

Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region. Mathieu Landriault, Andrew Chater, Elana Wilson Rowe, and P. Whitney Lackenbauer. 2020. Abingdon-on-Thames and New York, NY: Routledge. xiv + 134 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-0-367-28077-2. GBP 120.

In their book on *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region*, a group of area specialists on the High North take up the issue of increasing activities by multiple and diverse actors within the Arctic Circle and the question of governance that arises from this trend. The authors – Mathieu Landriault (Director, Observatoire de la Politique et la Sécurité de L'Arctique), Andrew Chater (Assistant Professor, Brescia University College), Elana Wilson Rowe (Research Professor, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs), and P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North, Trent University) – are themselves from institutions in Arctic states and publish this 2020 monograph in Routledge's *The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series*. The gap in the existing scholarship that their book sets out to cover is that of looking beyond just state-centric (Arctic Five; Arctic Eight) or inter-governmental organisational (Arctic Council (AC)) analysis, or else single focus of other levels of analysis (Indigenous peoples, non-state actors, businesses, local or regional government, etc.) of Arctic governance. Thus, they survey, on the one hand, a diverse range of circumpolar governance formats at all levels of analysis and, on the other hand, the interplay between these different governance levels.

The book contains seven chapters in total – an introduction, five core chapters, a conclusion, as well as useful appendices with important Arctic governance primary documents (e.g., the Ottawa and Ilulissat declarations). The introduction neatly frames the work with a review of the relevant body of literature and defines the focus of the book in terms of the actors and governance levels and types to be analysed.

The core chapters are themed with the different levels of analysis and actors therein from top (Arctic states) to bottom (private sector actors). In the first chapter, Landriault *et al.* tackle Arctic regional governance with a focus on the coastal states known as the Arctic Five (A5; US, Canada, Denmark – in respect of Greenland, Norway, and Russia) as well as the other, non-littoral states located within the Arctic circle (Iceland, Sweden, and Finland) in its main regional diplomatic forum, i.e., the AC. The authors cover the rise and evolution of the AC and changes that occurred over the years since its formation in 1996 – namely how it “began as a limited environmental governance body created and dominated by the Arctic states [and how emerging d] isagreements (. . .) produced a stronger AC” (p. 23). In addition, they highlight how the several international agreements which the AC facilitated also contributed towards increasing its mandate, as well as the positive development for broadening input of different actors by the emergence of the Arctic Economic Council and the Arctic Circle Assembly. In terms of a trend, Landriault *et al.* observe that “[a]lthough Arctic states still dominate Arctic governance, limited integration of non-Arctic stakeholders has emerged in recent years” (p. 24).


Chapter two concerns itself with the Arctic Ocean and its governance and thereby focuses on two main formats: the A5 and the Arctic 5 + 5. Naturally, the A5 format hints to the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration which was intended “[t]o counter the popular misperception that the Arctic was a ‘lawless frontier’ and a ‘reincarnation of the Wild West’” (p. 28). Landriault *et al.* point out the controversy surrounding that narrowed format in discussing issues of sovereignty over the Arctic Ocean with criticism coming from other states (Finland, Iceland, and Sweden), the European Union, as well as Indigenous peoples (p. 31f.). Via the 2015 Oslo Declaration, the A5 opened the discussion to include five additional parties with capabilities to fish in distant waters (China, the EU, Iceland Japan, and South Korea) which eventually led to the 2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAOFA). Insofar, the authors see the CAOFA as “affirm[ing] the intersecting, and often mutual reinforcing, layers of governance at play in the circumpolar Arctic” (p. 37).

The third chapter takes up Arctic governance exerted by sub-national units as so-called para-diplomacy (p. 42f.) and specifically looks at two multilateral formats, the Northern Forum (NF) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council, the North American Arctic as a case, as well as two specific sub-national units, Québec and Scotland. The authors find that the Barents initiatives between Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia are successful since the regions face similar conditions and the membership is restricted to that region, whereas the

opposite is true for the NF. While the North American region is not working together in an institutionalised way like the Barents region, there are still bilateral initiatives, though, mostly between Alaska and Canadian provinces and territories and little to no interaction with Greenland which exercises its autonomy internationally cautiously. Regarding Québec and Scotland, they “represent two examples of Arctic identity para-diplomacy, developing Arctic policies in response to rising global interest” (p. 54).

Chapters four and five are illustrating the range of actors in the Arctic by focusing on civil society and private sector actors, respectively. In the former chapter, Landriault *et al.* analyse roles of Indigenous peoples and their organisations, as well as observers – specifically within the AC. They find that “Indigenous peoples’ status as Permanent Participants (PPs) in the AC affords strong representation in Arctic governance” (p. 77) – giving as example for their reach of power them “blocking applications for accredited observer status when the applicant’s behaviour did not conform to their interests, as in the case of the EU ban on trade in seal products” (Ibidem). The authors survey the different types of observers (states, IOs, and NGOs) and the way in which they have proliferated in numbers as well as the rules under which they participate in the AC, assessing that the fear of the Arctic Eight (A8) “that a growing number of observers with more clout could marginalize Arctic state and PP voices and render the AC unworkable (. . .) has not occurred” (p. 78). In the latter chapter, businesses as well as business alliances are made the emphases. Landriault *et al.* highlight several aspects of business interaction relevant to the Arctic starting at the global level, in the AC, in the more recently established Arctic Economic Council, and bilateral business ventures using the Norwegian–Russian cooperation in the Barents Sea Shtokman gas field case to illustrate this. The authors note that there is an observable “absence of business actors as participants or invited delegates at (. . .) the [AC] until 2018 [which] suggests that the normative grounds for private sector engagement are still under development” (p. 98) and that it may well be indicative of “the conservation and environmental concerns that have long been at the heart of AC work” (Ibidem).

Importantly, the conclusion in which the authors set out to describe the interplay between Arctic actors at different levels is an important analytical original contribution – equally consequential for scholarship as for policy. On the scholarly side, the authors assert that “Arctic governance networks are neither stable over time nor flat in structure” (p. 104) based on observations of a missing hierarchy of the diverse non-state actors in the Arctic, the experimentation with different formats such as A5, A8, A5 + 5, or the case of the evolution of the NF from an erstwhile meaningful format to the current irrelevance. Additionally, “tightening links between the Arctic region and the global system, as well as the future potential for even more integration” (p. 105) was another trend in Arctic governance. On the policy side, the authors ask several pertinent questions regarding complexity, pace, settings, and inclusivity of non-regional actors in Arctic governance. While they find mainly advantages in the complexity of networks, the pace of Arctic politics “is reason to worry” (p. 106). On the subject of settings, for the A8, “the preferred method of Arctic governance (. . .) is to avoid creation of an overall regime or institution for the region” (p. 107) which naturally led to the emergence of the other above-mentioned formats. For the topic of settings along with the topic of inclusivity of non-regional actors, the authors find the successful example of the evolution in initiating and negotiating CAOFA (from A5 to A5 + 5) one that illustrates a dynamic, i.e., that “Arctic governance systems must acknowledge and incorporate the rights and interests of a growing array of global stakeholders” (p. 108).

To sum up, with *Governing Complexity in the Arctic Region*, Landriault *et al.* have identified a niche that needed to be urgently occupied within the current literature on Arctic governance. Not only is this work sure to be a much-cited contribution to scholarship but also a must-read for any student, scholar, or policymaker in the circumpolar region. (Lukas K. Danner , Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholar, Centre for Arctic Studies, University of Iceland & Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, Florida International University (lukas@hi.is)).

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