

Bazaar Governance: Situating the Arctic Circle

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INTRODUCTION

On 15 April 2013, President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson of Iceland attended a National Press Club luncheon in New York. He was there to present his vision of a new international assembly for the Arctic, to be known as the ‘Arctic Circle’. The primary aim of the assembly would be to ‘strengthen the policymaking process by bringing together as many Arctic and international players as possible under one large tent’ (Webb 2013). The analogy of the ‘tent’ was intriguing because it raised interesting questions about how large the tent would be, how stable it might be and how it would be accessed (including who or what would control this access). Moreover, if, as President Grímsson claimed, the Assembly was to be an ‘open tent’, then it raised further questions about whether there were ‘closed tents’ elsewhere, populating the international polar landscape. In other words, there was, according to the President, evidence elsewhere that ‘the Arctic

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has suffered from a lack of global awareness and, as a result, a lack of effective governance' (Webb 2013).

Participants in this new vista of the 'open tent' were to be drawn from 'institutional and governmental representatives, political and policy leaders, scientists and experts, activists, and indigenous peoples from the Arctic countries, as well as Asia, Europe and other parts of the world' (Webb 2013). In short, the Arctic Circle Assembly was to be a forum where virtually anyone who had something to say about the future of the Arctic could have a voice. As President Grímsson elaborated in conversation with Scott Borgerson, who has penned a number of provocative essays about the future of the Arctic in the journal *Foreign Affairs* (for instance, Borgerson 2008), just after the National Press Club luncheon:

It will, for example, be a testing ground where South Korea can justify, why is it so interested in the Arctic? Why does the leadership of South Korea visit Greenland? Why does the prime minister of China talk about the Arctic when he comes to Iceland? What is the agenda? I was in India a few weeks ago. The first item on the meeting with the foreign minister of India was India's desire to be a member of the Arctic Council. It's kind of crazy, paradoxical, that now I have to discuss in Delhi their membership in the Arctic Council. So in order to take the pressure off the Arctic Council membership, so to speak, this gathering—which we call The Arctic Circle, is partly a play of words of geographical location and having everybody sitting around the table, irrespective of protocol of [sic] power position—to broaden this dialogue and make it more inclusive and more effective. (Council on Foreign Relations 2013)

The timing of Grímsson's announcement posed an important provocation to the Arctic Council, the primary intergovernmental forum for the Arctic region, which was due to convene for its eighth Ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, only four weeks later (Steinberg and Dodds 2015). The Ministerial was expected to rule on whether a consensus could be reached among the eight Arctic states to expand the list of accredited observers to the Arctic Council to include China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, India, Italy and the European Union (EU) (as well as a number of non-governmental organisations and other interest groups such as Greenpeace and the Oil and Gas Producers Association). There was a palpable feeling at the time that Grímsson was challenging the Arctic Council to take on a more global profile, with a view that should the Arctic Council reject the observer applicants, then the Arctic

Circle would be prepared to provide an alternative platform for global interest to be expressed in the Arctic (Koring 2013). As the Canadian *Globe and Mail* newspaper concluded,

Mr. Grímsson was careful to say that the Arctic Circle was not intended as a rival or replacement for the Arctic Council. But just as Davos—the high-profile annual gathering of political and business leaders, celebrities and NGOs—often eclipses more staid and official fora, it is clear that the Arctic Circle is intended as a high-profile, dynamic conference where India and Google and Greenpeace—and countless others with a stake in the Arctic—need not wait for years hoping they may be allowed to speak. (Koring 2013; see also Quaile 2013)

What Grímsson did not say (but might have been thinking) was that the Arctic Circle initiative also had the potential to reposition Iceland as a gateway for the expression of global interests in the Arctic. On the same day that Grímsson presented his initiative, the Icelandic government signed a free trade agreement with China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013). The agreement followed a period of deepening economic relations (promoted by Grímsson) between Iceland and China, spurred on by the US military withdrawal in 2006 and the Icelandic banking crisis between 2008 and 2011 which led to a breakdown in relations with the EU. Iceland–China relations were further symbolised in 2012 by moves such as the visit of China’s Premier Wen Jiabao, the signing of a bilateral Framework Agreement on Arctic Cooperation, the opening of a new Chinese embassy building in Reykjavik and the visit of the *Snow Dragon*, China’s only icebreaker, which had been carrying a Chinese Arctic science expedition (CHINARE 5) through the Northeast Passage (Tatlow 2012). Two months after the announcement of the Arctic Circle initiative, news broke that the Icelandic firm Eykon Energy was teaming up with China National Offshore Oil Corporation to explore for oil in the Arctic around the island of Jan Mayen.¹

Yet the involvement of Alaskan and Greenlandic partners (and less explicitly, the Faroe Islands) suggests the Arctic Circle initiative was about more than Iceland’s blossoming relationship with China—it also positioned Iceland as the gateway to what we might describe as a ‘network of the marginalised’. Among the founding partners was Alice Rogoff, who founded *Alaska Dispatch*, a leading newspaper in Alaska, the USA’s only state with Arctic territory. One of Alaska’s two senators, Lisa Murkowski, was also appointed to the Arctic Circle’s honorary advisory board. Both

Lisa Murkowski and Alaska's other Senator, Mark Begich, gave presentations at the inaugural meeting of the Arctic Circle in October 2013. Alaskan involvement in the Arctic Circle from the outset is suggestive of concerns that Alaska has historically had a limited voice in Arctic affairs, with US Arctic policy being directed at the federal level in Washington, DC (McGwin 2015). The other founding partner from the Arctic was the former Greenlandic Premier Kuupik Kleist. Greenlandic officials have also been actively seeking an independent voice in Arctic affairs, distinct from that of the Danish government (Nunatsiaq News 2013). Alaskan, Greenlandic and Icelandic stakeholders therefore had common cause to support the Arctic Circle initiative as a way to reposition themselves geographically as important Arctic players willing to reach out to Asian states, on the one hand, and to Western corporations, such as Google, on the other. For Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the Arctic Circle would also provide a space to bring greater attention to the West Nordic Council, a parliamentary forum established in 1985 which has recently called for the three governments to align their Arctic policy interests and create a West Nordic free trade area to strengthen the regional economy and expand export capabilities in order to reach global markets, ending their traditional reliance on European markets (Gudjonsson and Nielsson 2015).

The attempt to use the Arctic Circle initiative to reposition Iceland as a gateway for the expression of both global and marginalised interests in the Arctic is indicative, moreover, of concerns within the country that its own influence in the region is under threat (Dodds and Ingimundarson 2012). Iceland was, for example, excluded from meetings of the so-called Arctic Five in 2008 and 2009, and more recently the Arctic Five fisheries discussions in 2014, because it was not considered to be an Arctic Ocean littoral state (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010). Having rejected EU membership for the foreseeable future, and lacking the financial muscle and littoral geography of Norway, Iceland appears alone in Europe (unlike Sweden, Denmark and Finland) (Lund 2015). Canada, the USA, and Russia meanwhile are all large enough to act independently. It is perhaps unsurprising then that Iceland has looked to make common cause with other isolated actors in Alaska, Greenland and the Faroe Islands in order to collectively boost their profile, while at the same time nurturing relationships with Arctic stakeholders in the wider international community (including Prince Albert II of Monaco, Abu Dhabi, China, the UK, Google, Guggenheim and the MacArthur Foundation, among many others).²

If indeed the Arctic Circle initiative is an attempt to reposition Iceland (and to a much lesser extent Alaska, Greenland and the Faroe Islands) geopolitically as a gateway for the expression of global and marginalised interests in the Arctic, then it is not an unusual approach to take. The number of international forums where Arctic issues are discussed has increased dramatically in recent years (including, e.g., *Arctic Frontiers*, the *International Arctic Forum*, *Arctic Imperative* and *Arctic Encounters*). However, the significance of these forums remains relatively understudied in the literature on Arctic governance, reflecting the traditional preoccupation of International Relations (IR) theory with state actors and state-based institutions, intergovernmental forums such as the Arctic Council and the Barents-Euro Arctic Council (BEAC), and sub-governmental organisations such as the Northern Forum (NF). Yet such conferences blur the lines between governance and dialogue—while the Arctic Circle and other initiatives do not ‘govern’ in the traditional sense, they have emerged as important sites for the sharing and contesting of ideas and practices about the present and future geopolitical make-up of the Arctic.

This blurring is evident from the close involvement of national governments in these forums. Both Norway (*Arctic Frontiers*) and Russia (*International Arctic Forum*), for example, directly fund annual international conferences on the Arctic which are positioned as critical to setting the terms of debate about the future of the Arctic. Such meetings also take place internationally—in London alone, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Canada and the USA have all funded workshops and conferences on Arctic geopolitics through their diplomatic missions.³ In addition to the opportunities to exchange ideas directly between stakeholders, such forums also provide a performance space for government officials to project their national interests in the Arctic in a certain light, either, for example, to remind others of the primacy of Arctic states and peoples or to demonstrate the legitimate interests of other stakeholders from beyond the region.

What is interesting to us in this chapter, then, is not the fact that yet another forum for dialogue about Arctic governance has been created, but more that the Arctic Circle offers an explicit example of the oft-ignored ‘bazaar-like’ features of Arctic governance, broadly understood as an assemblage of intergovernmental institutions, international forums, and international/national/sub-national stakeholders. While such an assemblage may sound bizarre to some, our point is that initiatives such as the Arctic Circle are important for the exchange (i.e., buying and selling) of

knowledge and ideas between different international, national and sub-national stakeholders about what kind of space the Arctic is, and how it should be governed, even though they are not defined as ‘institutions’ in the formal sense traditionally associated with IR Theory.

Our notion of the ‘bazaar’ is also suggestive of the way in which, contrary to how the Arctic governance regime has traditionally been imagined by IR scholars (Young 2008, 2012), initiatives such as the Arctic Circle provide different sites of performance and practice wherein stakeholders might seek to influence the Arctic governance regime in ways which might not be permissible elsewhere, for example, at the Arctic Council where non-Arctic states and other organisations have no voice in decision-making. By this, we are not trying to argue that the Arctic Circle and similar initiatives are competing with the Arctic Council for the right to govern Arctic affairs, only that they are collectively part of an unregulated marketplace of ideas which could influence the Arctic governance regime from within (Ingimundarson 2014, pp.186–187).

In this chapter, we use empirical data gathered at the Arctic Circle meeting in October 2014 to further investigate our claims about the bazaar-like qualities of Arctic governance. The first part of the chapter briefly reviews the recent literature on Arctic governance and shows that the dominant interpretation of the current regime is that the Arctic is a region governed by a ‘patchwork’ or ‘mosaic’ of institutions and legal instruments operating at multiple levels, while at the same time retaining some semblance of common purpose—namely to promote peace and cooperation in the Arctic. In accordance with this view, the Arctic Circle might simply be regarded as another piece of the jigsaw that produces this coherent whole. The second part of the chapter introduces our concept of the ‘bazaar’, which we have adapted from the work of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz on the ‘bazaar economy’ (Geertz 1978). The third part of the chapter illustrates our argument about the bazaar-like features of Arctic governance from the perspective of the UK (one of the authors was fortunate enough to be part of the UK delegation to the Arctic Circle in 2014)⁴, which has been engaged as an outsider in key Arctic governance structures since the late 1980s (Depledge 2013). The fourth part situates the Arctic Circle within the broader assemblage of Arctic governance. We conclude by considering how thinking about ‘bazaar’ governance enlivens our understanding of the emerging Arctic governance regime, and how a process-tracing approach might shed light on the circulation of knowledge and ideas within this bazaar arrangement.

ARCTIC GOVERNANCE: A MOSAIC OF COOPERATION?

The first circumpolar Arctic agreement was signed in 1973 by Canada, Denmark, Norway, the Soviet Union, and the USA to promote international cooperation for the sustainable management of polar bear populations. This was followed in the late 1980s and early 1990s by a host of institutional developments primarily centred on promoting international scientific cooperation and environmental protection, including the International Arctic Science Committee (1990), the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (1990), the NF (1991), the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (1991), the BEAC (1993) and the Arctic Council (1996). In addition to these regional and sub-regional instruments, parts of the Arctic are also subject to a number of international governance regimes including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the 1920 Treaty of Spitsbergen, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and its 1978 Protocol (MARPOL), the Oslo–Paris agreements on marine pollution (OSPAR), the 1975 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the International Maritime Organization (IMO)’s Polar Code, which is expected to enter into force in January 2017.⁵

This dizzying array of international agreements, policy declarations, legal instruments and sub-regional/sub-national organisations together constitute what Oran Young (2005, p. 10) has called a ‘mosaic of issue-specific arrangements’, which collectively constitute the prevailing Arctic governance regime complex (Young 2012). Other scholars have offered similar ways of framing Arctic governance as a patchwork of formal and informal arrangements that operate at different levels (international, regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national) (Stokke 2011). The broad ambition of these international institutionalists was summed up in the final report of the Arctic Governance Project, which called for greater efforts to ensure that ‘all these entities are joined together in a mutually supportive manner to form an interlocking suite of governance systems for the Arctic’ (Arctic Governance Project 2010, p. 13; see also Chap. 5 by Humrich, this volume).

Such an understanding of the prevailing Arctic governance regime complex emphasises the complementarity that exists between its constituent parts, as well as the possibility of developing new issue-specific arrangements to plug any remaining gaps (Koivurova and Molenaar 2009).

The core logic to grasp here is that the Arctic governance regime complex is constructed from the sum of its parts. As such, despite the very different arrangements that exist from the international level to the sub-national level, they are all understood to retain some semblance of common purpose—namely, to promote peace and cooperation in the Arctic.

While such an approach is useful for making sense of the way in which the prevailing Arctic governance regime complex is constituted, we argue that the debate around Arctic governance could be enlivened in two ways. The first is to emphasise the possibility that different governance arrangements may facilitate, interfere with, and contest one another (see also Ingimundarson 2014). The most obvious example of this came when the five Arctic Ocean littoral states (USA, Canada, Russia, Denmark and Norway), independently of the other three Arctic states (Finland, Sweden, Iceland), jointly issued the 2008 ‘Ilulissat Declaration’. While the Declaration itself was intended to reinforce the maritime rights of the five littoral states at a time of growing global interest in the Arctic, others questioned whether such a move might undermine the cohesion of the Arctic Council by excluding three Arctic states, let alone others who had a legitimate interest in the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean (Staalesen 2010; Weidemann 2014). Similarly, while all of the Arctic states have since emphasised the primacy of the Arctic Council in Arctic governance arrangements, its power to determine outcomes in the Arctic is severely restricted by its ‘soft’ law and forum-like character, and the need to defer to other international regimes on key aspects of governance relating, for example, to shipping, fisheries and pollution (Ingimundarson 2014; see also Chap. 6 by Selin, this volume).

In highlighting these conflicts, we do not mean to suggest that Arctic governance is chaotic, only to emphasise that there are multiple sites of action (and inaction) in the Arctic and we should be careful about overdetermining the role of formal institutions and legal regimes, such as the Arctic Council and UNCLOS, *per se*. Related to this, the second way in which we hope to enliven the debate around Arctic governance is by highlighting the need to explore a wider array of arrangements, which emphasises the role of both performance and place, and not just an ill-defined set of actors and institutions. In describing actors and institutions relevant to Arctic governance, it seems normal to invoke a laundry list of international regimes such as UNCLOS, circumpolar bodies such as the Arctic Council, sub-regional groupings such as BEAC, and non-state organisations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). The broad array of actors included

under the umbrella of ‘Arctic governance’ has also been extended to include the University of the Arctic, which is described on its website as a cooperative network of universities, colleges, research institutes and other organisations concerned with education and research in and about the North. However, international forums such as the annual *Arctic Frontiers* are rarely, if ever, acknowledged, despite the fact that they are regular sites of interaction and performance, involving an array of Arctic stakeholders, including government officials from Arctic and non-Arctic states. At the same time, such forums often refer to themselves as distinct sites. For example, the 2016 Arctic Frontiers conference website contends that ‘The Arctic is a global crossroads between commercial and environmental interests’,⁶ and pointedly does not refer to the Arctic Council.

The emergence of the *Arctic Circle* has further complicated this picture as many seem to regard it as a rival organisation to the Arctic Council, even though it is essentially just another site for the exchange of knowledge and ideas about the future of the Arctic, albeit one which receives far more media attention due to the presence of high-profile individuals such as a President Grímsson and major sponsors (e.g., Google). Again, we are not trying to argue that we should understand every site and space of discussion about the Arctic as part of Arctic governance—while this might be the case, boundaries always need to be delimited. At the same time, however, we must be careful not to adopt a ‘pick and mix’ approach whereby the *Arctic Circle*, for example, is treated as an institution of Arctic governance, while *Arctic Frontiers* is ignored. Here too, our notion of ‘bazaar’ governance could be useful as it emphasises form over function—what is common to the multiple sites of Arctic governance is that they all function as sites in which ideas are more or less effectively exchanged. Our examination of the *Arctic Circle*, as with other sites of Arctic governance, then, should therefore perhaps be more concerned with the form in which different ideas about the Arctic are exchanged.

BAZAAR GOVERNANCE

In 1978, Clifford Geertz explored how ideas from anthropology and economics could be combined to shed further light on the study of peasant market systems, or what Geertz calls ‘bazaar economies’ (Geertz 1978). In his discussion of bazaars in Morocco, he highlights two types of bazaar—the permanent (consisting of a designated trade quarter) and the periodic (which is more mobile and product specific)—which individuals are free

to move between in order to secure the best deal on various traded items. The bazaar has a number of distinctive characteristics which relate to form rather than function—it is not simply the exchange of goods that matters but the ways in which information about prices flows through the bazaar affecting choices about what prices to buy and sell at. As Geertz (1978, p. 29) notes, in the bazaar, ‘information is poor, scarce, mal-distributed, inefficiently communicated and intensely valued’. Participation in the bazaar requires a search ‘for information that one lacks and the protection of information one has’ as buyers and sellers contend with known unknowns such as market demand, pricing and product provenance (Geertz 1978, p. 29). Luck and privileged information play important roles in managing these uncertainties, as do skilful bargaining (which may initially involve price/supply testing and become more intensive when it comes to actual transaction), experienced brokers and trusted client/supplier relationships.

To navigate the bazaar, participants must therefore search for signs and clues about what is about to happen and where. This search can be made more or less difficult by the structure of the bazaar, but is also shaped by processes of clientalisation. This relates to the potential for lasting relationships to emerge between buyers and sellers on the basis of mutual trust. This also enables the seller to direct more energy towards ‘potential’ buyers, as he or she already has a number of secure customers, while the buyer can also spend less energy searching for the best price. However, it also partitions the bazaar by creating relationships between buyers and sellers based on ‘those in the know’, meaning that new arrivals to the bazaar may be far more exposed than regular participants to the vagaries of information flows.

In the context of the contemporary governance of the Arctic region, we posit the idea that the Arctic Circle is ‘bazaar-like’ in that it too involves imperfect exchanges of information, which in turn have the potential to impact the extent to which certain kinds of knowledge (or knowledge about certain things) gain currency at the expense of others. To reflect on the earlier quote from Grímsson, when forums such as the Arctic Circle bring together ‘institutional and governmental representatives, political and policy leaders, scientists and experts, activists and indigenous peoples’, it is not so that these actors can negotiate a common voice, but rather to give different stakeholders the opportunity to set out their ‘stalls’ and market themselves as legitimate Arctic actors capable of offering key insights into indigenous, economic, cultural, technological and political activities

in the region. At the Arctic Circle, these stalls take a variety of forms, from plenaries to workshops, breakout sessions, private meetings, drinks receptions, and dinners in restaurants. Each year, the build-up to *Arctic Circle* begins with various interested stakeholders attempting to secure their stall for the forthcoming conference—to become ‘stall-holders’. This is achieved by submitting proposals to the ‘organisers’, which itself requires would-be stall-holders to convince the organisers that there will be a market at the *Arctic Circle* for their ideas.⁷

In terms of the ideas being marketed and exchanged, a number of countries including the UK, France, Japan and Italy were present to market themselves as legitimate and engaged Arctic actors. Businesses such as *Polarisk* (a political risk research and consultancy firm) advertised more traditional wares such as consultancy services and technologies, and highlighted commercial opportunities for investment, infrastructure and trade. Other organisations such as the West Nordic Council and the World Economic Forum attended to promote awareness about their activities in the Arctic. Academics also held a number of sessions to present and debate their research findings, hoping perhaps that the *Arctic Circle* would increase their exposure to other potentially interested actors.

For those who win the right to set out their stalls at the *Arctic Circle*, the next challenge is to gain attention. Stall *placement* matters and it is in negotiating these placements that a stall-holder’s capital, skill, industriousness, luck and privilege are tested. The biggest prize on offer is to make it into the plenary programme (especially for the morning sessions) where stall-holders will likely gain the most coverage. Here, there is a clear advantage for those stall-holders who already have close relationships with the organisers (who may be long-standing clients) or been able to market their ideas effectively in advance. Countries such as the UK, China, Japan and France can also offer other ‘sweeteners’ to the organisers, such as the attendance of VIP diplomats who can enhance the reputation of the Bazaar (e.g., the *Arctic Circle* in 2015 was attended by President François Hollande of France), as well as other kinds of endorsements (e.g., letters of support⁸).

Plenary sessions are held in the atmospheric main auditorium of the *Harpa* conference centre in Reykjavik on the basis that these sessions are expected to generate the most interest. The main auditorium is the largest and busiest area of the Arctic Circle ‘bazaar’, and also the best furnished in terms of décor and lighting. The auditorium is also well-positioned to pick up ‘passing trade’ as free food and drink is made available just outside.

At the same time, it is expected that buyers will look at the plenary sessions first on the understanding that this is where the premium information will be sold. One is more likely to encounter a VIP, such as a government minister, in the plenary session, and this in turn may attract other high-profile audience members (indeed it is perhaps less likely that high-profile figures would bother to attend the *Arctic Circle* without an attractive audience to engage). The symbolism of the plenary therefore creates a mutual understanding between buyers and sellers that this is where the best information will be made available. For those that do not make it into the plenary, the risk they face is that their own stalls will be marginalised, sited somewhere else on the multiple floors of the *Harpa* building, or in other buildings altogether.

The stall-holders have to adopt different marketing strategies to ensure information about what they are selling is made available across the bazaar. Social media, word of mouth, enticing session titles and signposting (directing people to their stalls), all assume far greater importance, while a degree of luck is also needed. Of course, the ‘buyers’ also face an information challenge. Upon arriving at *Arctic Circle*, everyone is presented with a programme containing a list of all the stalls (sessions) that will be open over the course of the conference. At an event the size of *Arctic Circle*, participants are forced to choose between multiple stalls (there were 78 sessions across the three days) as they cannot attend them all. Here too, information is at a premium as the programme only details titles, timings, sites and speakers. With only imperfect information available, social media, word of mouth, title wording, and speaker reputations all assume greater importance as buyers navigate the bazaar in search of the most valuable information. At the same time, sellers are forced into thinking about how best to attract key buyers to their stalls (i.e., those people they are most keen to influence with their information).

THE UK DELEGATION IN REYKJAVIK: A BIZARRE PERFORMANCE IN OCTOBER 2014?

The strategies and performances elicited from those attending the *Arctic Circle*, whether as stall-holders or buyers (in many cases participants actually play both roles in the course of the conference) are critical to the flow and exchange of information in the bazaar. In the build-up to the 2014 *Arctic Circle*, the UK delegation was particularly successful, managing to

secure two stalls to be open on different days during Arctic Circle, while most other participants only managed to get one stall. Moreover, one of these stalls had gained a prized plenary position. The UK was not unique in this regard as national delegations from France, Singapore, and Japan were also given plenary stalls. Here, privilege appeared to play an important role. Since these delegations represented states, there was a need for the organisers to recognise their primacy as holders of premium information (with states still regarded as the primary actors in IR).

However, the UK was unique among these countries in being granted a second stall in a ‘breakout’ session, which would give the UK delegation a further opportunity to sell their wares. Among these ‘wares’ was the claim that the UK was a legitimate and active player in the Arctic. The sessions were also used to demonstrate the contributions that UK commercial actors and scientists/social scientists could make in the Arctic. To have those two sessions, moreover, was a privilege that one might surmise was either related to the close relationship between the head of the UK delegation, James Gray MP, and President Grímsson or to the fact that the UK delegation was able to convince the organisers that it had more information to sell (or most likely some measure of both). What was perhaps not anticipated by the UK delegation was that this second stall would be sited in a difficult-to-find room at the back of the *Harpa* building. Given the impression made by the UK delegation during the plenary (discussed below), there was also a palpable sense of fatigue about the UK delegation among other Arctic participants—or at the very least, a sense that all the ‘good stuff’ had already been sold during the plenary. In terms of audience numbers, the ‘breakout’ stall attracted far less interest than the ‘plenary’ stall. Of those that did turn up, there was a sense within the UK delegation that these were not necessarily the people that they were primarily interested in selling to.

The actual performance of the UK delegation at the *Arctic Circle* is also worthy of note. It is fair to say that the UK delegation made a big impression, especially during the plenary session. The strategy adopted by the UK delegation had multiple dimensions to it, involving nine speakers representing the UK government, UK parliament and British businesses giving quick-fire presentations; a projection of a giant Union Jack emblazoned on a screen behind them; the setting up of multiple banners by the stage advertising the UK as ‘Great’; and the handing out of glossy brochures (also emblazoned with the Union Jack) to prospective buyers in the audience.

Somewhat controversially perhaps, the poppy worn by many UK citizens each year in the run-up to Armistice Day in the UK (which coincided with the *Arctic Circle*) also ended up being enrolled in the performance of marking out the size of the British delegation/stall which dwarfed all others. All of these actions were part of a broader strategy to sell the view that the UK had both a legitimate and an active interest in the environmental, social, economic and geopolitical changes currently affecting the Arctic region—essentially as a response to a gauntlet thrown down by President Grímsson in 2013 when he told an audience in London that the UK was not doing enough to be taken seriously as a player in Arctic affairs, reflecting broader criticism that the UK has not always been as engaged with Arctic affairs as it could have been (Morrell 2013).

But how was this performance received by others attending the *Arctic Circle*? In other words, did the idea sell? In the coffee breaks and networking events that followed the UK ‘plenary’, participants at the *Arctic Circle* could be heard joking that the UK delegation might have lacked subtlety and maybe even went a little too far in trying to sell itself in Reykjavik. After the event, somewhat ironically, one academic blogger observed that the UK delegation had come across as a ‘trade mission’—a peddler of more traditional goods and services rather than of the sorts of knowledge and ideas that stall-holders at the *Arctic Circle* were supposed to be selling according to Grímsson’s vision (Exner-Pirot 2014). Nevertheless, the official feedback from within the UK delegation was that the UK had performed well, achieving its mission to sell the idea that the UK was an important actor in the Arctic, and creating the conditions going forward for the UK to continue participating in the marketplace of ideas about what the future should hold for the region.

At the same time, it was impossible to avoid the feeling that delegations from other countries, Arctic as well as non-Arctic, were also reflecting on the fact that they had perhaps missed an opportunity to set out a bigger stall in Reykjavik. A delegate from Japan (which opened its own ‘plenary’ stall the next day) even commented that Japanese parliamentarians would follow the UK example when the *Arctic Circle* next convened in October 2015, suggesting that the strategy used by the UK delegation had sold, even if the content had not. At the 2015 *Arctic Circle* meeting, for example, Japan released its first Arctic policy and undertook a provisional translation of the policy so that it could reach a wider international audience (Government of Japan 2015). A further measure of the degree to which the UK delegation was seen to have adopted a successful

strategy would be to see whether other delegations use the UK model when setting out their stalls at the next *Arctic Circle* meeting in 2015. Shortly after the *Arctic Circle* meeting in 2014, France announced and subsequently confirmed that President François Hollande would lead the French delegation to the *Arctic Circle* in 2015. The French president ended up delivering the keynote speech to the 2015 meeting. In contrast, the UK went for a far more discrete presence, perhaps reflecting that there is only so much buying and selling one can do in the Arctic from year to year, at least until there is a further significant increase in human activity in the region.

SITUATING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE IN AN ARCTIC GOVERNANCE BAZAAR

Finally, it is worth commenting on one other dimension to the Arctic Circle ‘bazaar’. In this chapter, we have primarily focused on the actors that brought their stalls to Reykjavik. However, in the broader contexts of debates about Arctic governance, it is worth noting that the *Arctic Circle* also constitutes a stall within the wider bazaar in which Arctic governance is negotiated; a bazaar in which the Arctic Circle ‘stall’ sits alongside other stalls ranging from the intergovernmental (e.g., the Arctic Council), to the international (e.g., the IMO), the sub-regional (e.g., the BEAC), the sub-national (e.g., the ICC), and other forums such as *Arctic Frontiers* and the *International Arctic Forum*. In fact, at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in 2013, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, responded with his own sales pitch when he argued that the Kiruna Declaration, as it pertained to new observers, had confirmed the Arctic Council’s primacy globally (Myers 2013).

Nevertheless, while most would acknowledge that the Arctic Council is indeed the primary ‘stall’ in the Arctic bazaar, it is not the only purveyor of relevance to Arctic governance. Although the Arctic Council has sought to transform its stall by becoming less exclusive, for instance, by accrediting more observers and establishing the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) in September 2014, there are political limits to what the Arctic Council can sell (including discussions on defence and security), creating demand for other stalls—such as the *Arctic Circle* and *Arctic Frontiers*—which are capable of building different networks of information exchange between international, national, sub-national, non-governmental and commercial actors (Steinberg and Dodds 2015).

While we have used the term ‘bazaar governance’ to analytically grasp what we think is at stake when it comes to making sense of Arctic governance, it is also motivated by a desire to return to some first-order principles in terms of why governance matters. From setting out ‘grounding rules’ for participants to decision-making processes, terms like ‘Arctic governance’ should be treated cautiously not only because the word ‘governance’ is contested as is ‘Arctic’ in terms of what it encapsulates and whether there are some parties (often assumed to be state parties) more than others who have a right/capacity to appropriate/inhabit that space in the first place. As the Government of Japan’s Arctic policy notes,

‘Some Arctic states, with a view toward securing their national interests and protecting their territories, have become active in the area of national defense. Moves toward expanding military presence may have an impact on the international security environment. In this way, changes in the Arctic environment have political, economic, and social effects, not only in the Arctic but also globally. Resulting opportunities and issues are attracting the attention of the global community, both of Arctic and non-Arctic states’ (Government of Japan 2015, pp. 1–2).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have sought to introduce the idea that the *Arctic Circle* Assembly has taken the form of an annual ‘bazaar’ where knowledge and ideas about the Arctic are ‘bought’ and ‘sold’ by a wide range of stakeholders from both within and beyond the Arctic region. Within the bazaar, these stakeholders become ‘stall-holders’, competing with one another for attention in order to position themselves as key knowledge brokers in the debate about the future of the Arctic region. They must rely on a combination of capital, skill, industriousness, luck, and privilege. After all, while it is expensive to attend *Arctic Circle* (unless you are speaking, a volunteer, a student, or part of the media), it is cheaper to attend than other Arctic events such as *Arctic Frontiers* in Norway. Moreover, although stalls must be negotiated with the organisers, the conference is open to everyone (in contrast to the Arctic Council where participation is strictly limited to member states, indigenous Permanent Participants, and observers).

At the same time, privilege still matters since having good relations with key figures such as President Grímsson and major sponsors help to ensure maximum exposure and exclusive access (Guggenheim, e.g., hosted an

invite-only drinks reception on one evening). In 2014, the UK delegation experienced both sides of this coin, gaining a high-level exposure in the plenary session, but attracting far less attention during the breakout session. The overall view from within the delegation was that the experience was a positive one. Despite existing commercial, cultural and political ties to the region, the UK is still worried about being perceived as an ‘outsider’, especially in those contexts where the UK has either commercial interests or domestic environmental opinion to contend with. Thus, although the UK has been careful to respect the sovereignty of the Arctic states and the primacy of the Arctic Council (where the UK’s own voice is limited), the *Arctic Circle* provided a valuable opportunity for the UK to ‘market’ its Arctic credentials in a display of flag-waving and showmanship that would have been impossible in nearly every other Arctic forum.

At the same time, we have also argued that the *Arctic Circle* is emerging as a stall in its own right, as part of a broader bazaar of Arctic governance in which the *Arctic Circle* competes with all kinds of other institutions and forums to push forward ideas about Arctic governance. The leadership of President Grímsson, with support from the Icelandic government, has helped to promote the *Arctic Circle* as the stall of choice for both global and marginalised stakeholders who have been excluded from other stalls such as the Arctic Council. Already, the Arctic Council has countered this challenge (whether intentionally or not): first by granting observer status to an increasing number of states, and second by establishing the AEC. In Norway, the organisers of *Arctic Frontiers* may be feeling the pressure as well, not least because Reykjavik is more accessible than Tromsø both geographically and financially. It seems noteworthy that in 2013, there was no official Norwegian, Swedish, or Finnish representation (at least in the plenary sessions) at *Arctic Circle*. In 2014, Norway was absent again. As this chapter suggests, this kind of bargaining and competition (and the dynamism implied), both between Arctic stakeholders and sites of Arctic stakeholder interaction, appear as neglected aspects of Arctic governance.

We suggest that an avenue for further research of the *Arctic Circle* ‘bazaar’ would be to explore how far ideas and relations that have been ‘bought’ and ‘sold’ in Reykjavik since 2013 have travelled since. A second avenue for future research would be to survey both stall-holders and attendees about their experiences at the *Arctic Circle*, in order to delimit more clearly what it is they are seeking to ‘buy’ or ‘sell’ at the forum, the strategies they deploy and the difficulties they face in achieving desired outcomes. The emergence of the *Arctic Circle* has helped to foreground these concerns, while adopting a concept of the ‘bazaar’ seems to us a useful way to begin addressing their neglect.

NOTES

1. Others in Iceland have, however, been sceptical about strengthening ties with China as indicated by the government's decision to reject a proposal by a multimillionaire Chinese property developer to build a huge tourist resort on a large tract of unused land in the northeast corner of Iceland.
2. A full list of Arctic Circle partners is available on the initiative's webpages at <http://arcticcircle.org/> (last accessed 08 December 2015).
3. Examples include the Norwegian-funded 'Geopolitics in the Arctic: A Changing International Landscape', London: Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 14 April 2015; the joint Swedish/Finnish-funded 'Forum: Arctic Climate Change & Security', London: International Institute for Security Studies (IISS), 2012–2014; and the US-funded 'The Future of the Arctic', London: The British Library, 16 March 2015.
4. Duncan Depledge gratefully acknowledges the financial support provided by the Mamont Foundation for this.
5. For a full list of Arctic governance agreements, readers should consult the webpages of the Arctic Governance Project at <http://arcticgovernance.custompublish.com/compendium.137742.en.html> (last accessed 08 December 2015).
6. See <http://www.arcticfrontiers.com/> (last accessed 08 December 2015).
7. The Arctic Circle organisers emphasise a determination to be as inclusive as possible in this regard, in contrast to other conferences such as *Arctic Frontiers* which set a specific 'theme' each year.
8. The News section of the Arctic Circle is littered with examples of letters of support, including recently, from President Xi Jiping of China and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

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