

Canada, the Arctic, and Post-National Identity in the Circumpolar World

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Abstract: Issues affecting the Arctic today—including climate change, natural resource development, and contending claims about countries' boundaries and borders—raise the opportunity to think about Canada's Arctic identity. What ideas and values form Canada's Arctic identity and how does this identity connect with policy? Canada's identity or sense of "self" at home and abroad affects how its citizens and policy-makers think about the Arctic, thinking which can shape Arctic policy. In turn, policy can reaffirm or challenge identity. This article explores the complex interplay between Canada's Arctic identities and Arctic policy. It begins by explaining how Canada's Arctic resource and sovereignty claims are part of the historic importance of the Arctic in producing Canadian national identity. In contrast, Canada's role in developing the Arctic Council, its relationships with circumpolar organizations, and its participation in the International Polar Year relate to a more recent emphasis on developing a circumpolar, post-national identity, which is based on values, ideas, and interests Canada shares with other Arctic countries and actors. These two identities, and the policy options and directions that emerge from them, are in tension. The article suggests how they may converge into a uniquely Canadian circumpolar identity by pursuing a multi-level identity framework, in which post-national values and institutions compensate for the limitations of the national (and vice-versa). In doing so, it is argued that Canada would be able to take on a greater leadership role in addressing both pressing challenges and new opportunities in the Arctic today.

Introduction

The devastating effects of climate change threatening the Arctic ecology, the melting sea ice opening possible year-round transit of the Northwest Passage, and the scramble for natural resources at the bottom of the Arctic seabed are among the issues appearing in academic scholarship, popular media, and government policy about the Canadian Arctic. Clearly, the

Canadian state today faces many opportunities and challenges within its own Arctic territory and waters, as well as in the Arctic region generally.

These contemporary issues also present the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the Arctic in Canada's identity. What values and interests form Canada's Arctic identity? What sort of policies and relationships do these identities enable? These questions can impact debates about Arctic policy. Canada's identity as its sense of self at home and abroad shapes how citizens and policy-makers think about and make Arctic policy. In turn, policy can reaffirm or challenge identity.

This article argues that Canada's resource and sovereignty claims in the Arctic relate to the historic importance of the Arctic in producing Canadian *national* identity. In contrast, Canada's role in the development of the Arctic Council, engagement with circumpolar actors, and participation in the International Polar Year (IPY) relate to a more recent emphasis on *circumpolar, post-national* identity. These identities, and the policy options and directions that emerge from them, are in tension. The article then suggests how they may converge into a *Canadian circumpolar identity* to enable Canada to assume a greater leadership role in addressing the pressing challenges and new opportunities in the Arctic.

National and Post-National Identities

To make clear the connections between identity and policy as well as the position of the Arctic in Canada's national and post-national identities, it is necessary to briefly consider the concepts of national and post-national identity. Generally, identity refers to the sense of self of a person or collective that describes and distinguishes them and their relations with others. It includes values and loyalties that define this identity. Identity is also attached to different levels: personal, local, cultural, national, and regional, and exists both within and between states (see Anderson 1991; Rummens 2001; Wendt 1992; Campbell 1998; Hønneland 1998; Légaré 2001; Keskitalo 2004; Paasi 2009).

National identity refers to the sense of "we-ness" felt by citizens within a state and is typically connected with territory, history, culture, values, and language. The state is the territorial container of this national identity (Anderson 1991, 6), claiming legitimacy based on citizens' loyalty to this identity. In the traditional view of the Westphalian state system—which divides territory and its populations amongst clearly bounded sovereign states—the state appears as a natural, pre-given, geographically-bounded community with a unique identity.

A key pillar of the Westphalian system, and therefore the identity of the state itself, is the principle of sovereignty. Sovereignty typically refers to the absolute legitimacy and authority of a state over its territory and population, involving the legitimate enforcement of internal order and provision of security against external threat (Agnew 2005, 437).¹ Sovereignty commingles with national identity as sovereign states must be internally unified, independent, and distinct from other states in their identity in order to gain recognition and international authority (Hulan 2002, 12). States thus claim a singular coherent national identity in an attempt to maintain borders, legitimize policies, and mobilize citizens. These identity claims are sometimes deliberately made and sometimes unconscious articulations of values, ideas, and symbols.

In Canada, the Arctic is an important component of Canada's national identity, as the state invokes the Arctic (and the "North") more broadly in building the nation and incorporating it as part of the discursive production of Canada (West 1991; Grace 2001; see also Shadian 2007).² In claiming an *Arctic national identity* for Canada, the state increases its claimed sovereign legitimacy over the Arctic and is therefore able to summon this identity to justify the use of the political, material, and ideational resources of the territory and its peoples.

By contrast, *circumpolar post-national identity* challenges the bounded Westphalian conception of Canada by understanding the Arctic in transnational terms. The post-national character of this form of identity indicates that the formation of loyalties, attachments, and values are transnational, insofar as they stretch beyond the boundaries of the state (see Linklater 1998). This form of identity takes on a regional shape in the Arctic (see Keskitalo 2004; Young 2005; Heininen and Nicol 2007; Hønneland and Stokke 2007). This regional identity refers to the sense of togetherness within a geographic region and is understood in terms of how members connect to their linguistic, cultural, and social similarities, and their perceptions of common interests and threats regardless of state boundaries (Hønneland 1998, 98). Regional institutions and sub-national groups and institutions can claim this regional identity to bolster their political legitimacy and mobilize peoples for collective action.³ This identity is geographically bounded in the sense of referring to the "natural" or self-evident Arctic that makes up this circumpolar region, defined in part by latitude, the treeline, average ambient temperature, and the presence and distribution of permafrost (Heininen and Nicol 2007).

However, it is not just a product of nature, nor is the region a spatial "scaling up" of state identities (see Agnew 2005). Arctic regional identity

is also the outcome of institutional and intergovernmental co-operation (Heininen and Nicol 2007, 137; see also Keskitalo 2004). It is partly created through language, policy, and political action, and is thus infused with power. This post-national composition of circumpolar regional identity points to transnational problems and interdependencies, the importance of non-state actors, and the multiple and often competing layers of identities that exist in the Arctic.

At this moment, circumpolar post-national identity may only be nascent or may be a loose conglomeration of common values and interests felt between states. Moreover, the formation of a post-national identity may not be felt outside of state or transnational political actors (see Wilson Rowe 2007). However, as discussed below, the Canadian government is making efforts to form a post-national identity, and that identity can be tied to areas of Canada's Arctic policy.

Canadian National Identity and the Arctic

Within Canadian national identity, the Arctic serves as part of Canada's core myth, helping to define Canada as a unique northern nation comprised of vast wilderness that is distinct from the United States (Hulan 2002, 6; Shields 1991, 162). As Sherrill Grace (2001) notes, there has been much within academic literature and popular culture that has discussed the North's key role in forming Canada as a national community and, in doing so, has also discursively created the North (see also Grant 1989; West 1991; Gittings 1998; Arnold 2008). As part of the North, the Arctic's place in Canada's national identity draws on and stresses valued characteristics that include resourcefulness and hard work in using nature to secure material wealth and prosperity, resilience and adaptability in thriving in a cold climate, closeness with nature and the desire to explore it, and steadfastness in protecting the Arctic and its natural beauty.

This identity and the values that circulate in and around it enable policies of resource extraction and the assertion of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The Arctic and Canada's national identity therefore have a mutually constitutive and reinforcing relationship; that is, the Arctic's role in producing Canada's national identity has enabled policies that call for the development of natural resources. By claiming the Arctic in its national identity, Canada is able to legitimate its policies of resource extraction and support for industry, which in turn reinforces the importance of the Arctic in national identity.

For example, the history of oil, gas, and mineral resource development shows the position of the Arctic in forming national identity, using the

promise of Arctic development as a source of future wealth and prosperity to generate national pride and “we-ness,” and drawing on the Arctic as a source of common heritage (Hulan 2002, 11). Resource development thus becomes part of a project of nation building and formation of national identity. The positioning of the Arctic then reinforces attributes of Canadian national identity, in which Canadians are resourceful and resilient. The Arctic reinforces this identity by providing a physical and imaginative site to develop these qualities within Canada’s national historical context.

Northern resource development has a long lineage in Canada, entering into the popular imagination during the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush and in the development of towns such as Norman Wells and Port Radium in the early twentieth century (Grant 1988, 31). This continued through Second World War planning and the 1940s movement to develop the Arctic and Subarctic. The drive to develop resources was also expressed in former prime minister John G. Diefenbaker’s vision of northern development in the late 1950s, and received more critical attention in the context of debates over the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline in the 1970s. Recently, the Arctic also appears in questions of resource extraction and fragile ecosystems.

As an important component of Canadian national identity, the Arctic thus needs protection and offers potential for development. Canada’s current prime minister, Stephen Harper, described the Arctic as “so beautiful that it can readily inspire that romantic patriotism which is one of the most priceless assets of a people,” and as “a storehouse of energy and mineral resources” (Canada Office of the Prime Minister 2007; see also Williams 2010b). This speech invokes Canada’s Arctic national identity by also articulating the values of hard work, ruggedness, and patriotism, linking these values with resources and, it would appear, consciously using identity claims to enable further development (Canada Office of the Prime Minister 2007).

Resource development as enabled by the place of the Arctic within Canada’s national identity is also connected with sovereignty issues. The quest for resources and securing them for Canada’s future prosperity also motivates sovereignty claims, and is central to “Canadian” values such as resourcefulness and resilience. Resource development also helps to bolster Canada’s Arctic sovereignty claims as it demonstrates that the Arctic is being used and occupied, not an empty “terra nullius” waiting to be discovered. Finally, as many of the firms exploring and developing resources in the Arctic are multinational, Canada acts as an environmental and resource regulator and enforcer, and regulations are an expression of sovereign rights.

This connection between sovereignty and resource development helps make sense of Russia's 2007 expedition to plant a rust-proof titanium flag under the ice at the North Pole. Russia's actions raised the fear of losing Canada's Arctic sovereignty and resources, focal points in Canada's national identity. The event also harkened back to the era of Cold War politics of division between the former Soviet Union and the West, sparking much media attention. *Battle for the Arctic* (2009), a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) documentary about Canadian Arctic sovereignty, perfectly captures the atmosphere of threat associated with Russia's actions and underscores the importance of Canada's Arctic sovereignty claims. The documentary also discusses the importance of circumpolar co-operation through Canada's United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) claims and geological mapping work with the international scientific community. While these initiatives are directed towards sovereignty protection and resource development, their international, co-operative nature reveals a fractioning of the Westphalian model of national identity and sovereignty, and offers an opening for developing a new framework for a uniquely Canadian circumpolar identity, as discussed below.

Thus, another consequence of the importance of the Arctic in Canadian national identity has been the emphasis the state has placed on protecting the Arctic, and therefore Canada's sovereignty. Specifically, Canada's claims of exclusive jurisdiction over the Northwest Passage are underpinned by a limited, Westphalian view of sovereignty and the protection of that sovereignty in the Arctic. Historically, the search for and transit through the Northwest Passage has symbolized the glory of the British Empire. Recently, it has come to represent the Arctic dimension of Canadian national identity and the physical extension of Canada's borders to include Canada's claimed territorial waters. From the time of the Franklin expeditions, ripe with nationalist and patriotic fervour in the British Empire, the passage has meant more than its physical presence. It has embodied patriotism, exploration, and resilience. Even at a time when Canadian identity was more closely tied to Britain, Arctic waters have reinforced national identity, carrying meaning that captured nationalist sentiments.

Today, Canada's claim to the Northwest Passage is more pressing in Westphalian, statist terms largely due to the ice-melting effects of climate change, which presents the possibility of year-round transit of the passage. This possibility also brings with it the potential for violations of Canada's Arctic sovereignty⁴ and Canadian national identity. These concerns are reflected in policy and funding commitments. For example,

the government's 2005 *International Policy Statement* connects climate change with the "need for Canada to monitor and control events in its sovereign territory, through new funding and new tools" (Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade [DFAIT] 2005). The government has also devoted funds to procure six to eight patrol ships, increase surveillance capabilities, and establish a new military base in the Arctic (Canada Office of the Prime Minister 2007). Most recently, the Canadian government's 2010 *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* reiterates the importance of Arctic sovereignty. Amongst other initiatives, the government mentions Canadian Forces operations and the creation of a Canadian Forces Training Centre in the Arctic, the launch of a new polar icebreaker, and the development of ship berthing and refueling facilities at Nanisivik (Canada DFAIT 2010) as a means to protect Canada's Arctic sovereignty and, by extension, its identity.

Sovereignty claims over the Northwest Passage can also be understood in light of globalization, a process that challenges state authority through the proliferation of non-state actors and transnational problems such as climate change. These challenges to state authority compel states to act out or "perform" their sovereignty claims so that they can maintain their power with respect to issues of practical governance and continue their identity and status as a sovereign nation-state (Shapiro 2004, 34). Canada is no exception. Seen in this light, Canada both consciously and unconsciously performs its Arctic identity and sovereignty claims through actions such as conducting military exercises and deploying icebreakers to traverse the Northwest Passage. This is also the case on Hans Island,⁵ where Canada has publicly planted its flag and left assorted bottles of spirits in a "performance" of its sovereignty. The passage has thus become a venue where Canadian national identity and values seem to clash with the threatening realities of globalization, as Canada's authority and Arctic sovereignty—connected with its national identity and values—could be challenged by the potentially increased presence of foreign-owned ships transiting the passage. As Michael Byers puts it: "Single-hulled tankers and tramp steamers could soon be steaming through one of the most fragile ecosystems on Earth, raising the prospect of catastrophic oil spills as well as the introduction of invasive species through the emptying of ballast tanks. Just as problematically, ships carrying illicit cargoes could be attracted by the near absence of a military or police presence" (2006, para 3).

Circumpolar Post-National Identity

While Canada's Arctic national identity draws upon and reinforces attributes and values such as resourcefulness, resilience, and exploration, which enable policies that develop the Arctic's resources and protect its sovereignty, the formation of Canada's circumpolar post-national identity enables a decidedly different set of policies. Canada's image as a "good" circumpolar citizen stresses the values of healthy and sustainable communities, transnational ecological and human concerns, and circumpolar co-operation in forming part of a "rules-based region" (Canada DFAIT 2010, 1). This circumpolar post-national identity is regionally institutionalized in the Arctic Council (see Keskitalo 2004), a forum of the eight Arctic states⁶ geared towards mitigating the negative transnational effects of globalization and modernity (Young 2005, 12) through environmental protection and sustainable development (Arctic Council 1996). Circumpolar post-national identity has been manifest in policies and values related to Canada's role in the development of the council, its engagement with Canadian and regional non-state actors, and its commitment to International Polar Year (IPY) projects, which included topics "ranging from sea ice to permafrost, Arctic char to polar bears, and ancient civilizations to contemporary Inuit health" (Canada International Polar Year Office 2007).

The development of the Arctic Council had much to do with Canada's conscious desire to promote its identity as a circumpolar actor, if not a leader in the circumpolar world (Keskitalo 2004; see also Heininen and Nicol 2007). Numerous co-operative treaties and agreements, the development of transnational organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Mikhail Gorbachev's Murmansk Speech in 1987 (which called for arms control and an Arctic zone of peace), the end of the Cold War, and the creation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991, have together facilitated Canada's efforts to both form the council and assume a leadership role within it. Unlike other Arctic states, Canada had a history of claiming an Arctic identity and therefore had the departmental, administrative, academic, and non-governmental resources and communities (Keskitalo 2004, 169) that it could consciously use in efforts to help develop the council. With the end of the Cold War, a tradition of commitments to multilateralism and international co-operation, and a history of claiming the Arctic as an important part of its national identity, Canada translated its national Arctic identity into a circumpolar post-national one through its initiatives in forming the council. This identity brings attention to transnational issues such as the environment, the health

of circumpolar communities, and sustainable development as seen within the various working groups within the council.

Together with ICC's efforts to lobby the government to create a Canadian Arctic foreign policy (Shadian 2007, 340), these circumpolar processes also influenced the development of Canada's own northern foreign policy (Heininen and Nicol 2007, 147–8). The result was the June 2000 release of *The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy*. This policy and subsequent policies, including the 2005 *International Policy Statement*, the 2008 *Northern Strategy*, and the 2010 *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy*, mention the Arctic Council as a vehicle for building circumpolar co-operation through multilateral and bilateral arrangements in issue areas including sustainable development and circumpolar research (Canada DFAIT 2000; 2005; 2010; Canada Office of the Prime Minister 2008). This co-development of post-national circumpolar and national identities and policies suggests that circumpolar post-national identity can influence national policy processes, an influence that underscores the fact that while these identities can be in tension, as discussed below, there is the space for both to come together.

Indigenous peoples have also influenced the development of circumpolar post-national identity in their work on developing circumpolar institutions and monitoring and assessing the Arctic's ecological and community health (see Wilson Rowe 2007; Shadian 2006). Indigenous peoples' organizations have Permanent Participant status at the council (Bloom 1999, 716),⁷ a unique and significant feature that reveals the importance of non-state actors in the region, and ensures that states work with their non-state counterparts. The government of Canada works with these transnational actors in the Arctic Council, further developing Canada's circumpolar post-national identity (Shadian 2007). While it is beyond the scope of this article to analyze the innovations made by the Permanent Participant groups, it is important to note their influence in creating circumpolar identity and policy. For example, through land claims agreements and the initiatives undertaken by institutions like the ICC, Shadian (2007) argues that Inuit politics have influenced domestic and regional identities (Shadian 2007, 324). Partly through Canada's collaboration with the ICC, sustainable development appeared on the council's agenda and, as of 1998, sustainable development guides the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Program and the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group (Arctic Council 2000). Further, Arctic Indigenous peoples have identities and histories that pre-date Arctic state borders and these actors can provide knowledge about circumpolar

co-operation and diplomacy that is not limited by statist concepts of identity and policy (Abele and Rodon 2007; Wilson 2007). Thus, relations between Indigenous peoples and states also need to be understood to fully account for relations between circumpolar states (Tennberg 2000, 11) and the development of states' circumpolar identities. In this context, partnerships with Indigenous peoples' organizations means that the Canadian state is helping to develop its circumpolar post-national identity by mobilizing groups that lend legitimacy to circumpolar co-operative initiatives (see Shadian 2007).

Lastly, Canada's promotion and funding of the International Polar Year (IPY), March 2007–March 2009, is an extension of its circumpolar post-national identity, one that transcends Westphalian state boundaries and narrow national attachments and values. Canada funded IPY projects worth \$150 million over six years to increase knowledge and research about polar regions. The federal government revealed interest in IPY when including it within the 2005 *International Policy Statement* as promoting "scientific knowledge and the people-to-people dimension of polar stewardship" (Canada DFAIT 2005). The federal government has funded science and research focused on two main areas—"science and climate change impacts and adaptation," and "health and well-being for northern communities" (Canada IPY 2007)—that complement other initiatives such as the establishment of the University of the Arctic and participation in the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). This policy direction identifies Canada as a member and participant in a large Arctic community and emphasizes the post-national values of environmental protection and transnational co-operation.

Tensions, Limits, and Movement Towards a Canadian Circumpolar Identity

The various levels of identity that affect the state can complement, clash, and co-evolve with one another. For Canada, there exists a tension between Arctic national identity and the pursuit of a circumpolar, post-national identity. The consequences for policy that emerge from each of these forms of identity are also in tension. This section explores this tension and argues that such tension should not be resolved by favouring one form of identity at the expense of another. The article then closes with a discussion of how national and post-national circumpolar identities could converge into a *Canadian circumpolar identity*, and offers policy suggestions that flow from this multi-levelled, balanced form of identity.

First, levels of identity themselves can come into conflict. Structurally, Canadian national identity occurs at the level of the nation-state, while circumpolar post-national identity goes beyond state borders. Further, the boundaries and territory claimed as part of national identity become less important with circumpolar post-national identity, in that the identity of each state is less important than that of the region as a whole. In this light, the traditional Westphalian understanding of sovereignty associated with Canada's national identity may be eroded by circumpolar post-national identity and policy.

Policies based on national identity can also conflict with circumpolar post-national policies through the articulation of very different values, processes, trends, and challenges. For example, competition over Arctic resources and the consequent drive to map the Arctic's continental shelf and claim territories of exclusive jurisdiction set up potential conflicts for Canada with its circumpolar neighbours, and could jeopardize co-operative arrangements made within the Arctic Council. Tensions over territory and resources could also stall the strengthening of circumpolar institutions such as the Arctic Council and the development of new institutions and organizations. Jeopardizing co-operative relationships and stalling the development of institutions could mean that urgent issues such as climate change could be ignored. Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's former minister of foreign affairs (amongst other distinctions) writes that in pursuing national interests by planting flags, increasing military presence, and engaging in legal battles over the Arctic, states risk losing out on co-operative opportunities and could neglect the needs of Indigenous peoples and the region's ecology (Axworthy 2008).

However, turning completely towards circumpolar post-national identity and institutions such as the Arctic Council is not the best answer for addressing the tensions between national and circumpolar post-national identity. Circumpolar post-national identity may never provide as strong an attachment as national identity for residents of the Arctic or for the rest of Canada. Further, as a focal point of Arctic governance, the Arctic Council is still just a "council," not an institution with the authority to make and enforce law (Bloom 1999, 721). Its budget is small compared with national governments, and it has been reticent to include security issues on its agenda (a condition of US participation in the council) (Johnston 2002, 154)—all real limitations on its power. While it may have normative authority in its ability to describe transnational problems and suggest transnational solutions, actual policy decisions still reside with states.

Similarly, Canada's Arctic national identity, and the institutions and policies it enables, present their own limitations. For example, the Arctic's place in national identity is not as unified as the Westphalian model would suggest. Instead, the Arctic can have different meanings and implications for identity that depend on culture, language, ethnicity, and geography (see Grant 1989; Grace 2001; Hulan 2002; Griffiths 2003; Keskitalo 2004). Consequently, policies designed to safeguard Canada's Arctic national identity may be exclusionary. As Franklyn Griffiths writes in reference to whether Canada's Arctic sovereignty is on "thin ice," it should be noted that "the reference is largely to the thoughts, preferences, and practices of the vast southern majority and those they have elected and employed to manage the work of central government ... the reference is to southern Canadians, and more likely anglophones than francophones" (Griffiths 2003, 273). Finally, policies that emanate from national identity cannot address transnational problems, require costly measures like monitoring and enforcement, can incite conflict with neighbouring countries, and create an atmosphere of competition rather than co-operation.

Both national and circumpolar policies, values, and institutions have strengths and weaknesses. Thus, for now, it makes sense for Canada to pursue both its national and circumpolar policies and values simultaneously, allowing each to balance the other. Accommodating these tensions and creatively deploying various levels of identities and policies can address problems that occur both at the national and transnational circumpolar level.⁸ A multiple, multi-levelled Canadian circumpolar identity framework is required because to some degree, national and post-national identities will always be in tension and will shift depending on the policy issue, the identities affected by policy, the normative rationale behind the issue, and the institutions involved in addressing it. For example, resource development involves national identities and national sovereignty, but also involves circumpolar post-national identities and co-operation in protecting the Arctic's environment. Thus, a multi-layered and multiple identity should be pursued in Canada, where one layer of identity and the policy it enables can compensate for the limitations of the other.

Following from this multi-levelled framework, the first policy suggestion is that Canada should continue its territorial and maritime claims in the Arctic. However, Canada should do so by promoting the values of international co-operation and a rules-based international order while eschewing nationalist sentiments that only encourage other states to reciprocate and articulate their own nationalisms (thereby posing the risk

of provoking serious conflict). Even with the development of circumpolar post-national identity, Westphalian borders and national interests remain salient. However, to effectively address transnational problems, such as climate change, Canada should view the Arctic in a context of stewardship and responsibility rather than sovereign ownership. Canada's UNCLOS claims should therefore be seen from the perspective of responsibility, rather than competition for resources.

For example, in August 2009 an amendment to Canada's 1970 *Arctic Water Pollution Prevention Act* came into force, extending Canada's jurisdiction over Arctic waters from 100 to 200 nautical miles to protect Arctic waters from shipping pollution (see Becklumb 2009). This had the potential to create controversy with our circumpolar neighbours as it makes a sovereignty claim; yet this move is more compatible with a Canadian circumpolar identity than planting flags or staging military patrols. The amendment addresses a transnational problem (shipping pollution) through a national initiative (now a part of the larger Northern Strategy), and will ultimately require circumpolar coordination and the mobilizing of circumpolar identities to fully address the problem. Diverting attention away from framing claims in terms of national sovereignty could also free up both the political will and resources to address transnational ecological and human concerns, such as economic development, threats to food security, well-being due to pollutants entering the food chain, and the preservation of Indigenous peoples' cultural practices, amongst many other concerns. This would help in developing a circumpolar identity in a manner described by the *Arctic Human Development Report* where actors do not seek to control territory by the exercise of power but instead focus on "a socially stable and environmentally sustainable order" (Heininen 2004, 212).

A second suggestion for policy connected with the development of Canadian circumpolar identity is that Canada should continue its public education about the Arctic and the research undertaken during the IPY. This would include ensuring an IPY legacy through building knowledge about circumpolar activities and communities. The importance of scientific research and Traditional Knowledge (TK) systems, pride in Canada's participation and funding of these projects, and knowledge of the specific issues that these projects address will go far in increasing awareness of Arctic issues and will help develop Canadian circumpolar identity. Canada should also promote awareness of the ICC internationally as a model of alternative forms of sovereignty (Shadian 2006, 2007), the co-operative efforts and history of the Arctic Council, and the experiences of

forming Nunavut. Awareness of these initiatives can deepen knowledge about Indigenous organizations and their interactions with various actors, the political organization of post-national identities, and the challenges and opportunities sub-national governments face in the Arctic. All these efforts can allow Canada to participate in developing Canadian circumpolar identity by increasing knowledge about circumpolar issues within the Canadian state.

Conclusions

As the Canadian government explained in the 2010 *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy*, "the Arctic is fundamental to Canada's national identity" (Canada DFAIT 2010). Concerns about environmental degradation and the sustainable development of natural resources, human development and security, sovereign territoriality, and circumpolar co-operation are issues and challenges facing the Arctic today. Canadian national identity leads to policies and activities that focus on the exploration and development of natural resources and the protection of sovereignty. Circumpolar post-national identity has led to a focus on developing the Arctic Council, engagement with transnational actors, and participation in the IPY. I have suggested bringing these identities and policies together into a multi-level Canadian circumpolar identity framework where post-national values and institutions compensate for the limitations of the national, and vice-versa. Doing so would create an approach to Canada's Arctic governance that would combine circumpolar co-operation with Canadian responsibility for Arctic territory and waters, and commitment to promoting knowledge about the Arctic's ecosystems, peoples, and governance in Canada and beyond. Re-casting Canada's Arctic identities into Canadian circumpolar identity as a foundation for policy is in Canada's interest, and will assist Canada in assuming a leadership role in the Arctic.

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Lisa Williams recently completed a PhD in political science from York University.

Notes

1. This is not to assume that the Westphalian international system is timeless, natural, or universal. For a discussion of the ways that the international system has come to be seen as natural, see George (2004) and Osiander (2001).
2. It should be noted that the boundaries of what defines the Arctic are somewhat contentious. First, while there are specific “climatic, atmospheric and biotic data” that are specific to the geophysical area of the Arctic, indicators such as the presence of permafrost, atmospheric composition, distribution of flora and fauna, and temperature do not neatly coincide to form a perfect boundary (Heininen and Nicol 2007, 136). Second, as authors such as West (1991), Grace (2001), Keskitalo (2004), and Shadian (2007) indicate, the Arctic’s discursive boundaries have been created, and therefore the meaning assigned to the term Arctic has been subject to change over time (see also Möller and Pehkonen 2003, 3). Further, the Arctic as a subject is also part of a larger geophysical area and ambiguous referent, the “North.” However, for the purposes of this article, the Arctic is used to describe the circumpolar geographical, geopolitical, and geophysical region within Canada located above approximately sixty degrees north. This boundary is used by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program of the Arctic Council (Arctic Council Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program 2003), the Geological Survey of Canada (Natural Resources Canada 2009), and is generally the subject of Canada’s sovereignty claims. This area includes the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut, and parts of Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec (see Williams 2010a, 11–13).
3. As Paassi (2009) writes, while academic and policy literature have proclaimed the death of regional identity, it has recently re-emerged and the idea of a region has gained new, albeit ambiguous meanings.
4. See Griffiths (2003) and Huebert (2003) for a debate on this issue.
5. Hans Island is located between Ellesmere Island and Greenland in the Northwest Passage and is claimed by both Canada and Denmark
6. These states include Canada, the United States, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and the Russian Federation.
7. This includes the Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich’in International Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Sami Council.
8. This idea of this multi-levelled and compensatory framework comes from Linklater (1998, 179–203).

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