



BA Thesis in Political Science

Small States in the Arctic Council

The Contribution of Finland, Iceland and Sweden

Elísabet Ólafsdóttir

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Útdráttur

Staða Norðurskautsráðsins hefur styrkst undanfarin ár. Aðgerðir sem að eiga þátt í því eru m.a. stofnun fastaskrifstofu, samningaviðræður lagalega bindandi samninga á vegum Norðurskautsráðsins, samþykki áheyrnafulltrúa sem tilheyra ekki norðurskautinu, stofnun Efnahagsráðs norðurslóða og útgáfa fjölda mikilvægra vísindaskýrslna. Rannsóknarefni ritsmíðarinnar er að kanna umfang framlags norðurskautsríkjanna þriggja (A3), Finnlands, Íslands og Svíþjóðar, til Norðurskautsráðsins. Sérstök áhersla er lögð á framlög þeirra til pólitískra, efnahagslegra, félagslegra og efnahagslegra málaflokka. Á þessu eru gerð skil með því að greina hvert framlag A3 ríkjanna hefur verið til vinnuhópa og funda Norðurskautsráðsins síðan að A3 ríkin gáfu út stefnumál sín í málefnum norðurslóða árin 2011 og 2013. Með tilliti til smáríkjakenninga og kenninga um frumkvöðla á sviði gilda og viðmiða, er því haldið fram að A3 ríkin hafi lagt mikið að mörkum til Norðurskautsráðsins. A3 ríkin hafa áhrif á Norðurskautsráðsins með því að nota smæð sína sér til framdráttar. Þau beita sérkunnáttu sinni og þekkingu á sviðum samvinnu og samstöðumyndunar til þess að hafa áhrif. Því má ætla að framlag A3 ríkjanna til Norðurskautsráðsins sé mikilvægt styrkingu og þróun ráðsins.

Abstract

The Arctic Council has been strengthening in recent years due to actions such as the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat, negotiations of legally binding agreements under the auspices of the Arctic Council, approval of non-Arctic observers, founding of the Arctic Economic Council and the production of important scientific reports. This thesis discusses to what extent the Arctic three states (A3), Finland, Iceland and Sweden, have been contributing to the Arctic Council. A special emphasis is placed on their achievements on political, economic, social and environmental issues. This is done by analysing what the A3 states have been contributing to the Arctic Council working groups and meetings since the A3 issued their own Arctic policies in 2011 and 2013. With reference to theories of small states and norm entrepreneurship, it is argued that the A3 states contribute to the Arctic Council to a great extent. The A3 states are able to have an effect on the Arctic Council because they use their smallness in a clever way and use their skills and knowledge in cooperation and consensus building to have an influence. The conclusion is that the A3 states' contribution to the Arctic Council is crucial to its strengthening and development.

Preface

This thesis is my final project for a B.A. degree in Political Science at the University of Iceland and is assessed at 12 ECTS out of a 180 ECTS degree. I conducted my research during the spring semester of 2017 with the intention of graduating in June 2017. Special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Page Wilson, for her support, understanding and professional guidance during the writing process.

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Abbreviations

A3	Arctic Three (Finland, Iceland and Sweden)
AC	Arctic Council
ACAP	Arctic Contaminants Action Program
ACS	Arctic Council Secretariat
AEC	Arctic Economic Council
AHDR	Arctic Human Development Report
AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
AMSP	Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan
AOR	Arctic Ocean Review
CAFF	Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EPPR	Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations
MOPSA	Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic
PAME	Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment
SAR	Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Operations in the Arctic
SAO	Senior Arctic Officials
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group
TFAMC	Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation

1 Introduction

1.1 The Arctic

The Arctic area is large but sparsely populated. Through the centuries, indigenous communities have been developing there in close relations to their environment. The Arctic covers a diversity of species, vast nature and natural resources. In recent decades, climate change has led to the melting of ice in the Arctic region. There is no specific definition of the Arctic but it is often based on the Arctic Circle (The Economist 2012), that is “the parallel of latitude that runs 66° 33′ 39” (or 66.56083°) north of the Equator and is one of the five major circles of latitude that mark maps of the Earth” (Latitude 34 North, Latitude).

The climate of the Arctic has become warmer in recent decades. A heat map of the world shows that the Arctic has warmed approximately twice as much as the global average since 1951. For instance, the temperature in Greenland has gone up by 1.5 °C, while globally it has gone up by around 0.7 °C (The Economist 2012, 1). This can have an impact on regional climate and the melting of ice and glaciers contribute to rising sea levels. Whether we look at the effects as positive or negative, depends usually on certain interests. For example, the reduction of sea ice has devastating consequences for polar bears and seals and the communities that live to exploit the products of the species. On the other hand, melting of sea ice will facilitate access to natural resources in the region such as minerals, oil, gas and marine life, and as a consequence, possibly encourage potential opportunities as well as the opening of new shipping routes. This rapid development has led to the engagement of closer cooperation of northern countries, particularly in the Arctic Council (The Economist 2012).

1.2 The Arctic Council

The 1996 Ottawa Declaration marked the establishment of the Arctic Council (AC). The Arctic Council is a forum for “promoting, co-operation, co-ordination and interaction among the Arctic states, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic” (Ottawa Declaration 1996). The Arctic Council has eight member states that have borders to or in the Arctic: the United States, Denmark (for Greenland and Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia and Sweden. At first, the idea was that the Arctic Council should be a multilateral platform for governments to promote cooperation of the states bordering the Arctic. Now it has become one of the main fora for international cooperation in matters concerning the Arctic (Haftendorn 2013, 30-37).

The Arctic Council's main emphasis has been on environmental issues, joint interests and sustainable development. With easier access, new technology and warmer climate, the attention has continued to shift towards possible demand for Arctic resources. Therefore, the political value of the Arctic Council has raised in recent years. The Arctic Council's operation and business is mainly observed in six working groups that operate their own offices and have regular meetings. Observing states and organisations actively participate in the work of the working groups and numerous expert groups and task forces also work under the AC's control. Furthermore, independent research organisations and academics are often asked for their opinion and knowledge to ensure professionalism and neutrality (Dodds, 2012).

1.3 Research Design

This thesis focuses on small states in the Arctic Council; Finland, Iceland and Sweden, which are quoted as the A3 states. The remaining member states are the so-called A5. These five states have been making decisions separately from the remaining A3 states and other permanent representatives of the AC. In 2008, the A5 first met without the three other AC member states, in Ilulissat, Greenland. The A5 signed the Ilulissat Declaration where they agreed that they would solve any conflict which might come up regarding the continental shelf with existing legal framework. Therefore, one could argue that they recognised that there is no need for an Arctic Treaty (Strandsbjerg 2012, 823). Furthermore, they held a highly criticised meeting in 2010. Former United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, argued that the issues discussed during the meeting also concerned the other three Arctic Council, as well as the indigenous people (Reuters 2010). The most recent A5 meeting was held in July 2015 in Oslo, Norway, where the A5 signed the Arctic fishing moratorium. As a consequence, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, expressed his concerns for the future of Arctic relations. He pointed out that Iceland would have had a lot to offer to the conversation due to Iceland's considerable experience in sustainable fishing industry (Eye on the Arctic 2015). These actions may indicate that the A5 states believe their interests are better protected within a narrower group.

Scholars differ on a definition of 'small state' and the boundaries between a 'micro state', 'small state' and 'middle power' are unclear (Baldur Þórhallsson and Wivel 2006, 652). Most scholars mention population as the most important variable when deciding if a state is small or not. The category itself can include states with up to 40 million inhabitants, depending on where you draw the line between 'small', 'medium' or 'large' categories. Other common variables in

determining the size of states are military capacity, size of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and territorial size (Baldur Þórhallsson and Baldvin Donald Pettersson 2005, 526).

Even though quantitative variables, like population or military force, are often used to anticipate state behaviour, it does not explain the role that small states can play in international decision making. The characteristics of states must be allowed to flourish and the power that they possess should not be limited to the powers which they were originally given (Baldur Þórhallsson 2012, 140). The concept of smallness is different in different contexts and they may not be vulnerable in all aspects. The institutional setting and the size and relationship with small states' neighbours do matter. A certain state can be 'small' in one dimension and 'larger' in another (Bailes and Baldur Þórhallsson 2014, 120-121). For instance, Denmark and Norway may well be 'small states' by global standards, but in the Arctic context they are not 'small'. This is why Denmark and Norway are not included in this thesis.

A focus on the A3 states may seem less useful when compared to the 'larger' states in the Arctic region. However, despite their smallness, these states are crucial Arctic players due to their worldwide reputation in leadership, equality, business expertise, cooperation, environment protection and more. The contributions of the A3 have been largely unconsidered. Nord explains that this is because of their limited participation in circumpolar diplomacy but this is also because International Relations (IR) theory and practice often assume that small states are not important (Nord 2016, 18). This thesis explores if this is the case by evaluating if Finland, Iceland and Sweden have had an influence in the Arctic Council since 2011 and if so, what kind of influence. We draw the line in 2011, because in that year, the A3 states developed and published their own Arctic policies.

The research question that is answered by this thesis is: To what extent have the Arctic three states (Finland, Iceland and Sweden) contributed to the Arctic Council?

The following hypothesis is: The Arctic three states (Finland, Iceland and Sweden) have contributed to the Arctic Council to a great extent. The A3 have contributed to the strengthening of the Arctic Council by using their skills in leadership, discussion, knowledge, norm creation and consensus building to initiate progress and have an influence. The A3 have for instance contributed to the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat, approval of new observers, production of scientific reports and the establishment of an Arctic Economic Council. Therefore, their contribution has been useful to the AC.

1.4 Thesis Organisation

The second chapter of this thesis reviews the theoretical schools of small state theory and norm entrepreneurship. These theoretical schools are used to better understand the work and contribution of the A3 states in the Arctic Council. The third chapter analyses the contribution of the A3 states by mapping out different kinds of contributions in separate sections. The fourth chapter discusses the A3 states' contribution to the Arctic Council in relation to analytics and theories. The last chapter provides conclusions and key findings with respect to the research question.

2 Theoretical Framework

First, the small state theory is discussed. The origins and diverse definitions of the theory are explored, as is how it has been developing in relation to IR and politics. Furthermore, the role of small states in international fora is further analysed. Second, norm entrepreneurship is explored. The concepts of norms and soft/hard power are briefly explained. Furthermore, norm entrepreneurs are identified, described and their motivations and potential are discussed.

2.1 Small State Theory

To be able to identify the role of A3 states in the Arctic Council, it is important to explore and understand small state theory. The international environment is a crucial starting point when determining the size of states and their power capability. Handel (1981) argues that structural factors like inter-state relations, a strategic geographical location and international institutions have consistently been perceived as the deciding factors where the fate of small states, and their independent potential in the international arena, are concerned (Baldur Þórhallsson and Baldvin Donald Pettersson 2005, 527).

As a result of the break-up of empires due to the decolonisation that took place in the 19th and 20th century, the number of small states grew. During that time, the definition of a small state, was a state that was not a great power (Baldur Þórhallsson and Wivel 2006, 653). However, there are many ways to identify the size of states. For instance, if we look at the case of the European Union (EU), there are many ways one can identify the size of member states. It is possible to consider population size, ability or effect in the EU or one could consider how the states think of their own position and effect in the EU. Hence, “neither ‘small state’ nor ‘great power’ is self-evident” (Baldur Þórhallsson and Wivel 2006, 653).

Neorealists in political science argued that state’s physical size or its relative power capacity would be the deciding factor of how it would behave in international politics (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004, 10). It was assumed that small states were exposed to political and economic pressure, and therefore their function in the international system was often questioned. It was assumed that small states had no international power because they could not defend themselves against larger neighbours due to their lack of diplomatic power, population, economy and military strength (Baldur Þórhallsson and Wivel 2006, 653).

Rothstein (1968) argued that what defines a small state, is how the population and institutions of the state define themselves:

A small power is a state which recognises that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so; the small power's belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognised by the other states involved in international politics (Rothstein 1968, 29)

Rothstein argued that some world systems give small states more opportunities and security than others. He explained that a bipolar world system gives small states the opportunity of flexibility when the superpowers try to win their loyalty. At the same time, this world system gives the small states less security than, for example, a conservative balance of power, where the great powers are more focused on keeping what is theirs than getting more (Hey 2003, 4-5).

Rothstein's definition is both psychological and material as he acknowledged the disadvantages of power related definitions. By contrast, Keohane (1969) does not consider public perception of the state's ability a relevant factor. Instead, he places emphasis on the leader and what kind of role those who are in control believe the states can play, rather than being concentrated on if security can be kept with mainly the resources of the state itself (Keohane 1969, 195).

Keohane classifies states in four categories. First, a 'system-determining' state is a great power state that plays a crucial role in developing the international system. Second are 'system-influencing' states that may be significant in having an effect on unilateral and multilateral actions but cannot dominate the international system by themselves. Third, there are 'system-affecting' states that cannot have an influence alone but can have a lot of effect with participation in small groups or alliances or through universal or regional international organisations. Lastly, there are 'system-ineffectual' states that can have a very limited influence on the international system, unless they are in large groups where each state has little influence and it is very likely they are dominated by larger states. He further explains these categories in terms of power; 'great', secondary 'middle' and 'small' (Keohane 1969, 195-196).

A great power is a state whose leaders consider that it can, alone, exercise a large, perhaps decisive, impact on the international system; a secondary power is a state whose leaders consider that alone it can exercise some impact, although never in itself decisive, on that system; a middle power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution; a small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system (Keohane 1969, 196).

He further explains how small states can logically advance international organisations without the belief that they will protect them or hold back great powers from certain actions.

The small and the middle powers' leaders know that they cannot do anything without one another (Keohane 1969, 196).

Within the international system the categories of small states and great powers become meaningful (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004, 3). Scholars have identified many different behavioural patterns small states are considered or expected to use internationally. Small states are generally supposed to limit their participation in global affairs that affect their local region or in cooperation with its closest neighbours. Furthermore, small states have a tendency to focus on international values, respecting international conventions and joining multilateral organisations, with the goal to promote cooperation and to avoid conflict with others. Moreover, it is expected that small states spend a relatively large part of their external funds to secure and maintain its physical and political security and survival. Although small states often prefer to remain neutral in international relations, they also tend to rely on superpowers for protection (Hey 2003, 4-5).

Small state studies had a fall-back in the 1970s and 1980s for the reason that size was not considered a relevant category. Scholars began using more general IR theories because of this or they developed new approaches to small state studies. Scholars like Maurice East (1975), concluded that small states were actually likely to act in a risky manner because they had fewer important resources and therefore they could engage in high risk international activities (Hey 2003, 4). East (1973), researched comparative foreign policy. He found out that small states make an attempt to keep the cost of foreign policy actions quite low by setting up more joining actions and taking an active part in multiple-actor fora (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004, 10). Furthermore, Katzenstein (1985), explained that being a small state does not mean that they have a disadvantage. He argued that small European states can in fact outperform their larger neighbours by being flexible and innovative in policy making (Hey 2003, 4).

Neumann and Gstöhl (2004) mention four justifications of why small state studies are relevant in the IR context. First of all, small states make up the great majority of the world's sovereign states. Secondly, they question why IR has focused on the fact that the only states worth examining are the ones with powerful capabilities. They explain that "this assumption can only be made for an international system where states do not feel bound by responsibility or international norms of appropriate behaviour such as, for instance, restrictions on the use of force" (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2004, 2). Thirdly, smaller states recognise great powers and the influence and privilege they have in the international system, for instance, having a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. However, international institutions make power

effects which are based on resources more apparent since norms and rules are in place and therefore require justification. Small states strictly follow international law and international regimes because they act to constrain powerful states. Lastly, institutions and policies are investigated in terms of the actors' relations. IR would gain a lot of new data by taking small states into account (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004, 2).

To be able to explain the behaviour of small states in international fora it is important to take into account the restrictions attached to their small size. Small states have certain flaws such as their exposure to economic swings in the international economy (Bailes and Baldur Þórhallsson 2014, 119). Previously, small states were seen as economically vulnerable in every respect. However, today they are not seen as vulnerable as before. This is because of the economic success many small states have achieved in recent decades. For example, states considered small by global standards in terms of population size, like the Nordic states, the Benelux states, Austria and Switzerland, have fared better than some of the larger states in the European Union, such as Germany, France, Italy and Britain, with regard to increase in production capacity. Nonetheless, small states have to stay alert due to the smallness of their economies (Baldur Þórhallsson and Baldvin Donald Pettersson 2005, 526-527) (Guðmundur Magnússon 2004). This is something that the financial crisis in 2008 demonstrated. For instance, Iceland was hit quite hard by the economic crash because it had not acknowledged its vulnerability, risk and challenges. It is important for small states to have cautious policies, an outstanding economic management and administrative skills and a good plan if they want to survive international shocks (Bailes and Baldur Þórhallsson 2014, 119, 127). According to Baldur Þórhallsson, small states are more defenceless than large states in political, economic and strategic terms. Small states are more prone to be exposed to international pressures and it is crucial for them to adapt domestically to endure political and economic international consequences. Furthermore, it is harder for small states to influence decisions made at the international level due to their lack of resources. Therefore, one can argue that it will be harder for smaller states than larger ones to have an influence in international institutions. Small states are more vulnerable and one of their key aims is to overcome this barrier (Baldur Þórhallsson 2004, 336).

Baldur Þórhallsson has researched whether the special characteristics of smaller states affect their technique in the decision-making process of the EU when it comes to Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Regional Policy. He explained that smaller states have different characteristics, smaller administrations and different interests than larger states.

Smaller states need to prioritise certain policies or sectors over others because of their lack of resources, staff and expertise. When it comes to their most important sectors, smaller states are dedicated. The reason for this is the use of their special characteristics. These characteristics range from familiarity, adaptable decision-making and giving guidelines rather than instructions. Smaller states do not harm their interests by prioritising between sectors due to their limited scope of interests on those issues (Baldur Þórhallsson 2006, 218-219). According to Þórhallsson, smaller states are inflexible in negotiations when they have direct interests, but they are flexible when it comes to interests that do not concern them. However, larger states are likely to be inflexible in all kinds of negotiations, regardless of if they have specific interests in the negotiations or not. The evidence that Þórhallsson provides on the negotiation process in the CAP and Regional Policy, indicates that the behaviour of small states is restricted because of the close collaboration of the larger states and their domestic interests. The negotiation skills of smaller states are different because of their size and characteristics, which leads to other kinds of interests. Þórhallsson explains that “larger states are bound by a close cooperation with their domestic interests as the governments of the smaller states are by their corporatist structure” (Baldur Þórhallsson 2006, 225).

Þórhallsson believes it is not advisable to divide states in certain categories according to quantitative variables. The power of states in the international arena changes rapidly and such a category will not be suitable in the long run. In the literature on small states, qualitative variables have received a lot of attention in explaining states’ domestic effects. A relational definition focuses on the power that states exercise rather than the power they obtain. Þórhallsson argues that it is important to include factors such as quality not quantity, knowledge, diplomatic expertise and drive, if one is to evaluate accomplishments on the international platform. Furthermore, the reputation and image of a certain state and its recognised impartiality are crucial origins of achievements. If small states want to become prosperous they need to show effective leadership, good coalition-building skills and an ability to work under pressure and prioritise (Baldur Þórhallsson 2012, 139-140).

In the mid-1980s the focus shifted on prosperous states like Iceland and Ireland. Small states were now perceived as innovative, clever and adaptable (Bailes and Baldur Þórhallsson 2014, 119). A small state may also benefit from being small. Its policy making structure is smaller and the decision making process is faster and more adjustable. Small states may portray themselves as being innovative and their global norms and actions are not committed to limited

national interests. This is what Christine Ingebritsen calls a ‘norm entrepreneur’ (Ingebritsen 2002).

2.2 Norm Entrepreneurship

Finland, Sweden, Iceland, along with other Nordic states, have often been mentioned in the context of norm entrepreneurship because of their role in peace-keeping, development aid and human rights prevention (Bailes and Baldur Þórhallsson 2014, 120).

Scholars in IR have been reconsidering the definition of power and as a consequence, evaluating how states can have an effect in by measures not related to economic and military capabilities. The international system is often viewed as anarchic, on the contrary, these scholars look into how states become socialised into an international community. Inside this community, norms are created. Norms are defined as “established practices, codes of conduct and standards of acceptable behaviour that influence state interests and identity” (Ingebritsen 2002, 12).

Small states do not have the hard power tools larger states have such as military and economic resources and the use of coercion and commands. Therefore, they need to use other soft power tools such as good ideas, attraction and persuasiveness to have an influence on the political agenda to improve their status and influence others. According to Joseph Nye, soft power is just as important as hard power. He explains that if states can convince others that their power is legitimate, they will not have to cross as many barriers while achieving their goals. If their ideas are attractive, it is more likely that others states will follow and create international norms. As a consequence, the small states will not have to change their own norms (Nye 2004, 5-7).

Theories of norm development are relevant when exploring the A3’s contribution to the AC because, as will be demonstrated in chapter four of this thesis, the A3 states use soft power and norm entrepreneurship to achieve their goals and have an influence in the AC. Therefore, it is meaningful to assess how these states have used norm entrepreneurship to make a contribution to international politics. Scholars of IR have examined norms and evaluated how they become important and how they shape and characterise state interests and identity. Furthermore, norms can coincide, clash or fail to be approved by the international community. However, it is valuable to research in many areas to identify why and how states follow a certain policy over another (Ingebritsen 2002, 12).

Finnemore and Sikkink identify three phases in the life-cycle of norms. They define norms as “a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, 891). Three phases must take place so states can form international norms (Ingebritsen 2002, 12).

The first phase is norm emergence. Norms most often need the factors of entrepreneurship and institutionalisation to be able to present their views. Norms are created by actors with strong opinions on what is the appropriate and desirable behaviour. Entrepreneurs draw attention to the subject and even create it by giving it a name and interpreting it. Norms need to prove their excellence in competition with other norms and challenge what is considered appropriate. Norms need a platform to be presented and international institutions like the United Nations are often used. When a norm is institutionalised and becomes a part of international rules and practices it approaches the next step. When entrepreneurs have convinced a number of states to adopt new norms, the norm has reached a certain tipping point (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896-901).

The second phase is norm acceptance. When this happens, a domino effect starts, characterised by international socialisation, where leading states try to get other states to follow them. Other states will follow because they are aware of the identity of the state. Therefore, they change their behaviour so it is in line with the new definition of appropriate behaviour for the identity of states (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 902). The final phase is norm internalisation. This happens when the norms are almost automatically followed and acceptance of the norm is created (Ingebritsen 2002, 12). As a consequence, there is no need to further debate its excellence. Because these norms are generally accepted, they bring little or nothing into the political debate (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 904).

According to Ingebritsen, economically dependent and militarily weak small states, like the A3, pursue social powers in the international arena by being ‘norm entrepreneurs’. That is, they have good international reputations in certain policy areas such as international security, universal welfare and the environment. These states set other states certain norms which portray the good society in the policy making of those issues (Ingebritsen 2002, 13).

With their efforts to bring their views forward and strengthen certain international norms, the A3 have acquired international reputations as reliable and trustworthy partners. There are several reasons why they became norm entrepreneurs and why they use it to have an influence. These states have remained mainly neutral in the international arena, especially Finland and

Sweden, which have stayed neutral in negotiations between the West and the East since 1945 and have been an active participant in building new security institutions in Europe such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (Ingebritsen 2002, 16-17).

Moreover, the A3 have a comparative advantage in foreign policy making. The distinction of their social democratic institutions that emphasize the importance of social partnership and consensus in policy-making, allows the A3 to uphold uniformity while pursuing their ideas domestically. This is why distinguished Nordics are frequently asked to share their knowledge in international conflicts (Ingebritsen 2002, 13, 18).

2.3 Summary

There still remains uncertainty of how the category of small states is defined. According to traditional approaches in IR and politics, small states are vulnerable and unable to have much impact on the international system. Such approaches emphasise population, territory, resources and capabilities. However, they do not address important issues such as norms and institutionalisation that undercuts the importance of the conventional power larger states have and instead, give small states scope for influence. It is important to look at factors like drive, expertise, knowledge, reputation when defining the size of states and the potential they can have in international fora. Small states focus on international values and join and respect multilateral organisations; further, they use the international platform to promote cooperation. The power of good ideas, international cooperation, special characteristics and appealing culture can be considerable and there, small states can make up for their loss of conventional power. As Ingebritsen has shown in the case of small states like the Nordic powers, they can influence the international community by using norm entrepreneurship as a foreign policy method. The remaining chapters demonstrate how this occurs specifically in the context of the Arctic Council, with reference to the roles of Iceland, Sweden and Finland.

3 The Contribution of the Arctic Three to the Arctic Council

The Arctic Council (AC) explains the resources of contributions to the work of the Council as being on a “voluntary, project-by-project basis and is largely provided in the form of people, expertise, scientific data and/or financial resources to implement specific projects in the Working Groups” (Arctic Council, Frequently Asked Questions).

It is possible to identify the AC’s achievements in several ways. First of all, the AC issues statements before every ministerial meeting and they are approved when they finish. The statements are named after the place they are initiated and they indicate the AC’s priorities in the next two years. Therefore, these identified priorities provide a baseline against which achievements can be measured in the following years. Other reports and statements presented at the ministerial meetings are also relevant here. During a ministerial meeting, the next state in line begins its two-year Chairmanship, but the eight member states take turns running the AC. The policy of the Council is characterised by the Chairmanship state. The Senior Arctic Officials’ (SAO) meetings are also very important in this context, but they do the real work behind the ministerial meetings.

Second of all, the working groups of the AC issue large assessment reports which are relevant when evaluating the contribution of different participants. These summaries are often over hundred pages on the scientific findings of the experts who stand behind the core of the work that the Council is primarily about. The reports draw less attention than the ministerial meetings in the world news, although, decisions are based on them. For instance, the AMAP heavy metals assessments became the foundation for the AC’s initiative to call for an international agreement in mercury. As a consequence, the agreement of the *Minimata Convention on Mercury* was accepted in 2013 (AMAP, Assessing Arctic Pollution Issues).

Finally, all of the A3 states have specific government-issued Arctic policies. These documents can give us further clues on what the A3 states’ interests and goals are in the Arctic region and if they have achieved any of these goals. Finland’s strategy for the Arctic Region was adopted in 2011 (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland 2010). However, it adopted a new strategy in 2013 which addresses a wider range of issues (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland 2013, 7). Sweden’s strategy for the Arctic region was adopted in 2011 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a) and Iceland passed a parliamentary resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy in 2011 (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy 2010-2011).

Sweden is the only A3 state that has held Chairmanship in the AC since 2011, but it held the Chairmanship from 2011 to 2013. Its stated Arctic policy was published at the same time it began its Chairmanship. Therefore, it resembled its Chairmanship aims. Finland will begin its two year Chairmanship, after the 10th Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, United States, this May. In 2019, Iceland will take over the Chairmanship.

3.1 Political Contributions

In recent years, the Arctic Council's role has been strengthened by the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat, ushering in international agreements and broadening the Council's agenda further to affairs related to policy making, international law and the economy. The A3 states have been actively involved in these efforts. Finland, Sweden and Iceland all respect the AC as the main forum for discussing Arctic affairs (Prime Minister's Office, Finland 2013) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a, 19) (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011).

3.1.1 Sweden and the Strengthening of the Arctic Council

According to Sweden's policy, Sweden wants the Arctic region to remain a space of low political tension. Sweden aims to strengthen the AC as a central multilateral forum for Arctic-related issues. It further places an emphasis on making common policies and concrete projects in cooperation forums like the AC to benefit the region as a whole (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a, 18). Sweden believes that the Council could be empowered by broadening its mandate to include issues like security, infrastructure and social and economic development. Furthermore, Sweden stressed the importance of more concrete projects and clear political actions in the AC. Therefore, Sweden wanted to strengthen the AC politically and institutionally (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a, 19).

Sweden's awareness and knowledge in the Arctic has grown since it published its Arctic strategy. Nord argues that this might be a consequence of its leadership role during its Chairmanship in 2011-2013 (Nord 2016, 167). The Swedish Chairmanship faced several obstacles. Self-interest had become a part of some Arctic states as they claimed access to resources and jurisdiction over different areas of the Arctic. These patriotic demands were threatening to cooperation in the Arctic region and the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008¹ of the A5 states further undermined the northern solidarity of the AC member states (Nord 2016, 76-77).

¹ See more: Ilulissat Declaration 2008.

Nord argues that the Swedish Chairmanship was one of the most successful and productive yet seen by the Arctic Council due to its efforts in strengthening the governance capabilities of the AC and establishing a broader consensus among its membership. This was done through, for instance, the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat and the inclusion of new observers (Nord 2016, 167). These efforts are further explained in detail later on in this chapter. However, today, a new government rules and it does not emphasise circumpolar diplomacy. Therefore, Sweden plays has now become more of a supporter rather than a leader in the AC today, while at the same time, receiving a lot of respect from its colleagues for its managerial capacity and skill in consensus creation (Nord 2016, 167-168).

3.1.2 Establishment of the Permanent Secretariat

Sweden's Chairmanship goals related to political contribution were, for instance, to establish a Permanent Secretariat (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011b, 6). The Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) previously rotated biennially with the Chairmanship of the AC. At the Nuuk Ministerial Meeting in May 2011 it was decided to establish a Permanent Secretariat in Tromsø, Norway (Arctic Council, The Arctic Council Secretariat). The Swedish Chairmanship had to deal with crucial implementation work. It was in charge of making an agreement with a host country, creating terms of reference, financial rules and staff guidelines. Furthermore, it was in charge of organising and overlooking the hiring of the Director of the ACS and approving a budgetary plan. The Swedish Chairmanship developed consensus by establishing an Institutional Task Force which was representative and responsible of the process of creating the Secretariat (Nord 2016. 122-123).

At the Kiruna meeting in 2013, the Secretariat in Tromsø was established, the Rules of Procedure issued and an Observer manual published (Bildt 2013). The ACS is in charge of administrative and organisational support of the AC's participants, member states, working groups, task forces and observers. Furthermore, the Secretariat is head of communication and outreach. Magnús Jóhannesson from Iceland is the Director of the ACS (Arctic Council, The Arctic Council Secretariat). The Secretariat is one of Iceland's top priorities in the Arctic because of Jóhannesson's hiring (Össur Skarphéðinsson 2013). Bailes argued that the Nordics' coordination secured the agreement to create the Permanent Secretariat. Therefore, the A3, as part of the wider Nordic group, together improved the AC's own structure and standing (Bailes and Margrét Cela 2013, 43).

3.1.3 Iceland and the Strengthening of the Arctic Council

Iceland's policy states that security in the Arctic should be strengthened. In its opinion, this can be done by establishing stronger cooperation and seeking bilateral agreements. Iceland's policy suggests to the next generation of bilateral agreements of security, to extend the common pollution prevention by bringing in more parties, because of expected growth in traffic of cargo vessels near Iceland. It further emphasises the strengthening of domestic consultation and cooperation on Arctic issues with the participation of many different groups, international organisations, governments and academics (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011, 10-11). Hermann Ingólfsson, Iceland's Director General for International and Security Affairs, expressed Iceland's commitment to work together under the symbols of sustainable development. Ingólfsson stressed the increased role of the AC as a negotiation platform for legally binding agreements, doing more policy relevant research and establishing a Permanent Secretariat (Hermann Ingólfsson 2013). Iceland, like the other A3 states, have been active in contributing to the discussion of strengthening and further developing the AC. At the Iqaluit ministerial meeting in 2015, the A3 stressed the importance of international cooperation and the Council's role as a forum for political dialogue (Persson 2015) (Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson 2015) (Tuomioja 2015).

3.1.4 Arctic Council: A Treaty-Based International Organisation?

Finland's strategy from 2013 expressed its willingness to further strengthen the AC by recognising the Arctic Council as a treaty-based international organisation. Finland is interested in being an active player in the development within the AC of a "contractual framework complementary to the overall regulation of activities in the Arctic" (Prime Minister's Office, Finland 2013, 59). Finland's two year Chairmanship of the Council will begin this spring. Finland has announced its aims in a brief manner. Finland aims to assure security policy in the Arctic and boost the importance of the region. Finland's Prime Minister has announced that the main elements of the Finnish strategy from 2013 are still in force (Government Communications Department 2016). Finland's priorities are based on EU and foreign policy and other Arctic infrastructure. The Finnish Government has not yet released any specific information or aims relating to establishing a treaty-based Arctic Council during its Chairmanship (Government Communications Department 2016). It will be interesting to see if the upcoming Finnish Chairmanship will emphasise the establishment of the AC as a treaty-based organisation and if any progress will be made towards it. Even though Finland has not mentioned it formally these last few months, this is something they have been expressing in the

last few years. Page Wilson explains that Finland's previous announcement of aiming to establish the AC as a treaty-based organisation is important. This is because, at time of writing, no other member state has publically addressed its opinion in developing the existing foundations of the Council in this manner (Wilson 2016, 65, 67).

3.1.5 Legally Binding Agreements

Iceland's policy states that the new *Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* (SAR) is an important factor in increasing the AC's importance and weight (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011, 5). The agreement was concluded in Reykjavík, Iceland (Össur Skarphéðinsson 2013, 3). The agreement identifies search and rescue areas for each member state for a better response to the increasing traffic through and above the Arctic, and therefore, better response to danger in the next few years (Arctic Council 2011). The agreement was the first legally binding international agreement negotiated under the auspices of the AC with the full participation of all eight Arctic states. It was signed in 2011 and put into force in 2013. All A3 states have signed on this binding agreement and therefore, finished respective internal procedures in place to commit corresponding parties to the agreement's responsibilities (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011, 5).

At the Kiruna meeting in 2013 the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution* was signed by all Arctic Council member states, including members from the A3 states (Bildt 2013). During the meeting, the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland expressed his appreciation of the oil spill agreement (Tuomioja 2013). Ingólfsson also expressed Iceland's positive reaction to the oil spill agreement and further highlighted the importance of building upon the work of the search and rescue agreement and the new oil spill agreement (Hermann Ingólfsson 2013). The Swedish Chairmanship was active in encouraging members of the Task Force behind the agreement to forward progress and it also closely scrutinised it. Furthermore, it oversaw the discussion and identified areas that might need other views and offered its help in building consensus (Nord 2016, 94, 97). When the agreement was under negotiation, 70 representatives from the Arctic states met in Reykjavík, Iceland (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland 2012). Parties from all A3 states have binding responsibility for oil pollution preparedness and response, requesting or rendering assistance, and providing 24 hour operational contact points (Arctic Council 2013a). The A3 states contributed to the negotiations and signing of the agreement, and are now participating in the follow up of the agreement.

However, it must be noted that the AC has not become a treaty-based international organisation. These two binding agreements have not been signed by representatives of the AC itself but the eight member states. This development can therefore be interpreted in different ways. One can argue that the collaboration between the eight member states is strengthening independently of the AC itself. However, it is possible that the AC is strengthening itself as the member states of the AC are using the AC as a negotiating platform for legally binding agreements. This may indicate that the AC member states are open for further development of the AC. If the AC member states would not recognise and support further strengthening of the AC, they would possibly choose another platform for negotiating important actions such as those outlined above.

3.1.6 Observers

Finland supports the inclusion of new observers. Finland emphasises the role of the EU in the Arctic and supports them becoming an observer in the AC (Prime Minister's Office, Finland 2013, 14-15). During Finland's upcoming Chairmanship, Finland plans on highlighting EU's role as one of the major stakeholders in Arctic affairs (The Arctic Institute, Finland, Governance). At the Iqaluit Ministerial Meeting in 2015, all A3 states stressed the importance of including observers in the Arctic Council, such as non-Arctic States as well as relevant organisations. Sweden and Finland place special emphasis on the inclusion of the EU (Persson 2015) (Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson 2015) (Tuomioja 2013).

The Swedish Chairmanship was active in encouraging other member states to favour the approval of new observers. It non-formally met possible applicants and began new discussion with permanent participants and member states that appeared negative towards the admission (Nord 2016, 94). As a consequence, five new observers (China, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Singapore) were accepted to the Council during the Kiruna meeting in 2013 (Nord 2016, 150). Doubt towards non-Arctic observers had been largely eliminated and the Swedish Chairmanship was praised for its actions towards creating consensus among AC members. The Swedish Chairmanship managed to do this by declaring their support for the admission of new observers and using underground lobbying to urge member states like Russia and Canada to accept the admission of new observers. The AC was strengthened because of the inclusion of six non-Arctic observers to the organisation, and was now able to move towards a more focused and united way of addressing its agenda (Nord 2016, 126). Iceland and Finland have also been advocating for the inclusion of non-Arctic observers (Nunatsiaq Online 2010) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland 2013). This was something that most likely supported the Swedish

Chairmanship to further build consensus, as the A3 states supported each other during these actions.

3.2 Economic Contributions

3.2.1 The Development of Economic Efforts

Iceland's Arctic Policy places an emphasis on increasing economic activity in the Arctic region by utilising resources in a sustainable manner and handling the ecosystem and the conservation of biota in a protective way (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011, 2). Changes in the Arctic region might generate job opportunities in Iceland related to resource utilisation, shipping, research and monitoring in the Arctic. Iceland's Arctic Policy argues that it is crucial that the Icelandic population will be able to make use of this. It further expressed Iceland's support for the idea of creating an Arctic Chamber of Commerce to promote trade cooperation in the region and business discussion (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2010-2011, 10-11).

At the Kiruna meeting in 2013, when the Canadian Chairmanship began, it was decided to create a project group that would draft the institutionalisation of an Arctic Chamber of Commerce. The group was called the TFCBF (Task Force to Facilitate the Circumpolar Business Forum) and was co-led by Iceland, Finland, Canada and Russia. Since May 2013, the group discussed regularly and issued a report in December the same year, which also suggested a change in the name of the forum that was approved in 2014: Arctic Economic Council (AEC). Finland and Iceland both volunteered to hold task force meetings and the meetings had participants from all of the A3 states, which contributed to the creation of the AEC (TFCBF 2013) (Arctic Council 2014)

Finland's Arctic goals are connected to the interests of Finnish research and business associations. It places an emphasis on its geographical, cultural and professional advantages. Furthermore, they mention the importance of long-term mutual effort and networking between the authorities and private companies (Prime Minister's Office, Finland 2013, 8-9). Like previously stated, Finland got a chance to put its view forward when co-leading on the task force that as a consequence established the AEC.

Sweden stresses the importance of free trade and international law in the Arctic region. One of Sweden's main focus is on sustainable development in the Arctic region (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a, 30). The Swedish Chairmanship aimed to initiate a discussion of the AC with the business community about sustainable development (Ministry

for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011b, 5) When the Swede Mikael Anzén was hired as the head of the SDWG during the Swedish Chairmanship, he led the effort to include the business community more broadly in the concerns of the Council (Nord 2016, 87). At the Kiruna meeting in 2013, Bildt argued that the Swedish Chairmanship had done revolutionary work in beginning a discussion with the business sector on how the private sector can support sustainable economic Arctic development (Bildt 2013).

3.2.2 The Arctic Economic Council

At the Iqaluit 2015 Ministerial meeting, all A3 states expressed their appreciation of the creation of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) (Persson 2015) (Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson 2015) (Tuimioja 2015). Like previously stated, the Arctic Economic Council is an institution created by the AC during the 2013-2015 Canadian Chairmanship. The AEC was developed to assist Arctic business activities and liable economic development. The AEC regularly reflects the current business perspectives for consideration by the AC. The members of the AEC come from many different sectors. All member states have three representatives at the AEC. The Secretariat is placed in Tromsø, Norway and is currently chaired by the United States. The Vice-Chair is in the hands of Tero Vauraste from Finland (AEC, About us). The day-to-day work in the AEC is done in working groups, similar to the Arctic Council. The AEC has four working groups and the Infrastructure: Maritime Transportation Working Group is co-led by Russia and Finland. The other groups are not led by any A3 states, but members and experts from these states do participate in the work (AEC, Our work).

All AC member states have up to three representatives in the AEC. Therefore, different sectors should be represented. Finland has members from Arctia Ltd., a Finnish company providing icebreaking and other Arctic vessels and Agnico Eagle Finland Ltd., a gold mining company. Iceland has members from the Federation of Icelandic Industries, Ursus, an investment company, and the Icelandic-Arctic Chamber of Commerce. Sweden has members from Ericsson Canada, a telecommunications company, and LKAB, a high-tech mining and mineral group (AEC, About us) (AEC, Members).

The AEC is a new institution and is still being formulated. During its annual meeting in 2016, the AEC adopted foundational documents like its three-year strategic plan, rules of procedure and membership terms and conditions. Iceland, Sweden and Finland all contributed to these actions (AEC 2016a). In November 2016, AEC signed the Canada and European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The Finnish Vice-Chair, Tero

Vauraste, argued that this agreement would be important in providing business opportunities by establishing strong market connections between Arctic states (AEC 2016b).

In January 2017, AEC's working group on Telecommunications released its report *Arctic Broadband, Recommendations for an Interconnected Arctic*. This report details the development of broadband in the Arctic and it is the first report the AEC releases. All A3 states have members in this working group that contributed to the work of this report (AEC 2017). The AEC and the telecommunications working group are organising the second summit on telecommunications in the Arctic that will be held in Oulu, Finland in July 2017 (High North News 2017).

It is obvious that telecommunications are getting a lot of attention in the AEC today. It will be interesting to see what the development of the AEC will be when Finland starts its Chairmanship in May 2017. The Vice-Chair is Finnish and Iceland and Finland were particularly active in creating the AEC because they were leading in the task force. Furthermore, all of the A3 states participate in the work of the AEC and Finland is co-leading in an AEC working group. Like previously stated, AEC still remains to be fully tested, but the establishment of the AEC is an important step in expanding the AC's work. The Swedish Chairmanship's engagement in discussing with the business community must have drawn attention to economic matters. It is important for the environment of the Arctic region, to include those who might be involved in business opportunities there, to secure that everything is done according to environmental protection. By including more actors, the AC is also further strengthened.

3.3 Social Contributions

As has been argued, the A3 states have contributed to the AC to a great extent. The AC has been strengthened by the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat, approval of more observers, facilitating legally binding agreements and the establishment of the AEC. During all these actions, the A3 were positive in discussion, cooperating towards consensus of all members and contributing by for instance, pressing the importance of strengthening the AC in discussion and participating in all sorts of design work. The A3 states are all supportive of the inclusion and protection of all those connected to or effected by the Arctic. Therefore, it is also crucial to look into the social contributions the A3 states have delivered to the AC. The A3 are internationally known for their expertise and effort in ensuring equality of all. In the work of the AC, there is no exception. All of the A3 states place an emphasis on the social aspect of the

AC in their stated Arctic policies. They mention the importance of indigenous peoples and the representation of everyone involved in or effected by Arctic issues. The following chapter identifies the A3 states' achievements on social measurements in the AC.

3.3.1 The Swedish Chairmanship and the Human Dimension

The Swedish Chairmanship planned on increasing the role of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), making the human dimension one of Sweden's priority tasks. The Chairmanship also noted that attention should also be given to gender equality perspectives (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011b, 4). The Chairmanship gathered support within the AC to enliven the SDWG and it was supplied with a new leadership and resources. The Swedish Chairmanship urged the AC to focus on matters of gender, culture, health and education within the Arctic region (Nord 2016, 118). Furthermore, The Swedish Chairmanship planned on launching the project *Arctic Human Development Report II: Regional processes and global linkages* (AHDR) to increase knowledge on social and physical change and how it can affect people living in the Arctic region (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011b, 5). The SDWG announced the report at the Kiruna meeting in 2013 and committed themselves to soon release a new *Arctic Human Development Report* (Nord 2016, 119).

Nord argues that the most important accomplishment in the human dimension was the Swedish Chairmanship "effort to help diffuse the existing tensions between the "environmental protection" and "sustainable development" wings of the organisation" (Nord 2016, 119). The Swedes suggested that there was a "Third Way" of thinking about the obstacles in the Arctic and the AC, by using efforts of resilience. This is something that the Nordic region had been using to respond to challenges of human development and environmental conservation in the Arctic. The Swedish Chairmanship explained that the social and natural systems face the same challenges and therefore, it is important that these systems communicate. The Chairmanship was successful in lobbying support for these ideas within the AC and separate working groups started to collaborate more with one another (Nord 2016, 119).

3.3.2 Sustainable Development Working Group

SDWG seeks to develop new ways of sustainable development in Arctic communities, especially for indigenous people, so everyone can enjoy possible opportunities and at the same time, respond to old and new threats. Socio-economic issues are in the foreground, from the exploitation of natural resources to protecting languages. Current Chairmanship is held by the United States, and the Secretariat is situated in Tromsø, Norway (Arctic Council, SDWG).

The A3 states' Ministries for Foreign Affairs have carried their participation in the SDWG (SDWG, SDWG Representatives). Furthermore, SDWG has two expert groups, the Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group and the Arctic Human Health Expert Group. All A3 states have a seat at the table (SDWG, Expert Groups). Researchers from all A3 states have contributed their work to the SDWG on topics such as indigenous language, sustainable livelihood, gender equality, health, transportation infrastructure, culture and human development. During the 2015-2017 United States Chairmanship period, projects are being led by Iceland and Finland, but not Sweden. Finland and Iceland are co-leads on a project called *Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy* and it assesses the need for the development of community energy experts. Furthermore, Iceland co-leads on a project on *the Arctic as a Food Producing Region* (SDWG, Current Projects).

Each of the A3 states have led a project in the past few years. Iceland and Finland co-led a project on *Gender Equality in the Arctic* during the Canadian Chairmanship. Iceland also co-leads in the *Arctic Maritime and Aviation Initiative*, which was created during the Swedish Chairmanship to assess transportation infrastructure. Sweden led a project on *Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (Part A)* (AACAA) during the Swedish Chairmanship. The report identifies the key findings and recommendations from the past AC assessments over the past ten years. This was done to identify how these provide to adaptation alternatives for Arctic countries (SDWG, Recent Projects). The main findings of this report was that climate change is happening, Arctic inhabitants are adapting and the AC has established monitoring networks that support this development (Arctic Council 2013b, 19). The Icelandic Stefansson Arctic Institute has been leading in projects and extensive reports of working groups, which include the *Arctic Human Development Reports I and II* and the follow up projects, *Arctic Social Indicators I and II*. The reports contained work from Finland and Sweden as well. *The Arctic Social Indicators* reports track social changes in the Arctic. The reports identify critical issues and upcoming challenges in the livelihood of the peoples of the Arctic region, quality of life and global change effects. These reports give important clues about what trends and changes in the Arctic relate or threaten the human development in the Arctic. The reports contribute to better knowledge of resilience and adaptation in the face of global change on the livelihood of Arctic peoples. The outcomes have been recognised of those who deal with human development and the indicators that these projects come up with are used to monitor changes in human development in the Arctic region (UArctic 2015) (Nymand Larsen et al. 2013).

Like previously stated, Iceland and Finland co-led a project on *Gender Equality in the Arctic* during the Canadian Chairmanship from 2013 to 2015. It also contained contributions from Sweden. Iceland proposed a project at the AC in the autumn of 2013, with the goal to promote gender related discussion on future and current challenges. The project led to a conference which was held in Akureyri, Iceland in October 2014, which was attended by stakeholders from all member states (Embla Eir Oddsdóttir et al. 2015). The conference was organised to open and enhance dialogue and look for any suggestions related to possible follow-up actions. The project was supposed to serve as a crucial support to the AC, especially in the future work of the SDWG (Embla Eir Oddsdóttir et al. 2015, 15) A report on the findings of the conference was presented at the Iqaluit ministerial meeting in 2015. The report argues that the main aim of the conference was to promote a broad discussion and cooperation on gender equality “putting current realities and future challenges into context with climate and environmental changes as well as economic and social developments” (Embla Eir Oddsdóttir et al. 2015, 7). Furthermore, the goal was to acknowledge the situation of men and women in the Arctic region. The report suggests that the recurring theme of recognising diversity, emerged during the conference. Moreover, gender mainstreaming was also highlighted as well as ensuring gender equality and eliminating discrimination in the AC. At last, the necessity of making gender-related issues a preference in the Arctic, along with adopting a comprehensive approach to Arctic development (Embla Eir Oddsdóttir et al. 2015, 7).

More than one Chairmanship of the AC has highlighted the importance of gender equality and most Arctic states have been active in promoting gender equality in other international fora. The first AHDR had a chapter on gender issues and in the second AHDR, gender issues are mainstreamed into each chapter (Embla Eir Oddsdóttir et al. 2015, 13). Eva-Maria Svensson, a Swedish Professor, criticised the first AHDR for its lack of addressing gender equality as such and the lack of responsibility over how the economic development has an effect on gender equality. Furthermore, she placed an emphasis on the fact that the AC does not have any practical action plans on ambitions in terms of gender equality that they certainly do have. She explains that now is the time to make gender equality mainstream in issues of the Arctic (Svensson 2014, 27).

Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson explained at the Iqaluit meeting in 2015 that one of the keys to secure social wellbeing and sustainable development in the Arctic region is by making sure that both men and women are represented in all levels of society. Moreover, Sveinsson called for

gender equality to become a permanent part of the work of the AC (Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson 2015). Persson also called for gender equality at the Iqaluit meeting (Persson 2015).

In the past, the Icelandic Chairmanship of the AC 2002-2004 placed an emphasis on strengthening the human dimension of the AC. At the gender equality conference in 2014, Sveinsson criticised the AC for not implementing enough gender related issues of the former report and hoped that the AC would implement gender perspectives in the work of the AC in a more systematic manner (Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson 2014, 77).

In November 2016, during a SDWG meeting, delegates formally endorsed an Iceland led project called *Gender Equality in the Arctic II* (Arctic Council 2016). The project “aims to continue that work by establishing a formal network of experts in this field that will over the course of the next two years advance the work of the Arctic Council and the SDWG in this area” (Arctic Council 2016). It will be interesting to see if the Icelandic Chairmanship of 2019-2021 will try to further push towards a consensus on gender issues in the Arctic. Finland has also been known for its gender equality efforts and Finland organised the first Arctic Council conference on gender equality in 2002 (Halonen 2014, 79). Finland will begin its Chairmanship in May 2017 and they have a chance to shape the future of gender equality in the AC.

The Swedish Chairmanship had high aims for addressing gender equality concerns in the AC. However, despite acknowledging the importance of the matter, it did not become a central debate of the AC. The same happened with its aims regarding indigenous peoples. Some projects sought to research indigenous requirements and gender-related attention had begun within the SDWG. Some argue that one of the reasons for this is that the Chairmanship had a very broad and demanding agenda. However, Nord argues that the organisation of its Chairmanship was carefully considered and thoroughly planned (Nord 2016, 129-130). Rather, Nord suggests that the members of the AC have too different views on these issues. Building consensus in the areas of gender equality concerns and indigenous peoples was the most difficult out of all issues. Nord argues that this might be because these issues lie deep within the human dimension which had up to that point, not been given a lot of effort. Nord explains that the reason for Sweden’s limited push on these issues must have been strategic and they thought it would be better for the SDWG to take the lead on these matters. SDWG created a better foundation for these issues and the Canadian Chairmanship pushed these concerns further in 2013-2015, when a broader consensus was actually doable (Nord 2016, 131-132). Nord notes that it is important for any organisational chair not to pressure when trying to build consensus.

It is important to find the balance between the participants for the best success. If one goes too far in its leadership role, one might not have too many followers (Nord 2016, 135).

3.4 Environmental Contributions

The A3 have proved that they are just as important as ‘larger’ states in the Arctic Council and their contribution is crucial. They have used and shared their skills and resources in political cooperation and organisation, education, equality matters, business infrastructure and network when contributing to and advancing the development and strength of the AC. For instance, this expertise was obvious when Sweden showed its leadership and cooperation skills when contributing to the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat. Finland and Iceland have showed leadership and entrepreneurial spirit when co-leading the establishment of the AEC and discussing its importance. The A3 all expressed their support of approving new observers because they all support the overall strengthening of the AC. Moreover, the A3 have been stressing the value of including projects of gender equality in the AC. Now it is necessary to evaluate environmental contributions, which are crucial to the existence of the Arctic Council. All of the A3 states stress environmental issues in their stated Arctic policies and they are known internationally for their efforts relating to the environment. The remainder of this chapter should give final evidence of what the A3 have been contributing to the AC and if their contributions are actually necessary.

The A3 states all recognise the importance of actions against climate change in their Arctic goals. To be able to identify the different environmental threats the Arctic is facing, scientific research has to be done. Research in the Arctic Council is mainly done in the working groups. All of the A3 states have expertise in Arctic infrastructure and they all consider themselves as leaders in sustainable development. They all emphasise the need to extract resources and protecting the marine environment by using sustainable methods. This is what the A3 focus on when contributing to the AC working groups. All of the A3 also mention the importance of promoting the working groups reports and further including academia into the research done by the working groups (Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy 2010-2011) (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland 2013) (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011a). The work done by the AC has been receiving greater attention in recent years because of the strengthening and expansion of the Council due to efforts previously mentioned. With regard to the Swedish Chairmanship, a number of its most significant achievements were the scientific reports presented at the Kiruna meeting. This common commitment to deliver was achieved through

close cooperation between various national representatives and the leadership of the working groups (Nord 2016, 118).

3.4.1 The Arctic Contaminants Action Program

The Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) working group aims to prevent, reduce and eliminate negative consequences of pollution of the Arctic environment. The current Chair of ACAP is Urik Westman from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretariat is situated in Tromsø, Norway (Arctic Council ACAP). From 2012 to 2014, the Chairmanship was in the hands of the Finn Jaakko Henttonen. He had also been the Chair of the Project Steering Group from 2003-2006 and Vice-Chair during the Russian Chairmanship in 2008-2012 (Arctic Council 2012).

The ACAP has three expert groups. First of all, the Expert Group on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Mercury is led by Åke Mikaelsson, from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Arctic Council, ACAP Expert Group on POPs and Mercury). Second, the Expert Group on Hazardous Waste is led by Timo Seppälä from the Finnish Environment Institute (Arctic Council, ACAP Expert Group on Hazardous Waste). Lastly, the Expert Group on Short Lived Climate Pollutants is co-led by Ann-Sofi Israelson from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Arctic Council, ACAP Expert Group on Short Lived Climate Pollutants).

Iceland has not been an active participant in the ACAP working group because the focus of the ACAP has been associated with chemical pollution around Russia (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland 2009, 14).

At the Iqaluit meeting in 2015, the Council agreed on the implementation of the *Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions*. Experts from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Canada and the United States worked together to identify actors that can be partly responsible for “minimising emissions of black carbon from residential wood combustion in the pan-Arctic region” (ACAP 2015, 2). The framework contains a common understanding for Arctic states and an impressive national and cooperative action to increase the overall decrease in black carbon emissions (ACAP 2015). An expert group was established to assess and review the progress towards the common vision (Arctic Council, Black Carbon and Methane Expert Group).

The framework was agreed only two years ago so the multilateral mechanisms remain untested. For the black carbon emissions to be reduced, it is important to ensure that these

approaches actually work. The framework itself is very important as all eight Arctic states recognise that the Arctic is getting warmer than other areas in the world. Therefore, they have committed a certain responsibility to take joint actions against climate change (Cavazos-Guerra et al. 2017, 149). In September 2015, all of the A3 states submitted their national reports. The national submissions are then reviewed and the expert group will give further instructions on future actions (Shapovalova 2016).

The framework was supposed to appear as a powerful collective political sign and Shapovalova explained that it was breakthrough because it was the first time that the AC member states have responded to decrease human-caused climate change. Progress is being made on knowledge and action on these issues. This soft-law flexible framework is suitable for the AC, because members are not ready to sign on binding emission reduction obligation (Shapovalova 2016).

3.4.2 The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) working group details the status and threats of the Arctic with respect to climate change and pollution issues. Its Secretariat is based in Oslo, Norway and the current Chairmanship is in the hands of Martin Forsius from Finland (Arctic Council, AMAP).

The Environment Agency of Iceland, The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, The Finnish Environment Institute and Finland's Natural Environment Centre, SYKE, have been in control of the A3's participation in the AMAP working group. Staff members of these agencies take part in the working group's meetings in Oslo, Norway, where they organise and decide upon the work of the AMAP. Furthermore, the POPs expert group has a Swedish co-chair from the Stockholm University (AMAP, Contacts).

The Swedish Chairmanship aimed to issue a report on the influence of carbon dioxide emissions on Arctic Ocean acidification at the foreign ministers meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in 2013 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 2011b, 4). The report, called *Arctic Ocean Acidification (AOA)*, was published, as planned, at the Kiruna meeting. The assessment is the first time an assessment on AOA has been done from an Arctic perspective and around 60 experts and leading authors contributed to the work. These experts came from all over, including the A3 states (AMAP 2013). Lena Ek explained at the Kiruna meeting that even if emissions would stop today, the recovery of the ocean would take tens of thousands of years (Ek 2013).

Assessments that were issued in 2016 by AMAP include contributions from Finland, Sweden and Iceland. These reports are *Temporal Trends in Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Arctic* (AMAP 2016a, 3), *Human Health in the Arctic* (AMAP 2016b, 3), and *Radioactivity in the Arctic* (AMAP 2016c, 3). The reports assess and monitor on the pollution and climate status of Arctic ecosystems. It is important to determine the origins for changing and expose emerging problems and risks. Furthermore, these assessments conclude by recommending appropriate actions to reduce risks to Arctic ecosystems (AMAP, Monitoring and Assessment). Selin explains that the AMAP activities are often seen as the most influential. By building on AMAP and other working groups' publications, the AC has been strengthened because of its political actions in supporting declarations on policy change and advocating members to act on issues (Selin 2017, 103-104).

3.4.3 The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group is issued with biodiversity and how it can be maintained in a sustainable manner. Research in this group is supposed to provide information in order to take preventive decisions and ensure stability and regional growth necessary to flora and fauna. Holding the chair is Norway but the Secretariat is situated in Akureyri, Iceland (Arctic Council, CAFF).

The Icelandic Institute of Natural History, The Finnish Ministry of the Environment and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency are in control of the A3 states' participation in the CAFF working group. Furthermore, members from these institutions take part in the working groups' meetings in Iceland, where they develop, overlook and design the work of CAFF (CAFF, CAFF National Representatives). Their participation illustrates that the A3 are all contributing to the important environmental protection work of the CAFF working group. The Seabirds (CBird) expert group is led by a Finnish Adjunct Professor from the University of Turku and has members from all A3 states (CAFF, CBird Members). The Flora (CFG), Protected Areas (CPAN) and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) expert groups have members and partners from all of the A3 states (CAFF, Expert Groups).

At the Kiruna meeting in 2013, *the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment* by the CAFF working group, was introduced. Sweden and Finland were amongst the leaders of this project but all A3 states contributed to it (CAFF 2013). The Swedish Minister for the Environment, Lena Ek, explained that the assessment showed the importance of taking influential actions to reverse the trend of biodiversity being degraded (Ek 2013). Both Finland's and Iceland's representatives at

the Kiruna meeting underlined the importance of this report and the necessity of taking it under serious consideration and address climate change by taking concrete actions. For this to happen, Ingólfsson from Iceland stressed the importance of Arctic international leadership (Hermann Ingólfsson 2013) (Tuomioja 2013).

The recommendations were signed off by the Arctic Council Ministers. Therefore, the recommendations made in 2013 will be implemented according to an eight year plan by CAFF called *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021*. Some of the recommendations have been implemented like establishing the *Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative* which intends to advance the status of a few Arctic breeding birds onward their migratory routes (Arctic Council 2015a, 22). The recommendations are directed to the AC as a whole. Some of the recommendations should be implemented through CAFF and others through other working groups or subsidiary bodies. Furthermore, some recommendations call for the action of national authorities, collaborations, and international organisations. The plan is a living document and progress is reported every year (CAFF, *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021*). During phase two, 2015-2017, the aim was to encourage states to develop national implementation plans coherent to the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendations as an important adaptation measure (CAFF 2013, 13). Currently, the recommendations do not hold any obligations. However, it aims to develop binding agreements if needed in the third phase, 2017-2019 (CAFF 2013, 17). Currently, there is no evidence of the recommendations being implemented in national jurisdictions. This suggests that binding agreements might be developed during the upcoming Finnish Chairmanship or it suggests that CAFF actions are not efficient enough, with or without the A3. According to an Excel Tracking Tool working document for 2015-2017, none of the recommendations have been implemented. The status of each recommendation is either marked as ongoing, started, not started, or left blank or with a question mark (CAFF 2015)

3.4.4 The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) working group is responsible for projects related to training and risk assessment if emergency occurs in the Arctic environment, whether its oil spill or natural disasters. Cooperation with numerous organisations and private companies is highlighted. The United States currently hold the Chairmanship and the Secretariat is situated in Tromsø, Norway. The working group meets twice a year and discusses important issues and new proposals (EPPR, About EPPR). The EPPR is in charge of the follow up of the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic* (MOPSA) and the *Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and*

Maritime Search and Rescue Operations in the Arctic (SAR). EPPR does this by for example planning exercises for possible scenarios (Arctic Council 2011) (Arctic Council 2015a, 27). The Environment Agency of Iceland, the Swedish Ministry of Defence and the Finnish Ministry of the Interior are responsible for the A3's participation and contribution in the EPPR (EPPR, Heads of Delegation). Current projects for the 2015-2017 Chairmanship period are not led or co-led by any of the A3 states (EPPR 2015a). However, both during the Swedish and the Canadian Chairmanships, Finland and Sweden co-led projects of the EPPR. For instance, Sweden and Finland co-led a project called *Conduct of Radiation Emergency Exercises*. They organised an exercise which was held in Canada in 2014. Moreover, all of the A3 states have participated in different projects on for instance, Arctic rescue, follow up of recommendations, designing and updating agreements or reports, conducting exercises (EPPR 2015b) (EPPR 2013) (EPPR 2011).

The A3 states' emergency points of contact that are involved with the work of the EPPR are quite many. These are for instance; the Swedish Coast Guard, the Icelandic Coast Guard, Iceland's Emergency Assistance, Iceland's Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, Maritime Alert Center of Iceland, the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, the Finnish Department for Rescue Services, Finnish Rescue Coordination Centre and the Finnish Centre for Radiation and Nuclear Safety (EPPR, National Emergency Prevention). The Finnish Ministry Department for Rescue Services held a Barents Rescue Exercise in 2015 and participants from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden participated (EPPR 2015c). Furthermore, the Finnish Rescue Coordination Centre, the Swedish Coast Guard and the Maritime Alert Center of Iceland were involved in the first MOPSA exercise which was held in Canada in 2014 (EPPR 2014, 5). In September 2015, an EPPR MOPSA exercise workshop was held in Washington D.C., United States. Representatives from the AC participated and the workshop addressed lessons learned during the 2014 exercise in Canada, discussed updates to the Operational Guidelines, identified high-risk Arctic scenarios from each member state. Each A3 state performed a presentation of the identified risks their country faces in the Arctic (Arctic Council 2015b). Another exercise was conducted by the United States in June 2016 to validate and update the MOSPA agreement. Members from all A3 states were a part of the exercise design team (EPPR 2016, 5, 7) As a result, an expert group will move to enhance the EPPR MOSPA Request for Assistance process (Braynard 2016). It is crucial to follow up on the MOPSA by holding exercises like these to identify risks and be

prepared for any accidents that might occur and the A3 states have been active in this important work.

3.4.5 The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group researches how norms can be created to avoid pollution of the Arctic marine environment. The Secretariat is located in Akureyri, Iceland and the Chairmanship is in the hands of Canada. The outcomes of the work that PAME conducts is important for the evolution of the AC as a whole and PAME itself. This is because scientific knowledge is helpful for the Arctic region itself and its future, as PAME encourages sustainable use and conservation of the Arctic marine environment (Arctic Council, PAME). The Icelandic, Swedish and Finnish Ministries for the Environment have been in control of the A3's participation in the PAME working group. The representatives participate in PAME meetings, where they evaluate progress and develop work plans (PAME, List of Members).

The Arctic Ocean Review (AOR) by the PAME working group was presented at the Kiruna meeting in 2013. The report reviewed the global measures that protect the Arctic marine and coastal environment. Iceland co-led the *AOR Final Report* and it was based on the work of experts across the Arctic in association with all Member States and Permanent Participants (PAME 2013, 11, 99). The European Union was also involved in the making of the Arctic Ocean Review (Van der Watt et al. 2015, 246). Lena Ek illustrated that the report identified different ways “to strengthen governance for the conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment” (Ek 2013). Finland's and Iceland's representatives at the Kiruna meeting also underlined the importance of these findings when it comes to taking actions to address climate change (Hermann Ingólfsson 2013) (Tuomioja 2013). Humrich suggests that with regard to the AOR, the AC has identified “relevant regulatory instruments on all levels and the implementation of their norms by the Arctic states urged in respective AC documents” (Humrich 2017, 88).

The Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025 (AMSP) was approved at the Iqaluit meeting in Canada in 2015. Iceland co-led on developing the AMSP. The AMSP “provides a framework to guide its actions to protect Arctic marine and coastal ecosystems and to promote sustainable development” (PAME 2015, 6). At the Iqaluit meeting in 2015, a Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) was established to develop a new mechanism to increase international cooperation and arrangements in controlling the Arctic Ocean. The

TFAMC is co-chaired by the United States, Iceland and Norway and all AC states and permanent participants are represented. Its analysis on these issues will be announced at the 2017 ministerial meeting (Oppenheimer and Ma 2016, 156-157). Iceland has been a leading actor on these issues. However, Finland's and Sweden's representatives contribute by taking part in the implementation of the plan. Therefore, all of the A3 recognise the importance of cooperating on protecting the Arctic marine environment. The TFAMC have met on several occasions since the task force was established. The last time they met was in the end of January, when they finalised its report which will be announced at the ministerial meeting in May (TFAMC 2016) (Arctic Council, TFAMC Meeting). The work of the TFAMC could also encourage cooperation in other areas, like in emission control and reduction (Cavazos-Guerra et al. 2017, 247). Therefore, the contribution of the A3 to this work, especially Iceland's, as it is co-leading, is important for the future of the AC. The report which will be announced at the upcoming ministerial meeting will most likely provide the AC with recommendations of how cooperation on Arctic marine areas should be strengthened. If these recommendations will be agreed, an implementation process will begin.

4 Discussion

In this section it is evaluated if the theories of small state studies and norm entrepreneurship apply when analysing the contribution of the A3 states to the AC. The contribution of the A3 states to the AC is valuable for the overall development of the AC. They have contributed their expertise in cooperation, leadership, organisation, environmental protection, research, infrastructure and more, to the different organisational bodies of the AC; the working groups, the Secretariat, conferences and AC meetings. Nord argues that small states in the Arctic region have an influence by using leadership and the use of soft power tools (Nord 2016, 19).

The hypothesis put forward in this thesis was that the A3 states have contributed to the AC to a great extent. In this chapter, theories of small states and norm entrepreneurship are used to measure and better understand the A3 states' contribution to the AC.

Þórhallsson argues that quantitative variables are not as important as qualitative variables when it comes to determining the power of states. He explains that factors like knowledge, diplomatic expertise and drive are important when evaluating accomplishments in the international platform. He also underlines the importance of norm entrepreneurship which is explained as showing effective leadership, good coalition-building skills and an ability to work under pressure and prioritise (Baldur Þórhallsson 2012, 139-140).

These are all qualities the small A3 states hold. As regards the AC, all of the A3 states have been very active in contributing to different kinds of working groups' projects, exercises and recognised research reports. Many institutions and representatives from the A3 states are involved in the work of the AC and they have been leading on different projects. These are projects on gender equality, establishment of the AEC, scientific projects concerning the environment and more. This kind of contribution - in the form of good ideas and knowledge - is a type of soft power, as explained by Nye in chapter two. Furthermore, the A3 states have shown a lot of cooperative effort in influencing and strengthening the Council itself. All of the A3 states took a relative part in drafting the legally binding agreements which the AC facilitated. Furthermore, the A3 collaborated when promoting more observers and the representation of all those concerned with the Arctic in all platforms of discussion of Arctic issues, like in the A5 meetings. Small states seek to have an influence together and this is what the A3 recognised was important for them to do in the AC.

Keskitalo argues that Nordic states use the value of the Nordic welfare state, as a tool for sustainable development, as a way of coordinating the Nordic work on Arctic issues. Keskitalo

explains that the Nordic states are role models on issues of sustainable development, high levels of education, supporting a dynamic economy, efficient health care and environmental quality. The Nordic states aim to “support the understandings of the impacts of climate change, protection of the sea environment, local sustainability strategies at a municipal level and general cooperation with fora that supports sustainable development in northern regions” (Keskitalo 2014). According to Bailes, the A3, as part of the wider Nordic group, coordinated when establishing the Permanent Secretariat in Tromsø, Norway. When this happened, the A3 joined knowledge and adopted similar lines on issues they share, including shipping safety, fisheries management, new oil or gas explorations and foreign investment handlings (Bailes 2013, 44).

These actions are in line with understandings of small state theory. According to scholars such as East, small states join actions to have an influence in IR (Neumann and Gstöhl 2004, 10). By being innovative and flexible, using their outstanding skills in certain policy areas, small states are able to outperform larger states in terms of relative capabilities (Hay 2003, 4). This is how small states gain from being small.

Two of AC working groups’ Secretariats, CAFF and PAME, are located in Iceland due to Iceland’s commitment on the issues. This is a crucial thing for Iceland in the Arctic, because it has something that Finland and Sweden do not have, which is, the location of working groups’ Secretariats in its country. Furthermore, Iceland has an advantage because the Director of the Permanent Secretariat is Icelandic. Former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Össur Skarphéðinsson, argued that the recruitment was a recognition of Iceland’s powerful Arctic initiative in recent years (Össur Skarphéðinsson 2013). The establishment of the Permanent Secretariat had a lot of effect on the strengthening of the AC. The A3 states were active on lobbying its establishment and the Swedish Chairmanship made sure to finish this project which was first set out in 2011. Sweden used its expertise in leadership and cooperation to secure its establishment (Nord 2016) (Össur Skarphéðinsson 2013) (Bailes and Margrét Cela 2013, 43).

The Swedish Chairmanship used its qualities as a norm entrepreneur, such as cooperative efforts and good leadership, to further engage discussion between the AC and the business sector. This was an important improvement as it later showed the AC’s strength and openness in cooperating on issues concerned with, for instance, extracting resources. The melting of sea ice might open up business opportunities in the Arctic region and therefore, it is important to protect the environment during such opportunities. The need to establish an economic fora in the AC was realised in the years after. As a consequence, the AEC was established. The role of the A3 in this establishment was important and further acknowledged that small states can have

an effect on the AC by using their smallness in a clever way. Their expertise and infrastructure in business and cooperation and leadership skills was helpful. Finland and Iceland were co-leading on the task force behind the AEC and Sweden also contributed to this work. Today, different business bodies are represented in the AEC, from all AC member states. The AEC is still formulating and the future will unfold what kind of role it will play. However, it is clear that by establishing such a Council, it shows AC's growing strength and open mind to the inclusion of more actors and maybe the expansion of AC's actions.

A3's actions on economic efforts in the AC further show that despite their smallness and lack of relative power capabilities, they still managed to have an effect on the AC. By using their advantage in other areas, such as knowledge, drive and quality, they were influential. Other states and representatives followed their suggestions and views and accepted them. By using efforts like these, norms are accepted (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 901-902).

SDWG was strengthened considerably during the Swedish Chairmanship. This was possible due to Sweden's cooperative methods and organised leadership. Iceland has been an active participant in the SDWG, leading on projects on human health and gender equality in the Arctic. The projects on gender equality are relatively new. It is possible to argue that Iceland has put gender equality in the Arctic on the tipping point of the norm cycle, as it has convinced many of the participants of these issues. This is because Iceland managed to get an acceptance on a project which led to a conference on gender equality which was attended by participants from all of the Arctic Council. As a consequence, a project on these issues is also underway during the Chairmanship period of 2015-2017. It will be interesting to see if Finland will place an emphasis on these issues and try to start the domino effect of the norm cycle, but they co-lead the previous gender equality project. Iceland was able to use its expertise and persuasive skillset to get a project on gender equality approved twice. This is important for Iceland because it proves their ability to have an effect on the Arctic Council and further shows their contribution to an important development within the AC, despite their assumed 'smallness'.

Finland called for an Arctic Council Treaty in its updated Arctic Strategy in 2013. Perreault believes that this was a strategic political move to protect Finland's interests as a treaty-based Council would defend the interests, power and privilege of the participants involved (Perreault 2017, 427). According to Bailes and Cela, Iceland will continue to support the AC as the central forum for policy making and discussion in the Arctic region. Iceland has been leaning towards Finland's proposal in reforming the AC's structure and opening up to a broader range of issues and actors (Bailes and Margrét Cela 2014). According to contributors to the work of the book

International Relations and the Arctic, Understanding Policy and Governance, Sweden has committed extensive resources to strengthen technological capabilities focused on Arctic interest. The A3 states give priority to the work of the Arctic Council because of their commitment to diplomacy and multilateralism. The reason for this is that it would be hard for them to have an effect unilaterally due to their small state position (Murray 2014). According to small state theory, small states are expected to respect international values and they generally promote cooperation to avoid conflict and better preserve their interests (Hey 2003, 4-5).

Helena Traner identifies which interests of the smaller A3 states are different than the ones of the A5 states. These are interests concerned with resource and environmental management, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and in guaranteeing denuclearisation in the Arctic (Traner 2011, 511). Traner explains that the current legal framework in the Arctic is not efficient enough to settle conflicts related to continental shelf claims and to respect the interests of all of the Arctic states, especially the smaller A3 states (Traner 2011, 500). This is why Traner argues that the smaller Scandinavian states should push for the development of an Arctic Treaty:

Smaller Scandinavian states are at a distinct disadvantage as a result of the current framework governing the Arctic. In order to better preserve their interests in the environment, the rights of their indigenous groups, and their security interests, these states should lead to push to develop a working group within the Arctic Council with a view toward the creation of an Arctic treaty (Traner 2011, 498).

Traner believes the Scandinavian states are perfectly suitable to lead the way in making the Arctic Council a formal international organisation with a legal mandate. Traner explains that by making an Arctic treaty, the Scandinavian states will be given a procedure for guaranteeing a sustainable way to manage Arctic resources, gaining denuclearisation of the Arctic and respecting the rights of the indigenous peoples. She also mentions that United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) leaves the resolution of conflict up to international diplomacy. Traner thinks a working group should be created, whose job is to reflect on ideas for an Arctic treaty (Traner 2011, 525).

According to small state theory and norm entrepreneurship, this is something that the A3 are capable of doing. Theory suggests that if small states, like the A3, use their expertise in discussion, knowledge and persuasiveness they can influence change in the international arena. The A3 have all advocated for a discussion on strengthening the AC. By making it a formal international organisation with a legal mandate, the AC will surely strengthen. It will be

interesting to see if the upcoming Finnish and Icelandic Chairmanships will bring further discussion of a treaty-based Arctic Council.

The rotating two-year Chairmanship of the Arctic Council is one of its unique traits. This feature of the AC was questioned in the beginning as observers were worried that two years would not be enough to be effective. Furthermore, concern was declared that the smaller states in the Arctic region would possibly not have enough capabilities to lead in an effective manner (Nord 2016, 170). However, the contribution of the A3 states has been considerable. For instance, the Swedish Chairmanship had a lot of effect on the AC by establishing consensus in the Council. Nord argues that other Arctic states recognised that Sweden held a very strong leadership in spite of being a small state, because of their ability in promoting cooperation and consensus among different memberships. The Swedish Chairmanship suggests that small states in the Arctic can make important contributions if they use their strengths. Nord argues that Sweden's strength in organisational abilities played a crucial part in its success, even though they have not been profiled as being an Arctic state (Nord 2016, 170-171). It can be argued that consensus became a norm in the Arctic Council when the Swedish Chairmanship concluded its Chairmanship. All members and participants acknowledged the norm of consensus.

Nord explains that a key to being successful while leading in the AC is by not imposing a single perspective on its companions. Sweden was careful not to do this during its Chairmanship and instead, focused on establishing consensus and common action among all participants, built on different needs and perspectives. Nord suggests that this should be applied more often in the AC (Nord 2016, 171). Nord believes that one of the most important lessons from the Swedish Chairmanship is that "it may be the unforeseen or unrecognised gift that may be the most important to an organisation's overall growth and enhancement" (Nord 2016, 172).

Nord argues that the power, northern profile and capabilities of a state should not matter when leading in the AC. He suggests that the special fit between a state's capabilities and the organisation's need is what creates a successful leadership. For instance, Sweden was not very active in portraying itself as an Arctic state before its Chairmanship. For instance, its Arctic policy was issued on the same day as Sweden released its Chairmanship goals. However, its international reputation of organisation and consensus building is recognised. When Sweden started its Chairmanship, consensus was exactly what the Council needed (Nord 2016, 172). Therefore, its small state capabilities matched the Council's need.

Nord argues that for the future of the AC, it is crucial to recognise that all of the Arctic states and their permanent participants and observers have important contributions to the work and development of the Council. These contributions vary but they must not be diminished (Nord 2016, 172). The A3 have contributed to the AC to a high extent and even though they are small states in the Arctic region, their contributions must not be diminished. The small state capabilities of the A3 such as consensus building, leadership, charm and knowledge and their ability to use their capabilities by being norm entrepreneurs is one of their greatest strengths.

5 Conclusion

This paper argues that Finland, Iceland and Sweden, the Arctic three states, have contributed to a great extent to the Arctic Council.

Arctic issues have been on the rise in international political discussion. Climate change, possible shipping routes and resource extraction have opened the eyes of the world to possible risks and opportunities in the area. The Arctic Council has been strengthening in recent years, even though some would suggest that the meetings of the A5 have been a threat. Due to their meetings, the A3 grouping of Iceland, Sweden and Finland was ‘created’. These states are portrayed as the small states of the Arctic region. Older and more limited understandings of small state theory would suggest that because of their smallness, these states would not be able to have an effect on the development of the AC.

The small state theory has been evolving in the last hundred years. At first, it acknowledged small as being powerless and helpless, without any hard resources. Later on, theorists realised that this was not a proper way of explaining and categorising small states as more factors can play a part in determining the size of state. Factors mentioned as important include knowledge, experience, innovation, leadership, charm and more. These factors can have a say if a state is able to have an influence in the international arena. Nordic states are often mentioned in relation to norm entrepreneurship because they are known internationally for their soft resources. They have good reputation in for instance, human rights, environmental protection and cooperation. These traits resemble the ones that the A3 states hold.

The A3 have contributed to the AC in many different ways. In the political sector, the A3 have been active in political cooperation and discussion. They have all put forward their ideas on the importance of the strengthening of the AC. The A3 have been contributing to the AC by establishing a Secretariat, issuing discussion of a treaty-based organisation, using the AC as a platform for negotiating legally binding agreements and further acknowledging the importance of inviting everyone whose interests are affected by the Arctic to join the discussion in the AC. The A3 used their skills in leadership, norm creation and consensus building to initiate progress.

In the economic sector, the A3 are known for their good infrastructure, innovation and cooperation. They all pushed for a stronger discussion with the business world and they all contributed to the establishment of the AEC, especially Finland and Iceland. Furthermore, the A3 have been active in contributing to the human dimension of the AC. The SDWG has been strengthened by efforts of the Swedish Chairmanship and working groups’ reports lead by A3

states. Moreover, issues on gender equality and the representation of all was put to the foreground by the A3. The A3 are known for their reputation in equality, discussion and cooperation and this all contributed to the strengthening of social issues in the AC. Moreover, all of the A3 have been contributing to research and projects by the working groups of the AC. Likewise, they have been leading on different projects and expert groups as well as the working groups themselves. Furthermore, two of the working groups are situated in Iceland. The A3 are known for their knowledge, education, environmental measurements, and consensus-building methods which have all come of use when contributing to political, economic, social and environmental issues in the AC.

The contribution of the A3 is valuable to the AC and therefore, the A3 have contributed to the AC to a great extent. The A3 use their norm entrepreneurship skills and reputation in knowledge, innovation, leadership and cooperation to influence the AC. Their smallness seems not to be of great importance at the AC platform as their interests and views have been portrayed in the work of the AC because of their lobbying. The smallness of a country, the population number or the capabilities they hold, do not necessarily tell us how powerful a state can be. Even though a state is categorised as being 'small' it does not mean that they are small in every respect.

We can expect the Arctic issues to continue to be in the fore of international relations. It might also be possible that more conflicts will arise between those who want to use the possibilities the area may hold and those who want to fight climate change. Only time will tell if the A3's contribution and efforts will matter in the fight against climate change, but it can be argued that the A3's interests are best kept by a strong Arctic Council to which the A3 make consistent, and valuable, contributions. It will be interesting to see if the upcoming Finnish Chairmanship will lead change by inviting the European Union as an observer or legitimating the Arctic Council as a whole. Iceland will be taking over the Chairmanship of Finland in 2019, and they have similar views on these aspects. The AC remains a peaceful organisation built on soft power practices for now, but the future will unfold what will happen next.

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