Home in the North: The Northern Forum, Alaska, and Subnational Foreign Relations in the Arctic

Emily Tsui

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Abstract

Despite being in existence for 25 years and being the only organization facilitating subnational foreign relations globally across the circumpolar world, membership in The Northern Forum, a site for the exchange of experience and intention among subnational Arctic and also northern governments, has declined in the last twelve years which has questioned the future of subnational involvement in Arctic governance. As a founding member that has remained with the Forum for most of its history, Alaska’s involvement presents a particularly interesting case study on the state of subnational foreign relations in the Arctic. This study examines the history of the Forum, which is one of engagement, diminishing interest, exit, and re-entry, largely from an Alaskan perspective. The principal question raised by this history is: what does Alaska’s withdrawal from the NF say about the state of subnational co-operation in the Arctic? This study critiques the Alaskan performance and recommends measures for the membership at large to achieve the Forum’s full potential.

Keywords: Northern Forum; Alaska; Regions; Arctic; Governance; Subnational governments

Disclaimer: Unless otherwise indicated in a footnote, interviewees are speaking in a personal capacity in reflection of their service at the position indicated. They do not represent their respective organizations at which they are currently employed.
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“To many who live and work in temperate climates, down there, looking up, the high latitudes are cold, remote, and as mysterious as the moon. But those of us who live here look at the Arctic differently. To understand sustainable living in the Arctic you need sustained thinking in the Arctic. We don’t look up. We don’t look down. We look around. To us the Arctic is home. It is heritage. It is our here and now and our hereafter.” – Governor Walter J. Hickel of Alaska, *Crisis in the Commons: The Alaska Solution*¹

The Arctic is changing at an exponentially rapid pace. As a consequence, increasingly complex environmental, economic, social and security challenges are emerging that affect the livelihoods of the people who live in the North and the ability of national Arctic policies to be effectively implemented. At the same time, the complexity of these challenges means that more than a single actor is needed to execute impactful solutions. Developing quick responses are becoming more vital if these challenges are to be met with robust responses, and opportunities that emerge are to be capitalized. Luckily, inhabitants of the Arctic region, who directly experience these challenges as part of their everyday life, understand the context by which these challenges have emerged, and have accumulated the knowledge needed to adapt to these changes that can be translated into effective policies. Although extreme variations exist between different parts of the Arctic, there are a number of common problems that exist, and solutions can be improved through sharing best practices. Since both federal and subnational governments both seek ways to improve the governance of the Arctic region to achieve their various priorities, whether they are economic or environmental, the effective incorporation of local knowledge and priorities into Arctic strategies is mutually beneficial.

¹ Emphasis added.

The Northern Forum (NF or Forum), an association of subnational governmental entities in the Northern region, was developed to share local knowledge to develop best practices for developing Arctic policies of both regional and federal governments. It aims to improve the quality of life of Northerners and to promote sustainable development. Businesses and other civil society groups are invited to participate in a largely “observer” status and their involvement has only marginally affected the governmental nature of the Forum. It is unique from other networks of subnational entities, such as the Barents Regional Council (BRC) or the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) in that it has an observer status at the Arctic Council (AC or Council), a high level intergovernmental forum comprised of eight Arctic states. Through its participation at the Council table, better policies designed by federal governments can occur as a result of sharing local knowledge to optimize solutions and the effective division of labour between subnational and federal governments. Significant attention has been paid by federal governments to the AC in recent years, as the prevailing mood in international relations in the Arctic is co-operation and federal governments have agreed that the AC is the prime venue to facilitate these solutions. The AC undertakes a number of projects that address common issues faced by its members. Including local knowledge at the table when proposals are introduced and implementation strategies are discussed increases the effectiveness of the AC’s activities. The NF therefore represents a channel by which governance in the Arctic region may be strengthened through inter-subnational co-operation. Though an awkward term, it is meant in this paper to refer to collaborative activities undertaken between subnational governmental entities, such as between Alaska and Yukon.

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2 The Northern Forum Board of Directors, Lapland Declaration of the Fourth General Assembly, Rovaniemi, June 1, 1999.
However, attention to and participation in the NF have been declining in recent years following Alaska’s withdrawal from the organization in 2011. At the Forum’s founding meeting in 1991, 14 subnational governments from across 9 countries represented by governors and top-level officials attended. Alaska was heavily committed to the Forum from the early days through hosting its primary secretariat in Anchorage (until 2011) and providing substantial financial and in-kind contributions. In the subsequent years, membership grew fairly consistently to 25 subnational governments across 10 countries between 2001 and 2003. Following this, membership continuously declined, and 11 governments across 5 countries remained at the time of Alaska’s withdrawal in 2011 represented by largely political staff, administrative assistants, and other lower level officials. As of 2015, 8 governments across 3 countries participate actively in the Forum’s activities. Over the years, subnational government participation in the Forum has therefore declined in number, diversity of countries represented, and level of political participation. As a result, although the NF is still in existence, its capacity and legitimacy in claiming to be the voice of “Northern subnational entities globally” has been significantly weakened. Alaska’s withdrawal is significant because of its investment in the organization throughout the years. If even the founding member who contributed significantly to the Forum left, what does that say about the Forum and its effectiveness? Why did Alaska leave the NF and has declared its intention to rejoin? Why has this decline in membership occurred?

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3 Signature page of the Northern Forum Bylaws, August 11, 1991.
4 John Doyle, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 15, 2016.
5 As will be shown, this occurred at a diminishing rate after Governor Hickel left office.
6 Natalie Novik, Northern Forum Membership List, undated, received through e-mail communication with author, February 21, 2016.
7 Please see Appendix I for details of annual member participation. Natalie Novik, Northern Forum Membership List and Priscilla Wohl, telephone interview with Emily Tsui, February 16, 2016.
8 At the time of access, the website’s “Member Regions of the NF” site was not updated to reflect its current members. However, accurate information was displayed under the “Regional Coordination” tab. “Regional Coordination,” The Northern Forum (accessed November 12, 2015).
What does this mean for the future of the organization and relations between subnational governmental entities in the Arctic?

Scholarly understanding of the Forum and subnational governments in the Arctic is extremely limited, and the purpose of this paper aims to answer the above questions and fill in some of these gaps in evaluating the performance of the organization and assessing the implications of this for the region. This research traces Alaska’s participation in the NF from 1974 to 2015, a period in which Alaska participated in the three founding meetings, helped to create the Forum, slowly reduced its support, withdrew, and in 2015, Governor Walker began the process for Alaska to rejoin the NF. A close examination of the reasons behind Alaska’s withdrawal shows that significant problems existed in the Forum’s organizational structure. Leaving the Forum in 2011 was not a rejection of the need for inter-subnational collaboration, since Alaska was then and remained actively engaged in bilateral relations with Yukon and through networks such as PNWER. Similarly, the reasons for which Alaska joined the Forum initially were present, if not deepened, when it stated its declaration to rejoin. This suggests that inter-subnational co-operation is constantly needed to respond to challenges in the Arctic. But as practiced by the NF, it requires significant reform if it is to represent Northern subnational entities and effectively advocate responsible policy in the Arctic vis-à-vis the AC in particular.

This paper proceeds in five sections. The Introduction presents the motivations behind this research, defines the terms and stakeholders that will be used in this paper and outlines the research methodology and limitations. Section I: Introducing the Theory and Application of Subnational Co-operation in the Arctic outlines how foreign relations of subnational entities are currently understood, and applies political scientist Alexander Kuznetsov’s framework to understanding why Arctic and Northern subnational governments engage in foreign relations.
Section II: Alaska and the Northern Forum evaluates the NF’s performance through examining the Alaskan participation in the NF, focusing on reasons for its withdrawal and re-engagement. This section concludes by assessing the implications of Alaska’s historical varying degrees of commitment to the NF for inter-subnational co-operation in the Arctic region. Section III: Paving the Cobbled Road suggests reforms for each stakeholder to increase the effectiveness of the NF, and ultimately, improve the state of Arctic governance in order to adapt effectively to rapid changes. The Conclusion suggests avenues for future research and summarizes the key findings of this study.

Introduction

Interest in Arctic subnational governments and regions has grown over the past decade, and this paper is motivated by this trend alongside identifying a need to fill in the knowledge gap on the Northern Forum. Evidence of the trend to study the foreign relations of Arctic subnational entities and Arctic regions exists in the 2015 edition of the Arctic Yearbook, where regional governance played a prominent theme amongst the selection of papers, and the “Regional Governments in International Affairs: Lessons from the Arctic” conference hosted on September 18, 2015 at the Munk School of Global Affairs in Toronto. In recent years, scholarly work has been published on Arctic regions as it exists either as a decentralized areas of governance, such as Antoine Dubreuil’s “The Arctic of the Regions,” or as it is institutionalized, such as Alyson Bailes and Kristmundur Ólafsson’s “Northern Europe and the Arctic Agenda: Roles of Nordic

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10 Proceedings of “Regional Governments in International Affairs: Lessons from the Arctic,” September 18, 2015, ed. Emily Tsui and Kevin Deagle (Toronto: Munk School of Global Affairs, 2015).
and Other Sub-Regional Organizations."¹² For the latter, there has been an emphasis on studying the BRC, with the NF often tokenized as an example of regional co-operation without much in-depth study. Indeed, a grand total of three articles¹³ authored by legal scholar Waliul Hasanat and political scientist Oran Young are devoted to studying this organization, and these works largely discuss the governance structure of the Forum.¹⁴

This paper picks up on a gap left explicitly by Hasanat’s 2012 “International cooperation in the Northern Forum” article, as he excludes “a critical view of the forum’s performance, successes or failures” from his analysis.¹⁵ Due to the diversity in the reasons for why member subnational governments might have left the organization, this paper concentrates exclusively on Alaska to explore the NF’s operations in depth and critically evaluates the organization’s performance. In doing so, this paper also bridges the gap in scholarship between the foreign relations of subnational governmental entities generally, these governments in the Arctic region, and the Northern Forum. This section clarifies the terms used throughout this paper, introduces key stakeholders, and states the methodology used to collect information.

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¹⁴ In contrast, the Arctic Council has had over a hundred books, articles, and think pieces written on the organization since its conception in 1996.
1. Definitions and Actors

Subnational Entity

The principal actor in this paper is Alaska, a subnational entity that participates in the NF. Sander Happaerts, Karoline Van den Brande and Hans Bruyninckx define subnational entity as “a coherent territorial entity situated between local and national levels with a capacity for authoritative decision making.”\(^{16}\) Alternatively, “subnational government” and “regional government” are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the level of government below the central authority that has competences and administrative resources more than a city but less than the federal government.\(^{17}\)

Subnational Foreign Relations

Participation in the NF is one aspect of foreign relations for a subnational government. The relations that subnational entities conduct with their counterparts not located within the same country are referred to in this paper as “subnational foreign relations,” “inter-subnational relations,” or the “foreign relations of subnational entities,” and can manifest in a co-operative, neutral, or confrontational manner. Although beyond the scope of this paper, other scholars refer to this as “paradiplomacy,” “constituent diplomacy,” “regional diplomacy,” “sub-state diplomacy,” “microdiplomacy,” “multilayered diplomacy,” “catalytic diplomacy,” “protodiplomacy,” and “post-diplomacy,” distinguished from each other in the breadth of


activities, levels of government included, and form of diplomacy. Activities conducted between these governments can include, but are not limited to, issues in: trade, tourism, infrastructure, emergency management, education, health, and knowledge sharing. This paper uses Kuznetsov’s analytical framework on inter-subnational relations to examine why the phenomenon blooms in a region, the legal grounds for an entity to engage abroad, reasons for foreign engagement, how sub-national co-operation might be institutionalized in a region, the attitude of the central government towards these activities, and the implications this has for the nation-state.

Arctic versus Northern

Although frequently used interchangeably, the use of the term “Arctic” and “Northern” refers to distinct, but connected, ideas. Since there is no single definition of “Arctic” and “Northern,” this paper defines these terms in the context of the organizations discussed. The “North” is a relative term, and implies that there is a south to compare it against. For NF membership, “Northern regions” is defined even more broadly as self-identification to a number of criteria discussed in depth below. This paper defines “Arctic” as the space that is near 66° longitude or between the imaginary “Arctic Circle” line and the North Pole. Arctic states are the eight included as members at the Arctic Council. As a result, there are Norths in each Arctic state and the subnational governments located in this region are the primary focus of analysis. In either case, it is evident that significant overlaps exist between the Arctic Council definition of “Arctic” and the NF’s definition of “Northern.” Since these definitions reveal that the classification of “Arctic” and “Northern” regions are largely artificially constructed binary

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19 For a good visualization of three different definitions of Arctic, please see Franklyn Griffiths, “Towards a Canadian Arctic Strategy,” *Foreign Policy for Canada’s Tomorrow* No. 1 (Toronto: Canadian International Council, June 2009), 2.
distinctions, this research views the NF and the AC as playing complimentary roles in improving the lives of those who live in Northern regions and for designing more effective federal Arctic strategies. Nonetheless, this blurry distinction between “Arctic” and “Northern” means that these organizations serve different, yet similar, constituents.

This paper focuses on the significant similarities between the two in the Arctic context. Over the years, the vast majority of the NF’s member governments have been located in the “Arctic.” Furthermore, the NF’s unique status in the AC merits an emphasis here. The NF represents the only formalized way a subnational government can engage at the international AC level, and as a result, this paper looks particularly at the role that Northern subnational governments located in the Arctic can play in strengthening the region’s governance practice. It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the NF’s role as an accredited observer at other international organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and Development Program (UNDP).\(^{20}\) The focus on the Arctic region stems partially from Bailes and Ólafsson’s observation that, “Only a superficial analysis could blame the current challenges and uncertainties of Arctic governance on a lack of institutions, or even of institutionalization in general.”\(^{21}\) As one of these institutions, building the NF’s capacity up helps to strengthen the Arctic region’s capability to respond to challenges. This occurs through advocating for policies that are seen to be particularly helpful for subnational governments and co-ordination of existing and future subnational activities with federal ones.

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\(^{20}\) Natalie Novik.

\(^{21}\) Bailes and Ólafsson, “Northern Europe,” 45.
**Regions**

The concept of regions is complex, and since this paper examines the foreign relations of Northern subnational entities in the Arctic region, clarification is needed on the use of this term. Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum argue that at the most basic level, a region is founded on territorial space and united through a “certain set of cultural values and common bonds of social order forged by history.”\(^{22}\) “Regions” in this paper are used to refer to a grouping of subnational government entities within a geographic space, as well as the geographic spaces concerned. Franklyn Griffiths observed that the Arctic, as having a “distinct geographic area with reasonably distinct political problems and processes” is “clearly a region.”\(^{23}\) For example, in the policy recommendation that calls for regional sub-secretariats to be formed, the “region” in question refers to the subnational entities located only in North America.

However, “regions” can also refer to a more fluid concept if the term is associated with identity. Geographically, regions can extend beyond a subnational government or a national state depending on the level of shared identity and cohesion. As a result, regions can exist on a scale of “more or less regionness,”\(^{24}\) and be comprised of a group of governmental entities that have voluntarily engaged in a transregional arrangement as suggested by the second clause of Hettne and Söderbaum’s definition.\(^{25}\) This is especially in the case of the self-identifying membership criteria of the NF. The fluctuating membership of the Forum calls into question the strength and cohesion of this broadly defined “Northern” regional identity, which served as a founding

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\(^{24}\) Hettne and Söderbaum, “Theorising the Rise,” 34.

principal for the Forum’s existence. Examining Alaska’s withdrawal from the Forum however, shows that there is still a distinct need for collaboration between subnational governments that identify as “Northern.” The gradation of “regionness” or “regionality” means that there could be a region inside of another region. This is the case where a proposed North American “regional” sub-secretariat operates under the Northern Forum, an association of subnational entities located in the Northern “region.”

Since this paper looks specifically at the ways subnational governments can engage in Arctic governance, the “Northern Arctic region” is the term that is used to refer to governments that could simultaneously both self-identify with the Forum’s definition of “Northern” and that are located in jurisdictions defined under the AC’s working definition of the “Arctic” region. For example, this includes Alaska, Yukon, Chukotka, but excludes Hokkaido, Gangwon, or Heilongjiang. Additional research could be conducted on the basis of relations with the broader “Northern” definition established by the Forum, but is not the focus of this paper.

**Key Stakeholders**

This paper will frequently reference seven main stakeholders: the Northern Forum, the NF’s subnational governmental members, the government of the state of Alaska, the office of the governor in Alaska, the Arctic Council, the secretariat of the Northern Forum, and the US federal government. This part will give a very brief overview of each actor and how they work with each other on Arctic strategies. It is critical to recognize that all of these stakeholders have their own priorities and objectives, partially by virtue of their constituents.

Each of these stakeholders have different interests. The NF exists currently as an international association of subnational governments that work to improve the lives of
Northerners as well as to promote sustainable development. The Forum itself does not exist independently in any legal sense, and rather works in the direction that its members set. While there are multiple categories of membership that the Forum uses, this paper examines principally the role of subnational governments as the Forum is intended to predominantly be a forum for governments. The government of the state of Alaska is one of the members, and the government’s responsibility is to represent all Alaskans across the state in its membership. Functionally however, the Governor’s office is largely responsible for the direction of the state’s participation. As the chief elected official for the state, the Governor is also theoretically elected to represent all Alaskans. In reality, Alaska’s governors pursue partisan politics, which may represent a problem for Alaska’s involvement. Meetings and projects initiated under the auspices of this Forum are organized by the secretariat. The secretariat’s purpose is to serve all members of the Forum, regardless of any potential dominant members. Alaska’s participation in the Forum is contrasted with the US federal government’s participation in the Arctic Council. The federal government’s interest in Arctic affairs has much to do with balancing the responsibilities of different departments, domestic policy, and foreign policy. The Council is a high level intergovernmental forum of the eight Arctic states; its membership is comprised principally by representatives of the capitals. Similar to the Forum, the Council is comprised of its members and its agenda is determined by those involved and it does not have an independent personality.

2. Methodology and Limitations

Due to limited information available on Arctic subnational relations and the NF, it was necessary to examine more generally the literature behind inter-subnational relations and to visit Anchorage to learn more about Alaska’s present and previous participation in the Forum. The former was particularly helpful in structuring the analysis for why subnational governments
engage in foreign relations for Section I of this paper. However, this literature is not particularly helpful in assessing performance, especially in cases of a specific organization, and interviews proved to be especially vital in answering the key questions outlined at the beginning for Section II. A total of 21 interviews were conducted during a research trip in Anchorage from February 12-22, 2016 or remotely through telephone, Skype, or e-mail. Furthermore, electronic versions of the majority of the Forum’s resolutions, and all of the Forum’s founding documents, could be located in print only at the Institute of the North’s headquarters in Anchorage.

The short time span associated with writing an undergraduate thesis and a single ten-day trip, as well as difficulties in the early stages of retrieving key documents needed to understand how the Forum operated, meant that there are some significant limitations with the analysis that follows. Firstly, despite interviews conducted over the phone in a three-month period and some interviews conducted in person, there was little time to follow up with the individuals to expand on some of their comments. Secondly, the lack of organization of the Forum’s records also meant that there were gaps in the resolutions and attendance lists. For instance, records of the Board of Governors, Executive Committee, or project reports could not be located. In fact, given the absence of information on all other governance bodies except for the secretariat, the secretariat must be taken to represent the institution of the Northern Forum as it exists separately from the demands of its members. Records were not kept on a consistent and a uniform basis throughout the years, leading to great difficulty in attempting to assess how the organization evolved. As a result, there are significant gaps in judging the success of projects undertaken by the Forum. Finally, due to the complexity of the US system of government, the researcher refrained from any deep analysis of the interplay among its institutions at the federal and the state level. This means that some available information that could doubtless prove useful in
explaining how best to divide responsibilities in Arctic policy between the two levels and branches of government must await further research.

Inherent challenges in conducting interviews are the biases of the interviewer and the interviewee, as well as the capacity for the interviewee to recall events. While the researcher did their best to remain objective throughout the process and tried to not frame leading questions, there was undoubtedly some bias present, especially the belief in the value of participating in international relations as the researcher is a student in this field. The interviewee’s recollections of what occurred in the past could also be affected by their emotions and experiences throughout their involvement. In more than one instance, the interviewees displayed or expressed frustration and anger over their time in working with the Forum or with its members. Given the small pool of individuals that were involved in the Forum, it was also difficult to control for objectivity in their analyses of why Alaska was varyingly committed to the Forum. However, where possible their statements were cross-checked with statements from other interviewees or with the relevant documents.

Section I: Introducing the Theory and Application of Subnational Co-operation in the Arctic

Scholarship on the foreign relations of subnational entities is relatively new, and is thus limited. Viewing Arctic governance from a subnational perspective is even scarcer. Given the rapid change in the Arctic environment, this is a field of inquiry that needs more attention. This section provides a brief overview of the existing literature on these subjects. Noting the scarcity of analysis conducted on the foreign relations of sub-national entities in the Arctic and the Northern Forum, it makes use of the analytical framework outlined by Kuznetsov in his *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy*. While his framework is useful in explaining why subnational
governments engage abroad, it is not particularly helpful in evaluating their continued involvement or explaining why they might dis-engage and re-engage. This section presents an overview of the existing literature on the foreign relations of subnational entities, introduces Kuznetsov’s analytical framework, and discusses its applicability to subnational governments generally in the Arctic region and Alaska’s engagement in particular. The focus of this section is on a subnational entity’s pre-engagement and initial engagement in foreign relations in the Arctic region, particularly with the Northern Forum.

1. Literature Review: Theory of Foreign Relations of Subnational Entities

The idea of inter-subnational governance, or foreign relations between subnational entities from different countries, has been explored by a number of scholars who have reacted to developments in the global system that saw a blossoming of these activities. Setting the groundwork for future works on this topic were Samuel Huntington’s 1973 “Transnational Organizations in World Politics,” and Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye’s 1974 “Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations.” They observed the changes taking place and noted that global politics was becoming increasingly interdependent on non-traditional actors at and in the subnational, private, public, and non-governmental sectors. Since the 1970s, the exclusive authority of the state has been challenged further, because of an increasing number of actors, an increasing number of contacts among those with an ability to influence the government, and the increasing amount of influence these non-state actors hold. 26 A continuing shift away from realist state-centric practice also led a number of scholars in the 1980s and 1990s to examine the phenomenon in greater depth.

In seeking to explain how these changes have affected subnational governments, the first phase of literature in the early 1980s and 1990s was focused on establishing terminology for this phenomenon. These different terms were noted previously, but the most popular term that has prevailed is “paradiplomacy.” This was initially introduced in the social science context by Rohan Butler in 1961, who explained it as “the highest level of personal and parallel diplomacy, complementing or competing with the regular foreign policy of the [state].” Paradiplomacy has remained a popular term, and is generally understood to refer to as the “involvement of constituent units (regions) of national states in international affairs, like the provinces in Canada, states in the United States, autonomous communities in Spain, the landers in Germany, the oblasts and republics in Russia, and so on.” This distinction therefore focuses only on the level of government below the federal level, and separates it from other terms that include cities or municipalities, which Kuznetsov classifies as public instead of state powers. Pioneers in this field include political scientists Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos, and researchers John Kincaid, Brian Hocking, and Charlie Jeffrey.

A consequence of the focus on trying to define these relations is that much of the literature has been narrative and descriptive. Aside from describing the external relations of subnational entities, it focuses on why subnational governments engage abroad and how they go about doing so. These articles or books often commence with the history and constitutional framework of the entity and country. Much work has been done on the Belgian case in particular, since many powers have been granted to its sub-national entities to conduct foreign

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27 Kuznetsov, Theory and Practice, 26.
28 Kuznetsov, Theory and Practice, 2.
policy. The Province of Québec in Canada has also proven to be a popular case study, beginning with the Quiet Revolution under Jean Lesage in the 1960s. These studies and others have demonstrated the extent and limits of subnational involvement in international affairs by providing descriptions of how these entities engage abroad. Yet this first phase of work lacked widespread applicability or predictability as to how other subnational entities may act.

Beginning in the late 2000s and early 2010s, a second phase has seen a shift from more descriptive towards a more analytical and theoretical approach. New frameworks have been put forward to explain why and how subnational entities conduct foreign relations. Rentl Blatter and Thiele Kreutzer and Peter Bursens and Jane Deforche notably observe that the paradiplomacy literature has been more of a descriptive tool and without the ability to derive generalized conclusions from this work. Bursens and Deforche work to fill this gap by using the concept of historical institutionalism to explain variations in external relations activities among federal states and examine Belgium in particular. Of particular importance for this paper is Kuznetsov, who summarizes and adds to this literature by creating an analytical framework for which future foreign engagements of subnational entities can be examined. His work is presented in detail below, and forms the basis of the approach used here.

2. Theory: Kuznetsov’s Framework of Subnational Governments Engagement in Foreign Relations

Kuznetsov’s *Theory and Practice of Paradiplomacy* establishes an analytical framework for which a critical analysis is possible of how and why subnational entities engage abroad. This

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33 Bursens and Deforche, “Going Beyond Paradiplomacy?” 153.
34 Bursens and Deforche, “Going Beyond Paradiplomacy?” 162.
framework is comprised of six questions which could be applied to any region and government in question, and he suggests possible answers for each. A modified summary of his framework is presented below, and the following sub-section will discuss each as it is relevant to the Arctic region, the Northern Forum, and Alaska’s participation respectively. The six questions are:

1. What are the causes of the booming of the paradiplomatic activities of an examined region?
   a. Potential reasons: Globalization, regionalization, democratization, foreign policy domestication and internalization of domestic political, federalization and decentralization, problems with the nation-building process, central government insufficient effectiveness in foreign relations, asymmetry of constituent units, outside stimulus, regional leader/political party, and borders.

2. How has paradiplomacy been institutionalized in an examined region?
   a. Potential methods: Regional ministry of Foreign Affairs, permanent abroad offices, official visits, exhibitions/forums, global and transborder multilateral regional networks, work within official central government delegations.

3. What are the legal grounds of constituent diplomacy in the country of an examined subnational case?
   a. Further questions: What is the level of legal permission of treaty-making with foreign actors granted by the national constitutions/legal acts to regional authorities? What are the constitutional requirements for consultations with subnational governments on foreign affairs issues?

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35 This summary is modified from the diagram on page 116. The only modifications are its simplification and a re-ordering of this question, to suit this paper’s analysis better. Kuznetsov, Theory and Practice, 116.
36 Kuznetsov, Theory and Practice, 116.
4. What is the predominant motive of the government of an examined region to be involved in international relations?
   a. Potential reasons: Economic motivations, cultural or linguistic factors, political goals, cross-border housekeeping

5. What is the attitude of the central government to paradiplomacy of its constituent entities?
   a. Potential approaches: Paradiplomacy as a challenge for whole nation, paradiplomacy as an opportunity for whole nation, cooperative-coordinated pattern, cooperative-joint pattern, parallel-harmony pattern, parallel-disharmony pattern

6. What are the consequences of paradiplomacy for the development of the nation?37
   a. Potential consequences: Rationalization of the national foreign policy, democratization of the decision making process in national foreign policy, disintegration of the state

Since not all the questions and reasons Kuznetsov provides for and asks are relevant to this paper, only the ones that are applicable will be explained.38 The following sub-sections (3-7) assess subnational foreign relations through answering questions 1-5 respectively. Furthermore as seen, these questions primarily investigate reasons for initial subnational government engagement in foreign relations. This framework is insufficient in assessing the post-engagement phase, when a subnational government has been engaged in foreign relations for a while. Further research is needed to establish an analytical framework and theory to do so.

38 The author highly recommends interested readers to read the entirety of Kuznetsov’s book for further details.
3. Application: Causes of inter-subnational foreign relations blooming in Arctic region

While the need for inter-subnational co-operation in the Arctic has been briefly explained, and some scholarship exists on its governance form, no systematic study has been undertaken to show why sub-national governments in the Arctic region engage in foreign relations. Eight of Kuznetsov’s reasons for the first question are of relevance here: globalization, regionalization, foreign policy domestication and internalization of domestic politics, federalization and decentralization, insufficient effectiveness of the central government in foreign relations, outside stimulus, role of regional leader/political party, and the role of borders. This very brief analysis focuses mostly on the early 1990s when number of these activities began, but also highlights their ongoing relevance.

Globalization

Kuznetsov explains globalization to be an erosion of “economic and cultural boundaries between states” which “granted subnational entities more opportunities to pursue their economic goals not only within their home state but across national frontiers as well.” The summary proceedings of the 1990 Third Northern Regions Conference, the event which resolved for the creation of the NF, commented on two contributors which led to an erosion of these boundaries. Firstly, the opening of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a major political development that allowed for these boundaries between the East and West to be eroded. This meant that Arctic peoples could re-establish family or cultural ties from the other side of the “Ice Curtain,” and forge new connections. Secondly, technical improvements in communications

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39 Kuznetsov, Theory and Practice, 102.
also allowed for regular dialogue between subnational entities and the facilitation of face-to-face meetings.\textsuperscript{42} This also allows for greater commerce, integration, and trade, as consumers have not only a larger market to choose from remotely, but also producers have a larger audience for which their items can be sold.

\textit{Regionalization}

Kuznetsov defines regionalization as the “global tendency that drives to subsidiarity…[the] delegation of as much competence as possible from central government to regional and local levels of authority in those sphere where non-central governments can perform effectively.”\textsuperscript{43} Between Arctic subnational entities, varying levels of political and economic devolution exist.\textsuperscript{44} For example, the 10 Russian federal entities located in the Arctic are divided in the level of autonomy they have in international affairs.\textsuperscript{45} In Canada, devolution movements in the Canadian North led to greater independence for the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Yukon by the time of the NF’s creation, as seen through the election of first government leader in the NWT in 1980,\textsuperscript{46} and in Yukon in 1979.\textsuperscript{47} In Alaska, significant autonomy was achieved with statehood in 1959, and its constitution is seen as one of the most progressive in the United States in terms of promoting local self-governance.\textsuperscript{48} However, the federal government still retains control over approximately 60\% of Alaska’s total territory, limiting the amount of autonomy

\begin{footnotes}
\item[42]“Executive Summary,” \textit{Summary Proceedings}, 4.
\item[43]Kuznetsov, \textit{Theory and Practice}, 103.
\item[44]Dubreuil,“The Arctic of the regions,” 923-938.
\item[45]Dubreuil, “The Arctic of the regions,” 925.
\item[47]Alcantara, “Preferences, perceptions,” 169.
\end{footnotes}
domestically the state of Alaska has over its territory.\textsuperscript{49} Despite these varying levels of autonomy, these subnational entities still voluntarily participated in the three founding Northern Region Conferences (with the exclusion of Soviet subnational entities in the first two due to Moscow’s prohibition on foreign travel of subnational leaders) that worked to construct a cohesive “Northern identity.”

\textit{Foreign Policy Domestication and Internalization of Domestic Politics}

The “global tendency of the blurring borders between domestic and foreign politics” which has compelled subnational entities to engage abroad is what Kuznetsov refers to as “foreign policy domestication.”\textsuperscript{50} Prior to the establishment of the NF and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the predecessor to the AC, Arctic issues were dominated by concerns about security because of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{51} Federal government departments, in control of defense and security policy, dominated the political field during this time and the Arctic largely remained a concern for “high politics.”\textsuperscript{52} In the post-Cold War years, the “peace dividend” generated opened the Arctic arena more to deal with other concerns such as climate change, global health, trade, and others. These are often dealt with at local, subnational and federal government levels, but have also transcended this domestic level in international

\textsuperscript{50} Kuznetsov, \textit{Theory and Practice}, 104.
\textsuperscript{51} Barry Scott Zellen, \textit{Breaking the Ice: From Land Claims to Tribal Sovereignty in the Arctic} (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 14.
\textsuperscript{52} One example of this was the Department of the Interior, which William Westermeyer and Kurt Shusterich noted as one of the principal actors on Arctic decisions during the last two decades of the Cold War. \textit{United States Arctic Interests: The 1980s and 1990s}, ed. William E. Westermeyer and Kurt M. Shusterich (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1984), 15.
multilateral foras such as the UNEP, World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). ⁵³

In the Arctic region, there is a tendency for these different issue areas to be tackled in an interdisciplinary and collaborative fashion. For example, the AEPS established in 1991 and the AC established in 1996, deal with issues related to climate change, health, and economic development which also concern subnational entities. ⁵⁴ With this blurring of jurisdictions between the federal government and subnational entities, governments such as Alaska are increasingly seeking the need to participate in international affairs to ensure that its voice and responsibilities are heard.

Federalization and Decentralization

In a summary of the literature explaining why entities in federal systems are more likely to engage abroad as opposed to unitary ones, Kuznetsov suggests that similar constituents and portfolios shared by the federal and subnational government as an explanation. ⁵⁵ The United States has one of the most developed local government system in the world, ⁵⁶ which means that significant authority has been granted by subnational entities to carry out day-to-day activities. At the federal level, states’ interests are to be represented by individuals from the region. However, there are differing interests between the federal and subnational governments which merit subnational advocacy. In the Alaskan case, this was expressed to be a motivating factor for

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⁵³ For example, the Municipality of Anchorage operates a Department of Health and Human Services; the State of Alaska operates a Department of Health and Social Services; the US federal government operates a Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the US is a participant alongside 193 other member states in the WHO.


foreign engagement, as expressed by individuals such as Bob Herron, an Alaskan member of the House of Representatives and Co-Chair of the Alaskan Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC), who lamented that the state’s relations with the federal government had been tortured since William Seward’s purchase of the land from the Russians in 1867.\footnote{Bob Herron, Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 8, 2016.} Differing priorities, namely the conflicting priorities of Alaska on sustainable development and the federal priority of environmental protection, make the two difficult to reconcile.\footnote{Herron.} Furthermore, the practical limitations of a US state’s engagement in foreign relations are also limited by its reliance on federal funding for its activities.\footnote{Steve Myers, Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 3, 2016.}

*Insufficient Effectiveness of the Central Government in Foreign Relations*

Kuznetsov admits that his classification of “insufficient effectiveness of central government in foreign relations” is a vague one, especially as “insufficient effectiveness” is a largely subjective term with multiple definitions.\footnote{Kuznetsov, *Theory and Practice*, 106.} In the US case, there is no doubt that the State Department is capable of making robust decisions and undertaking strong action in collaboration with other departments, such as the Department of Defense. However from the Alaska point of view, Washington D.C. can be regarded as “ineffective” in pursuing their priorities internationally as briefly mentioned above. As a result, conflicting priorities of what constitutes an “effective foreign policy” between the subnational and federal government is grounds for Alaskan participation in international affairs, and represents a significant reason for why Alaska chose to engage with the NF. In the case of other Northern subnational entities as well, the Arctic’s peripheral geographic location relative to their capitals is a factor in explaining conflicting perspectives that compel a government to participate abroad.
Outside Stimulus

As mentioned before, a significant factor that allowed subnational governments across the Arctic to participate and develop the NF was a direct result of the opening of the Soviet Union. The impact of former General Secretary of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev’s declaration that the Arctic should be a “zone of peace” cannot be understated. This allowed for Soviet participation at the Third Northern Regions Conference, which led to the creation of the NF. Additionally, by this time, it became increasingly evident designing solutions to climate change had to reflect the cross-border nature of the problem and deal with multilaterally. This trend is expressed through proliferation of global agreements and conventions that could be applied to protect the unique Arctic environment.

Role of Regional Leader/Political Party

Two political leaders were crucial in pushing forward the engagement of subnational entities in foreign relations: the Governor of Hokkaido, Japan, Naohiro Dougakinai during the 1970s and Governor Hickel in the early 1990s. Hokkaido was interested in international affairs as it was geographically and climate wise very different from the rest of Japan, and Governor Dougakinai wanted to reach out to other Northern governments to collaborate on environmental protection strategies. He had a vision that the co-ordination of the activities of regional governments could “contribute to the success of U.N.-organized conferences to be held in the future.” In 1974, he invited 19 subnational governments from across Canada, Scandinavia, and the United States to participate in the “International Conference on Human Environment in

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63 Wohl.
“Northern Regions” held in Sapporo.\(^6\) Although it was resolved that more frequent meetings should take place, difficulties in organization meant that none were held until the second Northern Regions conference in Alberta in 1979, and finally in 1990 in Anchorage.\(^6\) However, in transitioning from an ad-hoc conference format to a semi-permanent organization, Governor Hickel played a profound role which stemmed from his interest in international relations.\(^6\) He was personally quite invested in the Forum, which was emblematic in one of his more well-known quotes: “Why war? Why not big projects?”\(^6\) He believing strongly that “people-to-people initiatives were needed”\(^6\) in the North, especially where there were so many similarities in geography, history, cultural, and religious heritage. His consistent attendance at the Forum’s founding meetings helped to facilitate the participation of other subnational foreign relations vis-à-vis the NF.

*Role of Borders*

In sharing many similarities, bordering subnational entities tend to engage in bilateral relations to co-ordinate on a number of shared issues. For Alaska, this also appears to hold true. Yukon has more than 14 bilateral agreements and documents with Alaska.\(^7\) On November 25, 2015, the Alaska’s Governor’s Office also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with British Columbia to jointly address issues related to the protection of transboundary waters, workforce development and training, emergency management, and more.\(^7\) In comparison, no bilateral agreements have been signed between the Government of Nunavut and the State of Alaska,

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\(^6\) Hasanat, “International cooperation,” 373.
\(^7\) Steve Shropshire, Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 19, 2016.
\(^8\) Shropshire.
\(^9\) Hickel, *Crisis in the Commons*, 17.
\(^71\) “Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation Between the State of Alaska and the Province of British Columbia,” Juneau and Vancouver, November 25, 2015.
where no borders are shared. Shared borders is therefore a compelling reason for subnational
governments to engage in foreign relations

4. Application: Institutionalization of Subnational Foreign Relations in the Arctic Region

Kuznetsov offers six possible concrete ways in which the foreign relations of subnational
governments can be examined. Due to the diversity of governments across the circumpolar world,
the only two which is explored here are engagements within official central government
degulations and in global and transborder multilateral regional networks.

**Within Official Central Government Delegations**

Subnational entities may choose to work within official central government delegations
for a variety of reasons. Firstly, a central government has dedicated financial and human
resources to commit to foreign relations. The State Department’s budget (around 50 billion
USD)\(^{72}\) dwarfs the Alaskan Governor’s Office of International Trade (around 350,000 USD),\(^{73}\)
and its connections are significant. Secondly, working within the central government may allow
for greater impact to change Arctic policy. As Distinguished Scholar Lawson Brigham reflected,
Alaska is “not going to shape US policy by not going through the State Department…US Arctic
policy is created through the State Department.”\(^{74}\) Collaboration with the federal government
and voicing concerns through this channel could yield positive results, especially if the end goal
is a change.

\(^{72}\) “The Department of State and USAID FY 2017 Budget,” Bureau of Public Affairs, February 9, 2016.
\(^{73}\) Number calculated by adding the salaries of the three personnel working in the Office of International Trade. A
separate Office’s budget was not located. “State of Alaska FY 2017 Governor’s Operating Budget,” Office of the
Governor Office of Management and Budget, December 9, 2015.
\(^{74}\) Lawson Brigham, Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 11, 2016.
Global and Transborder Multilateral Regional Networks

For a variety of reasons explored above, a subnational entity may opt to engage in foreign relations through a multilateral network that bypasses the direct involvement of the central government. Three multilateral networks of subnational entities are particularly prominent for addressing Arctic issues: the BRC, the PNWER, and the NF. The latter’s history, operational structure and membership is discussed in detail in Section II.

The BRC is a voluntary association of Nordic and selected Russian subnational entities in the High North which “foster[s] direct collaboration among the local communities” in order to “support and promote co-operation and development in the Barents Region.”

Its membership is comprised of 13 counties, oblasts, and other subnational governments exclusively from that region.

The BRC also has a formal role for indigenous peoples (Sami, Nenets, and Veps) through granting them observer status. There are a number of working groups that have specific projects which tackle issue-areas including investment and economic co-operation, tourism, sustainable living environment, transport and infrastructure, culture, youth, education and research, energy efficiency, health and related social issues, and indigenous peoples.

The BRC meets regularly and operates on a rotating chairmanship model, similar to the AC. Receiving strong support from central governments, which includes generous financial support, the BRC is regarded by some as a successful model of inter-subnational co-operation in the Arctic region.

PNWER is another example of a geographically concentrated voluntary organization facilitating cross-border subnational co-operation. It works as a non-partisan third party to facilitate communication between legislatures in subnational governments across the Pacific.

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75 Bailes and Ólafsson, “Northern Europe,” 57.
76 “Chairmanship,” The Barents Regional Council (accessed March 13, 2016).
Northwest region of North America. Of particular relevance to this paper is its Arctic Caucus, founded in 2009 by Lesil McGuire of Alaska, Alaskan State Senator and co-chair of the Alaskan Arctic Policy Commission, to showcase the region to stakeholders in the south that may know very little about the Arctic. Alaska’s participation in PNWER has been cited as successful and useful by Representative Bob Herron and Drue Pearce, former Alaska State Senate President and Department of Interior appointee, among others who believe it to be worth the investment to participate.

As mentioned briefly in the beginning, the NF is the only organization promoting co-operation between subnational entities globally, from across and beyond the Northern circumpolar world. Similar to the BRC and PNWER, the NF also conducts projects and activities that are initiated by its members. However, the NF is distinct from the BRC and PNWER not only in its intention to be globally reaching, but also its observer status on the AC. Section II explores the Forum more in depth.

Networks of inter-subnational governance in the Arctic exist in different forms and locations. While all aim to facilitate co-operation and dialogue between them, it is important to emphasize that participation by subnational entities in these networks is voluntary. The decision of a subnational entity to participate in the networks is one that requires substantial investment in time, money, and energy. Reasons for why a subnational entity might engage in a network are explored in Section II with Alaska.

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78 Myers
80 Myers.
81 Novik.
5. Application: Legal Grounds for Alaska’s Involvement in International Affairs and the Northern Forum

The extent to which subnational governments can participate in these activities is also dependent on the powers awarded to them constitutionally and the degree of practical implementation of these powers. Using the case studies of a number of countries which permit or prohibit a subnational entity from participating in treaty-making, John Trone in *Federal Constitutions and International Relations* assesses the level of competence that these governments are granted as a result of their constitutional arrangement.\(^{82}\) While constitutions may not be able to predict the degree of freedom these entities have in practice, they are instructive in outlining theoretically what is legally permissible or restricted.\(^{83}\) Differences in constitutions can also help to explain the varying behaviour of subnational entities, as greater allowance for external relations of a government may permit it to engage more robustly and contribute to the form of governance it has selected. What these constitutions look like in practice, however, can and do vastly differ from what is formally outlined. Kuznetsov’s example is of the Soviet constitution, which when written, seems very progressive. In actuality, these freedoms were not enjoyed by its subnational government as Moscow exercised a strong degree of control over these governments.\(^{84}\) This means that both the theoretical and practical boundaries of subnational foreign relations must be looked at.

The constitutional arrangement of the United States theoretically allows for Alaska to engage in international relations in a robust fashion. In one of the few scholarly accounts of this subject, Samuel McMillan in *The Involvement of State Governments in US Foreign Relations*

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\(^{84}\) Kuznetsov, *Theory and Practice*, 54.
proves that governors and other US states’ leaders are increasingly involved in international politics and relations. The involvement of states in international relations has been both an economic and political necessity due to the global interdependence of modern economies.

Article I, section 10 of the US constitution “appears to establish a non-permeable internal political boundary that excludes the states from dealing directly with political entities located outside US territorial borders.” However, the Tenth Amendment prescribes that “the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people,” and have been interpreted by governors as giving them the right to engage in foreign relations. McMillan’s analysis reveals that economic motivations were dominant in explaining why states engage in foreign relations 80% of the time.

In Alaska, international relations are conducted through the executive branch in the Governor’s office. Unlike other jurisdictions where there might be a dedicated department for international affairs, these activities are nested within the Governor’s Office of International Trade. With the exception of the international aspects of Arctic policy delegated to the Alaskan legislature as a result of House Bill One “An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state” signed in 2015, the governor’s office still takes the lead on deciding and enacting the foreign relations of the state, which includes membership in the Northern Forum. The close relationship between the governor’s office and the Forum has proven to help as well as hinder robust participation in its membership, and is explored more in depth in the upcoming section.

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85 McMillan, The Involvement of, 1.
87 United States Constitution, Tenth Amendment.
88 McMillan, The Involvement of, 66.
89 McMillan, The Involvement of, 78.
91 Alaska (State). Legislature. Assembly. An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state. HB0001Z. April 7, 2015.
Alaska has capitalized on this constitutional right permitting them to engage in foreign relations since the early days of its statehood. In 1963, Alaska opened a Tokyo office to facilitate trade relations.\textsuperscript{92} Leading up towards the end of the Cold War towards the end of the 1980s, Alaskan leadership helped to bring the Soviet states to the NF. One instance in the beginning of cultural exchanges that took place at the time was Juneau resident Dixie Belcher’s “Alaskan Performing Artists for Peace” group, which went around for two weeks in 1986 to churches, schools, and hubs in Russia to try to open up the border that had been separating Inupiaq and other indigenous groups’ families for almost half a century.\textsuperscript{93} A year later, American long-distance swimmer Lynne Cox undertook the two hour swim between the Diomede Islands, where the distance from the United States (via Alaska) and the Soviet Union was the shortest.\textsuperscript{94} In 1988, the well-known Friendship Flight between Nome and Provideniya took place, which allowed indigenous families to be reunited after years of separation due to the Cold War.\textsuperscript{95} This flight was organized largely under the leadership of Alaskans, including Alaskan Governor Steve Cowper and Governor Hickel.\textsuperscript{96} Through these initiatives and subsequent others, a warm relationship developed between Governor Hickel and Governor Nikolayev of the Sakha Republic.\textsuperscript{97} With the Cold War fading the backdrop, there was a sense of accomplishment in these initiatives, and great enthusiasm from subnational leaders who dreamed of improving the lives of people who lived in the North.\textsuperscript{98} Although a still relevant statement today, the first executive director of the NF from 1992 to 1995, Steve Shropshire, reflected on the \textit{raison d’être} of the organization at the time, which was that the “Arctic has a lot of promise and potential, but

\textsuperscript{92} McMillan, \textit{The Involvement of}, 79.
\textsuperscript{94} David Ramseur, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 18, 2016.
\textsuperscript{95} Steve Cowper, \textit{Friendship Flight #1}, 1988, 6.
\textsuperscript{96} Drue Pearce, Telephone Interview by Emily Tsui, February 4, 2016.
\textsuperscript{97} Pearce.
\textsuperscript{98} Ramseur.
it lacked infrastructure and investment.”99 The Arctic represented a new frontier, and these leaders expressed a sense of defiance from the conflict occurring between their capitals, as they sought to continue co-operation to turn their dream into reality.

Ultimately, the US constitution permitted Alaska to engage in subnational foreign relations, and this was translated practically as well. This was seen through smaller initiatives prior to the creation of the NF, but also institutionalized through the Office of International Trade in the Alaskan Governor’s office.

6. Application: Predominant Motive of Alaska to Participate in the Northern Forum

Kuznetsov posits that economic, cultural, political, and cross-border housekeeping motivations help to explain why a particular entity chooses to engage in foreign relations. This is complementary to, and indeed builds on, Kuznetsov’s earlier question on factors contributing to the blooming of subnational foreign relation in a region. Since many of the explanations are the same, this section only provides a very brief overview. In Alaska’s decision to join the Forum, all four elements are applicable, but economic, political, and cross-border housekeeping are most important. Political motivations vis-à-vis the Cold War and disagreements with the federal government have already been mentioned above.

Economic Motivations

Alaska’s geographic separation from the Lower 48 and Hawaii, as well as the state’s location next to Yukon and Kamchatka, make the state fundamentally international. At its most basic level, it is impossible to access Alaska from the United States or elsewhere without

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99 Shropshire.
transiting through Canada or travelling over or across international waters. Representation abroad to advance Alaska’s energy sector, among other priorities, was a principal reason that former Alaskan Governor Walter J. Hickel expressed in the 1990 Third Northern Conference for joining the NF. Nearly 90% of Alaska’s GDP is composed of oil exports, which means that Alaska must always have one eye on global affairs in order to ensure that economic projections based on price and stability are secure. A significant proportion of Alaska’s coal goes to Korea, and fish, another one of big Alaskan exports, are affected by the international fishing regime. The second largest cargo hub in the world is located in Anchorage. As a result, there is significant motivation economically for Alaska to engage in international relations. The Forum’s second priority of promoting sustainable development in the North, appeared to fit well within the goals of the organization.

**Cross-border housekeeping**

Another factor that spurred upon Alaska’s participation was that there was a genuine desire for it to learn from others to optimize solutions to Arctic problems. Working on projects at a regional government level also allowed for the politics of the south to not permeate the need to co-operate in the North. A principal driver of this need is climate change, since communicating the changes that happen in the North between regions is particularly important. An example that occurs later is the flood warning that Yukon provided to Alaska in 2013. Canada is one of the leading countries in using aerial photography to analyze how the ice is melting, and tackling ice

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100 Wohl.
102 Craig Fleener, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 15, 2016.
103 Wohl.
104 Chris Hladick, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 16, 2016.
105 Novik.
jams requires co-operation. After Yukon saw the changes that were happening in the ice, it alerted Alaska, which allowed for a prompt response and evacuation along its border region.

7. Application: Attitude of Washington D.C. towards Alaska’s Participation in International Affairs

Kuznetsov’s framework calls for the examination of the perspective of the federal government towards its subnational entity’s engagement in foreign relations. There is a clear difference between the priorities of the State Department and the State of Alaska, however, this perceived difference is far greater from the Alaskan perspective. Washington D.C. either supports Alaskan involvement in international affairs on Arctic issues through the NF positively, or is disinterested in it. Priscilla Wohl, former executive director of the Northern Forum from 2001 to 2012 reflected that there was a tacit agreement between the State Department and the State of Alaska that the latter could discuss and approach climate change issues more openly when it was not politically acceptable to do so at the federal level. Prior to the George W. Bush presidency, the federal government provided financial support to Alaska and the Northern Forum. However, other priorities developed, especially after the 9/11 attacks, that gave the federal government subsequently a reason to be disinterested in Alaska’s engagement in the NF. Additionally, the rise of the AC as the premier intergovernmental forum to engage in Arctic issues at the federal level provided an additional impetus for federal disinterest.

106 Ben Ellis, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 18, 2016.
107 Wohl.
108 Novik and Mead Treadwell, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 22, 2016.
109 Treadwell.
8. Summary: Lessons Learned from Application of Kuznetsov’s Framework

Kuznetsov’s framework was particularly helpful in identifying reasons for Northern and Arctic subnational foreign relations, and in particular, Alaska’s engagement in the NF. This analysis revealed that there was a convergence of factors (globalization, regionalization, foreign policy domestication and internalization of domestic politics, federalization and decentralization, insufficient effectiveness of the central government in foreign relations, outside stimulus, role of regional leader, and role of borders) that compelled subnational foreign relations in the Arctic to occur. This motivation led to action, which has been institutionalized through the BRC, PNWER, and NF with varying levels of participation, purpose, and governmentality. Through Trone’s framework, it was also determined that Alaska is legally allowed to participate in international affairs, and has been able to do so practically. Economic, political, and cross-border housekeeping motivations form the basis of Alaska’s participation abroad, which complement the initial eight reasons for the blooming of subnational foreign relations. Finally, it was identified that the federal government has either a positive or disinterested position towards Alaska’s engagement abroad vis-à-vis the NF.

However, these questions deal primarily with reasons for engagement. To understand why Alaska left the NF and to evaluate the organization’s performance, a different approach is needed, which is now explored in Section II.

Section II: Alaska and the Northern Forum

As the only organization facilitating subnational foreign relations globally, examining the history of the Northern Forum and its membership provides a basis for insight into the role of regional and sub-national government involvement in Arctic governance. In particular, Alaska’s
participation, as a founding member of the organization from the early days and long-time host of its secretariat, sheds light on how the Northern Forum has operated, its successes, and the problems it has had. The Governor’s office, which is responsible for determining the direction of the state’s membership in the NF, has demonstrated inconsistent levels of interest and commitment for the state’s participation, which is examined more in depth in this section. This “uncommitted relationship,” where Alaska had one foot in and one foot out, with more weight placed on one foot at different times, was evident from the start. However, its continued involvement sheds light on whether inter-subnational co-operation vis-à-vis the Northern Forum is a desired path forward in improving the quality of life of the people who live there.

Due to limited theoretical work on reasons for why a subnational entity might withdraw from participation in a transborder multilateral regional network, this section does not systematically test or apply any particular theory to the findings. Rather, further research is needed to construct an analytical framework similar to Kuznetsov’s, for why subnational entities withdraw from foreign relations. However, since this paper looks at one particular transborder multilateral regional network, it is worth mentioning the ideas presented in the literature on “venue selection.” “Venue selection” (also called “venue shopping”) refers to the action that advocacy groups and policymakers undertake to select a decision setting venue which offers the best prospects for reaching one’s policy goals. Sarah Pralle, a leading scholar on this topic, suggests that actors select a venue that best fits their “larger strategic plan for achieving substantive policy change.” Failure to achieve their goal in a venue however, is only one of many other potential reasons that an actor may choose to leave a venue. In the case of Alaska

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(actor) and the NF (venue), the findings suggest that it is indeed a coalescence of reasons that prompted the state’s withdrawal in 2011.

This section will proceed as follows: a brief history of the NF presented, its organizational structure overviewed, a performance evaluation of the NF conducted, the history of Alaska’s engagement explored, reasons behind Alaska’s withdrawal examined, and motivations behind Alaska’s re-joining of the NF stated. In particular, the period prior to 2011 is emphasized, since scarce information exists on the state of the Forum after the secretariat’s relocation from Anchorage to the Sakha Republic following Alaska’s withdrawal. Finally, this section concludes with the implications of these findings for subnational collaboration in the Arctic.

1. Brief History and Overview of the Northern Forum Founding and Structure

Since Hasanat’s 2012 article113 on the NF effectively summarizes the history of the NF, only the most pertinent parts of its twenty-five history will be discussed here. Three conferences on Northern Regions preceded the NF. The groundwork for the establishment of the NF was laid at the 1974 International Conference on Human Environment in Northern Regions held in Hokkaido. At this conference, the future criteria for membership to the Northern Forum and its agenda began to be shaped. The criterion for the Northern regions invited was simply those that shared “similar climatic conditions,”114 which meant that this conference included other states not normally thought of as “Northern,” which meant Idaho and Oregon. (These states were located at the same latitude as Hokkaido.) The emphasis on climate and the environment was a theme throughout their engagement in the preliminaries to the NF, as in the early days, they

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113 Hasanat, “International cooperation.”
spearheaded projects on acid rain, the ozone hole, and the marine environment at a time before climate change was generally a concern.\textsuperscript{115} However, this broad definition also meant that there were vast differences in cultures, level of urbanization, and government structures represented, which had problematic implications when the NF took this definition and broad focus later.

A second conference took place in 1979 in Edmonton,\textsuperscript{116} but nothing substantial occurred until the 1990 Third conference in Anchorage, when Soviet subnational governments were allowed to attend. The twenty governors from northern regions attending the latter discussed concerns relating to the environment, infrastructure, technology, health, pollution prevention and cleanup, and more. Participants expressed a desire for future gatherings of regions to be held. In the report’s introductory letter, Governor Cowper as the conference chair, notes that the conference succeeded on two fronts. Firstly, he observed that agreements were signed on northern shipping routes, telecommunications, international fisheries, economic development, and medical treatment \textit{between} conference sessions. Secondly, he reflected upon the friendships that were made, and his hope that these friendships would continue. These successes achieved in this three day conference highlighted the possibilities available in co-operation, and hope and optimism soared for the success of this organization. Political scientist Gail Osherenko, a participant of this conference, expressed sincere hope for this venture, stating that the Forum’s establishment “may turn out to be a historical event symbolizing the increased involvement of regions in the international arena.”\textsuperscript{117} This move towards institutionalization of subnational entities coincided with the flourishing of increasing interest in regions in Europe,

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\textsuperscript{115} Novik.  \\
\textsuperscript{117} “Executive Summary,” 4.
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with the BRC also founded in 1991. Developing interest in the Arctic was also seen through the creation of the International Arctic Science Committee in 1990, and the AEPS in 1991.

The governors in attendance resolved to create a permanent regional forum to “improve the quality of local, national, and international decision-making regarding northern issues by providing a means through which northern voices can be heard at all stages of the process,” and “to offer opportunities to exchange ideas, solve common problems, and plan cooperative initiatives regarding issues that are unique to the North or take on special significance for the northern regions.” As a gracious host, Governor Cowper offered the resources of the Alaskan Governor’s Office to begin work on the establishment of this “permanent organization.” The election of Governor Hickel further electrified this commitment, and there was significant progress subsequently made on the establishment of a Northern Forum.

In May 1991, the Northern Forum Agreement was signed in Anchorage that laid out in greater detail the basic principles of the Forum’s mission and how it might operate. This established a permanent organization, biennial rotating general assembly, a permanent secretariat in the State of Alaska, and an interim board of directors, and called for the Office of the Governor of the State of Alaska to select and implement priority projects. In November 1991, the Northern Forum charter and bylaws, written in accordance to American corporate law for non-profits since the secretariat was to be incorporated in Alaska, were adopted to more specifically guide the actions of the organization. As stipulated by the bylaws, the secretariat

118 “Chairmanship,” The Barents.
119 “IASC History,” International Arctic Science Committee (accessed April 14, 2016) http://iasc.info/iasc/history.
120 “Executive Summary,” 4.
122 Wohl.
would be known as The Northern Forum Incorporated (NF Inc.), established in the State of Alaska as a Section 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The selection of Alaska was strategic, since it reflected not only Governor Hickel’s significant interest in seeing the Forum succeed, but also because incorporating it in the United States allowed many US-based foundations to benefit from tax exemptions. These exemptions provide incentives for the foundations to donate to the Forum, since federal laws on donations in the United States are quite restrictive in allowing for money to be channeled outside of its territory. Furthermore, the NF was able to secure grants from the US government, but certain organizations such as USAID stipulated that these grants could only be administered by Americans. This Alaskan-based NF Inc. would be accountable to the Board of Directors, which it would eventually be comprised of a member from each state. The NF Inc. was therefore created as a legal entity to manage the membership fees that the states were investing into the organization for regional co-operation, and it functioned as the business arm for the NF in soliciting grants as well. Later, associate secretariats were created without legal status that would assist in the NF’s activities.

Since 1991, the Forum has amended its bylaws several times, but the structure has generally remained the same up until the Anchorage secretariat ceased to exist. The Forum’s agenda agreed upon in the General Assembly, the highest decision-making organ of the Forum composed of the chief executive or their appointees of each members, that meeting biennially to approve policies, re-elect governors (previously called directors), deciding and approving basic

125 Novik.
126 Wohl.
128 Novik.
management items, revising the Charter, and other governance activities. Meeting more frequently to implement the Forum’s activities is the Board of Governors (previously called the Board of Directors) which meets once or more every year to decide and approve the guidelines for programs or revise agreements. Theoretically, the General Assembly and the Board of Governors are supposed to be meetings of the governors which have a ceremonial aspect. The Executive Committee meets before meetings of the General Assembly and the Board of Governors to set the agenda and to discuss the important items. Implementing the activities of the Forum and overseeing the projects directly are the Regional Co-ordinators, which is composed of lower ranking staff. The working groups for each project are chaired by regions which often work to provide in-kind support. The work of the secretariat is aimed at supporting the Forum’s activities.

Governmental membership in the Forum is contingent on a potential subnational entity paying its dues and self-identifying with the majority of the following criteria:

1. Climatic and geographical characteristics: climatic extremes, brief growing seasons, harsh or long winters
2. Demographic attributes: a small population clustered in communities separated by large distances
3. Resource-based economies: vulnerable to international market fluctuations and to corporate domination and agenda-setting
4. Environmental vulnerability: fragile ecosystems with slow recovery potential, limited number of species of flora and fauna, slow fauna growth as a result of climate

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5. Subsistence-reliant populations: rely heavily on land food, are especially vulnerable to environmental degradation and to species depletion, rely on ‘traditional’ subsistence economies of hunting, herding, gathering, trapping

6. Political vulnerability: political decision-making dominated by distant larger voting aggregates of population, perception by southern centres of northern regions as political and cultural hinterlands

7. Infrastructure, transportation, communications limitations: economies of scale; geographical, spatial, and environmental challenges

This definition aimed to promote solidarity of those who faced these common challenges. As Shropshire noted, this helped to transform regional identity from a series of different cultures and countries to have a more concerted and vibrant expression. However, even though the Forum has only extended its membership to regions north of the Tropic of Cancer, these parameters could conceivably allow southern regions with similar climatic conditions such as Nepal, India, Pakistan or South America to join. In a less hypothetical sense, the Northern Forum has included entities typically seen as the “south” in certain countries, such as Alberta or Québec in Canada.

131 Northern Forum, *Articles of Incorporation.*
132 Shropshire.
133 Hasanat, “International cooperation,” 376.
In 1996, the NF lost out on a significant opportunity as it failed to secure a “permanent participant” seat during the AC’s founding. Tony Penikett, former premier of Yukon, remarked on how this was largely a product of tensions between the indigenous communities and the predominantly “settler-run” organization of the NF. In the creation of the AC, the eight Arctic representatives wanted to especially recognize the unique contributions to the indigenous people and to reconcile indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Political scientist and activist Dalee Sambo Dorough remarked on the extent to which personal animosities existed in Alaska between the settler and indigenous communities, which would be translated into resentment by the time the NF was searching for a place at the AC table. She further remarked that the NF

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134 Tony Penikett, Interview by Emily Tsui, Toronto, November 6, 2015.
135 Tony Penikett, Proceedings of “Regional Governments in International Affairs: Lessons from the Arctic” September 18, 2015, ed. Emily Tsui and Kevin Deagle (Toronto: Munk School of Global Affairs, 2015), 10.
136 Dorough.
was not really familiar with Arctic indigenous concerns, and organized political lobbying allowed indigenous groups to be recognized as the sole permanent participants of the AC.  

Alaska’s departure from the Forum marked a significant shift in how the organization operated. Resolution 159 liquidated the NF Inc. in 2012, meaning that its incorporation and corporate governance documents were null and void. In 2013, the Forum began developing new bylaws and rules of procedure in accordance to international law. Resolution 160 declared the Northern Forum as an “international organization, without legal registration in a particular country, similar to the Arctic Council, University of the Arctic and other international organizations, and regulating its activities according to the international standards with account of the special aspects of national and regional legislations of the member regions.” Significant reforms in the NF are underway, and as a result, this paper principally focuses on the pre-2011 period.

2. Performance of the Northern Forum

Measuring the performance of any organization is difficult and highly subjective. In particular, significant challenges resulting from missing information and inconsistent record-keeping make it especially difficult to determine where and why the Forum succeeded or failed. However, evaluating its activities against its stated mandate provides for a starting point of analysis. The 1999 Lapland Declaration clearly defines the Forum’s mandate, which was built on scattered statements from previous declarations and resolutions:

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137 Dorough.
139 Northern Forum, “Resolution #160.”
140 Northern Forum, “Resolution #160.”
To improve the quality of life of Northern peoples by providing Northern regional leaders a means to share their knowledge and experience in addressing common challenges; and To support sustainable development and the implementation of cooperative socio-economic initiatives among Northern regions and through international fora.\textsuperscript{141}

To achieve this mandate, the Forum undertakes projects proposed by members.\textsuperscript{142} These projects greatly varied in size and scope and are supposed to be grassroots driven. However in interviews, it was revealed that the secretariat had the ability to steer the organization’s projects in a particular direction.\textsuperscript{143}

\textit{Successes}

Substantial achievements were made under the Northern Forum’s auspices mostly in its pre-2001 period. Projects during this time tackled both parts of its mandate in improving the quality of life of people in the North and also encouraging sustainable development. Completed projects included the first commercial circumpolar flight in 1994 that was organized to promote international co-operation and serve as a model for future air routes. The Northern Lights International Film Festival brought together films from nine northern countries to Alaska in 1995 and was facilitated by the Northern Forum. Other completed projects include: the Environmental Status Report on Northern Regions (1995), Guidelines for Wildlife Management in Northern Regions (1996), Environmental Health and Emergency Response (1996), Management of Marine Resources (1998), and Environmental Research and Monitoring of the Atmosphere and Oceans.

\textsuperscript{141} Northern Forum Board of Directors, \textit{Lapland Declaration}.
\textsuperscript{142} Wohl.
\textsuperscript{143} Wohl.
These projects produced extensive results, and developed information in regions where it was scarce.

One example of an NF activity during this time that had an immediate and tangible impact was the NF’s role in responding to the oil spill in the Komi Republic, Russia in 1994. After four years of meetings and other exchanges facilitated through the NF, Alaska had become colleagues and friendly with the Komi government. The Komi Republic reached out directly to Alaska for assistance, which Alaska was able to provide from their recent experience with handling the Exxon Valdez disaster in 1989 and its history with managing oil production and spills. With direct access to officials on the ground that shared information as to the extent and nature of the spill, Governor Hickel saw that an immediate response was required. However, a legacy of the Soviet period meant that the problem of denial was still pervasive in Moscow, and Washington’s discussions with the Russian central government had led them to believe that the spill was not catastrophic. Despite Vice-President Al Gore insisting that this was a federal issue not to be dealt with by subnational governments, Governor Hickel flew to the Komi Republic with oil experts to advise on the situation. The NF also spearheaded a $120 million clean-up fund from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank, which contained the disaster and prevented it from becoming a catastrophe of even larger proportions. In the years following, Alaska was critical in helping manage the oil spill response after a tanker accident in the Sea of Japan in 1997 as well. The connections fostered through the NF meetings, while governor-levels still attended the meetings, had real results.

145 Hickel, Crisis in the Commons, 13.
Failures

Since the NF’s legitimacy in being the voice for Northern subnational entities across the circumpolar world and in the Arctic is largely dependent on its reach, membership numbers are another indicator to measure performance. The NF’s 1991 Charter calls for the NF to be an international governmental organization, and in this respect, the organization has largely failed as seen through a significantly decreased number of subnational government participation from fewer countries. The NF’s unique nature is distinguished from other regional organizations such as the BRC or PNWER by virtue of its wide circumpolar reach and aspirations.

Asides from legitimacy, the consequences of smaller participation exist in project capacity. Members contribute annual fees based on size and population to the NF, which is used to support the secretariat. The secretariat then helps on the co-ordination and execution of the projects. Limited funding therefore affects secretariat and organizational capacity, which also hinders the success of projects as well. Consequently, the inability to retain a consistent flow of funding represents a significant failure.

Additionally, the question of reach also highlights the ambiguity in evaluating performance. For example, a high participation of youth from across ten to fifteen regions in the Youth Eco-Forum can be constituted a success, and can be interpreted as furthering the goal of the Forum of improving the quality of life in the North. Wohl, one of the principal organizers of these Forums, noted that this had micro-level successes as friendships were formed and the

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147 Halldór Jóhansson, Skype Interview with Emily Tsui, November 26, 2015.
148 Wohl.
next generation became more aware of environmental issues. On the other hand, it is unclear the extent to which this Eco-Forum actually had an impact on the quality of life of Northerners. The question remains of how many lives or how much have they improved are difficult to measure and are subjective. Natalie Novik, long-time former program co-ordinator and briefly interim executive director of the NF in 2012, commented on how these Eco-Forums did not necessarily represent the best possible use of limited funds. As a result of this ambiguity and subjectivity, it is more useful to look at how members have engaged with the Forum, since they reflect subjective attitudes towards the Forum’s success. Due to low financial barriers to entry, no financial barriers to exit, and little political cost domestically to enter or exit, this paper assumes that dissatisfaction with the Forum will lead members, and specifically Alaska, to vote with their feet and leave.


The Alaskan membership in the NF has seen varying periods of strong support and weak support, depending largely on the administration in the governor’s office, which suggests that Alaska was demonstrated a varying level of commitment to the NF politically and financially throughout the years. This subsection explores the history of each governor’s involvement in the NF from administration to administration.

Governor Cowper and Governor Hickel, the driving forces behind the NF’s creation, demonstrated significant interest in an active role for Alaskan participation. Under their
leadership, Alaska’s engagement in international relations was not only strong, but its support for the Forum was demonstrated through significant contributions the state dedicated for the Forum’s secretariat and activities. Governor Cowper initiated the offer for the NF secretariat to be hosted in Anchorage, which Governor Hickel embraced during his second time in political office from 1991 to 1994. One of the reasons for doing so was that he saw the NF was a way to promote his energy and development agenda. This support manifested itself beyond the cash flow from the state that exceeded the base requirement of membership fees, since there was also the access in networks and connections that the governor could provide. For example, with Governor Hickel’s assistance, John Doyle, former executive director of the NF from 1998 to 2001, was able to receive a 500,000 USD grant from Senator Ted Stevens. Governor Hickel also established an Alaskan organization, the Institute of the North, which he helped to serve as the educational arm for the NF.

The governorship of Tony Knowles from 1994 to 2002 took a decisively different tone. From an opposing political party (Democrat), Governor Knowles was not particularly interested in fostering Hickel’s legacy, especially vis-à-vis the Northern Forum. Instead of his direct participation, he sent his assistant David Ramseur to participate in the Northern Forum meetings. With the exception of stopping by one of the meetings for a few hours, Governor Knowles did not actively engage with the Northern Forum. Contrary to the pro-development tone that Governor Hickel took, Governor Knowles had a record of following President Bill

152 Wohl.
153 To understand Governor Hickel’s worldview, please see Hickel, Crisis in the Commons.
154 Doyle.
155 Ellis.
156 Ellis.
157 Pearce.
158 Treadwell.
Clinton’s pro-environment stance in the creation of the AC in 1996. Participation in the NF took a backseat to the rise of the AC under Governor Knowles.

Under Frank Murkowski, there was renewed interest in Alaska’s participation in the Northern Forum because of its engagement with Pacific Rim regions, but this interest was quite limited. The Forum engaged with Asian regions (South Korea, Heilongjiang, and Hokkaido) during the time of his governorship, which Murkowski saw to be beneficial for his objectives of increasing the economic prosperity of the region. Murkowski’s interest in the Pacific Rim deepened when he previously served as on the East Asia Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Taiwan was Alaska’s fourth largest trading partner, and Murkowski realized the importance of Alaska being engaged in international relations. However, perhaps because the NF at this time was not dealing explicitly with many issues relating to economics, nor was there strong top-level interest that could have helped to facilitate business relations, Murkowski’s attention was focused on directly facilitating trade relations as opposed to dedicating attention to NF membership. Furthermore, a cyclical revenue shock caused by a crash in oil prices occurred in Alaska during his tenure, and additional subsidies that the government provided to the Forum were one of the casualties as he left office.

Sarah Palin expressed scant interest in international relations, and Alaska’s participation in the NF suffered greatly as a result. Despite oil prices rebounding, Palin still made the decision to cut funding to the Forum. Her priorities were elsewhere, such as in increasing litigation against the indigenous people on issues of fish and game, that conflicted with the co-operative

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160 Pearce.
162 Pearce.
activities of the Forum.\textsuperscript{163} Without consultation, Palin cut the financial support to the Forum from $75,000 to $15,000, causing the secretariat’s office to go without pay for two months.\textsuperscript{164} As one of the initiators of the Forum’s concept and development, Alaska’s newfound complete disregard of the Forum’s operations was not taken lightly by Hokkaido, which fostered greater discord among its membership.\textsuperscript{165} The economic recession of 2008 also provided further justification from Palin to cut funding to the Forum.\textsuperscript{166} At the same time, the lost funding could not have been recovered through applications to private foundations, as much of their money was not recovered from the economic crash, and federal grants were also difficult to obtain.\textsuperscript{167} Few small grants were left, such as the Trust for Mutual Understanding, NATO, and from the European Union.\textsuperscript{168}

The effects of the financial crisis still reverberated under Sean Parnell’s administration, and in 2011, he decided to terminate Alaska’s participation in the Northern Forum. He instructed his chief of staff, Michael Nizich, to send a letter to the NF secretariat informing them of Alaska’s withdrawal.\textsuperscript{169} Reasons for this move are explored more in depth in the following subsection.

4. Why Alaska withdrew from the NF

Pralle’s analysis in “venue selection” and interview findings suggest that the Alaskan decision to withdrawal was premised on the perception that there was little value to be gained from participation in the Forum. This assumes that the Alaskan government, in acting rationally,

\textsuperscript{163} Dalee Sambo Dorough, Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 19, 2016.
\textsuperscript{165} Wohl.
\textsuperscript{166} Novik.
\textsuperscript{167} Novik.
\textsuperscript{168} Novik.
\textsuperscript{169} In accordance with the bylaws, since the letter did not bear the Governor’s signature, the legality of the letter can be questioned. Novik
assesses its contributions against its returns from participation in the Forum, and has determined that the former outweighed the latter. The Forum’s “outputs” were advocacy of the needs of subnational Northern entities internationally and projects that fell under its mandate. Structural deficiencies, it turns out, were a common theme that hindered the Forum’s ability to have robust outputs. These included a lack of clearly defined objectives, lack of cohesive identity generated from the vague membership criteria of “Northern,” lack of consistent funding, and an inability to separate personal and professional relationships. Furthermore, the dependence on the Governor’s office for Alaskan participation also meant that lack of interest from the governor, mostly for domestic and political reasons, had a significant impact on Alaska’s relationship with the Forum.

**Structural Deficiency– Lack of Clearly Defined Objectives**

Executing the Forum’s mandate, as copied and pasted above from the 1999 Lapland Declaration, through projects have generally been undertaken in an ad-hoc fashion. Doyle reflected that instead of strategically planning which projects to undertake, there was a general “ready, fire, aim”\(^\text{170}\) approach. Vagueness as to whom “Northern peoples” are, what “common challenges” exist, which aspects of “sustainable development” are considered, and where “Northern regions” stop and begin, made it difficult to identify a strategic path forward. Instead, projects were proposed based on a member’s interpretation of a mandate, and this lack of focus has made it difficult to allocate a substantial amount of funds or attention to any particular mission.\(^\text{171}\) Even when projects were identified, some members expressed frustration that they did not align with their interpretation of the mandate.\(^\text{172}\) Differing opinions on what the

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\(^\text{170}\) Doyle.
\(^\text{171}\) Novik.
\(^\text{172}\) Wohl.
objectives were drove a wedge in a potential unified approach to tackling common Northern issues.

**Structural Deficiency- Lack of Cohesive Identity**

This challenge of cohesion was identified as early as the first NF resolution on September 4, 1992 that acknowledged the diversity of its membership.\(^{173}\) The resolution states in its preamble, “Whereas the Northern Forum Secretariat represents the interests of a broad and diverse group regional leaders in the north. Whereas the geographic diversity of the organization creates special and unique challenges.”\(^{174}\) As noted, one major difficulty for the NF is finding common ground for projects to be undertaken that applies to the entire “Northern” region. The diversity of the North means makes for vast differences that exist in the financial, human, infrastructure needs and capacities of the Forum’s members.\(^{175}\) Furthermore, co-ordinating the projects that spanned across these regions’ time zones, languages, and geographies proved difficult. As a result, it was hard to find projects that were relevant, worth the investment, and could be feasibly co-ordinated by all members, especially during the peak of the Forum’s membership numbers of 25.

To meet these challenges, opt-in project funding and, later, associate secretariats were introduced. Alongside all-member funding of projects that demonstrated the capacity of the NF at an international level, the projects were separately funded by interested parties, but were still aligned with the mission.\(^{176}\) However, this posed a risk of fragmentation. The occurrence of these “sub-regional” and freestanding projects within the greater “Northern” region ran counter

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\(^{174}\) Northern Forum,” Resolution #001.”

\(^{175}\) Dubreil, “The Arctic of the Regions,” 923-924.

\(^{176}\) Hasanat, “International cooperation,” 374.
to the ideal of a single central co-ordinated structure that the Forum was to embody. To overcome these difficulties, associate secretariats were set up in different regions to assist the activities of the central office. For some time, there were two associate secretariats, one representing the Russians and located in the Sakha Republic, and one representing Northern Europe and hosted in Lapland. However, by 2011, there was only one associate secretariat still in quasi-existence in Moscow, because all the North European countries had withdrawn from the Forum by this point.

Within the twenty years when Alaska led the Forum’s operations, the organization expanded and then shrunk in its geographic reach. Once the secretariat moved from Alaska to the Sakha Republic, there was no longer any real need for associate secretariats to manage the present membership of the five Russian members, Gangwon Province in South Korea, and Akureyri in Iceland. However, despite these measures to improve the organization’s effectiveness, it was still unable to retain the other 13 members, largely lost during the peak of the organization which was not recovered after Alaska’s withdrawal. A broad membership is needed to democratize the organization and to move it away from an Alaska-centric organization.

The broad definition of “Northern” and the Forum’s willingness to accept as many as 25 diverse entities at its peak made it difficult to find and co-ordinate common activities. Difficulties exist as a result of the vast geography that these regions span across, resulting in challenges in co-ordinating across time zones, and travelling across vast distances. As will be shown, without the support of a stable funding mechanism and the human capacity to support these activities, there was much uncertainty as to the target members of projects (clusters of

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177 Langlais, “Arctic co-operation,” 25.
members or pan-Northern) and where the resources should be directed (the central or associate secretariats).

**Structural Deficiency- Lack of Consistent Funding**

Since the founding meeting of the Northern Forum, questions arose as to who would be responsible for managing and paying for the Forum’s administrative and operational costs. Indeed, Ben Ellis, former managing director at the Institute of the North, argued that the financial model of the Forum had been broken for a long time.\(^{179}\) Without the funds available and properly managed, limited opportunities existed for projects to be developed and for the secretariat to function efficiently. Funds that were received from membership dues, annual subsidies or grants were deposited in the NF Inc.\(^ {180}\) However, since the Forum was a registered corporation in the United States, this meant that there would inherently be a strong link between the Forum, Alaska’s participation, and the US economy. As seen after Alaska’s withdrawal, there has been greater difficulty in attracting funding due to the great uncertainty that existed of the Forum’s status.

Attracting external funding was vital for the Forum’s operational capacity, since contributions from each member government were modest. Membership in the Forum was contingent on the payment of fees, and money was necessary to ensure that projects were executed under the co-ordination of a secretariat. Dues were determined through a sliding scale based on population and amount calculated based on “gross regional product.”\(^ {181}\) This meant that initially, Alaska paid approximately 15,000 USD to be a part of the Northern Forum.\(^ {182}\) However,

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179 Ellis.
180 Novik.
182 Northern Forum, “Resolution #009.”
in member regions in the post-Soviet sphere, the membership fees represented too big of a financial burden, and the Forum often waived dues in times of crisis. This was especially the case for Russian regions, because they were less wealthy and were still recovering from the trauma of the Soviet era. Several members were found unable to pay their membership dues, and therefore their membership was terminated by the Board of Governors. The reliance on membership fees and reoccurring discussion of stabilizing the funding situation was discussed at every meeting of the General Assembly. This took away from substantive debates and discussion on projects and further contributed to the uncertainty that came to pervade the organization.

The membership of the NF was reformed to include business partners in 1999 and the early 2000s in an attempt to attract more funding. Their involvement was beneficial for increasing and diversifying the Forum’s operating budget. Businesses also played a crucial role in sponsoring Northern Forum events when they were hosted in the region where they operated by assisting to pay for the venue or conference costs. However, the Forum has historically limited success in attracting businesses, with approximately twenty businesses at its peak. Income generated from businesses is highly unstable, due to the drastic fluctuation of business membership and that businesses are less committed to the organizational goals and focused more on furthering its corporate priorities. As a result, the number and composition of the business members fluctuated substantially over the years, thereby also building in uncertainty into the Forum’s budget. Since this paper focuses on subnational governments, it is beyond the scope of this paper to engage with the issue of businesses further.

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183 Fleener.  
184 Novik.  
185 Novik.  
186 Wohl.  
187 Novik and Wohl.
Another source of funding which was also unstable was the annual subsidies that regions contributed beyond their dues that supplemented the income from membership fees. Alaska and Hokkaido in particular were supportive of the Northern Forum, and donated more than was required.188 As is explored later however, this funding was highly contingent on the political agenda of the governor’s office. This was the case since conducting foreign relations does not fall under any specific department in Alaska, then and now, and spending on Alaska’s participation in the Forum remains a discretionary line item that the governor requested from the legislature.189 As a result, political changes in the governor’s offices meant that it was difficult for the secretariat and the other members to develop a reasonable expectation of the contributions that Alaska would provide.

Budgetary cuts caused by the State of Alaska, a reduction of members, and delayed payment of membership fees resulted in further issues in finances. With only enough of a budget remaining to retain one employee, the Executive Director in 2010 took over doing the accounting herself, with quarterly verifications by a professional accountant. Financial transparency was greatly complicated, since the organization was managing several pass-through grants.190

Another consequence of funding uncertainty meant that there was greater pressure for the secretariat to collect membership fees. As Waliul Hasanat argued, this went contrary to the “Northern mentality,” which was one that tended to be gentle and understanding to others.191 Instead of the co-operative atmosphere prevalent in the North, the Northern Forum went about

188 Novik.
189 Craig Fleener, E-mail correspondence with Emily Tsui, March 14, 2016.
190 Novik. A pass-through grant refers to the money given from the government that goes through an intermediary organization (the NF in this case) to another recipient. For example, the State of Alaska would give money to the NF. The NF then grants the money to another local organization and this is known as a pass-through grant.
191 Md. Waliul Hasanat, Skype Interview with Emily Tsui, January 21, 2016.
their organization and missions in a “harsh” manner in terms of collecting membership dues.\textsuperscript{192} However, the extent to which this division in mentalities existed can be debated, since financial records of the Forum reveal that there were many cases when membership fees were waived for a year or reduced due to the economic hardships of a region.

\textit{Structural Deficiency– Dependence on Governor’s Office}

As mentioned in Section I, subnational governments in the United States are granted quite a large degree of freedom in participating in foreign relations. In particular, the Alaskan constitution “creates an exceptionally strong governor and legislature, largely in reaction to the frustrations of weak governmental institutions during the territorial period. Congress limited the power of the Alaska territorial legislature, retaining federal control over matters of vital interest to the residents of the territory.”\textsuperscript{193} In the case of international relations vis-à-vis the NF, Alaska’s involvement did not appear to constitute a “vital interest” for federal control.\textsuperscript{194} The NF was a governor’s initiative, and it is significant that the Governor’s Office of International Trade was responsible for managing Alaska’s participation in the Forum. This close association meant that Alaskan membership was subject to political whims, as seen above in the varying levels of commitment that each governor demonstrated towards the NF project.

While theoretically, the organization was independent and accountable to \textit{all} members, in reality, it depended heavily on Alaska. This was the case because of the organizational structure of the Forum mentioned above, whereby the NF Inc. was subject to Alaskan laws and its administrators of the secretariat were almost always, Alaskans.\textsuperscript{195} Furthermore, its connections

\textsuperscript{192} Hasanat, Skype.
\textsuperscript{194} McMillan, \textit{The Involvement of}, 65-68.
\textsuperscript{195} Novik.
with Alaska were strengthened through the designation of Governor Hickel as Secretary-General of the organization, an honorary title that legitimized his position in hovering around the organization until his death in 2010.\textsuperscript{196} Up until 2003, he was sent as Alaska’s representative to the Forum to sign resolutions on behalf of the current government, and still had substantial political ties to his successors in office.\textsuperscript{197}

The strong connection between the governor’s office and the secretariat had both a positive and a negative influence. Under Governor Hickel, Alaska’s engagement in international relations and the Forum was strong, and more resources were dedicated from his office to help the secretariat operate.\textsuperscript{198} This support manifested itself beyond financial contributions from the state that exceeded the base requirement of membership fees, but there was also in the access in networks and connections that the governor could provide. In the early years, this access and interest from governors allowed for high-level social interactions between the subnational entities, which were important to identify specific avenues of cooperation.\textsuperscript{199} Furthermore, as a forum that aimed specifically at promoting a unified voice for Northern subnational entities and fostering governor-to-governor relationships, the commitment of a governor to the project was extremely important. The lack of interest from a governor often meant, in the Alaskan case, the delegating the responsibility of attending meetings to a lower level official.\textsuperscript{200} At the same time, this meant that there was a heavy dependence of the Forum’s success on the personal interest of a governor.

\textsuperscript{196} Novik and Northern Forum, “Resolution #025: Designation of a Secretary General,” September 16, 1994.
\textsuperscript{197} Ellis.
\textsuperscript{198} Wohl.
\textsuperscript{199} Wohl.
\textsuperscript{200} Ellis.
Structural Deficiency- Inability to Separate Personal and Professional Relationships

Relations between the secretariat and the governor’s office became extremely poor leading up to Alaska’s withdrawal. As Pearce reflected, Alaska is small enough so that things get very personal, very quickly, and this certainly held true for the Northern Forum.\(^{201}\) Over a ten year period, tensions between Wohl, the executive director of the NF at the time, and Governor Hickel, secretary-general, increased as they did not agree on the priorities and direction of the organization. Governor Hickel, wielding a substantial amount of informal power within Alaska, was frustrated that the Forum was not pursuing the priorities that should have been, in his eyes, uppermost.\(^{202}\) Wohl, in following Doyle’s trend of democratizing the project, tried to move away from an Alaska-centric leadership to a more inclusive one, which included disregarding Governor Hickel’s suggestions. These reforms, proposed by Doyle but implemented by Wohl, included a move towards bureaucratization of the Forum’s activities. This meant that a significant amount of time would be spent to work on projects as opposed to high-level discussions. Projects brought together relatively junior bureaucrats, and interest from the governors began to wane. In reality, Wohl was responding to what was happening at the Forum, which was that governor participation was being replaced with significantly lower-level representatives. This served to perpetuate the lack of direction for projects as there was no leadership at the governor level to establish an agenda. Sincere frustration was expressed from the governor’s office during this time, with one high-level official present during the time of Alaska’s withdrawal remarking that Alaska “pulled out of the Northern Forum because [the Executive Director] would not resign.” Bad faith developed between the governor’s office and

\(^{201}\) Pearce.
\(^{202}\) Novik.
the secretariat, which made it difficult and undesirable for those who tried to assist the Forum during its troubled financial days around the time of Alaska’s withdrawal.203

The inability of personal politics to be separated from the Forum’s activities is linked directly to the faults in its organizational structure, specifically, its dependence on Alaska. Although there was a loose model of chairmanships that was being used (unlike the well-organized model used by the AC), the organization for the projects and meetings were still under the secretariat’s purview. The secretariat was largely supported by annual subsidies from Alaska, and bad faith began when Governor Palin slashed the funding significantly in 2009. This overlooked the fact that the Forum was an Alaskan-initiated international venture comprised predominantly of Alaskans. Every executive director until 2012 was an Alaskan that had close connections with the governor’s office.204 For example, before Wohl served as executive director, she used to work in Alaskan Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell’s office while he was the Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation. Close personal connections between individuals in the secretariat, compounded by the fact that the location of the secretariat was just streets away from the Governor Hickel’s office, meant that there were close ties between the two bodies.

Summary: Reasons for Alaskan Withdrawal

An assessment of the reasons behind Alaska’s withdrawal reveals a number of structural deficiencies with the Forum that led to Alaska regarding it as the incorrect “venue” to participate in. The NF’s lack of clearly defined objectives, lack of cohesive identity, lack of cohesive funding, dependence on the Governor’s office and inability to separate personal and professional

203 Treadwell.
204 Doyle.
relationships all hindered the ability of the NF to function at a maximum potential. However, this analysis of reasons expressed by those involved for leaving also reveals an opportunity. Reforming the NF’s structure would increase its effectiveness, and this explanation identifies areas for where improvements are needed.

6. Why Alaska is rejoining the NF

Despite these grievances that led to Alaska’s withdrawal, the state through its present Governor, Bill Walker, has expressed a renewed interest in the NF. This was declared publicly at the 2015 General Assembly in Yakutia. Four main reasons help to explain this decision: the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC), diverging perspectives between Juneau and Washington on Arctic policy, current restructuring of the NF, and the personal objectives of the Governor’s office. Taken together, these reasons for engagement flag what a new Alaskan engagement in the Forum might look like.

Alaska Arctic Policy Commission

The AAPC was created in April 2012 out of a need to identify an Arctic policy for the state in light of increased attention paid to the Arctic globally.\textsuperscript{205} Senator Lesil McGuire, who championed the creation of the AAPC, noted that one of the main premises of this commission was to include local voices.\textsuperscript{206} She reflected that “Now that the Arctic is a hot issue, a popular issue, there’s a feeling on the part of those who’ve been working on this subject that you’re kind of coming late to the party. I’ve been here a long time, where’s my voice?”\textsuperscript{207} This took place before US assumed Chairmanship of the AC, and this was in anticipation of potential

\textsuperscript{205} “About the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission,” Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (accessed February 8, 2016).
\textsuperscript{206} Lesil McGuire, Proceedings of “Regional Governments in International Affairs: Lessons from the Arctic,” September 18, 2015, ed. Emily Tsui and Kevin Deagle. (Toronto: Munk School of Global Affairs, 2015), 38.
\textsuperscript{207} McGuire, Proceedings, 38.
divergences in the agendas of Juneau and Washington. The commission’s conviction of the need to include local voices was a primary focus of the commission. The AAPC has helped Alaska identify its Arctic priorities and has increased awareness of Arctic issues in the state.

Remarkably, in less than a year of Recommendation 2H of the Implementation Plan for Alaska’s Arctic Policy release in January 2015 asking for consideration for Alaska to join the NF, Governor Walker officially declared Alaska’s intention and requested funds to implement this recommendation. This implementation plan of the AAPC prescribes additionally both explicit and implicit rationales for the state to be engaged in international relations through the NF, if not an organization similar to it. To “prepare for the current and emerging challenges in the Arctic,” the Commission believes that a co-ordinated effort between all levels of government, including at an international level, is important. Under the second strategic line of effort aiming to increase the response capacity gap in Alaska’s Arctic, 2H calls upon the Governor’s Office of International Trade to “foster and strengthen international partnerships with other Arctic nations, establishing bilateral partnerships and, in particular, Canada and Russia, to address emerging opportunities and challenges in the Arctic.” This included the suggestion to re-join the NF.

However, details of this recommendation illustrate that Alaska has only a limited interest in re-engaging with the Forum, or that the state does not fully understand the resources that are required to make the Forum an effective investment. Under the “resources needed” section, it states that the fiscal costs are “potentially some additional travel funding, but basic

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208 Pearce.
209 Herron.
210 Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, Implementation Plan for Alaska’s Arctic Policy, January 30, 2015, 27.
211 Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, Implementation, 3.
212 Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, Implementation, 27.
communications are fairly cost-neutral.”213 As emphasized in the previous section on reforms to the NF, significant financial investment is needed by all members in increasing the secretariat’s capacity to operate and additional costs are needed for projects. Unless Alaska is interested only in using the Forum as a venue for dialogue and not for pursuing projects at the inter-subnational circumpolar level, there is a disconnect between the required resources between its stated commitment and follow up. As a result, while the AAPC might be instrumental in bringing Alaska towards the Forum, the extent to which this translates into a robust commitment is not clear.

**Diverging Perspectives Between Juneau and Washington**

Although a recurring issue in Juneau-Washington relations, the diverging perspectives between Juneau and Washington have become more evident in recent years before the US Chairmanship of the AC took place. One example is Alaska’s attempt to try and get food security on the Chairmanship’s agenda, which failed.214 Craig Fleener, Special Advisor to Governor Walker on Arctic Policy, in reflecting on these negotiations, noted that this issue is a particularly pressing one that is on the minds of many Alaskans which has a direct impact. Climate change and the movement of populations into cities have meant that the previous dependence on subsistence hunting is shifting away. Instead, imported food, which Alaska is heavily reliant on, is expensive and less nutritious upon arrival due to its remote location. The NF provides an avenue for which Alaska can learn from local communities that experience similar climates and
geographies, especially in developing technologies and techniques to produce more locally and self-sustaining food.\footnote{Fleener.}

Another issue marked by consistent tensions between Juneau and Washington is on the extent to which environmental concerns should supersede economic priorities. Secretary of State John Kerry’s environmental activism has pushed the US AC Chairmanship away from sustainable development. At a time where Alaska’s current budget deficit is $3.6 billion out of a total budget of $5.2 billion due to the collapse of oil prices, there is serious concern that environmental protection not get in the way of drilling.\footnote{Hladick.} Treadwell noted that the question should not be “whether or not it was moral to be in the Arctic,” and not “whether it was appropriate to have a wilderness or not.” Instead, he argued that “we [Alaskans] are not going to rape, ruin, and run...we live here; we are going to be responsible.”\footnote{Treadwell.} Yet the reality is that Alaskans represent approximately 0.2% of the total US population, and that their concerns are often drowned out by the population and votes of the Lower 48. Fleener remarked ruefully that “They [the federal government] don’t think about us [Alaskans]. They don’t even know that we exist.”\footnote{Fleener.}

Alaskan Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development Commissioner Chris Hladick’s reminder that “the United States is an Arctic nation because of Alaska”\footnote{Hladick.} highlights the principal source of conflict between the federal and state governments. The principle of devolved governance is enshrined in the US constitution, and is a mindset that many Alaskans share. Herron notes that “Arctic policy can’t be separated from Alaska…and

\footnote{Fleener.}\footnote{Hladick.}\footnote{Treadwell.}\footnote{Fleener.}\footnote{Hladick.}
Alaska cannot be separated from the Arctic. Since policies that the federal government decides can have a direct impact on the lives of Alaskans, or represents a missed opportunity to do so, Alaskans see it to be important that they are included in the formulation of Arctic policies. Involvement in the NF means that Alaska can speak for itself and not as a member of the US delegation.

Current Restructuring of the NF

As mentioned previously, the NF’s structure was in a dire shape by the time Alaska left. However, renewed engagement by the Sakha Republic under the leadership of Mikhail Pogodaev, current executive director of the NF, is proving to be successful in attracting members. His conciliatory attitude has meant that Alaska was enabled to articulate the changes that it would wish to see before formally rejoining. Due to Pogodaev’s only recently joining the organization in November 2015, as well as rapid developments in planning for how the NF will be restructured, this paper does not elaborate further on these actions.

Personal Interest from the Governor’s office

Since the Governor has a substantial impact on how Alaskan participation in international relations is defined, Governor Walker and Fleener’s interest in the Northern Forum is particularly significant. Governor Walker was close to Governor Hickel, and understood the importance of trade and working with other Arctic states to build this relationship. The selection of Fleener as his Arctic Policy Advisor working in his executive office is also significant. Fleener previously served as the chair of Gwich’in Council International, a

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220 Herron.
221 Nils Andreassen, Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, November 24, 2015.
222 Fleener.
223 Nils Andreassen, E-mail correspondence with Emily Tsui, November 24, 2015.
224 Pearce.
permanent participant on the Arctic Council, and his belief in collaborating in the circumpolar world is evident in his goal of a “unified voice on Arctic issues.”

7. What does the Alaskan case reveal about subnational co-operation vis-à-vis the Northern Forum?

Throughout the interviews with those involved with the Alaskan decision to withdraw, nobody criticized the importance of subnational collaboration to address common Arctic issues. All believe that the political need to assert a collective voice for subnational governments in the North and the practical need for developing projects that directly improve the lives of Northerners still persist. This belief is reaffirmed in recent public opinion surveys. In the 2015 edition of the Arctic Public Opinion survey put out by the Gordon Foundation of Canada, the plurality of Northern respondents in Canada and the United States indicated that territorial/state and municipal/local governments best represented their interests. In Alaska, 28% of people believe that the territorial/state government is the best, followed by 25% in the municipal/local government, with only 15% believing that the federal government best represents them.

Additionally, the 2013 Institute of the North public opinion survey showed that Alaskans ranked the following issues in the order of their perceived importance: capacity to respond to disasters, such as major oil spills; capacity to provide good access and high quality care, education, and drinking water to residents; capacity to respond to emergencies, including search and rescue teams and equipment; basic public infrastructure, like roads, hospitals, libraries, schools and water treatment facilities; strong policies to preserve traditional culture and ways of life in the North; strong security services to respond to international threats and assert America’s interest in

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225 Fleener.
the Arctic; and strong policies to combat climate change and prevent pollution and environmental disasters. These priorities differed from the activities pursued by the federal government, and thus create a need for subnational governments to have their voices more loudly heard.

While there is a role for the U.S. federal government to address many Arctic challenges with respect to indigenous, environmental, and marine issues, subnational governments clearly have an opportunity as well as a right to govern the land on which they reside. Since subnational and local governments are often delegated the responsibility of implementing proposals at the federal level, and are responsible in addressing the day-to-day issues that affect everyday citizens, these governments often have a better sense of what issues are most pressing. Firstly, as demonstrated above, there is still a clash between federal government priorities in the Arctic and Alaskan priorities. Participation in the Forum allows for Alaskan voices to be represented directly at the international level to other states. Secondly, common challenges in infrastructure, cultural preservation, transportation, environmental development, tourism, extractive industries, and environmental protection are better tackled through sharing best practices. Thirdly, related efforts between the subnational and federal governments need to be better co-ordinated. Doyle puts this quite bluntly: “We can’t afford to mess up the Arctic. We just can’t. Human beings can’t, the animals can’t afford it, and Earth can’t afford it.” As a result, producing projects that are of direct relevance to Alaskans, maximizing the effectiveness of resources, and co-ordination makes a NF-type entity vital in improving Arctic governance.

However, the question of whether this collaboration, which has been deemed as necessary, should take the form of the NF remained unclear. This section demonstrated that

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227 Institute of the North, Survey of Alaskans’ Opinions on the Arctic (Anchorage: Institute of the North, 2013), 22.
228 Doyle.
inherent flaws exist in the Forum’s design which hindered its productivity, and thus led Alaskan leaders to see it as having minimal value. The contention is therefore principally one of whether the NF is the right place to invest financial and human resources in to achieve the goals listed above. While Ellis and Nils Andreassen, current executive director of the Institute of the North, expressed their skepticism on the NF’s potential to be an effective “venue,” Novik, Wohl, Treadwell, Pogodaev, Doyle, Pearce, and Jim Gamble, executive director of the Aleut International Association, did not. Ellis wondered if technological improvements have made face-to-face meetings between large groups of subnational governments obsolete, which was an idea fiercely rejected by the others who see value in these interactions. Andreassen questioned whether the circumpolar subnational model was a viable way forward to co-ordinate projects, but this concern appears to be undergoing review by Pogodaev in the NF’s renewal, and will be expanded on in Section III.

However, with the rise in prominence of the AC and the rapid changes occurring in the Arctic, subnational governments cannot miss out on the opportunity afforded to them through the NF to advocate for their priorities in national and international Arctic policy. The NF has two principal characteristics that make it unique from other venues, which, if capitalized, could make it a robust player in Arctic governance. Firstly, it strives to be a circumpolar organization of Northern entities. Significant reforms, as suggested below, are needed for this to occur. However, legitimacy and greater funding comes with membership numbers, and attracting a wide enough membership should be one of the secretariat’s major priorities. Unlike regional organizations such as the BRC and PNWER, the NF could serve to be the principal point of advocacy for

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229 In person and telephone interviews with the respective individuals.
230 Ellis.
231 Treadwell.
subnational governments across the Northern region. Secondly, and capitalizing on this advocacy position, the NF’s observer status at the AC should not be taken for granted. Robust participation in the AC should be the NF’s renewed priority. Dissatisfaction of federal Arctic policy expressed by Alaska as a reason to rejoin is indicative of the need to better articulate the needs of Northern and Arctic peoples to those designing policy. Inclusion of subnational governments in working groups and projects can help governments not only better identify priority areas, but also assists in providing local expertise.232 Instead of stepping away from the NF, it is in the best interest of all Northern subnational governments, especially those located in the Arctic region, to actively engage in its renewal.

Section III: Paving the Cobbled Road

The previous section demonstrated that there is still clearly a need for subnational foreign relations in the Arctic, and that the NF creates a unique opportunity for governments to act accordingly. However, much work is needed to avoid the pitfalls of a declining membership, and after assessing reasons for Alaska’s initial involvement, withdrawal, and re-engagement with the Forum, recommendations can be made for how the NF can be revitalized at an organizational and Alaskan level. While research gaps were identified throughout the paper, this section consolidates and expands on them here.

1. Reforms at the Forum Level

Alaska’s withdrawal from the Forum highlights the issues that require reform. Given the findings of this paper, seven broad categories of recommendations are offered with the intent of revitalizing the Forum.

1. Increase focus of the organization’s mandate

   a. *Find unique policy space:* The NF should endeavour to capitalize in the areas in which its activities are minimally replicated. This would avoid competition with other similar organizations such as PNWER and the BRC, and would allow it to develop focus in its activities. For the NF, this means representing subnational entities internationally, and employing its status on the AC. Since both of these niches are related to advocacy, the NF should strive to focus on being the pre-eminent voice of subnational entities residing in the Arctic and Northern regions. This would include advocating for the governments, peoples, and business interests of the North.

   b. *Establish purpose:* Advocacy should be the principal role of the NF in going forward. However, sharing knowledge to optimize solutions for the North is a worthwhile endeavour, and the NF should undertake a systematic evaluation of its past projects successes and failures. If this review reveals that it is indeed worthwhile to continue pursuing projects, the NF should focus on project
regionalization. This would mean establishing two “levels” of the NF. The international level of the Forum (hereafter referred to as NF Global) should be responsible for advocacy. The geographically regional level of the Forum (hereafter referred to as NF Sub-Regional), such as a NF North America, or a NF Eastern Russia, should be responsible for projects that facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration. Projects should be careful not to duplicate the AC’s activities, and instead should aim to be complimentary with the AC’s objectives. As a result, two distinct but related components of the NF (NF Global versus NF Sub-Regional) addressing different purposes and priorities should be created.

2. Re-evaluate scope of membership
   a. *Arctic or Northern:* A present assessment of the existing organization suggests that a widely defined criterion for membership is not conducive in building a common identity among subnational governments. The NF, although dealing explicitly with Northern subnational entities, has not been successful in generating sustained interest in keeping the organization robust. In recommending that the NF should focus more on its Arctic “advantage” as an observer to the AC, this paper suggests that a narrower definition of “Northern” regions be constructed. A consequence of this may be that some previously classified “Northern regions” will be excluded, however, in the interest of building cohesion to strengthen Arctic governance, this may be necessary.

3. Regionalize the organization
   a. *Revert to Sub-Regional Secretariats:* One of the lessons from the BRC and PNWER is that geographically close and culturally similar regions have much in
Although discontinued due to falling membership, the associate secretariat model should be introduced as a means to increase project productivity. These associate secretariats (NF Sub-Regional) would facilitate the projects done in three regions: North America, Scandinavia/Western Russia, and Central/Eastern Russia. Co-ordination of activities within these smaller sub-regions is easier due to similar time zones and reduced travel time of meetings for participants. Furthermore, in recognition of Alaska’s concerns over the NF working on projects relevant to the state, a more regionalized model can prove to increase efficiency of projects. As a result, the NF should undertake projects at more grassroots level that allows for more clearly defined goals.

b. *Streamlined advocacy:* These sub-regional secretariats would interact with each other at an international level through the NF Global. The NF Global would exist as a reincarnation of the presently existing NF presently, holding biennial general assemblies, facilitating knowledge sharing across sub-regions, but it would focus on advocacy. No projects will be directly undertaken by NF Global as they would be delegated to the responsibilities of the NF Sub-Regional bodies. At the international level of the NF should convene all members. Efficiency during meetings can also be maximized through having the NF Sub-Regional Bodies prepare agenda items determined at the regional meetings. This would be similar to the current model of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), where regional representatives (ICC Greenland, ICC Alaska, ICC Canada, and ICC Russia) meet quadrennially at a General Assembly to determine the policy of the ICC.

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233 Doyle.
4. Define level of political engagement
   a. *Governor level:* The early years of the Forum, when it experienced robust participation from members, saw participation from the highest levels of government. Direct governor participation in the Forum is necessary, not only to demonstrate a cohesive regional identity of subnational entities, but also in cases such as Alaska where resources for international activities come directly out of the Governor’s office. Building connections should yield especially fruitful results, as seen in the Komi Oil Spill Response of 1994. Their participation would be helpful in directing the direction of the subnational government’s membership and commitment, at both the international and the regional level.
   b. *Bureaucratic level:* Implementing projects often requires significant technical expertise, and the expert knowledge of local bureaucrats and technocrats represents a valuable resource that the NF should capitalize on. Alaska’s criticisms of the Forum highlight a significant potential problem, which is that a focus on overly technical projects could lead to disinterest from Governors. Projects done at the NF Sub-Regional level should however be undertaken with the expertise of these individuals.

5. Restructure funding model
   a. *Sustained secretariat funding:* While there are calls for a reduction of membership fees, it is important to determine a threshold that would allow for robust participation. This includes reforming the model by which the cost of funding is determined. On top of a flat rate for all members in participation, additional contributions should be added that are based on the subnational
government’s GDP and ability to pay. This would allow for wealthier entities to compensate for governments that may not be able to afford the additional costs necessary to support a strong secretariat.

b. *Chairmanship model:* Success of the AC and BRC model suggest that the use of “chairmanships” in organizations in the Arctic region works. Once an organization has acquired a minimum threshold of interest,\(^\text{234}\) a chairmanship helps to push projects along and to facilitate financing of the organization. There is a feeling that a chair must lead effectively and succeed during its tenure, and this will help to drive forth funding for the NF.

c. *Project based funding:* At the NF regional level, funding for projects should come from the entities that participate and/or are impacted directly by its potential benefits. Attracting funding for projects that have concrete and measureable results has generally proven to be helpful in the Forum’s past,\(^\text{235}\) and these successes should be replicated in the future.

6. Improve communication

a. *Greater transparency:* The direction of the organization should be determined by its members, and greater transparency is needed to better relay information between the secretariat and its members. Increasing accountability of the Forum’s activities is important to increase confidence in member participation. One way this could be accomplished is to create a systemized structure for record-keeping

\(^{234}\) This refers to the drastic difference between the US Chairmanship of the AC between 1998-2000 and its Chairmanship between 2015-2017. Once the US had determined that the AC was an organization worth investing its time and resources in, its participation became a lot more robust.

\(^{235}\) Novik.
and archives. This would allow better reviews of the organization’s projects to be conducted.

b. *Between secretariat and members:* The breakdown of communication between the secretariat and the Alaskan Governor’s office was evident by 2011. The “bureaucratization” of the organization, or the use of lower level bureaucrats to represent Alaskan membership, meant that the Governor was not always aware of the proceedings and outcomes of the NF. Sustained and direct governor participation is one way to overcome this challenge, and the activities of the NF regional level must be relayed back to the Governor.

c. *Between the NF and the national governments:* Since a vital part of the NF’s work could lie in advocating the inclusion of subnational goals and visions in federal Arctic strategies, the NF should endeavour to share its findings and priorities with national governments. Although the relationship between a subnational and federal government may be strong enough to obviate the NF’s intervention, the NF could provide additional legitimacy to the subnational entity’s claims. For example, Alaska’s demands for prioritizing sustainable economic development in the North to Washington could be strengthened if the NF intervened to provide examples of how this has been done in other Northern regions in an environmentally friendly way and efficiently.

d. *Between the NF and the AC:* One of the most important relationships the NF has going forward is with the AC because of a renewed advocacy position. The purpose of building this connection is threefold. Firstly, by having the NF at the table, both parties could collect information on upcoming projects so as to ensure
that there is a complimentary relationship between the NF regional level projects and the AC projects. Secondly, the NF could champion projects that would be of direct impact to local communities, as opposed to priorities established by the Council that might have less impact. Thirdly, participation of experts who are familiar with the issues under discussion could optimize the implementation plans generated by the AC. Funding for the NF international secretariat is vital in ensuring that a robust engagement persists. Reports of the NF’s participation in the AC should be distributed among NF members.

7. Renew a relationship with the indigenous populations of the North
   a. *Permanent Participant status in revitalized NF*: Following off the BRC model, this status would allow for formal relationship of the role that the indigenous people have and could play in strengthening local governance. This would bring another voice to the table, and if these actors have enough resources to participate effectively, there could be another and valuable viewpoint represented. Furthermore, the AC as demonstrated that the inclusion of indigenous voices adds legitimacy to the discussion, which is an asset the Forum needs in order to be recognized again as a capable actor.
   b. *Stronger relations with non-AC indigenous populations*: The NF’s successful engagement with Russia has been cited by Jim Gamble, executive director of the Aleut International Association, as one particular area that the NF could work on to strengthen governance of the North, namely through bringing in the indigenous populations not currently represented by the AC. In particular, the special Russian relationship with the Forum meant that it has a potential to engage

\[^{236}\text{Gamble.}\]
indigenous groups there, especially since participation by the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) at the AC has declined. The NF could assist in learning more about their conditions and assist in a more robust participation.

2. Reforms at the Alaskan Level

In addition to the reforms made with and by the Forum, looking at Alaska’s Arctic Policy suggests that Alaska’s renewed participation at the Forum may be quite limited. With this Arctic Policy in mind, there appears to be two possible paths for Alaskan involvement in the NF.

1. Viewing the Northern Forum through a dialogue-based lens
   a.  *Status quo:* Alaska’s current intention to engage abroad as indicated through recommendation 2H demonstrates that the state views the Forum’s value as a means of dialogue and for convening important stakeholders. The recommendation notes that implementing this recommendation would not be costly, allocating only minimal funding for travel.237 This limited engagement strategy, however, may not allow a particularly effective investment of funds for either Alaska or the Forum. Alaska can choose to participate in a growing number venues, such as the annual Arctic Circle or Arctic Frontiers conferences. Side events can be organized at these gatherings that deal specifically with subnational co-operation. Given the existing absence of Alaskan participation, on the Forum’s side, a minimal financial and strategic commitment by Alaska would not be sufficient in revitalizing its operations, aside from the potential that Alaska could bring in other members through its leadership, especially from North America.

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Indeed, to maximize the returns from Alaska’s investment in the Forum, Alaska should assume this leadership role in bringing subnational entities from across the circumpolar world together. This leadership should come from the governor’s office, and structures should be put in place to allow future governors to interact directly with the Forum’s secretariat.\textsuperscript{238} This kind of arrangement would be a return to how the three Conference on Northern Regions functioned in the early days. However, it should be noted that these conferences transitioned to a more permanent forum that worked on projects precisely because dialogue was not enough to significantly improve the lives of the North’s residents.

2. Viewing the Northern Forum through a dialogue and project-based lens

a. \textit{Revitalize the Forum:} Alaska has posed to benefit and contribute substantially to inter-subnational governance through the Northern Forum should substantial enough investment in the organization be made. As mentioned above, the Forum occupies a special space in international relations in that it is the only organization to convene subnational entities from across the circumpolar world. Furthermore, previous projects demonstrate that there is significant opportunity for the Forum to contribute directly to advance the level of knowledge and quality of life in the North. Through changing the Forum’s format in a regionalized model, seeing the direct value of the Forum through more relatable projects is easier. Alaska’s engagement in this model would mean an engagement in the NF regional level.

\textsuperscript{238} This model is similar to the G7/G20 summits. It is inconceivable that President Obama might send Vice President Biden to represent the United States at such a high level forum, since it is personal connections that make the forum unique. In a similar model, Alaskan Governors should also endeavour to personally attend the Forum’s meetings.
3. Research Gaps

This paper reveals that a number of research gaps exist in the study of subnational foreign relations, the Northern Forum, and Alaska’s participation. A number of questions still remain. The following are gaps that are beyond this paper’s scope which further research can be profitably undertaken.

1. What would an analytical framework explaining why subnational governments withdraw from foreign relations look like?

2. What explains the exodus of Nordic members after 2002/2003 from the Northern Forum? Since the BRC was founded in 1991, why did this happen only then?

3. In contrast to Alaska, why have Russian regions shown a dedicated interest in the Forum? What benefits and drawbacks do they see from participation?

4. How has the emergence of more robust regional organizations, such as the BRC and PNWER, contributed to Arctic governance? How has it hindered the abilities of the NF to operate?

5. To what extent are “Northern” and “Arctic” identities the same, and what do their departure points say about the cohesiveness of the region?

6. How can responsibilities be most effectively divided between the U.S. federal and Alaskan government on Arctic policy?

These questions only scratch the surface of the extensive research that is still needed to understand the role of subnational entities and regions improving Arctic governance. While a shift away from the dominant discourse of studying the AC is encouraged, there needs to be a complementary approach that bridges between the federal pan-Arctic level to a subnational regional level.
4. Section Summary: Recommendations for a Path Forward

Increasing the robustness of the NF is in the interest of both federal and subnational entities. However, there needs to be a concerted effort to revitalize subnational participation in the NF at the Forum and Alaskan level. On the NF side, this requires mostly strategic planning with the input from its members. Recommendations made here are to increase the focus of the organization’s mandate, re-evaluate the scope of membership, regionalize the organization, define the level of political engagement, re-structure funding models, improve communication, and renew the NF’s relationship with indigenous peoples. On the Alaskan side, there is still apparent uncertainty as to their perception of the NF’s purpose and role. Clarifying these issues on both sides allows for a first step in increasing the NF’s robustness.

Conclusion

This research provides a starting point for a deeper understanding of the role of subnational governments’ foreign relations in the Arctic and the Northern Forum. The case has been made here that subnational participation in the broader arena of Arctic governance has a functional purpose for both levels of government, nationally and internationally. For the subnational government, engaging in foreign relations allows it to participate directly in the arena that is largely responsible for determining the direction of Arctic region-wide policy. For the federal government and at the Arctic Council level, the participation of subnational entities allows for an optimization of projects’ effectiveness and efficiency. One method to do this is through transborder multilateral regional networks, of which the NF is an example. Through the Alaskan case study, it was demonstrated that while significant progress needs to be made reform the organization’s structure, there is still a demand for an NF type entity. It has been argued that the NF’s status as an observer on the AC represents an opportunity for subnational entities to
achieve their priorities of getting their voices heard internationally, as well as improving the lives of their residents. Recommendations were made in this paper for subnational governments to achieve this goal through the NF.

In a time where climate change is exponentially causing the speed of responses required to reduce the impact it has on populations, infrastructure, and communities, understanding the role that regional and subnational governments can play becomes critically important. Despite their critical role in improving Arctic governance, Arctic regions are under-examined and need to be more completely studied.
Appendix I: Annual NF Membership List of Subnational Governments

1991: Alaska, Chukotka, Dornod, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Jewish Autonomous Okrug, Kamchatka, Khabarovsk, South Korea, Lapland, Magadan, Trondelag, South Trondelag, Yukon (14)

1992: Alaska, Chukotka, Dornod, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Jewish Autonomous Okrug, Kamchatka, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Trondelag, South Trondelag, Yukon (14)

1993: Alaska, Chukotka, Dornod, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Jewish Autonomous Okrug, Kamchatka, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, South Trondelag, Yukon (17)

1994: Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Dornod, Evenk, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Jewish Autonomous Okrug, Kamchatka, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, South Trondelag, Västerbotten, Yukon (21)

1995: Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Dornod, Evenk, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Kamchatka, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, South Trondelag, Västerbotten (19)

1996: Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Dornod, Evenk, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Kamchatka, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, South Trondelag, Västerbotten, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (21)

1997: Alaska, Alberta, Dornod, Evenk, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Kamchatka, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Northwest Territories, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, Västerbotten, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (20)


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239 Northern Forum Membership List.
1999: Alaska, Alberta, Arkhangelsk, Dornod, Evenk, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Kamchatka, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Landelsutvalget, Lapland, Magadan, Nenets, Norbotten, Northwest Territories, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, St. Petersburg, Västerbotten, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (23)


2004: Akureyri, Alaska, Alberta, Arkhangelsk, Chukotka, Dornod, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Lapland, Oulu Province, Sakha Republic, Sakhalin, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (19)

2005: Akureyri, Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Dornod, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Lapland, Oulu Province, Sakha Republic, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (17)
2006: Akureyri, Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Komi, South Korea, Lapland, St. Petersburg, Sakha Republic, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (16)


2008: Akureyri, Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Gangwon, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Krasnoyarsk Krai, Komi, South Korea, Lapland, Nunavut, Sakha Republic, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (17)

2009: Akureyri, Alaska, Alberta, Chukotka, Gangwon, Heilongjiang, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Komi, South Korea, Nunavut, Sakha Republic, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (15)


2011: Akureyri, Chukotka, Gangwon, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Nunavut, Québec, Sakha Republic, Vologda, Yamalo-Nenets, Yukon (11)

2012: Akureyri, Chukotka, Gangwon, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Nunavut, Québec, Sakha Republic, Yukon (9)

2013: Akureyri, Chukotka, Gangwon, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Sakha Republic, Yamalo-Nenets (7)

2014: Akureyri, Chukotka, Gangwon, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Sakha Republic, Yamalo-Nenets (7)

2015: Akureyri, Chukotka, Gangwon, Hokkaido, Khanty-Mansiysk, Krasnoyarsky, Sakha Republic, Yamalo-Nenets (8)
Appendix II: Organizational Structure of the Northern Forum

Appendix III: Details on a Revitalized Northern Forum Structure

NF Global

1. Responsible for *advocacy* at the AC and in other international fora
2. Receives agenda and priorities through the direction of NF Sub-Regions set at general assemblies, executive committee, and board of directors meetings
3. General assemblies call for meetings between governor-level individuals
4. Secretariat located in Tromsø near the AC Secretariat
5. Funded through contributions of NF Sub-Regions and grants

NF Sub-Regions

1. Responsible for co-ordinating and establishing projects suitable for that region to improve the quality of life of Northerners and facilitate sustainable development
2. Three Sub-Regions: North America, Scandinavia/Western Russia, Central/Eastern Russia
3. Rotating chairmanship model of leadership and organization within the sub-regions led by top bureaucrats and individuals with technical “know-how”
4. Secretariats located in each Sub-Region
5. Funded through contributions of subnational governments
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Andreassen, Nils. Interview, Telephone Interview and E-mail Correspondence with Emily Tsui, November 24, 2015.


Brigham, Lawson. Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 11, 2016.


Dorough, Dalee Sambo. Interview by Emily Tsui. Anchorage, February 19, 2016.


Ellis, Ben. Interview by Emily Tsui. Anchorage, February 18, 2016.


Fleener, Craig. E-mail correspondence with Emily Tsui, March 14, 2016.

Fleener, Craig. Interview by Emily Tsui. Anchorage, February 15, 2016.


Hasanat, Md. Waliul. Skype Interview with Emily Tsui, January 21, 2016.


Herron, Bob. Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 8, 2016.


Hladick, Chris. Interview by Emily Tsui. Anchorage, February 16, 2016.


Jóhansson, Halldór. Skype Interview with Emily Tsui, November 26, 2015.


Myers, Steve. Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 3, 2016.


Novik, Natalie. Northern Forum Membership List. Undated, received through e-mail communication with author, February 21, 2016.

Novik, Natalie, Interview by Emily Tsui, Toronto, February 17, 2016.


Pearce, Drue. Telephone Interview by Emily Tsui, February 4, 2016.

Penikett, Tony. Interview by Emily Tsui, Toronto, November 6, 2015.

Pogodaev, Mikhail. Skype Interview by Emily Tsui, February 3, 2016.


Ramseur, David. Interview by Emily Tsui, Anchorage, February 18, 2016.


Shropshire, Steve. Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 19, 2016.


Treadwell, Mead. Interview by Emily Tsui. Anchorage, February 22, 2016.


United States Constitution, Tenth Amendment.


Wohl, Priscilla. Telephone Interview with Emily Tsui, February 16, 2016.
http://www.pnwer.org/working-groups.html


Archival Sources and Interviews

Due to the limited scholarly literature that exists on the Northern Forum, and its contemporary history, access to the Institute of the North’s storage of organizational documents of the Forum’s history was extremely helpful. However, as a result of many of these documents being missing or not being able to capture reasons behind Alaska’s withdrawal, interviews proved to be vital. I am grateful for the Gordon Foundation in particular for granting me the opportunity to organize the “Regional Governments in International Affairs: Lessons from the Arctic,” conference on September 18, 2015, where I was able to establish the connections I needed to move forward. The following list of interviews does not include the follow up conversations and emails about the Northern Forum, and the casual conversations with individuals as well.

Nils Andreassen, November 24, 2015
Lawson Brigham, February 11, 2016
Dalee Sambo Dorough, February 19, 2016.
Ben Ellis, February 18, 2016.
Lise Falskow, February 16, 2016.
Craig Fleener, February 15, 2016.
Jim Gamble, February 17, 2016.
Bob Herron, February 8, 2016.
Chris Hladick, February 16, 2016.
Halldór Jóhansson, November 26, 2015.
Steve Myers, February 3, 2016.
Natalie Novik, February 17, 2016.
Drue Pearce, February 4, 2016.
Tony Penikett, November 6, 2015.
Mikhail Pogodaev, February 3, 2016.
David Ramseur, February 18, 2016.
Priscilla Wohl, February 16, 2016.
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