canadians that we never had before. And so, it’s going to be part of our education. Some school boards and some education departments are more pro-active than others, but it’s not going away: We have the North and it’s going to be part of Canada, I hope, forever (C.x).

Clearly, education serves to generate awareness among Canadians from a young age – including those who grow up to be policy-makers – of Canada’s Arctic history, asserting and re-asserting identity narratives. And, as mentioned, these stories may be read with a visual backdrop of flags and maps on classroom walls, depicting Canada’s vast North next to the red maple leaf; history and geography are mutually reinforcing, reiterative, knowledges of the ‘nation-state’; these are the foundational stories of Canada weaved together as a coherent narrative. Through the telling and re-telling of stories, Canada and Canadians as Arctic – ‘always’ having been so – becomes part of the everyday: a mundane ‘fact’ on the pages of a textbook, guiding those who grow up to be state representatives throughout *their* own life-stories – from own to children’s to grandchildren’s days on the school-bench.

One story of the past that has been told and re-told a great number of times over the last couple of years is that of Sir Franklin’s tragic bane. His 19th century expedition in search of the NWP

⁵⁴ The moral obligations of the state to ‘look after’ its people may be traced far back to ideas of Hobbesian sovereign responsibilities, and Rousseau’s social contract. However, Foucault’s concept of governmentality is particularly useful in theorising how education ‘for all’ in the contemporary era forms part of the governance of a population – the focus or objective of contemporary governance (see e.g. Taylor, 1994; Painter and Jeffrey, 2009).

ended with the disappearance of both ships and crew. In the centuries that followed, numerous searches have been conducted (and pragmatically, as one interviewee added, “in searching for them they mapped the Arctic channels and the sea-routes through the Arctic” (C.ix)); and numerous stories, books, and songs have been written about it, making it perhaps the most famous of the many bestseller historical stories of explorers’ glorified hardships as they battled their way through an inhospitable region (see Francis, 1997). As elaborated below, these stories are past encounters with the Arctic that were imprinted on lives, bodies, and skins of ancestors whose blood is still seen to run in the nation’s veins – even as the ‘descendant’ readers, state officials or not, may never themselves corporeally experience it. Interestingly, the framing of Franklin’s story has shifted in correlation with Canadian societal and political developments. As an Englishman, the story of Franklin did not enter Canadian national discourse until the 20th century, and then, initially, as representing a proud British heritage. In the 1970s, however, this was turned on its head; as Canada was asserting its identity as an independent state, Franklin’s tragic fate became seen as a result of the arrogant folly of Eurocentrism (Cavell, 2007). In recent years, the story has, again, been appropriated and moulded accordingly to fit a new agenda: the assertion of Arctic sovereignty. Indeed, the search for the ships formed much of the public justification of charting and mapping the NWP, and it provided a nationalist backdrop and rhetoric in which to shroud Harper’s annual visits to the North. When one of the two ships, the HMS Erebus, was finally located in the autumn of 2014⁵⁵, it was therefore no less than a media sensation (and as noted, the materiality of the sensation was brought home, both to the Canadian and British capitals, in the forms of artefacts). For the government, it provided a stage from which to rally Canadian Arctic patriotism.

[T]here’s been a narrative woven around that story that’s given a sense of identity; all Canadians can associate with the Franklin expedition. Because we’ve been looking for it for a 150 years or something, right! So we finally found it, and the PM says ‘we found the Franklin ship’; ‘we’ being the government of Canada, not the people of Canada. Or, like, ‘me, I found it’ (C.viii).

⁵⁵ The HMS Erebus find was announced shortly prior to my fieldwork commencing in Ottawa. Unsurprisingly, this was a topic discussed both at the conference, *Arctic Change* (see pp. 62-63), in local museums, and in interviews – it was no less than a Canadian Arctic media sensation at the time. Coincidentally, only days before submitting the complete thesis in the autumn of 2016, the second ship – the HMS Terror – was also located, after 168 years at the bottom of Terror Bay in the Canadian North (see Watson, 2016 for more details). Interestingly, in the statement released by Parks Canada, there was this year – under the new Trudeau government – no mention of sovereignty, but rather it “underscores the importance of Inuit knowledge” – a sentiment also echoed by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, Catherine McKenna (cited in Parks Canada, 2016).

In the PM's own statement to the press, the political link was immediately made: "Franklin's ships are an important part of Canadian history given that his expeditions, which took place nearly 200 years ago, laid the foundations of Canada's Arctic sovereignty" (Harper, 2014b). The valid point made by several state personnel that Sir John Franklin "wasn't Canadian, he was British; the Canadian stamp on the Arctic didn't happen until the '50s" (C.viii) mattered little in the national fanfare that followed. In Franklin's own time, there was no 'Canada' in today's sense, but nevertheless, his 'discovery' has now been deeply embedded in stories of Canadian nation-building and settlement – retrospectively. While those within the state may be critical of Harper's political *framing* of the lost (and found) ship – indeed, may point to Inuit's discounted knowledge on the topic (Craciun, 2012, 2014) – the ubiquity of the narrative and patriotism makes it difficult to be critical of their *content* (see Closs Stephens 2015). That is, symbols of the Canadian Arctic 'nation-state' may not be received in any singular manner – banal or hot, there is not one universal interpretation (Jones and Merriman, 2009) – but the important point here is that they are received in the first place, digested, and reacted to in various ways. Much like Icelandic officials may vehemently disagree with President Grímsson's political framings, so may Canadian officials cringe at PM Harper's; however, the act of disagreeing and the act of cringing both become active articulations of a position on the question of Arctic state identity.

The telling of (hi)stories, such as that of Sir Franklin, is neither inconsequential nor coincidental for political practice to follow. While governmental rhetoric claimed that locating the ship served as 'proof' of Canadian historical claims in the Arctic as well as their technological advancement, it also raised uncomfortable questions about high expenditures, private companies' involvement, governmental control over the media, and – perhaps most importantly – why the ship had not been found earlier, when Inuit had told researchers years ago its approximate location.

[A] lot of our history has to do with this, well I guess, colonising or frontier-mentality of people going North and wanting to conquer it, or just like, braving elements to make it part of Canada. There's – the flipside is that it conflicts with a lot of our aboriginal history; because obviously aboriginal people have lived there a long time. So there is conflicting storylines there, but most Canadians relate more to the European history than the aboriginal history side of things (C.ii).

Remembering the Franklin-story means forgetting others; competing histories of indigenous peoples, or inconvenient stories of the heroes' cannibalism, must be obscured in the name of the grand narrative of nation-statehood (e.g. Anderson, 1983). The story as a rhetorical device may

thus be employed for a political purpose: described by one as “an active cultivation of Arctic identity in Canada” (C.vi). It may even work as a smokescreen, concealing the lack of real action and progress in the North (C.xii): what another official described as an attempt “to try to stay away of the question of people occupying the territory. So, [Harper is] trying to prove that somebody was up there before. But before Franklin disappeared, the Inuit was already up there” (C.iii). In other words, the presence of the empire both in the past and, in the form of bones and ship-wrecks, in the present stifles questions of alternative governance arrangements or rights claims even before they have been asked. The practices and questions the story *does* enable are those of a southern government with an agenda of how the Arctic is to be brought into the future:

[I]n reality, for Northern residents, it didn’t resonate in any way as something important. Because, for Inuit – and it’s totally understandable, they’ve been there for so much longer – so like, ‘yeah, whatever, you came when? [...]’. That’s just a show of...I don’t know, trying to re-write history; it’s an exercise of rhetoric, and not something that concretely means something (C.xii).

It *does* mean something in the South though, to voters and officials alike, as well as to an international audience. For decision-makers whose primary experience of the North is through precisely such an “exercise of rhetoric” (C.xii), Arctic space becomes imagined on precisely the terms set thereby; in turn, guiding the course of action said space and said history allow. While the stories of exploration and colonisation of the northern ‘frontier’ do not feature directly, explicitly, or even consciously in policy-making, their legacy may still be heard faintly echoing through the citations of Canadian identity discourse. And indeed, invoking these ‘shared’ stories of a purportedly shared past adds weight to promises of a shared future – rendering the potentially controversial as safe and *natural* development.

[G]iven that the [Canadian] national identity includes the Arctic it empowers and enables our political leaders to be very confident if not aggressive in claiming its role and influence as an Arctic state [...]. It gives, again, our state – the federal government – the authority, if you will, the democratic authority to claim a place. Because all of Canada sees itself as an Arctic nation. (C.xiii)

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird, as a case in point, firmly placed current efforts of defining Canada’s continental shelves in a historical trajectory in an address to the media on the topic: “We are drawing the last line on the map of our country by charting our last frontiers, upholding the bold tradition of exploration that has defined Canada’s history” (Baird, 2013). As such, history is never ‘over’, and certainly never uncontested, but is continuously re-historised,

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re-imagined, and re-interpreted by those who engage it both deliberately and not; and thus, renditions of the past bear highly real and highly material effects on relations of the present Arctic Canada.

The re-narration of Canadian history as deeply connected to the Arctic constructs new roots from which particular futures may grow: Arctic futures. The potentialities and possibilities unfold before Canada as they branch off from the present; what can be imagined *after* is contingent on the *now* that came from *before*. Arctic attention and awareness both in and beyond Canada is first and foremost based on anticipation (Dodds, 2001; Steinberg, Bruun and Medby, 2014; Woon, 2014) – challenges and opportunities, rights and responsibilities, *yet to come*. Present practices, present political pronouncements, positions and prepares for Arctic state futures: “a legacy we will leave for generations of Canadians to come” (Baird, 2013). Looking ahead to a future that seemingly flows from the past, former Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Chuck Strahl opened the *Northern Strategy*:

We are taking concrete action to deliver on our vision for the North, and to fulfil our promises. I am proud of our Government’s achievements on this vital initiative, and look forward to contributing to an even greater future for a region so central to Canada’s character and identity (C.DIAND, 2009).

Visions, promises, and a *better* future come into being from achievements of the past. And, additionally, state policy thereby becomes emotively connected to pride and anticipation. The *Arctic Foreign Policy* concludes with yet another powerful message from the former PM in the NWT in 2008: “The True North is our destiny... To not embrace its promise now at the dawn of its ascendancy would be to turn our backs on what it is to be Canadian” (cited in C.FATDC, 2010, p. 26). As with all prophecies and predictions, the unfolding of Canada’s Arctic ‘destiny’ remains uncertain. However, like the stories of the past, the ‘truths’ of these forecasts become of secondary concern as their *consequences* play out already, in the present.

[B]ecause we have all that space for trade that’s yet to be used or, like, all the Northwest Passage – even though in reality [...] it won’t be for 50 years you can really use it the way that it’s expected to be; [...] it puts us in the forefront of discussion (C.xii).

Hence, future contingencies are *already* influencing relations of power; Canada’s Arctic future may not have materialised (yet), but the status connected to its heralding is already having highly material effects, and thus is not just ‘happening’ but is *being actively made*. “The Government has a

vision for a new North and is taking action to ensure that vision comes to life – for the benefit of all Canadians” (C.Gov’t, 2009). Looking forwards and having a ‘vision’ that is intimately tied to that which “is at the very heart of Canadian identity” (C.DIAND, 2009, p. 39) both gives credibility and, in Harper’s view, “an *obligation* to continue this work” (2014a emphasis added). That is, a Canadian Arctic identity imagined to transcend from past to present to future dictates corresponding state action, practice, and performance. When pronouncing present Arctic politics as seemingly rooted in national past and futures, it is not only the Arctic identity of Canada that is positioned within a linear narrative, but also the speaking Canadian officials themselves – as representatives of something *more*, something of a longer *durée* than the singular subject. Within these temporal, as well as spatial, boundaries of Arctic state identity discourses, the official speaks and acts; in their naming, citation, and enactment as such, both the Arctic state and its representative are thereby produced.

International Arctic identity

While statements of identity discourses may fit within spatiotemporal frames – the *where* and the *when* of what can and cannot be said – the act of stating (performing, practicing) always takes place in relational interaction, requiring both a *who* and a *whom*. And in relations, there is always power: power that shifts and moves and flows *between* those stating and listening, as in a continuous, co-productive dance of discursive citation. For the Canadian official, the *meaning* of the above geographies and histories are, in other words, always contingent on the constitutive other, the discursive dance-partner. And moreover, the implications of the twists and turns of co-articulations are potentially political, potentially moving the balance of power. The North is only ever north when seen from the south, and gaining (and keeping) sovereignty is only ever meaningful in an *international* world. In other words, there is no discourse in a vacuum, no identity in isolation, but rather the Arctic state of Canada – and with it, Arctic state personnel – is ever becoming through encounters.

When speaking – and interviewing – about Arctic statehood and identity in Canada, conversations soon turn towards foreign policy (and frequently defence). Arctic statehood is, as seen in the previous two chapters, defined as membership in an international region, and so, an internationally significant title and identity. More so in Canada than in the previous two, however, the aforementioned terminological distinction between ‘Arctic’ and ‘Northern’ also

become one of *political* distinction: speaking of a specifically ‘Arctic’ state identity means, firstly, speaking of an internationally relational identity, being a state amongst other states, and political practices of interaction. Even though the terms’ definitions are ambiguously distinguished, their difference may lie primarily in employment and subsequent practice; as summarised by one interviewee:

We aren’t often using the word ‘Arctic’ unless it’s being specifically used to speak around the High Arctic, and certain activities that the federal government is responsible for in the High Arctic – which often kind of overlaps with the international dimension of our Arctic foreign policy and those kinds of things – generally around security, offshore boundary issues, those kinds of things. Otherwise we generally speak of ‘the North’ from a domestic perspective (C.xiii).

The Arctic region as such only fully entered southern Canadian consciousness in the post-war years as a result of the Soviet threat across the Pole, and is therefore still associated with a “complex interrelationship between: sovereignty, stewardship, and national security” (Grant, 1988, p. xv). While the so-called stewardship at the time referred to the government’s relationship with the Inuit population, this has today been transferred to the land itself – ‘stewarding’ Arctic space as other states enter. And indeed, one official summarised Arctic statehood for Canada as meaning precisely this: “stewardship and sovereignty” (C.xi). Or in the words of Harper: “This magnificent and unspoiled region is one for which we will demonstrate stewardship on behalf of our country, and indeed, all of humanity” (2008, cited in C.FATDC, 2010, p. 16). That is, it is a title that comes with specific political practices to be enacted *with* and *for* fellow states. Hence, even though Canadian politics may not be qualitatively different in the Arctic than elsewhere, the topically limited usage of the term discursively fences off what *kind* of politics is relevant – in this case, foreign policy and security. Arctic political practice thereby becomes the remit of certain departments, certain practitioners; discourse of Arctic state identity predetermines its actors.

Despite what the Canadian national anthem might seem to suggest, full sovereignty for the ‘strong and free’ – ending formal legal dependence on the British Parliament – is actually as recent as the constitutional ‘patriation’ in 1982 (and even today, the British monarch remains Head of State). The Canadian state in its present shape is therefore, like the previous two cases, a young state in terms of full independence. Also in Canada this features as a key concept in political discourse, though independence there tends to be articulated as *sovereignty*. Moreover, despite its large area,

it is a relatively small state population-wise, with roughly 36 million inhabitants (Statistics Canada, 2016). With the majority of this population residing along the southern border to the USA, the Canadian Arctic is among the most sparsely populated areas on the planet. A potent mix of a self-perception of being a small national community in a ceaseless ‘struggle’ for freedom, the North’s vast, sparsely inhabited areas, and myths of unchartered, untamed ‘frontiers’ imbues the Arctic with a threatening allure. As Grant (1988) explains, the “Myth of the North” has meant that the region has come to symbolise Canada’s uniqueness (in relation to the British Empire, in particular); and, perceiving itself as an “adolescent state the key to maturity lay in development of its northern ‘hinterland’” (1988, p. 3). As a circumpolar, multistate region, the Arctic therefore presents Canada with an opportunity to demonstrate both their strength and freedom in the face of an imagined and continuously re-imagined threat to their hard-earned sovereignty. Whereas one interviewee pointed to the increasing interest in the Arctic as necessitating defence expenditure, another saw it as the other way around: What she referred to as “sovereignty discourse” was in her view employed intentionally and strategically to justify expenditures, and “to constitute Canada as a certain kind of country” (C.vi) both to a domestic and an international audience. The military analyst Rob Huebert advises that “every time the government uses the phrase ‘Canadian sovereignty,’ listeners should substitute the word ‘nationalism’ instead” (quoted in Chase, 2014). According to another official, there is political support to be gained from “tapping into” the public’s Arctic identity, “triggering” concerns of threats thereto, which is, in turn, also “what other countries get faced with: that Canada’s being quite active – some people might even say aggressive – on the issue of sovereignty” (C.x); or more bluntly:

[The Conservatives] see security-threat as a way to unite Canadians with a common objective, and the threat of having maybe other countries wanting our territory and the – like, we don’t really have enemies (*laughter*) as a country, so to have something to defend, I think, as an ideology is really important in [the Harper] government (C.xii).

Hence, the parallels to Canada’s fellow Arctic states extend to a conceptualisation of statehood as sovereignty/independence among other states; however, unlike the smaller two cases in the previous chapters, this is in Canada subsumed in an imagination of enduring precarity to said statehood, requiring its unceasing performance and repetition in the face of threats – real or otherwise.

The international image of Canada has traditionally been that of a ‘middle power’: a self-proclaimed title based on their position between empires and small states in the UN. The “middle power myth” – the construction of a very specific image as such – has through the years been instrumental for the identity, and thereby support, of Canadian political relations (Chapnick, 2000). Central to this myth is a Canadian preference for ‘soft power’, multilateralism, and internationalism in foreign affairs, as well as being a peace-keeping nation (see e.g. Munton and Keating, 2001; Berdahl and Raney, 2010). Indeed, many have called for increased *peace-building* efforts from Canada and fellow ‘middle powers’ (among which also Norway is often included) (Axworthy, 1997), as these are supposed vanguards of human security, peace, and justice. In other words, this Canadian self-perception is, much like Norway, one of moral virtue (or even superiority) and responsibility (Neumann and de Carvalho, 2015); with it, it carries a specific set of rightful actions and behaviours for the Canadian state. One oft-mentioned example of Canadian cooperative spirit in the Arctic context is their purported leadership in the establishment of the Arctic Council⁵⁶ with the *Ottawa Declaration* in 1996 (Keskitalo, 2004). In the words of an interviewee: “Canada spearheaded the Arctic Council” (C.ii). Regardless of whether the Canadian delegation assumes a dominant role in the Arctic Council, as some argue they do (Keskitalo, 2004), their active participation in the multi-governmental cooperation is often highlighted as ‘typically’ Canadian. While this ‘middle power’ identity is thought to run through all of Canada’s politics, it also prescribes a specific role as one of the eight Arctic states:

[T]he Canadian element of the Arctic Council is to get everybody with an interest together, and say ‘okay, can we agree on everything that needs to happen?’. And then, based on who’s got the resources to make it happen, ‘let’s figure out how to work together and make it happen’ (C.v).

And, indeed, in what is framed as the changing “international dimension” of *Canada’s Northern Strategy*, Canada remains stable, seemingly guided by more deep-rooted values than transient geopolitical concerns: “Cooperation, diplomacy and international law have always been Canada’s preferred approach in the Arctic” (C.DIAND, 2009, p. 33). Thus, their political approach to the international Arctic region is seemingly ‘quintessentially’ Canadian, and anchored in an identity as, in the words of an official, always having been “one of bridge-builder” (C.xv).

⁵⁶ However, as noted in the previous chapter, the credit for the successful establishment of the Arctic Council is something which also Iceland claims (see p. 125); and indeed, Finland too would likely contend with their active role in its formative years.

Being one of the few Arctic states is therefore a privileged position from which to negotiate and collaborate – positioned as a nodal point in a network of such ‘bridges’. As in the other two cases, being one of eight – and indeed, one of five coastal states – grants Canada an advantageous international standing and status: “It definitely is a card that comes into play in terms of international negotiators or diplomatic policies” (C.ii). Several of the interviewees acknowledged the strategic deployment of Arctic statehood as leverage, making Canada “someone you have to invite at the table. And the Arctic Council as well is an important forum where we have visibility” (C.xii). External recognition, in particular when positive, and expectation of behaviour undoubtedly also register at home. The way that Arctic statehood and identity is conceptualised by Canadian officials is therefore also a result of others’ practices in their interaction:

While I said that Canada has always had a strong sort of Northern and Arctic identity, I would have to say though that we are going through a significant pivot point, where we are recognising that the entire world now is very interested in the Arctic as well (C.xvi).

However, several of the respondents noted concern that Harper’s government had potentially caused harm to the country’s international image as a ‘bridge-building’ middle power, in particular as the world is looking northwards.

I think the international perception of Canada has changed significantly over the course of this government. [...] And we’re hearing it; I’ve heard it myself in different multilateral international meetings: [...] ‘what’s happening in Canada? You guys used to be this, that, and the other thing, and that’s not happening anymore, and now you’re doing this, and we don’t understand. And we’re concerned’. [...] At the officials’ level, people are starting to hear the concern of other state officials around some of the policy directions or some of the politics that are having a bit of an impact, a negative impact, or – not a positive impact... (C.xiv).

A Canadian identity as an Arctic state is therefore simultaneously a product of internal processes and external ones, granting Canada a beneficial role – but a role that requires maintenance through actively performing to expectations both at home and abroad.

The concern expressed by the above official was not that the nine years of Conservative government (2006-2015) under PM Stephen Harper – during which the Arctic became a key priority – had *changed* state identity, but rather that it was at odds with it. Partisan whims and political rhetoric are not inconsequential, of course, but were of a seemingly different temporality than state identity: transient. During Harper’s time in office, some suggest that a ‘rebranding’ of

Canada was taking place: from peace-keeping nation to a warrior nation (Massie and Roussel, 2012). In some respects, Canadian politics moved gradually closer to the American model, including increased military engagement, reduced taxes, and a rejection of climate change reduction-targets (Harrison, 2014). Commenting on the political shift, Joël Plouffe (2014a) argues that nowhere is this more obvious than in the Arctic:

Harper's foreign policy in the Arctic region is not only rhetorically different than anything we've seen before – a narrative based on fear of external threats to Canada's sovereignty and security that produces ideologically driven policy objectives – but its aspiration to break with Canadian internationalism is also paradoxically colliding with U.S. objectives in the North (Plouffe, 2014b, p. 1).

The paradoxical collision refers to the US emphasis in Arctic matters on international cooperation and environmental matters, at odds with recent Canadian “neocontinentalism” (McKay and Swift, 2012; however, see Lackenbauer and Huebert, 2014). As Dodds (2012) argues, Harper's emphasis on Arctic uncertainty and potential threats constructed an arena for him to perform the role of “paternal sovereign”. And, indeed, both the paternalism and gendered nature of Arctic rhetoric is clear, including in interviews where the Arctic was frequently described as e.g. “fragile” (C.vi; C.ix; C.xi), “delicate” (C.v; C.vi; C.xvii), and “vulnerable” (C.xv) (see e.g. Bloom, 1993; Chartier, 2008; Hill, 2009). An interviewed Conservative Party politician referred to this as “a much more aggressive foreign policy”, and explained:

I think that Canada is being viewed as a more confident nation, and one that maybe is a bit more independent. We'll not just go along with what everyone else wants to do, but we'll assert our own position. And I think Canadians like that. Things have definitely changed with this government (C.xviii).

He continued that the changed attitude was led by a progressive government with a clearly defined agenda for its country: “Canadians often think, because we compare ourselves to the States, they think we're a small country. We're not! We're the 11th largest economy in the world, so we should act like that” (C.xviii)⁵⁷. The IR scholar Roland Paris (2014) writes about the promotion of a new Canadian “national role” (cf. Holsti, 1970) under Harper's “vision of Canada as a valiant fighter” (Paris, 2014, p. 275). Despite this, his findings suggest that most Canadians

⁵⁷ He linked this to Canadian politics in the Arctic, using the recent cooling of bilateral relations with Russia as an example of how they are a state capable of asserting itself.

still see the country's role as based on liberal internationalism⁵⁸. And, as such, ideas of the country's identity may be more deeply rooted than what changing governments and governmental priorities can influence. Hence, political rhetoric is unlikely to construct a *new* identity; rather, what is there already is re-interpreted, re-moulded, and re-framed for new contexts, but must always be enacted with a trace of preceding enactments.

Articulating Arctic rights and privileges implicitly erect boundaries of involvement for the non-Arctic; there cannot be Arctic inclusion without non-Arctic exclusion, and there is always an 'outside' of discourse. Indeed, Arctic regional membership is defined contra those who do not hold a claim thereto. Adding to the above status is therefore a discursive relegation of others (Connolly, 1991), limiting their possibilities of political manoeuvres.

[T]his is a part of the world like any other part of the world occupied by states. So I think their role in the Arctic is welcome; they can certainly play a role in doing what, you know, what states do internationally, or what companies do internationally, or what people do, but recognising that this is an area managed by, in particular, the five coastal states that occupy the area (C.xv).

'Non-Arctic' actors' role was also described by others as better kept limited: "I don't know what role they can play, because they don't have direct interest in the Arctic, other than the resources that come out of it, or the transportation that it offers, or tourism potential" (C.viii). In other words, those not 'belonging' to the region are framed as not just spatially but *morally* disconnected, prone to predatory pursuits of self-interest, which again necessitates Canadian protection (or 'stewardship'). With climate change on the one hand and natural resource extraction on the other as the two main headlines under which the Arctic is discussed globally, another official echoed concerns that are also prevalent in Canadian media's framing of, in particular, China (Woon, 2014):

Where the interest is being expressed by non-Arctic countries, I think we find it's often fairly self-serving. There's an interest in getting at resources that are in the Arctic, and a complete lack of

⁵⁸ After nine years at the helm, Harper's Conservative government has now also been succeeded by a Liberal one under Justin Trudeau. As the son of the popular former PM Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979 and 1980-1984), he represents a 'return' to the above self-perception of the country, e.g. as internationalist and multiculturalist. What the Liberal government will mean for Canada's Arctic policies remains to be seen, and is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis, but hitherto there seems to a shift (at least rhetorically) from military to human security, focusing less on sovereignty and more on communities (see Sharp and Østhagen, 2016; Berthiaume, 2016).

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recognition that the climate change problem that is causing the loss of ice and environmental change in the North is being caused by the South (C.xv).

For him, this situated Canada as a leader whose guidance would steer these self-serving others towards the common good:

Canada has a very special role to play here: To say that we recognise that we are responsible for this area; we recognise that we have things to do, but that responsibility – there's only so much a country can do on its own. It has to, in terms of a problem like climate change, it's a worldwide problem; it's not something that one country can address. And everybody has to come together to do something about it (C.xv).

Another explained that countries outside the region too “have an interest and, as members of our global community, a degree of right to be engaged in Arctic issues” (C.xiii). However, in order to do so, they would “need to deeply understand that the North is populated and to respect the interests, rights, of the peoples who already live there. It's not open territory; it's not the Antarctic” (C.xiii). The privilege of ‘true’ Arctic knowledge is thereby constitutive of Canadian power in relation to non-Arctic states. Furthermore, the above official continued that strengthening international law and, in her words, “solving” UNCLOS presents a “tremendous opportunity for partnering, and Canada is doing that in terms of inviting the non-Arctic state partners in for research” (C.xiii). As invitees, partnering with Canada when seen as pragmatically useful, the limitations of their role are evident. In this partnership, it is the Canadian state that seemingly altruistically opens its doors to visitors – as long as they follow the house-rules – reinforcing an image as leader and privileged, knowledgeable and sovereign, strong and free. In the end, the image that the interviewees painted was not theirs alone, but the result of innumerable layers of colours and reflections from others in interaction; an identity imbued with meaning through co-existence as an Arctic state amongst other states.

National Arctic identity

State interaction is more than that of a ‘system of states’: it is as much about the relations between those within the state's borders, the national community that said borders supposedly envelop and that state officials are employed to represent. As a collection of colonies that was gradually populated by immigrants of both British and French (and later, other) descent – not to mention the numerous nations of indigenous peoples already inhabiting the area – Canadian national

identity tends to be described less in terms of cultural homogeneity than the previous two cases. Instead, some argue that the only thing that truly unites diverse Canadians across a vast territory is an incessant preoccupation with locating an elusive national identity; described by Manning (2003, p. xvii), Canadian belonging is “coterminous to homelessness”. Or in other words, “Canadian nationalisms remain in the search, seldom the arrival” (Hillmer and Chapnick, 2007b, p. 11). Not least with fractions of Québec holding nationalist aspirations, the plurality of national identities in Canada is often more explicit than elsewhere. Indeed, in 2006, the Canadian government formally recognised the Québécois as “a nation within a united Canada” (Bélanger and Doran, 2013, p. 163). Hence, the question of Canadian identity generates a great number of answers, and perhaps with the recognition of this cultural diversity, notions of national coherence centre more on shared space – a shared national territory for different people. As such, the question of the quintessentially Canadian is often not a question of ‘who’ but of ‘where’ (Frye, 1971; see also Arnold, 2012). Territorial cohabitation and the aforementioned nature, winters, and cold therefore play an important role in uniting diverse and distant denizens within the Canadian borders. As Canada’s longest-serving PM Mackenzie King stated in 1936: “while some countries have too much history, we have too much geography”, referring to the country’s vast distances and lack of connecting infrastructure (quoted in Barnes, 2007, p. 161). And indeed, much like Norway and Iceland, the shared geography of the state is invested with the agency of ‘shaping’ or determining its people’s character: Arnold (2010) traces what she calls the “northmen thesis” back to the height of Canadian nationalism in the late 19th century. According to contemporary nationalists, the northern climate brought forth a Canadian race⁵⁹, markedly different from their European ancestors and empires:

As long as the north wind blows, and the snow and the sleet drive over our forests and fields ... we must be a hardy, a healthy, a virtuous, a daring, and ... a dominant race (quoted in Arnold, 2010, p. 453).

While discourses of Canadian national identity today have changed to one of ‘multiculturalism’, as I return to below, some argue that imaginations of the Canadian essence is still deeply racialised – the image of a wild ‘frontier-land’, ready to be conquered by the white man, still holds sway in people’s imaginations (Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, 2012, p. 4). And, while environmental

⁵⁹ Notably, the indigenous peoples of Canada were largely excluded from this imaginary; ‘Canadians’ meant the white European settlers.

determinism, even racism, á la the above may (hopefully) lie in the past, the country's environment still provides a way in which distant compatriots may share a national experience, a collective 'sensing' of the Arctic state in which they live (see Ahmed, 2004). Indeed, perhaps precisely because of the country's bi- or even multi-nationalism, their northernness may serve as something around which to unify:

I guess it's because we're a northern country and we have rough winters; Canadians always like to see themselves also as hardy and winter-country people. So they do have this psychological connection, whether appropriate or not, it's there: they see themselves, they see Canada as definitely an Arctic nation, beyond the legal fact that we are (C.x).

As previously noted, the cold may not be Arctic *per se*, but it provides a seemingly universally shared sense, experiences, and even culture: "it's a winter country. So, there's sort of a gradation of identity. Here, we identify with cold and winter and ice and skating and skiing" (C.cviii). The map on the classroom wall does not just show 'territory', but hints at the numerous fellow nationals who all live their different but *Canadian* lives in this territory, the 'geo-body' – who all look at similar maps and know that they, too, are part of the Arctic state of Canada (see Thongchai, 1997). And that sleet in the air, the nipping cold on a winter's day, may then become a reminder – conscious or not – for the state official too of the many others across the vast Canadian land who feel that cold: a reminder of their state, and their job, as Arctic.

If the spatiality of Canadian Arctic identity discourse is collectively related to – felt and known – through winter chills and snow, its temporality becomes a shared one through not only the above mentioned formal teaching of history, but also through fiction, art, and popular culture. Myths and histories of the past intermingle in the construction of stories that seemingly explain the present – their veracity of less importance than their power to provide meaning from childhood through adulthood (see Francis, 1997). As Emilie Cameron (2015, p. 12) contends, it is through stories that networks of people, ideas, and things become "sensible, legible, and political". She continues that stories are "relational and material ordering practices, [...] practices that are not merely representative but also constitutive of our relations with one another and with the land" (Cameron, 2015, p. 12). The specific story around which her argument revolves is the 'Bloody Falls massacre': a 17th century journal entry by the explorer Samuel Hearne – an Englishman sent to find copper in today's Nunavut on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) – of an Indian (Dene)-led slaughter of defenceless Inuit. Regardless of what did or did not happen, the story has

served (and still serves) to order relations between North and South, Inuit and *Qablunaat* (non-Inuit), white and indigenous, colonised and coloniser, territory and federal state. ‘Bloody Falls’ is only one among many stories that have been told and re-told in different ways and settings that, in their co-telling, are productive of a certain way of seeing, a certain way of relating, a certain way of knowing the Arctic in Canada. One official explained:

[T]hese are definitely, I would say, nation-building stories... that people like Pierre Burton and some of the great historical fiction writers in Canada have played up. [...] They always become bestsellers in Canada, because people love to hear about these stories, about adventure in our past (C.ii).

Stories and imaginations render distant space ‘known’, guiding relations and actions; as Grace explains, “North is an idea as much as any physical region that can be mapped and measured for nordicity” (2001, p. xvii). And, as stories that bind a nation together, they become undeniably political. When making a statement on Arctic sovereignty following the discovery of the HMS Erebus, Harper quickly linked it to culture: “For almost 200 years, the fate of the Franklin Expedition has captured our imaginations. Sir John Franklin’s story has inspired historians, singers and writers” (Harper, 2014a). At the time of Canadian nation-building in the early 20th century, Canadian ‘northernness’ was not only celebrated in politically problematic claims of the Canadian ‘race’, but also in nationalist romantic art, literature, and music – the great Canadian works still on display. Today too, the North and its ‘strangeness’ continue to be a popular theme in myth and fiction – phantasmal tales shared across the country’s South. The famous author Margaret Atwood traces three such myths – that of Franklin’s expedition, ‘Grey Owl syndrome’ (or ‘going native’), and the cannibalistic snow monster ‘Wendigo’ – showing how they have come to matter in Canadian literary tradition, morphing and changing even today. Ideas of political identity flow through popular culture in numerous ways, neither causal of the other, but in constant re-constitution as they are ‘read’ by different people in different settings – including those in the high echelons of government (Sharp, 1993; see Dittmer, 2010). And, importantly, so-called ‘elites’ too may have that tattered paperback on their nightstand, have that television programme on in their living room; their encounter with the North too may be primarily through imagination. In this manner, fictional representations of the Arctic, ranging from pristine emptiness to malevolent danger, brings what one interviewee referred to as a “land of mystery” (C.ix) to southern audiences (Moss, 1997; Hulan, 2002; Chartier, 2006). Yet, these accounts of Canada’s northernness “tell us virtually nothing about the north, while revealing a great deal about a society in which most people will never go there except in our collective imagination” (Shields, 1991; see

also Cameron, 2009; Arnold, 2010, p. 460). The aforementioned substitute for personal corporeal encounters with Arctic space, the sense of cold, is complemented by what some recalled as “fascinating” and “romantic stories of adventure [...] in our past” (C.ii). Through imagination, children and state officials alike may be temporarily ‘transported’ to the otherwise inaccessible North, making their experience thereof not sensed but *felt*. Symbolic of something larger – the nation – “the North draws together cultural value and identity to produce a metaphor for imperial grandeur, innocence, and sovereignty” (Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, 2012, p. 2). The Canadian majority south of the 60th parallel, such as Ottawa-residing officials, comes to ‘know’ the Arctic through literature and art – and, collectively experienced through imagination, comes to know what it means to ‘be’ Arctic.

The Canadian national ‘essence’ is not just to be found in representations of geography, history, and culture, however, but is also articulated in everyday encounters and relations between co-nationals. As per above, many Canadians unite around winter activities – ice hockey being a case in point. For many of the interviewed state personnel, connecting to the Arctic happened through what they considered a more general Canadian identity based on “common experiences, like Canadian winters and the things that you do in order to survive the Canadian winters, have fun in the Canadian winters” (C.v). Another official summarised that “a lot of our culture is based on northern activities, right – whether it’s curling or hockey – and so, that I think is the connection to the snow and the ice and the cold” (C.i). This immediately led him to another much-discussed (if somewhat tongue-in-cheek) geopolitical debate that connects Canadians to the Arctic: “And I think there is, you know, this whole – especially at this time of year [December] – this whole debate who really owns the North Pole” (C.i). For many Canadians, the holiday season is an example of a shared experience with which many will have some relationship and familiarity (often, but not always, imbued with positive emotion). Again, this can provide a sense of commonality and community, and an Arctic link of imagination for those in the South:

Canadians believe that Santa Claus is Canadian. I think that tells you – I mean, it’s silly right, but I think that tells you something. We grew up believing that we own the North Pole. Like, that is – there’s no question. You tell a Canadian that Santa Claus is Norwegian; they’ll be like, ‘no. You’re wrong’. And that right there, from childhood – we see ourselves as an Arctic country, absolutely. I always did (C.xviii).

The media's sensationalism around this moving point on top of the globe, the North Pole, and the uncertainty of which state's continental shelf it might be on under UNCLOS, is thus significant for symbolic and nostalgic reasons. Even though it is highly unlikely to be of either commercial or strategic value, the claiming of the Pole seemed to be high on Harper's agenda – including publicity stunts such as issuing Canadian ePassports to Santa and Mrs Claus (Chase, 2013). When the government in 2013 filed only a partial submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), leaving out the Arctic Ocean, the reason was purportedly a bottleneck in the highest levels of the government: the scientific data did not show the continental shelf extending far enough – to the Pole. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird (2013) explained at the time, “we have asked our officials and scientists to do the additional – necessary – work to ensure that a submission for the full extent of the continental shelf in the Arctic includes Canada's claim to the North Pole”. Not *just* about Santa, many saw this as a response to Russia's 2007 flag-planting on the polar seafloor (see Dodds, 2010b); as one official laughingly exclaimed: “As you know the North Pole was already claimed by the Russians; they put a flag underneath the ocean!” (C.iii). For another, the Pole's symbolic value was an ingrained remnant of the Cold War, when “there was a sincere feeling that the Russians were going to come over the North Pole and invade Canada” (C.viii). And, indeed, it is primarily Russia, and to a lesser-publicised extent Denmark/Greenland, that hold potentially overlapping continental shelf claims there, albeit any invasion is unlikely. Perhaps more important than the international display, however, Canada's revised submission was a performance to a domestic audience: As the ‘paternal’ embodiment of sovereignty (Dodds, 2012), it provided an opportunity for the PM to fatherly – lovingly but strict – protect what belongs to the large Canadian ‘family’, the nation held together by an imaginary bond of fraternity and kinship (see Anderson, 1983). Thus, through the familial, high politics and symbolic performances of sovereignty enter Canadians' front rooms and everyday lives; via Santa Claus and ice-hockey, the Arctic is domesticated.

It is not just symbolic political performances that filter through the quotidian (or seasonal), but Arctic imagery is already to be found in the everyday and mundane – inadvertently reminding Canadians of their belonging to an Arctic state. Symbolising the Canadian ‘nation-state’ as a whole, the flag's red maple leaf is ubiquitously recognisable, adorning innumerable other items small and large. Connecting two symbolic signifiers of Canadian identity, the former PM asserted: “As Canadians, we see ourselves as a Northern people. The great white North is as much a part of Canada's identity as the red maple leaf” (Harper, 2008a). While there are no maple trees in the

Arctic of course, depictions of the iconic leaf should not be hard to find in the North either – emblazing everything from governmental icebreakers to *tuques* – reminding Northerners, too, of nation and state (see Billig, 1995; but also Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell, 2014). As the state travels northwards in the shape of flags and symbols, the North also touches the lives of Southern Canadians through icons and imagery. One such icon is the polar bear: an animal the majority of Canadians will (fortunately) never encounter, and yet, one that many feel somehow connected to as they go about their daily lives in one of the multicultural Canadian metropolises.

Canada has a strong sense of identity with the polar bear. [...] they have this massive stamp where there's this gorgeous polar bear on it... I think it's a 20 dollar stamp or something like – not a cheap one, I know that. But there are different things that are, you know, things that are North, and Canada – it's just part of our national identity (C.xvii).

And, as another pointed out, “things like polar bears are on our *toonies* [two-dollar coins]... It's a big symbol for what Canadians feel like their Canadian identity is” (C.ii). As such, the majestic animal becomes part of the fabric of Canadian normalcy, now native to pockets, wallets, and post-boxes. Adopted not as Northern but as *all*-encompassing Canadian, not as majestic but mundane, the North is brought southwards and the South northwards through unnoticed visual reiterations of the Canadian Arctic and the Arctic Canada. When the state official sticks the stamp on a letter, it is not a conscious performance of identity; instead, it is an unnoticed act of everyday life in the Arctic state, as an Arctic official – a citation of discourse.

Much like the polar bear generates pride in that which individuates Canada in relation to most other countries, indigenous cultures have served a similar purpose, representing in particular the un-European. However, rather than representing the *typical*, these cultural symbols are often presented as an apex, or distillation, of Canadian difference (Pupchek, 2001). When Vancouver hosted the 2010 Winter Olympics, the Inuit *inuksuk* was chosen as the event's logo:

We used it as the symbol for something that was very much a national event in one of the least Arctic parts of our country. It was a very telling decision for how we wanted to portray ourselves on the world stage (C.v).

A humanoid stone figure, the *inuksuk*⁶⁰ (or *inunnguaq*) was traditionally an Inuit ‘helper’, both spiritual and practical (Hallendy, 2015). The choice was not uncontroversial, especially considering that it is a symbol associated with one specific indigenous people – a people whose traditional homelands are practically as far from Vancouver as you can possibly get in Canada. However, this was also what some argued was its strength: it was a marker of Canadian cultural multitude. As one official explained, the suggestion was first opposed, as many thought that a totem pole would be more representative of indigenous peoples in the province:

But, in the end, the case was made that we want the 2010 Olympics to be all of Canada’s Olympics. Yes, it’s being held on the West-coast, in the coast-mountains, but we want it to be part of – to be all of Canada’s Olympics. And the committee decided very strongly, in the end, that the *inuksuk* would be great symbol, because it wasn’t necessarily British Colombian, but it was all of Canada. And it’s been very, very well-received and well-accepted, and you can find *inuksuk* all of over our country now (C.ix).

Certainly, when interviewing officials in various governmental offices and buildings across Ottawa, the *inuksuk* was strikingly omnipresent on shelves and windowsills. Upon my pointing this out, one official explained that “because of our kind of hybrid, mosaic identity as a country, [we’re] able to see the local symbol of another region as a symbol of the whole and get behind it and associate with it” (C.v). Hence, in this case the particular has come to signify the national, a marginal-cultural artefact has come to signify the central; perhaps precisely because of its marginality, its distance from central polemics, the Arctic stone figure has come to embody national Canadian unity.

⁶⁰*Inuksuk* (pronounced and sometimes spelled *inukshuk*; plural *inuksuit*) is actually a misnomer for the humanoid stone structure to which most apply it. In Inuktitut, it means “to act in the capacity of a human”, and tends to be piled stoned or boulders used for communication. In contrast, the clearly person-like figure would correctly be called *inunnguaq*, meaning “in the likeness of a human” (Hallendy, 2015). One interviewed official also pointed this out to me as an example of what he called “Southern expropriation of Northern symbols”: “An *inuksuk* is just a pile of rocks! So, it’s even funnier, it’s even more ironic that not only did we poach a Northern symbol, we have used the word incorrectly, poached it incorrectly” (C.xv).

In addition to providing a symbol for ‘all’ of Canada during the 2010 Olympics, the use of the *inuksuk* undoubtedly also served to flag Canada’s Arctic statehood to international audiences (demonstrative of their superiority at winter sports...!). The deliberate construction and enactment of a national identity towards ‘others’ inadvertently serve to remind national citizens (and statesmen) of who they, too, supposedly ‘are’; much like in Iceland, e.g. tourists’ keen interest reflects back to them what their own purported ‘essence’ is. One politician described the 2010 event in terms of a performance, as a grandiose show, where the *inuksuk* became:

[...] our brand to the world. We use it to make money, I guess, for tourism. That’s – the Vancouver Olympics thing, that wasn’t done for Canadians, right, that was done for the world. To the world, that’s interesting, ‘oh look, the, you know, the Inuit’ (C.xviii).

He continued that “in my everyday, day-to-day life it means nothing, but symbolically it means something to us” (C.xviii). Interesting or exotic, the pervasiveness of Arctic symbols, *inuksuit* and polar bears, certainly is on par with maple leaves and beavers in Canadian souvenir shops. Also in the service of Canadian diplomacy, the practice of gifting Inuit art has been instrumental in projecting Canadian sovereignty (Lennox, 2012). And domestically, Inuit culture has been invoked to construct a romanticised past for Canada, akin to the German *volk*-movement in a nation-building project (Pupchek, 2001). This is what leads Arnold (2010, p. 460) to argue that, through national-romantic narratives, Inuit identity is co-opted and idealised “in the service of a state dominated by non-indigenous southerners”. Others argue, however, that while the appropriation of indigeneity as a marker of national independence in post-colonial societies is not uncommon, some of these symbols are today being re-claimed in displays of Inuit identity and agency (Graburn, 2004). For example, an *inuksuk* also adorns the flag of Nunavut, the majority-Inuit territory created in 1999: the result of a historic land claim agreement that marked a milestone for indigenous self-government. Clearly, the symbol has come to hold a multitude of meanings, far beyond that of its primary usage in the past. Ambiguously defined, open to interpretation, Guibernau (2013, p. 93) explains how national symbols allow “emotional creativity” as each individual forms their own subjective bonds: “Respect and reverence for symbols derive from their content and meaning attributed to them within distinct communities and groups”; sharing and “being moved by them unites individuals” (ibid.). However, while it may primarily have been Inuit who attributed the *inuksuk* with what she calls “sentimental meaning” (Guibernau, 2013) in the past, it is certainly something most Canadians will know and be familiar with today. Linking it to a sporting event where nationality is *felt* and embodied, where

nationalism is diffusely spread in and through “affective atmospheres” (Closs Stephens, 2015), the symbol is re-signified in the South. The sense of being moved as Canadian athletes won or lost, as hearts beat quickly in unison and adrenaline rushed through the veins of the nation, the event – with its Arctic, indigenous logo – thereby united the community across provinces and territories; the body of the individual a part of the body of the nation. Not unlike the state’s maple leaf travelling northwards, this was one way in which Arctic symbols travel south and become adopted as familiar, everyday, mundane – unnoticeably reminding Canadians, both inside and outside offices of government, of their country’s Arctic statehood.

Sub-national Arctic identity

As the above ambiguity and subjectivity of affective national symbols points to, the ways in which the Arctic state is encountered and interpreted is anything but universal. On the contrary, the range of practices through which statehood is seen, felt, and understood is as diverse as those seeing, feeling, understanding subjects. As the preceding discussion shows – with a vast (often ill-connected) geography, a federalised political system, and a history of both multiple indigenous nations and gradual settlement from a variety of ‘Old World’ states – Canada is state of internal heterogeneity (a stark contrast to the previous case of Iceland). As per above, however, Canadian diversity has, paradoxically, become a unifying force: an element of national identity being the recognition of difference (e.g. Harris, 2001). At least for representatives of the state, this is the narrative of choice; one in which they too no doubt believe, to a certain extent, as they go about ‘representing’ an officially *multicultural* state. That is, soon after non-Western (and non-white) immigration to Canada commenced in the 1960s, and soon after the federal state (though not the provinces) became officially French–English bilingual, PM Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979) introduced a policy of ‘multiculturalism’ (C.Gov’t, 2012). Unlike the ‘melting pot’ across its southern border, the Canadian state has strived to maintain (a certain level of) cultural diversity. By now a well-established Canadian trope, Gibbon (1938) famously described the “Canadian mosaic”, where each unique constituent makes up a harmonic whole. Recalling that many consider Canada an international frontrunner of morality and justice, a strong belief in multiculturalism being a core Canadian value serves to generate pride and patriotism (Kymlicka, 2003). By now it has become embedded as a distinguishing national characteristic, as argued by Kymlicka and Banting (2006, pp. 301–302): “It is ‘un-Canadian’ to oppose multiculturalism, a betrayal of the national code. Opposing multiculturalism in Canada is not only or even primarily

an attack on particular minorities, it is an attack on the symbol and substance of Canadian nationhood” (ibid.). The aforementioned performativity as peace-keeping nation abroad is thereby at home translated to ‘essentially’ Canadian inclusiveness and tolerance of their differences. However, as Mackey (1999, p. 70) points out, the policy of multiculturalism serves to “institutionalise, constitute, shape, manage, and control difference” (see also Brown, 2008). In turn, even difference needs to conform to a certain *acceptable* difference (Chung, 2007); that is, there is always a constituent ‘outside’ to identity discourse – difference beyond recognition that serves to define the boundaries of the national body (see Butler, 2011; Ahmed, 2004). While each piece of the mosaic may gleam with different hues and colours in the sunshine, their form must be chiselled to fit seamlessly into the larger whole; within diversity there is no room for deviance. And, for the state official, representing the Arctic state of Canada thus means representing a state of diverse peoples and diverse identities; however, identities that must all, in the end, come together under the banner of the ‘Canadian’.

One reason for the above cultural heterogeneity was the noted gradual process of historical settlement by both the French and British. In fact, it was not until 1867’s Confederation that the French and British colonies became a unified Canada (albeit still a British Dominion). Since then, the territorial expanse of the country has evolved from the initial four provinces – Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia – to include six more: Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), Prince Edwards Island (1873), Saskatchewan (1905), Alberta (1905), and Newfoundland and Labrador (as late as in 1949), as well as the three territories in the North (Ajzenstat, 2003, pp. 3–4). While the French cultural influence is less visible than the British outside the province of Québec, the sense of co-existence therewith has in itself become important for the majority Anglophone-Canadian population’s sense of self (Saul, 1998, p. 293) – as per above, a part of the celebrated domestic diversity. In contrast to the latter’s concerted efforts to untangle themselves from the former empire (and more recently, the US), this process has to a lesser extent taken place with its French heritage. Instead, the cultural emphasis for Francophone-Canadians has historically been that of maintaining a minority identity and language (McNaught, 1966). Moreover, regional identities in Canada are strong – perhaps unsurprisingly considering the recentness of the above provincial incorporation – though not necessarily in conflict as scales and subject positions intertwine in the constitution of self:

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Canada is often described as being a very ‘hybrid’ country [...] we are strangely comfortable with multiple identity categories. [...] You know, friends of mine can be aboriginal Canadian, they can be Cree, they can be Canadian, and they can be Albertan, and – we navigate (C.v).

The way in which identity discourse comes to be articulated – what facets are emphasised, what elements *matter* – is therefore contingent on setting and context. Speaking to me and my audio recorder as ‘Arctic’, as ‘state official’, and as ‘Canadian’ were but three shared positions they found themselves in, defined in relation to me and my questions; and, they “navigate” (C.v). Hence, an Arctic state identity has its boundaries, its constitutive outside defined in space and time, but the way in which it comes to be *enacted* – the way in which it comes into being – is as much about the relations through which its many parts are assembled ever anew, ever in novel combinations.

In a state the geographical size of Canada, the sheer physical distance – the aforementioned “vastness” (C.vii) – means that the sense of connection to the Arctic varies greatly within the state’s borders. Unlike in Iceland, and to a much greater extent than in Norway, there is in Canada a pronounced North–South divide: culturally, economically, politically, and consequently, identity-wise. The lack of physical connection – infrastructure, transport links, and communication networks – is undeniably an important factor, contributing to a lack of both social and cultural interaction:

It’s prohibitively expensive to travel within Canada, especially up North. So, I think that also kind of puts limits on identity with the North, and kind of, maybe, creates perceptions that may be inaccurate within Canada itself. Just because there isn’t – it’s very hard for people to explore that part of our own country (C.xix).

The Canadian North is, in Rob Shields’ (1991) terms, a “place on the margin” – not just geographically but *normatively* so; it is the periphery of the state’s physical ‘body’, its territory, where the South is central, core, the *heart* of Canadian society. And, as such, it is a place of otherness – or Margaret Atwood’s (2004) “strangeness” – that only *can* be experienced through TV-screens, books, tales, and imaginations.

[I]n our national identity, our imagination includes the North. We see it on the maps, our national broadcaster; there’s lots of documentaries and news-stories about life in the North, and what’s happening there... But... so at the level of our mental imagination I think it has a place, but generally speaking it’s pretty far away and it’s not part of our day-to-day (C.xiv).

Wanting to “make the North part of Canada” (C.v) was a turn of phrase used by another interviewee. Upon my pointing this out, it was clear that it was not a deliberate choice of words, but he chose to reflect on the slippage:

[W]e are conscious of that vast expanse of territory that we have above the top of the provinces. And we do think about it as being part of Canada and an important part of Canada, but on the cultural side I think that, you know, the infrastructure-challenges and sometimes the communications-challenges mean that the usual conversations between regional identities that we have are just a little bit more difficult with the North (C.v).

Hence, those who speak ‘for’ or represent the North play a crucial role in mediating and interpreting experiences across the divide; a responsibility that is also a position of power, with the privilege of ‘true’ knowledge. However, as an Arctic state, all the interviewed officials agreed that the lack of connectedness and the stark societal disparity in Canada is something to be overcome – through political means. Hence, being an Arctic state – one that is made up difference, even inequality – generates a need for practices of connection: construction of roads, shipment of supplies, and investment in welfare. ‘Hybrid’ or not, performing Canadian Arctic state identity is an ongoing process of relationality; and importantly, a process of building more relations, more connections, more bridges. ‘Being’ an Arctic state means ‘knowing’ Arctic space – for the state official, the only means of doing so may be to perform Arctic politics.

Even as ‘bridges’ are built – roads constructed and pipelines laid – it is always *from* the South *to* the North⁶¹, from the centre to the margin, in a seemingly one-directional, asymmetrical relationship, where the legacy of colonialism (and even racism) lurks not far below the surface. That is, while the socio-economic disparity and lack of connectedness are very real issues to be tackled, the way in which they become articulated as Arctic state practice – a performance of identity as such – is at times reminiscent of a time past: a time of paternal care for the seemingly infant member of the national family. While it may today be referred to otherwise, the 1950s’ ‘Eskimo problem’ – that is, a humanitarian crisis taking place in the Canadian North ostensibly as

⁶¹ Of course, the directionality is in reality an exchange: Southern state provisions for Northern resources – and power. However, one interviewee (C.viii) pointed to an interesting exception of the centrality of the South: Although both resources and attention usually go from the North to the South, as centripetal power that draws everything in towards society’s ‘core’, Canada’s *water*, the majority of its rivers, flow northwards, away from the USA (unlike Canadian politics’ movement). For him this was deeply symbolic – the veins of the nation lead to its *true* heart, beating ‘strong and free’.

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a consequence of divorcing the prototypical ‘noble savage’ from tradition – persists as stereotypes and imaginations (see Marcus, 1995), in turn ‘necessitating’ the government’s interventions.

I mean, you’ve got to keep alive the people who live there. You know, they lived in igloos. And they harvested off the land and in the oceans, and now they’re being told to do different stuff and live in different kind of shelter: man-made, and stuff from the South. So, now – how do you; learning how to live in a house; how the different things work. It’s one thing being sent a package of provisions – you’ve got to know what they are and how to prepare them (C.xvii).

Fortunately, the above interviewee’s statement was the most extreme of its kind⁶². Nevertheless, the framing of a federal government *helping* the needy North through governance, decision-making, and subsidies was widespread, revealing both colonial and racial undercurrents – a lingering legacy of Canadian history:

[T]here’s a civilisational narrative that I think persists, a sort of backwardness of the northern area [...] I think [through] a lot of Canadian history probably the Arctic and the North was considered places to conquer and to tame and to visit bravely as, you know, this kind of more backwards population that needed, sort of, you know, integration into our ‘advanced’ (C.vi).

Again, the lack of interaction is fertile ground for stereotypes and misunderstandings; for example that the North is “poor or somehow a second-class part of the country [...] I think it is sometimes naïve rather than, you know, in any way malicious” (C.v). More critical, another explained her perception of not only the average Canadian’s but fellow state officials’ views on the matter:

[P]eople are very curious and they’ve got a big appreciation of Northerners as, like, they – it’s the special one that’s a bit dumb (*laughter*). I’m being very candid here! Most people [...], they don’t perceive that there’s much intelligentsia going on there, but you see, like, ‘good people with a good heart’ (C.xii).

In light of the above, the previously cited official’s wish to “make [it] part of Canada” (C.v) bears connotations of not just geographical distances, but a dark history of indigenous assimilation and ‘education’. When the European settler colonists arrived in Canada, the indigenous population is estimated to have been roughly half a million – a number which rapidly dwindled (O’Donnell,

⁶² This was an exception to what was expressed by most interviewees, and may represent a view of the North that is ever less common.

2008, p. 285). In the centuries that followed, Canada's indigenous peoples – today's constitutionally recognised First Nations, Métis, and Inuit⁶³ – were subjected to a range of injustices. This despite what the Canadian national narrative tends to emphasise as a distinctly non-US history of 'frontier' settlement, marked by benevolence and generosity towards the indigenous populations (Dodds, 2012, p. 1000; Winter, 2007; however, see Kollin, 2001). While there is today awareness, population numbers have increased, and some formal apologies have been made (e.g. Harper, 2008b), the inclusion of indigenous cultures in the 'multi' of the state remains limited (*inuksuk* figurines on windowsills...). For the Arctic state of Canada, an identity as such means performing their Arctic responsibility – the citation of discourse carries with it an echo of past citations ('stewardship', 'burden'...), past relations, that continue to steer the practices in the present.

Clearly, the social responsibilities as an Arctic state extend beyond that of 'helping' an 'under-developed' region; the transition from post-colonial to *de*-colonial is about interrupting taken-for-granted binaries and unidirectional flows. It requires the de-colonisation of the mind (see Nandy, 1998), where coloniser/colonised, settler/native, indigenous/non-indigenous are subverted. While Arctic identity was in Canada as in Norway articulated as relative based on indigeneity, the latter's gradient was in the former a binary. Hence, the responsibility is as much about changing practices and prejudices in the South; the above 'naïveté' may not be malicious, but may nevertheless be detrimental – not least when coupled with racial difference: "There's just a lot of ignorance about aboriginal history and aboriginal peoples in general; and you can't talk about the North in Canada without talking about aboriginal peoples, because Northern issues are aboriginal issues in Canada" (C.ii). However paternalistic, there is, in line with a Canadian identity as moral and just, a genuine desire to make *right* past wrongs:

I would say, because of the social disparity – I don't know if that's the right term, but – between the North and the South, I think that most Canadians feel that it's necessary to focus on Northerners. [...] There's been an injustice in the past, and we need to do what we can to support development in the North (C.iv).

For the government, investment and focus on the North was therefore described by the above official as a "safe priority" (C.iv): a political platform with which neither opposition nor voters

⁶³ The latter of these is most closely associated with the Arctic – in particular in the territory of Nunavut, which is majority-Inuit, and the northern part of Québec's Nunavik; however, all groups are present in the North.

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would likely disagree. In other words, an identity as an Arctic state is as much about political practice *in* the Arctic as it is political practice in the South: a national display of the sub-national, where the latter is always different, but importantly, *part of*. Also internationally, performing Arctic statehood means performing the state's respect for 'their' Arctic lands and peoples – as distinct but always within the 'nation-state' writ large; in the candid words of one official:

I think there is, at the international level, the dynamics between aboriginal people and colonisers: the Canadian government wants to be able to show that he cares about 'his Indians' (*laughter*). And I'm using purposely the word 'Indian' for 'Inuit' and like, buying their support up there. [...] That is not at all what I would be saying [officially], but that is really what I believe (C.xii).

As also Norwegian officials stressed, Arctic political rhetoric may be instrumental for electoral support, but it does also require subsequent political action – an Arctic state identity is an ongoing *process*, necessitating its continual reiteration and performance:

[T]here's nothing worse for a government than giving the impression that they haven't done anything new, or they don't have promising projects and all that, so... when they come up North once a year it's always to show how they've got a position and continuity from the line of developing the North and making it Canadian (C.xii).

Part of this "developing" relates to increasing efforts towards devolution: granting the three territories higher levels of autonomy and province-like powers in order to provide "greater local decision-making and accountability" (C.Gov't, 2010). Embedded in the 2009 *Northern Strategy*, "Improving and Devolving Northern Governance" is the final of four key priorities (C.DIAND, 2009). This is a process that goes back 40 years or so, and the creation of Nunavut in 1999 is often seen as a case in point of its progression (see Doubleday, 2003). Administratively, the status as territory means that instead of exercising their own constitutional powers as the provinces do, this is delegated from the federal government based in Ottawa (C.Gov't, 2010). Again, however, the process forms part of the active display of the state's Arctic identity (and, paradoxically, sovereignty through devolution). Seemingly oblivious to the association many would have to the Cold War-era history of forced displacement of Inuit families to inhospitable High Arctic lands as 'flagposts' (see Marcus, 1995), one interviewee mused:

We started realising – what does the sovereignty in the Arctic mean for Canada? Is it a military presence there, or is the resource extraction, or is just having people live there? And it's beginning to look like it's having people live there (C.xx).

Indigenous habitation in past and present, their ongoing *use* of Arctic space – land and sea – as *Canadian* use, provides a basis for the state’s claims to sovereignty and authority. In the government’s *Northern Strategy* Canadian security is ensured precisely by “putting more boots on the Arctic tundra, more ships in the icy water and a better eye-in-the-sky” (C.DIAND, 2009, p. 9); and similarly, an interviewed official in the Department of National Defence praised Inuit Canadian Rangers as the state’s “eyes and ears in the North” (C.xi). In this manner, the Arctic state of Canada’s internal heterogeneity – culturally, ethnically, spatially, historically – is brought together as prefixed ‘-national’. Casting Northerners, in particular indigenous Northerners, as *Canadians* is instrumental to Arctic sovereignty – but more than this, the incorporation of indigenous cultures, histories, and geographies in the many facets of the ‘Canadian’ gives weight to Arctic statehood and identity for the nation at large. While a claim to Arctic identities may seem primarily the prerogative of those living there, and even more so those with indigenous roots, an Arctic *state* identity is as much about ‘partnership’, about actively displaying awareness, respect, and relationality. Hence, state officials’ articulations of Arctic identity were always made with the caveat of recognised relativity: They may all be ‘Arctic’ when faced with non-Canadian, non-circumpolar actors; domestically, however, ‘Arcticness’ is premised on a relational subject-position, defined in terms of northernness and ethnicity. *Who* is ‘Arctic’, and who is *represented* as such, is always defined in and through encounters with the state’s – and its representing subject’s – constitutive ‘other’.

Personal Arctic identity

Enacting state practices on a daily basis, state personnel are more than passive vessels of discourse; rather, they are simultaneously producers and products of the many statements of discourse through which the Arctic state emerges as such. That is, their acts cite past citations of discourse – ever anew, reifying or disrupting, in an ongoing *process* of identification. However, as identity is often described as ‘multifaceted’ or even ‘fragmented’, ‘state representative’ is but one of the subject’s numerous subject-positions; as pointed to above, the ‘practitioner of Arctic statecraft’ is always also a host of others – just like I was never just the doctoral researcher, but a co-producer of subjectivity, an ‘other’. Even in half an hour’s interview, it was evident that speaking of Canada’s Arctic state identity is never reducible to only one positionality; instead, relations and encounters past all leave impressions on the subjective self; one position matter for the next, and the enactment of the Arctic state bear traces of that which exceeds the walls of federal offices.

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Hence, the way in which state officials conceptualised their own role, their own position, and their own job as precisely that, Arctic state officials, and how this becomes intertwined with their numerous other 'identities', matters for how it comes to be performed. The state is, in the end, but the effect of practices by people (Thompson, 2001; see Jones, 2007).

The aforementioned distance – both geographical and cultural – was often articulated as experienced by state officials themselves: a proviso in the pronouncement of their perceptions of Arctic identity.

I associate [the Arctic] with certain indigenous populations, Inuit populations, but it's not something that I feel... as deeply... It doesn't... I sort of see it as a, sort of, a separate place; that it is part of Canada, and Canada is an Arctic nation, and it's very much an important theme at work (C.vi; emphasis added).

In her case, Arctic identity was limited to the professional – an identity within a department, within a certain context and certain relationships, but not necessarily beyond (see Neumann, 2007). As such, interviewees frequently spoke of their professional conceptualisation of Arctic identity as distinctly so: an *awareness* of the state they represent as 'Arctic' without their everyday life necessarily being so. As one noted: "[Northerners/Inuit] they're different from me, but they're part of Canada" (C.xviii). For many, 'political correctness', carefully avoiding seeming to speak 'for' Northerners, was therefore prevalent throughout the interviews – much more so than in the previous two states – as continual iteration and flagging of sensitivity and respect: "there's a huge focus – and rightfully so! – on the people and the impact that your policies and programmes may have on the people, their culture, their way of life" (C.xxi). In particular, speaking of social problems and wealth inequalities in the North – issues that are well-known to pose a serious problem to the region's prosperity – was excused, hushed, and avoided as "controversial" (C.xviii) or off the record. While not speaking 'for' is certainly not a bad thing (but rather a much overdue result of historical wrongdoings), it means that certain topics and discussions soon become 'no-go-areas'. Indeed, the act of not speaking should not mean silence, but rather, *listening*.

In contrast, those who were indeed involved in Arctic issues and policy on a daily basis articulated their own sense of identity as a minority within the federal state administration: "because most of the work that [my] Department is responsible for is based in the South, not everyone [here] is conscious of or aware of or would see ourselves as an Arctic state" (C.xiv). This was felt even

more so by the select few who have spent time in the Arctic themselves. Interestingly, living and working in the North as non-indigenous was what had made one interviewee acutely aware of their own Canadian identity: a latent identity of which they had not hitherto been fully conscious. For another, going north, experiencing it and relating to it on the level of the individual and the scale of the body, highlighted that it is not just from the South that the North seems far away – the vice versa is equally so: “They talk about going down South like it’s going to another country!” (C.x). As such, the awareness of one’s own otherness came to the fore in the North, in particular as representing the federal government.

It’s been a perennial problem in Canada that the further away you are from the central government, it’s easy to always point to the central government as the ‘bad guys’. And because of our geography, you know, a lot of people in the North feel that people in the South don’t pay attention to their issues, or that what we think is important is probably not what they think is important (C.xiv).

Thus, the North–South divide is felt and known also in governmental offices – in turn, engendering a sensitivity to own identity as both representing an Arctic state in the South and abroad, while simultaneously being the ‘other’ *in* the Arctic.

‘Other’ or not in the North, in the South the privilege of regional knowledge becomes a privilege of power – to define, describe, and shape imaginations. Former PM Stephen Harper’s annual media tour of the North is one obvious example of a performance of ‘expertise’ that was neither neutral nor inconsequential, but rather constructing an image of a space that enables and necessitates specific political practices (and a man prepared to lead those...); in his case, the above divide served a purpose. However, Arctic authority is based not only on geographical northernness (and experience thereof) but also indigeneity; thus, those with claims to the latter within the federal state administration play an important function in the construction of an Arctic state identity for Canada⁶⁴. Once more, personal, embodied experiences, family backgrounds, and ethnicities matter for who may speak – how and by whom the state is articulated into being:

[M]any officials haven’t spent much time there [...] You can’t say, ‘well I grew up on the farm, and this is our experiences back then’. Minister Aglukkaq can talk like that, because she is from the North, but most of our government, our senior officials who talk about the Arctic are not Northerners. So there’s a challenge (C.iv).

⁶⁴ Some of whom were also interviewed for this study.

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At the time of the interviews, Leona Aglukkaq – a Nunavut Inuk – served as Canada’s Minister of Environment, as well as the chair of the Arctic Council during the state’s chairmanship (2013-2015. See Exner-Pirot, 2016). Several of the interviewees pointed to how her appointment had led to a notable shift in policy and practice:

[The] Minister is an Inuit Minister and has a strong interest in the North herself, and it's an important part of her mandate. I think you'd be able to trace the increasing attention, orientation of the North in Canada and in government more generally through new institutions that have been created (C.vi).

As one official referred to PM Harper’s keen personal involvement in the Franklin search as “a student of Arctic history” (C.xviii), Aglukkaq’s influence – as President Grímsson’s in Iceland – shows the importance of individuals. However, in her case, her indigeneity was pointed out by several of the interviewees, purportedly of particular significance for the way in which Canada’s identity as an Arctic state has come to be enacted through policy. Although she is a highly public figure, also those at lower levels in the administrative hierarchy have a role to play in ‘bringing’ the Arctic to the South: they are the bridge-builders in an Arctic state that remains otherwise ill-connected. In other words, speaking of Arctic state identity, in Canada as elsewhere, means speaking also of subjective identities at the level of the individual. *Their* positionalities – as, for example, Inuk, woman, Canadian, Northerner – are always in play both within and *beyond* that of the position as ‘Arctic state official’; the performance only takes on meaning through its performer.

Seeing the performance for its actors, the state for its people, it is clear that the subjective and the personal matter; Arctic state relations are also relations to the subject’s self. Of course, interviewing state personnel in a professional capacity poses its limits (Kuus, 2013); in Neumann’s (2005) terms, being a diplomat, specifically, requires a ‘technique of self’ that cordons off the personal from the private. Nevertheless, while the information shared may be selective, strikingly many interviewees chose to draw on the intimately personal, talking about belonging, identity, and emotive attachment to a space so distant from their everyday. Indeed, for many, the fascination with the distant, ‘mythical’ North was that which had attracted them to their current jobs in the first instance – a perception that had changed with increased knowledge, but which nonetheless continued to affect as intrigue and personal interest:

[T]hinking about my own childhood [...] I grew up in New Brunswick, nowhere near... My mother’s American and my father’s from Montréal, so it’s not like they have any close connections to the Arctic,

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but I've always been drawn to it; it's always been something that's just been fascinating. I didn't even realise until I took this job just how much I'd already read about the North because I was so attracted to it! (C.-).

In fact, surprisingly many spoke warmly of family, friendship, and love in relation to their jobs and to the Arctic. One of these is worth quoting at length:

And I think, when I started thinking about it, I do have an identity with the Arctic for a number of reasons... why? My father spent thirty years in the Arctic as a naval officer during the Cold War. So all his work in the Arctic was top secret, and he would come back with all these stories – well, the stories he could talk about! – about the Arctic. And he lived with the Inuit, travelled with the Inuit. So I grew up with these stories about the Arctic. So I knew my dad as an Arctic person; and in some ways, I'm trying to maybe follow in his footsteps a little bit, you know. [...] To keep his work alive a little bit, and learn about the Arctic the way he saw it. [...] I identify with my father and the Arctic, they go together (C.-).

Conceptualisations of Arctic statehood and identity, then, are a product not only of formal titles and territories, but also of the deeply personal through which the world is viewed. Upon this admittance, the state emerges not as a stellar entity, divorced from civil society – or even from humanity – but as a constellation of distinct, at times contradictory, imaginations, actions, and emotions at the level of the individual person of a people, relating to each other.

Conclusion

In the end, Canada's Arctic state identity is articulated within the spatiotemporal parameters of geography and history, but the effects through which the state comes into the world are always those of practices – statements and actions – by its many practitioners. As such, the Arctic state of Canada is 'stated' into being through innumerable citations of identity discourse as such: drawing on preceding citations, guiding succeeding ones, and ever articulated anew in interaction.

Often defined by its 'nordicity', the 'True North', Canadian identity is seemingly anchored in geography: a nation that has taken root, grown, and prospered from the (settled) land. While its sheer size is vast and often ill-connected – the North therefore both spatially and mentally distant – *all* may identify as northerners – not least when defining themselves against the former Empire or their southern, US neighbours. Unlike the study's previous states, however, Canada's Arctic

space tends not to be described in terms of oceanic depths or flows, but as a land-like ‘frontier’: a frozen, solid space upon which flags may be planted, borders may be drawn, boots may march, and people may live. For Canadian officials in Ottawa, the emphasis is on active usage: the iterative performance of Canadian national presence – despite the majority of its members never having and never will set foot there. Instead, most encounter the Arctic only through words and images – including those developing policy for the region. However, through the collective experience of Canadian winters and corporeally sensed cold, the Arctic is translated, and *felt*, across the land, from shore to shore. Arctic identity is defined not only in space but also in time; the Canadian nation has taken root, grown, and will continue to grow – always in the process of becoming, and always moving upwards and forwards through the national narrative. Hence, both within and without state offices, stories matter – histories, commemorations, and tales of past glories – that serve to order relations. Constructing a new path backwards in time, through Inuit use of ice and doomed British expeditions, the story of Canada becomes a story of the Arctic state – one that is told in the Arctic present, anticipating, *shaping*, the Arctic future.

Even as Canada’s Arctic state identity is narrated as a consequence of its geography and history, the way said spatiotemporality translates to words and actions – the way the Arctic state comes into material being – is through relations and interaction at all scales. Arctic statehood is a title defined as a state amongst state, both Arctic and non-Arctic. Much like Norway and Iceland, being one of eight Arctic states provides Canadian representatives an advantageous status and position from which to negotiate. On the one hand, this provides an opportunity to perform and strengthen their traditional role as a ‘middle power’ internationally; on the other, Arctic statehood has in recent years in Canada been frequently subsumed in a broader political rhetoric (and performance) of sovereignty and threat thereto. And indeed, closely tied to tropes of national identity, the North is to be protected, as it is invested with symbolic and emotive meaning: a marginal space representing the distillation of the national ‘essence’. In federal departments and offices, the Arctic is brought south through the mundane and everyday: a stone figurine on a shelf, a stamp on a letter, a map on a wall. In this manner, the Arctic becomes part of the personal through everyday practices and habits; cultural distance is mentally bridged. Perhaps more so than any other piece of Canada’s multicultural ‘mosaic’, its northernness serves to unify and distinguish the ‘truly’, distinguishably *Canadian*: an identity that may be assumed by all precisely due to its opaque definitions and ephemeral character. However, when looking inwards to the imagined community, the diversity of ‘Arcticness’ is clear – much more so than in

the previous two cases. Geographical distance coupled with both stark wealth disparities and ethnic difference means that the North–South divide is highly apparent, and significant for the way in which identity is conceptualised. As a country that prides itself on its multiculturalism, there is still distance to be bridged in Canada that has little to do with spatiality and much more with the de-colonisation of minds, including those of certain senior officials. For most within the state, though, the emphasis is on not speaking ‘for’ Northerners, not assuming an identity that was not ‘theirs’ to claim – an awareness of own alterity in questions of Arctic identity that could only be (partially) overcome through knowledge and personal experience of the region.

Circumventing regional identities or ethnicity, however, the state’s Arctic identity is articulated in terms of the personal and intimately familial. An identity that is inherently geographical and historical is also subjective and emotional; for some, their understanding of self was a result of family, friendship, and love that somehow extend northwards. As such, Arctic statehood is not only an effect *upon* those expected to perform its functions, but also itself an effect *of* the people tasked with its enactment. Through the narratives, stories, and histories told, re-told, or forgotten, Canada’s identity becomes also an Arctic identity. Upon this vast and frozen stage – the ‘final frontier’ – statehood and sovereignty are performed; as the red maple leaf dances across white snow on TV-screens and photographs, it is not just the Arctic that is brought to southern Canadians, but Canada itself is brought into being as a unifying discourse that seemingly transcends distance and difference.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

July has passed – not just once, twice, but three times since the ministry doors closed behind me on that warm summer’s day in Oslo. Much more than months have come and gone in the years spent with the Arctic state, its people, and their identities. When I initially set out, I hoped to learn something about how ideas and imaginaries of identities feature in Arctic politics – what I found, however, was so much more.

The apologetic Norwegian politician may not inhabit that office anymore; Ólafur Ragnar is no longer President of Iceland; and the Canadian Inuk pointing to the circumpolar map may have retired. However, their stories – of themselves and of their state – have become part of the larger story of the Arctic state and its people: small black letters on pages of a thesis, quotes recited in conferences, woven together in what is theirs, but now also a piece of my story of encounters and performances of the Arctic state.

The Arctic state lives on, transcending the subject whose declaration of identity stated it into being two years ago. And yet, the individual subjects – wherever they may now be – who uttered, performed, enacted Arctic statehood are forever part of it. Not just words recorded and replayed, transcribed, typed, but also those uttered in passing, jokes in corridors, and fleeting comments – they all form part of the everyday experiences of the state and of the ‘self’.

As I left the ministry, I had felt the abstract notion of Arctic statehood enveloping me, drawing me in, making the researcher too part of the performance through which it materialises. As I see each new black letter on the page in front of me, each of which in effect cites the discourse it seeks to describe, I want to end on a hopeful note. Rather than seeing the state’s envelopment – the abstraction’s powerful ability to continuously become anew – as a force to be resisted, we need to look at not just how but why this is so.

It is not because the state, Arctic or otherwise, in and of itself holds and performs its ‘power’; the state emerges because we – the people, both within and beyond official institutions – make it. We believe in it, use it, perform it, and order our lives and relationships in discursive frameworks. Recognising the people in and of the state means recognising its humanity. And with humanity comes the capacity of compassion and of change. Breaking down binaries – such as that of the state and society – is so much more than an intellectual exercise; it is a call for more interaction, more relationality, where people and politics are recognised as one.

In this final chapter I draw together the findings from each of the three cases in order to show ways in which Arctic state identity comes to be articulated by its personnel. This means returning not only to that sweaty ministerial office, but to the study's initial questions and objectives. Instead of restating each preceding point and conclusion, however, the chapter seeks to hone in on what some of these responses may be, and how they may contribute to wider understanding. As indicated in the very first pages of the introduction, the project has led to many answers, insights, and realisations – but it has also raised an equal number of new questions to be explored. As such, final or not, the chapter is therefore not an end, but an invitation to see the state differently: to see it for its people.

A return to the start

Initially, it was the rhetorical and emotional potency of the political deployment of Arctic identity that caught my interest. However, my own assumptions about the political instrumentalism of identity were soon proven reductive, and so, instead I set out to learn how state representatives themselves understand, imagine, draw on, and cite discourses of Arctic identity. That is, I was intrigued by how those performing the state – enacting its effective 'materialisation' – themselves view and articulate its identity, and in turn, how this may influence political practice. Drawing on a well-established poststructuralist and discursive tradition, political geographical and critical geopolitical studies, and that of the state and identity respectively, a conceptual framework of 'state identity' was sketched out in Chapter Three, before, via my methodological approach in Chapter Four, filling in the study's empirical body. Choosing to focus on three of the eight so-called Arctic states – Norway, Iceland, and Canada – the following three interrelated research questions were formulated to this end:

- (1) How do state personnel in Norway, Iceland, and Canada articulate discourses of their state's 'Arctic identity'; and how is this spatiotemporally regulated and relationally mediated?
- (2) How, in turn, does state identity's discursive positioning condition possible political practice for those tasked with enacting the state?
- (3) Finally, how may the concept of 'state identity' – exploring identity discourses within a 'peopled' state – contribute to our understanding of the state, Arctic or otherwise?

The questions were approached through interview conversations with state personnel, who – while still speaking from their specific professional positions – reflected on the meanings of Arctic statehood and identity. Each participant offered something different: a piece of their own

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subjective understandings of their state, but more importantly, a small glimpse of their own subjectivity as Arctic state officials.

As they responded – and, in effect cited and performed discourse – the conceptual framework has worked to order and organise statements. That is, interrogating discourses within which statements are made meant, firstly, locating their boundaries. As the limits of what may be meaningfully said, done, thought, and enacted, Arctic state identity is spatiotemporally framed. In other words, it is a title that is conditioned by its position in geography and history – but also vice versa, a title that itself conditions subsequent enactments. These homologous spatiotemporalities of Arctic state identity thereby prescribe a practice of articulation that takes place within what is, firstly, cast as Arctic geography, and secondly, Arctic history.

The former refers not only to a (home)land in which identity may be rooted, but as *more* than this: Arctic space as *place* with heterogeneous connections between the human and nonhuman – of environments, natural forces, climates, weathers, floras, and faunas. In this manner, discursive boundaries are themselves produced in interaction, and collective identity in the sharing of subjective corporealities (or the shared lack thereof, as was often the case among Canadian officials). And interestingly, as a geographical region that is largely oceanic space, the spatialities of ‘being’ Arctic was – in spite of largely agreed upon lines and latitudes – expressed differently from person to person, as well as from state to state. Without reducing subjects’ individual views, there were identifiable contrasts between the three states in this regard: In brief, the Arctic was in Norway often spoken of in terms of oceanic and sub-oceanic resources; in Iceland as oceanic currents, flows, and connections between the island state and the world; and in Canada, as a solid and frozen frontier, *land-like* if not land, and often mythical, fragile, intangible. These imaginaries clearly suggest widely different political approaches; and yet, in all three cases, they function to guide the conduct of Arctic statehood in one direction or another.

As for the latter, Arctic temporalities, current Arctic political practice is regulated by (or along) the seemingly linear path of history – of time progressing from the state’s Arctic past towards its Arctic future. Having been marginal to national narratives until very recently, a process of re-interpretation, of re-focusing the lens of history towards the Arctic, is at present taking place. Suddenly in sharp relief, the memories of the past and imaginations of the future that connect people to the space from which the title of Arctic statehood is drawn are, however, always articulated in the present. Not just an instrumentalist *construction* of a ‘path’, these narratives

come about through the telling and re-telling of shared stories; they guide the orator as much as the listener. In fact, in the act of its pronunciation, it is not merely an Arctic narrative that is produced, but it simultaneously produces its pronouncer: subjectivity gained as Arctic state representative. Again, these boundaries were unique to each state (indeed, each official) – the Arctic story embedded in the national, familiar stories interwoven with the polar. Ancestral blood, still imagined as pumping through the veins of the national community, thus connect, anchor, and legitimise the present: Norwegian seafarers and polar explorers; Icelandic Vikings and fishermen; Canadian settlers and discoverers (and occasionally, Inuit) are all scripted into the politics of the present. This Arctic present is always one of progression – and indeed, this may be one way in which the performance of state identity contrasts with that of national such, namely its temporal privileging of the future. That is, present political practice, the enactment of the Arctic state, is always anticipatory and preparatory for what is yet to *come*; challenges and opportunities for the state to face sooner rather than later.

A title as an Arctic state – and indeed identity as such – is one gained by geographical markers and historical claims; present-day Arctic politics is performed within the limits set by the perceived meaning of Arctic statehood. However, these performances play out neither to nor from, but *between* subjects; they are always, inherently relational. Arctic spaces and times, natures and stories, take on meaning in social interaction. The context of a statement of identity matters as much for representation as reception. An Arctic state identity is therefore never static nor an object to be ‘held’, but a relation that forever flows – iteratively interpreted and re-interpreted. Encounters and interactions are of course never scalar; and yet, in their conceptualisation, a state identity may be expressed in terms of the international, national, sub-national, and personal.

Internationally, an Arctic state identity is one of membership and exclusivity: an Arctic state among states, Arctic or not, in a circumpolar region and a globalising world. It is an identity with which both rights and responsibilities follow – both of which require certain political performativity on the stage of the international. For Norwegian personnel, it was frequently an international asset; for Icelandic, an opportunity for simultaneously enacting involvement and independence; and for Canadian, a prompt for stewardship and even defence. For all three, ‘being’ an Arctic state is a role to be ceaselessly enacted on the global stage.

Looking inwards to the national community, an Arctic state identity connects to notions of national identity: For example, Arctic practices are also Norwegian practices; the two cannot

easily be disentangled. Embedded in school curricula and museum exhibitions, and represented equally in spectacular and mundane ways, the domestication of the Arctic renders also the domestic Arctic. Society – including people in governmental offices – in effect become Arctic too, as reminded through the everyday and familiar. In all three states, symbols such as the polar bear can now be found ubiquitously across southern towns and capitals: it has become part of the boringly familiar, no longer exotic but simply *normal*, a part of ‘who we are’.

Despite the polar bear’s ability to remind people of their shared state, internal heterogeneity also means that an Arctic state identity differs *within*. Distances and (dis)connections between north and south provide divergent attachments to the region. And, with its latitudinal definition, domestic ‘Arcticness’ becomes hierarchical based on relative northernness – there is always somewhere *more* Arctic. An Arctic state identity thus takes on a different meaning when articulated in relation to a fellow national but *northern* other. And moreover, indigeneity plays into claims of identity: Saami and Inuit in Norway and Canada respectively were often described as that: *more* Arctic. Interestingly, however, these intra- or sub-state differences may also be seen in light of a normative diversity; and, as such, their inclusion provides not a threat but an advantage to the state. Political practices and performances of partnering, of respect, and even of apologies for historical wrongs thereby, paradoxically, strengthen the state-level claim to Arctic identity too.

A collective and social identity, Arctic state identity is also understood as part of the ‘self’, part of the subject’s *personal* story. Arctic state personnel may perform a state, but will always do so through the modes and manners developed through subjective relations that far exceed their four office walls. As such, Arctic spatiality was talked about as embodied experiences, temporalities as familial (hi)stories. Professional positions as state officials were part of – leading to *and* from – something much more: of love and friendship, emotion and embodiment. In this manner, the Arctic state bears traces of – indeed, is *constituted* by – its innumerable enacting actors. Regulated in time and space, mediated through all scales of interaction; in the end, the Arctic state is a ‘peopled’ one, and state identity is about relating to others.

Implications and contributions

In summarising the above, personnel’s articulations of Arctic state identity emerge – including their regulation and mediation, as well as their positioning for practice; however, what remains is

the question of how this acknowledgement of the state as ‘peopled’ and the concept of ‘state identity’ contributes to understandings of the state, Arctic or otherwise. The thesis’ contributions to this can be seen as twofold – empirical and conceptual.

In considering Arctic statehood specifically, and the related identities of this formal title, the study contributes to a body of knowledge on Arctic issues in geography and beyond. As outlined in Chapter Two, there is a burgeoning subfield of critical polar geopolitics on which the study draws and to which it adds (see e.g. Powell, 2010; Dittmer *et al.*, 2011; Dodds and Powell, 2013; Knecht and Keil, 2013; Powell and Dodds, 2014; Bruun and Medby, 2014; Steinberg, Tasch and Gerhardt, 2015; Depledge, 2016). Although the wider subfield of critical geopolitics has actively pushed beyond state-centrism in recent years, much non-academic discussion of the Arctic region remains at the level of the state. In academic efforts to move past this, analytic attention has frequently been directed at actors and institutions other than the state – be they supra-, non-, trans-, or otherwise prefixed actors – but hitherto rarely questioning the how and *why* of said state-centrism in the first place. In other words, in moving past the state, it has seemingly been left *behind*. It is with this either/or approach the present study has taken issue.

Binary, even oppositional, conceptualisations of state/society, people/politics seem particularly tenacious in Arctic analyses; thus, speaking of people and identities tends to lead discussion immediately to a ‘civil society’ wholly divorced from governments, and in particular indigenous peoples. These foci are of course highly valuable – and again, perhaps particularly so in the postcolonial setting that much of the Arctic arguably is – but do not account for the whole picture. In order to fully understand Arctic relations, there is no denying that the eight Arctic states are key ‘players’; but, importantly, *not* as actors in and of themselves, but as the cumulative effect of a range of practices performed by *people*. Moving beyond both analytical and practical Arctic state-centrism therefore means also looking beneath and *within* what is seen as the Arctic state itself to recognise it as, first and foremost, a powerful idea that constructs the illusion of a coherent actor. So, what its practitioners understand the Arctic state to *be*, and Arctic statehood to mean, clearly has implications for the ways in which it comes to be performed – policies developed, negotiations held, agreements made, and so on.

Questioning *their* ideas of identity and attachment to a region with which they are professionally involved has therefore been the aim here, and these findings form the study’s main empirical contribution to understandings of the Arctic and Arctic relations more broadly. Even though the

reflections offered by the participants are by no means exhaustive, it has provided a glimpse of what it might mean to grant the Arctic state, or rather its *personnel*, humanity – seeing them as part of a society. Politics is, after all, about people and the relations between them – including those both within and outside state offices – and so, acts of Arctic politics too must be seen as *inter-action*. And with this, the aforementioned ‘non-state’ people are not constructed in opposition to a faceless state ‘apparatus’, not in a position of perpetual asymmetrical power, but may instead be granted a discursive position of relationality – where there is possibility for said interaction, for change, for challenging what needs to be challenged in a region of rapid change. As such, acknowledging the identities of state personnel is one step towards breaking down ingrained dichotomies, and start recognising their co-constitution and co-production of Arctic affairs.

Conceptually, the thesis’ contribution flows directly from the above: not just Arctic but *all* states are effects of practices that are invariably performed by people. Or rephrased, the state is inherently ‘peopled’; it is a product of the social and relational, imbued with all that comes therewith. In this manner, the study is one response to calls for such a ‘peopling’ of states (Jones, 2007; Kuus, 2008, 2014) and related concepts (Antonsich, 2011). It builds on and adds to political geographers’ theorisations of the state, statehood, and its practices – in particular those applying a poststructuralist lens (Abrams, 1988; Mitchell, 1991). And, to the increasing recognition of the state and/or nation as emerging also through the everyday, mundane, banal, prosaic, and mundane (Billig, 1995; Edensor, 2002; Painter, 2006; Jones and Merriman, 2009; Benwell, 2014), the thesis highlights the influence of such on officials too. Even as representatives, they are subject to state representations and iterative reminders of identity that constructs a sense of a collective self – a recognition that challenges assumptions of unidirectional ‘constructions’ of political identities.

It is the concept of ‘state identity’ that throughout has been the thesis’ theoretical linchpin and, in the end, the thesis’ main new contribution to the literature. Within its framework, I have sought to elucidate both the spatiotemporal limitations of what it ‘means’ to be and identify as a state, and the relational mediation of any identity discourse, regulated and regulating as it may be. Indeed, it is in bringing these aspects together and seeing their co-constitution that the thesis differs from the above noted authors. Doing so has brought to the fore this ‘peopled’-ness of the state by allowing the often silent subjectivities of state personnel to be heard – not as the unitary voice of the state, but as a multitude of stories, experiences, feelings, emotions, and imaginations.

These are aspects that have hitherto not been studied as such; that is, how meaning of both self and collective interweave in and through political practice. Through the focus on state identity, the state emerges neither as only individualised nor wholly institutional; rather, the many stories by the people of the state highlight how the subjective and the collective intertwine and co-constitute each other. To political geographical scholarship that seeks to ‘people’ state spatialities specifically, the study highlights that accounts of either territory or place cannot be as readily separated – the state too is produced through embodied experiences and material encounters; and vice versa, corporeal senses become codified through vast geographical imaginaries. Hence, the ‘peopling’ that is argued for in the thesis is simultaneously a matter of the macro scale of statehood and the micro scale of self – it is at their intersection that subjectivity is formed, and identity may be articulated.

And even though the thesis’ primary concern has been the state, conceptualising state identity is also an addition to the rich tradition of national identity literature. Again, by rejecting a binary view of state and society – seeing them as co-dependent – could arguably also tell us more about their interaction, such as how political ideologies of nationalism come to matter. That is not to return to a hyphenated and homogenised ‘nation-state’, but to see both parts as always heterogeneous, always a coming-together of disparate and diverse people who may hold divergent views of what, where, and who ‘we’ are; as such, exchanging the hyphen perhaps by a dash: a nation–state where each is equal and each is equally an ideal to only ever take on reality through its performativity. And as the heuristically scalar organisation of state identity relationality soon reveals, scalar entanglements are not an analytic challenge to be overcome, but a clue to its character: The national seeps into the international and vice versa; the personal is political, and family stories are recounted alongside grand narratives. It is not enough to consider state identity as *either* collective or individual, as *either* a state among states or official among officials; they are always already intertwined.

The implications of a concept of ‘state identity’, as per above, extend further than the contribution of another analytical matrix for studying the state, however. Recognising the state as ‘peopled’ – and recognising the significance of these people’s subjectivities and identities – requires a thorough assessment of the ways in which the state is approached, methodologically as well as conceptually, with practical, ideological, and ethical implications. In the first instance, the concept demonstrates the need for sensitivity to social contexts and interactions when studying state bureaucracies. Methodologically, the thesis thereby adds to Kuus’ (2013, p. 128) arguments

for the use of intensive interviewing to “allow for more nuanced and more relational account of the policy machinery”; that is, rather than claiming full ‘access’ to people’s thoughts and emotions through e.g. ethnographic methods, interview conversations allow people themselves to articulate meaning in and through a relational setting. And, as indicated from the outset, it rejects the notion of ‘studying up’ of ‘elites’, instead squarely approaching them as no more and no less than *people* – whose *position* may indeed be one of power, but without them reduced to such.

Exceeding only academic concern, such an understanding of the state speaks to critical geopolitics’ ‘emancipatory ideal’; it allows us to engage with the state differently, seeing it not as divorced from everyday life and society, but as the effect of daily work, routines, and tasks of those employed to do so. As such, the metonymic critical lens is not only directed at the frontline practitioners of geopolitics, but also at those interpreting it – challenging the binaries that persist in society as much as in academia. Again, the thesis is therefore a hopeful one, and an impassioned call for *more* political engagement, *more* interaction, discussion, and contestation – not *to*, not *against*, but *with* the state. In this manner, we may counteract a current climate of political detachment, distance, and deference, as seen particularly among youth, and instead engender new avenues of influence. It is through active *relating* that power *relations* may be changed.

Avenues for further research

Following the above contributions, implications, and indeed hopes, there are a number of directions in which future work could go. I will here offer a research agenda that furthers the outlined empirical and theoretical contributions by suggesting ways in which these may be brought forward.

The study of the empirical site, the Arctic region, has in recent years gained momentum; and while this “Age of the Arctic” (Osherenko and Young, 2005) has seen a plethora of publications in quick succession, the region is changing arguably at an even more rapid pace. In addition to furthering our understanding of the dynamic region itself, and building on this view of the Arctic state as ‘peopled’, future work may delve further into subjective meanings and identities in the conduct of Arctic political relations – and, particularly, how changing imaginations or discourses correlate (or not) with a space clearly in flux. As the thesis was limited to three of the Arctic states and 49 of their representatives, there is here scope for immediate expansion, of course. Beyond this, however, it is of interest to further query specifically the social relationality argued

for throughout. Continuing the work of distancing analyses from dichotomies, there lies great potential in work that would interrogate the interaction *between* those employed in/by state institutions and those in/by others. For example, one interesting avenue of further enquiry would be the conduct of ‘selves’ and representations of identities in multilevel fora, such as the Arctic Council: how Arctic member state officials, indigenous peoples’ representatives, and observer state- and organisation representatives interact. Such a focus may show how state identity is complicated by the simultaneous articulation of overlapping scales of identification – and indeed, what it is about state identity that is so particular. In this setting, the ethnographic methods that may be less suited to intra-bureaucratic studies (Kuus, 2013) could potentially generate valuable insights; for example, studying embodied ways of ‘being’, mannerisms, even sartorial representations, and finally, the stories and anecdotes drawn upon to ‘make sense of’ this changing region and own role therein.

The widest array of potential research routes lies in developing the concept of ‘state identity’. As laid out here, with its spatiotemporal boundaries and scalar relationalities, the concept could, in the first instance, be applied to different states or state-like/-aspiring entities. Since the thesis at hand has dealt only with specifically *Arctic* states – only one among many categories each of the three states would fit into – other similar categories could be studied; or indeed, querying when and why such categories come to matter and when they do *not*.

There is also much left to be said about the actual development of such identities: for example, what role does training, education, and inter-institutional networks play in the subjectivities of personnel and perceived identities of the state. Moreover, what role does materiality play in said identities: for example, how territorial imaginaries produce state personnel’s daily tasks – especially when said territory, as here, does not easily fit the conventional conceptualisation of the national (solid, territorial) ‘homeland’. And furthermore, how the physical infrastructures of their everyday – offices, buildings, equipment, communicative devices and networks – all play into the development of a subjective, professional ‘self’ in and as the state. That is not to argue for an agential nonhuman *per se*, but rather to explore how this ‘peopled’ state constructs meaning through practices and practicalities of policy-work. In other words, following the exploration of officials’ political practices based on state identity beyond their interview-articulation to their everyday and embodied enactments. Doing so would entail further pursuing the latter of ‘state identity’s’ relational scales in particular: the *personal* articulation of state identity – thereby allowing the use of thick descriptions to bring the agenda of ‘peopling’ the state and politics

forward. Examples may include opening academic space for the personal stories, anecdotes, and sense-making explanations state personnel present to not only argue a case, but to render meaningful their own professional tasks. Once more, this is where I believe the research potentials go further than that of a theoretical contribution to an ethical one, countering the ‘othering’ of the state.

If one thing, finally, may be said about state identities, it is that in exploring people’s identities and the relationships between them, there surely remain many surprises to be found; the state is only limited to what we ‘make’ it, and in politics too there is creativity and improvisation, emotion and instinct. Exploring state identity therefore means exploring our own interaction with each other and ourselves, the ways in which we discursively order these, and yet, how these relations always exceed our orderings. Encounters in offices, on phones, or through emails are not events with clearly defined beginnings and ends; the relations through which identity discourses flow never halt, never fully solidify. New encounters and new interactions mean constant movement – an articulation may cite the past, but it is always enunciated in the present, between people, discourses, and contexts. And more than this, encounters of the past *continue* – articulated anew in a doctoral thesis, a viva, a journal paper, or perhaps in conversations with students, friends, relatives, and colleagues. Therefore, although the present project has reached its end, these stories of statehood and identity have not, and will not; each time they are read, said, or thought of, state identity is *becoming* – and so, promises great potential for future research, future relationships at all scales of interaction.

Appendix B: Research Interviews

Please note that due to the interviews' strict confidentiality, no numerical identifiers are correlated with other details, and no titles/positions/partisanship are listed. See Chapter Three for further details.

Chapter Four: Norway

- **Conducted:** June-October 2014
- **Number of interviewees:** 16 (cited as N.i-xvi)
- **Telephone/Face-to-face in Oslo:** 10/6
- **Institutional affiliations:**
 - Ministry of Climate and Environment [*Klima- og miljødepartementet*]
 - Ministry of Justice and Public Security [*Justis- og beredskapsdepartementet*]
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs [*Utenriksdepartementet*]
 - Ministry of Defence [*Forsvarsdepartementet*]
 - Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation [*Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet*]
 - Ministry of Education and Research [*Kunnskapsdepartementet*]
 - The Norwegian Parliament [*Stortinget*]

Chapter Five: Iceland

- **Conducted:** October 2014-February 2015
- **Number of interviewees:** 12 (cited as I.i-xii)
- **Telephone/Face-to-face in Reykjavik:** 3/9
- **Institutional affiliations:**
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs [*Utanríkisráðuneytið*]
 - Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources [*Umhverfis- og auðlindaráðuneytið*]
 - Ministry of Education, Science and Culture [*Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið*]
 - Ministry of Industries and Innovation [*Atvinnu- og nýsköpunarráðuneytið*]

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- Ministry of Welfare [*Velferðarráðuneytið*]
- The Icelandic Parliament [*Alþingi*]

Chapter Six: Canada

- **Conducted:** July 2014-February 2015
- **Number of interviewees:** 21 (cited as C.i-xxi)
- **Telephone/Face-to-face in Ottawa:** 5/16
- **Institutional affiliations:**
 - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada⁶⁵
 - Environment Canada⁶⁶
 - Finance Canada
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 - Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development⁶⁷
 - Health Canada
 - Industry Canada⁶⁸
 - National Defence Canada
 - Natural Resources Canada
 - The Canadian Parliament/Senate

⁶⁵ This has since, in 2015, been re-named by the incumbent Liberal government under PM Trudeau as “Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada” (INAC).

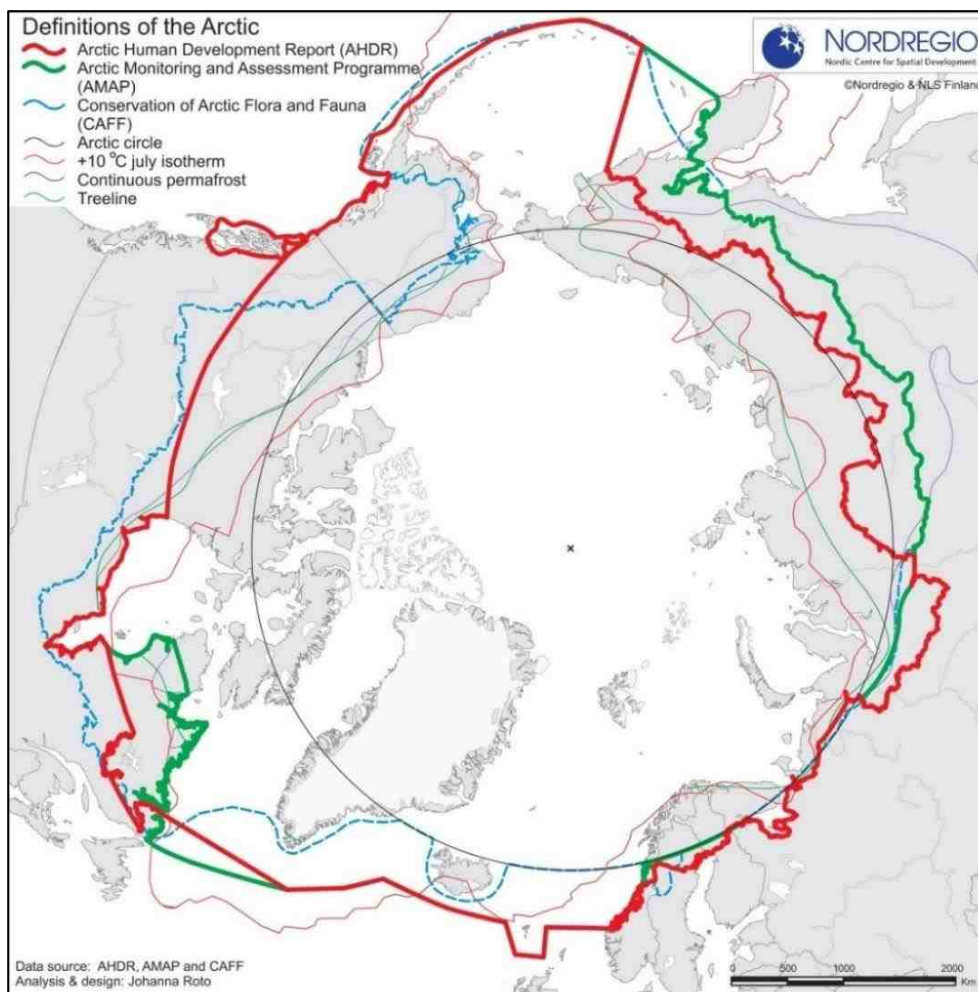
⁶⁶ Since November 2015, “Environment and Climate Change Canada”.

⁶⁷ Since November 2015, “Global Affairs Canada”.

⁶⁸ Since November 2015, “Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada”.

Appendix C: Multiple definitions

“Even though the concept of ‘The Arctic’ is commonly used, not single definition [sic.] exist that everybody agrees on. The map show [sic.] six common delineations. The Arctic circle is sometimes referred to as defining the Arctic, while the 10 °C has been the traditional definition used in many geography school books. Similarly the treeline has been used as a delimiting line for the Arctic in schoolbooks in biology and ecology. The AHDR (Arctic Human Development Report) emphasizes that the Arctic is a homeland for peoples, and therefore includes the social, economic, political, and ecological processes that are the critical properties for the functioning of the Arctic System. The AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) focuses on the environmental conditions in the Arctic, and therefore chooses to use a definition based on the general function of the Arctic environmental system. CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna), however, focuses on the Arctic from an ecosystem point of view. The fact that not one definition serves all purposes highlights show the complexity of the Arctic, and the need to be precise when referencing it in a specific manner.” (Roto, 2007, p. 32).



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