

Warmer Arctic, cooler cooperation

- A frame analysis about the Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings' statements 2015 - 2019



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Abstract

Policy conflicts in the multilateral Arctic cooperation have gained more space during the past few years. Once established for cooperation and interaction among the Arctic states and indigenous peoples, along with the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection, the Arctic Council is now facing some challenges in fulfilling its core doctrines. This development is primarily a consequence of certain states wishing to pursue their national interests over common interests in multilateral cooperation and coordination in the Arctic. This paper utilises a frame analysis in order to identify and understand the main frames that have shaped the politics of the Arctic Council. It also attempts to distinguish any possible frame changes over time, as well as to illustrate any potential changes of the dominance of the frames. Moreover, the paper seeks to examine whether and how the different parties of the Arctic Council have reacted to this newly emerged individualism from some parties. This paper argues that there are certain institutionalised frames in the Arctic Council that have been dominant for a long period of time, but there is a new frame that has evolved, that is profoundly different from the previous frames. Thus far the new contrasting frame has not reached the status of a dominant frame. Although, it is still unclear how it will affect the future multilateral cooperation regarding the Arctic matters.

Key words: climate change, the Arctic, Arctic Council, multilateral climate governance, cooperation, sustainable development, frame analysis

Words: 9982

Abbreviations:

AC	The Arctic Council
EU	The European Union
USA	The United States of America
AIA	The Aleut International Association
AAC	The Arctic Athabaskan Council
GCI	The Gwich'in Council International
ICC	The Inuit Circumpolar Council
RAIPON	The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North

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1 Introduction

History was made in the Finnish city of Rovaniemi on the 7th of May 2019, when the Arctic Council's (AC) 11th Ministerial Meeting did not result in a joint ministerial declaration. The 11th ministerial meeting in the Council's 23-year-old existence was the first one ever to fail to reach an agreement on the ambitions and wordings about the future Arctic cooperation. Merely a ministerial statement was signed at the meeting. A statement has considerably less of a formal character than a declaration. Furthermore, any remarks of climate change were removed from the statement. The outcome of the meeting was the result of the USA being the only Arctic country not to agree on having climate change mentioned in the joint Ministerial Statement. In effect, Pompeo, the Secretary of State of the United States (USA), held an additional speech about the country refusing to cooperate on certain issues a day before the official Ministerial Meeting speeches were held. This type of action is unforeseen in the history of the AC.

The event in Rovaniemi illustrates the challenges of coordinating national policies with the efforts to build stronger international environmental governance in today's global politics. Additionally, it illustrates that also in the Arctic, geopolitical questions have received more attention in relation to the previously dominated questions, such as climate change and cooperation. The Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi has been characterised by the practice of global power politics.

2 Purpose

In the light of this historical event, this thesis seeks to find the answer to the question whether there has been a shift in the dominant way of framing climate change in the AC, and whether the other member states and permanent participants responded to the behaviour of the USA at the latest Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi. This paper will examine the Arctic politics and the Arctic cooperation with the focus on environmental protection and climate change responses. My aim is to study which topics are brought up in the speeches held by the different member states' ministers and permanent participant groups' representatives. I will also aim at forming an understanding of through which frames the topics are being seen by different actors.

There are some policy conflicts within the AC, and my purpose is to understand the factors that cause such conflicts. In order to do that, I have chosen to conduct a frame analysis, since it helps to determine the underlying factors that make different actors behave in different ways. Frame analysis helps to examine differentiating values and beliefs that different actors uphold. This method and theory is an applicable tool for finding underlying structures of meanings of the actors of the AC. I will study the contest of meaning in political discourse in the AC, as well as any potential frame changes and their consequences. Some frames within the AC can namely be seen to have become institutionalised, and I will execute which types of frames are institutionalised and whether they have any strong opponents.

The research questions examined in this paper are:

- (I) Which frames are dominant, and how has their dominance changed over time?*
- (II) other member states and permanent participants get influenced by the US behaviour in their framing of climate change and respond to that in their statements and positions?*

3 Background

The Arctic region, once distant and remote area, has recently become an important arena of world politics. Since the ice and snow cover is rapidly melting in the Arctic, an increasing amount of new circumpolar routes are constantly being opened. This technically allows performing more economic activities in the region, such as establishing new transport routes, constructing new tourist resorts and opening new locations for natural resource extraction. Out of these economic activities, oil drilling is especially compelling for many actors, since there have been estimated to be a significant amount of the earth's total oil reserves in the Arctic.

In parallel, the Arctic is being hit hard by climate change and environmental destruction due to this anthropogenic natural resource exploitation. Some of the economic activities in the Arctic are hindering environmental protection and climate change mitigation. Also, the temperature rise in the Arctic is two times higher than the temperature rise on a global average. The Arctic flora and fauna, as well as the living conditions of the Arctic communities, are in danger. The diminishing of the ice and snow will drastically raise global temperatures to a greater extent, which, in turn, will also have major consequences in the rest of the world (Ambio 2011).

In order to peacefully cooperate on the Arctic issues, and to work as a unity with environmental protection and climate change, the AC was formally established in 1996. Since the formation of the Council until this day, the cooperation has constantly expanded, as the amount of parties and topics covered have incremented. However, during the recent years, the consensus-based work of the AC has been at stake, since individualism, geopolitics and security issues have gained more space over the environmental protection and climate change questions. This development is illustrated well by the outcome of the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in 2019, where not all of the participants wanted to include the term 'climate change' in the Ministers' joint declaration. One day before the official Ministerial Meeting speeches in Rovaniemi in 2019, Pompeo, The Secretary of State of the USA, made history by giving a speech outside the formal proceedings. Pompeo addressed that the Trump administration does not believe in collective solutions. Instead, he claimed, the ultimate power should lie in the hands of sovereign states. Pompeo continued by alleging that China, Russia and Canada, have all taken provocative measures in the Arctic. He did not mention climate change as a problem in the Arctic, but instead, he highlighted the economic opportunities that the Arctic natural resources can give (U.S. Department of State 2019). A day after Pompeo's supplementary speech in Rovaniemi, many actors representing different states and indigenous peoples' groups reacted to the speech by expressing their concerns regarding the lack of a common ground for climate change work and security issues getting the spotlight (the Arctic Council 2019). Some of the speeches at the Ministerial Meeting can be interpreted to be a reaction to the speech held by the USA.

3.1.1 The Arctic region and its populations

The Arctic region is the geographic area North of the Arctic Circle (66,5°N). There are eight states that have territories north of the Arctic Circle. Countries that can be classified as Arctic are the USA, Canada, Russia, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark (Berkman 2010, p. 13). There are four million circumpolar inhabitants, and half a million of them belong to indigenous populations (Rottem 2020, p. 28). The indigenous peoples have lived in the Arctic conditions during glacial and interglacial climate periods for tens of millennia. Moreover, the population of the states that are classified as Arctic entail various different nationalities, ethnicities and languages. 40 different languages are spoken in the Arctic region. Thus, one could say that the Arctic population is constituted by a high cultural and social diversity (Berkman 2010, p. 13-14).

3.1.2 The effects of the global warming in the Arctic

Already today, the warming of the Arctic has caused some visible effects in the region. In the future, the effects will be even more prevalent. According to the vast majority of scientific predictions, the sea-ice cap will disappear during the boreal summers within the next couple of decades. This has never occurred during the last 800 000 years or more (Berkman 2010, p. 18). The loss of ice sheets and snow cover will accelerate Arctic climate change, and it will expedite the rising global temperatures, since when the ice and snow have melted, they lose their capacity to reflect the sunlight back to the atmosphere. Moreover, melting of the ice affects other parts of the globe by rising sea levels in multiple locations at a fast pace (ibid., p. 19).

The Arctic areas are highly sensitive to the changes in the environment. Environmental degradation, such as soil erosion and pollution, are affecting the region remarkably. Biodiversity losses occur at an increasing pace. Many of the animals' living conditions are threatened. Polar bears are in danger of becoming extinct, as well as many other Arctic species. Furthermore, there will be more invasive species arriving, and especially the marine ecosystem will go through some huge changes because of the new climate conditions. Melting of the ice in the Arctic also has a huge impact on the human populations in the Arctic region, since many people's living conditions are threatened (Berkman 2020, p. 19). Climate change is not only a real challenge for the nature and the human populations of the Arctic, but also for the rest of the world.

3.1.3 The Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental high-level forum. It was formally established in 1996, when the foundation for the work of the AC, the Ottawa Declaration, which has primarily been the foundation of the work of the AC, was approved by all the eight Arctic member states. It promotes dialogue, cooperation and the efforts to serve the common interest of the Arctic states to protect the environment and to hinder climate change. It also advocates sustainable development and restricted and organised resource extraction in the area. The Council also promotes the involvement of the indigenous peoples' organisations in decision-making. What the AC abstains from, is dealing with *matters related to military security*, according to the Ottawa Declaration (Berkman 2010, p. 56-9).

The AC consists of eight Arctic member states; the USA, Canada, Russia, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Moreover, six Arctic indigenous peoples' organisations have been given the title of permanent participants. Those are the Aleut International Association (AIA), Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), Gwich'in Council International (GCI), Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Saami Council. The AC also has different programmes and working groups that focus on various topics, such as *Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme* (Berkman 2020, p. 58-9). The Council has currently 38 observer states, which include for example China, The United Kingdom and Germany. The amount of observer states has increased during previous years, and at the moment there are negotiations taking place about whether the Council should admit the observer status to some new candidates, such as to the European Union (EU) (Polar Science 2016).

The Ministerial Meetings take place every second year as the final stage of a twoyear chairmanship of an Arctic country. The working groups, however, conduct meetings on a more regular basis. The decision-making is consensus-based, which means that all the eight member states have to agree on a formalia. The AC has permanent participants who consult the work of the Council, as well as observers who observe the work, but neither of them have a voting right (Rottem 2020, p. 45). They both still play a proactive role in the AC (*ibid.*, p. 39). There are also other actors in the field of Arctic cooperation, but the AC is arguably the most established one in that sphere (*ibid.*, p. 2).

3.1.4 The race to the Arctic

Geopolitical issues in the Arctic region are increasing, and they emerge partially as a result of climate change. This is because new routes in the Arctic area are being opened at an increasing pace due to the depletion of ice and snow. From this physiographic point of view, the snow and ice loss will gradually give the possibility for people to access the natural resources that are underneath. It has been estimated that a significant proportion of the world's reservoir of oil and gas is situated in the Arctic area (Berkman 2010, p. 19). Conflicts that regard the Arctic region have already been witnessed, and they are expected to be more commonplace

in the future. Both intra- and inter-state conflicts have become a rising concern. Not only the states that own territory in the Arctic, but also nonArctic states have expressed their interest in the region's natural resources. This has caused conflicts both within the Arctic states and between the Arctic and nonArctic states. In order to secure a degree of stability in the region, and to strengthen the peaceful transboundary cooperation, some rules and regulations have been implemented at local, national, regional and international level (ibid., p. 20). The Arctic politics can be seen as three-folded, since they have national, regional and global dimensions.

Despite the efforts to stabilise the Arctic cooperation, and regardless of the two past decades of continuous ministerial agreements on the Arctic policies and cooperation, the conflict of interests occasionally distract the unity of the collective Arctic goals. On the one hand, all the Arctic states and the participating indigenous people groups have for a long time expressed their interest in cooperating in order to strengthen the work against climate change and environmental destruction, at least before the Ministerial Meeting in Rovaniemi in 2019. On the other hand, the states are aware of the economic possibilities that extraction of oil and other natural resources would bring them. The contradicting agendas between states on the one hand wishing to pursue the common interests of the AC, and on the other hand hoping to be able to fulfill their national interest, brought some disagreement to the meeting tables at the latest Ministerial Meeting in Finland in 2019. It is yet to be seen whether collective or individual interests will be at the center of the AC in the upcoming meetings.

3.1.5 International law in the Arctic

The most central actors in the international legal system today are individual sovereign states (Henriksen 2019, p. 10). However, international spaces are arenas where states' common interests have recently managed to gain a foothold. For instance, the case of the Arctic Ocean is a primary example of states balancing their own national interests, such as economic interests, with fundamental common interests, such as securing peace in the area (Berkman 2010, p. 50-1). Climate change has also been a major factor that has promoted cooperation, collaboration and transboundary management strategies in the Arctic region. International cooperation is important in the Arctic, since a huge territory does not belong to any state.

Despite a widely extended voluntary Arctic cooperation, there is a lack of legally binding force of the AC. The declarations of the AC only have a soft law power character. The Council cannot reinforce their formulated guidelines, codes of conduct and recommendations into the national law-making, since the AC has no legal personality or any regulatory authority (Berkman 2020, p. 59). Instead, it is up to the individual member states to implement the decisions and the policy recommendations that the Council makes. Although, despite the non-binding character of the decisions of the high-level forum, the AC still has managed to achieve some noteworthy things, such as producing knowledge about the Arctic

region, and increasing the attention to the region at multiple global forums in the recent years (Berkman 2010, p. 59).

Even if sovereign states have the right to utilise their own resources according to their national jurisdiction, there are certain international principles, laws and regulations that apply in the Arctic. States do not have the right to undermine the environment of other states or of territoria that are outside of national jurisdiction. This is called the '*no harm*' principle, and it has become a constraint under international law (Henriksen 2019, p. 194). Moreover, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), signed by 197 states in 1992, has been adopted in order to limit the global temperature increase below 2°C from pre-industrial levels (ibid., p. 199).

4 Theory

4.1.1 Frame analysis

Frame analysis as an interpretive policy analysis theory and method that seeks to highlight the central role that values and actions have in policy texts and political speeches. It aims at finding different meanings and illuminating the ties with reason and purpose. According to frame theory, the underlying systems of belief, ideas, views and perceptions of a person affect the way the person sees a certain situation, and therefore they affect the person's words and actions. People apply frames in order to comprehend the complex world and reality that we observe, and we then transfer this perception to others with our words and actions. A frame in Rein and Schön's words is:

“A structure of thought, of evidence, of action, and hence of interests and of values. Within the structure, the elements are internally related but also mutually constitutive of each other's identity” (Wagenaar p. 84).

For Rein and Schön, the action dimension should be paid specific attention to, since we only make actions that we see are possible actions. This also reflects in the expressed values in political agenda-setting (Wagenaar 2013, p. 84). A fundamental part of the frame analysis is finding and interpreting meanings that entail assumptional bases in policy discourses. Different world views, sets of values and beliefs underlie the different outcomes of agency. Actors, instead of structures, are the units of analyses in the frame theory. Consequently, the role of agency is central in frame theory.

Rein and Schön argue that certain frames are collective and therefore institutionalised (Wagenaar 2013, p. 85). Institutionalised action frames usually tend to have a hybrid character, since they have become dominant frames that are reluctant to give space to some alternative frames. That is why an individual actor representing a frame does not have much freedom to behave in a particular occasion (Rein and Schön 1996, p. 92). Action frames have not only individual agents promoting them, but also institutional settings that enable advocating them. The institutional sponsors that promote a certain frame can be interest groups, officials and challengers (*ibid.*, p. 95). The responsibility of an individual is to fill the gap between the institutional action frame and the actual situation with his or her own agency (*ibid.*, p. 94). In other words, the actor has certain freedom of action, but is often still bound to certain institutional settings.

Frames and interests are separate concepts, yet they still have a relationship that cannot be overlooked. Interests can shape frames, and frames can be used to support interests. Different actors view their interests through different frames, hence conflicting frames and interests can arise (Schön and Rein 1994, p. 29). Frame analysis has emerged as an alternative theory to the model of political rationality to which actors are rational and their interests are ‘objective, given and constant’ (Schön and Rein 1994, p. 21).

4.1.2 Frame analysis in policy conflicts

Frame analysis studies policy controversies, which are key elements in policymaking. Rein and Schön (1994, p. 37) emphasise the significance of frames in the formation, development and resolution of conflicts. In the formation of policies, frame theory explains, arguments are not conflicts of facts and data, but instead, they appear due to cognitive dissonance and competing meaning perceptions. If an adherent of a frame receives data that does not correspond to the frame he or she is holding, the data can be considered irrelevant by the adherent. If different parties perceive a certain situation through different frames, they hold conflicting frames, which often leads to policy conflicts. A priori insights play a central role in our speech, in our arguments, in our values and action (Wagenaar 2013, p. 85), hence even policy-makers are not rational actors with objective frame-settings (Rein and Schön 1994 p. 37).

There is always “framing and claiming” occurring within a particular issue arena. The contest of meaning arises in public policy-making, because meaning gives the possibility to legitimately claim economic and social resources (Rein and Schön 1996, p. 95). The purpose of a frame-critical analysis is therefore to distinguish the issue area, to identify the competing frames within it, and to determine the forums in which the policy discourse and frame controversies occur (*ibid.*, p. 93). A specific forum has specific rules when it comes to accepted discourse. The rules regard legitimate and non-legitimate arguments and facts (*ibid.*, p. 100). A search for explanation in public policy controversies and the efforts to solve the problem of multiple perspectives are some key elements in a frame analysis. One suggestion is to promote discourse across conflicting frames (Rein and Schön 1994, p. 45).

In policy conflicts, Rein and Schön argue, it is crucial that different parties become aware of the possible consequences that holding specific frames can cause. If the parties start to question and to understand their own and others’ frames, they may be able to understand every parties’ standpoints. This frame reflection can lead to better communication and interaction between the different parties. Frame reflection can even lead to reframing the matter of the conflict. In other words, frame analysis allows frame reflection in policy conflicts, which in turn can help solve conflicts or at least make them more comprehensible (Rein and Schön 1996, p. 93-95). If a frame analysis can be used for frame reflection, the study has extra-scientific relevance.

5 Method

A frame analysis is a form of an interpretive policy analysis. Interpretive policy analysis allows to study further meanings that form and alter different actions and institutions, and the ways in which they do so (Wagenaar 2013, p. 3). The objective of this method is to reveal elements of the texts that are not entirely self-evident (ibid., p. 5). In consonance with interpretive policy analysis, meaning is seen to be fundamental and constitutive. Meaning shapes people's perceptions of political phenomena. The nature of this type of analysis is contextual, since meaning is always bound to a certain context, and it is situated, since it is necessitated by a particular historical period. The frame analyst ought to firstly distinguish the context of the speeches and actions, secondly to identify the different parties, and thirdly to study the wordings and actions of the different parties (ibid., 10).

It should be noted is that it is not an easy task to conduct an interpretive analysis. What makes it especially hard, is the mutual penetration of theory and method, meaning the diffusion of each through the other, since an interpretive policy analysis such as frame analysis can be seen as a theory and a method simultaneously (Wagenaar 2013, p. 8). Moreover, there is a lack of a comprehensive interpretive theory that guides and gives the author of an interpretive policy analysis a clear structure in his or her work. Guidelines that determine the analytical problem, that direct the way in which the data should be collected, and that give orientation to the analysis, is missing in an interpretive policy theory and method (ibid, p. 9). Another factor that makes interpretive policy analysis challenging, is working with values, both from the empirical and the interpretive viewpoints. Wagenaar (2013, p. 5) argues that interpretive policy analysis is a moral activity. It has a normative character, since the value judgements are inevitable in all of the policy interpretive analysis work, for example in problem-formulation and the collection of evidence (ibid., p. 6). Schön and Rein (1994, p. 36): “[...] frames must be constructed by someone, and those that construct frames [...] do not do so from a position of unassailable frame neutrality. They bring their own frames to the enterprise and, what is more, they may be unaware of doing so”. Schön and Rein claim that frame construction is challenging also because it is difficult to be certain about which frame underlies an actor’s political position in a specific situation (Schön and Rein 1994, p. 35).

5.1.1 Operationalisation

In order to study different frames within a specific policy discourse, the frames have to be constructed by the analyst, since frames are not self-evident. Frames can be distinguished by the a priori insights and beliefs of the analysed texts, and they must be assumed and addressed (Rein and Schön 1996, p. 90). There are rhetorical frames

that can be distinguished in a text by studying the symbolism and rhetorics in the texts, such as metaphors and exemplars (ibid., p. 89). When constructing and analysing rhetorical frames, attention should be drawn to what kind of obviousness and normative claims the analysed text entails (ibid., p. 90). The author of a frame analysis has a high degree of independence when proceeding with the theory and method. Thus, I will identify the frames myself based on recurring patterns in the material, with the insights from earlier and more general framing attempts in the literature on international environmental politics. I will find the categories of the different frames myself, and I will be transparent about the process, which will increase the reliability of the study. The operationalisation in my interpretive policy analysis will therefore differ from an operationalisation in more positivist type of analysis.

5.1.2 Creating the frames

According to the frame theory, whenever an analyst is seeking to understand complex phenomena, he or she arranges the phenomena into more apprehensible categories. In the creation and the analysis of the different categories, so called frames, I will utilise Clapp & Dauvergne's four worldviews on global environmental change in my analysis about the AC as a tool to enlighten the frames that I have distinguished. Clapp & Dauvergne (2005, p. 3-15) have characterised four main worldviews on global environmental change; market liberalism, institutionalism, bio-environmentalism and social greens. The authors have created these categories after having studied how people think differently about the factors that cause climate change, what could be done about it, and whether or not they think climate change is a global crisis. The authors highlight that the categories are ideal, and they help to simplify the more complicated debates about climate change (ibid., p. 3).

I will collect data and categorise the underlying structures of thought that I have identified into different frames. I have constructed seven different frames out of the speeches, which I found the most distinguishable in the content of the speeches and that are the most relevant to the topic of my thesis. I have altered some of the names of the worldviews on global environmental change that Clapp & Dauvergne have presented, in order for them to better correspond to my analysis. Besides that, I have added three frames myself in order to fully demonstrate the variation of the distinguished frames in the political statements in the AC. The additional frames are technocracy, indigenous knowledge-based decision-making and sovereignty. Clapp & Dauvergne have included the promotion of technological development in the market liberal perspective, but I wanted to keep them two separate, since my hypothesis is that for certain actors of the Council the potential technological solutions are not fully correlated with market liberalism, and that the one is more important than the other.

In order to show the potential frame changes and changes in the dominance of the frames, I will present the analysis of the data from the Ministerial Meetings

chronologically in each frame. The statements from the year 2019 can be seen as reactions to the US behavior, since they were outspoken one day after Pompeo's preceding extra speech.

5.1.3 The frames and their theoretical background

Market liberal / resource exploitation

The market liberal perspective is mostly based on the ideology of neoclassical economics. Market liberals consider that economic growth and high GNP per capita secure sustainable development and the well-being of people. This, according to market liberals, is because societies raise their standards of managing the environment as they experience economic improvement. This perspective regards different market-based tools useful in the work against climate change. Optimism about the role of science and technology in solving climate change has also a predominant role in market liberalism (Clapp & Dauvergne 2005, p. 4-7). For this frame, I will look for underlying structures of thought that illustrate signs of the preferences of fostering economic growth, commercial opportunities in the Arctic and optimism towards technological solutions. I will also collect statements that promote natural resource exploitation.

Institutionalism / consensus-seeking

Institutionalism focuses on international institutions, norms, rules and regulations, which institutionalists consider to be vital in multilateral governance. When it comes to climate change, for instance, institutionalists believe that international cooperation is the most effective way of governance. Institutionalists also believe that institutions and states should internalise the sustainable development goals in all of their operations (Clapp & Dauvergne 2005, p. 7-9). With this theoretical background in mind, I have distinguished and created an institutionalist and consensus-driven frame, in which I will include any statements that emphasise cooperation, collective solutions, consensus-seeking, the role of institutions and multilateral partnerships.

Bio-environmentalism

Bio-environmentalism is a worldview on environmental change that primarily addresses the biological limits of the earth to support the increasing human activity. The vantage point of bio-environmentalism is the well-being of the planet's ecosystems. Bio-environmentalists often criticise the anthropocentric and egoistic decisions that humans have made at the expense of the protection of the environment. According to this perspective, economic growth is a major factor that

threatens the carrying capacity of the earth, ecosystem collapses and biodiversity losses (Clapp & Dauvergne 2005, p. 9-11). I have decided to use bioenvironmentalism as one of my frames. I will look for evidence from the statements that indicate a high level of focus on ecosystem change and other forms of environmental degradation.

Social greens

Social greens primarily highlight the inseparable relationship between social and environmental problems. They claim that inequality and environmental issues have the same root causes, since accelerating industrialism, overconsumption and globalisation simultaneously increase inequalities and climate change effects. Marxist critique towards capitalism is also common in the social green-thinking (Clapp & Dauvergne 2005, p. 11-16). I have identified and created a social greens frame, since I found it rather distinguishable in the AC Ministerial Meetings statements. In this frame, I will look for justice and equity - both intergenerational and intragenerational equity. The concept of intragenerational equity is equity between people in the same generation, and intergenerational equity, in turn, means fairness between people of different generations (Carter 2007, p. 211). I will also look for critique towards capitalism in the context of climate change and environmental destruction.

Technocracy

Technocracy is one additional frame that I have identified and constructed. Technocracy implies that there is a close relationship between scientific expertise and public policymaking (Bucchi 2009, p. 1). For supporters of this ideology, technological innovations (ibid., p. x) and institutions are of high importance (ibid., p. 4). In the technocratic frame, I will thus collect data that indicate the actors' beliefs in that governance should be guided by scientific research and knowledge, technology, the role of institutions advancing technological development.

Indigenous knowledge-based decision-making

I have also constructed the indigenous knowledge-based decision-making frame. For this frame, I will search for rhetorics and calls for action that value indigenous knowledge in all decision-making regarding Arctic matters.

Sovereignty

There are several definitions of sovereignty, but in this paper, I will focus on external sovereignty, which means the relationship between sovereign states (Moss 2014, p. 28). I will use the term sovereignty meaning 'supreme authority' of a certain state over a specific territory in an anarchic world order (ibid., p. 35). I have recognised and composed the sovereignty frame after having examined the statements held at the AC Ministerial Meetings. In this frame, I will present some

statements that demonstrate states wanting to pursue their sovereign power and national interests in the Arctic.

Table 1. (The Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings' frames 2015-2019)

Technocratic	scientific knowledge, research, technology, the vital role of institutions, best practices
Indigenous knowledgebased decision-making	traditional knowledge, adaptation capabilities, coexistence with the nature
Institutionalist and consensus-driven	the role of institutions, cooperation, collective solutions, consensus-based approaches, multilateral partnerships
Sovereignty	pursuing national interests, external sovereignty, selfdetermination, the power of the states
Bio-environmentalism	ecocentrism, the well-being of the Arctic ecosystems, biodiversity
Social greens	justice, equity; intergenerational and intragenerational, capitalism critique, social problems linked with environmental problems
Market liberal/resource exploitation	economic development/growth, commercial opportunities, natural resource use, technological optimism

5.1.4 Philosophical assumptions

In the study of the AC with the help of a frame theory, the philosophy of the theory and method utilised is important to examine. This includes e.g. the epistemological and ontological standpoints that can be distinguished in frame theory. Firstly, seen from an epistemological perspective, Wagenaar (2013) has classified Rein and Schön's frame theory and methodology as interpretive and hermeneutics (p. 82). The epistemological standpoint of hermeneutics and interpretive theories is subjectivist, and I will therefore study the texts with subjectivity and intersubjectivity as an assumption basis.

From an ontological point of view, Rein and Schön's approach towards reality, truth, meaning and action, has an anti-essentialist character. Rein and Schön believe that we do not have the access to a reality that is mind-independent, nor do they believe that there can be an archimedean point in the study of frames. For them,

values and purpose are fundamental in individuals' perception of the world, which makes reality and truth subjective (Wagenaar 2013, p. 83). There is no objective, frame-neutral observers of the world, Rein and Schön claim (1994, p. 30). Furthermore, according to Rein and Schön, our understanding of reality is dependent on the categories of understanding we appoint, and the categories, in turn, are based on the values and purposes we hold. Facts, theories, values and action are not separate from each other, and they even constitute each other (ibid., p. 85). This ontological approach can be classified as relativism.

5.1.5 Material

I will focus on analysing the speeches from the previous Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings that can be found online at the Council's webpage. The observation period will be 2015-2019, thus I will analyse the documents from the years 2015, 2017 and 2019 (Arctic Council). I have chosen this time frame, since it is wide enough to show the change of the discourse throughout the years and narrow enough to capture the most recent years that I consider to be the most relevant ones in my analysis. In 2015, the USA was namely under the Obama administration, which I assume had a different approach to climate change than the current Trump administration. Moreover, in 2015, the country was still under the Paris Agreement, meanwhile two years after, it had withdrawn from the agreement.

5.1.6 Previous work

There is an existing body of knowledge about the environmental work of the AC. Smieszek (2019) in her paper *Steady as She Goes? Structure, Change Agents, and the Evolution of the Arctic Council*, has studied the AC from the viewpoint of informal international environmental regimes. She concludes that international informal regimes should be considered in their own right, and not as being at an early stage of developing into hard law commitments. Non-binding instruments have some advantages that other forms of governance do not have, such as a more integrated participation of NGOs. Vigeland Rottem (2020) writes the internal and external challenges that The Arctic Council is facing in his book *The Arctic Council: From Environmental Protection to Geopolitics*. In the book, he also writes about possible future scenarios regarding the Arctic cooperation.

In previous studies of the Arctic environmental governance, frame analysis has been used to illuminate the Arctic natural resource development. Davies (2018) has conducted a frame analysis about the relationship between natural resource exploitation and environmental protection, in his paper *Making sense of complex*

socio-ecological issues: a frame-analysis of Arctic natural resource development. A frame has been used in other environmental studies as well; Galli (2011) in *Frame analysis in environmental conflicts: the case of ethanol production in Brazil* writes about environmental conflicts about development and implementation of green technologies, such as biofuel technologies, with the help of a frame analysis.

Also, the issue of forest management has been examined with the help of frame analyses and discourse analyses. Lewicki, Gray and Elliot (2003) in *Making Sense of Intractable Environmental Conflicts* write about conflict resolution with the help of examining changing frames when it comes to forest, water and waste management in the policy discourse. Dan Nielsen (2014) in the article *The role of discourses in governing forests to combat climate change* study discourses regarding governing forests.

5.1.7 Potential limitations

Frame analysis and discourse analysis are similar in the sense that they are both interpretive text analysis methods. A traditional discourse analysis can be utilised to study discursive power relations (Bergström and Boréus 2012, p. 354), whereas a frame analysis can be used to examine actors' meaning, values and action. Frame analysis cannot address power, nor can it show why certain actors are dominant actors, which is something that a discourse analysis is more suitable for. Moreover, frame analysis cannot be used for examining why certain frames are dominant frames, or as Rein and Schön call them, hybrid frames. Additionally, many discourse analysis methods focus on structures (ibid., p. 356), whereas frame analysis puts more weight on agency. Therefore, it is not applicable to examine structures and power relations in this paper.

6 Analysis

6.1 Key frames

6.1.1 Technocratic

The technocratic framing focuses on scientific knowledge. The holders of this frame would like to see scientific and technological expertise play a key role in the decision-making of the Arctic matters, and the solutions to climate change and environmental destruction stemming fundamentally from scientific expertise. For example, in 2015, Tuomioja, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and Kerry, the Secretary of State of the USA, underlined the role of science and technology. Tuomioja stated that he believes that all the attempts to exploit the natural resources of the Arctic should be guided by environmental impact assessments and with the best available technology and methods. Kerry also declared that he wishes to, with the help of different research programmes and projects, promote sustainable development in the decision-making of different parties (Arctic Council, 2015). In 2017, Freeland, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, highlighted especially the importance of data-based policy-making. Minister Fredriksen from Greenland, in turn, stated that he is willing to see an extended scientific cooperation in the Arctic (Arctic Council, 2017). In 2019, Wallström, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, highlighted the urgency of the situation. She spoke for the role that science has and how a fact-based approach is crucial when taking actions (Arctic Council, 2019). The overlapping theme in all the statements that belong to this frame is that the holders consider that good environmental governance is led by knowledge derived from natural sciences. This frame can also be seen to entail liberal institutionalist connotations, since many of the statements belonging to this frame emphasise that the AC as an institution where multilateral coordination is a key component. Many of the statements that could be analysed as technocratic are of highly pragmatic nature, referring to concrete actions that have been taken or should be taken. This frame has mostly been held by ministers from the member states, and the frame is a relatively dominant one.

6.1.2 Indigenous knowledge-based decision-making

Actors who hold this frame wish to enhance the status of indigenous peoples' experiences and knowledge in the Arctic decision-making. Many actors that can be interpreted holding this frame argue that the indigenous peoples in the Arctic region possess valuable knowledge in planning long-term strategies for the sustainability of the region. What connects the wordings that belong to this frame, is that they emphasise the indigenous peoples' capability to survive in the harsh Arctic conditions and to live by the nature's boundaries for the time immemorial. In 2015, Aglukkaq, the Minister representing Canada, emphasised that the people who live in the Arctic are the best experts of the area, since they know how to survive in the rough conditions. She declared: "[t]he people [of] the Arctic are the true Arctic experts and we must include their perspectives—we simply must" (Arctic Council, 2015). This proposition has external validity, since it is presented as common sense. She also stressed that if decisions are being made in the AC without combining scientific research with indigenous knowledge, our understanding of the Arctic and the development towards a more sustainable Arctic cannot be fulfilled. At the same meeting, Gamble and Vozhikov, the representatives from the AIA, made a remark on how the Council has done a great job in bringing indigenous knowledge into policy-formation during the recent years. Eegeesiak, Chair of the ICC, in turn, made a similar comment by highlighting that indigenous knowledge should be incorporated in all policymaking of the Arctic (Arctic Council, 2015). In 2019, Larsson Blind, the President of the Saami Council, raised awareness to the fact that studies show how in the Arctic areas populated by indigenous people, the environmental degradation is less severe. She continues that the indigenous knowledge should not be overlooked in the decision-making processes of the AC (Arctic Council, 2019). What one can notice from the statements that belong to this frame, is that most of them have been voiced by indigenous peoples themselves, and less by the member states. Yet, it can be classified as an institutionalised frame in the AC.

6.1.3 Institutional and consensus-driven

In the institutional and consensus-driven frame, the rhetorics of the Arctic ministers and indigenous group leaders underline the importance of having common solutions and cooperating on the Arctic matters. These kinds of statements can be found in other frames as well, such as in the technocratic frame and market-liberal frame. In this frame, however, I have chosen to include statements that exceptionally strongly indicate the actors' willingness to cooperate and seek

consensus. In this frame, statements about the actors' wish to try to ameliorate multilateral cooperation both internally amongst the Arctic member states and permanent participants, and externally with the focus on cooperation and partnerships with the observer states of the AC, are commonplace. In 2015, Minister Donskoy representing the Russian Federation, suggested that the internal cooperation in the AC could be deepened, and Sweden's representative, Minister Persson, declared that especially during turbulent times in politics, cooperation and dialogue is crucial. Holm Johannesen, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, claimed that the role of the AC, which promotes peace, stability and cooperation, will feasibly increase during the years to come. Moreover, he expressed his contentment about the inclusion of the indigenous peoples in AC's operations. Javo, the President of the Saami Council, stresses that the consensusbased model of the AC obligates all of its parties "to understand each other's positions, perspectives and histories". She claims that understanding is the fundamental element that enables cooperation (Arctic Council, 2015). Also, external cooperation with the current and future observer states is noteworthy in this frame. Persson from Sweden, Bragi Sveinsson from Iceland and Donskoy from the Russian Federation all stated that the EU should be brought to a closer cooperation with the AC. Tuomioja, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, went even further than that and declared that the EU should have an observer status in the AC (Arctic Council, 2015). In 2017, the rhetorics that belong to this frame remained rather similar. For instance, Minister Freeland from Canada accentuated that she wanted to improve reconciliation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples. Minister Fredriksen from Greenland brought up the interest of the non-Arctic states in the Arctic region, and noted that as it increases, the more important becomes the Arctic cooperation. Mack, a Delegate of the AIA, added that mutual respect is the cornerstone of a successful cooperation (Arctic Council, 2017).

Per contra, in 2019, the dominance of this frame received some opposition, primarily from the USA. Pompeo, the Secretary of State of the USA, declared that collective goals are not always the answer. He claimed that they are meaningless if they fail to be satisfied. However, many other states and permanent participants responded to the US behaviour in their speeches. For instance, Þór Þórðarson, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, declared that despite some minor disagreements, the 'common understanding' of the importance of the Arctic binds the community more tightly together. The Swedish Minister Wallström regrets that the ministers could not agree on a joint declaration at the Ministerial Meeting of 2019. She also suggests that the AC should commit to closer cooperation than ever before (Arctic Council, 2019).

6.1.4 Sovereignty

This frame did its full appearance in 2019, and it was predominantly a frame that the USA held. The narrative of this frame is that pursuing national interests and sovereignty weighs more to the member states than commitment to collective actions and common good in the AC. The Secretary of State, Pompeo, declared that: "[t]he United States regards cooperation in a different way than all the other states

and permanent participants”. He highlighted that the work of the AC is built on principles of “individual sovereignty, voluntary cooperation, and shared responsibility,” and the Council should “serve the interests of the nation-states”. He also noted that: “America’s new Arctic focus prioritizes close cooperation with our partners on emerging challenges, including the increased presence and ambitions of non-Arctic nations in the region”. Pompeo continues that the Chinese activity in the region is concerning the USA (Arctic Council, 2019). This frame was not a dominant one at the 2019 meeting, since other member states and permanent participants objected to the statements that Pompeo made.

6.1.5 Bio-environmentalism

The rhetoric of this frame is described by ecocentric world views. In 2015, Sweden’s representative Minister Persson, declared that the country would like to witness “an even stronger environmental dimension” in the AC, since the changes in the ecosystems and the Arctic nature are enormous. Brende, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, also lifted up the noteworthy changes that melting of the ice causes in the Arctic environment. Tuomioja, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, expressed their opinion that the AC should increase its ambition level to protect the environment. Minister Aglukkaq from Canada addressed the action imperative in a very similar manner. Kerry, the Secretary of State of the USA, declared their three main focus points for their chairmanship of 2015-2017, first of which was addressing climate change and its impacts. He also talked both about the negative impacts of climate change on Arctic ecosystems and human populations in the region. Kerry also stated that the decisions that the Council makes in the near future will affect the entire future of the Arctic and even the rest of the world, hence the AC should think about the common good in its policy-making. He continues:

“I think all of us are hoping to achieve a broader, more ambitious global agreement on climate action. And doing so really matters deeply for a host of reasons, but it’s also an indispensable part of a responsibility that is shared by every member of this council, and that is the stewardship of the Arctic Ocean” (Arctic Council, 2015).

These views were outspoken by a representative of the USA in the time of Obama’s presidency. However, at the two following Ministerial Meetings, when the USA was under Trump administration, there was a substantial frame change occurring.

In 2017, Tillerson, the Secretary of State of the US, declared: “[i]n the United States, we are currently reviewing several important policies, including how the Trump administration will approach the issue of climate change. [...] We’re not going to rush to make a decision. We’re going to work to make the right decision for the United States” (Arctic Council, 2017). This can be interpreted as the beginning of the US frame change. However, many other actors, such as Larsson Blind, the President of the Saami Council, was more convinced about their

proactive approach on climate change, since she for instance implored everyone to put mother nature as their number one priority (Arctic Council, 2017).

In 2019, however, the USA refused to name climate change in the joint declaration. This provoked some actors to respond to the event in their speeches. The Saami Council was one of them who reacted to the US behaviour. They referred the US actions to a Harry Potter character: “We would like to underscore that Climate Change and its impacts are nothing like Lord Voldemort that appears only if mentioned.” Also, Stotts, the President of the ICC, framed climate change in a similar way, with a tone that can be interpreted as bio-environmentalist: “We have it all: melting sea ice, thawing permafrost, stronger and more frequent storms causing erosion of our coastline. Today, it’s warmer and wetter, the Arctic climate has changed, and the Arctic ecosystem is transforming before our eyes.” Stotts continued his speech in a way that could be interpreted as a response to the US: “We believe it’s time to stop bickering over whether there’s climate change or not and start implementing strategies and actions to survive climate change. We believe it’s time to stop hiding from reality. “That sentence can be interpreted as a response to climate change deniers. Furthermore, Alexander, the Co-Chair of the GCI, stated that the organisation’s delegates will officially declare a climate change emergency, since problems in nature, such as animal suffering, melting of the ice and permafrost and wildfires, are taking place in their territories (Arctic Council, 2019). On the whole, this bio-environmentalism frame is held more by indigenous peoples’ organisations than by the member states. Nature is often a more of an integrated part of the indigenous peoples’ lives, hence nature potentially has more intrinsic value to them.

6.1.6 Social greens

This frame captures thoughts and ideas about equity, both intergenerational and intragenerational equity. In 2015, gender equality was mentioned on a couple of occasions, often in the same context as climate change. Sweden’s representative, Minister Persson, noted that women and young people are underrepresented in the decision-making of the Arctic. Bragi Sveinsson, the Minister for Foreign Affairs from Iceland, had a similar notion in their statement: “[e]qual participation of women and men in all spheres of society is key to secure social wellbeing and sustainable development in the region. I call on all of us to ensure that gender equality becomes a part of our work on a more permanent basis.” Also, inequality between indigenous peoples and majority populations were addressed. Javo, the President of the Saami Council, reminded the public that indigenous peoples are always the first ones to be negatively affected in connection with political and economic instabilities, thus securing the livelihoods of the Arctic peoples should be made a priority. Persson also noted that the culture, identity and the traditional ways of making a living of the indigenous peoples are threatened. Kerry, the Secretary of

State of the USA, declared that they intend to work more on diminishing the overrepresentation of Arctic indigenous peoples who have mental health issues due to less prosperous livelihoods. Kerry continued: “[s]o collectively, Arctic Council members in observer states contribute more than 60 percent of black carbon pollution. So if we want to know where the problem begins, all we have to do is look in the mirror” (Arctic Council, 2015). These statements that address gender equality and indigenous disadvantages indicate intragenerational consideration. The following statements, in turn, illustrate framing of intergenerational equity. Kerry claimed that the warming climate in the Arctic endangers future generations' living conditions in the Arctic, despite people having been living in the region for thousands of years, and despite having always been able adapting to the harsh conditions before. These issues often follow a similar development with climate change and environmental degradation in the Arctic, he claims (Arctic Council, 2015).

In 2017, especially intergenerational equity was highlighted in the statements. Brende, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, claimed that by maintaining peace and stability, we can secure environmental protection and use the resources of the Arctic, so that the future generations benefit from the decisions of today. Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, shared this view, and stated that a sustainable future requires a stable Arctic. Wallström also mentioned that she is thinking about her own grandchildren hoping to secure a sustainable future for them (Arctic Council, 2015). In 2019, Pokka, the Minister of Environment of Finland, talked about both inter- and intragenerational equity. Firstly, she stated that it is the youth who will be facing the greatest consequences of climate change, and mentioned the climate demonstrations that young people are taking part in today. These notions regard equity between generations. In the same speech, she claimed that it is the responsibility of the wealthy Arctic states to urgently cut the CO₂ emissions in order to keep global warming within 1,5°C. This could be interpreted as equity within the current generations, where the richer Arctic states should take actions, since they have the possibility for it. Þór Þórðarson, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, stated that the Arctic ice is expected to melt, which will be challenging particularly for the indigenous peoples and small Arctic communities. Alexander, the Co-Chair of the GIC declared:

“I fear that future generations will not be able to say, “I will hunt for caribou tomorrow” for two reasons: Because our language has been brutally repressed in the wake of decades of policy that punished our people for speaking Gwich’in [...] [o]r alternatively, because there will be no caribou on the mountain, because the government of today, chose to value temporary profit over our relatives and relationships that have sustained us since time immemorial” (Arctic Council, 2019).

Alexander expressed his concern towards the suppression of the indigenous Gwich’in language and culture and questioned the possibilities of the Gwich’in people being able to sustain their livelihoods in the midst of man-made climate change. Stotts, the President of the ICC, continued with similar critique towards the anthropocentric politics of the current era:

“[w]e believe people should live within, and in collaboration with, nature. Our viewpoint conflicts with the perspective of the so-called dominant society that arrogantly assumes man can control nature. We can see where that approach has gotten us. That approach has been disastrous for the Arctic and the rest of our planet” (Arctic Council, 2019).

Throughout the analysed years, both intergenerational and intragenerational equity were brought up. However, intergenerational equity, especially the will of maintaining a sustainable future for the next generations, is a more dominant element in this frame than intragenerational equity.

6.1.7 Market liberal & resource exploitation

This frame is characterised by world views that promote market liberalism, economic growth and profiteering from the Arctic natural resources. This frame is partially overlapping with the technocratic frame, since many market liberal views are also in favour of technological solutions. In 2015, Minister Donskoy from the Russian Federation declared the following:

“Russia is open to collaboration and joint implementation of large-scale projects in the Arctic, particularly in the Arctic region of the Russian Federation. This entails not just extraction of natural resources, or energy, but also use of the Northern Sea Route as the shortest route for transportation of goods between Europe and Asia, as well as the development of infrastructure for industry, transport, communications and tourism.”

Although, Donskoy adds, climate change and the advancement of technology allows us to endeavour new commercial opportunities, but we must do so in accordance with certain environmental standards. Minister Qujaukitsoq from Greenland acknowledges that climate change can advance the development for the better in certain fields on the island: “in tourism, in agriculture, in mineral and oil extraction and in industrial development based on hydropower” (Arctic Council, 2015). In 2017, Freeland, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada stated: “I hope that we can all work to support innovation and economic growth.” In the same manner, Samuelsen, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, expressed in his statement that improving connectivity, such as extending the infrastructure in the Arctic, would increase economic development (Arctic Council, 2017). At the following Ministerial Meeting in 2019, Samuelsen continued with a similar theme. He strongly highlighted the economic development that the Arctic cooperation enables: “new business opportunities are emerging. We should pursue those opportunities in a sustainable way” (Arctic Council, 2019). Denmark has been one of the member states holding this frame the most.

7 Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to examine which frames are dominant in the Arctic Council, and whether their dominance has changed over time. Additionally, the objective of this paper was to study whether the member states and permanent participants get influenced by the US behaviour in their framing of climate change and respond to that in their statements and positions. In this paper, I have shown the underlying frames that have shaped the political discussions about the Arctic region, with the focus on environmental governance.

After having analysed the material of the statements from the AC Ministerial Meetings held in 2015, 2017 and 2019, I suggest that the most dominant frames have been the ‘institutional and consensus-driven’ frame, the ‘social greens’ frame and the ‘market liberal / resource exploitation’ frame. They can be called as institutionalised frames, since they have been mentioned more frequently than the other frames. However, the ‘technocratic’ frame, which is mostly held by the member states, and the ‘indigenous knowledge-based decision-making’ frame, predominantly held by the permanent participants, can also be addressed as institutionalised frames in the AC, since they have been prevailing in many speeches. Additionally, the ‘bio-environmentalism’ frame is distinguishable in the past three AC Ministerial Meetings, but it is not as dominant as the previously listed frames. The ‘sovereignty’ frame, held by the USA, has emerged somewhat recently. Thus far, it has encountered resistance from other Arctic actors. However, there is still a possibility that the sovereignty frame, which is in conflict with most of the other main frames in the AC, might hamper the Arctic cooperation in the future.

This paper has shown that different actors often hold different frames. Indigenous peoples more frequently highlight the significance of indigenous knowledge as a guidance in policy-making processes. They also address the intrinsic value of nature and express their concern about the degradation of the Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity; they often hold the ‘bio-environmentalist’ frame. Moreover, they often highlight cooperation and coordination with the inclusivity of indigenous peoples and dedicate words for equity and justice in their statements to a larger extent than the member states. Hence, they tend to hold the ‘social greens’ frame more than the member states. One explanation for that could be that the indigenous peoples are often the first ones to face the consequences of climate change, thus they are more prone to hold the social greens frame. The representatives from the member states, in turn, more often hold the ‘technocratic’ frame, but also on other frames, such as the ‘institutionalist and consensus-driven’ frame and the ‘market liberal & resource exploitation’ frame.

Following the frame analysis of the AC, it can be stated that there have been certain frame changes. The USA can be seen having held the ‘institutionalist and consensus-seeking’ frame in 2015, but in 2019, Pompeo’s statements belonged more to the ‘sovereignty’ frame. Future research could examine the future frame

changes and their dominance changes at the AC Ministerial Meetings. It could also be aimed at examining whether there will be more binding international Arctic laws that dictate the Arctic behaviour in a unifying manner, or whether the member states prefer to defend the sovereign state system and to promote national interests.

8 Conclusion

According to my interpretive text analysis study of the Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings, the ‘institutional and consensus-driven’ frame, the ‘social greens’ frame and the ‘market liberal / resource exploitation’ frame have been highly institutional frames from 2015 until 2019. This paper also shows that there have been some minor frame changes in the AC Ministerial Meetings, yet no considerable changes in the frame dominances have emerged. At the latest AC meeting in 2019, many actors responded to the US actions when Pompeo, the Secretary of State of the USA, declined to agree on including ‘climate change’ in the ministers’ joint declaration. Frame analysis can best fulfill its core purpose by necessitating frame reflection, which can essentially be a tool in political conflict resolution.

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