

Preface

This book is about the Arctic, but what is that apart from a name? We all perceive the Arctic – and for some of us *the new Arctic* – differently based on our own point of departure, be that from an interested general public point of view or from a scientific one. To communicate knowledge of the Arctic, and how it swiftly transforms and interacts with the rest of the globe to a wide audience, is an important part of our objective with this book.

There are plenty of good reasons why we should question the physical and political boundaries that hitherto have defined what the Arctic is and will be. During the course of working with this book, we have found wide support from a broad range of disciplines that together helps support the observed fact that change occurs on all platforms in the new Arctic, in all camps and at all levels, and although the rate of change is faster in some compartments than others, it is, nevertheless, a fact hard to dispute. The deeper we have dug into reflecting on the new Arctic, the more certain we have become that the Arctic needs to be understood from a multitude of angles, with different eyes and viewpoints and with intelligent and complementary scientific insight – and occasionally across multiple timescales.

In this book we have addressed literature, carbon, oceans, governance, history, monitoring, glaciers, legalities, water, expeditions, globalisation, law, health, cooperation, narratives, vegetation, development, tourism, indignity, husbandry, security, food and art. These keywords represent individual pathways to the new Arctic, a place that is and is not, a place that curiously enough is developing in front of our very eyes, but do we understand what we see?

We believe that the contributions that make up this book afford a unique set of keys that can open up doors, known and unknown, that lead to not only new perspectives on the Arctic – the many possibilities and consequences that are arising due to the powers and forces at play – but also to a reaction, perhaps even a coordinated response. By making the critical challenges inherent to the Arctic accessible and intelligible to a wider audience, we dearly hope that responsible action will, in due time, be one outcome.

We thank the authors for their contributions, the reviewers for their corrections, NordForsk for the financial support and Springer for publishing the book. We hope you will come to appreciate it as much as we do.

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The New Arctic

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2015, XXII, 352 p. 44 illus., 39 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-17601-7