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## Use It or Lose It: Canadian Identity and the Construction of Arctic Security Policy

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

USE IT OR LOSE IT: CANADIAN IDENTITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
ARCTIC SECURITY POLICY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

Michael P. McCormack

2017

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.  
School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Michael P. McCormack, and entitled, Use It or Lose It: Canadian Identity and the Construction of Arctic Security Policy, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Thomas Breslin

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Ronald Cox

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Peter Craumer

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Mohiaddin Mesbahi, Major Professor

Date of Defense: December 7, 2016

The dissertation of Michael P. McCormack is approved.

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John F. Stack, Jr.  
Dean of School of International and Public Affairs

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Florida International University, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

USE IT OR LOSE IT: CANADIAN IDENTITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
ARCTIC SECURITY POLICY

by

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Miami, Florida

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This dissertation investigates the specific factors that drive state action in Canadian Arctic security policy, particularly in relation to securitization of the Arctic region and historical factors that influence decision-making. The purpose of this research is to develop stronger linkages between securitization processes and actual policymaking. When studying the Arctic as a defined geographical space, we see considerable differences between Arctic states when it comes to how cultural and historical attachment to the Arctic region may serve as a selling point for the ability of national governments to justify allocation of defense resources to their respective publics. Using the Canadian case, this research illustrates the strength of identity factors when compared to day-to-day bureaucratic politics and the influence of public opinion. This dissertation does not follow the ideas of one particular theoretical paradigm, but instead utilizes eclecticism to better illustrate the depth of the various factors that may contribute to policymaking. Additionally, the effects of policymaking and securitization processes are measured through public opinion. The ultimate findings of this research support a hypothesis of linear identity factors as a major influence on Canadian Arctic security policy, but also suggest that research on securitization theory needs to better connect rhetorical

securitization processes to actual policymaking. Through this, the research not only provides value in using this case as a test for the strengths and limits of securitization theory, but also emboldens understandings of security policy as being driven by a combination of domestic policy, foreign policy, endemic historical factors, and government strategic communication practices.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In August 2007, a group of Russian scientists studying the extent of the Lomonosov Ridge used a submersible to plant a Russian flag on the seabed under the North Pole. While the event proved to be little more than a publicity stunt, Western media outlets were quick to see this as a harbinger of a new “resource race” in the Arctic,<sup>1</sup> particularly in the context of the general relationship between Russia and the West at the time.<sup>2</sup> In the end, this relatively minor incident created greater public attention to the Arctic as a source of “threat” that required action on the part of Arctic states. This is not to say, however, that the impact of climate change in the Arctic was not previously understood and planned for by various governments prior to this incident. Instead, the Russian “claim” on the North Pole opened up more questions regarding the geopolitical significance of the region and the various issues that Arctic states ought to address in developing a strategy for responding to Arctic climate change. Scholars and practitioners

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<sup>1</sup> This tone was seen in news pieces by major media outlets in covering the Lomonosov Ridge expedition, both during the expedition itself as well as after the “flag-planting.” Examples of this can be found in Jung Hwa Song, “Cold War at North Pole?” *ABC News*, July 31, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=3432208>; Jamie Doward, Robin McKie, and Tom Parfitt, “Russia leads race for North Pole oil,” *The Guardian*, July 28, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/29/russia.oil>; and Doug Struck, “Russia’s Deep-Sea Flag-Planting at North Pole Strikes a Chill in Canada,” *The Washington Post*, August 7, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/06/AR2007080601369.html>. Seemingly even-handed descriptions of the event nonetheless contained a suspicious tone of Russian intentions. As seen in CNN, “Russia plants flag on Arctic floor,” August 4, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/europe/08/02/arctic.sub.reut/index.html?eref=yahoo>, expedition leader Arthur Chilingarov is described as “pro-Kremlin” while also discussing Russian media descriptions of the event as potentially “[raising] tension with the United States in a battle for Arctic gas.”

<sup>2</sup> Earlier in the year, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a speech critical of American foreign policy at the Munich Security Conference that would later be seen as a turning point in souring the Russian-American relationship. See Rob Watson, “Putin’s speech: Back to cold war?” *BBC News*, February 10, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6350847.stm>. Just days after the North Pole flag-planting event, Russia resumed a Cold War practice of undertaking long-range bomber patrols which included flights over the Arctic.



have provided answers to many of these questions as of late, although full understanding of the political, economic, and social issues facing the region are still under development.

As conceptions of security began to evolve beyond hard materialist concerns following the end of the Cold War, scholarship tying the natural environment to ideas about security also began emerging. This, in turn, increased attention to the study of specific cases in which the effects of climate change could be tied to measurable impacts on human populations. This has precipitated academic work on developing theoretical conceptions of the Arctic space and its relationship to real-world security issues. While the challenges faced by Arctic states have received greater attention on the parts of governments, non-governmental organizations, and think-tanks, academic communities devoted to Arctic issues have also begun forming. As such, academic work that addresses potential security problems in the Arctic in a comprehensive manner has been attempted, although there are still some areas in which even comprehensive approaches to Arctic issues are lacking. This is particularly evident when it comes to understanding the more discursive elements of the issue, such as the ability of governments to draw attention to and prioritize Arctic security issues within their respective bureaucracies and justify expenditure of resources on Arctic issues to their national populations. Additionally, academic work on Arctic security issues has, ironically, straddled the line between “non-traditional” conceptions of security that brought the natural environment into the discussion in the first place and more “traditional” conceptions that focus on power-balancing in the region. The manner in which scholarship about the Arctic is taking shape in many ways mirrors ongoing discussions about how best to frame our understanding of security and what constitutes “threats.”

The particular areas of this issue that this work takes interest in concern the specific factors that drive state action when it comes to Arctic security matters. In studying the Arctic as a defined geographical space, we see considerable differences between Arctic states when it comes to how cultural and historical attachment to the Arctic region may serve as a “selling point” for the ability of national governments to justify allocation of defense resources to their respective publics. As such, more investigation of how national governments promote the allocation of resources to Arctic security issues both within their respective Arctic regions as well as on a national level may yield interesting conclusions in explaining government behavior on this issue. Rather than addressing the Arctic space in its totality, my approach will focus on the Canadian case. Although several interesting issues could still be discovered by looking across the Arctic space in general, there are also notable reasons for why I am choosing this case in particular. Firstly, a narrower focus helps to mitigate the possibility of falling into the trap of “re-packaging” existing work on the subject matter, even if work on security issues in the Arctic remains relatively limited in general. Secondly, this case creates an interesting methodological framework from which we can perhaps draw larger conclusions about the factors driving state behavior in national security decision-making.

In this dissertation I will approach this subject through three main research questions. Firstly, how much does Canada identify with the Arctic space on an overall cultural level? Secondly, how does Canada conceive the region in the context of its own strategic outlook, and what steps is it taking to address political, economic, and environmental changes in the Arctic? Thirdly, how does overall national identification

with the region serve as a driving factor to prioritize Arctic security issues versus simply acting to protect sovereign territory and natural resources?

### ***The Arctic in Brief***

Seen as a region of strategic importance during the Cold War period, the Arctic Ocean has received increased attention in policy circles in recent years due to recognition of the potential economic impacts of the region's warming climate. This has raised notable areas of concern for states with direct stakes in the region: First, a general decrease in Arctic ice extent is expected to lead to an increase in available shipping routes in the coming decades; second, the Arctic seabed is believed to contain an abundance of key natural resources, which has raised concerns about the potential for competition and/or conflict in the region. Although states and energy corporations have paid increased attention to the potential of the Arctic region as a source of oil and gas wealth, the true extent of this potential still remains under study. An oft-cited 2008 study by the United States Geological Survey estimated that the region holds approximately 13% of the global share of undiscovered oil, 30% of the global share of undiscovered natural gas, and 20% of the global share of undiscovered natural gas liquids.<sup>3</sup>

How do we define the Arctic region? The simplest answer would be to point to the territory lying above the Arctic Circle, which sits at roughly 66° 33'N latitude. Some climatologists, however, favor a definition that better envelops the distinct climatological

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<sup>3</sup> United States Geological Survey, "90 Billion Barrels of Oil and 1,670 Trillion Cubic Feet of Natural Gas Assessed in the Arctic," 23, 2008, accessed April 19, 2015, [http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=1980&from=rss\\_home#.VTQzrcmtzxQ](http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=1980&from=rss_home#.VTQzrcmtzxQ).

factors that constitute the Arctic region.<sup>4</sup> The differences in opinion about this particular definition are of little use to this analysis, however. Instead, the main focus of this work actually rests on the idea that the conception of what the Arctic “is” and “is not” can vary considerably among the different Arctic states. It is, therefore, more important to understand who the relevant actors in the region are and how they are responding to the prospect of Arctic climate change. The variance of actors giving serious attention to the Arctic as an area of strategic importance range from the eight states with territorial claims in the region (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and the United States) to non-Arctic states interested in potential resources in the region (China) to intergovernmental organizations (particularly the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Because of this, a true idea of the region’s importance is still very much a matter of debate.

Of the eight states with territorial claims in the Arctic, we can further distinguish a group that is often referred to as the “Arctic Five”: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States. What differentiates these five states from the other three is their holding of both maritime territory and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in the Arctic Ocean.<sup>5</sup> Because of mutual interests in addressing climate change in the region, the Arctic states have increasingly worked through institutions such as the Arctic Council to develop multilateral, concrete agreements regarding responsible governance of the Arctic

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<sup>4</sup> An illustration of these two definitions can be found courtesy of the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center at: [https://nsidc.org/sites/nsidc.org/files/images/arctic\\_map.gif](https://nsidc.org/sites/nsidc.org/files/images/arctic_map.gif) (accessed April 21, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Although Iceland technically has a small piece of maritime territory north of the Arctic Circle as well, it is excluded from this group due to its distance from areas of greater concern found at higher latitudes.

space. The most impactful agreement governing use of the Arctic Ocean was agreed to by the Arctic Five in 2008. Known as the Ilulissat Declaration, the document expressly dismissed the possibility of developing a standing legal regime regulating the use of the Arctic Ocean.<sup>6</sup> The impact of this document was important for two reasons. First, it set a tone of cooperation in addressing territorial disputes and in preventing competition over territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean. Second, it recognized the supremacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the supreme legal regime in dealing with maritime legal issues in the region. This implicitly recognized the Arctic Ocean as a space generally open to the international community, a precedent that was a departure from the division of Antarctica under the stewardship of a handful of states in 1959.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the resource potential in the Arctic region, the general trend of melting ice has also led to the likelihood of the increased viability of shipping through the Arctic Ocean. The opening of such routes would theoretically reduce travel time and costs on routes from Europe to East Asia and western North America. As such, Arctic states have begun formulating plans for increased infrastructure development, disaster management, and facing challenging search-and-rescue operations in order to prepare for an expected

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<sup>6</sup> Rule of Law Committee for the Oceans, “The Ilulissat Declaration,” May 28, 2008, accessed April 22, 2015, [http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat_Declaration.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Antarctica is often cited when discussing legal framework development in the Arctic Ocean, not least of which due to the fact that some commentators have called for a similar regime to the Antarctic Treaty to be established in the Arctic. Nonetheless, some notable differences—particularly in the fact that Antarctica is a landmass—make the reversal of the Ilulissat precedent unlikely in the near future. Further discussion on this comparison can be found in Oran Young, “Whither the Arctic? Conflict or cooperation in the circumpolar north,” *The Polar Record*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January 2009), p. 73-82, and Rüdiger Wolfrum, “The Arctic in the Context of International Law,” in *New Chances and New Responsibilities in the Arctic Region*, Georg Witschel, Ingo Winkelmann, Kathrin Tiroch, and Rüdiger Wolfrum, Eds. (Berlin: BWV, 2010), p. 37-48.

increase in maritime traffic. Although such issues have allowed Arctic states to focus on practical matters resulting from climate change in the Arctic Ocean, there are also broader contentions about the status of the shipping lanes that may see increased traffic in the coming years. The two main routes of note are the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along Russia's Arctic coast and the Northwest Passage route that traverses Canada's northern fringes (see fig. 1).



*Fig. 1. Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Route*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hugo Ahlenius, "Arctic sea routes-Northern sea route and Northwest passage." *UNEP/GRID-Arendal Maps and Graphics Library*, 2006, accessed April 23, 2015, [http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/arctic-sea-routes-northern-sea-route-and-northwest-passage\\_f951](http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/arctic-sea-routes-northern-sea-route-and-northwest-passage_f951).

While the NSR falls within Russia's sovereign territory and EEZ—and thus is not a matter of dispute—there are disagreements between Canada and other Arctic states about the legal status of the Northwest Passage. Canada has had recent disputes with Denmark and the United States in areas where small islands or resources stand in between territorial waters recognized under international law.<sup>9</sup> Canada has furthermore argued to the United Nations that its continental shelf extends underneath these areas, which would give it sovereignty over the Northwest Passage under the UNCLOS.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the United States has argued that the Northwest Passage constitutes an international waterway that must remain open to all foreign-flagged ships. These disputes have remained relatively benign, however, given the shared commercial and security interests between the involved states.<sup>11</sup> Having stated the reasons why the Arctic has gained greater international attention in recent years, outlining the reasons why the Arctic has been seen as a matter of international security can now be better understood.

***Security issues in the Arctic: Problem or opportunity?***

In the past decade, security and defense organizations within Arctic states have paid increased attention to the Arctic as a potential area of future operations. Despite the role that the Arctic played during the Cold War in military planning,<sup>12</sup> current political,

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<sup>9</sup> Natalia Loukacheva, "Nunavut and Canadian Arctic Sovereignty," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, (Spring 2009), p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> This is outlined in detail in Michael Byers and Suzanne Lalonde, "Who Controls the Northwest Passage?" *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 2009), p. 1133-1210.

<sup>12</sup> The impact of the Arctic space on military strategy was seen both in great power tensions (e.g. adversarial submarine operations by both the U.S. and Soviet Union in the Arctic Ocean) as well as in how land forces were trained to potentially operate in Arctic conditions (this latter aspect was indeed a mainstay of defense planning in Scandinavian countries during the Cold War).

economic, and climatological conditions—not to mention technological advancements in the last two decades—have nonetheless required security agencies to re-think their approach to operating in the region. This has raised two questions that often guide debates about the Arctic security issues: first, is an increased focus on military operations in the Arctic creating conditions for future conflict, and second, what are the motivations and priorities that guide Arctic states in creating plans for operating in the Arctic?

The first question is especially important to consider in the context of which countries constitute the Arctic sphere. Of the eight Arctic states, five are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while two—Finland and Sweden—were officially neutral during the Cold War while also generally acting as members of the Western European sphere. Ultimately, this means that seven of the Arctic states were strategic adversaries during the Cold War to the eighth state, Russia. As discussed earlier, such events as the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident made it particularly tempting to paint the situation in the Arctic as a growing point of contention between Russia and the other Arctic states. Proponents of this argument point to an apparent increase in Arctic military exercises as evidence that military tensions are on the rise in the region.<sup>13</sup> These exercises have taken place across the Arctic space and have been undertaken both individually and in concert with other states. Russian exercises are often highlighted in

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<sup>13</sup> This argument is perpetuated more by media and policy research organizations than in traditional scholarship, as seen in J. Michael Cole, “Militarization of the Arctic Heats Up, Russia Takes the Lead,” *The Diplomat*, December 6, 2013, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/militarization-of-the-arctic-heats-up-russia-takes-the-lead/>. Nonetheless, some traditional scholarship has also purported this viewpoint, particularly in the context of national sovereignty. See Robert Huebert, “Renaissance in Canadian Arctic Security,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2005-06), p. 17-29.



Western media as a bombastic sign of Russian intentions to militarize the Arctic space.<sup>14</sup> Reporting on Canadian exercises will often note that the operations are undertaken in order to “assert sovereignty” over the country’s Arctic regions.<sup>15</sup> Multinational exercises such as Cold Response, which has been conducted in Norway on several occasions since 2006, are, unsurprisingly, billed in more muted terms.<sup>16</sup> Denmark’s establishment of a major Arctic-focused military command in 2012<sup>17</sup> and Russia’s establishment of its own in 2014<sup>18</sup> only added to the perception that Arctic states are on a course to conflict.

A deeper investigation of the situation, however, casts doubt on the strength of this narrative. Despite the attention to Arctic military exercises vis-à-vis the generally poor strategic relationship between Russia and other Arctic states, activities within intergovernmental organizations such as the Arctic Council have proven to be generally positive and productive.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the tremendous challenges posed by operating in the Arctic have made the idea of military conflict in the region almost unthinkable in the near

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<sup>14</sup> Isabelle Mandraud, “Russia prepares for ice-cold war with show of military force in the Arctic,” *The Guardian*, October 21, 2014, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/21/russia-arctic-military-oil-gas-putin>.

<sup>15</sup> David Pugliese, “Arctic exercise kicks off today involving Canadian Army, RCN, RCAF, Canadian Rangers,” *Ottawa Citizen*, April 1, 2015, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/arctic-exercise-kicks-off-today-involving-canadian-army-rcn-rcaf-canadian-rangers>.

<sup>16</sup> Norwegian Armed Forces, “Cold Response: About,” last updated March 7, 2014, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://mil.no/exercises/coldresponse/Pages/about.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> Defence Command Denmark, “Arctic Command,” last updated February 13, 2015, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://www2.forsvaret.dk/eng/Organisation/ArcticCommand/Pages/ArcticCommand.aspx>.

<sup>18</sup> TASS, “Russia’s Defense Ministry establishes Arctic Strategic Command,” December 1, 2014, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://tass.ru/en/russia/764428>.

<sup>19</sup> This argument is outlined in Ekaterina Piskunova, “Russia in the Arctic: What’s lurking behind the flag?” *International Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Autumn 2010), p. 851-864, and Michael Byers, “Cold Peace: Arctic cooperation and Canadian foreign policy,” *International Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Autumn 2010), p. 899-812.

future. This is already an issue that has been acknowledged by governments in budgetary terms<sup>20</sup> as well as by military officers who have participated in recent Arctic exercises.<sup>21</sup> Former Canadian Chief of Staff Gen. Walter Natynczyk perhaps summarized it best: "If someone were to invade the Canadian Arctic, my first task would be to rescue them."<sup>22</sup> Why, then, is there still a reason to focus on the Arctic as a security problem?

### ***Understanding the threat***

Though the analysis laid out here thus far has questioned the idea of a brewing conventional conflict in the Arctic region, this does not mean that the Arctic is free of threats or security issues worth addressing. Rather, we must think of the Arctic space not only on a transnational level, but also on a human level. Although estimates of when the warming trend in the Arctic will reach a tangible point of significance—such as an ice-free summer—are still under debate by climatologists, the reality is that we are likely to see an increase in human activity in the region in the coming years while also seeing a change in the environment that people living in the region must endure. Whereas states must deal with issues such as improving search-and-rescue and law enforcement functions in the region to meet this expected increase in human activity, they also must prepare for the probability of significant environmental degradation and a decrease in

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<sup>20</sup> David Pugliese, "Polar Challenge: Extreme Conditions Put High Cost on Arctic Operations," *Defense News*, June 10, 2014, accessed April 28, 2015, <http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20140610/DEFREG02/306100030/Polar-Challenge-Extreme-Conditions-Put-High-Cost-Arctic-Operations>.

<sup>21</sup> Nathan Fry, "Survivability, Sustainability, and Maneuverability: The Need for Joint Unity of Effort in Implementing the DOD Arctic Strategy at the Tactical and Operational Levels," *Military Review*, November-December 2014, p. 54-62, [http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20141231\\_art012.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20141231_art012.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Remarks made to Halifax International Security Forum, November 21, 2009.

food security for native populations due to the negative impacts of climate change on animal populations that the natives rely on for subsistence. Ultimately, it may be that *state* security is intrinsically linked with the level of actual *human* security in the region.

One debate in the field of human security is whether international law favors the security of individuals or the security of states. As Gerd Oberleitner argues, these two concepts are not mutually exclusive.<sup>23</sup> This argument previously appeared in the 1994 Human Development Report, which sees the security of individuals—regardless of nationality—as interdependent across borders.<sup>24</sup> What this means is that the security of the state and the security of smaller groups within the state can necessarily intertwine: regardless of how a smaller group feels about its own status within the larger state, it may see it necessary to subsume itself within the state’s security apparatus in order to remain secure against threats external to the state. As Joseph Parent argued, the ability to use the state as a “protection racket” against outside threats can prove to be a significant incentive for groups to hold an agreeable position with the state on issues of security.<sup>25</sup>

What are the implications for native groups residing in the Arctic space when we think of the region’s security in these terms? The first issue is one of state protection. Because of the aforementioned implications of maintaining a presence in Arctic affairs, states with a stake in the Arctic issue undoubtedly would include protecting citizens in their Arctic regions as part of their Arctic policies. Not only do they do this out of the

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<sup>23</sup> Gerd Oberleitner, “Human security and human rights,” *European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Occasional Paper Series*, Issue 8 (June 2002), p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> 1994 United Nations Human Development Report, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Parent, “Institutions, identity, and unity: The anomaly of Australian nationalism,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Autumn 2007), p. 8.

responsibility to protect their own citizens, but it also gives states a legitimate means to remain engaged with the issue. By directly addressing the concept of the individual (or relatively small groups within their borders), the state can justify political posturing, bolstering of security forces in these regions, and other acts of sovereignty through the internationally-sanctioned right to protect one's citizens. The second issue is how the day-to-day lives of individuals will be affected with an increased focus on Arctic protection activities. On the one hand, military build-up in the region can serve as a means to bolster rural villages that are otherwise devoid of major economic investment.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the environmental impacts of increased activity in the Arctic can have detrimental effects on these regions in the long-term. Increased activity in the Arctic regions—be it commercial or government—would undoubtedly affect the natural environment that many Arctic residents rely upon either through over-fishing or environmental degradation from industrial activity.<sup>27</sup> Though the Arctic is not alone in these issues, a variety of meteorological phenomena make the Arctic particularly susceptible to environmental degradation. The exponential effects of pollution in these regions have also been measured to affect the build-up of certain toxins in residents' bodies.<sup>28</sup> These implications create a mixed view as to whether significant state investments in Arctic sovereignty activities will be positive or negative in the long-term.

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<sup>26</sup> Barry Scott Zellen, *On Thin Ice: The Inuit, the State, and the Challenge of Arctic Sovereignty*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), p. 59.

<sup>27</sup> David Balton and Kjartan Hoydal, "Policy Options for Arctic Environmental Governance," *Arctic Transform*, March 5, 2009, accessed April 29, 2015, <http://arctic-transform.org/download/FishEX.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Melissa A. Verhaag, "It is not too late: The need for a comprehensive treaty to protect the Arctic environment," *Georgetown Law Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 2003), p. 559-61.

### ***Bridging the gap: The purpose and value of this research***

What are the merits of choosing the Arctic as the subject of analysis in the first place?

From a pragmatic standpoint, academic research on policies related to climate change is emerging as a popular topic within the field of international relations, due both to the increasing relevance of the topic in policy circles as well as increased attention to non-traditional aspects of security. The Arctic also serves as one of the best cases for understanding the real-world consequences of climate change and how they relates to security studies.

In order to serve as an original contribution to the field, there must be some understanding of how my research differs from other aspects of research on Arctic security issues. Although recent scholarship taking a comprehensive approach on Arctic security issues has been attempted,<sup>29</sup> much of this has focused primarily on real-world aspects of the issue while giving only superficial attention to the relationship between identity and security. In effect, current scholarship on the region has served as a solid foundation for understanding the main issues facing the Arctic states (as I summarized above) while leaving room for more theoretical development on understanding the factors that drive action in addressing these issues. Additionally, my work will help to build upon literature that has connected the role of general discourse about the Arctic to prioritization of Arctic security issues specifically.<sup>30</sup> Unlike existing literature, however, I

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<sup>29</sup> Recent examples include James Kraska, Ed., *Arctic Security in An Age of Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2013), and Zellen, *The Fast Changing Arctic*.

<sup>30</sup> An example of this can be seen in Leif Christian Jensen, "Seduced and surrounded by security: A post-structuralist take on Norwegian High North securitizing discourses," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (March 2013), p. 80-99.

will provide a bridge to how discourse may *drive* action rather than only explain its role in raising the issue as a *potential* priority for governments.

This work also has applications to the field of international relations in general that go beyond the Arctic case or the two countries being studied here. While cultural and identity-based explanations of national security decision-making have received significant attention since the end of the Cold War,<sup>31</sup> this work will also highlight how seemingly regional issues within states can be brought to the attention of the national populace as a significant matter of national security. Given differing opinions between regions within a state on how to prioritize various issues of national importance, greater understanding of the dynamics that drive security issue prioritization based upon the amalgamation of these preferences on a national level may prove particularly interesting. My research will therefore place significant emphasis on balancing how cultural issues on both a regional and national level influence larger decision-making.

Ultimately, one of the main goals of this project will be to develop better understandings of agenda-setting in the context of Arctic security. By this I am referring to identifying how key players in Canada on this issue—be it political leaders or particular aspects of the bureaucracies themselves—have managed to raise the security issues facing the Arctic to a higher level of prioritization in national decision-making.

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<sup>31</sup>Some examples include Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Richard Ned Lebow, *Why Nations Fight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010); and Brent Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations* (Routledge: New York, 2008).

Existing international relations literature does provide some tools to work with along these lines, although it also makes the temptation to answer all questions regarding the strategic value of the Arctic region stronger. The problem with taking such an approach is that it would likely result in vague answers to many questions rather than theoretically strong answers to a handful of questions. As discussed above, I have identified three questions to be addressed in this research. Additionally, applying major paradigms of international relations to this case leads to a complex theoretical intersection that appears to speak to all perspectives. I do not approach this topic with the goal of trying to explain behavior through the tenets of a single paradigm. Indeed, this analysis will intertwine several components of competing paradigms to holistically explain behavior among involved actors, particularly when it comes to issues of power and interest (realism) and having a national identity that is strongly connected to the region (constructivism). This is not to say that the conclusions reached here may not arguably fall more within the bounds of one paradigm rather than others; instead, the approach taken here is cognizant of the fact that explanatory power on this subject matter may lie more with eclecticism than with a single paradigm. Such an approach is influenced by existing work on eclecticism in international relations<sup>32</sup> as well as in security studies specifically.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> A comprehensive overview of the use of pluralistic approaches in international relations can be found in Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*, (Routledge: New York, 2011), 188-212. Additional work that may prove useful on this subject is Rudra Sil and Peter Katzenstein, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Multiple chapters in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* apply here. In particular, this includes the introductory chapters (Peter Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security" and Ronald L. Jepperson et. al., "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security") as well as chapters on differences in domestic strategic culture (Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine Before World War II" and Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China").

This work is also influenced by the securitization approach advanced by the Copenhagen School. Because of this work's focus on the role that elite interests play in framing the Arctic as a significant security issue that requires the immediate attention of the national security bureaucracy, the securitization approach will prove rather useful to further understanding how national governments "sell" the idea of an Arctic security "problem" to their respective publics. Furthermore, this will open up our discussions of Arctic security issues to include more investigation of the range of voices that actually precipitate action on Arctic matters in the form of security practices. Although I have given brief mention to the human security angle that is most immediately threatened by climate change in the Arctic, this work will serve to demonstrate how government prioritization of Arctic security issues in the two case countries is actually more of a "top-down" phenomenon than vice versa. While several factors play into the creation of this dynamic, it also must be understood that some of the terms that scholars have used to categorize the interactions that influence thinking about security are very much fluid concepts: that is, we are still developing understandings of what these concepts actually mean and encompass. By incorporating existing literature on securitization and other approaches, this work will not simply regurgitate a line of dogmatic thinking about security, rather, it will seek to enhance how these terms are employed.

***Understanding securitization and the rise of "environmental security"***

The quintessential work on securitization theory came at a time when the expanding definition of the term "security" created much consternation among those who favored more "traditional" understandings of security. In contrast to traditionalists who



saw the expansion of security as problematic at the end of the Cold War,<sup>34</sup> the development of the securitization approach by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde was guided by the view that security studies needed to evolve beyond explaining security only in terms of military force.<sup>35</sup> In constructing securitization, the authors moved beyond seeing security issues as being the targets of politicization, and instead wanted to describe the process that occurs when politicized security issues are elevated to a level of importance that supersedes normal political rules. The crucial point here is that for a securitization process to occur, there must be an actual speech act (or series of such) that elevates a given referential object to a position of existential threat.<sup>36</sup> This is an important distinction to make as securitization theory speaks to how a problem is elevated to a position of threat, but not necessarily to the means that the government will use in order to respond to this threat. When understanding how securitization theory applies to this analysis, it must be recognized that the key point is to understand how the respective governments frame the issue, rather than how successful they are in taking coherent action on the issue when having to operationalize their security agenda within the national bureaucracy.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Stephen M. Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (June 1991), p. 213, and Robert Jervis, "Security Studies: Ideas, Policy and Politics," in *The Evolution of Political Knowledge, Democracy, Autonomy, and Conflict in Comparative and International Politics*, Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson, Eds. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 2004), p. 106-107.

<sup>35</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner: Boulder, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-26.

<sup>37</sup> Rita Floyd refers to this problem by extending the logic of securitization to understand why a referent object is securitized in the first place and who, if anyone, benefits from doing so. See Rita Floyd, *Security*

The natural environment was also given specific attention in constructing the securitization approach.<sup>38</sup> What separates the natural environment from other aspects of securitization is the relationship between scientific communities and the political actors that result to securitizing moves. Because of their ability to analyze complex sets of data in a way that most of the political establishment or general population cannot, the scientific community is theoretically given significant power in state decisions on environmental matters. This has particularly been the case in recent years, according to Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, given a higher standard of proof required by international actors. Interestingly, increased demands for this level of proof are actually the key source of strength for the scientific community, who are given the task of “reducing uncertainty” in the face of increased political attention on environmental matters.<sup>39</sup> This theoretical explanation, of course, does not always prove true in the realms of normal political operations.<sup>40</sup> The equilibrium between theory and reality when looking at this in securitization terms therefore lies in how political actors (and, indirectly, the scientific community) are able to raise the natural environment as a referent object for a

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*and the Environment: Securitisation Theory and US Environmental Security Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 56.

<sup>38</sup> In fact, the natural environment constitutes one of the five “sectors” that are described in Buzan, et al., *Security*, p. 27, as being a means to, “differentiate types of interaction” that may otherwise be missed when viewing security solely through a state-based lens. See Buzan, et al., *Security*, p. 71-94.

<sup>39</sup> Buzan, et al., *Security*, p. 72-73.

<sup>40</sup> Domestic politics on this front differ between Arctic states for both structural and endemic reasons. The parliamentary systems of Canada, Denmark, and Norway allow for greater participation by environmentally-focused parties, whereas the presidential system of the United States and the mixed political system of Russia are less receptive to participation by environmentally-focused parties. Even so, there does not seem to be a clear relationship between the strength of the environmental lobby and the extent to which each state securitizes the Arctic.

securitizing move both in the case of significant disasters (e.g., the 1986 Chernobyl accident) or in longer-term threats to the overall human condition (i.e., the question of whether human civilization itself must alter its activities in order to mitigate the threats posed by climate change).<sup>41</sup>

Additional work on the securitization concept has also expanded the ways in which we can apply securitization across levels of analysis that in turn helps to clarify the transnational impact of the Arctic issue. Although the development of securitization theory opened the door to a number of interesting modes of analysis for understanding how political leaders shape discourse on security issue prioritization through the use of speech acts, it also became evident that further comprehension of the contexts created by these initial definitions was necessary. Constituting climate change as an overarching threat brings the securitization process to a higher level of analysis (unlike the original conception, which existed as a “middle-range” construct between policymakers and their domestic audience<sup>42</sup>), which can be described as “macrosecuritization.” The distinguishing factor here is the ability of the threat to be universalized across a portion of the global population rather than just by the citizens of a single state. Although macrosecuritization refers to the overarching process of constituting the threat, acceptance of the threat across regions is also aided by the existence of trans-regional “security constellations” that can build commonalities between otherwise disparate

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<sup>41</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, p. 73-76.

<sup>42</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, “Macrosecuritisation and security constellations: Reconsidering scale in securitization theory,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (April 2009), p. 255-56.

regions.<sup>43</sup> This may prove especially useful given the scope of analysis here: The Arctic “threat” is trans-regional but how states respond to the issue is also guided by how their own territory or region is impacted. The macrosecuritization and security constellation frameworks thus offer a possible route to comprehending the sometimes difficult problem of traversing multiple levels of analysis within the securitization concept.

Beyond the securitization angle, the field of environmental security itself began receiving greater attention following the end of the Cold War. Much of this was due to a general shift toward greater understandings of “non-traditional” security studies during this time, but it was also representative of real-world events that caused scholars to wonder how the natural environment fit into the realm of security studies, if at all. Influential works that laid the foundation for environmental security during this time, such as those by Thomas Homer-Dixon<sup>44</sup> and Robert Kaplan,<sup>45</sup> were very much influenced by armed conflicts within and between lesser-developed countries during the 1980s and 1990s. In these terms, environmental security was not only framed as the means by which climate change and environmental degradation affected the basic needs of individuals, but also how such changes—and the expected worsening of these conditions—would ultimately lead to scarcity-driven conflicts at the state level.<sup>46</sup> Kaplan

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. The “security constellations” idea incorporates the “regional security complexes” construct outlined in Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, “On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict,” *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 1991), p.76-116.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy,” *The Atlantic*, February 1994, accessed May 6, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/>.

<sup>46</sup> Floyd, *Security and the Environment*, p. 76-77.

would go as far to refer to the natural environment as a “hostile power” that would become “the national-security issue of the twenty-first century.”<sup>47</sup> Such framing of the issue in these terms is interesting for two reasons. First, it was largely—although not exclusively—tied to the lesser-developed world. This was understandable given the abundance of inter- and intrastate conflicts in poorer states around the end of the Cold War, although the threat was also quickly understood to be a “civilizational” problem that affected the developed world as well.<sup>48</sup> The second, and more pressing issue, however, was how the actual “threat” from the natural environment was constructed. Although the initial foundations of environmental security departed from traditional security studies in describing the threat to individuals—rather than the state—the argument quickly circled back to how states needed to respond to this threat, or even how changes in the natural environment would increasingly serve as a catalyst for conflict between states. Differentiating human security from environmental security may indeed speak to this dynamic: whereas human security conceptions focused on the individual as the referent object, environmental security began to be a matter of threat to the state.<sup>49</sup> This distinction is important as it helps to recognize the importance of political actors pointing to threats emanating from the natural environment in the first place.

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<sup>47</sup> Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy.”

<sup>48</sup> Homer-Dixon’s influence on U.S. environmental policy during the 1990s was substantial, with senior Clinton administration officials being quick to frame the issue as something that affected the U.S. on an existential level. See Floyd, *Security and the Environment*, p. 78-79.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth L. Chalecki, *Environmental Security: A Guide to the Issues* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013), p. 8.

### ***Identity-building and the Arctic security community***

When considering the impact of identity and cultural factors on decision-making, it is worth discussing exactly how the term “identity” applies to the case at hand. From a paradigmatic standpoint, identity as a causal factor is generally associated with the constructivist approach. Superficially, some constructivist literature would be relevant to this analysis in that it discusses the state feeling the “need” to uphold a given identity construct.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, better connections between identity, interest, and foreign policy development can also be found in neo-classical realist literature in being described as a “cartelization” process.<sup>51</sup> The diversity of theorizing about the power of identity does provide this analysis with many existing concepts on which to build, but it also confirms the use of analytical eclecticism as the best frame of reference for this case. Because of this, it is also best to determine the specific manner in which identity constructs are applicable to this analysis, rather than delving into the complexities of the term “identity” at large.

Incorporating identity concepts here requires understanding the term at two levels of analysis. First, there need to be understandings of how identity is developed at the state level. Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” concept is relevant here as it identifies how concepts of nationhood based upon a given set of political borders are continually reinforced through societal identification with a “deep, horizontal

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<sup>50</sup> See Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009) and Brent Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations* (Routledge: New York, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> See Jennifer Sterling-Folker, “Neoclassical realism and identity” in, *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*, Steven Lobell, Norrin Ripsman, and Jeffrey Taliaferro, Eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 135-36.

comradeship” regardless of individual social status.<sup>52</sup> The crux of the “imagination” of this community, however, is the means by which the development of the community takes place through language. The modern state was, in many cases, imagined through the development of a given set of vernacular understandings that were mass produced to develop ideas about what the national community stood for.<sup>53</sup> If we apply the “imagined communities” concept to this case, we can develop ideas about how society in each state develops understandings of what the nation “is” and “is not.”

The second level of analysis is found at the transnational level. The first work to give attention to the political ramifications of a changing Arctic after the Cold War generally focused on the development of discourse, regimes, and institutions that helped to bring attention to the issues facing the Arctic.<sup>54</sup> The habitual use of the word *regimes* in this literature, I would argue, also created some interesting precedents in how the Arctic was analyzed further. Rather than using this word interchangeably with such words as “norms,” viewing Arctic politics as a “regime” implied that the Arctic was a coherent space that required substantive governing. As such, the Arctic was increasingly viewed as a transnational community that was in need of regular, cooperative caretaking from the Arctic states. Despite positive ideas about Arctic regimes and governance emerging during this period, it was only very recently that more specific attention was

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<sup>52</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37-46.

<sup>54</sup> Examples of this include E.C.H Keskitalo, *Negotiating the Arctic: The Construction of an International Region* (Routledge: New York, 2004); Oran R. Young and Gail Osherenko, Eds., *Polar Politics: Creating International Environmental Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Oran R. Young, *Creating Regimes: Arctic Accords and International Governance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

given to the security aspects of the issue.<sup>55</sup> When envisioning how Arctic states approach their own Arctic territory, we therefore must be considerate of the fact that this territory is also part of a larger, transnational space that has been managed with an evolving set of multinational regimes.

Along these lines, it is also quite possible that Canada is on the verge of forming a distinctive *Arctic identity* that is representative of how the Arctic specifically contributes to its national fabric. The impact of this idea is in how states effectively use the Arctic as a means to further larger foreign policy goals. In the case of Canada, the Arctic is used as a vehicle for emboldening national conceptions of sovereignty. This goal then elevates the Arctic to a level of significant importance in how Canada develops its overall security and foreign policy priorities. As such, the Arctic could ultimately become a cornerstone of the country's holistic identity. Identifying the potential existence of such a construct in the course of this analysis would prove to be an interesting addition to our understanding of how national-level factors work intersubjectively with transnational factors in creating a conception of the Arctic space.

The final framework that is of particular application here is the notion of security community. The most significant definition of the term "security community" was undertaken by Karl Deutsch in the late 1950s as a means to describe a social dynamic between groups in which there were mutual understandings of the need to avoid physical conflict between each other. Contrary to a *realpolitik* explanation of the absence of war

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<sup>55</sup> The absence of security issues in these discussions was actually by design in the case of the Arctic Council: the 1996 Ottawa Declaration that founded the body expressly prohibited the discussion of military matters as part of the Council's regular agenda.



between groups—or more commonly, states—members of the community were bound to avoid violence by some underlying set of core values.<sup>56</sup> Adler and Barnett built upon this concept by seeing the security community framework as a means to move past the divide between political realists and institutionalists.<sup>57</sup> What is most interesting about recent work on security communities, however, is how it frames the concept of peace within a given security community. Although peaceful security communities such as post-World War II Western Europe were built around shared norms and institutions, “peace” in this context must also be understood as “absence of war.”<sup>58</sup> This understanding of security community has interesting applications to the Arctic space given the players involved. On the one hand, Arctic states have proved to be generally cooperative on Arctic matters and have put significant energy into creating institutions that address shared problems across the Arctic space. On the other hand, the general geopolitical tensions between Russia and other Arctic states does leave open the possibility of a decline in the otherwise positive dynamic that exists in Arctic political spheres. As such, the cementing of the Arctic as, at the very least, a permanently “non-war” security community would protect the region from the generally negative dynamics that underline the relationship between Russia and the West. While interstate relations in the Arctic region may not provide cause for worry

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<sup>56</sup> Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, Eds. *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 6-7.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> This conception is discussed in the case of Brazil and Argentina, who had mutual understandings of avoiding war while also maintaining a sense of historical rivalry. See Andrew Hurrell, “An emerging security community in South America?” in *Ibid.*, p. 228-264.

in the short-term, seeing the region as falling within this version of security community in the future is certainly something worth considering.

### ***Connecting theory and practice***

Having outlined the theoretical constructs that influence this research, it is worth considering how my research will add further to these discussions. As noted earlier, one of the more problematic questions for the Copenhagen School is connecting rhetoric to action. That is, what is the purpose of giving thought to how governments or other influential actors frame a security issue if they ultimately do not precipitate tangible action on said issue? This question is perhaps best answered by understanding the idea of *security practices*, which bridges the movement from discourse to action on a given issue. Lene Hansen has offered useful discussion along these lines in explaining how policy and identity are constructed as mutually constitutive when it comes to developing foreign policy. This does not mean that identity and policy cannot be separated; instead, “adjustments” to stabilize the equilibrium between the two occur if the identity or group of policies begin to drift away from the norm.<sup>59</sup> Unlike policy, however, there is less of a conscious process in defining identity. As such, the extent to which identity influences policy cannot truly be understood as a direct process, but rather as a factor that combines with external constraints (e.g., material capabilities or bureaucratic dynamics) to ultimately influence policy decisions.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 28-31.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

A problem that arises with this is how we quantify the role of agency within structural processes when it comes to foreign policy development. As noted by Vincent Pouliot, rational processes have not always offered adequate answers to how actors solve practical problems when forced to act immediately.<sup>61</sup> Subsequently, there is also the question of where a sense of “practice” comes from in the first place: Is it simply another word for norms or do we need to give more thought to whether the process of enabling policy is something distinct in itself? Pouliot sees the key as being the degree of “implicit learning” that is regularly replicated by those in positions of power. In other words, practices are built because they are shown over time to work, which, as Pouliot argues, has led to the sustained dominance of *realpolitik* thinking among practitioners.<sup>62</sup> What this focus on security practices means for the purposes of this analysis is understanding how influential identity factors are to actual policy outcomes in light of the existence of other processes. The goal here is, therefore, not to make the argument that other factors—such as economic pressures or even material security concerns—do not play a noticeable role in policy processes. Instead, the argument presented here is expected to explain how agenda-setters in the country studied have played upon identity factors in order to raise the profile of Arctic security issues. Although significant attention to Arctic security issues has only been ongoing for less than a decade, sufficient time has nonetheless passed in order to be able to evaluate whether discursive attention to the issue has

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<sup>61</sup> Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), p. 17.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30-31.

resulted in tangible results in action (and even to determine what factors have driven this action).

In addition to the factors discussed above, the methodological value of this particular case selection offers interesting opportunities to understand the development of identity factors within a given state as they relate to security matters. The selection of this case not only gives us the ability to demonstrate how a regional issue has arguably become enveloped within national identity but also to dig deeper into the nuances of how these identity factors are reified and guided by national policymaking.

Aside from incorporating previously discussed theoretical literature, analysis of relevant literature related to the case country will remain focused on government policy documents (particularly their respective national Arctic strategies) as well as relevant news reporting of recent events related to the case. In order to build better understanding of how identity plays a role in how Canada approaches the issue, there will also be incorporation of historical analysis of past policy and attitudes that may give insight to present-day behavior. Beyond simply tying the Arctic region to modern conceptions of security, there first needs to be a deeper understanding of how *Arctic-identity* formed in the country over time. This understanding goes beyond the security aspect of the Arctic and points to how Canada raised the issue of the Arctic as a space needing attention, albeit for environmental or social reasons.

### ***Plan of research***

The next three chapters will serve as the empirical basis for this study. In the second chapter, I give a detailed overview of the evolution of Canadian Arctic policy since major Arctic expeditions began taking place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter

also shows how Canadian agenda-setters—particularly senior government officials—have used the Arctic as a means to reinforce Canadian conceptions of national sovereignty in modern times. This includes discussion of the region’s critical role in Canadian security and defense policy during the Cold War. Overall, this chapter makes the argument that the Arctic has been consistently intertwined with Canadian ideas of sovereignty to build up the region as being an existential part of national identity.

The third chapter discusses how Canada’s post-Cold War Arctic security policy is representative of and guided by these underlying notions of national identity. Of particular interest here is to give further insight to the degree to which recent policy is actually a representation of underlying identity factors rather than an agenda being shaped only by current agenda-setters or short-term interests. This is a particularly interesting notion to address given political disputes about who is actually driving Canadian security policy in the Arctic.<sup>63</sup>

The fourth chapter analyzes public opinion and media responses to Canadian Arctic security policy during the Stephen Harper era. This chapter provides additional empirical weight to measuring how the securitization process resonated in Canadian society and also shows how the media acted as a significant player in the securitization process in itself. Additionally, this chapter helps to highlight how Arctic politics fit into Canadian politics generally, and whether this period of time showed new trends in how the issue will be prioritized in the future.

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<sup>63</sup> In other words, this speaks to a consistent complaint of the political opposition to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s government since it took office in 2006: namely that the government has engaged in bellicose rhetoric about Arctic sovereignty that is a departure from previous attitudes of Canadian foreign policy.

The fifth and concluding chapter evaluates the conclusions reached in the three empirical chapters and offers possible connections between this research and further scholarship on security discourse and security practices.

## **Chapter 2: Building a Canadian Arctic identity**

Identifying early influences in building the Canadian conception of the Arctic includes recognition of the social and economic dynamics in Canada in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Canada was still colonized under British rule during this time, it meant that attempts to traverse northward were guided by European beliefs of limitless economic potential in the largely untouched frontiers of the known world. This further introduced two important factors that guide our understanding of the exploration of the Canadian Arctic: first, the general wonderment of the pristine frontier that presented itself to those willing to explore it, and second, the impact on native peoples and the natural environment that were affected by British Canada's increased presence in the region. The combination of these two factors created a strong sense of otherness in the early Canadian psyche when it came to envisioning the Arctic, a tradition that was ultimately passed down to "southern" Canadian society as it achieved sovereign independence. To this day, the understanding of the North as a distinct entity is not only recognized in current societal rhetoric and government policy, but also shares the sense of awe that captivated the early explorers of the region.

Although exploration of the Canadian Arctic did not begin in earnest until the mid-1800s, European colonization in Canada over the two centuries prior had already created a burgeoning trading regime based upon competition for the colony's vast resources. The interests of British and French fur traders led them to continually seek out new areas of resources via the territory's seemingly endless network of rivers and lakes. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, traders had effectively wiped out certain animal populations along

the east coast and St. Lawrence River.<sup>64</sup> Because of this, European merchants increasingly came into frequent contact with native tribes as they ventured further into previously unexplored lands. The relationship with native peoples during this time was dichotomous: on the one hand, their knowledge of the geography in regions previously unexplored by Europeans proved invaluable as British explorers pushed closer to the Arctic in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, elements of the Royal Navy were less aware of the natives' expertise, instead utilizing their own methods in exploring the region.<sup>65</sup> The main goal during this period was to discover the possible existence of the long-theorized Northwest Passage route connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As a result, the means of exploring the Arctic were driven both by a rivalry of sorts amongst the different British interests themselves—particularly between fur traders and the Royal Navy—as well as larger British goals of controlling trade in the region in contrast to other countries.<sup>66</sup>

Under the direction of Sir John Barrow, the second secretary of the Admiralty, Britain ambitiously worked to ensure maritime dominance of the Arctic. Although

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<sup>64</sup> John McCannon, *A History of the Arctic*, (London: Reaktion, 2012), p. 86-88.

<sup>65</sup> These differences affected the speed by which travelers were able to move through the region: land-based routes often involved travelling light and quick, whereas later sea-based routes were slower and larger. This was also representative of differing methods utilized by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Royal Navy, as outlined in Hugh N. Wallace, *The Navy, the Company, and Richard King*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1980), p. 2-3. There were also instances in which the British outright rejected indigenous expertise as being too primitive, much to their own detriment. This is seen in the example of declining to use Inuit clothing that ultimately held up better in cold weather conditions, as discussed in Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison, "Winter and the Shaping of Northern History: Reflections from the Canadian North," in *Northern Visions: Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, Eds. (Broadview: Peterborough, ON, 2001), p. 27.

<sup>66</sup> At this time, Russia and the United States were seen as chief competitors to any British discovery of a Northwest Passage. See Wallace, p. 5-8.



historians consider Barrow to be the grand architect of Arctic exploration during this time,<sup>67</sup> the explorer who would gain the most fame for his exploits would be Sir John Franklin. While Franklin would participate in the initial 1818 expeditions that set the tone for British Arctic exploration in the coming decades, it was not success during that time that brought him to the forefront of the public eye.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, Franklin's expedition from 1818-21 proved disastrous, as did a second expedition from 1825-27. Franklin's fame, interestingly enough, was buoyed by these failures: as it turned out, the idea of an explorer bumbling his way through a forbidding landscape provided for an entertaining narrative back home.<sup>69</sup> Such failures would only foreshadow what was to come for Franklin as attempts to map the Arctic coastline continued during the 1830s. Although much of the Canadian Arctic was explored and mapped during this time, expeditions failed to find the final link that would prove the existence of a true Northwest Passage. Seeking to remedy this, the Admiralty called upon Franklin to undertake what would be his final mission.<sup>70</sup> Launched in May 1845 using the ironclad vessels *Erebus* and *Terror*, Franklin's expedition was tasked with the mission of finding the missing link that had bedeviled European explorers for centuries prior.

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<sup>67</sup> McCannon, p. 127.

<sup>68</sup> It was instead the experiences of John Ross and William Parry, who commanded other aspects of the 1818 expedition, that were more impactful on British Arctic policy during the 1820s. See McCannon, p. 127-32.

<sup>69</sup> Wallace, p. 12-13.

<sup>70</sup> While Franklin was qualified to lead the expedition, it is widely believed that he was ranked below other commanders who had refused the mission. This contributes to the irony that surrounds Franklin's legacy, in that his career in the Arctic was, in actuality, largely marked by disaster and failure. See Michael Durey, "Exploration at the Edge: Reassessing the Fate of Sir John Franklin's Last Arctic Expedition," *The Great Circle*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (December 2008), p. 15-21.

After failing to hear from Franklin's expedition by the summer of 1847, British officials became concerned about the welfare of the crew. By the end of the year, the Admiralty was convinced that Franklin and his crew were in dire straits, and began preparations to send a search party the following summer.<sup>71</sup> It was not until 1854 that the fate of Franklin and his crew was finally discovered: an expedition led by John Rae made contact with Inuit villagers who had come across possessions and remains of Franklin's crew, even alleging that the longest surviving crewmembers may have resorted to cannibalism to head off starvation.<sup>72</sup> Further investigations during the 1850s and onward slowly pieced together what transpired during the doomed expedition. Franklin himself was discovered to have died in June 1847.

Franklin's expedition was ultimately befallen by becoming lodged in ice while seeking the connecting piece in the Northwest Passage—and thus resulting in the crew eventually succumbing to sickness or starvation<sup>73</sup>—with the drama of piecing together the story of the expedition taking on a mythical character in itself. As the details of Franklin's ill-fated mission emerged over time, the legend that developed around Franklin during his first forays into the Arctic—that of a man taking on the harshest conditions on Earth for the sake of human exploration—transformed into a sort of

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<sup>71</sup> Wallace, p. 72-73.

<sup>72</sup> McCannon, p. 136.

<sup>73</sup> One explanation argues that Franklin would have ultimately found the waterway he was looking for—what is now known as the Simpson Strait—had he remained closer to the Boothia Peninsula. Instead, Franklin's ships sought a path through the more open waters of the Victoria Strait, ultimately resulting in the grounding. This is discussed in McCannon, p. 133-34. The safer route was apparently ruled out from the start by both Franklin and the Admiralty, however, due to the size of the ships. This is discussed in Wallace, p. 55-57.

martyrdom for the cause. This was certainly helped by the saga of finding the remains of the expedition in the first place—his wife’s pleas to authority and financing of her own expeditions to find him, not to mention the adulation of such high-profile figures as Charles Dickens, created this image almost immediately<sup>74</sup>--and also by the role that the events of 1845-47 would take on as a heroic narrative in the early formation of modern Canadian identity.

The initial emergence of a nationalist interpretation of the Franklin expedition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was likely due to Canadian desires to assert sovereignty over its Arctic frontiers. Unlike during the time of the Franklin expedition, Canada’s transition to the status of British dominion in 1867 now meant that it been developing its own attitudes relative to the world around it. This is an interesting point when we compare what had transpired over the previous century: whereas the British Admiralty’s failures in the Arctic were often pointed to as being a result of an imperial culture that chose expansionism over caution,<sup>75</sup> Canada now had the opportunity to establish an Arctic policy that was independent of the whims of the British Empire. This did not mean that Canada at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was any less tenacious about the need to stake its claim in the Arctic, however. Following the election of Wilfred Laurier to the office of Canadian Prime Minister in 1896, the Canadian government showed increasing concern about its assertive American neighbor, whose expansionist ideals included looking

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<sup>74</sup> McCannon, p. 134-136.

<sup>75</sup> This is summarized in Durey, p. 34, but is also seen throughout Wallace’s work as noted in Footnote 2.

northward toward the Arctic.<sup>76</sup> This was also coming at a time when renewed interest in the Arctic was occurring at a global scale, not least due Norwegian Roald Amundsen's 1905 transit of the Northwest Passage, the first successful maritime navigation of the entire route. The Canadian perspective at this time was therefore more driven by concerns about the geopolitical threats to the country's sovereignty that were posed by this new period of Arctic exploration, rather than being driven by any attachment to the region on a historical level. It was as a result of this time period, however, that conceptions about Canadian Arctic sovereignty began to take shape.

The chief concern for the Canadians was the possibility of American incursions in Hudson Bay and the Arctic archipelago. Beginning in 1906, the government sent Captain Joseph-Elzèar Bernier to enforce fishing and whaling tariff regulations in the region as a means of demonstrating Canada's commitment to protecting its sovereignty in the Arctic. Bernier demonstrated a particular zeal for the mission, and began claiming Arctic islands under the Canadian flag in several trips through 1911. Although these expressions of sovereignty went mostly unchallenged, there is some debate as to how receptive the government was to Bernier's "island-hopping" method of enforcing sovereignty.<sup>77</sup> Regardless of this, Bernier's voyages created a precedent demonstrating that Canada was willing to enforce its Arctic claims.

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<sup>76</sup> Janice Cavell, "A little more latitude': explorers, politicians, and Canadian Arctic policy during the Laurier era," *Polar Record*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (October 2011), p. 290-95.

<sup>77</sup> Cavell argues that because the Americans did not ultimately challenge Canadian Arctic claims—despite earlier fears—Laurier's government actually sought to distance itself from Bernier's actions in order to prevent inflaming increasingly cordial relations with the United States.

The more famous embodiment of Canadian Arctic sovereignty would come soon after under the direction of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Born in Manitoba and raised in North Dakota by Icelandic parents, Stefansson was influenced both by the intellectual curiosity of his parents as well as the frontier lifestyle that he experienced as a child. Although entering Harvard at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a divinity student, Stefansson instead switched to study anthropology, following a budding interest in the works of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin.<sup>78</sup> Stefansson's desire to investigate his ancestral homeland led him to Iceland in 1903. Despite losing interest in Arctic pursuits following this trip, an offer to take part in the Anglo-American Polar Expedition in 1906 would lead him to rediscover the possibility of satisfying his intellectual curiosity in the region.<sup>79</sup> Originally expected to link up with the expedition's ship at a seaside village in the Yukon following an overland journey, Stefansson instead found himself stranded among Eskimo villagers. This experience led Stefansson to live among the Eskimos and adapt to their way of life. Having become disillusioned with the Anglo-American expedition during this time, Stefansson left in August 1907.<sup>80</sup>

The importance of noting this element of Stefansson's experience not only sets the tone for understanding the value of his more famous expedition in the ensuing years, but also to demonstrate how his individual experiences would impact the legacy that he left on Canada's northern experience. Stefansson's major expedition on behalf of Canadian interests was launched in 1913. The irony of this was that Stefansson's personal

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<sup>78</sup> Richard J. Diubaldo, *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic* (Montreal: McGill, 1978), p. 7-10.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19-23.

identification as a Canadian was unclear. After all, his family had moved to the United States shortly after Stefansson's birth, something that was not lost on Stefansson in his adult life.<sup>81</sup> Stefansson additionally needed to reclaim his Canadian citizenship as an adult, as his father's naturalization as an American citizen in the 1880s had nullified the younger Stefansson's ability to claim Canadian citizenship through birth.<sup>82</sup> Stefansson's previous forays into the Arctic—both as part of the Anglo-American expedition as well as a second trip from 1908-12—had also received financial support from American institutions as a result of his academic connections in the United States.

Regardless of Stefansson's personal inclinations about his nationality,<sup>83</sup> the Canadian government sought to give Stefansson financial backing in return for an expedition that would be unquestionably Canadian. Having been granted some funds from American institutions for an ethnological expedition in 1913, though still falling short of the total needed, Stefansson turned to Canada for additional help. The Canadian government agreed to fully fund the expedition provided that Stefansson drop his American backers and instead pursue the operation as a Canadian expedition. This also shifted the purpose of the mission, which now included claiming newly discovered lands as Canadian territory.<sup>84</sup> Though the Canadian government may have demonstrated a

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<sup>81</sup> Janice Cavell and Jeff Noakes, *Acts of Occupation: Canada and Arctic Sovereignty, 1918-25* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* As outlined here by Cavell and Noakes, Stefansson also did not shy away from playing up connections to Canada when necessary, which was part of his general adeptness at creating positive public relations around his expeditions.

<sup>84</sup> Stefansson's expedition was a partnership with zoologist Dr. Rudolph Anderson, a colleague of Stefansson on previous expeditions who reluctantly joined him again in 1913. The new mission demanded by the Canadian government left Stefansson to lead a "Northern Party" with exploratory aims, whereas Anderson would lead the "Southern Party" scientific mission along the Arctic coastline. Anderson's

mixed reaction toward Bernier's expeditions a few years earlier, concerns about foreign incursions in Canada's Arctic claims had not wholly withered. The outbreak of major war in Europe the following year only further bolstered general Canadian anxiety about being able to protect its claims. The context of the war was not lost on Stefansson. Ending his expedition and beginning a series of lectures in the fall of 1918, the explorer built on the victorious feelings occurring in Canada at this time to shape his travels in the Arctic as being part of a Canadian "destiny" to further develop its northern lands.<sup>85</sup>

The five-year expedition itself would end up having a tremendous impact on how Canadian views of Arctic sovereignty were shaped going forward. Although the expedition experienced early trauma,<sup>86</sup> Stefansson's expedition was ultimately successful in answering a number of questions about unknown geographical features in the Arctic as well as generally asserting Canadian sovereignty interests.<sup>87</sup> Stefansson's work was not completed in 1918, however. Stefansson was increasingly concerned about Denmark's intentions in the Arctic, seeing recent actions near Greenland as evidence of a concerted Danish effort to challenge Canada's sovereignty claims. Stefansson's viewpoint was initially shared by bureaucrat J.B. Harkin, who pushed this concern in government circles in 1920. However, Harkin would become increasingly suspicious of Stefansson's actual

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misgivings from the start, as well as the separation of the two by the new set of objectives, only created further tensions as the expedition went on. See Stuart E. Jenness, *Stefansson, Dr. Anderson, and the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-1918* (Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2011), p. 5-11.

<sup>85</sup> Cavell and Noakes, p. 19-23.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14. The loss of the ship *Karluk* in 1913, resulting in the deaths of eight crewmembers who attempted to survive off of the land on Wrangel Island, would prove particularly controversial to Stefansson's legacy. Some close to the expedition felt that Stefansson had not taken the proper precautions to ensure that crews would be able to survive in the case of being stranded for an extended period of time.

<sup>87</sup> Jenness, p. 324-28.

motivations for raising the alarm against the Danes.<sup>88</sup> Stefansson had also long wanted to annex Wrangel Island under Canadian control, a fairly dubious idea given its proximity to the Soviet Union. Following a failed attempt to establish a presence on the island, resulting in the death of four members of Stefansson's team, the Canadian government was ready to be finished with the explorer.<sup>89</sup> Despite this, Harkin and others concerned about the potential Danish threat were able to convince new prime minister Mackenzie King, who came to power in 1922, that Canada needed to reinforce its sovereign claims over areas that might be of interest to the Danes, particularly Ellesmere Island. The importance of this moment was less about the actual policies and players and more about their impact. As the government instituted a series of summer Arctic patrols from 1922-25, public perceptions were soon shaped into the idea that there was, indeed, a significant threat from Denmark to Canada's Arctic sovereignty. In reality, this was not actually the case. Nonetheless, the perception that Canada's Arctic interests were constantly under threat from outside actors had taken hold.<sup>90</sup>

What should be clear by this point is that the legacy of these expeditions not only helped to create a national narrative for Canada as it moved toward independence from Great Britain in 1931,<sup>91</sup> but that the narrative also took on a life of its own beyond

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<sup>88</sup> Cavell and Noakes, p. 35-90.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 6-9.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> The passing of the 1931 Statute of Westminster, which allowed Canada and other members of the Commonwealth Realm to establish foreign policies fully independent of the British government, did not appear to have a significant effect on Canadian Arctic policy. This was because Canada already exerted a significant degree of control over its Arctic claims as a result of an 1880 decree.



the actual events of various Arctic expeditions. Although the expeditions were able to make an immediate impact on their future legacy in some respects, the weaving of the Arctic into the Canadian national fabric was also not something that necessarily occurred immediately. Instead, the process of bringing more understanding to the Canadian Arctic was indeed intertwined with attempts to better define the meaning of Canadian nationhood. The first comprehensive work that addressed the Franklin expedition came through Richard Lambert's 1949 book *Franklin of the Arctic*. In this book, Lambert did not shy away from criticizing Franklin *per se*, but nonetheless continued the theme of building the Arctic as a forbidding environment that would not have been understood if not for the courage of explorers such as Franklin. In short, Franklin was understood to be a hero because he attempted to brave the Arctic, regardless of his various follies along the way that, as later historical analysis would show, arguably could have been foreseen prior to his disastrous final expedition.<sup>92</sup> Although Lambert's book was by no means the first to build a heroic mythology around Canadian expeditions in the Arctic,<sup>93</sup> his book re-introduced the potential value of the Arctic as a foundation on which to build a positive, nationalistic Canadian ideal.

As previously touched upon, there was a parallel narrative occurring at this time as well. The championing of the Arctic within the Canadian cultural narrative also caused

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<sup>92</sup> Janice Cavell, "Comparing Mythologies: Twentieth-Century Canadian Constructions of Sir John Franklin," in *Canadas of the Mind*, Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick, Eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 2007), p. 29-31.

<sup>93</sup> Several voices, to include those of Stefansson, contributed to the building of this dynamic from the 1920s to the 1940s. Lambert was certainly influenced by these voices in writing his 1949 book, although there were differences of opinion in how the various expeditions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were analyzed. See Cavell (2007), p. 22-33.

its proponents to highlight the divisions between Canadian accomplishments in the Arctic and the British interests that had initially undertaken them. This resulted in a narrative that acknowledged the British role as being a key part of the Canadian Arctic chronology while also seeking to highlight a distinctive Canadian understanding of the region. As such, the British were commended for taking the initiative of exploring the region, but the Canadian approach to the Arctic was seen as more appreciative of the expertise of native peoples in operating and surviving in the region's forbidding elements.<sup>94</sup> On a cultural level, Canada was certainly finding opportunities to highlight the Arctic as an intrinsic part of its young nationhood.

By the early 1930s, Canada's efforts to assert its sovereignty over Arctic claims had seemingly paid off. Other Arctic states began to accept Canada's claims in the region—the lone exception being the United States, which nonetheless did not mount a substantive challenge to Canada in this respect. This acceptance also changed the way in which Canada could approach its Arctic space,<sup>95</sup> as well as causing some cognitive dissonance on the parts of Canadian policymakers. No longer needing to publicize perceived threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty, there was some concern that continued focus on the Arctic would make the country seem like nothing more than a frozen, barren landscape to foreign economic interests. There may have also been declining interest on the public's part on the topic, although those with an interest in promoting Arctic exploits—particularly those who had explored the region—continued to produce a variety

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. This was certainly influenced by Stefansson, whose adherence to Darwinian principles saw using the native experience as essential to truly understanding the region.

<sup>95</sup> Cavell and Noakes, p. 246-48.

of media and cultural products related to their experiences. As such, the issue of Canadian Arctic sovereignty was not going unnoticed by the public, even if there was not a conscious prioritization of the region in national political discussions.<sup>96</sup> Such a dynamic is important to note: although the public may not have placed significant weight to the Arctic in terms of the political priorities that regularly affected them at this time, general awareness of the issue nonetheless made it easier for government officials to point to Arctic sovereignty matters as a grave threat when needed.

Having solidified its claims over the Arctic space, Canada was now faced with the question of what to do with the territory. The focus on the Arctic was now moving from a matter of *sovereignty* to a matter of *responsibility*. What this meant in practical terms was increasing the level of access to the northern territories as well as the overall welfare of Inuit natives living in the Arctic. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the value of white fox fur pelts rose significantly, setting off a new boom in Arctic fur trading. The largest trading operation was run by the Hudson's Bay Company, which had long been involved in the region. The Canadian government soon realized that increased economic activities in the region were having a potentially adverse effect on Inuit populations, not least of which due to the potential for affecting their access to their food supplies. The Canadian government responded by passing legislation limiting outside hunting activities, which also resulted in an increased presence by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) during the 1920s.<sup>97</sup> Part of the problem in simply cracking down on trading activities,

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 248-52.

<sup>97</sup> David Damas, "Shifting relations in the administration of the Inuit: The Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian government," *Études/Inuit/Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p. 6-11.

however, was that some Inuit had become economically reliant on the traders. This was evident when the government entertained the idea of limiting the areas where trading posts could operate. As some existing posts had become vital economic hubs for the Inuits, shutting them down left local populations without a consistent source for their basic needs. This left the Canadian government in the position of having to find ways to provide these populations with sustenance to make up for the shortfall.<sup>98</sup> This period demonstrated that the Canadian government not only had to deal with potential incursions from non-native economic interests, but also how complicated the process of providing for the basic needs of native peoples in this region would be.

By assuming sovereignty over Arctic territories with Inuit populations, Canada was also responsible for creating a political status for the group. Policies for administering relationships with the Inuit changed hands several times during the 1920s and 1930s, with the chief issue being whether the group should fall under existing legislation related to other native groups.<sup>99</sup> Although a permanent policy stating that the federal government was responsible for the welfare of the Inuit was established in 1939, the group was nonetheless deemed distinct from the First Nations groups that lived elsewhere in Canada.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Sarah Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship With Inuit* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>100</sup> This did have some implications on individual rights: for example, Inuit were given the ability to vote in federal elections in 1950, whereas members of First Nations tribes did not receive this right until 1960. See Bonesteel, p. 7.

It was during this time that Canada was again faced with the prospect of major war in Europe. Unlike during the First World War, Canada now had an independent foreign and defense policy and was no longer bound to follow Britain into armed conflicts. Mired in economic depression during the 1930s, public support for joining Britain in the event of war was low. The country was also reluctant to repeat the experience of the 1917 “conscription crisis” in which deep divisions between Canada’s English- and French-speaking communities emerged over the country’s participation in the war.<sup>101</sup> The Canadian Parliament would ultimately declare war on Germany within days of its invasion of Poland in September 1939, although there are some interesting events to note as to how Canadian society moved from being generally against participation in the European theater to, at the least, tacitly supportive. A visit by the British royal couple in the spring of 1939 had not only been received warmly by the public, but also seemed to trigger a sense of empathy for the British situation, even among French-Canadians.<sup>102</sup> Despite Canada’s relatively quick response in voting whether to join the British war effort following the invasion of Poland, this was not as a result of a wholehearted belief of the need to respond to Germany’s actions. Instead, Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s motivation was to ensure that Canada had the ability to make an independent decision without seeming beholden to British requests for support.<sup>103</sup> An emergency meeting of Parliament to debate the measure saw most

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<sup>101</sup> W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, *Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 13-16.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16-20. The influence of World War I veterans as public figures, particularly in Quebec, helped to influence this dynamic.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22-24.

members supporting Canadian contributions to the war—much to King’s surprise—although the government’s intent was to avoid a full-scale mobilization on the scale of World War I. Ultimately, parliamentary approval to join the war appeared based around a resigned belief that not supporting Britain would be an absurdity given the political situation in Europe.<sup>104</sup> This was also helped, of course, by the fact that King and his cabinet were secure in the idea that Canada now had the ability to make independent decisions on these matters.

With a relatively lacking industrial base and an underequipped and unprepared military force, Canada’s initial contributions came in the form of producing war materiel for Britain. It soon became apparent, however, that Canada would need to increase investments in its defense capabilities and later use them in the European theater. By the end of the war in 1945, the country had gone from reluctant ally to a country that had offered legitimate contributions to the most intense aspects of the conflict, to include the Italian Campaign, Normandy landings, and liberation of the Netherlands.<sup>105</sup> Much in the same way that Canadian participation in World War I fueled patriotic fervor in a time of Canada staking its claims to Arctic sovereignty, the second iteration created a legacy of a country willing to rise to global security challenges.

Despite Canada’s notable participation in the war, the Arctic was not seen as a strategic issue even despite Canada’s concerns about homeland defense. Nonetheless, wartime security preparations did lead to the creation of security institutions that continue

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 269-273.

to hold sway in the region to the present day. Although most of Canada's foreign military participation during World War II took place in Europe, there was also legitimate reason to fear Japanese incursions on Canada's Pacific coast. This belief was fueled by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the capture of Britain's Pacific colonies soon after. There was also the fear of an "insider threat" from the large population of Japanese immigrants who inhabited British Columbia. Popular fears of Japanese-Canadians sympathizing with Japan during the war fueled internment and relocation policies which resettled thousands of Japanese-Canadians away from British Columbia—where most of them lived—in other parts of the country. Although the resettled Japanese-Canadians were allowed to return by 1949, some had already chosen to continue their lives elsewhere in Canada.<sup>106</sup> This period was a black mark on Canada's democratic process, particularly as these policies had been undertaken with widespread support from non-Japanese-Canadians.

Fears of a Japanese threat also led to demands to form a defense force in British Columbia in 1942. Noting that citizens had already taken it upon themselves to defend their homeland through coastal patrols and forming volunteer civil defense units, the Canadian government determined that it was best to establish a formal citizens' defense corps in British Columbia.<sup>107</sup> Because budgetary concerns constrained the formation of more organized reserve units, the government favored the establishment of an auxiliary

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 249-253.

<sup>107</sup> There was a certain irony in this as the population of loggers and fishermen in rural areas were previously seen as deterred by the prospect of adhering to military discipline. See P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), p. 28-33.

defense corps model, which took the name “Pacific Coast Militia Rangers” (PCMR) in the spring of 1942. This name accomplished two goals: The model not only embraced the practical aspects of Canada’s Pacific defense needs, but the name *ranger* also inspired romantic images of patriotic citizens defending their local communities in a time of war.<sup>108</sup> PCMR units were given significant local autonomy in terms of electing leadership and ensuring the readiness of their troops. The downside of this was not only the possibility of local politics influencing unit readiness, but the expectation that PCMR units would be self-reliant also left them receiving little tangible assistance from the Canadian military beyond some spare rifles and ammunition.<sup>109</sup> The expansion of the PCMR into the colder climate of the Yukon only added to the organization’s mystique, creating an image of courageous rangers willing to endure the frozen climate on dog sleds to protect their communities and country.<sup>110</sup>

Beyond these themes, the Rangers would ultimately evolve into a militia force that was also representative of native peoples that inhabited Canada’s less-defended regions. The recruitment of Aboriginal rangers proved particularly successful during World War II,<sup>111</sup> which would pay dividends for the ranger model after the end of the war. Although the PCMR began to see reductions even before the end of the war—the Japanese were on the defensive by the end of 1943, with Allied forces launching their

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.34-35.

<sup>109</sup> As it was, supply demands for the regular military forces pushed the PCMR down on the priority list. See Ibid., p. 36-45.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 49-51.



final offensive against the Germans soon after—the success of the PCMR remained fresh in the minds of defense planners at the war’s conclusion. Senior defense officials began to discuss the possibility of expanding the PCMR model to a countrywide force that would serve as the country’s cost-effective territorial militia, particularly in remote areas in the north. The need for such a force was predicated not only by fears of future Soviet incursions, but perhaps moreso by concerns that Canada would have trouble maintaining its sovereignty as the United States developed plans for continental defense.<sup>112</sup> In 1947, the new Canadian Rangers organization was established. Its role was not only to be on the lookout for outside incursions, but also to provide local expertise to the military during exercises.<sup>113</sup> This role was particularly important in the Canadian Arctic, where the new Rangers served as a warning post in remote regions where it was unfeasible for the military to maintain a regular presence. The Rangers program was also seen as a way to accomplish the government’s goal of bringing modern society to the Inuit.<sup>114</sup> Although the PCMR had been quickly raised as a means to meet an urgent threat, the new militia, interestingly enough, proved to be an effective way to quell fears that Canada was not actively aware of threats to its territory.

There are several important themes discussed thus far that are notable in understanding the shaping of Canadian Arctic policy going forward. Because Canada’s

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 52-61. Such fears were not only drawn from Canada’s historical suspicion of US intentions, but also due to the presence of American military personnel in Canada building various road projects to connect Alaska to the continental United States.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p.74-75. This was a departure from the PCMR’s role during the war, which had included actively engaging enemy forces if need be. The lack of an explicit role in engaging in hostilities was by design in the new organization, as the military did not want to create a rival to regular and reserve military forces.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 142-151

relationship with the Arctic was a dynamic that moved alongside the country's gradual move toward independence, there is the question of whether ideas about nationhood and sovereignty were necessarily predicated on the state itself being an independent entity. That is, was Canada's Arctic policy necessarily something that evolved out of the country's existing notions of its identity, or something that developed parallel to the factors that influenced the creation of this identity? From the discussion above, it appears that Canada's views of the Arctic were indeed influenced by the country's general political and economic position at a given point in time. Nonetheless, the experiences of Arctic explorers and their ability to impact Canadian society—particularly in that their exploits would take on a life of their own at times—also played a significant role in how the country viewed its Arctic frontiers. It must be understood, therefore, that the Arctic had permeated the Canadian consciousness on both the political and social levels by the end of World War II. As I have demonstrated here, this was not always a conscious decision, but rather the result of a contingent set of processes and historical events that led Canada to feel the need to assert claims over its Arctic territory.

The term that would take on special importance along these lines is “sovereignty.” Superficially, it wouldn't seem out of place for Canada to feel the need to protect areas that it claimed as part of its sovereign territory. What is distinct here, however, are the particular reasons why Canada felt the need to point out its willingness to protect its sovereignty at different points in time. Though decision-making on Arctic matters up to this point was often the result of various bureaucratic and domestic-level factors that have been discussed here, the first half of the twentieth century also saw a latent Canadian fear of American political and economic dominance. This was, of course, tempered by the

desire—if not the existential need—to maintain positive relations with the United States. As such, fears of American infringements in the Arctic (or in Canada at large) generally provided the impetus for Canada to clearly assert sovereignty over its claimed Arctic space. As the historical record shows, American interests in the Arctic were never solidly expansive beyond the basic protection of Alaska. Nonetheless, the occasional unknowns created by its southern neighbor were enough to motivate Canada to think clearly about the worth of its Arctic territory and the resources that it was willing to invest in the region. As we will see during the Cold War period, lingering fears of too much American influence on Canada were instrumental in building the country’s modern security and defense policies.

Finally, the Arctic served as a useful way in which to translate the experience of early Canadian settlers to the modern day. Much as the 18<sup>th</sup> century fur traders gradually expanded their known world by exploring Canada’s wondrous terrain, the Arctic region now served to add to the narrative of Canadians with a “can-do” attitude as stewards of a vast country with tremendous natural beauty. Canadian identity would also shape itself in terms of being decidedly “northern.” This was not only done as a means to contrast the country with the American experience but also because, due to the country’s endemic geologic formations and the way in which the country was gradually settled, it was hard to argue that Canada was not of an intrinsically “northern” character.<sup>115</sup> The focus on developing Canadian identity in such terms only increased in the 1950s as Canadians

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<sup>115</sup> W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), p. 89-93.

sought ways to define Canadian identity outside of the country's military history.<sup>116</sup> The post-World War II period was therefore one in which Canada's modern identity was facing a fresh recalibration of values; its Arctic policy was no different.

***Canada and the Cold War: The Arctic as a strategic problem***

Beyond concerns about the strategic situation it faced at the advent of the Cold War, Canada also faced decisions about how to orient its broader foreign policy. After all, the country's ability to conduct a wholly independent foreign policy was a relatively new phenomenon and a considerable portion of that period had been consumed by the impact of World War II. The birth of the United Nations offered a tremendous opportunity for Canada to establish itself as an international player. Although its strategic interests were undoubtedly aligned with the West, the country also could act as a force moderating the growing international divide developing between the American and Soviet spheres of influence. Canada's early role in the UN not only supported the overall development of the organization, but also established a key role for the country as a reliable contributor to the growing number of international peacekeeping operations. Such a role suited Canada well, as it maintained a relatively large military force while also being free from the foreign commitments carried by well-equipped allies such as Britain, France, or the United States. The commitment to international peacekeeping operations proved to be a significant aspect of Canadian defense policy through the 1950s

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<sup>116</sup> David Neufeld, "Parks Canada and the Commemoration of the North: History and Heritage," in *Northern Visions: Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, Eds. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2001), p. 49.

and 1960s.<sup>117</sup> It also, arguably, created an apocryphal notion of Canada as being altruistically and internationally driven when the country was simply seeking to develop a foreign policy that both fit its capabilities and allowed it to retain a sovereign identity. This idea continues to exist within the Canadian discourse to this day.<sup>118</sup>

Canada was also preoccupied by the realities of defending its vast territory from potential Soviet incursions or, even more worrying, American incursions to prevent the Soviets from establishing a presence in North America. Realization of this latter reality forced Canada to be proactive in establishing concrete linkages with the American defense establishment early on while it was still in a position to work with the Americans on an equal footing. The beginnings of the Canadian-American defense linkage actually began in 1940 following a meeting between King and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Ogdensburg, New York. The result of this meeting was the establishment of the Permanent Joint Board on Defense (PJBD), a consultative body between the two states that included senior defense and diplomatic officials. The push to meet at Ogdensburg was precipitated more by the Canadians. Whereas the Americans were still attempting to stay uninvolved in the global conflict during this time, Canada's decision to assist the British demanded engagement of the Americans on matters of coastal defense.<sup>119</sup> Though the PJBD only acted in an advisory capacity, the formation of the

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<sup>117</sup> Elinor C. Sloan, *Security and Defence in the Terrorist Era* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2010), p. 8-9.

<sup>118</sup> The creation of a somewhat misleading, nationalist idea in Canadian society about the country's recent history in foreign affairs is discussed in Hector Mackenzie, "Canada's Nationalist Internationalism: From the League of Nations to the United Nations," in *Canadas of the Mind*, Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick, Eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 2007), p. 90-92.

<sup>119</sup> C.P. Stacey, "The Canadian-American Permanent Joint Board on Defense, 1940-1945," *International Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1954), p. 108-113.

board was effectively the beginning of comprehensive defense cooperation between the two countries.<sup>120</sup>

The continental defense relationship only strengthened following World War II with operational defense capabilities being developed by the two countries. Although the allied experience during the war and cooperation through the PJBD had strengthened relationships between the two sides, the Canadians were still wary of giving too much leeway to the Americans while negotiating the possibility of allowing American forces to operate in their country. This was complicated by the fact that initial plans would base American bombers at stations in Newfoundland and Labrador, which were moving toward a referendum to leave British control for Canadian confederation in 1948.<sup>121</sup> Following a Canadian victory in this referendum, the Canadians and Americans finally came to agreement on the issue in 1952. Nonetheless, concerns about an increased American presence in the country were never really quelled, but rather took a back seat to the realities of the Soviet threat.<sup>122</sup>

The role of the Arctic in continental defense also became central to Canadian foreign and defense planning at this time. The Canadians were left with a difficult decision vis-à-vis their American counterparts: Now that the two countries were moving

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<sup>120</sup> The feeling that a coherent idea of hemispheric defense was emerging this time is represented in Walter N. Sage, "The Historical Peculiarities of Canada With Regard to Hemisphere Defense," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 1941), p. 27.

<sup>121</sup> The Americans actually took advantage of the tension between Canada and Britain over Newfoundland's political status, often siding with the Canadians as a means of currying favor on the basing issue. See Nathaniel French Caldwell, Jr., *Arctic Leverage: Canadian Sovereignty and Security* (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 29-34.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

closer toward a unified system of continental defense, should the Americans be pressed to officially recognize Canada's Arctic claims? Although the Americans had given *de facto* acquiescence to Canadian claims during the 1920s, there were fears that this policy would change in light of feared Soviet incursions. The Canadians ultimately decided against seeking formal recognition for the sake of maintaining harmonious relations with the United States.<sup>123</sup> Having established that the Canadians were on board with a strongly-linked continental defense, albeit with some reservations, the Americans began to establish formal defense structures that would include the participation of the Canadians. The chief defensive concern in the early Cold War period was to provide an early-warning system to detect possible incursions by Soviet military forces. Planners had envisioned a chain of radar stations that would stretch across the North American Arctic space to serve this purpose. The formal agreement for the establishment of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line across the Canadian Arctic came into being in 1955, with the system coming online in 1957. The DEW Line was ultimately a diplomatic victory for the Canadians. As part of the agreement, the Americans gave significant control to the Canadians in operating the stations, which was also seen by the Canadians as further (albeit unofficial) recognition of Canadian claims to its Arctic frontiers.<sup>124</sup> Alongside membership in the newly-formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949

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<sup>123</sup> Some historians have seen this as a strategic error on the Canadian government's part. Lackenbauer and Kikkert's analysis shows, however, that the decision was not made prematurely, but only after a reasonable weighing of the nature of the Canadian-American defense relationship at this time. This may have ultimately proven to be the prudent decision considering this dynamic. See Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, "Sovereignty and Security: Canadian Diplomacy, the United States, and the Arctic, 1943-1968," in *In the National Interest*, Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll, Eds. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), p. 102-06.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107-109.

and the establishment of the bilateral North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) with the United States in 1958,<sup>125</sup> Canada had secured a robust position against the Soviet threat, although concerns about sovereignty within these structures remained.

The Canadians also needed to prepare for the possibility of how to fight a war in the Arctic if such an event occurred. Such preparations remained largely within the realm of the hypothetical, however, with Canadian military planners more occupied by the possibility of all-out nuclear war than a conventional war in the Arctic latitudes. As such, the military did not put too much emphasis on Arctic warfare during the early Cold War period.<sup>126</sup> Instead, the new mission opened up a viable role for the Canadian Rangers. This also created a number of questions regarding not only the role of the organization in Canada's territorial defense, but also how a force that was largely Aboriginal fit into Canadian society at large. Ranger membership in the Arctic regions was largely composed of local Aboriginals (with the exception of units in the Yukon, which were predominately white), which has historically had a noticeable effect on the role of the organization in their local communities.<sup>127</sup> While Aboriginal members of the Rangers may have identified with their given local community, they also served as representatives

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<sup>125</sup> Though established prior, the DEW Line was added to NORAD's command system upon the latter organization's establishment.

<sup>126</sup> Canadian participation in the Korean War also diverted resources and attention from the Arctic. See Andrew B. Godefroy, *In Peace Prepared* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), p. 84-92.

<sup>127</sup> P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "The Canadian Rangers: A 'postmodern' militia that works," *Canadian Military Journal*, Winter 2005-6, p. 55. <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo6/no4/doc/north-nord-03-eng.pdf>. Accessed August 20, 2015.



of the Canadian military in their role as Rangers. This created a dual conception of citizenship that would be openly acknowledged by Aboriginal leadership.<sup>128</sup>

One of the long-standing points of contention that would develop during the Cold War between the Canadian government and Arctic communities was the degree to which the region was militarized. This was contentious for two reasons: first, the obvious anxiety felt by Arctic residents over the prospect of their homeland becoming a battleground; second, as discussed by Barry Scott Zellen in reference to the Inuit, a clear distinction between friend and foe was not present in the Inuit mindset. Though many Canadian Inuits did feel loyalty toward Canada—particularly as many fought in the Canadian military during World War II—they also felt loyal toward the safety of other Arctic indigenous groups outside of Canada (including in the Soviet Union).<sup>129</sup> This was an interesting point of reference in light of the Cold War context: Whereas Canadian Aboriginals may have held a sincere sense of loyalty toward Canada, they also were not tied solely to Canadian conceptions of the outside world. This dynamic may be natural in any instance in which a state increases its presence in one of its sub-state units over time, as was the case in the Canadian North. What this revealed, however, is that remote Arctic communities may be indifferent about what is occurring elsewhere in Canada but *would perhaps* be affected by what is occurring in another Arctic community on the other side of the world. It is worth noting that Zellen's example here did raise the question of this feeling being one pushed by Aboriginal leaders—rather than being representative of the

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>129</sup> Zellen, p. 19.

feelings of Aboriginal communities on the whole—in order to fulfill an ulterior agenda.<sup>130</sup> Even so, other historical facts surrounding Aboriginal conceptions of community certainly make this construct potentially viable.

“Southern” Canada was also undergoing changes in terms of how it viewed the North and its role in Canadian identity. Much as the Cold War Canadian narrative was based on internationalism and responsibility in decision-making, cultural works on the Arctic showed an increasing tendency to shift from the “heroic” stories of earlier explorations to the importance of environmental stewardship by people inhabiting the Arctic. This was seen as influenced by the idea that Southern Canadians not only sought to build a safer narrative of how its country should operate in the Arctic, but also that increased contact with the Inuit provided for the need to better understand their needs and viewpoints.<sup>131</sup> This was certainly influenced by a general trend toward cultural postmodernism, but was also the result of the North, while still psychologically distant, occupying an increasingly less forbidding position to Southerners. In short, the Arctic still retained a sense of being a distinct wilderness while also being normalized as a geographical feature.<sup>132</sup> This was also then internalized as a part of the development of Canada as a progressive state: Because the Arctic region was largely inhabited and underdeveloped relative to the rest of the country, it was both an area that was either due to be prioritized within economic and social development efforts or even a recognized

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 18-19

<sup>131</sup> Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2001), p. 174-76.

<sup>132</sup> This is represented by a shift toward cultural representations of the North less as mystic anthologies and more as “travel narratives.” See Renée Hulan, *Northern experience and the myths of Canadian culture* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2002), p. 139-150.

wilderness that was purposely not developed in order to maintain the uniqueness of the landscape.<sup>133</sup> The national perception of the Arctic region was therefore co-constitutive with the dynamics of the national understanding of the Canadian identity as a whole.

The next round of attention to this issue came after the election of John Diefenbaker to the role of prime minister in 1957. Calling a snap election the following year, Diefenbaker used the momentum of his political campaign to outline a new national vision that specifically referenced the Arctic:

*“As far as the Arctic is concerned, how many of you here knew the pioneers in Western Canada? I saw the early days here. Here in Winnipeg in 1909, when the vast movement was taking place into the Western plains, they had imagination. There is a new imagination now. The Arctic. We intend to carry out the legislative program of Arctic research, to develop Arctic routes, to develop those vast hidden resources the last few years have revealed.”*<sup>134</sup>

This speech was perhaps the most direct acknowledgement in modern times of the Arctic’s place in the Canadian national identity. Not only did the tone of the speech serve to benefit Diefenbaker’s subsequent electoral victory, but it also set the intention to prioritize northern issues under Diefenbaker’s government.<sup>135</sup> Diefenbaker appeared highly influenced in this regard by the economist Dr. Merril Menzies, whom he brought

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<sup>133</sup> Keskitalo, p. 131-32.

<sup>134</sup> John Diefenbaker, “A New Vision,” Speech at Civic Auditorium, Winnipeg, February 12, 1958. Transcript accessed from Canada History, “John G. Diefenbaker: His Northern Vision,” accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/documents/Primeministers/diefenbaker/docs-the-northern-vision.htm>.

<sup>135</sup> Keskitalo, p. 132.

in as a speechwriter and economic advisor during his 1957 campaign. As a result, the idea of the “northern vision” took shape in the form of a regional economic development program. More notably, the program was driven by a concerted effort to develop potential energy and mineral reserves in the North, which was helped by the fact that these areas remained under federal control. This not only resulted in actual energy exploration activities, but also spurred the construction of roads, railways, port facilities, and funding for social programs in the North.<sup>136</sup> In retrospect, however, the actual impact of Diefenbaker’s rhetoric in practical terms was decidedly mixed. Although Diefenbaker’s discussion of the Arctic was considerable in tying the region to the larger national fabric going forward, the successes of the northern development program in terms of building infrastructure also did not completely live up to the government’s plans.<sup>137</sup>

The reasons for Diefenbaker’s northern vision were also not wholly due to domestic factors. Shortly after taking the helm in Ottawa, Diefenbaker’s government faced an increasingly tense relationship with the United States over cross-border trade regimes. What proved particularly problematic for the Canadians was an increasingly tough set of protectionist economic policies by the United States, especially in limiting imports of Canadian oil.<sup>138</sup> From the American side, the early interactions with the

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<sup>136</sup> Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada Since 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 186-87.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*; Grace, p. 69-70. As Grace discusses, some of these issues were largely endemic to the inherent difficulties of modernizing the Arctic region rather than the specific programs undertaken by the Diefenbaker government. Still, Diefenbaker’s rhetoric effectively tied the essence of “being Canadian” to “being Northern.”

<sup>138</sup> Bruce Muirhead, *Dancing Around the Elephant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 15-16.

Diefenbaker government also showed an increasingly nationalist tone from the Canadians. This may have actually resulted in a moral win for the Canadians in the bilateral relationship, as American concern over Diefenbaker's campaign rhetoric caused them to develop a more comprehensive set of policies when dealing with Canadian concerns.<sup>139</sup> Ultimately, the relationship between the two sides did not experience a major rift despite the disagreements during Diefenbaker's first years. Instead, this experience showed that Diefenbaker's domestic conception of the "northern vision," while motivated largely by internal factors, was also not wholly disassociated from the Canadian-American relationship at the time. Such a dynamic was only representative of the running theme that was consistent of Canadian Arctic decision-making during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***International law, controversy, and the sovereignty showdown***

With the Canadian Arctic seeing increased access by the early 1960s—whether because of government development programs or through supply of distant military facilities such as those constituting the DEW Line—there were growing concerns about the need to formalize legal claims over the maritime routes surrounding Canada's Arctic islands. At this time, there was not yet an international standard defining territorial maritime limits, but instead a varying set of international customs that were under codification discussions in international bodies.<sup>140</sup> The issue was further complicated given the unique character of the Canadian Arctic archipelago: Even if Canada accepted

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 17-19.

<sup>140</sup> Different states declared different standards regarding what constituted their territorial waters, though many states moved toward the present-day limit of 12 miles by the early 1960s. See Carol Elizabeth Remy, "U.S. Territorial Sea Extension: Jurisdiction and International Environmental Protection," *Fordham International Law Journal*, Vol. 16, Iss. 4 (1992), p. 1220.

an international standard limit from its coastal waters, how would this apply to the straits between the numerous islands? Part of the later impetus for developing an official policy on these distinctions was derived from increased incursions that tested the lack of official policies. Initially, such policies were not seen as necessary because existing laws calling for the application for permission to transit the Arctic archipelago were generally respected by the largely American ships that provided supplies to the DEW Line facilities.<sup>141</sup> Nonetheless, various organs of the Canadian government had already been pondering the territoriality question during the 1950s. Although the Canadians considered imposing the 12-mile claim beyond the furthest reaches of the archipelago, strategic concerns—be it recognition of the American submarine presence in those areas or fears of stirring up a territorial rivalry with the Soviet Union—led the Canadians to be more conservative in their actions. The safest bet was to instead claim the straits between the Arctic islands, even though this was probably going to be met with protests from the United States.<sup>142</sup> This viewpoint was not actually put into official policy at this point in time, although there was also little need to actually take a stand on this issue.

What would occur several years later would prove to be one of the most controversial and defining moments in modern Canadian conceptions of Arctic sovereignty. In 1968, an oil field was discovered near Prudhoe Bay on the Alaskan Arctic coastline. The discovery led not only to increased interest in the potential oil resources

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<sup>141</sup> Lackenbauer and Kikkert, p. 110-111.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111-113. There were also concerns that claiming too much maritime territory would also force Canada to spend money on aids to navigation equipment and law enforcement in those areas per international custom, something that may not have been financially viable.

that could be found in the region, but also the means of getting to and from extraction sites. In October of that year, the American corporation Humble Oil began plans to send an oil tanker through the Northwest Passage the following summer. There were a few implications to this decision that affected the political landscape surrounding Northwest Passage sovereignty. Firstly, the voyage itself would be historic: the ship *Manhattan* that would go on to make the trip was the first commercial vessel to traverse the passage in its entirety, and only the ninth surface vessel to do so.<sup>143</sup> Secondly, the ship would require the assistance of icebreakers to complete the voyage, which would require official coordination with the Canadian or American governments in order to receive assistance from their respective coast guards. In his first meeting with U.S. President Richard Nixon in March 1969, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau asked that the Americans submit an official request for the *Manhattan* voyage. Under the guise of seeing the issue as a private business matter that did not concern the U.S. government—not to mention understanding the potential precedent that would be set by agreeing to the Canadian request—Nixon declined to ask official permission.<sup>144</sup> The *Manhattan* nonetheless began its voyage in August 1969 from Philadelphia, making the return to New York in November. Along the way, the ship was escorted by both Canadian and American icebreakers.<sup>145</sup> Aside from demonstrating that a large commercial vessel could indeed transit the Northwest Passage, the voyage did not appear to be particularly eventful.

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<sup>143</sup> Caldwell, Jr., p. 45.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 46-47.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

Yet in 1970, the Canadians were already seeing the *Manhattan*'s voyage as a direct challenge to their Arctic sovereignty and were using the event to justify further changes in how they defined their Arctic claims. How did it reach this point? We first need to examine the discussions that were taking place following Humble's 1968 announcement of its intention to transit the Northwest Passage. Canada demonstrated immediate concern after Humble's announcement, although there were competing explanations as to why it did. One could fairly argue that the Canadian government was concerned about the environmental implications of the transit of a large oil tanker through the Northwest Passage, although previous research by Meren and Plumptre finds that the Canadian concern was likely driven more by fears of sovereignty infringement despite political statements to the contrary.<sup>146</sup> Allowing the voyage of the *Manhattan* could also actually prove the difficulties of operating in the Northwest Passage, bolstering Canadian arguments that the waterway was a unique geographical feature that would be an exception to future international maritime agreements.<sup>147</sup>

Canadian consideration of the plan did not only involve how to approach the U.S. on official terms—as was eventually done by Trudeau in March 1969—but also to determine if some of the practicalities of the voyage could result in later precedents. For example, this was seen in determining whether to formally request that the U.S. Coast

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<sup>146</sup> Environmental issues were indeed an increasing priority for the Canadian government during this time. However, the authors saw the Trudeau government as actually engaging in a policy of “environmentalism of convenience”: that is, he used popular sentiment surrounding environmental concerns to mask the actual concern over sovereignty on this matter. See David Meren and Bona Plumptre, “Rights of Passage: The Intersecting of Environmentalism, Arctic Sovereignty, and the Law of the Sea, 1968-82,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Winter 2013), p. 174-75.

<sup>147</sup> John Kirton and Don Munton, “The Manhattan Voyages and Their Aftermath,” in *Politics of the Northwest Passage*, Franklin Griffiths, Ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1987), p. 71-72.



Guard ask permission to transit the Northwest Passage while providing escort support to the *Manhattan*. Although the USCG was not required to ask permission under previous agreements, the Canadians submitted a permission request in this instance as a subtle means of gaining effective sovereignty recognition.<sup>148</sup> Why was there ultimately no strong stand taken by the Canadian government prior to the *Manhattan*'s voyage? Internal discussions raised the possibility of setting an official policy on use of the Northwest Passage, but it may have come down to the small window of time that Canada had to develop a comprehensive legal justification to assert sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. There were also a number of external considerations, not least of which the general desire to keep the issue from rising to the point of major political confrontation with the United States.<sup>149</sup>

As a result, the effects of the *Manhattan* voyage would be seen in subsequent Canadian policy. Fearing that this crossing was the first of many, the Canadians unveiled an official set of policies regarding sovereignty over the Arctic straits. Not only were these policies enacted fairly quickly after the *Manhattan*'s voyage, but they were also the culmination of the existing discussions that had been occurring both inside of Canada and at the global level for over a decade. The first clear instance asserting Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic occurred in April 1970 when Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp noted in a parliamentary debate, "Canada has always regarded the waters...of the Arctic archipelago as being Canadian waters...the present Government

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 73-76.

maintains that position.”<sup>150</sup> Two months later, Parliament passed the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPAA), which asserted Canada’s jurisdiction in enforcing against commercial dumping in the Arctic to a limit of 100 miles from the coast and effectively subsumed the Arctic archipelago. Other legislation extended Canada’s recognized territorial sea from three to twelve nautical miles, in line with an increasing trend in the international community.<sup>151</sup> Although the actual language of the legislation referred to protecting against pollution and illegal dumping—albeit giving fairly wide latitude to enforcement authorities in determining what constituted those activities<sup>152</sup>—it was quite clear what this legislation signaled to the outside world. The United States was quick to express its disappointment, as the Americans argued that the Northwest Passage should be treated as an international waterway.<sup>153</sup> Invoking Sharp’s statement and the AWPAA, External Affairs legal advisor J.A. Beesley offered the assertion that the unique nature of the Arctic archipelago resulted in Canada’s right to claim jurisdiction over the islands.<sup>154</sup> Although, the “unique nature of the Arctic” argument had been advanced internally, it was through these actions that the Canadians staked their position officially.

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<sup>150</sup> J.A. Beesley, “Rights and Responsibilities of Arctic Coastal States: The Canadian View,” *Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (October 1971), p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> Richard B. Bilder, “The Canadian Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act: New Stresses on the Law of the Sea,” *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (November 1970), p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8-11.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

<sup>154</sup> Beesley, p. 1-12.

These positions were not accepted on the international level, however, with the notable exception of the Soviet Union.<sup>155</sup>

Beyond legal mechanisms, the defense establishment also offered an official position on the issue. The 1971 defense White Paper explicitly prioritized Arctic sovereignty within the Canadian Forces' strategic outlook;<sup>156</sup> this was a notable departure from the previous White Paper in 1964, which did not directly address the issue.<sup>157</sup> Language on the Arctic not only discussed bolstering defense capabilities in the region, but also spoke directly to the mission of assisting civil authorities in social development efforts in the North.<sup>158</sup> This language was representative of some of the issues facing Canada and its security policy during this time. The problems faced in combating the Québec separatist group Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), which culminated in the taking of hostages during the 1970 October Crisis, demonstrated that Canada indeed faced security threats aside from the Arctic and Cold War fronts. Furthermore, the détente policies that would come into effect regarding relations with the Soviet Union eliminated the temptation to boost defense spending during the 1970s.<sup>159</sup> Thus, the shifts that occurred in Arctic policy from 1968-71 were perhaps the most significant on the issue in the modern era. Nonetheless, it was also clear that Canada had other priorities

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<sup>155</sup> Caldwell, Jr. pp. 50.

<sup>156</sup> Canada Department of National Defense, *Defence in the 70s* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), p. 8-11.

<sup>157</sup> Even the concept of internal or homeland defense is addressed only in passing, and is done so in the context of NATO strategy and continental defense cooperation with the United States. See Canada Department of National Defense, *White Paper on Defence* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> *Defence in the 70s*, p. 11-12.

<sup>159</sup> Sloan, p. 17.

during this time—such as social spending, facing the 1970s economic crisis, or even just within the realm of security and defense spending—that left the Arctic competing for attention.

Such was the issue facing Brian Mulroney upon his election as Prime Minister in 1984. Mulroney and his Progressive Conservative party not only sought a departure from the roughly two decades of Liberal governance previous,<sup>160</sup> but also emphasized the need to devote more resources to a defense establishment that had been put on the bureaucratic backburner by the Trudeau government in the 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>161</sup> Over the course of Mulroney's tenure, which lasted until 1993, there was also a desire to foster warmer relations with the United States.<sup>162</sup> For Mulroney, this was an economic necessity following the problems faced by the country during the 1970s. Mulroney's attitude toward the United States resulted in a number of tangible policy achievements during his time in office, most notably the signing of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement in 1988.<sup>163</sup> Interestingly, Mulroney's approach to U.S. relations was also noticeably different from that of John Diefenbaker, the last notable Progressive Conservative prime

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<sup>160</sup> The Liberal Party held the premiership from 1963 to 1984 with the exception of a Progressive Conservative interlude from 1979-80 under Joe Clark. Clark would serve as Secretary of State for External Affairs in Mulroney's government.

<sup>161</sup> Caldwell, Jr., p. 55.

<sup>162</sup> There was nonetheless a schism in Canada's foreign policy establishment over its relationship with the U.S. While Mulroney pushed closer cross-border relations, Joe Clark was part of the "multilateralist" wing that was skeptical of U.S. power and more sympathetic to Canada's role as a peacemaker. Mulroney and others who favored closer relations with the U.S. nonetheless won this debate. See Stephen J. Randall, "Engaging the United States: The Department of Foreign Affairs and U.S. Policy, 1982-2005," in *In the National Interest*, Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll, Eds. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), p. 212-213.

<sup>163</sup> Nelson Michaud, "Setting the Canadian Foreign Policy Agenda, 1984-2009: Prime Ministers as Prime Actors?" in *In the National Interest*, Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll, Eds. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), p. 186-87.

minister, which demonstrates the evolution that took place in the bilateral relationship over the previous three decades.

Mulroney's views toward the United States would nonetheless be tested through another contentious incident involving use of the Northwest Passage. In August 1985, the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* traveled from the Pacific coast via the Panama Canal on a resupply mission to a U.S. base in Greenland. On the return trip, however, the ship instead traversed the Northwest Passage. Although the U.S. Coast Guard informed Canadian authorities of its intention to travel through the route, it did not explicitly ask for permission. The Canadian public was furious. One activist group even went so far as to hire a plane to drop Canadian flag-wrapped leaflets on the ship's deck as it traveled through the Arctic archipelago.<sup>164</sup> Although the Americans claimed that the decision to travel through the Northwest Passage was simply a matter of taking the shortest route back to the Pacific, the Canadians could not help but see this as an affront to Canadian sovereignty in the same vein as the events surrounding the *Manhattan*'s voyage. Much as was the case in that incident, the Canadians were quick to react. In September, Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark spoke in Parliament regarding a series of initiatives to further assert sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago, which included the possibility of bringing the issue to the World Court if necessary.<sup>165</sup> The most notable of

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<sup>164</sup> Janet Cawley, "U.S., Canada in Cold War Over Who Rules the Arctic Waters," *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1985, accessed August 28, 2015. [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-08-18/news/8502230914\\_1\\_northwest-passage-internal-waterway-polar-sea](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1985-08-18/news/8502230914_1_northwest-passage-internal-waterway-polar-sea).

<sup>165</sup> Nicholas C. Howson, "Breaking the Ice: The Canadian-American Dispute Over the Arctic's Northwest Passage," *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1987-88), p. 341-42.

these was establishing a Canadian claim to a “straight line” around the archipelago.<sup>166</sup> The issue was further complicated by the fact that the U.S. had rejected adherence to the UNCLOS in 1982, which created the possibility that the two countries did not have a basic foundation by which to understand each other’s position should the Northwest Passage dispute be presented in front of an international tribunal.<sup>167</sup> This mindset also influenced the 1987 defense white paper, which discussed the Canadian intention to procure nuclear-powered submarines as a recognition of Canada’s inability to protect itself from maritime threats under its present organization.<sup>168</sup> The Canadian position influenced the signing of an agreement between the two countries in 1988 that brought a sense of closure to the issue. While the agreement did not set binding terms governing use of the Northwest Passage by U.S. ships, it did state that the U.S. would make an effort to act in a cooperative nature with Canadian authorities when American ships used the route.<sup>169</sup> Much as had been the case with previous instances of potential American infringement on Canadian claims in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadians had managed to win tacit acknowledgement of their position from their neighbors while stopping short of receiving official legal recognition of their claims. Although this did leave the door open

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<sup>166</sup> In essence, this meant that the Canadians created a contiguous “bubble” that stretched from the mainland to the furthest reaches of the archipelago. This was distinct from the previous claims, which claimed sovereignty over the archipelago but were less clear over the outer limits of the Canadian claim given the “unique nature” of the geographical formation.

<sup>167</sup> Philip J. Briggs, “The Polar Sea Voyage and the Northwest Passage Dispute,” *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring 1990), p. 443-46.

<sup>168</sup> Canada Department of National Defense, “Challenge and Commitment: A Defence Policy for Canada” (Ottawa: Government of Canada Publications, 1987), p. 52-55.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446-48. Opposition from the Liberals in Parliament and disagreement amongst members of Mulroney’s cabinet over the submarines’ cost ultimately killed the plan.

to future American incursions, the historical record showed that the Americans had little energy to match the Canadian response when controversies over Arctic claims occurred. Therefore, the Canadians had managed to mostly maintain their Arctic claims simply by showing the willingness to expend effort to match challenges to those claims.

The systemic power balance between East and West during this time was also having an effect on policy toward the Arctic. As part of the thawing of relations taking place alongside Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, there were also efforts to establish cooperative understandings between the two sides regarding the use of the Arctic space. A key moment came during a Gorbachev speech in October 1987 in Murmansk. In this speech, Gorbachev proposed that the Arctic states agree to establishing an Arctic nuclear-free zone as part of a phased demilitarization in the region, as well as suggesting the need to develop cooperative programs on energy production, scientific exploration, and environmental protection.<sup>170</sup> Initial diplomatic communications between the West and the Soviet Union on this issue soon left NATO states skeptical of the motivations behind this announcement, however, as Soviet proposals on the demilitarization issue actually appeared to give them the military advantage.<sup>171</sup> Still, there was value to Gorbachev's speech, particularly if we look at it in the context of larger Soviet reforms and the effects that the influence the policy had following the Cold War. Although the speech marked a clear turning point in Soviet

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<sup>170</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev, "Speech in Murmansk at the ceremonial meeting on the occasion of the presentation of the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star to the City of Murmansk," October 1, 1987, accessed September 7, 2015, [https://www.barentsinfo.fi/docs/Gorbachev\\_speech.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/docs/Gorbachev_speech.pdf).

<sup>171</sup> Dan Hayward, "Gorbachev's Murmansk Initiative: New Prospects for Arms Control in the Arctic?" *Northern Perspectives*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (July/August 1988), accessed September 7, 2015, <http://carc.org/pubs/v16no4/4.htm>.

Arctic policy, the non-military factors highlighted in Gorbachev's speech may have also been a culmination of the direction in which Soviet Arctic policy was already moving, rather than responding to more recent events preceding the speech.<sup>172</sup> A focus on non-military factors also had an impact going forward despite the failure to establish clear agreements on the military aspects of a potential Arctic demilitarization program. By emphasizing these factors, Gorbachev helped to shift the conversation about the Arctic from one of strategic rivalry to one of international cooperation focused around energy, economic development, and environmental matters.<sup>173</sup>

### ***Conclusions: The Canadian Arctic identity***

The historical review of Canada's Arctic policy tells us of a few key factors that can guide our understanding of present-day Canadian Arctic policy. Firstly, Canada's particular history during the colonial period significantly contributed to the importance of the Arctic later on in constructing the Canadian identity. As the country's geography proved ever-forbidding and captivating to early settlers, early influences on the Canadian identity were guided by a sense of frontierism and appreciation for the country's natural environment. Even as the country had mostly been explored by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the handful of corners in the Arctic space that remained unexplored only reinvigorated this tradition. What is especially interesting in constructing the idea of the Arctic is how the region took on a life of its own in the Canadian psyche. As evidenced by Franklin's final

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<sup>172</sup> Raphael V. Vartankov and Alexi Y. Roginko, "New Dimensions of Soviet Arctic Policy: Views from the Soviet Union," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 512 (November 1990), p. 69-78.

<sup>173</sup> Kristian Åtlund, "Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (June 2008), p. 305-6.



expedition, even hasty attempts to explore the Arctic were spun as generally positive examples of the region's unique and forbidding character. Such narratives were instrumental in building a sense of uniqueness in the Canadian identity as the country moved toward independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Secondly, the historical record has shown that Canada's identity was largely built with an eye toward the United States. As its southern neighbor also built its national identity within the New World construct—as well as having its own brand of frontierism and territorial expansion—Canada regularly found the need to identify the characteristics that made it especially unique. The country was able to do this by emphasizing its “northern” character, something that the United States could only claim halfheartedly following its acquisition of Alaska. Although the two countries have managed to develop a close sense of kinship over cultural similarities and mutually beneficial economic relations, Canada has shown itself to be especially sensitive to any hint of American incursion. As Canada began to pepper strategic defense documents with specific references to “sovereignty,” it did so especially with attention to fears to growing American influence in the country at a given time. The Arctic therefore served two purposes in helping to Canada distinguish itself from the United States. First, the distinction of “northern character” helped to create a sense of Canadian uniqueness that could remain exclusive of American influence. Secondly—and on more practical terms—Canadian ownership of a vast Arctic territory gave it more of a stake in hemispheric defense discussions, particularly as the two countries' defense structures established closer links during the Cold War.

Finally, the Arctic has shown to be an enduring issue in Canadian identity formation that has been met with similar responses when the country has felt that sovereignty over its Arctic territory was threatened. Although this analysis has certainly highlighted how certain individuals, external security issues, and domestic politics have had a significant impact on individual government actions, the historical record nonetheless shows a clear trend over time toward defending the notion of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Additionally, the Canadian public has often found itself engaged on the issue when the government raises it, regardless of its opinion of the Arctic as a day-to-day national priority. Why are these findings important? As I will discuss in the following chapters, the discursive raising of the Arctic as a priority for the Canadian government in recent years is less influenced by the actions of individual leaders as it is by historical and cultural attachment to the region. Instead, current policies are merely the modern iteration of a Canadian legacy of sensitivity to the sovereignty of its Arctic territory. As demonstrated in this historical analysis of the issue, the deep roots of the Arctic in the Canadian character continue to serve as the primary motivating factor in how Canada conducts its modern-day Arctic policy. The paradox of this, however, is that rhetoric and substantive policy changes have not always resulted in significant economic investment in the Arctic, regardless of whether the government makes a concerted attempt to undertake such a program. This dynamic may be reflective of the reality of domestic politics, but also guides our understanding of the gap that remains between raising the discursive alarm over an issue and actually committing resources to address it.

### **Ch. 3: New dimensions of security in the Canadian Arctic, 1993-2015**

When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, there was little need for sustained tension in the conflict between East and West. Instead, the possibility of positive relationships centered on non-security issues seemed like the more attractive option for working on issues pertaining to the Arctic. Canada welcomed this development as the country sought to eliminate the need to focus its defense and security policies on the possibility of a territorial threat. This was particularly suited to the post-Cold War foreign policy developed by Jean Chrétien's government following its election in 1993, which sought a politically "safe" set of policies that could guide Canada into the next century.

The emergence of high-profile humanitarian crises during the 1990s also allowed Canada to promote peacekeeping operations as the cornerstone of its defense policy. As Sean Maloney discussed, participation in peacekeeping missions allowed Canada to achieve four objectives that directly impacted its national interest: pushing global threats away from North America; the ability to use a larger coalition (mainly NATO) as a support base; ability to use military contributions as political leverage; and ability to participate in operations which were well-suited to the size and capability of the Canadian military.<sup>174</sup> It can also be argued that the Canadian focus on humanitarian concerns was for the purposes of political expediency on the part of the Chrétien government (in power for the majority of the 1990s), which did not develop a distinct vision for the Canadian defense and security establishment after the Cold War.<sup>175</sup> T.S.

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<sup>174</sup> Douglas L. Bland and Sean M. Maloney, *Campaigns for International Security*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2004), p. 22.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Hataley and Kim Nossal's study of the Canadian response to the 1999 crisis in East Timor also supports this viewpoint. Whereas Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy showed particular zeal for the human security agenda, a combination of defense budget cuts and political indifference left the Chrétien administration initially hesitant to contribute to the United Nations force in East Timor. Though Canada eventually did make military contributions to the force, the delay in agreeing to contribute was inconsistent with Canada's supposed prioritization of peacekeeping operations in the international arena to that point.<sup>176</sup> The idea of Canada as a committed "peacemaker" may therefore be a bit of a revisionist account of the country's foreign and defense policies during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the contrary, the analysis here thus far has demonstrated that Canada's foreign policy has historically been more attuned to *realpolitik* than observers often realized. The notion of the Arctic as an integral part of the national identity has only solidified this argument. Later in this chapter, this particular aspect of the Canadian foreign policy tradition will be re-visited when discussing Arctic policy under Stephen Harper's government.

The 1990s nonetheless represented an opportunity to think differently about the meanings of security in the Arctic, both due to growing recognition of the effects of climate change as well as due to the *en vogue* status of global institution-building. Expanding upon the rapprochement over the Arctic that took place in the latter stages of the Cold War, Arctic states were quick to frame global understandings of the Arctic within themes of economic development and environmental protection. The emerging

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<sup>176</sup> T.S. Hataley and Kim Richard Nossal, "The limits of the human security agenda: The case of Canada's response to the Timor Crisis," *Global Change, Peace, & Security*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Feb. 2004), p. 5-17.

concept of “sustainable” development as first popularized by the Brundtland Commission in the 1980s was a particularly attractive idea to apply to the Arctic region. Under the direction of former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, the United Nations-mandated Commission developed a comprehensive document between 1983 and 1987 that outlined the tenets of sustainable development.<sup>177</sup> With an explicit focus on the relationship between human development and the lessening of armed conflict, the nascent concept of sustainable development was seemingly the perfect experiment that could use the Arctic as a model for future success. As such, the institutionalization of sustainable development policies under the guidance of the Arctic Council was built in this image.

The Arctic Council was formed as a result of several ministerial meetings between Arctic states beginning in 1989, with the organization itself being founded under the 1996 Ottawa Declaration. Inspired by the sustainable development concept prevalent at the time,<sup>178</sup> it is no surprise that the formation of the Arctic Council avoided a hard security component. Curiously, a footnote to the otherwise short Ottawa Declaration did explicitly state that the Arctic Council was to avoid military matters.<sup>179</sup> Although such a statement certainly was an act of foresight on the part of the Arctic Council’s framers, this also helped to set an important precedent that the Arctic was not only to be conflict-

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<sup>177</sup> “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future,” March 20, 1987, accessed February 1, 2016, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.

<sup>178</sup> The impact of sustainable development on the Arctic Council’s formation was effectively inevitable given the intergovernmental discussions leading up to the Ottawa Declaration. See Timo Koivurova and David L. VanderZwaag, “The Arctic Council at 10 Years: Retrospects and Prospects,” *University of British Columbia Law Review* (2007), p.121-123.

<sup>179</sup> Global Affairs Canada, “Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (Ottawa, Canada, 1996), May 15, 2013, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique/ottdec-decote.aspx?lang=eng>.

free in the post-Cold War era, but a legitimately positive area of cooperation between former strategic foes.

From the Canadian standpoint, the Arctic Council should have been a welcome development in the Canadian foreign policy agenda, particularly in light of other global discussions about climate change. The carving of the new territory of Nunavut, whose population is largely Aboriginal, from the Northwest Territories in 1999 also was seen as a victory for the human development agenda in the Arctic. Still, the practical difficulties of increasing economic development in the Arctic regions were soon realized in the course of these discussions.<sup>180</sup> The Canadians were also not totally divorced from approaching the emerging concept of “human” security through military force. It was during this time that the “responsibility to protect” or “R2P” doctrine gained traction in the international community as a result of mass humanitarian crises that were perceived to have been exacerbated by international community inaction. Two schools of thought developed regarding how to approach human security. Whereas Japan spearheaded a human security approach known as “freedom from want”—which saw human security as a concept that stemmed from development—Canada and Norway advocated for a “freedom from fear” approach that put emphasis on protection from physical violence.<sup>181</sup> Canada was also instrumental in developing two international organs focusing on human security in the International Commission on State Sovereignty (ICISS) and the Human

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<sup>180</sup> Nigel Bankes, Terry Fenge, and Sarah Kalf, “Toward Sustainable Development in Canada’s Arctic: Policies and International Relations” in *Canada Among Nations, 1993-94*, Christopher J. Maule and Fen Osier Hampson, Eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1993), p. 170-89.

<sup>181</sup> Gerd Oberleitner, “Porcupines in love: The intricate convergence of human rights and human security,” *European Human Rights Law Review*, Issue 6 (2006), p. 591.

Security Network (HSN). The ICISS was disbanded following the release of its findings in 2001, though its report entitled *The Responsibility to Protect* was undoubtedly the first to give significant weight to the “R2P” concept.<sup>182</sup>

Canadian Arctic policy by the late 1990s, although seemingly setting a positive tone for a sustainable future in the Arctic region, was thus attempting to incorporate a number of emerging concepts that may have been too ambitious for Canada’s actual level of capability. Although the Arctic may not have been the chief domestic concern for Canada in light of Québec’s razor-thin failed secession referendum in 1995 and an economic crisis that tanked the value of the Canadian dollar, the region was nonetheless close to the heart of Chrétien, who had served as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development under Pierre Trudeau.<sup>183</sup> In 2000, the Canadian government released a report outlining its strategy for the Arctic. The report established four main “objectives” for Canada’s Arctic strategy:

*“To enhance the security and prosperity of Canadians, especially northerners and Aboriginal people; To assert and ensure the preservation of Canada’s sovereignty in the North; To establish the Circumpolar North as a vibrant geopolitical entity integrated into a rules-based international system; and to promote the human security of northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic.”*<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Oberleitner (2002), p. 9-10.

<sup>183</sup> James K. Bartleman, *Rollercoaster: My Hectic Years as Jean Chretien’s Diplomatic Advisor, 1994-1998* (Toronto: Douglas Gibson, 2005), p. 75.

<sup>184</sup> Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, “The Northern Dimension of Canada’s Foreign Policy,” (2000), p. 2.

At first glance, this would seemingly balance Canada's then-orientation with its historical emphasis on Arctic sovereignty. An analysis of the report, however, found it to be more focused on themes in the former category: sustainable development, Northern institution-building, and using the Arctic as a vehicle for international cooperation, particularly with post-Soviet Russia. The concept of sovereignty only received a handful of passing references, and was arguably out-of-place given the document's focus on intergovernmental cooperation.<sup>185</sup> The confusion between the strategy's stated objectives and its actual recommendations were rather representative of the dynamic that puzzled the Canadian mindset at the time. That is, how could Canada establish itself as a global leader in sustainability and institution-building when it actually showed a historical sensitivity to outside interference?

This confusion was also present in how Canada re-positioned its post-Cold War defense policy, something that was further hampered by controversy in the military during the 1990s. While participation in peacekeeping was a politically palatable use of the military during this time, the incident that came to be known as the "Somalia Affair" would expose the deep cultural problems that actually existed in the Canadian military. In March 1993, a Somali teenager was beaten and killed at the hands of Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) peacekeepers who suspected the teenager of stealing supplies. Public exposure of the incident shortly thereafter not only shocked Canadian society, but also exposed widespread discipline and organizational problems in the military that were seen as key factors contributing to the event. Ironically, the urgency of the Cold War may have

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 5.



actually helped to mold this culture: Faced with a very “conventional” threat, the military did little to foster professionalization or academic advancement for its future leaders during the period. A public inquiry into the Somalia Affair found that the events that led to the death of the Somali teenager were not simply undertaken by a handful of miscreants, but were representative of a rough and insular culture that fostered such actions.<sup>186</sup> The Somalia Inquiry found that these issues were particularly exacerbated within the CAR, which was not a separate unit in itself but instead a “skeleton” organization composed of units from other parts of the Canadian military. The unit had also undergone a reorganization from 1991-92, which the inquiry found to be detrimental to the regiment’s ability to undertake its peacekeeping role in Somalia.<sup>187</sup> As a result of the Somalia Affair, the CAR was disbanded in 1995. Although the controversy did spur positive reforms in the Canadian military in many of the problem areas,<sup>188</sup> the exposure of such entrenched social problems in the Canadian military during the 1990s was nonetheless among the most shameful periods in the history of the country’s defense establishment.

The stressful combination of greater demand on the Canadian military to contribute to worldwide contingencies and the general desire to reduce post-Cold War military expenditures was not ignored in the 1994 defense white paper. The document acknowledged the uncertainty of the international security environment while also

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<sup>186</sup> David J. Bercuson, “Up From the Ashes: The Re-Professionalization of the Canadian Forces After the Somalia Affair,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Fall 2009), p. 31-35.

<sup>187</sup> Canadian Department of National Defence, “Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry-Executive Summary,” July 2, 1997.

<sup>188</sup> Bercuson, “Up From the Ashes”

discussing the difficulty of doing so amidst Canadian budget constraints.<sup>189</sup> The document then struck a tone of multilateralism, aiming for a defense posture focused on the ability to take part in peacekeeping missions. A section focusing on protecting the Canadian homeland even struck this tone, focusing on using the military in such activities as aiding civil protection, fisheries enforcement, and responding to environmental disasters.<sup>190</sup> The tone of this document was certainly not unwelcome given the apparent easing of tensions at the end of the Cold War, but it did allow regular maintenance of military readiness to be de-prioritized within the budgetary process. Particularly in retrospect, it became evident just how misunderstood the complexity of responding to international humanitarian crises really was. Although the Canadian focus on multilateral peacekeeping during this time was a logical use of the military's resources, the factors in place needed to sustain these operations—such as efficient logistics chains and the ability to deploy military units to far-away locations in short order—were not provided for in both budgetary terms and strategic outlook. The tone of the 1994 white paper was a representation of this flawed thinking in that it assumed a more stable international outlook following the end of the Cold War.<sup>191</sup> As seen in crises ranging from the former Yugoslavia to sub-Saharan Africa during this time, the reality was anything but peaceful.

In light of this, it was clear that Canada was facing a crisis of being in its foreign and defense policies. Although the politically palatable multilateralism that drove these

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<sup>189</sup> Canada Department of National Defence, "1994 White Paper on Defence" (1994), p. 1-2.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 16-18.

<sup>191</sup> The issues with this line of thinking are summarized in Douglas L. Bland, "The Fundamentals of National Defence Policy Are Not Sound, in *Canada Without Armed Forces?* Douglas L. Bland, Ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2004), p. 4-7.

policies during this period may have allowed for an element of stability in light of domestic turmoil, it also helped to feed a certain amnesia about Canada's own history when it came to how its military was employed. While the country has had a reputable history of peacekeeping under the United Nations flag, it also has a defense policy beyond it. Yet the lull in strategic tension in the 1990s nonetheless allowed for a new image of "Canada as peacekeeper, and only that" to become the image of Canadian defense policy. There are a few possible reasons why this came into being, whether it was societal relief over the end of the Cold War or a desire to distinguish the Canadian national identity from the more militaristic United States.<sup>192</sup> Interestingly, the contribution of Canadian military personnel as a percentage of total United Nations peacekeeping forces has actually fallen dramatically since 1991, when Canada was among the top contributors to UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>193</sup> At the very least, the idea of Canadian peacekeeping being truly driven by altruism rather than by ulterior motives was also a misleading notion that fed into this myth.<sup>194</sup> Public opinion polls since the end of the Cold War on this issue have also yielded interesting results. Canadians have shown consistency in expressing favorable opinions toward peacekeeping, but have also shown themselves to be responsive to changes in the international environment.<sup>195</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>192</sup> Eric Wagner, "The Peaceable Kingdom? The National Myth of Canadian Peacekeeping and the Cold War," *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter 2006-2007), p. 48.

<sup>193</sup> United Nations, "Troop and peace contributors archive (1990-2014)," accessed February 10, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors\\_archive.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors_archive.shtml).

<sup>194</sup> Wagner, p. 48-53. This is also explored at length in David Jefferess, "Responsibility, Nostalgia, and the Myth of the Canadian Peacekeeper," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Spring 2009), p. 709-727.

<sup>195</sup> Pierre Martin and Michel Fortmann, "Canadian public opinion and peacekeeping in a turbulent world," *International Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring 1995), p. 370-400.

a dichotomy developed when tying peacekeeping to specific operations: While a favorable percentage of Canadians continued to show a “moral obligation” to assist people suffering from war or poverty, support for Canadian participation in coalition operations in Afghanistan beginning in 2002 was less enthusiastic.<sup>196</sup> Canadians thus showed a tendency toward internationalism, but were less enthusiastic about participation in international military operations when the mission was more bluntly defined as combat-oriented. In this sense, Canadian public opinion was shying away from the reality of what peacekeeping actually entailed.<sup>197</sup>

The purpose of explaining Canada’s overall foreign and defense orientation during this time is to better position our understanding of why the Arctic re-gained rhetorical prominence when Stephen Harper took office in 2006. The political cycle that led to a re-assertion of sovereigntist language was not only a product of the confused policies of the 1990s, but was also a result of Canada having to face the aforementioned difficulty of continuing to push the “peacekeeper” image while engaging in unquestionably full-fledged military operations abroad. Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the Canadian government was asked to join the US-led coalition against Afghanistan and the larger global campaign against terrorism. The Canadians were quick to respond, committing naval forces to the Arabian Sea in October 2001 to support American military operations.<sup>198</sup> The prospect of committing

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<sup>196</sup> Lane Anker, “Peacekeeping and public opinion,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 2005), p. 27.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28-30; Martin and Fortmann, p. 382-84.

<sup>198</sup> Embassy of Canada to Afghanistan, “History of Canada’s Engagement in Afghanistan 2001-2014,” accessed February 11, 2016, <http://www.international.gc.ca/afghanistan/history-histoire.aspx?lang=eng>.

ground troops, however, was less enthusiastic. While discussing the issue in November 2001, Chrétien was quick to point out that any ground mission would last no longer than six months, and would be halted should Canadian troops find themselves in a “full-conflict situation.”<sup>199</sup>

Clearly, the Canadians were having trouble getting past the prospect of warfighters engaging in warfare. A six-month army deployment did eventually follow in 2002, although further Canadian contributions were not ironed out at this time. Canada would later commit to a stable force rotation that lasted until the end of 2011. This was likely due to several factors to include demonstrating commitment to Western initiatives against terrorism and maintaining positive relations with the United States, particularly in light of Canadian opposition to the 2003 Iraq War.<sup>200</sup> From this period of time we can draw the conclusion that Canada, while not refusing to keep its alliance commitments, was also reluctant to fully commit to the internationalist position on which it had claimed to base its post-Cold War foreign policy.

In Arctic policy terms, Canada was faced with a similar conundrum of determining how best to address the security issues that may have been developing in the region. Although the disappearance of the Soviet threat alleviated the need to defend the Canadian Arctic on military terms, hard security issues did not completely disappear from the region during the 1990s. Both the American and Russian navies continued to operate submarines in the region in a mutually suspicious manner, raising concerns that

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<sup>199</sup> Claire Turenne Sjolander, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Road to Kandahar: The Competing Faces of Canadian Internationalism?” *Canadian Foreign Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 2009), p. 82.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83-85.

the possibility of conflict still remained. The secretive nature of American submarine operations also made it difficult for the Canadians to fully press the issue despite the close defense relationship between the two countries.<sup>201</sup> Despite the presence of “what-if” scenarios, however, hard security issues were not prioritized given the low chance of conflict. Instead, the focus of Arctic security policy remained in the realm of lingering legal issues under UNCLOS and the basic maintenance of military forces that could operate in the Arctic if the geopolitical situation changed in the future.<sup>202</sup>

The 1990s and first few years of the new century were largely free of major concerns for Arctic security, although this was perhaps a refusal to attend to a problem demanding imminent attention. Certainly, the establishment of the Arctic Council and the work of other intergovernmental climate organizations helped to bring attention to the real problems that were due to face the region. There was, however, a noticeable gap between the end of the Cold War and the 2007 Russian flag incident in which the Arctic was analyzed in hard security terms. There are several possible reasons for this, not least of which due to the way that the Arctic was viewed in the respective Arctic states. Aside from Canada’s views outlined above, Russia was in the process of regaining economic and political momentum following the ascendancy of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency in 2000. Although the country did submit a claim to the United Nations arguing for an extension to its recognized Arctic claims in 2001,<sup>203</sup> the Russian

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<sup>201</sup> Rob Huebert, “Canadian Arctic Security Issues: Transformation in the Post-Cold War Era,” *International Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Spring 1999), p. 215-221.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224-228.

<sup>203</sup> United Nations. “Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf: Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines, Submissions to the Commission, Submission by the

government did not begin drafting an updated version of its argument until 2012.<sup>204</sup> In the United States, the issue of climate change had become highly politicized (and particularly looked down upon by the George W. Bush administration), thus effectively removing the possibility of significant action on Arctic policy.

Climate policy was nonetheless an area that was gaining increased momentum as an emerging security issue in the new century. Although the feasibility of a liberal international order was challenged in the Western world by the difficulties of the United States' military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, the resigned recognition of the continued presence of violent conflict also helped to inspire attention to the effects of climate change on the human environment. This was especially present in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where conflicts over scarce natural resources continued to plague the continent. Even outside of armed conflict, major environmental events—such as the 2004 Asian tsunami that claimed the lives of over 200,000 people—gave greater weight to the hypothesis that natural disasters and human security were not mutually exclusive. Paul Martin's government—which succeeded that of fellow Liberal Jean Chrétien in December 2003—had already begun realizing the necessity of a more coherent Arctic policy. In a 2005 strategy billed as the “International Policy Statement,” the government explicitly defined the need to emphasize the country's Arctic sovereignty as well as to pay greater attention to northern issues.<sup>205</sup> Still, assertions of Arctic sovereignty had not

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Russian Federation,” June 30, 2009, accessed February 14, 2016, [http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs\\_new/submissions\\_files/submission\\_rus.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_rus.htm).

<sup>204</sup> This was eventually submitted in 2015.

<sup>205</sup> Government of Canada, “Canada's International Policy Statement” (2005), p. 7-8.

yet emerged as a foreign policy priority ahead of issues such as terrorism or broader development concerns. As climate change began to gain more attention from policymakers, however, this would soon change.

### ***Stephen Harper and Arctic Sovereignty***

In December 2005, the Conservative Party outlined an ambitious defense strategy, known as “Canada First,” as part of its platform for the next month’s federal election. As part of Canada First, the Stephen Harper-led Conservatives would increase defense spending in order to procure new aircraft, ships, and increase the total number of military personnel.<sup>206</sup> In a speech that month to outline the plan, Harper did not focus on the ongoing mission in Afghanistan, which was Canada’s biggest defense priority at the time, in order to justify the call for increased defense spending. Instead, Harper used the opportunity to tie the plan to a renewed emphasis on Arctic sovereignty. As part of this renewed commitment, the new government would seek to utilize overall defense procurements to commit further resources to the Arctic region as well as to build a new naval facility in Nunavut that could be used for both civilian and military purposes.<sup>207</sup> Harper’s statements were certainly reminiscent of past instances in which Canada held anxieties about the status of its perceived level of Arctic sovereignty. As in past instances, these anxieties did not appear out of thin air. The setting this time was Hans Island, a small rock formation that lies about halfway between Greenland and Ellesmere

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<sup>206</sup> Probe International, “Defending Sovereignty—Backgrounder,” December 13, 2005, accessed February 15, 2016, [http://www.probeinternational.org/old\\_drupal/UrbanNewSite/ConservativeDefencePlan.pdf](http://www.probeinternational.org/old_drupal/UrbanNewSite/ConservativeDefencePlan.pdf).

<sup>207</sup> Dennis Bevington, “Harper Stands Up for Arctic Sovereignty,” December 22, 2005, accessed February 15, 2016, [http://www.dennisbevington.ca/pdfs/en/2005/dec25-05\\_speech-harper.pdf](http://www.dennisbevington.ca/pdfs/en/2005/dec25-05_speech-harper.pdf).



Island in the Nares Strait and whose ownership is the source of a long-running dispute between Canada and Denmark. In the years preceding Harper's speech, a series of mostly symbolic actions on the island had become the source of renewed diplomatic dispute between the two countries.<sup>208</sup> Although these disputes were benign in nature, public attention to these actions nonetheless raised the profile of Canadian Arctic sovereignty concerns.<sup>209</sup>

A curious dynamic upon Harper's election in January 2006 was how these new assertions of sovereignty fit into Canada's relationship with the United States. In his first press conference following his election, Harper directly criticized the United States for its position that the Northwest Passage constituted an international waterway.<sup>210</sup> In light of Canada's previous history of asserting its Arctic sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States, this could have been seen as an immediate attempt to signal to the Americans that Harper would not be a pushover in the bilateral relationship. The context of what Harper sought to change in the relationship, however, was quite the opposite. Owing to somewhat frosty relations in the years previous that were particularly enflamed by the Iraq War, the Conservatives were able to paint a latent anti-Americanism that existed in Canada at this time as unproductive to the overall health of the bilateral relationship. Harper had thus

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<sup>208</sup> This involved a series of tit-for-tat actions in which politicians and military personnel from either side "claimed" the island for their respective country. See CBC News, "Canada, Denmark agree to resolve dispute over Arctic island," September 19, 2005, accessed February 15, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-denmark-agree-to-resolve-dispute-over-arctic-island-1.551223>.

<sup>209</sup> P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "From Polar Race to Polar Saga: An Integrated Strategy for Canada and the Circumpolar World," in *Canada and the Changing Arctic*, Franklyn Griffiths, Rob Huebert, and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Eds. (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2011), p. 119-122.

<sup>210</sup> Doug Struck, "Harper Tells U.S. to Drop Arctic Claim," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2006, accessed February 16, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/26/AR2006012602011.html>.

actually prioritized the rebuilding of the Canada-US relationship, something that he was successful in doing early in his tenure.<sup>211</sup> This was also, arguably, an evolution of the modern Conservative tradition in approaching U.S. relations. If we look at the previous examples of Diefenbaker, who was more stubborn about his country's interests in the bilateral relationship, and Mulroney, who was warmer toward the United States while also having to deal with the controversial *Polar Sea* incident, we see an interesting meld of steadfast national sovereignty and committed concern about the strength of the relationship. This may have only been possible because, as was the case in the century previous, the United States was not eager to push the Canadians on Arctic sovereignty matters. For Harper, being able to speak effectively to both the sovereigntist and bilateralist positions early in his governing term was a major boon for his agenda.

During his first year in office, Harper would add further rhetorical weight to the Canadian government's focus on Arctic sovereignty. In an August 2006 speech in Iqaluit, Harper described the "first principle of Arctic sovereignty" to be "use it or lose it,"<sup>212</sup> that is, the country was required to constantly reinforce its sovereignty over its Arctic territory to prevent it from being encroached upon by others. Such a statement not only reiterated Harper's focus on the Arctic, but also added a special urgency to the issue. On a discursive level, this presented a certain irony: Rather than speaking to the global threat

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<sup>211</sup> This not only mended disagreements on political terms, but also caused the Americans to be more willing to engage on lingering economic disputes. See Kim Richard Nossal, "Defense Policy and the Atmospherics of Canada-U.S. Relations: The Case of Harper Conservatives," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2007), p. 26-27.

<sup>212</sup> Library and Archives Canada, "Securing Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic," August 12, 2006, accessed February 17, 2016, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071123030520/http://www.premierministre.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1275>.

faced as a result of Arctic climate change—which could, in the most literal sense, result in the decrease of landmass due to rising sea levels—Harper was actually speaking to the need to bolster human activity in order to deter a hypothetical military incursion. As it would so happen, Harper’s “use it or lose it” remark took place during the midst of a Canadian military exercise whose magnitude had perhaps not been seen in the Arctic in decades.<sup>213</sup>

Shortly prior to Harper’s assumption of office, the Canadian military had begun a reorganization process that was completed in 2006. The result of this was the re-flagging of the previous Canadian Forces Northern Area, which was responsible for military operations in northern Canada, under a new command called Joint Task Force North. The change was more than cosmetic: As part of the larger defense transformation, Joint Task Force North was imagined as a flexible organization that would work more closely with civil authorities to respond to emergencies and environmental disasters.<sup>214</sup> Such a change was particularly convenient for the practical aspects of the new focus on the Arctic, but also allowed the government to present the impression that it was immediately committing resources to the Arctic—even if the change was already forthcoming under the previous government’s defense restructuring.

Defining the Arctic “threat” was also an evolving thought process during this time. While the long-term threat came from the melting of Arctic ice and the subsequent

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<sup>213</sup> Nunatsiaq News, “‘Operation Iqaluit’ achieves its objectives,” August 18, 2006, accessed February 17, 2016, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/operation\\_igaluit\\_achieves\\_its\\_objectives/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/operation_igaluit_achieves_its_objectives/).

<sup>214</sup> Jim Bell, “Northern forces to beef up emergency response work,” *Nunatsiaq News*, May 26, 2006, accessed February 17, 2016, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/northern\\_forces\\_to\\_beef\\_up\\_emergency\\_response\\_work/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/northern_forces_to_beef_up_emergency_response_work/).

negative effects on the natural environment, there were also questions of which man-made threats needed to be prioritized in strategic thinking. Although pessimistic thinkers would offer the possibility of state-to-state threats if Canada did not assert its sovereignty in the region, the likelier threat came from man-made environmental damage due to resource exploitation, illegal dumping, or poaching of endangered species. The expected increase in human activity would also cause a greater demand on search-and-rescue resources, which tended to be handled by the military and civilian coast guard. Defining the chief threats had importance beyond allocating budgetary resources. If the biggest threats to the Arctic came through means that were usually dealt with by law enforcement authorities, would there really be much point in increasing military forces in the region? Even in an “aid to civilian authorities” capacity, it would not be necessary to increase the military presence in the Arctic in the way proposed under the new strategy. For this to happen, external forces would need to justify this presence.

Although it was due to circumstances that were not caused by Canada directly, but instead the deteriorating manner of relations between the West and Russia, such an opportunity presented itself in 2007. While Western media outlets saw the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident as the latest evidence of a resumption of the Cold War given the state of Western-Russian relations at the time, the Canadian government was also in a position to showcase the incident as justification of its Arctic strategy. Foreign minister Peter Mackay’s immediate response characterized the Russian action as harkening back to the fifteenth century,<sup>215</sup> although it was the resulting actions that would prove to be

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<sup>215</sup> C.J. Chivers, “Russians Plant Flag on the Arctic Seabed,” *New York Times*, August 3, 2007, accessed February 21, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/03/world/europe/03arctic.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/03/world/europe/03arctic.html?_r=0).

more impactful. Shortly after the incident, Harper took the opportunity to make an “important announcement” regarding Canada’s Arctic sovereignty in a speech at Resolute Bay. Repeating his “use it or lose it” line from the previous summer, Harper formally announced the government’s plans to construct a naval facility and Arctic military training center as promised in the 2006 election campaign.<sup>216</sup> Although the language in the speech was strikingly similar to language used in previous speeches on the Arctic—particularly in emphasizing Canada’s Arctic heritage—the previous week’s events provided for convenient timing for Harper’s message to be amplified.

By framing the incident as an extension of recent Russian prodding of the North Atlantic security framework,<sup>217</sup> Canada—and the United States, for that matter—immediately established an image of Russian actions in the Arctic as being inherently aggressive. This discursive tool did not just follow the immediate aftermath of the incident, but was regularly utilized when accusing Russia of infringing on Canadian sovereignty.<sup>218</sup> Such a dynamic between Russia and the West also helped to add legitimacy to the Harper government’s political agenda in the Arctic. Why then does a deeper examination of the issue show that conflict was unlikely to arise? In the wake of the flag-planting episode, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov visited Canada in November 2007. During his visit, the two sides signed several agreements on matters of

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<sup>216</sup> Library and Archives Canada, “Prime Minister announces expansion of Canadian Forces facilities and operations in the Arctic,” August 10, 2007, accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071120165605/http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1787>.

<sup>217</sup> See footnotes, Chapter 1, page 1.

<sup>218</sup> Lackenbauer, “From Polar Race to Polar Saga,” pp. 123.

Arctic economic cooperation, agricultural relations, and energy policy.<sup>219</sup> It was clear that any actual controversy over the August incident had abated on a government-to-government level. The signing of the Ilulissat Declaration the following year only strengthened the argument that, despite what media and the general public had been led to believe in the months previous, there was indeed little chance of physical conflict between the Arctic states.

Aside from what was happening in the public eye, work still needed to be done for the Harper government in meeting the goals of its Arctic agenda. In 2009, the government laid out a comprehensive “Northern Strategy.” While the strategy did not present anything particularly new beyond what the government had previously stated when discussing its Arctic agenda, the unveiling of the country’s first Arctic strategy since 2000 did demonstrate renewed commitment to the region. The Northern Strategy outlined four key areas of focus: Arctic sovereignty, protecting Canada’s “environmental heritage,” social and economic development, and increasing political devolution to local governments.<sup>220</sup> As was evident by the use of these four pillars, the strategy balanced both the sovereigntist aspects of the Arctic agenda with the softer, human dimension that generally preoccupied day-to-day Northern affairs.

What was also notable here was the language used: It was not simply a matter of protecting Canada’s sovereign territory, but also its “heritage.” In this line of thinking,

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<sup>219</sup> Embassy of the Russian Federation to Canada, “Working Visit of the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Viktor Zubkov to Canada,” November 29, 2007, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.rusembassy.ca/ru/node/345>.

<sup>220</sup> Government of Canada, “Canada’s Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future,” (2009), accessed February 24, 2016, <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/cns/cns-eng.asp>.

Canadian government action to protect sovereign territory in the Arctic was, therefore, preserving the most intrinsic root of Canadian nationhood. Also important to note here, however, is how the tone of the document matched the dynamic observed in November 2007: Even while the relationship between the East and West was tense, Canada was seeking to take a cooperative approach to multinational Arctic affairs. The presence of the sovereignty pillar also proved a bit ironic as the document even went so far as to downplay Arctic territory disagreements with Denmark and the United States, saying “All of these disagreements are well-managed and pose no sovereignty or defense challenges for Canada.”<sup>221</sup> Never mind the role that these disagreements had in elevating Canadian fears of losing Arctic territory in the previous century, now the government was outright saying that such fears were misplaced!

A second document, billed as the “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy” was released in 2010 and used similar tones in translating Canada’s Arctic strategy to the international context. Even when discussing matters of Arctic sovereignty, the document emphasized Canada’s intention to assure its sovereignty claims through legal channels.<sup>222</sup> The manner in which the Arctic agenda was shaped during this time was representative of the duality that characterized Canadian Arctic policy at this time.

While Harper’s rhetoric demanded that Canada take stronger action to defend its Arctic sovereignty, his government was actually taking a more passive approach in policy. By following up on campaign pledges to coherently elevate the status of the

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Government of Canada, “Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy” (2010), p. 5.

Arctic in both domestic and foreign policy, Harper's government had seemingly conquered a major aspect of its political agenda. By the end of the Conservatives' reign in 2015, however, the operationalization of the Arctic agenda had become mired in budgetary concerns, technical delays, and political controversy.

What follows is an interesting test of the gap that may exist between rhetoric and domestic politics in applying securitization concepts to the real world. In doing this, I will examine the two key areas of focus for the Harper government's Canadian Arctic agenda. First, the role that hard security structures—namely the military—played in the agenda will help to demonstrate whether the Arctic was actually made to be a priority in the defense agenda. Second, the “soft” aspects of the Arctic security agenda—those being economic development and human security issues—will highlight how the government actually worked against itself in getting to the root of the problem.

### ***Preparing for the war that wouldn't happen***

As ambitious as the Arctic agenda was regarding a reinforcement of Canadian defense capabilities in the Arctic, not even the most optimistic military planners could argue that increasing the defense footprint would be possible without unique difficulty. Fortunately, the government was able to call on a group of familiar faces, the Canadian Rangers, to aid in its effort. Not only did the Rangers continue to offer an opportunity to act as a low-cost “listening post” in the Arctic, but also offered invaluable expertise to a defense establishment that was looking to increase its presence in a region in which it had relatively little operational experience. Additionally, further attention to the Canadian Rangers was a palatable way of selling the idea of an increased military presence in the Arctic to the public, as the Rangers' iconic uniforms consisting of red sweaters and



baseball caps presented a familiar tone to “Southern” Canadians.<sup>223</sup> The Rangers’ expertise not only included valuable understandings of their local geography, but also included training Canadian military personnel in basic survival skills endemic to the harsh Arctic climate. Coupled with a pledge from Harper for additional funding to increase personnel, add new Ranger units (or “patrols”), and modernize the Rangers’ equipment, the use of the Rangers as part of the new Arctic agenda seemed like a sensible plan.<sup>224</sup>

Although the renewed role for the Canadian Rangers could be seen as a success in basic terms, the actual reality of these plans did not live up to their rhetorical gusto. In contrast, defense officials felt that Ranger patrols were already plentiful and at necessary personnel levels across the Arctic, and that resources would actually be better suited to patrols well south of the Arctic. In the end, it was actually the non-Arctic units that saw the most growth as a result of the government’s plans to boost the Rangers’ size.<sup>225</sup> The more public controversy involved efforts to procure replacements for the Rangers’ Lee Enfield rifles, which dated to World War II. The process did not even begin until the summer of 2011, and it was not until four years later that the new rifles began making their way to the Rangers in a disbursement cycle that was planned to last until 2019.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Whitney Lackenbauer, “If It Ain’t Broke, Don’t Break It: Expanding and Enhancing the Canadian Rangers,” *Munk School of Global Affairs Working Papers on Arctic Security* (March 2013), p. 4.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9-11.

<sup>226</sup> Steve Rennie, “Retirement looming for Lee-Enfield rifles used by Canadian Rangers,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 2, 2014, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/retirement-looming-for-lee-enfield-rifles-used-by-canadian-rangers/article20317691/>.

Issues procuring rifles proved to be a microcosm for other problems that plagued the defense establishment on more expensive systems. The one that would cause the most political controversy—and even be a major factor in challenging Harper’s position as prime minister—was the process surrounding the procurement of the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet. A joint development effort of eight countries—with the United States as the largest investor—the F-35 was seen as a reasonably-priced option for countries seeking a 21<sup>st</sup> century replacement for aging fighter aircraft. Canada joined the project in 1997—although it did not sign a binding agreement to purchase the future fighter<sup>227</sup>—and did not face controversy over the decision for the first several years of the aircraft’s development. Fissures began to appear in the program south of the border in March 2010, however, when U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates fired the senior military officer in charge of the program due to cost overruns and performance issues.<sup>228</sup>

Controversy over the program would strike Ottawa just a few months later. Without first having parliamentary debate or seeking a competitive bid to replace its current crop of F-18 fighter jets, the government announced its intention to purchase 65 F-35s. Although the government had stated its intention to buy that many fighter jets under the Canada First strategy, the unilateral decision by the government to commit to the F-35 specifically was immediately seized upon by the political opposition.<sup>229</sup> The

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<sup>227</sup> CBC News, “Canada to spend \$9B F-35 fighter jets,” July 16, 2010, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canada-to-spend-9b-on-f-35-fighter-jets-1.908494>.

<sup>228</sup> Craig Whitlock, “Defense secretary Gates fires general in charge of Joint Strike Fighter program,” *Washington Post*, February 2, 2010, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/01/AR2010020103712.html>.

<sup>229</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, “Late Learners: Canada, the F-35, and lessons from the New Fighter Aircraft program,” *International Journal*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Winter 2012/2013), p. 173-74.

controversy was further inflamed when media reports suggested that the government was misrepresenting the true costs of the program.<sup>230</sup> The problems mounted for the Conservatives in February 2011 when Canada's elections board charged that the party had violated electoral rules during the 2006 campaign.<sup>231</sup> This only fueled growing criticisms about the government's overall level of transparency—many of which stemmed from the F-35 cost issue—resulting in the opposition presenting a vote of no-confidence in March 2011 and forcing another election. The no-confidence vote also involved the first instance in Canadian history in which a government was held in contempt by a parliamentary committee.<sup>232</sup>

Despite the tumultuous year the Conservatives had faced politically, they actually *increased* their share of power in parliament in the election two months later, attaining a majority for the first time since coming to power. The reason for this was not only a fractured political opposition, but also the manner in which it split. The left-wing New Democratic Party (NDP), which in previous years had served as second-fiddle progressives behind the more established Liberals, emerged as the second-place finishers in the 2011 election and captured the role of official opposition. The Liberals, on the other hand, lost over half of their previous share of seats. Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, who resigned after an election in which he failed to even win his own

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 174-75.

<sup>231</sup> CBC News, "Tory party, 2 senators face election charges," February 24, 2011, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/tory-party-2-senators-face-election-charges-1.1070158>.

<sup>232</sup> Gloria Galloway, "Harper government falls in historic Commons showdown," *The Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2011, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-government-falls-in-historic-commons-showdown/article4181393/>.

constituency, was an accomplished historian who had argued for a hawkish, internationalist foreign policy.<sup>233</sup> Perhaps Ignatieff's foreign policy made him indistinguishable from that of Harper, who was often accused by the political opposition of being too bellicose by Canadian standards. Perhaps Ignatieff simply presented himself as too aloof during the election campaign.<sup>234</sup> Or perhaps, in some way, the Canadian government had finally articulated a coherent set of policies that provided stability for the Canadian electorate in a way that had not been realized since the end of the Cold War.

If this latter proposition was the case, it did not change the fact that the government's success at throwing rhetorical support behind its Arctic agenda significantly outweighed its ability to actually successfully implement the agenda. As the F-35 program continued to have problems outside of Canada's borders,<sup>235</sup> strategists began to question the appropriateness of the jet for Canada's particular needs. Some questioned the logic of replacing the dual-engine F-18—which offered a safeguard in case of the loss of one engine—with the single-engine F-35 given the expected use of the jet over the vast Arctic territory.<sup>236</sup> There were also concerns that the first jets delivered

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<sup>233</sup> Ignatieff's general views are summarized in Michael Ignatieff and Joanne J. Myers, "The Lesser Evil: Hard Choices in a War on Terror," *Carnegie Council for International Affairs*, January 23, 2004, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20040123/index.html>.

<sup>234</sup> Linda Diebel, "Exclusive: What really sunk Michael Ignatieff and the Liberals," *Toronto Star*, May 7, 2011, accessed March 3, 2016, [http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/05/07/exclusive\\_what\\_really\\_sunk\\_michael\\_ignatieff\\_and\\_the\\_liberals.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/05/07/exclusive_what_really_sunk_michael_ignatieff_and_the_liberals.html).

<sup>235</sup> David Axe, "Trillion-dollar jet has thirteen expensive new flaws," *Wired*, December 13, 2011, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.wired.com/2011/12/joint-strike-fighter-13-flaws/>.

<sup>236</sup> Jeff Davis, "F-35 'a serious strategic mismatch' for Canada's North,' retired colonel says," *National Post*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/f-35-a-serious-strategic-mismatch-for-canadas-north-retired-colonel-says>.

to Canada would not include a satellite communications suite necessary to communicate from distant points over the Arctic.<sup>237</sup> The budgetary woes extended to other aspects of the agenda as well, notably in the construction of the Nanisivik Naval Facility. Located at the site of a former zinc mine on Baffin Island, the new naval facility would be used to support deep-water maritime operations during the summer months. Harper originally announced plans for the naval facility in 2007 with an estimated budget allocation of \$100 million as well as plans for an adjacent airstrip. When the Royal Canadian Navy approved plans for the base in 2010, however, the plan's price tag had ballooned to \$258 million.<sup>238</sup> The government eventually scaled back the project to reduce the cost to \$116 million, which resulted in shelving plans for the airstrip as well as plans to keep the facility running year round.<sup>239</sup> Ground was also not broken on the facility until 2015, with an expected opening date of 2018.<sup>240</sup>

Ships that could potentially be docking at Nanisivik in the future were also contributing to the budgetary woes. In 2010, the government unveiled plans to construct several ships for Arctic operations under a program called the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS). The NSPS called for construction of new ships for both

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<sup>237</sup> CBC News, "F-35s face communications problems in Arctic," October 23, 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/f-35s-face-communication-problems-in-arctic-1.971260>.

<sup>238</sup> David Pugliese, "Nanisivik naval facility was originally supposed to cost \$258 million but DND balked at price tag," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 8, 2014, accessed March 6, 2016, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/nanisivik-naval-facility-was-originally-supposed-to-cost-258-million-but-dnd-balked-at-price-tag>.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. Although maritime operations were only expected in the summer months, the facility nonetheless would have been maintained year-round by a permanent staff under original plans.

<sup>240</sup> CBC News, "Nanisivik, Nunavut, naval facility breaks ground," July 18, 2015, accessed March 6, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nanisivik-nunavut-naval-facility-breaks-ground-1.3158798>.

combatant and non-combatant roles (i.e., icebreaking). The program also served a role beyond procurement for the robust Arctic agenda: while the Canadian shipbuilding industry had been previously driven by a “boom-and-bust” cycle that saw ships built mostly during times of need, the NSPS provided a new dynamic that would see ships built on a more regular schedule regardless of the international political situation.<sup>241</sup> As such, the NSPS also incorporated the goal of establishing strong relationships with the shipbuilding industry, to include a competitive bidding process for the task of building the ships.<sup>242</sup> The program began to experience problems over the ensuing years, however, as it became apparent that the government had underestimated the true costs of the program.<sup>243</sup> The scope of the NSPS also showed itself to be too broad: as the strategy called for the construction of several different types of ships, determining how to focus budgetary resources may have effectively resulted in projects competing against each other. Echoing criticisms of the F-35 project, commentators also began to see the ships as ineffective in meeting operational requirements while creating a significant cost burden for the government.<sup>244</sup>

In contrast to these setbacks, the government’s rhetorical support for its Arctic agenda was in full swing. Harper used annual trips to the Arctic—he visited the region

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<sup>241</sup> Martin Auger, “The National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy: A Five-Year Assessment,” *Library of Parliament*, June 15, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3-4.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13-14.

<sup>244</sup> Michael Byers, “Why Canada’s search for an icebreaker is an Arctic embarrassment,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 21, 2014, accessed March 6, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-north/why-canadas-search-for-an-icebreaker-is-an-arctic-embarrassment/article16425755/>.

each summer between 2006 and 2015<sup>245</sup>—to lend legitimacy to the government’s agenda. The visits eventually drew ire from the political opposition, not only due to public revelations of the cost of the visits, but also due to perceptions of their contrived nature. For Harper’s opponents, images of the prime minister donning Canadian Ranger apparel and riding snowmobiles made the visits seem like less of a demonstration of national sovereignty and more, as one Liberal member of parliament quipped, a “million-dollar photo op.”<sup>246</sup>

Public knowledge of the difficulties in operationalizing the Arctic agenda also could not prevent the development of a perception that a massive militarization campaign was underway in the region. One example of this was during the 2011 election campaign when Ignatieff accused Harper of choosing militarization of the Arctic over a focus on improving the region’s social services.<sup>247</sup> After all, the 2009 Northern Strategy did devote attention to ensuring security in the region through “ground-up” social and economic development. On balance, however, Ignatieff’s criticism of these aspects of Harper’s Arctic policies was not unfounded; by that point, the perception was that Harper’s Arctic

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<sup>245</sup> Alex Boutilier, “Stephen Harper heads north on annual Arctic journey,” *Toronto Star*, August 19, 2014, accessed March 7, 2016, [http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/08/19/stephen\\_harper\\_heads\\_north\\_on\\_annual\\_arctic\\_journey.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/08/19/stephen_harper_heads_north_on_annual_arctic_journey.html). Harper’s final visit took place during a campaign stop in August 2015.

<sup>246</sup> Alex Boutilier, “Bill for Stephen Harper’s annual Arctic trips tops \$3.4M,” *Toronto Star*, January 27, 2015, accessed March 7, 2016, <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/01/27/bill-for-stephen-harpers-annual-arctic-trips-tops-34m.html>.

<sup>247</sup> Allan Woods and Richard J. Brennan, “Harper, Ignatieff duel over Western Arctic,” *Toronto Star*, April 17, 2011, accessed March 7, 2016, [http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/04/17/harper\\_ignatieff\\_duel\\_over\\_western\\_arctic.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/04/17/harper_ignatieff_duel_over_western_arctic.html).

economic development programs put particular emphasis on natural resource exploitation as an economic engine rather than diversifying the region's economy.<sup>248</sup>

As Northern socioeconomic issues received increased public attention,<sup>249</sup> the true depth of issues facing Arctic communities also became more apparent. Although Harper's economic programs may have provided short-term relief to Arctic communities that struggled to maintain sustainable economies, critics did not see this as solving the longstanding social problems—such as dealing with mental health and high suicide rates—that plagued these communities. The emphasis on natural resource exploitation as a vehicle for economic growth was particularly ironic to many given the potentially negative environmental effects of these activities, which would harm subsistence economies that were essential to providing for many Arctic communities.<sup>250</sup> Scientists were further skeptical of supposed scientific research stations as being heavily influenced by the energy sector.<sup>251</sup> In time, the tangible results of Harper's ambitious Arctic agenda had slowly unraveled on both the hard and soft security fronts.

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<sup>248</sup> Steven Chase, "Harper heads north to promote resource development," *The Globe and Mail*, August 18, 2013, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.torontosun.com/2013/08/23/pm-says-hes-not-ignoring-arctic-social-woes>.

<sup>249</sup> Murray Brewster, "Harper in the Arctic: Fight between economic, social development takes centre stage," *CTV News*, August 22, 2013, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/harper-in-the-arctic-fight-between-economic-social-dev-t-takes-centre-stage-1.1422136>.

<sup>250</sup> Ed Struzik, "Oh Canada: The Government's Broad Assault on Environment," *Yale Environment 360*, July 2, 2012, accessed March 8, 2016, [http://e360.yale.edu/feature/oh\\_canada\\_the\\_governments\\_broad\\_assault\\_on\\_environment/2548/](http://e360.yale.edu/feature/oh_canada_the_governments_broad_assault_on_environment/2548/).

<sup>251</sup> Mychaylo Prystupa, "Harper's research station a 'cloak' for Arctic oil push, says climate expert," *National Observer*, September 25, 2015, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/09/25/news/harper%E2%80%99s-research-station-%E2%80%98cloak-arctic-oil-says-climate-expert>.



How can we explain the difficulties of turning the ambition of the Arctic agenda into reality? There are three key areas that likely resulted in this. First, the difficulties of ramping up human activity in the Arctic may have been underestimated. Although the limitations posed by Arctic operations were expected, it was not until more coherent plans were drawn up for these operations that the true costs began to hit home. While the “not knowing without doing” phenomenon was not surprising, there were also cases of simple shortsightedness: in the Nanisivik case, the government’s failure to communicate with local authorities led them to begin plans for the new port facility without fully understanding what resources would be available.<sup>252</sup> Even energy corporations who appeared quite keen on the Arctic’s untapped natural resources found themselves scaling down operations after early difficulties operating in the region.<sup>253</sup> The Harper government’s nearly decade-long ambitions in the Arctic showed that the region was less understood than previously thought.

The second problem in implementing the Arctic agenda was simple bureaucratic politics. Of the near-decade that the Harper government held power, it spent over half of it as a minority government. This made it more difficult for the government to win parliamentary support for Arctic programs, particularly given the agenda’s emphasis on boosting defense spending and increasing natural resource exploitation. Moreover,

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<sup>252</sup> This explains the shelving of the airfield as part of the facility. See Lee Berthiaume, “Key Arctic naval facility delayed by budget cuts despite being announced with much fanfare by PM in 2007,” August 21, 2013, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/key-arctic-naval-facility-delayed-by-budget-cuts-despite-being-announced-with-much-fanfare-by-pm-in-2007>.

<sup>253</sup> Clifford Krauss, “Shell Delays Arctic Oil Drilling Until 2013,” *New York Times*, September 17, 2012, accessed March 9, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/18/business/global/shell-delays-arctic-oil-drilling-until-next-year.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/18/business/global/shell-delays-arctic-oil-drilling-until-next-year.html?_r=0).

controversies over cost overruns in Arctic projects began to be seen by the political opposition as further evidence of opaque government behavior that extended to the broader political agenda.<sup>254</sup> Although the fractured nature of Canada's political opposition<sup>255</sup> may have aided Harper's ability to grow his political coalition from 2006-2011 on numerical terms, this also created a growing discontent in opposing political circles that would turn against Harper in the 2015 election.

The third problem may have simply been due to exogenous factors that negatively impacted key aspects of the Arctic agenda. The most notable example was the budgetary issues faced by the F-35 program. Although Canada had extended a tentative commitment to procure airplanes from the program, it did not sustain the initial research and development costs that were borne by the United States. While the source of the controversy may have been the government's failure to be forthcoming about the program's true costs, program delays which the government was helpless to prevent also would have put it in a difficult political position. The decline of global oil prices, which took a toll on the Canadian economy,<sup>256</sup> also made it difficult to sustain continued

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<sup>254</sup> This perception was not instantaneous, but rather built over the course of the Harper government. See Sarah Boesveld, "Report gives Harper government a failing grade for transparency," *National Post*, May 10, 2011, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/report-gives-harper-government-a-failing-grade-for-transparency> and Tim Harper, "Stephen Harper quietly scraps a pledge of transparency," *Toronto Star*, November 30, 2014, accessed March 20, 2016, [http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/11/30/stephen\\_harper\\_quietly\\_scraps\\_a\\_pledge\\_of\\_transparency\\_tim\\_harper.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/11/30/stephen_harper_quietly_scraps_a_pledge_of_transparency_tim_harper.html).

<sup>255</sup> Though the Conservatives and Liberals have traditionally been the two largest parties in Canadian politics, the NDP and Bloc Québécois also tended to constitute sizable minorities in the House of Commons as well.

<sup>256</sup> Kim Mackrael, "Falling Oil Prices Hurt Canadian Economy," *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2015, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/falling-oil-prices-hit-canadian-economy-1437002047>.

investment in government infrastructure projects in the North. This was not unique to the boom-and-bust nature of infrastructure investment, but the particular difficulties of operating in the North made long-term infrastructure investment more difficult than in other regions.

Having traced the Arctic legacy leading to the present, we have gained significant insight into how the political processes that result in tangible action presented a different challenge than the speech acts that are made to be central to securitization theory. The second—and arguably more important—component of understanding securitization theory comes from understanding how speech acts translate into public acceptance of the given constitution of threat. In the next chapter, I will assess how public perceptions of the Arctic agenda as an existential security matter developed during the course of the Harper government, with particular attention to potential differences across regions and ideological lines.

#### **Ch. 4: Measuring the impact of policy in media and public opinion**

The final aspect of this analysis will look at how government Arctic policy from 2006 to 2015 was reflected in Canadian media reporting and public opinion. This will draw from original research of media reporting as well as analysis of existing public opinion data over this time period in order to evaluate the influence of government policy rhetoric on the populace. In addition, public opinion and media reporting following key flashpoints—particularly the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident—will be evaluated to discern whether the national populace was energized on the issue by instances of possible “threat.”

The more intriguing part of this analysis involves analyzing the effect of government rhetoric not only on a national level, but also across provinces and between “Northern” Canada and “Southern” Canada. The reason for doing this is to control for other factors that may have influenced perceptions of government Arctic rhetoric and policy, such as political party loyalty, economic and social divides, education levels, and exposure to regular media on Arctic issues. The difficulty in doing so, however, is that the potential resonance of the Arctic as a recent security issue is not something that can be viewed in a vacuum. As has been argued here, rhetoric about Arctic securitization is, in fact, the result of an evolution of Canadian identity since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When adjusting for perceptions of government action to address the “Arctic security problem,” therefore, we cannot isolate the modern nature of the issue from other political lines that may have influenced opinions on government action. Instead, research on media reporting and public opinion across regions will help to demonstrate whether there was

resonance on a national level that is clearly evident beyond other, regional-level factors that may affect reception to government rhetoric on given issues.

### ***The Canadian political landscape: A brief background***

Isolating Canadian electoral politics as a potential variable in public opinion on the Arctic may actually be relatively easy to achieve simply because the landscape has been so fluid in the past fifty years. An analysis of electoral results from 1968 to 2015<sup>257</sup> found it difficult to identify consistent party loyalties over an extended period of time from the 1990s onward, with some exceptions. A large part of this had to do with the presence of “political insurgencies” that would occur every few elections. Prior to the 1993 election, the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties generally battled for the majority of seats (ridings), with smaller proportions won by the NDP and Social Credit Party.<sup>258</sup> In 1993, however, a victory by Jean Chrétien’s Liberals was also met by a Conservative collapse—many areas of Western Canada that generally favored the Conservatives voted for the Reform Party instead—and the emergence of the Bloc Québécois as a powerful political force in light of growing tensions over Quebec’s political status. Conversely, the 2011 success of the NDP was aided by the wooing of Liberal and Bloc Québécois-

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<sup>257</sup> Election results from 1968-2000 can be accessed from Natural Resources Canada, “Federal Elections, 1968 to 2000,” <http://geogratis.gc.ca/api/en/nrcan-rncan/ess-sst/-/%28urn:iso:series%29atlas-of-canada-federal-elections?sort-field=relevance>, accessed April 6, 2016. Election results from 2004-2011 can be accessed from Elections Canada, “Maps Corner—Historical Data,” <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/maps&document=index&lang=e#ffour>, accessed April 6, 2016. Results from the 2015 federal election can be accessed from Elections Canada, “Maps Corner,” accessed April 6, 2016, <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/maps2&document=index&lang=e>.

<sup>258</sup> The Social Credit Party was a populist party prevalent in Quebec and Western Canada between the 1930s and 1970s.

leaning voters, resulting in massive losses for both parties.<sup>259</sup> Attempting to categorize voting trends on a simple left-right ideological spectrum also would not capture the various cleavages that exist between parties, nor would it represent the potential diversity of opinions that could be present across issues. Nonetheless, we can make some assumptions based upon the areas in which political trends have shown more consistency. For example, we would expect less political support for Harper's Arctic agenda in metropolitan Toronto or Montreal, given the Conservatives' flagging political success in those areas in the last two decades. Conversely, we would expect stronger support in Harper's home province of Alberta, whose own economic interests in natural resource development would only increase favorable views toward the government's Arctic economic program.

There is also the issue of how Northern Canadians view their interests within the Canadian federal system. Each of the three northern territories holds a seat in the 338-member House of Commons and 105-member Senate, although geographic factors—particularly in the Nunavut archipelago—make intimate representation more difficult than in more populated areas. In addition, Northern Quebec is located within a geographically large electoral riding that extends into “Southern” Canada, which may limit the resonance of that community's needs at the federal level. Northern regions also remain dependent on federal subsidies, potentially limiting the political position of

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<sup>259</sup> Marc André Bodet, “Strongholds and Battlegrounds: Measuring Party Support Stability in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (September 2013), p. 577-78.

Northern regions in the federal political process even further.<sup>260</sup> Residents of Northern Quebec also found themselves trapped in a difficult position when Quebec's provincial government began to assert greater control over the federal-provincial relationship in the 1980s, which may have further isolated the needs of the primarily Aboriginal population from federal purview. Thus, even attempts to push Northern issues to the provincial level may not always be fruitful.<sup>261</sup> While political devolution giving greater autonomy to local governance may be favored by Northern regions, particularly those with a large Aboriginal population,<sup>262</sup> the current reality is that decisions on Northern issues are largely controlled by Southern Canada. This is not only due to a lack of influential political representation at the federal level, but also the fact that many northerners live in the three territories that hold less power vis-à-vis the federal government than do Canada's provinces. This is especially pronounced in Nunavut, whose geography has provided the federal government with an argument to give the territory less power over natural resource rights than in the Northwest Territories or Yukon.<sup>263</sup> This also, arguably, maintains a certain level of psychological distance between Northern and Southern Canada in that the northern territories are still viewed as distant frontiers that can be governed directly from Ottawa.

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<sup>260</sup> Gary N. Wilson, "Nested Federalism in Arctic Quebec: A Comparative Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 80-81.

<sup>261</sup> Peter Jull, "Inuit Politics and the Arctic Seas," in *Politics of the Northwest Passage*, Franklyn Griffiths, Ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queens, 1987), p. 50-51.

<sup>262</sup> Wilson, p. 80-81.

<sup>263</sup> The federal government argues that the presence of more offshore resources in Nunavut than in the other two territories, as well as the presence of these resources across territorial lines, justifies this position. See Paul Mayer, "Mayer Report on Nunavut Devolution," *Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada*, June 2007, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357676177444/1357739682215#chp4h>.

On the question of how Northerners view an increased federal presence in the Arctic, there is also a notable mix of rhetoric. Some perspectives were more welcoming to increased resource extraction activities in the North as a means to boost the region's struggling economy, assuming that such activities were balanced by necessary environmental protections.<sup>264</sup> Other perspectives, such as those argued by former Inuit leader and Canadian diplomat Mary Simon, were more concerned about the realistic impacts of increased outside activity on the day-to-day life of Northern communities.<sup>265</sup> There is some weight behind using the term "realistic impacts" here. Although resource exploitation could provide short-to-medium-term economic relief for struggling Northern communities, the likely effect would be the decline—if not eventual, total elimination of—traditional subsistence activities that served as the lifeline for these communities. For many Northern communities, having to face such a reality head-on creates a sense of pause in the abstract rhetoric happening at the national level.

In the context of public opinion on the issue, there are also some methodological factors to consider. Even aside from the above conundrum of geographic distance between the majority of Canadians and the Arctic, there is also the issue of assumptions about how much Canadians *truly* comprehend the Arctic. The difficulties of measuring public opinion have been shown to be particularly present in Canada, not least of which

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<sup>264</sup> Michael Mifflin, "Arctic sovereignty: A view from the North," *Policy Options*, May 1, 2007, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-arctic-and-climate-change/arctic-sovereignty-a-view-from-the-north/>.

<sup>265</sup> Mary Simon, "Inuit and the Canadian Arctic: Sovereignty Begins at Home," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Spring 2009), p. 250-260.



are due to language divisions that can significantly alter the tone of poll questions.<sup>266</sup> Yet it may also be possible that the elasticity of policy decisions to public opinion may be overstated, particularly when the nature of Canadian parliamentary democracy has made it difficult for single parties to consistently command strong majorities on a given issue. François Petry's study of democratic responsiveness in Canadian politics found that public opinion was certainly able to influence policy outcomes on key issues, particularly in cases in which the effects of policies were redistributive to the larger population versus benefitting elite interest groups. This was made easier, however, when public opinion already supported the government's agenda.<sup>267</sup> An interesting finding by Petry here also has application to Arctic policy under Stephen Harper. Using the example of Brian Mulroney pursuing free-trade agreements in opposition to public opinion, Petry notes that Mulroney was able to overcome this opposition by intensifying communications campaigns to meet intensified overall discussion of the free trade issue.<sup>268</sup> In short, the government was able to win the argument by having the most prominent voice in a loud discussion. Although public opinion may not have been steadfastly against Harper's Arctic agenda—as will be discussed below—there is some logical extension here. By presenting a bold plan in the face of increased demand for bold action, the government may have been able to gain significant momentum to implement its agenda.

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<sup>266</sup> Christopher Page, *The Roles of Public Opinion Research in Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 162.

<sup>267</sup> François Petry, "The Opinion-Policy Relationship in Canada," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (May 1999), p. 547-48.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 548-49.

One also must consider where the Arctic stands as both a domestic and foreign policy issue: socioeconomic issues fall within the former, whereas sovereignty and climate policy, for the most part, fall within the latter. The intuitive assumption is that domestic policy carries more weight between the two in public opinion, though Petry's analysis demonstrates that changes in government could also noticeably alter this balance.<sup>269</sup> Carrying this assumption forward, it would not be surprising to see such a dynamic when Harper increased rhetoric about Canadian Arctic sovereignty in the international sphere. In the previous chapter, I discussed the salience of the Arctic issue in the late 1990s in the context of broader Canadian foreign policy. Yet there are also some notable points to address when putting the Arctic in the context of foreign policy, particularly when determining how opinions differ between across regions.

The most contentious example of this is how Quebec's unique culture within the Canadian identity shapes public opinion in that province, especially considering the dynamics germane to French-language media. Public opinion in Quebec has also shown itself to have notable differences from the rest of Canada on major foreign policy issues. While Quebec showed higher disagreement than the rest of Canada with the United States' post-9/11 defense policy (to include the invasion of Iraq),<sup>270</sup> Quebecers were more favorable than the rest of Canada toward the 1987 Canada-US Free Trade

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid., p. 546-47.

<sup>270</sup> David G. Haglund, "Quebec's 'America Problem': Differential Threat Perception in the North American Security Community," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Fall 2009), p. 554-558.

Agreement and subsequent 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement.<sup>271</sup> There are some factors that explain the case of the former. Although Quebecers' views of the United States have fluctuated over time, some commentators have noted the possibility of a growing "anti-Americanism" streak in the province in the early 2000s.<sup>272</sup> This may be due to less exposure to American media than English-speaking Canada and more exposure to media from France, which was more critical of American foreign policy after 9/11.<sup>273</sup> In trade terms, however, Quebec politicians were able to influence public opinion in favor of free trade by linking the issue to politics surrounding Quebec nationalism in the early 1990s.<sup>274</sup> In both cases, we see examples of elites—be they political leaders, media, or lobbying groups—playing a significant role in shaping public opinion.

Although concerted government campaigns existed to influence public opinion regarding Arctic initiatives prior to Harper's government—as outlined in the second chapter—the ability of the government to engage in a comprehensive strategic communications campaign was heightened over previous eras via technological change. As such, the ability to produce mass communications campaigns that could be seen as easily in Toronto as they could in Iqaluit allowed for the government to harmonize its intended message. One must also consider, however, how Canadians viewed national

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<sup>271</sup> Pierre Martin, "When Nationalism Meets Continentalism: the Politics of Free Trade in Quebec," in *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, Michael Keating and John Loughlin, Eds. (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1997), p. 238-240.

<sup>272</sup> This is discussed in Haglund, p. 554-558, although this is also an embedded perception in Canadian society that was supported by opinion polls during this time.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Martin, p. 256.

security in the first place. In light of the political tumult of the 1990s, Canadian attitudes were shifting on identity matters when it came to this issue. On matters of defining Canadian national identity, opinion polling outside of Quebec found a significant increase in support between 1995 and 2004 for factors such as “Speaking the Language,”<sup>275</sup> “Being Born in Canada,” and “Having Citizenship.” There was also an increase in support for the Canadian military and national history as sources of pride.<sup>276</sup> Arguably, this change in support was wedded to the evolving dynamics of the international arena and their effects on Canada. Canadian participation in the American-led “War on Terror” and further inward evaluation of Canada’s increasingly diverse population—as generally harmonious as this latter phenomenon has been—may have contributed to a rise in the more conservative notion of national identity. Furthermore, this would have helped explain support for the Conservative Party’s 2006 electoral victory as well as continued exploitation of identity-based factors by the Harper government to garner support for its foreign policy and Arctic agendas.<sup>277</sup>

Corollary to these findings is how Canadians were responding to the notion of internationalism. As noted in the previous chapter, controversial actions taken by Canadian peacekeepers in the 1990s and public realizations of the difficult realities of peacemaking in the Afghanistan conflict likely had an effect on public enthusiasm for peacekeeping. This finding was also noted in the above polling regarding inclusion of

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<sup>275</sup> This assumedly referred to being able to speak English.

<sup>276</sup> Tracey Raney, “As Canadian As Possible... Under What Circumstances? Public Opinion on National Identity In Canada Outside Quebec,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Fall 2009), p. 14-19.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19-22.

“Democracy” and “Influence in the World” as sources of Canadian pride, which saw a decline between 1995 and 2004.<sup>278</sup> In this sense, any Canadian attachment to internationalism may have come from a cyclical, “nostalgic” desire to attach something distinct to the Canadian identity, a desire that became subdued when further inquiry into the subject was presented.<sup>279</sup>

Pinning down the sources of Canadian foreign policy becomes further complicated by the country’s relationship with the United States. While Canadians have consistently shown an independent streak when it comes to the relationship, there is also a general consensus that bilateral relations need to remain healthy.<sup>280</sup> Public opinion can also go against certain issues that may put the government in a difficult position within the bilateral relationship. An example of this was seen in 2004, when the Canadian government backed down on its initial openness to joining an American ballistic missile defense system as Canadian public opinion soured toward the United States due to the invasion of Iraq and a series of protectionist actions by the Americans toward cross-border trade.<sup>281</sup>

These factors demonstrate that the Canadian public’s perceptions of foreign policy are subject to regular change, but are also not irrespective of rational assessment of the international scene. At the same time, evaluation of public attitudes toward foreign

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., p. 15-17.

<sup>279</sup> Don Munton and Tom Keating, “Internationalism and the Canadian Public,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 34, No. 3 (September 2001), p. 532.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 542.

<sup>281</sup> Donald Barry and Duane Bratt, “Defense Against Help: Explaining Canada-U.S. Security Relations,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p. 79.

policy could lead one to believe that Canadians are, at times, subject to “crises of confidence” between rhetorical national identity and their willingness to uphold the values associated with that identity. Although that is not a trait unique to Canadians, it does provide for an important foundation for understanding how the government can influence public opinion on matters of national security.

The issue then becomes determining whether and, if it did, how the Canadian government was able to “sell” the Arctic as a security issue to the general public. Answering these questions of multiple facets of Canadian society will provide a strong understanding of the government’s effectiveness in securitizing the issue. The first aspect of this involves identifying trends and differences across the Canadian national spectrum. As outlined above, we would expect differences across regions based upon predominant political ideology, socioeconomic factors, and population density. The last aspect may prove to be the most interesting. While we would expect differences in opinions when comparing cities and rural areas, what would the dynamic be when comparing major cities to major cities? The value of knowing this is not only in highlighting these dynamics, but in determining if there are any potential variables affecting these dynamics beyond predominant political ideology. Moreover, it is necessary to determine whether the Canadian public has accepted the Arctic problem as a security issue as framed by the government. In order to do this, I will trace how public opinion was affected by changes in the international environment, most notably surrounding particular Arctic-related events.

Beyond the attitudes of the general public, we can also view the potential securitization of the issue through the lens of the media. Certainly, the media can be

argued to be an extension of the securitization process rather than being the referent object. At the same time, the relationship between the media and public opinion is different from the relationship between the public and the government. Whereas the government attempts to win public support for its agenda, the media can both influence as an elite actor and serve as an effective bellwether of public opinion. This distinction is important as it shows that the media's influence is not constrained by one side of the government-public relationship, but can instead serve the interests of either based upon the circumstances. Measuring media interpretations of the Arctic security agenda can therefore be valuable in determining if trends mirror or help shape public opinion over time. Additionally, trends in media reporting and editorializing on the issue may help to uncover identifiable preferences within the broadly defined media. If this is the case, then it would possibly demonstrate a third actor that has a definable role in the securitization process.

Methodologically, there are some issues to note in analyzing the securitization process in this way. Data on Canadian public opinion in regards to this issue is not extensive, and the data analyzed here was gathered by polling groups that remained close to the issue. Although the polling methodology itself meets an empirical standard, the relatively limited availability of polling data should be acknowledged as a byproduct of the relative youth of the issue. On this note, the long-term ramifications of the Canadian Arctic security agenda cannot yet be evaluated given that increased focus on the issue, as defined here, has only been underway for a decade. This is especially important to note given the October 2015 electoral defeat of the Harper government, which occurred during the time of this writing. It is very possible that the current government under Justin

Trudeau would choose not to continue the country's Arctic security agenda along the same lines. The value of this research, therefore, is to evaluate how the government during a given period of time attempted a securitization process and to understand the factors that allowed—or did not allow—securitization to take place. The subsequent effects of these processes, while not possible to study at the present time, are certainly worth further study in the future.

### ***Canadian Public Opinion and Arctic Security***

The main data sets used here were taken as part of a comprehensive joint initiative by the EKOS Research Associates polling firm, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, and the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs. Billed as "Rethinking the Top of the World," the polling initiative was published in two iterations in 2011 and 2015. One stream of thought would find that this timeline doesn't completely capture the full securitization process that might have been taking place upon Harper's election in 2006. Conversely, this may have nonetheless been enough time for public opinion on the Arctic to "settle" with less sensitivity to heightened rhetoric that takes place during election campaigns. This latter assumption will guide the understanding of the polling results here. Interestingly, the poll also sought opinions from the public of other Arctic states in addition to analyzing Canadian public opinion on both the national and sub-national levels. Although the results of public opinion outside of Canada are not the subject of analysis here, they nonetheless do add some further context to the global public picture regarding the nature of Arctic security.



On broad questions facing the Arctic, the 2011 opinion poll did show some notable differences between Northern and Southern Canada.<sup>282</sup> Although respondents in both locales stated that the natural environment was the biggest issue facing the Canada—with 33% of Northerners and 39% of Southerners expressing this opinion—Northerners also put greater value on factors such as housing, the economy, and education. The starkest contrast between the two, interestingly, was found amongst those who stated that sovereignty was the biggest issue facing the region: whereas 19% of respondents expressed this opinion in Southern Canada, only 6% expressed this opinion in Northern Canada. What might account for this difference? Pollsters noted that focus groups in Northern communities expressed a less developed understanding of the Arctic sovereignty issue, particularly as this issue was not adequately presented by the media or government. In Southern Canada, the highest response to the prioritization of Arctic sovereignty was found in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, although this response was not significantly higher than the average in all of Southern Canada. This aspect of the polling results is not particularly surprising given the socioeconomic differences between Northern and Southern Canada as well as the focused resonance of the government-driven Arctic sovereignty campaign toward Southern Canadians. Nonetheless, the poll also found Northern Canadians to be more upbeat on opinions of current quality of life, expected quality of life in the next 10 years, and current health. This finding is surprising at first sight, although differences between Northern regions are less surprising. Whereas 84% of Yukon respondents found their life to be “good,” 65% of

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<sup>282</sup> For reference purposes on all discussion of the 2011 poll here, see EKOS Research Associates, “Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Security Public Opinion Survey,” January 2011.

respondents in more remote Nunavut stated the same. This finding is helpful in demonstrating that even the “North” in itself is prone to differences on socioeconomic and wellness matters.

Respondents were also asked to describe an unprompted view of their understandings of the term “security.” A plurality of respondents in both Northern and Southern Canada tied security most to protecting Canada’s borders from international threats, with a smaller number of respondents highlighting sovereignty or environmental protection. The wedding of security to international threats was most commonly found in Alberta, with a third of respondents identifying security in this manner. When given prompted definitions of security, however, a greater diversity of results was discovered. Nine out of ten respondents in Northern Canada rated environmental and social security as “important,” with 86% and 82% of Southern Canadians responding the same on each category, respectively. When asked the question of whether the Arctic should serve as the center of Canadian foreign policy, over half of respondents in both Northern and Southern Canada responded affirmatively. More tellingly, Northerners were more likely to see the Arctic as an intrinsic part of Canada than Southerners with a difference of 77% to 63%. On its face, the difference is not surprising given the identity duality held by Northern Canadians versus their Southern counterparts. However, should we read into this statistic when considering the impact of securitization and the argument advanced here? The fact that six out of ten Southern Canadians saw the Arctic as intrinsically part of the Canadian whole does not necessarily debunk this argument, even if this statistic does not represent an overwhelming majority. When combined with other questions

asked in the polls, there was a clear statement of interest in giving definition to the priorities that drove Arctic security.

When it came to hard security matters, however, 56% of Northern Canadians rated national security as an important factor with 69% of Southern Canadians doing the same. When asked about devoting military resources to the Arctic and away from global conflict zones, a majority of respondents in both Northern and Southern Canada—59% to 56%—supported this idea. However, a significant difference was seen when given the option of not shifting overseas military forces to the Arctic, with 32% of Northerners and 14% of Southerners expressing this opinion. On the question of building up military forces in the Arctic, only 52% of Northerners expressed support for this, whereas 60% of Southerners did the same. In Southern Canada, support for increased Arctic militarization was highest in Alberta and lowest in Quebec. Even so, support for military and national security factors ranked well below statements prioritizing quality of life and strengthening the socioeconomic picture across Canada. This demonstrates that while hard security factors were not rejected by Canadians, they were also not immediately prioritized following the government's increased rhetorical focus on hard security matters in the Arctic. Such a finding, while intuitive, also demonstrates that public opinion proved to be relatively stable on the issue during this time.

What key takeaways should be noted in this first round of opinion polls? Firstly, the polls represented a consistent level of understanding of the issues facing the Arctic on both the national and sub-national levels. Unsurprisingly, Northern Canadians prioritized socioeconomic issues over hard security issues. The fact that Southern Canadians also generally prioritized these issues—although not to as high of a degree—was also not

surprising. The poll results also showed that, on a provincial level, Southern attitudes toward the Arctic generally followed political trends: conservative-leaning Alberta tended to show the highest support for increasing hard security measures in the Arctic, whereas Quebec was generally the least supportive of such possibilities. Additionally, such measures did not receive overwhelming support in the country at large, particularly when given the option of instead focusing on socioeconomic and environmental protection factors. These results would thus appear consistent with Canadian political attitudes on domestic and foreign policy matters.

What do these results mean for arguments advanced about the impact of securitization? As suggested in the first chapter, it is possible that “security” for the Canadian populace could indeed refer to addressing the threats faced by Northern populations on socioeconomic and environmental degradation matters. Thus, increased government attention to the Arctic could very well be a means of providing security around these issues. When looking at the poll results, however, the highest response to an unprompted definition of security suggested that traditional notions of the term had not entirely washed away. The rebuttal to this would be that the poll results also demonstrated that Canadians had very diverse views on matters of security. Although the government undoubtedly played up the sovereignty and hard security aspects of the issue, it also clearly incorporated the “human” aspects into its Arctic agenda as well. This may have created an open-ended securitization process, be it intended or accidental, that caused the public to respond with a holistic understanding of what “Arctic security” actually means. A parallel dynamic to this was how the shaping of Arctic security dialogue was occurring on a transnational level.

Could we not also argue that Canadian public opinion was responding not only to their government's framing of the issue, but also to how the issue was being framed in global discussions? The poll's engagement with respondents outside of Canada showed that opinions on various aspects of the Arctic issue could vary considerably between states, although Canadian public opinion was not an outlier on these issues outside of questions regarding territorial sovereignty and the ownership of the Northwest Passage. On both a national and global level, therefore, the 2011 poll shows that Canadians on both the national and sub-national level did show significant interest in the Arctic issue. Unsurprisingly, the views expressed in this poll did not significantly depart from expected results given political norms and identities on security matters.

The 2015 version of the poll<sup>283</sup> revisited a number of the same issues from the first iteration, but also provided contexts regarding how Southern Canadians viewed the Arctic space. While the timing of the 2011 version did allow for a more objective evaluation of the Harper government's Arctic agenda, the 2015 version would have expectedly been of a more critical bent given the demonstrated problems that various Arctic investment initiatives were facing. Would this create a more negative view of the Arctic agenda, particularly among Southern Canadians? Or would we expect less focus on ambitious infrastructure, resource development, and military spending while maintaining support for health and education investments? The findings of the poll did help to reveal some underlying discursive effects of the government's agenda on Canadian beliefs regarding the Arctic. To test this, the poll provided respondents with

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<sup>283</sup> For reference purposes on discussion of this poll, see Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, "Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Public Opinion Survey, Vol. 2," (September 2015).

four true/false statements: Nunavut communities are not connected by road, nor is the province connected to any other province via road (true); the majority of Inuit, First Nations, and Métis in the Arctic live on reserves (false); Canada has several military bases along the Northwest Passage (false); there is no cell phone service in any of the three Arctic territories (false). In all, 37% of Southerners polled answered zero or one of these questions correctly, with only 10% correctly answering all four. On the question of road connectivity, the number of individuals incorrectly answering “false” slightly outweighed those answering “true.” Slightly over one-quarter of respondents incorrectly believed that Canada had several military bases along the Northwest Passage to provide for territorial defense, which raises an interesting notation to this aspect of the poll. While overall public knowledge of the Arctic proved to be underwhelming in this poll, could it be argued that the government’s rhetorical focus on hard security matters actually stuck in the minds of some Canadians? The totality of further results from the polls may help to shed light on this question.

On matters of the greatest issues facing Canada and the Arctic specifically, there was little change regarding the prioritization of economic issues on the national level and environmental issues on the Arctic regional level. However, issues such as calling for governance changes as well as perceived reductions in privacy and freedom of speech—two categories that did not appear in the 2011 polling results—appeared above all issues besides the economy on a national level. Certainly, it seemed that the controversies that had plagued the Harper government’s public image in previous years were resonating in public opinion. Canadians in both the North and South also demonstrated a slightly less optimistic outlook on their quality of life compared to the previous poll, adding further

weight to the assumption that the political climate at this time was sensitive to the economic downturn and growing discontent toward the current government. When asked to measure the importance of various issues facing the Arctic, there was not any significant change in terms of how respondents ranked the various issues against each other. However, there was a small decline in those respondents who assigned high importance to most presented Arctic issues. Additionally, statements that expressed support for increasing search-and-rescue and military capabilities in the Arctic saw more noticeable declines in respondents who agreed to their importance.

On security matters, definitions favoring protection of the environment and increasing social wellness received the highest number of respondents in seeing them as important. The largest decline in support came for definitions that supported increasing the national security apparatus in the Arctic, with less than half of Northern respondents demonstrating that hard security definitions were not important toward their own definition of security. The importance of economic security to defining security also saw a noticeable decline, which was likely due to decreased support for natural resource exploitation in the region. Opinions on the perceived level of rivalry in the Arctic between countries also yielded some interesting results. While a clear majority of Northerners felt that the threat of military conflict had decreased or stayed the same in the previous year, 50% of Southerners answered in the same manner. This response can be interpreted in multiple ways as respondents who answered that the threat was unchanged may not necessarily be viewing the threat as absent. Nonetheless, outwardly optimistic feelings on this subject were clearly lower outside of Northern Canada, even if the

wording of this question did not provide for a clear delineation of the actual level of perceived threat.<sup>284</sup>

Another interesting point to note was the decreased support for strengthening the Canadian military posture in the North. In both Northern and Southern Canada, the number of respondents expressing support for strengthening the military's presence fell to less than half. Although support for this remained higher in Southern Canada, there was nonetheless a larger percentage decline as well. This could perhaps be as a result of the national political situation resonating more outside of the North. There was similarly a more pronounced decline in Southerners who rated a military presence in the Canadian as "extremely important" vis-à-vis Canadian military operations elsewhere.

Some surprising results were uncovered when the poll turned to international cooperation matters. Although a slight increase in support for a hypothetical nuclear-free weapons zone in the Arctic was unsurprising given declining support for hard security solutions to Arctic issues in Canada, a sharp decrease in awareness of the Arctic Council among Southern Canadians was also observed. This was surprising not only because it challenged the assumption that awareness of Arctic issues would remain at least constant when compared to the 2011 poll, but it also so happened that Canada held the chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2013-2015.

What would explain the decline of awareness of an organization in the country that was meant to oversee the organization's operations during this time? It's possible that tensions with Russia over its 2014 invasion of Ukraine or the government's focus on

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<sup>284</sup> The pollsters did note that focus group discussions did not yield a particular sense of strong concern about military threats in the region. See "Rethinking the Top of the World" (2015), p. 42-43.



hard security matters, neither of which fell within the purview of the organization, overshadowed any attention the organization might have otherwise received during the Canadian chairmanship. These factors might also explain similar declines in knowledge of the organization in Finland and Norway, whose shared borders with Russia weighed heavily on Northern issues from 2014 onward. On the other hand, the government's championing of Arctic economic development via resource exploitation would have seemingly aligned with the creation of the Arctic Economic Council, which the Canadian government touted as a successful byproduct of its chairmanship.<sup>285</sup> Canadians also showed increased support for allowing non-Arctic states to have a greater say in Arctic affairs, which would not be indicative of a backlash toward multinational cooperation in light of other geopolitical issues. There was also a decrease in those Canadians who thought that their country should take a "firm line" on border disputes, with more favoring peaceful negotiations over these disputes.

The broader conclusion that we can draw from the poll was the presence of a general decrease in the resonance of Arctic issues across Canada from 2011-2015. When asked specific questions about Arctic matters, Canadians now showed an even greater tendency toward peaceful or socioeconomic-based priorities in the Arctic. If Canadian public opinion surrounding Arctic sovereignty did hit an apex during the course of Harper's tenure as prime minister, it had seemingly diminished near the end of his tenure in 2015. Could we then measure points in which public opinion did spike in favor of

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<sup>285</sup> Shaun Malley, "Canada's leadership of the Arctic Council—a look back," *CBC News*, April 23, 2015, accessed May 8, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canada-s-leadership-of-the-arctic-council-a-look-back-1.3046225>.

Arctic sovereignty initiatives in response to governmental influence? A study previously undertaken by Mathieu Landriault and Paul Minard looked at exactly this. In order to test the resonance of government initiatives in the public mind, Landriault and Minard looked at responses to the annual Arctic trips taken by Harper and key Arctic military exercises. The military operations in question were Operation NUNALIVUT, which typically took place in the spring, and Operation NANOOK, which typically coincided with Harper's summer tour, and were well-publicized as a result. The level of support for these operations was measured in the study by support for Harper's Conservative government between 2006 and 2014 during the times in which these trips occurred.<sup>286</sup> The authors found that the summer Arctic tour and Operation NANOOK did have a noticeable effect in increasing support for the Conservative government—whereas NUNALIVUT did not have a noticeable effect—suggesting that Harper's personal emphasis on Arctic matters did resonate with the public.<sup>287</sup> While the effects of these operations did not have longstanding consequences on attitudes toward the Tories, these findings did allow for establishing consistency in a public opinion that favored both liberal internationalism in its foreign policy and bolder displays of Arctic sovereignty. However, the study did not achieve the expected result of finding greater support for the government in its first two years, which showed that other factors indeed affected public opinion despite notable events in the Arctic.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Mathieu Landriault and Paul Minard, "Does standing up for sovereignty pay off politically? Arctic military announcements and governing party support in Canada from 2006 to 2014," *International Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (March 2016), p. 47-49.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

Even so, the apparent decline in national attention to Arctic issues was consistent with a general decline in support for the Conservatives beginning in 2012.<sup>289</sup> Combined with other aspects of the analysis of polling results, such as higher support for government initiatives in Conservative-dominated Alberta, there does appear to have been a clear connection between existing political beliefs and support for the government's Arctic agenda. This does not wholly explain levels of support for the agenda at various points, however, as previously-discussed assessments showed support that was higher than would be suggested by political lines. Landriault and Minard's analysis also suggests that the noticeable connection between Harper's identity-driven Arctic visits and brief increases in public support for the government was indicative of the influence of identity factors. Nonetheless, this must be grounded in other aspects of Canadian political culture and beliefs, which did not ultimately see a watershed increase in support for hard security measures in the Arctic. Instead, identity factors were enough to push the issue to a point of increased discussion and perhaps, for a time, a higher level of support than would be expected given other political influences. This narrative can, of course, become self-fulfilling. What does this prove beyond the idea that the government can influence public opinion on a given issue for a period of time? And at what point—and why—does the government eventually lose the ability to continually maintain support on the issue? The answer to this goes beyond the elite factors that exist outside of government control, particularly the role of media in continuing to shed light on the issue (whether or not their views support the government's position).

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

The mass media dynamic in Canada is interesting given the relationship between the country's large size and geographic population spread. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the country's iconic, government-backed television and radio service, offers both national and regionally-focused programming throughout Canada. Although this allows for consistent, high-quality programming regardless of local population density, it also may result in coverage that still is under the editorial control of a media corporation that is geographically distant from the issue. This could be especially notable in the Arctic, where the company's local branch, CBC North, covers the entirety of Northern Canada. As such, the service provides a diverse array of content to serve the populations of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and northern Quebec. When a "regional" network broadcasts in multiple languages and covers four time zones,<sup>290</sup> how "local" can it really be? Although a variety of online media resources exist to fill the gaps in local coverage, they do not have the consistent reach of the more established CBC. As noted in the earlier discussion on the relationship between Northern residents and the government's Arctic agenda, this may help to explain the distance between the Southern and Northern perspectives, even with the apparent presence of national mass-media in the North.

Toronto-based *The Globe and Mail*, the country's largest national newspaper, is also viewed as the bellwether of national perspectives. The paper, however, has faced criticism in how it balances local and regional coverage. Despite its national focus, it has

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<sup>290</sup> Katherine Barton, "Igloolik, Northbeat celebrate 20 years: A look at how TV evolved in the North," *CBC News North*, November 13, 2015, accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/northbeat-igloolik-20-years-how-tv-evolved-in-the-north-1.3317652>.

historically held conservative editorial leanings and has been perceived to privilege coverage of metropolitan Toronto over other metropolitan areas.<sup>291</sup> *The Globe and Mail*'s chief national competitor, *The National Post*, has also been viewed as traditionally conservative-leaning, albeit it has been noted to occasionally buck this trend in notable fashion.<sup>292</sup> Major metropolitan areas are also served by local newspapers, which can add political and social balance to national-level perspectives. *The Toronto Star*, which also happens to be the highest-circulation newspaper in Canada, has tended to support progressive perspectives.<sup>293</sup> As noted in a 2014 *Globe and Mail* editorial, however, the left-right dynamic is not necessarily telling in terms of views toward the government. Although major Canadian print media favored the Conservatives in the 2011 federal election, this did not prevent newspapers from being routinely critical of Harper's agenda.<sup>294</sup>

As such, the media perspective in Canada must be recognized as nuanced in how it represents both local and national issues. The inclusion of media perspectives here is to not only help demonstrate how media organizations have presented Arctic security

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<sup>291</sup> Elke Winter, *Us, Them, and Others: Pluralism and National Identities in Diverse Societies* (University of Toronto: Toronto, 2011), p. 96.

<sup>292</sup> Pat Murphy, "Is the National Post still a conservative newspaper," *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 18, 2012, accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/Is-the-National-Post-still-a-conservative-newspaper-174833901.html>.

<sup>293</sup> Kathy English, "Why do newspapers endorse?" *Toronto Star*, October 11, 2008, accessed May 15, 2016, [https://www.thestar.com/news/politics/federalection/2008/10/11/why\\_do\\_newspapers\\_endorse.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/politics/federalection/2008/10/11/why_do_newspapers_endorse.html).

<sup>294</sup> Gerald Caplan, "Harper's media foes aren't liberal—they're moderate conservatives," *The Globe and Mail*, September 13, 2014, accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harpers-media-foes-arent-liberal-theyre-moderate-conservatives/article20586614/>.

matters on the local and national level, but also to show how they have framed the debate over time. Analysis of media perspectives here will focus on the presentation of events surrounding three notable events related to the Arctic: the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident (as well as preceding perceptions of Harper's Arctic agenda following his election in the previous year); media views of the various issues that became apparent in the Arctic security agenda between 2010 and 2014; and "post-mortem" analyses in late 2015 following the end of Conservative governance.

Around the time of the 2006 federal election, Harper's Arctic agenda was not going unnoticed by Canadian media. Previously, Harper was criticized for his ties to the "Calgary School," a group of politically conservative academics at the University of Calgary who were viewed as the intellectual basis for Harper's Western Canadian political movement that sought to "overturn" perceived centers of power in eastern Canada.<sup>295</sup> As the election neared, critics of the Calgary School began to tie Harper's ideological leanings to the much-maligned neoconservative influences of the Bush administration in the United States.<sup>296</sup> Conversely, conservative perspectives, such as those found in *The National Post*, were quick to dismiss these views as baseless.<sup>297</sup> On Harper's proposed Arctic agenda, *The Globe and Mail* published an editorial from University of Calgary political scientist and Arctic expert Rob Huebert—who,

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<sup>295</sup> Marci McDonald, "The Man Behind Stephen Harper," *The Walrus Magazine*, October 2004.

<sup>296</sup> Linda McQuaig, "Conservatives' rise in popularity has been driven by Canada's elite, not majority," *The Toronto Star*, January 22, 2006.

<sup>297</sup> Peter Foster, "School for paranoia: The not-so-scary 'school' behind Stephen Harper," *The National Post*, January 28, 2006, accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.nationalpost.com/story.html?id=86eceb52-a380-41ca-bed8-70af28a87668>.

interestingly, appeared to avoid being lumped in with the Calgary School—two weeks prior to the election. In the editorial, Huebert endorsed a focused Arctic agenda while also expressing caution over being too optimistic about the Conservatives’ ability to actually achieve their proposed agenda.<sup>298</sup> The timing of this editorial was interesting given how its message could be read. On the one hand, Huebert expressed a fairly middle-ground argument regarding the Liberals’ and Conservatives’ respective competence in providing for Canada’s Arctic sovereignty. On the other hand, the call for stronger expressions of Arctic sovereignty may have implicitly supported Harper’s agenda, even though Huebert explicitly criticized the Conservatives’ plans. The importance of these perspectives is not the fact that they varied on the expected agenda of the Harper government, but instead that Harper’s language toward Arctic sovereignty was already being recognized as a looming focal point for the next government.

The controversial Russian flag-planting incident the following year came at a time in which the Harper government’s Arctic agenda was beginning to take shape in policy implementation terms. By this point, media organizations would have seemingly acclimated to the normality of the Arctic sovereignty discussion. So why did this incident instead bring greater attention to the issue while also helping to drive a public narrative of growing rivalry? As mentioned in the first chapter, this event took place amidst otherwise declining relations between Russia and the trans-Atlantic security community. Some clues could also be found in how media organizations framed the event when first reporting on it. CBC reported the story with a headline of Russia “staking claim to [the]

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<sup>298</sup> Rob Huebert, “Who best defends our Arctic?” *The Globe and Mail*, January 4, 2006, accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/who-best-defends-our-arctic/article727039/>.

Arctic region,”<sup>299</sup> which, while representative of the ongoing scientific missions to build a case for future legal claims in the region, also communicated a sense of looming conflict between the Arctic states. *The National Post* furthered this narrative by injecting commentary from Arctic legal expert Michael Byers, who saw the incident as representative of Canada’s inability to effectively enforce its sovereign claims.<sup>300</sup> The event was thus immediately being viewed in some circles with an alarmist tint, seeing Canada as helpless in the face of Russian incursions.

CBC’s French-language service struck a milder tone to the unfolding situation—describing the Canadian government’s position toward the incident as “unimpressed”<sup>301</sup>—with its coverage generally objective and non-editorialized.<sup>302</sup>

Montreal daily *Le Devoir* took an interesting tack in one of its analyses of the situation: While soliciting quotes from oft-quoted experts like Huebert and Byers, the newspaper also sought the opinions of French-Canadian academics Frédéric Lasserre and Joël Plouffe, who both used the opportunity to criticize the American legal position on the Northwest Passage as counterproductive and inconsistent.<sup>303</sup> Although the Americans’ legal argument on the Northwest Passage and their general refusal to ratify UNCLOS was

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<sup>299</sup> CBC News, “Russia plants flag staking claim to Arctic region,” August 2, 2007, accessed May 17, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/russia-plants-flag-staking-claim-to-arctic-region-1.679445>.

<sup>300</sup> The National Post, “Ocean explorers plant Russian flag on Arctic sea floor,” August 2, 2007, accessed May 17, 2016, <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=95c070f6-bcc0-460e-8c12-e873dd18a1df>.

<sup>301</sup> ICI Radio Canada, “Ottawa nullement impressionné,” August 3, 2007, accessed May 21, 2016, <http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelles/international/2007/08/02/001-pole-nord-russie-jeudi.shtml>.

<sup>302</sup> ICI Radio Canada, “Un drapeau russe sous le pôle Nord,” August 1, 2007, accessed May 21, 2016, <http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelles/International/2007/08/01/002-pole-nord-russe.shtml>.

<sup>303</sup> Manon Cornéliier, “La bataille des glaces,” *Le Devoir*, September 1, 2007, accessed May 21, 2016, <http://www.ledevoir.com/politique/canada/155286/la-bataille-des-glaces>.



a regular complaint from the Canadians, the inclusion of focused criticisms against the Americans was an interesting choice given that previous commentaries on the issue had otherwise presented discomfort with perceived Russian expansionism. These comments were also not only representative of Canadian tendencies to jab their southern neighbors when presented with sovereignty concerns, but also of Canadians' parallel exasperation at the United States' differing position that potentially endangered a common continental position against Russian advances. Although calmer voices ultimately acknowledged that the Russians did not pose a dire security threat to Canada's Arctic sovereignty, the continued divergence of the North American positions would continue to be a sore spot going forward.

The calming effect of experts on the issue did not stop the media from speculating about potential rivalry in the Arctic even after the initial attention to the flag-planting incident had subsided. Greater attention to the Arctic region also meant more focus on the implications of the "economic nationalism" that came with the government's attempts to demonstrate that it was serious about protecting sovereign claims to resources. As argued in the *Financial Post*,<sup>304</sup> the financial-reporting arm of *The National Post*, the government's promotion of Northern development was becoming increasingly intertwined with the promotion of natural resource extraction in areas that were becoming noticeably difficult to draw from. This line of thinking saw the government's agenda as creating the *expectation* that corporations would begin investing energy and funds in

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<sup>304</sup> Peter Foster, "'Northern Vision' still alive—and still problematic," *Financial Post*, October 20, 2007, accessed May 22, 2016, <http://www.financialpost.com/scripts/story.html?id=b26fd04c-6a6b-428b-8fb2-3bfa02f2a136&k=54236>.

resource extraction rather than viewing the region as a potential opportunity that needed to be balanced with legitimate environmental and socioeconomic concerns. Certainly, Harper had set the tone shortly after the Russian event by invoking his “use it or lose it” line. Even NDP leader Jack Layton, whose party was only the fourth-largest in the House of Commons at the time, expressed a desire to see greater federal investment in the region.<sup>305</sup> Although Layton’s comments stated that the government needed to focus investment on the socioeconomic needs of the region, rather than prioritize some broad notion of sovereignty enforcement to counter foreign interference, these comments from an otherwise critical source could have been seen as tacitly encouraging to the government’s Arctic focus.

In November 2007, *The Toronto Star* published a piece warning of an unprotected “back door” that was coming into shape as a result of the opening Northwest Passage.<sup>306</sup> The piece included input from Huebert and Byers, who both argued for the need to invest in more naval assets for the region but disagreed over whether they should be of a military or civilian coast guard nature. Also included was concerned commentary from the former head of Canadian military forces in the North. Embedded with the authoritative comments of these individuals was a handful of disconcerting scenarios, such as a major environmental disaster or the inability to prevent the passage of a “rogue

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<sup>305</sup> Chris Windeyer, “Layton backs Iqaluit port pitch,” *Nunatsiaq News*, September 7, 2007, accessed May 22, 2016, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/2007/709/70907/news/iqaluit/70907\\_491.html](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/2007/709/70907/news/iqaluit/70907_491.html).

<sup>306</sup> Ed Struzik, “Who’s guarding our back door?” *The Toronto Star*, November 18, 2007, accessed May 22, 2016, [https://www.thestar.com/news/2007/11/18/whos\\_guarding\\_our\\_back\\_door.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/2007/11/18/whos_guarding_our_back_door.html).

ship” through Canadian waters, which further elevated the argument that Canada was ill-prepared to defend its Arctic territory.

Although this particular article was actually written as a news piece (rather than an editorial one), its matter-of-fact description of the Arctic “threat” was demonstrative of the reality that the Arctic region had indeed become a matter of national security for Canada. What did this mean for the next few years of Canadian policy? While these views were certainly in line with how the issue was being presented in other Arctic states, it was notable that the events of August 2007 had a nearly immediate effect on Canadian discourse about Arctic security. Whereas the Harper government had first begun the securitization process during its campaigning in late 2005, the issue had seemingly become fully securitized two years later. The next question, then, was whether society (and the media that served as a connection between society and governance) would continue to accept the threat as the government undertook measures to counter it. As discussed in the previous chapter, the government faced a multitude of clear difficulties in implementing its Arctic agenda that were reflected considerably in Canadian media.

Yet a key question would need to result from this: Did society and the media view the Harper government’s missteps in its Arctic agenda as poor execution in responding to a legitimate threat, or did they view them as proof that the securitization of the Arctic was a misguided endeavor in totality? By the time the F-35 controversy began to unfold in 2010, the Harper government had arguably been in power long enough for a full evaluation of Harper’s policy vision to take place, and it had already survived a snap election to boot. A lengthy January 2011 profile of Harper in the popular weekly magazine *Maclean’s* was particularly representative of the Canadian political climate

during this time. Depending on one's perspective when reading the piece, Harper could either be viewed as politically bold for his strategy of moving a center-left country rightward, or as an ideologue seeking to implement policies that were anathema to the country's progressive values.<sup>307</sup> Similarly, there was a mix of perspectives in reference to the Arctic agenda. One perspective published in *Maclean's* in early 2010 continued to lament the "inability" of Canada to protect its Arctic sovereignty and, interestingly enough, tied current events to previous instances of Canada's Arctic sovereignty being "threatened."<sup>308</sup> Appeals to Canadian sovereignty would be used for the other side of the argument. A 2012 Ralph Nader editorial published by *The Toronto Star* warned against the Harper government's closeness with the militaristic American security umbrella, and called for a Canada independent of these pressures.<sup>309</sup> The coming tumult of the Arctic agenda was nonetheless overshadowed in the run-up to the 2011 federal election, which was more focused on the general problems with the F-35 program and perceptions of a lack of government transparency.

By 2012, however, the media was beginning to pay greater attention to the problems encountered in the Arctic. The reporting of massive cost overruns in an Ottawa-backed Nunavut housing project, for example, looked all too similar to the F-35

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<sup>307</sup> Paul Wells and John Geddes, "What you don't know about Stephen Harper," *Maclean's*, January 31, 2011, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/what-you-dont-know-about-stephen-harper/>.

<sup>308</sup> Brian D. Johnson, "Do we really own the Arctic?" *Maclean's*, May 17, 2010, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/historian-shelagh-grant-on-the-coming-struggle-over-the-canadian-arctic-and-why-we-may-soon-lose-our-sovereignty-in-the-north/>.

<sup>309</sup> Ralph Nader, "Beware 'deep integration,'" *The Toronto Star*, December 26, 2012, accessed May 23, 2016, [https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2011/04/26/beware\\_deep\\_integration.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2011/04/26/beware_deep_integration.html).

debacle.<sup>310</sup> Although the Government of Nunavut shouldered most of the blame for the cost overruns in this instance, the event was a microcosm of the budgetary difficulties that were becoming apparent in Arctic operations. By 2013, Harper's rhetoric was looking increasingly empty when juxtaposed with actual policy. As published in *The National Post*, it was no longer simply a question of the problems faced by the government bureaucratically, but also whether the threat of foreign incursions in the Northwest Passage was overblown in the first place.<sup>311</sup> Arctic politics expert Heather Exner-Pirot referred to Harper's Arctic policies as "embarrassing" and even referred to him as the "Putin of the Arctic" due to his aggressive statements about Canadian Arctic sovereignty.<sup>312</sup> Oddly enough, the same media outlets that had willingly published the hawkish commentaries about the Russian "threat" in 2007 were now turning against the insinuation that the threat was ever that serious in the first place. Certainly, alarmism was decried by influential voices prior to this, such as was the case in a 2010 editorial by Plouffe and Harry Borlase that appeared in *Le Devoir*.<sup>313</sup> Yet despite the 2011 electoral gains made by the Conservatives, the flaws in the Arctic agenda's execution were

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<sup>310</sup> Nunatsiaq News, "Report: 'socio-economic objectives' lay behind Nunavut social housing fiasco," November 27, 2012, accessed May 23, 2016, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674report\\_socio-economic\\_objectives\\_lay\\_behind\\_nunavut\\_social\\_housing\\_fia/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674report_socio-economic_objectives_lay_behind_nunavut_social_housing_fia/).

<sup>311</sup> Michael Den Tandt, "After the photo ops, Harper must deliver on promises in the Arctic," *The National Post*, August 21, 2013, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/michael-den-tandt-after-the-photo-ops-harper-must-deliver-on-promises-in-the-arctic>.

<sup>312</sup> Heather Exner-Pirot, "Blog: Stephen Harper and the North Pole—still embarrassing Canadians on Arctic policy," *Eye on the Arctic*, December 11, 2013, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2013/12/11/blog-stephen-harper-and-the-north-pole-still-embarrassing-canadians-in-arctic-policy/>.

<sup>313</sup> Joël Plouffe and Harry Borlase, "L'Arctique de Stephen Harper," *Le Devoir*, August 28, 2010, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.ledevoir.com/politique/canada/295162/l-arctique-de-stephen-harper>.

becoming clearly apparent. Less charged evaluations, such as that by Arctic historian Whitney Lackenbauer published in *The Globe and Mail*, noted the difficulties faced by the government while also leaving open the possibility that the spirit of the agenda could be salvaged.<sup>314</sup> Still, growing frustration with the costs and difficulties faced by the government's various Arctic projects should not be examined in a vacuum. As the Arctic agenda was heavily security-focused and promised increased military spending, it would only be logical that the F-35 controversy and the costs incurred in Canada's participation in the Afghanistan campaign would extend a general wariness toward Arctic security spending. Paradoxically, this wariness was met with a doubling-down of military spending pledges by the government.<sup>315</sup> Although the government was clearly demonstrating rhetorical commitment to its policies—even those outside of the Arctic space—it was clearly losing ground when the results of these policies were put under the microscope.

Following a 2015 federal election involving a tight three-way race between Harper's Conservatives, Trudeau's Liberals, and Thomas Mulcair's NDP right until election day, the Liberals managed to pull off a surprisingly strong victory that left them with a majority in the House of Commons and the Canadian prime ministership for the first time in nearly a decade. Naturally, questions were raised about what Arctic policy would look like under the new government. With Trudeau not making any particularly

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<sup>314</sup> P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "Harper's Arctic evolution," *The Globe and Mail*, August 20, 2013, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/harpers-arctic-evolution/article13852195/>.

<sup>315</sup> Brian Stewart, "\$30B fighter jets just the start of defence-spending boom," *CBC News*, April 6, 2011, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/30b-fighter-jets-just-the-start-of-defence-spending-boom-1.1066653>.

bold statements about any changes in Arctic policy during the course of the campaign,<sup>316</sup> these commentaries seemingly appeared to turn toward evaluations of Harper's policies. Additionally, the reality soon became evident that Trudeau would be inheriting Harper's Arctic budgetary woes with ongoing projects.<sup>317</sup> Nonetheless, some initial commentaries following the election also expressed a belief that Trudeau's government would be more attentive to the social problems facing the North. An editorial published by CBC argued that failure of the Conservatives to win any of the three seats from the Northern territories signaled a protest against Harper's Arctic policies. The surprising defeat of Leona Aglukkaq, who had represented Nunavut in the House of Commons and served as a member of Harper's cabinet since 2008, in favor of Liberal candidate Hunter Tootoo was seen as particularly damning.<sup>318</sup> It's possible that the result in Nunavut was simply consistent with the national trend favoring the Liberals, especially as the Yukon and Northwest Territories also flipped to the Liberals from the Conservatives and NDP, respectively. Aglukkaq was also favored early in the election campaign,<sup>319</sup> which suggests that there was not festering discontent in the territory toward Harper's agenda leading up to the election. In the months that followed, it was not possible to discern if

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<sup>316</sup> Mia Bennett, "Blog: What does Trudeau win mean for the Arctic?" *Eye on the Arctic*, October 21, 2015, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2015/10/21/blog-what-does-trudeau-win-mean-for-arctic/>.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Jerald Sabin, "North's Liberal vote a rebuke of Harper's Arctic policy," *CBC*, October 21, 2015, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/opinion-sabin-arctic-policy-election-1.3280899>.

<sup>319</sup> Steve Ducharme and Jim Bell, "Tootoo rides Liberal tsunami to grab Nunavut from Aglukkaq," *Nunatsiaq News*, October 20, 2015, accessed June 2, 2016, [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674tootoo\\_rides\\_liberal\\_tsunami\\_to\\_grab\\_nunavut\\_from\\_aglukkaq/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674tootoo_rides_liberal_tsunami_to_grab_nunavut_from_aglukkaq/).

major changes were underway in the Arctic under the new government. Although the Arctic and climate change matters featured during Trudeau's March 2016 visit to Washington, commentators saw the visit as positive but unrevealing on Arctic matters.<sup>320</sup> Instead, commentaries in the United States were more focused on the warm welcome received by Trudeau in Washington, whose youthful, progressive demeanor was painted as a refreshing tack from the opaque, pessimistic rhetoric of his predecessor.<sup>321</sup> It is apparent, however, that the rhetoric had shifted along these lines. Unlike his predecessor a decade prior, Trudeau did not expend his earliest breaths as prime minister to make statements of sovereignty toward Canada's southern neighbor.

The findings of this analysis,<sup>322</sup> while generally intuitive, nonetheless offer understandings of how the securitization process aided Stephen Harper's Arctic agenda during the life of his government. Although Harper faced many policy and bureaucratic difficulties in actually implementing the tangible aspects of the agenda, his rhetorical focus on the issue—and subsequent coverage of this focus within the national media—arguably raised the profile of Arctic security issues in the public sphere. Public opinion polls might not have reflected overwhelming support for a stronger Canadian position on sovereignty matters, but they did demonstrate attention to the idea in the first place. Thus, the securitization process might not have been successful in making hard security matters

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<sup>320</sup> Bob Weber, "Obama, Trudeau further some Arctic goals but miss others," *Maclean's*, March 10, 2016, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/obama-trudeau-further-some-arctic-goals-but-miss-others/>.

<sup>321</sup> Gregory Korte, "Trudeau state visit marks emerging 'special relationship' with Canada," *USA Today*, March 10, 2016, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2016/03/09/trudeau-state-visit-marks-emerging-special-relationship-canada/81524932/>.

<sup>322</sup> A table summarizing these findings can be found at the end of the chapter.



in the Arctic a public priority, but it did have an impact on creating a measurable level of support, even if unenthusiastic, for the government's agenda. The combination of mass media and public opinion also provides some understandings of the Canadian political dynamic that can be used for further comparative research. Despite the diversity and fragmentation of Canada's political system, strength of secondary political parties at various points in time, and intertwining of both domestic and foreign policies with a regular look toward the United States, the political dynamics driving support for the government's Arctic policies were remarkably normal. That is, opinions toward the government's Arctic agenda appeared to track closely with partisan political beliefs or day-to-day practical issues (e.g. higher support in the North for the socioeconomic aspects of Arctic policymaking). Therefore, while the securitization process elevated the issue to greater resonance in the public mind, the intensity of support for specific proposals came more from conventional political forces. What, then, can we determine from tracing the development of Canadian Arctic identity to the present as it relates to the securitization process? In the next chapter, I will conclude this analysis with several avenues in which to further evaluate that question.

*Fig. 2: Summarization of public opinion between 2011 and 2015*

<b>2011 Poll</b>	<b>2015 Poll</b>
Greater public focus in Northern Canada than Southern Canada on Arctic socioeconomic matters	Southern understandings of Northern Canada low despite government securitization campaign
More favorability in both Northern and Southern Canada for “soft” approaches to Arctic security compared to “hard” security measures	Decreased support in both North and South for increasing military presence in North
Greater support in Southern Canada for increasing hard security footprint in Arctic	Southern understandings of Arctic Council low despite Canadian chairmanship of the organization from 2013-15
Highest support among Southern Canadians for increasing Arctic military presence shown in Alberta, lowest support in Quebec	General decrease in Southern Canada of attention to Arctic issues 2013-15
Support for various Arctic security measures appeared to track with domestic political dynamics	Decreased support for Arctic issues likely influenced by general public turn against Harper’s government, though other factors in play as well

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

In August 2008, Parks Canada's Underwater Archeology Service (UAS) began an expedition that would take on political significance in the coming years. While Ottawa's redoubling of Arctic sovereignty was in full swing, UAS was seeking to find some of the earliest inspirations of Canadian Arctic identity: the remains of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition.<sup>323</sup> Although some details of the expedition's fate had been determined over time, the remains of Franklin's ships *Erebus* and *Terror* had actually never been found. Robert Grenier, the UAS archaeologist tasked with leading the expedition, had also led a mission to find the ships in the 1990s.<sup>324</sup> Rather than being a routine scientific expedition that might have otherwise received little attention outside of academic circles, however, the 2008 mission was declared to be an assertion of Canadian sovereignty. This declaration was not made by Grenier or the scientific team, but instead by Environment Minister (and future Foreign Minister) John Baird, who was present to announce the expedition. Noting the significance of Franklin's mission to Canadian history, Baird also stated, "We certainly think that by establishing our long-standing presence in the Arctic, that can enhance issues of sovereignty."<sup>325</sup> Although the mission's timing tracked with the timeline of the government's progressing Arctic agenda, it also so happened that the Russian scientific mission that had brought greater public attention to Arctic sovereignty

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<sup>323</sup> Parks Canada, "The Franklin Expedition: 2010 Search," May 27, 2016, accessed June 14, 2016, <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/culture/franklin/recherche-search/exp2010.aspx>.

<sup>324</sup> CBC News, "Canada launches new Arctic search for Franklin's lost ships," August 15, 2008, accessed June 14, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canada-launches-new-arctic-search-for-franklin-s-lost-ships-1.702857>.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

matters occurred the previous August. East-West relations were also at perhaps their lowest point in the post-Cold War era following the Russian invasion of Georgia a week prior to the announcement. These coincidences were likely outweighed by the practicalities of such an expedition, not least of which being the necessity of operating such a mission during the summer months to reduce difficulties in operating in the Arctic climate. Much as it had during Vilhjalmur Stefansson's expeditions a century prior, the Canadian government was nonetheless sending a message: No opportunity to assert Canadian Arctic sovereignty is too small.

After pursuing the ships for six more summers, researchers finally discovered the remains of *Erebus* in September 2014.<sup>326</sup> For Harper, the moment was more than a piece of his Arctic agenda: Some commentators went so far as to note that he seemed personally obsessed with finding the expedition's remains.<sup>327</sup> Others noted Harper's desire to leave a lasting legacy on the Canadian conception of the North that would push future prime ministers to prioritize the Arctic as a key component of national sovereignty.<sup>328</sup> The discovery was announced with much fanfare by the government, with Harper declaring the find as a key victory for the Canadian case on the extent of its Arctic sovereignty. Although the tone of the announcement was to be expected by this point, the seemingly vindicated manner in which Harper tied the expedition to Canadian

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<sup>326</sup> NBC News, "Ship From Doomed Franklin Expedition Identified as Erebus," October 1, 2014, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/ship-doomed-franklin-expedition-identified-erebus-n216341>.

<sup>327</sup> Margo McDiarmid, "Stephen Harper and the obsession with Franklin," *CBC News*, September 3, 2014, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stephen-harper-and-the-obsession-with-franklin-1.2754180>.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

sovereignty was nonetheless puzzling to observers.<sup>329</sup> With other aspects of the Arctic agenda visibly facing problems, Harper was nonetheless relishing the moment.

The point of this anecdote is not just to provide further evidence of the extent of the Harper government's securitization campaign, but also to demonstrate the way in which it tried to paint the Canadian Arctic as a timeless representation of national identity. In the course of this analysis, I have traced a linear pattern of national identity to demonstrate that the conception Harper spoke of was based in historical precedence. In light of this, the discovery of *Erebus* came at an interesting time. Whereas Harper would have trumpeted the discovery even if it had come at an earlier time during his government's reign, the issues facing the government's Arctic policy at this time made this a new reminder of Arctic sovereignty essential to the government's message. From the government's standpoint, it was necessary to regularly re-emphasize Arctic sovereignty in order to maintain continuance of the securitization process.

But given the visible problems that the government was facing in defending this message, could this have actually decreased the effectiveness of the government's message and actually made it seem more overbearing? From what we saw in the previous chapter, the strength of the government's message on Arctic sovereignty indeed saw a decline in public opinion around this time. There was also a looming trend of declining support for the government in general which, as shown in previously cited research, had an effect on support for the government's policies. This study of the Harper government's

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<sup>329</sup> Nicky Woolf, "Canada uses Franklin expedition wreck to boost North-West passage claim," *The Guardian*, September 13, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/13/canada-uses-franklin-expedition-wreck-north-west-passage-claim>.

Arctic policies therefore showed that while the securitization process itself was successful insofar as the Canadian population generally recognized Arctic sovereignty challenges as a security issue—not to mention the growing recognition of Arctic security issues globally—the ability of the government to sustain the bureaucratic inertia of its Arctic agenda nonetheless fluttered after a period of time. This certainly occurred due to several aforementioned factors that are expected in democratic governance, but also raised a number of interesting questions about the problems of connecting securitization processes to demonstrable government action.

While we can certainly point to the successes of the government in developing Arctic security on a discursive level, does it really mean much if the rhetoric was not ultimately matched by actual policy? Cases such as this do demonstrate some of the limits of securitization theory, but also present new opportunities in connecting theory to political practice. For all of the discussion of convincing the populace of a given threat as part of the securitization process, there is little discussion of how to convince those within government of the weight of the issue, particularly within the realm of parliamentary democracy. In some ways, the securitization process is almost anathema to the actual nature of parliamentary operations. With the rhetorical emphasis that the Harper government put on increasing spending on hard security measures in the Arctic, it would be expected that the parliamentary opposition would not look favorably upon the government's proposals simply due to ideological and party-line disagreements. This does not, however, rule out the effect that the securitization process could have in raising the issue generally. That is, if the parliamentary opposition instituted counter-proposals that recognized some form of Arctic security response, but had a different definition of

what “Arctic security” actually meant, could we nonetheless see that as a representation of an effective securitization process? In this particularly case, the political opposition, particularly the Liberal Party, was not too far removed from accepting the Arctic security issue in the first place. As discussed by Petra Dolata, the shift from Liberal to Conservative governance in 2006, which was arguably an important spark in the Arctic sovereignty and security discussion on a rhetorical level, did not result in a momentous change in actual policy.<sup>330</sup> In essence, the rhetorical change was representing already-occurring changes in policy that had been happening under Liberal governance.

The resulting analysis of this case has demonstrated that securitization processes undertaken by the Canadian government toward the Arctic from 2006-2015 were not solely endemic to that point in time. Instead, these processes actually built upon longstanding factors within the Canadian national identity that fueled a noticeable pattern of responses to perceived infringements to Canadian Arctic sovereignty. From this study, we have derived some interesting conclusions. First, securitizing moves by the government were often met with some sort of policy response, be it through new legislation or increased resources to the Arctic region. The tangible effects of these responses, however, were mixed and often depended on domestic political dynamics at a given time. A second finding is that gaps continue to exist between our understandings of the securitization process and actual policy implementation. Further research on this specific aspect of the securitization process beyond existing research on the formation of securitizing rhetoric may yield more interesting conclusions for how governments

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<sup>330</sup> Petra Dolata, “A New Canada in the Arctic? Arctic Policies Under Harper,” *Canadian Studies*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (2015), p. 138.

manage both the rhetorical and governance processes. These conclusions can be plugged into existing research on securitization theory which is moving in this direction.

***What does this research mean for understandings about securitization?***

Some perspectives have noted how Canadian rhetoric toward the issue, while raising the profile of the Arctic globally, also created a false narrative of how to approach Arctic security issues. Keskitalo discusses the gap that exists when comparing national-level discourse about the Arctic with discourse when viewing the region as a whole. For Keskitalo, Canadian rhetoric toward the Arctic still viewed the region in frontier terms, which created an inaccurate image of the problems that faced both the Canadian and global Arctic.<sup>331</sup> This perspective identifies an interesting problem. Although the Arctic region as a whole faces common issues across national borders, it is ultimately national governments which must set a policy agenda to address these issues. As such, there is not only duplication of work in addressing the region's issues, but also little coordination that could better suit the needs of the Arctic in totality.<sup>332</sup> Conceptions of "otherness" that create differences between Northern and Southern Canada are also less pronounced in the Nordic countries, which hinder true Canadian understandings of the region.<sup>333</sup>

This perspective also notes some difficulty in identifying the referent objects in the securitization process. By securitizing the Arctic space, was the Canadian government actually only talking about the Canadian Arctic rather than the region as a whole? Going

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<sup>331</sup> E. Carina Keskitalo, "Setting the Agenda on the Arctic: Whose Policy Frames the Region?" *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 19, Iss. 1 (Fall/Winter 2012), p. 162-63.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.



by Keskitalo's line of thinking, this seems likely. Although Canadian securitization of its Arctic space inherently involved conceptions of the international dynamic, it did not address the threats to the Northern environment or populations globally. Instead, it involved constructing a foreign threat to Canadian Arctic interests when the threats to the total Arctic space were actually contained within the region. This sub-regional securitization thus created a world within a world when the threat actually required buy-ins from all of the Arctic states. Lacking sufficient clarity on where and to whom the securitization processes were actually occurring may have contributed to an overly ambitious Arctic policy strategy that was based more on a reactive feeling to counter a broad notion of "threat" rather than first identifying the origin of the actual threat.

This creates a new question: Do securitization efforts actually follow well-established policy processes such that the government already has sufficient inertia to convince the population of a given threat? In other words, does the general population accept that a threat exists simply because a competent authority says so, even though democratic processes would theoretically provide the capability for pushing back against that decision? This is an interesting framework to understand where the securitization process actually begins, and is one that could potentially use further exploration.

However, it is also inherently couched in one of the difficulties of securitization literature in that securitization is tied only to the speech acts of the government. As discussed in the previous chapter, I noted the possibility of other actors—namely the media—in furthering the securitization process. Securitization literature is not devoid of the roles that non-governmental organizations and other actors play, particularly in areas such as the Arctic where the threat is transnational. The difficulty, however, is actually defining the picture

in the region as containing “threats” rather than undergoing a time-specific period of politicization.<sup>334</sup>

As seen in the discussion on the role of public opinion, the national government’s rhetoric has less resonance in Northern Canada. When measuring this dynamic in this particular case, we must also consider how the population is connected to the governing authorities. It is also notable that the authoritative body undertaking a securitization process, even if it is a government body, might not necessarily be the national government. Whereas Northern Canadians have a relatively low level of representation in national politics, social cohesion would be expectedly higher at the local level than in more populated areas of Canada. Thus, the ability of Northerners to “set the agenda” through embedded social factors results in less need to convince the population of a given agenda after the policy process has been set in motion. This particular factor may not apply so much to security matters, however, as even “soft” aspects of security policy receive backing and direction from the federal government. This may be the difficulty in attempting to view securitization processes across multiple layers of government insofar as the national authority tends to control security policy. Though this does not give the government the monopoly on security matters, it does centralize the number of voices who are attempting to shape security policies.

Further difficulty in defining the securitization of the Arctic space involves recognizing how the Arctic is a region that crosses other widely recognized regions. Although I noted the work of Buzan and Waever in using the Arctic space as a “security

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<sup>334</sup> Kristian Åtlund, “The European Arctic after the Cold War: How can we analyze it in terms of security?” *Norwegian Defence Research Establishment*, February 2, 2007, p. 22-23.

constellation” to connect regions in the first chapter, other perspectives see regional construction differently. For Powers and Goertz, regions are constructed based on institutional economic linkages,<sup>335</sup> which may have application to this case. In this conception, these economic linkages serve as a foundation for other areas of region-building in the social and political spheres, to include security issues.<sup>336</sup> This argument is not significantly different from Buzan and Waever’s *per se*, although it does build on that work’s particular definitions of regions. The interesting question raised here is the institutional aspect of forming a region. While it was not necessary to form the Arctic Council in order to view the Arctic as a coherent region, it did give weight to the idea that the Arctic was a region with a particular set of needs that needed to be addressed by a specialized, multinational body. Previously, issues facing the Arctic on a multilateral level were conducted in a more *ad hoc* fashion that did not create much continuity in speaking to the region’s particular needs. There was additionally the issue of where best to find areas of practical cooperation between Arctic states. As the Arctic Council was formed only a few years after the end of the Cold War, economic issues seemed to be the easiest foundation for cooperation to avoid lingering political differences between East and West. Nonetheless, the economic issues facing the Arctic regions in the Nordic countries were of greater relevance to respective national political discourses than in the United States or Canada. Discourses that emanated across the Arctic were therefore influenced by discourses endemic to the Nordic region, but the North American

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<sup>335</sup> Kathy Powers and Gary Goertz, “The economic-institutional construction of regions: conceptualization and operationalization,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 37, Iss. 5 (December 2011), p. 2394-95.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

viewpoints toward the Arctic were less influential in institutional discussions. This is likely due to more North American rhetoric about sovereignty and hard security matters than in the Nordic countries, even despite the Arctic's similar relevance to Nordic defense policies.<sup>337</sup>

Thus, the images influencing a collective Arctic identity are actually representative of certain national-level identities that managed to rise to the top of issue prioritization. Because of the "regions within a region" nature of the Arctic, transnational regional linkages are likely best served on a continental level. For Nordic states, this has been easier to achieve through institutional means due to shared borders and connections between indigenous groups across these borders.<sup>338</sup> The Arctic has also served as a particularly enriching source of post-Cold War cooperation between Norway and Russia, owing to both a long-history of cross-border relations prior to the Cold War period as well as common economic interests in the Barents Sea.<sup>339</sup>

A visualization of such a dynamic is harder to imagine in North America, however, due to multiple factors. First, the area near the US-Canadian Arctic border is more remote than that in the Nordic region, making it difficult for the two countries to maintain a regular working relationship over shared territory. Second, the two countries are engaged in an ongoing dispute over the demarcation of the maritime border. Settling of this issue would likely help to bring about the possibility of greater cooperation

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<sup>337</sup> This is due to less general focus on hard security matters in overall national discourse in the Nordic countries during the formation of Arctic-focused institutions in the 1990s.

<sup>338</sup> The Sami people emanate from a broad region that overlaps Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden.

<sup>339</sup> Geir Hønneland, "Identity Formation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region," *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (September 1998), p. 283-84.

between the two countries in the region, although disagreements over ceding fishing resources near the border have not left much room for hopeful resolution in the near future.<sup>340</sup> Finally, intertwined cooperation with the United States in the Arctic would only occur following a massive shift in historical Canadian thinking regarding its Arctic sovereignty. Although the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident may have altered the direction of modern Arctic security discourse in the West, the fact remains that many of the “sovereignty emergencies” that Canada previously faced emanated from concerns over American encroachment in the Arctic. Close cross-border relations similar to those present along the main US-Canadian border would therefore represent an undoing of how the region has historically fit into Canadian identity. For such a scenario to occur, the negative effects of climate change on the natural environment would need to reach a point at which the two sides were forced to engage in shared management of the region to prevent further degradation.

Such a development would also represent a significant change in the regional order such that even closely intertwined relations—like those currently seen in the Nordic countries—would not be sufficient to address climate change. This does not mean that the two countries cannot have friendly, cooperative relations in the region, but instead that lingering identity and political factors prevent either side from submitting to a truly joint, regional space.

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<sup>340</sup> Rob Huebert, “Why Canada, U.S. must resolve their Arctic border disputes,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 21, 2014, accessed July 13, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/why-canada-us-must-resolve-their-arctic-border-disputes/article21189764/>.

A further outcome of studying this case was showing the limits of securitization theory, even despite the acknowledged usefulness of the approach as an analytical foundation. Arguably, this particular case demonstrates instances in which the theory is superfluous to cases in which security is more embedded within a given political situation.<sup>341</sup> While this does make securitization theory more apt to describing an emerging security situation such as that in the Arctic region, it also represent a potential empirical problem. If securitization theory can only apply to certain cases, then what is the value of using a securitization-influenced case to develop further principles for understanding political behavior? The value in this case is the manner in which securitization theory is seen as the vehicle for understanding the power of the rhetorical process but doesn't necessarily act as proof of the theory's validity. Instead, the dynamics observed here give considerable weight to the idea that rhetorical processes can influence a population on the constitution of threat, but also that the ability to constitute the threat in the first place stems from an existing set of identity factors. In the case of the Canadian Arctic, we see that these identity factors helped to reify the concept of threats to national sovereignty at given points in time. The fact that these identity factors maintain continuity in a non-obvious manner—that is, the Harper government's highlighting of them was seen as actually being contrary to an understood set of identities by a fair portion of the population—is an even more interesting finding from the course of this research. It may be this factor, namely the strength of identity factors “in the background” of day-to-day political operations, that deserves further research.

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<sup>341</sup> Amir Lupovici, “The Limits of Securitization Theory: Observational Criticism and the Curious Absence of Israel,” *International Studies Review*, Vol 16, Iss. 3 (September 2014), p. 399-401.

In the end, standalone identity factors were not enough to create a successful, broadly accepted Arctic agenda. In this, the Harper government may have missed an opportunity to implement its agenda more gradually. Arguably, the basic securitization process of threat constitution was sufficient to allow the government to set the terms for an Arctic security agenda. Had the government dialed down its rhetorical emphasis on sovereignty and implemented its agenda more gradually, it might have been able to achieve successful results given the political limitations. This raises the question of where the securitization process actually ends. For the Harper government, the process was an integral part of its Arctic security agenda, rather than the precursor to win further public support. This, in many ways, was problematic from a policymaking standpoint, but also revealed that the level of commitment to the process might not have been necessary in the first place. Whereas previous instances of Canadian unease over its Arctic territory were marked by responses to singular instances—such as the *Manhattan* or *Polar Sea* incidents—the process under the Harper government was more fluid. Even having noted the significance that the 2007 Russian flag incident had on the securitization process, this incident acted to bring existing processes to light rather than create them. The fact that this was indeed a fluid process might have motivated the government to regularly inject its policies with significant rhetorical backing.

What is interesting about this case is that it shows an instance in which the government's effective securitization process actually became oversaturated. As the government built expectations for the level of threat, it also increased the expectation for actions to meet that threat. When difficulties in implementing an effective set of policies to meet the threat became apparent, the existence of the threat itself was questioned. In

this way, the government began to lose its authoritative “linguistic competence” on the issue.<sup>342</sup> As the federal government is the authority tasked with ensuring security over its territory, however, there were no actors who could step to fill in the authority void.

Inasmuch as the government maintained a consistent rhetorical message regarding Arctic sovereignty, the conceptual threat remained. By default, the lack of any other potential competent authority on the issue that could seriously challenge the federal government’s rhetoric allowed it to hold, even despite the enduring practical issues of Arctic security policy.

### ***The future of Arctic security***

What if we consider the possibility that the Canadian government’s current policy difficulties may not matter so long as they are corrected in the long-term? That is, if we accept that rhetoric about Arctic security matters has been set as a constant in Canadian political discourse, would it not follow that policymakers would put more energy into overcoming the difficulties of operating in the Arctic? Firstly, what we believe to be the “short-term” in this case could very well be a decade given budgetary commitments that have already been set in motion by the Harper government. We are also assuming that no significant disruption to the relatively harmonious dynamic currently in place in the Arctic region will occur during this time. A change in this dynamic, however unlikely, could result in further rhetorical escalation that would potentially create a new set of financially straining policies. What is instead needed is a re-imagination of the Arctic

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<sup>342</sup> The issue of asymmetric information and inherent ability of public officials to securitize an issue over other actors is discussed in Thierry Balzacq, “The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience, and Context,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2005), p. 190-91.



space from the Canadian perspective. Having examined historical responses to perceived threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty, it is clear that policies to address perceived threats to sovereignty were reactive and focused on the short-term.

In previous cases, this did not necessarily result in negative consequences: As other instances discussed here were generally focused on perceived threats from the United States, the Canadian response was generally sufficient to satisfy sovereignty concerns within the bilateral relationship. Current realities present a different set of challenges for Canadian policymakers, however. In contrast to the actions taken by the Canadian government in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century regarding *perceived* threats to security, climate change has brought about a serious threat to Canadian territory. Canadian policy must therefore address both geopolitical balancing of Arctic sovereignty while also providing for legitimate responses to the effects of climate change on Canadian Arctic communities. This would seemingly imply that sovereignty concerns in the traditional sense should be de-prioritized in favor of multilateral cooperation to deal with the effects of climate change. The ability of the Canadian government to take this stance is difficult, however, due to continued Western tensions with Russia, as well as lingering disputes over legal claims to various areas of the Arctic space. This does have a negative effect on Arctic cooperation efforts, even if that aspect of the East-West relationship has been generally positive. The simple solution is to simply drop insistence on these claims, though management of the Arctic space ultimately falls back to individual governments agreeing to work collectively. Even among Western Arctic states, this is not so easy.

How, then, are we supposed to view the Arctic space in light of what we've come to understand about the securitization processes that have occurred in the region over the past decade? Firstly, the timeline of this particular securitization process suggests that it may be completed in basic terms, although what the future holds is still up for debate. The fact that the basic securitization process has occurred does not prevent the possibility of new rounds of securitization to address particular threats that will arise in the Arctic space. There is also the problem of how new threats are being created by the failure of cohesive security policies among the Arctic states: That is, the lack of interconnected cooperation on security matters between states, even among the NATO members, potentially creates a negative feedback loop in actually securing against the threat. This largely has to do with domestic retrenchment on security matters in Canada and Norway or, in the case of Denmark and the United States, lacking consistent policy salience on Arctic issues. In the latter countries, a greater push for recognition of the challenges facing the Arctic would likely have a positive benefit on the space as a whole, and would encourage more focused cooperation from other Arctic states. Unfortunately, significantly increased engagement on the parts of Denmark and the United States is unlikely due to the lack of enduring identity factors in the two countries that activate Arctic securitization processes. For more cohesive policies to occur, the agenda would need to be set by players who have a greater stake in the region within their national politics, which would naturally be Canada or Norway. Russia could potentially activate this process as well, though this would require a significant change in its greater strategic outlook that is also very unlikely in the near future.

The second issue is that securitization processes, while effective in creating greater focus on the fact that there are indeed security issues in the Arctic, also created a series of competing narratives as to where the threat actually emanated from. The most prominent “threat” involved infringements on sovereignty over newly discovered natural resources. Although this threat may have garnered the most attention in the public sphere, it also did not capture the full threat picture that included threats from the natural environment. The question is whether this was a natural tendency based upon traditional notions of security or whether this was a result of the language used by authoritative voices. Based upon the analysis presented here, it would appear that authoritative voices specifically crafted rhetoric based upon hard security concerns, although it would also be fair to say that such an approach was heavily influenced by previous conceptions of security. While it is possible to create understandings of threat from the natural environment, the discursive manner of doing so can result in conflation of what the public understands to be security. As seen in the previous chapter, the public is not ignorant to the idea of environmental matters falling within the realm of security, but also have not naturally engrained the idea of security-through-environmental-protection into the collective consciousness. The result of this, as evidenced by this case, is the ease that the government had in continually tying Arctic security to sovereignty matters due to the lack of a coherent voice offering an alternative version of regional security. Because of this, there was conscious recognition of the environmental aspects of Arctic security that were nonetheless not powerful enough to be enveloped in the actual securitization process. As a result, hard security matters that only made up part of the region’s security dominated the focus of the securitization process.

Finally, there is a certain irony in the fact that the region that will be directly impacted by the effects of climate change was less targeted by securitization rhetoric. With the Canadian government having to speak to the majority of its population that lives in “Southern” Canada, the securitization of the public in the North was functionally unnecessary. This could, however, result in a negative feedback loop for the practical aspects of the securitization process that go beyond political fallout in Northern communities. With the difficulties of operating in the Northern climates now evident, Southern Canadians’ appetite for continued investment in the region may very well decrease to a point of undoing stated government commitments to Northern issues. This would have a detrimental effect on progress made on better understandings of the socioeconomic issues facing the North, regardless of the difficulties encountered in recent policymaking. Taking into account the previously advanced argument regarding Harper’s personal view of Arctic security, such a scenario is one that even future governments would want to avoid. This also adds further to the idea that the securitization process toward the Arctic is non-continuous, and that a new securitization process may be necessary in the future for the government to continue to justify devoting resources to Arctic issues. Future securitization processes, however, would be unlikely to target rhetoric toward Northern Canadians for the same reasons as before. These securitization processes would also likely encounter more pushback from public opinion as the underlying identity factors that drove the recent securitization process were revealed and the rhetoric was diversified. By this I am referring to the fact that the inherent authoritative power held by the government was diluted by other actors having the ability to comment on the securitization process over an extended period of time. For a new

securitization process to be successful, the level of threat would need to be in response to a clear flashpoint in the region beyond what has previously occurred. This would either need to be a clear violation of national sovereignty on the part of one of the Arctic states, or more likely, greater public outcry over the physical consequences of climate change in Northern communities.

What is not entirely evident is whether the urgency of addressing Arctic security issues has changed in the last decade as a result of greater awareness of the issues facing the region. Part of the problem is continued recognition of Arctic issues as an aspect of larger climate change concerns rather than on their own face. The achievement of the Paris Agreement to much acclaim in December 2015 was representative of this problem, as Arctic community leaders noted that the region received little attention in the course of international climate change negotiations.<sup>343</sup> Although the Arctic did feature prominently on the agenda of the Nordic countries' visit to Washington in May 2016,<sup>344</sup> which matched its place during Justin Trudeau's visit to the city earlier that year, the Arctic is inherently at a disadvantage when it comes to international climate discussions. Because of the small number of countries with a direct stake in the Arctic, the region generally takes second billing to the problems faced by the more numerous, lesser-developed countries located in warmer climates. Conceivably, the direct interests of Russia and the United States, not to mention growing indirect interest from China, could be enough to

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<sup>343</sup> Eilis Quinn, "Arctic missing from Paris climate agreement," *Radio Canada International*, December 18, 2015, accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/12/18/arctic-missing-from-paris-climate-agreement/>.

<sup>344</sup> The White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S.-Nordic Collaboration on Climate Change, the Arctic, and Clean Energy," May 13, 2016, accessed July 3, 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/05/13/fact-sheet-us-nordic-collaboration-climate-change-arctic-and-clean>.

push the Arctic to a more prominent position in global climate discussions. The current reality, however, is that those countries have not exercised their full abilities in agenda-setting on climate policy matters. While the Nordic countries do have both a direct interest in the region and agenda-setting ability in international discussions, their low relative power in the international system may hinder their ability to truly influence lasting recognition of Arctic issues.

The definition of “Arctic security” has also not moved considerably despite more attention to the issue. Although media reporting of Arctic-focused military exercises continue, public perceptions of the level of security in the region have still not quite caught up to reality. A 2015 piece in the *Toronto Star* noted that public perceptions of undefended Canadian Arctic sovereignty continued despite studies showing that the Canadian military was beginning to adjust positively to the difficulties it initially faced while operating in the region.<sup>345</sup> For the time being, the Trudeau government and military have also appeared to continue operations initiated by the previous government,<sup>346</sup> be it for continuity reasons or the current government not having yet unveiled a new Arctic strategy. Continued media attention to Arctic military operations does help to illuminate ongoing security issues in the region, but it may also create misconceptions about the origins of the threat. If the public continues to operate under a decade-old narrative concerning the threat of outside interference in national sovereignty, then continued

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<sup>345</sup> Bob Weber, “Canada’s military doing better job in Arctic than people believe, report says,” *Toronto Star*, May 26, 2015, accessed July 3, 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/26/canadas-military-doing-better-job-in-arctic-than-people-believe-report-says.html>.

<sup>346</sup> David Pugliese, “Canadian Military Looks to Expand Arctic Footprint,” *Defense News*, May 23, 2016, accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/2016/05/23/canadian-military-looks-expand-arctic-footprint/84643736/>.

coverage of Arctic military operations will likely allow perceptions of state-based threats to continue. As previously discussed, the previous government did take steps to dismiss the notion of state-to-state conflict in official strategy documents. This was a departure from the government's general rhetoric on the subject, however, which allowed the idea to persist. If future government rhetoric does not move to change this narrative, then regional security will likely be unable to move to a new frame of reference. Continuing to view Arctic security in hard security terms distracts from the threats that are most likely to persist in the region in the coming years.

A possible change to this view could come through the changing economic situation in the region. Adding to the difficulties of operating in the Arctic region was the fall of global energy prices in 2014. Facing an expected loss of revenues, many energy corporations scaled back or suspended Arctic energy exploration in North America as the region yielded little short-term return on investment.<sup>347</sup> The most curious case of this trend involved the efforts of Shell Oil to secure leasing rights in Alaska. Shell had suspended its operations in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas in 2013 following an accident involving two drilling ships, which resulted in a review from U.S. federal regulators.<sup>348</sup> Following a review of internal safety procedures, Shell re-applied for federal approval to resume drilling in the Chukchi Sea in 2015. After a process that faced heavy criticism

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<sup>347</sup> For an example of this in Canada, see Chester Dawson, "Exxon Mobil, BP Suspend Canadian Arctic Exploratory Drilling Program in Beaufort Sea," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 2015, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/exxon-mobil-bp-suspend-canadian-arctic-exploratory-drilling-program-in-beaufort-sea-1435348381>.

<sup>348</sup> John M. Broeder, "With 2 Ships Damaged, Shell Suspends Arctic Drilling," *New York Times*, February 27, 2013, accessed July 4, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/28/business/energy-environment/shell-suspends-arctic-drilling-for-2013.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/28/business/energy-environment/shell-suspends-arctic-drilling-for-2013.html?_r=0).

from environmental groups, the U.S. government granted Shell conditional approval to resume drilling in July 2015.<sup>349</sup> The consternation from Shell's opponents was short-lived, however, as Shell announced that it was abandoning the Chukchi drilling project due to disappointing discoveries.<sup>350</sup> Although Shell's departure came at the end of an ongoing trend of corporations re-assessing their commitment to the Arctic, Shell's quick departure after a hard-fought process to obtain regulatory approval for its Chukchi wells demonstrated the degree to which the Arctic region had become unpalatable for energy exploration activities. This trend was less apparent in Norway, whose offshore Arctic drilling activities are less affected by climatological and logistical difficulties than in North America, although the global decline of oil was having a significant effect on Norway's large oil economy.<sup>351</sup> Russian energy exploration activities also faced significant difficulties, though for different reasons. As a result of Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine, Western countries imposed heavy sanctions on Russian energy exploration activities that effectively canceled several ongoing consortia of Western and Russian oil exploration. The barring of Western expertise from Russian exploration activities was particularly damaging to operations in the Arctic, where Russian corporations were

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<sup>349</sup> Steven Mufson, "Obama administration greenlights Shell drilling off Alaska's Arctic coast," *Washington Post*, July 22, 2015, accessed July 4, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/07/22/obama-administration-greenlights-shell-drilling-off-alaskas-arctic-coast/>.

<sup>350</sup> Sarah Kent, "Shell to Cease Oil Exploration in Alaskan Arctic After Disappointing Drilling Season," *Wall Street Journal*, September 28, 2015, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/shell-to-cess-oil-exploration-offshore-alaska-1443419673>.

<sup>351</sup> Atle Staalesen, "Goliat's fight against decline in Arctic oil," *Barents Observer*, March 10, 2015, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://barentsobserver.com/en/energy/2015/03/goliats-fight-against-decline-arctic-oil-10-03>.



reliant on outside technology to overcome the difficulties of extraction in the region.<sup>352</sup> In the Russian case, oddly enough, outside geopolitical events rather than events within the Arctic itself had managed to affect energy exploration.

Although the global energy market is subject to speculative prediction, near-term predictions of global energy prices do not see an expected return to the price levels seen a decade ago. This creates a re-focusing of how the Arctic fits into the global economic picture, which was a large part of how the region drew increased global attention in the first place. If the Arctic's energy potential is not determined to be economically feasible to extract, the region is less likely to be the focus of future securitization processes. While an expected increase in maritime transits through opening waterways presents a frame of reference for sovereignty-based securitization processes, such possibilities are of a rhetorically benign character compared to the prospect of foreign actors extracting energy resources. If energy resources are deemed to be de-prioritized compared to extraction in other areas of the world, then how would the Arctic region remain as a recognized priority in the minds of public opinion? The silver lining to this option would be the potential result of less interference of national organs in local affairs. This would also potentially bring less outside economic interests that are pushed at the behest of national government agendas, which would lower the chances of further environmental damage from natural resource extraction activities.

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<sup>352</sup> The Moscow Times, "Russia's Rosneft Won't Resume Sanctions-Struck Arctic Drilling Before 2018—Sources," June 11, 2015, accessed July 4, 2016, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russias-rosneft-wont-resume-sanctions-struck-arctic-drilling-before-2018-sources/523478.html>.

The unavoidable reality, however, is that Northern regions are still very dependent on such outside forces for subsidizing basic needs such as education, healthcare, food supplies, and housing. In order for greater local autonomy to become the reality, Northern regions would need to determine how to address these shortfalls. Such a dynamic is particularly difficult to change in Canada where Northern regions are only connected year-round by airplane. Given the declining state of the natural environment in the region, economic activities that supported the community in the past will likely be unfeasible in the future. Progress in other aspects of the region's standard of living has indeed come at a price.

Having previously discussed the difficulties of developing a regional Arctic identity, what is the value, if any, of promoting an "Arctic identity" in the Canadian national context? If Southern Canadians cannot truly value the issues that Northern Canadians face, is a national Arctic identity really anything more than one of many symbols used to represent the Canadian image? Furthermore, what does continued promotion of Canadian Arctic heritage actually do in practical terms for Canadian interests in the Arctic? Lisa Williams has argued that the Canadian Arctic identity actually complements Arctic regional identity in the sense that Canadian national interests are served by promoting a rules-based order in addressing concerns facing the whole Arctic space.<sup>353</sup> While this is true on its face, it is also representative of the root problem that continues to hamper Arctic policy at the national level. Canada's rule-based approach to the region may comport with international norms and modernity, but it also

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<sup>353</sup> Lisa Williams, "Canada, the Arctic, and Post-National Identity in the Circumpolar World," *The Northern Review*, No. 33 (Spring 2011), p. 124-25.

often drifts into a paternalistic mindset that is too rooted in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century views of the region. Such attitudes have arguably been bolstered by Ottawa's recent attempts to undertake a more proactive agenda in the Arctic. Regardless of the fact that the region can be reached in a short time by air or instantaneously by internet communication, attempts to improve infrastructure or undertake extensive economic activities could not avoid the age-old problem of the region's uniquely forbidding character. At some point, would Southern Canadians eventually give up the idea of investing in the region for this reason?

Such is the puzzle that faces the Canadian nation in addition to demonstrating the potential limits of identity power in decision-making. While identity factors may weigh significantly in driving public opinion in favor of government sovereignty-defense actions, continued public support may also only hold if there is a continued perception of urgency in the government taking these actions. Another potential drawback from the government's perspective is the ability of the public to remain informed of the progress of government investment and action in the region. In years past, direct media from the region was sparse, if not non-existent, which favored the government's ability to steer the narrative in a direction positive to its interests. Now, it is difficult for the government to conceal the difficulties of operating in the region while facing increased scrutiny in doing so. The presence of the Soviet threat against the Canadian Arctic during the Cold War allowed the government to maintain a security posture in the Arctic regardless of other perceived infringements on sovereignty. While threats remain against the Arctic region in the form of climate change, the justification for an extended security posture in the current era is more difficult to defend to the public. Instead, measures to combat climate

change are enacted through climate policy in national decision-making. Even if the government attempts to frame an enhanced security posture as a deterrent to threats against sovereignty by outside actors, it becomes difficult to defend this position in the long-term absent noticeable interference from foreign actors. Although such interference cannot be ruled out in the future, the events of the past decade make it difficult to argue that an elevated level of concern on the matter is justifiable for an extended period of time, especially considering the need to focus resources toward mitigating the effects of climate change. Given current conditions, continued securitization of the Arctic space on sovereignty matters may have approached a point of exhaustion.

That does not mean that hope is lost for a positive security dynamic in the Arctic space, nor does it mean that our understandings of Arctic security have reached an apex. Although the Arctic's forbidding conditions are inherent to how much of the globe views the region, Arctic states ironically did not give enough attention to the true ramifications of this reality when planning for greater human activity in the region in the coming decades. Interestingly, recognition of the region's changing climate in the near *future* did not recognize that *current* conditions were still unduly harsh and unique. While many difficult lessons have been learned about what the future holds for the Arctic, these lessons must also be viewed as benchmarks for positive action going forward. On a geopolitical level, conditions are amenable to such a possibility. The difficulties thus lie within states themselves, particularly in those where the Arctic and more populated portions of the country are separated by a great distance. Because of this, national governments have difficulty understanding the scope of the problems faced by Northern communities day-to-day, with this lacking understanding also being shared by much of

the national population. The result of this, as seen in Canada, is an increasingly threatened Arctic territory being governed by a national entity that does not understand it, all-the-while using the region as a means to boost national pride.

Where, then, does positive action begin for Canada and its Arctic territory? Greater political devolution to Northern communities has its strengths and weaknesses, although it is probably not feasible to give these regions a significant share of power vis-à-vis national governance due to dependence on federal subsidies to support the difficulties of living in the Arctic. Realization of the costs of resource development may help to positively change struggles faced in the federal-local dynamic. With an eagerness to rapidly seize natural resources in the region now abated (perhaps only temporarily, however), there can be more attention to sustainable options for economic growth in the region. Such options can be exercised by the local communities themselves with federal organs providing assistance as needed, be it in areas such as healthcare and education or through more investment in search-and-rescue capabilities. Building this positive future requires a change in mindset, however. No longer is the Arctic the forbidden frontier that vexed explorers searching for the world's ends. Instead, it became an intrinsic part of the Canadian national fabric, one that now needs to be viewed on more equal footing with the rest of the national territory.

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