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National Interests and Security Policies in the Arctic Region among Arctic States

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Hilde-Gunn Bye

June 2018

Advisor: Cullen Hendrix

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Title: National Interests and Security Policies in the Arctic Region among Arctic States

Advisor: Cullen Hendrix

Degree Date: June 2018

ABSTRACT

The United States, Canada, Russia, and Norway are all Arctic states. However, they prioritize the Arctic region to different degrees in terms of investments of security assets and military presence. What explains why some Arctic countries prioritize the Arctic more than others? This thesis explores this question through using an issue-based approach, which looks at the salience of issues as having implications for foreign policy tools and measures. This thesis finds that having interests and stakes in the region of high overall salience contribute to an explanation of why some countries prioritize the region more, while low overall salience is linked to less prioritization of the region. By having assessed how national interests in the region drives security policies towards the Arctic, this thesis also provides an understanding of why the U.S. is not prioritizing the Arctic in a time when others are increasingly directing their attention to the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to so many people who supported and encouraged me throughout the journey of writing a thesis. I want to especially thank my thesis advisor Cullen Hendrix. While I have had a personal interest in the Arctic region for a long time, taking classes with Cullen Hendrix inspired me to start the project of writing a thesis. Much of my academic growth is thanks to his valuable guidance and encouragement, and I am very thankful. I also want to thank Martin Rhodes for being on my thesis committee and for valuable feedback. I would also like to say thank you to my roommate and best friend, Maja, who has encouraged me to continue writing my thesis, while also telling me when I need a break. My parents, Solveig and Hans-Jørgen, have always been there for me and I am thankful for their encouragement and support.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Relevance of the Study – National Policies in a Changing Arctic

The Arctic region is commonly defined as the area located north of the Arctic Circle, which circles the globe at approximately 66°34'03" north of the Equator (Åtland 2010, 12). This region could be termed a periphery both geographically and politically. Where the sun never shines during winter and the sun never sets during summer, lies the Arctic, a sought off destination in earlier times for adventurous explorers looking for maritime routes from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. However, the Northwest Passage confronted these explorers and their ships with nearly impossible barriers of ice to get through. Though quite inhospitable, the Arctic Ocean, at the center of the region, borders three continents and encompasses eight states in which five of these are Arctic coastal states; Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway, and the Kingdom of Denmark through Greenland. Though the region has mainly remained sidelined in international politics historically, Arctic states, as well as the broader international community are increasingly paying attention to what happens up north. Over the past decades, the Arctic region has undergone significant physical changes. As the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report highlights, climate change and warmer temperature have led to Arctic sea ice declining both in extent and thickness (Hassol 2004, 25). New sea lanes are opening up for

transportation, possibly shortening shipping routes between Asia and Europe. Furthermore, as sea ice declines, more areas are opened up for resource extraction. According to surveys, significant amounts of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves are located in the Arctic (Gautier et al. 2009, 1175-1179).

The aforementioned climatic developments, along with better technologies of extraction of resources from deep sea, have “increased the economic and geopolitical stakes in the region” (Østerud and Hønneland 2014, 160). Global warming and potentially increased human activity in the region are some of the key drivers behind the heightened attention to Arctic affairs. In 2008, Scott Borgerson (2008, 63) argued that “global warming has given birth to a new scramble for territory and resources among the five Arctic powers.” While drawing links between climate change and armed conflict should be done with care, as this link is more complex than commonly assumed, climate change may give rise to security implications in the Arctic region; the dramatic changes here “are likely to have a major impact on the security situation of the countries that surround it” (Åtland 2010, 48). These implications are both related to issues such as environmental security concerns as well as dynamics of interstate relations (*ibid.*). Though arguably an outpost in the global political context, the Arctic is not quite as peripheral to many of the Arctic countries' foreign policies. The recent changes have warranted closer scrutiny and interest, especially from the Arctic littoral states; discussions of strategies and interests related to maritime routes, resources and territory are high up on the political agenda in many of these states.

A New Strategic Environment: Arctic Nations and Force Posture in the Region

These physical changes are driving some Arctic countries to invest more resources and bias force posture toward the Arctic. Chief among these is Russia. Exemplifying the variation in security policy attention towards the Arctic between Arctic states is Russia's increased attention towards the Arctic. Indeed, that the Arctic is emerging as a region of major geopolitical importance for the Arctic countries (Åtland 2010, 3) seem to be much clearer in the case of Russia than for instance the United States. The former superpower, often termed as "the world's most prominent Arctic power" (*ibid.*, 16), has been building up its naval forces in the Arctic and military activity is increasing; the country has for instance resumed strategic bomber flights along the Norwegian coast (Rottem 2013, 246). Since 2015, Russia has established six new bases in the Arctic region and have invested in missile defense systems (Devyatkin 2018). Russian investments in naval capacities in the Arctic has increased significantly; the Northern Fleet, operating in the Arctic region, has the greatest number of icebreakers and submarines of the four Russian fleets (*ibid.*). In total, Russia has the largest icebreaker fleet in the world with 38 active polar icebreakers (Moe 2014, 794, The Arctic Institute 2018a). In this context, the almost muted US policy emphasis on the Arctic, especially compared to the emphasis placed by some of the other Arctic states, is puzzling. Borgerson (2008, 64) argues that the United States has remained mostly on the sidelines in the Arctic game. Moving beyond vague statements, other Arctic players have begun implementing their strategies in the Arctic, and it may be time for the U.S. to reassess its Arctic policies as well. In the context of environmental and geopolitical change in the Arctic, the U.S. can no longer afford to continue to ignore these polar areas (Huebert

2009, 25). In contrast to Russia for instance, the United States has not built up such icebreaking capacity. As of 2017 the U.S. polar icebreaker fleet consists of four ships (O'Rourke 2018, 2). *Healy*, a medium polar icebreaker is mainly used for scientific research in the Arctic, while *Palmer* is mainly used for scientific research in the Antarctic, moreover, *Polar Star* and *Polar Sea*, the two ships with the most icebreaking capabilities out of the four are among the world's most powerful icebreakers, though non-nuclear powered (*ibid.*, 2-3,7). However, *Polar Sea* is not operational due to engine problems (*ibid.*, 4). In light of this, it seems puzzling that the icebreaker fleet of the superpower United States, the country with the world's largest military, in practice seem to consist of one heavy polar icebreaker for operations in the Arctic. Arguably, the U.S. has remained largely on the sidelines in the game of the Arctic; "through its own neglect, the world's sole superpower – a country that borders the Bering Strait and possesses over 1,000 miles of Arctic coastline – has been left out in the cold" (Borgerson 2008, 64-65). In 2009, the Bush administration signaled renewed interest in the region via National Security Presidential Directive No. 66, outlining main elements of America's Arctic Region Policy (Heininen 2012, 22-23). This document, as well as additional documents released later by the Obama administration "indicate that in the early-21st century the Arctic region is steadily emerging as a new important area in US foreign policy" (*ibid.*, 24). However, investments have largely not been put in place to pursue Arctic affairs (Keil 2014, 170). Also, the United States is the only Arctic coastal state that have not signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

For Canada, retaining a maritime presence in the Arctic is of high priority, emphasized in the Canadian Government's Northern Strategy Canada from 2009. In the early 2000s, Canadian defense officials began to reexamine Canadian capabilities in the Arctic due to the changing security and environmental situation in the region (Lackenbauer and Huebert 2014, 323). The new commitment to the Canadian Arctic is for instance shown through opening of an Arctic Training Centre in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, in 2013 which can be used year-round for Arctic training operations, providing the Canadian Armed Forces with a "state-of-the-art training hub capable of supporting individual and collective Arctic and cold weather training", which increases the military's ability to respond to emergency operations in the Arctic (Lackenbauer and Lajeunesse 2016, 34).

Norway also retains a significant military presence in the High North, an area termed as having "great importance to Norway" (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017a). As will be assessed later in the thesis, the Norwegian government has put more emphasis on the high north as a key strategic area. Following from this, Norwegian defense posture is also to a large degree geared to the north. In light of this, it may be argued that for a global power like the United States, its actual capabilities and prioritization of the Arctic region is lacking and subordinate, especially when compared to other regional actors. A thorough assessment of military assets in the region will be provided below, showing that the four countries are dedicating different levels of interest towards the region. However, that the Arctic is peripheral to U.S. security policy is one of the main underlying topics of this thesis.

Research Question

Of all the five Arctic coastal states, the United States may be characterized as a “reluctant Arctic actor” (Huebert 2009). Compared to increased policy attention on the part of the other four Arctic littoral states, U.S. capabilities and focus towards the region are of lesser extent (Østhagen 2011). *What explains why some Arctic countries prioritize the Arctic more than others?* The main focus of this study will be to answer why the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway prioritize the Arctic to different degrees. By answering the research question, this thesis will also seek to explain why the United States seem to prioritize the region relatively less. It is important to emphasize that, by prioritization, I mean why some countries choose to invest more security assets and military presence and engagement towards the Arctic region. To explore the research question this thesis will employ an issue-based approach, and explore and compare the salience of the four countries’ tangible and intangible interests and stakes in the region in order to explain the variation of prioritization of the region. I have chosen to focus on four broad issues that can be termed as purposeful for an examination of national interests and security policies in a changing Arctic region: *population centers; navigation and trade routes; economic resources; as well as the intangible role of the Arctic, such as identity and historical ties to the region.* The reasons for choosing these issues will be given in the method section of this thesis. I am aware that there may be several ways to examine why levels of interests towards the Arctic differ. Economic and domestic issues, bureaucratic struggles, leaders’ personalities and interests, and the influence of interest-groups are some of the factors that may contribute to explain why engagement in the Arctic varies. However, these issues will be largely outside the scope of this thesis, as I

have chosen to examine how interests and stakes in the region drive policies towards the Arctic. My main argument will be that some Arctic countries prioritize the Arctic region more due to having more salient interests and stakes in the region. As I will outline in the methodology chapter, I see the difference in prioritization of the Arctic, the variation of security assets and attention devoted towards the region, as a function of the countries' tangible and intangible interests and stakes in the Arctic.

As the research started with some initial motivation to explore why the U.S. is not investing security assets or military capabilities towards the region, I should also point out some reasons for looking at these other Arctic actors. Of the 8 Arctic states, the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway including Denmark through Greenland are all Arctic coastal states (Åtland 2010, 3). As much of the change taking place in the Arctic involves maritime issues, such as navigation and trade routes and offshore oil and gas exploration, it is a natural point of departure to address Arctic coastal states. Indeed, these changes are specifically making the Arctic region emerge in geopolitical significance. While exploring issues of tangible and intangible salience would be interesting with regards to the remaining Arctic states: Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Denmark (Greenland), length is a crucial factor in limiting the study to these four states. Moreover, by choosing the U.S., Canada, Russia and Norway, this thesis provides a study of two countries from the North American continent; one of them, the world's superpower. Canada is furthermore considered to be a prominent Arctic actor, with its emphasis on sovereignty in its massive Arctic territory, and of course the Northwest Passage goes along the north American coast and the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Norway, moreover, is an active Arctic player, and the High North, is a key concern in foreign policy concern

and a strategic area for the country. Also, by choosing Norway, Scandinavia and thus Europe is represented. Lastly, Russia is a major actor in the Arctic, a former superpower and also has a massive Arctic territory and Arctic coastline. While Greenland has geopolitical ties to Europe, it is geographically located on the North American continent and will be excluded from this project. Greenland has its own government, however, foreign affairs, security policy and judiciary matters are decided by the government in Denmark (Erdal 2013, 3). Greenland also depends on subsidies from Denmark to finance the national budget (*ibid.*, 1). However, ambitions of independence from Denmark are also arising, partly due to the potential for large extractive industries which will make Greenland less financially dependent on Denmark (*ibid.*, 2,4). As such, the future status of Greenland seems uncertain, and the Arctic actor can be seen as being in a pre-transition period, in which sovereignty questions are discussed. Further studies regarding developments in Greenland should be encouraged, however this thesis will exclude this actor mainly due to the Greenland-Denmark issues mentioned above, which makes the actor somewhat different for analysis purposes compared to the other four countries discussed in this thesis.



Figure 1.1. Map of the Arctic, showing three definitions of the region: The tree line, the 10 degrees Celsius isotherm, and the Arctic Circle. Source: Map from NSIDC n.d.

Research Design, Limitations and Outline of the Project

This study has a qualitative research design. A research question was developed as the research proceeded. While a later chapter on methodology will go further into the methodological framework in this study, it is worth noting here that the main part of the thesis will make use of a comparative study of the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway in order to analyze their tangible and intangible stakes and interests in the region, as well as how these drive security policies and measures towards the region. As part of this project, various literature related to the issue of the Arctic was used in seeking to answer this research question. One set of literature looks at the geopolitical implications of climate change, incorporating both articles, books and scientific reports on the dynamics of climate change in the region, as well as literature that deals with

international relations in the region and the potential for conflict. This literature is drawn from a variety of sources, however, it should be pointed out that literature from Norwegian researchers is prevalent mainly due to the fact that Norway is one of the leading countries in researching Arctic affairs. Another set of literature is more country specific. Here, a lot of the literature is drawn from researchers with expertise on particular countries, as well as from government statements and reports, government websites, and more specifically the four countries' Arctic strategies and policies.

With regards to limitations of the study it is firstly relevant to note that it is still uncertain to what extent climatic changes have implications for security politics in the region as the full consequences of climatic changes have not yet taken place. Yet they are likely to have implications for policy makers in the coming years (Åtland 2010, 43). I am also aware that many of the governmental documents regarding national security policy and the Arctic might not yet be available, representing a limitation to the study as there may be certain pieces of information that are classified, but which would have given us a more complete story of the topic. As noted, I am aware that states are diverse actors and many factors play in to formulating policy. For the purpose of this study I have decided to keep my focus on the interplay between interests in the Arctic and security policy. Narrowing the focus down to these issues is purposeful for conducting this type of study within a certain page limit.

The thesis will be outlined in the following way. The next chapter will provide an examination of the four countries force postures in the Arctic and how they vary. This will be followed by a third chapter which will cover the literature review. Here I will address the debate regarding the geopolitical changes of climate change in the Arctic.

This section will introduce the various perspectives on international politics and the potential for conflict in the region. By examining Arctic affairs in a more systemic view, this provides a foundation for how one can understand security measures in the region. An analysis of the United States and Arctic security will be provided, as the subject of the U.S. is one of the main underlying topics of the thesis. The literature review is furthermore followed by a method section which will present the issue-based approach. This will cover the first part of the thesis. The second part will begin the examination of tangible interests, issues and stakes in the region. I examine the four countries tangible interests in three chapters on population and population centers, navigation and trade routes, and economic resources. I then turn to examine intangible issues and the intangible salience of the Arctic to the four countries. The conclusion will summarize and synthesize the main findings.

CHAPTER II
FORCE POSTURES – COMPARING SECURITY ASSETS, ENGAGEMENT AND
POLICY IN THE ARCTIC REGION

The United States, Canada, Russia and Norway's security policy focus towards the Arctic differ; there is variation in how the Arctic is prioritized among the four. This section will discuss and compare the countries' military assets, presence and commitments in the Arctic in order to show that the U.S., Canada, Russia and Norway are dedicating different levels of interests towards the region and that some countries prioritize the Arctic more than others.

Air, Land and Naval Military Presence and Assets in the U.S. Arctic

While the geostrategic importance of the Arctic has faded after Cold War, the U.S. still has fundamental national security interests in the region as set out in President George W. Bush's policy document from 2009, *National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-66)/ Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-25* (US White House 2009).

These interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight (US White House 2009).

The Directive recognizes that human activity in the region is growing and will continue to increase, which also will require the U.S. to be more present in the region to protect its interests (US White House 2009). While this document suggests increased interests towards the Arctic, the region remains distant from the U.S. foreign and security agenda (Åtland 2014, 154). With regards to the U.S. military presence in Alaska, there are two large U.S. air bases located in the state; Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage and Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks (Wezeman 2016, 18). The Alaskan Command (ALCOM) under which US forces in Alaska fall, consists of approximately 3,700 National Guard and reserve personnel as well as 16,000 regular personnel, and is incorporated in the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) (Wezeman 2016, 17-18). However, there is no separate command for military operations in the Arctic region, and responsibilities are being split between the Northern Command, the Pacific Command and the European Command (*ibid.*, 17). The US Army Alaska (USARAK), which is the army component of ALCOM also has bases near Fairbanks and Anchorage, both located south of the Arctic circle (*ibid.*, 19). USARAK, while calling itself ‘America’s Arctic Warriors’ is not specifically earmarked for Arctic operations, and in mid-2015 there was a proposal to cut almost 3000 of the 4000 troops (*ibid.*).

In terms of US air and missile defences, the Arctic region is important, and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) controls US interceptor aircraft in the Alaska NORAD region and operates radars for air surveillance in Alaska and Canada (*ibid.*,18). The U.S. Navy also has a role in the Arctic in implementing US Arctic policy, and it is the U.S. Navy and the Department of Defense’s mission to ensure

“freedom of navigation in the world’s oceans and providing security and protection for the United States and its allies” (Conley et al. 2013, 7). However, the Navy’s surface fleet in the region has limited operational experience in the Arctic environment and few surface vessels which have the capabilities of operating here (Conley et al. 2013, 7, Åtland 2014, 154). However, it should be noted that the U.S. military has valuable Arctic undersea capabilities, and it operates several nuclear submarines which performs missions in the region (Åtland 2014, 154-155). The U.S. submarine fleet which has a long history of performing missions and exercises under the Arctic ice cover, and the ability to operate nuclear submarines in the region is considered important to national security (Conley et al. 2013, 7, Åtland 2014, 154-155). US nuclear attack submarines participated in Arctic exercises in 2011, 2014 and 2016, operating together under the ice and establishing a camp on the Arctic ice (Wezeman 2016, 20).

However, while U.S. submarine forces tracked and prepared to engage Soviet submarines under the Arctic ice during the Cold War, the importance of the task greatly has greatly diminished in a new security environment through the 90s (Huebert 2009, 19). “Indeed, the composition of its current submarine force reflects the US perception that the Arctic is not of high strategic importance, although the US Navy is known still to deploy a submarine in Arctic waters at least once a year” (Huebert 2009, 19). There are however indicators that U.S. Arctic actors are starting to assess the situation in the north more closely. The Navy has created its Arctic Roadmap which guides policy in the region in the context of a changing Arctic environment in order “to ensure its own readiness and capability in the region” (Titley and St. John 2010, 42). Potential investments and

capabilities in the region were assessed in a report to Congress in 2011 in The Department of Defense's "Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage". This concluded that "additional evaluations of the future Arctic operating environment are needed before significant investments in infrastructure are made" (Conley et al. 2013, 7-8). This may indicate that while budget requirements for U.S. investment in the Arctic is needed, the current economic situation is a constraining factor (*ibid.*, 8). However, it may also suggest that the current environment in the region is considered stable with regards to the Navy's ability to secure a maritime presence and navigation rights.

Another important actor in the Arctic is the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) under the Department of Homeland Security. Of all U.S. government security actors, the Coast Guard has the largest set of authorities with regards to the Arctic Ocean and it has responsibility to protect the Alaskan maritime region of District 17, one of 17 regional Coast Guard commands, entailing 33,000 miles of coastline (Conley et al. 2013, 9-10). At the same time, this also entails several challenges for the Coast Guard with regards to maritime operations due to harsh climate, infrastructure and the geographic area that has to be covered (*ibid.*, 10). In addition to operational challenges, budget challenges are also prominent here, as the Department of Homeland Security often prioritizes fighting terrorism as well as protecting America's southern land and sea border (*ibid.*). Moreover, the U.S. has in practice only one icebreaker for operations in the Arctic environment. *Polar Star* began its service in the late 1970s and has thus been in service longer than its "intended 30-year service life" (O'Rourke 2018, 3). Icebreakers have crucial abilities to

operate in the Arctic climate and to cut through several meters of ice. They can thus function as vessels to, on the one hand, assert sovereignty in maritime areas, and on the other hand, support economic and industrial activities in ice-covered areas. In other words, investments in icebreakers can thus be seen as a “symbol” of prioritization of the Arctic region. The lack of investments in icebreakers particularly indicates that the Arctic is not a prioritization in the U.S. As such, while the U.S. has undersea capabilities, the lack of surface vessels and icebreaking capacity to operate in the harsh climate which characterize the North American Arctic is worth noting.

Air, Land and Naval Military Presence and Assets in the Canadian Arctic

Exercising sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic is a key priority for the Canadian Government (Government of Canada 2010, 5, Wezeman 2016, 3). Indeed, the Northern Strategy from 2009 emphasizes sea, land, air and space capacity to safeguard sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic (Åtland 2014, 155). The Canada First Defence Strategy from 2008, which contains Canada’s defense policy and includes plans for investments until 2028 also puts emphasis on securing Canada’s sovereignty – including in the Arctic (Wezeman 2016, 3). Improvement of its capacity to operate militarily in the Arctic is also seen as an important component of solving security and sovereignty challenges, and the country emphasize the vision of better safeguarding its Arctic territory as well as maritime areas and air space (Bergh 2012, 4). With regards to military presence in the Canadian Arctic land area, the main Arctic force is the Canadian Rangers which patrols northern Canada: a “lightly armed militia force” of approximately 5000 personnel trained for year-round operations, but there are additional plans to set up an army unit of

approximately a 500 troops regular army unit for Arctic operations (Wezeman 2016, 6). A Canadian reserve force is based in Yellowknife, while a small military base is also located on Ellesmere Island, as well as a special Arctic training center in Resolute Bay, Nunavut (*ibid.*). Arctic summer exercises are also being held with both land, air, and sea forces involved (Åtland 2014, 155).

Moreover, for Canada as well, the Arctic region is important in terms of air and missile defenses operated through NORAD, and the country regularly conducts Arctic air defense exercises (*ibid.*). In addition, the Royal Canadian Air Force anti-submarine warfare aircrafts which are based on the east coast of Canada have the range to patrol the Canadian Arctic region (Wezeman 2016, 3-4). In terms of air force capabilities, 77 combat aircraft are based in south east and central Canada, but they are also able to operate from four secondary air bases in the Canadian Arctic, and are “regularly deployed in the Arctic region, especially to intercept Russian bomber and reconnaissance aircraft close to Canada’s airspace” (*ibid.*, 4). With regards to naval bases, the nearest Canadian naval base to the Arctic region is south east of Canada at Halifax, Nova Scotia (*ibid.*, 7). Expansion of the small existing coast guard base at Nanisivik on Baffin Island, Nunavut, was expected in the period 2010–15 to become a naval base with docking and supply facilities. However, “this programme has also been downsized to a refuelling base and delayed by several years” (Wezeman 2016, 7).

Moreover, while the Royal Canadian Navy have annual deployments in the region, it is also noted that there are simply too few, too expensive warships that have trouble operating in the Arctic ice-infested waters, which make them “poor platforms” for

operations in the Arctic environment, such as regular fisheries inspectors and patrolling (Lackenbauer and Lajeunesse 2016, 39). However, the Navy does provide naval assets such as Halifax-class frigates and other maritime coastal patrol vessels in support of operations in the maritime environment during the navigable summer season (*ibid.*, 33). It is relevant to point out that the Arctic defense and security policy is crafted “with an eye towards probabilities and responsible resource allocation” which means that the Canadian Armed Forces has prioritized to address security challenges following from reduced sea ice and more economic activity in the region (*ibid.*, 23-24). The Canadian Government has announced several initiatives that would strengthen its military presence in the Arctic. In the Canada First and the Northern Strategy documents one large icebreaker was planned for the coast guard, while plans also have been made for an additional large Arctic offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) (Wezeman 2016, 6).

Moreover, the Canadian Coast Guard has a fleet consisting of 15 icebreakers; 7 of these are light icebreakers, 4 are medium, and 2 are heavy icebreakers, *CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent* and *CCGS Terry Fox* (Government of Canada 2018). As such, Canada has the second largest icebreaking fleet of the four Arctic countries. Canada’s sovereignty and military presence in the Arctic is particularly publicized through the yearly military Operation *Nanook*, though beyond these publicized deployments, the Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force have an active year-round military presence and responsibilities in the Arctic, conducting operations, surveillance, patrols and controlling airspace of the Arctic (Lackenbauer and Lajeunesse 2016, 30-31).

Air, Land and Naval Military Presence and Assets in the Russian Arctic

Russia adopted its Arctic policy document in September 2008 called “The Foundations of the Russian Federation’s State Policy in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond” which was published in 2009 (Wezeman 2016, 13). This document, in contrast to the 2001 Arctic policy document, refers less to hard security issues in the region and but puts more emphasis on issues such as economic development (Zysk 2010, 104-105). Two main topics of this document is the emphasis on making the region a strategic resource base for Russia and preserving Russia’s role as a leading Arctic country (Åtland 2014, 152). The second document that Russia’s Arctic policies are set out in is “The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security Efforts for the Period up to 2020”, adopted in 2013 which also focuses on non-military challenges and emphasize cooperation between the Arctic states (Wezeman 2016, 13). These documents also particularly address the importance of the Arctic’s resources to Russia’s wealth as will be highlighted.

For Russia, Arctic military security is growing in its importance. Developments include expansion of Russian forces in the Arctic, a new “Joint Strategic Command North” in addition to modernizing equipment and increased training (*ibid.*, 14). Major Russian military forces are present in the Arctic which also have become more active than in recent years (ISAB 2016, 8). Russian military presence in the region has particularly increased with regards to naval and air activities. Russia has resumed its deployment of reconnaissance and long-range bomber patrols, for instance increasing the number of flights by Russian bombers along the northern coast of Norway and across the

north pole from the Kola peninsula (Østhagen 2017, 240, Expert Commission 2015, 17, 20). In addition to several radar bases and air bases being planned along Russia's northern edge, several of the Arctic air defence and radar bases that were closed after the end of the cold war are also being reopened (Wezeman 2016, 14). Moreover, the Kola Peninsula is also home to Russian ground forces, including naval infantry, and an Arctic brigade of 3600 troops became operational in 2015 (*ibid.*, 14-15).

Russian naval power in the Arctic is largely based in the northwestern corner, on the Kola Peninsula (Åtland 2014, 153). As will be indicated later in this thesis, the Kola Peninsula is a key strategic area for Russia in the Arctic, providing access to the world's oceans for the Northern Fleet. Access to the Atlantic Ocean is of strategic importance to Russia and the Russian navy, especially with limited access to the Baltic and the Black Seas after the Cold War (Zysk 2010, 108). The Northern Fleet, based at the Kola Peninsula right across the Norwegian border, is the largest of Russia's five fleets (Wezeman 2016, 15). "The fleet includes most of Russia's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), which operate in the Arctic area (including under the ice) and are protected by surface ships (including Russia's sole aircraft carrier), nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft" (Wezeman 2016, 15). The Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean are still important training and stationing areas for the Russian SSBN force, and over half of Russia's sea-based strategic nuclear warheads are found on the submarines operating in the region (Åtland 2014, 153). With regards to priority of investments, the modernization of the country's fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines is at the top of the list (*ibid.*). "Moscow's continued reliance on the nuclear deterrent, together

with the focus on enhancing global naval power projection capabilities, indicates that the military strategic importance of the Arctic to Russia will remain high for the foreseeable future” (Zysk 2010, 110). Additionally, Russia has the largest icebreaker fleet in the world with 38 active polar icebreakers and four of these are operational nuclear icebreakers (Moe 2014, 794, The Arctic Institute 2018a). As of 2015, Russia’s icebreaker fleet working in the Arctic consisted of six diesel-electric icebreakers and four nuclear icebreakers, while more four diesel-electric icebreakers and one nuclear icebreaker were under construction (Moe and Brigham 2017, 55). Of the icebreakers working in the Arctic, *50 let Pobedy*, has capacity of breaking through thick ice with the large icebreaker, while four smaller icebreakers have the capacity of breaking through thin ice (Wezeman 2016, 15). The Russian navy is also increasing its capabilities for operations in areas with thin ice with the launching of a vessel that could be used for breaking 1-metre-thick ice, as well as other icebreaking support ships and patrol ships (*ibid.*, 15-16). In sum, the “total of Russia’s deployable military capabilities in the Northern ‘theatre’ is still greater than the combined forces of its neighbours” (Baev 2010, 4).

Air, Land and Naval Military Presence and Assets in Northern Norway

Norway’s focus towards the High North¹ can be traced back to the red-green coalition government from 2005. The Government policy documents, The Soria Moria Declarations of 2005 and 2009, as well as the Norwegian Government’s High North Strategy from 2006, outline the challenges and opportunities in the High North, and the growing importance of the region for Norway in the years ahead (Rottem 2013, 245,

¹ In Norwegian governmental policies, Northern Norway and Svalbard is often referred to as the “High North.”

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). The 2007 Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy still guides Norwegian defence policy and gives priority to the High North (Wezeman 2016, 10). Moreover, in 2012, the Government issued a long-term plan for the Armed Forces, which focuses on the High North as “Norway’s most important strategic focus” (Rottem 2013, 244). According to the Norwegian Armed Forces annual report, presence and surveillance in the High North is crucial, and this presence is continued with through naval vessels, land forces and maritime patrolling aircraft as well as fighter aircrafts (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017b, 30). Indeed, the Norwegian Armed Forces presence in the North is relatively high.

Norway restructured its land forces in 2009, resulting in Brigade North, a wintertrained force located mostly in Troms county becoming the largest unit of the Norwegian Army (Wezeman 2016, 12). With regards to this brigade, a mechanized battalion, medical battalion, artillery battalion and intelligence battalion are located at Setermoen in Troms county (Norwegian Ministry of Defence 2013). Moreover, the Army Staff, Brigade North Staff, MP company, signal battalion and logistics battalion are located at Bardufoss also in Troms county (*ibid.*). An engineer battalion and a light armored battalion are also located in Troms county at Skjold (*ibid.*). The Border Guard is located at Hoybuktmoen in Finnmark county, close to the border with Russia. In general, the Norwegian Army has a continual presence in Finnmark county (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017b, 6).

Moreover, the Joint Headquarters for the Norwegian Armed Forces changed location in 2009 from a commando center in southern Norway to being established outside Bodo, in Nordland county, north of the Arctic Circle. While Norway emphasizes military presence in the region as politically important, locating the headquarters in Northern Norway is not intended as a militarization of the region (Rottem 2013, 245-246). Furthermore, with the arrival of over 50 new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Aircrafts, the main air force base is in the process of being changed from its location in Bodo to a more southern location at Orland outside Trondheim, however Evenes air base in Nordland county will operate as a forward base (Wezeman 2016, 11, Forsvarsdepartementet 2017). Given the speed that these aircrafts can attain, one may assume that the change to a more southern location will have little impact on air power in the north. Indeed, the range for these jets is 2200 km; corresponding to the distance between Oslo and the south of Italy (Forsvarsdepartementet 2017). The Norwegian air force still retains several bases north of the Arctic circle. The 333 squadron is located at Andoya air station where Orjan air crafts have responsibilities of surveilling maritime activity and uphold Norwegian sovereignty in Norwegian maritime areas (Norwegian Armed Forces n.d.). Search and rescue forces also operates from air stations in Northern Norway. The Norwegian air force is also in the process of phasing in new weapon systems such as the Coast Guard helicopter NH90 (Norwegian Armed Forces n.d.). The activity of maritime patrol aircrafts in the High North has been high throughout 2017 (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017b, 6).

Having a naval military presence in the north is also important for Norway. The Coast Guard base is located at Sortland in Nordland county, while the Coastal Rangers Commando is located at Trondenes in Troms county. There is also a naval base at Ramsund in Nordland county. That Norway is an active player on the north is indicated by the presence of the Navy and Coast Guard. Indeed, both the Coast Guard and the Navy's general presence has increased in the high north and activity will continue to increase (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017b, 20). 48 % of the Norwegian Navy's activity were conducted in the High North and through 2017, there was a continual presence at all times of at least one submarine (*ibid.*, 6). Norway has moreover been modernizing its armed forces over the past years, which is shown through its naval capabilities. Norway has a highly modern navy with Fridtjof Nansen class frigates, Ula-class submarines and Skjold-class corvettes (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017a). Five high-tech frigates in the *Fridtjof Nansen* class were built during the 2000s, which are the main "surface combatant units" (Åtland 2014, 156). The Nansen frigates and the Ula Submarines are particularly capable of operating in the Arctic environment, however, none of Norway's warships or patrol ships can break ice except the Coast Guard icebreaker *Svalbard* which is lightly armed (Wezeman 2016, 12-13). Three large Barentshav OPV's are however capable of operating in icy conditions (*ibid.*, 13).

With regards to icebreakers, the Coast Guard, part of the Norwegian Navy, has one icebreaker among the 15 coast guard vessels it operates, which is the *Svalbard* icebreaker (Norwegian Armed Forces 2017a, Wezeman 2016, 13). As such, it is clear that both the U.S. and Norway has the same number of icebreakers. However, it is

relevant to note that the environment in the Norwegian Arctic is different from the North American Arctic region. As will be noted later in the thesis, it has less ice and has a milder climate due to the gulf stream. Arguably, the requirement for icebreaking capacity should thus be seen in light of these operating conditions. As suggested, Norway also has several other surface vessels that have abilities to operate in its Arctic maritime area. Moreover, while the *Polar Star* began its service life in the 1970s, *Svalbard* was built in the early 2000 (Norwegian Armed Forces 2016). This indicates that the investment into capacity to operate in the Arctic is much more recent in Norway. Lastly, with regards to power politics in this environment, Norway and Russia are the two major actors in this sub region of the Arctic. However, while Russian military activity has increased of late, this activity is not seen as an “expression of pressure on Norway’s interests” (Rottem 2013, 246). In relation to its big neighbor in the north, Russia, Norway has “sought to pursue a policy of “reassurance” vis-à-vis Russia in the north, emphasizing the non-offensive nature of its defense posture and the need for bilateral cooperation” (Åtland 2014, 157). Indeed, in the Arctic region more broadly, Canada and Russia are often the two countries said to be “head-to-head”, accusing each other of being militarily aggressive in the region (*ibid.*, 155-156).

CHAPTER III
LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHOD

The Geopolitical Implications of Climate Change in the Arctic Region

The Arctic region has received growing attention in recent years. This section will give an overview of the literature that deals with potential geopolitical implications of climatic changes in the Arctic. This part will in this way serve as an overview in order to understand the increased interest towards the Arctic, thereby giving a presentation of the various perspectives that has framed the debate around developments in the region in recent years. It introduces the conflict and cooperation dichotomy in the context of the ongoing changes in the region, aiming for a nuanced analysis. Bringing in various perspectives of developments contribute to a broader understanding of security dynamics in the region. Within this debate, there are also possible explanations for why the U.S. is paying little security attention to the region relative to the other Arctic countries. Though there is some literature that does a good job of dealing explicitly with US security policy in the region, (Lundestad 2013, Huebert 2009), much of the existing literature about the relationship between the U.S. and the Arctic is insufficient and does not currently offer a compelling explanation for the purposes of this project. In this regard, the policy and academic worlds look quite similar. Therefore, while providing an overview of the situation in the Arctic, this section will at the same time survey the literature to identify

and interrogate existing explanations for the United States not emphasizing security interests in the Arctic. The end conclusion will be to move on to an alternative, issue-based approach.

The remainder of this section proceeds as follows. It begins with the geopolitical implications of climate change in the Arctic, and a literature that generally predicts conflict in the region. Following from these discourses, the paucity of U.S. security emphasis on the region may be framed as a question. Why is there a gap between the expected U.S. attention towards the region and the actual focus it has up north? Succeeding this section is a presentation of literature that counters the view that conflict emanating from increased access to resources is the next characterization of the Arctic region. This latter part will also provide some explanations for why the U.S. has relatively little focus towards the Arctic. Existing literature provides an insufficient approach to understanding and exploring the matter of the research question. As such, the conclusion will offer an alternative approach to exploring the research question and an *issue-based* approach to explain national interests will be applied.

The Geopolitics of the Arctic - the Conflict Perspective

Scholarly work on the Arctic as a security issue is part of a larger discourse about the geopolitical implications of climate change, where certain voices portray the region as an arena for imminent conflict. From this point of view, that the U.S. is not paying more attention to the region is puzzling, as the implication is that the U.S. will likely fall behind in the race for the Arctic, risking that other players such as Russia will emerge as

a leader in the region. Most of the literature on the politics of the Arctic is grounded in International Relations paradigms, though this grounding is more implicit than explicit. This has been mainly empirical in orientation and few contributions take their explicit point of departure from theory, with one exception being with regards to identity (Hønneland 2016). Geir Hønneland, Director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, notes that “IR theory has to some extent, implicitly or explicitly, structured the empirical presentation of Arctic politics and spurred debate between (implicitly or explicitly defined) camps, but it has not informed analysis to any significant degree, with the constructivist approach as a possible exception” (Hønneland 2016, 17-18). Realism and liberalism are rationalist theories focusing on material interests. Political realism or *Realpolitik* emphasize how states are selfish actors, competing for power and survival in an international system with no overarching government (Donnelly 2013, 32). Liberalism shares the view that states are the most important actors in international politics, however, its main theoretical proposition is that states’ concern with power can be overridden by economic and political considerations (Walt 1998, 38). From this point of view, states can overcome the obstacles to peace posed by anarchy through international cooperation which is achieved through commitment to liberal values, free market and international institutions (*ibid.*). Neorealism grew out of the realist paradigm in the late 1970s by the publishing of *Theory of International Politics* by Kenneth Waltz (Reus-Smit 2013:218). Neorealism or structural realism hold that the international system is anarchic; this means that every unit in the system are functionally the same and must rely on self-help to secure survival. The differences between units are furthermore determined by

differences in capabilities (Donnelly 2013, 37). Neoliberal institutionalism broadly shares the same view of international politics as neorealism by its focus on states as the most important actors and the anarchical condition of the international system. However, it offers a challenge to neorealism by its assumption that even in an anarchic environment, cooperation between states can be achieved; anarchy may be mitigated by regimes and institutional cooperation as they bring “higher levels of regularity and predictability to international relations” (Burchill 2013, 67). Both neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism dominate the debate on the future of Arctic developments (Keil 2014, 162). While neorealism evokes a confrontational rush for the Arctic’s resources, neoliberal institutionalism highlights “the necessary reform of the institutional system governing Arctic issues”, and both share the view of significant and rising stakes of Arctic resources (*ibid.*).

With regards to the current topic of portrayals of the Arctic as the next arena for geopolitical conflict, neorealism may be said to be most relevant with regards to structuring the empirical presentation of developments in the region. Interest in the geopolitics of the Arctic and the implications thereof of climate change blossomed after the 2007 Russian flag planting on the bottom of the sea on the North Pole. Scott Borgerson captured the moment with his 2008 article “Arctic Meltdown”, an example of a contribution that pressed the issues of emerging tensions in the region. The Arctic region is one of the places on the earth where the effects of climate change are manifesting themselves at a faster pace compared to other parts of the world, exemplified by figure 3.1 below which shows summer ice extent between 1970s-2100. The 2017

Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) assessment's summary for policy makers, published by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), highlights that the Arctic climate is shifting to a new state and that temperatures in this region are warming faster than in other regions (AMAP 2017, 10). Accelerating changes in this region is a process in which receding snow and icecaps reveals darker ocean areas which in turn furthers melting by enhancing heat absorption (Stokke 2011, 838). The 2017 SWIPA finds that the Arctic Ocean could be largely ice free during the summer in the coming decades (AMAP 2017, 10). These changes have opened up opportunities for increased human activity in the region, increased possibilities for new shipping routes as well as extraction of minerals, oil and gas. The United States Geological Survey has assessed that 30 % of the world's undiscovered gas and 13 % of the world's undiscovered oil may be found in the Arctic Region, mostly offshore (Gautier et al. 2009, 1175).

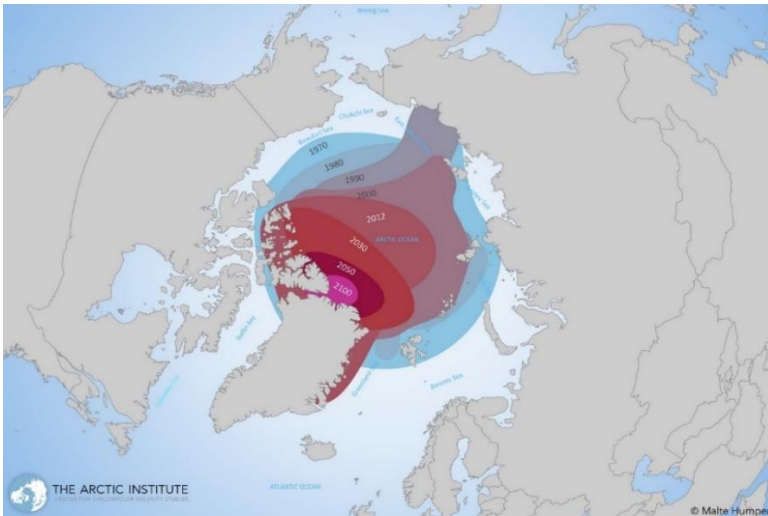


Figure 3.1. Illustration of summer ice extent from 1970-2100. Source: Map from the Arctic Institute 2016.

Accompanying these changes and opportunities are discourses that link climate change with the potential for heightened international tensions in the region. Climate change and its implications, in terms of opening up for economic opportunities, may arguably change “the geostrategic dynamics” in the region (Blunden 2009, 121). In addressing economic and security implications of global warming, Scott Borgerson (2008, 63) argued that “global warming has given birth to a new scramble for territory and resources among the five Arctic powers”. He warned that “without U.S. leadership to help develop diplomatic solutions to competing claims and potential conflicts, the region could erupt in an armed mad dash for its resources” (*ibid.*, 65). Moreover, he points out that:

The combination of new shipping routes, trillions of dollars in possible oil and gas resources, and a poorly defined picture of state ownership makes for a toxic brew. The situation is especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structure that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes (ibid., 71).

In framing the debate about the Arctic, some observers point to increasing competition, militarization, and possible conventional or unconventional conflict in the region (Lackenbauer and Lajeunesse 2016, 11,12). Scott Borgerson’s article is an example in this category, echoed by others whose’ fears relate to resources and military muscle-flexing in the Arctic as sources of possible tension and conflict (*ibid.*, 12). These types of discourses grounds the discussion within the realist view of international politics. Indeed, taking this view of developments in the region it may be argued that security dilemma dynamics are in fact taking place. From a realist stance, states will act to ensure their security and their interests, mistrust other states’ motives and employ military means if

necessary (Rottem 2013, 237). Robert Jervis notes that the security dilemma entails how states' policies "designed to increase the state's security often have the effect of decreasing the other's security (even though this is not desired or intended)" (Jervis 2011, 416). Indeed, self-interested states under the condition of anarchy in the international system constantly compete for power or security (Walt 1998, 38). Moreover, under these conditions, where states cannot be sure of others' intentions, they must rely on themselves for protection. In other words, states' fear of being exploited drives the security dilemma (Jervis 1978, 172). In this regard, the discourse that pertains particularly to access to petroleum resources and sea lanes is relevant to point out. Arguably, there may be discourses among states in the region to view each other as potential rivals in the quest for oil and gas resources (Åtland 2010, 33). There is a growing recognition "among Arctic states that they are facing a 'security dilemma', and that unilateral moves could set off an 'arms race' that none of the states want" (*ibid.*).

While it is reasonable to harbor some reservations regarding the extent to which the Arctic region is becoming a zone of high-scale military confrontation, the potential for military conflict cannot be entirely eliminated due to the massive economic stakes in the region as well as unsettled boundaries of maritime jurisdiction (Blunden (2009, 121). As such, climate change may serve as a "threat multiplier", which potentially may aggravate tensions among Arctic states (Åtland 2010, 30).

When addressing the topic over potential competition in the Arctic over resources or sea-lanes, the focus often entails Russia. Out of the five Arctic states, Norway, the U.S., Canada, and Denmark (Greenland) have excellent relations, with all four being

NATO members, tying them together in a shared security and cooperation regime. Russia on the other hand is seen as a wild card by many in the Arctic; often said to do as it pleases in the High North (Hønneland 2014a, 2). Andreas Østhagen (2017, 240) also notes that “in the predictions of conflict in the Arctic, Russia holds centre stage.” A more self-assertive Russia in the region has increased worry among the other Arctic states about its intentions, and the 2007 Russian flag-planting on the seabed at the North Pole has been characterized as the start of “the scramble for the Arctic” (Hønneland 2016, 1). On this note, the Arctic is important to Russian defense policy. As indicated above, Russia’s military presence in the region has increased, though Russian authorities emphasize that the increased military preparedness is mainly a response to security challenges deriving from increased economic and other activities in the region (Zysk 2010, 107). On the other hand, as Robert Huebert notes, some also question the intent of increased military preparedness in the region. Russia is modernizing and expanding their submarine forces, reviving their long-range bomber patrols in addition to the expanding their northern bases (Huebert 2017, 371-372). Some, for instance, view the modernization of Russian military bases not as being done to better facilitate search and rescue capabilities in the area, but instead for the purposes of improving Russian military capabilities in the region (*ibid.*).

Taking a realist view of these developments, one may argue that Russia is behaving in line with the self-help logic, particularly in the context of security dilemma dynamics. From this viewpoint, Russia is preserving its self-interests, as any state would, trying to increase its security and avoid being exploited.

Importantly, as Åtland (2010, 42) notes, Russia's fear about other states taking control of resources perceived as theirs is often coupled with the country's traditional fear of NATO. Indeed, one view is that the Arctic states' search for competitive economic advantage may also deepen the existing fault lines between Russia and NATO (Blunden 2009, 121).

As such, in the context of Arctic security, it is also relevant to look at the relationship between Russia and NATO. However, instead of looking inside the region, is it arguably also relevant to look at the relations in the global context - how outside development may affect interstate dynamics in the region. In the aftermath of Russia's intervention in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014, increased attention was given to possible confrontation in the High North, and Russia's relationship with other Arctic states began to deteriorate (Østhagen 2017, 240). The Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014 cooled the relationship between Arctic states and Russia, with some Arctic states such as Canada, Norway and the United States imposing sanctions that affected Russian activities in the Arctic, while Russia on the other hand increased military activities in and around other Arctic states such as Sweden and Finland (Huebert 2017, 372-373). Arguably, the Russian concern with NATO expansion as well as its protection and development of its nuclear deterrent will lead to the Russian seeing a necessity of building up of their military forces in the Arctic region (Huebert 2017, 374). Moreover, such a build-up, coupled with other tension point elsewhere between the West and Russia may lead to these confrontations playing out in the Arctic (*ibid.*). Indeed, the Arctic is not

independent from international affairs, and there is a possibility that military conflicts with their roots outside the Arctic can spill over into the region:

Ultimately, the point of tensions and the dynamics of these tensions between Russia and the other Arctic States do not originate in the Arctic, nor do they represent conflict about the Arctic. But they do ultimately affect the relationship that have been developed throughout the period of good cooperation in the region (Huebert 2017, 373-374).

The above discussion is linked to assumptions within geopolitics as well as great power politics championed by offensive realists like John Mearsheimer. According to Mearsheimer (2001, xi, 32), great powers fear each other, see each other as enemies and compete for power, which results in undermining chances for peace as great powers shape the international system. As such, they act according to the self-help logic outlined above. Geopolitics moreover, which “relates political power to geographical space” ties all of this together as it indicates “great power games and power politics” (Østerud and Hønneland 2014, 171-172). Since the intervention in Georgia in 2008, through the intervention in Ukraine and its involvement in the Syrian war, Russian foreign policy seems to be taking a more assertive and militarized turn. In light of this, an open question remains with regards to U.S. perceptions of Russia’s intentions in the Arctic. Russian behavior in the Arctic can be seen in the light of realist assumptions as its military assertiveness is growing in the region. However, while Russia seem to be acting in accordance with realist assumptions, the U.S. does not seem to have a more focused security policy in this region in the context of changing geopolitical dynamics, for instance compared to its engagement in the region during the Cold War. The next section will explore this issue further and address other literature and perspectives that may help us understand international politics and security dynamics in the region.

Arctic Developments - Stability and Rule of Law?

The above discussion maintains that as the geopolitical importance of the Arctic is increasing, it is a puzzle why U.S. attention towards the north lags behind. However, the literature that predicts increased tensions between the Arctic states is insufficient to explain what is actually taking place in the region. As such, other sides of the debate contend that rhetoric about increased international competition and possibility for military confrontation in the Arctic is overestimated. Indeed, several studies show nuanced depictions of the security dynamics both within the region more broadly and among the region's various actors (Østhagen 2017, 240). The literature revive will therefore leave the realist/neorealist paradigm behind and move on to an examination of the Arctic region itself in order to provide an explanation as to why the U.S. focus is lacking.

The Relevance of Institutions – the Law of the Sea

First off, many of the common assumptions about the beginning of international conflict in the region need to be reconsidered. For instance, though tabloid views of the 2007 flag planting by Russia term the incident as the beginning of the scramble for the Arctic, this characterization needs to be corrected and accompanied by an analysis of factors such as institutions in the Arctic and their implications for regional dynamics. To begin with, the Russian flag planting may be seen as simply a symbolic act as part of a broader scientific expedition, the goal of which was to collect data for Russia's submission for an extended continental shelf to the Continental Shelf Commission, in

other words, the expedition itself was done in accordance with the Law of the Sea (Hønneland 2014a, 2). Illustrating a rule-abiding Russia up north is also the 2010 delimitation line agreement with Norway, which gives the two countries equal halves of a disputed area in the Barents Sea (*ibid.*, 3). Indeed, the agreement is one of the most recent settled disputed that is referred to by analyses informed by neoliberal institutionalism, along with the many other disputes in the Arctic that have already been peacefully settled (Keil 2014, 165).

From a neoliberal institutionalist point of view, these examples may be evidence of how institutions like the Law of Sea has an important role to play in the region and facilitates orderly development of resources and cooperation through transparency and predictability. However, from a realist view, one may still argue that institutions do not have a role in constraining states' behavior, rather, when institutions benefit states, they become central. As will be shown below, both points may be valid. Behaving according to the Law of the Sea is one of the most prominent guiding policies of all the five littoral states in the Arctic (Heininen 2012). Though the U.S. has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, many of its major provisions are international customary law and thus binding on the U.S. as well (Stokke 2011, 839). Moreover, though there are several unresolved legal maritime claims and disputes in the region, all Arctic states agree that the applicable legal framework is provided by the Law of the Sea (Lundestad and Tunsjø 2015, 393). The Ilulissat Declaration issued following a meeting at Ilulissat, Greenland, in 2008, stated that all the Arctic states shared a common desire on how to regulate the "new" Arctic and agreement over the wish to resolve disputed

jurisdictional issues peacefully (Rottem 2013, 241). Following from this are the questions of what happens when a territorial claim or transgression has gone too far, and what would the operative conflict resolution mechanisms be? Nemeth et al. (2014, 715) notes that in general the creation of conflict management mechanisms has been necessitated by the competition for scarce maritime resources. Accordingly, two mechanisms that states may employ to resolve competing claims to maritime areas are “privatization of the area in the form of declared exclusive economic zones and institutionalization of the issue through membership in UNCLOS” (Nemeth et al. 2014, 715). However, “neither privatization nor institutional solutions reduce militarized tensions over contested maritime spaces” (*ibid.*:732).

From a realist stance, it may be argued that the meaning of institutions disappears in the context of self-interested states that wants to maximize security and interests. However, Nemeth et al. (2014, 733) finds that “where UNCLOS seems to matter most is in its effect on the prevention of new maritime conflicts”, even though these types of mechanisms do not influence the probability of military conflict over maritime areas (*ibid.*, 711).

In the current Arctic context, it is however relevant to note that the types of prevention mechanisms outlined above is specifically applicable to the Arctic region where most of the areas of overlapping maritime boundary disputes today “are ‘cool’ rather than ‘hot’ disputes: “if for no other reason than the regions where overlaps exist are not yet areas of intense resource interest (...)” (McDorman and Schofield 2015, 208). When institutions like the Law of the Sea significantly benefits states, as it does in the

Arctic, they may provide a stabilizing mechanism. Russia, for instance, are ensured resource rights to large parts of the Arctic Ocean and enjoys large exclusive economic zones provided by the UNCLOS. Additionally, Article 76 of the LOS Convention establishes “the right of a coastal state to determine the outer limits of its continental shelf” (Jensen 2015, 228). In other words, this article allows a coastal state to submit a claim to a continental shelf beyond 200 nm based on certain criteria (*ibid.*). However, this is an opening for a territorial claim of the *continental shelf*, not the ocean areas beyond the 200 nm zone (Østerud and Hønneland 2014, 162). As such, while the states here have established territorial waters and 200- miles zones, one fundamental question remain, namely the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nm (Jensen 2015, 230). As the process of submissions of claims continue, disagreements have arisen. Both Canada and Russia dispute the Danish claim that the polar underwater ridges extend from the shores of Greenland (Østerud and Hønneland 2014, 162-163). However, the Arctic states, including the U.S. abide by the Convention’s stipulations in this process (Jensen 2015, 241). Arctic littoral states benefit from upholding the law of the sea, and not undermining it. Indeed, another point to consider is that most of the resources in the maritime domains of the Arctic are already located in undisputed areas and there is little unclaimed land for petroleum operations (Claes and Moe 2014, 98,117). A military confrontation involving undisputed, and even disputed resources, may seem as far-fetched due to the balance between military risk and political benefit and could be termed as counterproductive (Jensen and Rottem 2010, 79).

As such, one may see the conflict threshold as high even though tabloid versions claim different. As will be elaborated below, cooperation is a key foreign policy principle for Arctic states in the region and “both the high rate of Arctic boundary settlement and the manner in which Arctic states manage unsettled boundaries indicate strong determination to deal cooperatively with contested issues” (Stokke 2011, 841). While the Arctic region’s abundance of resources has been one of the foremost arguments for a stand-off in the region, the location and accessibility of these resources are factors that do not support this argument (Østhagen 2017, 240-241). As already mentioned, most of the resources are located within already settled jurisdiction of the various states in the region. Moreover, a stable operating environment is also of high priority in order to support the viable production of these resources (Rottem 2013, 240). Following from these analyses, it may be argued that rational states would seek a stable “operating environment” and avoid political tensions and conflict that would pose threats to the viable production of resources in the Arctic (*ibid.*). On the same note, it may also be argued that states would seek to avoid weakening the legitimacy of the Law of the Sea, which gives the countries rights to huge amounts of resources in massive ocean areas. The next section will go further into factors which may be seen to dampen the prospects for geopolitical conflict in the Arctic. It will firstly focus on how effects of climate change in fact also may be hindering the viable extraction of resources in the region, as well as physical and geographic factors of the region itself that contribute to a more nuanced picture of further activity here.

Climate Change and Implications for Commercial Activities

In examining policies in the Arctic, it is also necessary to take a closer look at the physical changes taking place up north as a result of climate change. Climatic changes do not only give rise to opportunities such as more open sea areas as a result of receding ice cap; a warmer Arctic will also likely entail more operational challenges for the Arctic states (Stokke 2011, 836). As such, it is necessary to closely examine how these changes might affect the prospects and viability of commercial activity. In turn, this is important in order to understand the level of attention paid to the region. Indeed, “the relationship between these environmental changes and the commercial viability of Arctic economic activities is not straightforward” (*ibid.*, 838). Other consequences of climate change in the region such as rougher and wilder weather conditions, moving ice, thawing permafrost and more frequent calving may result in more costly and difficult Arctic operations, creating new risks and challenges for instance to Arctic offshore transport and petroleum operations (*ibid.*, 836,838). Operational constraints may mean that the situation will be one of continuity rather than rapid change, and can perhaps also help to stabilize the situation by giving actors more time to adapt (*ibid.*, 839). Andreas Østhagen (2017, 241) moreover sheds light on the different climatic conditions of various areas *within* the Arctic region; companies face different climatic conditions as well as challenges related to infrastructure in the areas offshore Alaska and Greenland compared to the Barents Sea where offshore drilling is already taking place at a higher speed.

Geographical and logistical facts need to be acknowledged in any discussion of security in the Arctic (Rottem 2013, 243). Distances in the Arctic are enormous, and

infrastructure is lacking; “the Arctic covers a sixth of the world’s surface with its 30 million square kilometers. At the same time, the region holds 4 million inhabitants” (Rottem 2013, 243). With increasing activity and a changing environment in the region, what has been so-called “soft security issues”, such as oil spills and shipping accidents, may become heightened concerns (*ibid.*, 242). These issues are distinguished from classic security concerns as these are not considered to be intentional acts and incidents such as invasion or terrorism (*ibid.*). Indeed, Lundestad (2013, 171) notes that more attention was given to the region under the presidency of George W. Bush in terms of security issues, however such issues were considered in a non-threatening perspective “linked to the increased level of activity in the region”, including interests in energy security and secure maritime movement. It is moreover observed that the Department of Defense also took into consideration human and environmental security issues in the region and opportunities in this regard to work with other actors multilaterally, suggesting that security issues in the region was perceived as more than just related to classic security concerns under the Obama administration (Lundestad 2013, 174).

Regional Developments in National and Global Economic Context

Any assessment of the possible implications of climate change in the Arctic and a potential race for resources, should also examine regional developments in the global context. In this regard, it may be noted that the Arctic, though peripheral, is not isolated from global developments. Several factors beyond the region itself may prove to be crucial for further activities here. The state of the global economy is an important factor for Arctic oil and gas development moving forward; downturns in the global economy

will for instance make Arctic oil and gas production less likely (Harsem et al. 2011, 8041-8042). Another example is the effects of oil prices on Arctic offshore petroleum activities. Indeed, “even if we do see a spike in worldwide commodity prices in the next decade, Arctic resource extraction will remain a specialised, localised and costly affair” (Østhagen 2017, 241). It is estimated that there is a need for an oil price of at least \$50–\$60 per barrel, and even \$100 in certain regions for operations to be commercially viable (*ibid.*). The region is especially vulnerable to external factors due to the high production costs here compared to other oil and gas producing regions (Harsem et al. 2011, 8041-8042). Other market conditions may also challenge the commercial viability of Arctic gas exploration and production, such as the shale gas revolution in the U.S. which reduced the demand for Arctic oil and gas (Lundestad and Tunsjø 2015, 393). As will be noted later in the thesis, with regards to the U.S. and Arctic offshore oil production, the issue of how to transport oil and gas is also a difficult subject, especially after the Exxon Valdez accident (Huebert 2009, 8). The political debate and the domestic opposition regarding the Keystone XL Pipeline as well, suggests that these issues should be assessed carefully in the current domestic and political environment. As will be explored later in the text with regards to U.S. economic resources in the Arctic, several factors contribute to constrain the further development of these resources.



Figure 3.2. Map of the Arctic Ocean including depictions of the Northern Sea Route, offshore national boundaries, 200-nautical-mile limits, and summer sea-ice extent. Source: Map from The Economist 2015.

With regards to the possibility of new shipping routes, there are several challenges to their economic feasibility stemming from seasonal variations, the need for icebreakers, insurance costs, and inherent risk in areas of unstable seas and limited search-and-rescue capacity. Indeed, we will most likely only see an ice-free Arctic during a few summer months (Harsem et al. 2011, 8039). Based on these climatic conditions, traffic through the Northern Sea Route (NSR) will mainly be seasonal and ice conditions will remain variable, thus year-round usage of the entire passage will remain difficult and as a consequence the NSR will most likely not replace the Suez Canal as a global trade route any time soon, but can rather be termed as a seasonal complement (Brigham 2013, 76, Stephenson et al. 2014, 112). Arild Moe (2014, 784,799) also notes that on the supply side with regards to the NSR, Russia lacks an integrated policy for the NSR and potential users will base their use of the route on its attractiveness; if they believe that conditions will not be favorable and stable over the long term, they will most likely not use this route for transportation. Climate change may at some point also open up the Northwest

Passage (NWP), which goes along the northern coast of North America, as a viable route for commercial shipping (Åtland 2010, 37-39). The topic of the NWP has been a point of contention between the U.S. and Canada, as will be seen later in the thesis. Indeed, a commercially viable NWP could arguably lead to increased tensions between these actors (*ibid.*, 39).

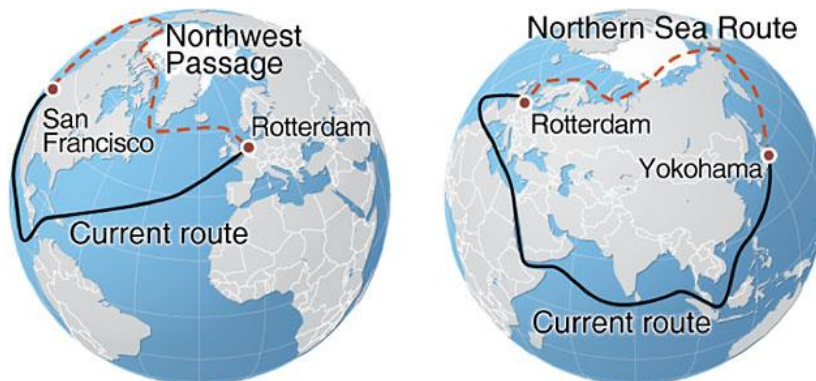


Figure 3.3. Map showing the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route. To the left, comparison of the current sea route connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, with the Northwest Passage along the northern coast of North America. To the right, comparison of current transportation route connecting Europe with Asia, with the Northern Sea Route along the northern coast of Russia. Source: Map from *Discovering the Arctic* n.d.

Cooperative Regimes and Economic Interdependence

Furthermore, it is relevant to point out that arguably, stability and peaceful relations continue to characterize the Arctic region; this is a state of affairs both dependent on Arctic states and their policies, as well as hold up by the institutional structures that are in place cooperation in the region (Heininen 2012, 42). Cooperation is a guiding principle in all of the eight states' Arctic strategies, and all of the strategies emphasize the Arctic Council (AC) as an important arena for multilateral cooperation

which continues to be the primary forum for intergovernmental cooperation on Arctic affairs (Heininen 2012, 41-42). On the economic side, several of the states in the region cooperate in terms of offshore oil and gas exploration. Indeed, for Russia, foreign expertise and intergovernmental cooperation is crucial for a viable extraction of national resources, and in this context, political tensions could undermine the viable resource development in the region (Rottem 2013, 240). Wilder weather conditions may also act as a stabilizing mechanism in that it may necessitate cooperative behavior on commercial activities. “Consequently, the Arctic states all have an interest in creating a favourable political environment for investment and economic development” (Østhagen 2017, 241). As shown, the Arctic region has been characterized by a climate of cooperation between the relevant actors (Rottem 2013, 253). With regards to US-Russian relations in the Arctic, it is pointed out that relations between the two countries generally have been quite good and cooperative, especially under the Obama administration (Lundestad 2013, 181-182). Even after the events in Ukraine 2014, a situation of stability continued to characterize the Arctic region, and “the arctic states have made efforts to keep the region separate from the geopolitics of Ukraine, the Middle East and the Korean peninsula” (Østhagen 2017, 242).

This section has illustrated that the actual potential for conflict in the Arctic region still remains low, even though tabloid versions claim the Arctic to be an unregulated arena. The ambiguous effects of climate change and its implications for potential future commercial activity seems to put a damper on the proposed “resource race in the Arctic”. The Arctic climate still presents challenges for operating in this

environment, which also lay foundations for further cooperation between regional actors.

As Andreas Østhagen (2017, 241-242) observes:

The expectations of a scramble for resources have been founded on thin ice. Outright military conflict with other states to claim a limited quantity of out-of-bounds offshore resources—many of which look likely to remain unexplored for at least the next couple of decades—is neither economically nor politically profitable. The argument that the race for resources will result in an outright conflict over the arctic does not hold.

This is not to say that security dynamics are not at play in the region – the situation is more complex than a conflict/no-conflict scenario, and the Arctic is important in terms of international security (Østhagen 2017, 242, Rottem 2013, 238). While a conflict over the Arctic is unlikely, relationships in the Arctic, in particular between Russia in some of the other Arctic states cannot be isolated from deterioration in Russia's relationship with these states more broadly (Østhagen (2017, 242). However, it is important to note that the strategic importance of the Arctic to national security and defense policy is different for the different states. However, despite security dynamics playing out in the region – especially in the European part – geographical factors again place some constraints on possible spillover effects, and Russian military investment in the region may for instance have little impact on Canada's security outlook, but will have more impact on Norway's security concerns due to the geographical closeness of the two countries (*ibid.*). As such, Arctic security should be assessed in terms of sub-regions such as the North American Arctic and the Eurasian Arctic (*ibid.*, 244). This may provide some answers to the relatively little security policy focus on the part of the United States.

U.S. Arctic Policy in a Low Threat Environment

The previous section has assessed the situation in the Arctic in the context of climate change and future economic opportunities and come to the conclusion that even though climate change gives rise to geopolitical considerations and implications, the Arctic may still be characterized as a stable, low-threat environment. Factors such a prevailing legal framework that is acknowledged by the relevant parties, as well as relatively little activity in the region, helps explain this. As such, the above section has provided one perspective useful to assess U.S' approach to the region in terms of security policy. Indeed, situating U.S. engagement in the region within this broader context may give us a relevant answer to the question of why the U.S. has relatively little security policy focus towards the Arctic.

As noted above, the strategic importance of the region for the U.S. waned after the Cold War, though lately increased attention has been given to the ongoing changes and their consequences for U.S. national security. One important policy during this time has been to ensure a stable and secure region, in which US interests are maintained (Lundestad 2013, 186). The U.S. Department of Defense is monitoring the changes and assessing what level of engagement that is necessary in the current and future situation (Lundestad and Tunsjø 2015, 394). It may in this way be argued that as long as stability and US regional interests are maintained, engagement will remain limited. Lundestad and Tunsjø (2015, 394) notes that the 2009 Arctic policy directive issues by the Bush administration does not refer to any state threats in the region; however, challenges include terrorism and criminal and hostile acts. Arguably, as long as national security

objectives are not threatened, the Arctic does not represent an urgent issue (Lundestad 2013). The Obama Administration's suggestion of the building of an additional icebreaker showed that interest was present, however, no formal decision to expand US polar capabilities may suggest that the situation in the Arctic was not considered urgent (Lundestad 2013, 174). It is for instance noted that existing force posture is adequate to meet "near- to mid-term U.S. defense needs" (U.S. Department of Defense 2011, 3). In the context of this low-threat security environment, the role of the U.S. may be characterized as "strategically awaiting," with constant and continued assessment of the situation. As the Department of Defense has stated, the U.S. is balancing between being "late-to-need" and the cost of making "premature Arctic investments" (*ibid.*).

The United States - a Global Power

Following from the above analysis is the notion that the lack of attention to the region also may be explained by the low level of strategic importance of the region to the United States compared to other regions of the world where the US has more security interests. It is clear that the region does not have the same strategic relevance to the U.S. as it for instance had in the Cold War where it became one of many arenas for a standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union. In other words, the region is less important nowadays in terms of international power politics compared to what it was during the Cold War (Rottem 2013, 237). In the current context, as Lundestad (2013, 177) notes, other foreign policy issues as well as economic conditions in the United States are perceived as more important. As such, besides only focusing on what it is about the region itself that may explain the research question, it is also relevant to take a

look at perspectives that may highlight what it is about the United States that contributes to explain this issue. Here, the fact that the United States is a global power with more urgent security interests elsewhere provides a relevant explanation. As explained here, as a global power with a more multifaceted foreign policy agenda under the Bush and Obama administration, the Arctic attracted some political attention, however it remained a subordinate issue even under the Obama administration as the focus was placed on other regions.

Conclusion – Does the Arctic Issue Challenge the View of a Race for Resources Picture of Arctic Developments?

In this part of the thesis I chose to explore the security dynamics in the region through a more broader perspective of international politics in the region in order to give an overall view of the situation, laying a foundation for the rest of the thesis. Some of the conclusions from this section is that extreme weather and environment, as well as oil and gas cooperation and interdependence, contribute to dampen the potential for conflict in the region. As does the need for a stable rule of law and a stable environment to actually develop and benefit from the extraction of resources. The states benefit from the Law of the Sea in terms of rights to massive amounts of resources. In this way, upholding and not undermining the UNCLOS is crucial. Arctic states are committed to act in accordance with the Law of the Sea, even the U.S. which has not ratified the Convention. As such, these factors suggest that the Arctic issue challenge the view of race for resources picture of Arctic developments. Through this assessment I also explored some explanations for U.S. lack of prioritization of the region. Following from the literature review, some of

these were related to how the region is perceived as a low-threat environment and having stable rule of law. Moreover, while the U.S. lack of attention to the region was framing as puzzling, explanations were here presented as relating to how the U.S. perceives the situation as not urgent enough to deploy more capabilities in the region, though interest has increased. Indeed, since the Cold War, the United States has “engaged, to the extent perceived necessary, to ensure that the Arctic remains in a secure state, which maintains US regional, and global, interests” (Lundestad and Tunsjø 2015, 395).

However, the perspectives and explanations addressed up until this point are not sufficient on their own to fully understand why the U.S. has minimal security policy focus towards the Arctic. Relevantly, the literature review does not explain why other countries do prioritize the region more. Indeed, this approach fails to address the actual stakes that the four countries have in the region. A deeper exploration of more specific issues, interests and stakes is needed. In order to answer the research question, the rest of this paper will employ an issue-based approach of world politics and look more closely at the actual importance of various Arctic issues and interests to the U.S. and other actors in the region. By employing this approach, the thesis will map out new territory through comparing the importance of issues in the Arctic for the U.S. to three of the most active and engaged states in the region; Russia, Norway, and Canada. Thus, the main part of this thesis will instead explore specific issues of interest to answer the research question and gain a deeper understanding of why the U.S. is falling behind in the Arctic game.

Method - the Need for an Issue-based Approach

The previous literature review assessed the relationship between U.S. security policy and the Arctic region and situated the lack of attention on behalf of the U.S. as part of a broader discussion about the nature of Arctic international politics. The ultimate conclusion from this is that currently, the Arctic region is considered to be a stable, rule-based, low threat environment which calls for less capabilities directed towards the north. For the United States' part, a low threat environment in the Arctic benefits U.S. interests. Moreover, a stable and friendly Arctic political environment has been important for all the Arctic states, including Russia and the United States (Heininen 2016, 7).

However, while the literature review looks at features that may systematically increase or decrease the potential for conflict in the region, it cannot entirely explain why there is different security prioritization of the Arctic among the four. In other words, it does not explain why other countries do prioritize the region more. While the literature review is basing countries' attention towards the region on underlying assumptions about the state of the region itself, this section calls for an assessment of the actual interests and stakes that the countries have in the region. Similar approaches has been called for in the study of the Arctic, for instance by Keil (2014), who notes that an overall interest-based approach is "useful to unpack the black box of 'Arctic interests'" and should be accompanied by examination of interests that cannot "solely understood in rationalist terms but has to include identity, cultural and historical considerations of the importance of the Arctic region to the respective countries" (Keil 2014, 180). As will be seen, this section attempts to incorporate such an approach to this study. Thus, one of the ways to

better understand the research question is to turn to an issue-based approach to explore the salience of the region to the four countries. This will contribute to explain the variation in prioritization of the region, and furthermore why the U.S.' engagement in the region is of lesser extent. In answering the research question, this model, unlike the literature review, will reconcile the four countries' behaviors in the same theoretical paradigm of the issue-based approach.

An Issue-based Approach to Explain Conflict

The issue-based approach has been established as a valued approach in the study of interstate conflict. Several studies use the issue-based approach and look at issues to understand international interactions and conflicts. Examples of studies that have involved looking at contentious issues as an approach to understand international interactions and conflicts are Hensel (2001), Hensel et al. (2008), and Diehl (1992) among others. Gleditsch and Ward (2013) moreover incorporate the study of contentious issues into the study of forecasting interstate disputes. They call for greater attention to looking at contentious issues as they might have great potential to cause states to use violent measures, raising the risk of militarized disputes among states (Gleditsch and Ward 2013, 18-19). Lee and Mitchell (2012, 677-678) also situate their theory within an issue-based approach as they deal with the relationship between foreign direct investment and territorial disputes. The Issue Correlates of War Project (ICOW), started by Paul Hensel in 1997 has collections of systematic data on "contentious issues in world politics" (ICOW 2017).

This project has collected data on territorial claims and it also include issue data sets on river claims, maritime claims and identity claims (Hensel 2001, 82, ICOW 2017). Many of the studies using the issue-based approach base their research in this project such as Hensel et al. (2008) and Hensel and Mitchell (2005). This project also lays out some indicators to measure the salience of territory and maritime claims, which I use in my study and will outline below.

Empirical research on the potential for conflicts between states has often inclined towards looking at features that systematically influence the prospects for conflict or peaceful agreements (Gleditsch and Ward 2013, 19). However, an essential idea within the issue-based approach is that, in the study of conflict, greater attention should be given to substantive issues, instead of largely basing research on interstate conflict on structural causes. According to this approach, policy makers are not necessarily just simply aiming for power or security, but rather more concerned with “achieving their goals over specific issues” (Hensel et al. 2008, 118). As such, this approach looks to the specific issues, for instance disagreements and competing views between states, such as control over territory or maritime areas (*ibid.*). Territorial issues and claims have largely been studied as they are argued to be particularly common motivations and causes for many military conflicts (Gleditsch and Ward 2013, 19, Hensel and Mitchell 2005, 276). Issues, as described by Randle (1987, 1) may be termed as “a disputed point or question, the subject of a conflict or controversy.” Moreover, an issue is “what states choose to fight over” (Diehl 1992, 333). Issues may furthermore vary in salience which is “the degree of importance attached to that issue by the actors involved” (*ibid.*, 334). They can be termed

as having “relatively high” or “relatively low” salience (Hensel et al. 2008, 121). The former indicates that the issue has importance to a state’s leadership or a large part of the population, and the latter indicates that the issue does not have any meaningful salience to these actors, perhaps except a small part of the population (*ibid.*). Issues can also be characterized along the dimensions of being tangible or intangible (Diehl 1992, 333). With regards to issues being tangible, these “issues can involve competing views over the disposition of concrete or tangible stakes, such as control over a particular territory, the removal of a leader, or the implementation or termination of a specific policy” (Hensel et al. 2008, 118). Examples of the tangible values that issues may have involve security, survival and wealth (Hensel et al. 2008, 120).

On the other hand, territory or maritime areas can also have intangible salience as their value may be immaterial. Indeed “value of territory does not lie exclusively in its physical contents. Many territories are also valued for more intangible, psychological reasons” (Hensel and Mitchell 2005, 277). Relevantly, issues with a high degree of intangible salience, may for instance be territorial issues where there are strong identity ties and historical possessions, and they are moreover noted to be harder to resolve peacefully and may produce more frequent militarized conflict (*ibid.*, 275,277). As such, “issues may also involve competing views on intangible stakes, such as influence, prestige, or ideological or philosophical questions” (Hensel et al. 2008, 118-119). Examples of intangible values that issues may have are culture, identity and, prestige (*ibid.*, 120).

Explaining Arctic Countries' Security Policies with the Issue-salience Model

In the Arctic, there are various issues and interests of both tangible and intangible salience for the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway. Together, these issues and interests may contribute to the Arctic varying in terms of relatively high or relatively low salience to the four countries. An important insight from the issue-based approach is that higher issue salience has implications for policy. The values and stakes attached to issues influence decision makers and are important to understand foreign policy tools and measures (Hensel et al. 2008, 117,123-124). Higher issue salience indicates that the state is more likely to use foreign policy tools such as militarized conflict or peaceful methods (*ibid.*, 124). In other words, territorial and maritime issues may arise into disputes of military character if these issues at stake are more salient to the countries (*ibid.*). On the other hand, “low-salience issues are unlikely to be seen as justifying the costs and risks of military action” (*ibid.*). Explaining international conflict should be done with an eye to issues and their salience as foreign policy may vary by issue area and states may be more “willing to fight for issues as they regard as important” (Diehl 1992, 333).

In order to answer the research question, I will draw on the insights from the issue-based approach and the issue-salience model in order to explain the variation of prioritization of the Arctic, defined as the variation in investment of security assets in the region. In other words, this model will help explain the extent to which Arctic countries would invest security assets in the region as a function of their tangible and intangible interests there.

Based on the discussion of military assets and capabilities in the region, I therefore hypothesize that the Arctic overall has relatively low tangible and intangible salience to the United States. I also hypothesize that the Arctic overall has relatively high intangible and tangible salience to Russia, Canada and Norway (see table 1 below).

Table 1

Tangible

	Rel. Low	Rel. High	
Rel. Low	USA		
Rel. High		NORWAY RUSSIA CANADA	

→ The extent to which countries will invest security assets in the Arctic region

Intangible

Table 1 shows how the Arctic region can be characterized in terms of salience for the four Arctic countries of the United States, Russia, Canada and Norway. The rows point to either relatively high or relatively low intangible salience, while the columns point to either relatively low of relatively high tangible salience.

Employing this salience-model for this project, I see the extent to which Arctic countries invest security assets in the region as a function of their tangible and intangible interests here. Having interests of relatively high tangible and intangible salience in

Arctic areas may explain why some countries invest more security assets to the region, thereby prioritizing the Arctic more than others. In other words, more investment of security assets in the region is a function of the higher salience of the tangible and intangible interests found in the countries' respective Arctic areas. In order to establish the tangible and intangible salience of the Arctic to the U.S., Canada, Russia and Norway, I will explore and compare their interest and issues *within* the Arctic region for the four countries. By doing this through a comparative study, we will see that issues vary in salience to the four Arctic countries and this way, we can find out why the U.S. ends up in the upper-left corner of table 1. Moreover, while the issue-based approach to a large degree has dealt with territorial issues, this paper will explore both territorial as well as maritime issues. So, what issues are we looking at to establish the salience of the broader issue, the Arctic? I draw on indicators used in the COW project that measures the salience of territory. Firstly, the tangible salience of territory can be measured in a number of different ways, but the ICOW territorial claims data set focuses on three:

First, a given territory is more tangibly salient if it is known or believed to include potentially valuable resources such as oil, copper, iron ore, nickel, uranium, fresh water, or fisheries. Second, a territory is considered to be more tangibly salient if it has a strategic location. A location can be considered strategic for either military or economic reasons, ranging from important defensive positions or military bases to communication or trade routes, a route to the sea, or a warm water port. Finally, a territory is considered more tangibly salient when it sustains a permanent population – measured by the presence of permanent towns or villages – than when it is uninhabitable (Hensel and Mitchel 2005, 278).

Following from these indicators and applying this to my research, I explore the tangible interests and issues of navigation and trade routes, population and population centers, economic resources and the salience of these stakes and interests to the four

countries. Moreover, in the issue-based approach literature, intangible salience is considered to be an important driver of policies. There are several indicators for how to measure intangible salience. However, the ICOW territorial claims data set includes three:

A given territory is considered more intangibly salient to a state that considers it part of the national homeland, rather than a colony or dependency. Colonies or other dependencies – while perhaps important to a state’s prestige – are not part of the nation, and thus not accorded the same value. Second, a given territory is considered more intangibly salient to a state that has ethnic, linguistic, religious, or other identity ties to the territory and its residents. A territory that is only inhabited by members of other groups may be valuable because of its physical contents, but a territory that is inhabited by one’s kinsmen has much greater value as part of the nation. Finally, a territory is more intangibly salient to a state that has previously exercised sovereignty over the territory than to one that has not done so (...) while territory that has never been ruled by a state might be valuable for other reasons, territory that has been under the state’s sovereignty has greater value because of this connection to ancestral homes, buried ancestors, and other pieces of history (Hensel and Mitchell 2005, 278).

Applying this to my research, I have chosen to focus on how the Arctic has an historical connection and how the Arctic has identity ties to the nation. These indicators are relevant in order to determine which interests and stakes will be looked at in this thesis, and while this provides an overview of how to measure intangible and tangible salience of territory, the ICOW project also provides indicators to measure the within-issue salience for territorial and maritime claims which will be pointed to later in the project.

Issues and Interests of Tangible Salience in the Arctic Region

This section will go through three categories of issues of tangible salience in the Arctic region: *population centers, navigation and trade routes, and economic resources*. For each category, a comparison between the United States, Russia, Canada and Norway will be provided in order to show how the interests and stakes vary in salience for these four littoral Arctic states. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the different issues within these broader categories have different issues *within* them. For instance, under *navigation and trade routes*, the Northwest Passage is an important issue for the USA and Canada, while the Northern Sea Route matters more to Russia. As such, we will see a different approach regarding the issues within the broad categories depending on the relevant country's interests and location. Going through these various interests and stakes of intangible salience I aim to explore the salience of these for the four countries. Based on the conceptual framework outlined here, I argue that the Arctic countries will prioritize the Arctic more if they have significant tangible interests and stakes in the region that have a high salience to these countries. In other words, this means that a high overall salience of the Arctic calls for more security assets and engagement.

Issues of Intangible Salience in the Arctic Region – Identity and Historical Ties to the Arctic

This section will mainly assess how the Arctic has been used to for identity-building purposes and how the Arctic has identity and historical ties to the nations. In this way, I will explore how intangibly salient the Arctic is for the four countries. We will

here see that the Arctic greatly differ in its intangible value among the countries, for its populations and political leaders. Drawing on the issue-based approach, this may have implications for policies and attention directed towards the region. Thus, in this section, investments and engagement in the Arctic will also be seen as a function of the Arctic's intangible value to these countries. By doing so, this section will bring up a new dimension of Arctic affairs, contributing to explain both why prioritization differs. Again, I will argue that increased salience of the Arctic in intangible terms will contribute to explain more prioritization of the region.

Conclusion

Drawing on the issue-salience model will explore how valuable the Arctic is for the four countries. I aim to explore how salient the Arctic is to the four countries by exploring within-issues in the region of tangible and intangible character. Through using the issue-based approach I aim to look at the different stakes and interests that various countries have in the region and establish the different salience that these stakes and interests have to the four countries. I thus explore reasons for why the Arctic is or is not considered salient to these countries. Then I will use the findings from the salience-model to answer the research question of why some countries prioritize the Arctic more than others. I explore and try to explain how the salience of the stakes and interests countries have in the region may explain security policy towards the Arctic. By doing so I draw on the issue-based approach and its focus on how issues drive policies and measures.

As mentioned, the issue-based approach suggests is that higher issue salience has implications for policy and that higher issue salience indicates that the state is more likely

to use foreign policy tools such militarized conflict or peaceful methods (Hensel et al. 2008, 123-124). As such, I see the extent to which Arctic countries would invest security assets in the region as a function of their tangible and intangible interests there. More specifically, having tangible and intangible stakes and interest of relatively high salience contribute to explain why some countries divert more security and military presence towards the region. In this way, I explore the interests that drive the security policies of Arctic states towards the region. As mentioned, I argue that some Arctic countries prioritize the Arctic region more due to having more salient interests and stakes in the region. This exploration of different interests in the Arctic provide an explanation for why the prioritization of the Arctic vary among the four states, and at the same time, it will provide an understanding of why the U.S. has relatively little security policy focus in the Arctic region.

CHAPTER IV

POPULATION AND POPULATION CENTERS IN THE ARCTIC REGION

Table 2²

	USA	CANADA	RUSSIA	NORWAY
% of land mass in the Arctic region³	<17 %	<40 %	<60 %⁴	<48 %
% of population in the Arctic region⁵	<0,002 %	<0,003 %	1,4 %	9,7 %
Number of cities w/ min. 25 000 residents in the Arctic region	0	0	5+	2

² Numbers are rounded off and taken from the Arctic Institute country webpages as listed in bibliography, as well as referenced in-text.

³ Landmass of Arctic area in million km² divided by total landmass in million km².

⁴ Referenced in-text.

⁵ Population in Arctic area divided by total population.

Highlighting the various countries differences with regards to population as well as strategic aspects of Arctic territorial areas of the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway contribute to illuminate some important aspects of variation between the Arctic countries and furthermore contribute to explain different degrees of security policy emphasis towards the region. However, before moving on to explore issues related to population and population centers, it is again relevant to point out how the salience of territory may be measured. Indicators used to measure the salience of territorial claims are as mentioned:

First, a given territory is more tangibly salient if it is known or believed to include potentially valuable resources such as oil, copper, iron ore, nickel, uranium, fresh water, or fisheries. Second, a territory is considered to be more tangibly salient if it has a strategic location. A location can be considered strategic for either military or economic reasons, ranging from important defensive positions or military bases to communication or trade routes, a route to the sea, or a warm water port. Finally, a territory is considered more tangibly salient when it sustains a permanent population – measured by the presence of permanent towns or villages – than when it is uninhabitable (Hensel and Mitchel 2005, 278).

As will be seen below, these indicators vary throughout the region and will be pointed to in order to highlight important issues with regards to population and population centers in the Arctic.

USA

The United States became an Arctic nation with the purchase of Alaska from Russia in the late 1800s. However, while Alaska is an immense state in terms of size, only the northern parts of Alaska could strictly be included in the definition of the Arctic areas: “the U.S. Arctic territory, defined as the region above the Arctic Circle (66.3 degrees North), is comprised of the northern parts of Alaska and parts of the Beaufort

and Chukchi Seas” (Østhagen 2011). The next section will mainly focus on the population and population centers in these areas north of the Arctic Circle in the analysis of tangible interests, while also shedding some light on the Alaskan population in general.

Alaskan Population and Population Centers

As indicated, in the United States, Alaska is the only state which has territory above the Arctic Circle. However, Alaska is relatively large compared to other states. While the entire land area of the U.S. entails 9.857 million km², Alaska’s land area is approximately 1.718 km² (The Arctic Institute 2018c). As seen in table 2, this represents approximately 17 % of U.S. total landmass. However, in terms of population size, with a population of approximately 740,000 Alaska thus ranks as one of the least populated state in the U.S (U.S. Census Bureau 2018a). Also seen in table 2, this represents only approximately 0,002 % of the total U.S. population. However, since only northern parts of Alaska are located above the Arctic Circle, it is worth noting that there is an even smaller percentage of people living in the U.S. Arctic. From the table, it is also clear the U.S. Arctic territory comprises a smaller percentage of total landmass and a smaller percentage population, compared to the other Arctic states.

For Alaska as a whole, Anchorage is the largest metropolitan area, with a population of 298,192 people, Fairbanks had a population of approximately 32,000 people in 2016, while Juneau and Nome have populations of approximately 32,000, and 10,000 respectively in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau 2018a). However, these cities and towns are technically below both the Arctic Circle and the tree line definition of the

Arctic. With regards to larger towns north of the Arctic Circle, Barrow and Prudhoe Bay are located on the Beaufort Sea coast. These towns have, according to the 2010 Census, a population of 4,212 and 2,174 respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2018b, U.S. Census Bureau 2018c). The Western Arctic region, which includes most of the North Slope, the Northwest Arctic areas as well as some of the Yukon-Koyukuk area, is the least economically developed region in Alaska (Goldsmith and Hill 1997, 18,21). This region includes some of Alaska's poorest areas and in the northwest parts of the region, there are limited economic opportunities (*ibid.*, 19). However, the region does have North Slope oil development and fishing grounds. In the north particularly, many people depend on oil development which employs many people, though many workers are commuters from other areas (*ibid.*). Regarding future projections, petroleum development is expected to provide jobs in the northern areas, however, the Western Arctic region is expected to remain the least economically developed region in the state (*ibid.*, 21).

The state of Alaska is located far north and not connected to the mainland of the U.S. These factors may contribute to explain the lack of development of urban areas, in addition to climatic conditions such as ice and snow which create challenging living conditions and obstacles for infrastructure. The Alaskan Arctic has few highways, and accessibility to rural communities is limited (The Arctic Institute 2018c). As shown in the table above, there are no cities with over 25,000 residents in the U.S. Arctic territory. Prudhoe Bay and Barrow, two of the largest towns north of the Arctic Circle in the U.S. Arctic have both a population under 5,000 people.

Drawing on the indicators outlined above, it becomes clear that the U.S. Arctic is very sparsely inhabited, and it does not have any major political or economic centers. In terms of population and population centers the salience of the U.S. Arctic territory can be termed as low. Following from the salience of the U.S. Arctic territory and interests here are also implications for security posture. As such, it may be argued that as a natural consequence of the relatively small population living in the U.S. Arctic area, “American capabilities, presence and engagement in the Arctic” is relatively minor compared to other Arctic states such as Norway and Russia (Østhagen 2011). That security measures follow from strategic calculations in Arctic territories will be much clearer with regards to the other country cases in this study.

Canada

In contrast to the United States, large areas of the Canadian Arctic are contiguous with the mainland of Canada, with the exception of islands in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago such as Banks Island, Queen Elizabeth Islands, Victoria Island, Ellesmere Island, and Baffin Island (Grant 2010, xiv). In the political definition of Canada’s Arctic, it “encompasses the three northern territories – Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut – as well as the northern portions of Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador (Nunatsiavut)” (The Arctic Institute 2018b).

Canada’s Northern Population and Population Centers

These Northern Territories encompasses a land area of 3.921 million km², approximately 40 % of the Canadian landmass (The Arctic Institute 2018b, Government of Canada 2013). However, while Canada has a population of around 35 million people,

the Northern Territories have a population of approximately 105,000 people (The Arctic Institute 2018b). While the Canadian Arctic is an enormous land area, 105,000 people make up less than 0.5 % of the Canadian population, as seen in table 2. Of the four Arctic countries, Canada has the lowest number of people living in its Arctic area. However, as a percentage of total population, the number is higher than compared to the U.S. Going more specifically into the various areas and towns in the Canadian Arctic, the northern territory of Yukon has a population of 34,000 people, while Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut have populations of 43,000 and 33,000 respectively (ACIA 2011, 20-22). Regarding population centers, Whitehorse, which is the capital of Yukon has a population of approximately 23,000 people; Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories (NWT) has a population of almost 20,000 people, while Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut has a population of approximately 6,200 people (The Arctic Institute 2018b). It should be mentioned that while these are population centers in the region, they are all technically below the Arctic Circle. On the other hand, these areas are also considered to be included in the Canadian political definition of the Arctic, as mentioned above. In comparison, the majority of Canadians live on Canada's southern border in major cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, all of which have populations over 2 million people (The Arctic Institute 2018b).

With regards to infrastructure and development, it is possible to paint a fairly similar picture of the Canadian Northern Territories as with most of the U.S. Arctic. In both cases, there are challenges related to huge distances and remoteness, as well as challenges related to providing services to many of the remote communities in the

Canadian Arctic, many of which already suffer from social and health challenges such as unemployment and water quality (The Arctic Institute 2018b). However, there are differences between the northern territories of Yukon, NWT and Nunavut. Firstly, Yukon has the best communications infrastructure of the three territories and has roads that link all but the most northerly of its 17 communities (ACIA 2011, 20). With regards to the NWT, 10 of its 33 communities can only be reached by air as there is no access to roads and nine other communities only have winter roads, and many of the most isolated communities are located in the northernmost parts of NWT where there is tundra (*ibid.*, 21). Lastly, Nunavut differs from both Yukon and the NWT in that there is no road access to any of the 25 communities and its geography differs; “the territory is all above the tree line, with rolling tundra in the west and central parts, and mountains covering much of Baffin Island in the east” (*ibid.*, 22).

Following from this, it is clear that the Canadian Arctic territory is similar to its U.S. counterpart with regards to population and population centers. As seen in the table above, there are no cities with more than 25,000 people in the Canadian Arctic and only approximately 0,003 % of the population of Canada lives in the Arctic area. However, with regards to the geographical size of its Arctic area out of total land area, there is significant difference between the U.S. and Canada. For the latter, the Arctic area represents approximately 40 % out of total land area. Though this number would probably be smaller if the Arctic Circle definition is strictly applied, it is still clear from the assessment above that Canada still has large areas above the Arctic Circle. Moreover, even though the Arctic areas of Canada contain a relatively small

population, it is clear from the above discussion on security emphasis that the Arctic area matter in salience to Canada. However, while this on the one hand might not directly stem from factors such as population or population centers, it may have to do with the view of the sovereignty emphasis on the Arctic, sovereignty claims with regards to waterways, as well as the intangible role of the northern regions which contribute to the Arctic having tangible as well as its intangible salience to Canada. The strong emphasis on sovereignty, and particularly the intangible role of the Arctic especially contrasts the Canadian case to the United States, and as will be seen later, this may turn out to be a distinguishing factor in explaining why the two North American countries prioritize the Arctic to different extent.

Russia

With regards to geography and its population in the Arctic, Russia could be termed as the Arctic superpower. The country has a massive Arctic territory, and according to the Russian definition of the North, its Arctic area “encompasses more than 60% of Russian territory” (Keil 2014, 169). While other estimations of the size of Russia’s territory may vary from this, it is clear that Russia has a massive territory above the Arctic Circle. Moreover, Russia’s Arctic coastline is stretching from the border with Norway in the west, to the Bering Sea in the east. Moreover, the Russian Arctic also includes archipelagos and islands in Russian Arctic waters:

the Novaya Zemlya in the Kara Sea, Severnaya Zemlya in the Laptev Sea, and the New Siberian Islands in the East Siberian Sea. To the north-east of the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, Russia’s Franz Josef Land is located just 950 kilometer miles from the North Pole. Russia’s closest point to the North Pole is Cape Fligely on Rudolf Island a mere 911 kilometers from the pole (The Arctic Institute 2018a).

Population and Population Centers

As with the other Arctic regions, the Russian far north entails harsh climate and tundra, however, due to the length of its coastline, the western Arctic has a milder climate due to the Gulf Stream. Moreover, the region is rich in minerals and petroleum resources, which has led to the Russian Arctic having larger population centers and more industrial development. Of the four countries addressed in this paper, Russia has the largest number of people living in its Arctic area. With its 2 million people living in the Russian Arctic, the country accounts for about half of the people living in the Arctic worldwide (The Arctic Institute 2018a). Out of a total population of 143,5 million people (The Arctic Institute 2018a), 2 million represents about 1,4 % of its total population, a larger number compared to both Canada and the U.S (see table 2). The largest city located north of the Arctic Circle is Murmansk, a port city in the northwestern part of Russia on the Kola Peninsula in relative close proximity to the Norwegian border. Murmansk is furthermore the Arctic region's most populous city with approximately 300,000 people (*ibid.*). Murmansk is a crucial center in the region and the location of much of the region's economic activity. It is an important industrial center, and its port is both an origin and arrival destination for shipping along the Northern Sea Route. Indeed, Murmansk represents an "an ice-free port situated in the heart of the Barents region" (Vartdal 2017). As will be indicated below, the Kola Peninsula which is home to both the Northern Fleet and the city of Murmansk, is of great military and strategic importance.

Moreover, the importance of the city can also be seen as connected to its proximity to other countries in the Barents region, such as Norway, Sweden and Finland. The city holds a role with regards to the development of the Barents region as well as the Russian Arctic partly due to its close social and political proximity to other actors in the Barents area, and as such it could be seen as having a role of being an open meeting place, important for the communities in the north, for instance in terms of cooperation (Vartdal 2017). This area is as mentioned benefitting from the Gulf Stream in terms of having a milder climate and lesser ice extent. Infrastructure is better here than in other areas in the Russian Arctic, and there is thus better connectivity to other parts of Western Russia and the rest of the countries in the Barents area. Furthermore, the Murmansk region has in the 21st century, “experienced a growth in tourism, trade and investment in infrastructure” (*ibid.*). Moreover, “it is also part of a new development program to support eight Arctic Zones, totaling 210 billion rubles investments until 2020. These zones are meant to develop the potential of the Northern Sea Route and facilitate international trade” (*ibid.*).

As for larger cities located north of the Arctic Circle, Murmansk is followed by Norilsk in population size, an industrial and more remote city in Krasnoyarsk Territory further east, with a population of approximately 175,000 people (The Arctic Institute 2018a). Russia’s third largest city above the Arctic Circle is Vorkuta with approximately 70,000 people (*ibid.*). However, there are also several smaller cities above the Arctic Circle such as Kirovsk, Monchegorsk, Apatity. With regards to the indicators regarding the salience of territory then, it may be argued that the Arctic territory of Russia can be

termed as relatively high. Indeed, the Russian Arctic territory has a strategic location, for both military and economic reasons, and a large permanent population. In this regard, it may be argued that Murmansk and its strategic location plays a crucial role, being both a large industrial, political and military center in the Arctic close to other countries in the Barents region. Murmansk provides a port with access the world's oceans and the region lies along the Northern Sea route, a transportation route stressed by Russian leaders as important for communications and trade reasons, as will be elaborated below. Large population centers such as Murmansk and Norilsk, as well as the large resource-extraction industry mean that Russia objectively can be termed as the Arctic superpower (Baev 2013, 489). These factors may moreover contribute as explanations for why the security emphasis is greater in the case of Russia and why the Arctic region is higher up on the security agenda in Moscow than it is in Washington. Seeing military assets as a function of its tangible interests here and the salience of these contribute to explain the higher Russian presence and engagement in the Arctic region, and the force posture it has, for instance compared to the United States (Østhagen 2011). In other words, the higher military presence, engagement and capabilities in the Russian Arctic area may partly be explained by the relatively higher salience of the territory and flowing from strategic calculations in this territory.

Norway

According to the Arctic Institute, Norway refers to the Arctic as everything above the Arctic Circle (The Arctic Institute 2018d). However, it is also relevant to point out that Norwegian foreign policy distinguishes between different parts of the Arctic area.

The High North refers to Northern Norway and Svalbard which are more hospitable and populated, while the extreme Arctic is the more uninhabited areas such as the North Pole in the High Arctic (The Arctic Institute 2018d). With regards to the land areas, the High North refers to the counties of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. Moreover, Norway also has sovereignty over the Svalbard archipelago midway between Norway and the North Pole. The three mainland counties account for about one third of the total landmass of Norway with approximately 100,000 km², however, 85,000 km² are added with the land area of Svalbard and Jan Mayen, thus making the Arctic land area of Norway approximately 48 % of its total landmass as the total land area of Norway is 385,000 km² (The Arctic Institute 2018d). Yet, it should also be mentioned here that this number would be a little lower if one would strictly apply the Arctic Circle definition due to how the Arctic Circle crosses through Nordland county.

Population and Population Centers

Norway has approximately 480,000 people living in its Arctic area (The Arctic Institute 2018d). Out of a population of approximately 5,000,000 people, this is a large number and as seen in table 2, this accounts for almost 10 % of the total population in Norway. As such, the number of people living in the Norwegian Arctic territory as a percentage of total population is larger than in any of the other three countries.

With regards to its Arctic areas, Finnmark is the northernmost as well as easternmost county in Norway, where Vadsø is the regional capital. It borders the Russian Murmansk region in the east as well as the Lapland of Finland in the south east. Karasjok in Finnmark is also the location of the Sámi parliament of Norway (The Arctic

Institute 2018d). Kirkenes is one of the major towns in Finnmark. It has an ice-free deep water port (Reuters Staff 2018), where activity is expected to grow due to increased shipping in the region. Northern Norway lies on the edge of the Northern Sea Route, and with the fifth “most valuable shipping fleet in the world” there is significant interests in the potential for increased traffic via this maritime route (The Arctic Institute 2018d). In this regard, Kirkenes, which is located close to the Russian border in Finnmark county, may become a crucial port in Northern Norway.

To the southwest of Finnmark lies the county of Troms, Tromsø is the regional capital and the largest city in northern Norway with a population of approximately 70 000 people (The Arctic Institute 2018d, SSB 2017a). Compared to many other Arctic cities, Tromsø is a large city, and also relatively large compared to other Norwegian cities. The city is also the main location of the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway. South of Troms lies Nordland county where Bodø is the regional capital and the largest urban and administrative center, with a population of approximately 50,000 respectively (The Arctic Institute 2018d, SSB 2017a). The Lofoten and Vesterålen islands in Nordland county are some of the top tourist attractions in Northern Norway, and the adjacent waters are also spawning grounds for the northeast Arctic cod stock, an important cod stock for Norway which will be further explored below.

Moreover, with regards to climate and environment, it is relevant to note that the Arctic land areas of Norway differ from the other three Arctic areas addressed above. According to Stromquist and Johnston (2014, 18), a large portion of Norwegian Arctic waters do actually not meet true Arctic criteria, for instance in terms of the ice regime.

The climate of northern Norway is characterized by cool summers and relatively mild winters due to the temperate sea and the Gulf Stream. As such, the land area also has minimal differences compared to the south. In contrast to some of the countries addressed above, communications in the northern areas can be considered relatively good. Roads connect more or less all minor and major villages and towns in the region. Additionally, ferries and regional flights are also readily available. There are also direct flights to the capital, Oslo, from many of the northern cities such as Evenes (Harstad/Narvik), Tromsø and Bodø. The coastal ferry, Hurtigruten, also travels the coast of Northern Norway from Bergen in the southwest to Kirkenes in the northeast, close to Russia. Additionally, there are also regional railway connections from Bodø to Trondheim, and further south to Oslo, as well as railway from Narvik to Sweden. There is also plans for an additional Arctic railway link from Finland's northern city Rovaniemi to Kirkenes in Norway (Reuters Staff 2018). In this regard, the Norwegian Arctic territories stands out as being much less remote than its counterparts in Canada and the United States.

As such, it is clear that of the four countries, Norway has the largest percentage out of its total population living in its Arctic territory and has almost 50 % of its landmass located in the Arctic region, including the Arctic Archipelago Svalbard. Additionally, it has two large cities above the Arctic circle, Tromsø and Bodø, both of which have excellent communications and infrastructure, universities, and do not necessarily stand out compared to other Norwegian cities further south. As such, we see that most of the people living in the Arctic live in either Russian or Norwegian territories. These areas, including Canada's Arctic areas, are geographically larger than the U.S. counterpart.

In terms of looking at population and population centers, the salience of the Norwegian Arctic territory can be termed as relatively high. The territory is claimed as homeland territory, it has a permanent population spread along the whole of Northern Norway partly due to the good communications and infrastructure. Norway exercises sovereignty in this territory, and many of the areas have a militarily, economically, and strategic location. In light of this, the high presence of military assets in the region can be seen as a function of these tangible interests in the region.

In sum, the higher presence of population, as well as industrial, political, and economic centers suggests that military presence is higher in these areas, both in Russia and Norway. Compared the North American states, factors such as higher numbers of population, large territory, and several large cities, can explain the relatively high salience that the Arctic has for Russia and Norway and furthermore contribute to explain the higher military presence and engagement in these areas. In other words, the higher military presence, engagement and capabilities in the Russian and Norwegian Arctic areas may partly be explained by the relatively higher salience of the territory and following from strategic calculations in this territory.

CHAPTER V

NAVIGATION AND TRADE ROUTES

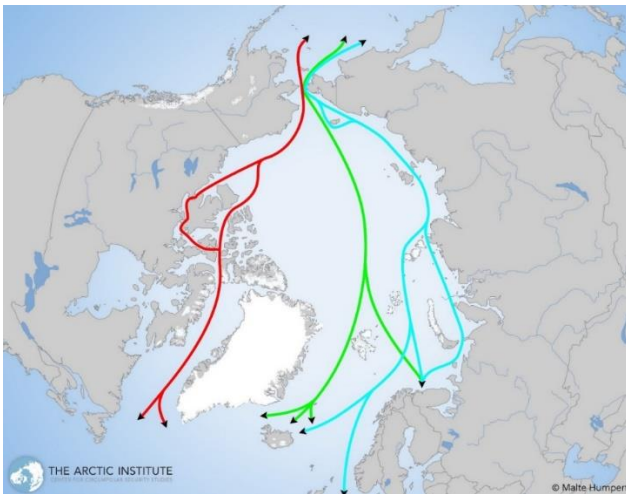


Figure 5.1. Map of shipping routes through the Arctic. Red route depicts the Northwest Passage. Green route depicts the route across the North Pole. Light blue route depicts the Northern Sea Route. Source: Map from The Arctic Institute 2016.

The Arctic region is largely a maritime domain, and as environmental change is taking place, larger ocean areas are opened up for human and economic activity. For the four littoral Arctic states, current and potential Arctic waterways seem to be growing in their importance. This section will go through the various issues with regards to navigation and trade routes that are of tangible interest to these countries, starting with the United States. Specific contentious issues of tangible salience will be identified, in addition to the tangible interests and stakes that the countries have in their respective Arctic maritime domains. For instance, with regards to the U.S. and Canada, much

attention will be devoted to the issue of the legal status of the Northwest Passage. In order to establish a better understanding of how we can measure the salience of the issues dealt with here, such as the Northwest Passage, this section will draw on Hensel et al. (2008, 130)'s six general indicators for maritime claim salience to help distinguish between "the most and least salient issues". These will help indicate important issues and the salience of these:

(1) maritime borders extending from homeland rather than colonial or dependent territory, (2) a strategic location of the claimed maritime zone, (3) fishing resources within the maritime zone, (4) migratory fishing stocks crossing into and out of the maritime zone, (5) the known or suspected presence of oil resources within the maritime zone, and (6) relation of the maritime claim to an ongoing territorial claim (involving maritime areas extending beyond either claimed coastal territory or a claimed island) (Hensel et al. 2008, 130).

Before exploring the tangible issues and interests, it is however relevant to remind the reader of how the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the parameters for coastal states' rights and duties under international law. As mentioned, articles under UNCLOS provides coastal states with the right of establishing a 200 nm exclusive economic zone as well as the possibility of submitting a claim for an outer continental shelf, and while this provides benefits and rights to the Arctic Coastal states, we will also see that some issues remain with regards to navigation rights.

The United States

The United States has long-standing interests in the Arctic region. During the Cold War, the region was an area of strategic confrontation and Arctic waters and air space were central both to the U.S. and her allies as well as to the Soviet Union (Østerud

and Hønneland 2014, 158). The European Arctic was particularly significant to both superpowers and allies. The protection of sea routes between Europe and America was highly important, and “(...) the line from Greenland through Iceland to the Azores served as stepping stones in American Atlantic defence”, moreover, the U.S. was granted military strongholds on Greenland and Iceland, serving as “geostrategic counterpoints to Soviet aspirations in the High North” (*ibid.*). While this serves as a historical starting point, what are the tangible issues and interests that matter to the United States in the Arctic today? The marine areas in the Arctic that the U.S. has jurisdiction over is limited to maritime parts of the Chukchi Sea, the Bering Sea and the Beaufort Sea (Åtland 2014, 154). However, the next sections will identify some broader issues that the U.S. has with regards to the maritime domain, focusing on freedom of the sea and the issue of the Northwest Passage.

Freedom of the Seas vs. the Law of the Sea?

The United States is not a party to UNCLOS. However, while the country has not ratified the Convention, it has acted in accordance with the convention and considers its provisions to be binding international law (Titley and St. John 2010, 40). All Secretaries of State since the adoption of the Convention have backed its ratification, as do nearly all U.S. maritime stakeholders such as the US Coast Guard, the US Navy, and the US Chamber of Commerce (Jensen 2015, 239, Bergh 2012, 10). However, while the US Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee also approves of ratification of the Convention, the Senate has blocked it twice as a “handful of Republican senators oppose the convention on the grounds that it undermines US sovereignty” (Bergh 2012, 10).

Arguably, the Law of the Sea actually broadens the rights of the U.S. in the region through giving the U.S. possibility to extend the country's exclusive economic zone, however, due to not having ratified the Convention, the U.S. cannot submit a claim of an outer continental shelf to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Moreover, not being a party to the Convention also removes the possibility to challenge other countries' demands in the region (Doty 2012), leaving the U.S. outside the process where other countries put forth demands of extended continental shelves. In this way, ratifying the UNCLOS can hardly be seen as undermining U.S. sovereignty in the region (*ibid.*). Having not ratified the Convention, one may argue that the U.S. continues to remain on the sidelines in the Arctic. On another note, that the U.S. has not ratified the Convention may also indicate a broader interest that the U.S. has with regards to maritime domains, which is the principle of the freedom of the sea.

In 1982, as President Ronald Reagan refused to sign the LOS Convention, he sent the then Special Envoy to the Middle East, Donald Rumsfeld on a mission to explain the U.S. opposition, explaining that it is of no interest to the U.S. to hand of sovereign control of two-thirds of the Earth's surface to other (Jensen 2015, 239). According to the U.S. Presidential Directive of 2009, "freedom of the seas is a top national priority" (US White House 2009).

This also pertains to the Arctic region. Ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as ensuring maritime presence in the region are key tasks that U.S. Arctic players are involved in (Conley et al. 2013, 7). "Preserving the rights and duties relating to navigation and overflight in the Arctic region supports our ability to exercise

these rights throughout the world, including through strategic straits” (US White House 2009). In this regard, the Northwest Passage turns out to be an issue to explore as the U.S. and Canada have different views on the legal status of the strait.

The Northwest Passage

One of the critical issues for the U.S. in the Arctic relates to the control and legal status of the Northwest Passage (NWP), potentially becoming even more salient to the U.S. as the ice cap continues to shrink. The U.S. and Canada disagree on the legal status of the Northwest Passage, and while United States views the Northwest Passage as a strait used for international navigation and claims the passage as an international waterway, Canada claims sovereignty (US White House 2009, Hensel et al. 2008, 123). That the Passage is an international strait is supported by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) which in 1985 challenged Canada’s claim by sending the US Coast Guard Cutter *MS Polar Sea* through the Passage without having requested Canadian permission (Bergh 2012, 13). In 1969, the US tanker *SS Manhattan* visited the Passage unannounced, leading to diplomatic tensions between the countries (*ibid.*, 9).

U.S. interests in navigational freedom is closely related to the issue of the Northwest Passage. The United States bases its position regarding the NWP on the principle of freedom of navigation, however Canada’s claim complicates the matter as concerns are related to how accepting the Canadian position on the Northwest Passage as Canadian internal waters might make it a precedent applicable elsewhere in the world, such as in the case of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz (Huebert 2009, 17).

The Viability of the Northwest Passage

As ice continues to melt, the Northwest Passage could potentially provide a trade route between the east and west coast of the U.S., providing an opportunity to go north instead of the longer route through the Panama Canal (ISAB 2016, 6). However, while there may be some potential economic and commercial benefits to the U.S. from the NWP, the United States currently lacks the necessary infrastructure, particularly icebreakers and ports, to support any substantial commercial use of the Northwest Passage, and rough conditions also make it less viable than other routes (*ibid.*). In this way, the Northwest Passage may not be expected to become a competition to other straits such as the Suez Canal for the time being. As will be pointed out below, Canadian leaders also recognize the current environmental state of the route for commercial use. The current viability of the route may also explain why the issue has not risen to become a highly salient issue. Hensel et al. (2008, 123) points out that “commercial navigation through the Passage is not currently practical, and neither side views the issue as justifying drastic measures”. The current environmental conditions throughout the route, affecting opportunities for increased shipping, indicate that the Northwest Passage, as a contentious issue, unlikely will cause fighting (Bailes 2013).

United States - Canadian Relations

Any discussion of the security implications of the issue of the Northwest Passage is incomplete without shedding some light on the nature of the relationship between the United States and Canada. The two countries are both close allies and important trading partners. Being democracies, it may also be argued that militarized conflict is less likely,

due to how norms such as peaceful conflict resolution characterizes the foreign policy of democracies, adding to the assumption that two democracies will likely attempt peaceful conflict management (Hensel et al. 2008, 127). Moreover, there is indication that the United States relationship to Canada has mitigating effects. In 1988, the U.S. agreed, through the Arctic Water Cooperation Agreement, to ask Canada for consent before sending their Coast Guard icebreakers in to the Passage (Huebert 2009, 17). It was observed that “American willingness to negotiate the agreement shows their willingness to grant Canada special attention” (*ibid.*). With regards to another maritime boundary issue between the U.S. and Canada in the Beaufort Sea, located off the coasts of Alaska and the Yukon-Northwest Territories (McDorman and Schofield 2015, 219), the Navy’s Arctic Roadmap notes that even though there is disagreement on the maritime boundary, Canada is considered a close ally, and their relationship is not jeopardized by this dispute (Titley and St. John 2010, 40). In other instances, even with two democracies, some maritime areas may be deemed as highly salient to one or more states, such that security measures become drastic. In the 1970s, issues regarding the territorial sea around Iceland lead to increased tensions between Iceland and the United Kingdom due to the salience of the fisheries in the area to both countries’ economies (Hensel et al. 2008, 122-123).

Tacit Agreement?

An additional point worth mentioning, which contribute to explain why the issue of the Northwest Passage has not become a top political priority may also be due to the fact that Canada retaining control over these waters may benefit the US national security interests (Huebert 2009, 21).

Even some US commentators — such as former US ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci, and US Council on Foreign Relations Fellow, Scott Borgerson — have suggested that, if Canada increased its defence capability in the north, the United States might look the other way in the event of a challenge to Canada’s claim on the Northwest Passage (Huebert 2009, 18).

If human and economic activity in the Northwest Passage increases, it may certainly be of U.S. interest to have Canada deal with challenges such as accidents and soft security issues as well as asserting control over transits due to potential threats to homeland security such as terrorism. Both the U.S. and Canada’s ability to operate in the region will be diminished if traffic through the Northwest Passage increases and cooperation is lacking, and responsibilities are unclear (Bergh 2012, 19). Moreover, if the U.S. view of the legal status of the NWP prevailed, Russians would have rights to fly military aircrafts over the Passage which would not be in the security interests of any of the two countries (Huebert 2009, 21). As such, while the Northwest Passage comes across as a contentious issue for the U.S. in the Arctic, particularly with regards to navigation and trade routes and due to U.S. emphasis on freedom of the seas, other factors contribute to show that the salience of the issue arguably can be termed relatively low in the current environment, particularly due to the route’s current environmental state. The viability of the route, security interests, and U.S-Canadian relations provide explanations for why this issue not currently calls for drastic security measures.

Canada

Depending on who is prime minister, the attitude of the Canadian Government towards the Arctic has generally differed between genuine interest and indifference (Bergh 2012, 6). The recent growing interest towards the region could be traced back to

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who held office from 2006 to 2015. Harper made the region a national priority and repeatedly stated that asserting Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic is the country's top priority, while also stressing the importance of the Arctic to Canada's national identity, both in historic terms and in relation to future prospects (Bergh 2012, 6). In 2010 the government of Canada released "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy", a year after having adopted a "Northern Strategy" (Lalonde 2017, 48). The 2010 paper emphasizes that exercising sovereignty over the Canada's North is the number one Arctic foreign policy priority and that "Canada is committed to exercising the full extent of its sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the region" (Government of Canada 2010:3-4).

Addressing navigation and trade routes becomes particularly relevant in the Canadian case with its extensive Arctic coastline. With regards to tangible salience, the NWP clearly seem to stand out as an issue of high tangible salience to Canada. Mainly differing from the U.S. case is that significantly larger parts of the maritime borders of the NWP extend from the Canadian homeland. Further suggesting that the NWP has high tangible salience to Canada, is Canada claims of the Northwest Passage as historic internal waters "over which Canada exercises full sovereignty" (Lalonde 2017, 43). The Canadian Government invoke vital national interests as the fundamental justification for control over the NWP (*ibid.*, 60). Indeed, under the Harper government, criticism was raised towards the militaristic tone that was invoked with regards to the focus on sovereignty (Nicol 2016, 100).

Besides having an interest in exercising sovereignty over the Passage, the Canadian government also looks to the NWP as a venue for future economic development (Nicol 2016, 100). In this regard, it is noted that marine transportation will play a vital role in the economic development of the North (Lalonde 2017, 48). However, while there are prospects for economic development of the north, there is still lack of infrastructure in the region, and need for better practices for the safety and security of Arctic shipping, as well as need for reliable maps and vessels (Bergh 2012, 5,8). While aware of the potential economic benefits of increased shipping through the Northwest Passage, the Canadian government also recognize that the that the NWP will not become a large-scale viable transit route anytime soon (Bergh 2012, 5).

In this regard, even though the NWP is an issue between the U.S. and Canada, factors such as viability and relations between contribute to mitigate dynamics of drastic security measures. However, the national interest that Canada has in sovereignty in the Arctic contribute to explain why Canada emphasize having a military presence in the region. Indeed, The *Canada First Defence Strategy* from 2008 states “Canadian Forces must have the capacity to exercise control over and defend Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic” (Government of Canada 2008, 8). In its goal on exercising sovereignty in these waters, the Canadian government puts emphasis on being a responsible manager of the Passage (Lalonde 2017, 60). As the *Canada First Defence Strategy* notes, environmental changes in the region has brought with them additional challenges, for instance the possibility of increased illegal activity which may have consequences for Canadian sovereignty and security, moreover having implications for “a potential requirement for

additional military support” (Government of Canada 2008, 6). Moreover, “as activity in northern lands and waters accelerates, the military will play an increasingly vital role in demonstrating a visible Canadian presence in this potentially resource rich region, and in helping other government agencies such as the Coast Guard respond to any threats that may arise” (*ibid.*, 8). As mentioned, the Canadian Armed Forces is choosing to invest to meet security challenges related to more economic activity and thinning ice. Increased presence may be more related to soft security challenges as emphasized in the earlier discussion of military assets in the region. The higher number of Coast Guard vessels, for instance compared to the U.S. may be explained in light of these dynamics. Search and rescue in order to meet safety challenges in the region may be of importance in this new environment.

Russia

After the second presidential term of Vladimir Putin, there has been significant focus on the Arctic region in both domestic and foreign policy discourses in Russia (Zysk 2010, 103). Russia is a determined Arctic player and the importance of the Arctic to Russia has contributed to fuel its determination to make it clear, by economic and military means, that Russia is a central Arctic actor (*ibid.*). With regards to navigation and trade routes, a natural point of departure would be to explore the issue the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and the country’s interests here in order to explore its tangible salience to Russia.

The Northern Sea Route

Russia has approximately half of the Arctic coastline as the Russian Arctic territory stretches along 24,140 kilometers of coastline along the Arctic Ocean, from waters “from the Barents Sea in the west at the border to Norway to the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk in the far east” (The Arctic Institute 2018a). Along parts of this coast lies the Northern Sea Route (NSR), legally defined as “the waterways between the Kara Gate and the Bering Strait” (Moe 2014, 784). The salience of this route can for instance be seen in relation to its strategic location, fish stocks and presence of oil resources within the maritime zone. Due to climatic differences in this part of the Arctic, this route is far more ice-free than the Northwest Passage. Thus, in contrast to the NWP, opportunities for commercial and economic development here may be more likely at the current moment. However, before exploring the salience of the route to Russia, the next section will firstly shed some light on legal issues pertaining to the NSR.

The Legal Status of the Northern Sea Route

With regards to rights over the route, it is relevant to point out the different positions that some actors hold over the jurisdictional status of NSR. Russia’s position on the status of the waterway is that the straits are internal waters, and “that the waterways north of Russia are a part of the national transport infrastructure holding the country together” (Moe 2014, 786). This means that Russian regulations require vessels entering or intending to enter the NSR to give advanced notice to Russian authorities and pay a fee for using the route (Zysk 2010, 107). Other voices, including the United

States, maintain that NSR is an international waterway (Huebert 2009, 17). The U.S. Presidential Directive of 2009 on the Arctic Region states that “(...) the Northern Sea Route includes straits used for international navigation; the regime of transit passage applies to passage through those straits” (US White House 2009).

With regards to navigational rights, UNCLOS “mandates free navigation within the 200 nm exclusive economic zone” (Moe 2014, 786). However, an important exception is to be found in the so-called ‘ice-covered areas clause’, Article 234 which is a foundation for Russia’s argument for controlling and managing traffic on the route (*ibid.*) Shortly explained, this clause gives coastal states a right to enforce regulations to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from vessels “in ice-covered areas within the limits of the exclusive economic zone” (UNCLOS 1982, 115). With shrinking sea ice however, Article 234 could become less relevant, which may induce Russia to rather emphasize the historical formation of the route, having been developed over many decades (Moe 2014, 786). Russia has, on several occasions, warned that “attempts by other countries to change the NSR’s legal status and transform it into an international transit corridor would be in conflict with Russia’s national interests” (Zysk 2010, 107). The legal status of the NSR may potentially become an even more contentious issue as its importance is expected to increase (Zysk 2010, 107). The next section will look further into the tangible salience of the route to Russia in terms of commercial and economic interests.

The Northern Sea Route and Economic Development

One of the most fundamental issues for Russia in the Arctic is the Northern Sea Route and its development (Zysk 2010, 105). Russia has stated that it will use the Northern Sea Route as a “national” transport route, and as a transportation link and a central element in maritime connections between Europe and Asia (ISAB 2016, 8, Zysk 2010, 105). The importance of the route to Russia has been present for decades. From the 1930s, the Soviet authorities especially used the western part of the waterway mainly for industrial development in northwest Siberia (Moe 2014, 784). During the Cold War, the NSR functioned as an important transportation route during the Cold War, supplying Russian local communities through the country’s Arctic territory (The Arctic Institute 2018a). However, after a peak of traffic in 1987, the use of the route decreased after the Cold War, and infrastructure and routes of communications deteriorated as traffic fell due to reduced economic activity in the north (Moe 2014, 785). Again, in the late 2000s, its importance is again rising. Indeed, the route has seen a revival as a national and international shipping route after increased melting of sea ice in the region (The Arctic Institute 2018a).

As indicated above, the route is seen as crucial with regards to economic development of the Russian Arctic region, and its increasing role should also be seen in connection with the growing extraction of natural resources in the Arctic as the increased level of shipping expected through the NSR westward is linked to expected increase in Russian petroleum activity mainly from the Barents and Kara Seas (Zysk 2010, 105). Indeed, along the route are several natural resource projects and the route is

seen as vital for the accession, exploitation and export of these hydrocarbon resources (The Arctic Institute 2018a). The Russian authorities especially see liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects such as the Yamal LNG project near the Yamal Peninsula with its LNG factory and port at Sabetta as generator of traffic on the NSR and seen as crucial for further development of the route (Moe 2014, 791).

With regards to international use of the route, the NSR was officially opened for international shipping in 1991, and Russia has lately been encouraging international use of the sea route (Moe 2014, 786). Traffic through the route has increased in the last years, however transits remain very limited in comparison to global shipping routes like through the Suez and Panama Canal. Number of transits increased from four in 2010 to 71 transits on the route in 2013 (*ibid.*, 787). However, voyages counted need not have sailed the full length of the NSR and Russian ports could be both origin and/or destination ports, transits are not necessarily international transit (*ibid.*).

In any case, development of the NSR is one of the fundamental goals of Russia in the Arctic and it retains high importance to the Russian government, emphasized in several documents (Zysk 2010, 105). Russia has emphasized the importance of the route as a transportation route and for supporting oil and gas activities in the region. In light of these findings the salience of the route to Russia can be termed as high. It may moreover be argued that Russia's tangible interests in the NSR and the high tangible value that the route holds for Russia contribute to explain why the region is being relatively more prioritized in terms of security assets diverted towards the region. The route is perceived as a vital transportation route for industries in the Russian coastal Arctic region and its

role is moreover expected to grow as the extraction of Arctic natural resources increases (Zysk 2010, 105). In addressing military presence in the region, it is thus worth noting that “Russia’s strategic interests in the Arctic are closely related to the country’s economic interests in the region” (Åtland 2010, 16,42). As NSR traffic increases, Russian authorities stress the maintenance of a military presence in the Arctic for security reasons due to territorial and maritime claims in the region (ISAB 2016, 8). Russia has the largest icebreaker fleet in the world, which capacity, particularly its four nuclear icebreakers, is considered vital for transit operations along the route (Moe 2014, 794). As will be explored below, there is fear in Russia that others may take control over natural resources perceived as theirs (Åtland 2010, 16). The issue of military assets as a function of tangible interests in relation the Northern Sea Route will thus also be explored below in a later chapter on economic resources.

Norway

Norway, while considered a minor player in international politics, can be regarded as an important and engaged actor in the Arctic (Rottem 2013, 235). The northern areas are identified as the top foreign policy priority of Norway (Åtland 2014, 156-157, Norwegian Ministries 2017, 2). Due to developments in the Law of the Sea, Norway is a significant maritime state with jurisdiction over large maritime areas. “Norway’s maritime areas in the Arctic come to approximately 1 500 000 km², which corresponds to the combined area of France, Germany and Spain” (Arctic Council 2015). In 2006, Norway submitted its documentation to support the claim “that its continental shelf extended beyond 200 nm in three distinct areas: the Banana Hole in the Norwegian and

Greenland Seas, the Loophole in the Barents Sea, and the Western Nansen Basin in the Arctic Ocean” (Jensen 2015, 235). In 2009, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) issued its final recommendation and announced that Norway has “substantial rights and responsibilities in maritime areas of some 235 000 square kilometers” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009). As such, Norway holds a maritime area six times the size of Norway’s land mass (Rottem 2013, 244). Norway has significant economic interests in these maritime areas; which may be termed as highly salient to the country. Its Arctic maritime areas are the location of important fish stocks and oil and gas resources; as will be seen below. The maritime areas north of Norway may also gain particularly strategic relevance as beginning and/or end areas for the Northern Sea Route. Indicating the importance of these maritime areas for Norway is for instance the interest that the country had in solving a delimitation dispute with Russia in the Barents Sea. The successful delimitation treaty signed by Russia and Norway in 2010, gives the two countries equal halves of a disputed area in the Barents Sea. The process had been ongoing for around 40 years, and the delimitation agreement can be seen as one of the highlights of Norwegian foreign policy in recent times. Both Russia and Norway needed to sort out their differences to meet new challenges from the ongoing loss of sea-ice and the opening of the region to increased economic and maritime activity and “to ensure consolidation of their sovereign rights over natural resources and jurisdiction over international shipping” (Henriksen and Ulfstein 2011, 10). The treaty is an example of orderly governance of the region and was signed in a period with increased attention to the Arctic. The agreement notably received particular attention from the U.S. and is seen

a positive example for the rest of the region underscoring Canada and the United States' failure to reach an agreement over the Northwest Passage and the Beaufort Sea which "may undermine their ability to pursue their interests in the region" and also undermine their abilities to "exercise international leadership in the region" (Bergh 2012, 19).



Figure 5.2. Map of the Arctic Ocean, and various seas of the Arctic Ocean. Source: Map from The Arctic Institute 2016.

Another relevant issue worth mentioning with regards to maritime issues in the Norwegian Arctic is the legal status of the Svalbard waters, a Norwegian Archipelago in the Arctic Ocean, located half-way between the North Pole and Norway (see figure 5.2). The dispute surrounding these maritime areas has again come to the surface after a tense dispute between EU countries and Norway regarding countries' fishing rights to snow crab in these waters. According to the Svalbard Treaty of 1920⁶, Norway has sovereignty over the Svalbard archipelago and its territorial waters. However, the Treaty also stipulates some limitations to this sovereignty, namely that nationals of all contracting

⁶ The original title of the Treaty is *Treaty Concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen*.

parties should have “equal rights of fishing and hunting; equal freedom of access and entry; and equal exercise and practice of all maritime, industrial, mining or commercial enterprises” (Sobrido 2017, 76). Since the Treaty was put in place before developments in the Law of the Sea, it is a matter of contention whether this principle also applies to the waters beyond the 12 nm territorial waters of Svalbard. Norway’s position has been one that claims that the equal treatment provisions do not apply to these water, holding that the continental shelf around Svalbard is a prolongation of Norwegian mainland (Henriksen and Ulfstein 2011, 9).

Due to conflicting views on the issue and particular opposition from Russia and EU countries, Norway has created a Fisheries Protection Zone in the area, where the Norwegian Coast Guard is patrolling and managing with regards to fisheries resources; undertaking enforcement measures according to Norwegian fisheries regulations and laws (Inderberg 2007, 32, Pedersen 2008:243). However, coercive and punitive enforcement measures against foreign fishing vessels in the zone, such as arrests, stirs diplomatic responses and opposition to the Norwegian regime (Pedersen 2008, 249-250,255). The attempted arrest of a Russian trawler, the *Elektron* in 2005 ended with the Russian fishing vessel taking off towards Russian waters with Norwegian Coast Guard inspectors still onboard (Pedersen 2009, 151).

The Svalbard archipelago has a geostrategic location and its waters are rich of fish and possibly petroleum resources (Jensen and Rottem 2010, 79). The importance of the fish stocks in the Barents Sea, including the Svalbard area, to Norway should not be understated. Norway has a keen interest in the protection of sustainable fisheries in the

area and in the Barents Sea generally, exemplified through its Coast Guard activities and the establishment of a joint Norwegian-Russian fisheries commission which manages the Barents Sea fishing resources.

As such it is relevant to point out that the salience of the Norwegian maritime areas in the Arctic can be termed as being high to Norway. Moreover, this may further explain the security presence in the region, as in order to assert sovereignty in the areas. Norway is committed to protect the economic and security interests in the region (Åtland 2014, 156-157). Exercising sovereignty over these large maritime areas is one of the key responsibilities for the Norwegian Coast Guard, and military presence in these waters may thus also be a signal of presence to other actors in the region. As mentioned, Norway has a strong emphasis on the High North in its defense policy, shown in the fact that Norway possesses one of the most modern navies in Europe (Åtland 2014, 156). The further expansion of its military presence in the Arctic is also a function of the expected increase in maritime traffic on Norway's Arctic Coast which has security implications for this region and the country (ISAB 2016, 9). The Arctic Strategy points out that "Norway has a special responsibility to help to ensure that activities in Norwegian waters are safe and environmentally sound. We will maintain a presence and will provide effective surveillance, and emergency preparedness and response in our large sea areas" (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 36).

In terms of security policy in the north it is also worth noting that Norway's relations with Russia in the north is a constant feature of the Norwegian policy in the Arctic, and while cooperation, dialogue and good relations with Russia is emphasized,

Norway is also aware of the increased Russian military activity, and while this activity is not considered to be aimed at Norway, it remains an important factor in the security and defence policy of Norway (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 18).

CHAPTER VI
ECONOMIC RESOURCES



Figure 6.1. Map of Arctic countries' exclusive economic zones. Source: Map from The Arctic Institute 2016.

This section will continue to explore issues and interests of tangible salience in the Arctic, focusing on economic resources. The Arctic region is gradually opening up for economic and human activity, and this section will specifically explore the interests these countries have with regards to economic resources, particularly focusing on offshore oil and gas, as these resources are frequently mentioned in discourses on

developments in the Arctic. The security implications of energy and the secure and stable access to this energy is crucial for states (Jensen and Rottem 2010, 78). It is “a driving force of international relations” (*ibid.*). Energy security, often linked together with national security, may be termed vital to the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway. However, the salience of these stakes and interests also differ between these four.

As a backdrop to this section, which focuses on economic resources such as offshore oil and gas, it is relevant to emphasize earlier points related to how several factors may affect the potential for oil and gas exploration and development in the region. Factors such as the price of oil and gas, and increased accessibility influence commercial interests in the region (Østhagen 2013, 4). While accessibility seems to be increasing in terms of a shrinking ice-cap as a consequence of climatic changes, these same changes may also have implications for the Arctic in terms of more unpredictable weather and other factors that may make it more difficult for the oil industry to operate in the region. While some studies suggest Arctic hurricanes are likely to decrease in the future, climate change could also give way to more unpredictable weather and could affect the Arctic with increased storm frequency, potentially worsening conditions for the oil industry, for instance by interrupting processes such as drilling and transportation (Zahn and von Storch 2010, 309, Harsem et al. 2011, 8039-8040). Moreover, the effects of climate change in the Arctic could also lead to changes in the ice structure, which in turn could change the behavior of the ice and how the ice responds to wind and waves; some studies suggest that “Fragile Arctic ice” is expected to “move at a greater speed compared to the older, more stable ice” (Harsem et al. 2011, 8039). Even though oil companies may

counter this with new and improved technology, such development may also represent challenges for the oil industry. Moreover, they turn into factors of increased costs and challenges associated with Arctic oil and gas production. Additionally, more unpredictable ice could also increase the possibility of oil spills, and more extreme weather could make an oil spill even more difficult to handle (Harsem et al. 2011, 8040). While tabloid versions of climate change in the Arctic tend to focus on the increased accessibility of resources, environmental changes also have implications for the access and profitability of these resources. These are points to keep in mind when assessing the development of oil and gas in the region.

USA

While the United States stresses national and homeland security issues as key concerns in its Arctic policy, increased attention to the region is also due to economic opportunity prospects, such as energy development (Bergh 2012, 14). Though not a party to the UNCLOS, the U.S. has an extensive Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The EEZ around Alaska goes into the waters of the Chukchi Sea, the Bering Sea and the Beaufort Sea (see figure 6.2). In this zone, the U.S. has “sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources” (NOAA 2017). This section will explore the interests that the U.S. has in these offshore resources, as well as onshore oil and gas in the Arctic. By doing so, it will assess various factors that contribute to show the salience of these stakes and interests to the U.S.

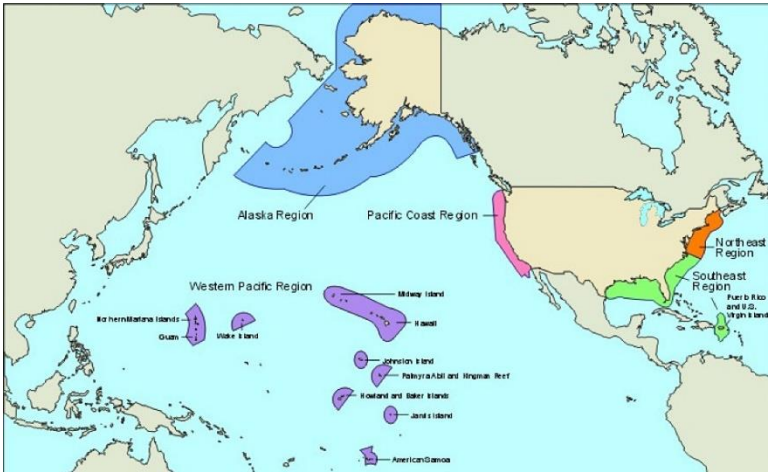


Figure 6.2. Map of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zones. Source: Map from NOAA 2017.

While the Presidential Directive from 2009 recognizes that the Arctic region is rich in resources, it also puts great emphasis on the fragility of the region and notes that it is the policy of the United States to “ensure that natural resource management and economic development in the region are environmentally sustainable” (US White House 2009). In fact, the Presidential Directive from 2009 gives less attention to economic development in the Arctic, however, emphasizing that development should be conducted in a responsible way (Heininen 2012, 31-32). President Barack Obama’s “National Strategy for the Arctic Region” from 2013, which largely follows the main lines of President Bush’s Presidential Directive, moreover stressed that the Arctic region’s energy resources “factor into a core component of our national security strategy: energy security”, and that continued responsible development of its Arctic oil and gas resources may contribute to decrease its reliance on imported oil (US White House 2013, 7). This latter rhetoric indicates that the economic resources in the Arctic are of importance to the U.S. However, the rhetoric is not followed by actual activity and development.

Indeed, various factors contribute to explain why the salience of these economic resources and interests to the U.S. currently may be termed as relatively low.

Oil and Gas Resources and Development in Alaska

Alaskan oil and gas production has historically mattered to the United States, accounting for 20 per cent of U.S. domestic production in the period from the 1980s to 2000 (Claes and Moe 2014, 112). The Prudhoe Bay field, on the North Slope which is still in production, is the largest oil resource in Alaska and was considered the largest discovered onshore oil field in North America when it was discovered in 1968 (*ibid.*). However, after reaching a peak in 1988, Alaskan oil and gas production has decreased and around 2014, Alaskan production constituted 13,2 per cent of total US production (*ibid.*). However, as indicated above, the prospect of new energy development is a strong driver for the increased attention towards the Arctic.

The Arctic region holds significant amounts of the world's undiscovered oil and gas resources. Of these, the maritime areas around Alaska holds a large share of the oil reserves in the Arctic (Harsem et al. 2011, 8038). Indeed, "the USA has the second highest estimated Arctic oil and gas potential with 20% of the total" (Keil 2014, 170). While informal policies have been adopted between Canada and the U.S. in order to discourage drilling or other hydrocarbon related activities in the disputed area of the Beaufort Sea (McDorman and Schofield 2015, 220), the maritime area of the Beaufort Sea can be considered one of the critical resource regions in the Arctic for the U.S. (Lamy 2016, 87). The seabed offshore in the Beaufort Sea is estimated to have a "mean recoverable oil at 6.94 billion barrels", while a mean of 15.4 billion barrels of oil is

expected in the continental shelf under the Chukchi Sea (Claes and Moe 2014, 112). Indeed, following the Gulf of Mexico in estimated domestic resources are the waters of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas (Keil 2014, 171). Assessments have also been done for the onshore fields of the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) and Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which are estimated to hold large reserves of oil and gas (Claes and Moe 2014, 112). These fields, as well as offshore oil development in the U.S. Arctic, have generated increasing interest among energy companies (Keil 2014, 171). Some of the large U.S. companies are present in Alaska, and several are investing in order to continue production from existing onshore fields (Claes and Moe 2014, 112). One of the companies that was at the forefront of offshore Arctic drilling was Royal Dutch Shell, which in the summer of 2012 looked to conduct exploratory drilling in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas (Bergh 2012, 14). Shell had also constructed its own icebreaker; rivalling the U.S. Government capacity to maneuver in the region (Bergh 2012, 14-15). However, in September 2015, Shell had to close the production in the Chukchi Sea, “as extraction was not profitable given geological and environmental conditions” (Chater 2017). Indeed, Shell encountered several problems during its first drilling season, and several accidents and equipment problems delayed the process, suggesting that “the outlook for the offshore Arctic appears to be one of fairly slow progress” (Stromquist and Johnston 2014, 8). Moreover, while oil companies may push for activities, court challenges, lengthy drilling license processes and federal permissions, as well as low price levels also contribute to delay and constrain further development of Arctic offshore oil and gas (Keil 2014, 171, Claes and Moe 2014, 114).

As such, while the potential for energy development is present in the U.S. Arctic, there has been less interest on the part of the U.S. Government with regards to actual development of Arctic offshore oil and gas resources. In fact, of total U.S. oil production, the offshore oil resources in the U.S. Arctic are not expected to play a major role (Keil 2014, 171). The next few sections will elaborate on the factors conditioning further oil and gas activity in the U.S. Arctic region.

Environmental Concerns and Domestic Politics

In the U.S., the balance between environmental concerns and energy security is a main theme in the debate regarding Arctic oil and gas development, contributing to explain how further U.S. Arctic oil and gas production is conditioned. On the national level, the general public's view on climate change and the environmental and human impact of oil spills is a factor that contribute to condition oil and gas activity in the region (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). There has been growing opposition towards oil drilling in the Arctic among the U.S. public. On 15 May 2012, a petition that was delivered to the White House which was signed by more than 1 million people, urged Shell to stop Arctic drilling (Bergh 2012, 15). Moreover, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico arguably had some implications on production in the Arctic. It is for instance noted that as a result of the job losses due to the oil spill, the US government has for instance decided to review the licenses for Arctic drilling that were given before the incident (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). Moreover, in contrast to the Gulf of Mexico, where a large number of people were mobilized, the Arctic region has limited capabilities such as poor infrastructure to handle a huge oil spill like the one in the Gulf of Mexico: "this represents a potential extra cost

to not only the industry, but also to governments when they are deciding upon whether or not new drilling licences will be granted in the Arctic” (Harsem et al. 2011, 8040). As indicated, the U.S. government has been cautious about Arctic oil and gas exploration. Under the Bush administration, opposition from both Democrats and Republicans in the Congress hindered the U.S. government to allow full scale drilling (*ibid.*, 8043). While President Obama during his first term seemed to show increased interest in Arctic oil and gas exploration as a policy of reducing dependence on oil imports, he nevertheless used a 1953 law and permanently banned “new oil and gas drilling in most US-waters in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans” at the end of his second term (Broder 2010, Smith 2016, US White House 2016). In the “Statement by the President on Actions in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans”, Obama emphasized the lack of infrastructure and oil spill preparedness in this harsh climate (US White House 2016). However, it is relevant to note that Obama’s ban could be challenged by Trump in court though it is unclear what President Donald Trump will do with regards to further offshore oil and gas development in the Arctic. With regards to oil activity on land in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. federal government opened a small part of the refuge in 2017 for energy development (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017a).

In any case, the decision-making process of opening up areas for oil and gas exploration is a highly politicized process, “as any lease sale must be included in the Department of Interior’s overarching five-year plan”, a plan informed by political agendas as much as it is geared to optimising governance of offshore resources” (Østhagen 2013, 17). While the state of Alaska is highly dependent on oil production and

has strong regional interests in opening offshore fields, for instance in the Chukchi Sea, it does not have the decision-making authority to allow offshore drilling, as decision-making authority lies with the federal government which has moderate interests (Østhagen 2013, 10,19,21). The situation is such that the federal government which arguably is far from the Alaskan Arctic in both distance and mind-set is “wary of upsetting the balance between regional interests and environmental concerns as it will be held accountable for whichever decision, if any, is made” (Østhagen 2013, 17). Moreover, national energy interests and economic factors also influence decisions about further offshore oil and gas development in the Arctic, the topic of the next section.

Economic and Infrastructural Aspects of Offshore Oil and Gas Activity

Besides the focus on environmental concerns, further oil and gas activity in the Arctic region is also conditioned by internal and external economic factors. An exogenous shock which would limit US access to oil imports or a financial downturn are factors that most likely would increase Alaskan oil and gas activity (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). However, other economic factors may on the other hand contribute to explain the low level of Alaskan Arctic resource development, particularly with regards to offshore resources. With regards to internal factors, analyzing the role of Arctic oil and gas resources should be done in the context of the US oil and gas market. In the current moment, there are factors that indicate that the role of Arctic oil and gas in the domestic U.S. economy remains relatively low. Firstly, in terms of gas resources, it is relevant to shed some light on the shale gas revolution that has emerged in the U.S. The US gas

market was experiencing a significant shift from conventional to unconventional gas sources, which in 2014 represented around 40 % of U.S. production (Keil 2014, 171). Indeed, the shale gas revolution did affect the North American market, which due to the shale gas revolution, seems to be approaching self-supply (Claes and Moe 2014, 110-111). Østhagen (2013, 17) observes that “the development of unconventional natural gas resources elsewhere in the US has also lessened the perceived urgency of developing a natural gas in the Alaskan Arctic.” Indeed, market developments may hugely affect Arctic energy production, as production costs may be higher in this region. Indeed, exploitation of conventional hydrocarbons in harsh, challenging and remote areas like the Arctic may be less likely and less profitable as prices are pushed down due to increased US gas production and oversupply in the gas market (Keil 2014, 171). Implications of the shale gas development and self-sufficiency in gas may also mean that exporting will be prioritized rather than consumption, which arguably “could reduce the political importance of developments at the federal level” (Claes and Moe 2014, 114).

Transportation of U.S. Arctic natural gas is also a key issue in this context. Even though Alaska has the nation’s third largest natural gas gross withdrawals and natural gas volumes from the North Slope exceed local demand, there is an issue of transporting the natural gas to the market and consumers in the south due to the lack of a pipeline (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017a). Claes and Moe (2014, 114) notes that even with over-supply implications of the shale gas revolution, the demand for gas could be maintained if Alaskan gas reserves “can be produced and brought to the market on competitive terms.” However, gas development is more profitable from southern parts of

Alaska than from potential fields in the northern parts due to how new transport facilities from the LNG facilities to the US market is more viable from oil fields in these southern parts (Claes and Moe 2014, 113). Indeed, distance from the north of Alaska to the south of the state is comparable to the distance between Norwegian Sea gas fields and the gas grid of continental European (*ibid.*). Secondly, how strongly the US federal government pushes for Arctic oil and gas development is related to national energy interests (Østhagen 2013, 17).

In terms of oil, while the Alaskan Arctic has untapped offshore oil resources, these resources are not expected to become a major part of oil production in the U.S.: “the biggest part of US crude oil production has been, and still is, onshore production in the lower 48 states” (Keil 2014, 171). Moreover, while onshore resources are in decline, offshore resources are on the rise in the lower 48 states, particularly from production in the Gulf of Mexico (*ibid.*). Furthermore, while Alaskan onshore oil is considered important to the U.S. total oil supply, it is less important now than 20 years ago; Alaskan oil production as a percent of total U.S. production has decreased, as indicated above contrastingly, and at the same time, the federal areas in the Gulf of Mexico, which constituted 10 per cent of US production overall in 1988, constituted 28 per cent around 2014 (Claes and Moe 2014, 114). In light of this, these changes of relative importance as well as higher productions costs in Alaska compared to the federal areas in the Gulf of Mexico, “make it arguably less important politically to sustain Alaskan production rates” (Claes and Moe 2014, 114).

Lastly, with regards to external factors, the production of Arctic oil and gas may also be conditioned by factors such as global energy demand and high prices (Harsem et al. 2011, 8041). Relatively high and stable oil prices are important for oil companies as they invest in high cost Arctic offshore development, and sudden shifts in demand or oil prices could have significant effects on future production due to the high production costs here compared to other regions (Harsem et al. 2011, 8044). According to Huebert (2009, 6), “some analysts suggest, off the record, that Alaskan oil deposits are viable above about \$80 per barrel for offshore deposits and about \$55 per barrel for land-based sources.” In a “Statement by the President on Actions in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans” under the Obama Administration, which will be addressed in more detail below, it is noted that:

In 2015, just 0.1 percent of U.S. federal offshore crude production came from the Arctic and Department of Interior analysis shows that, at current oil prices, significant production in the Arctic will not occur. That’s why looking forward, we must continue to focus on economic empowerment for Arctic communities beyond this one sector (US White House 2016).

As such, while there is potential for offshore oil and gas activities in the U.S. Arctic, there is little federal push for the development of these. Several factors contribute to highlight how this activity is conditioned. Relevantly, one of the main conclusions from this is that tangible interests of economic resources here, particularly offshore oil and gas, does not have a significantly high salience to the U.S. federal government. U.S. interests seem to be relatively low, shown for instance through little offshore activity in the region. Arguably, the current low salience of these resources to the U.S. in general,

calls for less attention in terms of the presence of security. Indeed, while other Arctic states such as Norway and Russia tie their military presence to some extent to their economic interests in the region, as will be seen below, it may be argued that the low level of activity and interests in the U.S. Arctic is one of the key factors contributing to the security posture that the U.S. has with regards to the Arctic today. In other words, the security relevance due to economic resources and activity may be characterized as low.

Canada

The Government of Canada's "Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy" points out that resource development in the north can significantly contribute to wealth and job creation (Government of Canada 2010, 10). Canada is a large energy producer globally and has considerable interests in the Arctic region with regards to oil and gas resources (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). As with the U.S., the potential for energy development has been one of the drivers for renewed interests towards the region. Moreover, there are estimations of large amounts recoverable oil and gas offshore in the Canadian Arctic in Canada's various Arctic Offshore Basins (Barnes 2016, 4). These Arctic resources are also seen as important to sustain current production levels and are as such of interests to Canada (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043).

Arctic Oil and Gas: Much Interest – Little Activity?

The Canadian Arctic became more interesting to oil and gas companies due to rising oil prices, along with new technology and positive assessments of resources (Østhagen 2013, 11). However, despite rhetoric regarding resource developments in the

Canadian Arctic policy, there has been little actual development and activity offshore in the Arctic region. Arguably, there is no offshore drilling currently ongoing in the Canadian Arctic waters, and the country neither has any offshore oil platforms (Chater 2017). Moreover, The Norman Wells field, located onshore in the Northwest Territories is arguably the only remaining oil producing well in Canada's Arctic (The Arctic Institute 2018b).

In addition to low oil prices, much of this slowness of commercial exploitation is due to issues such as environmental concerns and lack of infrastructure, which also have contributed to pausing many of the ongoing projects (*ibid.*). Due to uncertainty and growing production levels in other locations in Canada, the federal government in Ottawa has been reluctant in promoting its Arctic offshore resource potential (Østhagen 2013, 11-12).

As such, many of the same factors that hinders further exploration of oil and gas resources in the U.S. Arctic also apply to Canada. Challenges to offshore oil and gas activity in the Arctic are also pointed out by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, which highlights that extreme sea ice which can be up to 30 meters thick, icebergs, permafrost, low temperatures, ice scour of the seabed and operational remoteness and distance to markets facilities are some of the challenges to activity (Barnes 2016, 5). Additionally, it is also worth pointing out that other economic factors also matter in the analysis of further offshore oil and gas development in Canada. The country is one of the main suppliers of oil and gas to the United States, and Canadian production of oil and gas resources should thus also be assessed in light of oil and gas

demand in the U.S, as well as complex regulatory processes and government regulations which also contribute to condition further activity (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043).

Environmental Concerns and Domestic Politics

While the awarding of final drilling permits is particularly controversial in the United States, Canada has also emphasized environmental concerns with regards to oil and gas development, and some popular resentment against Arctic drilling exists (Østhagen 2013, 16). While there is a lower level of tension in the popular environment, this could also be due to slower development pace (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the decision of President Obama to put in place a ban on the bulk of Arctic offshore areas was paralleled by Canada which put a similar restriction on its Arctic waters. The United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement notes that: "Canada is designating all Arctic Canadian waters as indefinitely off limits to future offshore Arctic oil and gas licensing, to be reviewed every 5 years through a climate and marine science-based life-cycle assessment" (Government of Canada 2016). With regards to the agreement's implications, Andrew Chater notes that "this new agreement is significant because it seeks to end the debate as to whether the North American Arctic will become an oil-producing region, a dominant theme in academic literature throughout the last decade" (Chater 2017). He furthermore points out that "one reason behind the new policy is that it has little immediate economic cost" as neither Canada or United State currently have ongoing offshore oil drilling in their Arctic waters as climatic factors in the North American Arctic, such as ice cover hinders economic viability (*ibid.*).

As such, the ban on oil drilling firstly indicates that Arctic oil and gas development is currently less important to the two countries, secondly it shows that current levels of offshore oil and gas activity in the region is minimal. Thirdly, on a similar note as President Obama's statement above on Alaskan oil production, Chater notes that political debate about the Arctic will be more inclined towards focusing on other relevant issues, such as Arctic fisheries, shipping, and community development (Chater 2017). With regards to internal political considerations, it is for instance noted that even though there are strong commercial interest in developing offshore fields, such as in the Beaufort Sea, Canada is not largely dependent on these resources for energy supplies, and thus we will most likely not see a federal push to develop costly gas fields in the remote Arctic area (Østhagen 2013, 18). Indeed, both regional and federal interests in development of the resources such as in the Beaufort Sea can be termed as weak (*ibid.*, 18-19).

In addition, it is also relevant to point out that Canada is a large producer of diamonds globally, and while the Canadian Arctic is rich in resources such as oil and gas as well as fish, one of the three main sources of employment in the Canadian Arctic is mining of resources such as diamonds, gold, zink, silver and lead (The Arctic Institute 2018b). In many instances, mineral extraction has been favored due to how it is perceived to provide increased direct revenue benefits (Østhagen 2013, 11). As such, while there is commercial interest in the petroleum resources in the Canadian Arctic, other factors such as governmental approval constrain further development. There is a lack of federal interest in pushing for offshore development partly due to how the gains

from development is perceived as low or uncertain (Østhagen 2013, 11-12). On the other hand, it may also be argued that though the current market relevance is low, the vast undiscovered Arctic oil and gas resources is linked to the key issue of Canadian Arctic sovereignty (Keil 2014, 174). It is argued that the economic resources offer “an attractive means to increase Canadian activities in the North” and in this way can be linked as having overall high importance to Canada (*ibid.*). In other words, while activity is low, the economic resources become part of the broader issue of sovereignty in which security assets follow. The emphasis on having military presence to safeguard Canadian sovereignty in the maritime areas, as described above, may not necessarily be link to the specific economic resources, but the broader notion of sovereignty over the maritime areas in which the resources are located.

Russia

Russia is one of the world’s largest producers and exporters of hydrocarbon resources, and oil and gas resources are highly important to the Russian economy. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (2017b, 1), Russia has high oil and gas production and the export of energy is a driver of Russian economic growth, moreover, in 2016 almost 40 % of the federal budget revenues were from revenues from oil and natural gas. Russia also has significant interests in the oil and gas resources in the Russian Arctic. With regards to estimated discovered and undiscovered oil and gas resources, official Russian estimates point to 70 billion tons of oil equivalents (Claes and Moe 2014, 108).

Of all the Arctic states, Russia is clearly the country with the greatest essential interests in the region (Keil 2014, 166). Factors such as being the country with the longest Arctic coastline, the largest Arctic state geographically, and being an important actor in global energy markets indicate that Russia is the most crucial Arctic actor and the country expected to gain the most from Arctic resource extraction (*ibid.*). This particularly pertains to the development of Arctic gas. Indeed, there is expected to be much more undiscovered gas than oil, and most of the natural gas in the Arctic is found on the Eurasian side (Harsem et al. 2011, 8038). According to Claes and Moe (2014, 106), with 95 % of the recoverable natural gas resources in discovered fields, Russia is by far the largest actor with regards to Arctic gas activities. The Arctic is seen as an important source of revenue from both oil and gas resources partly due to how these resources are seen as important for further economic development and competitiveness in global markets (Zysk 2010, 104-105). Indeed, it has been noted that “as much as 20 percent of Russia’s gross domestic product (GDP) and 22 percent of the total Russian export is generated north of the Arctic Circle” (*ibid.*, 105). The Arctic oil and gas resources represents almost around 20 % of the Russian economy, and may represent even more in the future (Brigham 2017). Russia has been active in exploring for new sources in the Arctic, as older Russian wells are expected to have declining production (Zysk 2010, 105). As such, the resources in the region are particularly seen as important for Russia for further wealth as they could substitute for declining production elsewhere such as in western Siberia (*ibid.*). Indeed, in order to meet fiscal targets, there is a dependency on tight oil production, and production in more Arctic offshore fields in

order to balance the budget (Stromquist and Johnston 2014, 17). As such, Russia does not only have a significant share of the Arctic region's oil and gas resources, as indicated previously, Arctic resources are seen as salient for further economic development. In future terms, as indicated, "Arctic shelf development is a longer-term strategic priority that could be a significant source of production growth beyond 2020" (*ibid.*, 18).

Moreover, it is relevant to note that the role of Arctic oil and gas resources plays a broader significance for Russia in they are seen as vital to Russia's relevance in world affairs (Zysk 2010, 105). "The role of energy reserves in strengthening the country's position and influence on the international stage has been emphasized in the national security strategy up to 2020 that was adopted in May 2009" (Zysk 2010, 105). Shane Tayloe (2015, 9) explains that abundance of natural resources "makes the Arctic integral to Putin's grand strategy that aims to accomplish economic prosperity and power parity with the US largely through making Russia an energy superpower." The Arctic region has clearly been emphasized as a strategic resource base by Russian authorities (Blunden 2009, 125).

Factors Affecting Russian Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Activity

The Russian government has nationalized most of the Russian energy sector since the beginning of the Putin era; state-owned Gazprom handles over 80 % of the Russian gas production, while the Russian state also has a majority holding in Rosneft (Harsem et al. 2011, 8042, Claes and Moe 2014, 111). These two companies were the

only two companies that fulfilled the criteria in the new laws passed by Russia in 2008 that gave exclusive rights to new offshore licenses “to companies with a state majority holding and at least five years’ experience of working on the Russian continental shelf” (Claes and Moe 2014, 111). However, the imposition of national control and monopolization may also constrain the rapid development of Arctic offshore petroleum resources as in order to assess further offshore activities there is a need to take into account these companies’ interests and abilities to operate on the Russian continental shelf (*ibid.*). On this note, Russian companies are in need of cooperation with foreign companies for their expertise and technology in operating offshore in the Arctic (*ibid.*). Western oil companies’ help is for instance noted as crucial the development of these resources (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017b, 3). Harsem et al. (2011, 8043) notes that: “Russia’s problem, however, lies in obtaining foreign investment and attracting the companies that possess the new technology that is required to increase production.” The sanctions put in place after the Ukraine crisis has contributed to stop the involvement of Western companies in Russian Arctic offshore projects, and together “sanctions and lower oil prices have reduced foreign investment in Russia’s upstream, especially in Arctic offshore and shale projects, and they have made financing projects more difficult” (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017b, 3).

It should also be noted that the global market for natural gas has experienced some changes in the last few years. Indeed, an intended market for the Shtokman LNG, liquified natural gas from the “gas super-giant Shtokman” which was discovered in 1988, was the U.S. (Claes and Moe 2014, 109-110). However, as already mentioned

this market seemed self-supplied after the U.S. shale gas revolution, and the project was postponed in 2012 (Keil 2014, 168-169). “An obvious lesson from the Shtokman experience is that Arctic offshore gas is marginal in today’s market and that effectiveness and cost of development are crucial” (Claes and Moe 2014, 111). A general decline in gas demand globally as well as increased production of gas has led to oversupply and a decline in the demand for Russian gas (Keil 2014, 168). On the other hand, it should also be noted that this might only hold for the short- to midterm future; increased demand might be generated in the mid- to long-term as gas is considered to be a cleaner form for energy than coal for instance, in turn this could lead to rising prices due to increased demand (*ibid.*). However, an additional factor to consider is also the economic situation in Russia which might hamper further investments in infrastructure and projects, and may lead to further cuts in its Arctic program (Brigham 2017).

Arctic Oil and Gas Activity Despite Obstacles

However, despite conditioning factors, the Russian Government does seem inclined to further develop the Arctic resources. Indeed, the fall of oil prices contributed to various measures, or proposed measures, by the Russian government to increase revenues, for instance by selling shares in various Russian companies, increase prices through the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and change tax regulations (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017b, 4). Moreover, it is also noted that the sanctions will have little effect on Russian production in the short term as many of the fields that Western companies were partners in for instance in

2012 and 2013, were not expected to be producing for at least 5 to 10 years; “the immediate effect of these sanctions has been to stop the large-scale investments that Western firms had planned to make in these resources” (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017b, 3). Additionally, in contrast to the U.S. and Canada, the Russian government will not likely put constraints on further hydrocarbon activities in the Arctic when it comes to environmental concerns as the Russian authorities are arguably not very concerned about global warming, suggesting that, due to the importance of these resources, Russia will thus not likely move away from oil and gas as energy resources (Baev 2007, 7, Harsem et al. 2011, 8042). With regards to policy implementation, Russia also starkly contrasts the U.S. As shown above, while documentation and policy activity have increased in the U.S., action and investments have not followed. Russia on the other hand, despite numerous obstacles, has implemented many of its Arctic developments goals, for instance through Gazprom and Rosneft’s expansion of projects in the region (Zysk and Titley 2015, 173). Oil production in the Russian Arctic has been growing and there are several projects in development (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2017b, 4,6-7).

Moreover, of all the Arctic nations, Russia has the most developed infrastructure in the Arctic region with several icebreakers; and has among other things constructed “pipelines of record-breaking lengths from the Yamal Peninsula in Siberia” (Harsem et al. 2011, 8042).

The project at the Yamal Peninsula represents one of the most advanced development project in the Arctic region:

Two new ports on the eastern shore of the Yamal Peninsula illustrate the critical connection between the NSR and Russia's push to develop hydrocarbons in the Arctic. A new Arctic marine transportation system using the NSR will service the recently constructed liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant and port at Sabetta, located on the Gulf of Ob (...) An initial fleet of 15 icebreaking LNG-carriers, the world's first such ships, will carry Yamal gas out of the Russian Arctic to global markets. Each is capable of carrying 170,000 cubic meters of LNG and can operate independently (without icebreaker support) in modest ice conditions (Brigham 2017).

From the assessment above it is clear that Russia has significant tangible interests in the region in terms of these economic resources which may be termed as highly salient to the country. Overall, the Arctic is of outstanding importance for Russia and Russians. In this way, it may be argued that the economic resources are significantly contributing to the salience of the Arctic for Russia through holding economic and strategic importance. They contribute to the salience of the North to Russia which furthermore holds a role in Russia's ambition to increase its international role (Keil 2014, 170). Indicating this salience is for instance the pursuit of development of the Northern Sea Route in inhospitable environments where temperatures can fall to -40 degrees Fahrenheit: "The NSR is what provides, and will provide, most of the access to these resources (...) In reality, the development of resources and their contribution to the overall security of the Russian economy will be the primary drivers of the NSR's future use" (Brigham 2017).

In light of the Russian emphasis on developing the Arctic resources, it is relevant to note that much of Russia's security measures in the region are linked to

these economic interests. Indeed, the Russian Arctic policy document from 2009, “stresses the importance of a continued military presence as essential for securing national interests in the Arctic, although Russia’s defense policy in the region is discussed in the Arctic document only in vestigial form” (Zysk 2010, 107). Russian authorities have stressed that increased military presence is a function of the security challenges that may come from the increase in economic activity in region (*ibid.*). As indicated above, much of this focus has been related to security measures that will support the development of these resources. “Hence they devote much attention to development of search and rescue capabilities, surveillance, and navigation systems to provide safety for and control of the economic, military, and ecological activities” (*ibid.*). It is also for instance noted that new activities related to oil and gas impose more responsibilities on the Russian Navy: “the Northern Fleet is likely to be tasked with the anti-terrorism protection of the new installations (platforms, pipelines, terminals, et cetera) and tanker traffic” (Åtland 2011, 272). As such, the Northern Fleet has gotten a “brown-water” function, operating in coastal waters or “the ‘brown-water’ zone” (*ibid.*, 272,281), taking a primarily defensive role. On the other hand, blue water navies can generally be termed as operating globally. Anyhow, interests in the region with regards to economic development and the NSR’s link to the exploitation of natural resources may be crucial for explaining the prioritization of the region in terms of military presence. “The expected increase in industrial and commercial activities in the littoral zone appears to be seen as argument in favour of strengthening the naval and/or FSB presence in the region” (Åtland 2011, 272).

Norway

Norway is Western Europe's largest oil producer and exporter, and the largest petroleum liquids producer in Europe (US Energy Information Administration 2016, 1-2). Moreover, on a world basis, the country was in 2015 the third-largest exporter of natural gas, following Qatar and Russia (*ibid.*, 1). Domestically, the petroleum industry is Norway's largest industry, and the export of oil and gas accounts for almost half the value of total exports (SSB 2017b). Over 90 % of the oil and gas that is produced in Norway is exported (Keil 2014, 175). The discovery of oil and gas on the Norwegian continental shelf has contributed significantly to growth and transformed Norway into being one of the world's wealthiest countries. Revenues from the petroleum industry make up the Government Pension Fund Global which is a 1 Trillion USD sovereign wealth fund in which transfers finance the non-oil fiscal budget deficit (Ministry of Finance 2016). During its operations over 40 years, the industry has created values for over NOK 12 000 billion (Ministry of Petroleum and Energy 2013).

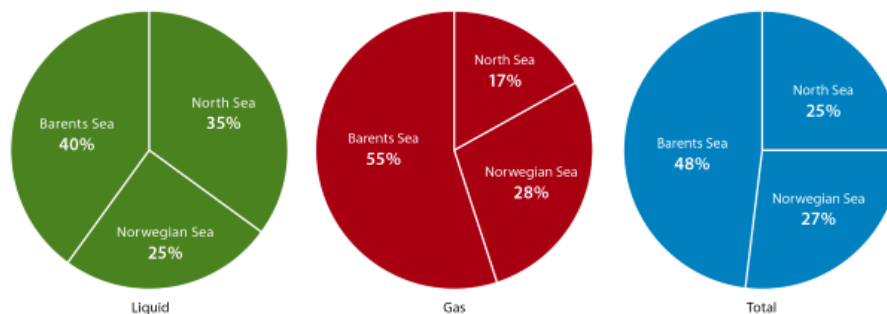


Figure 6.3. Depiction of recoverable undiscovered resources by areas on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. Source: Illustration from Norwegian Petroleum Directorate 2016.

Arctic Oil and Gas Exploration and Activity

Being one of the world's largest natural gas exporters as well as a big oil producer, Norway has significant interests in the production of Arctic oil and gas (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). The North Sea and the Norwegian Sea have traditionally been the locations of production since the 70s, with respectively 66 and 17 fields in production in 2017 (Norwegian Petroleum 2018). However, as with Russia, there are challenges of matured oil fields, and petroleum production has gradually declined since 2001, with most of Norway's North Sea fields in decline (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2016, 3-4). As such, similar to its neighbor in the north, increased attention is being given to the north as output has declined elsewhere (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). Due to being a country heavily dependent on oil and gas, Norwegian decision-makers are concerned with maintaining and increasing production, arguably; "if Norway wants to continue its current output level, Arctic oil and gas activity must increase" (Harsem et al. 2011, 8043). The Norwegian Government has in recent years pushed oil exploration further north on the Norwegian continental shelf. The government is among other things, investing in mapping potential resources as well as granting exploration licenses in the Barents Sea (Keil 2014, 175). In addition to the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea, the Barents Sea is the third section of the Norwegian continental shelf (NCS) (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2016, 2). The Barents Sea, while inside the Arctic area, has different climatic conditions to other sub regions in the Arctic, with less icy conditions due to the high temperatures created by the Gulf Stream.

As mentioned by Stromquist and Johnston (2014, 18), “it is important to note that although a good deal of Norway’s future hydrocarbon potential lies in areas north of the Arctic Circle, the conditions do not meet true Arctic criteria, particularly in terms of the ice regime.” In any case, Norwegian Arctic waters are expected to hold significant potential (Keil 2014, 176). According to the Arctic Strategy from 2017, “Nearly half of Norway’s estimated undiscovered oil and gas resources are to be found in the Barents Sea” (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 2). As indicated on the figure below, there are high estimates of undiscovered resources in the Barents Sea, which is the only of the three sections located above the Arctic Circle. In 2017, the Barents Sea contained 71 production licenses, however Snøhvit and Goliat are the two fields currently in production (Norwegian Petroleum Directorate 2017, Norwegian Petroleum 2018). Norway’s first offshore gas development in the Barents Sea is the Snøhvit field, which is also the first facility of liquified natural gas (LNG) in Norway (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 24). The Goliat field is an oil producing field located south east of Snøhvit. Some of the main conditioning factors with regards to offshore oil and gas development in the Norwegian Arctic has been lack of infrastructure, for instance due to the remoteness of these areas (Stromquist and Johnston 2014, 19). While ice conditions are different in this part of the Arctic, there is also need for equipment made for Arctic operations. For instance, “future offshore oil production at the Goliat field in Northern Norway, or the Prirazlomnoye field in North-West Russia, depend on state of the art drilling platforms able to withstand drifting sea ice throughout the year” (Østhagen 2013, 8).

However, considerable technological advances have been made, and oil companies continued push to explore oil and gas fields elsewhere has led to new equipment that can be used for Arctic operations (Østhagen 2013, 8). As indicated in Figure 6.4 below, most of the southern part of the Barents Sea is now opened for petroleum activity. Due to the delimitation agreement with Russia, the previously disputed area could be opened, indeed, “minutes after the agreement entered into force in July 2011, the Norwegian authorities started acquiring seismic data from the area” (Claes and Moe 2014, 115). Stromquist and Johnston (2014, 18-19) notes that the agreement with Russia contributed to significant increase in the Barents Sea resources. However, the northern parts stretching towards the Svalbard archipelago, has not been opened. This is also the case with the area further south in the Barents Sea, offshore Lofoten and Vesterålen, for which there was heated political debate regarding opening up for petroleum activities or not. The Lofoten and Vesterålen case represents an aspect of the Norwegian debate regarding further oil and gas activity in the Norwegian High North. While environmental groups, some political parties, and other actors such as the fishing industry opposed the opening of the Lofoten offshore areas for oil activity due to vulnerable ecosystems and important fishing grounds, others, such as the oil industry pushed for exploration (Claes and Moe 2014, 115).

Moreover, the Norwegian government was recently sued by environmental organizations for having awarded licenses to oil companies in Arctic areas, the Norwegian government won the Arctic lawsuit. Regarding further oil and gas activity in the Norwegian High North, Harsem et al. (2011, 8043-8044) notes that oil and gas

development in the Norwegian High North may vary from region to region, as environmental concerns triumph in some places, whereas profit maximization triumph in other such as for Hammerfest.

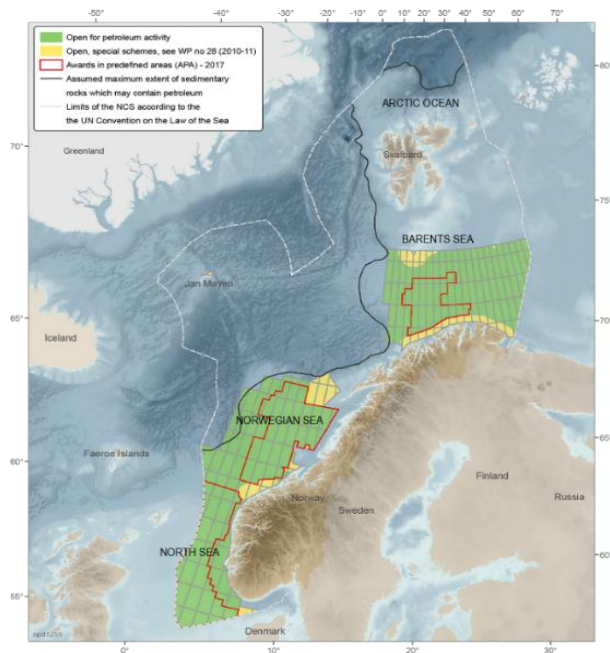


Figure 6.4. Map of area status as of May 2017. Source: Map from Norwegian Petroleum Directorate 2017.

Economic Sustainability and Development

On the more general note of the salience of the economic resources of the Arctic for Norway, the Norwegian Government, as indicated in previous sections, sees the High North as important for development of Norway, and especially for the Northern regions above the Arctic Circle (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 2). The Arctic Strategy from 2017 indicates that Arctic resources are salient to value creation in Northern Norway and for Norway as a whole, and the resources on land and on sea provides income for many

residents in the north (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 9). It moreover notes that the government will “work to increase the positive local and regional spin-off effects of oil and gas activities in the Arctic” (*ibid.*, 24). It is furthermore relevant to shed light on the importance of the Barents Sea for both Russia and Norway, in terms of economic activity such as fisheries. Indeed, the sea is a rich fishing ground, home to the Northeast Arctic cod, “the world’s biggest cod stock” and a commercially important stock (Hønneland 2014a, 10). The cod stock has its spawning grounds by the Lofoten archipelago, and the waters around Svalbard is also important habitat for the cod, and the fisheries in the area have been an important mainstay for people in the Northern parts of Norway and for Russian in the Northwest part of country for centuries (Hønneland 2014a, 10-11). Both countries have together managed some of the most valuable stocks in the area in the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission (Hønneland 2014b, 75). The Arctic Strategy notes that the region’s rich natural resources are factors that contribute significantly to the wellness of the business sector in Northern Norway, and “further growth will have to be based on an even better utilisation of the region’s natural and human resources” (Norwegian Ministries 2017, 23). Among these area ocean-based industries such as the seafood industry, the maritime industry in addition to oil and gas (*ibid.*, 23-24). It is pointed out that these, together with “new ocean-based industries such as marine biotechnology, energy, seabed mining, and maritime transport and tourism, have considerable potential for the future” (*ibid.*, 23-24).

In this way it is clear that the economic resources in the north, particularly oil and gas, but also other industries such as fisheries, may be characterized as highly salient to Norway, to further economic development for both the Northern regions and Norway as a whole. Oil and gas resources is central to the Norwegian economy and one of the main exports of the country, moreover, new discoveries in the north may be crucial in sustaining production, hence the increased attention. Moreover, this may also contribute to explain the investments and commitment that Norway directs to the North in terms of security assets, presence and capabilities. As mentioned, Norway is committed to protect its economic interests in the region and the country is an active military player in safeguarding sovereignty in these maritime areas for instance through daily operations and presence by the Norwegian Coast Guard. Thus, for both Norway and Russia particularly, the Arctic, through its resources may be termed as highly important to both countries' interests. As salient strategic areas, the capabilities and engagement in the region matches these tangible interests.

CHAPTER VII
THE INTANGIBLE ROLE OF THE ARCTIC – IDENTITY AND HISTORICAL TIES
TO THE REGION

The Arctic has often been romanticized as a pristine, remote, even mythical world (Grant 2010, 5). From earlier periods, depictions and tales of polar explorations have provided us with stories of people who saw this region as the ultimate quest for adventure. “Since the age of the classical Greek philosophers, the Arctic has held a mysterious fascination for Western civilizations, which often portrayed this mythical region with fanciful images that belied reality” (*ibid.*). The image of the north has historically had intangible value; and today the Arctic retains this intangible salience for many. This project will now move on from assessing the tangible stakes that the various countries have in the Arctic, to an analysis that explores the *intangible* salience and role of the region, which will shed some different light on the understanding of why prioritization of the Arctic varies among the countries. By doing so, this section will mainly focus on the issue and role of Arctic identity, and how the states have identity and historical ties to the region. As such, it is relevant to first of all comment on the topic of national identity. One way of explaining national identity would be to refer “to the sense of “we-ness” felt by citizens within a state” and this sense of belonging could for instance be connected with territory, history, and culture (Williams 2011, 114). National identities

are made up of a complex set of components, when addressing how the states have identity ties to the region, this chapter will mainly focus on *if* and *how* the Arctic plays a role as a component of national identities in the four countries, and how the states have historical and identity ties to the region. Moreover, it is also worth noting that while some literature on identity and the Arctic deal with the circumpolar and regional identities, this chapter will focus on intangible issues at the national level.

Furthermore, the Arctic region is home to several Arctic indigenous peoples. In talking about the intangible role of the Arctic, this section will also shed light on the indigenous peoples living in the Arctic. The Arctic has for thousands of years been home to indigenous peoples. Addressing the indigenous peoples of the Arctic can therefore give an historical dimension to ties to the Arctic and its residents. One of the indicators provided above notes that: “a given territory is considered more intangibly salient to a state that has ethnic, linguistic, religious, or other identity ties to the territory and its residents” (Hensel and Mitchell 2005, 278). Thus, exploring the role of indigenous peoples and their connection to the states, is thus relevant when talking about the intangible salience of the Arctic. However, it is important to note that while the Arctic states have indigenous groups living in their Arctic territory, many of these groups span across several countries and borders.

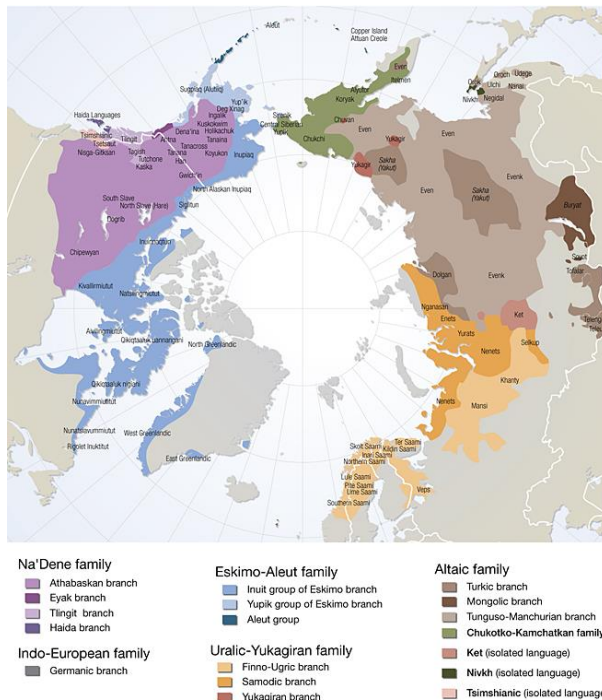


Figure 7.1. Map showing demography of Arctic indigenous peoples based on linguistic groups. Source: Map from Arctic Centre n.d.

USA

The purchase of Alaska from Russia made the U.S. an Arctic nation. For a long time however, the U.S. has arguably not emphasized that it is a state with a northern identity. It was the Arctic Region Policy document issued by the U.S. government in 2009 that changed the rhetoric on the U.S. as an Arctic nation. While the 1994 Arctic policy document stated that the U.S. has been an Arctic nation, the 2009 document states that the U.S. “*is an Arctic nation*” (Huebert 2009, 3). As this chapter will show, the Arctic has not played the same role as a component of national identity in the U.S. as it has in the other four Arctic states. The United States is a global power with global interests, and for long periods of its history, its worldview has been internationally oriented. While the topic of U.S. national identity is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is

worth noting that some draw a connection between the internationally oriented worldview and foreign policy to the country's national identity. Hilde Restad (2015, 2,5) argues that American identity can be incorporated in the concept of American exceptionalism which entails ideas of the U.S being exemplary and having a unique role to play in world history. She notes that this concept incorporates ideas that have inspired a certain foreign policy in the history of the United States, which she argues to be unilateral internationalism (Restad 2015, 3,10). Whereas one agrees with identifying U.S. national identity in this way, it may be argued that presidential discourse in U.S. foreign policy projects has been framed by the American national narrative of the idea that the U.S. has a mission in the world and that Americans and American foreign policy to a large extent has been internationally oriented. By being a superpower with global interests, it is clear that U.S. interests and presence has been more visible in some regions compared to others, and that U.S. foreign policy has been directed towards these regions such as Europe and the Middle East (Lundestad 2013, 1). In some way, while the U.S. has devoted some attention to the Arctic region, the U.S. engagement in this region could be seen as a broader story of U.S. engagement in the world, with policies directed towards the Arctic being linked to "US policy on broader areas adjacent to the Arctic" (*ibid.*, 26).

Within the global worldview of the U.S., the Arctic has not featured prominently in the American national narrative, and the U.S. has not been portrayed as a "Northern" nation. As will be seen below, the U.S. Arctic has not featured as an important component of U.S national identity, remaining in the periphery. The overall intangible

salience of the Arctic to the U.S. remains rather low which also may contribute to influence the extent to which the Arctic is prioritized, as the region remains distant to the American people and its political leaders.

The Role of the Arctic in U.S. Society and Population

Before diving deeper into the intangible salience (or lack thereof) of the Arctic in the U.S., it should be mentioned that the U.S. does in fact have a history of polar explorations, being particularly active in the nineteenth century. Senator William Henry Seward “set the stage for U.S. territorial expansion into the Arctic” with the purchase of Alaska (Grant 2010, 123) and during the gold rushes into Alaska in the late 1800s, the area then became seen more as “a land of wealth and opportunity” (Keil 2014, 172). Moreover, Robert Peary is said to have planted the Stars and Stripes at the North Pole in 1909, contributing to the Arctic exploration becoming associated with national prestige (Grant 2010, 11).

However, the view of Alaska has also been negative among many Americans. It has remained “a distant region in the American mindset”, becoming the forty-ninth state of the USA almost a hundred years after it was purchased (Keil 2014, 172). Indeed, even the purchase of Alaska, while framed as “an important step in the rise of the United States as a great power in the Asia-Pacific region” (U.S. Department of State 2018), was also termed “a worthless Arctic wasteland” (Keil 2014, 172). Arguably, Americans do not particularly see themselves as having a northern identity, they do not see themselves as a northern country, and in the Americans “hearts and minds” the Arctic does not figure prominently (*ibid.*). This might be indicative of how many Americans see the Alaskan

Arctic as a remote place, not really connected to him or her. In other words, the U.S. Arctic does not seem to be of concern to the general American. That the U.S. public has little interest in the region and low domestic stakes in the region (Bergh 2012, 17) may also indicate that the region is not particularly politicized in the U.S. The Arctic ranks low in domestic politics in the U.S. and does not play a significant role in the American national narrative. In this way, it may be argued that the Arctic remaining so distant to the American people may also contribute to explain the peripheral role the Arctic holds at the political level, and how the region is distant from the security and foreign policy agenda.

Moreover, the importance that the Arctic holds for the U.S. in terms of intangible salience is arguably lower than compared to the other four countries addressed where the role of intangibles such as Arctic history and identity to various degrees have been incorporated and used at the political level on Arctic policy-making.

However, it is worth noting that the U.S. has indigenous peoples living in its Arctic territory. About 14,3 % of the Alaskan population are indigenous peoples, and the territory above the Arctic Circle is considered traditional homelands for both the Inupiaq (Northwest Alaskan Inuit) and Yup'ik (The Arctic Institute 2018c). In light of climate change, attention has been given to the effects that these changes have on Arctic indigenous peoples. As many of the Arctic indigenous groups live by the sea, and depend on hunting and natural resources, as well as transportation on the sea ice, the climatic changes has impacts on their traditional livelihoods. The attention to Arctic indigenous peoples can be seen in Arctic policy documents, for instance the Arctic Region Policy document of 2013 which acknowledges that reduced sea ice affects indigenous peoples

(US White House 2013, 5). The document furthermore addresses the needs of indigenous peoples living in the Arctic region as one of the United States' central interests in the region (*ibid.*, 4).

Canada

In contrast to the peripheral image of the Arctic within the United States, the region has a central role within Canada's national identity in which the Arctic "serves as part of Canada's core myth, helping to define Canada as a unique northern nation comprised of vast wilderness that is distinct from the United States" (Williams 2011, 116). In tying the Arctic historically to Canada, the Canadian North has for instance been linked to the history of exploration of the Northwest Passage. Through its history, the Arctic has been incorporated into Canadian's heritage and identity partly thanks to images of the Arctic absorbed by Canadians through "romanticized literary and artistic renditions of British polar explorations" (Grant 2010, 8-9). Relevantly, the Northwest Passage comes across as having particular intangible salience. While the NWP has symbolized the glory of the British Empire, Canadian identity has historically been more close to Britain, and these Arctic waters has in turn come to represent "the Arctic dimension of Canadian national identity and the physical extension of Canada's borders to include Canada's claimed territorial waters" (Williams 2011, 118).

Interestingly, while Canada in large parts is an internationalist society, the Arctic and the Northwest Passage in particular has and still is a highly politized issue; associated and tied in with Canadian national identity (Bergh 2012, 15,18). Interestingly, the Arctic has been politically tied to national identity and the issue has been incorporated as part of

the “discursive production of Canada” (Williams 2011, 115). According to Bergh (2012, 15) some view the Canadian government’s strong emphasis on the Arctic “as a way of creating a ‘rally round the flag-effect.’” The Arctic is a politized issue and nationalistic sentiments are used politically in Canada resulting in the fact that it may raise the domestic stakes regarding issues such as the Northwest Passage waterway (*ibid.*,17-18). The high domestic stakes and public opinion does in fact have implications for Canada’s delegation in Arctic Council negotiations as it decreases the delegation’s room for manoeuvre (*ibid.*, 16).

That the intangible role of the Arctic region to a large extent has been used in purposes related to Arctic policy in Canada, can thus be seen in the issue of sovereignty. The safeguarding of Arctic sovereignty is as noted highly important to Canada and Canadians, and the Canadian government has in fact been playing on Arctic sentiments in order to “bolster Arctic sovereignty” (Keil 2014, 174). As such, Arctic identity plays a role in influencing and enabling Canadian policies in the Arctic related to sovereignty and resource extraction purposes (Williams 2011, 116). In turn, Arctic policies are reinforcing the salience of Arctic in Canadian national identity (*ibid.*). It is also worth noting that in tying the Arctic to Canada, the Government of Canada has also been stressing the human dimension of the north. The Northern Strategy notes that besides the legacy of polar explorers, the “longstanding presence of Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples” are also an important part of Canadian Arctic heritage (Government of Canada 2009, 3). Canada gives attention to the role of indigenous peoples living in its Arctic territory in its Arctic policy documents. In its Northern Strategy document, Canada for

instance stresses that the country works with various indigenous people's groups with Permanent Observer status in the Arctic Council such as the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Government of Canada 2009, 13). Many of the Inuit groups in Canada live in the Inuit Nunangat which stretches across Canada's northern regions and are considered the historical inhabitants of large parts of these territories (The Arctic Institute 2018c, Greaves 2016, 465). Canada's "Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy" starts off by addressing how the Canadian north is home to indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (Government of Canada 2010, 3). The role of indigenous peoples is furthermore being linked to Canada's Arctic sovereignty. In tying the indigenous peoples to Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic, the Northern Strategy highlights the historical connection that these peoples have in the region:

Inuit – which means “people” in Inuktitut – have occupied Canada’s Arctic lands and waterways for millennia. Long before the arrival of Europeans, Inuit hunters, fishers and their families moved with the seasons and developed a unique culture and way of life deeply rooted in the vast land. Our nation’s strong presence in the Arctic today is due in large part to the contributions of Inuit, who continue to inhabit the North (Government of Canada 2009, 3).

Moreover, with regards to sovereignty in the Northwest Passage, Canada for instance links its responsibilities of sovereign control to environmental responsibilities and protection of its vulnerable Northern populations (Lalonde 2017, 60). Other examples that arguably could illustrate a possible linkage of indigenous peoples to asserting sovereignty in the region has for instance been to mostly include people from Arctic indigenous communities to the Canadian Rangers which' military presence is in the remote parts of Canada's Arctic (Government of Canada 2010, 7). As such, the

emphasis on Canada's Arctic sovereignty could partly be seen as presented as being tied and based on both historical elements and the continued presence of Arctic indigenous peoples.

Russia

With large parts of its territory above the Arctic Circle, Russia should, more than any other state, "be described and understood as a northern country" (Keil 2014, 169). However, it may also be pointed out that most of the Russian population do not particularly have a strong connection to the Arctic (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 548). Indeed, within Russia, the relationship with the Arctic varies throughout the large country. Northwest Russians may for instance "speak about themselves as northerners, as opposed to Russian southerners, and as Russians, as opposed to Scandinavians" (Hønneland 2014a, 85). The aim of this section is not to group all Russians together or talk about one specific sub-group of Russians in relation to national identity, but to explore intangible characteristics and aspects related to the Arctic in Russian society and politics.

Firstly, a few comments on historical trends related to the Russian worldview may give a context to explore how the North matters in terms of intangible salience to Russia. The divide between East and West has historically contributed to shape Russia's worldview (Hønneland 2016, 32). Russia's relations with the West, or perhaps its concerns, "have been at the heart of Russian political philosophy and Russia's foreign policy for centuries" (Hønneland 2014, 59). While Westernizers, especially towards the end of the Cold War period, have believed Russia should learn from the West, others

have a worldview that connects to a Slavophile worldview that entails how competing civilizations is surrounding Russia (Hønneland 2016, 28-29). However, Russian foreign policy approach has since the millennium and Vladimir Putin been relatively a relatively de-ideologized, and pragmatic to the outside world, despite anti-Western rhetoric: “(...) Putin obviously wanted Russia to be seen as a civilized partner in international politics because it is in Russia’s best interests” (*ibid.*, 30-31). Now, after Russia’s actions in Ukraine this approach may be questioned. With regards to national identity, the East as a symbol of national identity diminished in the early eighteenth century (*ibid.*, 32). It is observed that: “in the worldview of the ever more Westernized upper classes, the North took precedence over the East as Russia’s spatial-ideological point of reference” and early romantic writers in the pre-Revolutionary Russia often used the North in their writings, employing the North as a symbol of a place indigenous to Russianness (Hønneland 2016, 32). In the current era as well, the intangible salience of the Arctic in Russian society and politics is arguably increasing.

Arctic Narratives in Russia - Russia and the West

In the debate about the Arctic in Russia, there are two major meta-narratives. The first narrative, ‘Russia and the Arctic’, incorporates components related to the Arctic as being neglected; the reason being Russia itself (Hønneland 2016, 67). However, the other narrative, which arguably dominates the debate, is related to ‘Russia vs the West’ (*ibid.*).

In this domestic discourse regarding the Arctic, relations and concerns with the West and NATO feature into parts of the Russian narrative on the region:

(...) the West is interchangeably talked about as 'Cold NATO' and 'our neighbours'; when these foreign powers seek to maximize their interests in the Arctic, it is referred to either as a natural thing – what any reasonable state (or alliance) would do – or as outright offensive, reflecting the impudent behavior of foreigners in Russia's backyard, or, rather, the country's core area (Hønneland 2016, 67).

Through this discourse about the Arctic, the narratives related to how Russia is different from the other Arctic states is prominent, and the identity-building narrative establishes the difference between Russia and the other Arctic states (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 561). Indeed, “Russian Arctic policy is explained in the context of ongoing competition for the Arctic’s treasures with “the other” (the other Arctic states)” (*ibid.*, 549). By establishing this distinction between Russia and other states, Russian leaders are communicating and emphasizing both the “uniqueness” of Russia and moreover also the salience of the Arctic to the public (*ibid.*, 548-549). The next section will go further into these issues, emphasizing that the Arctic plays an important role politically and for purposes of identity-building in Russia.

The Role of the Arctic in Intangible Terms: Identity and Historical Ties to the Arctic

Russia's state identity remains shaky twenty years into its post-Soviet history, and the loudly proclaimed intention to expand its Northern borders by securing control over a million sq km of the Arctic shelf is best understood as an attempt to consolidate it (Baev 2010, 6).

After the end of the cold war, and particularly under Vladimir Putin, it may be argued that the Arctic has been an important component in Russian efforts in trying to re-define Russian identity. Increased attention to the intangible salience of the Arctic may be linked to Russian attempts to connect the region with the prestige and power that Russia

has held historically. Relevantly, the region has come to play a role in the Russian efforts related to increasing Russian prestige on the international level (Zysk and Titley 2015, 170). In this context, the historical role of the Arctic for Russia is emphasized through nationalistic sentiments drawing on the stories of exploration and “military muscle-building” which “is aimed at creating a positive message pertaining to the very core of the still vague Russian national identity” (Keil 2014, 169). In this way, while Russia has a long history in the North, in later years there has been increased attempts in tying Russia to the Arctic and official narratives has emphasized this connection.

The Arctic seems to be playing a role and part in Russian identity-construction in which Russian leaders frame Russia as a great Arctic power, and the Arctic as an essential component of Russian national identity (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 561). In this identity-building process, “Russian leaders emphasize the historical connection between Russia and the Arctic and, in fact, position the state as a “historical” Arctic Great Power” (*ibid.*). As such, the identity building-process that draws on the intangible value of the Arctic, such as its symbolic value, can be identified as a way to influence both “the hearts and minds of national and international audiences” of the salience of the Arctic to Russia (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 548). In this attempt to tie the Arctic to Russia, some comments should be noted with regards to the indigenous peoples living in the Russian Arctic.

Russia has several indigenous peoples living in its Arctic area. Some of these includes the Nenets, Chuckhi, and Khanty (The Arctic Institute 2018a). As with other Arctic indigenous peoples, these groups that have been present in the Russian Arctic for a

long time and are also closely connected to resource exploitation in the region (The Arctic Institute 2018a). In light of this, there has been some tension between indigenous groups and extraction companies in the Arctic, in which the latter has posed a threat to traditional livelihood for instance through pasture degradation (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 555). It is for instance noted that Russian leaders have emphasized coexistence between the indigenous peoples and industrial production, and attempted to act as a defender of the former (*ibid.*). Moreover, some of the Russia discourses point to how indigenous peoples and their culture are closely connected and part of Russian society, in order to avoid excluding other parts of the Russian population who do not belong to Arctic indigenous peoples, they are not emphasized as core elements (*ibid.*).

Indigenous people and people in the non-Arctic parts of Russia are often separated both geographically and culturally. The narrative created by the state should create the feeling of belonging to the Arctic across the country, and the feeling of belonging to Russia among the indigenous populations of the circumpolar regions (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 561).

In sum, the emotional and symbolic dimensions of the region play crucial roles at the political level, in Russian Arctic policies (Keil 2014, 170). Indeed, the “Foundations of Russia’s Arctic policy” document from 2008 highlights the national pride of associating Russia with the Arctic (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016, 551). By rhetorically tying Russia to an identity of being an Arctic nation may furthermore be important for Russian leaders as it may ensure that policies related to Arctic is legitimized, such as rights to Arctic exploration of resources (*ibid.*, 548,561). That intangible issues feature into and matter in terms of policies with regards to the Arctic is furthermore supported by Pavel Baev (2013, 492), who notes that Russia’s policies in the

north such as resource exploration and the establishment of sovereignty is driven “by deeper (and often imaginary) convictions in Russia’s belonging in the North (...) which shapes its core identity.”

Norway

Before and during the Napoleonic Wars, Norway was in a union with Denmark which lasted for approximately 400 years. However, as Norway-Denmark entered the Napoleonic Wars on the side of France, Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814, into a union that lasted until 1905. While national romanticism was part of a broader trend in Europe, Norway too experienced an upsurge of national romanticism in the eighteenth century, accompanied by independence movements. Nation-building thus became a central theme in Norwegian society with a focus on “resuscitating” Norwegian culture (Neumann 2000, 243). While other themes had been part of national identity-building in Norway, such as its relations and cultural, geographical and historical ties with Europe and the rest of Scandinavia, the North has also played a role, which will be explored in this section. While not necessarily a large or the most essential component of Norwegian national identity, the Arctic has played a role as the country’s “border, periphery and frontier” (Medby 2014, 255).

Norway and Historical Ties to the Arctic: Indigenous Peoples, the Vikings and Polar Expeditions

The Arctic matters to Norway in historic and cultural terms. The current era has seen an upsurge of tv shows about the Vikings, which may remind some of the links between Norway and Scandinavia to Arctic explorations. Norway has a long history

related to various explorations and travels to the North. Indeed, in the eleventh century for instance, Vikings explored areas of the Arctic region for resources (Keil 2014, 176). Norway's links to Iceland through Norsemen settlements, as well as Iceland's ties with the Kingdom of Norway during the Middle Ages, also provides history, particularly through the Icelandic Sagas, that further links Norway to the Arctic. Leif Eriksson, a Norse explorer from Iceland, is for instance said to have been the first European to the North American continent. He moreover was the son of Eirik the Red, which led a group of Norse farmers said to be first European settlers in the North American Arctic (Grant 2010, 41). The intangible role of the Arctic has in various ways relations to this Arctic history and "the memory of glorious Norwegian Arctic adventures surely contributes to Norwegian's identifying with the North" (Keil 2014, 176).

In the more modern period there are also examples from history that links Norway to the Arctic, for instance the history of the explorations of Norwegian Arctic explorers such as Roald Amundsen, Otto Sverdrup and Fridtjof Nansen. Roald Amundsen is considered to be one of the most successful polar explorers through history; he was the first to navigate throughout the Northwest Passage (Kløver 2017). Fridtjof Nansen, another great Norwegian polar explorer, skied across Greenland in the late nineteenth century at the time of the independence movement (Medby 2014, 255). Later, he also sailed across the polar sea in an expedition with the polar ship *Fram*. Otto Sverdrup is also one of Norway's famous Arctic explorers. Sverdrup participated in Nansen's expedition over Greenland.

Arguably, this history has played an important role in historically relating Norway to the Arctic, and it is also being increasingly highlighted at the political level in Norway, as explored below. Moreover, with regards to the topic of relating Norway to the Arctic, it should also be mentioned that Norway's Arctic also is home to Arctic indigenous peoples. While the Sámi people span across the Barents region and the countries of Norway, Sweden, northwest Russia, and Finland, half of the Sámi people, approximately 50,000, live in Norway (Greaves 2016, 469). The Sámi peoples' traditional lands in Norway stretch from the middle of Norway to the border with Russia in the north (The Arctic Institute 2018d). In Norway, the Sámi Parliament is located in Karasjok, Finnmark. As with many of the other Arctic indigenous peoples, the Sámi have traditional livelihoods such as hunting, fishing as well as reindeer herding (*ibid.*).

Interestingly, Norway's polar past is being used in Norway through various channels to emphasize the "Arcticness" of the country. Medby (2014, 256) notes that Norwegians are subject to 'banal Arcticness' in their daily lives: the Polar explorers, mentioned above are being labelled on objects such as stamps and airplanes, "thereby continuously reminding Norwegians of their Arctic past and future." Other examples of promoting the Arctic and Norway's polar past is the Norwegian Central Bank's new banknotes with the picture of a cod, as well as Viking ship museums and the Fram museum which has exhibitions of polar explorers and their ships. Emphasizing the link to Norway's polar past indicates an attempt to reify a view of Norwegian continuity in the region (*ibid.*, 252,257).

The Intangible Role of the Arctic in the Current Period

In the current period as well, the topic of the North in intangible terms is also increasing. While large parts of the population of Norway might not particularly identify as belonging to an Arctic nation, the Arctic does hold an important identity-related meaning for Norway and Norwegians and the region has plays a role in relation to how Norwegians understand themselves as northerners (Keil 2014, 176). Moreover, as a common theme through this chapter, the Arctic has also been used politically in order to frame Norway as central to the Norwegian nation (Medby 2014, 252). As mentioned above, this also applies to Canada and Russia. In recent years, the Norwegian government, which as mentioned above, has prioritized the Arctic region and highlighted the strategic relevance of the North to Norway. The increased international interest towards developments in the Arctic has also contributed to the increased focus on establishing links to the region. The government has promoted the country as an Arctic state and framed the Arctic as providing prosperity for both the local population of the North, such as the Sámi people, but also how the Arctic holds promise in terms of prosperity for the whole country (*ibid.*, 256,258). As such, political discourses play roles as it increases public knowledge and engagement and this in turn could contribute to strengthen and legitimize Norway's active role in its Arctic area (Medby 2014, 256, 262). The attempt to engage the Norwegian population in the Arctic issue may also be related to the need to justify to tax payers who are not necessarily connected to the region, that the government's investment and public spending in the region (*ibid.*, 252).

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

What explains why some Arctic countries prioritize the Arctic more than others? This thesis has argued that the Arctic countries' tangible and intangible interests and stakes in the region can explain why some countries choose to invest more military assets and security measures towards the Arctic, thus prioritizing the region more. It has examined the extent to which Arctic countries would invest security assets in the region as a function of their tangible and intangible interests and stakes there through using the conceptual framework of an issue-based approach. It has moreover examined whether this can explain why the U.S. has relatively little security policy focus towards the region. In order to assess U.S., Canadian, Russian and Norwegian interests and stakes in the region I examined four within-issues in the Arctic region: *population and population centers, navigation and trade routes, economic resources and the intangible role of the Arctic*.

This chapter will conclude the thesis by summarizing the four countries' tangible and intangible interests and stakes in the region and synthesize them to give a conclusive answer to the research question. Table 3 identifies the main findings of the four countries' tangible and intangible interests in the region. As seen here, there is significant variation of interests and stakes for the four countries.

Table 3

	USA	CANADA	RUSSIA	NORWAY
POPULATION AND POPULATION CENTERS	<p>-The smallest % of population in Arctic areas, and smallest % of land area of total land area above the Arctic circle.</p> <p>- Just a few thousand inhabitants above the Arctic Circle</p> <p>-Relatively little urban areas and industrial development.</p> <p>-Harsh climate and little infrastructure.</p> <p>-Largest towns above the Arctic Circle have around 2000-4000 inhabitants.</p>	<p>-The land area of the Canadian Arctic as % of Canada's total land mass is relatively large.</p> <p>-A small % of Canadian population lives above the Canadian Arctic</p> <p>-Relatively little urban areas and industrial development</p> <p>-Cities above the Arctic Circle are also relatively small, and no cities have more than 25,000 inhabitants.</p> <p>-Harsh climate and little infrastructure.</p>	<p>-The land area of the Russian Arctic as a % of total land area is the largest of the four.</p> <p>-Approximately half of the people living in the Arctic lives in the Russian Arctic.</p> <p>-The Russian Arctic also contains several large cities, some with over 100,000 people.</p> <p>-Murmansk is an industrial, economic, political and military center in the region.</p> <p>-The Western part of the Russian Arctic has relatively mild climate.</p>	<p>-As a percentage of total population, around 10 % live in the Norwegian Arctic. This is a relatively high number considering the population size of Norway.</p> <p>-Norway also has two major cities in the Arctic region with over 25,000 inhabitants.</p> <p>-Norwegian Arctic territory is also relatively large compared to the total landmass of Norway.</p> <p>-The climate in the Norwegian Arctic is relatively mild, and the region has good infrastructure and communications.</p>
NAVIGATION AND TRADE ROUTES	<p>-Jurisdiction is limited to parts of the Chukchi Sea, Beaufort Sea and Bering Sea.</p> <p>-Opposes Canada's position over</p>	<p>-Canada has extensive interests in safeguarding sovereignty in the Arctic and over the Northwest Passage</p>	<p>-Russia has significant interests with regards to the NSR becoming a possible shipping route between Europe and Asia.</p>	<p>-Norway has an extensive Arctic coastline and also has jurisdiction over ocean areas six times the size of the country.</p> <p>-Safeguarding of</p>

	<p>the NWP, but this issue is characterized by low tensions, good relations between Canada and the U.S., and is a broader issue of U.S. interests in the freedom of the seas.</p> <p>-Cannot submit a claim for an outer continental shelf because it has not ratified the UNCLOS.</p>	<p>-The legal status of the NWP is a highly politicized issue.</p> <p>-Canada has rights and jurisdiction over extensive maritime areas in the Arctic.</p>	<p>-The NSR is seen as vital for the development of offshore oil and gas.</p> <p>-Russia has a massive Arctic coastline, accounting for about half of the Arctic Ocean coastline.</p>	<p>sovereignty in these areas is emphasized.</p>
ECONOMIC RESOURCES	<p>-There are estimates of large amounts of oil resources offshore in the U.S. Arctic.</p> <p>-Alaska is largely dependent on oil, but currently no or very little offshore drilling in Arctic waters</p> <p>-Offshore oil production in the Arctic is not considered to play a major role in the U.S. economy.</p>	<p>-Though Canada has maritime jurisdiction over large ocean areas, there is currently no or little offshore oil and gas development in the Canadian Arctic.</p> <p>-As with the U.S., Arctic offshore oil and gas is not considered to be a large part of the Canadian economy due to oil and gas resources elsewhere.</p> <p>-Environmental concerns is also an issue here.</p>	<p>-Russia has high interests with regards to the development of offshore oil and gas in the Arctic.</p> <p>-These resources are seen as vital to the Russian economy, which largely is dependent on revenues from oil and gas.</p> <p>-With shrinking deposits elsewhere, there is increased interests toward the role of Arctic oil and gas.</p> <p>-Russia already has several ongoing projects and has</p>	<p>-Oil and gas is an important part of the Norwegian economy.</p> <p>-Norway has increasingly been looking north with regards to oil and gas development due to decreased production elsewhere.</p> <p>-There is already production ongoing in Norway's Arctic maritime areas.</p>

			relatively better infrastructure than other Arctic countries.	
THE INTANGIBLE ROLE OF THE ARCTIC	-The U.S. has not historically identified itself as a northern country, and the Arctic does not play a large role among the public or in identity-building.	-Canada has historically identified itself as an Arctic nation. -The Arctic has also been used particularly for national identity-building.	-The Arctic has also played some role in Russian national identity-building and has increasingly been used under the presidency of Vladimir Putin.	-Norway as a country has to some extent been identified with the north, and the Arctic has cultural and historic relevance to Norwegians.

Main findings of tangible and intangible interests and stakes among Arctic countries.

With regards to these findings, the Russian and Norwegian Arctic have significantly more population and population centers than Canada and the United States. Moreover, land area in the Arctic as a percentage of total land area is lower for the U.S. than for the other three countries. Secondly, the U.S. has relatively little jurisdiction in northern maritime areas, particularly compared to Russia and Canada. For instance, while the U.S. has an Arctic coastline of 1,706 km, Russia has 24,140 km of Arctic coastline (The Arctic institute 2018c, The Arctic institute 2018a). Indeed, the NWP and the NSR goes along the northern areas of Canada and Russia respectively. As such, issues such as sovereignty has been particularly emphasized in both countries as maritime areas are opening up for navigation and possible trade routes. Thirdly, there is little or no current offshore oil and gas activity in the North American Arctic, and Arctic oil and gas activity is hampered by several factors in both Canada and the U.S.

Moreover, Arctic oil and gas is not believed to become a big part of either countries' economy. Arctic oil and gas development is contrastingly looked at with much greater interest in both Russia and Norway. There is already Arctic offshore oil and gas production in both countries' Arctic maritime areas. Relevantly, Arctic oil and gas is seen as potentially crucial for both economies, which are largely based on oil and gas, as other areas of production are dwindling. Lastly, the intangible salience of the Arctic is higher in Canada, Russia and Norway compared to the U.S. In these countries, the Arctic has more or less been used in national identity-building to some extent. These Arctic countries emphasize both historical and identity ties to the region. The role of the Arctic in intangible terms seem to be relatively lower among the population and political leaders in the U.S.

These factors contribute to explain variation in security focus and prioritization towards the region among the actors. Decision makers are influenced by the values and stakes attached to issues, and policy makers may "pursue costlier or riskier options to achieve their goals over issues that are considered highly salient than over less important issues" (Hensel et al. 2008, 124). Conflict can be explained by looking at issues and their salience, and states will be more willing to use military tools if they regard the issue as important (Diehl 1992, 333). Drawing on the salience model, I explore the different prioritization of the Arctic as a function of the four states' tangible and intangible interests and stakes here, and the salience of these. I have emphasized through the various interests and issues addressed how security measures are arising as consequences from these, for instance from increased economic activity. Tangible and

intangible interests and stakes can thus be used to explain why the overall salience of the Arctic remains relatively low to the U.S. As a consequence, the U.S. security focus towards the Arctic has remained comparatively low and has not matched that of other nations in the Arctic (Østhagen 2011). Thus, in line with the findings from the tangible and intangible interests and stakes looked at, we can better understand why the Arctic “is far from the top of Washington’s foreign and security policy agenda” (Åtland 2014, 154). In contrast, the region has significant importance to Russia, in line with the findings from oil and gas, navigation routes and population, and Arctic identity. The high salience of the Arctic also means that the region has important salience to the state’s leadership and a large portion of the population (Hensel et al. 2008, 121). Moreover, security measures have been emphasized as arising from increased economic activity and the importance of safeguarding these areas.

These conclusions also apply to Norway, where the overall salience of the Arctic remains high. Activity on the European and Russian side of the Arctic remains higher, also indicating the higher presence of security and military assets, as emphasized above. The case of Canada is lastly an interesting case due to the relatively low economic activity taking place and the low number of people living in the Arctic area. However, as emphasized throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how sovereignty, particularly with regards to the Northwest Passage, as well as the role of Arctic identity may contribute to explain why the Arctic remains closer to political leaders in Canada and their security policy focus than it does in the United States. Indeed, in line with the findings, I have argued that the Arctic does hold relatively high

overall salience to the country which again indicates that the region has important salience to the state's leadership and a large portion of the population, which in turn explains higher prioritization of the region.

As overall conclusions, it is worth noting that the relatively low activity in the U.S. Arctic and low salience of U.S. interests and stakes here, contribute to explain the relatively low American presence and engagement in the region. Moreover, it is also clear that the significance of the Arctic region to Canada, Russia and Norway contribute to explain higher military activity here. In Norway, Russia, Canada, the intangible salience of the region also contributes to the overall salience of the Arctic which in turn may explain policies directed towards the region.

Limitations of the Issue-based Approach

The issue-based approach is one way to explore what drives security policies towards the Arctic region. However, some limitations to this approach should be highlighted. First of all, what explains why some actors, with no legal rights to resources or sea lanes in the region, do seem to put forth increased policy attention to the Arctic? What, for instance, drives the recent and increased attention towards the Arctic on behalf of China, a non-Arctic state, but with observer status in the Arctic Council (Arctic Council 2018). Due to not being an Arctic coastal state, China does not have any concrete rights or claims in the Arctic region, such as rights to oil and gas resources, due to the provisions set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. However, in January 2018, the Chinese government issued a white paper with its Arctic region's policy, highlighting interests in oil and gas exploration as well as the

interest in development of Arctic shipping routes through the ‘Silk Road on Ice’ initiative which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative (FNI 2018). It may be argued that the issue-based approach, as outlined in this project, has limitations when it comes to explaining what drives policies towards the Arctic from a state that does not have any tangible stakes that belongs to the country in the region. Though it may be argued that China’s interests for instance, are related to the possibility of cooperating with countries in the region in terms of oil and gas exploration or the use of sea lanes, the case of China serves as an example of how other features, rather than having concrete or intangible stakes in the region, may explain increased policy attention.

Indeed, other paradigms and features beyond the issue-based approach may also explain increased security policy attention, and this prioritization may not only be based on the salience of tangible or intangible stakes or interests in an area. As assessment of other features and factors within international politics as mentioned in the literature review may thus also provide crucial insights into explaining security measures and engagement towards the Arctic. For instance, from a neoliberal institutionalist perspective it may be argued that rather than an explanation of low intangible and tangible salience, lack of prioritization of the region may be due to how the U.S. is seeing the current situation in the region, characterized by stable rule of law and cooperative regimes, as a reason to not invest and deploy more security assets in the region. In this setting, for a global power like the U.S., security threats elsewhere could be perceived as more urgent. Moreover, from a neorealist view, it may also be argued that the U.S. has enough capabilities to meet potential threats in the context of the

current situation in the Arctic. From this perspective, current assessment in the region does not call for increase in capabilities towards the region, although this could change in the future. In this way, capabilities would then be diverted to other regions which are perceived as more urgent.

On a similar note with regards to limitations of the thesis is that the issue-based approach and how it is used in this study leaves out a gap when it comes to specifically explaining the formation of security policy. For instance, the issue-based approach, as used in this particular project, links the issue of population and its salience to increased security policy towards the Arctic. However, what are the actual steps in this process for choosing to invest more security presence and engagement towards the Arctic based on the issue of population? What are the mechanisms that influence these choices? Issues and their salience may very well influence decision makers and in turn foreign and security policies, however, the methodology in this project have some limitations with regards to explaining the actual mechanisms involved. For instance, having a large population in its Arctic territory may explain increased security policy focus for Norway, however, the approach does not explain specifically the mechanisms why Norway chooses to invest more security policy based on the specific issue of population. In this way, the method used here to a large degree leaves out explaining how the issue of population directly influences policy attention.

To conclude this thesis however, while there are limitations to the method used, the issue-based approach is used in this project to explore how tangible and intangible issues, interests and stakes, and their salience, can explain why some countries

prioritize the Arctic region more than others. While this method leaves out some factors and incorporates others, it contributes with a valuable explanation to understand what drives security policies towards the Arctic. As such, it can be termed as a relevant approach to a broader understanding of these countries' security policy focus towards the region. As overall conclusions, it is worth noting that the relatively low activity in the U.S. Arctic and low salience of U.S. interests and stakes here, contribute to explain why the relatively low American presence and engagement in the region. Moreover, it is also clear that the significance of the Arctic region to Canada, Russia and Norway contribute to explain higher military activity here. In Norway, Russia, Canada, the intangible salience of the region also adds a dimension to explaining the overall salience of the region, which provides an additional understanding of the increased policy attention towards the Arctic. Using an issue-based approach with a focus on the salience of interests, issues and stakes, this thesis has provided one explanation for why prioritization of the Arctic differs amongst the Arctic states of the United States, Canada, Russia and Norway. To do so, the thesis has built on existing literature, but also mapped out new territory to a subject that still lingers on the periphery of international relations.

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