

# Germany: A new (non-)Arctic power?

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*Through an in-depth analysis of the 2013 document *Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik*, along with other policy documents published by the German government over the past decade, this paper assesses Germany's perceived national interest behind developing into a non-Arctic state with an Arctic policy and which priorities led up to the publication of Germany's revised *Arktispolitik* in 2019. This paper provides an analysis of various industries and interests, such as shipping, tourism, scientific research, and energy security, to understand Germany's economic and geostrategic background that has fueled and influenced the creation of its *Arktispolitik*. The concluding analysis forwards the argument that Germany recently published its Arctic policy to legitimize its claim of having a stake in the Arctic to further its economic interests, such as shipbuilding and tourism, as well as strengthen its existing political and strategic alliances, most notably NATO and the Arctic Council.*

## Introduction

Even though Hamburg, Germany's northernmost major city, is located 1,446 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, Germany has been showing a growing interest in Arctic relations. In September 2013, Germany published the document *Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik: Verantwortung übernehmen, Chancen nutzen (Guidelines of the German Arctic policy)* and became yet another non-Arctic state with a clear Arctic policy (Distance between Hamburg, Germany and the Arctic Circle, n.d.). The document outlines Germany's intention to make the Arctic a central focal point of its foreign policy, specifically focusing on the effects of the Arctic on the German and European economies, global climate change, and specialized research and technology (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1). Furthermore, the *Arktispolitik* announced Germany's position on the issue of freedom of navigation through the Arctic, supporting the growing group of states which support straits, such as the Northwest Passage, to be legally considered international straits (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1). Moreover, the document discusses Germany's position on the right to self-determination of Indigenous populations in the Arctic and Germany's support of bilateral and multilateral partnerships to maintain the security in the Arctic region (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1). Even though the document proceeds to underline the importance of multilateral cooperation and recognizes

the importance of the Arctic Council, Germany takes a clear, geostrategic stance that has an implicit effect on the sovereignty and internal politics of Arctic States (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 2).

Six years later, in 2019, Germany published its updated and more extensive *Arktispolitik*, which encompasses a more thorough assessment of Germany's position on Arctic matters. Nevertheless, the 2013 Arctic policy introduced Germany onto the Arctic stage with its first official *Arktispolitik* and presented Germany's official Arctic policy positions. The publication of the first *Arktispolitik* and subsequent policy developments are important to consider in order to understand the origins of Germany's Arctic interests and consequent policy positions. As such, this paper will focus on the 2013 *Arktispolitik* and answer the question: *Why did Germany, a non-Arctic state, create an Arctic policy?*

To answer this question, this paper conducts a qualitative policy analysis of the 2013 document *Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik* to assess the main strategic principles that derive possible motivations behind this publication. Since Germany is one of the biggest exporters globally and is heavily involved in the shipping industry, access to shorter shipping lanes crossing through the Arctic would significantly benefit Germany's shipping sector.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Germany prides itself with being a leader in scientific research, as demonstrated through the scientific research establishment, the Alfred-Wegener-Institute (AWI), and its research ice breaker the *RV Polarstern* (Research ice breaker, n.d.; Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 8-9). Moreover, action against climate change and the preservation of the fragile Arctic environment through stringent environmental guidelines for both shipping and research has become a focal point of Germany's *Arktispolitik* (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 8-9). Consequently, the *Arktispolitik* highlights an active role within Arctic governance to enable Germany to continue to champion its leadership in Arctic scientific research and environmental protection (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1-2). Energy security and strategic considerations underline the *Arktispolitik*, as Germany closely works with Norway, Canada, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in securing access to the Arctic region (Bundespräsidialamt, 2014). Finally, the paper will analyze the international political environment that existed in 2013, a year when numerous Asian and some European non-Arctic states became politically involved in the Arctic (Sun, 2013; India and the Arctic, 2013; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013; Jin, Seo, & Lee, 2017; Storey, 2014: 66-72).<sup>2</sup>

This paper will proceed as follows. It will first present a summary of the specific statements and implications made within the *Arktispolitik*. The paper will then focus on factors that influenced and were affected by the *Arktispolitik*, including shipping routes and economic opportunities in the Arctic, securing access to energy sources and mineral resources, Germany's involvement with scientific and climate change research in the Arctic, and recent NATO activities and bilateral partnership agreements with Arctic states. The next section discusses policy implications for Arctic states, specifically Canada. This section compares and contrasts Canadian and German policies pertaining to climate change and environmental protection, Indigenous self-determination, the legal status of the Northwest Passage, and possible security ramifications. This paper provides a discussion of the origins and motivations behind the creation of the *Arktispolitik* and why the creation of an Arctic policy by a non-Arctic state is important to recognize for the future governance of the Arctic.

## Summary of Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik

The document *Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik* is a detailed document that concisely and unambiguously presents Germany's stance on various Arctic issues. Beginning on the first two pages of the document, eleven bullet points state Germany's stances on climate change, economic implications, the freedom of research, and peaceful use of the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1-2). Following this executive summary, the *Arktispolitik* is divided into three main sections; the first one discussing the Arctic as a region undergoing significant changes, the second focusing on the chances and risks in the Arctic from a German perspective, and the third presenting the German Arctic policy (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 3).

From the beginning of the document, Germany recognizes that the retreating ice has caused an increasing geopolitical and geo-economic (*geoökonomisch*) interest and importance in the region (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 4).<sup>3</sup> The section highlights aspects specifically important to Germany, such as the global implications of a warming Arctic, the difficulty shaping an appropriate legal framework, and economic opportunities, such as fishing, shipping routes, and tourism (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 4-6). Moreover, Germany underlines its interest and concern in the changing Arctic climate as changing ocean currents influence the climate in northern Europe, including Germany (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 5). Finally, Germany highlights its support of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Arctic by listing the three conferences pertaining to the Arctic it hosted in Berlin in 2009, 2011, and 2013, as well as indicating its permanent observer status in the Arctic Council and membership to the Svalbard Treaty (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 5-6).<sup>4</sup>

The second section discusses the Arctic from a German perspective by analyzing potential opportunities and risks. The first opportunity discussed is the economic potential following a warming Arctic and the retreat of multi-year ice (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 7). Ensuring the continued supply of natural resources, such as oil and gas, but also of copper, nickel, and zinc, dominates the discussion (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 7). Norway and Russia are specifically mentioned in supplying Germany with needed oil and gas, both of which extract these resources in the Arctic region (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 7). Even though the *Arktispolitik* was published before the cooling relations between Russia and the West that began in 2014, Germany continues to buy oil and gas from Russian companies (Crooks & Foy, 2017). While Germany recognizes in its *Arktispolitik* that the extraction of natural resources will predominantly be accomplished by Arctic states, it underlines Germany's cutting-edge technologies and research in the areas of maritime transportation and oil, gas, and mineral extraction capabilities (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 7). The 2011 *Nationaler Masterplan Maritime Technologien* (*National Masterplan Maritime Technologies*) (NMMT) was created as a platform to maximize economic potential for German companies involved in the research, development, and production of maritime technologies (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2011: 2). The NMMT specifically presents "Eis- und Polartechnik" (ice and polar technologies) as a pillar, highlighting Germany's prevalence in constructing ice breakers and other ice-capable vessels, offshore structures designed for the Arctic region, and expertise in Arctic shipping (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2011: 15-16). Through the NMMT, in combination with the statements made in the *Arktispolitik*, Germany creates a position as stakeholder in the economic development of the Arctic by providing technological expertise to Arctic states.

Despite Germany's recognition of the economic potential, the protection of the environment is a needed overarching regulator (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 8-9). Moreover, Germany proposes that not only the extraction of natural resources but also shipping should follow strict environmental guidelines to limit the dissemination of black carbon, prevent oil spills, and avoid other disasters related to shipping in the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 8). Nevertheless, the *Arktispolitik* recognizes Germany's stake in cross-Arctic shipping, as it has the world's third largest merchant fleet and largest fleet of cargo ships, and is the seventh largest exporter of containerized cargo (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 9; About the Industry, n.d.; United Nations Conference on Development and Trade, 2016: 37). As a result, Germany plays a considerable role in protecting both ships and the environment in the Arctic. Regarding straits such as the Northwest and Northeast Passages, the German government supports free, secure, and peaceful passage (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 10).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Germany proposes solving any legal issues through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in line with international conventions and agreements, such as the Polar Code (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 9-10).

The delimitation of exclusive economic zones and continental shelves not only changes the landscape for the determination of international straits. Instead, the *Arktispolitik* highlights the consequent reduction of freely accessible space in the Arctic to conduct scientific research (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 10). Through AWI, the International Arctic Science Committee, and other governmental and private actors, the *Arktispolitik* underlines the importance for Germany and its actors to maintain a freely accessible Arctic for the purpose of scientific research (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 10-11). This aspect of the *Arktispolitik* is also connected back to the overarching theme of the changing climate in the Arctic with an appeal to unbiased collaborative research in the region (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 11). Germany's ability to provide world-class research is a factor that not only ties into climate change, but also promotes multilateral cooperation throughout the Arctic region.

The final point of the *Arktispolitik*'s second section pertains to security and stability in the Arctic. While Germany supports a multilateral and cooperative environment to secure and maintain stability in the region, the *Arktispolitik* nevertheless recognizes that the changing Arctic may result in unexpected political changes (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 11-12). As the Arctic region is a dynamic environment, policies and actions change frequently and unexpectedly. One such event was the 2017 announcement that Russia would nationalize the Northeast Passage, also commonly known as the Northern Sea Route, and only allow Russian flagged vessels to transit that route (Staalesen, 2017b). Correspondingly, the 2013 *Arktispolitik*'s foresight continues to hold true.

The third and final section of the *Arktispolitik* describes how Germany's Arctic policy focuses on Europe and the international community. One indicator that points toward this intention is the fact that the English language version of the *Arktispolitik* was published two months prior to the German language one.<sup>6</sup> Continuing from the first two sections, the third section first highlights the important effects a changing climate will have on the region, and underlines the significance of Indigenous groups and their rights (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 13). Following these initial clarifications, Germany reiterates its support for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 13-16). Furthermore, the document highlights Germany's continued support and involvement with the

Arctic Council, in which it has held permanent observer status since 1998 and is recognized for its Arctic scientific and technological expertise (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 15; Observers, n.d.). Additionally, the *Arktispolitik* underlines the importance of Germany's membership in the European Union (EU) and its bilateral relations with all Arctic states and China (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 17-19; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016). The last aspect the *Arktispolitik* underlines is Germany's relationship with NATO and its recognition of NATO as an important actor within the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 19). In highlighting Germany's recognition of the importance of cooperation in the Arctic, the *Arktispolitik* presents Germany's stance on economic, climate, and security facets of the region.

### **Major factors influencing and affected by the *Arktispolitik***

Within the *Arktispolitik*, there are three major factors summarizing Germany's concerns and motivations: shipping and other economic opportunities, scientific research and climate change, and security and strategic implications. In the context of this article, all three of these factors are considered domestic and international context factors because they fall between the intersection of national interest and international priorities.

#### **Shipping routes and economic opportunities**

Germany's connection to shipping and the ship building industry comes from a long history of maritime trade through the Hanseatic League (Hansebüro der HANSE). The Hanseatic League connected Northern and Northeastern Europe through land and sea trade routes beginning in the Middle Ages (Hansebüro der HANSE). The influence of this trade system in Germany is evident to this day, as numerous cities still bear the official title "Hansestadt" (Hanseatic City) (Freie Hansestadt Bremen, n.d.; Stadtporträt, n.d.; Hansestadt Rostock mit dem Seebad Warnemünde, n.d.; Kurzüberblick, n.d.). Specifically Hamburg, as the second largest port in Europe and one of the top ten biggest ports in the world, holds a significant stake in the shipping industry (Hamburg's Port, 2007). Already in 2005, Germany's largest maritime trading partner was China (Hamburg's Port, 2007). Since then, China's shipping sector has grown dramatically, with China owning the third largest shipping fleet globally and holding eight out of the top 20 largest cargo ports (United Nations Conference on Development and Trade, 2016: 21, 65). Moreover, 15 out of the 20 ports with the largest cargo volume are located in East Asia, while the ports of Hamburg and Rotterdam are the only two European ports handling comparable volumes (United Nations Conference on Development and Trade, 16: 65). Consequently, finding the shortest and most cost-effective route between Northern Europe and East Asia is a crucial aspect of the German shipping industry.

The opening of Arctic waters and the increasing accessibility of Arctic shipping routes, such as the Northern Sea Route along the northern Russian coast, would enable German shipping companies to reduce shipping times to East Asia by up to 30 per cent in good weather conditions (Verny & Grigentin, 2009: 112). Nevertheless, Jerome Verny and Christophe Grigentin highlight potential technical difficulties ships may encounter en route, such as floating ice sheets and the probable need for strengthened hulls to weather the ice (Verny & Grigentin, 2009: 111). While these technical challenges may pose barriers to the current shipping sector, German shipyards, such as the Meyer Werft and Lürssen Norderwerft, have adapted and now offer to build container ships fitted to withstand multiyear ice cover (Containerschiffe, n.d.; Das Unternehmen, n.d.).

Another significant economic opportunity is the potential for resource extraction in the Arctic. For Germany, the interest in the extraction of natural resources in Arctic waters is threefold – its desire to secure a steady and reliable energy supply, which is an aspect specifically highlighted in the *Arktispolitik*; its engineering and innovative industries, which design and produce parts crucial to offshore oil and gas extraction; and its economic interest in extracting and exporting minerals and metals (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 7; Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2011: 5-7). The NMMT further highlights Germany's stake in the maritime security technologies, linking these to resource extraction and achieving energy security (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2011: 12-13). Various German industries ranging from ship building to resource extraction, claim a stake in a wide range of Arctic endeavours, which are present in the *Arktispolitik* and thus represent one side of German Arctic interests.

### Scientific research and climate change

Another facet of German Arctic interest concerns climate change and scientific research conducted by German institutes, such as the AWI. In 2015, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research published a strategic paper titled *Schnelle Veränderungen in der Arktis: Polarforschung in globaler Verantwortung (Rapid Climate Change in the Arctic: Polar Research as a Global Responsibility)*. The paper discusses topics important to the German public pertaining to changes in the Arctic, including the future of climate change in the Arctic, the effects of the melting Greenlandic ice sheet, the impact on the climatic feedback loop of melting sea ice, the effects of gas hydrates and retreating permafrost on the global climate, the possibility of Arctic organisms adapting to a changing climate, and opportunities and risks of commercial exploitation of a melting Arctic (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2015: 3).

Moreover, *Schnelle Veränderungen in der Arktis* highlights the importance of thorough research in the Arctic to overcome scientific and legal barriers that can arise through a melting Arctic combined with growing economic sectors in the region (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2015: 11). Aside from research for economic purposes, German researchers, primarily through AWI and the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (*Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe*), conduct research surrounding climate change and the impact these changes have on the Arctic environment (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2015: 14-15).<sup>7</sup> Finally, *Schnelle Veränderungen in der Arktis* presents its four main objectives for German research in the Arctic; sustainability research, knowledge transfer to society at large, technology transfer, and the involvement of the next generation of scientists (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2015: 18-22).

Through the *Arktispolitik*, the above-discussed strategic paper, and extensive reports of recent expeditions and research published on the AWI website, Germany not only highlights climate change and the need for thorough research in international fora but also succeeds in producing quality research. As such, Germany's claim to have a stake in the Arctic due to climate change reaches beyond the argument that changing wind patterns and ocean currents may affect Germany's climate (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 5). Consequently, bilateral and multilateral cooperation is not only presented as a crucial political approach in the *Arktispolitik*, but it is also practiced through collaboration on research projects among Arctic and non-Arctic states.

## Security and strategic implications

The third pillar of Germany's *Arktispolitik* pertains to maintaining a secure Arctic and fulfilling all strategic needs, both bilaterally and through organizations like NATO. Throughout the *Arktispolitik*, Germany highlights its support and engagement to maintain a peaceful Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1). As such, the *Arktispolitik* recognizes that political and strategic developments in the Arctic are “*schwer kalkulierbar*” and thus underlines the importance of multilateral cooperation to prevent conflict (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 11-12).<sup>8</sup>

The two main multilateral organizations closely connected to the Arctic are the Arctic Council and NATO. The Arctic Council is the only international body that includes all Arctic states, yet its mandate precludes security considerations (Humrich, 2015: 144-145; Arctic Council, 1996). Nevertheless, Christoph Humrich (2015: 144-145) argues that the Arctic Council politically rose out of Arctic security concerns. Humrich (2015: 145) points toward Mikhail Gorbachev's speech in Murmansk at the end of the Cold War as the inherently securitized spark and influence for the predecessor of the Arctic Council and highlights that constabulary duties, such as search and rescue, fall under the umbrella of the Arctic Council. As such, the Arctic Council's mandate includes, although implicitly, those security concerns that pertain to the safety of the region and its people.

Other than the Arctic Council, NATO could also play a role. Out of the five Arctic littoral states, which are Canada, the United States, Norway, Denmark, and Russia, all but Russia are members of NATO (Bartsch, 2015: 139). While the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) provides Germany with a forum for military cooperation with all Arctic states (except Russia) and key non-Arctic allies, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France, Germany is only an observer in the ASFR. Moreover, the ASFR is not a multilateral organization but a “structured multilateral forum” intended “to enhance dialogue, cooperation and regional understanding” (Ellis, 2018; Ellis, 2014).

Since the annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014, however, relations between NATO members and Russia have cooled considerably, raising the question of discussing security concerns in the Arctic Council once again (Ministerial Meeting, 2015). Keeping this relationship in mind, Russia published its newest Arctic strategy half a year before Germany published its *Arktispolitik* (Haftendorn, 2016: 102). Nationalist sentiments and protective attitudes toward the Arctic were present throughout Russia's strategy (Haftendorn, 2016: 102). Consequently, Germany's continuous focus on the importance of multilateralism and collaboration can be seen in a new light when comparing it to Russia's Arctic strategy. As such, Germany's allegiance continues to lie with NATO if the question of Arctic relations were to be framed militarily.

Despite Germany's support of existing alliances and their extended influence into the Arctic region, Arctic exceptionalism and the belief that the region is a sanctuary are frequently used as counterarguments to NATO's involvement in the Arctic (Bartsch, 2015: 139). The concept of Arctic exceptionalism is the notion that alliances and international affairs that influence events and actions in the rest of the world are irrelevant in the Arctic (Käpylä & Mikkola, 2015: 5). This ties into the understanding that the Arctic is a sanctuary in the sense that historically, the region has been peaceful, and no fighting has spilt over into the Arctic (Käpylä & Mikkola, 2015: 5). While these two notions are frequently brought up and are said to promote cooperation in the Arctic,

the *Arktispolitik* instead recognizes that existing alliances, of which Arctic states are members, extend into the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 19; Griffiths, 2011: 190).

Germany's *Arktispolitik* is constructed on the three pillars of economic opportunities, climate change and scientific research, and security and strategic implications. This foundation can be traced back to bilateral and multilateral agreements and organizations with which Germany is involved and continues to support. Furthermore, through specializing on certain technologies and Arctic research, Germany claims a stake in the Arctic and a seat at the table. Through these actions, Germany has created a niche for itself as a non-Arctic state wanting to be involved in the Arctic.

### **Policy implications for Arctic states**

While Germany maintains relations with all Arctic states, this section considers the implications of the *Arktispolitik* on Canada and the Canadian Arctic. Canada is chosen for this comparison because it is not as explicitly mentioned in the *Arktispolitik* as European Arctic states, yet is a German ally and makes up a large geographic area of the Arctic. The section will explore four aspects that were mentioned in the *Arktispolitik* and could be considered contentious: guidelines and conceptualizations of environmental protection and guidelines, the rights of Indigenous peoples, the legal status of the Northwest Passage, and possible security ramifications.

### **Climate change and environmental protection**

Through unilateral initiatives and multilateral institutions (the EU), Germany has been championing environmental protections and action against climate change (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 8-9, 16-19). Throughout the *Arktispolitik*, Germany continuously highlights the drastic effects of climate change on the Arctic. The *Arktispolitik*'s statements concerning the effects and extent of climate change in the Arctic are representative of documents such as the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment* published in 2004 (Hassol, 2004: 22-25). Consequently, collaboration between Germany and Canada, as well as other Arctic states, would facilitate the implementation of effective environmental guidelines.

The impact of climate change on the Arctic has been described as a force multiplier that requires multilateral collaboration to tame its consequences (Lackenbauer, 2011: 141-142). Especially for Canada, an international approach is crucial since "Canada's weak record on climate change is a serious blow to [its] self-image as good international citizens" (Lackenbauer, 2011: 141-142). While Lackenbauer recognizes American climate leadership under President Barack Obama as the new way forward, the new administration in the United States has reversed this leadership by threatening to withdraw from international climate agreements and lifting domestic restrictions intended to mitigate climate change (Shear, 2017). The alternative to American leadership that is presented by Lackenbauer is heavier involvement of the EU (Lackenbauer, 2011: 143).

However, Germany also discusses the potential for extracting natural resources as Arctic ice retreats, granting easier access to both land and oceans (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 19). The notion of achieving energy security becomes an underlying theme in the majority of Germany's Arctic policies. As a result, Germany's stance toward exploiting fishing grounds and extracting oil and gas in Arctic waters may be different from that of Canada. Nevertheless, Germany's interest in protecting the Arctic environment and combating climate change becomes further obvious when comparing the specificity with which the *Arktispolitik* approaches these issues to that of Indigenous rights and its support of the Indigenous right to self-determination.

## Indigenous rights and self-determination

The *Arktispolitik* recognizes the special standing of Indigenous populations living in the Arctic, with one of its eleven points recognizing Arctic Indigenous populations' right to self-determination (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 1). More specifically, the *Arktispolitik* states that "their rights to self-determination and freedom within their habitat must be maintained" (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 13).<sup>9</sup> Even though Germany states the right to self-determination various times in the *Arktispolitik*, there is no elaboration as to how this self-determination should look like. This vague mentioning of Indigenous rights could be attributed to Germany's adherence to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Alternatively, the *Arktispolitik* may refer to the creation of new independent Arctic states, which is highly unlikely. Alternatively, the mention of self-determination may point into the direction of granting Indigenous populations rights and protections regarding their cultures and languages.

In the case for Canada, Germany's support for Indigenous self-determination could be understood as support for the creation of self-government and increased autonomy through land claims agreements, such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975, which resulted in a form of self-government (Rodon & Grey, 2009: 317). While there are numerous agreements across Canada's North that set up various types of self-government, the three territories (Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut) are still heavily influenced and governed by the Canadian federal government in Ottawa (White, 2009: 291-292). Consequently, one could argue that Germany supports increasing autonomy granted to the territories and to groups that have settled land claims agreements, such as the Nunatsiavut and Nunavik in the provinces of Labrador and Newfoundland and Quebec respectively (Rodon & Grey, 2009: 317-318). Alternatively, Germany could be supporting the creation of a separate governing entity, such as in the case of Nunavut, where a land claims agreement was settled in 1993 and the region became its own territory in 1999 (White, 2009: 284). Nevertheless, it is unclear what exactly Germany supports when it mentions the Indigenous right to self-determination.

## Legal status of the Northwest Passage

Autonomy and claims to sovereignty also affect straits crossing through the Arctic that have seen an increasing amount of traffic. Germany's support of *freie Schifffahrt* (free or unrestricted shipping) is one of the main sections within its *Arktispolitik* (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 9-10). As the policy states, "[T]he federal government supports a free, safe, and peaceful passage through Arctic passages under observance of strict environmental protection and regulations" (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 10).<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, Germany highlights the importance to settle political, legal, and environmental challenges pertaining to Arctic passages through organizations such as the IMO (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 9). While these two positions underline Germany's appreciation of a liberal international system, it has also utilized the IMO to register complaints and dissensions.

As such, when Canada made its NORDREG system mandatory for ships sailing between Canadian islands in the Arctic, including through the Northwest Passage, Germany was one of the states that expressed concern (Solski, 2017: 202). NORDREG encompasses the Arctic Canada Traffic Zone and as of 2010 requires all ships passing through this zone to inform Canada of the ship's intended route, the ship's ice capabilities, and the period of time the ship will be within the Arctic Canada Traffic Zone, among other information to facilitate the enforcement of environmental guidelines and to provide ships with ice and weather information (Transport Canada, 1998).

Although Germany does not explicitly state that it rejects any claims to sovereignty over the Northwest Passage in its *Arktispolitik*, it nonetheless highlights the importance of freedom of navigation and an international approach to shipping in the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 9-10). Moreover, Germany supports an international approach to search and rescue capabilities in the Arctic region (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 10). While international cooperation for search and rescue missions is important, this constabulary capability of Arctic states continues to be a gauge for control over a certain territory (Staalesen, 2017a).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, although Germany's statements in the *Arktispolitik* may solely support international cooperation and finding agreeable compromises, the underlying message is one that, if not outright rejects, highly criticizes Canada's claim to sovereignty over the Northwest Passage.

### Security ramifications

While the effects of climate change and overlapping claims to sovereignty may pose security threats, the focus for security ramifications is on NATO and the western relationship with Russia. Although the Arctic Council is the predominant international organization in the Arctic, constabulary alliances, such as the Arctic Coast Guard Forum "Arctic Guardian," also exist, picking up the security aspects that are excluded from the Arctic Council (Canadian Coast Guard, 2017). Nevertheless, NATO is the main security alliance that can claim jurisdiction in the Arctic, albeit explicit NATO action has been limited in the Arctic. While in 2009, NATO and the Icelandic government organized a conference titled "Security Prospects in the High North," little beyond air patrols had been committed to the Arctic when Germany published its *Arktispolitik* in late 2013 (Smith-Windsor, 2013: 1-3). Since then, NATO has conducted some exercises in the Arctic, with Trident Juncture in Norway taking place in 2018 as the most recent one (Charron, 2017: 1).

Germany's strategic involvement with Canada in the Arctic outside of NATO is limited. Even when the *Arktispolitik* lists its bilateral Arctic security partners, Finland, Norway, Iceland, and Sweden are mentioned as the primary partners, and Denmark is explicitly listed as Germany's primary strategic partner (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 18-19). Though the EU recognizes Canada, along with the United States, Russia, and China, as "strategic partners," they are only considered to be "other important actors" in Germany's *Arktispolitik* (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 18)<sup>12</sup> This leads back to Germany's assertion that NATO is an appropriate forum to discuss any security issues pertaining to the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 19). Although Canada has been less supportive of Germany concerning NATO's involvement in the Arctic, a German delegation visited the Canadian Arctic in 2017, organized through two NATO committees for research and technology as well as economic relations (Charron, 2017: 2). As a result, bilateral security ramifications for the Arctic between Germany and Canada continue to be largely channeled through NATO.

## Discussion

### Origins and motivations

When Germany published its *Arktispolitik* in late 2013, it was the first European country to do so that year. Although various Asian countries published Arctic policies that year and also obtained observer status with the Arctic Council, Germany's actions were unique for a number of reasons. Unlike Asian states that published their Arctic policies in 2013 and acquired permanent observer status in the Arctic Council, Germany already had close ties with all Arctic states, and held permanent observer status in the Arctic Council. As a result, Germany's level of integration among

the Arctic community was higher when the *Arktispolitik* was published. Moreover, Germany has provided research capability to the international and Arctic communities through institutions such as AWI and the ice breaker *RV Polarstern* (An Icon of German Polar Research, 2017). Consequently, one of Germany's major motivations for creating and publishing its *Arktispolitik* was to solidify Germany's seat at the Arctic table.

Another factor contributing to Germany's claim to have a stake in the Arctic is not only presented in the *Arktispolitik*, but also by Franklin Griffiths (2011: 201-202) when he discusses the possibility of non-Arctic members in the Arctic Council being granted more speaking rights and opportunities to get involved with Arctic stewardship. Griffiths (2011: 201) further highlights the stake that non-Arctic states and actors have in Arctic relations through matters like climate change. These themes are found again in the *Arktispolitik*, where one of the pillars is climate change and scientific research.

A further pillar pertains to Germany's interest in economic opportunities and a growing Arctic shipping sector. While they are relevant factors worth considering, they can be categorized into what Griffiths (2011: 201) calls "future considerations." This is to say that, even though achieving energy security through accessing Arctic oil and gas resources and maintaining a competitive edge within its shipping sector, economic considerations for Germany's *Arktispolitik* were also a relevant motivation. Nonetheless, it was likely not as pressing as having a seat at the Arctic table to further scientific research and fighting the effects of climate change. Moreover, current threats and opportunities were more influential in contributing to and motivating the creation of the *Arktispolitik* than the future potential of the Arctic.

The third theme that was discussed in relation to the *Arktispolitik* encompasses security and strategic considerations. While Germany's policy highlights bilateral and multilateral cooperation, Germany suggests NATO to be the appropriate platform for security concerns in the Arctic (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013: 19). When combining these statements with Germany's vague indication that the Arctic is an unpredictable playing field, one can infer that the growing distrust among NATO members toward Russia is an underlying motivator for Germany's *Arktispolitik*. As such, Germany's main motivations for creating its *Arktispolitik* can be summarized as Germany's attempt to legitimize its claim to have a stake in the Arctic and therefore maintain and expand its role within Arctic governance.

### **Importance of non-Arctic states in Arctic governance**

Over the course of the past ten years, various non-Arctic states have developed national Arctic policies and applied for permanent observer status with the Arctic Council.<sup>13</sup> As Griffiths (2011: 201) discusses, the rising interest in the Arctic by non-Arctic states can be attributed to "future considerations." Thus, a growing number of actors have taken interest in the Arctic because of new opportunities, such as easier shipping and tourism (Dawson, Stewart, Johnston, & Lemieux, 2016: 1425-1426; Blunden, 2012: 115). Although Griffiths acknowledges the fact that, and also why, non-Arctic states have become interested in the region, Griffiths (2011: 189-190) also argues that disputes and conflicts from other global regions seeping into the Arctic would cause cooperation in the Arctic to "unravel." As such, too much international influence and the extension of interests from other regions in the world have a potentially detrimental effect on Arctic cooperation.

Following Griffiths' arguments, Arctic states ought to be prudent when admitting non-Arctic states to the Arctic Council. While the dilution of Arctic voices could be a legitimate concern, numerous Arctic states themselves have the majority of their populations living in southern regions and most have never been to their country's Arctic region.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, when considering Arctic states' policies, it is inevitable to separate Arctic affairs with the remainder of the world. Accordingly, while Arctic isolationism may be welcomed by some, it is difficult to achieve.

## Conclusion

In September 2013, Germany published the document *Leitlinien deutscher Arktispolitik: Verantwortung übernehmen, Chancen nutzen* (*Guidelines of the German Arctic policy*) and became yet another non-Arctic state with a detailed Arctic policy. In the *Arktispolitik*, Germany took clear stances on the freedom of navigation, free access to the Arctic to conduct research, the rights and right to self-determination of Arctic Indigenous populations, and its confidence in international organizations to act as the primary enabler and enforcer of Arctic governance. Through these assertions, Germany aimed to make the Arctic a central focal point of German politics and foreign affairs.

To answer the question of why Germany, a non-Arctic state, created an Arctic policy, this paper approached the question through three steps. The first step involved an analysis of the *Arktispolitik* to understand what Germany's 2013 Arctic policy said and how its assertions could be interpreted. The resulting analysis highlighted two major aspects. The first one pertained to the rhetoric used in the policy, which self-assuredly announced Germany's stakes and consequent involvement in the Arctic, notwithstanding the fact that Germany is clearly a non-Arctic state. The second aspect highlighted the three pillars upon which the *Arktispolitik* was built, which were shipping routes and economic opportunities, scientific research and climate change, and security and strategic implications.

These three pillars were discussed in detail as the second step of this analysis. Even though the *Arktispolitik* emphasized the German shipping and ship building sectors, as well as German energy security, international cooperation and consensus became the dominant theme. The second pillar, pertaining to scientific research and climate change, followed a similar pattern. The *Arktispolitik* highlighted the work that had been done by German scientists and institutions, which was supported by the document *Schnelle Veränderungen in der Arktis: Polarforschung in globaler Verantwortung* (*Rapid Climate Change in the Arctic: Polar Research as a Global Responsibility*). The third pillar, which discussed security and strategic implications, was the most explicit in relying on international organizations.

The third step in analyzing Germany's *Arktispolitik* involved an analysis of possible effects of Germany's policy on an Arctic state. Canada was chosen for this comparison, as it was not explicitly highlighted as a close Arctic partner for Germany yet is an Arctic coastal state. Guidelines and conceptualizations of environmental protection, the rights of Indigenous peoples, the legal status of the Northwest Passage, and possible security ramifications were considered. Germany's track record of climate change policies and environmental protection is extensive, and although Germany has been looking to the Arctic for a secure supply of energy, its environmental concerns and action to combat climate change have trumped other considerations. A more convoluted aspect of the *Arktispolitik* was the continuous emphasis on the Indigenous right to self-determination. Throughout the document, there was no elaboration on what the right to self-

determination for Indigenous peoples in the Arctic would entail. Consequently, there could be two interpretations to Germany's statement. The first one would be to support the secession of Indigenous groups from Arctic states, which would fragment Arctic relations even more. This result would prove to be unfavourable to German interests. Therefore, the second alternative is more plausible. This option would entail support for land claims agreements and the granting of self-government such as Nunavut, Nunatsiavut, and Nunavik in Northeastern Canada.

Similarly ambiguous as the Indigenous right to self-determination was Germany's stance on Canada's claim to sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. The *Arktispolitik* underlined Germany's support for the freedom of navigation and legal regulation of straits. Nevertheless, the *Arktispolitik* also asserted that any differences of opinion regarding the regulation of straits through the Arctic should be resolved through international platforms so that all points of view and political stances could be represented appropriately. At the same time, however, Germany had voiced its concern when the Canadian government proceeded to make its NORDREG program mandatory for all ships crossing through the Canadian Arctic, including the Northwest Passage. The conclusion to this analysis was that even though Germany may not outright reject Canada's claim to sovereignty over the Northwest Passage, it had and continues to highly criticize Canada's actions.

The final potentially impactful aspect were possible security ramifications of Germany's *Arktispolitik*. However, while Germany mentioned security and strategic considerations a number of times in its Arctic policy, the main focus was on the role of NATO and its effectiveness in the Arctic due to most Arctic states being members of NATO. Consequently, the *Arktispolitik* changed little to nothing pertaining to the strategic relationship between Canada and Germany, other than Germany reassuring Arctic states that it was interested in the Arctic and was willing to support its allies.

The concluding discussion of this paper pertained to the motivations behind the creation of Germany's *Arktispolitik*. Through this paper's analysis, it could be concluded that while security concerns and the prospect of economic opportunities contributed to the creation of the *Arktispolitik*, the main motivator was Germany's support for multilateralism and to legitimize its claim to have a stake in the Arctic. As a non-Arctic state, Germany has highlighted its research capabilities and climate leadership to present itself as a crucial element to cooperative Arctic governance. Through this framework, Germany presented its aspirations and concerns while solving most issues through multilateral channels. As a result, Germany enforced the argument that it deserves a seat at the Arctic table through its publication of the *Arktispolitik* in 2013. Nevertheless, the publication of Germany's updated *Arktispolitik* in 2019 will show whether the foundation that was established through the 2013 document will enable Germany to remain a non-Arctic Arctic power.

## Notes

1. According to the World Shipping Council, Germany is the seventh largest exporter of containerized cargo, and according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Germany possesses the fourth largest ownership of the world fleet (About the Industry; United Nations Conference on Development and Trade, 2016: 37).

2. Even though Japan did not publish an official Arctic policy until October 2015, the Japanese government began to explicitly mention the Arctic (ocean) in its Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, an Arctic ambassador was appointed, and Japan became a permanent observer in the Arctic Council in 2013 (Tonami, 2014; The Headquarters for Ocean Policy, 2015).
3. “Im Zuge des mit der Klimaerwärmung der letzten Jahrzehnte einhergehenden Rückgangs des arktischen Polareises wächst die geopolitische und geökonomische Bedeutung der Arktis für Deutschland, die Europäische Union und die internationale Gemeinschaft insgesamt.”
4. The Svalbard Treaty recognizes Norway’s sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, or Spitsbergen, and came into force in 1925 (The Svalbard Treaty).
5. “Die Bundesregierung setzt sich für eine freie, sichere und friedliche Durchfahrt durch arktische Schiffspassagen [...] ein.”
6. The English language version was published in September 2013 and the German language one in November 2013 (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013; Federal Foreign Office; 2013).
7. Research by German institutes is predominantly conducted at the joint research station with France named AWIPEV (the name is the merger of the German AWI and the French Institut polaire française Paul Émile Victor, or short IPEV) in Ny Ålesund, Svalbard and through the German-Russian research project “Laptev Sea System.” Further research is also conducted in conjunction in the European, Greenlandic, and Canadian Arctic regions.
8. “Schwer kalkulierbar” translates to “difficult to calculate or predict.”
9. “Ihre Rechte auf Selbstbestimmung und Freiheit in ihrem Lebensraum müssen gewahrt werden.”
10. “Die Bundesregierung setzt sich für eine freie, sichere und friedliche Durchfahrt durch arktische Schiffspassagen unter Berücksichtigung strikter umweltrechtlicher Vorgaben ein.”
11. Even recently, Russia’s attempt to create its own search and rescue base on Svalbard left Norway reassuring all stakeholders of the archipelago that Norwegian forces were very capable of handling all search and rescue missions in and around Svalbard.
12. “...sowie anderen wichtigen Akteuren wie den USA, Kanada, Russland und China...”
13. In 2013 alone, Japan, China, India, South Korea, and Singapore received permanent observer status in the Arctic Council. Both France and the United Kingdom have since also published their Arctic policy documents (Stokke, 2014: 770-773; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013; Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement International, 2016).
14. The United States, Canada, and Russia are predominantly southern countries with Canada and the United States having limited to no road or railway access to the North.

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