

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE ARCTIC

RASMUS GJEDSSØ BERTELSEN  
RASMUS@CANTAB.NET



AALBORG UNIVERSITY  
DENMARK

# Overview

- Doing International Relations research on the Arctic and North Atlantic
- The importance of linking natural and social systems, invasive species and international politics
- Theoretically informed International Relations questions concerning invasive species
- Discussion

# Doing International Relations research on the Arctic

- A personal background: childhood in Iceland, a deep interest in Denmark's historical, current and future relations with the North Atlantic, Iceland, Faroes Islands and Greenland
- Assistant professor of Development and International Relations, teach in MA programs on European Studies, Development and International Relations and China Area Studies
- Research interests: Arctic, Asia-Arctic, East-West flows of knowledge and talent
- Postdoc at Harvard and United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies (Yokohama)
- PhD, International Relations, Cambridge (UK), Sciences Po (Paris)
- Political science, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, the Netherlands



# Arctic International Relations research topics

- The history, present and future of the North Atlantic
- The long process of devolution of power in the North Atlantic (1840s-2040s?)
- The conditions for independence: human capital, fiscal independence and political desire (IAS: environmental management)
- Highly developed microstates, high relative, but low absolute capabilities (IAS: environmental management)
- Security (IAS: bio-security)
- Economic development: how did Iceland become a successful independent microstate, and what does it mean for the Faroe Islands and Greenland
- The interplay of human capital and natural resources
- The Arctic in global politics, the interest of Asian powers and the Arctic nexus in Asian-Arctic Country state relations (IAS: more in a moment)



# Linking social and natural systems

- "Preaching to the converted"
- The excitement and importance of studying interaction between social and natural systems
- Importance of training students to understand interaction between social and natural systems
- Jobs in that interaction
- Invasive species and International Relations, a new intersection, no literature, no presentations at conferences
- In a moment: suggestions how to study the International Relations of marine resources and invasive species in the Arctic

# Theoretically informed International Relations studies of invasive species in the Arctic

- Integrate Arctic International Relations studies in general International Relations research, beware of policy orientation
- International Relations theories as frameworks for thinking systematically about causalities and actors, for International Relations students and others



# Invasive species in the Arctic and International Relations theory

- Realism (power competition between states)
  - Local and global power relationships, small states and great powers, rising Asian powers
- Liberalism (different actors and their interests)
  - the importance of sub-state actors and their interests
- Institutionalism (the power of rules)
  - the importance of the Law of the Sea, Polar Code, etc.
- Constructivism (the power of norms)
  - the importance of discourse on the Arctic
- Transnationalism (the effects of people-to-people relations)
  - the importance of science, environment and indigenous people



# Realism: Power (Transition), China and the Arctic

- The centrality of the state and relative power relationships in an anarchic international system
- Pessimism concerning progress and cooperation
  - "Strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they"
  - "X is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact"
- Power imbalances within the Arctic
  - The mackerel dispute, attempts of coercion of the Faroe Islands and Iceland
  - (historical precedence of the Cod Wars)
  - Norwegian-Russian relationship
- Rising Asian powers, new shipping lanes and perhaps fisheries
  - China is *the* rising power—competing interests in shipping and fisheries between Arctic and "near Arctic" powers?





# Realism: Power (Transition), China and the Arctic

- The centrality of the state and relative power relationships in an anarchic international system
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  - "Strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they", Thucydides, ca 400BC
  - "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact", China's foreign minister, 2010
  - 5 RNN Fridtjof Nansen-class frigates and 50+ RNAF F35
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# Liberalism: the importance of other actors and their interests

- The importance of other actors and their interests for preference-formulation
- Optimism concerning progress and cooperation
- What are the actors, commercial interests, etc. concerning invasive species?
- What are the interests of different actors concerning invasive species?
- How are preferences and policies formed?



# Institutionalism

- Do institutions or rules matter? Are institutions possible? Why do states design institutions?
- Can institutions facilitate cooperation, validate agreements, create common expectations, raise levels of information?
- What are the possibility for and effectiveness of institutions concerning invasive species?
- Design of invasive species institutions
- The central institution in Arctic affairs: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, what other institutions on invasive species?
- Examples: Cod Wars and institution of economic exclusion zone, demarcation between Norway and Russia, status of the Northern Sea Route and Northwest Passage, mackerel and herring conflict between EU, Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland



# Constructivism

- The power of words, images and norms
- Does how we speak about international politics affect international politics?
- How do we speak about the Arctic?
- How does China speak about the Arctic?
- Which Chinese voices say what about China and the Arctic?
- "Near Arctic State", Arctic as common heritage of mankind
- Creating norms with effects
- What is the effect of norms about the Arctic concerning invasive species?
- Does it matter if the Arctic is the "common heritage of mankind"?
- How do norms affect institutions concerning invasive species?



# Transnationalism (science and environment)

- Nye and Keohane (1971): Non-state actors moving information, ideas, goods, people and money across borders
- Arctic is "science-dense", lots of science in the discussion, activities. Science close to politics
- Arctic Council and its working groups
- Arctic science is transnational—is there an Arctic epistemic community?
- Do Arctic scientists agree on problems and solutions? Is there an effect on policy?
- China is also moving into the Arctic through science
- What does the Arctic scientific community on invasive species look like?
- Is there an epistemic community with effects on outcomes?



# Transnationalism (indigenous people)

- People-to-people relations, the linkages of sub-state actors
- Arctic Council stands out for the role of indigenous people as permanent participants
- Self-government for indigenous people is among most interesting characteristics of the Arctic
- Indigenous people are often organized transnationally and operate transnationally
- Invasive species are a transnational threat to indigenous people
- How do indigenous people mobilize and respond?



# Domestic politics, invasive species and political science



# Conclusion

- Social and natural systems
- Theory

