China and Russia’s Involvement in the Arctic

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Luis A. Rojas, Contractor
Research Analyst
Metro Accounting and Professional Services
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Preface

This report creates a catalog of resources for use on the topic “China and Russia’s Involvement in the Arctic.” This catalog of resources is in response to a request by the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Air University (AU) Academic Centers, USAF Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), Alabama and is in support of the AFCLC mission.

The mission of the AFCLC is to serve as the USAF focal point for creating and executing programs that sustain career-long development of Linguistically, Regionally, and Culturally competent Total Force Airmen to meet the Service’s global mission. In addition to providing subject matter expertise and support for Air Force Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) governance, the AFCLC accomplishes this mission by designing, developing and delivering: 1) LREC familiarization education to AU officer, enlisted, and accessions programs; and 2) pre-deployment training and training products.

As a Research Analyst for Metro Accounting and Professional Services, the researcher has identified open source material on China and Russia’s Involvement in the Arctic by using multiple sources during his research. This catalog includes academic journal articles, books and other legitimate peer-reviewed, academic resources. Sources are categorized by topic and broken down into relevant sub-topics based on the request of the AFCLC representative or on the discernment of the researcher. Catalog entries include Title, Author, Source, Date and Content Abstract, Summary or Overview that gives the end user a sense of what the author has to say about the selected topic and sub-topic. The text used in this compilation is taken verbatim from the source, and none of this information is intended to be viewed as a product of AFCLC or Metro Accounting and Professional Services. Inclusion in this compilation does not constitute endorsement of the source by AFCLC.
China’s Involvement in the Arctic:


Abstract:

China’s Arctic engagement has increased considerably during the past decade, which has not only offered plentiful economic opportunities but also created new risks and concerns among the eight Arctic states, non-state actors, and peoples. To increase understanding of dimensions of Beijing’s Arctic activities, The Arctic Institute’s new China series probes into China’s evolving Arctic interests, policies, and strategies, and analyses their ramifications for the region (and beyond). Over the coming weeks, we will publish numerous articles and commentaries elaborating on the political, economic, environmental, and social dimensions of China’s Arctic involvement.

Current & Relevant Information:

China’s Arctic policy in brief

China’s Arctic involvement began in the field of science. China signed the Svalbard Treaty in 1925, and since the early 1990s, Chinese scholars have conducted Arctic and Antarctic expeditions aboard research icebreaker Xue Long. Today, China has research stations on Svalbard (Yellow River Station, est. 2004) and Iceland (the China-Iceland Arctic Science Observatory, est. 2018). In Sweden, China has its first overseas land satellite receiving station (the China Remote Sensing Satellite North Polar Ground Station, est. 2016), and with Finland, it has agreed to establish a joint research center for Arctic space observation and data sharing services. China’s first home-built icebreaker, Xue Long II, was finished in 2019, and plans for building a nuclear-powered icebreaker have been unveiled.

In January 2018, China published its first-ever official Arctic White Paper, which defines China’s policy goals in the region as follows: “To understand, protect, develop and participate in the governance of the Arctic, so as to safeguard the common interests of all countries and the international community in the Arctic, and promote sustainable development of the Arctic”. The White Paper underlines that the Chinese government respects the sovereign rights of the eight Arctic states in the region. At the same time, it portrays the Arctic as a globally shared space, a “community with a shared future for mankind”. Notably, the White Paper defines China as a “near-Arctic state” which has legitimate rights in the region – and argues that Arctic states should respect these rights, including the right to conduct scientific research, navigate, perform flyovers, fish, lay submarine cables and pipelines, and even explore and exploit natural resources in the Arctic high seas.
In geographic terms, of course, China is located far from the Arctic region: its northernmost tip is located almost 1500 kilometers south from the Arctic Circle. As China has no history of extensive Arctic scientific expeditions either, it had to undertake serious efforts over the past decade to convince the eight Arctic states of its status as a legitimate stakeholder in the region – without such recognition, they would not have granted China an observer status in the key regional intergovernmental organization, the Arctic Council, in 2013. In other words, as Marc Lanteigne’s article explains, China had to build a “robust Arctic identity”. Labelling itself a “near-Arctic state” plays an important role in those efforts even though the conception has also faced criticism among the Arctic states and stakeholders. What is more, China has developed bilateral ties and engaged in multidimensional Arctic diplomacy in order to build relationships with various state and non-state actors in the region. According to Lanteigne, relational theory, a recent addition to International Relations theory drawing from Chinese cultural and philosophical traditions, can help us understand China’s activities and identity-building process in the Arctic.

When it comes to regional governance in the Arctic, China’s role remains rather limited. Since 2007, it has taken part in the work of the Arctic Council, and in 2013, it was accepted as a formal observer to the Council. China is also a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and supports the IMO’s International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code). Although China did not play a very influential role drafting the Code, Trym Elterjord’s article finds that Chinese experts welcome the Polar Code as a binding international law instrument that, in many ways, supports Beijing’s globalist vision of the Arctic. In 2018, China also joined the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean.

**China’s economic activities in the Arctic**

In June 2017, the Arctic was incorporated into President Xi Jinping’s flagship Belt and Road Initiative as one of the “blue economic passages”. China has also renamed Arctic shipping lanes as the “Polar Silk Road”. As the Northern Sea Route along the Russian Arctic coast constitutes the most viable alternative of these lanes, Chinese investors have begun to cooperate with Russian companies. In addition to shipping, Sino-Russian cooperation on energy has increased significantly, especially in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis, despite their historic mistrust. In particular, the Chinese involvement in the LNG project in Yamal has been decisive. As Christopher Weidacher Hsiung’s commentary points out, this remarkable change in the Sino-Russian economic relations raises a question: Are we witnessing an emerging Arctic economic partnership between the two countries? Despite their growing cooperation, however, Sino-Russian relations remain very complicated. Mariia Kobzeva’s commentary scrutinizes this complexity from various angles: historic, bilateral, and territorial.
Greenland, an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, constitutes another Arctic region where China’s economic involvement has significantly increased. Marco Volpe’s article elaborates the role of Chinese investments in two mining projects in Greenland. As he demonstrates, there have been impediments in the process despite mutual interest in developing the mine sector. In addition to economic, social, and environmental impacts locally, China’s growing engagement with Greenland may have broader political ramifications given Greenland’s relevance for the United States’ global policy. Moreover, Chinese investments may also give boost to Greenland’s independence movement.

In other Arctic states and regions, Chinese investors are involved in many energy and infrastructure projects, among other economic activities. Chinese investors are also contributing to plans to construct the Arctic Corridor, a new railway link between Kirkenes, Norway, and Rovaniemi, Finland, as well as a tunnel under the Baltic Sea between Helsinki and Tallinn. If realized, these infrastructure projects would link China’s Polar Silk Road to Eastern and Central European markets.

**China and Arctic climate change**

As China is the biggest carbon dioxide emitter in the world, its success (or failure) to reduce emissions is a critical factor determining the future of the Arctic. For the time being, regrettably, China’s 2030 Paris Agreement Nationally Determined Contribution is rated “highly insufficient” to prevent dangerous climate change from happening. China’s Arctic strategy does not introduce additional measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, nor has the state assessed its broader environmental footprint on the Arctic region.

What has drawn less attention in the Arctic policy debates is that China is also a large source of black carbon (soot) and other short-lived climate pollutants. Yet China has not taken an active part in international cooperation on black carbon. An important reason for this is, as Yulia Yamineva’s commentary illustrates, is the lack of knowledge of sources, impacts, and potential mitigation measures of black carbon in China. As black carbon contributes to air pollution, which is a huge problem in China, there are undoubtedly domestic incentives to reduce it there. Since the global community also benefits from China’s efforts to reduce black carbon, global cooperation should be increased in this field. According to Yamineva, there is plenty of room for international cooperation in science, such as black carbon emissions monitoring and inventories, as well as knowledge sharing about possible solutions.

**Risks and the future prospects of China’s Arctic engagement**

It seems that traditional security issues are making a comeback in Arctic affairs, especially due to the intensifying great power competition between the United States and Russia as well as the ongoing power transition between the United States and China. From the perspective of the United States, as Yun Sun’s commentary and Jacquelyn Chorush’s article make clear, China’s growing Arctic role is largely
perceived as a military threat. In May 2019, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo explicitly challenged the regional role and intentions of China and Russia in the Arctic, and the Department of Defense warned about potential dual use of Chinese facilities in the region. US Senate bill 1790 also clearly reflects these threat perceptions about China. Chorush’s article reviews the historic origins of US Monroe Doctrine and analyses the ways in which it continues to shape the contemporary narrative of the Arctic among US leadership – a narrative that anticipates a military conflict in any arena in which China is involved.

Due to the above-mentioned economic possibilities that China’s growing Arctic interest offers to Arctic states and regions, Sun points out in her commentary that many Arctic states do not share the same threat perceptions about China’s growing regional influence with the United States. That said, there are signs that many Arctic states are increasingly concerned about security implications of China’s growing Arctic engagement. For example, the Swedish Defense Agency, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, and the Norwegian Foreign Intelligence Services, among others, have expressed concerns regarding potential dual-use of Chinese Arctic facilities and the party-state’s growing influence in those countries. In contrast to the US, which according to Chorush’s article fears a “fully kinetic” Chinese threat in the Arctic, other Arctic states seem to be more worried about political and economic risks that may accompany Chinese investments in the region.

As Sun notes, it is not “legal, sensible or feasible” to prevent China from taking part in Arctic affairs. Undoubtedly, China has come to the Arctic to stay, like it or not. At present, China’s influence in the region is largely based on its economic prowess. Yet it is likely that China wants its voice to be better heard in Arctic policy debates as well. If it is not accepted in international meetings discussing the Arctic, there is a risk that China will establish its own Arctic club – a fact that motivated Norway to accept China’s application for Arctic Council observer status some years ago. What’s more, some of the pressing problems in the Arctic – especially climate change – cannot be solved without China’s contribution. That is why it is easy to agree with Chorush’s point that the contemporary US threat narrative based on the centuries-old Monroe Doctrine fails to grasp multiple dimensions of China’s Arctic engagement, including its true security implications. To mitigate those risks, international cooperation is an absolute necessity.

The forthcoming articles of The Arctic Institute’s new China series do their bit in facilitating such cooperation by increasing understanding of the political, economic, and environmental dimensions of China’s Arctic engagement. Together, the articles will offer a comprehensive account of China’s policies and interests in the Arctic – highly recommended reading if we are to enhance international cooperation and secure a resilient future in the region.

“China in the Arctic: Policies, Strategies, and Opportunities for Alaska,” Liz Bowman and Dr. Qingchao Xu, University of Alaska Fairbanks: Center for Arctic
Overview:

The objective of this report is to describe China’s policy and positionality in the Arctic and, more specifically, to discuss the bilateral relationship between Alaska and China. As a non-Arctic state, China has limited capacity to impact regional decision making directly. Consequently, China has engaged Arctic stakeholders in order to increase its participation and influence within northern regional affairs. For public and private sectors in Alaska and the U.S. more broadly, it is critical to understand the role that China plays in the Arctic region already, as well as its plans for the future. An accurate and unbiased analysis of the significant Arctic interests of China, as well as other nations with whom the U.S. may currently have strained relations, is vital to the security of the region. Understanding how other countries, in particular non-Arctic nations, perceive and operate in the High North allows Alaska and the U.S. to create stronger and more beneficial partnerships in business and other endeavors such as scientific discovery and search and rescue. Consequently, our report is jointly written by scholars from both Alaska and China with expertise in their home countries’ northern interests and policies. To frame this paper, the following two areas of inquiry are considered. Firstly, how is China already working in the Arctic? More narrowly, what has shaped the nation’s interest in the North from its internal political development and how does it view its presence in the Arctic currently and into the future? Secondly, how should the state of Alaska interpret this engagement and what role does the state play within the complex national relationship the U.S. has with China?

The Arctic has a long-standing operational history of joint initiatives, primarily based on the region’s inherent remoteness, environmental conditions, and lack of infrastructure. In particular, bi- and multinational cooperation is strong in scientific endeavors. Areas of research that are already flourishing include those related to climate and weather, where China is engaged heavily because of known impacts of Arctic regional climate change on its domestic climate. For example, in 2018, China and Iceland inaugurated a joint Arctic science observatory outside of Akureyri, Iceland. In an effort to strengthen its Arctic science, China often draws comparisons between the Arctic and the “Third Pole” region, high mountain and frozen sections of the Himalayas, in order to provide expertise and support its justification for inclusion in Arctic research. This is because China has a long history of cryospheric research in the Himalayan region, and it can use this expertise to its advantage in the Arctic setting.

In order to better understand China’s role and address the questions noted above, this paper discusses the following topics: China’s interests and concerns in the Arctic, China’s Arctic identity, policy and strategies, as well as China’s engagement
with climate change, economic and social development. It concludes with a section specific to the China-Alaska relationship and where there are opportunities for China and Alaska to expand collaboration.

Current & Relevant Information:

**Conclusion**

China is extensively involved in the Arctic. It continues to maintain a strong position in various economic ventures despite a lack of physical territory in the Arctic. It has found success in pursuing projects and initiatives of mutual interest between itself and Arctic partners. As with any significant global power, China’s interests are many and varied, so it shares some interests with Arctic states. As such, China has found success in partnering with Arctic states and institutions for activities of mutual interest, including natural resource extraction, climate research, and infrastructure development. At the same time, China also suffers from failures in investment on infrastructure in the name of the Polar Silk Road and negative impacts imposed by the ongoing trade war. These are emerging tendencies, deserving more attention from the industrial arena and academic realm in particular.

Scholars continue to debate whether the international community should view China’s increased engagement with the Arctic as an opportunity for collaboration or a challenge to cooperation. This is because it is not clear if China is motivated by national interests, such as energy security and food security, or for the betterment of the global community, as in global climate research, or both. Undoubtedly, frequent and in-depth communications at a variety of levels between Alaska and China will give insight into answering this question. Therefore, in the case of Alaska, working with China on Arctic initiatives should be considered, but with great awareness of the potential geopolitical and economic risks.


**Summary:**

America’s interests in the Arctic region will only increase in the coming years. As other nations devote resources and assets in the region to secure their national interests, America cannot afford to fall behind. The U.S. must champion an agenda that advances its national interest and devotes the required national resources to the Arctic region. With the focus on China’s dubious and aggressive claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea, massive infrastructure investments in Central Asia and Africa, and trade war with the U.S., it is easy to overlook another aspect of Beijing’s activities in the Arctic. The Administration must continue to monitor China’s activity in the region, promote economic freedom in the Arctic, and refuse to recognize China’s self-proclaimed status as a “near Arctic-State.”
Key Takeaways:

1. The U.S. cannot afford to fall behind in the Arctic and should pursue an Arctic agenda that advances growing U.S. national interests and thwarts Chinese aims.
2. China seeks to be an Arctic actor for many reasons: to access new shipping routes, increase economic influence, and lay the groundwork for future military activity.
3. The Trump Administration should continue to raise awareness of China’s questionable ambitions in the region and check Beijing’s efforts to increase its regional influence.

Current & Relevant Information:

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“Near Arctic State”

In the simplest terms, China sees the Arctic region as another place in which to advance its economic interests and expand its diplomatic influence. As a non-Arctic country, China is mindful that its ambitions in international Arctic institutions are naturally limited, but this has not stopped Beijing from increasing its economic presence in the region.

China’s Arctic strategy published in 2018 offers a useful glimpse into how Beijing views its role in the region. Running 5,500 words in its English translation, the strategy is littered with all the Arctic-related buzzwords, such as “common interests of all countries,” “law-based governance,” “climate change,” and “sustainable development.” The irony is not lost on observers of the South China Sea, where China has shunned international norms to claim sovereignty, or the fact that China is the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Even though China’s closest point to the Arctic Circle is more than 800 nautical miles away, Beijing refers to itself as a “near Arctic State”—a term made up by Beijing and not found in the lexicon of Arctic discourse. In fact, extending Beijing’s logic to other countries would mean that Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United Kingdom are also “near Arctic” states. These are hardly the countries that one imagines when
thinking about the Arctic. As Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said: “There are Arctic states, and non-Arctic states. No third category exists. China claiming otherwise entitles them to exactly nothing.”

**China’s Dubious “Near Arctic State” Claim**

![Diagram showing the Arctic and China's location](image)

**China’s Motivation**

But even with its self-professed and exaggerated role in the Arctic, China does have legitimate interests in the region. After all, China is a global trading nation with the world’s second-largest economy. It holds a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council. China is motivated to be an Arctic actor for five primary reasons:

1. **New Shipping Routes.** China is unique in modern times in being a continental power that is almost entirely dependent on the sea for food and energy. New sea-lanes in the Arctic have the potential to play an important role when it comes to diversifying China’s import dependencies.

2. **Economic Influence.** China sees itself as a global power, and the Arctic is just another region in which to engage. China hopes to complement its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—a vast trading network being constructed by China on the Eurasian landmass and beyond—by investing in and constructing major infrastructure projects along the emerging sea-lanes in the Arctic.

3. **Scientific Research.** Whether it is for China’s sea-based nuclear deterrent, natural resource extraction, or commercial shipping, research on polar high-altitude atmospheric physics, glacial oceans, bioecology, and meteorological geology is important for China’s strategic interests. As a signatory of the Svalbard Treaty, China is allowed to conduct scientific research on Svalbard and
has done so since 2004 at its Arctic Yellow River Station located in Ny Ålesund. China has a total of eight scientific research stations in the Arctic.

4. **Laying the Groundwork for Future Military Activity in the Region.**
Currently, China’s military involvement in the Arctic is limited. The People’s Liberation Army Navy has never sailed into Arctic waters. However, the director of the Norwegian Intelligence Service, Lieutenant General Morten Haga Lunde, stated recently that “in the long term, we must be prepared for a clearer Chinese presence also in our neighboring areas.” The Pentagon recently warned “that China could use its civilian research presence in the Arctic to strengthen its military presence, including by deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks.”

5. **Access to Minerals, Fishing, and Other Natural Resources.** China also sees the Arctic region as a way to satisfy its growing demands for energy and food. China is a significant investor in Russia’s Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) project. Beijing received the first shipment of Yamal LNG in July 2018 and will import 3 million tons of Yamal LNG every year beginning in 2019. The dietary needs of China’s growing population can be met partly by increased fishing in the Arctic region.

For now, however, China’s primary motivation in the Arctic is economic. In its Arctic strategy, China also coined the term “polar silk road.” The goal of the Polar Silk Road is to compliment China’s BRI by investing in and constructing major infrastructure projects along the emerging sea-lanes in the Arctic.

**America’s Backyard**

China is also becoming more involved in America’s backyard with an eye to investing in Greenland and Iceland, although it must be pointed out that in the case of Greenland, China’s role is often greatly exaggerated. For example, China has a license for only one mine in Greenland.

The Chinese embassy in Reykjavik can accommodate a staff of up to 500 people, underscoring the importance that China places on its presence in Iceland. The U.S. embassy in Reykjavik has about 70 people. In 2013, tiny Iceland, with a population of slightly more than 330,000 people (the population size of a small Chinese town), became the first European country to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) with China. However, Iceland has so far refused formal membership in China’s BRI.

**Raising Awareness**

The Trump Administration has used every available opportunity on the international stage to raise awareness of Chinese ambition in the Arctic. During a recent trip to Iceland, Vice President Mike Pence made Chinese economic activity in the Arctic one of the focal points of his visit. During the 2019 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting, Secretary Pompeo devoted a sizable amount of his speech to highlighting the threat
that China poses to U.S. interests in the region, saying that “the United States and Arctic nations welcome transparent Chinese investment that reflect economic interests, not national security ambitions.” To build on this awareness, the U.S. should:

- **Continue to raise awareness of China’s questionable ambitions.** China has declared itself a “near Arctic state”—a made-up term that previously did not exist in Arctic discourse. The U.S. should work with like-minded partners in the Arctic Council to raise legitimate concerns about China’s so-called Polar Silk Road ambitions.

- **Check China’s desire to influence the Arctic Council.** The U.S. should make sure that China does not try to exceed what it is allowed to do under its status as an observer in the Arctic Council.

- **Keep an eye on China’s activities in America’s backyard.** So far, China’s motivation in Greenland and Iceland seems to be more about economics and less about security, but considering the massive debt that China has left in Sri Lanka, Djibouti, and elsewhere, it is only reasonable to question China’s motivations in the Arctic.

- **Promote economic freedom in the Arctic.** Economic freedom spurs prosperity, respect for the rule of law, jobs, innovation, and economic sustainability in the Arctic region. Most important, economic freedom can help to keep the Arctic stable and secure. It should be the focal point of broader U.S. engagement in the region.

**Preparing for Peace**

The U.S. needs to champion an agenda that advances the U.S. national interest and devotes the required national resources to the region. These measures are not preparations for armed conflict. They are preparations for a peaceful future. With the Arctic becoming increasingly important for economic and geopolitical reasons, now is not the time for the U.S. to turn away from its own backyard.


**Abstract:**

China is now strong enough to be a ‘norm maker’ or even a ‘shaper’ in Arctic affairs, a new report on China in the Arctic finds.

High North News talked to some of the report’s authors: Timo Koivurova, Liisa Kauppila, Sanna Kopra, Marc Lanteigne, Mingming Shi, Matgorzata (Gosia) Smieszek, and Adam Stepien.

**Current & Relevant Information:**
HNN: What are your new findings concerning China's current and future role in the Arctic?

Timo Koivurova: We have mapped out China’s increasing presence in the Arctic, both in policy and practice. This has in itself been a great contribution since China’s presence is increasing in the region in numerous ways: The vast investments in Arctic science, increasing commercial activities in different parts of the Arctic, and the awareness in China that the country contributes a lot to the environmental problems of the Arctic.

Marc Lanteigne: It is becoming evident that China is developing greater confidence in its Arctic diplomacy, but is still taking a cautious approach to its economic diplomacy in the region, especially as the Belt and Road plans in the region are starting to encounter pushback. China-Canada relations have deteriorated considerably in recent months, and Beijing’s relations with Sweden have also been problematic. Some Arctic states are expressing concerns about Huawei, and some plans such as the facilities at Arkhangelsk and the possible train link between Kirkenes and Rovaniemi, have yet to get off the ground. However, while the Arctic will not be a focal point for Chinese strategic interests, the region is still an important component in the country’s foreign policy.

HNN: What are general opportunities and risks of China as an Arctic actor?

Timo Koivurova: China is becoming a global power and in order to continue to develop along those lines, it requires a presence in regions considered strategically significant, including the Arctic. However, there has been the tendency to draw linkages between other areas where Chinese policy has conflicted with other states, such as the South China Sea, and Beijing’s Arctic policies. However, one needs to be careful about over-interpreting these links.

In our view, even if some scholars perceive hard security threats from China, we think that many reasons speak against it – the presence of powerful states with also powerful Arctic identities, lack of on the ground knowledge of the region, and large media, expert, and scholarly scrutiny over whatever China does in the Arctic. So, we do think that China has chosen a conservative, non-revisionist multilateral multi-layered approach for the region, also recognizing the importance of the sovereignty of the eight Arctic states. It is important, of course, to bear in mind that China is a global power. Thus, it is important to continue scrutinizing its actions, but this is very much what the Arctic states have been doing – all investments from China that appear strategically threatening, seem to be also treated as such.

Expect more soft than hard power

Liisa Kauppila and Sanna Kopra: In contrast to various China threat theories, we did not take it for granted that China’s growing Arctic engagement would pose some kind of threat to the region’s future. At the same time, however, we found it
necessary to identify potential risks that may emerge from the exercise of different types of power.

In general, the use of Chinese hard power does not seem a very plausible scenario. A military conflict of any scale would simply breed mistrust and thus hamper China’s chances of utilizing Arctic economic opportunities. Forms of soft power, such as panda and science diplomacies, play an important role in China’s efforts to increase its leverage in Arctic affairs. In this way, China pursues to cultivate positive public sentiments that are needed if the country wishes to make large-scale investments in Arctic countries.

Beyond soft and hard power, there is a range of instruments of influence. To describe some of them, we use recently proposed the concept of sharp power. There is a fine line between soft and sharp power. The use of sharp power is equally seeking to shape public opinion but with much more questionable tools, such as censoring displeasing views and spreading deceptive information. Such instruments have become more important with the onset of globalization and digitalization. In our view, being aware and critically assessing these risks - be they more or less likely - creates a solid foundation for long-term Sino-Arctic collaboration.

Marc Lanteigne: What makes the Arctic distinct is that its geography does not lend itself well to overt competition, since it is very difficult for any one power to be revisionist without inviting a response from the other main actors. At present, the politics of the Arctic lends itself to cooperation rather than rivalries, but that may not be the case in the future, especially if the region continues to become internationalized and viewed as an economic frontier.

Adam Stępień: Arctic cooperation is about awareness-building, developing common understanding of challenges, and acquiring sensitivities to Arctic issues. As China becomes an actor in the Arctic, and takes part in Arctic cooperation, there is also a chance for Chinese officials to acquire these sensitivities and common understandings. This is crucial as China has a major environmental footprint on the Arctic.

**China influences the Arctic already**

The country has economic weight and interests that already influence Arctic economies, in both direct and indirect ways. China also takes part –increasingly actively – in shaping international norms, and many international norms to a great extent are highly relevant for the Arctic (consider, for instance, the law of the sea, the Polar Code provisions within international shipping conventions, and the current negotiations regarding protection and management of biodiversity in the high seas). There are further possibilities that China contributes to the scientific understanding of the changing Arctic.
Gosia Smieszek: China has set a goal of becoming a world-class innovator by 2050. Thus, the country’s spending on research and development has been steadily growing over the past decades, exceeding all other counties together. China’s massive investments in R&D are also reflected in its advancing polar capacities.

Whereas the economic crisis in 2008 forced other countries to cut or suspend their R&D, China has been steadily developing its polar assets and potential. Consequently, in light of the extremely high costs of operating and conducting scientific research in the North, China’s role as a vital scientific partner might be expected to continue growing along the country’s improving innovation capacities.

**HNN: How does China impact Arctic people?**

Mingming Shi: Chinese companies and financial institutions have resources that allow them to become important investors in many Arctic regions. The Chinese government has a high degree of influence over Chinese economic actors, especially those owned or controlled by the state. The close interaction with Chinese officials in the Arctic context may be valuable for example for indigenous peoples if their communities are adversely impacted by Chinese companies or Chinese-funded investments.

Beijing has made quite a few declarations of respect for Arctic societies, cultures, and legal systems as well as its commitment to a win-win approach. These commitments provide guidelines for Chinese investment in the Arctic. Furthermore, the region might regard said guidelines as informal standards in order to examine Chinese engagement. At the very least, that opens an access point for dialogue with Chinese authorities and Chinese corporate management.

**HNN: How is China’s changing role in global matters related to its developing role in Arctic affairs? Is the Arctic "special" for China in any respect or is it "just another region" in China’s strategy towards more global influence?**

Mingming Shi: China has been developing its policies on both the Antarctic and the Arctic for quite a while already. In other words, China is not a newcomer in Polar affairs. However, even though it joined the Svalbard Treaty in the 1920s, the footprints of Chinese scientific research, political ties, and economic diplomacy have only appeared in the Arctic over the past few decades.

For the country, the Arctic is not just part of the larger blueprint of its global affairs; it is also an arena it has to play in with particular caution. For example, some Chinese officials and diplomats have expressed their views that the country should bear in mind the importance of Arctic affairs, given its special natural and political atmosphere.

Marc Lanteigne: The Arctic is definitely part of Beijing’s moves towards more effective cross-regional diplomacy, but unlike other regions outside of the Asia-Pacific, including Africa and the Middle East, China has a limited history in the far
north, and has no geographic, historical, or ideological ties to fall back on when developing its Arctic diplomacy. Therefore, China has had to construct its Arctic regional identity much more carefully, in a way which both assures Arctic players that Beijing is not seeking a revisionist agenda, but also avoiding the ‘blueberry pie problem’ of the Arctic being cut up amongst the region’s eight players, with non-Arctic states being left out.

As well, although China has stressed that its interests in the Arctic are more long term as compared with other regions, the country cannot afford to be left behind, especially should a scramble for northern resources take place. The extension of the Belt and Road into the Arctic, even if no concrete projects appear right away, is nonetheless the main way in which Beijing is seeking to define itself as an indispensable Arctic partner.

China wants to shape norms

The other issue here is not so much rules but rather norms. China used to be a ‘norm taker’ starting in the 1990s, allowing the West to set the agenda and to develop post-cold war organizations, since Beijing was in a weaker power position and needed the goodwill of many global regimes in order to re-integrate into the international system. However, China is now strong enough to be a ‘norm maker’ or even a ‘shaper’, and does not want to be strictly bound by US and Western institutions. Beijing is now in a position to influence global norms, especially with the United States potentially withdrawing from much international discourse. The question is: How will Beijing use its new capabilities in the Arctic?

Sanna Kopra: After President Trump announced to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement, the world has hoped for China to step up and fulfill the leadership vacuum in international climate politics left by the US. Although President Xi Jinping has responded positively to these expectations and China has strong domestic incentives to take the findings of the recent IPCC report very seriously, it has not demonstrated any kind of climate leadership role in the Arctic. In my view, taking a stronger leadership role in international efforts to tackle climate change would not be a big sacrifice for China. Conversely, such a leadership role would support China’s national interests and alleviate various China threat theories at the global level. When it comes to the Arctic, China’s stronger commitment to tackle climate change would probably improve the state’s image and generate trust amongst the Arctic states. This would, in turn, help China to legitimize its stronger engagement in Arctic regional affairs.

HNN: Building on your findings concerning China’s current and future role in the Arctic, which implications thereof do you see for Arctic countries’ policies?

Timo Koivurova: We tend to think that China is here to stay, and its scientific and economic presence will increase with possible hard security implications – Arctic
states should remain watchful of those engagements, as they have mostly done by this day. It is also important to understand that China is a great power, and economic dependence on it is not always a good thing.

What we are now seeing is a further diversification of China’s Arctic interests, including in political, economic, legal, and scientific areas. Now that the White Paper has been published, China will be under further pressure to demonstrate what specific roles it will play in the region.

**Concerns about Chinese influence and control**

Adam Stępień: A part of our report focuses on concerns related to stronger Chinese presence in Arctic Finland and enhanced cooperation with Chinese actors as regards Arctic questions (for instance, commercialization of Finland’s Arctic expertise towards Chinese Arctic activities). We have identified a couple of dimensions of these concerns.

First, there is the risk that stronger ties lead to increased Chinese future economic and political influence at national and regional levels, leading to dependence, greater possibilities to exert political pressure, and increased exposure to downturns in Chinese economy.

There are concerns related to Chinese control of strategic infrastructure, including recent controversies around a port investment in southern Sweden or the planned upgrade of Greenlandic airports. Chinese mining companies in Canada were allegedly complaining about lengthy community consultations processes and complex stakeholder engagement requirements. That may not bode well for the social performance of Chinese economic actors in the regions where impact assessments, benefit sharing, and stakeholder participation have been greatly advanced in the last couple of decades.

Second, there are anxieties about the environmental and social performance of Chinese economic actors. These anxieties stem to a great extent from the experiences of Chinese investments in other regions like Africa and South America.

Third, there are also questions as regards the reliability of Chinese investors, as many plans tend to be announced, creating hopes, concerns and first social impacts, but then ultimately many plans are abandoned, leaving behind a high degree of disappointment.

These concerns have so far not materialized in Arctic Finland, at least not to a significant degree. Interestingly, while some actors in Finland are concerned about the rising presence of China in the Finnish Arctic, others are actually disappointed that there is so little Chinese investment. These contradictory perspectives coexist in Finnish public debate at present.

**China denied land acquisition**
However, some problematic cases do occur in other Arctic regions and they tend to have circumpolar resonance. For instance, we had some cases of planned major land purchases by Chinese investors in Greenland, Iceland, and Norway – all of them not coming to fruition due to local and national resistance based on both socio-environmental and security grounds.

Authorities and other actors in the Arctic need to be aware of risks related to any foreign investments. However, on the other hand it is important that we do not treat China as a unified monolithic actor, which behaves the same way in all regions and circumstances. There are different companies, different state agencies, different academic institutions and it is not wise to put all of them in a black box called China. Decision-makers should consider each case of Chinese presence in the region against specific circumstances and nature of this presence.

Marc Lanteigne: Arctic countries need to take the broader political context into consideration in their handling of China. Although President Xi has consolidated his power, and is now able to retain the post of president indefinitely, China is now facing serious economic headwinds as well as an emerging trade war, which could further exacerbate the various divisions within the Chinese government. This may especially affect the question of whether to continue the Belt and Road Initiative in its present form and what the speed for further economic reforms should be.

**Arctic countries need to understand China**

Liisa Kauppila: Arctic countries should dedicate more resources for increasing their understanding of China as a global economic actor, including Chinese actors’ modes of operation and business culture. Language skills in Mandarin Chinese, in particular, should be improved through consistent efforts. This is particularly important for the small Nordic Arctic countries since China is now becoming the new influential neighbor with whom we must learn to coexist in a productive manner.

Gosia Smieszek: Not only is China among the world’s leading science powers but it also has the world’s largest education system with a stated goal to increase both incoming and outgoing student mobility – another area worth further exploration by Arctic, and in particular Nordic, countries.

Sanna Kopra: Arctic countries should also intensify scientific cooperation with China on black carbon – the issue area that has been strongly promoted as a platform for enhanced cooperation among states also by Finland’s President Sauli Niinistö. Due to the lack of knowledge on black carbon emissions and their sources at the domestic level, China has not taken an active role in the Arctic Council’s work on black carbon.

Although China’s air quality policies do not explicitly address black carbon, its efforts to improve air quality and public health by decreasing coal burning are very important for the future of the Arctic, too. Improved scientific knowledge of black
carbon inventories and links between climate change, air quality, and public health are necessary for China’s stronger involvement on international cooperation on black carbon.

1. Military and Security:


Abstract:

China has clearly emulated Russia’s previous example of making loud claims and increasing military patrols in the Arctic. China will likely become a major player in Arctic trade routes and become a main destination for goods shipped through the Northern Sea Route. It is likely that a significant part of future Russian oil and gas production will ultimately be supplied to China. What are the strategic implications of China’s active involvement in Arctic politics? The Arctic “Great Game” is often described as a new Cold War between the United States and Russia. Regionally, the two main protagonists are Russia and Norway. This article makes a different argument. The Arctic has recently become an issue on the Russo-Chinese, and possibly Russo-Japanese security agenda. The first goal of this article is to examine the Arctic policy and strategy of Russia, perhaps the most difficult nation to understand in terms of Arctic security. The second goal of the article is to explain how the Arctic has become an issue of concern in Russia’s relationship with China.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

As the Cold War ended after 1990, it seemed that the military confrontation in the Arctic that started with the Second World War had been cast into history. Yet, by the second decade of the post-Cold War era, the Arctic states had begun to rebuild their Arctic capabilities. With the Arctic climate changing fast, the geopolitics of the region are rapidly transforming. As Scott G. Borgerson stated in Foreign Affairs, “A Great Game is developing in the world’s far north.” Why has the Arctic become so crucial? One reason is the fact that the region is a potentially huge resource base. The Arctic may be open to year-round shipping within a few decades. The battle for resources might then be waged by military means. Therefore, the next few years will be critical in determining whether the future will hold a stable and cooperative Arctic order, or a competitive and volatile Arctic anarchy. There are still many factors raising the potential for conflict. Governing institutions are weak and major powers are involved. Behind the surface of the rhetoric of cooperation, there frequently lies the pursuit of self-interest.

This article’s first goal is to examine Russia’s Arctic policy and strategy, perhaps the most difficult state to understand in terms of Arctic security. Russia plans to invest
massively in Arctic resources, such as enormous port infrastructures like Murmansk. After its controversial flag-planting on the North Pole seafloor in 2007, Russia moved to further bolster its Arctic presence in 2008–2010. Analysis of the Arctic’s geopolitics has traditionally focused on East-West issues; however, this article makes a different argument that East-West rivalry has diminished thanks to the Russo-Norwegian Treaty of September 2010. Instead, the Arctic has recently become an issue for the Russo-Chinese, and possibly Russo-Japanese security agenda. Thus, the Arctic is now an issue in the overall Asian security agenda. These trends reflect the ongoing security rivalries in Asia influenced by the rise of China and the concomitant decline of Russia as well as climate and technological changes that are opening the Arctic as a usable commercial thoroughfare. These climactic and technological changes make the provision of energy from the Arctic to Asia a matter of energy policy as well as a Russian security policy. This leads to the second goal of the article, which is to explain how the Arctic has become an issue of concern in Russia’s relationship with China.

**China and the Arctic**

By 2009, contracts had been signed for China to receive Russian oil from northern Russia’s Yuzhno Khilchuyu field in Nenets Autonomous Okrug. China is also talking to the interested parties about a railway from China through Russia and Scandinavia to Norway’s port of Narvik that could presumably transport Arctic commerce too. More recently the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has signed an agreement with Russia’s commercial shipping agency Sovkomflot on Arctic shipping, that includes deals on hydrocarbons. According to this agreement, China will likely become a major player in Arctic trade routes and it will also become the main destination for goods shipped through the Northern Sea Route; in addition, it is likely that a significant part of future Russian oil and gas production will ultimately go to China.

China’s interests go beyond the current strong polar research capability, which shows every sign of growing by an order of magnitude. Accordingly, SIPRI reports that China is already building an icebreaker for polar expedition as well as allocating more money for scientific research of the Arctic. In addition, to the polar research projects, China attended the Ilulissat Ministerial Conference of the Arctic Council in 2008 as an observer, along with South Korea, and has obtained formal status at the council as an observer with the intention to play an increased role. China has been actively cooperating with its Norwegian partners in academic research. It opened its first Arctic research station in 2004, which made China the eighth state to have its own station on Norway’s Spitsbergen Island. The Chinese Zuelong icebreaker is currently on the longest ever expedition the country has ever had in the region. The expedition began in 2004 and is continuing as of 2011.

Chinese polar experts strongly support further exploration of the Arctic. Concurrently China’s dependence on exports and greatly increased shipbuilding capabilities
would lead it to closely examine the prospects of greater exploitation of the Northern Sea Route and the commercial possibilities along its length. A SIPRI report by Linda Jakobson noted that China is flush with capital. A potential multilateral joint venture in which China’s capital could be used in exchange for the opportunity to gain the experience it seeks in deep-water drilling projects is the ongoing cooperation between Statoil, Total and Gazprom to develop the first phase of the Shetokman gas fields in the Barents Sea. In particular China could invest in Russia’s Arctic energy projects, that require huge foreign investments if they are to materialize, thus giving it a major stake in this critical Russian region and energy sector.

China has publicly stated its interests in the Arctic and demanded to be taken account of there. Hu Zhengyue, China’s Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, made a statement outlining China’s overall Arctic agenda while attending an Arctic forum organized by the Norwegian Government on Svalbard in June 2009. Hu said, “When determining the delimitation of outer continental shelves, the Arctic states need to not only properly handle relationships among themselves, but must also consider the relationship between the outer continental shelf and the international submarine area that is the common human heritage, to ensure a balance of coastal countries’ interests and the common interests of the international community.” Professor Guo Peiqing put it more directly: “Circumpolar nations have to understand that Arctic affairs are not only regional issues but also international ones.” Guo has estimated that about 88 per cent of the seabed of the Arctic Ocean would be under the control of the Arctic littoral states if the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf were to approve all the existing or expected claims to the Arctic Ocean continental shelf.

China, though not a member of the Arctic Council, disputes any claims of sovereignty in Arctic waters beyond littoral countries’ 12-mile limit or economic exclusion zone if they signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Although China has no Arctic coastline, China recently stated: “The Arctic belongs to all the people around the world as no nation has sovereignty over it.” This statement directly challenges Russia’s assertion over Arctic waters beyond its territorial limits and challenges a cornerstone of Russian policy and the “vital interests” cited above.

Beyond these challenges to Russia there is clearly some military interest among the Chinese Navy. Thus, Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) stated that the Arctic belongs to all the people of the world and no nation has sovereignty over it according to UNCLOS. He believes that there is a scramble for the Arctic underway that encroaches on China’s interests. In addition, China and other nations “should find their own voices” regarding the Arctic. In particular China should become an indispensable player in Arctic exploration, especially as the exploitation of the Arctic “will become a future mission of the navy.” While such sentiments have not yet become policy, they are not isolated as there are notable exponents in China’s navy and expert community of an aggressive policy to acquire
foreign bases and to conduct missions beyond China’s immediate coastline. Beyond the expressions of such sentiments, even if the PLAN may still be unable to compete with the U.S. Navy in projecting power abroad, there is little doubt that it is building quite vigorously for a capability to project naval and air power well beyond China’s shores and equally vigorously investigating possible missions far beyond China. As Russian planners realize, these capabilities represent a greater threat than to just U.S. allies and interests.

In August 2010, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre praised China’s cooperation in the Arctic and said it should go further in the future. Speaking at the China Institute of International Studies Forum in Beijing, he said that Oslo had observed “China’s technological interest and capability in the Arctic. We would like to see how Norwegian and Chinese research groups on the environment come together in highly complementary areas of interest and go deeper, in areas ranging from natural science to geopolitics,” he said. “It is important for Norway to engage with China in dialogue about issues relevant in the region,” Støre added.

Beijing is also actively strengthening ties with Iceland. The area of particular interest for China is new sea routes that are opening due to ice melting. Citing Icelandic President Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson’s interview with Norwegian broadcaster NRK, The Barents Observer wrote that over the past two years relations between Iceland and China have increased. Following the 2008 financial crisis, Grimsson stated that when the banks collapsed in Iceland, “we faced a situation, where there was no positive helping hand coming either from Europe or the United States, and I and the government decided to approach the government of China […] to see if China could show some friendship in these times of difficulties.” The president is quoted as telling NRK that the bilateral talks between the leaderships of the two countries indicated that China is keen, “to cooperate with Iceland and the other countries in the Arctic region on what is happening in the Arctic and the northern regions and also regarding what are the implications of the Northern Sea Routes opening up over the next few decades.”

Conclusion

The strategic issues posed to Russia by the nascent Sino-Russian rivalry over the Arctic and China’s visible economic-political-military rise in Asia will not disappear or dissolve in a bilateral partnership. In this context, Russia’s sharp reaction to Chinese claims in the Arctic is hardly confined to the Arctic and is visible throughout East Asia. However, that sharp reaction does underscore that for Russia and China the Arctic is now a vital interest. Despite official claims of bilateral relations being at their highest point, Russia’s sharp reaction shows that there are rising tensions, particularly regarding bilateral military issues. Since this relationship is a critical one for Asian and international security, the Arctic occupies a place on the agenda of Asian security because its future development is a matter of dispute for Moscow and Beijing.
In Russia’s case the mutual decision with China to forego open discussion of contentious issues inhibits domestic debate as well as allows China to continue implementing a key tenet of its grand strategy. This key tenet is China’s resolute action to defer and postpone any discussion of contentious issues with Russia or other neighbors into the future, as long as China’s vital interests or irrecoverable losses are not threatened. In this way, China buys time to enhance its overall capabilities and improve the balance of power in its favor while forestalling the advent of any counter-Chinese coalition of forces. China is assiduously enhancing its range of capabilities and asserting itself in inconceivable ways or in different regions such as in the Arctic. Despite the unclear intentions of Chinese leaders, as China grows more powerful, the logic of the competitive order of world politics suggests that it will increasingly attempt to rearrange the future of the international order to suit its interests and supplant those of a United States it believes is weakening. Specifically, its actions will be seen, whether they are so intended or not, as attempts to reorder the structure of international relations in Asia and upon the Asian security agenda that include the Arctic. Even if China does not seek territorial expansion or direct conflict, and the odds of it gaining from any such attempts may be very long, as its power grows and its assertiveness grows in a well-established historical pattern, others will come to have greater concern about its tendencies and proclivities. In this way, the present Sino-Russian dispute over the Arctic exemplifies current trends in Asian security.

This Arctic example should encourage Russian leaders to foster a more open domestic security debate about China’s ties to Russia and its future orientation, as well as about Russia’s future in Asia. The Arctic’s European future seems to have been resolved through the Russo-Norwegian Treaty; however, the Asian dimension must sooner or later be faced. In addition, both China and Japan are interested in the Arctic. Japan seeks greater access to discussions on the Arctic because it too stands to gain from opening up that zone to transcontinental commerce on a more regular basis. Japan was also asked to join any new shipping regime that concerns the Arctic and apparently seeks membership as an observer of the Arctic Council. Thus, Arctic issues are increasingly part of the Asian agenda. Any effort to resolve Arctic issues by Russia or anyone else will increasingly involve China, Japan, and possibly South Korea as well as Canada and the United States. For Russia to achieve its goal of an independent great power status in Asia, it must contend with the rise of China. Failure to resolve Russia’s Arctic destiny or to find the means to compete with a rising China undermines the possibility of resolving the Arctic, insofar as Asia is concerned, or more importantly the nature of Russia’s relationships with China and the rest of Asia. Should Moscow fail in that task, the burden of grappling with a rising China will fall to others, while Russia’s failure will only add to China’s power and belief in the correctness of its current course.

“Intensifying U.S.-China security dilemma dynamics play out in the Arctic: Implications for China’s Arctic strategy,” Camilla T. N. Sørensen, Arctic
Abstract:

The U.S., Russia and China are all assigning higher strategic priority to the Arctic and are strengthening their diplomatic and military presence and activities in the region. For the U.S. and Russia, it links up with the growing security tension in the surrounding regions, e.g. the North Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic Sea region. However, the deepening great power competition with China also increasingly drives Washington’s diplomatic and military offensive in the region. For China, it is a question about ensuring access to Arctic sea routes and resources, e.g. energy, minerals and fisheries, and making sure that China gets a say in Arctic governance. The so-called “Arctic exceptionalism” – i.e. the Arctic as a low-tension region, where the great powers, despite conflicts in other regions, continue to cooperate and refrain from political and military coercion to get their way – is under pressure. This article analyzes how Arctic politics and security are increasingly intertwined with global security developments that are dominated by intensifying U.S.-China security dilemma dynamics. It further discusses the implications for China’s Arctic strategy pointing to how recent developments make it even more difficult for China as the only great power without Arctic territory to ensure its access to and influence in the region. Seen from the perspective of numerous Chinese Arctic scholars, this underlines the growing importance of strengthening China’s economic and strategic cooperation with Russia in the region.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction: Arctic politics and security through a prism of “great power competition”

The above excerpts from the U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo’s speech to the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Finland in early May of 2019 give a clear indication of how the Trump Administration increasingly views the Arctic as yet another arena for great power rivalry outlined as the overall frame for U.S. security policies in the National Security Strategy from December, 2017 (White House, 2017). In recent months, the U.S. has strengthened its focus on the Arctic, both diplomatically and militarily. The June 2019 updated Arctic strategy from the U.S. Department of Defense is presented as a strategy for the Arctic region “in an era of strategic competition” (DoD, 2019b: 2). That is, Washington increasingly sees Arctic politics and security through a prism of “great power competition,” and it is China, in particular, that Washington points to as the main great power competitor. The strategy warns about creeping Chinese attempts to use investments and other economic leverage points to gradually increase China’s role and influence in the Arctic, which is threatening regional stability. As stated in the strategy “China is attempting to gain a role in the Arctic in ways that may undermine international rules
and norms, and there is a risk that its predatory economic behavior globally may be repeated in the Arctic” (DoD, 2019b: 6). The annual report on China’s military power from the U.S. Department of Defense to Congress, published in early 2019, also for the first time includes a special section on “China in the Arctic” which warns “Civilian research could support a strengthened Chinese military presence in the Arctic Ocean, which could include deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks (DoD, 2019a: 114).

These recent official U.S. statements and documents combined with the ongoing “securitization” in Washington of almost all dimensions of the bilateral U.S.-China relationship, from student exchanges and cultural programs to trade and joint business and research projects, decrease the room of maneuver for China in the Arctic. The U.S. is concerned about the Russian military build-up in the Arctic, which in itself arguably would have led to an increasing U.S. military presence in the region. However, it is the growing Chinese presence and interests in the region that have led to the comprehensive upgrading of the U.S. diplomatic approach to the Arctic, which is illustrated by the significant increase of high-level visits to the region in recent months and the reopening of a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in Greenland, announced in early June 2019 (GoG, 2019).

The rising U.S. worries come on the background of the development of a more confident, proactive and sophisticated Chinese diplomacy in the Arctic over the recent decade. The region has moved up the Chinese leaders’ foreign and security policy agenda and is assigned increasing strategic importance. The key here is that in Beijing’s perspective, the Arctic has become more closely linked with its ability to realize China’s economic reform agenda and great power ambitions.

This article analyzes how Arctic politics and security are increasingly intertwined with global security developments that are dominated by intensifying U.S.-China security dilemma dynamics. It further discusses the implications for China’s Arctic strategy, pointing to how recent developments make it even more difficult for China as the only great power without Arctic territory to ensure its access to and influence in the region.

In terms of theory and analytical approach, the analysis draws on defensive neorealism with its focus on states as the main actors in an anarchic international system (Waltz, 1979). The structure of the international system, i.e. the distribution of relative power capabilities among the great powers, combined with geostrategic conditions, set the overall room of maneuver for states. All states seek to maximize their security by strengthening their relative economic and military power and enter alliances. The security dilemma as coined by John Herz (1951: 3-4) is the central analytical concept. It catches a situation, where a state’s attempt to increase its own security has the effect of decreasing the security of other states. More specifically, the security dilemma refers to vigorous action-reaction dynamics between two states, where the steps by one state to increase its security, e.g. by building up its
military, creates similar responses by another state, setting off another response by
the first state, and then again by the second and so on. This stimulates a “negative
spiral” of deteriorating relations with growing security tension, power competition,
escalating arms races, and potentially conflict and war (e.g. Jervis, 1976). The
ultimate sources of the security dilemma are anarchy – i.e. the lack of a higher
authority in international politics – and states’ uncertainty and fears about each
other’s intentions under anarchy.

The key is that such security dilemma dynamics are playing out in the Arctic. They
are visible in all bilateral relations among the three great powers, but with the most
consequential dynamics being found in relations between the U.S. and China, which
strongly link up with the deepening great power competition between the two states.
Russia is increasingly positioning itself with Beijing even though Moscow still has
strong concerns about the implications of a stronger and more ambitious China. As
argued below, this is a result of not only the Western sanctions against Russia since
the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014, but also an awareness among
Chinese leaders of the potential for adverse security dilemma dynamics and the
need for countering “China threat” perceptions and reassuring Russia and other
Arctic states (Hsiung, 2018). It reflects how Beijing continuously seeks to strike a
balance between assertiveness and reassurance in its Arctic diplomacy. Thus, there
are multifaceted and crosscutting security dilemma dynamics currently at play in the
Arctic, where some are linked to the deepening U.S.-China great power competition
and others have certain regional origins. The other Arctic states are to different
degrees and in different ways caught between the U.S. as a close ally and traditional
security guarantor, China as prospective economic partner, and Russia as an
important Arctic neighbor that they need to cooperate with to address the many
complex challenges evolving in the region as the ice melts.

The article presents its analysis in three steps. The first section analyzes China’s
Arctic strategy, the drivers behind and how Beijing seeks to implement the strategy
(i.e. China’s evolving Arctic diplomacy). Seen from Washington, China’s entrance
into the Arctic and the development of a more confident, proactive and sophisticated
Chinese diplomacy in the region has begun to threaten regional stability. This
activates and further fuels the U.S.-China security dilemma dynamics in an Arctic
political and security context. Specifying such dynamics, the second section takes a
closer look at the U.S. response and what it prescribes regarding how the Arctic
states should deal with China in the Arctic. The third and last section discusses the
implications for China’s Arctic strategy, also including analyses and debates on this
from Chinese Arctic scholars. Several of these Chinese Arctic scholars underline the
growing importance of strengthening China’s economic and strategic cooperation
with Russia in the region as a way for Beijing to respond to what they increasingly
assess as a more threatening U.S.
China, South Korea and Japan are actively pursuing scientific, economic and political activities for the development of the Arctic, the Arctic resources, ensure security in it, seeking to increase its role in the Arctic Council, cooperating and competing-Rui with other countries. The paper stresses that China is in the final stage of preparation of its Arctic strategy, however, it is noted that the Arctic is important for China, but not a top priority of its foreign policy. The priorities of the Republic of Korea in the development and exploration of the Arctic, as shown by the analysis conducted by, yavlyutsya: research, the use of the Northern Sea Route for the transportation, receipt of orders from Arctic countries for Korean shipyards for the construction of offshore oil platforms, special vessels and icebreakers; development of relations with Russia. Japan is a growing interest in the Northern Sea Route, scientific research in the Arctic. We consider Japan’s attempts to resolve the territorial issue with Russia. Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the establishment of a new international structure in the Arctic, which was formed not on a geographical basis, and by the presence of economic interests in the region. Seoul supports the establishment, together with Russia a regional mechanism of multilateral cooperation in the Arctic, with the code name “Asia-Pacific Arctic Council”.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

China, Korea and Japan as the Asian Arctic Council observer countries are most actively pursuing the Arctic policy. The research of the interests, various aspects of their work reveals the features of the Arctic policy of every of these three countries. The comparative analysis shows that in addition to political, economic issues of cooperation, these countries have started to pay more attention to the issues of countering new challenges and security threats (terrorism and illegal migration), development of constructive and business cooperation in prevention of emergency situations, the tasks of search and rescue in the Arctic.

Interests and policy of China in the Arctic

China has the most powerful potential of all Asian countries to participate in the Arctic policy. Today it has the second economy in the world, so is looking for all possible ways for further development. China’s interests in the Arctic form a complex which consists of, first, economic, including natural resource- and transportation and logistics interests, and secondly, ecological and climatic and other research interests
as fundamental theoretical and various scientific applications, thirdly, geopolitical and closely related military-strategic.

China is actively promoting a full series of scientific, economic and political initiatives to secure its strategic interests in the Arctic. The country is actively engaged in polar research. The start of this research was initiated in 1981, China held the first expedition to the Arctic in 1995, when researchers reached the North Pole on foot. And the first marine expedition to the North Pole took place in 1999. Since 1994 China holds polar research aboard the only China research icebreaker "Syuelun" ("Snow Dragon"), which was purchased from Ukraine in 1993. In August 2013 "Syuelun" was the first of the Chinese ships which passed along the Northern Sea route (NSR) in the Barents Sea, and on the way back from Iceland to the Bering Strait — went on high-latitude route, bypassing the Northern sea route. The voyage of "Syueluna", as director of the Polar Research Institute of China (PRIC) Hueygen Yang noted in interview with South China Morning Post, "strongly encouraged" Chinese shipping companies. For the first time a Chinese ship skirted almost all the northern coast of Russia. The Japanese believe that the polar ambitions of Russia were hurt by this case. Commercial use of the NSR is to use (of course, be-paid for) Russian icebreakers, as well as fees for passage along this way.

At the international level, the question of dividing of the Arctic has not been settled yet, and China benefits from it, seeking to prove that no one has exclusive rights to the development of the region. Presence in China’s structure of authorities of special Arctic and Antarctic Administration proves China’s serious intentions. It is responsible for the implementation of research programs and stepping up activity in these areas. China is going to create the first ever permanent drifting station in the Arctic Ocean. In autumn 2013 two container vessels belonging to COSCO, passed along the Northern Sea Route from Dalal to Rotterdam. The company received from the Administration of the NSR the permit for three trips, giving the right for independent sailing along the route in light ice conditions, as well as sailing with icebreaker assistance. China announced the construction of a new icebreaker with a range of 20,000 nautical miles, able to pass the ice with thickness of up to 1.5 meters, with acceptance of which in 2014. Recently significant investments in the expansion and modernization of production capacities of the Arctic shipbuilding industry are arranged in the country, building of entire fleet of modern icebreakers is planned.

China is gradually increasing its influence on decision-making process related to the Arctic. Beijing has already been steadily integrated into the system of the Arctic problem solutions: ranging from the environment and ending with the economy. Expanding investment projects in the Arctic states, China lays the foundation for increasing its influence in the region. With a number of major projects, it has formed the basis for building the mechanisms of economic pressure on these countries to implement their own interests in the Arctic. So far Beijing does not show clearly its
explicit claims to the Arctic by means of authorities. Excessive activity in the region can only lead to what is now observed in the South China Sea. China’s position on the disputed territories in this sea has led to the fact that countries in the region have united to stand against China. India, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia actively prevent attempts of Beijing to seize control in the South China Sea.

Subarctic countries are also displeased with China’s activity in the Arctic and, considering it a dangerous competitor. Ignoring the discontent of these countries, China calls itself "the Arctic country" by means of experts. But nevertheless, Beijing rarely crosses the "red line" and does not give grounds to consider its intentions aggressive. Now China prefers not to get involved in the diplomatic conflicts and work through joint ventures. But in the wake of rising of the economic power and military potential, Beijing can become less "polite". It is no coincidence that China closely monitors all actions of Russia in the Arctic. For example, if repeated updated application of Russian Federation to the United Nations, sent in August 2015 on the extension of the continental shelf, proving that the underwater Lomonosov and Mendeleyev ridges are a continuation of its continental shelf, will be satisfied, China, as some scholars note, finds itself in disadvantage regarding the development of resources in the Arctic. If application response will be successful for Russia, the Arctic area of the country may increase by 1.2 million sq. km. it is also possible that with the increasing of China and a possible weakening of Russia due to the sanctions of the West, Beijing can decide to declare the "Marine Silk Road" as international water area. But then other countries may require recognition of Hainan Strait between the island and mainland China as a neutral area. The beginning of the serious dispute between Russia and China regarding the NSR would be in the interests of the West oriented to raw containment of China.

Many experts agree that China will acquire much more from cooperation with the Arctic countries, than from an aggressive policy to extend its influence in the region. At the same time, China is interested in blocking all the attempts of Russia to maintain, and if possible, to expand its special status in the Arctic. On a number of important aspects China’s ambitions in the region are close to the US approach: both countries want the principle of "free hand", though in different ways. However, our countries have much more common interests. Russia and China are interested in the development of transit along the NSR, the creation of joint centers of ecological tourism. Russia is ready to involve the Chinese mining companies to the development of hydrocarbon resources on the shelf, as well as their investments for the development of coastal infrastructure. We are interested in developing and exporting of scarce ore mineral resources located in the Arctic zone of Russia to the markets in the Asia-Pacific region. In turn, as already noted, China is interested in access to the hydrocarbon resource base of the Arctic, including the rich fisheries in the Arctic Ocean.
Based on the above, it should be noted that China will continue to hardly strengthen its policy in the north, but will do it gradually, using soft power and trying to find the approval of the other parties. According to Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China in the Russian Federation Li Hui, the Chinese party in the development and exploration of the Arctic pays attention to intensification of cooperation and exchange of Arctic experience, improvement of practical cooperation on a multilateral and bilateral basis, as well as expansion of opportunities for public participation, scientific research institutes, enterprises in the Arctic cooperation. At the same time, it is important to consider that the Arctic for China is important, but not the top priority in the foreign policy of the country.

Conclusion

China, South Korea and Japan at all sites put forward the idea that the Arctic is a "province of all mankind", and its development should be arranged by efforts of all the countries that have this urgent need, the relevant financial, economic and technological opportunities. They try to revise in their favor the legal status of the Arctic, non-admission of registration of the applications for the extension of the continental shelf in the region by the coastal states. They seek to transfer northern sea routes under international control (the Northern Sea Route in Russia and the Northwest Passage in Canada).

China, South Korea and Japan are seeking to ensure a permanent, or at least seasonal presence in the Arctic in the form of scientific expeditions, cargo transportation, fisheries, mining, education, settlements, they try to get information about the deposits of strategic natural resources in the Arctic and their development, prospects of operation of the Northern Sea Route, Russian technologies of ice-breaker constructions, the situation in the areas inhabited by indigenous peoples of the North. In this regard, Russia faces extremely difficult tasks in the issue of the protection of this region as a national resource base and transport route. Russia’s relations with China, the Republic of Korea and Japan on the issue of economic development of the Arctic should combine elements of both cooperation and competition. Russia's task is to find a reasonable balance in this area.


Overview:

Estimated to possess some 30 percent of the world’s untapped natural gas, 13 percent of its undiscovered oil, 40 percent of its natural minerals and sea-based resources, and one of the world’s most promising fishing grounds, the Arctic region has become a strategic prize in China’s global quest for resources and Asia-Pacific
hegemony. Indeed, Beijing is willing to “buy” territories or governments with an Arctic presence to advance its standing and influence in this rising theatre of operations.

Part of China’s strategy is based on a term of art used in the confidence racket – the “long con.” This term is used when a “con man” (or entity) makes a sizeable investment of capital, time, and energy over an extended period to engage his victim’s (the “mark’s”) trust in order to achieve a far more valuable “score” at the end of the scheme.

In China’s case, being granted observer status at the May 2013 Arctic Council meeting in Kiruna, Sweden – after having been deferred twice – represented an important milestone in slipping into the tent of the leading governing body of one of the largest strategic resource and transportation “finds” of our time. Beijing’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are more than willing to play along with the Council’s focus on the environment and sustainable economic development – for now.

Security-minded analysts should be concerned that China’s true intention is to position itself to influence heavily, if not outright control, the awarding of select Arctic energy and fishing-related concessions as well as the rules and political arrangements governing the use of strategic waterways now gradually opening due to melting ice. In order to preclude this possibility, member states engaged in discussions regarding Arctic development ought to conduct discreet counter diplomacy, ensure competitive bidding and good governance, insist on commercial fairness, demand “know your customer” diligence, and conduct appropriate military planning.

Current & Relevant Information:

China’s Soft and Hard Arctic Power

Beijing’s Arctic strategy is underpinned by the initial use of soft power to attain its regional objectives. Science and resource diplomacy and active engagement in multilateral institutions are already playing a large role in this “long con” in the so-called High North. The Chinese navy (PLA Navy or PLAN) is at the helm of several of the country’s seemingly benign Arctic initiatives. It is hastily constructing the capability to operate in the harsh polar environment. This includes a fleet of dual-use icebreakers (with both civilian and military applications), aircraft equipped to fly in inhospitable weather, and reinforced bulk carriers and tankers that can navigate dangerous Arctic waters (Rainwater 2013).

Although environmental research, especially climate change, will be the primary public face of China’s deepening commitment to the Arctic, this soft power strategy is being shadowed step by step by a military build-up specifically designed to engage in Arctic operations, particularly with respect to Russia’s North Sea Route, Canada’s Northwest Passage, and the Bering Strait.
One military expert from the US National War College suspects, for example, that the 1999 expedition to the Arctic by China’s huge Xuelong ice-breaker to conduct oceanographic and benthic studies helped advance PLAN’s antisubmarine warfare capability (Cole 2010, 24). It is almost certain that China will eventually deploy submarine patrols and surface warships in Arctic waterways for surveillance and peaceful “exercises” (such as search and rescue). Using its icebreakers as a soft power calling card, Beijing will be actively looking for one or more friendly ports on the Arctic perimeter. China’s unsuccessful gambit to purchase some 300 square kilometers of Iceland’s northern coast – ostensibly for a golf resort – may have represented such a foray. An Arctic naval presence would protect Beijing’s “regional interests” and multiply its options should it need to confront Canada or the US in the region.

When – as it undoubtedly will – China turns the dial to its hard strategy, it may be fortunate for Canada and the US that China’s only current point of entry to the Arctic is through the Bering Strait. This choke point – with only some 85 kilometers separating Russia and Alaska, and a similar configuration as the Malacca Strait or Strait of Hormuz – will surely be contested at some point and, at minimum, prove to be an abiding threat to vital Chinese strategic interests because of its proximity to the US. This is just one reason that several Chinese scholars have challenged (probably with government encouragement) the rules and norms governing the sovereign claims of the circumpolar states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US). Initially, it has selected so-called “lawfare” to rewrite the statutes presently in force that favor these nations and affect future governance issues.

Conclusion

China’s original idea was to promote the notion that the Arctic was a global common, open for exploitation by any and all nations. This was when Beijing used to state that the Arctic is the inherited wealth of all mankind. That line simply did not sell internationally, estranged the very Arctic states that it is assiduously courting today, and even complicated its own rigid demands concerning the East and South China Seas. The propaganda narrative was promptly retooled to emphasize China’s determination to help protect against environmental spoilage of this pristine frontier and join the rule-making of Arctic states to help ensure fair and common benefit for all mankind.

Although this retooled narrative is highly suspect, the recommendations outlined above are not designed to suggest that business cannot be sensibly or safely done with Chinese entities in, or near, the Arctic. They are rather intended to point out the special risks that accompany doing business with SOEs that are often tasked with performing multiple functions, including establishing strategic beachheads, gathering intelligence, and serving as forward-deployed assets of the PLA and the security services. In this connection, it is also useful to keep in mind that the political
disconnect between the PLA and Chinese civilian leadership is clearly widening, with less predictable consequences for the country’s Arctic soft and hard power architecture.

Although the SOEs, particularly those in the energy sector, advertise themselves as benign commercial entities with no hidden government agendas, this is regrettably not the case. The complacency and compliance of several Arctic Council member and observer states that are the objective of China’s long con need to be replaced with healthy doses of vigilance, security-minded due diligence, and hard-headed realism concerning the Chinese purveyors of seemingly richly rewarding resource development and transportation opportunities.

Perhaps the risks described in this Commentary will, for the most part, not materialize into full-blown disputes and/or security threats. Perhaps we should take China at its word through its state-controlled news agency Xinhua, that “China’s activities are for the purposes of regular environmental investigation and investment and have nothing to do with resource plundering and strategic control.” Perhaps Malte Humpert, Executive Director of the Arctic Institute, is right when he observed in an interview, “I don’t think there’s any more reason to be concerned about China’s ambitions than there is about anyone else’s ambitions in the Arctic.” That is certainly the most desirable calculus and outcome.

The question is: given the evidence, would you, as a policy maker or business executive, wish to stake your country or firm’s strategic interests in the Arctic on that sunny proposition?

“China as an Arctic Great Power: Potential Implications for Greenland and the Danish Realm,” Camilla T.N. Sørensen, Danish Defence Policy Brief, February 2018 [9]
http://fak.dk/biblioteket/publikationer/Documents/Policy%20Brief%202018%2001%20februar%20UK.pdf

Abstract:

In late January 2018, China released its long-awaited White Paper on China’s Arctic Policy. It represents the culmination of the development of a more confident, proactive and sophisticated Chinese diplomacy in the Arctic. Beijing has intensified its efforts in establishing substantial and extensive relations with all Arctic actors and has gradually increased the presence and influence of China in the Arctic institutions. An increasing number of Chinese investments and infrastructure projects take place in the Arctic, propelled primarily by a growing Chinese interest in Arctic resources and Arctic sea routes, which are now officially included in the maritime part of President Xi Jinping’s prestige project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The policy brief analyses China’s Arctic White Paper focusing on the potential implications for Greenland and the Danish Realm. The policy brief concludes that China’s increasing presence in the Arctic constitutes a challenge as well as an
opportunity depending on whether Copenhagen and Nuuk succeed in establishing open, respectful and constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Current & Relevant Information:

These years, China appears on the international scene as an ever more confident great power. President Xi Jinping speaks of a 'new era' for China as a great power marking the end of the traditional 'keeping a low profile' guideline for Chinese foreign and security policy. China pursues great power responsibility and seeks to play a more active role in addressing and solving international conflicts and global challenges. However, the expectation on the part of China is that China in return attains great power influence and respect.

Domestic Driving Forces and a Visionary Chinese Leader

China’s development is driven by strong domestic concerns and considerations. China’s increasing dependence on imports of energy and natural resources has been the main factor causing China to enter into economic agreements and strategic partnerships to an unprecedented degree with countries in e.g. Africa, Latin and South America, Central Asia and the Middle East. The current restructuring of the Chinese economy, where Chinese-driven innovation and technological development are at the top of the agenda, also drives the expansion of Chinese investments in and acquisition of foreign companies. The new tendencies in Chinese foreign and security policy are also to be traced back to President Xi Jinping, who as an unusual proactive and visionary Chinese leader is more willing than his predecessors to use economic and military tools to demonstrate and secure what Beijing considers legitimate Chinese spheres of interest. With President Xi Jinping, China has begun to present Chinese ideas and solutions and to launch new comprehensive Chinese initiatives. The most ambitious of these initiatives is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). With this initiative, China positions itself in the lead of efforts to generate regional and global economic growth and development by funding and establishing large-scale infrastructure projects such as high-speed train connections, modern roads and ports, oil and gas pipes as well as communication networks and cables. The BRI specifically aims to secure better and faster transport and communication connections between China and Europe, but also to the Middle East and Africa.

Increasing Strategic Significance of the Arctic

This ‘new era’ for China as a great power is also evident from the country’s ambitions and diplomatic behavior in the Arctic. China’s first Arctic White Paper released in late January 2018 states that China, due to its status, size and proximity to the Arctic, has legitimate interests in the region and should therefore be respected and included as an important stakeholder. Furthermore, it emphasizes that the Arctic should not be regarded as a demarcated region but has global implications and international impacts, and therefore it is not up to the Arctic states solely to establish the rules and norms for the future development of and access to the region and its
resources. Non-Arctic states like China also have a legitimate role to play and a right to engage in Arctic research, navigation, overflight and a series of economic activities such as resource extraction, fishery, cabling and piping. These are new directions. Previous Chinese official speeches and documents on the Arctic have taken a more modest and reluctant stance and underplayed China’s ambitions in the region. This played an important role in reducing the concern among the Arctic states and in 2013 paving the way for China’s membership of the Arctic Council as an observer state. However, among Chinese Arctic scholars and in internal Chinese documents characterizing the Arctic as a ‘common good’ has long been prevalent. November 2014 saw the first indications of how China’s more confident and ambitious foreign and security policy also included the Arctic. For the first time, President Xi Jinping characterized China as a ‘polar great power’ and directly linked the country’s ambitions in the polar regions, i.e. Arctic and Antarctica, to China’s goal of becoming a maritime great power. In his speech at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, President Xi Jinping further underlined Beijing’s goal to obtain world-class military might by 2050 including a Chinese navy capable of operating globally. With the opening of China’s first overseas military naval base in the East African country of Djibouti in August 2017, this is gradually beginning to materialize. The release of China’s first Arctic White Paper should be seen in light of these developments. It shows how the Arctic has moved up the Chinese leaders’ foreign and security policy agenda and is assigned increasing strategic significance.


Abstract:
China’s interest in the Arctic is not usually discussed thoroughly in its context of the core interests of the Chinese Communist Party: political stability, territorial integrity and economic growth. This article discusses the role of the Arctic in light of the crucial importance of energy and transportation security for continued political stability and economic growth in China. China has a global view of pursuing this security sourcing energy globally and developing its navy to ensure strategic capabilities to protect sea-lanes against state and non-state challenges. Political stability in China is believed by the Communist Party to rest on continued economic growth. China is deeply dependent on energy imports and expected to become more dependent in the future. For its energy, China is dependent on the Persian Gulf plagued by instability and militarily dominated by the USA. Equally the Chinese economy is dependent on exports, which makes China dependent on secure and preferably short sea-lanes to major markets. The strategic competitor, the USA, controls the sea lanes and choke points as the Strait of Malacca; in the Gulf of Aden,
piracy is a threat; while the Suez and Panama Canals are bottlenecks. Arctic energy and the Northern Sea Route offer some opportunities for diversification of sources and supply lines.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

China has a population of 1.3 billion people and an economy that has been growing at an average of 10% per year for three decades since the 1980s. In order to maintain the current economic growth rate, China has to make access to adequate energy supplies a national priority, and to a great extent a national security priority. China’s energy consumption has grown by leaps and bounds, and by 2006, it could be stated that China was “the world’s second largest consumer and third largest producer of primary energy. From 2000 to 2005, China’s energy consumption rose by 60 percent, accounting for almost half of the growth in world energy consumption” (Downs, 2006: 1). There is no sign that China’s energy consumption will slow down; on the contrary, it is expected to steadily increase. Modeling and scenario building for China looking all the way to 2100 forecast more than a doubling of China’s energy consumption, despite great gains in energy efficiency (Shan et al., 2012; Liu, Chen & Liu, 2011; Rout et al., 2011). What is of particular importance for discussing China and the Arctic is the much-expanded role of oil in the energy mix of China in the future, where China will steadily become more and more dependent on imported oil with consequences for China’s energy security. To reach its aim of a “harmonious society” and “the Chinese dream” of President Xi Jingping of doubling the 2010 GDP per capita by 2020 (the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party) and being a fully developed country by 2049 (the centennial of the People’s Republic of China) (Kuhn, 2013), China will have to utilize every fuel source available including investment on renewable energy and expansion of nuclear power. It is expected that China’s import of oil and natural gas will increase at a steady rate. In connection with its rising energy import, especially of oil, the issue of energy security becomes very important for China (Xu, 2006; Erickson & Collins, 2007; Leung, 2011; Zhang, 2011, 2012; Cao & Bluth, 2013; Rainwater, 2013).

The objective of this article is to discuss China’s nascent Arctic interests and strategy within the context of the core interests of the Chinese leadership and thus provide a framework for understanding its Arctic interests and strategy. In recent years China’s possible interests and strategy in the Arctic have received much initial media and policy interest with Jakobson (2010) as the landmark study and subsequently academic interest in the West and in China as referenced in this article. We seek to place Chinese Arctic interest and possible strategy in the broader context of Chinese leadership core interests.

It is therefore the argument of this article that China’s Arctic interests and possible strategy must be seen within the context of China’s phenomenal economic and
political rise, how the Chinese leadership manages this rise as a “Peaceful Rise”, and how the existing dominant Western and other powers in the international system respond to this rise. China sees itself as a rising power with a legitimate role in the governance of regions around the world, including the Arctic, which leads China to pursue, for instance, a science agenda worthy of a great power (Jakobson, 2010; Lasserre, 2010; Blunden, 2012; Jakobson & Peng, 2012; Jakobson, & Lee 2013). Science is the first step and bridgehead for China into the Arctic to pursue interests defined by the core interests of the Chinese leadership: political stability, territorial integrity and economic growth. Therefore, China’s scientific involvement in the Arctic and other Arctic activities should be seen in the context of these core interests (Jakobson & Peng, 2012; Jakobson & Lee, 2013).

China defines itself as a “socialist market economy” (People’ Daily, 2007) and is governed by a Communist Party, whose legitimacy is based on economic and nationalist performance. This leadership sees its survival based on delivering economic growth, which is where the Arctic comes in in a number of ways. Much of Chinese science focuses on climate change, and Arctic climate change is of importance for Chinese climate and therefore agriculture and food security, which translates into social stability and legitimacy for the Communist Party. Secondly, as pointed out, the phenomenal Chinese growth has made China into a major importer of sea-borne energy and raw materials. The sea-lanes of the world are dominated completely by the United States Navy and occasionally troubled by piracy, which both raises important energy and transportation security issues for China – perhaps in strategic competition with the USA, and certainly not allied with them. Diversifying and eventually protecting sources and supply routes of energy and raw materials therefore becomes a strategic objective for China, which brings the Arctic into the picture (Laliberté & Lanteigne, 2008; Pan & Zhou, 2010; Blunden, 2012; Hong, 2012a, 2012b; Jakobson, 2010; Jakobson & Peng, 2012; Jakobson & Lee, 2013; Rainwater, 2013; Xia 2011).

**Chinese Energy and Maritime Transportation Security and the Arctic**

China is facing energy and maritime transportation security challenges from state and non-state actors; and will be increasingly dependent on oil and natural gas imports to continue its path of growth, which is the basis for the core interests of the Chinese leadership and perceived to be the basis of its political survival. These security challenges and their effect on core interests are the context of China’s interests and possible strategy in the Arctic.

**Conclusion**

China has experienced phenomenal growth since the open-door policy of Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s. This growth has made China into an emerging super power and strategic competitor of the USA. It has also made China into one of the world’s major importers of energy (especially oil) and raw materials. China’s growth
has been based on manufacturing for export, real-estate and infrastructure, which has been highly energy and raw material intensive, while energy, raw materials and exports overwhelmingly travel by sea. China describes itself as a socialist market economy and is governed by a Communist Party, which bases its legitimacy on economic and nationalist performance. The interlinked core interests of the national leadership are, therefore, political stability, territorial integrity and economic growth. The international systemic framework for China’s development is US hegemony and global naval domination, while China is a rising continental power but a historically weak sea power. This complex raises a number of energy and maritime transportation security issues for China. For energy, China is much dependent on the Persian Gulf, which is unstable and militarily dominated by the USA. The energy, raw materials and exports which are crucial for the core interests of the Chinese leadership travel on sea lanes dominated by strategic competitors such as the USA or India or are threatened by piracy. These energy and maritime transport security challenges are the framework for China’s nascent Arctic interests and possible strategy.

China’s soaring demand for energy in connection with its export-oriented economy poses a variety of new challenges for its foreign policy: the country will become more and more dependent on the purchase of natural resources abroad for sustaining its economic development. Any crisis to its access to overseas resource and maritime shipping routes will have a negative impact on China’s growth and trade-dependent economy. China will endeavor to protect the strategic areas concerning its national interest. In recent years China’s energy diplomacy in the context of the political economy of global energy developments has drawn the attention of the West especially in connection with the sensitive regions, such as the Middle East and Africa. As one Chinese scholar bluntly states, “the determining factor shaping the rise and fall of a country ultimately is not just the size of its total economic volume but also the strategic ability of the country; that is, the ability to use national forces to achieve political goals” (Zhang, 2006: 22).

Perhaps the greatest change to the international system of the 21st century will be the rise of China. As a rising power on a global scale, China sees itself as a legitimate stakeholder and participant in the governance of regions around the world, including the Arctic. China is therefore availing itself of Arctic science commensurate with its global role and pursuing a role in Arctic governance both through permanent observership in the Arctic Council and diplomatic engagement of smaller Arctic nations. However, China is a global power with global interests, and the Arctic is one of many regions of importance to energy and shipping (Lasserre 2010; Alexeeva & Lasserre 2012a, 2012b; Blunden 2012; Jakobson & Lee 2013; Stensdal 2013; Stokke 2013).

“Arctic security: evolution of Arctic security dynamics and prospect for a security regime in the Arctic,” Deng Beixi, Advances in Polar Science, 23 September 2016
Abstract:

The security dynamics in the Arctic since the Cold War has transitioned from militarization, to de-militarization, and to re-militarization. Under the circumstances of ongoing globalization and climate change, the Arctic states have accorded priority to the enhancement of military capacities in the region, with a view to safeguarding sovereign rights, ensuring navigation security of Arctic waterways, responding to contingencies and guaranteeing civil security. Such military capacity-building measures are otherwise interpreted as initiatives to resume arms race in the Arctic, which would be contributive to the security dilemma. Subject to the structural competition of the U.S. – Russia rivalry, there has long been an absence of a security regime in the Arctic. Nevertheless, the build-up of security regimes in the Arctic constitutes a major concern for the Arctic states, as well as for some extra-regional stakeholders. In the Arctic regional context, the ever-intensifying institutional cooperation in the domains of nontraditional and civil security lays the cornerstone for establishing confidence-building measures, and gives rise to the consensus that maintaining cooperation in the Arctic will be mutually rewarding for all.

Current & Relevant Information:

Implications of Arctic security for China

China, as an Arctic extra-regional state, has no conflicts of interest with the Arctic states in terms of sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdictions in the Arctic region. However, this does not mean that the security situation in the Arctic is unrelated to China. On one hand, as a potential user of Arctic resources and sea routes, China is seeking regional peace and stability for its engagement in Arctic development cooperation. On the other hand, with China being a state situated in the mid-latitudes of Northern Hemisphere, the weaponry (e.g. missile defense systems and nuclear submarines) and military installations that both Russia and the U.S. have deployed in the Arctic, impose deterrence against China. The absolute advantages of Russia and the U.S. in terms of Arctic air supremacy and mastery of the strategic channels (e.g. the Bering Strait) pose challenges as well to China’s potential commercial use of Arctic sea routes. In addition, as an official statement of China’s Arctic policy still appears to be vague, China’s engagement in Arctic issues tends to be labeled as “China’s emerging threat” or “China’s hunger for Arctic resources” with the hypothesis that China is unsatisfied with its observer status within the Arctic Council, and China is therefore thought likely to become a revisionist power attempting to transform the current Arctic order and to re-allocate rights and the
interests in the Arctic. Accordingly, while paying close attention to the development of Arctic security dynamics, China should wisely participate in the multilateral cooperation in low politics and non-traditional security such as SAR, and prevention of marine oil pollution in the Arctic. In doing so China can build mutual trust with the Arctic states and contribute to shaping a stable political environment favorable to China’s engagement in sustainable and cooperative Arctic development.


Summary:

The geopolitical landscape of the Arctic today is a significant departure from the great power politics of the Cold War. Apart from traditional Arctic states, far more international organizations and non-Arctic states are showing an increased interest in the Arctic. This report explores the growing interests of China in the Arctic and examines the motivations behind its involvement in the region. China's interests range from participating in Arctic governance, promoting bilateral diplomacy in the Arctic area, accessing potential resources, exploiting shipping opportunities and undertaking polar research. Thus far, China's involvement in the Arctic has been fairly low-profile. Since obtaining observer status on the Arctic Council in 2013, China has modestly bolstered its bilateral relations with Arctic states and participated in the development of resources in the region.

The State Council Information Office of China published a white paper titled "China’s Arctic Policy" on January 26, 2018. China’s policy goals in the Arctic are shaped by four key principles—to understand, protect, develop and participate in the governance of the Arctic. In order to realize these policy goals, the white paper emphasizes the need for “respect, cooperation, win-win result and sustainability.” These policy goals and principles are reflected in the respective areas that China has shown interest in, which are analyzed in this report.

China’s Arctic white paper is the result of policymakers’ careful deliberation. It also reflects the longstanding expectations of researchers, countries and international organizations involved in Arctic governance. The recent expansion of China’s role has invited international suspicion of its intentions in the Arctic, especially from council member states. China’s new white paper spells out its intentions for the Arctic and should relieve some concerns over its transparency and commitment to international law.

China’s Arctic strategy is only just beginning to unfold and still faces many challenges, including the Arctic states’ disputes over territorial sovereignty, vigilance among certain countries, the natural environment in the Arctic region and China’s
technological constraints. Nevertheless, with China’s newly released Arctic policy white paper, China has emphasized a key theme—cooperation.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The geopolitical landscape of the Arctic today is a significant departure from the great power politics that existed in the region during the Cold War. The supremacy of the military presence and security interests of the two superpowers during that time have now been replaced by the multiple political interests of the eight North Pole states, dominated mainly by the military and security interests and naval capacity of Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway and Denmark. Through the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008, these five Arctic coastal states (the Arctic Five) have asserted the predominant role in addressing both territorial issues and emerging issues related to resource development in the Arctic region (Yeager, 2008).

The exclusivity of Arctic governance has been challenged by the activities of states from outside the region, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Japan, South Korea and India; these states are taking a special interest in many aspects of the Arctic that focus on scientific research, shipping and resource development. Estimated oil and gas reserves in the continental shelves of the northern seas and visions of new trans-Arctic sea routes are also attractive to transnational corporations that are increasingly interested in the potential commercial value of Arctic energy resources (Robinson 2007: 21). This report explores the growing interests of China in the Arctic and examines the nature of its interests and motivations in wanting to maintain its involvement and presence in the region. China’s interests range from participating in Arctic governance and accessing potential resources to exploiting shipping opportunities and undertaking polar research.

Vigilance among Arctic states

China has actively sought to have a say in Arctic affairs through multilateral and bilateral means. Unfortunately, China’s intentions have been met with suspicion by Arctic states. China’s application to become a permanent observer of the Arctic Council was rejected three times before being approved, which demonstrates the vigilance of the Arctic states, especially the five coastal states bordering the Arctic Sea.

Of the five coastal states, the most vigilant are Russia and Canada. These two states seek to control the northern and north-western sea lanes respectively, but China has yet to recognize their rights over these two lanes (Jakobson 2013). Russia in particular has shown serious bias against China’s attempts to join the Arctic Council. Ever since Russia planted its flag on the Arctic seabed in 2007, China has paid a great deal of attention to the region. In 2012, after China’s
icebreaker Xue Long (Snow Dragon) finished its fifth scientific survey in the Arctic region, it returned to Shanghai through the northern sea lane of the Arctic, which runs along the Russian coast. Because this sea lane has been emblematic of Russian influence, it is natural that the expansion of China’s influence would invite vigilance from Russia.

China’s growing interest in the Arctic has enhanced the vigilance of the Russian military, which is highly sensitive to security issues. In a rare public warning to China in 2010, Russian Navy Commander Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky said “We are observing the penetration of a host of states which...are advancing their interests very intensively, in every possible way, in particular China,” and stressed that Russia would increase its military presence in the Arctic to defend Russia’s interests (Reuters 2010). In 2012, Russia resumed its live-fire drills in Arctic waters. In February 2013, Russian President Vladimir Putin remarked in a conversation that Russia’s interests in the Arctic were under threat and necessitated enhanced military actions. In September 2013, Russia announced that it would reopen a military base in the New Siberian Islands and resume its former permanent military presence there.

Canada also harbors suspicions against China, which are equal to if not greater than those of Russia. In 2012, an opinion poll conducted by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada showed that only 12 percent of Canadians had a favorable impression of China, and 29 percent had an unfavorable impression. Although Canadian officials do not show vigilance against China, the Canadian academic community has shown suspicion. Professors David Wright and Rob Huebert from University of Calgary and Victor Suthren from the Canadian War Museum are concerned about China’s stance on Arctic affairs. For example, they assume that China believes the Arctic is open to the international community and does not acknowledge Canadian sovereignty over northwestern sea lanes. Canada is also suspicious of China’s desire for resources, sea lanes and strategic positions in the Arctic region; China’s accelerated pace of military modernization suggests the possibility that China might enhance its military presence in the region. Commodore Tyrone Pile, Commander of the Canadian Fleet Atlantic, was quoted by the Calgary Herald as saying that the Chinese Navy would soon have twice as many submarines as the U.S. Navy, leading the newspaper to ask whether Canada was prepared to defend its Arctic sovereignty (Lackenbauer and Manicom 2013: 3-5).

Interestingly, Canada is the Arctic state that seems the most concerned about what China’s Arctic policy white paper will mean for them. Canadian experts say that China’s Arctic policy is attempting to tread a line between respecting the sovereignty of Arctic nations like Canada and the United States, and leaving room to benefit from disputes under international law. Language used in the white paper—such as “respect for international law”—is viewed by scholars like Robert Huebert and
professor Frédéric Lasserre of Université Laval to be an attempt to articulate limits on member states’ sovereignty.

Even non-coastal states in the Arctic are suspicious of China. Iceland has rejected a Chinese businessman’s attempts to buy its land twice, suspecting that he might build a harbor there even though Iceland was assured that the land would be used to build a golf course (The Disaffected Lib 2013). The attitudes of Iceland and Russia signal that China will encounter many challenges in future efforts to take part in Arctic affairs.

Still, the white paper sends a positive signal to Chinese researchers and policy practitioners who now have clear strategic guidance. The international community, including Arctic Council member states, have welcomed the transparency and increased confidence China shows in participating in Arctic governance. As China experiences rapid military and economic growth, suspicions regarding its global strategic intentions as it moves towards the Arctic are unavoidable. The white paper integrates the Chinese narrative into Western discourse, defining itself as an important stakeholder. This narrative has won recognition and respect from the international community and serves to reduce concerns from the Arctic Council member states (Hong 2018).

Conclusion

China’s interests range from participating in Arctic governance affairs, promoting bilateral diplomacy in the Arctic area and accessing potential resources to exploiting shipping opportunities and undertaking polar research. Thus far, China’s involvement in the Arctic has been fairly low-profile. Since obtaining observer status on the Arctic Council in 2013, China has modestly bolstered its bilateral relations with Arctic states and participated in the development of resources in the region.

The recently published white paper titled “China's Arctic Policy” implies that the policy goals on the Arctic are shaped by four key principles—to understand, protect, develop and participate in the governance of the Arctic. In order to realize these policy goals, the white paper emphasizes the need for “respect, cooperation, win-win result and sustainability."

China’s Arctic strategy is only just beginning to unfold and still faces many challenges, including the Arctic states’ disputes over territorial sovereignty, vigilance among certain countries, the natural environment in the Arctic region and China’s technological constraints. Nevertheless, with China’s newly released Arctic policy white paper, China has emphasized a key theme—cooperation.

2. Geopolitical Environment:

Overview:

Chairperson Levitt, Deputy Chairperson O'Toole, Deputy Chairperson Laverdière, and other distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon. I am a Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation, where I have conducted research and authored several publications on the Arctic, with a focus on the geopolitical implications of the region’s changing physical environment. While RAND’s research does not address specific policy recommendations for the Canadian government, my goal for today is to provide the committee with information to support its decision-making.

My contribution today will focus on two changes that have altered the geopolitical environment in the Arctic over the past five to ten years. One change is the increased assertiveness of one Arctic nation, Russia, in the region. The second change is the rising presence of non-Arctic states—including, but not limited to, China—in a part of the world that used to be almost exclusively of interest to Arctic states. I will examine the origins and implications of both developments, focusing on the challenges—and, at times, opportunities—that they pose to Arctic states and to Canada in particular.

Current & Relevant Information:

**China’s Role in the Arctic: What Impact Can So-Called “Near-Arctic States” Have on the Region?**

NATO’s renewed, albeit still cautious, interest in the Arctic is yet another example of what Arctic states might see as a growing trend in the region—the increased interest of non-Arctic states in Arctic issues. The most powerful and significant of these newcomers is China.

To be fair, China’s interest in polar issues is not new. China has a strong track record of research and scientific expeditions in Antarctica since the 1980s, and in the Arctic since the 1990s. Its range of interests in the Arctic has since widened and is becoming more focused on extractive, commercial, and shipping domains. In 2017, 11 of the 27 vessels that transited through the NSR originated from or were going to a Chinese port. In January 2018, China issued its first Arctic policy, which highlights in its very first paragraph China’s most fundamental belief when it comes to the region: The Arctic is a global issue that cannot be left to Arctic states alone. China describes itself as a “Near Arctic State,” a term that it defines as “one of the continental States that are closest to the Arctic Circle.” China also makes clear that it sees the Arctic as an area of economic and investment potential, envisioning a “Polar Silk Road” integrated to its larger Belt and Road Initiative.
So far, China has remained within the boundaries of existing treaties and principles regulating Arctic affairs, and its Arctic Strategy reaffirms the authority of these rules. Increased Chinese interest also presents precious opportunities for Arctic communities, many of which are in dire need of investment and infrastructure. Yet this interest also raises various concerns. Based on China’s aggressive behavior in the South China Sea, China might similarly try to impose its own interpretation of maritime international law in other regions, if the stakes are high enough. In addition, China’s large investments need to be secured, and economic involvement might eventually lead to some form of military presence. China’s political leverage through economic investments might have destabilizing consequences, for instance on the delicate Greenland-Mainland Denmark relationship—last March, Greenland shortlisted a Chinese company to develop three of its airports, to the dismay of the Danish government—or in relation to environmental or labor regulations. Chinese investments in certain areas, such as communications, media, and new technologies, potentially create opportunities for undue political influence or uncontrolled transfers of sensitive data or technologies. For example, China’s construction of an observatory for northern lights in Iceland has raised concerns that the facility might be used for surveillance, rather than research.

So far, Arctic nations have cautiously welcomed China’s willingness to play a larger role in the Arctic. China has been an observer state to the Arctic Council since 2013, and it has joint projects with several Arctic nations—particularly Russia, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Iceland—some of which are at the exploration or prospecting stages. Chinese investments are so far relatively modest, with the exception of the Yamal LNG project with Russia.

Arctic nations are also setting limits. In 2011, Iceland blocked the sale of a large plot of land to a Chinese investor; in 2016, Denmark declined to sell a vacant naval base in Greenland to a Chinese mining company; and in that same year, a projected Chinese resort in Svalbard, under Norwegian sovereignty, was canceled. Each Arctic state—often under public pressure—is setting its own limits when it comes to welcoming Chinese presence.

Russia’s approach toward China shows a similar mix of interest and caution. China is a key investor in Russia’s Yamal LNG project, and Chinese funds are particularly welcome, as Russia has been shunned by some of its more traditional investors since its annexation of Crimea. Russia also welcomes Chinese interest in developing port infrastructure along the NSR. Yet Russia is also very much intent on keeping the NSR under its control. This may eventually create tensions with China, as China sees the NSR as one element of the Belt and Road Initiative and will resent obstacles to its free use of the route (the alternative route, the Northwestern Passage along the northern shore of Canada, is not considered a viable replacement because of poor navigation conditions and a lack of infrastructure). While Russia and China are formally allies through the Shanghai Cooperation
Organization, Russia remains wary of China’s military power on its southern border and, as an Arctic nation, is irritated by the intrusion in Arctic affairs of non-Arctic states, as evidenced by its long-standing reluctance to grant observer status to these countries in the Arctic Council.

Because of the economic and military power that China commands, the level of concern triggered by its interest in the Arctic is without equivalent. However, it is not the only non-Arctic state to develop an Arctic policy and look for a deeper commitment to the region. Most other observer states to the Arctic Council have an Arctic strategy, a polar strategy, or at least some official guidelines regarding their Arctic policy. Most recently, in September 2018, the United Kingdom released a Defense Arctic strategy that highlights a closer training relationship with Norway and intensified surveillance of submarine activity in the Arctic. India is now investing in Russia’s extractive industry in the Arctic. It remains to be seen whether, like China, these non-Arctic nations see themselves as “near Arctic states” that cannot leave the leadership of a strategic region to eight nations only; and whether they might find it advantageous to coalesce as a group of like-minded countries to seek more political and decisional weight both within the Arctic Council and in other international fora.

So far, the approach of Arctic states has been to coopt non-Arctic states rather than exclude them. Most have been eventually accepted as observer states in the Arctic Council, and they are participating in the development of new rules for the Arctic. For instance, China—along with Japan and South Korea, as well as the European Union—has participated in the discussions that eventually led to prohibiting commercial fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean. Yet Arctic nations have made clear that the broader legal background for such development should remain the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other existing principles of international law. As stated in the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, they reject the development of new international rules specifically for the Arctic—an equivalent of the Antarctica Treaty—as such a treaty would require painful negotiations and would likely be less advantageous for them than the current system.

To conclude, I would highlight what I see as perhaps the biggest change occurring in the Arctic, and the one that is of most significance for Canada and other Arctic states: The Arctic, which used to be the ultimate periphery, is slowly but surely turning into a center—a center of economic activity and investment, a shipping hub, a transit point between areas of strategic interest, and a military chokepoint. The Arctic connects Russia’s oil and gas industries to Asian markets; China’s manufactured goods to European markets; and Russia’s Northern Fleet to the Atlantic sea lanes and, further south, the Mediterranean. This is not a projection but the current situation, and these trends will only become more pronounced over time, as the NSR becomes more routinely navigable; communications and maritime awareness improve; and, eventually, a brand-new Transpolar Route opens. Canada
and other Arctic states face the key challenge of balancing their sovereign interests against the ever-growing interest of non-Arctic nations.


Abstract:

The Arctic is changing. Facing challenges driven by resource demands, changing power relations and climate change, the top of the world demands the attention of European states and EU officials. This paper examines the main geopolitical issues in the Arctic, such as the development of the region’s energy resources, the underlying potential for conflict and the increasing presence of China in the region. It argues that to unpack the region’s complexities, we need to recognize the diversity within the Arctic across a range of issues and to differentiate different levels of analysis: the international and the regional. Furthermore, this paper argues that the EU’s approach to the north suffers as a result of a general deficiency in EU external policies, namely incoherence and a multitude of voices and opinions. To have a more effective Arctic policy, the EU needs to distinguish between the different levels outlined here, raise awareness of the issues facing the Arctic among its member states and politicians, and better communicate the relevance of the Union to Arctic states. The EU must view the Arctic primarily as a long-term strategic priority and as an area of growing geopolitical importance.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

In 2006–7, researchers, policymakers and the media alike began making a range of claims about the future of the Arctic. Climate change is accelerating the melting of the ice in the north. Coupled with high oil prices and positive estimates of the region’s hydrocarbon resources, this led to the Arctic being portrayed as both the world’s new energy frontier and the northern ‘shortcut’ to Asia. As the Arctic littoral states—Denmark (Greenland), the US, Russia, Norway and Canada—placed the north on their domestic and foreign policy agendas, and non-Arctic states such as Japan, France, Germany and China expressed interest in the region, predictions were made that the Arctic would become the next arena for geopolitical conflict.

Since then world events have taken a turn. The fall in the price of oil and gas transformed hopeful Arctic resource projects into unprofitable ventures. Russian ice-breaker levies and high operating costs turned trans-Arctic shipping into a long-term prospect. The focus shifted to northern industries that were already profitable, such as mining, tourism and fisheries. Simplistic predictions about an Arctic ‘boom’ turned into equally simplistic forecasts of an Arctic ‘bust’. However, as Russia’s relationship with the ‘West’ deteriorated in 2014 over Ukraine and later Syria, headlines warning
of an imminent confrontation in the Arctic reappeared. This time it was not the region’s resources that were fueling a scramble: it was the region’s growing strategic importance for NATO, Russia and even China. The result of these predictions, however, turned out to be the same: Arctic states have been, and still are, placing pieces on the chessboard in advance of an imminent geopolitical conflict in the north.

However, studies were quick to point out that many of the Arctic predictions were largely inaccurate, whether they had been made before or after Russia’s annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea region in 2014. Over the past decade scholars have produced more balanced depictions of the dynamics both within the region as a whole and among the various actors with a stake in the Arctic. Moreover, foreign ministries in Arctic states have been particularly active in emphasizing the ‘peaceful’ and ‘cooperative’ traits of the region. Even China—an actor prompting a sense of skepticism and uncertainty in northern countries—has played according to the Arctic ‘rule book’. It has reiterated the primacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and in its White Paper on the Arctic, it emphasizes the importance of cooperation. Finally, those inhabiting the Arctic region—indigenous as well as non-indigenous peoples—have been demanding the right to partake in decision-making forums concerned with Arctic development and have been insisting that there should be less talk about geopolitics and quick business opportunities.

There thus seems to be a multitude of actors, layers and levels at play—the situation warrants further unpacking. The main question this paper asks is, what are the geopolitical characteristics of the Arctic region? By extension, how accurate are the predictions of conflict in and over the Arctic? What is the role of China in all this? And what do these developments entail for the EU and for its ambitions to be an Arctic actor? To answer these relatively large questions in a limited amount of space, a few key points will be made. First, we need to divide the analysis into different levels. This means that, instead of treating all issues as interrelated and part of one picture, we have to differentiate the systemic (international) level from its regional (Arctic) counterpart. In this way we will be able to disentangle some of the arguments already mentioned. Second, when examining issues within each level, we need to recognize the inherent diversity of the region. The paper will show that when we think of Arctic security, it makes more sense to divide the area into subregions: The North American Arctic, on the one hand, and the Eurasian Arctic, on the other. Finally, it is not possible to boil down the dynamics of the Arctic to an antithesis between conflict and non-conflict.

What about China?

There have been a great many reactions from Arctic states and Arctic actors to China’s involvement in the top of the world since 2007–8. How can we explain China’s involvement in the north, and what are its interests in the Arctic?
These questions have three dimensions: two are region-specific and one is connected to the systemic level described in the previous section. First, China has a considerable research presence in the Arctic, particularly on Svalbard; moreover, it is investing in research equipment and infrastructure destined for the Arctic. This research is mainly focused on natural science and utilizing the Arctic—as many scientists are—as a testing ground for climate predictions and for examining the effects of human activities further south. In a country with ambitious research agendas, a wide range of scholars and researchers are pushing for China to become involved in the Arctic for such purposes.

Second, China has stated economic interests in the north. These range from ensuring it has an advantageous position in the development of the Northern Sea Route, to investing in infrastructure projects and extractive industries. China’s One Belt One Road initiative has an Arctic dimension known as the ‘Ice Silk Road’. It entails exploring how northern sea-lanes, in tandem with rail capacity, can add to the country’s world trade links. The Chinese ‘Silk Road Fund’ and the China National Petroleum Corporation have 9.9% and 20% stakes, respectively, in the large-scale Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas project in Arctic Russia. This ties Russia and China closer together in the development of Arctic gas resources. As well as long-term prospects and strategic investments, immediate economic prospects are undoubtedly of relevance to China’s Arctic endeavor.

Finally, China’s involvement in the Arctic also concerns its position as an emerging superpower. As China continues to assert its influence on the world stage, the Arctic will be only one of many regions where presence and interaction are components of an expansion of power in both soft and hard terms. Ensuring Chinese interests, ranging from businesses to opinions on developments related to the Law of the Sea, is a natural part of this expansion, just as it has been for the US over the last half-century. Limited tension between Arctic actors and China might arise, but the Arctic is still predominantly a harsh and challenging domain where the Arctic states will retain their primacy. What is more likely is that the impact of conflicts elsewhere, including those involving China, would spill over into the Arctic. This would be due, not to the Arctic’s resources or to internal power struggles, but to the strategic importance of the Arctic and the importance it holds for some NATO countries and for Russia.

However, Chinese officials have made few comments on the importance of the Arctic to China. References have been made to China as a ‘near Arctic state’, a situation which demands involvement. At the same time, China is not accepted as an Arctic state and has largely been excluded from regional politics. It has pursued a low-profile approach to the region focused on cooperation—often bilateral—with the Arctic states. In tune with policy documents in all circumpolar states, Beijing has emphasized principles such as cooperation, win–win results and sustainability. In late 2016, Norway and China resumed normal diplomatic relations, which had been
in limbo since the Nobel Peace Prize Committee awarded the prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2010. China has also taken steps to strengthen relations with all Nordic countries over the last decade. The Arctic has similarly been a component in Beijing’s efforts to expand relations with both Russia and Canada in recent years.

With the White Paper launched in the spring of 2018, China signaled its desire to be taken seriously as an Arctic actor, even though it is not an Arctic state in geographical terms. China is now entering a new phase of its northern endeavor, emboldened by its international stature and relationship with Russia. It remains to be seen exactly how this will translate into concrete policies or actions, such as those connected to One Belt One Road. Relations between Arctic countries and those non-Arctic countries that are present in the region are thus likely to be significantly affected by the broader ongoing power shift in the international system, that is, the rise of China. In the short-to-medium term, relations between the two sets of countries are likely to be shaped more by developments outside the region than by those within it. And in the Arctic, Russia and—increasingly—China hold central positions.

Especially relevant are the questions of China’s adherence to UNCLOS and how it views the role of this international regime in relation to its own Arctic interests. So far UNCLOS has been the strongest guarantee of mutual interests in a cooperative region, supporting the interests of the Arctic states themselves. Challenges to this regime could arise from developments in high-seas fisheries and/or protected marine areas, overlapping continental seabed claims or the increasingly common discussions on the status of Arctic sea-lanes. Such challenges could spur questions about the flexibility and adaptability of UNCLOS in a context characterized by changing power dynamics and climatic change. Here China plays a key role.

**Conclusion**

The Arctic will keep growing in importance to northern states and the international community for two intertwined reasons: (1) the unremitting disappearance of the Arctic sea ice will allow for more activity, and (2) some of the world’s greatest powers are investing in, and focusing on, the region. However, the dynamics of this region cannot be boiled down to the mutually exclusive options of conflict or no conflict. A race for Arctic resources or territory is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future, despite the territorial land grabs that have been occurring in other parts of the world. Thus, it is not the influence of geography on politics that has the potential to cause conflict in the Arctic.

At the same time, the region’s growing importance within the international system is becoming increasingly apparent. In this regard the Arctic stands as an arena where the US, Russia and China interact with the EU. Here the EU has several roles to play. It can ensure that its member states and institutions are aware of the complexities of the region, whether these relate to the livelihoods of indigenous
peoples or to Russia’s (and other Arctic states’) military investments. The EU should only involve itself in the Arctic in a regional (and non-threatening) manner. Beyond this, the EU needs to recognize the increasing importance of the Arctic within the international system and the role the Union plays in shaping the region. This it can do by setting clear visionary goals in line with its own interests as the world’s second largest economy, after China.

https://lauda.ulapland.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/63191/Hossain.Kamrul.pdf?sequence=1

Overview:

The Arctic region consists of both the terrestrial landmasses of the eight circumpolar states and the approximately 14 million square kilometer marine area of the Arctic Ocean. The vast landscape of the entire Arctic is the size of the African continent. Much of the region, particularly the marine area, is ice-covered throughout most of the year. Ice never melts in the central Arctic Ocean, but during the summer months, many parts of the regional seas around the ocean open up to maritime access. The ice thickness throughout the Arctic Ocean, including the central ocean, however, is shrinking at an accelerating rate. Climate change is suggested to contribute to increasing global temperatures, and in the Arctic, temperatures are rising two to three times more quickly than the global average, resulting in much faster melting of ice sheets. Ice melting, while creating challenges for the Arctic environment, also presents new opportunities as access to the Arctic Ocean gradually becomes feasible. The Arctic is known to be a resource-rich region with potential reserves of offshore oil and gas and other terrestrial mineral resources. Moreover, navigation through the newly emerging Arctic sea routes is gradually gaining in popularity despite the challenges to develop these routes as alternatives to traditional routes. Against this background, this brief paper emphasizes that despite challenges, particularly environmental and human security threats, emerging global geopolitical interests related to resource potential and maritime transportation of resources make the Arctic a focal point of global attention.

Current & Relevant Information:

Global Geopolitical Interests in the Arctic

The region’s resource potential, along with the increase in marine navigation through the new Arctic routes, has allowed a broad expansion of trade and investment that increasingly connects the Arctic with rest of the world, including the emerging economies of Asian nations. It is claimed that the Arctic is gradually becoming an important region, offering new economic frontiers for global actors and stakeholders. Access to ice-free Arctic Ocean, as discussed, not only leads to intensified extraction of its living and non-living resources but also offers maritime access for
international navigation, which global actors see as beneficial for increasing potential trade and investment in the region. Emerging Asian nations, including China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore—which in 2013 became official observers to the Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental forum of the eight Arctic states—are exploring opportunities to build business relationships with the Arctic nations.

China—often labeled an energy-hungry nation—is on the frontlines of these developments. As its economy grows rapidly, China seeks to diversify its energy imports and sees Arctic resources, particularly Russian oil and gas resources, as potential targets to meet its growing energy demands. As bilateral relations with Russia improve, China is expected to double its oil imports from Russia by 2020 and has agreed to cooperate in building gas pipelines starting in 2018. China also meets its needs by investing in the energy sector elsewhere in the Arctic. For example, in 2013, China bought Nexen, a Canadian oil and gas company, for $15 billion. Chinese investment in the Arctic countries extend to the development of other mineral and mining resources, particularly rare-earth elements, in which China has a 95% ownership share today. Five Chinese mining companies hold licenses to explore and develop rare earth elements in Greenland. It should be noted that China is considered to be the world leader in refining rare earth elements. Moreover, China has established a free trade deal with Iceland, its first European partner in such an agreement. After the United States closed its Cold War era military base in Iceland in 2006, China expanded its presence in the region, making China the gateway to potential business investments in the Arctic.

China also increasingly uses the Arctic shipping routes and considers the implication of the use of the routes in its Belt and Road Initiative policy. It should be noted that China is among the most important nations in international maritime trade. Chinese ownership of vessels ranks fourth in the world, and the country carries 90% of its exports and imports through maritime transport. Moreover, Chinese ship owners control 8.91% of total world tonnage, making the country both the world’s leading export nation and an important importer of goods and raw materials. The first Chinese cargo ship reached Europe via the NSR in the summer of 2013, and China tested its icebreaker Xue Long on the NSR in 2012. It is expected that by 2020, 5%-15% of China’s trade with Europe will travel by the NSR.

In addition to China, other influential Asian nations, such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, are also considering the future potential of the Arctic. For example, Japan—the world’s largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG), second largest importer of coal, and third largest importer of oil—views the Arctic as an alternative source to meet its increasing energy demand. Japan has planned LNG shipments from Norway and Russia in 2018, explored the potential of the NSR to transport these resources, and invested in maritime capacity building by developing (or transferring) new technology. South Korea has a similar interest in energy resources and has invested in building ice-strength cargo ships capable of operating on the
Arctic routes. Singapore has a great interest in offshore activities in the Arctic and is exploring the potential to use its lengthy maritime experiences to contribute knowledge and develop the shipping industry.

While these developments suggest increasing interest in the Arctic among global actors, the region’s importance is also, to some extent, shaped by its role in the politics of the great powers, particularly China. The Arctic’s rise as an influential global actor in economics and politics gives it a say in global politics. The US perceives a threat from China’s development of closer relations between China and Russia, including transporting energy resources from the latter.

“A Russian Perspective on China’s Arctic Role,” Nadezhda Filimonova and Svetlana Krivokhizh, The Diplomat, 27 September 2014 [16]


Overview:

On September 1, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli launched the construction of one of the largest joint gas projects in the world – the Sila Sibiri (Power of Siberia) pipeline. The pipeline will deliver gas from Siberia in the Yakutia Republic (Chayandinskoye field) and Irkutsk region (Kovyktinskoye field) to China and Russia’s Far East. Putin has also announced the possibility of Chinese companies joining in the exploration of Rosneft's biggest production asset, Vankor Field, from which gas is delivered to China in line with the accord signed between Rosneft and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) in 2013. Earlier this year, privately owned Russian gas producer Novatek signed a deal with CNPC for the annual delivery of three million tons of liquefied natural gas from their joint Yamal LNG project for the next 20 years. Rosneft is also negotiating a joint exploration of the Barents and Pechora Seas’ shelves with CNPC.

Current & Relevant Information:

In recent years the Russian government has been reluctant to allow Chinese companies to take a stake in Russian oil and natural gas fields. However, with a changing geopolitical situation, marked by highly tense relations with Europe over Ukraine and China’s transformation into the world’s second largest economy, the Russian state seems to be making its own pivot to Asia. Therefore, joint Sino-Russian energy projects, particularly in the Russian part of the Arctic, are becoming an area for strengthening bilateral cooperation. For Russia this collaboration may help to improve two crucial issues: increased energy security and strengthening economic cooperation with the Asia Pacific. For China this will ensure diversification of its oil and gas imports and help supply its growing energy demands. Such initiatives are also backed by the Russian energy companies Gazprom, Rosneft and Novatek, which consider energy cooperation with China a way to diversify their
energy exports. However, there are a number of factors that will influence Russia’s position on China’s involvement in the High North.

For Russia the Arctic region has always been a part of the state’s vital economic and national security interests. During the Soviet era the Russian part of the Arctic was closed to foreigners. Only in the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, did the situation change. The Northern Sea Route was finally opened to foreign ships, and international energy companies were invited to develop energy projects in the Russian High North. The prime motivation for Russia to attract more participants to such projects at present is that the country desperately needs foreign investment and technology to develop its shipping and oil and gas industries, as well as overcome environmental risks. Without large-scale investment and expertise, these initiatives are likely to be poorly implemented. At the same time, security concerns are pushing Russia to bolster its military capacity in the Arctic by reestablishing bases and reequipping its forces to guarantee human safety and protect its sovereignty in the region.

That is one of the reasons why Russia maintains a rather rigid position on preserving the region only for the Arctic states. Its stance was articulated in the Ilulissat declaration in 2008, which asserted the predominant role of the five coastal states in territorial issues and resource development in the Arctic Ocean. It also explains Russia’s rather cautious stance on China’s application for observer status in the Arctic Council (AC), and the fact that Moscow was one of the major proponents for setting clear rules to limit the participation of observers in the AC. Commenting on the AC enlargement, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev emphasized that the Arctic states are the ones to define the rules for governance in the region. However, Russia now faces a critical dilemma of how to balance its economic and security interests in the region.

As for China, its current official position is in line with Russia’s interests. By joining the Arctic Council, Beijing confirmed its respect for the Arctic states’ sovereign rights. At present, official statements have been limited to emphasizing the critical importance of the region to China in terms of environmental issues and economic interests. Several factors support this cautious approach. The first concerns the existing uncertainties about the future of Arctic shipping and natural resources extraction. It appears at present that China aims to stake out a share in the Arctic projects while assessing further opportunities for economic activities in the region. This flexible position enables China to observe and react according to the situation. Another factor is geographical: China is not an Arctic state. By improving collaboration with Arctic states and being involved in projects, China establishes its physical presence in the region. Finally, China’s flexibility could be explained by the fact that an assertive position on the existing territorial disputes could possibly undermine its own contested claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea.
However, some Chinese scholars and officials have expressed views that run counter to China’s moderate official stance on the Arctic. Take Qu Tanzhou, director of the Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration, for instance: “Arctic resources … will be allocated according to the needs of the world, not only owned by certain countries.” Chinese Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo went even further, stating that the “current scramble for the sovereignty of the Arctic among some nations has encroached on many other countries’ interests.” Statements like this are widely cited in Chinese and foreign media and are a cause for concern, first and foremost among Arctic states, about possible changes in official Chinese policy. The best way to minimize possible conflicts would be to establish a legal regime in the Arctic that would regulate regional economic activity and satisfy the interests of stakeholders, including non-Arctic states. Until then, the situation will remain rather uncertain.

Therefore, despite Russia’s turn to China and emerging prospects for cooperation between the two powers in the Arctic, Sino-Russian relations in the region are not entirely positive. On the one hand, there is mutual interest in developing a collaboration, while the current geopolitical situation pushes Russia to strengthen ties with its eastern neighbor. On the other hand, there are internal and external uncertainties surrounding the further development of relations between Arctic states.

“The Arctic in world politics: The United States, Russia, and China in the Arctic – implications for Finland,” Vesa Virtanen, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Harvard University, 17 July 2013 [17]  
https://programs.wcfia.harvard.edu/files/fellows/files/virtanen.pdf

Abstract:

The diminishing Arctic sea ice will lead to increased activities in the Arctic in the 2020s. Within the Arctic region, there are valuable unexploited oil, gas, and mineral fields. As the ice melts, access to these resources will become easier. At the same time, new shipping routes from Europe to Asia will create opportunities to save as much as 20 days in sailing and as much as $1 million per ship in fuel costs. Arctic fishing will become more attractive as the ice melts and fisheries move towards the north. A more accessible Arctic will also be a tempting locale for tourists looking for new adventures.

These developments will create new prospects and challenges for the nation states in the region and for those who wish to take advantage of these opportunities. The primary actors in the Arctic are the eight Arctic states—namely Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. But the new possibilities and resources also interest non-Arctic countries, like China, Japan, and South Korea.

This study utilizes realist theory both as a lens to analyze current state actions in the Arctic as well as a guide to predict future interactions among states. According to realist theory, states are rational actors and they have strategies that maximize their
prospects for survival and the attainment of power. When applying realist theory to the changes in the Arctic, it can be predicted that nation states will try, insofar as possible, to gain benefits from the forthcoming developments in the Arctic. This may lead to rivalry and even disputes between them. The best-case scenario would result in interstate cooperation in the region, but competition or conflicts cannot to be excluded.

This study focuses primarily on the great powers, (the United States, Russia, and China) and their potential reactions to the changing conditions in the Arctic region. It finds that the changing Arctic is not as interesting to the United States as it is for Russia and non-Arctic China. The main “Arctic” interests of the United States are environmental issues, freedom of the seas, and ensuring that shipping routes in the area remain open. The U.S. Arctic (Alaska) is far away from the key focus areas important to the United States. Additionally, when North America achieves greater energy independence in less than 10 years, thanks to shale oil and shale gas reservoirs, its economic interests in the Arctic regarding oil and other fossil fuels are going to be less valued than today. Only if a disaster occurs will we see more rapid development in U.S. Arctic capabilities.

For Russia, the melting sea ice in the Arctic creates huge opportunities with regard to accessing the oil and gas fields located within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the far North. Of the great powers, Russia will benefit most from the Arctic change. Its power in the international arena and its economic well-being depend on how much money it can make from energy products. To further enable the state’s access to such resources, Russia is strengthening its military presence in the Arctic in order to protect its interests in the area. As well as access to oil, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along the Russian coast is seen in Russia as a means of making money in terms of passage fees. With less ice blocking the NSR, Russia can more easily sell and transport its valuable energy products to Asia, where energy demand is growing more quickly than anywhere else in the world, and is set to increase substantially, at least in the next 10 years.

For China, not being an Arctic state and therefore having no direct claims over territory or resources, the potential new shipping routes are of great interest. Utilizing Arctic passages significantly shortens the distance between Europe and China, reducing shipping transport costs. China’s economy is highly dependent on international trade and relies heavily on its shipping fleets to connect with markets around the world. China is also interested in exploiting new oil and gas fields in order to boost its economic growth, but as it is not an Arctic country and therefore has no legal claim to Arctic resources, it buys energy fields and builds infrastructure to be able to benefit from the Arctic climate change.

This study also finds that military activity in the Arctic is rising. The “worst case scenario” would be caused by disputes between the great powers. Even though some Arctic states are strengthening their military presence in the Arctic, the
greatest implications from the melting sea ice are not related to military issues. The security policy situation in the Arctic is likely to be more demanding in the 2020s than it is today, but the likelihood of direct military confrontation in the area is remote. Existing disagreements are likely to be resolved diplomatically because of huge interlinked economic interests and the deterrence of the nuclear arsenal of the great powers. International cooperation in the Arctic is essential, both now and in the future, in order to avoid misunderstandings. The major “everyday” threats are disasters linked with increased drilling for energy, environmental challenges, and an uptick shipping, fishing, and tourism. The Arctic states are not yet sufficiently prepared for search and rescue (SAR) tasks and possible environmental problems in the harsh and vast area with poor communications. Unfortunately, it seems now that radical improvements in SAR capabilities are not likely before something happens.

The melting Arctic ice will have security implications for all of the Arctic states. This study, however, specifically focuses on the possible security implications for Finland. Increased activities in the Kola Peninsula are forcing Finland to follow Russian activity closely, as most state action happens near Finnish borders. The defense of Lapland remains important for Finland. Increased activities in the Arctic will create new economic opportunities for Finland, especially regarding Finnish expertise in operating in the Arctic. To enable Finland to fully exploit the new circumstances in the Arctic, infrastructure—particularly roads, railroads and transit areas—should be developed. This will be important for Finland, located in the future traffic hub of the Arctic, to be better able to benefit from the opening of the NSR between Europe and Asia.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

During the Cold War, the Arctic was divided into two armed camps: The United States and NATO on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. The Arctic region provided an attractive area of operations for strategic weapons systems. Along that tense front, nuclear submarines and bombers operated. Runways and radar stations were built, along with underwater acoustic sensors. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the strategic importance of the Arctic was diminished, especially in the eyes of U.S. policymakers.

A more cooperative approach concerning the Arctic region has emerged since 1990. The United States and Soviet Union agreed on the location of their maritime boundary in the Bering Strait and Chukchi Sea. The Arctic Council, an international organization, which institutionalized cooperation on nonmilitary matters among the eight Arctic countries, was established in 1996. In the 1990s, Arctic cooperation was not very active, but during the last few years, it has intensified. All eight Arctic countries are members of the Arctic Council. No new non-Arctic states have been accepted as formal members.
During the last few years, more attention has again been given to the Arctic region, but in a far different way than during the Cold War. Global warming is affecting the Arctic much more than any other region, and the melting of the Arctic sea ice makes the Arctic more accessible, which is creating greater opportunities for the extraction of oil, gas, and many valuable minerals. At the same time, the area has become more attractive for commercial shipping, industrial fishing, and even tourism. These factors will most likely make a significant impact on the security and environment of the Arctic in the 2020s. The Arctic is interesting in terms of security especially for the eight Arctic countries, but recently China, Japan, and South Korea have become more and more engaged in the area. This increase in interest and activity in the Arctic region can affect Nordic security and the power balance in the Arctic as well.

It is not only polar bears, which are altering their behavior because of the big changes occurring in the area, but also major actors in international politics. For polar bears, the change is already clear; they can no longer easily kill seals because of diminishing ice. They try to survive and they have to adapt and eat berries instead. On the other hand, it is not yet clear how the behavior of nations will change because of the diminishing ice. The rapid pace of the melting of sea ice in the Arctic has caused nations to consider the implications of the consequences of an Arctic without or with much less sea ice. International relations are still dominated by realist considerations in that each nation state is primarily concerned with its own interests. States will try to take as many resources and as many benefits as possible. In the Arctic, rising temperatures and the unexploited fuel resources can mean suddenly rising tensions, a situation that is comparable to what we have already seen in 2012 in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

In this study, I will concentrate on evaluating why the Arctic is growing more interesting for the great powers of the United States, Russia, and China. Although there are three implications brought on by climate change, being ecological, socioeconomic, and political, this paper will focus on the political changes, specifically the political implications relevant to security policy. I will also seek to calculate how these great power implications will affect Finland.

In this study, I will try to answer the following questions: What are the great powers’ interests in the Arctic region? What are the possible dispute areas in the Arctic? What kind of implications may change in the Arctic have for the security environment in the Arctic as a whole and for Finland in particular?

There are, of course, more actors in the Arctic than the world’s three largest military spenders, i.e., the United States, Russia, and China, although these nations are by all means those that are going to influence the security situation the most. If something happens in the Arctic, the main implications for international security will come from the relations among these great powers.
There are several other actors in the Arctic that will have some impact on the region’s development. The most relevant are the other Arctic states: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and Canada. The small Scandinavian countries, along with Denmark and Iceland, will have influence to some extent, as they have control over desirable strategic resources. For Canada, the Northwest Passage is important, but it does not affect the strategic environment for other countries, like Finland. For Finland’s security, the major implications are to be seen in the actions and relations among the United States, Russia, and China in the European High North. Moreover, there are other international organizations that will also influence events in the region. For example, all Arctic countries except Russia, Finland, and Sweden are members of NATO. Finland and Sweden, however, which have no Arctic coast, have good relations with NATO. Thus, NATO will have some bearing on the future of the Arctic region. Another organization active in the region is the EU. The EU is increasingly interested the Arctic, but it is unlikely to have a significant impact as not all EU countries are interested in the Arctic.

Recently, the Arctic has been the topic of several different studies and focus groups. Maybe the most significant project to research the Arctic is the Geopolitics in the High North research program, the aim of which is to develop new knowledge about actors and their interests in the High North. The program is led by the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies and has published several studies. Many countries, like the United States, Russia, and Finland, have also published their own Arctic white papers as well. But, despite this increased attention, comparisons of security policy interests among the great powers concerning the Arctic have not been made in great depth.

This study was inspired by the material I have researched and the several interesting discussions I have had during my academic year as a Fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. The lack of studies focusing on comparative security policy drove my choice of topic. During the past few years, I have seen heightening interest in the Arctic region during my visits to different countries, not least in Russia and China, compelling my study to focus on the great powers in particular in relation to Finland.

This study consists of four main parts. First, it is important to define the Arctic region prior to engaging in analysis of the security policies of the great powers. Then I will explore the role the Arctic region plays in security policy. Finally, the key elements of realist thinking will be explained, because the theory still appears to be an important and relevant tool in explaining nation-states’ actions. In the second part of this study, I will evaluate the great powers’ interests in the Arctic. I will also quickly evaluate other actors in the Arctic to provide a holistic picture of the strategic environment in the region. In the third part of the study, I will evaluate the great powers’ developing influence in the future of the Arctic and assess possible dispute areas in the region.
In the fourth part, I will address the security/political implications of Arctic change for Finland.

**Conclusion**

The retreat of the Arctic sea ice will most likely accelerate in the coming years. This opens new possibilities for extracting oil, gas, and minerals from previously inaccessible areas in the Arctic. New shipping routes will be opened and tourism and fishing will move further north. Even though the security policy situation will be more demanding in the future than it is today, the biggest challenges are not related to security issues, but to environment problems, pollution, SAR, and other challenges that arise when more ships and people are moving in a vast area with poor communications.

In the United States, the energy revolution will decrease the need for still relatively expensive Arctic energy for a while. This is not the case in Russia and China, where there is a growing need for more energy from the Arctic. The United States will get more cheap energy from shale oil and shale gas during at least the next 50 years than from the Arctic. Russia will benefit the most from the new situation in the Arctic. For Russia, new possibilities for extracting energy products are important for economic and military development. For Russia, the all-important NSR might be usable for shipping several months a year well before the 2020s well north of the 200 nautical mile border. If so, Russia is not going to benefit so much from the fees it has been planning to collect.

China will try to use the new situation in the Arctic to get access to as many oil and gas fields as possible to attempt to satisfy its increasing demand for energy. The NSR is of great importance for China in its trade with Europe. Most likely, there will be more Chinese ships in the Arctic in the near future. This may cause tension between the great powers.

The new shipping routes are to be used in coming years, but it seems that the traffic will not expand as rapidly as some have thought because of the continued harsh conditions.

Shipping is likely to grow steadily during in the coming ten years; after that, how the future shipping volumes on the NSR might look should be reassessed. Considering how fast the changes have come in the last ten years, there could be new developments that might alter the timeline for increased shipping traffic that cannot be predicted from the current conditions.

There will be some increasing military presence in the Arctic. Russia will concentrate more capabilities on the Kola Peninsula and along the NSR in order to protect this vital area of energy resources. As power politics still count, Arctic rivalry among the great powers will occur to some extent. Most likely, this will not lead to any military conflicts. It is more probable that environmental problems, some increased tension
between actors, and safety problems and rescue tasks related to more shipping, energy drilling, increased tourism, and fishing will arise. These are challenges that all the Arctic actors should focus their resources on and increase cooperation with each other so that development in the Arctic will be under control and major disasters can be avoided.

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e651/bed811033c1c4193f0459d6e35623483d969.pdf

Abstract:
Few places have been the source of as much speculation, hype, and broad statements as the Arctic region at the start of the 21st century. Propelled to the agenda by flag-plantings and resource appraisals a decade ago, the Arctic continues to lure researchers and journalists to venture northwards to “the next great game”.

Fortunately, with more attention comes more knowledge as well. Several scholars have now debunked the notion of resource wars in the North, due to the sheer size of the areas in question and the fact that the Arctic states already have ownership over most of these areas, through the Law of the Sea regime. Moreover, the foreign ministries of the Arctic states have highlighted the cooperative traits of the region: “in the Arctic, we work together” to solve problems.

Nevertheless, notions of Arctic conflict and great power politics over the North Pole keep emerging on the political and news agenda. Why is this so, if all is well up in the High North?

Current & Relevant Information:
China in the Arctic
Unlike the case in the Cold War, China has now emerged as an Arctic actor. With Beijing continuing to assert its influence on the world stage, the Arctic will be only one of many regions where China’s presence and interaction are components of an expansion of power in both soft and hard terms. China has been noted as a “near-Arctic state,” a situation which demands involvement from Beijing.

However, China is not accepted as an Arctic state and has largely been excluded from regional politics. Despite the inaccuracies of US Secretary of State Pompeo’s warning in 2019 that Beijing’s Arctic activity risks creating a “new South China Sea,” such statements highlight how the USA sees the Arctic as yet another arena where the emerging systemic competition between the two countries is increasing.

https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/180528/chang_-_china_russia_energy_relations.pdf
Overview:

The highlight of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Shanghai in May 2014 was the signing of a 30-year accord to supply China with natural gas through a new pipeline from the Russian Far East. It was no spur-of-the-moment agreement in response to Western threats over the Ukrainian crisis, but rather the product of a decade-long negotiation. From the start, the logic was clear: connect the Russian Far East’s large untapped natural gas reserves to China’s voracious appetite for energy. In fact, I worked on the financial and technical feasibility of such an arrangement some 17 years ago at Mobil Oil Corporation (now ExxonMobil).

But until the last half decade, Russia’s entire energy transportation infrastructure had been geared to shipping oil and natural gas westward to Europe, not eastward to Asia. The new accord between China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Gazprom marked another milestone in Russia’s shift away from Europe and towards Asia. The deal clears the way for the development of the Russian Far East’s giant Chayanda natural gas field and the completion of a pipeline, called the Power of Siberia, which will carry 38 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas per year to China starting in 2018. That is the equivalent to more than a quarter of Russia’s current natural gas exports to Europe. Russia eventually hopes to boost those exports to over 60 bcm per year.

Current & Relevant Information:

Beijing and Moscow have long discussed supplying Russian energy to China. As early as 2000, they had already envisioned potential pipeline routes that would link Russia’s Siberian oil and natural gas fields to China’s Daqing oilfields, from which existing pipelines could then deliver the imported oil and natural gas to the rest of China. In 2006, the two countries held talks to build two natural gas pipelines with a total capacity of 70 bcm. But neither side could agree on a price to be paid for the natural gas. Parallel negotiations over Russian oil exports also were bogged down.

The 2008 global financial crisis changed all that. Up until then, Russian firms primarily relied on credit and financing from Western banks and oil companies. But those sources quickly dried up. At the same time, once sky-high global energy prices nosedived. Russia turned to China. The two countries reached a deal in 2009 under which Russia would export to China 15 million metric tons per year (about 300,000 barrels per day) of oil for 20 years in exchange for $25 billion worth of loans from China Development Bank to Rosneft and Gazprom, Russia’s state-run oil and natural gas companies, respectively. With Russian oil production dipping that year for the first time since the 1990s, Moscow no doubt felt pressure to strike a deal. Having long underinvested in exploration to replace aging and depleting fields, Russia’s energy companies needed money to develop new oil and natural gas reserves in the Russian Far East. They also used a portion of their newly acquired funds to build a spur pipeline from Russia’s trunk Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean.
(ESPO) pipeline into China. That spur pipeline symbolically opened in September 2010 and oil began flowing through it in January 2011.

Another wave of energy deals between China and Russia was concluded in late 2010. They covered a broad range of issues. China Huadian Corporation, a Chinese state-owned enterprise and one of China’s five major power utilities, and Russia’s TGK-2, a regional utility, agreed to develop a joint power project in the Russian city of Yaroslavl. At the same time, CNNC Jiangsu Nuclear Power Corporation contracted with Russia Atomic Energy Corporation to design the third and fourth nuclear reactors at the Tianwan Nuclear Station. The two countries also made headway on the export of Russian energy to China. CNPC signed an agreement with Rosneft that settled issues related to the supply of Russian oil for the new spur pipeline to Daqing. Meanwhile, Gazprom revealed that CNPC had agreed to begin discussions for a long-term contract to take over 30 bcm of natural gas from the Russian gas exporter.

The next flurry of energy deals began in 2013. But preparations for it began long before that. In 2003, a collection of Russia’s independent oil companies and BP, a British oil major, pooled their Russian assets to form a new company called TNK-BP. Among TNK-BP’s most valuable assets was a 62.8 percent interest in the Russian Far East’s huge Kovykta natural gas field, just west of Lake Baikal. Most industry experts considered Kovykta’s proven reserves to be the best source for natural gas exports to Asia. By 2007 Moscow wanted those reserves back and began to pressure TNK-BP to sell. Eventually, Moscow forced TNK-BP into bankruptcy and Rosneft bought the company’s assets, including Kovykta, in March 2013.

Thus, Rosneft was well positioned to make new deals with China in 2013. Rosneft’s first agreement was to double its shipment of oil to CNPC to 30 million metric tons per year (about 600,000 barrels per day). In return, CNPC agreed to prepay Rosneft $60 billion for its future oil deliveries. Those prepaid funds came in handy, because it had just spent over $40 billion to acquire TNK-BP’s assets and needed the cash to service its massive debts and to invest in new exploration. Still, the deal demonstrated the worth of the ESPO pipeline and its spur to China.

Moscow’s next two deals raised eyebrows even further. Historically, Russia had been reluctant to permit Chinese companies from taking direct stakes in Russian oil and natural gas fields. But last September it allowed CNPC to acquire a 20 percent interest in Novatek’s Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Russia’s Arctic region. In exchange, CNPC agreed to purchase at least 3 million tons of LNG from the project. Even more notable, CNPC and Rosneft agreed to form a joint venture to explore for and produce oil in East Siberia, which contains vast deposits extending hundreds of miles north from Lake Baikal. Those deposits are considered to be some of Russia’s most valuable untapped energy assets. The creation of the joint venture, in which CNPC holds a 49 percent stake, seemed to herald a shift in
Russia’s thinking about China (and, to cynics, Russia’s continued need for Chinese capital).

Conclusion

China and Russia have shared a long history. For much of it, their relations were chilly. Russian leaders have worried about Chinese encroachment into the Russian Far East since the late 1600s, when Chinese forces drove Russian settlers out of the Amur River valley. Although China and Russia settled their once-disputed border ten years ago, many Russians (particularly those who live in the Russian Far East) remain wary of Chinese intentions, especially as they see China economically and technologically surpass them. Indeed, in 2003 Moscow shied away from a Chinese proposal to build a pipeline from Siberia’s oil and natural gas fields directly into China. Russian leaders likely believed that it was far better for Russia to build a spur pipeline into China from its trunk line. That way, if relations between the two countries turn chilly again, Russia could still use its trunk line to export its energy resources to other Asian customers.

But Russia’s push into Asia is not without risk. So far, Russian Far East energy projects have not been very profitable. The fact that half of Russia’s oil exports to China were paid for with Chinese loans, rather than cash, did not help their cost economics. Unless such projects can fetch higher prices for their oil and natural gas production in the future, they are hardly beneficial to Russia’s economy. For the moment, since all of the deals between the two countries have involved long-term fixed-price contracts, even if prices rose, Russia could not benefit much from them. Increasingly, Russia’s power and influence in world affairs center on its control of energy resources. Some observers have said that Putin understands the energy industry better than any other national leader. If true, that is because he has to. He realizes that Russia must develop its Far Eastern resources if Russia’s energy strategy is to work (and Moscow’s coffers are to remain filled). But to do so, Putin is also aware that he needs China, not only as a customer, but also as an investor.

Meanwhile, China’s diversification of its energy suppliers to include Russia also carries risk. Russia’s willingness to use its control over energy resources as a political lever must concern Chinese leaders. Russia already did so with Ukraine in 2008. There is no reason to believe that Russia would not do the same to China in the future. After all, the two countries spectacularly fell out before when Beijing and Moscow quarreled over communist leadership in the late 1950s. But China needs access to new energy resources if its economic growth is to be sustained. Those in the Russian Far East offer China not only a source that is reasonably politically stable, but also nearby and accessible by land. In any case, given China’s apparent ascendency and Russia’s relative stagnation, Beijing may see little harm in further tie-ups with Russia today. And since pipelines can point both ways, China could also use them as leverage over Russia, especially if Western hostility towards Moscow ratchets higher.
For the moment, none of that need worry China or Russia, so long as both are estranged from the West. Over the long run, however, Russia’s relationship with China may not prove stable. As long as China continues to rise and Russia does not, the underlying economic and military balance in the region will shift. The further that power imbalance tilts toward China, the more the historic mistrust between the two countries could turn small irritations into big problems, especially if one or the other improves its relations with the West. However, like the time it took for China and Russia to ink its newest natural gas deal, there may be a long wait.

“Confucian geopolitics: Chinese geopolitical imaginations of the US war on terror,” Ning An, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences College of Science and Engineering University of Glasgow, April 2017 [20]
http://theses.gla.ac.uk/8158/7/2017AnPhD.pdf

Abstract:
This thesis contributes to the literature of critical geopolitics. Based on the exploration of existing studies of critical geopolitics, in this thesis I first argue that this body of literature only presents a partial picture of the world from the perspective of political geographies. While it does offer a solidly critical stance in the investigation of how spatiality influences the exercise of power, it also has certain limitations from ontological and epistemological perspectives. Many studies in this literature suffer from three problems. First, many works have empirically and overly focused on Western states while neglecting both non-Western spaces/places and non-Western geopolitical theories. Second, this body of literature has paid too much attention to media texts rather than the audience who consume those media. In the small amount of audience studies, fans, who are considered to be the most passionate consumer, have always been equated with the audience, thereby ignoring other consumption forces, such as critics and occasional readers. Third, the majority of extant critical geopolitical studies have been concerned with constructionism, which emphasizes the significance of human beings in creating a space and thus influencing the exercise of power, while much less attention has been paid to the materiality that underlines the being, or object, playing any of a set of active roles in a narrative.

Those limitations of critical geopolitical studies, in particular the lack of non-Western examples, provide new possibilities for the development of the current field of critical geopolitics. This thesis focuses on Chinese political geographies, a non-Western socio-political background. It indicates that the socio-political context of China has brought potentialities for investigating the complex entanglement between spatial practices and the exercise of power. Specifically, this thesis gives an overview of Chinese geopolitical traditions, hua-yi distinction and Sino-centrism, that have had, and still have, a significant impact upon Chinese political cultures. At the same time, this thesis also reviews the extant literature of Chinese geopolitics. On this basis, it argues that previous works of/in Chinese geopolitical studies have been intimately
associated with Western dominance, in particular the classical geopolitical tradition
in Western academia, and thus lacked the examination of internal geopolitical
voices. These overviews have built two fundamental frameworks for this thesis:
critical geopolitics and non-Western geopolitics. Critical geopolitics is the main
theoretical framework for this thesis, while non-Western geopolitics is the primary
empirical framework for this thesis, although its contribution is not limited to empirics.

Thus, I argue that geopolitical space is seldom a pure space controlled by any single
force or any single element, but rather a heterogeneous space influenced by a
mixed range of forces and factors, including both Western and non-Western forces
and values, ruling and ruled forces and values, and socially constructed and material
factors. In particular for popular geopolitics, I argue that popular space usually
strengthens cultural hegemony, but at the same time it also erodes authority. It is a
space of difference and antagonism. Armed with the above perspectives, this thesis
will use three chapters of empirical studies to explain how various spaces, forces
and values are involved in the exercise of power. Three stories are narrated in this
thesis:

(1) Two different – even opposite – Chinese newspaper writings of terrorism and
the US war on terror, which can be read as an examination of how Chinese elites
practice and perform their geopolitical identities.

(2) Audience imaginations of terrorism and the US war on terror through their
readings of Chinese newspapers as mentioned above (1), which can be read as
an investigation of how Chinese elitist views are spread and how geopolitical
visions are established in Chinese society.

(3) Discussion of terrorism and the US war on terror in the Internet community, in
which both Internet users and computer algorithms and bots have a significant
impact upon the creation of public opinion.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction - Imaginations of the US in post-9/11 China

What does ‘the US’ mean in China? For most ordinary Chinese people, this is quite
a tricky question. After all, China is widely known as a socialist state that is
considered to have a different political, economic and cultural system as well as —
most importantly — a different ideology from capitalist states (Zizek, 2012).
Numerous historical studies in China have argued that Chinese imaginations of the
US have typically been characterized as capitalist, Western, tyrannical and
hegemonic, and therefore absolutely opposite to China’s self-proclaimed status as a
socialist, Eastern, harmonious and peaceful state (Niu, 2001; He & Huang, 2008).
Along with developments in media, such as TV and the Internet, different
imaginations of the US that go beyond binary and antagonistic cognitions (to
highlight e.g. democracy, freedom, equality and advancement) have increasingly
emerged in post-Cold War China. However, such positive imaginations are not yet deeply engrained into Chinese people’s everyday imaginations of the US. On the contrary, the negative imagination of the US seems to be emphasized again and again. When I was about ten years old, I first learned of ‘the US’ from People’s Daily, an official newspaper that was always left at the back of the classroom in the junior high school in my hometown in a remote area in Northwest China. At that time, I witnessed how the US was depicted by official Chinese powers as an imperial force. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I was overwhelmed by such voices. The negative imagination of the US as an imperial force was usually taken for granted by Chinese people and its socio-political significance was less well understood.

Chinese Geopolitics

Mia Bennett (2015) has explored the Arctic narratives in China’s official discourse under the framework of critical geopolitics. In so doing, Bennett (2015) claims that Chinese official depictions of the Arctic not only stress the salience of intraregional powers in the Arctic Circle but also illustrate the Arctic as a form of global space. Such discourse links Arctic space to the entire planet, thereby legitimating China’s geopolitical status in the Arctic.

Conclusion – Main Findings

The first quote is from the former US President George W. Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress at the launch of the US war against terrorism after 9/11, which mapped a binary imaginary geography ‘either/or’ between terrorist and those against terrorists. Since then, the war on terror has become the most significant code in US geopolitical practices, with a strong dichotomous framework between terrorism and US as counterterrorism (Orfy, 2010). This dichotomous geopolitical architecture has been widely accepted by other states and thus applied in their own geopolitical practices, such as in Sri Lanka (Kleinfeld, 2003) and in the Philippines (Woon, 2014). The second quote is chosen from the former chairman of the Chinese government Hu Jintao in his speech on Constructing Socialist Harmonious Society in 2008, which summed the Chinese government’s main criterion for the handling of domestic and foreign affairs. From this perspective, it can be seen that notions of peace, harmony, social stability, tranquility and order are highlighted in Chinese political culture, which might bring different geopolitical visions about the US and its war on terror. This is where this thesis has begun.

Putting this thesis in the theoretical and empirical background of non-Western geopolitics that has often been under-researched in extant knowledge of geopolitics, as reviewed in chapter 2 and chapter 3, this research attempts to theorize Chinese geopolitical imaginations of the US war on terror through the perspective of non-Western geopolitics, particularly a variety of localized Chinese geopolitics. Specifically, this thesis examined the relations between Chinese discourses of terrorism and Chinese geopolitical imaginations of the US in post-9/11 China. As
elaborated in previous chapters, this thesis discussed Chinese discourses of terrorism and the US in articles from two newspapers (People’s Daily and South Weekend). It examined middle-level audience imaginations of terrorism and the US arising through their reading of these two newspapers. Additionally, it explored Internet discourses of terrorism and the US through the case study of Sina Weibo.

On this basis, this thesis found that Chinese imaginations of the US war on terror, from both the state view and the non-state view, tend to refuse a dichotomous ‘either/or’ framework in their observations whereby a simple opposition is spied between terrorists and the US as counterterrorist force. These Chinese imaginations not only pointed out the difference but also looked at the sameness between terrorists and the US, which largely challenged the US’s ‘either/or’ geopolitical practices of the war on terror.

From the state vision, this thesis explored the representations of terrorism and the US in two Chinese newspapers, People’s Daily and South Weekend, in chapter 5, and in so doing concluded that Chinese journalism refuses a binary understanding of terrorists and the US as a victim. Most specifically, the universalized nature of terrorism was underlined in relevant articles in two newspapers, albeit the quantity of such articles accounted for a rather smaller proportion (around 26% and 42% in People’s Daily and South Weekend, respectively). Similarly, however, the remaining newspaper articles that were related to the representations of the US war on terror also depicted the US as a negative image as well as the terrorist. Both newspapers paid attention to the writing about the US war on terror, through which the US was repeatedly described as a rogue state bringing humanitarian crisis, global disorder and hegemony to the world. In this sense, it can be seen that the boundary between terrorists and the US was blurred, and on this basis the sameness between terrorists and the US was underscored.

From the non-state view, this thesis studied the middle-level Chinese people’s discussions of terrorism and the US through their readings of People’s Daily or/and South Weekend in chapter 6, as well as the mass Chinese Internet users’ discussions of terrorism and the US in the Chinese Internet community, Sina Weibo, in chapter 7. On this basis, this thesis concluded that the refusal of a dichotomous framework between the US as counterterrorist and terrorist not only made sense in state voices but also in non-state realms. For example, in the exploration of Chinese audiences in chapter 6, a number of the recruited middle-level Chinese people, as well as the Chinese newspaper representations, looked at the sameness between terrorists and the US, viewing terrorists as the universal enemy of all humanity and at the same time describing the US as a rogue state that brought humanitarian crisis, global disorder and hegemony to the world. Moreover, the empirical study of Sina Weibo in chapter 7 also found that the mass Chinese Internet users’ imaginations of terrorism and the US were partly related to negative constructions of the US, albeit the Internet discourses were not merely limited to this negative aspect.
These two empirical cases have explained that the refusal of ‘either/or’ in Chinese imaginings of terrorism and the US was not only a form of top-down voice, but also indeed a type of bottom-up self-awareness.

Taken together, this thesis hence promoted a localized geopolitical notion, Confucian geopolitics, to understand and explain Chinese geopolitical imaginations of the US war on terror. Most specifically, as discussed in chapter 3, the Confucian philosophy so deeply historically-rooted in Chinese political culture appears to have significant impact upon Chinese geopolitical thoughts and practices, even in a contemporary China contextualized by Communist ideologies. That is, values of harmony, diversity, order and welfare are all still demanded in Chinese political ideas and actions, in both domestic and international political realms (Jiang, 2003; Wang, 2003; Qin, 2010). In Confucianism, the ultimate rule to evaluate a politician or a state is to see whether he/she/it can build a harmonious world both in domestic space and in the international community through stable, peaceful and tranquil ways. Based on these Confucian values, the Chinese vision tends to see the sameness among the various political actors, rather than to look at their difference so as to justify certain political interests.

In the empirical analysis of Chinese imaginations of terrorism and the US in this thesis, it can be seen that responses to such Confucian values and visions can be found everywhere. For example, Chinese newspapers, People’s Daily and South Weekend, tend to see the sameness between terrorists and the US, representing the terrorists as insecurity-makers, and at the same time they also describe the US as the maker of insecurity, disaster and crisis as well. In such Chinese visions, both terrorists and the US are regarded as going against the Confucian values of harmony and peacefulness. Similar ideas can be evidenced in Chinese audience imaginations of terrorism and the US. Quite a number of Chinese audiences even pointed out that it was exactly the US’s tough behavior, going against Confucian values, that resulted in the calamity of terrorism. Moreover, the examination of Chinese Internet discourses of terrorism and the US has also found that, to a much wider extent in Chinese society, these Confucian values of harmony and diversity still impact Chinese people’s evaluations of the US war on terror and their constructions of anti-US identity. On this basis, this thesis concludes that these Confucian elements, which are deeply sedimented in Chinese society and Chinese political culture but often ignored or left implicit and assumed in extant knowledge, really do impact Chinese geopolitical imaginations, in particular of terrorism and the US. Therefore, this thesis suggests a notion of Confucian geopolitics to understand geopolitical imaginations of terrorism and the US without the ‘either/or’ binary framework.

In addition, Confucian geopolitics also provided a different way of observing the US from existing frameworks of Capitalism-Communist antagonism (Niu, 2001; He & Huang, 2008) and Chinese nationalism (Kluver, 2001; Zhou, 2005), refusing to
depict US society as an opposite of Chinese society. This is particularly reflected in the empirical study of the audience space and Internet space. As aforementioned, Chinese discourses on the US appear not only limited to the depiction of the US as a rogue state bringing humanitarian crisis, disorder and hegemony to the world, but, at the same time, also paid attention to the positive aspects of the US, in particular in Chinese audience imaginations and Internet discourses. For example, in chapter 6, it can be found that audience space had created a foothold for Western values and thus built up a positive image of the US. Moreover, in chapter 7, this thesis found that Chinese Internet discourses about the US had also involved pro-US sentiments that went far beyond Chinese nationalism. These positive perceptions of the US, whether in the audience imaginations or in Internet discourses, were usually built on the basis of understandings of US environment, technology, democracy, social system, economic system, education system and entertainment, were closely related to the US society’s features of harmony, diversity, peace, welfare and order. In this sense, the refusal of constructing a conflicting and binary relationship between the US and China can also be read as a form of Confucian thinking, in particular under the socio-political context of China.

As mentioned above, Confucian geopolitics does offer a different way to look at terrorism and the US beyond the ‘either/or’ binary framework in US geopolitical practices. However, it merits highlighting that Chinese geopolitics is more than just Confucian geopolitics, but that Confucian elements have been surprisingly ignored in extant works of Chinese geopolitics. This thesis therefore brings the Confucian elements back into Chinese geopolitical research. Indeed, this thesis also warned of a ‘trap’ for non-Western geopolitics. That is, this thesis admitted the importance and emphasized the significance of the Confucian elements for understanding Chinese discourses on terrorism and the US, whether by elites, middle-level actors, or mass publics, but, at the same time, it can be seen that Western elements made sense as well as Confucian elements. For example, the contexts of Communism and Chinese nationalism were still found to be related to Chinese discourses of terrorism and the US. In chapter 5, where People’s Daily’s and South Weekend’s writings of terrorism were discussed, the representation of terrorism as a form of universalized issue, to a significant extent, can be considered to be influenced by Chinese nationalism and so used for legitimating Chinese ethnic and religious policies in Xinjiang. In chapter 6, where Chinese audience imaginations of terrorism and the US were explored, it can be seen that parts of Chinese audiences also tried to use nationalist sentiments to construct and practice their imaginings about terrorism and the US. Similarly, in chapter 7, a number of Chinese Internet users tried to apply the Communist context and Chinese nationalism as an important way for understanding terrorism and the US. Some Internet users ‘shouted out’ Cold War slogans to support their anti-US discourses; other Internet users even recalled tense Sino-US diplomatic events (e.g. the Chinese embassy bombing incident and Sino-US aircraft collision incident) to show their patriotic stances, construct their national identity and practice their anti-US imagination. In this sense, this thesis reinforced the idea of Chinese geopolitics
as more than just Confucian geopolitics, but as a complex assemblage in which both Confucian elements and other possible elements came together.

In sum, just as the original term “critical geopolitics” which brought together two terms that were seen to be contradictory (Sharp, 2013), there seemed to be a contradiction in saying “Confucian geopolitics” as these two terms (i.e. Confucian and geopolitics) seemed to be two different, even contradictory terms: the former one underlined peace, harmony, social stability, tranquil and order, while the latter one emphasized the geographical impact upon politics, in particular violence and conflict. As summed above, however, it is exactly in that contradiction where a new way of thinking about geopolitics that refuses a binary inside-outside perspective can emerge.

3. Economic Activities:

“Arctic Blue Economic Corridor: China’s Role in the Development of a New Connectivity Paradigm in the North,” Vasilii Erokhin, Gao Tianming, and Zhang Xiuhua, Arctic Yearbook, 2018 [21]


Abstract:

During recent years, growing exploration of natural resources and development of transport routes have reemerged in the Arctic as a scene for political and economic collaboration between Nordic and non-regional states. Being a non-Arctic country, China nevertheless has played an active role in the elaboration of international regulations and the establishment of governance mechanisms in the Arctic. The country has recently released a White Paper on the Arctic Policy and thus prioritized scientific research, underscored the importance of environmental protection, rational utilization, law-based governance, and international cooperation, and committed itself to maintaining a peaceful, secure and stable Arctic order. Diversified transportation routes and economic corridors are of paramount importance to such global trading nations as China. However, an extension of the economic corridors to the Arctic is viable only in the case of development of satellite trade, production, and research opportunities along the potential transport routes. In this study, the authors discuss the critical points in the implementation of China’s paradigm of collaboration and connectivity in the Arctic, as well as focus on the promotion of bilateral win-win investment and trade projects with the countries along the potential Arctic Blue Economic Corridor (ABEC). The authors conclude that the ABEC may be efficiently incorporated into China’s Belt and Road network, but emphasize that specific technological and economic challenges have to be considered and met before a
sustainable connectivity between the markets of Asia and Europe is established in the Arctic.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

International collaboration in the Arctic and the challenges of Arctic connectivity for economic development and trade have been attracting increased attention by many scholars worldwide. One of the most comprehensive comparative studies of Arctic strategies and policies of different countries has been made by Heininen (2012), who summarized the priorities, priority areas, and objectives of major actors in the Arctic. Involvement of non-Arctic states into the Arctic governance and growing roles of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and other non-regional actors in the Arctic issues has been studied by Ivanov (2016), Coates and Holroyd (2017), Lanteigne (2014), Leifer (2013), Peng and Wegge (2015), Streltsov (2017), and others. Most of the publications include contemporary issues of international cooperation in the Arctic in the formats of the Arctic Council and the Nordic Council. However, it is important to consider the roles of various trans-Arctic interactions between Nordic and non-Arctic countries, particularly, China, to address the specific implementations of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Nordic diplomatic model for achieving sustainable development in the region.

The themes of China’s involvement in the Arctic governance and growing role of the country in the Arctic issues have been addressed by both Chinese and international scholars. Lanteigne (2014) studied the evolution of China’s Arctic strategies in terms of their distinct paths, institutions, and political and economic dimensions. Joelsen (2016) focused on the study of China’s engagement with the Arctic Council, particularly, strategic goals of China’s observer status in that organization, principal interests of the country in the Arctic, and peculiarities of contemporary China’s diplomacy with the Arctic countries. Lanteigne (2017), Stokke (2013), and Gavrilov and Kripakova (2017) determined the prerequisites for the formation, analysis of the current state and of the future development of the Arctic policy of China and the countries of Northeast Asia and provided a description of current opportunities for China to participate in the institutional and rule-making mechanisms of the Arctic governance.

Bennett (2014), Stephenson et al. (2013) paid special attention to the ports linking resources in the North Pacific and wider Arctic region to destinations in Northeast Asia, particularly, the effects of the development of the shipping lanes in the Arctic Ocean for the increase of commercial ties between Asia and Nordic countries. Special attention has been given to the investigation of transport corridors in the Arctic. Meng et al. (2017) focused on navigation conditions and commercial features and reviewed the existing studies that had examined the necessary conditions and requirements for transarctic shipping routes to be viable. Guy and Lasserre (2016)
studied perspectives, challenges, and regulations of commercial shipping in the Arctic. Jorgensen-Dahl (2010) investigated the perspectives of economic development and shipping in the Arctic along the Northwest, Northeast, and Transpolar passages. Farre et al. (2014) focused on the perspectives and challenges of commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage, including Russia’s part of the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Ruksha et al. (2013), Xu et al. (2011), and Verny and Grigentin (2009) studied the perspectives and challenges of development and exploration of the NSR for bulk and container shipments between China, Russia, and Europe. Dunlap (2002) studied the possibilities of transit transportation along the NSR by Russian and foreign vessels. Kikkas (2015) and Zalyvsky (2015) discussed the potential of the NSR and other transport corridors in the Arctic and conducted an analysis of major factors affecting the performance of transport and economic projects in the High North. Fisenko (2013, 2014) and Zelentsov (2012) focused on the political, economic, and transport aspects of the development of the NSR in terms of competition for resources in the Arctic and search of new ways of shipping.

China has recently published its Arctic policy and incorporated the Arctic shipping lanes into the BRI transport network. Contemporary approaches of the country to the development of the region and exploration of its resource and transport potential require thorough study in the light of the collaboration with Nordic countries. However, as to the involvement of the Nordic countries in the implementation of the announced Arctic Blue Economic Corridor (ABEC) initiative, there have not been any comprehensive studies of the issue so far. Perspectives on the development and commercial use of transport and trade routes in the Arctic, polar logistics, and development of infrastructure in the High North are among the hot topics to investigate. This paper attempts to bridge the gap and assesses the challenges and perspectives of turning the ABEC into an economic and transport corridor between China and Europe. This study discusses the major challenges China faces in exploring new maritime ways in the Arctic and collaborating with Nordic countries and Russia in the development of the ABEC.

**Conclusion**

The initiative of the establishment of an economic corridor in the Arctic is an integral element of the long-term vision of the region by China. Despite the strategic orientation of the BRI to the southern transport corridors, China is rather dependent on the situation in Malacca and Suez (Sun, 2014; Lanteigne, 2013). The ABEC initiative is as an attempt to diversify maritime transport routes and ensure long-term security trading for China. The resource-rich Arctic offers new possibilities in China’s global search for energy and strategic engagement in the region. However, the prospective vision of the ABEC is not only about securing trade routes. The overarching goal is to facilitate connectivity between China and Nordic countries, to ensure sustainable economic and social development of the Arctic, and to bridge the
gap between traditional industries in the Arctic and China’s market. Chinese shipping in polar waters in the coming years will form the backbone of the BRI process in the Arctic, which will require collaboration with Nordic countries and Russia, on the co-development of transport infrastructure and cargo-generating facilities along the Arctic routes.

For the Nordic countries, Russia, and other stakeholders involved, there are certain geopolitical and commercial advantages of the ABEC initiative, as well as risks. Nordic countries and Russia look forward to attracting investment to the mining and infrastructure projects in the Arctic, increase export of hydrocarbons and minerals, and benefit from serving transit navigation along the opening maritime routes. China would like to ensure its presence in the Arctic projects, get access to economic resources and shipping routes in the region, and incorporate the entire region into the BRI network. However, there are many specific technological and economic challenges to be considered and met before the ABEC may become a viable alternative to the MSR. Development of the ABEC requires extensive construction and reconstruction of the infrastructure along the entire route from Russian Chukotka in the east to Iceland and Greenland in the West: deep-water seaports with modern logistics and service, transport hubs, support and rescue points for safe and stable transarctic shipping, and refueling points for transit vessels passing the route from China to Europe and back.

The success of the ABEC is only possible with the attraction of foreign investments. In such a situation, future development of the ABEC and China’s position in the initiative depend on the willingness of Nordic countries and Russia to attract China’s investment. The economies along the potential ABEC have a wide range of assets and features that Chinese investors seek, i.e. hydrocarbons and maritime transport in Norway and Russia, shipbuilding in Finland, research and development in Sweden, mining in Denmark (Greenland), renewable energy and rare-earth metals in Iceland, among others. However, the magnitude and certain patterns of China’s activities in the region have also raised concerns as Chinese companies have begun to buy what some consider critical infrastructure (Seaman et al., 2017). To overcome challenges of strategic mistrust, China should further engage Nordic countries and other stakeholders to reassure them of its intentions (Liu, 2018). China should not solely rely on its economic largesse to win the support of its potential ABEC partner nations. Over the long term, China will need to highlight the less visible benefits of the ABEC, such as sharing of development experience and expertise, the promotion of regional cooperation, and the delivery of more global public goods.

Overview:

Although the current Chinese government under Xi Jinping has made great strides in expanding the country’s foreign policy interests well beyond Asia, it was under the previous government of Hu Jintao (2002-12) that China’s international relations began to evolve from a strong concentration on the Asia-Pacific region and the United States towards encompassing many other parts of the world, including increasingly the Arctic region. Since President Xi assumed office in late 2012, there has been a much stronger focus on ‘cross-regional’ diplomacy, aiming to improve relations in parts of the world much further away from China, including in Africa, Europe, Latin America and increasingly in the Far North. At the same time, Beijing is becoming more comfortable with the status of ‘great power’ in the international system and as a result, is beginning to develop global strategies that are less in line with Western norms. Although China remains an enthusiastic joiner and participant in international organizations, including those developed and backed by the United States and its allies, the country is increasingly seeking its own foreign policy identity.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

China is the first great power to ‘grow up’ within a global system saturated with international organizations and regimes, and the country’s government has maintained that its foreign policy is not following the same paths as those of the rising powers of the past, paths which often involved overturning the previous international order through force or other coercive power. Instead, Beijing has been advocating its advancement to great power status while at the same time being cognizant and respectful of existing rules and norms. During the early years of the Hu government, there was much emphasis on shifting Chinese foreign policy from behaving as a ‘large developing state’ to instead focusing on ‘peaceful rise’ (heping jueqi): meaning that a growing China would not seek to be a disruptive force and would instead adhere to the structure of the international system. Even the term ‘rise’ became so politically sensitive in governmental policy circles that the alternative phrase ‘peaceful development’ (heping fazhan) began to be more commonly used. The underlying meaning, however, was the same. China would not seek to overturn the established international system, or regional orders, as a result of its rise in power. This has especially been the case with regions further away from China, where another country has been engaged with the offer of partnership based on mutual political and economic interests.

Under Xi, Chinese foreign policy has demonstrated greater comfort and confidence with the country’s expanded international role and great power status, as evidenced by the increasingly frequent use of the phrase ‘Chinese dream’ (Zhongguo meng中
which calls for the further ‘rejuvenation’ (fuxing 复兴) of the country and a greater role for individuals in building the Chinese nation. Nonetheless, in many of Beijing’s dealings with regions outside of the Asia-Pacific, there remains a primary focus on building partnerships based on mutual interests rather than great power/small state dynamics. This is partially because compared to previous rising powers, China is ‘rising’ under far greater and closer international scrutiny of its future policies and strategic goals, both on the international and on the regional level. Furthermore, there is much internal discussion within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) over the degree to which the country should continue to follow the oft-cited Deng Xiaoping-era doctrine of ‘tao guang yang hui’ (韬光养晦), meaning to avoid openly demonstrating one’s capability and instead keeping a low profile, as opposed to becoming a more traditional great power with a greater willingness to challenge global regimes and norms, as well as build opposing ones as the Soviet Union attempted to do in the twentieth century.

China’s development of ‘cross-regional diplomacy’ since the turn of the century has taken many forms, including bilateral agreements, greater engagement within international regimes and organizations of various sizes and types, and economic cooperation in the form of increased trade, joint ventures and development assistance. This widening and deepening of China’s diplomatic Interests has taken place as the country’s power levels have risen to where the People’s Republic became the world’s second-largest economy, just behind the United States (overtaking Japan) in 2010-11. China’s military capabilities, while still developing in many areas, have grown in tandem with its evolving economic power to the point where there is much outside debate about whether the country is or soon will be posing a strategic challenge both to its immediate neighbors and to the United States itself.

Despite these gains, China is still very much a developing state and, on the domestic level, must address a myriad number of problems related to economic and political reform. China’s economy is also growing increasingly dependent upon not only the maintenance of trade with the West, especially the United States and Europe, but also upon a steady inflow of energy and raw materials. The post-2008 global financial crisis and subsequent recessions and slow recoveries in the West have had a negative effect on Chinese exports, even if the country’s growth rates have remained healthy by Western standards and its gross national product (GDP) showed an annual growth of 7.5% as of mid-2014. Nonetheless, there is ongoing concern both within China and globally about a ‘hard landing’ scenario whereby the country experiences a sharp drop in economic development resulting in higher unemployment and increasing strains on the Chinese political system. Although China’s economy has been slowing down due to a reduction in demand for Chinese goods in key markets such as the United States and Europe, Beijing is hopeful of managing the slowdown process, encouraging economic growth on the domestic
level and overall hoping for a ‘soft landing’, slowing growth with limited economic (and political) disruption.

Fossil fuel imports are another area of sensitivity as the country seeks to diversify its energy consumption away from indigenous coal, which makes up approximately 69-70% of fuel consumed in the country, but is both inefficient and a major source of pollution. During early 2014, poor air quality levels in several Chinese cities sparked a governmental ‘war on pollution’ (xiang wuran xuanzhan 向污染宣战), which included plans to begin ambitious cutbacks on coal burning. Other fossil fuels, such as oil and gas, are seen as short-term solutions to this problem until more environmentally friendly options become more viable. In September 2013, China surpassed the United States to become the world’s largest petroleum importer, due largely to the practice of hydraulic fracturing (‘fracking’) in the US which has increased the level of indigenous fossil fuel supplies, and Beijing has been active in seeking out new supplies of oil and gas, preferably in accessible and politically stable regions.

As China settles into great power status, the country is seeking a louder international voice not only in Asia-Pacific affairs but also in other parts of the world. This has led to questions about whether China’s rise will place it increasingly at odds with the United States and its allies. The issue of political and economic competition, including over resources, between the West and China has been raised in many parts of the world, including in the Arctic, a region that has begun to attract much international attention due to more of its lands and resources becoming available, mainly as a result of climate change. The Arctic and the Far North regions are increasingly being seen as economically valuable for China and for other areas of Asia, because of the raw materials, including fossil fuels as well as base and precious metals, minerals and gemstones, becoming easier to access. While much of China’s resource diplomacy in the region has focused on Canada, Greenland, Iceland and Russia, Beijing’s interests in Arctic resources as a whole have been noted in other parts of the world.

Another Arctic aspect that has captured Beijing’s attention in recent years has been the possibility of expanded maritime trade routes in the region as more of the Arctic Ocean becomes ice-free during the summer months. With the expansion of Chinese trade during the 1990s, a great deal of strategic attention has been focused on the development of ‘sea lanes of communication’, or SLoCs (haishang tongdao 海上通道). With the melting of the ice in the Arctic region, sea routes that previously would have been impassable by all vessels save for modified icebreakers are becoming increasingly viable. This would introduce the possibility of shorter and less expensive transit times between key markets, especially between Europe and East Asia. Although, under Xi, Beijing has been seeking to ‘rebalance’ (zai pingheng 再平衡) its economy away from an emphasis on exports and towards greater domestic-level growth and household consumption, for the near term China’s economy will remain
largely based on ‘goods exports’, and therefore any means to bring Chinese products to Western markets in a faster and more efficient fashion will attract the attention of Party policymakers.

In addition, with the expansion of Chinese trade, there has been greater concern expressed in Beijing about the protection of maritime shipping from foreign interference or even interdiction, including by state and non-state actors. Under the Hu government, there was much discussion of a ‘Malacca Dilemma’ (Malu jia kunju 马六甲困局) in reference to the large share of Chinese trade, including in fossil fuels, which must pass through the Indian Ocean and the narrow Malacca Straits. For example, approximately eighty percent of China’s imported oil and gas must pass through the Malacca region. Therefore, any alternative trade routes in less politically sensitive regions, and being less expensive to maintain, are constantly being sought by China.

At present, much of China’s attention in the Arctic region has been based on scientific interests, including studies in geography, climatology (especially climate change), geology, glaciology and oceanography. Beijing has expressed interest in developing scientific partnerships with Arctic states in a variety of fields. However, China – like many other states – is closely watching economic developments in the Arctic, while simultaneously seeking a greater voice in northern regional affairs in proportion to its rising power and capabilities. This issue has presented a challenge to the Arctic states, and especially the littoral Arctic states which now face the task of reconciling greater international attention to the region’s resources with the need to develop their own political and economic interests and promote greater boreal cooperation.

As will be explained in more detail, beyond the scientific realm, China’s Arctic interests have developed along three distinct paths. First, Beijing is seeking access to potentially lucrative raw materials, (including fossil fuels, minerals and metals), which may become more easily exploited in the Arctic due to receding ice. Although China wishes to develop these raw materials to maintain threshold economic growth rates, the government is cognizant of the fact its actions are being intensely scrutinized by other actors, including the United States and the European Union - much more so than by other Asia-Pacific states which have developed Arctic economic policies over the past decade, including Australia, India, Japan and South Korea. Therefore, it has been in Beijing’s best interests to eschew policies that could become a catalyst for an overt ‘resource scramble’, and to avoid giving the impression that it is seeking a ‘zero-sum approach’ to obtaining these resources.

Diplomatic feathers were ruffled in 2012 when People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy Rear Admiral Yin Zhuo described the North Pole and surrounding areas as belonging not to any specific country, but rather to ‘all the people of the world’ (shijie renmin 世界人民), in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the
Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The perception of the Arctic as a ‘global commons’ had also been voiced by Hu Zhengyue, then-Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister, who noted at a 2009 conference in Svalbard that the Arctic region ‘occupies a unique position for all of us as humankind’. Since that time, however, Beijing has attempted to frame its Arctic policy more towards the seeking of partnerships with Arctic states and regimes, has placed greater emphasis on its scientific interests, and has been sensitive to suggestions that its Far North interests are primarily resource-driven. However, much of Beijing’s diplomacy with specific Arctic actors has already taken on economic and resource dimensions.

Second, the potential opening of Arctic sea routes, especially the Northeast Passage via the northern Siberian coast, is of great interest to China as it seeks to export goods to Europe and beyond, using faster and less expensive routes. In this, China is joining with other Asian states in seeking to take advantage of future trans-Arctic shipping. Beijing is also seeking a voice in the developing of these potential trade routes and in the likely expansion of legal regimes to regulate regional behavior. Third, China wishes to play an expanded role within the Arctic Council in the wake of attaining formalized observer status in that forum in 2013.

Beijing first expressed interest in attaining observer status in the Arctic Council in 2007 in the wake of the organization’s Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting in Tromsø, Norway in April of that year. However, China’s application was caught in internal debates within the Council about protocols regarding the admission of new observers, an issue which had become increasingly pressing as the visibility of the organization grew on the international level and the list of potential observers became ever longer. Beijing thus had to wait until the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Council, held in Kiruna, Sweden in May 2013, to finally attain the status of ‘observer’. China cannot seek to become a full member, as it lacks territory above the Arctic Circle, (situated at about 66°33’ N) or indeed in any region commonly considered ‘Arctic’; the shortest distance between China’s northernmost point in Mohe County (漠河县), Heilongjiang province at 53°33’ N and the Arctic Circle is more than 1400 kilometers. Nonetheless, there have been arguments within the country that China’s proximity to the Arctic region and the effects of regional climate change on Chinese weather patterns have justified greater China’s engagement with any major existing and emerging regimes addressing Arctic affairs.

Maintaining these positions, Beijing is seeking to put forward a definition of the Arctic development and governance process as largely an international issue, as opposed to one that is strictly the domain of the littoral states. However, China’s expanded role within the Arctic Council may be affected both by the presence of other new formal observers from Asia, including India, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, and by the increasingly tense relations between the West and Russia in the wake of the Ukraine crisis, the annexation of the Crimea region and the start of the Eastern Ukraine conflict in April 2014. Although there have been attempts to keep the
repercussions of these events - which have increasingly soured Moscow’s relations both with the United States and the European Union - out of Arctic diplomacy, spillover may be inevitable given Moscow’s dominant role in Arctic affairs. With the Arctic region taking on greater global strategic and economic significance, Beijing wants to avoid being left out of future decision-making processes, especially considering that two great powers, Russia and the United States, are full members of the Council and may be moving towards increasingly problematic strategic relations. In short, China is seeking to enter Arctic politics at a time when the region has become both more crowded and more diplomatically unpredictable. Nevertheless, there are strong economic reasons for Beijing to continue to press for a greater role in Arctic politics.

Conclusions: No Longer Just a Bystander

China’s evolving role in the Arctic has been described as a ‘mildly revisionist power’. The idea of ‘mildness’ reflects the country’s support for the maintenance of regional norms and rules, including UNCLOS and other relevant international laws, as well as engagement with Arctic governments and international organizations such as the Arctic Council. At the same time, China’s development as a great power has resulted in the country calling for a larger role in Arctic policymaking despite its lack of a Far Northern frontier. As one study noted, Beijing is seeking to ‘build capacity’, though diplomacy and scientific partnerships, to ensure that China has a voice in emerging global governance matters involving the Arctic. Beijing is also not alone among Asian states in seeking a louder voice in Arctic affairs, especially since the expansion of the list of Arctic Council observers after 2013. Japan, Singapore and South Korea are also developing their specific approaches to Far North policy, with a focus on scientific endeavors but also with an eye on the economic potential of the Arctic. China therefore has to be cognizant of potential diplomatic competition among Asian actors as the Arctic continues to be internationalized.

Beijing remains notably sensitive to global perceptions that it is unilaterally seeking to influence regional politics or to annex resources in the Arctic, as demonstrated by the initial imbroglio over the potential for mining deals in Greenland, as well as other debates over potential Chinese Arctic investments. Although Chinese policies in the Arctic are in many ways similar to those of other Asian states, including those of Japan and South Korea - especially in stressing the need for viewing the region to a great degree as a global as opposed to regional resource - Beijing finds itself under comparatively much more critical scrutiny, especially in the West, over its long-term Arctic interests. Under these circumstances, Beijing has been receptive to overtures from individual Arctic Council governments, including for example Denmark and Iceland, in a variety of areas ranging from the scientific to the political.

While China has increased its strategic visibility in areas that it considers its ‘core interests’, such as the nearby East and South China Seas, in areas further from China - including the Arctic - Beijing has sought to maintain the identity of a partner
rather than an advancing power. This has not only allowed China to counter concerns about the country seeking to challenge the political and economic status quo in the Arctic, but also to allow Beijing, still largely a regional neophyte, to continue to collect further information about various facets of regional politics and economics. As one study noted, the opening of the Arctic region has presented security and legal questions which are best addressed in a multilateral fashion, and China is in a much better position to address these matters in conjunction with Arctic states. In another view, any aggressive or revisionist actions on Beijing’s part would invariably trigger balance-of-power behavior from the other Arctic governments: a scenario which would be too risky for China, especially considering that two of the governments in question are the United States and Russia. Therefore, Beijing has continued to maintain a conservative approach while engaging the region via a series of bilateral and multilateral initiatives.

Although scientific endeavors, especially in the area of climate change issues, will form an important part of China’s Arctic policies in the coming years, economic concerns will inevitably comprise a larger share of Beijing’s Arctic thinking. This will be due both to ongoing demands by the Chinese economy for ready access to fossil fuels and raw materials, as well as a better means to transport Chinese goods to markets, but also to the desire to avoid being excluded by other great powers and the Arctic littoral states should economic activities in the region continue to develop at a rapid pace. Although political and economic disputes in the Arctic have been addressed and oftentimes settled by diplomacy, there is still the future possibility of larger political and strategic differences between regional powers, (such as Moscow and Washington), spilling over into the Arctic itself. This would be a nightmare scenario for China; and even if security problems do not appear in the Arctic in the near term, Beijing will remain watchful of any attempts by the littoral states to exclude non-Arctic governments from what China sees as international issues, including the question of the northern maritime transport routes.

As China’s political and economic rise continues, the Arctic will assume a much greater importance for Beijing as it settles further into the status of a great power and imaginable global power in the international system. Thus far, it has been in China’s interests, along with the other states seeking a greater presence in the Arctic, to avoid overt zero-sum policies and instead to seek regional cooperation and joint confidence-building and problem-solving. More overt competition for resources, access and influence in the Arctic becoming the norm, is a dubious but not an impossible future scenario. However, although there are differences among regional governments and outside actors over some areas of future Arctic governance, the current political atmosphere very much favors cooperation and communication. This would be the best departure point for Arctic governments to engage Beijing as China’s presence at the top of the world becomes ever more visible.
“An analysis on Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic in the BRI era,” Olga Alexeeva and Frederic Lassere, Advances in Polar Sciences, 2018 [23]
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frederic_Lasserre/publication/330354805_An_analysis_on_Sino-Russian_cooperation_in_the_Arctic_in_the_BRI_era/links/5c3bbe2f92851c22a37358e9/An-analysis-on-Sino-Russian-cooperation-in-the-Arctic-in-the-BRI-era.pdf

Abstract:
Over the past decade Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic has emerged as one of the major topics of the Russia-China negotiations on how to expand their comprehensive strategic partnership and to bring it to a new level. China considers the Arctic region important for its economic interests and desires to be included in the development of the region and its economic potential. For Russia, the Arctic is a future strategic resource base that would replace the old depleting fields and assure Russia’s status as a major worldwide energy supplier. Despite many joint statements on deepening of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the development of the Arctic energy resources, the concrete results of these ambitious plans are few. Some joint projects were dropped, as China and Russia could not agree on the conditions of the deal, others are progressing very slowly and have an uncertain future. In 2017, China has expanded its “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) to the Arctic thus elevating the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic to a higher level. How did the relationship between Russia and China evolve in the Arctic and how do Russia and China view and respond to the new Arctic dimension of the BRI? What factors limit the strategic rapprochement between China and Russia in the Arctic?

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
In January 2018, China released its first Arctic White Paper that outlines the major points of Beijing’s Arctic strategy. The document has attracted a lot of media attention both in the West and in Asia, and renewed concerns raised by some academic and many media commentators about a Chinese takeover of the Arctic. Although the Paper does not provide any detailed policy guidelines, mostly confirming the well-known Chinese interest for the economic development of various Arctic resources, one theme stands out in this otherwise very generic presentation—China’s ambition to tie the Arctic to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by using a “Polar Silk Road” to connect China to Europe through the Arctic Ocean (State Council Information Office of the PRC, 2018).

The idea to extend the BRI to the Arctic reflects not only China’s recent shift to a more confident approach in pursuing its economic and geopolitical interests worldwide, but also Beijing’s desire to further strengthen and promote the Sino-Russian economic ties in the polar region. Currently, Russia is the only BRI partner among the eight Arctic states and the largest recipient of Chinese Arctic investment.
Since 2014, Moscow has been increasingly open to the idea of China’s greater involvement in extraction and mining activities in the Russian Arctic and has officially committed to further cooperate with China on Arctic BRI projects of various nature and different scale.

At the same time, Beijing has showed a growing enthusiasm for the use of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) (Huang et al., 2015). The Chinese are not only actively testing the feasibility of the Arctic shipping routes by sending commercial ships along the NSR but are also working on the design and construction of ice-classed vessels, capable of operating in Arctic waters. These Chinese activities found energetic official support in Moscow which confirmed on several occasion its intention to develop the cooperation with China on the NSR, conveniently re-christened as “Ice Silk road” or “Silk Road on Ice” to fit the BRI’s official vocabulary.

The emerging Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic and its economic and geopolitical potential has recently became the focus of some scholarly attention. The majority of Western scholars tends to analyze the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic from Moscow’s perspective by focusing on the Russian aims of pursuing the partnership towards China in the Arctic (Lanteigne, 2015; Røseth, 2014). In 2017, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) published a detailed and rather balanced report on the recent developments of the Sino-Russian economic cooperation in the Arctic. After examining the evolving interests and activities of China and Russia in the Arctic, the report concluded that the existing divergence in goals and approaches greatly undermines the future of Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic (Sørensen and Klimenko, 2017), apparently confirming views already exposed by Lee and Lukin (2016).

Russian experts, while noting that Russia and China have differing priorities in relation to the Arctic, emphasize the economic benefits of the joint development of the Arctic resources and shipping routes for both countries (Konyshev and Sergunin, 2012). Although acknowledging the potential strategic and military risks of the growing Chinese presence in the Arctic (Khramtchikhin, 2015) and the existing differences in Russian and Chinese interpretation of Arctic law and governance (Morozov, 2016; Zagorsky, 2016), most Russian scholars see the future of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic in a more optimistic light then their Western colleagues.

Chinese scholars also highlight the positive drivers for Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic (Wang et al., 2015; Song and Wang, 2014) and study the possibilities of connecting the Russian Arctic to the BRI project (Li et al., 2016; Lu, 2016). In the majority of the publications, China is described as “a natural partner” for Russia as it has the ability to supply technologies and investments to back up Moscow’s endeavor to develop Arctic resources and shipping routes.
To identify the scope and scale of the Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic, we have assembled data from different Russian and Chinese sources in an attempt to quantify the Chinese participation in the development of the Russian Arctic since 2012. Governmental agencies in both Russia and China give very few details about the terms and conditions of the signed deals and their official statistics are often at odds with each other, so most of the data is sourced from periodicals and academic publications. The comprehensive analysis of these sources revealed that Sino-Russian projects in the Arctic—their expense, scope, and anticipated value—are frequently misrepresented for many different motives, including geopolitical concerns. How do Russia and China view and respond to the new Arctic dimension of the BRI? What are the potential implications for further Chinese-Russian cooperation on the NSR in the Arctic? Is the ongoing Russia-China cooperation in the Arctic the result of short-term pragmatic choices for both parties, or is it the beginning of a nascent strategic partnership? Are there discrepancies in the views of each partner regarding their cooperation in the Arctic? This paper examines whether this recent boost in Sino-Russian relations in the Arctic is a pragmatic choice for both parties or whether it is borne out of political and strategic partnership.

This paper aims to contribute to the literature on the development of the China-Russia partnership in the Arctic by providing a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of recent Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic, through a review of commercial negotiations and economic activities related to the exploration of the energy and shipping potential of the Russian Arctic, as well as an assessment of the current state of the cooperation between the two countries. A thorough review of the Russian scientific literature was notably used to document the cooperation between Russia and China in the Arctic and how it is perceived in Russian sources. This was analyzed in the frame of the constructivist approach of international relations and political geography, theories that emphasize that States may cooperate in the political and economic field, to the difference of the realist approach (Lasserre et al., 2016). The paper will first explore Russian objectives in the Arctic; then the first steps of the Russia-China cooperation in the region; and will then analyze the achievements of this cooperation.

**Conclusion**

The Ukrainian/Crimean crisis and Western sanctions, which took away Russian access to key financial markets and technological know-how, have brought Russia closer to China and seem to elevate their strategic and economic partnership to a higher level. The Russian “pivot to the East” has resulted in the signing of a number of important agreements related to the joint economic development of the various resources of the Russian Arctic. This rapprochement has been recently confirmed by Beijing’s decision to expand the spatial scope of the BRI to the Russian Arctic and thus further promote Sino-Russian economic cooperation in the region. Thus, this
paper has tackled the issue of how Russia and China can cooperate in the Arctic so as to foster their respective interests.

However, despite the apparent deepening of the bilateral relations, concrete results of these ambitious plans are limited. Some joint projects were dropped, as China and Russia could not agree on the conditions of the deal, others are progressing very slowly and have an uncertain future. Mutual strategic mistrust and different understanding of the mechanics and final goals of the Sino-Russian partnership in Beijing and Moscow seem to undermine the scale and the rhythms of their cooperation in the Russian Arctic. Yamal LNG is the only successful Sino-Russian joint venture in the Arctic where both sides seem to find their own interests, although Moscow and Beijing interpret differently their respective contribution to the implementation of the project.

The connection of the Arctic to the BRI might provide a new momentum for Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic by stimulating Chinese companies to participate more actively in the energy and infrastructure projects on the Russian territory. The realization of projects under the BRI umbrella will improve their opportunities for financial support from the Silk Road Fund and other official Chinese institutions thus reducing their exposure to various risks associated with many Russian projects in the Arctic. Greater involvement with the BRI might also motivate Russia to formulate a more coherent and pragmatic vision of its partnership with China and thus increase the scale of Chinese involvement in the development of the Russian Arctic. For now, the Sino-Russian relationship remains a marriage of convenience where both sides try to balance their vulnerabilities at the expense of the other. Closer cooperation within the BRI might change the situation and lead to a renegotiation of terms of Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic, even though the prospects for a mutually beneficial relationship remains tributary to a number of international and domestic factors.

“China’s Strategic Interests in the Arctic,” William G. Dwyer III, United States Army War College Strategy Research Project, 1 April 2015 [24]

Abstract:

China has been active in the Arctic for many years conducting climate research and expeditions. Over the last few years, China has made overtures for greater involvement in Arctic affairs and governance seeking full membership status in the Arctic Council and further collaboration with Arctic nations. China’s interest in the Arctic is driven by the need to fuel and feed the world’s largest population and most
powerful economy. This study begins with a review of China’s historical activities in the Arctic then argues that its recently intensified interest there is driven by two factors: natural resources and new maritime trade routes. Next, it suggests venues for increased Chinese participation in the governance structures for the Arctic and concludes with recommendations of concrete steps that the United States, as the incumbent Chair of the Arctic Council in 2015, can take to promote U.S. national security interests and encourage China’s responsible behavior in this dynamic international sphere of cooperation.

Current & Relevant Information:

China’s Strategic Interests in the Arctic

The Arctic environment is in great flux as scientific studies show the Arctic ice cap has diminished by 40% over the past 35 years. Nations are conducting polar scientific research to better understand the changing Arctic ecosystem and the effects of the warming Arctic upon the world’s climate. The Arctic Ocean and coastal areas once barren and frozen under a dense sheet of ice are slowly coming to life with industry and commerce brought about by the receding ice conditions.

These environmental changes bring new opportunities for the eight Arctic nations (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States) that ring the North Pole. Arctic nations are competing for abundant resources such as oil, natural gas, minerals, and fish stocks that the newly accessible Arctic contains. The receding ice is also unlocking additional maritime trade routes that will relieve the increasingly stressed global marine transportation system between Asian, European, and North American ports. This study will address these new trade routes known as the Northern Sea Route, the Transpolar Sea Route, and the once-legendary Northwest Passage.

Although it has no Arctic littoral, China has been active in the Arctic for many years conducting climate research and scientific expeditions. Recently, China has signaled its intent to become more involved in Arctic affairs and governance by seeking full membership status in the multilateral Arctic Council and further collaboration with the Arctic nations. China’s interest in the Arctic is driven by the need to fuel and feed the world’s largest population and economy.

This study begins with a review of China’s historical activities in the Arctic and argues that its recently intensified interest there is driven by two factors: 1) new sources of oil, natural gas, minerals and fish, and 2) additional maritime trade routes. This review also proposes avenues for increasing Chinese participation in the governance structures for the Arctic and concludes with recommendations of concrete steps that the United States, as the incumbent chair of the Arctic Council in 2015, can take to encourage China’s responsible behavior in this dynamic international sphere of cooperation.
Conclusions

The Arctic will continue to be a strategically important region into the future as nations position themselves to take advantage of the untapped resources and expeditious maritime routes. Although China’s interests in the Arctic started with scientific research, they have evolved into a desire to exert influence over the control and distribution of the bountiful natural resources (oil, natural gas, minerals, and fish stocks) required to sustain China’s population and fuel the world’s largest economy. According to Stephen Blank, “China is clearly after more than simply investment and trade opportunities as it continues to display its obsession with securing energy and other supplies where the U.S. Navy cannot or will not go.” Additionally, China has signaled its intent to step up its use of the three Arctic maritime transit routes.

The Arctic Council is the internationally agreed model of governance and has established a strong reputation for cooperation and mutual respect among Arctic nations, as evidenced by the Arctic SAR and oil spill agreements. Some argue China will not be satisfied with its limited role of observer in Arctic affairs and will continue to lobby for full membership on the Council. However, the Arctic Council can capitalize on China’s leadership position in the global economy to boost the strategic importance of the group. The rise of China in the Arctic may also be seen as a balance to Russia, which is the most active and provocative state in this region.

The self-labeling of the United States as an “Arctic nation” by national policy makers is not borne out by the intensity of American policy and activity in the region. Unlike Russia and Canada, the United States is perceived by China as neither an Arctic power nor a threat to China’s rising influence in the region. This perception offers the advantage of muting any aggressive notes in the tone of American calls for China to exhibit responsible behavior befitting a major international power.

The United States can take concrete actions in three arenas – unilateral, bilateral and multilateral – to reduce the risk to its national security interests in the Arctic. First, the U.S. Senate should ratify the UNCLOS and fund additional Coast Guard aircraft, icebreakers and other patrol vessels to give the United States both increased international legitimacy and Arctic maritime capability.

Second, the United States should capitalize on the success of the bilateral Coast Guard ship-rider program to build confidence with China in related maritime areas. A candidate venue could be the joint maritime patrols between littoral nations in the South China Sea proposed last month in Malaysia by the commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet. Scott Cheney-Peters of the Center for Strategic and International Studies suggests that the U.S. component of such patrols could be vessels from the Coast Guard (rather than the U.S. Navy) to reduce the appearance of a direct military challenge to China. The law-enforcement character of the Coast Guard and its established capacity-building programs with its Chinese counterpart should result in a less provocative presence that could spawn additional areas of cooperation.
Third, the chair of the Arctic Council affords the United States a powerful legitimacy granted by a multilateral body that China desperately wants to join. The U.S. government must leverage this unique opportunity to build a solid coalition within the Council to induce China to assume the mantle of responsible global partner in several venues. The prize of full membership in the Arctic Council could be used to prod China into cooperation on maritime issues not only in the Arctic Ocean but further afield in the contentious theater of the South China Sea. The United States and the other Council members must be vigilant to Chinese attempts to subvert Council proceedings through economic coercion of vulnerable Arctic nations. The evolving Arctic offers great potential for multi-lateral cooperation rather than the pursuit of self-interest and competition. The United States and China have an opportunity to reinforce strong maritime governance in the Arctic for their mutual benefit.


Abstract:

Most studies of Asian state involvement in Arctic affairs assume that shorter sea-lanes to Europe are a major driver of interest, so this article begins by examining the prominence of shipping concerns in Arctic policy statements made by major Asian states. Using a bottom-up approach, we consider the advantages of Arctic sea routes over the Suez and Panama alternatives in light of the political, bureaucratic and economic conditions surrounding shipping and shipbuilding in China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Especially Japanese and Korean policy documents indicate soberness rather than optimism concerning Arctic sea routes, noting the remaining limitations and the need for in-depth feasibility studies. That policymakers show greater caution than analysts, links in with our second finding: in Japan and Korea, maritime-sector bureaucracies responsible for industries with Arctic experience have been closely involved in policy development, more so than in China. Thirdly, we find a clear tendency towards rising industry-level caution and restraint in all three countries, reflecting financial difficulties in several major companies as well as growing sensitivity to the economic and political risks associated with the Arctic routes. Finally, our examination of bilateral and multilateral Chinese, Japanese and Korean diplomatic activity concerning Arctic shipping exhibits a lower profile than indicated by earlier studies.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
How important are shipping and shipbuilding for the Arctic aspirations of leading Asian states? How much of their engagement is purely commercial, and how much is a reflection of political goals? We take a bottom-up approach, examining Arctic sea routes from the perspectives of Asian governmental agencies, companies and industry associations, rather than a top–down approach centered on Arctic change. A recent study ranked China highest among the leading maritime nations of the world, with Japan and the Republic of Korea as third and fourth. Given the global orientation of their maritime industries, these nations will always assess Arctic options across a wide array of alternatives.

Since 2013, China, Japan and Korea have enjoyed formal observer status in the major international forum specifically targeting northern affairs, the Arctic Council. All three countries emphasize the mutual benefits of cooperation with the Arctic states, but differ significantly in the salience they ascribe to various maritime business opportunities, in the centrality of their shipping ministries in Arctic policy development, and in the preparedness of their maritime industries to commit themselves financially to northern sea routes.

Three alternative transit routes are in focus in debates over trans-Arctic shipping: The Northeast Passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific north of Russia, the Northwest Passage through Canada’s Arctic Archipelago, and the Central Route across the North Pole. For the near future, it is only the Northeast Passage—specifically, the Northern Sea Route—that has attracted serious interest from Asian shipping actors. The Northwest Passage has depth limitations and remains severely constrained by permanent or moving ice. Regular use of the Central Route remains a futuristic scenario, requiring far greater ice retreat than seen so far. The “Northeast Passage” is the loose term historically applied to the entire Arctic passage between Europe and Asia: the Northern Sea Route is the clearly demarcated sea area between the Kara Sea in the west to the Bering Strait in the east, extending 200 nautical miles from the coast, developed and regulated by Soviet and Russian authorities since the 1930s. In addition to its potential as a transit corridor, this route is of interest to the shipping industry because of transport-intensive resource extraction projects in the Russian North. Shipping out from the Arctic or into it is termed “destination shipping,” as distinct from transit shipping between the Pacific and the Atlantic.

Because most studies of Asian-state interest in the Arctic assume that shorter sea-lanes to Europe are a major driver, we begin by examining the prominence of shipping concerns in the Arctic policy statements of major Asian states. Contrary to the impression left by many analysts, these policy documents—those by Japan and Korea in particular—reveal soberness rather than optimism with respect to Arctic sea routes, highlighting the remaining limitations and the need for more in-depth feasibility studies. This greater caution from policymakers than from analysts can be explained by our second finding: in Korea and Japan, maritime-sector bureaucracies...
responsible for industries with Arctic experience have been closely involved in policy development, more so than in China. Our third finding concerns the tendency to greater industry-level caution and restraint in all three countries, reflecting financial difficulties in several major companies as well as growing sensitivity to the economic and political risks associated with Arctic routes. On this basis, our final substantive section examines bilateral and multilateral Chinese, Japanese and Korean diplomatic activity in Arctic shipping, finding much lower profiles than indicated by earlier studies of Asian states in Arctic affairs.

**China**

Due to China’s steadily rising geopolitical status, its foreign-policy moves are followed with keenness by the outside world. China acquired its first (and as yet only) icebreaking research vessel in 1993; in 2004, the Polar Research Institute of China set up an Arctic research base in Svalbard. This Norwegian archipelago is the most accessible among high-latitude research sites—for climatic reasons, and because the Spitsbergen Treaty ensures “equal liberty of access and entry for any reason or object whatever” for nationals of all signatories. China is an original signatory to the Spitsbergen Treaty; as with the other Asian states examined here, its Arctic engagements have expanded during the past decade from an early focus on scientific research, orchestrated by polar research agencies more heavily engaged in Antarctic than in Arctic research.

China’s Arctic policy document is thorough and specific, reflecting a longstanding process of developing regional priorities and defining four principles: respect, cooperation, win–win results, and sustainability. “Respect” and “cooperation” refer primarily to international institutions, notably the UN Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) and the network of “global, regional, multilateral and bilateral channels” for facilitating joint endeavors. Reciprocity is highlighted - that coastal states must respect the rights that non-Arctic states enjoy in the region—a point reiterated in official Chinese statements on the Arctic over the past decade. A speech by the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hu Zhengyue, on a visit to Svalbard in 2009 was the first prominent articulation of how China perceives its role in this region. Only slightly modified, this speech titled “China’s view on Arctic cooperation” was published on the Ministry website, indicating that it represented official policy. Like the 2018 policy document, the 2009 speech reflects China’s longstanding foreign-policy line of reassuring the outside world that it accepts the international order. Three points emphasized by the Assistant Minister in 2009 are no less prominent in the 2018 official policy document: the requirements under LOSC for cooperation with non-Arctic states on matters such as shipping, the gains derivable from joint scientific research and peaceful pursuit of win–win opportunities, and the transregional effects of Arctic environmental change.

How one’s own country is affected by Arctic environmental change is a prominent and recurrent feature of all Asian-state policy statements on the Arctic, explicitly
justifying a greater scientific presence in the region and implicitly suggesting some level of stakeholder saliency.

The third principle put forward in Chinese policy, “win–win results,” has become increasingly prominent in official statements and was in 2015 already cited among the central norms underlying China’s practice in the Arctic. The term, with variants like “common interest” or “mutual benefit,” occurs throughout China’s Arctic policy document. Also, the final principle, “sustainability,” present in early statements, has become more elaborate and pronounced with time—in the policy document, references to sustainability or environmental or ecological protection are outnumbered only by those to “China.”

China’s Arctic policy devotes considerable attention to maritime transport, and makes some bold claims: “The utilization of sea routes and exploration and development of the resources in the Arctic may have a huge impact on the energy strategy and economic development of China … [and] China’s capital, technology, market, knowledge and experience is expected to play a major role in expanding the network of shipping routes in the Arctic and facilitating the economic and social progress of the coastal States along the routes.” Shipping is mentioned first among the economic sectors of interest to China—but references to the economy appear only after China’s policies and positions concerning scientific research and protection of the Arctic environment are elaborated. Highlights include the “constructive role” China has played in “the formulation of Arctic-related international rules,” presumably including the negotiation of the legally binding Polar Code under the International Maritime Organization, as well as the “Polar Silk Road” branch of the broader infrastructure project known as the Belt and Road Initiative.

The four principles articulated in China’s Arctic policy sit well with Bennett’s argument that China is systematically building two mutually reinforcing narratives to gain legitimacy as a regional stakeholder: one territorial, highlighting its “near-Arctic” location and involvement in Arctic research, and one globalist, highlighting the extra-regional impacts of Arctic change. This balancing of territorial and globalist arguments for a role in Arctic affairs is also highly compatible with the general direction of policy spelt out in Japan’s and Korea’s Arctic documents.

**Conclusions**

Shipping and shipbuilding are not quite as powerful drivers of the Arctic aspirations pursued by China, Japan and the Republic of Korea as many believe. Arctic maritime transport is viewed with rising caution at governmental as well as industry levels in these countries. Soberness in evaluating maritime business opportunities is evident, particularly in Japanese and Korean policy documents and industry statements. China’s Arctic policy is more upbeat on Arctic shipping options, subsuming them under the larger Belt and Road Initiative as a “Polar Silk Road.”
However, the Chinese shipping industry’s actual moves into the region have been cautious, and increasingly so over time.

The bottom-up approach we have taken here means that any distinct advantages that Arctic sea routes enjoy over the Suez and Panama alternatives—notably, shorter distances and associated savings of fuel and time—are seen in light of the specific political, bureaucratic, and economic conditions that surround shipping and shipbuilding in China, Japan and Korea.

The political attention those countries pay to the Arctic is clearly rising, but not as steeply as the rise in attention to Asia among Arctic-policy analysts. Claims to saliency as Arctic stakeholders are based primarily on the effects of Arctic climatic developments on their home territories and on the rights all non-coastal states enjoy under international law. However, China, Japan and Korea also emphasize their own contributions to scientific investigations in the Arctic as well as the relevance of their capital and technology for regional economic development. Especially in China’s policy document, those reasons are reinforced by explicit references to its own prominence in global governance and international affairs. All three underscore that they fully respect the sovereign rights of coastal states, and none of them has explicitly challenged the controversial unilateral shipping regulations that Canada and Russia have established for ice-covered waters adjacent to their coasts. At regional and global levels too, the Asian states have maintained relatively low profiles, in shipping-oriented activities under the Arctic Council and in the negotiations of a legally binding Polar Code under the International Maritime Organization.

The significance of shipping and shipbuilding for Asian engagement in the Arctic has also been conditioned by bureaucratic structures in each country and their proximity to industry associations and fluctuations in the relevant markets. The ministries of foreign affairs, and in Japan the Cabinet Office, have played important roles in the aggregation of comprehensive Arctic policies; in Korea the main driver has been the powerful Ministry for Oceans and Fisheries, which also has responsibility for shipping and polar research. Deep involvement of the segment of government closest to shipping and shipbuilding, characteristic of policy development in Korea and Japan, implies that elaboration of goals, priorities, and specific projects build on sector expertise sensitive not only to opportunities but also to political or economic constraints. In China as well as Korea, the two countries whose Arctic policies convey the clearest emphasis on economic use, the shipping industries have been financially overstretched in recent years and thus less prepared to commit themselves to heavy investments where the expected returns are potentially high, but uncertain and still far in the future.

For all three countries, rising attention to Arctic developments as well as broader aspirations of playing visible roles in global governance mean that maritime transport projects involving this region are assessed with considerable interest, but we find
nothing to indicate that they will be pursued unless the expected returns equal or exceed those of other options. “Arcticness” matters—but competitiveness decides.


Abstract:

This article contributes to the academic debate on China’s growing interests in the Arctic and enriches our understanding of the various economic and political factors influencing Chinese investment decisions in the mineral sector. The article studies Chinese interests in two Arctic advanced mineral exploration projects – the Citronen Fjord zinc project in Northern Greenland and the Kvanefjeld (Kuannersuit) Rare Earth Element (REE)-uranium project in Southern Greenland. It analyses China’s different policies for REE and zinc and their different roles in China’s foreign policy strategy – the Belt and Road initiative (BRI), which also includes plans for establishing an “Ice Silk Road”. Based on a study of Chinese-language policy documents and academic articles from the mining sector, we argue that Chinese involvement in the two projects is driven by different strategic considerations. Chinese involvement in REE projects overseas is primarily driven by China’s interest in the strategic resource itself, whereas decisions of where to engage in zinc projects are to a higher degree determined by China’s foreign policy priorities. China has a well-developed and clearly defined national strategy for REE, a resource it considers “strategic,” of which the Kvanefjeld project is likely to be part. Zinc, on the other hand, is not a strategic resource to China, but still essential for its industry. Hence, we argue that the Citronen Fjord project is less tied to national resource strategy; instead, it offers China access to the Arctic region and to zinc as an added bonus. By focusing on the mineral sector, the article explores the extent to which mineral interests drive Chinese foreign policy and to what extent other foreign policy interests influence the Chinese mineral sector overseas.

Current & Relevant Information:

Chinese Interests in Greenland: Mineral Resources and Power Balance

China’s growing interests in the Arctic and emerging Arctic strategy have been the subject of several publications in recent years (e.g., Jacobson & Peng, 2012; Lanteigne, 2014; Brady, 2017; Lackenbauer et al., 2018; Sørensen, 2018). As Anne-Marie Brady (2017: 116) has shown in her book China as a Polar Great Power, China’s Arctic policies are formally managed within China’s maritime supra-bureaucracy. The maritime bureaucracy hosts at least seventeen different government agencies and departments with polar interests. In addition, external actors, including polar scholars, state-owned enterprises and other commercial forces may also influence China’s polar policies. In Greenland, a country many
scholars of Chinese-Arctic relations regard as being of strategic importance for China’s Arctic activities, mineral resources have been the focus of China’s interests (Brady, 2017; Sørensen, 2018). This makes Greenland an interesting and well-suited case for further exploring the extent to which mineral interests drive Chinese foreign policy and to what extent other foreign policy interests influence the Chinese mineral sector overseas.

Chinese state involvement in Greenland’s mineral sector has generated political controversy in Denmark and Greenland. In Denmark, apart from concerns that state-supported Chinese companies will seize control over Greenland’s vast mineral riches, there are fears that Chinese investments come with hidden political and military agendas. In 2016, the Danish government stepped in to prevent the Hong Kong-based mining company General Nice from taking over the abandoned naval base Grønndal (Breum, 2016; Matzen, 2017). Recently, a bid by China Communications Construction Company, a Chinese state firm previously blacklisted by the World Bank, to build airports in Greenland prompted the Danish government to secure half of the financing of the airports. The interpretation in Greenland and Denmark was that this was done to keep China out. It resulted in the party Partii Naleraq, strongly in favor fast Greenlandic independence, leaving the government in protest against accepting support from Denmark (Bennett, 2018). In Nuuk, parts of the political elite regard a vibrant mining sector largely fueled by Chinese capital as one of the few feasible ways of achieving economic self-sufficiency (Gad et al., 2018).

While there have been plans for very large Chinese investments in Greenland for a while now, actual investments are so far extremely limited. This suggests that that “speculation and political rhetoric far exceeds actual developments” (Foley, 2017: 100). However, the establishment of the “Ice Silk Road” (冰上丝绸之路) as an official policy and the above-mentioned fact that Chinese state firms have made bids for building airports in Greenland – a country with inadequate and badly connected infrastructure – seem to indicate that Greenland has at least some priority in parts of the Chinese state system.

Since Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988) first coined the concept “fragmented authoritarianism,” the view of large parts of the Chinese bureaucracy as being able to select between policy agendas set by competing sectors of the central leadership in Beijing became a common assumption in many studies of Chinese politics (Mertha, 2009). Under current president Xi Jinping, this view has become increasingly challenged, with one of the important elements of fragmented authoritarianism, policy experimentation, also questioned (Stepan & Ahlers, 2016). Recent studies of Chinese state-controlled enterprises, however, reveal that the fragmented authoritarianism approach may still have some relevance in the study of this sector. Based on telephone interviews with Chinese mining companies, Têtu and Lasserre (2017) argue that Chinese companies’ decisions to invest in
Greenland are based on a combination of economic and political considerations. Increased Chinese control over capital outflows means that both political support and commercial viability are increasingly required. We aim at exploring the incentives from the Chinese bureaucracy towards the mining sector and how these might be changing as a result of the “Ice Silk Road”.

Chinese companies interested in Greenland are at least partly driven by state interests (Sørensen, 2018; Zeuthen, 2017; Têtu and Lasserre, 2017). Few, however, have studied what the state wants to gain from its involvement. Moreover, with few exceptions (e.g., Brady, 2017; Zeuthen, 2017; Martin 2018), most Western analysis relies exclusively on English-language sources to assess the interests and motivations behind Chinese state investments in Greenland. This article draws extensively on Chinese-language materials intended to inform and instruct Chinese stakeholders involved in mineral exploration projects overseas, some of which have never been analyzed in Western research. In addition, the article draws on data collected in interviews with stakeholders in some of the mining projects. It focuses on two advanced mineral exploration projects in Greenland where Chinese companies are involved – the Citronen Fjord zinc project in Northern Greenland and the Kvanefjeld Rare Earth Elements (REE) and uranium project in Southern Greenland.

The article begins by discussing China’s foreign policy interests in Greenland and the Arctic more broadly. It then moves on to present the global supply and demand outlook for zinc and REE based on data from geological surveys, providing an explanation for China’s interests in the two commodities from a macro-perspective. It then compares China’s policies for zinc and REE based on the official five-year plans for the two commodities, showing how zinc and REE are differently prioritized and their different roles in China’s Belt and Road initiative (BRI 一带一路), the larger policy framework of which the “Ice Silk Road” is a part. The next section discusses China’s interests in Greenland’s mineral resources based on a content analysis of Chinese-language geology journals from the Chinese Academic Journals Database (CAJ), a Chinese full-text database containing more than 66 million articles. It shows how, following a series of diplomatic exchanges between China and Greenland from 2011 to 2013, Chinese geologists began to publish detailed assessments of Greenland’s mineral resources. The article then briefly introduces the two mining projects and the Chinese investments in these projects that followed the diplomatic exchanges. Finally, it analyzes and compares the two Chinese companies involved in the projects, their relationship to the Chinese state, and how they operate within Chinese and global policy frameworks, before concluding that Chinese involvement in the two projects is driven by different strategic considerations. We argue that Chinese involvement in REE projects overseas is primarily driven by China’s interest in the “strategic” resource itself, whereas decisions of where to engage in zinc projects are to a higher degree determined by China’s foreign policy priorities.
Conclusion

Understanding China’s intentions in Greenland is challenging. By analyzing what companies and policy advisors do and say, we may get an impression of why selected actors do as they do, but even under the very authoritarian leadership of Xi Jinping, China’s interests in Greenland are still mainly controlled by incentives. Through analysis of Chinese-language policy documents and academic articles from the mining sector, this article has explored the different possible drivers behind Chinese engagement in two mining projects in Greenland. We suggest that Chinese involvement in REE projects abroad are more likely to be driven by China’s interest in the strategic resource itself, whereas decisions of where to engage in zinc projects are more likely to be determined by China’s foreign policy priorities.

Greenland has strategic value for China both as a source of important minerals and as a foothold for accessing the Arctic region. As suggested by a growing number of Chinese scholars in Chinese-language publications, Greenland could come to play a key role in China’s Arctic strategy. Clearly, parts of the Chinese state are building Arctic knowledge that may be used to facilitate investment in Greenland in the future, investments that could serve to support China’s Arctic access.

The mineral sector’s goal is to supply the minerals needed by China. At the same time, however, the industry is open towards utilizing incentives that other parts of the Chinese state bureaucracy might provide for geostrategic reasons and is subordinate to directives. The exact combination of mineral need and geostrategic incentive may vary from project to project, but in the case of Greenland, it appears as if the geostrategic element of possible future decisions on mining is considerable.

“Asia Eyes the Arctic,” Page Wilson, The Diplomat, 26 August 2013 [27]
https://thediplomat.com/2013/08/asia-eyes-the-arctic/?all=true

Overview:

In May this year, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Singapore and Italy were admitted as permanent observers to the Arctic Council—a forum bringing together the eight Arctic member states (United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark (via Greenland), Russia, Sweden, Finland and Iceland), indigenous Arctic populations, and other interested parties to discuss a range of issues posed in this unique region. Formed in 1996, the Council and its work has been attracting growing worldwide attention in the wake of the record low levels of sea ice coverage documented in the summer months of 2007—a record which itself was broken last year.

Current & Relevant Information:

That five of the six new observers to the Council are Asian states reflects two developments: first, the great interest of these states in the commercial opportunities made possible by a transformed Arctic region; and second, the Council’s need to reinforce its position as the preeminent body for the discussion of Arctic matters.
Taken together, these developments suggest that the future of Arctic affairs, both inside and outside the Council, is likely to be far more complex and far more influenced by Asian actors than has been the case to date.

The economics supporting the Asian observers’ interests in the Arctic are well known. Increasingly long ice-free periods in the North West Passage (NWP) and the Northern Sea Route (NSR) due to the effects of climate change raise the prospect of a quicker and cheaper transit for Asian products destined for Europe than that currently provided by the Strait of Malacca and the Suez Canal.

In a speech given a few days after South Korea was accepted as an observer, its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs estimated that by using the NSR, travel time and distance between the shipping hub of Busan and Rotterdam would be reduced by about thirty per cent – leading him to refer to the new route as the “Silk Road of the Twenty-First Century.” Shipping in the other direction—from Europe to Asia via the NSR—has also begun, with the first Japanese-owned ship carrying Russian iron ore concentrate from the Kola Peninsula to China in 2011. Presently, China is attempting its first commercial transit of the NSR, expecting the journey time between Dalian and Rotterdam to be reduced to 35 days, instead of the usual 48 days. The dangers associated with the traditional Suez Canal route—namely, piracy around the Horn of Africa—only adds to the appeal of new Arctic shipping lanes, despite the considerable uncertainty that still surrounds their viability in one of the world’s harshest environments.

A second economic rationale underpinning Asian observers’ interest in the region is its resources. The U.S. Geological Survey has estimated that the Arctic contains 30% of the world’s undiscovered reserves of natural gas, and 13% of its undiscovered oil. The same survey suggested around 84% of the Arctic’s estimated resources are located offshore. While global prices for these commodities remain high, there will be a strong incentive to explore recovery options despite the high cost and high risk involved.

Already this year, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) has submitted a joint application with Eykon Energy to Icelandic authorities for a license to explore and produce oil and gas in Arctic waters. Other recent deals by Chinese companies in relation to oil, gas and mineral exploitation in Russia and Greenland have already been documented. Similarly, the state-owned Korea Resources Corporation (KORES) signed a memorandum of understanding in September of last year with Greenland to pursue joint ventures with respect to rare earth elements, tungsten and cobalt. The cash infusion and know-how provided by Asian states to local resource companies has made it possible for these projects to proceed, given the ongoing budgetary constraints faced by many Arctic and/or European governments in the wake of the global financial crisis. To the extent that such activities become important sources of revenue for Arctic states, then their domestic politics are also likely to reflect the growing influence of the partnering Asian states.

Abstract:

A growing global market for generic minerals that are used in technical products for the ‘green’ energy transition and the electronic industry holds interesting potential for the Arctic. This article takes Greenland as an example of an Arctic nation which may offer an alternative sourcing country for minerals otherwise known as ‘conflict-minerals’. China’s electronic, solar power and wind energy industries need certain generic minerals for production for the global market. Certain conflict-ridden countries are main sources of some of these minerals, which are known as ‘conflict minerals’ when their trade helps fuel the conflicts. Commitment to fight conflict minerals have led to various guiding normative standards; and the EU and US have introduced requirements on importers and manufacturers to document efforts to avoid conflict-related supply chains. These developments underscore the potential market for deposits elsewhere. China has responded by developing guidelines for minerals supply chains and mining investment. The article explains that these guidelines can apply outside conflict areas and discusses how their connection to other international regulatory instruments for business responsibility for human rights can be deployed by Greenlandic actors to enhance the implementation by Chinese economic entities of Greenlandic policies and national regulation on social sustainability. The article argues that in particular the Chinese guidelines’ reference to the concept of risk-based due diligence, a concept that has been introduced by guidelines from the United Nations (UN) and elaborated in guidelines from the Organization for Economic Collaboration and Development (OECD) as a company approach for identifying and managing its adverse impacts, may be deployed to complement Greenland’s own regulation on stakeholder engagement.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Preventing adverse social and environmental impact of mining and the trade in minerals is a key issue for affected communities and host governments (Ruggie, 2013; Footer, 2015). Companies causing adverse impacts on society may also suffer economic losses due to the reduction of their ‘social license to operate’ (Nelsen, 2006; Henisz et al., 2014). While concern with adverse societal impacts caused by extractive industries has particularly been voiced in regard to countries in Africa and Latin America, the manner in which mining is performed means that the
industry as such can be considered a high-risk sector in regard to potential adverse impacts regardless of country or region. There is a need everywhere for adequate measures to protect communities, employees or the environment against harmful effects of dust, industrial processes, treatment of mined or discarded materials, etc. Local communities often feel strongly about the establishment or extension of mining projects or possess specific knowledge of relevance for identifying and managing potential adverse impacts. Irrespective of location, adequate processes also need to be in place to ensure stakeholder engagement. From health impacts on communities and occupational health and safety of workers to general working conditions and meaningful stakeholder engagement, a range of impacts caused by the industry and relevant processes to identify and manage these have human rights relevance. Indeed, the risks and steps to avoid these have been clarified through efforts to develop normative guidance for governments as well as companies with regard to business impacts on human rights over the past two decades, especially with the United Nations (UN) (Ruggie, 2013) complemented by the Organization for Economic Collaboration and Development (OECD) (Buhmann, 2015).

Recent years' commitment to fighting climate change through transitions to a ‘green’ economy has led to an increased economic interest in certain minerals that are required for products like solar power panels, batteries for electric cars, as well as a range of electronic goods, many of which are produced in China and traded to other countries (Huang, 2018; Cao & Groba, 2013; Wang, 2009). International political support for fighting climate change through green transitions took a leap forward with the 2015 Paris Climate Change Accord, as well as the adoption in the same year of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with SDG 7 aiming to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, including renewable and clean energy. In the years preceding this, international concern had been expressed with severe social impacts of the mining and sourcing of some minerals used for products relevant for this transition, in particular the so-called ‘conflict minerals’ sourced out of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In the United States and Europe, such concern has led to extensive requirements on companies importing such minerals from the DRC area or deploying them for manufacturing purposes to provide transparency on the sources of the minerals, e.g. through mandatory reporting. For the US and EU markets, manufacturers or importers of products that contain generic minerals that originate or may potentially originate from the DRC area are subject to reporting on their supply chains and risk management processes. The potential reputational risk, as well as the human and economic resources required for the reporting, create a potential market for the relevant types of minerals sourced out of other regions that do not suffer from civil wars and human rights atrocities characterizing ‘conflict minerals’ from the DRC area. For a special issue related to the topic of mutual resource interests between China and the Arctic, this raises interesting economic prospects if Arctic areas can be providers of the relevant types of minerals for China’s industry supplying to the global market. This in turn raises questions on how to address potential adverse societal concerns in the
Arctic areas where such minerals could be mined, including through strong engagement with communities as stakeholders.

This article addresses these questions from the perspective of Greenland, an Arctic nation with potential sources of a range of the relevant minerals, and strong policies, a minerals resources law, other regulations and procedures for social sustainability and impact assessment, benefit agreements, and citizen involvement. Previous studies (e.g. Hubbard, 2013), that have addressed Indigenous concerns in particular, have argued that these policies and the implementation of the Greenlandic regulation for socially sustainable mining may benefit from considering the so-called risk-based due diligence approach that was introduced and elaborated by UN guidance instruments on business responsibilities for human rights. This article expands that line of argument to Greenlandic society in general, in particular local communities that may be affected by mining projects. Adopting a particular focus on the potential Chinese interests in Greenlandic minerals, the article considers how two sets of guidelines developed by the Chinese mining and minerals industry may complement the Greenlandic raw materials regulation for the purpose of avoiding adverse impacts and ensuring stakeholder engagement in line with international guidance on business and human rights. In particular, the article argues that the Chinese guidelines’ inspiration from international guidance instruments that take a human rights perspective and encourage the risk-based due diligence process may offer opportunities for Greenlandic actors to deepen community engagement and prevention of adverse impacts of a human rights character (such as, but not limited to, health impacts). Due to space limitations the article does not discuss other Arctic states, however in principle the Chinese guidelines may be applied by governments or communities in other areas from a similar perspective as the one argued in here.

Greenland is a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, and in 2009 was granted self-government, a step up towards full independence from ‘home rule’ introduced in 1979 and prior colonial status. With Greenlandic aspirations of achieving independence from Denmark, interest has also grown for developing a self-sufficient economy. Greenlandic raw materials play a part as a potential source of income for such an economy (Ilisimatusarfik & University of Copenhagen, 2014). Combined with the prospects that climate change offers for easier access to minerals hitherto covered under ice as well as for making sea or land-based infrastructure to ship mined ore or processed composites more accessible, already existing international interest in exploiting Greenlandic raw-materials grew around 2014 (Merrild-Hansen et al., 2016). While it later cooled off due in part to the global development in prices for relevant minerals, the prospect of Greenland emerging as a supplier of various minerals and other raw-materials remains, in principle, not least due to the economic aspects of independence. The economic interest among foreign companies in exploring these resources is reflected by the fact that a large number of exploration permits are held by international companies (Government of Greenland, 2018).
If supplies can be accessed at competitive prices, Greenland offers potential sources of ‘conflict-free minerals.’ Such competitiveness depends not only the price of a unit of the material. It is also determined by economic or human resource-demanding steps needed for trading a product in certain markets, for example steps to document that a mineral does not fuel war and human rights atrocities. China has shown an interest in funding the development of a mining infrastructure of minerals in Greenland, and in buying minerals for use in the Chinese manufacturing industry (Zeuthen, 2017; Economist, 2018).

In Greenland the potential adverse as well as positive social impacts of mines have been a major issue in regard to several proposed projects. In addition to health and environmental impacts, particular concern has been raised in regard to Chinese political interests and the impact of a potentially large influx of Chinese workers (Economist, 2018; Nuttall, 2012; Merrild-Hansen et al., 2016). Local tensions and conflicts among citizens and politicians have been observed both in regard to the Isua mine prospect (close to the capital Nuuk) that might have employed a large contingent of Chinese workers (Nuttall, 2012), and in regard to potential mining at Kvanefjeld in Southern Greenland (Bjørst, 2016, 2017; Triscott et al., 2017). The potential health effects of uranium dust from the mine and the possibility that Chinese employees may form a large proportion of workforce at the Kvanefjeld mine are concerns voiced by parts of the local community (author’s interviews August 2018). China’s persistent interest in investing in the Greenlandic economy in a broader sense has been documented through Chinese bids on the construction of new airports in Greenland (Matzen & Daly, 2018).

On that backdrop, this brief article explores and discusses the implications of Chinese guidelines for responsible minerals supply chains and mining investment. It does so with a particular emphasis on Chinese companies in the sector in Greenland. This is based on an analysis of the Chinese guidelines based on the legal method of document analysis, combined with a pragmatic socio-legal approach of placing the documents into the broader normative, political and economic contexts. A pragmatic socio-legal approach (Tamanaha, 1997) emphasizes the role and potential of normative standards to govern conduct. By contrast to a doctrinal legal approach, which often has regard only to hard (binding) law and legal enforcement in courts, the pragmatic approach recognizes the relevance of guiding normative instruments as well. As the societal impacts of transnational economic activity is generally not subject to hard regulation and legal enforcement across borders, the pragmatic approach to the role of guiding instruments is relevant for the topic of this article. As will be explained, the principles informing risk-based due diligence makes the Chinese guidelines a potentially relevant source of socially responsible action beyond the conflict areas from which ‘conflict minerals’ derive.

Conclusion
With climate change affecting access to minerals in the Arctic, and political commitments to green transitions around the globe enhancing the economic interest in particular minerals, Arctic supplies of minerals for the technical products required for a non-carbon economy are potentially attractive to the global market. The fact that the Arctic, including Greenland, has deposits of minerals otherwise mainly sourced from conflict-ridden areas offers potentially interesting opportunities, in particular with regard to types of minerals that in recent years have become subject to strict supply-chain documentation and transparency requirements if they derive from or close to conflict-affected areas. China is showing an interest in such ‘conflict-free minerals.’ China has issued guidelines for responsible minerals supply chains and mining investment. These guidelines apply similar approaches to identifying risks of adverse impacts, managing those impacts, and engaging local communities, as do the OECD’s Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, based on the UNGP. It is therefore possible to expect similar standards of conduct in regard to identifying and managing human rights risks and other risks to society of Chinese companies in the mining sectors as of companies based in OECD states such as Canada, the United States, or the United Kingdom.

The CCCMC guidelines aim at guiding companies to consider and address their societal impacts through responsible investment in the minerals sector and risk-based due diligence to ensure socially responsible sourcing of minerals. This article has shown that as the Guidelines create an expectation on companies operating in non-conflict Arctic nations like Greenland, they can be applied to complement the Greenlandic requirements for social sustainability assessment and citizen involvement. From a human rights perspective, the details contained in the Chinese guidelines add a level of detail in regard to risk assessment processes and stakeholder engagement. Connecting to the UNGP, the detailed steps for due diligence can be deployed by concerned citizens or public organizations to underscore the human and social dimension of the impact assessment process from the individual’s perspective, including meaningful stakeholder engagement, and influence on the identification of benefits that companies may be asked to provide as part of the license agreement.

Seen in the normative, political and economic contexts of extractives exploration and exploitation, this means that host societies can explicitly expect Chinese companies to assume an active role in ensuring impact assessments that involve a high degree of public participation in decision-making (a human right) for the identification of potential adverse impacts as well as benefits, including with regard to such human-rights related public policy objectives as local employment and capacity building.

For Chinese companies and the world market, this can result in a larger supply of the generic minerals that are needed for much electronic hardware, including for the green transition. For companies that would otherwise source from the DRC or other conflict or high-risk areas, this would be an important alternative supply that would
reduce risks of contributing to armed and humanitarian conflicts and could help reduce the administrative burden of proving that minerals marketed to the US or EU markets are not conflict-minerals.

The overall normative alignment between the Greenlandic raw materials regulation and the Chinese guidelines can be deployed strategically by Greenlandic authorities at central and local level to articulate expectations of companies. This is not limited to the generic minerals that are ‘conflict-minerals’ if sourced from some other areas. Being aspirational, the guidelines can also be applied to other types of mineral and mines. The CCCMC guidelines and their application of risk-based due diligence can be referenced to further deepen the implementation of Greenland’s raw materials regulation in regard to societal impacts.

In Greenland as elsewhere, proposals on new economic opportunities do not necessarily lead to uniform agreement. They can also spur local disagreement. The debates on projects like the Isua or Kvanefjeld mining projects in Greenland are examples of this. Would a human-rights oriented emphasis on meaningful stakeholder engagement help address such disagreement? This is not certain. Yet the strong human-rights oriented focus of the risk-based due diligence process and the emphasis on the perspective of affected stakeholders may help retain awareness of the rights of individuals and to feed their views and concerns into solutions that balance economic activities and societal impacts. The emphasis on meaningful stakeholder engagement should influence the design of citizen involvement and consultation processes towards enhancing citizens’ perceived experience of receiving information to help them make informed decisions; and for their views and concerns to feed into the general decision-making process on whether projects should go ahead.

4. Environmental Protection:

“China’s climate policy: does an Arctic dimension exist?” Gørild Hegelund and Cheng Han, Advances in Polar Science, September 2016 [29]

Abstract:

The article discusses whether and to what extent an Arctic dimension in Chinese climate policy exists, and whether there are signs of potential linkages between China’s engagement in the Arctic and its domestic climate policies. Although the Arctic is not directly addressed in domestic climate policy, the article concludes that an Arctic dimension exists, in the following areas: the growing awareness in China of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, climate risk, resilience and vulnerability, which has contributed to increased attention to climatic change in the Arctic and its
impact on China; polar scientific research, which is largely climate related, plays a significant role in determining China’s Arctic climate agenda; China’s climate policymaking and domestic institutional set-up is a contributing factor to climate engagement in the Arctic; China’s status as an observer nation in the Arctic Council might potentially raise the profile of domestic climate policies and lead to the addition of an Arctic pillar to national climate change strategies.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

China’s climate policy and efforts are of global relevance given that it is the world’s largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter. Furthermore, the Arctic is regarded as an important source of knowledge for future climate development. In recent years, China has shown growing interest in the Arctic region and a number of studies and reports have discussed whether China has geopolitical intentions in the Arctic linked to global security, shipping routes and resource interests. However, these studies have not looked into a possible climate policy aspect in China’s engagement in the Arctic. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap.

The overarching question is whether and to what extent an Arctic dimension in Chinese climate policy exists, and whether there are signs of potential linkages between China’s engagement in the Arctic and its domestic climate policies. To this end, this article analyses China’s climate change policy developments, and institutions involved in Arctic policymaking and research. Equally important, this paper explores the possible implications of climatic change in the Arctic for Chinese domestic climate policy by examining the evidence of climate-related engagement in the region. Trends related to rapidly evolving policy contexts, such as progress in China’s scientific research in the Arctic, are evaluated. Based on climate science and policy prospects in relation to the Arctic, the paper discusses the signs of possible linkages and their potential implications.

China has a long history of engagement in the Arctic and considers itself a near-Arctic country. China’s presence in the Arctic comprises the first Chinese Arctic research station, Chinese Arctic Yellow River Station on the Svalbard Archipelago, which is under Norwegian sovereignty. A milestone in China’s Arctic history came in 2013 when the country obtained observer status in the Arctic Council; in addition, Japan, South Korea, India, Singapore and Italy were granted observer status at the Ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden in 2013. That same year, the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center was established in Shanghai to strengthen research collaboration between China and Nordic research institutions on Arctic matters. In addition to engaging with smaller Nordic states (e.g., Norway, Denmark, and Iceland), China also collaborates with bigger Arctic states (U.S., Russia, and Canada).

Concluding remarks
Initially, we asked whether there is an Arctic dimension in China’s climate policies. This paper has therefore explored a number of signs, based on publicly available evidence, where recent development and future prospects of China’s Arctic climate nexus may be put in perspective. We have found that an Arctic dimension exists in domestic climate policy, although the link is not direct. However, there are points of convergence between Arctic climate and China’s domestic climate policymaking summarized in the following points.

Climate change continues to climb up the political agenda in China. On a global level, China has showed growing ambition, leadership and practices in climate change through international negotiations and collaboration. China’s achievement of Arctic Council observer status in 2013 is a milestone in this regard. The Council’s work is closely linked with China’s key domestic policies and priorities on the environment and climate change. Domestically, China has recently approved the 13th FYP that further strengthens policies to address climate change. China’s vulnerability to climatic change and the subsequent social impacts and economic losses have brought to the fore the challenges of adaptation, climate risk and resilience that increasingly play a role in domestic climate policymaking as illustrated in the Third Assessment Report for China. The 13th FYP places equal emphasis on mitigation and adaptation. The need to better understand climatic impacts on China has made the Arctic an attractive area for scientific research. Moreover, the rapid climatic changes in the Arctic and their impact on China’s climate are receiving mounting attention, and policymakers have become increasingly aware of the complexities and risks of climate change.

China’s engagement in the Arctic thus far has been dominated by scientific climate and polar research; polar scientific research plays an important role in determining China’s Arctic climate agenda. China’s climate research in the Arctic is now transitioning into systematic knowledge production to provide better understanding of climatic changes at home. In addition to scientific research, we anticipate that social science research and geopolitical research will be further strengthened, for instance, through the work of the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center in Shanghai.


Abstract:

Globally, there is no lack of security threats. Many of them demand priority engagement and there can never be adequate resources to address all threats. In this context, climate is just another aspect of global security and the Arctic just another region. In light of physical and budgetary constraints, new security needs must be integrated and prioritized with existing ones. This discussion approaches the security impacts of climate from that perspective, starting with the broad security
picture and establishing how climate may affect it. This method provides a different view from one that starts with climate and projects it, in isolation, as the source of a hypothetical security burden. That said, the Arctic does appear to present high-priority security challenges.

Uncertainty in the timing of an ice-free Arctic affects how quickly it will become a security priority. Uncertainty in the emergent extreme and variable weather conditions will determine the difficulty (cost) of maintaining adequate security (order) in the area. The resolution of sovereignty boundaries affects the ability to enforce security measures, and the U.S. will most probably need a military presence to back-up negotiated sovereignty agreements. Without additional global warming, technology already allows the Arctic to become a strategic link in the global supply chain, possibly with northern Russia as its main hub. Additionally, the multinational corporations reaping the economic bounty may affect security tensions more than nation-states themselves. Countries will depend ever more heavily on the global supply chains. China has particular needs to protect its trade flows. In matters of security, nation-state and multinational-corporate interests will become heavily intertwined.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**Overview**

Many organizations and institutions recognize the need to consider the potential security implications of climate change. While climate may exacerbate the security situation in already sensitive areas, the Arctic presents a (potentially rapid) emergent theater of security concerns. Arctic security affair will evolve over the years and the initial response will most probably by unsuitable and inadequate for future needs. Conversely, developing a long-rang response may prove to be unsuitable and inadequate for nascent needs.

With its mission of national security, research at Sandia National Laboratories is evaluating the impact of climate change within the Arctic. A sister study addresses the physical impacts of uncertainty on the timing and extent of climate change on Arctic security priorities. This report presents the implications for the underlying drivers of security within the changing Arctic.

The opening of the Arctic presents many security challenges because of the high potential it has for changing global economic (and thereby, geo-political) power balances. Once the Arctic becomes economically exploitable, it may provide a large fraction of new global oil, gas, and mineral reserves. The adequate open-water conditions of the future will also 1) allow a dramatic increase in shipping, 2) could spur spectacular infrastructure and processing development along the route and 3) elevate inevitable economic and strategic competition. The convergent trade routes (and local resources) will present a major economic boon for parts-assembly product-finishing and for the refining of raw/bulk materials into high-value products.
This added economic expansion could radically complicate law enforcement, environmental protection, and peacekeeping activities in the Arctic.

With recognition of the fact that good science requires the existence of dissenting views, there is a strong consensus agreement among scientists about anthropogenic climate change. Further, there is growing confidence in the models used to understand future climate conditions. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) represents the mainstream scientific assessment. However, IPCC results only portray those aspects of climate-change science fully supported by historical data and vetted computer simulations. These measured results reveal significant changes in the latter part of the 21st century, but the projections focus mainly on best estimates whose graphical representations show relatively gradual change over the next decade. Nonetheless, other assessments for the Arctic, which support and give detail to the IPCC work, create a disturbing picture even when viewed in the longer timeframe. Recent studies indicate more rapidly changing impacts, especially in the Arctic, where dramatic changes (e.g., an ice-free Arctic) may occur in as little as five years. This is a difference of 60 years compared to the IPCC assessment. Other scientists believe that the Arctic crossed the “tipping point” last year, where reinforcing phenomena will now accelerate changes further. One recent study presents evidence that life-extinguishing levels of abrupt climate change can occur in year-level timeframes. This year continued a rapid reduction on Arctic ice-cover. The assessment in this report assumes the intermediate, non-catastrophic situation where the Arctic Ocean becomes assessable for rapid economic exploitation during the next decade, with ever-increasing levels of access thereafter.

Rapid climate change has the potential to cause ruinous shifts in economic and political fortunes. As discussed in the next section, the historical record then shows a close link between economic/political disruptions and volatile security conditions. Thus, changes in economic and political status guide the assessment of future security dynamics. Economic assessments to date overlay the future climate change on the existing economic and demographic conditions. There is an assumption of increased mineral exploration and shipping activity, but often only a limited perspective on the implied (larger) knock-on effects. This analysis attempts to avoid a linear, one-cause-one-effect outlook. It also includes the implications of climate change as not being a single event but rather as being a process of continual transformation. In that framework, territorial claims and permafrost degradation play a supporting role to the broader security circumstances, as constrained by these underling realities. Hence, as presented below, the evolution of and response to security risks are hampered by a continually changing physical setting, and thereby, a changing political and economic environment.

This report neglects several security aspects of climate change other than to note them here: Migration could cause cascading demands on not only receiving and
donor nations but would generate pressures also on the supporters and adversaries of those nations, and on international peacekeepers and aid suppliers. These demands can compete with or can spill over into Arctic tensions. Climate-induced disease vectors and natural disasters can amputate nation-state leadership and create power voids where factional entities (and their allies) compete to the same affect. Rapidly evolving land-use changes can amplify climate change impacts and bring on the instigating agricultural collapse, migration, and disease. Further, financial market stability may be an early victim of climate-change due to changes in national and corporate fortunes from transient or sustained extreme weather and environmental conditions (e.g. melting of permafrost and change in hydrological cycle). Financial destabilization is often a source of civil destabilization. Later observations will note the high-stake investment flows the Arctic can precipitate for companies and nations – with their sensitivity to financial stability. In fact, the large financial flows espoused for mitigation efforts may themselves be financially destabilizing. Lastly, some would also argue that efforts to provide Arctic security promote a balance-of-power “arms-race” that increases conflict opportunities.

This report does attempt to address Arctic-region security dynamics caused by geopolitical and accelerated economic activity. Oil, gas, and mineral exploration along with expanded shipping operations will jump-start the Arctic “gold rush,” but the relocation of secondary and tertiary infrastructure in the supply chain to the Arctic region may be the primary drivers of Arctic economic expansion. Protecting those supply chains, the enforcing of rights and renegotiation of poorly defined rights within a jurisdiction, and safeguarding multinational/nation-state interests could require significant resources. Shifting climate conditions will further alter the effectiveness/requirements of US security forces over time.

For assessing security needs in the Arctic, the question is not “What security risk happens when the Arctic opens?’ but rather “How will security risks evolve as the geo-political and economic-expansion plays out?” The physical speed with which the Arctic changes will determine the gap between reality and expectations, and will shape the perceived threat from the unexpected setbacks. This perceived status-gap and the ability to cope with changing circumstances appear to define the trigger of conflict. Early slow dynamics in the Arctic can allow all parties to co-evolve toward balanced positions.

Rapid dynamics can abruptly change political, military, and economic standing, with consequently raised tensions. Because climate-change will produce an ever-shifting playing field, relative status is more important that absolute status, and relative change is more important than absolute change. The next sections of this chapter explore: 1) categorizing the risk prioritization of climate change, 2) economic transitions in the Arctic and its national security implications. 3) the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea and its relation to security risk, 4) multinational-corporation and nation-state intersections creating the security landscape, 5)
contributions of Russia and China to arctic security dynamics, 6) security constraints from the severity of the Arctic environment, 7) security constraints from the fragility of the Arctic environment, 8) security (cost) constraints from the expansiveness within the Arctic, and 9) impacts of Arctic changes on southern-hemisphere security.

Summary

Uncertainty in the timing of an ice-free Arctic affects how quickly it will become a security priority. Uncertainty in the emergent extreme and variable weather conditions will determine the difficulty (cost) of maintaining adequate security (order) in the area. The resolution of sovereignty boundaries (presumably based on UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea negotiations) affects the ability to enforce security measures. The U.S. will most probably need a military presence to back-up negotiated sovereignty agreements.

Mineral extraction may initiate the “gold rush” to the Arctic, but shipping could jumpstart the economic engine that propels the Arctic into being the next global growth engine. The processing of resources and the finishing of product may become the dominate economic activity, dwarfing the mineral and shipping efforts that now primarily act to support the global economic supply chain in the Arctic --- centered primarily on Russian shores and in Russian waters.

Nonetheless, the multinational corporations creating the economic bounty may affect security tensions more than nation-states themselves. Countries will depend ever more heavily on the global supply chains. China has particular needs to protect its trade flows. Nation-state and multinational-corporate interests will become heavily intertwined in a security sense.

The Arctic environment is both fragile and severe. Environmental protection constraints (laws) may negatively affect security operations, and evolving weather (climate) conditions will require an evolving set of assets for security responses.

Once the Arctic does become economically accessible, its importance to security appears to be a certainty. The importance of the Arctic to the global economy should make its security issues a top priority. Understanding the timing and extent of security needs, along with the strategy to counter the need, consistent with cost and planning constraints, will require assessments of uncertainty-weighted risks and optimized planning based on advanced technology.

“Greening Arctic Cruise Shipping Through Law and Technology: A Role for China?” Stefan Kirchner, Arctic Yearbook, 2018 [31]
Increased shipping in the Arctic will mean not only increasing tourism revenue for local communities but, more importantly in the long run, increasing health risks for local residents. The overwhelming majority of ships is powered with fossil fuels and concerns over emissions have led to the creation of Emission Control Areas, such as the Sulphur Emissions Control Area (SECA) in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and along much, but not all, of the coasts of the United States and Canada. None of the existing SECAs includes areas north of the Arctic Circle. This means that coastal communities, in particular in cruise ship destinations, are put at risk from high emissions of SO2. The research presented here shows that China has the potential to play several roles in contributing to the protection of coastal communities in the Arctic and in safeguarding the human right to live in a healthy environment, which has long been recognized by the European Court of Human Rights. It will be shown that China has the potential to use international forms of cooperation in the context of the work of the International Maritime Organization in order to support the establishment of a SECA for the entire Arctic Ocean but can also profit from it in the long run, provided that China’s shipbuilding industry becomes able to meet the needs of more environment conscious ship buyers.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Cruise shipping is booming globally — and in the Arctic in particular (Nilsen, 2018; Wright, 2018). As the Arctic is undergoing unprecedented changes, it is becoming a desired travel destination. In light of the fragility of the Arctic marine environment and the multiple effects of cruise shipping on the natural environment as well as on coastal communities, ensuring at least a minimum level of sustainability of cruise operations requires international regulation. This will likely involve non-regional actors; in particular countries whose citizens are particularly active in Arctic tourism.

For some time, China has been pushing for more recognition and a more active role in Arctic affairs by trying to get more involved in regional decision-making processes. A case in point is China’s involvement with the Arctic Council where China has gained Observer status. For the self-styled “near Arctic” state, this is an important achievement as China has long sought a seat at the table. These efforts are not an end in themselves. China has economic and security interests in the Arctic, both of which can raise concerns among Arctic nations. In order to gain support - or at least a lack of opposition - from Arctic states for China’s Arctic ambitions, it appears likely that Arctic states’ governments will have to see positive sides to China’s Arctic ascendance. In other words, China’s involvement in the region might face resistance or at least resentment1 unless it is seen as beneficial for Arctic states and local communities.

While China’s official role in cruise tourism is still relatively limited, the large number of Chinese visitors to the Arctic give China an interest in the region and in the well-
being of their citizens. Likewise, states, like China, should not overlook the impact tourism has on local communities. Accordingly, the well-being of local residents in tourism areas should also be taken into account by the home countries of visitors. While the sovereignty of the receiving states prevents tourists’ home states from taking direct action, a cooperative effort aimed at safeguarding the rights and interests of local communities in tourism regions is in the interest of all sides. The sustainability of Arctic tourism can benefit from the involvement of the home countries to tourists who visit the Arctic. This can be done through raising tourists’ awareness of local conditions and the needs of local communities prior to departure or by influencing international legal frameworks relevant for tourism activities. This text is concerned with the latter aspect.

It will be shown that there might indeed be a way for China to actually make a positive contribution which benefits the people who live in the Arctic. One way to do so, and the focus of this article, would be for China to take an active role in protecting Arctic coastal communities against air pollution from ships. While such action might not provide immediate benefits for China, it could increase acceptance of Chinese tourism-related activities by local communities in the Arctic. This is a factor which is not to be underestimated because for many small Arctic communities, the current tourism boom, which is to a significant degree fueled by Chinese visitors, is a mixed blessing: local economic benefits clash with the environmental and cultural costs of opening up to mass tourism of questionable sustainability. Reducing the air pollution caused by cruise vessels operating in the Arctic is one way to protect coastal communities.

In order to assess the likelihood of such a move, different aspects will be investigated, in particular the current state of international law when it comes to protecting Arctic coastal communities from vessel-source air pollution, green shipping technology and China’s Arctic policies, as evidenced by the nation’s 2018 Arctic White Paper (People’s Republic of China, 2018).

Concluding Remarks

When keeping in mind China’s environmental policies at home as well as the disregard for human rights, including the right to health, it seems questionable at first whether China might actually pursue such a course of action. In the Arctic, however, China has to – and appears to be – following other rules. Cooperation across borders is essential in the Arctic and non-Arctic states such as China will be dependent on the cooperation of Arctic states in order to be able to do business in the Arctic. Cooperation with Arctic states will usually require predictability as a partner, which in turn will require compliance with international agreements which apply in the Arctic. So far, China appears to honor international law in its activities in the Arctic. Utilizing international law as a tool to contribute to the provision of practical benefits for Arctic communities might provide long term benefits for China in the form of increased access to cooperation with Arctic states.
For the time being, air pollution by ships remains a significant concern for coastal communities. While steps have already been taken by the IMO, a more complete transition towards greener shipping technologies will be inevitable in the long run. China has the technical and legal means to contribute to an improvement of the situation. It remains to be seen in how far China’s commitment to international law and cooperation, including in the fight against air pollution by ships, which has been affirmed in the government’s Arctic Policy White Paper in early 2018, will actually be implemented with a view towards the wellbeing of the people who live in the Arctic.

https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6248686.pdf

Overview:

China is the world’s second largest emitter of greenhouse gases, behind only the United States. While China's per-capita carbon emissions remain barely one-tenth that of the U.S., total emissions in China are expected to surpass U.S. emissions by 2009, and perhaps as early as 2007, shattering earlier estimates that it would not be until 2020 for China to become the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases. In addition, by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency, "emissions from China will be growing twice as fast as emissions from all of the OECD countries combined."

This study is an attempt to assess the scope and tenor of news coverage of climate change through analysis of the coverage in the most influential Chinese media – especially official news sources such as People's Daily, Global Times and Xinhua (New China News Service), which set the agenda for all other media outlets in China, and newer, more independent media such as Caijing magazine, whose articles carry tremendous weight with other Chinese media and thus are influential well beyond their numbers. (Many of the Xinhua and People's Daily articles cited in this report are archived on the websites of Sohu and Sina, China's largest news web portals, which each get hundreds of millions of hits per day.) The focus on these influential organs of Chinese media thus has two purposes: first, the numbers themselves are significant; second, just as newspapers such as The New York Times influence U.S. media far beyond the newspaper's own circulation numbers, so do the aforementioned media bring great influence to other Chinese media, especially radio and television. In addition, interviews with environmental journalists in Beijing will help to underscore several key conclusions in this paper.

The paper will assess overall focus and tone of Chinese media coverage; how, when, and why that focus has changed; and what are the limitations of coverage in state and state-controlled Chinese media.

Current & Relevant Information:
Climate change coverage in China: A qualitative analysis

China's stance on global warming is reflected by the main state media organs, such as Xinhua news agency, People's Daily, and the Sohu and Sina news web portals, which carry large amounts of news from Xinhua and People's Daily. Through analysis of these central organs it is thus possible to discern changes both in media coverage, and by extension, state policy.

In China, where the vast majority of media is state-run and critical articles are subject to scrutiny and censorship, coverage of global warming through 2006 was characterized largely by translated scientific reports or science news reports from the west, often cited matter-of-factly and without comment. Moreover, few if any articles made the link between Chinese carbon emissions and the growing climate change problem. This coverage began to change in some aspects after the release of the IPCC Working Group I report on 2 February 2007 in Paris, and other events at approximately the same time.

Chinese coverage of global warming, its causes and effects, can be generally described in two distinct phases: before and after 2 February 2007, the date of the release of the aforementioned IPCC report. As of this writing it has been three months since the release of that report, and it appears that the shift in coverage in China has been enough to suggest a genuine change in what China is willing to allow its state-controlled media to report and interpret. This appears in part due to the release of the IPCC report, and in part to official statements and meetings just prior to the release of the report, which, taken together, indicate a shift in official Chinese acknowledgement of concern about climate change contributing, therefore, to an intensification of coverage. (This acknowledgment of concern, however, has not yet led to any change in China's opposition to caps in carbon emissions. Indeed, in late April, China, through its state-run newspaper, Global Times, accused western politicians of "climate terrorism" in order to undermine Chinese economic prosperity.)

Conclusion: The tenor of global warming coverage is set by Chinese state-owned media. Coverage since 2 February indicates strongly for the first time that the Chinese government is aware of the risk of global warming, such as the impact of increasing drought. But China as before continues to assert that developed nations should take more responsibility and has not signaled any shift in policy.

“Chapter 8: Asian States in Arctic Affairs,” Heather Exner-Pirot, sju.ca, 2016 [33]

Overview:

The past decade has witnessed a surge in interest in the Arctic, as global warming trends make oil, gas and shipping routes in the region more accessible. In essence, a ‘new’ ocean – one that for all intents and purposes has been confined from
significant human activity until the past decade, has been opened, and with it enormous potential for resource development and transportation.

Predictably, the newly accessible Arctic Ocean has attracted the interest of a number of Asian states, in particular China, South Korea, Japan and India, who have large populations and a growing need for resources. Perhaps also predictably, the five littoral states of the Arctic Ocean (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, United States) are seeking to limit the influence of non-Arctic states in establishing the parameters of its use. International law supports their right to do so. However, the development of the Arctic and its many resources need not be exclusive. In fact, there is much to gain by working cooperatively on developing mines, shipping routes, infrastructure and a regulatory framework that serves all stakeholders’ needs, from those of local residents to those of foreign states.

This chapter examines 1) the interests of the Asian states in the Arctic, 2) the role of Asian states in circumpolar affairs, and 3) the possibility for cooperation in the economic development of the region.

Current & Relevant Information:

Scientific

India, China, Japan and South Korea have been involved in polar research for many years, and their scientific interests in the Arctic and Antarctic precede the current geopolitical activity. All four have established research stations at NyÅlesund, an Arctic research base on the Norwegian Arctic Archipelago of Svalbard. All four are also signatories to the Antarctic Treaty System.

Polar research covers a wide spectrum of activities; however global warming and climate changes have increased Arctic research efforts from non-Arctic and non-European states in recent years. While some commentators have painted Asian research in the Arctic as a kind of Trojan horse for economic and political positioning, Asian research in the Arctic is genuine, legitimate and of broad scientific benefit.

China, Japan and South Korea have acquired in the past decade that are “[raising] eyebrows among members of the Arctic Council” are designed solely for scientific research. China’s Xuelong icebreaker, often touted as “the world’s largest non-nuclear icebreaker,” is a Ukrainian cargo vessel that was bought and modified by China in 1993 to support its polar research. Its icebreaking capacity is “insufficient”, which is why China has commissioned a more powerful icebreaker, yet to be named, with an expected delivery date in 2014. The majority of the Xuelong’s expeditions have been conducted in the Antarctic. Japan’s newest icebreaker, the Shirase, was completed in 2009, and replaced the icebreaker of the same name after the original Shirase ended its 25-year run. Like its predecessor, it is being used to support Antarctic research and has not yet made any visits to the Arctic. South Korea also
recently commissioned a new icebreaker, the Araon, which was launched in 2009. Korean polar research will be focused on developing a second base in Antarctic for the next few years, however the Araonis expected to travel each year to both the Antarctic and Arctic. Finally, India has ordered an ice capable research vessel dedicated to polar expeditions, which is due to be launched in 2012.

The point is that there is nothing suspicious, or even particularly new, about Asian interest in polar research. Although there has been a recent increase in Asian interest in Arctic research, this is true of most countries, and a reflection of sustained political and scientific interest in global warming.

**Possibility for Cooperation**

One concern seems to be that China’s worst behaviors in Africa will be replicated in the Arctic. This includes low wages and lax labor standards, the importation of Chinese workers to the detriment of local residents, and poor environmental safeguards. This behavior is problematic, but often exceptional, in Africa. However, it is wholly unlikely in most of the Arctic: aside from Russia, environmental and labor standards are very high, even world class, and the promise of capital investment is not enough in Canada, USA, and the wealthy Nordic countries to bypass existing legal arrangements, especially on indigenous lands. By contrast, the regulatory framework in Canada’s territorial North, as an example, is so stringent it is detrimental to new investment, with layers of aboriginal, territorial, federal, environmental stipulations needing to be satisfied before development can begin.

On the other hand, opinion is deeply split as to whether and how to welcome it, and many remain suspicious of Chinese overtures. It seems that although the possibility for mutually beneficial cooperation exists, Arctic states and their people are struggling to find it.

**Conclusions**

As the Arctic is transformed by global warming and resources and shipping routes become increasingly accessible, Asian interest is expected to increase. This is unlikely to result in significant tension or conflict. But like any new relationship, it must be managed carefully. What can be expected with regards to Asian interests in Arctic affairs in the future?

The Arctic Five have a legal lock on the Arctic Ocean, from their 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), where most of the recoverable oil and gas is expected to be found, to their extended continental shelf, which will likely eat up almost 90% of the ocean’s seabed. Arguments from China, Japan and other countries in favor of treating the Arctic Ocean as a common heritage of mankind akin to the Antarctic are not likely to go far. As such, Asian states might influence, but will not direct, Arctic policy.
Practically this may not be as significant as some Asian commentators fear. Regulation in the region, whether it be on shipping, fishing, or environmental issues, is increasingly multilateral and non-discriminatory. Thus, Asian activity in the Arctic will be subject to the same limitations as those of Arctic states. The sooner regional governance arrangements are articulated, for example with the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) Polar Code on shipping, the sooner Arctic and non-Arctic states will invest in the infrastructure and assets needed to capitalize on the newly accessible Arctic. Arctic regional governments are more likely to compete for Asian investment than ostracize it, as public policy increasingly trends towards large scale resource development as the avenue for northern development. The Arctic is vast and underdeveloped; Asian investors will likely find many willing hosts. The challenge will be in ensuring local and national regulations are followed and enforced, but this is something the cautious Chinese will be likely to respect rather than try to bypass – one poor outcome could damage their reputation in the region for years.

As to China, Japan, and South Korea’s applications to be observers on the Arctic Council, one must wonder what the fuss is about for Russia, Canada and the United States. As it stands, observers have next to no say on Arctic Council matters, but tend to sit mute through the proceedings until one of their cohort addresses the Council on all observers’ behalf. The Arctic Council member states are the only parties with votes, and at any rate make political decisions based on consensus. Additional observers are unlikely to detract from the influence of current members. Norway, Iceland and Denmark have been vocal in their support for Asian inclusion in the Arctic Council, a break from the tradition of keeping Council discussions ‘in the family’; thus, it seems likely to be a matter of time before they are admitted. One might also expect the Asian states to come forward with their own Arctic policies in the near future, highlighting concern for the environment, respect for indigenous peoples’ rights, interest in sustainable resource development, a well-developed shipping regime, and promotion of international cooperation. A number of Asian commentators have already called on their governments to do so.

It has been said that the Chinese character for crisis is the same as that for opportunity. Arctic and Asian states are now at a crossroads in determining which perspective they will adopt with regards to future cooperation in the region. Inasmuch as gains can be made on both sides, stakeholders will likely see increasing Asian interest as an opportunity.

“What Happens in the Arctic Does Not Stay in the Arctic: An Assessment of Climate Cooperation between China and the European Union in the Arctic Region,” Arianna Rovaris, University of International Relations Aalborg University Denmark, 2019 [34]
Summary:

During the last few decades, the world has witnessed a radical change in its weather patterns, such as the increase of the average temperatures, desertification, glacial reduction, pollution of the oceans, and threats to the life of flora and fauna. The rise in the global temperatures is known as global warming, and it is caused by the increase of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

The detrimental effects of climate change are especially visible in the Arctic, as in the last few decades the Arctic average temperatures have risen at more twice the global average, causing the fast melting of its ice cap. The consequences of climate change in the Arctic region affect the entire globe and cannot be ignored; thus, it became imperative for nations to acknowledge the severity of the situation and the need for a global response to it, to address the issue globally and increase the number of actors involved in Arctic affairs and its environmental protection.

Climate cooperation between China and the European Union started in the 1990s and intensified especially after the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, giving space to China for joining the European Union as a global climate leader. The two parts have established various bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to cooperate for tackling climate change, and have implemented domestic measures to reduce their negative impact on climate. Even though cooperation between China and the European Union within global climate governance may be said to be successful, however there are not specific measures for addressing climate change in the Arctic.

The melting of the Arctic ice is opening opportunities for new shipping and trade routes, as well as for the exploration and exploitation of untapped energy resources. The potential economic benefits resulting from the warming Arctic are attracting an increasing number of actors, among them China and the European Union. Given the two actors’ vested interests in the Arctic region, it seems that they are striving to find a concrete way to work together for tackling climate change in the Arctic while securing their respective interests.

Climate cooperation between China and the European Union is analyzed through the theoretical framework of Robert Keohane’s Neoliberal Institutionalism. Its focus on the role of institutional regimes in shaping and framing actors’ behavior in their foreign policies, helps define how China’s and the European Union’s decisions and actions are influenced by their membership in international institutions, such as the climate policy regimes and the Arctic institutional framework. Therefore, the thesis investigates how China and the European Union cooperate internationally on climate
issues, and then the research is narrowed to their cooperation in the Arctic governance and environmental protection, to testify to what extent they cooperate for climate issues at the global level and at the Arctic regional level. Moreover, the research attempts to explain how China’s and the European Union’s vested economic interests in the region affect their cooperation, and how the Arctic institutional regime influences their relationship and foreign policy behavior.

The thesis aims at giving a contribution to the existing literature addressing this topic, which has not been vastly investigated yet, by revealing the reasons behind China’s and the European Union’s problematic cooperation on climate issues in the Arctic given the presence of common interests and commitment to fight climate change and protect the environment.

Current & Relevant Information:

**Introduction**

During the last few decades, the world has witnessed a radical change in its weather patterns, such as the increase of the average temperatures, desertification, glacial reduction, pollution of the oceans, and threats to the life of flora and fauna. The rise in the global temperatures is known as global warming, and it is mainly caused by the increase of GHG emissions in the atmosphere.

Climate change in the Arctic region is not something new, and in the last few decades the Arctic average temperatures have risen at more twice the global average, causing the fast melting of its ice cap. This phenomenon is believed to generate profound consequences both within the Arctic climate system and the global one. The Arctic may be considered as the “tip of the iceberg of global climate change”, as it is connected to the global climatic, environmental and political processes and systems (Keil & Knecht 2017: 3, 4; Cavazos-Guerra et al. 2017: 231; Féron 2018: 85).

The title of this thesis comes from a speech held by Vidar Helgesen, the Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment, during a seminar organized by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Norwegian Parliament in Svalbard in 2017. His words clearly explain how the consequences of climate change in the Arctic region affect the entire globe and cannot be ignored; thus, it became imperative for nations to acknowledge the severity of the situation and the need for increasing the number of actors involved in Arctic affairs and its environmental protection (NATO-PA 2017).

International climate cooperation started in the 1990s, when the UNFCCC was founded in 1992. This organization aimed at keeping the level of GHG emissions in the atmosphere at a lower level through international cooperation. Up to date, its membership is almost universal. Since the UNFCCC establishment, there have taken place many international climate negotiations and agreements, leading up to the 2015 PCA, which represented a landmark in global climate discourses. The
Arctic is not explicitly mentioned in the PCA, however the convention preceding the agreement, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) held in Paris, has helped to grow awareness regarding climate change in the Arctic region (Keil & Knecht 2017: 1).

In the past decades, and especially after the US’ withdrawal from the PCA, China has emerged as a responsible power and a global climate leader together with the EU. However, even though its role in climate governance is praised in the international arena, its commitment to climate issues has been questioned by some. China has shown a great interest in the Arctic, and since 2013 it holds an observer role in one important Arctic governing body, the AC. On January 26th 2018 the country stated its official positions and interests regarding the Arctic region through the issue of the first China’s Arctic Policy White Paper (Graczyk et al. 2017: 131; State Council Information Office of the PRC 2018).

Since the 1990s, the EU has developed its climate policy together with the international one, and has always maintained a leading role in climate governance and environmental protection. Unlike China, its application to the AC is still pending because of a lack of unanimity within the Council’s members. Among the reasons behind Arctic States’ reticence in granting the EU an observer status, there is the Canadian opposition to the 2008 EU’s approval of a ban on the trade of commercial seal products, as well as the Russian discontent with the sanctions imposed by the EU after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Depledge 2015). However, the EU contributes to the governance and the environmental protection of the Arctic region through other means and has begun to develop its Arctic policy since 2008. Three of the EU’s Member States are permanent members to the AC, namely Denmark, Finland and Sweden, and other Member States hold the role of formal observers to the AC; the Union confines with the region and has vested interests in cooperating in Arctic affairs other than for climate issues (Graczyk et al. 2017: 132; Arctic Council 2018).

Climate cooperation between China and the EU started in the 1990s and intensified especially after the US’ withdrawal from the PCA, thus giving space to China for joining the EU as a global climate leader. The two parts have established many mechanisms to cooperate for tackling climate change, and are essential actors in the setting of the global climate agenda. However, given the vested interests of both actors in the Arctic, it seems that they are striving to find a concrete way to work together for tackling climate change in the region.

The purpose of this thesis is the investigation of the reasons behind the paradoxical relationship between China and the EU when it comes to climate cooperation in the Arctic region.

Conclusion
This thesis has sought out to identify the reasons behind the problematic cooperation between China and the EU in addressing climate change in the Arctic region. China and the EU have been selected as case studies for the analysis because they are currently leading global climate governance, and they are increasingly involved in Arctic affairs. In the Arctic, they both advance a policy emphasizing environmental protection and sustainability, and they are both committed to fight the Arctic climatic change. Other than environmental issues, the two actors are interested in cooperating in the Arctic because of the potential economic opportunities in the region, such as oil and gas resources or the opening of new shipping and trade routes in the Arctic Ocean, as well as the Arctic new geopolitical and geostrategic implications.

The thesis has presented an overview of climate change in the Arctic and its implications, as well as the governance framework of the region, and the main actors involved. The introduction to the Arctic climatic change and its governance framework has been relevant for the subsequent analysis in pursuance of delineating the context within which China and the EU are involved.

The thesis has proceeded with the analysis of China-EU cooperation in the context of global climate governance, which determined that, despite the former divergences in their approaches to the fight against global warming, global climate cooperation between China and the EU may be said to be a success.

For the sake of narrowing the research to China-EU cooperation for tackling climate change in the Arctic region and unveil the reasons behind their behavior, the thesis has presented the two actors' respective historical engagement with the region, their Arctic policies, and their interests in the Arctic. The thesis has moved to the analysis of their engagement with climate change in the Arctic, focusing on their cooperation within the Arctic institutional framework, their bilateral and multilateral climate cooperation, as well as the potential conflictual issues and interests in the region.

Neoliberal Institutionalism's focus on the role of institutional regimes in shaping actors' behavior proved to be useful in defining how the Arctic institutional framework may influence China's and the EU's behavior and policy decisions, as well as their mutual perception and cooperation. The theory proved to suit well for the analysis of international cooperation under climate policy regimes and institutional frameworks. Institutional regimes may be considered necessary for dealing with climate issues, and as the Arctic climatic issues affect the climate systems of the Earth, thus there is the need for cooperation between actors from all around the globe. Cooperation may be difficult to achieve in the absence of regulating mechanisms, thus institutional regimes act as forums which gather more actors together and facilitate cooperation. States are believed to be self-interested actors trying to pursue their interests, however, through institutions, they may decrease uncertainty and increase trustiness in each other's commitment to the agreement. The actors' behavior has been examined through the theoretical foundation of the thesis to attempt to provide a
logical explanation of the dynamics and the reasons motivating their actions. Finally, the last chapter has summarized the main findings and assessed the research questions posed in the Introduction.

The analysis has revealed that China and the EU present differences in their policies towards environmental protection, climate change, as well as indigenous people’s right. Moreover, they may have problems of mutual misperception, as the EU might perceive China as a potential rival (the so-called ‘China threat’), and China on the other hand may see the EU as opposing to the Chinese development in order to safeguard the Union’s interests. In addition, the EU is divided in its attitude towards the BRI and the Polar Silk Road, as this initiative may bring great economic opportunities to some Member States, while creating economic disadvantages for others, as well as damaging the environment and contributing even more to climate change.

China and the EU are both strongly committed to the fight against global warming and are currently leading global climate governance. They have implemented domestic measures to cut emissions and pursue sustainable development; moreover, they have established various bilateral and multilateral cooperating mechanisms for combating climate change. However, it might appear that they are striving to find a way for concretely cooperate in the Arctic. This may be due to the presence of substantial conflicting geopolitical, geostrategic and economic interests in the region, as well as it may be caused by the constraints of the Arctic institutional regime which frames and influences their actions.

It may be suggested that China, the EU, and the Arctic States might need to find a method for balancing the pursuance of their economic interests in the region, with the promotion of the sustainable development of the Arctic. The geopolitics of the Arctic is an evolving process and it may likely undergo many changes and witness the creation and establishment of a new Arctic order with the involvement of more actors in the decision-making and policy-making processes. It is yet to be seen whether China and the EU will be part of this new potential order, and whether they might be able to establish a concrete cooperating mechanism and a set of norms for establishing measures specifically targeting the Arctic climate change and environmental protection, while continuing to pursue their interests in the region.

“The Attitude of the People’s Republic of China Towards the Arctic,” Magdalena Środoń, mysl.lazarski.pl, 2015 [35]

Overview:

Before World War II the polar regions were largely of interest to travelers as severe conditions in the region made it impossible to carry out broader actions. The situation has changed due to technical progress, which showed geostrategic
advantages of the Far North. The progressive climate changes and shrinking of the permanent ice cover have led to the intensifying discussion on the exploitation of natural and biological resources of the Arctic Ocean and using the potential sea routes. With the development of possibilities to operate in the Arctic waters, the rivalry among the states interested in the extension of their influence in the Arctic Circle is getting stronger. One of the countries looking intently toward the north is China which engaged its capital and diplomacy in the Arctic several years ago. This article is devoted to the analysis of the general objectives of China’s policy towards the Arctic region, with particular emphasis on the issue of natural resources, climate change, shipping and relations with the Arctic countries.

Current & Relevant Information:

**Climate Change**

Although the Chinese authorities are intent on the Arctic resources and the possibility of using the potential routes, it should be clearly stated that they have never laid claims to any part of the Arctic Ocean. Even if they put forward claims, they would be unjustified because China does not have a coastline in the region. Beijing often explains the growing interest in the Arctic by the necessity to conduct research on climate changes which occur much faster beyond the Arctic Circle than in other parts of the world. The Arctic plays a key role in the natural processes of a global nature. China believes it is one of the countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In 2011 about 430 million people were affected as a result of extreme weather phenomena and natural disasters connected with the processes occurring in the Arctic. The losses were estimated at 309.6 billion yuan.

Beijing hopes that the results of research projects carried out in the polar regions will be used by Chinese researchers to analyze conditions in the Himalayas, which are sometimes called the third pole. At first glance, it seems that the Arctic differs from the Himalayas. In reality, the two areas have a lot in common. The melting of Himalayan glaciers, just like of the Arctic ones, poses a real threat to the safety of people living in the region. In the end, the biggest rivers of south-east Asia are supplied with water from the glaciers of the Tibetan plateau. It is worth mentioning here that glaciers contain about 75% of global freshwater resources which are used by over 2.5 billion people. After collecting rainwater in the rainy season, they release it evenly throughout the year, stabilizing water levels in rivers. It is clear, therefore, that along with melting glaciers, problems with water will worsen, which will negatively affect agriculture and hence the amount of produced food. Today, millions of people in China suffer from alternately occurring and increasingly intense floods and droughts, which result from, inter alia, climate change beyond the Arctic Circle. The consequences caused by the receding mass of Himalayan glaciers will magnify the negative effects caused by the changes taking place in the Arctic. It is surprising that despite the awareness of the real risks of global warming, China’s position on climate issues is not unequivocal. On the one hand, Beijing is aware of the
consequences of the neglect of environmental problems. On the other hand, fearing the slowdown of the economic development pace, it avoids resolving issues related to the change of the energy balance structure. So far, carbon has played a major role in it and there is no indication that something has changed in this matter. Low energy efficiency of the Chinese economy and the costs which China would have to incur in order to reduce its energy consumption, explain why Beijing’s involvement in international efforts to combat climate change is far from the expected.

Summary

Although China has not presented an official strategy for the Arctic, it is actively engaged in the political life of the region, demonstrating the interest in both positive and negative effects of the occurring changes. Chinese financial background and research and scientific potential may in the future contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of the development of environmental processes in the Arctic, as well as to the effective use of potential perspectives regarding the exploitation of natural resources and the development of Arctic shipping. Meanwhile, the Chinese authorities are cautious in their activities, being aware of achieving greater benefits from the cooperation with the Arctic states. The rhetoric of the representatives of the Chinese authorities – conflicting at times – results from the fear of marginalization of the role of China, and eventually its exclusion from the decision-making process regarding the management of the region. Conducting effective policy in international forums, especially in bilateral relations with the Nordic countries and Russia, undoubtedly strengthens the position of China in the Arctic. The effects of this process, together with the increase of its global role might in the long run be very significant for international relations.

http://exclusiveejournal.sk/files/files/79/32/14/b30f10165b7240f5bc920cfb738c5849/b30f10165b7240f5bc920cfb738c5849.pdf

Abstract:

Changes in the Arctic region are bringing new opportunities and challenges for Arctic states and for the broader international community. As never before, the Arctic has become part of a complex set of political and economic dynamics linking actors within and outside the region. Among non-Arctic states, China is particularly determined to have a greater influence in Arctic affairs. China declares itself to be a “near Arctic state” and an “Arctic stakeholder,” even though its northernmost territory lies more than 1,000 miles south of the Arctic Circle. As the most populous country in the world, China claims that it should have a say in Arctic policy and disagrees with Arctic issues being decided by Arctic states alone. More broadly, given the region’s resource reserves, shipping lanes, and implications for global warming,
China argues that Arctic state interests and claims must be balanced against international interests in the seas and resources of the region.

Current & Relevant Information:

**China’s Arctic Strategy**

Beijing has focused on neutral topics: sponsoring expeditions, conducting climate changing surveys, supporting the development of indigenous peoples, preserving local cultures, promoting sustainable development, campaigning against environment pollution, and promoting tourism. By developing strong positions in these areas, China will not only be able to tap the knowledge of the international scientific community and put forth arguments to support the theory of climate change influence on China; it will also be able to collaborate with six organizations (Arctic Athabaskan Council; Aleut International Association; Gwich’in Council International; Inuit Circumpolar Council; Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North; Saami Council) that represent indigenous peoples and have the status of permanent members of the Arctic Council. Thus, Beijing can lobby its interests in the Council not on a direct basis, but using a special channel that has already shown itself to be effective.

This scientific approach is a path for China to achieve its true goals in the Arctic, which lie in the economic realm. To start with, Beijing seeks a diversification of supply routes. The main route for China – the Strait of Malacca – is susceptible to piracy and terrorism. An Arctic Route would let China, first, reduce transportation expenses, second, diversify and secure its shipments, and third, diminish the risk of a U.S. Navy closure of the Strait in a conflict.

Meanwhile rising consumption is forcing Chinese companies to invest heavily in oil exploration and shipment, for example, from Africa and Brazil. Assumptions about Arctic natural resource deposits are thus attractive to Beijing. China will seek not only to get access to new oil fields but also to acquire modern drilling technology it currently lacks.

The third element in the Chinese economic strategy in the Arctic is a share of maritime resources, especially fish. The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has shown the region’s potential in this regard. Access to fisheries is crucial for countries like Greenland and Iceland, which depend heavily on maritime resources for export earnings, and China has been very active in establishing bilateral economic contacts with these smaller members of the Arctic Council to ensure support for its permanent membership bid. These same tactics worked well in the Asia-Pacific, where China built strong investment relations with ASEAN members to help conclude a free trade agreement with ASEAN. In 2010, China provided Iceland with a $500 million-plus currency swap to support the struggling Iceland bank system. Also, in 2010, Denmark signed deals with China worth $740 million in the areas of power, the green economy, agriculture and food security. In
2011, Denmark’s ambassador in China made a statement in support of a Chinese bid for permanent membership of the Arctic Council. The same position was expressed by the leaders of Greenland and Iceland. In addition, China’s financial aid to small countries will let Beijing participate in the Arctic infrastructure development that will be crucial for the year-round functioning of the Arctic Route. This encompasses port building, ship repair stations, transport hubs (for example, Ísafjörður in Iceland) and rescue centers.

Chinese international strategy in the Arctic will pursue solely pragmatic goals. Not only is economic prosperity as stake but also China’s image as a potential global leader. While it talks up the impact of global warming on Chinese environment and food security, Beijing systematically and purposefully continues to encourage the economic dependence of small Arctic states on China such as the free trade agreement with Iceland to earn support in the Arctic Council. Moreover, the high cost of projects to develop new oil infrastructure in the region force states to attract investors. This opens opportunities for China to develop influence and locks in future energy access. Next up, look for Beijing to begin negotiating route transit fees with Moscow.

In recent years the Russian government has been reluctant to allow Chinese companies to take a stake in Russian oil and natural gas fields. However, with a changing geopolitical situation, marked by highly tense relations with Europe over Ukraine and China’s transformation into the world’s second largest economy, the Russian state seems to be making its own pivot to Asia.

**Future Possibilities**

In the short-term China will most likely continue its cautious Arctic policy, as it strengthens relations with Arctic states and increases its involvement in Arctic projects, it is likely to develop a more assertive long-term policy.

This flexible position enables China to observe and react according to the situation. By improving collaboration with Arctic states and being involved in projects, China establishes its physical presence in the region. Finally, China’s flexibility could be explained by the fact that an assertive position on the existing territorial disputes could possibly undermine its own contested claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea.

### 5. Potential Detrimental Impacts:


Abstract:
Arctic is a region gaining more prominence due to the apparent climate change and the role of extra regional powers. On 26 January 2018, China released a white paper on its Arctic policy, clearly highlighting its intentions and ambitions. While pitching itself as a “near-Arctic state”, China vowed to actively participate in the affairs of the warmer Arctic. The white paper underlines “Polar Silk Road”, the continuation of the Belt and Road Initiative, a step closer to developing Arctic ports and transportation corridors. While this is a far-fetched project that may not see the fruits of implementation at least in the near future, it sure represents the growing China’s twenty-first century ambitions. In this regard, China is developing stronger diplomatic relations with the Arctic states. China’s seemingly close relation with a number of Arctic states gives a new dimension to the emerging geopolitics of the region. The recent attempt to build a polar ice-breaker (Xue Long II) and opening bids for its first nuclear-powered ice breaker portrays long-term plans of China to grow into a ‘Polar Power’.

Presence of China in the high north sparks two important questions- first, whether China is interested in the militarization of the Arctic or will it confine itself to scientific and commercial interests as stated in the white paper. Second, whether the eight Arctic states are prepared to accept the fact that the region remains no more limited to their reach but is moving towards becoming more global in nature.

The paper has made a modest attempt to explain China’s Arctic policy, its interests and implications on the region, demystify the perceptions surrounding the Chinese presence and the infrastructural projects. An attempt will also be made to include various perspectives as well as a theoretical assessment using theories of International Relations.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The Arctic has been changing dramatically due to rising global temperatures resulting in melting of the sea ice. A warmer Arctic has been attracting the world’s attention due to economic and geopolitical reasons. The Arctic Five (Norway, Russia, Canada, Denmark and United States) and the other three countries in and near the Arctic Circle (Iceland, Finland and Sweden) are staring at possible opportunities such as opening up of the new navigational routes, discovery and utilization of untapped resources. As a result of these developments, Asian countries are leaving no stone unturned to mark their presence in the region. China in particular is undertaking numerous steps to ensure that it grows into a significant player in the Arctic. On 26 January 2018, China released a white paper on its Arctic policy, clearly highlighting its intentions and ambitions. It underlines “Polar Silk Road”, a continuation of the Belt and Road Initiative. It is an initiative to develop Arctic ports and transportation corridors. While this is a far-fetched project that may not see the fruits of implementation at least in the near future, it seems to represent
China’s twenty-first century ambitions. China is developing stronger diplomatic relations with the Arctic states. China's seemingly close relation with Russia, Iceland and Denmark (through Greenland) gives a new dimension to the emerging geopolitics of the Arctic region. The recent attempt to build a polar ice-breaker (Xue Long II) and opening bids for its first nuclear-powered ice breaker portrays its long-term plans for the region (China Launches Icebreaker Xue Long 2, 2018).

China is seen as a rising power having developed diplomatic relations with a number of countries across the globe. China over the years has developed a very capable armed forces, economic prowess and led by a very strong leadership. China’s aspiration to be seen as the world leader gets reflected in their fundamental goals. Hence, their move and presence in every region including Arctic has raised debates among the members of academic and strategic community. It is, therefore, necessary to study China’s role in the High North in the backdrop of climate change and the dynamics of emerging geopolitics in the region. Whether China’s increasing influence will have implications both for the region and the shifting world order remains a part of the discussion?

The paper has made an attempt to analyze China’s proactive role in the Arctic by using deductive and analytical method and also assessed the relevance of the theories of International Relations and Geopolitics. Both qualitative and statistical data collected from primary (Arctic Council Documents and the stated policies of the countries that have a role in the Arctic) as well as secondary sources such as journals articles, books, opinion pieces and news articles have been used. A detailed literature survey and interviews have been done to collect adequate information, thereby incorporating different viewpoints on the theme.

The paper has made an attempt to understand whether China’s Arctic Policy has a strategic orientation with a focus on economic approach towards achieving its great power ambitions. The first section discusses the larger geopolitics of the Arctic, which includes the geography of the region, the resources, politics over navigational routes and contesting claims of the Arctic states. The second section focuses on the tangible and intangible “push” factors or the reasons attributed to Chinese presence in the Arctic. Assessing China’s Arctic Policy white paper and its engagement in the Arctic is the highlight of the third section. The fourth section throws light on the Arctic states’ responses to China’s footprints as well as the implications of its actions for the High North.

**Conclusion**

The future geopolitical scenario of the Arctic region is bound to see the effects of irreversible climate change. With this comes the exploration of more resources and the discovery of new maritime routes. Russia and Canada will be the biggest players in the region owing to their geographical location, military presence as well their involvement in the activities pertaining to the Arctic. Russia is at an advantageous
position, as most of the resources are at present closer to the Siberia and the Northern Sea Route. Canada views itself as a potential player, an attractive hydrocarbon market and hence is investing substantially in the development of the natural resources in the Arctic.

The region is no more confined to the eight states and has moved beyond to include extra-regional powers from Europe and Asia. While on one hand the extra regional powers are seen as an opportunity for the littorals of Arctic, on the other, it is perceived as a threat to their primacy. The Arctic Council is exclusive and is built on the base that the world must accept the sovereignty of the regional states. There are however differing viewpoints which suggest that the shipping routes and the deep seabed resources must be treated as common heritage of mankind. While some states like the USA agree to this, other littoral states like Canada are on the opposite end.

Certain push factors, both tangible and intangible, that are driving China’s Arctic strategy can be clearly observed. The lateral expansion of China in terms of its economy requires it to scout for resources that can sustain its humongous secondary sector. While this is the tangible factor, China is looking for the normative gains by calling itself as a ‘Near-Arctic State’. Constructing its identity as a great power in the shifting geopolitical order, necessitates its presence in all the regions of the world. Arctic is one of those frontiers where the power play is simmering, yet subtle. Making early investments in this region and capitalizing on the need for new infrastructure in the region, will provide China, the first-move advantage and help it gain a prominent place in the agenda setting process.

China’s approach to the High North has primarily used economic tools. It entered the realm of Arctic on the pretext of being affected by the climate change, conducting scientific studies and gradually shifted its focus to resource exploitation and building of infrastructure. Identification of necessities of different countries and investing heavily in developing them, is the core of China’s Arctic strategy. Through its value-adding actions, it is ensuring that the states or particular region in a state find it compelling to have China on board. As President Xi Jinping put-forth in 2014, China desires to become a polar power, having a say in the Arctic affairs and thereby leaving no stone unturned to reach its target of being recognized as a great power. Its strategies, actions and diplomatic skills holds the hypothesis proving to be true.

“The rise of China in the Arctic? Domestic motives, actors and international context,” Martin Kossa, isanet.org, 20 October 2015 [38]
http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/AP%20Hong%20Kong%202016/Archive/cbc09d1b-cf7b-4252-88f5-ca43776cbaa0.pdf

Abstract:

Over the past decade, China has been steadily increasing its presence in the Arctic region and came to call itself an Arctic stakeholder. However, Beijing still lacks an
official Arctic policy and, at present, it seems that such white paper is in the early stages of its drafting. At the same time, there seem to be several actors within China that are interested in the Arctic region and have the capacity to influence China`s Arctic decision-making process. As such, this research explores the motives behind China`s Arctic engagement, identifying the main domestic actors influencing China`s foreign policy in the region and reflects on linkages between China`s proactive diplomacy and the Arctic. As research analyzing Chinese foreign policy, this study also aspires to further develop our understanding of the process of state policy transformation in an era of increasing fragmentation, decentralization and internationalization.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The warming of the global climate is unequivocal leading to the increase of temperatures over the Arctic land mass by up to 5°C. Arctic summers of the 20th century have been the warmest in the past 400 years. As a consequence, the size of the Arctic sea ice has been steadily declining and in September 2012 it reached its "lowest seasonal minimum extent in the satellite record since 1979." The Greenlandic ice sheet together with glaciers in Alaska and Northern Canada have been losing mass and thus directly contributing to the global sea level rise. In addition, Arctic permafrost is thawing and, in the process, releasing greenhouse gases like methane into the atmosphere. All of these changes will have a serious local as well as global environmental impact, including ocean acidification, vegetation changes, coastal erosion and changes to the marine food chain.

Paradoxically, these environmental transformations coupled with the forces of globalization are the main drivers contributing to the opening of the Arctic region and the new economic opportunities stemming from it. The High North holds large deposits of oil and gas, gas hydrates, rare earth elements, coal, iron ore, nickel, cobalt, zinc, lead, copper, gold, silver, platinum and diamonds. The shrinking of the Arctic sea ice also leads to the emergence of new shipping routes in the Arctic Ocean. It is estimated that by using the shorter Northern Sea Route (NSR), running across the northern coast of Russia, between Northern Europe and Asia "one saves about 40% of travel time and subsequent fuel and freight shipping costs." Additionally, some studies have suggested, that there might be a northward migration of fish species into the Arctic Ocean deeming commercial exploitation of these waters more profitable.

The Arctic region has also attracted considerable attention from many states across the Asian continent. Among the non-Arctic Asian states, China occupies a prominent position due to its growing influence in world politics and expanding military capabilities. Over the past decade, Beijing has been steadily increasing its presence and activities in the High North and came to call itself an important Arctic
stakeholder and a Near-Arctic state. However, China still has not articulated any official Arctic policy and, at present, it seems that such white paper is in the early stages of its drafting. At the same time, there seem to be several actors within China that are interested in the Arctic region and that have the latent capacities to influence China’s Arctic decision-making process. While there is a growing volume of scholarship that is analyzing Asian and Chinese interests in the Arctic region, there seems to be a gap in our understanding of which actors within China have what interests and how they can influence the official decision-making process; what role does the Arctic play in China’s foreign policy and where to place it within the context of China’s emergence as a new global player. Against this background, this research paper will seek to explore the following interrelated questions: What are the motives behind China’s engagement with the Arctic? Who are the main domestic actors influencing China’s foreign policy in the region? How does the Arctic reflect in China’s "new" proactive foreign policy? What kind of Arctic power will China be? The unsure future developments of the Arctic region coupled with the uncertainty about how China will use its growing power and influence create a compelling impulse to examine China’s intentions in the High North.

This research paper will proceed through six parts. First, it will establish Neoclassical Realism as a theoretical framework with a brief subsection on methodology. A short overview of China’s polar hardware will follow. Part number three will discuss China’s Arctic interests followed by a summary of Chinese domestic actors that could strive to influence China’s foreign policy directions in the Arctic. The fifth part will show some parallels between China’s Arctic engagement and its "new" apparently more proactive foreign policy. The research paper will wrap up by some concluding remarks.

Concluding remarks

Over the past decade, as the physical changes taking place in the Arctic region have secured it a more visible place in international affairs, the High North has also been attracting some attention in China. Beijing is now being regarded as a polar capable state with a history of polar activities, a considerable and growing polar research program, modern facilities and polar equipment, research stations and a well-established network of research institutions on the mainland devoting their resources to the Polar Regions.

In view of the potential impact the changing Arctic might have on China’s socio-economic developments and because of its proximity to the region, China has declared itself an important Arctic stakeholder and a 'near-Arctic' state. However, despite such statements, China still has not published any official Arctic policy paper. Therefore, this research paper has identified foreign policy actors within China that could seek to influence the decision-making process over Arctic policies. Besides the traditional actors within China’s State Council like the State Oceanic Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, there
seems to be a whole flurry of 'actors on the margins' like China`s large SOEs, local governments, research institutions and academia as well as the 'public sphere'. It is important to acknowledge that the decisions are made by the traditional actors while the non-traditional entities seek to influence those decisions. Such distinction is in line with the theoretical framework of this research - Neoclassical Realism. This theory of foreign policy claims, amongst other things, that foreign policy is made by actual leaders who are not making decisions in a vacuum but need to consider interests of other societal actors within the state. These actors have the biggest opportunity to influence foreign policy when a relative stable and a low threat environment prevails which, under current conditions, the Arctic region is. Moreover, the research at hand supports the body of literature claiming that the Chinese state is transforming - not being a monolithic, unified 'Westphalian' state but becoming increasingly fragmented, decentralized and internationalized.

There certainly exist direct links between China`s 'new' foreign policy and its conduct in the Arctic region which this research paper has identified primarily in its references to respect, cooperation and win-win. However, it seems that China is looking at its foreign policy goals in a more long-term and strategic manner. As such, it would be optimal to look at China`s Arctic engagement in the context of its overall foreign policy objectives: a) political stability, b) sovereign security, territorial integrity and national unification and c) sustainable economic and social development.

Considering the effects Arctic climate change has on weather in China, there are concerns that such effects might do damage to China`s agriculture thus directly endangering its food security. Moreover, because of sea-level rise large numbers of people would be forced to leave their homes. All of these developments could have an impact on China`s political stability therefore Beijing needs to understand the changes taking place in the Arctic. Another point for consideration is China`s need to sustain its economic growth. The Arctic region has the potential to ease China`s energy and transportation insecurities in the form of access to much needed natural resources and relatively safe transportation routes. Thus, the Arctic could be regarded as a prospective region that could help China secure two of its most important foreign policy objectives. Also, China, by engaging with the Arctic and as a country that is striving for a global great power status, seeks respect such a country deserves.

Since Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, he has been advancing the notion that China, despite being a developing country, has now the power and influence to conduct a great power foreign policy. The question in order would be if China will be satisfied with its current position within the Arctic governance system, to be treated like other "ordinary" observers and leave the decision making on others. NCR predicts, that it is inevitable for emerging powers to exercise their growing influence in regions far off their borders. Will this be the case in the Arctic? In the short turn, China is expected to follow the principles it laid out at the 2015 Arctic Circle conference in Iceland, which are largely based on its past conduct: 1. further explore
and understand the Arctic, 2. protect and properly utilize the Arctic, 3. respect the
right of Arctic states and Arctic indigenous peoples, 4. respect the right of non-Arctic
states and the international community, 5. build a multitier Arctic cooperation
network and 6. uphold the Arctic governance system based on existing international
law. Therefore, for the time being, China will not make any significant changes to its
Arctic approach. Moreover, the Arctic region is not poised to become China’s top
foreign policy priority. As such, it is hard to imagine that China would want to subvert
the existing order there. Instead, it will continue to work within that order and it will
seek to increase its political influence and status through active participation as it will
look for ways to increase its 'right to speak' (hua yu quan) in Arctic affairs - a popular
and wide spread theme amongst Chinese Arctic commentators. In view of the
predictions outlined in this paragraph, China in the Arctic is likely to be, to use Mikael
Weissmann`s words, "a responsible reformer striving for achievements."

“The United States and China in the Arctic: A Roadmap for Sino-US Cooperation
on Energy, Climate Change, and Global Governance,” Clara Ma, Yale University
Department of Political Science, 23 April 2019 [39]
https://politicalscience.yale.edu/sites/default/files/ma_clara.pdf

Overview:

The global competition for undeveloped oil, natural gas, and unconventional energy
resources in the Arctic sits at the crossroads of two of the most pressing concerns of
this century: climate change and energy security. The Earth’s circumpolar region is
both a vital and vulnerable frontier holding immense potential for energy, scientific
exploration, trade, and transportation, and it is warming at rates as much as double
the global average as a result of positive surface-albedo and water vapor feedbacks
in the polar climate system, which act together to enhance the effects of climate
change. This phenomenon, known as polar amplification, has triggered accelerated
sea ice melting over the last several decades. Changes in the Arctic will in turn affect
global weather and climate through factors like the release of methane and
decreases in the Earth’s surface reflectivity induced by the loss of ice cover, causing
the planet to absorb even more incoming solar radiation. Since 1980, Arctic sea ice
volume has decreased by 75%, and according to the 2014 IPCC AR5 report, climate
models have projected that significant areas of the Arctic may be ice-free in the
summertime by as early as the 2050s in the high-warming scenario.

Governance of the Arctic is rooted profoundly in the international system. According
to the terms of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the
Arctic and most of its natural resources lie within the Exclusive Economic Zones
(EEZs) of five coastal countries: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United
States, all of whom are members of the Arctic Council, the intergovernmental forum
that deals with issues faced by Arctic states and Arctic indigenous populations.
Although the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as “China”) does not have any territory that borders the Arctic, it has long expressed an interest in the region’s development. In 2009, China requested permanent observer status in the Arctic Council and received it in May 2013, allowing representatives of the Chinese government to attend Council meetings for the first time but not to vote officially on any matters. China’s permanent observer status requires that it recognize “Arctic States’ sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic” as well as that “an extensive legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean, including, notably, the Law of the Sea.” In January 2018, in its first official Arctic policy white paper, China declared that it perceives itself as a “near-Arctic state.” The white paper highlighted the importance of the incorporation of the Arctic into the larger Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese President Xi Jinping’s massive effort to build infrastructure across Eurasia. However, China’s behavior in the Arctic so far has suggested that it will continue to forge partnerships with Arctic states like Russia, who have legal rights to Arctic resources, rather than act unilaterally against internationally agreed-upon rules of conduct in the region.

In light of China’s growing interest and presence in the Arctic, as melting ice renders Arctic energy resource extraction more feasible and opens valuable passageways for shipping, there is no doubt that interactions between the United States and China in the region will increase. Will these interactions be cooperative or rivalrous? Can the US and China collaborate in the Arctic given mounting tensions over trade and in the South China Sea? Why should they? On what issues is collaboration most pressing, mutually beneficial, and potentially fruitful? To answer these questions, I explore the geopolitical changes that have occurred and will continue to occur in the Arctic as a result of anthropogenic climate change, the impacts of which are felt acutely in the polar regions. In Sections 2 and 3 of the essay, I discuss American and Chinese policy and strategic approaches to the Arctic and examine the extent to which the US and China have common and conflicting interests therein. In Section 4, I make the case for cooperation between the two countries, arguing that the interests of the two are not fundamentally at odds in the region and instead that the Arctic represents an important opportunity for the US to engage with China, cope with its rise, and hold it accountable to its environmental promises while moderating the most detrimental ecological effects of Russia and China’s joint plans for Arctic development, some of which are already in motion. In Sections 5 and 6, I consider the barriers to cooperation between the US and China as well as the potential for conflict in the Arctic at large. Finally, in Section 7, I make policy recommendations for the United States that I believe to be most imperative for improving its overall leadership in the Arctic while cultivating a collaborative relationship with China in the region’s governance. Although the Arctic will become an increasingly active arena for global trade and natural resource competition over the course of this century, it also represents a critical opportunity for cooperation between the United States and China on issues pertaining to climate change, energy trade, freedom of navigation, and sustainable development.
Potential for Arctic Conflict

The potential for interstate conflict in the Arctic has both endogenous and exogenous dimensions. Within the region, disputes exist between Arctic coastal states over border and territorial claims, regulation and control of Arctic shipping routes, and extension of the continental shelves under UNCLOS for resource ownership and extraction. For example, the US and Canada disagree over the ownership of a small portion of the Beaufort Sea between Canada’s Yukon territory and the US state of Alaska, where the EEZs of the two countries overlap. Similarly, Canada and Denmark share a dispute over the tiny Hans Island in the 22-mile wide Nares Strait that separate the two countries. Perhaps even more serious than clashing territorial claims is the issue of the status of two key Arctic maritime transportation routes, the NWP, which runs along the coast of Canada, and the NSR, which passes through Russian territory. Freedom of navigation and the right of innocent passage is allowed under UNCLOS through any nation’s EEZ and territorial sea but not through its internal waters. Thus, whether the NWP or NSR are viewed as internal waters or as international straits is important to the United States, which has long been a proponent of the freedom of movement required to support global trade and security. Moreover, control over these passageways would confer the right to enforce environmental and safety regulations therein. With regards to the NSR, Russia has invoked Article 234 of UNCLOS, which allows an Arctic coastal state to enforce environmental requirements and pollution-control measures in the waters of its EEZ that are covered in ice. Russia currently mandates that ships traversing the NSR be accompanied by a Russian icebreaker and pay the associated operational fees, which has raised concerns over cost and access for countries like China interested in the use of this passageway. The last major potential source for internal conflict in the Arctic is related to the extension of EEZs up to 350 nautical miles from the continental shelf under UNCLOS guidelines, which would grant states exclusive rights over valuable mineral and energy resources located in the deep seabed.

In spite of these disagreements, the dynamics of Arctic governance have historically been cooperative: Most intra-Arctic differences have been approached and many resolved diplomatically. Every Arctic state has membership on the Arctic Council, which most recently declared its commitment to settling Arctic disputes using mechanisms created by UNCLOS, an international treaty that all but the US have ratified. Additionally, most natural resources lie within clearly demarcated portions of the EEZs of Arctic nations, where there are no disputes. For these reasons, Juha Käpylä and Harri Mikkola warn that the potential for intra-Arctic conflict should not be overstated, as this may “generate self-fulfilling prophecies.” Instead, they argue, if conflict were to arise in the Arctic, it is most likely to be extra-Arctic in nature, stemming from dynamics outside the region. Finally, it is worth noting that any
endogenous conflict in the Arctic by definition would not concern China directly, as China does not possess any territorial rights in the region.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The Arctic is not an isolated system. Rather, the consequences of its development are intertwined with the rest of the world. The viability of the region’s natural resource exploitation depends on fluctuations in the global energy market, and changes in the Arctic climate have extensively documented effects on the global climate system. While both US and Chinese Arctic policy emphasize environmental protection, China has becoming an increasingly active investor in natural resource extraction in the Arctic, most prominently vis-à-vis Russia. Because China is limited by its status as a non-Arctic state, it must pursue partnerships with states that have legal rights to the Arctic. As the most active Arctic power, and with more than 40 operational icebreakers, Russia has proven to be China’s most frequent collaborator thus far. Meanwhile, Russia, faced with tightening Western sanctions, has warmed to China’s growing interest along with the more stable investment that China is able to provide for key energy and infrastructure projects. Still, the Sino-Russian partnership in the Arctic is constrained by mistrust on both sides and does not preclude collaboration between the US and China on common interests related to climate change mitigation, sustainable development, fisheries management, environmental protection, air pollution, freedom of navigation, and a complementary natural gas trade.

In addition to increasing engagement with China in the Arctic, the United States should undertake the following actions to better position itself for leadership in the region: It should first update and ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. By strengthening international enforcement mechanisms for UNCLOS, the US can hold Russia and China accountable to maritime environmental, transportation, pollution, and safety regulations, while slowing the overall pace of development. Next, the United States should bolster its scientific exploration and understanding of the Arctic region, in part to solidify its own extended EEZ claims, by investing in better navigational and communications technology, which are currently outdated or lacking in entirety. Finally, instead of turning away from intergovernmental organizations like the Arctic Council, the United States must embrace them and commit to maintaining an active presence therein.

For the United States, mutually beneficial cooperation with China in the Arctic will not only strengthen relations between the two countries overall but will also allow it to ensure that the development of the geopolitically important Arctic region aligns with its own priorities. As I have demonstrated in this essay, the Arctic is a region in which China’s strategic intent is complementary rather than contradictory to US Arctic as well as broader global interests – it is precisely in these areas that the United States should engage with rather than alienate China, leveraging Chinese
interests and capabilities to work together to address the global challenges of the 21st century.

“China’s New Arctic Policy: Legal Questions and Practical Challenges,” Nong Hong, Maritime Awareness Project, 16 March 2018 [40]

Overview:

China issued its first official Arctic policy in a white paper published on January 26, 2018. The Chinese media and academics were truly thrilled—both by the content of the policy and by the fact that it had been formalized and published—and reacted immediately with overwhelmingly positive reporting and analysis. Meanwhile, the international community, especially the Arctic states, quickly added their views on the white paper.

Of the Arctic five (the five states with a coast inside the Arctic circle), Canada is the most concerned about the white paper’s implications. Canadian experts warn that China’s Arctic policy is attempting to tread a fine line between respecting the sovereignty of Arctic nations and leaving room to profit from disputes in international law. The white paper’s use of language like “respect for international law” is viewed by Robert Huebert from the University of Calgary and Frédéric Lasserre from Université Laval as an attempt to articulate limits on Arctic states’ sovereignty. One of the issues that worries Canada the most is whether China will adopt the same legal position as the United States and the European Union: treating the Northwest Passage as a “strait for international use,” in opposition to Canada’s claim to it as “internal waters.” In fact, this essay shows that the white paper largely avoids this difficult issue, focusing instead on the considerable opportunities and challenges posed by economic and environmental considerations.

Current & Relevant Information:

Other than the long-standing objections raised by the United States and echoed by the EU, Canada’s position has not been challenged by other states that also recognize the importance of shipping through the Arctic. China, Japan, and South Korea, in particular, see the melting Arctic Ocean as a unique opportunity for international trade, which will have a measurable effect on their economies because of their dependence on shipping. In addition, over the past decade a growing number of cruise ships have sought to transit the Northwest Passage.

The positions of China and other non-Arctic states on the legal status of the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route will be crucial for the Arctic littoral states. Sooner or later, non-Arctic states will have to adopt a clear position on whether the Northwest Passage and Northern Sea Route enjoy the status of
international waters for navigation, as the United States and the EU hold, or whether they are internal waters, as Canada and Russia insist.

In its white paper, China maintains that all activities to explore and utilize the Arctic should be conducted in compliance with treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Svalbard Treaty, as well as with general international law. However, the white paper does not touch on the status of the Northwest Passage and other straits in the Arctic. On shipping, China expresses a desire “to work with all parties to build a ‘Polar Silk Road’ through developing the Arctic shipping routes.” China encourages its enterprises to participate in infrastructure construction along these routes and to “conduct commercial trial voyages,” in accordance with international law, to pave the way for regular commercial operations. In addition to emphasizing opportunities for commercial shipping, the white paper offers evidence of China’s interest in supporting and encouraging cooperation with Arctic states to develop tourism in the region and calls for concerted efforts to enhance security, insurance, and rescue systems.

One consideration that might weigh against China following the lead of the United States and EU on the Northwest Passage is that doing so would weaken the argument that its own Qiongzhou Strait, between Hainan and continental China, should be considered internal waters. It is worth noting, however, that the status of the Qiongzhou Strait has rarely, if ever, been a matter of debate, while the status of the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route has frequently been contested.

Like its neighbors in East Asia, China sees the melting Arctic Ocean as a unique opportunity for itself and international trade generally. Its recently published white paper on Arctic policy highlights the country’s interest in shipping routes through the Arctic, among other interests such as participating in Arctic governance and polar research. On the one hand, the international community, including Arctic Council members, welcomes the transparency and increasing confidence that China shows by participating in Arctic governance. On the other hand, given China’s rapid military modernization and economic growth, suspicions regarding its global strategic intentions as it moves toward the Arctic are unavoidable. Canada’s concerns about China’s evolving position on the status of the Northwest Passage are symptomatic of this dilemma. Thus, a combination of potential economic benefits, unsettled legal issues concerning the navigation regime in the Arctic, and technological and environmental challenges will likely determine the prospects for China’s involvement in Arctic shipping.

“Coping with a "Near-Arctic" China,” Mischa Longman, University of Calgary, 23 September 2019 [41]
Overview:

The purpose of this research project was to explore the implications of an accelerated Chinese interest in Arctic affairs. More specifically, this project focused primarily on the practical effects of this greater involvement in the region for the two largest and most globally influential Arctic states, namely Russia and the United States from a mix of political, military and economic perspectives. In doing so, this project would seek to increase understanding of recent developments in Chinese policy and economic involvement in the Arctic region and how they would influence the behavior of powerful local actors, a topic of some importance and urgency given the historical insularity of the Arctic from outside affairs or actors, as well as the region’s characterization as a zone of inter-state cooperation rather than competition. How would China’s entry into the region in the form of ambitious policy proclamations and substantial foreign direct investment into Arctic states affect these conditions? Given rising competition elsewhere in the world between the United States and China, the topic of China’s entry into the Arctic seems both highly current and fraught with the potential to fundamentally reshape the region’s political and economic landscape. Existing regional issues may serve as fault lines which a powerful extra-regional actor could exploit, such as the substantially deteriorated relationship between Russia and the NATO members of the region since the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the resultant weak Russian economy. In studying these issues under the aegis of the larger research question articulated above, this project sought to provide a snapshot of the Arctic’s political and economic landscape at a moment of unprecedented outside interest, as well as accurately capture the essence of what trends and tendencies have arisen in Russian and American policy in reaction to these developments.

Current & Relevant Information:

Results

This project revealed a number of interesting preliminary findings on the effects of China’s entry into the Arctic region. These will be beginning with the broader context before addressing the specific findings on Sino-Russian and Sino-American relations in the Arctic. The BRI’s development was traced from inception to its current ambitions for the PSR, and areas of concern such as the “debt trap” potential by which Chinese loans could be used as economic leverage to achieve ownership of strategic resources were addressed, finding them largely overblown. However, Chinese investment patterns in infrastructural projects such as the Greek port of Piraeus did show some willingness on the part of Chinese state investors to take advantage of an economically-disadvantaged state in order to attain decisive ownership over strategically significant resources. Chinese interest in the Arctic was traced broadly to establishing energy security, given massive domestic energy consumption and ongoing efforts to phase out coal in favor of natural gas, a resource present in great quantities in the Arctic and particularly under Russian
ownership. Additionally, the Arctic would provide new shipping opportunities for both Chinese importing and exporting, bypassing sensitive areas such as the Suez Canal or Strait of Malacca.

With this basic contextual information out of the way, the major findings of the research question may be addressed beginning with Russia. Sino-Russian cooperation was shown to have experienced a major upswing since 2014, roughly the same time as Western sanctions aimed particularly at the energy industry began to severely damage the Russian economy. In this way, China seems to have stepped in to act as a significant investor in Russian Arctic projects, particularly those involving energy extraction and exploration as well as the construction of transport infrastructure related to the Russian Northern Sea Route (NSR). These developments serve the double purpose of meeting China's goals through the BRI as listed above as well as supporting important sections of the Russian economy in the aftermath of sanctions. However, this project also found significant underlying tensions in Sino-Russian relations in the Arctic, and it became pertinent to analyze in particular a trio of failed or stalled multi-billion-dollar (equivalent in USD) projects in order to ascertain the sources of these tensions. Ultimately, Russian concerns over Chinese investment were found to potentially stem from considerations of the strategic sensitivity of the NSR to Russian state security, an unwillingness to cede operation control or decisive ownership stakes in major extraction projects to Chinese state investors and a seeming willingness to utilize other Asian investors such as India in order to avoid over-dependence on Chinese financing. On the Chinese side, a pair of major contracts were found which fell through due to the extensive “anti-corruption drive” spearheaded by President Xi Jinping, pointing to a potential (albeit difficult and opaque) area for future research on Sino-Russian relations, namely the effects of entrenched corruption on the relationship.

Research into the American reaction to China’s entry into the Arctic proved extremely fruitful, as well as the area of the project in which the most use could be made of primary sources in the form of just-released American policy documentation and official speeches by the Secretary of State. A lack of releases by civilian institutions were more than compensated for by a flurry of recent policy releases by the United States Department of Defense (DoD), particularly in the form of a comprehensive DoD Arctic Strategy and a Coast Guard strategic document which went into extensive detail about Chinese capabilities in the region. These were compared to earlier iterations of the same documents, which were found to have either mentioned China in somewhat muted terms or not at all, whereas the most recent documents made clear that China is viewed as a strategic competitor to the United States in the Arctic. The lack of civilian documentation only served to make this point more explicit, as did the official policy speech by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo at the Arctic Council in which he invoked the need for increased military security and characterized China’s self-proclaimed “near-Arctic” status as
illegitimate. Overall, the American reaction to Chinese Arctic activity was shown to have been led entirely by considerations of military security, with practical effects consisting largely of substantially increasing funding for icebreaking vessels in order to maintain a regional presence and raising the issue of China’s illegitimacy as a regional actor. While future policy releases or actions may emphasize civilian aspects or seek to improve Sino-American relations in the region, it is clear at the time of this project that the current administration of the United States is vocally opposed to China’s entry into the region and is willing to overtly elevate this topic to a military concern.

Conclusion

While the above section illustrates the most important findings of this project’s research, it also illustrates that there are many branching paths which further research into these fields could follow. The aforementioned language barrier of Russian and Chinese did serve as a limitation on adequately analyzing Sino-Russian relations, as did the opacity of political issues in these states. However, the breadth of the project served as the single largest limitation, and in another iteration perhaps focusing research on a single aspect (Sino-Russian economic relations in the Arctic, for instance) would prove even more fruitful. Ultimately, despite this somewhat overstretched breadth, this project answered our initial research question of China’s impact on Arctic relationships by showing the region as becoming rapidly less insular, as a powerful outside actor seeks to establish an economic and policy foothold in the region.

China’s growing interest in the region has not gone unopposed, with the Russian government expressing their misgivings through seeking to maintain decisive economic and operational control of sensitive projects and the Americans through overtly threatening behavior and policies opposing China’s Arctic ambitions. Already there is unprecedented behavior from the American government, with the Secretary of State speaking of military security in the Arctic Council despite such topics being explicitly outside the Council’s mandate, specifically to inveigh against an extra-regional actor. Russia has already, through actions such as inviting India as an alternate investor and seeking to keep Chinese involvement in direct operations low, shown a level of unease with growing economic reliance on China. For any future project on these considerations, a translator skilled in either Russian or Chinese would prove invaluable for deepening an understanding of the Sino-Russian relationship beyond economic data and Western academic sources.


Abstract:

Arctic ice is melting at an accelerating rate, giving way to not only the last great frontier that promises navigable waterways and natural resources, but international
attention to emerging geopolitical and economic significance. China has not published an Arctic strategy, nor explicitly described its interests in the Arctic; however, it has declared itself a “near-Arctic” state and become the most active observer in the region. This analysis examines China’s rhetoric, investment, and collaborative engagement with the Arctic states. The key findings are that China’s geostrategic interests are to advance its global legitimacy and economic development. As such, China is interested in establishing a diplomatic and economic presence in the Arctic to elevate its global status and ensure China’s access to sea lanes and resources. China’s growing engagement in the arctic could represent another significant driver to a power shift from the U.S. to China.

Current & Relevant Information:

All permanent members of the Arctic Council have published Arctic strategies and made sovereignty, security, economic development and environmental protection a priority. Twelve non-Arctic countries have been granted observer status to the council along with twenty other intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies. China, Japan, India, South Korea, Singapore and Italy are the latest observers granted status in May 2013. As observers, representatives can present positions and convene talks with regional decision makers in order to influence Arctic affairs, but final decisions are the exclusive right and responsibility of permanent members. Active observers must therefore rely on diplomatic and economic engagement with permanent members in order to advance their Arctic interests.

China has not published an Arctic strategy, nor explicitly described its interests in the Arctic; however, it has declared itself a “near-Arctic” state and become the most active observer in the region. This analysis examines China’s rhetoric, investment, and collaborative engagement with the Arctic states. The key findings are that China’s geostrategic interests are to advance its global legitimacy and economic development. As such, China is interested in establishing a forward diplomatic and economic presence in the Arctic that elevates its global status and provides China’s access to sea lanes and resources.

Implications for United States Interests

China is recognizing the growing geostrategic and economic importance of the Arctic, and for the foreseeable future, will continue to shape Arctic development through ongoing investment, diplomacy, and maritime projection. China will also continue to accrue global credibility from its Arctic activity, and U.S. interests may be impacted, or even threatened in the future. The U.S. National Strategy for the Arctic Region defines U.S. interests in the Arctic, which include providing for the security of the U.S.; protecting the free flow of resources and commerce; protecting the environment; addressing the needs of indigenous communities; and enabling scientific research. As Arctic stakeholders with separate and distinct interests, China
and the U.S. have an opportunity for greater transparency and openness, but may also be prone to conflict.

The most serious implication for U.S. interests is foreign militarization of the Arctic, especially in the international waters off North America. A big U.S. concern is that China may eventually deploy surface warships to the Arctic to protect its commerce and to assert maritime power globally. There is also concern that China’s growing and increasingly active submarine force could also soon be patrolling the High North.

With increased commerce and human activity in the Arctic, U.S. Arctic affairs are clearly shifting from domestic to international in nature with the specter of unlawful commerce, rivalry or territorial dispute looming in the future. Fortunately, UNCLOS places almost all of the Arctic resources under national jurisdiction so the scope of potential disputes is limited. However, there is potential for impact to the U.S. interest to protect the free flow of resources and commerce in accordance with international rules and norms. The U.S. has not yet ratified UNCLOS but has been abiding by it. China has ratified UNCLOS, but its interpretation of land features that determine the limits of territorial waters, as well as accepted EEZ activities, have been at odds with U.S. and allies in the ECS and SCS.

Since 1998, the Arctic Council has remained committed to its original principles centered on non-militarization of the Arctic, with focus on cooperation, environmental stewardship, marine conservation and the like. These are noble principles that must endure however they were established when the level of human activity was far lower than today. Arctic security does not appear in any of the Council’s biennial declarations. In fact, the first mention of the expectation for peaceful development under the rule of international law appeared in the 2009 Tromsø Declaration. With the growing number of observers since 1998, including an increasingly active China, future militarization and security of the Arctic is highly germane to Council matters. It is time to make agreements and decisions on military security in the Arctic.

**Recommendations**

The U.S. is not doing enough in the Arctic to balance China’s ascendency. Going forward, budget constraints will continue to hamper the U.S. in making rapid headway to close key infrastructure and capability gaps, however, a short list of strategic considerations would include the following:

The U.S. should expand the Asia-Pacific rebalance northward to include the Bering Sea and NWP. To support this, investment in icebreaker ships, deep water ports, roads, and air fields along coastal Alaska should command a higher national priority. All investment should be underpinned by rigorous multiagency feasibility studies. Alaska’s western and northern coastline (Arctic) spans 3,000 miles, or one and a half times the distance between northern Maine and the tip of south Florida, yet its shallow features and underdeveloped marine infrastructure create a critical
vulnerability in U.S. security. A strategic rebalance northward should also include expansion of the U.S. Coast Guard annual Arctic Shield exercise to include Navy and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) joint forces. Moreover, USNORTHCOM should request allocation of Navy assets to adequately patrol Arctic waters, sharpen Arctic navigation and expand presence.

The U.S. is assuming the 2-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council in April 2015, and will not hold the position again until 2031. At present, it is appropriate to reassess the Council’s position on Arctic security and peaceful militarization in the region. The U.S. can drive a renewed agenda in concert with realizing vital national interests.

Finally, the U.S. should join the rest of the Arctic Council and ratify UNCLOS to more firmly lead in the maturation of international rules and norms. UNCLOS clearly serves U.S. national security and economic interests. The Arctic has so far been an outstanding model for peaceful development under UNCLOS, and U.S. ratification will further implant the expectation that all stakeholders commit to full transparency of activities and intentions in the region.

China’s substantial engagement in the Arctic could represent another significant driver to a power shift from the U.S. to China. Today, the U.S. stands at a crossroads where it can either tip into complacency or act decisively to secure Arctic interests, and extend global superiority.

“China’s Maritime Security Interests in the Arctic Region: Military capabilities and possible intentions,” Sarah Kirchberger, Research Gate, June 2016 [43]

Abstract:

China’s strategic interest in the Arctic region has attracted a lot of attention ever since the People’s Republic of China (PRC) applied for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council in 2007. However, China’s actual maritime (let alone naval) presence in the Arctic has been fairly limited so far. Given other areas of interest in Eurasia, in the Asia Pacific as well as in Africa, it is worth considering what the status of China’s Arctic engagement from the government’s strategic point of view might be. Are there any tangible indicators pointing to a possibly heightened level of Chinese Arctic maritime exploration in the future, e.g. in terms of related hardware procurement? The aim of this article is to explore the question to which extent Chinese naval activities, military capabilities, transnational investments, and security co-operations within the Arctic region have the potential to affect military-strategic considerations in the Arctic. Furthermore, it intends to put China’s strategic interest
in the Arctic, and its actual level of maritime engagement there, in perspective given
China’s extensive security concerns in other world regions.

Current & Relevant Information:

**Divergent Public Perceptions of China’s Arctic Ambitions**

There seem to be striking differences between the perception of China’s Arctic
maritime presence within the Arctic countries and in non-Arctic countries on the one
hand, and by observers outside and within China on the other. While Russian
observers typically assume a relatively strong Chinese interest in developing its
maritime, economic, and security presence in the Arctic, non-Arctic Western and
Asian observers have tended to downplay the importance of the Arctic when
discussing China’s emerging global role. It is, for instance, telling that in one of the
most insightful recent treatments of China’s rise – David Shambaugh’s 2014
monograph China Goes Global – the Arctic is not discussed even cursorily. Related
keywords such as “arctic,” “polar,” “Greenland”, “Iceland,” “Norway” or “Svalbard” are
entirely absent in the book’s index. Another very recent discussion of China’s
emerging global maritime security strategy by two Chinese experts – Xu and Cao
(2016) – likewise makes no mention of the Arctic, but instead concentrates on the
PRC’s major maritime security concerns elsewhere, such as its so-called ‘core
interests’ of sovereignty, above all the Taiwan question, and the South China and
East China Sea issues. Other topics highlighted by them include China’s
vulnerability towards SLOC disruptions, often referred to as the ‘Malacca dilemma’;
China’s ongoing anti-piracy operations off the Gulf of Aden; and the naval rivalry with
the United States in the Asia Pacific region. This choice of topics clearly indicates
the relatively greater importance of these issues when compared with China’s
emerging Arctic interests. In a thorough study of domestic Chinese discussions of
the Arctic potential, David C. Wright likewise notes that it is “important not to
overestimate the importance of the Arctic in most publicly available Chinese naval
strategic thinking. Two important books by major Chinese naval strategists published
in 2010 discuss little if anything substantive regarding Chinese interests in the Arctic,
but they cover the Indian Ocean quite extensively” (Wright 2011: 36).

It is therefore by no means unusual, neither in the Western nor the Chinese literature
on China’s worldwide maritime security concerns, to find the Arctic entirely
neglected. This probably reflects the comparably low level of importance attributed
to Arctic maritime security questions by many observers when compared to
seemingly more pressing maritime security challenges China is currently facing
elsewhere.

However, when one analyzes the existing literature on Arctic security issues
specifically, a number of surprising insights can be gained. It seems that China’s
Arctic role is given a far more prominent coverage in some of these sources (e.g.
Hough 2013), although this is not always the case. Especially in studies that were
published by scholars from the Arctic countries themselves, many authors tend to focus more strongly on China’s developing interest in the Arctic. But even among those observers who do assume that China ultimately aims at expanding its strategic role in the Arctic, there seems to be no clear consensus whether China’s ambitions are positive or troubling in nature. Russian observers typically express greater concern regarding Chinese security ambitions than e.g. Scandinavian or Canadian commentators (cf. Willis and Depledge 2014), although a tendency to portray China’s Arctic interests very negatively can also be noted in some Western publications (Huang et al. 2015: 60). Therefore, an interesting question to consider is: What material evidence currently indicates a growth of China’s Arctic maritime interest and activities?

Conclusion

Starting roughly with the ‘Taiwan Missile Crisis’ of 1996, the past two decades have seen a naval build-up in China both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. China has been aiming to enhance the level of its naval capability by building an expeditionary navy, and plans to transform its military into a modern force capable of joint operations.

Because China’s coastal waters within the so-called “First Island Chain” are confined and shallow, and are subject to constant surveillance by the US and its allies, China has to contend with a relatively unfortunate geostrategic position, which places constraints on China’s naval expansion. Driving US forces further away from its shores by developing stronger anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities seem to be the primary interest behind China’s naval build-up. At the same time, it seems that attempts to further enlarge China’s military presence in the South China Sea may be a strategic necessity from the Chinese vantage point, not least in order to offer China’s ballistic missile submarines based at Hainan Island a greater scope of action for training and patrol missions, as well as greater protection against hostile forces.

As it seems, China’s naval planners have primarily been concerned with developing the capabilities suitable and necessary to defend what the Chinese Communist Party deems to be its non-negotiable “core interests.” These have been defined multiple times as the Taiwan question; sovereignty over Xinjiang, and sovereignty over Tibet. Lately, the sovereignty issues in the South China Sea and East China Sea seem to have been elevated to the status of yet another “core interest.”

Based on China’s recent actions and its official rhetoric, one may infer that the complicated sovereignty issues in the Asia Pacific will remain much more strategically important from Beijing’s point of view than the idea of projecting its military power into the Arctic region, especially given the rather limited Chinese economic interests there, which pale in comparison to its much larger investments and shipping activities in Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa.
The most strategically relevant aspects of China’s Arctic engagement are probably China’s natural resources exploration activities in various Arctic countries; the PRC’s evolving economic partnership with Iceland; and above all, China’s strong and growing economic and military-technological cooperation with Russia, which includes both joint maneuvers and Arctic raw materials extraction projects, which may result in a greater volume of bulk carrier traffic in the Arctic region. It seems indeed that China engages in what Tessman and Wolfe term “strategic hedging,” by treating the Arctic as one among several possible sources of future energy and raw material imports, even though this will remain a particularly challenging region to exploit for climatic reasons alone (Tessman and Wolfe 2011: 236). Nonetheless, as Haftendorn recently observed, new technologies such as fracking may make polar hydrocarbons less attractive in the future (Haftendorn 2016: 136). Given the above factors, it seems unlikely at this point that the Arctic waters could become a focal area of Chinese naval interest anytime soon.

To sum up, China has as of yet not promulgated an official Chinese Arctic strategy. Beijing is likely to concentrate most strongly on developing military capabilities that are designed to secure its so-called “core interests” of sovereignty in the Asia Pacific, above all Taiwan and the South China Sea; it will likely try to constrain US surveillance activities near Chinese shores; and, it is likely to pursue its economic interests in the Arctic mainly in co-operative rather than confrontational fashion, as it has done so far. The strengthened cooperation with Russia, which lately included joint maneuvers in the Arctic, will likely shape as well as constrain China’s level of military engagement in the High North.


Overview:

The Arctic region, or High North, ranked top of the security agenda during the Cold War due to its strategic importance. Its significance was largely reduced with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Bloc countries. However, due to both the warming climate in the Arctic and the re-emergence of geopolitical competition in the region, the Arctic is once again of profound importance to NATO security. According to the latest available data, climate change is occurring at a faster rate than previously thought, which will have a significant impact on the Arctic and on the security of Arctic littoral states.

There is a desire among Arctic countries to cooperate closely to address common challenges and solve territorial disputes by diplomatic means. However, the re-emergence of the Arctic on the international agenda and possible spill-over of
tension between Russia and NATO Allies, as well as China’s increasing engagement, could make the Arctic an arena for strategic rivalry. This report follows earlier papers of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) on the issue of the High North and gives an update of the situation in the region. This report has been updated following the discussion in the Political Committee meeting at the Assembly’s Spring Session.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**The Increasing Engagement of China in the Arctic**

The Arctic is not only a subject of strategic interest for the “Arctic Five” but also for external powers such as the five Asian countries approved as observers to the Arctic Council in 2013 – the PRC, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Singapore. The resources of the Arctic and the potential impact the NSR could have on commercial and diplomatic relations between Asia, Europe, and North America is driving these countries’ participation in regional matters.

While the PRC does not have an official Arctic policy, senior Chinese government officials have articulated a rather clear strategy for their engagement in the region. Beijing is interested in the exploitation of the sea lanes that will slowly open up as a result of global warming. Moreover, China is also interested in strengthening its ability as a non-Arctic state to access Arctic mineral resources and fishing waters. The PRC has taken steps over the past several years to protect its interests in the High North, pursuing a presence in Svalbard, Iceland, and Greenland.

China is building partnerships with a wide range of partners in the region to ensure that it will have a voice on Arctic affairs in the future. In the past few years, Beijing has intensified diplomatic relations with Nordic countries such as Iceland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. For example, the PRC concluded a free-trade agreement with Reykjavik in 2013; both countries are also cooperating in geothermal power and tourism. If the Arctic ice recedes further, Iceland could become a major shipping hub of the Transpolar Sea Route, which would become an alternative to the Northwest Passage and the NSR. Recently China formally incorporated the Arctic into its plans for maritime cooperation under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In its Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the BRI, released in mid-June 2017, the PRC’s National Development and Reform Commission and the State Oceanic Administration envision a “blue economic passage” linking China with Europe via the Arctic Ocean. The BRI is an ambitious development program through which China plans to build infrastructure connecting it to countries in Asia and Europe, thereby boosting trade and stimulating economic growth. BRI would also open up and create new markets for Chinese goods and technology and help tackle its excess cement and steel capacity. Russia, the only BRI partner among the eight Arctic nations, is generally supporting China’s involvement in the Arctic, not least because Moscow is keen for Chinese investment in its infrastructure because capital from the West has dried up.
In contrast to its typical preference for bilateral diplomatic mechanisms, and particularly in comparison to its aggressive stance on territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas disputes, the PRC has thus far pursued a multilateral approach to advance its interests in the Arctic. The Chinese emerging Arctic strategy could be seen as a component of its maritime military doctrine under President Hu Jintao, which shifted from the regional to the global scale, projecting power abroad (Cassotta et al., 2015). These concerns raise the question of a NATO policy for the Arctic, though Allied member states among the Arctic littoral states hold different views on whether or not there should be a NATO Arctic strategy. While some argue for an increased presence of NATO in the Arctic, others have voiced concerns that establishing a NATO strategy for the region would give non-Arctic Allies an influence in the affairs of the High North (Coffey and Kochis, 2016).

In any case, China’s actions in the High North are relevant for the security interests of NATO Allies as the developments in the region have an impact on the economic and political stability of Europe. Given the PRC’s improving relationship with Russia, Beijing’s growing engagement in the High North should be monitored closely, particularly in the context of heightened tensions between Russia and the Alliance.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The existing relationships among Arctic littoral states are by-and-large defined by cooperation and there is currently no rush on Arctic resources. However, the situation could change very quickly. Climate change is occurring more rapidly than previously anticipated and Russia’s aggressive actions against Ukraine and other NATO partners like Georgia could well have a negative impact on stability and security in the High North.

This picture is compounded by the increasing interest and presence of non-littoral Arctic states, including the PRC. This is of particular concern as Beijing’s assertive rhetoric and actions with regard to sovereignty issues in the South China and East China Seas, is contesting UNCLOS – which regulates interstate relations in the Arctic. As Arctic ice continues to melt and other non-NATO states re-evaluate their Arctic posture, it would be prudent for NATO to engage in an effort coordinated among member states to improve its situational awareness in the High North.

The decision of the Allies at the Warsaw Summit to ensure comprehensive situational awareness in the North Atlantic emphasizes the importance that is attributed - again - to the northern flank. Safeguarding the sea lines of communication, especially during a crisis or conflict, is vital for the security of the Alliance as a whole. However, the security developments in the North Atlantic also have an impact on the adjacent Arctic region, where Russia is building new or upgrading existing military infrastructure, which can be used for SAR, daily policing, and military operations. This begs the question if NATO should not also increase its situational awareness in the Arctic. While NATO Allies among the Arctic littoral...
states hold different views on whether or not there should be a role for NATO in the security of the region, this report finds that the security, environmental, and economic imperatives in the region require that NATO, at the very least, have the capacity and resources to monitor and consider developments in the Arctic.

As the strategic relevance of the High North increases in the future, the Arctic littoral states of the Alliance, and indeed all Allies, can ill afford to postpone an evaluation of NATO’s approach to the region indefinitely. Russia is already expanding its military footprint in the High North by establishing infrastructure along the Northern Sea Route and non-littoral countries like the PRC are becoming more engaged. Therefore, in the view of your Rapporteur, NATO should:

a) initiate a dialogue and information exchange among NATO Allies in the North Atlantic Council, that includes outside expertise, to provide Allies with the latest assessments of the impact of climate change on the Arctic. Allies should be encouraged to enforce existing international climate agreements and pursue additional opportunities for multilateral cooperation on reducing greenhouse gases;

b) create an “Arctic working group” at NATO Headquarters that will:

- identify the security implications of climate change on the Arctic and Arctic littoral states,
- review Allied infrastructure needs in the region, particularly with regard to SAR and communications capabilities,
- identify NATO territory in the Arctic vulnerable to territorial infringement by non-NATO states;
- evaluate NATO’s deterrence, defense, and maritime posture in the High North;
- analyze Russia’s changing military posture and operations in the region, as well as China’s strategy in the High North and possible implications on security in the Arctic;
- report to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly on these issues on an annual basis;
- defer to the Arctic Council on policymaking on issues within the purview or under the consideration of the Council;

c) develop plans that help Allied Arctic littoral states to improve their SAR capabilities in the Arctic;

d) continue and strengthen Allied exercises on the Alliance’s northern flank. This would allow participating countries to acquaint forces to operations in the harsh climatic conditions, which is also a prerequisite for expansion of improved SAR capabilities.
Russia’s Involvement in the Arctic:

Overview:

An article published on October 5 by the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) discusses Russia’s strategy in the Arctic region and the evolving role of China therein (Russiancouncil.ru (http://russiancouncil.ru/blogs/arctic/es-kitayrossiya-i-arktika-strategicheskie-imperativy/), October 5). Among other points, the piece notes that “the Arctic region is one of the key elements of Russian national security” and “one of two regions where Russia plays the role of a great power.” At the same time, the article alludes to “growing international competition in the region.” It frames the United States and the European Union as Russia’s main regional competitors. But China is notably presented as a “strategic partner” for whom “the Arctic region is not a top strategic priority” and whose efforts to build up its naval strength are related to a desire to challenge the US, not Russia. The sentiments expressed in the above-mentioned RIAC article appear to reflect how Moscow views the prior concrete steps the Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China (PRC) have been taking to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the Arctic. On May 15, Russian media stated that “Russia and China are preparing a memorandum on joint efforts to consolidate actions in the Arctic region” (TASS (https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/5200505), May 15), while on June 8, Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping declared their readiness to “boost cooperation in the Arctic via the implementation of joint infrastructural-, transportation- and energy-related projects” (RIA Novosti (https://ria.ru/world/20180608/1522345980.html), June 8). Nonetheless, Chinese ambitions in the Arctic seem to extend beyond the level of such joint initiatives.

Current & Relevant Information:

On January 26, the Chinese State Council Information Office published a white paper titled “China’s Arctic Policy,” which argues the country is entitled to “enjoy freedom or rights […] in the Arctic Ocean” and to be a full-fledged player equal to other states (Gov.cn (http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm), January 26). The paper points to the fact that, since the PRC is “closely involved in trans-regional and global issues in the Arctic,” it seeks to further “facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic and social development of the Arctic” via expansion of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road toward the creation of a Polar Silk Road—an extremely ambitious project that aims to enhance trade/transportation routes linking Asian and European markets.
The news from China was met with enthusiasm on the Russian side, being construed as sign of expansion of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership. Russia’s expectations in this matter are premised on three assumptions:

– China will save Russia’s stagnant north: Chinese investments in the Arctic are thought to be a remedy for long-lasting structural problems faced by Russia’s High North. In particular, Russia hopes the PRC’s involvement will bring new work sites, large infrastructure projects, socio-economic development of the area, as well as a lifeline from Western sanctions (Asiarussia.ru (http://asiarussia.ru/news/18878/), January 31, 2018);

– China has no alternatives but to work with Russia: The Northeast Passage (NEP), controlled by Russia, and the Northwest Passage (NWP), controlled by the US and Canada, are China’s only prospective maritime transportation routes across the Arctic Ocean. And Beijing’s growing conflict with Washington purportedly makes the NEP the only viable option for Chinese vessels traveling to and from Europe (RIA Novosti (https://ria.ru/analytics/20180129/1513490180.html), January 29). This idea was expressed by Putin in 2017, when he proposed to “merge the Silk Road with the NEP, to turn the latter into the former” (TASS (https://tass.ru/ekonomika/4797575), December 8, 2017);

– China will be unable to “sideline” Russia (Topwar.ru (https://topwar.ru/134818-dragon-v-arktike-novyy-shelkovyy-putstanet-polyarnym.html), January 30, 2018), given Russia’s dominant position in the Arctic and the nature of relations between Beijing and Moscow.

As China seeks to develop multiple resilient transit corridors to markets in the West, Russia believes that geography makes it an obligatory and unavoidable partner in any such efforts. Yet, increasingly, Russia is finding itself circumvented and outflanked; and it lacks the financial resources to rectify that situation.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1700/RR1731/RAND_RR1731.pdf

Summary:

To date, the Arctic has been widely viewed as stable and peaceful, with cooperation between Russia and other Arctic states remaining possible in spite of heightened geopolitical tensions. For example, the Arctic Council has endured as a forum for cooperative policy shaping, agreements have been signed and abided by, and nations—including Russia—have participated together in search-and-rescue exercises. This report examines the following research questions:
• What factors have contributed to maintaining the Arctic as an area of cooperation, even when tensions among Arctic states were rising in other regions such as Ukraine, the Baltics, and the Middle East?

• Can these factors sustain cooperation in the face of further dramatic changes that will likely take place in the Arctic?

• If cooperation is threatened by these changes, how might U.S. policy help mitigate the effects of these factors and contain tensions?

While there are many transformations at play in the Arctic, we selected and examined four—maritime access, resources, continental shelf claims, and Russian reaction to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence—that appear to have the potential to drive a dramatic shift in regional geopolitics from an emphasis on cooperation to escalation of tensions. When possible, the United States should take steps to reduce the risks that these transformations pose to Arctic cooperation, which represents a key objective of current U.S. Arctic policy.

This report is based on research of open-source literature; conversations with international experts on the Arctic and Russia; insights from a May 2016 roundtable with additional subject-matter experts from the U.S. government, think tanks, and universities; and use of a computer simulation for physical maritime access.

Current & Relevant Information:

Russia's Approach in the Arctic: Between Buildup and Cooperation

Russia’s actions and rhetoric with regard to the Arctic have alternated between inflammatory and conciliatory, creating some uncertainty regarding its intentions in the region. Russia has increased military presence in its High North, but not to Cold War levels. Russian policy in the Arctic has been mostly cooperative, and inflammatory speeches or events (such as the planting of a Russian flag on the seabed near the North Pole in 2007) may be best understood as aimed more at a domestic audience than an international one. Overall, Russia has benefited from its cooperative stance on Arctic issues for three main reasons: First, the difficulties of operating in such a rigorous environment make it inherently beneficial to collaborate; second, a number of key Arctic issues—oil spills, for instance—are transnational, therefore requiring collective responses; and third, economic development and investments benefit from a peaceful and cooperative environment—a factor of particular importance to Russia, which views the economic development of the Arctic as a key strategic objective.

Upcoming Transformations in the Arctic

While cooperation on Arctic issues has been successfully maintained between Russia and other Arctic nations—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States—the region is already experiencing, or will likely
experience, major transformations in the short to long terms that may alter Russia’s incentives to cooperate. Four such transformations have the potential to upset current Arctic trends:

1. climate and geographical changes that radically modify maritime access
2. global interest in Arctic exploitation that drives competition for resources
3. legal decisions, specifically the upcoming recommendations by the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) regarding the claims that Russia, Denmark, and Canada have submitted or will submit
4. NATO presence in the Arctic region that Russia might perceive as a military threat warranting a response in kind.

**Climate and geographical changes that radically modify maritime access:** Diminishing sea ice is the primary enabler for maritime access in the region. We used a previously developed geographic information system (GIS)—based model called the Arctic Transit Accessibility Model, which uses estimates of surface maritime accessibility based on projected sea ice distribution and thickness—as well as assumptions about vessel ice class—to assess the implications of a changing climate on access to the maritime Arctic region. In the future, maritime access will increase only during the summers, and the Arctic will remain a seasonally accessible area for all practical purposes. Nevertheless, even increasing seasonal access has important implications for Russia, which, for centuries, has been able to rely on thick, persistent sea ice to create a physical barrier along its northern shoreline. This barrier is diminishing, leading Russia to reconsider how to control its vast northern border for strategic and economic purposes. One instance in which Arctic cooperation could be threatened is if continued intense seasonal access changes draw substantial foreign presence along and around the Northern Sea Route. Russian ambitions to control this seaway have been widely documented and publicized. Not only would foreign presence fuel Russian concerns over sovereignty and potential attacks on its strategic and economic assets, more activity in general could lead to an increased risk of sparking unintended conflicts.

**Global interest in Arctic exploitation that drives competition for resources:** Better prospects for access to the Arctic have raised questions about whether “resource wars” might occur with the growth of international interest in exploiting the Arctic. Resources are a key factor shaping Russia’s Arctic policy. Over the long term, Russia appears keen to develop its Arctic territory and increase its ability to bring resources, particularly hydrocarbons, to global markets. Potential for high global energy prices, along with the development of the necessary infrastructure and access to extraction technologies, will be instrumental in determining the magnitude of impact from this factor.
However, Russia is unlikely to discontinue cooperation with other Arctic states solely due to angst over resources. Russia’s oil, natural gas, minerals, fish stocks, and other resources are not under any major threat. In addition, destabilizing the region could limit Russia’s potential for benefiting from them. Other than the upcoming CLCS decision (which will be discussed next), there are no major territorial disputes between Russia and its Arctic neighbors in which there might be substantial resources at stake. No non-Arctic states appear poised to clash with Russia over resource control. Further, the difficulty of resource exploitation in this harsh, remote region alone is sufficient to severely hinder economic profitability in many cases, let alone if a conflict were to put at risk personnel, ships, and infrastructure needed to support these activities.

**Upcoming recommendations by the CLCS regarding the claims that Russia, Denmark, and Canada have submitted or will submit:** The upcoming decisions by the CLCS on the claims set forward by several Arctic states regarding the limits of their continental shelf could upset the current order, should those decisions not support Russia’s claims. In this scenario, Russia might choose to resubmit a claim with additional scientific evidence. In addition, or instead, Russia might interdict Danish and Canadian exploratory teams in the contested areas. This could have serious security implications because Denmark and Canada are NATO members. However, there is no concrete indication that the Alliance would intervene in this case.

Alternatively, Russia might receive a positive decision from the CLCS but then overreach by interdicting or limiting the transit of international vessels over its continental shelf. Russia appears unlikely to make such a move, however, because contesting a decision based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) might open a “Pandora’s box” whereby other decisions, some of them to Russia’s advantage, could be contested by third parties. UNCLOS also ensures that most of the Arctic seabed can only be claimed by Arctic coastal states—a rule that Russia has no interest in undermining.

**NATO presence in the Arctic region that Russia might perceive as a military threat warranting a response in kind:** Russia could perceive itself as being under military threat in the Arctic if NATO decides to extend its presence in the region. One way this could happen is through heavier NATO involvement in the Arctic—whether through increased military presence of NATO members, or through a higher involvement of the Alliance as an organization in the region. NATO has an interest because five of its member states are Arctic nations, and Russia has denounced Alliance presence in its near abroad. Another plausible scenario is if Sweden and Finland choose to join NATO, which could trigger Russian response due to fear of encirclement. Russia has already warned that it would react negatively to such a decision by its Nordic neighbors. Domestic politics may play a critical role in how Russia reacts. While there is little evidence that shifts in public opinion have shaped
Russian President Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy so far, the Arctic is an important domestic issue in Russia before it is an international or diplomatic issue, suggesting that Russia’s Arctic interests could be used as a nationalistic stake to shore up domestic support, particularly in times of political and economic difficulties.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Our first two research questions focus on the factors that have maintained the Arctic as an area of cooperation and the ability to sustain such cooperation in the face of dramatic changes that will likely take place in the Arctic. Our analysis produced five key findings.

1. **Russia’s current militarization of its Arctic region does not, in itself, suggest increased potential for conflict, with the exception of accidental escalation.** Russia is still a long way from reestablishing Cold War levels of military presence in the Arctic, and is unlikely to use Arctic-based assets effectively in other, more likely, contingencies—for instance, in the Baltics.

2. **Russia’s cooperative stance in the Arctic cannot be taken for granted.** Future behavior cannot be confidently anticipated on the basis of historical patterns, although the number of mechanisms (e.g., agreements, diplomatic organizations) through which Russia cooperates on Arctic affairs could make it difficult to abandon this stance in rapid fashion. Destabilizing the region would also limit Russia’s potential to benefit from its Arctic resources, which its national priorities clearly indicate it wishes to do. Yet even economic factors will not necessarily steer Russia toward cooperation in the future, particularly if its ambitions for enhancing its energy sector through northern oil and gas reserves grow increasingly out of reach.

3. **Projected declines in sea ice suggest Russia will likely continue to militarize the Arctic, if only to protect its strategic assets and infrastructure in the region.** Russia’s northern shore will be more exposed, increasing its perceived vulnerability to potential attacks. Increased maritime access overall will reduce Russia’s ability to control Arctic shipping lanes or block them in the event of a conflict.

4. **While Russia has mostly benefited from UNCLOS decisions in the past, there would be nothing to stop it from ignoring or distorting UNCLOS recommendations if it judged such recommendations contrary to its interests.** It is worth noting that the UNCLOS decision itself bears little risk of conflict, at least in the short term. The rights it would recognize would not lead to actual resource exploitation for years, possibly decades.

5. **Russia would likely feel threatened by an expansion of NATO’s role in the Arctic.** The Kremlin has shown consistent hostility to increased support for NATO in Sweden and Finland, and to a larger NATO influence in the region,
suggesting that keeping NATO at bay is a solid, and permanent, tenet of its Arctic policy.

Our third research question focuses on U.S. policy options that could help mitigate the effects of the factors outlined above and contain tensions. The fact that Russia’s behavior in the Arctic could change from cooperative to conflictual and is difficult to foresee warrants close attention to the region on the part of the United States. As indicated in the 2013 U.S. Arctic Strategy (which includes “Enhance Arctic Domain Awareness” as an element of its first line of effort), monitoring of the region may require encouraging improvements in Arctic region domain awareness and access, through continuing and (as necessary) expanding funding for:

• mapping (including of underwater topography)
• vessels and aircraft that can operate in Arctic conditions
• maintaining existing infrastructure and assets
• development of multipurpose ports and airstrips that can facilitate access
• enhancing communications systems to promote a safe operating environment and help avoid unintended conflict
• further allocating intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets that can help increase the transparency of foreign Arctic activities to help prevent misunderstandings that can lead to conflict.

Unpredictability also suggests that special care should be taken to avoid accidental escalation of small-scale incidents. This can be done through supporting activities that bring the United States and Russia together on Arctic issues—for instance, through institutions (such as the Arctic Council, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and the International Maritime Organization), joint activities (such as safety and environmental exercises, collaborative scientific research) and information sharing (for instance, data related to commercial shipping traffic). It could also be done by reducing Department of Defense barriers to participating in international Arctic activities that involve Russia when the focus is military support to civil authorities (such as search-and-rescue exercises). Another option would be to create a forum dedicated to security issues beyond the existing meetings of the Arctic Chiefs of Defense Staff.

Russia’s increased vulnerability on its northern shore and sensitivity to an increased NATO presence in the Arctic region writ large also suggests that even limited incursions of the Alliance for such activities as routine exercises have the potential to fuel tensions when seen against the background of stronger support for NATO on the part of Sweden and Finland. While this does not mean that NATO should in any way halt its activities in the region, it suggests the necessity of striking a balance between ensuring that NATO has some capability and experience to support Arctic
operations without establishing a presence of the Alliance in the region that would create tensions between Arctic nations, and particularly with Russia. This includes supporting measures designed to strengthen NATO’s ability to conduct operations in cold-weather conditions and pursue efforts started at the 2014 Wales Summit and confirmed at the 2016 Warsaw Summit to adapt to the new threat environment.

Finally, the United States would be in a better position to pressure Russia to abide by its commitment to UNCLOS if it were a UNCLOS signatory itself—a step that is mentioned in the U.S. Arctic Strategy as an element of the third line of U.S. effort in the Arctic.

While there are substantial barriers to fully addressing these policy implications because of political, budgetary, and other challenges, failing to prepare for these transformations might have serious implications for some key priorities of the United States, such as promoting freedom of navigation, ensuring the safety and environmental security of U.S. citizens living in the Arctic, and maintaining domain awareness in a region that could become both increasingly militarized and economically significant.

“Russia’s Strategy in the Arctic,” Jørgen Staun, Royal Danish Defence College, March 2015 [47]  https://pure.fak.dk/files/7120599/Russias_Strategy_in_the_Arctic.pdf

Summary:

Russia’s strategy in the Arctic is dominated by two overriding discourses – and foreign policy directions – which at first glance may look like opposites. On the one hand, an IR realism/geopolitical discourse that often has a clear patriotic character, dealing with “exploring”, “winning” or “conquering” the Arctic and putting power, including military power, behind the national interests in the area – which is why we, in recent years, have seen an increasing military build-up, also in the Russian Arctic. Opposed to this is an IR liberalism, international law-inspired and modernization-focused discourse, which is characterized by words such as “negotiation”, “cooperation” and “joint ventures” and which has as an axiom that the companies and countries operating in the Arctic all benefit the most if they cooperate peacefully. So far, the IR liberalism discourse has been dominating Russian policy in the Arctic. Thus, it has primarily been the Russian Foreign Ministry and, above all, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that have drawn the overall lines of the Arctic policy, well aided by the Transport Ministry and the Energy Ministry. On the other side are the Russian national Security Council led by Nikolai Patrushev and the Russian Defence Ministry headed by Sergey Shoygu, which both have embedded their visions of Russia and the Arctic in the IR realism/geopolitical discourse. Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, does the same. Nevertheless, he has primarily chosen to let the Foreign Ministry set the line for the chosen Russian Arctic policy, presumably out of a pragmatic acknowledgement of the means that have, so far, served the Russian interests best. Moreover, it is worth noting that both wings, even though they can
disagree about the means, in fact are more or less in agreement about the overall goal of Russia’s Arctic policy: namely, to utilize the expected wealth of oil and natural gas resources in the underground to ensure the continuation of the restoration of Russia’s position as a great power when the capacity of the energy fields in Siberia slowly diminishes – which the Russian Energy Ministry expects to happen sometime between 2015 and 2030. In addition to that, Russia sees – as the polar ice slowly melts – great potential for opening an ice-free northern sea route between Europe and Asia across the Russian Arctic, with the hope that the international shipping industry can see the common sense of saving up to nearly 4,000 nautical miles on a voyage from Ulsan, Korea, to Rotterdam, Holland, so Russia can earn money by servicing the ships and issuing permissions for passage through what Russia regards as Russian territorial water.

The question is whether Russia will be able to realize its ambitious goals. First, the Russian state energy companies Gazprom and Rosneft lack the technology, know-how and experience to extract oil and gas under the exceedingly difficult environment in the Arctic, where the most significant deposits are believed to be in very deep water in areas that are very difficult to access due to bad weather conditions. The Western sanctions mean that the Russian energy companies cannot, as planned, obtain this technology and know-how via the already entered-into partnerships with Western energy companies. The sanctions limit loan opportunities in Western banks, which hit the profitability of the most cost-heavy projects in the Arctic. However, what hits hardest are the low oil prices – at present around 50 dollars per barrel (Brent). According to a study by Marlene Laruelle, which draws upon figures from the International Energy Agency (IEA), the majority of the deposits in the Arctic are not profitable as long as the oil price is under 120 dollars per barrel. Whether Russia chooses to suspend the projects until the energy prices rise again – and until it has again entered into partnerships that can deliver the desired technology and know-how – or whether the Russian state will continuously pump money into the projects is uncertain. The hard-pressed Russian economy, with the prospects of recession, increasing inflation, increasing flight of capital, rising interest rates and a continuously low oil price, provides a market economic incentive for suspending the projects until further notice. Whether the Kremlin will think in a market economic way or a long-term strategic way is uncertain – but, historically, there has been a penchant for the latter.

One of the Kremlin’s hopes is that Chinese-Russian cooperation can take over where the Western-Russian cooperation has shut down. Russia has long wanted to diversify its energy markets to reduce its dependence on sales to Europe. At the same time, those in the Kremlin have had a deeply-rooted fear of ending up as a "resource appendix" to the onrushing Chinese economy, which so far has been a strong contributing reason for keeping the Russian-Chinese overtures in check. The question now is whether the Western sanctions can be the catalyst that can make
Russia overcome this fear and thus, in the long term, support the efforts to enter into a real, strategic partnership with China.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

As global warming increases and the polar ice quickly melts, the Arctic region’s strategic importance grows. The polar areas become progressively more accessible for the utilization of the expected wealth of natural resources in the underground, and, furthermore, the hope is that they, in the longer term, can function as the transit route for the global ship traffic between Europe and Asia. These circumstances have, in recent years, resulted in renewed political and economic interest in the Arctic, not least from the countries that have coastlines in the area: the USA, Canada, Norway, Denmark (Greenland) and Russia. The interest in this anticipated Arctic bonanza has been so great that, in the eyes of some observers, it resembles the recipe for a new “great game” between the great powers. As one of the most concerned observers, the neorealist Scott Borgerson, expressed it in a 2008 article in Foreign Affairs, there is a risk that the increasing competition between the Arctic coastal states will cause the region to become the stage for “armed brinkmanship.” Borgerson considers the situation to be “especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes.” Thus, Borgerson’s concern reflects an underlying fear that IR realism’s version of international politics with anarchy and balance of power as the foremost dynamics could come to dominate in the Arctic instead of a more IR liberalism-inspired, institutionalized and regulated division of sea territory, in which the states moderate their claims and conduct in relation to the other states’ claims and conduct, the international community’s rules and an expectation of achieving a greater absolute benefit by operating in a rule-bound universe. Fortunately, the worry of Borgerson and others has, so far, not materialized. Instead of balance of power and anarchy, the process with regard to the division of the Arctic region into bits of national territory has, so far, been quite peaceful and well-regulated. Despite the increased political rhetoric, Russia has also stayed on the UN track, even though Russia is the only one of the Arctic coastal states having a real military presence and experience with operations in the Arctic. But why do Russian decision-makers speak about the Arctic in strong patriotic terms such as “explore”, “winning” and “conquering” when they nevertheless follow a policy that is regulated by UN rules? What does this duality in Russian politics, which is seen not only with regard to the Arctic, but also in other policy areas, for example the relation to the West, reflect? Another question increasingly posed by commentators and researchers is whether the worsening relations between Russia and the West, as a consequence of the war in Ukraine and Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, run the risk of having a spillover effect on development in the Arctic.
In this report, I try to answer the following questions: What is Russia’s objective in the Arctic, and what does the Russian Arctic strategy comprise? And does Russia have the means to reach the set objectives? In my attempt to answer these questions, I shall analyze the Russian official and written strategies relevant to the Arctic as well as political statements from relevant persons in the Russian foreign policy establishment and look at what has been done so far. But since the Arctic policy is not formulated in a political vacuum, but is affected by what the foreign policy establishment’s conception of what Russia generally is, wants to be and will be in the world, I shall first go through the main features of what I consider to be the predominant foreign policy school in Russia, the so-called great power normalizers – the group of Russian observers, politicians and practitioners who favor Russia’s return to being a normal great power in its own right. Furthermore, within this discussion, there is a discussion of who the essential players are with regard to Russian foreign and security policy, and how policy comes into being in today’s Russia.

Conclusion

Russia’s political debate about the Arctic is dominated by two overriding discourses, which, at first glance, look like opposites. Partly an IR realism/geopolitical inspired and patriotic discourse with certain elements of romantic nationalist rhetoric, which deals with “exploring”, “winning” and “conquering” the Arctic and shows a willingness to use power, including military power, to achieve its goals if necessary. Partly an IR liberalism, international law-inspired modernization discourse, in which the language is characterized by words such as “negotiation”, “cooperation” and “joint ventures”, and in which the assumption is that all states profit more by cooperating peacefully with each other in the Arctic. So far, the IR liberalism track has been dominant in Russian politics with regard to the Arctic. Thus, the Russian Foreign Ministry and, especially, Foreign Minister Lavrov have primarily drawn the overall lines in the Russian Arctic policy, supported by the Transport Ministry and the Energy Ministry. On the other side stand the national Security Council led by Patrushev and the Russian Defence Ministry led by Shoigu. Both have succeeded in securing and maintaining Putin’s interest in the Arctic, just as they, to a certain extent, speak about the Arctic in the same way as Putin, namely in IR realism/geopolitical terms. Nevertheless, the Russian Foreign Ministry has laid out the lines regarding the Arctic – presumably because of Putin’s pragmatic acknowledgement that the UN track is the most productive way to secure support for the Russian desires to obtain expanded underwater territory out to the 350 nautical mile limit. This is possible if CLCS, under the terms of UNCLOS, recognizes that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are extensions of the Siberian continental shelf, and if Russia is subsequently able to enter into bilateral agreements with the other Arctic coastal states that claim parts of the same territory – the USA, Canada and Denmark (Greenland) respectively. In that connection, it is worth noting that the claim Denmark submitted to CLCS in the middle of December 2014 to a great extent overlaps with the Russian claim. If the anticipated Russian claim is recognized by CLCS – the petition is
expected to be submitted in the spring of 2015 – Russia stands to gain an ocean territory of nearly 1.2 million square kilometers that can be added to the already vast Russian territory.

When Putin, who is the most important foreign policy actor in Russia, supports the IR liberalism course, even though he primarily sees and speaks about the world within the framework of an IR realism/geopolitical worldview, it is not, however, only because of a pragmatic acknowledgement of which means best serve the Russian goals. It is also because the two foreign policy wings in the Kremlin – of which Putin is the ultimate judge – despite their disagreement on the means, are quite in agreement about the objective: that the Arctic shall make the continuation of Russia’s restoration as an internationally-acknowledged great power possible.

Thus, Russia’s ambition in the Arctic is first and foremost of an economical nature. On the one hand, there is a desire to develop the enormous natural resources expected to be found in the region – especially oil and gas. The development of the natural resources has thus enjoyed first priority since they shall guarantee Russia’s future position as an energy superpower when the capacity in the existing oil and gas fields in Siberia diminishes – which the Energy Ministry anticipates will occur at some point between 2015 and 2030. On the other hand, Russian see great potential in opening an ice-free northern sea route between Europe and Asia across the Russian Arctic, with the hope that the international shipping industry can see the common sense in saving up to nearly 4,000 nautical miles on a voyage from Ulsan, Korea, to Rotterdam, Holland, so that Russia can make money servicing the ships and permitting passages through what Russia considers Russian territorial waters.

Although, at first glance, it can appear to be very contradictory that Russia’s foreign policy elite, including, not least, Putin himself, on the one hand speak of the Arctic policy in IR realism/geopolitical, even occasionally strong patriotic terms, but on the other hand choose to follow an IR liberalism course in their foreign policy, it is anything but contradictory. Behind it, namely, lies a realistic balancing of which foreign policy tools best secure the Russian interests in which situations.

The question is, then, whether Russia has the ability to develop the wealth of resources that the Arctic reportedly conceals. The two large state energy conglomerates, Gazprom and Rosneft, which are the only ones that have the right to extract oil and gas in the Arctic, lack the technological capacity, know-how and experience to extract oil and gas under the extraordinarily difficult conditions in the Arctic, where the most important deposits are expected to be found offshore in very deep water. According to plan, the procurement of this technology and experience should be achieved through the previously entered into partnerships with Western energy companies. Partnerships, which – at the moment – have fallen victim to the Western sanctions imposed on Russia because of the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine. The sanctions’ tightening of the borrowing opportunities in Western banks also hits the cost-heavy projects in the Arctic, as it reduces the profitability of
the projects. Most important with regard to the profitability, however, are the falling prices of oil and – at the time of this writing (the beginning of January 2015), the oil price is below 50 dollars per barrel. In this report, there is reference to an estimate based on information from the International Energy Agency (IEA), which says that most of the Arctic fields are not profitable if the world market price of oil is below 120 dollars per barrel. The projects in the Arctic are not only expensive, they are also very long-term, and therefore the profitability is not likely to be re-established until the energy prices increase again. Whether Gazprom and Rosneft choose to suspend the projects in the Arctic in the meantime – where it is, after all, difficult to make headway because of the lack of technology and know-how – or whether the Russian state will pump additional sums into the companies, is uncertain.

One of the Kremlin’s hopes is that the increased Russian-Chinese cooperation take over where the Russian-Western cooperation slows down. There has long been a strong Russian desire to find new markets for Russian energy and thereby partly disengage from the dependence on mainly selling to Europe, especially when it pertains to gas. The question is whether the Western sanctions can be instrumental in overcoming the deeply-rooted Russian fear of ending up as a “resource appendix” to the onrushing Chinese economy, which, so far, has been a strong contributing reason for keeping the Russia-Chinese rapprochement in check. One of the foremost Russian foreign policy goals is to restrain the West’s, especially the USA’s, influence and promote a multipolar world order, with Russia as one of the poles. In this connection, Russia has long sought support from the Chinese, who also would like to weaken the American unipolarity. The question is whether China, in the long-term, is interested in a multipolar world order or prefers a bipolar world order in which the Chinese and the Americans can set the agenda, which the rest of the world, including Russia, then must follow. This circumstance also contributes to the Russian ambivalence.

The plans to open an ice-free navigation route in the Arctic Ocean are hampered due the lack of ice-breakers. For even though Russia has some of the world’s strongest nuclear-powered ice-breakers, the majority of them will be decommissioned in 2020 due to age, and, at present, Russia only has six nuclear-powered and nine diesel-powered ice-breakers on the drawing board to keep the sailing routes open and service the ports, rivers and drilling platforms, etc. in the enormous area. Whether the Russian shipyard industry can deliver these ice-breakers is, however, difficult to predict – but its previous inability to deliver the agreed orders on time and on budget is not promising. Russia’s ambitions are also hampered because most of the Northern Fleet’s ships are not designed to ice-class standard, which limits their ability to operate in the Arctic waters. In addition to that, the Russian ambitions are hampered due to the fact that a stretch of approximately 2,500 kilometers has not been monitored by radar since the fall of the Soviet Union, and because the plans to deploy a group of MiG-31 interceptor planes to do, amongst other things, the monitoring duty were reversed in November 2012 when
Shoygu replaced Anatoly Serdyukov as Defence Minister. Shoygu has promised, though, that the radars will be operational again before the end of 2014. Whether that is the case or not, is not known at the time of writing. All in all, one can say that Russia’s capacity for patrolling and monitoring – not to mention conducting rescues – in the Arctic is limited in relation to the region’s enormous size. Thus, the question is whether Russia can, in reality, carry out its ambitious goals for the Arctic region.

With regard to the Russian goal of ensuring a robust military presence in the Arctic, there are a number of unknown factors when assessing the effects of the highly-publicized Russian rearmament program from 2011, which involves an injection of 22 trillion roubles (730 billion dollars [2011 rate]) for the purchase of new military equipment for the Russian defence until 2020. Whether the Russian military capabilities in the Arctic, comparatively seen, are increased in relation to the USA’s and the Arctic NATO countries’ capabilities in the Arctic in the course of a five-to-ten-year period depend on whether:

• Russia maintains the rearmament program in its full form in spite of the prospects of recession, growing capital flight, increasing inflation, increasing interest rates, an oil price around 50 dollars per barrel (when the state budget had counted on 105 dollars per barrel to be able to balance148) and a rouble rate that, in the period June 2014 to the end of December 2014, fell nearly 50 percent (but regained some of the loss over the New Year).

• The Russian defence industry is able to deliver according to the plans in the rearmament program, which the industry’s previous track record does not indicate.

• The delivered equipment lives up to or is better than NATO standard in regard to technological level, utility and quality.

• USA and NATO maintain their defense budgets at the current level or adjust them downwards, and the distribution of resources within NATO countries does not prioritize the Arctic regions at the expense of other places in the world.

• Sweden and Finland do not increase their rapprochement towards NATO, which could have strategic consequences for the Northern Fleet’s bases in Murmansk, etc.

If the points above are realized, it will, seen in isolation, further change the balance of power in the region to the advantage of Russia, which, at present, is considered to be the strongest military power in the Arctic.

The question is, however, whether this will have any real effect with regard to Russia’s ability to fulfil the Russian foreign policy goals when it concerns the Arctic. Partly because the policy carried out is based on the UN’s institutions and negotiations, not least with regard to the other Arctic states, which Russia must reach agreement with if the Russian territorial claims in the Arctic shall be met and
recognized by the international community after the CLCS has come up with its assessment. Partly because the foremost foreign policy goal for the Arctic is to transform the Russian territory into a strategic resource base that can promote Russia’s economic development. Thus, so far, Russia’s policy in the Arctic is not based on military robustness and power. At the same time, the geographic circumstances and the enormous distances in the Arctic make military presence less important from a regional perspective. One of the conditions that goes against a future “armed brinkmanship” in the Arctic, as some IR realists fear, is thus the difficulty of sustaining a real, robust, permanent presence and sovereignty enforcement in the region without requiring a great amount of resources to do it.

Thus, one can argue that the Russian arms build-up in the Arctic primarily has two foreign policy objectives: 1) It is a part of the overall balancing of the USA and NATO with the objective of ensuring a robust repulsion force on the northern flank. Russia will simply no longer accept the current situation with an open northern flank. Thus, the Arctic strategy’s wording about the buildup of the necessary fighting potential should be seen in the light of the overall balance of power with the USA and NATO rather than in the light of the regional Arctic needs, since the Russian Arctic north coast is, in military circles, seen as a possible invasion route for enemy forces. The regional Arctic security requirements thus deal primarily with being able to enforce sovereignty, including international law that could establish that Russia has control over its territory – but, in this connection, one really needs very little, as witnessed by the Danish-Greenlandic dogsled patrols of the kingdom’s borders. Secondly, Arctic security requirements are about rescue service and, to a lesser extent, about fighting terrorism. 2) The second objective with a build-up of fighting potential in the Arctic could be seen as a form of insurance policy, in case the decision from CLCS is unclear or go strongly against Russia’s wishes and require further collection of documentation, a new petition, etc. In this case, the reasoning in the Kremlin may be that a robust military presence in the Arctic can guarantee Russia’s interests until there is a final decision from CLCS. A robust military presence in the Arctic will, in an IR realism/geopolitical worldview, be further necessary, or at least advantageous, in connection with the bilateral negotiations with the other Arctic coastal states over the division of the territory, as this is considered as a possible enforcer of Russian interests.

This perhaps especially holds true in relation to Denmark (Greenland), which – in contrast to Norway – has not entered into an agreement with Russia concerning the delineation of frontiers. The Danish-Greenlandic claim, which was submitted to CLCS in mid-December 2014, goes from Greenland’s existing 200-mile territorial sea limit along the submerged Lomonosov ridge all the way over to the Russian 200-mile limit on the other side of the North Pole, thereby making great inroads into an area that Russia considers as its territory. The question is, then, whether the Danish-Greenlandic claim – if CLCS recognizes it – will be considered by Russia as legitimate, or whether it, during a continued confrontation between the West and
Russia, will be seen as a little-too-bold, maximalist claim that can be made the subject of a Russian foreign policy mobilization of patriotic circles and, thus, reactivate the IR realism/geopolitical discourse.

One argument that speaks for continued cooperation in the Arctic, including if the war in Ukraine drags on, is that the Arctic policy has traditionally been isolated from the ups and downs of the relationship between Russia and the West – precisely because all of the important actors in the Arctic actively work for such an isolation. Thus, cooperation in the Arctic has actually taken place in the past despite disagreements over the Russian-Georgian war and NATO’s missile defense plans. The question is, then, whether this will hold true in the long term, since the Arctic policy is also, in the long run, dependent upon how the relations between the great powers, especially Russia’s relation to the USA and the West, develop.

An additional unknown factor in connection with the Russian policy regarding the Arctic is the case that the circle of persons who has access to Putin and thus may influence the foreign policy decision-making processes, has apparently narrowed considerably, not least up to and after the war in Ukraine. This narrowing has clearly weakened the liberal-technocratic wing, isolated Putin from critical voices, and abandoned him to the advice from the siloviki wing. The question is whether that, in the somewhat longer term, could also have influence on the Arctic policy, or whether Putin – perhaps in the light of the growing economic crisis – will stick to the pragmatic choice of the IR liberalism course, which, so far, has served Russia so well in the Arctic.

“The Political Economy of Russia’s Reimagined Arctic,” George Soroka, Arctic Yearbook, 2016 [48]
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/George_Soroka/publication/311399359_The_Political_Economy_of_Russia’s_Reimagined_Arctic/links/5844394c08ae2d217566cc8e.pdf

Abstract:

This article examines Russia’s evolving approach to Arctic development in light of the Kremlin’s “Asian pivot” and the ongoing political rift between Russia and the West over the crisis in Ukraine. Specifically, I contend that the Arctic represents a key component of Moscow’s attempts to reorient geopolitically and economically after its annexation of Crimea, and that it is part of a larger, long-term plan to develop Siberia and the Russian Far East as both a resource base for the country and a transit route for goods moving between Asia and Europe. Consequently, this piece assesses the region’s political economy from the perspective of two interrelated Arctic projects—the construction of the Yamal LNG facility and government-led efforts to promote utilization of the Northern Sea Route.* Adopting a constructivist approach, I argue that Russia’s recent efforts to develop the Arctic are motivated not only by material incentives, but also involve a significant status-

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seeking component that draws on Russia’s view of itself as the preeminent Arctic power.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

The Arctic is staggeringly rich in natural resources, with an oft-cited 2008 United States Geological Survey report estimating that it harbors “undiscovered, technically recoverable” hydrocarbons equivalent to 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids, or approximately 22 percent of the globe’s unexploited reserves (Stauffer, 2008). This is in addition to sizable mineral deposits, which run the gamut from prosaic metals like lead and copper to more precious commodities such as gold, diamonds, and various rare-earth elements. Its biological resources are also impressive; for example, major cod and haddock stocks exist in the Barents Sea. As a result, with ice cover on northern waters shrinking precipitously over the last several decades and technological innovations making possible commercial activities unthinkable just a few years ago, it is becoming increasingly plausible to talk about the large-scale development of the Arctic. This holds true not only across extractive industries, but also in the shipping sector.

Russia, given its propitious geology, long history of Arctic engagement, and the sheer size of its northern territories, is particularly well-positioned to benefit from this confluence of events under favorable macroeconomic conditions. Even though the Russian Arctic is home to fewer than two million people (Ahlenius, 2008), the region already accounts for approximately one-fifth of the country’s GDP, and Moscow is eager to increase these numbers. Yet it has some catching up to do. For much of the 20th century the Arctic was a focal point for Soviet military and industrial activity, but the mounting fiscal pressures and competing political priorities that emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union’s dissolution caused Russia to pull back from the High North in the early 1990s. It was not until the 2000s that the Kremlin’s interest in the Arctic began to noticeably rekindle, fueled by a peculiar blend of resource nationalism and historically contingent ideas about the region’s role in defining Russia’s national identity and international standing.

Concerned with the present, this article examines Russia’s economic push northward in light of its estrangement from the West and Moscow’s attempts to rebalance geopolitical and trade relations toward the Pacific Rim. The argument advanced consists of two parts. First, I claim that material inducements are, by themselves, insufficient to explain the Kremlin’s approach to developing the Arctic, especially as President Vladimir Putin has indicated that he wants Russia to be acknowledged as a major power by the global community and believes an active Arctic presence will help achieve this recognition. Consequently, Moscow’s northern development strategy is mediated by a significant status-seeking imperative that not only complements economic incentives, but also aids in defining how these are understood and acted upon. Second, I claim that in the aftermath of the Ukraine
crisis the role the Arctic plays in Russia’s efforts to reorient toward Asia has been underappreciated. True, Moscow’s attention began turning northward well before its March 2014 annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of fighting in the Donbas region; already in 2008, then-president Dmitrii Medvedev, speaking before the Security Council, stated that he wanted to “convert the Arctic into Russia’s resource base for the 21st century” (2008). The Kremlin’s “Asian pivot” predates it as well, Putin having explicitly called for this two years prior (2012b). Nonetheless, the worsening of relations with the West that resulted from the confrontation over Ukraine has intensified the emphasis placed on both developing the Arctic and establishing closer ties with Asia, serving to increasingly conflate these objectives while simultaneously foregrounding their status-related dimensions.

In examining how the latter interact with material incentives, a tripartite distinction between motivations, processual policy “drivers” and “audience effects” provide a useful heuristic. At the top-most analytic level, Russia’s plans for developing the Arctic—which represent a critical component of what may be thought of as a wider “nesting doll” economic strategy for Siberia and the Russian Far East, as well as Eurasia more generally—are spurred on by pragmatic as well as status-oriented motivations. Moscow is today striving to position itself at the head of a vast Eurasian confederation, one whose claim to occupying a distinctive geographic space is predicated on its latitudinal intermediation between Asia and Europe. At the same time, the longitudinal penetration of Russia’s understanding of Eurasia is extending ever-further northward, propelled by economic pragmatism as well as resentment over how Russia has been treated in the international system.

However, while the economic allure of a warming Arctic is self-evident, the impetus for engaging in status-seeking behavior requires explanation. Nostalgia for the great-power standing Russia ceded when the bipolar world order that had characterized the latter half of the twentieth century crumbled has long been a prominent feature of its post-communist politics. Not only do surveys conducted over the last two-plus decades consistently show that a majority of the population regrets the Soviet Union’s demise, but they likewise reveal that many hold extremely negative opinions of the two men most identified with this outcome, Russia’s first democratically elected (and pro-Western) president, Boris Yeltsin, and the hapless last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. Consequently, striving to recover international prestige resonates with a domestic audience; while seeking after status is an avowedly elite-led phenomenon, it conspicuously taps into, and reinforces, mass demand. Putin, who once described the USSR’s collapse as the “greatest geopolitical catastrophe” of the twentieth century (2005), finds this an attractive appeal to make, in his speeches repeatedly invoking imagery of the West trying to “put Russia on her knees” or “chain the Russian bear.” As he emphasized in a February 2012 article penned while he was seeking re-election to a third presidential term, “Russia is accorded respect, and treated with consideration, only when she is strong and stands firmly on her feet” (2012b).
At a secondary level of analysis, there exist a number of policy drivers that serve as the mechanisms through which both material and status-related motivations are reified. They include economic, political, military, scientific and historical factors, all of which, to varying degrees, contain within themselves objective material and subjective perceptual components. Moreover, these are not discrete, self-contained units, but rather porous categories that interact dynamically. For example, developing an offshore hydrocarbon field is an economic endeavor, but it also generates military implications, such as the need to protect shipping lanes utilized by oil tankers and reinforce territorial claims.

Finally, who the intended audience is for these narratives and their associated behaviors matters (audience effects likewise do not exist just as outputs, but provide systemic feedback in ways that may affect drivers and even motivations). Emphasizing its Arctic identity for a domestic audience is certainly part of the appeal of increasing regional involvement, but Russia’s actions also concurrently function to send messages to neighboring states and other countries interested in the Arctic. However, not only does the content of these dual communication streams vary (as they are expected to perform differing functions), but dealing with this “lack of alignment” and the consequent “potential for counter-productive setbacks caused by inconsistencies between them” poses a significant political challenge (Gorenburg, 2014). Illustrating this, there is a tension between Moscow’s hardline domestic rhetoric concerning issues such as NATO’s holding of military exercises in the region and the multi-track diplomatic cooperation Russia continues to exhibit in its relations with other northern NATO-member states, both bilaterally and through organizations such as the Arctic Council.

This mode of argumentation is informed by the theoretical framework of social constructivism, an underlying premise of which is that intersubjectively constructed identities affect how national interests are defined (Ruggie, 2000: 14). The “social facts” that emerge from this process may “differ fundamentally from material facts, the reality that exists irrespective of collective beliefs about its existence,” but they do not lack causal power (Abdelal, Blyth & Parsons, 2005: n.p.). With regard to economics, this approach holds that the perception of material interests is not universal, but rather the product of specific contexts and actors, with ex-ante collective identities and beliefs “endowing the economies in which they are embedded with social purposes” (Abdelal, Blyth & Parsons, 2010: 9). It would therefore be a mistake to interpret what is happening in the Russian Arctic only through the prism of realpolitik and a rationalist, material ontology that overlooks the ability of social agency to create meaning. Factors other than objectively knowable, tangible facts may serve to accentuate or attenuate the attractiveness of various economic options, allowing, for example, fiscally sub-optimal projects to be pursued if they satisfy status-seeking demands. Exactly this tendency is today being evinced in Moscow’s economic vision for the Far North, where state-led development goals are not only determined by straightforward economic calculations, but also take into
account more subjective geopolitical motivations intended to buttress Russia’s international prestige and reinforce its self-concept of being a key global player.

**Conclusion**

Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper liked to remind audiences that “the first principle of Arctic sovereignty is use it or lose it” (cited in Austen, 2007). Russia has taken this admonition to heart, intent on asserting itself as the leading northern power. However, whether Russia will be able to achieve the full scope of its Arctic ambitions is still very much uncertain, as there exists a wide disconnect between Moscow’s sanguine pronouncements and the rate at which investment capital is flowing into the region. So, while likening the Kremlin’s Arctic development plans to a “Potemkin village” (Medvedev, 2016: 5) is overly pessimistic, the fact remains that bold statements about the region’s potential have thus far proven more bluster than prediction.

Indicative of this, in March 2016 Aleksandr Tsybul’skii, Russia’s Deputy Minister of Economic Development, stated that implementing Russia’s Arctic development goals through 2020 would cost 260.2 billion rubles (“Minekonomrazvitiia,” 2016), a modest increase from the 222 billion rubles Dmitrii Rogozin had previously cited for this same period (“Rogozin,” 2015). However, after a May 2016 Arctic Commission meeting, it was announced that 145 priority projects (no date was specified for their completion) would alone require investments totaling around 4.8 trillion rubles, of which about 3.75 trillion would have to come from off-budget sources (Pravitel’svo, 2016). Finally, on September 7, 2016, Alexei Uliukaev reported that some 150 Arctic projects would require investments totaling 5 trillion rubles by 2030 (Ofitsial’nye, 2016). Even this latter sum, however, may prove too low to build-out the comprehensive infrastructure required to achieve Moscow’s aggressive development targets. Nor can foreign investment or financing be counted on in the present geopolitical climate.

Western sanctions have hurt Russia not only by restricting the availability of external capital, but also by making it more difficult to access the expertise and equipment needed to tackle demanding Arctic projects. The need for foreign technology and services is especially acute for offshore drilling in the region, with one expert estimating that Russia will not be able to muster domestic equivalents before 2020-2025. Meanwhile, replacing the required equipment with Chinese or other third-party substitutes is risky (Panichkin, 2015). Collapsing hydrocarbon prices have only exacerbated the situation, making many long-planned ventures, like the development of the gargantuan Shtokman gas and condensate field in the Barents Sea, economically unfeasible. Lower energy prices, along with heightened political risk, have also reduced the NSR’s allure. China, meanwhile, has proven more reluctant to invest in Russian oil and gas ventures than homegrown proponents of the “Asian pivot” had initially anticipated, although it continues to actively explore the possibilities for Arctic shipping.
In conclusion, Russia’s growing Arctic presence is being propelled by a re-imagining of its commercial and strategic possibilities, a move that is predicated not only on the rise of the Asia-Pacific region and an ensuing recalibration of trade relations, but also Moscow’s estrangement from the West. This leaves the Kremlin balancing between the nationalistic appeal the Arctic holds for its domestic constituents and the critical skepticism with which many international observers have greeted Russia’s plans for regional development. While the reputational costs of failing to deliver on economic promises differ based on the audience in question, Moscow is currently unwilling to pay either price. As the Russian Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Sergei Donskoi, stated in May 2016, postponing regional development until macroeconomic conditions improve will not happen “under any circumstances” (cited in “Neft’ i gaz,” 2016). Plainly, the Kremlin does not want to lose its hard-won share of the global hydrocarbon market, but such categorical pronouncements also implicitly concede that status-related concerns have, at least temporarily, eclipsed objective material realities. This should not surprise us, as the Arctic represents a region where operating even under optimal conditions requires considerable technical competence and resources, rendering it a geographic canvas upon which states can project power and signal their rising international stature.

1. Military and Security:

“Russia’s Arctic Policy and the Northern Fleet Modernization,” Pavel Baev, Russia/NIS Center, August 2012 [49]

Summary:

The interplay of the foreign, domestic and military dimensions of Russia’s Arctic policy is characterized by peculiar incompatibilities. The position of power secured by the military superiority and ambitious modernization of strategic forces is supposed to grant Moscow strong influence and tangible advantages in the Arctic relations. In fact, military build-up generates suspicions among neighbors in the Arctic and has prompted them to urge NATO to pay more attention to the former “Northern flank”. The heavy concentration of naval units and military-industrial enterprises in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions is supposed to make them into a solid support base for the regime of president Vladimir Putin, while in reality problems with Armed Forces reform have produced discontent in the ranks and problems with financing the shipbuilding program lead to social tensions. The official talk about expanding Arctic cooperation and opening the Northern Sea Route is increasingly met with disbelief in North-Western Russia, where any protest acquires “strategic” importance due to high attention from the Nordic neighbors and implicit involvement of, or impact upon the Northern Fleet.

The plans for upgrading the strategic “muscle” are dubious and the military units in the Kola Peninsula, instead of performing the role of “security provider” and serving
as a reliable instrument of the federal center, are in fact a major source of political instability:

– The program for deploying a new generation of strategic submarines hangs on the final tests of the Bulava missile and requires a massive concentration of resources;

– The plans for deploying two Mistral-class amphibious assault ships (under construction in France) with the Pacific and Black Sea fleets show that the Northern Fleet is quite unsuitable for the role of the pivotal “blue water” Navy and its infrastructure for supporting major surface combatants is in decay;

– The politically-driven rush to construct submarines and mass-produce missiles increases the risk of technical failure and human error, including accidents involving nuclear weapons and reactors.

President Putin’s interest to the Arctic geopolitics has a pronounced military-security character and is underpinned by his deep involvement in the gas business, but it has also acquired an environmental agenda. His “pet project” is Russia’s claim over territory between the underwater Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges adding over a million sq km to Russia’s seabed; it can only succeed with consent of the Arctic neighbors, so Moscow demonstrates readiness to engage in advanced cooperation in the Arctic Council and to improve bilateral relations. The domestic political crisis will probably spoil Putin’s intentions to expand personal trust-based ties with the West; it could push him to confrontation and even self-isolation, which does not bode well for his Arctic policy.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Most of the goals officially defined in Russia’s Arctic strategy—such as developing new oil and gas fields, restoring the Northern Sea Route (SevMorPut), or protecting the fragile environment—are positively impossible to advance with military means. Yet, there is a distinct connection in Russia’s policy-making between the tasks of strengthening the mechanism of the Arctic Council and submitting a new claim for expanding the continental shelf, and the plans to increase its military might, above all the Northern Fleet. This connection came out inadvertently in Vladimir Putin’s answer to the question by the famous polar explorer Arthur Chilingarov about the plans for reviving the SevMorPut:

“Technically speaking, polar stations support the safety of this national route. Tomorrow, new naval submarines will arrive at Sevmash after completing factory tests and high-seas trial runs. We will also beef up our military bases there, and we will certainly increase national security in the north.”
Several characteristic features of Russia’s Arctic policy can be discerned in this quote and the preceding verbiage. Firstly, the economic interests are closely intertwined with issues of prestige, and the latter are strongly shaped by the traditional reliance on the military might. Secondly, it is the Northern Fleet, and first of all the nuclear-powered strategic submarines armed with ballistic missiles (SSBNs), that constitutes the central element of Russia’s military might in the Northern theatre and is expected to secure Russian interests, even those that have no relevance whatsoever for the submarine activity. Finally, it is obvious that Putin, who has started his controversial third presidential term, has a strong personal interest in the Arctic, which cannot be reduced to his well-known particular attention to the gas business and has a pronounced militaristic character, perhaps shaped by his unshakeable belief in the primacy of “hard power.”

Instead of perpetuating “stability,” Putin’s decision to take back the supreme authority—announced with great fanfare in September 2011—has triggered a profound political crisis in Russia, which has evolved since the March 2012 elections but is by no means resolved. Further development of this crisis will have massive and not easily assessable impact on every aspect of policy-making, including the implementation of ambitious plans for development of the Far North.

Conclusions

The interplay of foreign, domestic and military dimensions in Russia’s Arctic policy is characterized by very peculiar incompatibilities. The position of power secured by the military superiority and ambitious modernization of strategic forces is supposed to grant Moscow strong influence and tangible advantages in the Arctic. The heavy concentration of naval units and military-industrial enterprises in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions is supposed to make them into a solid support base for Putin’s regime. In fact, neither proposition comes true in real political life. Military build-up generates suspicions among the Arctic neighbors and prompts them to urge NATO to pay more attention to the former “Northern flank,” while technical risks associated with nuclear programs make Russia look positively backward. Problems with Armed Forces reform produce discontent in the ranks and above all in the officer corps, while problems with financing the shipbuilding program lead to social tensions. The possibility that protests among the workers and urban middle classes would find support in the Navy makes the Murmansk oblast one of the most politically dangerous “hot spots” and conjures the specter of the 1905 mutinies.

Putin may have petro-interests in the Arctic and some eco feelings about the region but he could not produce any meaningful responses to these challenges. In fact, his attention has drifted from the North towards the East, and one of the main initiatives for his new presidency is the creation of a new ministry and, possibly, a powerful state corporation for the development of Siberia and the Far East. There is, nevertheless, a promising avenue for advancing Russia’s interests in the North—and it leads toward greater cooperation with the Arctic neighbors. Medvedev made a
good start with the maritime border treaty with Norway, but Putin has shown little appetite for exploiting this breakthrough and distanced himself from this not very “patriotic” compromise. His own big project—expansion of Russia’s continental shelf to the North Pole—can only succeed, however, if a cooperative solution is found with Canada and Denmark and if the US does not raise objections, as it did in 2001. The domestic political crisis will probably spoil Putin’s intentions to expand personal trust-based ties and could push him to the track of tensions with the West and even self-isolation, which does not bode well for Arctic policy.


Summary:

• Russia’s military posture in the Arctic is informed by the changing geopolitical environment, and can no longer be considered in isolation from the country’s growing tensions with the West. In this sense, the period of ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ – in which, by convention, the region has been treated as a zone of depoliticized cooperation – is coming to an end.

• Certainly, the Russian Arctic is not exceptional for Moscow in military-operational terms. Russia’s leadership has accorded the same threat perception to the Arctic as it has to other theatres of operation. It seeks consistent control over foreign military activity in the Russian Arctic, and ensured access for Russian armed forces, particularly the Northern Fleet. Russia’s military build-up in the Russian Arctic and the Kremlin’s intentions are, at least for now, defensive in nature.

• Russia’s military build-up in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) primarily aims to ensure perimeter defense of the Kola Peninsula for the survivability of second-strike nuclear assets. Russia’s ‘Bastion’ defense concept consists of the projection of multi-layered sea denial and interdiction capabilities.

• Another Russian priority is to ensure the Northern Fleet’s access to, and passage along, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. This has hitherto been achieved through military infrastructure along the NSR. However, due to the receding ice, Moscow will seek to enforce ‘border control’ over a larger portion of its Arctic area in the future. The revamping of dual-use border control infrastructure and facilities is deemed a priority for safeguarding Russia’s vision of national security in the AZRF.

• Since the mid-2010s, Russia has deployed substantive force and capabilities along its northern border in the AZRF. Parts of the armed forces, such as the Arctic Brigade, are now Arctic-capable and have developed concepts of operations tailored
to that environment. The Northern Fleet has been repurposed with the Arctic environment in mind, and has been provided with Arctic-specific military technology and training.

- Russia acts as a status quo power and a reluctant rule-follower in the Arctic, partly because international law there plays in its favor, and partly because it is in Russia's interest to do so. Despite growing tension, cooperation between Russia and other Arctic nations is likely to endure.

- Russia's military leadership rules out starting a conflict in the Arctic, and would push any Arctic-based conflict towards sea lines of communication between the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. However, the risk exists of escalation and miscalculation around incidents at sea.

- In dealing with Russian ambition in the region, Western military and policy planners should seek to maintain the convention of treating the Arctic as a 'low tension' area. However, planners must also acknowledge the existence of pressing military security issues in the wider Arctic. A more inclusive debate and the establishment of a regulatory framework around military security in the Arctic would be useful. As Russia will chair the Arctic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum between 2021 and 2023, this is a window of opportunity to address military security in the region.

- Innovative efforts can be made to strengthen military security and domain awareness in the region, without militarizing the issue. This should start with the creation of a military code of conduct for the High North. This would send a powerful signal that cooperation should remain an absolute priority for all Arctic states, and that maintaining the region's 'low tension' status requires action, not just words.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Ever since Mikhail Gorbachev’s 'Murmansk speech' in 1987, in which he defined the Arctic as a 'zone of peace and cooperation', the region has been widely understood by coastal states to be an area of 'low tension'. In other words, it has been seen as a place where great-power politics between coastal states should be set aside and replaced with practical, depoliticized cooperation.

However, the Arctic is not insulated from global security challenges, especially those around the impacts of climate change. ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ is coming to an end. Despite its unique geography, the Arctic does not exist in isolation from the wider international context, or away from the pressures around the strained relations between Russia and the West.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin paid little attention to the Arctic. During the 1990s, the Russian Arctic was at best considered a burden fraught with socio-economic problems. Little was done there until an ‘Arctic revival’ began in the 2000s,
focused on reinvesting in a region that had previously been abandoned for more than 15 years. Russia has been described as a ‘confused Arctic superpower’, balancing cooperation and competition with other Arctic nations as part of its efforts to reassert its role as a great power.

Moscow’s intentions for the Arctic are not Arctic-specific, but are related to the Kremlin’s global ambitions for reviving Russia as a great power. Russia’s force posture in the Arctic is informed by the changing geopolitical environment around its strained relations with the West. This explains why growing tension with the West and the risk of miscalculation could lead to a more assertive Russian posture in the Arctic in the future.

What happens militarily in the Russian Arctic has little to do with the region itself. In that sense, the Russian Arctic is not exceptional for Moscow in military-operational terms. The leadership has accorded the same level of threat perception to the Arctic as it has to other theatres of operation regarding NATO and the West. For the Kremlin, the Arctic is fundamentally Russian – especially since the four other coastal nations are NATO members.

This paper focuses on Russia’s military posture, force structure and military intentions in the Russian Arctic. It seeks to demystify Moscow’s military build-up in the region: it explains that if Moscow is indeed militarizing the Russian Arctic, the military build-up and the Kremlin’s intentions are, at least for now, defensive in nature.

A further section deals with the implications of Russia’s Arctic military posture for NATO and its key partners in the region, Sweden and Finland, arguing that all of these actors should address the issue of Russia’s increased military presence now. The paper also presents policy-relevant recommendations for NATO and its partners regarding military security in the Arctic.

In terms of geography, the paper considers the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), from its territorial sea to the extended continental shelf. The analysis covers both the ‘High North’ (namely the European Arctic, where NATO and its Nordic partners are concerned with Russia’s presence) and the Pacific or ‘North American’ Arctic. The term ‘Arctic Eight’ refers to eight nations, consisting of a core of five ‘coastal’ states (Russia, the US, Canada, Denmark and Norway) plus three ‘non-coastal’ states (Iceland, Sweden and Finland) – the latter being states that are not bordering the Arctic Ocean.

**Conclusion**

It is no longer quiet on the Northern Front. Because climate change is not a linear process, annual variations in the extent of ice floes will be unpredictable, and this will have an impact on coastal states in unprecedented ways. The Arctic today will not
be the same as the Arctic that Russia and other coastal states will experience by the 2040s and 2050s, when the Arctic Ocean will be navigable.

It seems that the golden era of ‘low tension’ is slowly coming to an end: the Arctic is now a place of growing military security wariness, albeit with enduring scope for cooperation. It is time to puncture the myth of ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ and recognize that the region can no longer be insulated from the broader military security context.

It is yet to be determined whether Arctic nations will continue their cooperative course, or whether strategic competition will increase in the polar seas. Just as space conquest was a venting mechanism for great-power competition during the Cold War, the Arctic could very well become the arena for the new ‘Great Game’ of the 21st century.

Arctic matters will remain on the Russian policy agenda and will outlast the tenure of President Vladimir Putin. The nature of economic and military activities, however, will depend on how the Kremlin manages to turn political and symbolic rhetoric into economic dividends. In the future, this could push Moscow into altering, to an extent, its cooperative approach with other Arctic nations. This would have serious security implications. Although not a given, military build-up could very well become an escape strategy for the Kremlin, or even potentially an end in itself. The ‘militarization’ of the Russian Arctic, for now defensive in nature, would then have a more offensive contour in respect of NATO and its partners.

So far, Russia has been acting as a status quo power and a reluctant rule-follower in the Arctic, partly because international law plays in its favor, and partly because the Kremlin values a cooperative stance and it is in its interest to preserve the current arrangements. Despite growing tension, cooperation is likely to endure. For the West, working continuously with Russia, especially on military security affairs, will avoid transferring the current security tensions into the Arctic.

Russia will chair the Arctic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) between 2021 and 2023, taking over from Iceland. There might now be a window of opportunity to prepare the ground for a more inclusive debate around military security in the region. This would send a powerful signal that cooperation should remain an absolute priority for all Arctic states, and that maintaining the ‘low tension’ status takes action, not just words.

“Russian Military Activities in the Arctic: Myths & Realities,” Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshev, Arctic Yearbook, 2015 [51]
https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236381835.pdf#page=404

Overview:

The outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis has spurred new accusations of Russia as being an aggressive and militarist power not only in East Europe but also in the Arctic (in addition to the charges brought earlier with regard to the planting of the titanium flag
on the North Pole in 2007, resumption of naval and air patrols in the region and military modernization programs of the Russian conventional and nuclear forces deployed in the Far North. It was expected that in the wake of the crisis Moscow would dramatically increase its military activities and presence in the region as well as accelerate its military modernization programs. Some experts paid attention to the fact that Russia’s new maritime doctrine (July 2015) has identified the Arctic (along with the North Atlantic) as priority areas for the Russian navy.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

However, these alarmist expectations were not fulfilled. First of all, there was no substantial paradigmatic shift regarding the Kremlin’s vision of the military power’s role in the Arctic. As before, Moscow’s military strategies aimed at three major goals: first, to demonstrate and ascertain Russia’s sovereignty over the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), including the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf; second, to protect its economic interests in the High North; and third, to demonstrate that Russia retains its great power status and has world-class military capabilities. In a sense, Russian military strategies are comparable with those of other coastal states (especially the U.S. and Canadian ones).

Still, some impact of the Ukrainian crisis could be seen in the increasing number and scale of the Russian military exercises in the Arctic. For example, in March 2015 Putin ordered to inspect the Northern Fleet for combat readiness. Some 38,000 soldiers, 3,360 vehicles, 41 naval vessels, 15 submarines and 110 aircrafts were involved in the inspection. In August more than 1,000 soldiers, 14 aircraft and 34 special military units took part in drills on the Taymyr Peninsula (northern Siberia).

However, it should be noted that the March combat readiness inspection was a response to NATO’s preceding drill in Norway which involved 5,000 troops, the largest military exercise on the NATO northern flank since 1967. As for the August exercise, according to the Northern Fleet Commander Admiral Vladimir Korolev, this exercise was purely defensive as it was done more than 3,000 km away from the Norwegian border and directed to protect economic security of the AZRF (to prevent poaching, smuggling, illegal migration as well as to conduct search and rescue operations) rather than to plan any offensive moves.

So far, Russia has responded to NATO’s moves with more rhetoric than action in the Arctic, notes Andreas Østhagen, an Arctic policy expert with the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies. In contrast with the Baltic Sea region where the NATO-Russian tensions have obviously increased over the last year, “The situation in the High North is close to normal compared to the activity of the last years,” the head of the Norwegian Joint Command Headquarters, Lt. Gen. Morten Haga Lunde believes. “This is in spite of the tense situation that has evolved between Russia and NATO.”

According to official numbers from the Norwegian Joint Command Headquarters, there had been 43 scrambles and 69 identifications in international air space outside...
the coast of Norway in 2014. In 2013 there were 41 scrambles and 58 identifications, and in 2012 there were 41 scrambles and 71 identifications. The numbers are considerably lower than during the 1980s, when there could be as many as 500 to 600 identifications per year.

There was no dramatic increase in Russia’s naval and air patrolling of the North Atlantic and Arctic in 2014-2015. Moreover, after two catastrophes with the Tu-95 strategic bombers (Summer 2015) their flights were suspended for a while.

Russia’s military modernization programs in the Far North were implemented according to schedule. However, some Western military analysts tried to represent the deployment of the Pantsir S-1 shortrange air defense system on the Kola Peninsula, plans to replace S-300 long-range air defense system by a more advanced S-400 ‘Growler’ system, tactical training for fighter jet pilots in Arctic conditions, sea trials of nuclear submarines (most of which are designed for the deployment to the Pacific Fleet), plans to establish 16 deep-water ports, 10 search and rescue stations, 10 air defense radar stations, and 13 airfields along its Arctic periphery as an evidence of Russia’s growing military ambitions in the High North.

These experts tend to ignore that fact that the Soviet-time military machine has significantly degenerated in the 1990s and early 2000s and the Russian conventional and nuclear forces badly need modernization to effectively meet new challenges and threats.

To reorganize in a more efficient way the Russian land forces in the Western part of the AZRF there were plans to transform the motorized infantry and marine brigades located near Pechenga (Murmansk region) to the Arctic special force unit, with soldiers trained in a special program and equipped with modern personal equipment for military operations in the Arctic. The Arctic brigade should be operational by 2016. There were also plans to create another Arctic brigade somewhere in the Arkhangelusk region. All conventional forces in the AZRF should form an Arctic Group of Forces (AGF) to be led by the joint Arctic command (to be established in 2017).

However, the Ukrainian crisis has made adjustments to Russia’s military planning. While two Pechenga-based brigades were left in place, the Arctic brigade was surprisingly created ahead of schedule (in January 2015) and deployed in Alakurtti which is close to the Finnish-Russian border. Another surprise was that given an ‘increased NATO military threat’ in the North, President Putin has decided to accelerate the creation of a new strategic command ‘North’ which was established in December 2014 (three years ahead of the schedule). It was also announced that the second Arctic brigade will be formed in 2016 and will be stationed in the Yamal-Nenets autonomous district (east of the Ural Mountains in the Arctic Circle).

Another interesting structural change is an ongoing reorganization of the Russian Coast Guard (part of the Federal Security Service (FSS), successor of the KGB). Now the Coast Guard has a wide focus in the Arctic: in addition to the traditional
protection of biological resources in the Arctic Ocean, oil and gas installations and shipping along the Northern Sea Route are among the agency's new top priorities. For this purpose, the FSS has established two new border guard commands: one in Murmansk for the western AZRF regions, and one in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky for the eastern Arctic regions.

There are plans to equip the Coast Guard in the AZRF with the brand-new vessels of project 22100. The Okean-class ice-going patrol ship, the Polyarnaya Zvezda (Polar Star), is currently undergoing sea trials in the Baltic Sea. Vessels of this class can break up to 31.4-inch-thick ice. They have an endurance of 60 days and a range of 12,000 nautical miles at 20 knots. They are equipped with a Ka27 helicopter and can be supplied with Gorizont UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles).

The attention which Russia pays now to the Coast Guard is in line with what other coastal states do (especially Norway and Denmark).

To conclude, serious international experts do not see any particular alarming trends in Russia’s military behavior in the Arctic in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis. According to the former Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard and current U.S. State Department Special Representative to the Arctic, Admiral Robert J. Papp: “Everything we have seen them doing so far [i.e. Russia], is lawful, considered and deliberative. So, we’ll just continue monitoring it and not overreact to it.” Papp noted that all countries have a responsibility to be able to provide search and rescue capabilities and navigation assistance in the area and Russia seems to be investing in that.


Abstract:

As the only non-NATO littoral state in the Arctic, Russia’s policies have great relevance for the region’s security environment. A series of military deployments and announced upgrades to infrastructure and weapon systems since 2007 have led to speculations that Moscow seeks to remilitarize its Arctic sector in anticipation of a warmer climate in the region. Using strategy documents and policy pronouncements since 2008 as instruments of analysis, this paper considers Moscow’s security intentions in a climatically changing Arctic. The findings reveal that Russia is not on course to reconstitute its prior military strength in the Arctic and is generally disinclined to initiate an arms race. Instead of supporting a "Great Game" confrontation, Russia's military footprint in the Arctic is increasingly linked with the Kremlin’s controversial jurisdictional assertions.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
Since the record-breaking 2007 summer ice melt, two narratives have dominated analyses of Russia’s Arctic strategy. The first to take root was based on a zero-sum, confrontational approach, according to which Russia acts unilaterally to achieve its expansionist strategic interests. The theatrical planting of a Russian flag on the North Pole seabed and provocative bomber flights along NATO’s Arctic frontier in 2007 were two early data points for this pessimistic appraisal of Russian motives. The second narrative has developed more recently and argues that the Kremlin appreciates that its own interests are best served through bilateral and multilateral compromise. Evidence in support of this argument has been plentiful recently and includes the 2010 Russia-Norway maritime delineation agreement on the Barents Sea and the Arctic Council’s first binding treaties, on search-and-rescue in 2011 and oil-spill response in 2013.

Concurrent with these narratives are differing assessments of Russia’s military intentions in the Arctic. As climate change opens up a more accessible theater of operations in the Arctic for the world’s navies, littoral states are increasing the tempo of military maneuvers in the region. Russian activity is especially pronounced, out-pacing all other Arctic nations in terms of military forces operating in both the air and maritime realms. Some commentators have noted the risk of instability and the potential for an arms race between the four NATO rim states and Russia as a result of numerous interstate disputes, most of which involve lucrative economic opportunities such as fishing, energy extraction, and transportation. In 2010, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, US Admiral James Stavridis, cautioned that the struggle for Arctic resources could ignite a new “cold war” in the region. Other commentators have downplayed the threat of conflict and the risk of militarization by emphasizing that security enhancements since 2007 constitute logical and peaceful preparations for a more navigable Arctic.

The competing narratives have come about largely as a result of Russia’s erratic Arctic policies following the 2007 ice melt. Belligerent rhetoric by Putin and other Russian officials contrasted with conciliatory moves at the bilateral level and in the multilateral forum of the eight-member Arctic Council. To some extent, this pattern continues as evidenced by Vladimir Putin’s comments to the Russian Defense Ministry Board in February 2013 in which he accused the West of methodical attempts to alter the strategic balance and warned of a militarized Arctic. In spite of such rhetoric, in the past two years the Kremlin has issued a wealth of policy statements, investment decisions, and military commitments related to the Arctic, providing ample data to separate bluster from intent. Russia’s security intentions are no longer shrouded in secrecy or obscured in mix messages.

This article addresses the question of Russia’s military objectives in the Arctic in order to gauge not only the likelihood of a regional arms race but also to draw broader conclusions concerning the trajectory of Moscow’s security policy in the Arctic.
Conclusion

Russia’s preparations are ongoing and clearly have a military component. Even so, Russia is not prioritizing the Arctic in its defense planning. It appears more concerned with the legal ramifications of the changing Arctic environment than with grand strategic questions of nuclear deterrence and naval force parity in the region. Consequently, security measures in the Arctic will remain closely tied to supporting specific national interests as outlined in strategy documents, most notably control over surface traffic in Russia’s Arctic waters. The changing remit of the Northern Fleet is meant to augment efforts in other spheres, such as the modernization of maritime legislations and regulations, with the ultimate goal of establishing irreversible precedent of control in anticipation of greater Arctic surface traffic. This highly nuanced security machination has been overshadowed by the more spectacular, yet less strategically significant, acts of military bluster in the Arctic since 2007.

Russia’s course of action defies the competing narratives presented in the introduction of either an alarming return to Soviet-era Arctic militarization or a measured and rational response to climate change. Moscow’s designs are neither entirely benign nor entirely belligerent. While moderate improvements to naval capability are occurring, current developments do not amount to a reconstitution of anything approaching Soviet-era strength. Military spending in the Arctic has suffered and benefited from the same economic swings of boom and bust that has affected the readiness of the rest of Russia’s armed forces since 1991. Even with the altering deployment characteristic of the Arctic Ocean, there is no indication that this correlation will change or that Russia harbors malicious intent in the region.

At the same time, the Kremlin’s perception that the region falls within its sphere of influence remains at odds with Western perception. Subsequently, Russia’s cooperative attitude of late in the Arctic should not be extrapolated to all circumpolar disputes. When it comes to navigational rights, Russia’s interests are not aligned with those of most Western nations. The divide between the two sides will only widen as a result of climate change. If Western nations and NATO are counting on Russia’s obsession over its Arctic waters to fade away with the ice, they are likely to be disappointed.

“Russian Policy in the Arctic after the Ukraine Crisis,” Kristian Søby Kristensen and Casper Sakstrup, Centre for Military Studies University of Copenhagen, September 2016 [53]  https://cms.polsci.ku.dk/english/publications/russian-policy-in-the-arctic/Russian_Policy_in_the_Arctic_after_the_Ukraine_Crisis.pdf

Abstract:

How significant have the Ukraine crisis and the deteriorating relations between Russia and the West been for Russia’s policies in the Arctic since 2014? Is it possible to discern a change in Russian policy or can a case be made for continuity?
These are the essential issues examined in this report. Russia is an actor of central importance in the Arctic. Consequently, the development of Russia's policies in the Arctic is of paramount importance to the Danish Realm and the conditions governing Danish foreign and security policy. This report, therefore, sets out to analyze two aspects of Russian policy – the military and the diplomatic – before and after the Ukraine crisis, respectively. Firstly, the analysis indicates that a line of continuity rather than change prevails in Russian policy. Since 2008, Russia has consistently opted for a generally pragmatic and accommodating diplomatic course combined with a wide-ranging modernization and reinforcement of Russia’s military capabilities in the region. Secondly, the report interprets this political trajectory as a consequence of Russia’s core interest in the economic development of Russian Arctic territory. This core interest indicates that Russian policy is likely to focus on international stability and on the development of regional relations as long as they support Russian interests. Even so, other concerns – especially in terms of military strategy and symbolic politics – can potentially lead Russian policy in a different direction, risking increased instability in the Arctic. Further, Russia will, from time to time, carry out diplomatic and military actions that decrease her trustworthiness, stepping up conflict dynamics and potentially contributing to undermine Russia’s own key economic interest in maintaining regional stability. Thus, there are risks associated with the future development of Russia’s policy in the Arctic. Thirdly, therefore, the report discusses the challenges that Russia’s policy in the Arctic is likely to present to the Danish Realm. On this basis, the report concludes by outlining a number of priorities and principles that may be used as a starting point for developing specific initiatives with which Danish diplomacy can contribute to maintaining the Arctic as a stable geopolitical region characterized by relatively low tension.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

In 2015, approximately 100 paratroopers were air-landed by Russia on the ice near the North Pole. The air landing is just one example of a series of remarkable Russian actions in the Arctic, conceivably indicating a confrontational and potentially aggressive Russian policy. The landing exemplifies a consistent Russian line of symbolic politics in the Arctic. A line initiated in 2007 when the Russian Arctic explorer Chilingarov headed an expedition to the Arctic Ocean and an unmanned submarine planted a Russian flag at the bottom of the sea near the North Pole, triggering much international attention.

Hence Russia’s actions have contributed to focusing world attention on the Arctic, fueling the popular dystopian vision of the Arctic defined by geopolitical confrontation as well as by competition for, and disputes about, territory and natural resources. Moreover, such actions fill Russia’s Arctic neighbors and the rest of the world with apprehension and uncertainty about her intentions in the Arctic.
At the same time, Russia has taken an active and pragmatic part in establishing broad multilateral regional collaboration pivoting on the Arctic Council, as well as organizing practical bilateral collaboration in numerous areas. Russia has also ratified the Ilulissat Declaration from 2008 where the five Arctic coastal states jointly declare their actions to be subject to international law, which, in turn, will provide the framework for settling prospective territorial disputes.

Consequently, there is consensus among academics, observers, and practitioners that, despite Russia regularly acting in ways suggesting an aggressive political line and, despite Russia currently investing in military capability in the Arctic, the likely outcome is that overriding Russian economic interests and a central Russian desire for regional (economic) development will maintain Russian Arctic policy within a regulated Arctic order focusing on compromise, collaboration, and stability.

However, Russia’s actions in Ukraine in 2014 have caused serious rifts in general Russian-Western relations. In Ukraine, Russia has shown deployment of military force to be part of her foreign policy and, moreover, shown a willingness to break international law. Russia’s actions in Ukraine have clearly caused antagonism between Russia and the West on security policy, undermining Western confidence in Russia.

Since the Ukraine crisis, there has been substantial military activity in the Russian Arctic and Russia has carried out a series of military exercises, both minor operations, including air-landing paratroopers on ice floes near the North Pole as mentioned earlier, and large joint exercises deploying hundreds of aircraft, numerous ships, and thousands of troops. Further, a number of old Soviet bases have been reopened and new ones established, a new central unified Arctic strategic command has been set up, and designated Arctic brigades are in place.

Does all this activity signify a shift in Russia’s Arctic policy in line with the policy adopted for Ukraine? Will we be witnessing a definitively more aggressive and less collaborative Russia in the Arctic as a consequence of the Ukraine crisis? In other words, an Arctic spill-over effect where the Arctic region will increasingly reflect the general tension between Russia and the West? These questions have only been scantily clarified. Relatively few academic analyses of Russian security policy in the Arctic have been made and several of these are, for good reasons, primarily based on empirics prior to the Ukraine crisis. At the same time, Russia’s future policy in the Arctic is decisive for the Danish Realm. Intensified security policy and the possibility of military tension in the Arctic risk a serious downscaling of opportunities for economic and social development in the Arctic – including Greenland. Furthermore, an increasingly tense Arctic region risks placing Denmark in a distinct, perhaps even vulnerable, antagonistic position vis-à-vis Russia. Consequently, there are serious Danish interests at stake in relation to Russia’s policy in the Arctic. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to examine and interpret continuity and change in Russia’s Arctic policy after the Ukraine crisis and, on the basis of this, identify potential
consequences and opportunities for the Danish Realm with regard to future Arctic policy.

Aside from this introduction, the report is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is a presentation of a model for analyzing Russia’s policy in the Arctic and, by breaking the policy down into two dimensions – a diplomatic and a military – the report will construct four ideal-typical trajectories for Russian foreign policy. On the basis of this, chapter 2 will address Russia’s policy in the Arctic from 2007-2014 prior to the Ukraine crisis. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of Russia’s policy in the Arctic after the Ukraine crisis. This leads to an analysis in chapter 4 of the underlying intentions of the policy, its drivers, and a discussion of continuity, change, and risks in connection with Russia’s policy in the Arctic. Finally, chapter 5 identifies a number of principles and priorities to inspire the formulation of a policy on Russia in the Arctic for the Danish Realm.

The Military Dimension

Prior to the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis and the Russian annexation of Crimea, Putin announced that a decision had been made to reorganize Russian forces in the Arctic under a new command structure with an independent Arctic unit command, Northern Fleet – United Strategic Command, headquartered in Murmansk. This Command is responsible for the Arctic area with the Northern Fleet and a considerable number of smaller air and territorial units under its command. As is evident above, this is not a new idea, and the decision was, as planned, effectuated in December 2014. In connection with the establishment of the Arctic Command, the Russian Ministry of Defense made it known that the first of two Arctic brigades were expected to be set up some time in 2015, stationed close to the Finnish border in Alakurtti while the location of the other brigade had yet to be decided. This first Arctic Brigade, on the drawing board for several years as mentioned above, was finally established in January 2015, based on the 80th Motorized Rifle Brigade located close to the Finnish border. In 2015 and 2016, this unit trained deployment to various locations in the Russian Arctic. Russia is anticipated to establish a second dedicated Arctic brigade. It is likely to be based on units from the Kola Peninsula only a few kilometers from the Norwegian border.

The Russian Northern Fleet is Russia’s largest and most important naval unit, supporting Russia in Syria, among other things. Units from here were apparently also deployed in the Black Sea in connection with the conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, ships or units from the Northern Fleet are frequently used in Russian naval diplomacy. Russia’s only aircraft carrier, Admiral Kutznetsov, visited Syria in 2011 and acted as the flagship for a flotilla in 2012, in addition to visiting Egypt in 2012; in 2008, the missile cruiser Pjotr Velikij (Peter the Great) headed a naval deployment to Venezuela. These assignments are over and above the Fleet’s primary task of securing Russia’s sea-based nuclear strike forces.
Russia’s military modernization program also illustrates the importance of the Fleet. According to the Russian 2020 material investment plan, the investment of 4700 billion roubles is, among other things, anticipated to add 51 new surface vessels to the Northern Fleet. This sounds like an extensive military build-up, but existing ships are mostly dated, and it is anticipated that the majority will need replacing within 10–20 years. Some observers believe that between 40 and 70 per cent of the vessels in the Northern Fleet are not fully operational.

As already mentioned, the area around the Kola Peninsula is the basing- and staging area for the Northern Fleet as well as for a considerable number of Russian strategic nuclear submarines. A total of 81 per cent of Russia’s sea-based nuclear weaponry are now, according to estimates from 2014, assigned to submarines attached to the Northern Fleet. Further, the Russian Arctic is also an important test site for Russian nuclear and missile technology. This is the area where Russia is developing and testing new long-distance missiles and conducting training and exercises for nuclear forces. Moreover, the Northern Fleet is where the new – apparently fairly advanced – Borei-class submarines with new and similarly advanced intercontinental missiles of the Bulava type are first tested before being introduced to the Russian armed forces. The introduction of new strategic capacities and the training of Russian nuclear forces have continued in 2014-2015. The Russian bases near the Kola Peninsula, the Northern Fleet, and Russia’s strategic deterrence capacities are continuously being reinforced or optimized following the Ukraine crisis. Elsewhere in the Russian Arctic territory, military or paramilitary structures are also being extended or optimized.

In 2014, Russia opened two new bases to support the search and rescue capability of the coast guard. At the same time, two new regional border control units were established in the Arctic under the auspices of FSB in June 2015 while more vessels were added to the Russian coast guard. In addition to the bases already established, a program to extend or set up bases to support the increased presence of the coast guard in the Russian part of the Arctic is underway. According to Nikolaj Patrusjev, head of the National Security Council, these bases are intended for ‘dual use’ and may thus operate as support for the Russian Northern Fleet. FSB is already running a number of bases in remote parts of the Russian Arctic territory – in Franz Josef’s Land, for example, which is now being upgraded with e.g. new runways. Infrastructure for border guards is also being established elsewhere in the region to which more than 100 million € have been earmarked. According to Putin, this task should be given high priority by FSB. The increased focus on building infrastructure is complemented by larger and more complex exercises in which various Russian emergency and preparedness authorities participate – focusing on counter-terror operations.

Likewise, there have been extensive investments in infrastructure and establishment of bases on the military side. Conley and Rohloff note in their report that the Russian
military authorities plan to establish 13 runways, 10 rescue and search centers, 16 new deep-water ports, and 10 new radar installations on Russian territory. The objective of the Russian activities is by maintaining a presence, extending surveillance capability, and, finally, by setting up a logistical structure to enable rapid reaction and the deployment of civilian as well as military capacities throughout the vast Russian Arctic. Some of this work starts from a rather low level. For example, the aim is to set up continuous Russian radar coverage of the coastline – non-existent at present. Essential parts of this (re)structuring program, capable of supporting surveillance and ensuring a presence in the Russian Arctic were planned before the Ukraine crisis. The crisis does not appear to have led to a reduction in Russian infrastructural investments. For example, Russian authorities announced the establishment of a new drone base in the Arctic in the autumn of 2014 and Mr Bulgakov, vice defense minister, is quoted as saying that ten military airfields would be reopened in the Arctic region before the end of 2015 – seen in relation to the four existing airfields amounting to a significant expansion. In tandem with this, military air bases are opened – on Wrangel Island, for example, during the second half of the year. At the same time, several of these bases were equipped with various kinds of air defense systems.

Many of these investments have been announced – several times – prior to the Ukraine crisis. For example, the re-establishing of full radar coverage was already mentioned in the Arctic strategy from 2008 while the Russian secretary of defense in 2014 announced that there would be full radar coverage of the Arctic within a year. This could indicate that Russia is attempting to accelerate the construction of installations in the Arctic. However, it is difficult to obtain confirmation as to whether this is actually the case. The Russian Ministry of Defense has announced, however, that two new missile warning radars are being built to upgrade two existing ones.

The map below from the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) report The New Ice Curtain offers an idea of existing Russian bases in the Arctic, as well as bases being upgraded or constructed.

Figure: Russian bases in the Arctic:
The map shows that, if Russian plans are realized, we will see a marked upgrading of Russian surveillance and reaction capability within own territory. The map also shows select Russian military exercises after the Ukraine crisis.

All joint military exercises and other kinds of military collaboration between NATO member states and Russia were suspended on 1 April 2014 as a consequence of the Ukraine crisis. In the Arctic, this resulted in the recurrent Northern Eagle Exercise carried out jointly between Russia, the USA, and Norway, and the annual Pomor exercise carried out jointly by Russia and Norway being suspended in 2014 and 2015.

However, Russia has carried out a number of remarkably large-scale military exercises after the Ukraine crisis began. In September 2014, the largest military exercise since the fall of the Berlin Wall was carried out and designated Vostock 2014 and, according to the Kremlin, involving more than 150,000 troops, 600 aircraft, and 80 navy vessels in the Eastern Military District. In 2015, it was the turn of the Central Military District, where an exercise was carried out involving 95,000 troops, 170 aircraft, and 20 ships, according to the Russian Ministry of Defense. In 2016, it might conceivable be the ‘turn’ of the new United Strategic Command to carry out a large-scale exercise. We are likely, therefore, to see large-scale Arctic exercises involving all forces and combining paramilitary, conventional, and nuclear Russian forces in exercises where vast amounts of equipment and troops will, quickly and with short notice, be deployed to remote areas where they will train very conventional operations.
Russia’s Arctic capabilities are not exempt from exercise activities although they have not played a central part in the two large-scale exercises mentioned above. Officially as a counter-measure to the Norwegian-led Joint Viking exercise involving 5000 troops, the Russian Northern Fleet carried out a so-called ‘snap check’ exercise that, at very short notice, in March 2015 involved between 38,000 and 45,000 troops, 3360 vehicles, 41 naval vessels, 15 submarines, and 110 aircraft. The exercise was, among other things, training the deployment of infantry troops for Novaja Zemlja and Franz Josef’s Land. Shortly after this, the joint Scandinavian exercise Arctic Challenge involving 115 aircraft and 3600 troops with the NATO member states Norway, England, Germany, the USA, and the Netherlands together with the NATO partners Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland was held. Once again and, presumably in response to this exercise, Russia carried out an exercise designed to test the newly established Arctic brigade as well as the capability of the air force to deploy its units to Russia’s external borders. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, this exercise involved 12,000 troops and 250 aircraft and helicopters.

The Northern Fleet, too, has carried out a number of minor independent exercises during the summer of 2015, including deploying the newly established Arctic brigade to the Siberian archipelago. In the spring of 2014 and in 2015, Russia also demonstrated her capability to air-land around 100 paratroopers on ice floes in the inhospitable area near the North Pole.

Furthermore, the nuclear submarines in the Northern Fleet and their support vessels repeatedly carried out exercises in 2014, simulating massive nuclear retaliatory strikes and, in 2015, the Northern Fleet trained its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) submarines in operations below the Arctic ice sheet. All the while, Russian submarine activity is said to be on the increase in the northern Atlantic – not least in the, traditionally, strategically important waters between Greenland, Iceland, and Great Britain.

In overall terms, the period after the Ukraine crisis is characterized by a continued focus on evolving and extending Russian military capabilities in the Arctic. This includes the reorganization of units and staffs, specific military capacities, infrastructure, and logistics as well as exercises to boost preparedness in the Russian Arctic units. This could reasonably be interpreted as a continuous process of modernization or military build-up.

Still, the upgrading of Russian capability following the Ukraine crisis is still not vastly different from the long-term perspectives in place for developing Russia’s strategy in the Arctic in 2008, nor from announcements and initiatives during the period 2008-2014 as outlined earlier. It is even possible to view the developments as Russia lagging behind in terms of realizing the many plans and initiatives begun or announced prior to the crisis in Ukraine.
This does not alter the fact, however, that a substantial increase and upgrading of important elements of Russia’s capability in the Arctic has taken place. Additionally, a number of the many initiatives planned and started prior the crisis in Ukraine have actually been implemented, presumably resulting in upgraded capability. The reorganization of units and staffs, investment in new infrastructure, and increased readiness of Arctic units as illustrated by the large-scale exercises are an indication of this.

An overall look at diplomacy and the military shows a high level of continuity in Russia’s Arctic policy before and after the Ukraine crisis. The decisive shift takes place in 2007-2008 rather than in 2014. Continuity is especially noticeable in diplomacy where the pragmatic line of collaboration has been continuous, possibly even consolidated. As for the military, there is a greater element of uncertainty when attempting a lucid interpretation of developments. In one sense, many of the Russian units are old, run-down, and shortly to be phased out and the question remains open whether Russian reinvestments will be sufficient to replace units being phased out. In another sense, it would seem that the extensive Russian reforms have increased both mobility and preparedness in the military units – also in the Arctic. We do not, therefore, see any signs of reducing focus on Arctic military forces. On the contrary and measured on several parameters, Russian forces appear to be more capable and active than previously. The Russian pattern of exercises is especially indicative of this. The overall result, therefore, is one of slight arms build-up combined with an increase in diplomatic responsiveness. In the figure below, the white and the black crosses illustrate the situation before and after the Ukraine crisis, respectively.

Thus, Russia’s policy maintains its position in the top right-hand quarter where military build-up is combined with diplomatic pragmatism and responsiveness. We must conclude, therefore, that if there is any traceable development in Russian policy, it is one of consolidation. In diplomatic and military terms, there is a continuous development trending towards an increased military build-up and diplomatic pragmatism. However, one thing is outlining trends in Russia’s policy in the Arctic. Another is how this trend should be interpreted and explained. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

“Is Russia Going Hard or Soft in the Arctic?” Alexander Sergunin, Wilson Quarterly, 2017 [54]

Overview:
In contrast with the internationally widespread stereotype of Russia as a revisionist power in the Arctic, Moscow’s future actions in the region are more likely to be fairly pragmatic in nature.

Is Russia igniting a new arms race in the Far North or taking justifiable steps to defend its interests in a changing environment? The answer to that question depends greatly on whom you ask, where they are, and just how much they appreciate the range of issues that factor into Russia’s Arctic policy.

Current & Relevant Information:

In the West, some analysts believe that Russia, due to economic weakness and technological backwardness, tends to privilege coercive military instruments to protect its interests in the Far North. Western mass media and, to a lesser extent, politicians portray the modernization programs and changes in Russia’s military capabilities within its Arctic territories as a possibly game-changing buildup that increases the risk of conflict. They often trace the start of their concerns to 2007, when Moscow resumed naval and air patrols in the Arctic and North Atlantic regions and planted a flag under the North Pole, staking a major land claim. The Ukraine crisis has only fed Western skepticism of Russia’s true aims.

Moscow insists that its intentions, as articulated in the Arctic doctrines of 2008 and 2013, are inward focused or purely defensive, and aimed principally at the protection of the country’s legitimate interests. Primary among those interests, it says, is the development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), already a vital region for the national economy and one with great promise for further development in energy, mining, infrastructure, communications, and beyond. The Kremlin also maintains that it is not pursuing a revisionist policy, but rather wishes to resolve all disputes in the Arctic by peaceful means, relying on international law and organizations. Military strategists generally insist that the country must be prepared for contemporary and emerging security issues, no aggression implied.

Certain Russian actions and activities in the Arctic do support officials’ stated determination to stick to a soft-power approach, in a context of dialogue and diplomacy. At the same time, the cold, hard facts of increasing military assets in the Russian Arctic suggest that the government is making sure it is well prepared to flex its northern muscle. When the balance sheet is tallied, there are grounds to believe that Moscow will pursue fairly pragmatic and responsible policies in the region for the foreseeable future.

Between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the early 2000s, the Kremlin paid little attention to the North. The end of the Cold War meant that the region was no longer a zone of possible confrontation with NATO and the U.S. In the Yeltsin era, the economic potential of the region was underestimated, and Russia’s northern reaches were perceived by the federal government as a burdensome source of socio-economic problems. Almost abandoned by Moscow, these areas had to rely on
themselves (or foreign assistance) for survival. Things began to slowly change when the general socio-economic situation in Russia improved, and the Putin government, with its ambitious agenda of national revival, came to power.

The industrial base in the AZRF currently accounts for up to 20 percent of the entire Russian GDP – even if only about 1.6 percent of the country’s population lives there.

Today, Russia has enormous national interests in the Arctic region. The industrial base in the AZRF currently accounts for up to 20 percent of the entire Russian GDP – even if only about 1.6 percent of the country’s population lives there – and nearly a quarter of Russia’s export revenues. Fueling these figures is the fact that the region produces no less than 95 percent of the country’s gas and approximately 70 percent of its oil. Russian geologists have discovered some 200 oil and gas deposits and there are more than 20 large shelf deposits in the Barents and Kara Seas which are expected to be developed when prices rise. The AZRF’s mining industries yield 99 percent of Russia’s diamonds, 98 percent of its platinum, and the majority of other rare metals. Reduced ice coverage due to global warming will mean increasing access to these natural resources and correspondingly increasing significance for the AZRF. The Russian federal and regional governments, along with the private sector, have articulated plans to further develop the industries and infrastructure of the region, including hundreds of billions of dollars in Russian and foreign direct investment in energy, mining, transport, and communications.

Moreover, as the Arctic’s sea ice coverage continues to drop, Russia stands to earn considerable economic benefits from the development of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) – which, when navigable, is the shortest shipping route between European and East Asian ports. Important domestic routes connecting the full length of the country’s enormous northern border should also expand. Moscow believes that by improving NSR infrastructure and safety, the NSR will be attractive not only to Russian business, but also to foreign shipping companies. When the eagerly anticipated Yamal liquefied natural gas plant becomes operational next year, shipments to East Asian markets, and potentially to Europe and North America, will be facilitated. In a sign of more to come, the new Christophe de Margerie gas tanker made it through the NSR in August 2017, becoming the first ship of this type to do so without needing an icebreaker escort.

With this vast commercial potential as a backdrop, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced that two new Arctic coast defense divisions are to be established by 2018 as part of an effort to strengthen security along the NSR. One is likely to be stationed on the Kola Peninsula, in addition to existing military units there, while the other will be in the eastern Arctic. The new forces can cover anti-assault, anti-sabotage, and anti-aircraft defensive needs. Given the trend of increasing Arctic access, the government has also made strengthening the Border Guard Service a top priority for High North security. The Border Guard has been assigned to deal
with new soft security threats and challenges, such as the establishment of reliable border-control systems, the introduction of special visa regulations to certain regions, and the implementation of technological controls over fluvial zones and sites along the NSR. All in all, Moscow plans to build 20 border guard stations along its Arctic Ocean coastline.

On these fronts, the deployment of new assets and the expansion of security mandates in the Russian Arctic appear to be reasonable and practical steps to support Russia’s plans for developing the region.

Another change is the ongoing reorganization of the Russian Coast Guard, a part of the Border Guard Service, which now has a wide remit in the Arctic; in addition to the traditional protection of biological resources in the Arctic Ocean, oil and gas installations and shipping along the NSR are among the agency’s new priorities. The attention that Russia is now paying to the Coast Guard is in line with what other coastal states do, especially Norway and Denmark. Moreover, Russia actively partook in the creation of an Arctic Coast Guard Forum, which was established by the coastal states in November 2015.

On these fronts, the deployment of new assets and the expansion of security mandates in the Russian Arctic appear to be reasonable and practical steps to support Russia’s plans for developing the region.


Overview:

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to speak to you this morning as well as join with my fellow panelists to discuss the evolving nature of Russia’s growing military threat which geographically stretches from the Kola Peninsula in the Arctic to the Mediterranean coast of Syria.

Current & Relevant Information:

Russia is back as a geopolitically destabilizing state actor. After experiencing a period of relative peace and security in Europe over the past 25 years – and with the exception of the brutality of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s – the transatlantic community believed that these twenty-five years were the new, post-modern norm. Unfortunately, I believe we will come to view this post-Cold War period as an exceptional moment of security that has now passed. We have returned to balance of power politics where Russia – with increasing frequency – uses military means to achieve its political objectives. The transatlantic community’s response to Russia’s invasion of its neighbors – and indeed its first talking point – is to take the military option immediately off the table. The West then seeks to
establish a diplomatic course guaranteed to ensure the intractability of the very problem that Russia has created, eventually hoping to “reset” its troubled relationship and achieve agreements on broader strategic issues.

Russia’s military modernization in the Arctic is a perfect example of how this new curtain or, as I suggest in a new CSIS report – an ice curtain – has being formed. Russia has held three major military exercises in the Arctic over the past 24 months. The first instance was a simultaneous exercise around the Kola Peninsula which was part of the larger, Zapad 2013 military exercise, which demonstrated a more streamlined command structure, more efficient tactical units and the ability to deploy a large scale, complex military operation that is coordinated with other areas of operation. This exercise demonstrated that Russia has a larger spatial definition of its theatre of operations, extending from the Arctic to the Black Sea.

The second exercise, in September 2014, was the largest post-Soviet military exercise and was held in the Russian Far East. Preceded by a snap military exercise, Vostok-2014 involved over 100,000 servicemen and a complex display of air, maritime and land components. This exercise was partly conducted on a new military base in the Russian Arctic New Siberian Islands and Wrangel Island which some analysts believe simulated Russian forces repelling a U.S. or NATO invasion. This exercise focused on rapid mobilization, combined operations and demonstrated use of both conventional and unconventional forces. The third and culminating exercise occurred in March 2015 when President Putin announced a snap military exercise that consisted of 45,000 Russian forces, 15 submarines and 41 warships at full combat readiness in the Arctic. This extraordinary exercise tempo, the three-fold increase in Russian air incursions over the Arctic, Baltic and North Seas over the past twelve months and Russia’s announcement that it will have a total of 14 operational airfields in the Russian Arctic by the end of this year, 50 airfields by 2020 and a 30 percent increase of Russian Special forces in the Arctic suggests that the Arctic has emerged as a major theatre of operations for Russia. Defending against future military threats, the Arctic region has now been included in Russia’s amended military (December 2014) and maritime (July 2015) doctrines and will be coordinated by a new Russian Northern Fleet-United Strategic Command for the Arctic.

The conclusions that we draw from Russia’s military behavior in the Arctic over the past 24 months are that Russia is increasingly able to project significant anti-access/anti-denial capabilities in the Arctic, the North Atlantic and increasingly in the North Pacific while demonstrating the ability to rapidly deploy both conventional and nonconventional forces throughout the theatre. What is perhaps most disturbing has been Russia’s focus on enhancing its nuclear deterrent in the Arctic which it has simulated massive retaliatory attacks in the Barents Sea. Our Norwegian and British allies have also witnessed a surge in Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic.
From the Arctic, Russia’s military presence increases along the new ice curtain south to the Finnish – Russian border. Russia has returned to its abandoned military base 50 kilometers from the Finnish border where the first Russian infantry brigade has arrived with 3,000 soldiers anticipated at the base. The curtain proceeds to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, home of the Russian Baltic Fleet, where vessels from the fleet have delivered fighter jets and Iskander missile launchers capable of launching both conventional and nuclear missiles. Russia has recently installed new S-400 missile batteries and increased its force presence. The arming of Kaliningrad is part of a 19 trillion-ruble plan to increase the share of modern weapons in the Russian armed forces’ arsenal from 10% to 70%.


Overview:

In recent years, the Arctic region has been attracting serious attention from scholars. The opening of the Arctic Ocean brings new opportunities and challenges, many of which are depicted and presented as a security threat for Arctic society. The regional security in the Arctic is built around interdependence mainly on political, military, economic and environmental issues. The region exhibits clearly defined and interconnected relations of cooperation and confrontation with an evidence of strategic potential shared with all of the regional actors. The Arctic can be defined as an independent geopolitical region with specific conditions and shared history. The Arctic is a significant security region with the longest direct border between NATO and Russia. Thus, its geopolitical importance is fundamental for all Arctic states and is likely to increase in the future. Although the level of military tension in the region is higher at the time of writing, it is still much lower than it used to be, and lower still than in other parts of the world.

Following the introduction, the author looks at the importance of regional security and its role in the future of the Arctic. The paper describes how regional security is created and what the criteria are for the classification of the Arctic as an individual regional security complex. Later, the author briefly elaborates on the so-called ‘Russian factor’ and on Russia as a key player in the cooperative and peaceful development of the Arctic. Finally, the paper presents several thoughts on how the Arctic might look in the future, based on proposed scenarios.

Current & Relevant Information:

The “Russian Factor”

Current relations between Russia and NATO are at the lowest level since the end of the Cold War. The ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine undermined the perception of
Russia as a reliable partner in the eyes of Western countries. Although there are different perceptions of the Kremlin’s foreign policy among particular Alliance members, there is a general consensus on the condemnation of Russian military activities in Ukraine. As a consequence of current security changes in Europe, it has been a great challenge to maintain the Arctic region as a zone of peace and cooperation.

Since 2013, Russia has been substantially restoring its old soviet military airfields and ports in the north. This has been followed by numerous military exercises (increased in number and scale), the modernization of military equipment and the deployment of two brigades with special training for operations in the Arctic environment. The first brigade was deployed in Alakurtti at the beginning of 2015 to the naval airbase with a strategic location, approximately 60 km from the Finnish border. The second brigade should be deployed behind the Ural Mountains in Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area by the end of 2016. Furthermore, Russia’s controversial statements, non-transparent sources of capabilities and military plans could lead to a classic security dilemma and increase the securitization of the whole region (Padrtová, 2014). As members of NATO, the US, Canada, Norway and Denmark have a stronger joint position in the region; thus, Russia’s topmost priority should be avoiding any further escalation and potential confrontation with other states, as this would inevitably lead to its isolation, not only in the Arctic region.

Combined with political assertiveness, the intensified presence of the Russian naval and air forces has drawn much international attention. In a strategic context, Russia’s Arctic military capabilities and their modernization play a crucial role in their maintaining the current favorable status quo and deterring potential challengers. Following developments in Ukraine, it is expected that the Kremlin will continue to increase its military in the coming years.

The very significant increase in the military deployment of Russian forces, together with frequent maneuvers of bombers or fighter aircraft in the proximity or on the edge of Arctic states’ airspace, raises security concerns among other states in the region. Those developments inevitably lead to the improvement of US-Canadian capabilities - including NORAD air defense system (North American Aerospace Defense Command) based at the Greenland airport base in Thule, as well as capabilities of Norway and Denmark. This, in turn, leads to increasing Russian perceptions of insecurity and thus creates a classical security dilemma. Although the Kremlin emphasizes the cooperation and peaceful approach in finding solutions to Arctic disputes, official documents show quite the opposite. The new military doctrine from December 2014 declares that “One of the main objectives of Russia’s Armed Forces is to secure the national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic.” For the first time in history, Russia included its Arctic interests in its military doctrine. These elements highlight the strategic importance of the region for Russia (Padrtová, 2014).
The first and most direct example of how the Ukraine conflict has started to impact Arctic cooperation was Canada’s decision to boycott an Arctic Council task force meeting held in Moscow in April 2014. This was followed by other similar meetings, where either Russia was not invited or Russian participation was boycotted by one or several Arctic states. Therefore, claims that there is no aggression in the north and that states are all cooperating fully on all levels is ignoring the reality.

Furthermore, NATO and the EU members expressed their adverse stance towards Russian military actions in Ukraine when they collectively imposed sanctions on Moscow. These restrictive measures have had a dramatic impact on the Russian economy.

Although it is unrealistic to isolate the Arctic from developments of the global security environment, it might serve as an exemplary laboratory for collaboration. The positive aspect of cooperation in the Arctic is that there is no need to open new channels of communication. Western countries can use the already established channels to maintain dialogue with Russia. One of the most functional platforms for cooperation is the Arctic Council (AC), which has been successful in several initiatives such as the oil spill response plan or the formation of the Arctic Economic Council in 2015.

Another success of Arctic cooperation was the establishment of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum in late October 2015. In addition, all Arctic states should cooperate in regard to the determination of the limits of the outer continental shelf. Specific areas identified by Canada, Russia and Denmark overlap; thus, negotiations to resolve differences will be inevitable (Sevunts, 2016).

Arctic relations to date have been mostly diplomatic and respectful of international law. On the one hand, all Arctic states should be able to prevent their disagreements on Ukraine and conflicts elsewhere from spreading north. On the other hand, the behavior of the actors of the international security environment in one region cannot be separated from their behavior in other regions. In contrast to Ukraine or Georgia, the Arctic is the only strategically important region where Russia has not thus far violated the internationally recognized borders and status quo. For the time being, Moscow respects international law in the Arctic, and all her claims for territorial expansion have been addressed by means of international law. The reason for this is that, for Moscow, the current status quo is most favorable, and it is not in Russian interest to have any kind of military conflict in the north. However, the question is whether the Kremlin will also respect the boundaries set by international law once the status quo no longer suits Russia.

2. Geopolitical Environment:

“Arctic Energy: Pathway to Conflict or Cooperation in the High North?” Nong Hong, Arctic Portal, 31 May 2011 [57]
http://library.arcticportal.org/1532/1/Arctic_Energy__Pathway_to_C...pdf
Abstract:
The melting of the Arctic ice cap in combination with developments elsewhere concerning future energy security are creating scenarios that range from low level friction to potential conflict between the Arctic littoral states. Much attention has been devoted to maritime boundary disputes involving the Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the US. In addition to this, the emerging interest of non-Arctic states in shipping, polar research and non-living resource exploitation also adds uncertain elements to the Arctic geopolitical development. Many Arctic states’ populations are skeptical about non-Arctic states’ intentions in the Arctic, thus raising such questions as, “Is China going to take away our oil and gas from the Arctic to meet its energy needs?”, “Why are Japan and South Korea interested in observatory status in the Arctic Council?” Associated with these concerns is the essential question, “Is the energy factor a curse to Arctic cooperation or an opportunity to a peaceful settlement of Arctic maritime disputes?”

Current & Relevant Information:

Arctic Geopolitics

During the Cold War, the Arctic was a security flashpoint with US and Soviet nuclear submarines patrolling under the North Pole and bombers airborne over the region. Today, the Arctic is disassociated from great power politics. New concerns, challenges and opportunities, however, are arising as the Arctic is perceived to be increasingly more accessible.

Countries with military/security interests and naval capacity in the Arctic are Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, and the US. Russia has been the headline grabber with the Chilingarov expedition planting a Russian flag on the sea bed under the North Pole and the resumption of bomber overflights in August 2007. Russian military interests center on the Kola Peninsula, home to the Russian nuclear submarine fleet, and on rebuilding the Northern fleet. The US also released its revised US Arctic Regional Policy in January 2009, which reiterated the importance of the Arctic for US national security and defense. Denmark and Norway, which control Greenland and the Svalbard Islands, respectively, are also anxious to establish their claims. For Greenland, which has just approved a new self-government relationship with Denmark, the focus is on developing a cooperative infrastructure in the Arctic, i.e., through the Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Greenland’s desire to have direct participation in the deliberations of Arctic states is complicated by Danish policies, which are focused on Europe and can be at odds with the interests of Greenlanders. Canada is also defending its political interests, for example, by making vessel notifications in the Northwest Passage mandatory and making clear it will not cede anything in the North. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in July 2007, announced funding for new Arctic naval patrol vessels, a new deep-water port, and a cold-weather training center along the Northwest Passage.
There are also international governmental organizations and major powers from outside the region which take an interest in the North. For example, the new Northern Dimension is interpreted to mean a common policy of the European Union (EU), the Russian Federation, Iceland and Norway in Northern Europe. In addition, northern issues are finally being given a higher priority on the EU’s agenda, and matters relating to the north have been an important concern of the United Nations (UN) for years. For example, the UN has special duties in the region through the UN International Law of the Sea.

Major powers from outside the region, such as the UK, France, Germany, China, Japan and South Korea are taking a growing interest in many aspects of the North, such as in scientific research. Finally, there is a growing worldwide, even global, economic and political interest toward the northernmost regions of the globe, particularly due to estimated fossil fuels in the shelves of the northern seas and visions of new Trans-arctic sea routes. Consequently, trans-national corporations (TNCs) have strong commercial interests to become present to utilize energy resources.

Conclusion

The Arctic has recently witnessed a manifold growth in its geostrategic importance due to the huge deposit of oil and natural gas, and the potential contribution of northern sea routes for global shipping. As a result of this, northern regions and seas have become a target area for the growing economic, political and military interests of the Arctic states as well as of major powers outside the region and trans-national companies.

While it is important to look at the Arctic issue from a law of the sea perspective, with the Arctic states resorting to the Commission of Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS) for advice on the outer limit of continental shelf, and major powers, transnational corporations are seeking chances to develop the region within the framework of a 'common heritage of mankind' beyond national jurisdictions; political, economic and technological concerns also challenge oil companies in further investment in energy development in the Arctic. By the same token, however, joint management of resources is another option that might come into play as countries involved in a dispute might see more advantage in approaching the disagreement this way rather than losing a claim in a zero-sum game. The energy factor, rather than a curse for the Arctic, could serve as an opportunity for regional cooperation in the region.


Abstract:
The thawing of the Arctic ice shield opens up new possibilities: access to raw materials is eased, and shipping distances may decrease. The meddling of an increasing number of nonregional players in Arctic affairs is resulting in closer cooperation among the Arctic coastal states. The potential for conflict exists mainly where sovereign and exploitation rights cannot be conclusively clarified under existing international law. The risk of a military escalation, however, remains low.

Current & Relevant Information:

Until just a few years ago, the Arctic attracted little international attention. To be sure, this enormous territory of 21 million square kilometers between the North Pole and the Arctic Circle was of considerable importance to the navies of both the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, since they could conveniently hide their submarines under the thick ice shield. Also, the shortest flight trajectories for intercontinental ballistic missiles between North America and the Russian mainland are across the North Pole. All the same, the Arctic remained a marginal region in global politics and economics. Being sparsely populated with about 4 million inhabitants on account of its harsh natural environment, it barely made headlines.

The recently surging interest in the Arctic has much to do with climate change. The Arctic did experience periodic warming and cooling phases in the past, but its surface temperature has been rising steadily over the last 45 years. Since measurements began in 1979, the sea ice has been shrinking. This development is set to continue. Recent projections predict ice-free summers for the 2030s.

Even though problems such as persistent darkness and extreme cold in winter will remain, the melting of the ice mass in the Arctic is associated with both economic and strategic opportunities. Of particular interest are the deposits of raw material in the Arctic and the opening of shorter shipping routes. Unsurprisingly, these new possibilities are whetting the appetite of a growing number of states.

The crowding of non-Arctic players into this region is strengthening the incentives for cooperation among the Arctic coastal states (Denmark, Canada, Norway, Russia, and the US). But there are also new causes for conflict, in particular regarding the lack of agreement on territorial sovereignty issues in certain regions. With the changes in the Arctic and its growing international importance, the coastal states also face new challenges in terms of national defense.

Today, the Arctic is characterized by a mixture of cooperation, competition, and conflicts of interest. There are indications that the growing presence of non-Arctic players prompts more cooperation among the coastal states. Open conflicts are unlikely to break out in the foreseeable future: While existing mechanisms for cooperation may be too weak to resolve some conflicts of interest, the costs of military conflict will likely be considered too high in light of uncertain gains. If conflicts were to occur, they would probably be limited in both time and space, aiming at the enforcement of interpretations of international law. Having said that, as the
involvement of all key political players increases, the Arctic is also the scene of overarching geo-strategic competition and conflict. The extent to which the thawing of the Arctic means conflict or rapprochement and cooperation will therefore also depend on the shape of the future world order and the relationships between the different power centers.


Overview:

Russia’s North is one of the country’s richest areas. Its value for the country’s economy derives from the vast quantities of valuable raw materials to be found there, including oil, gas, gold, diamonds, nickel, copper, platinum, iron and timber.

The total value of mineral resources in Russia’s North exceeds 22.4 trillion US-Dollar, according to Western estimates (by comparison, the total value of US mineral resources is eight trillion US-Dollar).

The Northern region of Russia is home to less than 10 percent of the population, while its contribution to the national revenue is up to 20 percent or one-fifth of Russia’s GDP. Up to 60 percent of raw materials exports come from the north of the country.

According to 2009 data from the Science journal research group, about 83 billion barrels of oil – the equivalent of 10 billion tons and 13 percent of the world’s unexplored reserves – lie under the Arctic ice.

Almost all the Arctic natural gas resources (about 1,550 trillion cubic meters) are off the Russian coast, with most fields at a depth of under 500 meters. More than 200 potential fields have been discovered in the Barents, Pechora and Kara Seas.

The Arctic zone accounts for 91 percent of natural gas and 80 percent of proven Russian reserves of industrial gas.

The mainland part of the Arctic boasts unique reserves of copper and nickel ores, tin, platinum metals, agrochemical ores, rare metals and rare earth elements, major reserves of gold, diamonds, tungsten, mercury, ferrous metals, optical raw materials and gem stones.

The Arctic regions – the Kola Peninsula, Taimyr, Chukotka, Yakutia, Norilsk – contain reserves of apatite concentrate (more than 90 percent), nickel (85 percent), copper (about 60 percent), tungsten (more than 50 percent), rare earth elements (more than 95 percent), platinoids (more than 98 percent), tin (more than 75 percent of known resources in the Severo-Yanskoye field), mercury (the main known reserves are in the Yano-Chukotka province, with major reserves on Taimyr Peninsula), gold, silver (about 90 percent) and diamonds (more than 99 percent of
which are on the territory of Yakutia, in the Arkhangelsk Region and the Taimyr Autonomous Area).

The Arctic zone accounts for the major part of Russian reserves of gold (40 percent), chrome and manganese (90 percent), platinum metals (47 percent), indigenous diamonds (100 percent), vermiculites (100 percent), coal, nickel, stibium, cobalt, tin, tungsten, mercury, apatite (50 percent) and phlogopite (60 - 90 percent).

The overall forecast for coal deposits is at least 780 billion tons. The area accounts for the production of 100 percent of diamonds, stibium, apatite, phlogopite, vermiculite, rare and rare earth metals, 98 percent of platinum metals, 95 percent of gas, 90 percent of nickel and cobalt and 60 percent of copper and oil.

Current & Relevant Information:

Russia’s national interests in the Arctic are economic, geopolitical, scientific and environmental. The Russian Arctic is also a place where the geopolitical interests of both Arctic and non-Arctic states intersect owing to their geographical position.

The Basic Principles of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond identifies the following Russian priorities in the Arctic zone:

- expanding the resource base of the Arctic zone of the RF to meet the needs of the population;
- maintaining a military presence in the region;
- elimination of environmental threats in the context of growing economic activities;
- creating a common information space;
- applying modern scientific principles in managing the Arctic territories, taking due account of defense objectives;
- mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation of the Russian Federation with the Arctic states.

Other strategic priorities of the Russian Federation, as before, include delimitation of the sea with Arctic states on the basis of international law; the formation of a common regional search and rescue system; and the fostering within the Arctic Council and the Barents / Euro-Arctic Council of good neighborly relations between Russia and the Arctic states.

The problem of strengthening Russia’s position in the Arctic Region takes on added urgency today given the sparse population, as well as the many challenges involved in transition to sustained development.

The Arctic is very important strategically, while the possibility of an international military conflict is a perceived threat, as witnessed by the build-up of military presence in the Arctic by all the countries adjacent to that sector.
Such an outcome is not very likely, but if Russia’s position in the Arctic weakens it may lose a significant part of the Arctic zone and its control over the Northern Sea Route. That would weaken the border territories and pose a threat to the country’s economic stability.

“The Arctic as a Geopolitical Bond among the European Union, Norway & Russia,” Matthaios Melas, Arctic Yearbook, 2016 [60]

Abstract:
If there is a place of common ground between the European Union and Russia, it is on the fields of energy, environment and migration. The Arctic binds together the EU with its two major energy suppliers, Norway and Russia. In 2014 the EU imported almost 70% of its total natural gas from Norway and Russia and 44% of its crude oil. The EU, Norway and Russia are also bound together by common efforts to protect the Arctic environment. Moreover, the recent migration crisis in Europe not only rattled the foundations of the Schengen treaty but also raised tensions between Norway and Russia especially at their borders. After two world wars, Europe has sought for stability. Moving forward from the difficult past, geopolitical issues were put to the side, but it was Ukraine that violently reintroduced geopolitics in European international relations. This paper seeks to analyze the common – and not so common – ground of these three major actors on contemporary Arctic issues. Energy exploitation and distribution, environmental protection and migration flows are the new geopolitical elements of the “European” Arctic. With my research, I want to present the Arctic as an example of cooperation and mutual understanding rather than a boiling pot. I am going to argue that violence is not inherent to geopolitics but, as the name itself implies, geopolitics explain how politics and international relations are affected by both human and physical geographical factors. The last point that I will make is that geopolitical analysis is crucial for identifying important underlying issues that could lead to political, military or economic destabilization if disregarded.

Current & Relevant Information:
Introduction

The purpose of this article is to examine the emerging geopolitics of the “European” Arctic as demonstrated through energy, environment and migration. The Arctic environment is harsh and unique compared to the rest of the European continent. However, in the last decade, the decrease in sea ice and the development of new technologies have enhanced human accessibility to the living and non-living resources of the Arctic. Moreover, new navigation routes, the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route, are coming forth. Despite the fact that the Arctic is considered one of the most unspoiled and untouched regions on Earth, it is facing increasing risks both from climate change and human activities. It is time to put aside the reluctance to use geopolitical analysis on contemporary issues, as once
again geopolitics could help to foresee and address upcoming adverse developments before they escalate.

After the end of WWII and successful cooperation in Arctic waters between the U.S. and Canada for shipping bulk supplies of military and humanitarian cargoes via the Northern Sea Route to support the Soviet Union and the Allies against the Axis, the Arctic became the center of the Cold-war confrontation. The two adversaries deployed their state-of-the-art army units; submarines and nuclear deterrence facilities were developed in the Arctic, as it was the shortest route between them. The Arctic was valued for its strategic utility, and neither side valued sovereignty of it (Mychajlyszyn, 2008; Beixi, 2016). Soon after the end of the Cold War though, the disputes in the Arctic were forgotten and cooperation thrived among its nations and indigenous populations. In the last twenty years the potential for conflict in the Arctic has risen due to increased accessibility of its abundant resources, climate change, migration flows and the increasing global interest for the region and its resources (Heininen, 2011; Østerud & Hønneland, 2014).

Norway, despite being a small country in terms of population and territory relative to the EU and Russia, is a major actor in the Arctic compared with Iceland, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, with more than 470,000 of its population living above the Arctic Circle. Furthermore, it has strategic territories like the Svalbard Archipelago and the island of Jan Mayen which grant to Norway a maritime area in the Arctic of about 1,500,000 km2, equal to the area of Germany, France and Spain combined (Arctic Council, 2015b). Additionally, it is a major actor concerning its abundant energy reserves and its exports to the EU. Norway is the third largest exporter of natural gas and oil after Saudi Arabia and Russia. 31% of all gas imports of the EU and 11% of all oil imports came from Norway in 2012. From 2004 until 2014 Norway was consistently the second largest supplier of natural gas and oil to the European Union (European Commission, 2016b; Eurostat, 2016b).

The word “geopolitics” is the combination of the Greek words for “land/earth” (γη) and “politics” (πολιτική). Put simply, geopolitics deals with the impact of human and physical geography on international politics and relations (Devetak, 2012: 492). In this study, the “land/earth” factor consists of two components. On one hand is the Arctic, which, strictly geographically, could be defined as the area north of the Arctic Circle – 66° 33' 39'' North. On the other hand, is climate change. Climate change has a bifunctional role in this case, as it is not only a geographical aspect but also the catalyst for emerging international relations and security studies, as it facilitates the exploration and the exploitation of Arctic resources, which under different (colder) conditions, would be inaccessible. But now the Arctic is melting, it is melting fast, and abundant fossil fuel resources are at the sovereign states’ fingertips. Concerning the “political” aspects of this study, the factors that are emerging extend not only among the Arctic rim states – Norway, Russia, USA, Canada and Denmark– but further south to actors like China, Japan, India and the European
Union (EU). These actors are very keen to exploit the new energy potential of the Arctic. Recent estimations revealed that the Arctic holds about 30% of the world’s undiscovered natural gas and 13% of undiscovered oil (USGS, 2008; Gautier, et al., 2009; Hong, 2012). However, these resources and the processes of extraction and distribution are mutually dependent on developments miles away from the Arctic. The clearest example of such bilateral reliance is the annexation of Crimea from Russia on March 18th, 2014 (Walker & Traynor, 2014; BBC, 2014), which was followed by sanctions from the EU on Russia on July 2nd, 2014 (European Council, 2014), after a list of sanctions from the US was implemented in March 2014 (U.S. Department of State, 2014). These developments hindered Russia’s plans for the Yamal LNG4 mega-project, as the Russian companies were in great need of European and US technology, knowledge and funding (Vazard, 2014a; Vazard, 2014b; Marson & Williams, 2015; Reilly, 2015; Mäe, 2016). As a consequence, Russian firms leant on Chinese banks and funds for financial support (Kuersten, 2015). Novatek, the major shareholder of the Yamal LNG project, ensured funding for the project from two Chinese banks. The Export-Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank signed two 15-year loans, for €9.34bn and €1.3bn (Farchy, 2016; Yamal LNG, 2016). This relatively simple example outlines nicely how contemporary geopolitics function. Ongoing climate change provides access to untapped resources by the shrinking of the sea ice, and actors from all over the globe are gathering around the Arctic waters, seeking their share on these resources. Arctic geopolitics are starting to affect areas further away from the geographical Arctic Circle, not only the EU and its sanctions but also countries like China, which are willing to fund risky infrastructures in order to fulfil their energy demands. So, the emerging geopolitics of the Arctic are advancing to global geopolitics.

In this paper, I present how the EU, Norway and Russia are geopolitically bound by three major Arctic matters. The bond is so deep and strong that it could be argued that in the fields of energy, environment and migration these actors could comprise a security complex “whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan, Waever, & de Wilde, 1998: 12). The article is divided into three parts. In the first part, the aspect of energy is analyzed as one of the three major geopolitical bonds. Energy extraction in the Arctic is a crucial test that humanity is about to win against the relentless environment of the High North. Extraction of energy and its distribution are equally significant. As there are more and more political and technological issues around the distribution of energy, geopolitics offer great opportunities for in depth analysis of the element of energy. Arctic environmental aspects were high in the policy agenda of the EU (European Parliament, 2008) and Norway (Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2001). Russia also contributed to the protection of the Arctic environment in 2011 by giving 10 million Euros for pollution prevention initiatives (Arctic Council, 2011). The efforts for the Arctic’s environmental protection are continuous. In 2015 for example
the Arctic states and indigenous organizations agreed on a common effort to reduce black carbon and methane emissions, which directly affect the Arctic environment (Arctic Council, 2015a). Last but not least, the so-called “polar route,” used mainly by refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria, but also by refugees and migrants from other countries of Asia and Africa, depicts clearly the size of today’s globalization. Furthermore, this extreme refugee route is an addition to the well-known fact that in the contemporary world, the institutions of the traditional state of the 20th century have been eroded and, as a result, known concepts, such as borders, territories and distance are collapsing faster than predicted (Huysmans, 1997: 350-351; Ó Tuathail, 1998: 16-34; Huliaras, 2004). For example, where the iron curtain once stood, one could now cross on a bike without any border control. Nowadays, the threats come from global factors, such as terrorism, piracy, drugs trade, human trafficking and cross-border environmental risks, to name a few. In the 21st century there are many threats that do not take into account borders such as environmental disasters, (i.e. a potential oil spill) or irregular migration at the Arctic. On the other hand, cooperation for the development of vulnerable populations and protection of the environment, are reasons to put disputes aside. Geopolitics, which is fundamentally engaged with borders, resources, flows, territories and identities, could provide the means for critical analysis and understanding on places and communities (Doss, 2007: 3).

Conclusion

The concept of Arctic Geopolitics was forgotten, after the Cold War. New developments that concern EU territory, such as the Crimea crisis, the migration crisis, energy and environmental security, have brought geopolitics back into the spotlight in the past five years. Developments in the Arctic, such as the shrinking of sea ice, the presence of fossil fuels and new shipping routes, brought geopolitics into this region as well. As the Arctic becomes more and more militarized, compared with the post-Cold War period, many have argued that a new Cold War is coming to Arctic waters. Nevertheless, during the Cold War the Arctic was an area of interest not because of which country it belonged to but merely due to its proximity to both USA and Russia. Nowadays, the biggest concerns in the Arctic are not the military developments, but the cooperation to protect the environment and overcome the challenges in energy exploitation. There are already the Search and Rescue Treaty and the Oil Spill Response Treaty, signed in 2011 and 2013, respectively. After the Cold War, the security agenda has been broadened to other issues, more prominent than military conflict, such as human security, environmental security and energy security. Another parallelism that should be avoided is the comparison of the Arctic Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea in terms of geopolitics. Comparisons to the Mediterranean may have the same meaning as the “Balkanization” has for continental areas. Balkanization – and Mediterraneanizing? – is inherited with instability, border disputes, fatal interventions, drowning of thousands of refugees and violations of national sovereignty. There is only one common political characteristic between the Arctic and the Mediterranean; both the USA and Turkey
have not ratified the UNCLOS. It would be preferable to build on the already robust, peaceful cooperation on the Arctic and then to try and disseminate the model rather than trying to downgrade all the important efforts that have led to the current cooperative status in relation to the Arctic.

In terms of energy, one could argue that it is not geopolitically ‘clever’ to transfer or spread the turbulence of one region – Crimea – to another – the Arctic – as the EU does due to implementation of sanctions which hinders Arctic energy exploration and exploitation. Of course, among the great powers involved in the Arctic terrain – the EU, USA and Russia – there are areas of cooperation and fields of conflict. The Arctic is a case that includes both. Cooperation in the field of energy should be promoted as in the fields of environment and migration. The Arctic and especially Arctic energy are rising in global geopolitics. This is an important reason for the EU to cooperate with Russia, despite ongoing conflicts between them.

As it was predicted in May 2016, the two parties – EU and Russia – extended their sanctions (Stratfor, 2016; Pettersen, 2016b) in late June-beginning of July. Russia on June 29th, 2016 announced the expansion of the counter-sanctions till December 31st, 2017 (TASS, 2016) and the EU extended the sanctions on Russia on July 1st, 2016 until January 1st, 2017 (European Council, 2016b). Taking these developments into account, the EU is not going to be a permanent Observer in the Arctic Council in the near future. With oil prices rising slowly, and with renewables not yet a sufficient source of energy, the EU has to push for cooperation with Russia on energy matters. The Arctic could be an exception to the EU’s sanctions in order to develop sufficient and environmentally friendly extraction fields. This will benefit the EU, ensuring its energy supplies despite global disruptions. While the demand of energy in Europe is inherently connected with the energy on offer from Russia, cooperation is the only way to ensure mutual profits.

The Arctic migration route made clear that migrants and refugees will take whatever route is possible for fleeing war and poverty. Migration flows are as flexible as water; if you close one road, they will just find another one; and to raise walls to stop migration it is like raising walls to protect from the rising sea levels. In the Arctic, due to cooperation among neighboring countries, the flow was treated adequately, despite misunderstandings and temporary tensions. Nevertheless, the EU and Russia have to find solutions not only for the flows but also for the reasons that produce these flows, which means that they have to cooperate on establishing peace in Syria and tackle poverty and instability in the Middle East and Africa. Again, Arctic developments and fast reactions on migratory legislation could be a great example for the rest of Europe. Respect for the Arctic rim states’ sovereignty and strong cooperation in the Arctic concerning environmental protection, search and rescue, human mobility, energy technology and infrastructure will not abolish security concerns, but could at least minimize them.
Overview:

Governments have a broad variety of tools to communicate their aspirations and plans with domestic elites, as well as with governments abroad. In the policy process, in order to bring up a new or redefine an old issue on the agenda with the ultimate goal of changing policy, media conventionally becomes a venue where policy images and narratives are mobilized (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Domestic policy communication usually aims at informing citizens of the existence of a certain policy and gaining their support in pursuing this policy, for instance, comply with the policy requirements, participate, approve of budgetary transfers and the like (Ahn 2012). In their international political communication, governments are aiming at foreign governments and publics to inform them regarding their policy goals, intentions and activities, as well as to build a certain image using public diplomacy and soft power tools (Nye 2004; Sherr 2013).

In Russia, the Arctic policy has witnessed a revival in the past 15 years. The Russian strategic documents present ambitious plans to make the Arctic a profitable part of the Russian state, energy powerhouse, and a source of increased geopolitical power. The realization of Arctic policies is envisioned through state support in the sphere of resource development, transport and power infrastructure, as well as through tax arrangements and co-financing from budgets of various levels and off-budget sources (Arctic Strategy 2008). In other words, the state guarantees financial support to the numerous industrial developments in the High North. While the Russian government has been experiencing problems with maintaining the country’s welfare system (Cook 2013), the government could be expected to enhance popular sentiment with regard to Arctic development through communicating its policy aspirations as a compelling narrative.

Internationally, the growing importance placed on the Arctic in contemporary Russian domestic political speech and international rhetoric posed the question regarding its ambitions and plans, as well as speculations about its readiness to use military strength (Cohen, Szaszdi and Dolbow 2008). Some commentators concluded that Russia is being a ‘troublemaker’, pursuing aggressive and expansionist politics that will eventually lead to conflict (Kraska 2009; Aron 2013). Others regarded Russia as a ‘status quo seeker’ interested in maintaining the region as an area of international cooperation and in preserving its most important asset as the country’s future economic engine – its stability (Overland 2010; Keil 2014; Heininen, Sergunin and Yarovoy 2014).
Previous research emphasized that the Western media tend to over-interpret the official Russian statements and called for a more nuanced scholarly understanding of Russian policy in the Arctic (Piskunova 2009; Lackenbauer 2010; Laruelle 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Johnston 2012). Wilson Rowe (2013) showed that Russian media coverage framing the Arctic as a zone for cooperation rather than conflict grew steadily during 2008–11, so that by 2011 articles with a conflict-oriented tone had almost disappeared. Gritsenko (2016) demonstrated that hydrocarbon energy development has dominated the Russian Arctic policy agenda mediated through the mainstream Russian media outlets during 2011–15. Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya (2016) argued that Russian leaders use symbolic means to frame Russia’s Arctic policy to the Russian public in order to justify Russia’s claim to the Arctic region and the development of abundant Arctic resources.

Based on extensive empirical analysis of policy communication, this chapter investigates the difference between the Arctic narratives presented by the Russian government to the domestic and foreign audiences. We apply narrative policy analysis (Nye 2004; Jones and McBeth 2010) to demonstrate how the Russian government offers two separate, yet intersecting policy stories. For the domestic audience, it highlights the socio-economic significance of natural (hydrocarbon) resources to the development of the Arctic region and Russia as a whole, and demonstrates persistence in turning the Arctic into the primary resource base ‘against all odds’ (such as the Western economic sanctions and low price of oil). For the foreign publics, it presents the narrative of the Arctic as a territory of peace and stability, emphasizing adherence to the norms and principles of the international law.

Current & Relevant Information:

Russia has a long history of economic (including maritime, fisheries, and extractive industries) and scientific activity in the region located above the Arctic Circle and usually referred to as ‘Far North’ (Krayniy Sever) in Russian. The collapse of the Soviet Union caused significant disinvestment into the Russian Arctic region, which resulted in decreasing activity, deteriorating infrastructure, and massive outwards migration. During the 1990s, Russian Arctic policy was not a coherent set of activities, but rather a response to economic and social crises. This situation was unfavorable from the Russian point of view as it complicated access to the Arctic riches (in particular, mineral energy resources) and undermined potential benefits from the development of commercial maritime activities.

In 2001, the Russian Cabinet approved the draft of a document titled “Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic,” outlining the Russian national interests in the Arctic, which can be regarded as the beginning of the modern era of Russian Arctic policy. Between 2008 and 2015, a series of new concepts, strategies, and doctrines were adopted to frame plans of the Russian government in the Arctic in the long term, as well as within specific policy sectors, such as energy, transport, and security. In order to improve administrative support
for Arctic zone development, the State Commission for the Development of the Arctic was established in 2015 by the RF Government, institutionalizing the preceding strategic communications.

Besides the orientation towards the Arctic in Russian domestic politics, another facet of the Russian Arctic policy is international cooperation on Arctic-related issues. From the very beginning, Russia was an active member of the intergovernmental Arctic fora, in particular the Arctic Council (Heininen 2013). In 1997, Russia ratified The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which has become the basic international regime governing the Arctic. Recently, Russia actively participated in Arctic cooperation by entering into bilateral and multilateral agreements with other Arctic states.

The escalation of the Ukrainian crisis, especially Russia’s intervention in the Ukraine in early 2014, has raised questions regarding the future of international cooperation in the Arctic (Klimenko 2014). In the light of the Ukrainian situation, increasing Arctic militarization has been perceived as a sign of Russia’s readiness to use military force to achieve its geopolitical ambitions (Norris 2014). The sanctions imposed by the EU, the United States, and some other countries have created constraints for the implementation of Arctic energy projects previously envisaged as cooperation between Russian and Western companies (Aalto 2016). Generally, the scholars provide reassurances that the Arctic is not the Ukraine and that Russia will ‘play by the rules’ in the Arctic as its material and political interests will come first: success in attaining sustainable economic growth and development in the Arctic depends upon its ability to align with other powers.


Abstract:
The Arctic’s key role in the modern global environment is obvious. Several leading economies have been battling for the right to gain control over this region. The article is focused on the content and approaches to the analysis of Arctic policies of China, South Korea and Japan through the prism of Russia’s economic and geopolitical interests. The authors analyzed and summarized data, expert assessment of activities carried out by the three Eastern Asian countries in the Arctic, reflected the key stages of Russia’s negotiations and cooperation with these countries in the issues pertaining to the development of the Arctic. The conducted analysis showed that the Arctic’s development is possible provided that all parties to the process comply with international laws while making use of innovative technologies and establishing principles of global effective policy.
circumstances, Russia needs to take concerted efforts to enhance the models of regional and international cooperation with the countries concerned with a view to protecting and promoting their rights and national interests in the Arctic as an area of the country’s direct presence and borders.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**Introduction**

The Arctic is generally accepted as a unique territory with strong economic potential. Sustainable and gradual development of the Arctic area is an objective which the scientific community has been discussing over the past few years.

Attention paid by the Russian leaders to the Arctic has been constantly rising, with targets set to improve the living conditions of the locals, new mining and offshore projects getting under way, transportation systems spreading, environmental and safety issues resolved in all respects. Nowadays Russia’s Arctic generates over 11% of the country’s gross domestic product and accounts for around one-quarter of Russian exports.

When determining regional development policies, Russia adopted such key documents as the “Development Strategy for the Arctic Area of Russia and Ensuing National Security for the Period until 2020”, Russia’s government program “Socio-Economic Development of the Arctic of Russia for the Period until 2020” and some others.

A comprehensive program is being prepared as part of the Strategy for the Country’s Spatial Development to renovate and expand the country’s pipeline infrastructure, implementation of which allows Russia to turn into a key logistics and transportation hub of the planet, with global technology changes to be taken into account. The Northern Sea Route plays the most significant role in the development of the Arctic area, and there are plans to make it “a truly global, competitive thoroughfare”.

The concept of the project “Strategy of Spatial Transportation & Logistics Corridors in Russian Territory that Unite the Asia-Pacific Region and the European Union” has been developed. Alexander Sergeyev, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, explained that “the concept provides for creating conditions for the comprehensive development of Siberia, the Far East and the Arctic by establishing two spatial transportation and logistics corridors to be based on a new high-speed railway and the Northern Sea Route”.

Efforts taken to solidify scientific, transportation, navigation, and military infrastructure in the Arctic and Russia’s water area of the Arctic Ocean make it possible to cement Russian interests in this strategically important region. When addressing the Federal Assembly of Russia on March 1, 2018 Russian President Vladimir Putin pointed out that “the Russian Arctic fleet remains the most powerful worldwide”.

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For the purpose of solving economic, defense and geopolitical targets in the Arctic, and to strengthen Russia’s presence in the region as “a leader of polar sciences” a project has been launched to design and build a North Pole self-propelled platform.

Meanwhile, Russia remains committed to developing this region peacefully while observing its own national interests and respecting unconditionally those of other countries.

The Russian president officially set the vector of foreign policy in the region in a letter to the Arctic Council members dated August 30, 2016. It states that “the Arctic should be approved as the space for an open and equal dialogue based on the principles of general and indivisible security, with no room for geopolitical games of military blocs, cozy deals and division of spheres of influence”.

The state policy of this kind contributes to forming a new model of Russia’s regional cooperation with the countries concerned, inseparable elements of which are a constructive dialogue, creativity and equal cooperation. Moreover, as the Russian presidential address states, “Russia sticks to the viewpoint that the Arctic has no potential for conflicts”.

The purpose of this research work is to analyze the latest trends and prospects of how East Asian countries – China, Japan and South Korea – can influence the situation surrounding the Arctic, ways for Russia to protect interests in relations with these countries in the region under study.

The hypothesis of the research is the assumption that there is a trend of stability, “a resource of joint development” in the region which prevails over those of destabilization and relations of competitiveness. This can lay the groundwork for interaction and mutually beneficial relations between Russia and other countries concerned, including China, Japan and South Korea.

The study of Russian relations with the three East Asian countries in the Arctic substantially confirms the hypothesis that the countries are in search of compromise ways of deepening relations and interaction and takes into account current objective trends of globalization and benefits of integration.

There is a reason to believe that Russia’s cooperation with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea with respect to the Arctic’s development can become a key factor fostering stability and deepening international cooperation in the Arctic.

Conclusions

Russia’s cooperation with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea in developing the Arctic, being a key factor of regional development, has evolved dramatically.

The research work gives reason to conclude that there are prerequisites allowing Russia and its East Asian partners to make efforts to build a new model of cooperation in the region. The emerging model takes full account of the diversity of
the national interests, competition among countries, the difference in their socio-political structure, political and economic environment, amasses various resources that make it possible to ease or nullify confrontation among the parties, thus promoting stabilization of the global system as a whole, as well as its regional and country segments.

With a focus on cooperation with East Asian countries, including China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, Russia aims to create external conditions for its innovative and technological development. In relations with its Eastern partners, Russia is interested in solidifying consistently mutual trust, helping citizens, economic and political elite of member states form a stable positive image of a member country, convincing that the current quality of bilateral, trilateral and multilateral relations is not an artificial, politically cyclical structure, but an enduring value meeting vital interests of nations.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Peter_Hough2/publication/265427553_Worth_the_energy_the_geoPolitiCs_of_ArCtiC_oil_And_gAs/links/54e8a72a0cf2f7aa4d5267ae/Wor th-the-energy-the-geoPolitiCs-of-ArCtiC-oil-And-gAs.pdf

Abstract:
Climate change is literally and metaphorically bringing the Arctic in from the cold in international affairs with new economic opportunities emerging with the retreat of the ice sheets. Prominent amongst these is the prospect of previously inaccessible oil and gas sources in the High North becoming available for extraction. A spate of extended maritime claims by the states of the region and some high-profile diplomatic posturing has prompted much anticipation of a new scramble of resources and even a new, more literal Cold War. The reality, however, appears to be more mundane with the Arctic oil rush proving to be more of a slow and cooperative saunter thus far, as the Arctic powers, and others, seek the new riches with a degree of caution, employing – and even sharing – lawyers and geologists rather than deploying troops.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
In 2007 the Arctic was uncharacteristically thrust to the forefront of the world’s media when a robot from a Russian submarine placed the national flag on the exact location of the North Pole for the first time in history in a symbolic act of “conquest” both retro and futurist. The Russophobic response of the Western media and politicians to this stunt was also reminiscent of fears from yesteryear provoked by “the Bear” and seemed a likely precursor for a new, modern, high-tech geopolitical struggle between East and West. Canadian Foreign Minister, Peter Mackay,
epitomized Western irritation at the Russian initiative by stating; “You can’t go around the world and just plant flags and say “we’re claiming this territory.”” However, the governments of Canada, along with fellow Arctic littoral states Denmark and Norway, have been busy in recent years claiming extra (underwater) territory, albeit in a less extravagant fashion. The melting of the Arctic ice sheets has opened up new possibilities for navigation, fishing and, most particularly, the exploitation of underground resources once thought too costly to extract, awakening the interests of governments and Multi-National Corporations (MNCs).

**Conclusions**

Rhetoric and reality are often not the same in international relations and particularly not in the politics of the Arctic where declarations are often the howls of sheep in wolves’ clothing. Arctic exploration, whether for adventure or profit, has always seemed to be accompanied by much symbolism, jingoism and bombast as man seeks to conquer nature at its most brutal in something of a “masculinist fantasy.” This, though, flies in the face of the reality that making money in remote, difficult conditions necessitates cooperation rather than nationalist rivalry. Instead of the old maxim that a successful foreign policy requires one to “speak softly but carry a big stick” what we are witnessing in the Arctic is more a case of, “talk tough but carry a big bag of carrots.” Exercising sovereign control over vast, thinly inhabited tracts of land is a difficult task; hence the tradition of cooperation and sharing in the use of common land and resources between Inuit, Sami and other regional indigenous groups. Arctic “incomers” generally come to recognize the reality of this to some degree but domestic public opinion often sees only the flags and oilfields displayed on maps. The cordial cartel that is the Arctic 5 and the energy-seeking ventures bringing together Western MNCs and the Kremlin represent more a case of transnational symbiosis than a new Cold War nationalism. Far from the lucrative scrambles produced by the discoveries of Yukon gold in the 1920s or Alaskan oil in the 1960s, future energy exploration in the High Arctic is set to be much more long-term and speculative or as Emmerson terms it, a ‘slow rush for Northern resources.’ Whilst global warming is rightly bringing much needed attention to the needs of its indigenous populations whose lives are being transformed by a transforming physical and economic climate, an awful lot of hot air has been spoken about an Arctic oil rush and a new Cold War.

“Property and government interests of Russia under globalization: The Arctic case,” Nikolay D. Eletsky, Arctic and North, 2018 [64]
http://eletskiy.narod.ru/1/35.pdf

**Abstract:**

Modern processes of the global property and governance formation are contradictory combined with the preservation and reproduction of economic interactions within the framework of individual States, regions and inter-state conflicts.
relations. The actualization of these processes in the Arctic region is due to its transformation into a place of focus and the most acute manifestation of the new contradictions between globalization and nation — state interests. The author concluded that the implementation of the Russian Arctic strategy is complicated by the uncertainty of prospects and the variation of possible vectors of the new globalization. The article substantiates the need for drastic measures to strengthen the Russian position in the Arctic due to the current strengthening of regionalization and fragmentation of the world economy. The geo-economic and geopolitical configuration of international cooperation in the Arctic may change in the near future due to the transition from of a unipolar to a multipolar model of the world order and the growing threats of a new hybrid cold war. It’s shown that the contradictions between the Arctic powers are complicated against the background of the desire of the non-Arctic countries to participate in the exploitation of the region's resources. The author reveals the issues related to the search of the optimal balance between the objective imperatives of globalization and the protection of nation — state and regional interests of Russia as the largest Arctic power.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

At the present stage of development of the world civilization, one of the most acute contradictions is the contradiction between globalization and existence of nation-states. The depth and role of this contradiction, the diverse and comprehensive nature of its influence on social relations in the modern world are due to the objective nature of the factors and patterns of globalization, and the need for state-organized forms of economic and political interactions. The objectivity of these phenomena and, at the same time, their heterogeneity, multidirectional, and (in some substantive and functional respects) opposites, give a rise to the issue of protecting nation-state interests in the context of expanding globalization, which by its nature not only genetically indifferent about these interests, but in many cases opposes them.

At the same time, the globalization of production forces and the reproduction process as a whole becomes a key. We observe an expanded reproduction of global value chains that constitute the material basis for deepening economic globalization. It is essential that the Russian economy is not only deeply integrated into global value chains, but also plays a prominent role in their reproduction, being, according to the ECB, among the six most significant participants in these processes and ahead of the integrative influence of the UK, France, Italy and all the BRICS countries except China. Since the production process that forms the global value chains takes place, as a rule, within the TNCs framework, it enhances their global role, contributes to the transformation of the largest TNCs into global corporations. The latter are now transformed into the main modern form of primary economic activity (more precisely – an integrative industrial, scientific, financial and
commercial complex). At the same time, these processes increase the contradiction between the orientation of global corporations towards the unification of production and commercial due to functioning in the “world without borders”, on the one hand, and the national-state discreteness of the world economic system, on the other. In the current system of geo-economic and geopolitical relations, the Arctic turns into a region of localization of the most significant forms and mechanisms of the global contradiction.

**Conclusion**

The crisis of the modern globalism does not abolish the laws of globalization but contributes to a change of its forms. At the present stage of the development of transition to neo-globalization, regionalization of the world economy has intensified, in the form of globalization mainly. Glocalization is manifested in the strengthening of the local, incl. regional, interests and peculiarities, but reflects the dominant influence of globalization. In the Arctic region, globalization is manifested in the fact that global governance there is exercised in interaction through structures, mechanisms and institutions of regional governance.

Also, we cannot ignore the uncertainty of the prospects and the variability of the development scenarios for neo-globalization, as well as the fact that the formation of global property and management is a long process that will take several centuries. This time is going to be used to search for the optimal relationship between the objective and the imperatives of globalization. Protection of nation-state interests will remain relevant. The complication of geo-economic and geopolitical problems and contradictions in the Arctic require their comprehensive scientific research. At present, we observe the crisis of the US-centered model of globalism and the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar system. New aspects of the protecting Russia's interests are identified, considering the trends of property globalization and management. Formation of multipolarity means overcoming the unipolar-hegemonic monopoly on the right to formulate, represent and protect universal goals and interests, and therefore act as the main subject of global governance and the “ultimate beneficiary” of the appropriation of world profits. In the connection to the transition to a multipolar world, the global importance and functional content of the modern sectoral division system in the Arctic water area and the special powers of coastal states is increasing. These states are designed to maximize the actions on “common human” interests in the international development of the Arctic’s wealth and the efficient use of globally significant resources of the region, combined with their own interests through the development of resources in exclusive economic zones and offshore fields and observing the rules of international shipping.

Considering the impossibility of ensuring full sovereignty over the Russian polar ownership with the understanding of their status before 1991, this system can be viewed as a palliative model of protecting the interests of our state in the Arctic region in the case of unconditional abandonment of the unilateral concessions,
which in turn requires the all-round expansion of effective economic management in the region and the strengthening of its military defense potential due to the new hybrid Cold War. The palliative and transitional nature of the protecting Russian interests in the Arctic region is objectively determined by both the current problems of the Russian state and the contradictions of the global ownership and governance genesis.

3. Economic Activities:

“Developing Hydrocarbon Resources in Arctic Russia: The Role of Sino-Russian Collaboration,” Anastasia Ufimtseva and Tahnee Prior, Arctic Yearbook, 2017 [65]  
https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2017/Briefing_Notes/4_Developing_Hydrocarbon_Resources_in_Arctic_Russia.pdf

Overview:

A decline in conventional hydrocarbon resources and increasing energy scarcity, along with geopolitical changes, shape today’s global energy governance; at times, pressuring corporations to seek resources in precarious regions like the Arctic. The Arctic is the presumed home of a vast amount of fossil fuels (Carmack et al., 2012). Ongoing research shows that rapid biophysical change continues to open the region to new extractive opportunities and risks. While drilling off the coast of Alaska is halted for the foreseeable future – due to low global oil prices, disappointing exploration outcomes, and vocal public opposition – the development of hydrocarbon resources off the coast of Norway and Russia continues. Russian corporations are particularly active in the Arctic with large hydrocarbon projects like Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) acting as testing grounds for both Russian institutions and corporations.

New extractive opportunities in the Arctic are open to actors both in- and outside the region; with the role of foreign investors increasing in the Russian Arctic. China, for instance, is gradually turning to the Arctic to support Beijing’s political ambitions and to sustain its economic model, dependent on foreign natural resources (Sun, 2014: 40). Concurrently, ongoing economic and political pressures on Russian oil and gas projects have shifted energy cooperation eastward. Sino-Russian collaboration in the exploration of Arctic hydrocarbon resources, started expanding in 2013; when the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) bought a 20 percent stake in the Yamal LNG project.

With such developments in mind, important questions arise across multiple governance scales: globally, in terms of the global geopolitical climate; nationally, in terms of tax incentives in large-scale extractive projects in the Russian Federation; and locally, in terms of environmental governance and human rights. Now, more than ever, is a crucial time for scholars to better understand how these relations play out on the ground, and how this might impact the environment and inhabitants of the Russian Arctic.
Current & Relevant Information:

Russia's Arctic strategy, put forward in 2009, identifies its Arctic zone as a core national interest and resource base for oil and gas development (President of the Russian Federation 2009). The strategy is motivated by Russia's economic dependence on revenue from the oil and gas sector, which has been rising steadily from 2006. Currently, approximately 50 per cent of the federal budget is generated from energy exports (Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, 2015). Hydrocarbon resources also account for 68 percent of Russia's total exports (PwC, 2016). Given Russia's dependence on hydrocarbon revenue, it appears that Russia will be unable to sustain its economic development without developing its hydrocarbon resources.

The depletion of oil and gas resources in western Siberia forces Russian corporations to shift extractive activities northward to the Yamal peninsula. Their efforts are supported by the Russian government, which assumed a leading role in the Yamal LNG project through a public-private partnership scheme. The government invested public funds to build infrastructure in the Yamal Peninsula to stimulate the development of hydrocarbon resources. Media covering the Yamal project estimate that the government contributed over 47.3 billion RUB (approximately $843 million USD) and provided 150 billion RUB (approximately $2.7 billion USD) in loans through the National Welfare Fund of Russia (Soldatkin & Astakhova, 2016). The money was used to construct the sea port and adjacent infrastructure. By investing in the seaport, the government opened the door for subsequent construction of the LNG plant in Yamal. In addition to the generous financial support, Russia effectively subsidized portions of the project by adjusting taxation rates for extractive companies operating in the Yamal Peninsula. Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved an economic strategy promising zero tax on mineral extraction from fields located in the Yamal peninsula – for a duration of 12 years, or until a specified output is achieved (Gerden, 2016).

Yamal LNG is also the first Arctic LNG project to enlist the help of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs). It is important to remember, however, that significant national incentives for such investment exist as well. Chinese SOEs participate in the construction of the Yamal LNG plant; winning tenders for specific aspects of the project. According to a news report by Klimenko and Sørensen (2017), Chinese corporations will be responsible for the production of around 80 percent of the equipment for the project. For example, CNPC and Magang Group Holding Company, took over construction of steel structures for the plant and delivered complete parts of the project to the Yamal peninsula. CNPC is completing four engineering packages for Yamal, one of which was recently shipped from Shandong Province in China to Yamal (CNPC, 2016). China’s Sinotrans Shipping Ltd. gained a contract to build tankers which will be operated by Russia’s Sovcomflot around the
Conclusion: A Way Forward

Yamal LNG project is one site where we can trace aspects of new policies in hydrocarbon and financial sectors in Russia. Current policies are influenced by Chinese SOEs forging close ties with Russian corporations to be able to participate in Arctic projects located in Russia. These Russian companies, with minority Chinese investment, are obligated to undergo a national environmental impact assessment and ecological assessment prior to project implementation “for any economic activity that holds potential risks for the environment, an assessment of the possible negative impacts should be done.” (Koivurova et al., 2016: 185-186). However, Russian environmental impact assessment processes have not been updated in 17 years (since 2000), and therefore reflect the practices of that time. The likelihood that future updates will be influenced by the cultural norms and values of the private sector, and multinational corporations, is thus highly plausible (Koivurova et al., 2016: 199) – an interesting prospect when considering Chinese investment and Russian national incentives.

Cooperation on the Yamal Peninsula aside, Russian and Chinese companies are still seeking further mutual ground for energy cooperation in the Arctic. It is plausible that other big Asian players, such as Japan, may be interested in partnering with Russian hydrocarbon companies to develop new hydrocarbon projects (such as Arctic LNG-2) in the region. Further research is still required to trace the policies, goals, and investment commitments of new actors in the region. The investment flows will likely shape the future of extractive projects in the Arctic. They will thus require closer monitoring and oversight to ensure that human modification of the landscape does not harm local environment and security. Additional research and data can help provide better baselines.

“Scramble for the Arctic Offshore Oil & Gas Resources in Russia,” Nadezhda Filimonova, Arctic Yearbook, 2013 [66]


Abstract:

For several decades, high prices of oil and gas have been a major driving force for Russia’s economic growth and state prosperity. During this period the state mostly relied on natural resources production in West Siberia. Today the Russian economy is still very dependent on the energy sector, however the traditional areas of energy production cannot satisfy the demand any longer and the state is facing a challenge of finding a new energy supply area. Arctic offshore resources represent an alternative energy supply; however severe climate conditions, environmental risks and high production costs make offshore exploration less attractive. This article
examines different approaches and interests of the Russian state and businesses towards the offshore exploration in the region. Convergences and divergences in the stances are discussed, providing an outline for the future development of the Russian energy sector with relation to the on-going international energy market development.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**Background**

For several decades, high prices for oil and gas have been a major driving force in Russia’s economic growth, making the country dependent on oil and gas exports and vulnerable to fluctuations in crude oil prices on the world market. From 1996-1998, up to 14-15% of the state’s GDP revenues derived from hydrocarbons production and export; from 1999 – 2003 their share increased to more than 20% (Berezinskaya and Mironov, 2006), and in 2012 represented almost a half of the federal revenues (Neftegazovaya Rossiya, 2013). Starting from the 1960s a bulk of hydrocarbon production occurred in West Siberia. Today Khanty–Mansi Autonomous Okrug still accounts for 51% of oil production in Russia (Ria Novosti, 2012). Currently, the state’s policy to preserve and expand energy production and exportation faces certain challenges. West Siberian fields are dwindling, and the oil production is predicted to decrease by 19% by 2020 (Kezik and Ermakova, 2012). In addition, geological surveys have been slow paced and modern energy production technology has not been fully introduced. According to “Russia Oil and Gas Report”, published in 2011, in the future, an increasing share of energy production will be produced outside of West Siberia (Business Monitor International, 2011).
Russian oil and gas fields in the Arctic

Oil and gas fields containing immense reserves have been found in the Russian section of the Arctic shelf.

Field classification:
- Unique: more than 300 million metric tons of oil or 500 billion m³ of natural gas
- Large: from 30 to 500 million tons of oil or from 30 to 500 billion m³ of gas
- Middle: from 3 to 30 million tons of oil or from 3 to 30 billion m³ of gas

The Arctic in figures:
- Russian share of world natural gas reserves: 25% (95% of world reserves)
- Russian share of world oil reserves: 53% (60% of world reserves)

Today, oil and gas resources in East Siberia and on the Arctic continental shelf are viewed by the Russian state as new potential areas for energy production. In 2008 during the Security Council meeting, President Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012) announced a mission to convert the Arctic region into a resource base of the 21st century, to compensate the dwindling resources in West Siberia (Ilyn, 2008). Recoverable hydrocarbon resources on Russia’s continental shelf account for up to 100 billion tons, including more than 13.5 billion tons of oil and about 73 trillion m3 of gas (Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, 2006).

The bulk of resources (about 66.5%) are located in the northern seas (Barents and Kara Seas). Apart from the economic reasons for energy supply diversification, offshore development is linked with Russian geopolitical interests in guaranteeing its presence in the Arctic waters via a military component. In addition, offshore hydrocarbon production is associated with the socio-economic development of the Northern regions in Russia.

The “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security for the Period up to 2020”, published in February 2013, outlined the policy directions and the mechanisms needed for the relocation of oil and gas production into new areas. The strategy prescribes a development of a natural resource base by implementing new technologies, conducting complex studies on the continental shelf and in coastal zone, forming reserve fund deposits and accomplishing relevant infrastructure projects (Government of Russia, 2013). One of the mechanisms for the tasks’ implementation is based on collaboration between state and business organizations, including foreign entities.

Hence, this study provides an analysis of the current state of relations between the Russian government, state-controlled (Gazprom and Rosneft), and private (LUKOIL and NOVATEK) oil and gas companies. The article begins with a brief overview of a legal set of actors and their respective rights for operation on the Arctic continental shelf. Furthermore, it provides a comparative analysis of the Russian government, state and private companies’ offshore strategies and interests. Finally, the article outlines the prospective development of the Russian Arctic offshore sector in relation to the energy sector development in other Arctic states, as well as with the on-going changes in the global energy markets.

Conclusion

In general, the offshore energy development in Russia is characterized by rivalry within business and political structures and between them, although there are certain issues where everyone’s opinions coincide. The government, backed by the state-controlled companies Rosneft and Gazprom, follows a rather rigid stance towards preservation of the state monopoly on the offshore sector through privileges granted to Rosneft and Gazprom. A certain divergence from this position could be seen in the policy of Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, which lobbied for the
liberalization of the current subsoil legislation. The position is mostly backed by the strong necessity to speed up geological surveys and to re-orient energy production from the gradually depleting fields in West Siberia to new areas, including the Arctic continental shelf. It is rather doubtful that the government will expand the number of actors to conduct oil and gas exploitation on the shelf. There is a small possibility that the private companies will be allowed to conduct geological surveys under the joint agreement with Rosneft or Gazprom, while the state-owned companies will be responsible for extraction and production.

The political rivalry is also fueled by the hostile relations between Rosneft and Gazrom. While providing a certain degree of support to Rosneft, for instance, by allowing the TNK-BP company purchase, the President has leaned towards the protection of Gazprom’s gas export policy by stating that LNG export liberalization should not harm Gazprom’s export positions. Thus, a further expansion of Rosneft in the gas market and on the continental shelf, in particular, will depend on the ability of its President, Igor Sechin, to lobby its interests and influence the decisions of the President and the government concerning the future development of Gazprom and the energy sector as a whole.

At the same time, the rivalry brings into question the ability of Russia to effectively implement its energy policy and its goals of expanding exports to Asian markets. In reference to the offshore development, the main concerns are about the time-period for the start of the economic activity on the shelf and with its LNG production, and its existing risks and high costs. The uncertainties around LNG export liberalization and the tough stance taken by Gazprom to preserve its export monopoly also bring into question the possibility of the Yamal LNG project coming into realization by 2017. In addition, there are doubts concerning the feasibility of Gazprom’s Vladivostok LNG project and Rosneft’s Sakhalin LNG project due to high costs and the existing uncertainty with the gas export markets.

The question also exists concerning the impact of cooperation with foreign companies on the future development of the Russian energy sector and on the ability of the state-controlled companies to independently carry out economic activities on the shelf in the future. For now, it seems that the companies are trying to stake offshore sites in the Arctic, considering offshore extraction from a long-term perspective.

Summing up, the uncertainties described above towards internal energy policy development and competition for resources and political sphere of influence inside Russia could lead to a situation where the country will weaken and possibly will lose its position as a main energy exporter to the European and prospective Asian markets. The critical challenge for Russia lies not in growing competition from other energy export countries; rather it is the inability of the state to effectively tackle the current problem of gradual depletion of its West Siberian fields. Thus, the state is facing a critical necessity in clearly defining its energy strategy and undertaking bold
steps to introduce changes into the current state of affairs in the Russian energy sector.


Abstract:

This paper attempts to consider a fundamental problem of ensuring sustainable development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the context of expanding economic activity. In August 2017, the new edition of the Russian state program on the Arctic's socio-economic development was released. At present, this is the main document regarding the development of the Arctic territories of Russia. The main idea of this document and the future law “On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation” is to create support zones, which will be complex projects of social and economic development of the Arctic territories where the Northern Sea Route will become the main navigable artery and the central project. According to the state program, one of the main tasks of the support zones is the use of best practices for creating favorable living conditions for the residents. This paper will examine the Russian Arctic's challenges and opportunities regarding sustainable development, including an analysis of the recent Russian plans in relation to the territorial development.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The 1992 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, following the Bruntland Commission, recognized the so-called sustainable development “that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). Since then, the concept of sustainable development has acquired global significance. It is a fundamental problem of our time. This concept is indeed applicable to such an essential region as the Arctic. Since its foundation in 1996, the Arctic Council has aimed to integrate sustainable development to the main areas of its activities. The forum unites the efforts of the eight member states to solve the challenges of the Arctic region to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the ecosystems and peoples living in the area. Therefore, the sustainable development of the Arctic is a global objective and requires the establishment of international cooperation.

Finland’s Chairmanship platform in the Arctic Council states that “the human dimension of the Arctic Council’s work covers such areas as health, water, energy, infrastructure, and Indigenous cultures and languages, and thus contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations
2030 Agenda. Finland proposes to explore how the SDGs can be further used in strengthening the economic and social progress and cultural self-expression of Arctic communities” (High North News, 2017). Meanwhile, the current global warming has economic consequences which could be beneficial for the Arctic states. A recent launch of industrial development in the Arctic shows the growing interest toward transport and energy opportunities in the region. Economic indicators are increasing; however, the growth of industry could lead to a high degree of negative impacts on the environment and residents.

The concept of the Russian Federation’s transition to sustainable development was released in 1996. Since the 2000s, there has not been a single document approved by Russia in the title of which there was a reference to “sustainable development.” It is especially interesting because Russia has declared a new stage of Arctic development. The new edition of the state program of 2014 “Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025” (State Program) was published in August 2017. The updated State Program outlines the country’s major plans for the Arctic territories, and sets out complex projects for the social and economic development of the region.

**Economic Development of the Russian Arctic**

The Arctic has always been a reserve of natural resources for Russia. Since the 1930s, during the Second World War and then the Cold War, in connection with the international situation, the country’s economy began to need natural resources badly. So, in the 1920’s and 1930’s in the USSR, a program of government events was organized to study and develop the so-called Far North. The Soviet Union was eager to discover the resources of the rich Arctic quickly. There were issued orders for the construction of mines, power plants and factories near the Arctic deposits. Soviet development of the Arctic was intensive, large-scaled and based on free labor. In 1931, the first oil field in the Russian Arctic, Chibyiskoye, was discovered in the Komi Republic. In 1932, the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (Glavsevmorput) was created by the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR. The new directorate was entrusted with the economic development of the Arctic and navigation on the Northern Sea Route (NSR), as well as the organization of geological work, and exploration of minerals in the Arctic. The first head of the Glavsevmorput, Otto Schmidt, was appointed a polar explorer, who in the same year made passage on the NSR on the icebreaker “Sibiryakov” for the first time in one navigation, of 65 days. In 1937 the first flight over the North Pole was made, and the first drifting scientific station “North Pole” was settled. In total, 31 drifting stations were organized in the USSR, and they functioned until 1991. The program relaunched in 2003. In the 1930s Arctic seaports (Igarka (1931), Tiksi (1933), Dixon (1934), Dudinka (1935)), cities and new settlements were constructed. The USSR used prisoners of the Gulag as free labor. Thus, the prisoners built such Arctic cities as Dudinka, Vorkuta, Inta, Pechora as well as such industrial enterprises as the
Norilsk Mining and Metallurgical Combine in 1935 and the Kapitalnaya mine in Vorkuta in 1937 and so on. In the second half of the 20th century, the most abundant hydrocarbon deposits were found. In the 1960’s and 1970’s they were discovered on the coastal territory—Urengoy (1966), Yamburg (1969), Bovanenkovo (1971), etc., in the 1980s hydrocarbons were found on the Arctic shelf—Shtokmanovskoe (1988), Prirazlomnoye (1989), etc. As a result, during the period from the 1920s to the 1980s, the Soviet Arctic has become a circumpolar region with the most significant number of cities in the world.

Today, the Arctic region is one of the priority directions of Russia’s internal policy, including social and economic development as well as international cooperation. However, the legal status of the Russian Arctic zone and its borders are not yet defined precisely. The framework law on the Arctic zone in the USSR and then in the Russian Federation was not released despite attempts to accept it. Today legal relations in the Russian Arctic are regulated by more than 500 documents (Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, 2017, October 10). A draft law “On the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation” has been in progress for five years, and its consideration is continuously postponed. However, it may be submitted to the government in 2018.

Today, Russia’s Arctic strategy is determined by three documents: Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and beyond (2008); The Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation development and national security system for the period till 2020 (2013); The new edition of 2017 of the state program of “Socio-economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation for the period till 2025” (2014).

In Russia, the concept of “sustainable development” is interpreted differently. There is no comprehensive understanding of all aspects of sustainable development. For example, in the State Program on the Arctic, the word “sustainable” is used 16 times on 140 pages of text. Five times the phrase “sustainable development” is used in different contexts: “sustainable development of the nuclear weapons complex,” “sustainable development of indigenous peoples,” “sustainable development of related industries,” “sustainable development goals and human well-being,” “sustainable development of regional ecosystems.” Thus, the State Program on the Arctic does not define what is meant by the term “sustainable development.” The authors of the State Program either did not set the task of articulating the principles of “sustainable development” or there is no clear understanding of what “sustainable development” is. At the same time, the authors consider this term to be applicable in completely different contexts. However, in the Russian terminology the closest term to “sustainable development” is usually the term “socio-economic development.”

The main idea of the State Program is a creation of so-called support zones – comprehensive social and economic development projects aimed at achieving strategic interests and ensuring national security. There are eight support zones
identified based on the existing administrative-territorial division of the Russian Arctic zone (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, August 31). It is interesting that Russian regions work out these support zones, not federal authorities. Articles of the State Program about the support zones will be included in the future law “On the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.” As of now the State Program can be considered as the primary document reflecting Russian plans in the Arctic zone.

Thus, industrial development is the cornerstone of Russia’s Arctic strategy. The primary task of creating the support zones is the exploitation of mineral resources. According to the State Program, “almost two thirds of all projects are directly related to the development of the mineral resource base” (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, August 31). Mineral raw centers with their infrastructure will be developed within the support zones. The most significant projects are the seaport of Sabetta on the Kara Sea in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District, which already began operating in December 2017, and is expected to become the most significant logistics hub of the NSR. One of the essential parts of this hub must be the Northern Latitudinal Railway (707 km), which will connect for the first time the Trans-Siberian Railway with the Northern Sea Route. It should be noted that this is a project of Soviet designers of Stalin’s time. The completion of the railway construction launched in May 2018 is planned by 2022. The project also has a social significance: about 300,000 new jobs can be created in the Arctic and the Urals. Another important project in Sabetta is the Yamal liquefied natural gas (Yamal-LNG) plant which opened in December 2017.

The Northern Sea Route will become the most significant project. It should unite all the subjects of the Russian Federation that participate in the development of the Arctic because “the formation and functioning of the support zones are planned to be carried out in close connection with the Northern Sea Route” (ibid). By 2021, Russia plans to build three new nuclear icebreakers of Project 22220. The main icebreaker “Arctic” will float out in 2019, “Siberia” in 2020, and “Ural” in 2021. Russia does not limit the passage of foreign ships on the NSR, but starting in 2017 the right to transport hydrocarbons remains exclusively for Russian vessels (Government of the Russian Federation, 2017, December 26). As Vladimir Putin said in the message from the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, by 2025 the cargo traffic on the Northern Sea Route should grow by ten times – up to 80 million tons per year (Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, 2018, March 1). In March 2017, the government was instructed to work out the issues of creating a separate institution who will be responsible for the integrated development of the Northern Sea Route and Arctic territories, including the development of infrastructure and all the services required. At the moment, there is no special ministry responsible for the Development of the North and the Arctic in Russia. The leadership over Arctic issues at different times has been exercised by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. However, the creation of a new ministry would require much effort and money, therefore it is
uncertain when this will happen. Last year, it was announced that a decision has been made to entrust the Arctic to the Rosatom Corporation, whose structure includes Atomflot with its icebreakers. Rosatom might soon gain control over the development of the NSR and the coastal areas of the Arctic.

Moreover, a separate section of the State Program on the Arctic prescribes plans for the development of the Russian Far East, which includes two Arctic regions—Yakutia and Chukotka. This combination is not accidental. After the presidential elections in 2018, Yuri Trutnev was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister of Russia responsible for both regions’ development—the Russian Far East and the Arctic. He was previously responsible for the development only of the Far East. In September 2018, Trutnev also headed the State Commission for Arctic Development. In connection with his appointment, we can assume that not only the Far East but also the Arctic will become a megaproject of Russia.

The State Program emphasized that public-private partnership must be a relevant tool for implementing the social and economic development of the Russian Arctic zone. The mechanism of public-private partnership was used in such megaprojects as the APEC meeting 2012 in Vladivostok, the Olympic Games 2014 in Sochi, and the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018; now the same development tool is being introduced for the development of the Russian Far East with the Arctic. The Far East is a priority, and the Arctic has an applied significance. The Ministry of Economy of the Russian Federation does not single out the Arctic in a separate macro-region in the draft of the Strategy of Spatial Development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025. In this strategy, the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation is distributed among four macro-regions—the North, North-West, West-Siberia and Far East. However, in the development of the Far East, the situation is unusual, because Russia is oriented towards foreign investors, primarily Asian ones. Russia’s “Turn to the East” (from 2013) as well as Western sanctions (since 2014) predetermined the development of Russia’s international cooperation with the countries of Northeast Asia—China, Japan and South Korea. In turn, the interest of Asian countries in the NSR is enormous. Their main attention is paid to the development of the transit possibilities of the Arctic. In this case, the Far East can become an outpost of Russia’s Arctic strategy in relations with Northeast Asia. To develop the Far East, Russia should take in consideration the wishes of these countries. Western sanctions on Russia have become an obstacle to possible investment projects, including the Arctic. At the same time, a possibility of cooperation with Russia remains, in the case of interest from the Western partners. Strong examples of this can be the participation of the French Total in the Yamal-LNG project or gold mining in Chukotka by the Canadian company Kinross Gold. Russia is open to collaborating with any potential partner, but the problem lies in excessive bureaucracy and the lack of a unified mechanism. The idea for a “one-window” mechanism is proposed to solve these issues.
Conclusion

The primary challenge for both social and economic development of Russia’s Arctic zone is an outflow of residents since the 1990s. Russia has set the task of keeping and attracting residents to the Arctic. There are discussions on this topic. Scientific research on human capital and human potential are in progress. It is necessary to increase the attractiveness of the region despite its harsh climatic conditions. Tools of attraction are an improvement of the living standards of the residents (an increase of salaries, benefits, compensations, and so on), and the creation of a comfortable infrastructure for housing and communications, which is impossible without socio-economic development. Therefore, in the State Program, the first object is the improvement of the quality of human life. It appears that Russia figures the development of social infrastructure is closely linked to the creation of industrial facilities. Russia needs to pay attention to the social dimension of sustainable development of its Arctic zone because those northern residents are the guarantor of its national security. Their presence in the Arctic zone provides Russia with its ability to exercise control over these vast territories. Also, more than 2 million residents of the Russian Arctic have a unique experience of survival in a severe climate.

At the same time, environmental security is a pressing issue. Russia recognizes the accumulated environmental damage as a critical problem. Since 2012, the “general cleaning” of the Arctic territories from the debris of the Soviet legacy has been taking place. The fact that Russia’s economy sank into a deep depression in the 1990s is one more reason behind the pollution, besides Soviet industrial development. The accumulated environmental damage in the Russian Arctic is not only a result of industrial activity, but also of human activity abandoned by residents after their massive outflow from the Arctic in 1990s. In recent years, the President and the government are monitoring that project. Russia continues to clean up the Arctic, but it is not enough. There is a lack of funds to do it rapidly. We can assume that Russia could associate with the international environmental community to find some solutions to this problem.

Russia has an apparent imbalance preferring economic development, rather than sustainable development as yet. It is very unfortunate that the environmental dimension of sustainable development remains in the shadow of statements about socio-economic development. There are concerns about environmental security arising from a new stage in the socio-economic development of Russia’s Arctic zone. Fears arise in particular from the pre-existing experience of large-scale Soviet development of the Arctic. So, it is necessary to establish a special regime for nature management, environmental protection, and pollution monitoring in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. However, Russia has an opportunity to engage in the process of developing a concept of sustainable development for the Arctic through the Arctic Council. The Sustainable Development Working Group proposes to
consider the Arctic zone as an indicator of environmental conditions which gives a signal to the rest of the world about the impact of global processes (Kharlampyeva, 2010: 214). Environmental aspects should be central to the sustainable development of the Arctic. Current environmental issues exist in all circumpolar countries. Therefore, it is necessary to establish deeper international environmental cooperation. Indeed, creating an effective system of sustainable development is possible only with the participation of all eight Arctic states (Young, 1998; Dodin, 2005).

Meanwhile, the Northern Sea Route is the primary goal of the socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. First, the NSR will develop as a transport and logistics sector between Asia and Europe. Second, it will act as a service sector in the framework of major energy projects. Russia undertakes to restore its infrastructure on the NSR because it has the longest coastline in the Arctic Ocean. The melting of the Arctic ice cap opens opportunities for Russia regarding the development of the Northern Sea Route. Opening access to the Arctic sea routes may allow Russia to develop as a maritime power. Merchant ships can begin to navigate, accompanied by icebreakers, through the Arctic, including across the North Pole. However, it is necessary to develop international cooperation to build all the logistics, as well as provide opportunities for rapid emergency response, and support commercial activity. In particular, Russia cannot implement its politics in the Arctic region without cooperation with other member states of the Arctic Council. The Arctic challenges are the shared responsibility between the circumpolar states. On the one hand, Russia’s State Program notes the importance of international cooperation within the organizations which are mandated to address Arctic issues. On the other, it is already clear that a special place in Russia’s international cooperation in the Arctic region will be occupied by the countries of North-East Asia. In particular there are great hopes associated with China. But it’s clear that the Arctic is a region of international cooperation for Russia.

“Problems of unconventional gas resources production in arctic zone -Russia-,” Zyrin Viacheslav and Ilinova Alina, Espacios, 25 May 2018 [68]
http://www.revistaespacios.com/a18v39n42/a18v39n42p17.pdf

Abstract:
This paper is aimed to underline strategic importance of the Arctic as a wealth of petroleum and mineral resources. One of the most potential nonconventional sources of natural gas is gas hydrates, which impressive resources are concentrated in the Arctic Zone. The paper in general presents main characteristics of the Russian Arctic and gas recourses. Then we present some economic issues of gas hydrates production and it is paid special attention to environmental regulation of natural recourses production.

Current & Relevant Information:
Introduction

Russia is one of the most important players in the Arctic Zone with wide range of economic, security and political interests in the region. Arctic is a wealth of petroleum, gas and other mineral resources. From being regarded almost like a restricted area, the Arctic has become a global economic, ecological and social concern (Moe, 2016). In 2008, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimated that the Arctic might contain 13% of the world’s undiscovered oil and 30% of its undiscovered gas (Gautier, 2009). Of these hydrocarbon resources, 84% were believed to be offshore and most of them are not distributed: the highest concentrations are expected to be in north of Alaska and in the western part of Russia (Moe, 2016).

Oil and gas resources are vital to Russian national security and economy; oil and gas alone account for roughly 20-25% of Russian GDP (Simola, 2013).

Arctic has been proclaimed as the resource base of the twenty-first century (Moe, 2016). The Russian Arctic shelf in the future can become the main source of hydrocarbons for both Russia and the world market in the whole. Its industrial development in some circumstances (oil and gas prices, new knowledge and technologies, legal framework, etc.) may compensate decrease in oil and gas production in the old deposits in Russia (Western Siberia). The special role is assigned to up-to-date extraction technologies and oil and gas recovery technologies, providing energy effectiveness and ecology safety [Cherepovitsyn, 2016; Zyrin, 2016; Nikolaev, 2016] and also to extraction of nonconventional oil and gas resources. One of the most important nonconventional sources of natural gas is gas hydrates (GH).

Gas hydrates are crystalline gas and water compounds with a variable composition. According to various estimates, natural gas hydrates contain about 2,000-5,000 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Most part of these gas resources is concentrated in the Arctic Zone. According to Russian estimates, up to 1,000 trillion cubic meters of gas hydrates may be present in the Russian Arctic (Youkashev, 2015).

In this paper we would like to pay special attention to the technologies providing gas hydrates production in the Arctic Zone and to the ecological aspect of this activity.

Conclusions

In the whole, at this stage the Russian Federation largely keeps up from the European countries and USA in the sphere of environmental issues, that is why close cooperation with international ecological organizations can have a positive effect both on the development of the national science and in this area, and on the improvement of new ecologically friendly technologies. Active ecological policy in respect of distinguishing technologies for oil and gas production in the Arctic will help to save ecosystems of the most important strategic region of the Russian Federation.
and the whole world for the further effective and sustainable development of the territories.

Gas hydrates are one of promising nonconventional sources of gas in the long-term period. In this regard issues of development of ecologically safe technologies which will allow to get gas hydrates is especially relevant. The ecological risks are the main point for future gas hydrate production, and technological progress should be based on the ecological safety, and could be provided in the following ways:

1. Government and public control for any implemented Arctic hydrate recovery technologies
2. Complex research of drilling process for GH formation
3. Proved by numerical researches and simulation, field test efficiency and safeness of implemented technologies for Arctic deposits
4. Careful technology control – control for formation condition, gas production rates prevention of creating so called gas-hydrate bomb
5. Control on hydrate decomposition and gas releasing through evaporation
6. Exclude aggressive inhibitors-based technologies for Arctic zone
7. Careful control for heating methods, preventing heating of near layers.


Abstract:
The aim of the article is to develop the methodology of economic estimation of risks when exploring shelf deposits of the Ob Bay in the Arctic Region of Russia. It considers various methods of accounting and economic estimation of risks: Sensitivity analysis, scenarios method, imitation modeling, and the method of real options. Calculations and the conclusion about the most rational method for calculating sea Arctic projects were made. This method of real options allows to take into account peculiarities of venture projects. This work is practically important because the offered methodology can be applied for all gas-and-oil deposits at the Arctic shelf of Russia that have been actively developed over the last decade.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
Over a recent decade due to a number of unique gas-and-oil deposits the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation has been attracting a great attention of Russian and foreign extracting companies. In spite of the temporary decrease in prices for hydrocarbons on the world market related to political reasons more than to economic regulation, the shelf deposits of the Russian Arctic are promising for the exploitation in the coming decades. “Energy Strategy of Russia up to 2030” proves this. So, in case of stabilization of the price for oil on the level of USD 100 per barrel, it is possible to speak about the reasonability to introduce large-scale projects of gas and oil exploration in the Arctic shelf of Russia (Kursky and Kurskaya, 2001; Cherepovitsyn et al., 2012).

Today the first developing Arctic deposit is Prirazlomnoye in the Pechora Sea. Oil started appearing from it in 2014. However, in the future it is planned to explore other deposits, too (Facts. The Norwegian Petroleum Sector, 2014; Smith and Lalwani, 1991; Azarnov, 2001).

The group of deposits located in the Ob Bay of the Kara Sea is extremely promising for exploration. This group includes such deposits as Severo-Kamenomysskoye, Kamenomysskoye-more and Chugoriahinskoye deposits. The deposits of this group are located in the basin of the Ob Bay of the Kara Sea. The depth of the sea in this area is approximately 6 m (Bobylev, 2006; Gasprom and OJSC, n.d.).

However, due to natural and climate, technical and technological, financial and other difficulties, Arctic gas-and-oil projects are extremely risky. In order to objectively estimate all possible risks and develop the program of their leveling, it is necessary to develop special tools (Zakharov, 2002; Zakharov and Nikitin, 2003; Zakharov and Kholodilov, 2002; Zakharov et al., 2004; Kostenko, 2009).

Generally, risks estimation is the process of defining the probability of occurrence of risk factors - specific events or situations that can affect the development of the project (business) and achievement of the target results.

Risks estimation consists of defining unfavorable factors and situations whose occurrence is theoretically possible (qualitative analysis), and quantitative estimation of the damage from their occurrence (quantitative analysis) (Berlin et al., 2003a; Berlin et al., 2003b; Grigorenko, 2006).

The task of the qualitative analysis of risk is to reveal the sources and reasons of risk, stages and works whose performance is assisted by risks, i.e.:

- Determining potential zones of risk
- Revealing risks associated with the enterprise activity, and
- Forecasting practical benefits and possible negative consequences of the revealed risks occurrence.
The main task of this stage of estimating gas-and-oil projects is to reveal basic types of risks that influence financial and economic activity of the gas-and-oil producing complex.

**Conclusion**

As a conclusion, we would like to note that the offered methods used for risk estimation characterize the risks in terms of the impact of factors of inner and outer circle on the target indicator of the estimation of the investment project efficiency. In the present work we have made a detailed analysis of the methods that are the most actively used, developed algorithms of applying these methods, and offered the modification of the scenario’s method. The latter means more serious working out of the obtained data and development of the most probable forecasts. Further work at this theme assumes full comprehensive estimation of the risk that includes such stages as identification, quantitative and qualitative estimation of possible damage as well as selection of the risks management method and determining the combination of measures required for decreasing the risk level and minimizing the supposed damage.


http://library.vscc.ac.ru/Files/articles/1575974920_2543_eng.pdf

Abstract:

Settlement in new regions of the Russian North, available for new economic exploitation, started at the beginning of the 20th century: the exploration of mineral deposits, its mining and shipment into southern regions commenced at the same time. Experience of building cities as trade and industrial centers, marine ports, and military settlements, which was acquired in the 18th–19th centuries, was insufficient. It was necessary to define forms of settlement, quantitative parameters of emerging communities, and convenience of the latter. Discussions and knowledge acquisition resulted in a consent to build permanently populated large cities. It was suggested to build basic cities in the North and pivotal cities, which would have infrastructural functions, in nearby areas. Quantitative guidelines on population numbers for each type of settlement were proposed: pivotal cities – 300 thousand residents, basic cities – 80-150 thousand people, industrial cities – 15-30 thousand inhabitants, watch and expeditionary villages – 3-5 thousand people. After making the Arctic Zone in the Russian North the independent management unit consisting of nine pivotal areas, it became necessary to justify settlement framework, which would meet new requirements. Thus, the purpose of this article is to develop the methodology of calculating the Index of Pivotal Settlement which would allow us to classify an urban settlement as a multifunctional pivotal settlement, a pivotal settlement, a potential pivotal settlement, and as a settlement which does not meet criteria of a pivotal one. The creation of this index is based on three methodological
principles: complexity, consistency, and account of agglomeration effect. The calculation of the index of the Arctic pivotal settlements is carried out due to the concept of demographic gravitation. Acquired results would allow each Arctic pivotal area to determine pivotal settlements, and the centers of surrounding areas development.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**Introduction**

It is difficult to overestimate the role of the Arctic in the country’s economic development. 90.4% of the whole Russia’s natural gas amount was mined here, as well as 24.7% of associated gas, 17.6% of oil, and 10.8% of iron ore concentrate. Also, more than 50% of platinum, nickel, cobalt, copper, 15.0% of fish and fishery products were produced here.

The formation of the settlement system in Northern and Arctic regions was conducted in several steps. The period of the 1930s was experimental in terms of building cities and urban-typed settlements (UTS). The 1940s could be characterized by rapid increase in the North economic development rates. In the following years, together with industrial and urban development, a broad geological search was continuing and new, unique deposits were discovered. The settlement of the Far North regions in 1970s was influenced by science and technology development.

The focal settlement structure, which has a pattern of territorial expansion on the basis of socio-economic relations between industrial centers and economically developed areas of the middle zone, is the characteristic of the early North exploration period. Due to unfavorable natural and climatic conditions, and high expenditures on all sorts of manufacturing works, social infrastructure, and personnel maintenance, continuous territorial Arctic development has never happened. Besides, it is prohibited because of the environmental reasons. Thus, the focal settlement type, which is based on large strategic mineral deposits, is and will be the only option for the Arctic.

V.I. Kondrat'eva notes that “space characteristics typical of the Russian region of the Arctic, such as focal-dispersed settlement nature, underdevelopment of road and transport infrastructure, extremely high costs of life support, due to extreme climatic conditions, show the advantage of this territorial approach, which purpose is the resource investment into pivotal settlement and infrastructural frameworks’ development”.

The model of pivotal settlements based on the concept of demographic gravitation is presented in this paper. Pivotal network should contribute to Russia’s economic development and comfortable life of population in the Russian region of the Arctic. Special attention is given to the study of the longtime practice of building settlements
for the permanent population residence. It is different from foreign practice which is based on the building of temporary settlements.

In 2010s, approaches toward the Russian North development went through significant changes: attention was shifted to the Arctic space rather than the exploration of all Northern territories. Out of 11,931,100 sq. km of the Russian North, 3,754,600 sq. km (31.5%), which make up AZRF (Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation) land territories, were given special attention. 2,406,400 mil. people, or 24.3% (out of 9,920,920 mil. northerners) became residents of the Arctic.

Nowadays, most northern strategies and development programs are aimed at the Arctic. Authorities’ attitude toward northern territories also changed. The former strategy “from exploration to habitation” has transformed into “the transition from the residence policy to the policy of non-indigenous population staying in the Far North” approach. It makes studies on the watch-based method of labor organization, on the network of pivotal settlements justification, and centers of arctic space development relevant.

The research on settlement network transformation from small villages to pivotal and basic cities was analyzed within the methodology of “spatial development”, which can be defined as coordinated progressive changes in the development and reproduction of natural resources, the placement and internal maintenance of productive powers, in the population settlement, and the construction of the living environment.

The subject of the research is the Russian region of the Arctic within borders defined by the President of the Russian Federation in his Decree 287 dated 27.06.2017. In 2019, eight uluses of Sakha Republic (Yakutia), which are not analyzed in the article, were included into AZRF. The goal of the research is to develop a methodology for calculating the Index of Pivotal Settlement which would allow relating an urban settlement: to a multifunctional pivotal settlement, to a pivotal settlement, to a potential pivotal settlement, to a settlement which does not meet criteria of a pivotal one. The following goals were set: to analyze the transformation of the settlement system in the Russian region of the Arctic, to examine the modern approaches to the settlement of the Russian North, to analyze the dynamics of population and urban settlements in the Russian region of the Arctic, to develop a method and algorithm of calculating the pivotal settlements index, and to arrange urban settlements in the Russian region of the Arctic according to criteria of pivotal settlements.

The informational basis of the study is represented by the Russian Federal State Statistics Service data, which include a database of municipalities’ indicators, official websites of cities and villages, websites of authorities and state organizations, databases of geographical data, regional and federal legal acts.

Conclusions
A number of conclusions and suggestions can be drawn from the analysis:

1. It is proved that Arctic cities should have limits of growth: the optimal size of urban settlements is in the range of 50–100 thousand inhabitants; it is recommended not to form new permanent settlements in areas with unfavorable medical and geographical conditions;

2. For the future, authorities suggest the transition from the residence policy to the policy of non-indigenous population staying in the Far North;

3. It is necessary to improve the division of labor between the Northern regions and the main settlement areas, to develop the pivotal centers of Northern development in them; the procession of the “Northern resources” is available in basic settlements, located in the middle North;

4. Taking into account the new role of the Arctic in socio-economic development of Russia, the negative trends of decreasing number of settlements' population, we grouped arctic cities and UTSS according to the pivotal settlement criteria with the help of suggested algorithm of PSI calculation. It allowed us to suggest development centers for each pivotal zone of the Arctic. The basic settlements, having special value, but meeting the criteria of basic settlements, are proposed for several PZ (Igarka, Tiksi, Anadyr, and Pevek).

The scientific and practical relevance of the work is the formalization of the “pivotal settlement” concept, which can be used in the development of strategic documents on the Arctic territories' exploration and the spatial development of Russia.

Further studies should focus on the formation of public policy measures for the optimal management of the demographic and labor potential of each analyzed settlement group.

“Organizational Mechanisms for Implementing Russia’s Arctic Strategy in the 21st Century,” Konstantin S. Zaikov, et al., Arctic and North, 2020 [71]

Abstract:
The Arctic in the 21st century remains a popular topic in the natural-scientific, economic, socio-humanitarian, and political spheres. The relevance of studying the Arctic is determined by the fact that in recent decades, deep and irreversible transformations have taken place in this region, and a full understanding of the causes and consequences of which for the economy and environmental management has not yet developed. As a result of climate change and globalization, there is a growing interest in the Arctic macro-region on the part of many foreign
countries that developed strategies and programs for the development of national Arctic zones at the beginning of the XXI century. Against the background of global competition for resources and transport communications, it seems relevant to analyze the features of the development of Russia's state policy for managing the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the XXI century. The article analyzes the mechanisms of implementation of Russian state policy in the Arctic based on the strategic planning system and reveals the bottlenecks in the system of state management of the Arctic region. It is concluded that the core of Russia's policy in the Arctic is innovative modernization that can ensure sustainable socio-economic development, infrastructure development, rational use of natural resources, protection of local ecosystems and development of indigenous communities.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The Arctic is a high-latitude region of the High North, except for the dry part, incl. the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the seas of the Arctic Ocean, as well as the outlying territories of North America and Eurasia.

The deep interest of Russia in the development of the High North and the Arctic has existed for centuries. Changing forms and priorities, it reached a level when the Arctic territories become one of the means of ensuring national security and sustainable socio-economic development of the state. The formation and scientific justification of the development priorities of the circumpolar territories of the Russian Federation is one of the critical tasks in the development and modernization of the economy. The role of science is increasing not only due to the influence of the natural-geographical factor in the Arctic region but also due to the differentiation of the natural and economic conditions of economic activity existing in this zone. Such distinction necessitates the development of specific Arctic-oriented regulatory legal documents to manage the development of the vast and non-standard Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (the Russian Arctic, the Arctic zone).

A study of the directions and problems of the development of the Russian Arctic shows the significant role of geographical science in the development and solution of national economic issues. The geographic approach creates the opportunity to justify the sustainable socio-economic development of not only the Russian Arctic but the entire state. It formulates strategic benefits for Russia both within the circumpolar zone and the Eurasian continent, and in the global economic space.

Conclusion

Currently, the Arctic from the world periphery is turning into a zone of close attention to many countries. In the 21st century, in Russia, the development of the state policy for managing the Arctic zone continues non-standard, extensive, with vast distances, with extreme climatic and socio-economic conditions of management.
The regulation system for the development of the Russian Arctic is characterized by historical continuity, and now it fits into the federal system of strategic planning. According to Decree of the Government of Russia dated December 26, 2015 No. 1449, action plans for the development of the Russian Arctic are reflected in the activity plans of the federal executive bodies, which should include a schedule of activities for the implementation of strategic planning documents. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation “On the organization of project activities in the Government of Russia”. In conjunction with the order of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation dated April 14, 2014 No. 26R-AU “On the Approval of Methodological Recommendations for the Implementation of Project Management in Executive Bodies”, they allow managing the development of the Russian Arctic on the principles of project management, incl. the formation and implementation of support development zones in the Arctic.

In current conditions, the task of adapting to the global economic trends in the economies of the Arctic regions of the Russian Federation, and state support for private and state projects for the development of the Arctic space is of particular importance. Currently, unified approaches to providing such support for projects implemented in the Russian Arctic are not developed. The solution to the problem may be the formation of support zones of development, which should ensure the establishment of a multiplicative effect not only for the Arctic but also for nearby territories. Thanks to measures of state and corporate support, the core of Russia’s policy in the Arctic is knowledge, innovative modernization in the name of national security interests, sustainable nature management, conservation of unique ecosystems, and the viability of local communities.

The basis of state policy aimed at sustainable socio-economic development of the Arctic region should be based on the following approaches:

• development of research activities, i.e., accumulation of knowledge about climate change, the impact of these processes on the socio-economic systems of the Arctic;

• resource efficiency, i.e., integrated extraction and use of fuel and energy, mineral and raw materials, aquatic biological and tourist and recreational resources;

• environmental conservation: the use of Arctic-oriented ecological standards and technologies, incl. international standards for assessing the environmental impact of ongoing and planned business activities;

• human orientation: provision to the public, incl. indigenous people, opportunities to meet social and cultural needs, the involvement of indigenous representatives in the process of making managerial decisions in the field of nature management and socio-economic development of their territories;
• innovation: creative solutions and innovative technologies based on international experience, interdisciplinary research, and education will ensure the safety of the population. Re-search superiority, the pace of creating new knowledge, and introducing innovative products into production are critical factors in ensuring the competitiveness and sustainable development of the Russian Arctic.

It seems appropriate to develop further Arctic-oriented approaches to the development of programs, regulatory legal, tax, financial, economic and administrative-organizational mechanisms to ensure the effective development of the Arctic spaces, attract investment, protect national interests, create new highly qualified jobs, and develop infrastructure, ecological safety of the population and the environment in the Arctic macro-region.

At the same time, the prevailing trends in the socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic, the need to diversify the region’s economy, and attract investments against the backdrop of sanctions and budgetary constraints determine the need to find new effective approaches to managing the region.


Abstract:

This article is devoted to the study of the investments and their transformation in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the conditions of the crisis of the last decade. Current studies indicate the occurred as a result of economic shocks aimed at the implementation of the state Arctic policy, as well as the need for financial and technological constraints that require a retrospective analysis of investment activity in the Arctic zone. The study of investments in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in 2008-2017 has four stages identified: 2008 2010; 2011 2012; 2013 2014; 2015 2017. One may see that investments in the Russian Federation are due to quite sharp fluctuations and their uneven distribution across regions. The most significant volumes of Russian investments in the first phase were typical for regions partially located in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, and now for entirely Arctic areas. The same situation was until 2014 with foreign investments in the Arctic. However, after the start of the “sanctions war,” we observed a turning point. Foreign investments in the Arctic areas of the Russian Federation significantly decreased. The decline continues to this day. Predicted options for further investment development in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation have an adverse scenario for the national economy.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
The Arctic is one of the most resource-rich regions in the world, incl. hydrocarbons, which is of fundamental importance for the world community in the context of the gradual exhaustion of the continental resources. According to geologists, the Arctic disposes of about a quarter of global oil and natural gas reserves. Almost 75% of them are on the shelf of the Arctic Ocean. At the same time, the Russian Federation enjoys the most significant resource potential in the Arctic. The principal reserves of which are on the Arctic continental shelf (mainly in the waters of the Barents, Pechora and Kara seas). According to Russian scientists, “the reserves of oil, natural gas, and gas condensate in the Russian Arctic basin are comparable to the hydrocarbon provinces of the Middle East and Western Siberia and are more than 280 billion tons”. Also, the Arctic is rich with the other natural resources: the largest deposits of tin, nickel, lead, manganese, diamonds, etc.

Intensive reduction of sea ice, significantly accelerated over the past 30 years has opened up new opportunities for offshore mining and navigation development along the main Arctic transport corridors: The Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage. Thus, according to forecasts of American researchers from the University of California L. Smith and S. Stephenson, "due to the melting of an unprecedented amount of Arctic ice, the transport corridors in the Arctic Ocean will become more accessible by 2020, and shipping will be year-round by 2050".

Thus, the new resource and logistical opportunities opening in the Arctic were the immediate cause of a surge in interest worldwide for this unique macro-region and naturally led to increased international competition for the development of the Arctic. It has led to the urgent need to develop a fundamentally new state policy of Russia concerning its Arctic territories.

Conclusion

Investments in the Arctic has always been extraordinarily uneven and unstable. They are directly related to large-scale projects for the extraction and processing of hydrocarbons. In the future, this leads to an investment recession after such projects or their suspension due to external negative phenomena, incl. stricter sanctions against Russian oil and gas sector. It follows that a balanced investment development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation requires large-scale institutional changes in the state Arctic policy and investment policy that will help attract resources and promote their practical use.

4. Environmental Protection:

Abstract:

The consequences of global climate change are mostly portrayed as negative for environment and society, due to the warming in temperatures. However, there are certain benefits from this process as well. One of them is the opening of a polar shipping route between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The Northern Sea Route may cut travel time from Europe to Asia by 40% and allow Russia to export its vast natural resources much faster. Some expert assessments point out that remote northern Russian towns which have been experiencing economic depression in the transition period may turn to economic and social revival. But this process may entail new risks for fragile Arctic ecosystems and traditional nature management by Indigenous populations. Most discussions about Russia’s Northern Sea Route focus on shipping traffic, sea ice assessments and expected socio-economic benefits. However, assessments of the impact of further industrialization for the adjacent coastal zone ecosystems and northern residents are still inadequate. Thus, this paper is aimed not only at analyzing the Russian Arctic zone development strategy connected with the Northern Sea Route, but also to highlight the broad spectrum of human and environmental consequences of these activities. Among them, impacts on the economy (national and regional), the environment and population (effects caused by navigation activity and industrialization as well as risks for the coastal ecosystems and Indigenous people) will be assessed.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century the Arctic zone has attracted the attention of many states, including even those which are situated far from it (Germany, China, Japan etc.). This is explained by its richness in natural resources and cultural heritage, and its ecosystem functions and services which are important both at the regional and global scales. Russia is a northern state whose modern economy is closely connected with the economic development of the Russian Arctic zone (Overland, 2010; The Russian Federation Government Program, 2014). Its terrestrial limits were adopted after the President’s decree in 2014. According to the Russian Federation’s Policy for the Arctic to 2020 (2009), the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation includes a part of the Arctic which involves, in full or in part, the territories of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblasts (provinces), Krasnoyarsk Kray (provinces), Nenets, Yamal-Nenets and Chukchi autonomous districts, as well as internal maritime waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the Russian Federation adjoining such territories, areas and islands. The terrestrial area of the Arctic zone is about 3,700,000 km2 and the population is about 2.5 million (encompassing only 2% of the Russian population but more than half of the population of the global Arctic region) (Rosstat, 2015).
The impact of global climate change has certain benefits for the Arctic zone. One of them is the opening of a polar shipping route between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Several important documents concerning economic and social development of the Russian Arctic zone were adopted recently (SAP, 2009; State Program..., 2014; Strategic planning..., 2013; The Federal Law..., 2012; The rules..., 2013). Among the priority targets mentioned in those documents are the revival and development of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), commercial use of the new transport corridor, reconstruction of coastal infrastructure, development of innovation centers etc. (Figure 2) (State Program..., 2014). The NSR is defined as lying between the Kara Gate, at the western entry of the Novaya Zemlya straits, and the Provideniya Bay, at the southern opening of the Bering Strait, for a total length of 5,600 km. There are multiple shipping channels (lines), and the NSR crosses through waters of varying status: internal, territorial and adjacent waters, exclusive economic zone, and the open sea (The Northern Sea Route Administration, 2013). The NSR has been historically important to Russia both economically and socially, especially in the soviet period when it was used solely as a domestic sea route, being closed to international shipping. Today, under conditions of global warming as Arctic ice continues to melt, the NSR is becoming more accessible for navigation (Zalyvsky, 2015). Moreover, Russia has significant interest in transforming the NSR into a strategically important sea line of communication opened to international trade (Strategic planning..., 2013). The NSR may cut travel time from Europe to Asia by 40% and allow Russia to export its vast natural resources much faster (Zalyvsky, 2015). Some expert assessments point out that remote northern Russian towns that have been experiencing economic depression since the period of transition of the 1990s to the early 2000s, may potentially experience economic and social revival (Gordeev et al., 2011; Kuzmenko & Selin, 2014; Zalyvsky, 2015; Zelentsov, 2012). New economic clusters will be formed, including transportation, providing modern infrastructure.
At the same time all of the documents concerning economic and social development of the Russian Arctic zone mentioned above include special sections concerning the connected environmental and social aspects of the economic development plans. They outline activities directed at nature conservation and support for Indigenous populations. In this connection, it is necessary to study the possible negative effects on local populations for monitoring and control.

Most discussions about Russia’s NSR focus on shipping traffic and sea ice assessments and expected benefits (Lasserre, 2014; Meng et al., 2017). However, assessments of the impact of further industrialization at the adjacent coastal zone ecosystems and northern residents are still inadequate. Thus, the paper is aimed to analyze the Russian Arctic zone development strategy connected with the NSR and to highlight a broad spectrum of human and environmental consequences of these activities. Among them, the impact on the economy (national and regional) and environment (effects caused by navigation activity and risks for the coastal ecosystems) were assessed. In addition, the consequences that the process of Northern Sea Route development may entail for traditional nature management of Indigenous people as well as human health and well-being of other populations are analyzed.

The study presented in this paper is based on an analysis of Russian Federal and regional documents relevant to the topic. They include social-economic development
programs, Indigenous population support documents, regional reports on environment and human health assessments etc. (e.g., Russian Federation’s Policy for the Arctic to 2020 (2009), State Program “Social-Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation up to 2020”).

Conclusions

The activization of national and international interests in the Northern Sea Route occurred due to modern geopolitical processes and economic developments of the Arctic zone in the Russian Federation and worldwide. According to our analysis, the NSR renovation presents both benefits and problems in the coastal zone. Benefits are connected with the economic development of the Russian Arctic, an increase in international trade, the appearances of new employment opportunities for local populations, new technologies, etc. The integration of regional ports and towns within the NSR to the economic development of the Arctic, of course, will be essential for optimism and business promotion, the civic engagement of business and the local populations, and the formation of alternate public opinions about these remote territories (Zalyvsky, 2015). However, its development may also cause some negative impacts such as environmental degradation due to regular oil spills, deterioration of living conditions of local populations (i.e., local landowners, disruption of the traditional land use of the Indigenous population), increase security dilemmas and accelerate climate change (Heininen et al., 2014). New strategic development plans of the NSR’s development demonstrate awareness of these potential problems and outline general approaches to mitigate them. That is why the study of these problems is urgently needed now, in order to elaborate practical measures. Of special importance among them are detailed assessments of the adaptive capacity of traditional land users and the accumulated traditional knowledge for dealing with environmental risks, especially to loss of traditional culture and social identification. Based on the analysis of current state economic and political interests, one may conclude that Russia is open and willing for cooperation with foreign partners that can contribute to exploiting Arctic natural resources, developing sea routes and solving the numerous socioeconomic and environmental problems of the region (Heininen et al., 2014). One of them is appealing to the administration of the NSR as the main state supervisor and the subject of Arctic shipping organizations to ensure the rational use of the NSR, and provide for the ecological safety of the environment and local Arctic communities (Zalyvsky, 2015).

“On the development of the main research areas of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation,” Anatoly V. Shevchuk and Valentin V. Kurteev, Arctic and North, 2016 [74]  http://www.arcticandnorth.ru/upload/iblock/5cc/05_shevchuk_kurteev.pdf

Abstract:

The article is focused on the current research trends in the field of environmental protection and security in the Arctic. This means the development of Arctic
environmental safety strategies for the period until 2030, pollution and the environmental situation in the Russian Arctic, use of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for the major infrastructure projects in terms of their impact on the Arctic environment and the possible damage, an environmental atlas of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation within the project of the National Atlas of the Arctic. An assessment of the dumping impact (waste disposal in the sea) on the environment of the Arctic and indigenous peoples, taking into account the transboundary transfer of pollutants. All the tasks of the environmental damage elimination could be solved by special programs. The authors also formulated the possible outcomes of the proposed research in the Arctic.

Current & Relevant Information:

**Arctic Environmental Security Strategy until 2030**

Assessment of anthropogenic pollution and analysis of the environmental situation within the Russian Arctic reveals the most significant problems, solution of which determines the strategic directions for the Arctic environmental protection. These include:

a) The unsatisfactory condition of a number of areas outside the industrial zones on the Kola Peninsula and Taimyr, water objects, including sources of drinking water and poor quality of drinking water.

b) Threatened species diversity of flora and fauna, and especially the preservation of rare and endangered species, hunted species of animals, socially significant flora areas and berries.

c) Land degradation, including natural grasslands.

d) Cross-border pollution of the atmosphere and ocean.

e) Radioactive pollution of the environment.

Production and transportation of hydrocarbons in the Arctic regions of Russia and the basins of the major Siberian rivers create powerful anthropo-technological impact not only on terrestrial ecosystems, but also begin to exert significant pressure on the Arctic marine ecosystems through a system of river flow. Some inland areas of the Russian Arctic are characterized by strong transformation of the natural geochemical background, atmospheric pollution, degradation of vegetation cover, soil and ground, inclusion of pollutants in the food chains, increased morbidity of population.

There are four major areas of the environmental stress: Murmansk region (10% of the total emission of pollutants), Norilsk agglomeration (more than 30% of the total emission of pollutants), oil and gas fields in Western Siberia (30%) and the Arkhangelsk region (a high degree of pollution with so-called specific substances). Cities in Arctic zone are always present in the list of cities with significant air
Among the industries related to pollution, the first place is occupied by steel and mining in Norilsk, Monchegorsk, Pechenga, Zapolyarny, Olenegorsk, Kandalaksha, Talnakh, Kovdor, Deputatskoe, and others. Despite the economic downturn of the 1990s, the area of pollution is growing slowly due to the disproportionate reduce of production and inertness of natural processes. Centers of mining and metallurgical industry are characterized by elevated levels of toxic accumulation in ecosystems, increased morbidity, cancer and skin diseases. Mining and primary processing of raw materials in the Arctic leads to mechanical disturbance of soils mainly in the permafrost areas, as well as the pollution of underground and surface-waters with the air strontium compounds, heavy metals (especially mercury) and oil.

A particularly high load is observed in the tundra landscapes, forest tundra and northern taiga in Western Siberia and Bolshezemelskaya tundra. The number of accidents at the individual fields is not the same, but it is directly related to the size of deposits and consequently the overall of industrial facilities in its territory, duration of operation, the technical density loads on the territory. Each of them is a potential source of negative effects on the environment.

Annual number of leaks of oil carbohydrate is extremely high. Consequently, in the oil producing regions accumulate a significant amount of petroleum hydrocarbons and their contents in soil during the extraction and operation of pipeline systems. The volume of possible concentrations of the bituminous substances in soils of the northern Russia ranges from several g/kg to several hundred g/kg. The total load on the environment of the oil-producing companies, concentrated in the Arctic regions, determines the seriously threatening chronic pollution of the Arctic Ocean, which over time, with a high degree of probability, can lead to destabilization of the ice cover of the Arctic and the severe global consequences.

In order to resolve issues of environmental security in the Arctic, we need the efforts of not only of the Russian organizations but also countries interested in the development of the Arctic. Cooperation of the eight Arctic states officially began in 1989 when in Finland in Rovaniemi the Environmental Protection Conference took place and it was attended by ministers from Canada, Norway, the Soviet Union, the US, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland. The conference adopted environmental strategy for the Arctic and the founded an integrated approach to ecological cooperation in the region for the eight Arctic states.

Currently in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation it is planned to perform a large-scale infrastructure projects, as well as raising the level of hydrocarbon and bio-resource use, strengthening the national security. In this regard, it is relevant to unite the efforts of the authorities in the environmental protection of the Arctic. But the analysis of strategic documents issued by a number of Russian ministries and departments shows that the issues of environmental protection, ecological safety in the Arctic are poor reflected or do not visible at all.
Development of “Environmental Security Strategy of the work on the development of the Arctic for the period till 2030” will coordinate the activities of federal and regional authorities, sectoral ministries and organizations on the basis of the relevant program (subprogram), modern trends aimed at stabilization and rehabilitation of the Arctic environment, including the possibility of “green” economy, adaptation of people and industries to climate changes and attraction of business to address the elimination of accumulated environmental damage. At the same time, it should be noted that in the northern regions we already have similar types of documents.

**Conclusion**

Summarizing all said above, it is relevant to underline the following directions for research and environmental security measures in the Arctic:


2. Carrying out a strategic environmental assessment of policies and programs, large infrastructure projects in terms of their impact on the Arctic environment and possible damage.

3. Creating environmental unit within the National Atlas of the Arctic taking into account the areas of environmental sensitivity to oil spills and other negative impacts on the environment.

4. Evaluation of the impact of dumping on the Arctic environment, social and living conditions of indigenous peoples, taking into account the transboundary transport of pollutants.

5. Development of a program (subprogram) for elimination of accumulated environmental damage in the Arctic.

Implementation of the proposed research will contribute to:

a) improvement of the ecological status of the Russian Arctic and North;

b) the conservation of biological diversity;

c) the implementation of international commitments, improvement of the country’s environmental image;

d) the creation of conditions for replication of experience on cleaning the Arctic territories in other regions;

e) the effectiveness of the state property use (functioning of the Northern Sea Route, fisheries and eco-tourism).

“Introduction of Innovation Technology as a Factor in Environmental Modernization in Russian Arctic,” Svetlana Arturovna Lipina, Konstantin Sergeevich Zaikov, and Aleksandra Valerevna Lipina, Economic and Social
Abstract:

The paper considers the fundamentals of formation and realization of the modern Russian state environmental policy in the Arctic and analyzes environmental threats and challenges, including the impact of the mining and metallurgical complex on the environment. Coal industry and ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy are considered to be major producers and accumulators of waste. In the smelting of metals slags are formed, which are based on oxides. Sulfur oxides occupy one of the first places according to their negative impact on the environment. The present paper considers environmentally responsible business models in the Arctic, when the priority in management decisions is given to the issues of preserving nature and not just making profit. The main environmental issue is associated with the accumulation of waste in the places of concentration of objects of industry, transport, energy and social sphere in the confined spaces in those areas of the Arctic, where mineral deposits are exploited, raw materials are processed and transported. The industrial processing of secondary resources and recycling of sulfur in accordance with the principles of green production (recycling) are of special scientific interest. The authors propose the following innovative methods for solving the problems of ecological modernization in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation: utilization of sulfur-containing waste, recycling of technogenic wastes; the paper also analyzes operational and physical-mechanical properties of sulfur-extended asphalt concrete and sulfur concrete, and the possibilities of production of a new generation of building materials and road surfaces. High consumer properties of sulfur-containing construction materials – low cost of raw materials, workability of sulfur concrete and mortar mixes, fast development of strength, resistance to radiation and other aggressive environments, high frost and water resistance – make them competitive with traditional building materials that often cannot withstand the difficult climatic conditions of the North. The use of sulfur-containing waste in various economic sectors in the Arctic zone will significantly reduce the cost of products and designs and will contribute to the solution of one of the most important tasks of our time – protection of the environment from industrial pollution.

Current & Relevant Information:

Currently, the priority of the state environmental policy in the Arctic is the conservation of unique Arctic ecosystems, decontamination, the study and protection of valuable natural areas and ecosystems from the negative impact of economic and other activities. The importance of studying and ensuring environmental safety for natural objects and ecosystems of the Arctic zone in Russia is stated in the Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and further approved by the President of the Russian Federation September 18th, 2008 (Order no. 1969).
The authors consider the following environmental challenges and threats in the Russian Arctic Zone (RAZ): deteriorating pollution and environmental components amid the increasing human-induced impact, accumulation of waste and pollutant burden through transboundary transfer, the risks and costs of natural resource development, high depreciation of fixed assets, global climate change and its impact on the distribution of permafrost zones, dangerous hydrometeorological, ice and other natural processes, the increased risk and damage from these processes, technological accidents.

The priority “hot” spots and impact areas by location of environmental challenges directly in the Arctic natural areas characterized by presence of natural objects and ecosystems vulnerable to any human induced impacts are the following (Strategic Action Plan – the Arctic Zone, 2009): in the Murmansk Oblast – Murmansk, Zapolyarny and Nikel; the Kola and Pechora bays in the Barents sea; the Gulf of Ob and the Yenisey Bay in the Kara sea; in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous district – the Yamburg and Urengoy deposits; in the Chukotka Autonomous district – the village of Pevek and the Bilbino complex. For the RAZ municipal units it is prior to identify environmental threats on their territory. The increased environmental risks are associated with the development of the marine and coastal economic activity and concentration of the defense and border infrastructure. On the Arctic coast, major cities and settlements are situated. It is prior to identify the environmental threats in “hot” spots located outside RAZ territory and having an adverse transboundary impact on the Arctic territories. The ecosystems of inland sea waters are most affected by humankind. The strongest human induced impact on Arctic seas are focused on their shores, bays and in coastal waters. The main environmental problem associated with waste accumulation in sites where industrial, transport, energy and social objects are concentrated in confined Arctic spaces with mineral deposits and raw materials processing and transportation sites. It should be noted that the sources of environmental pollution, production and consumption wastes in the Arctic are mainly located in settlements, on industrial, defense, energy and transport sites. Significant amounts of pollutants were accumulated in the 1930–1980-s during the period of global intensive industrialization, large-scale mineral extraction which remains relevant nowadays.

The main negative changes in Arctic landscapes are associated with the following reasons:

– economic development which does not match the environmental capacity of the natural environment amid absence of adequate rehab measures;

– non-diversified range of using natural resources from territories with predominant extractive industries;

– increased natural-technological risks amid the development of alternative forms of land use (transportation, mineral extraction, fishing, traditional resource use).
Latest research of the Arctic has helped identify the territories with major changes and environmental destruction. These negative processes are related to pollution of surface and coastal marine and river ecosystems with heavy metals, petroleum products, organic compounds of different origin, sulfur and nitrogen compounds, etc., mechanical soil deterioration, overgrazing on reindeer pastures. Crisis situations have developed in the West Kola, Central Kola and Norilsk districts, critical situations are observed in Arkhangelsky, Timan-Pechora, Novaya Zemlya, Vorkuta districts and tense – in the West and East Chukotka and in the Yana-Indigirka (near Deputatsky urban-type settlement) districts that are still developing. The situation in the Bilibinsky District is currently characterized as potentially adverse, but with probable accidents of different scale at nuclear power stations the situation can instantly be changed to catastrophic (this applies to nuclear power plants in the Kolsky district), which became the basis for the choice of this impact area.


Abstract:

The Barents Sea has long been a testing ground for cooperation between Russia and Norway. Driven by mutual economic interests, the two states have worked together in previous decades to oversee a shared commercial fishery. More recently, off-shore oil production has become a Russo-Norwegian focus. Emerging petroleum production provides an opportunity to assess environmental stewardship in the region. In particular, this study explores the differences and influences in Norwegian and Russian offshore oil-spill prevention policy in the Barents Sea. The study focuses on how each state’s national and economic strategic objectives translate into domestic policy, and how such influences are reflected in operational mandates and behavior. Principal-agent (a.k.a. agency) theory and case studies provide the framework for this study through a defined view of the contractual relationships between the governments (principals) and industry (agents). Findings indicate that 1) there is no mutual policy for the shared environment, 2) there should be, and 3) divergent issues can be identified and potentially overcome. Additionally, the approach to prevention policy by Russia’s governmental authorities yields concerns regarding operational intent while Norway’s public-sector principles likely instill more confidence in outcomes. As the Barents Region continues to foster a convergence of bilateral (and multilateral) interests, this study helps identify relevant prevention policy decision-making factors while contributing to further understanding and expectations for activities in the Barents Sea.

Current & Relevant Information:
Introduction

For decades, Russia and Norway successfully worked together, despite occasional conflicts, to manage a world-class fishery. One area presenting significant challenge has been the disputed maritime territory known as the “Gray Zone,” which accounted for twelve percent of the Barents Sea total area. As Russian and Norwegian interests shifted from fish to offshore oil and gas production due to expanding exploration activity, Russia and Norway addressed their Gray Zone dispute with the Barents Delimitation Agreement in 2010. The distinct motivation for this agreement, supported by numerous sources, including the national strategies for both states, strongly indicates ambitions to protect fisheries, often with implicit acknowledgement to energy exploration and production as an underlying factor, possibly only minor (Filipek & Hruzdou, 2011: 231; Henriksen & Ulfstein, 2011: 8-9; Jensen, 2011: 158; Moe, Fjærtoft, & Øverland, 2011: 150-152; Neumann, 2010).

Interest and investment in Barents Sea offshore production clearly increased in the last decade. However, the international community lacks a clear understanding of how both nations intend to approach production risks. Given recent Barents Sea oil production and exploration increases and the likelihood of expansion in the future, it is an apt time to explore Norwegian and Russian offshore oil-spill prevention policy. To what extent do Norway and Russia coalesce in their oil spill prevention policies in the Barents Sea? What explains congruence or variation in their approaches? As joint stewards of the Barents Sea, with statutory requirements regarding any cross-boundary reserves in place, it is appropriate to analyze and compare their regulatory regimes to identify factors that shape oil-spill prevention policy development and implementation.

Currently, both Russian and Norwegian oil project leads in the Barents Sea are state owned. Accordingly, a principal–agent framework offers a useful lens to examine potential outcomes for this study where the principal is the state and the agents are the oil companies. Under this framing, national interests informing oil production strategies likely play a significant role in oil-spill prevention policies. In particular, Russia and Norway’s differing geopolitical goals offer significant insight into the respective motivations behind each nation’s oil-spill prevention policies, and may even inform expectations. This argument emphasizes three key points explored in detail throughout the article: 1) no shared prevention policies exist for the shared Barents maritime regions, 2) shared policies should be established as a result, 3) divergent aspects can be identified and overcome in order to achieve mutually beneficial (shared) policies. The findings reveal the potentially leading cause of discrepancy indicating that, as principals, Norway largely enforces high standards over production operations to maintain a stable domestic economy, while Russia employs its energy production capabilities to expand global influence.

This study reviews the relevant context concerning petroleum projections, oil spills in the Arctic, prevention policy fundamentals, and the history of Norwegian and
Russian energy policies. Additionally, a case study of each nation will serve as the basis of this inferential study.

Conclusion

Although a performance-based versus prescriptive-based approach to prevention goals could theoretically produce the same desirable results, that is not likely the situation for the Barents Sea. The principal-agent theory used in this study provided a focused method for considering how state and industry decision makers may determine and focus offshore production policy strategies. The framework and aggregate-level case study methodology helped establish individual policy circumstances for Norway and Russia, which allows further consideration of overlapping issues and expectations more reliably.

The research question posed in this article considers the extent as well as reasons explaining the divergent policy approaches for Norway and Russia. Both face significant bilateral deliberations ahead for elements of their shared maritime region. The article provides compelling evidence that no shared policy exists for offshore oil-spill prevention, yet there is a clear need for one. The goal of this study was to offer a focused insight into strategic influences that might contribute to understanding and expectations. Furthermore, the article helps to identify where issues diverge and ways to develop recommendations for overcoming difficulties in establishing joint solutions through shared policy.

Individually, Norway’s system, by design, facilitates petroleum activity by promoting a methodology of “governing within” (Nordtveit, 2015: 155) whereas Russia prefers a top-down style of governance. Moe (2010: 245) describes very different constraining forces between Russia and Norway with regard to offshore development in the Arctic. In Norway’s case, self-imposed constraints, driven by discernable national interest, translate into environmental precautions that determine the pace of development and otherwise control oil production activities in favor of safety. Alternatively, Russia has lofty global objectives and requires energy revenues to realize them. The oil industry supports these goals through less prudent, or restrictive, and more permissive practices to maximize production levels.

Overlapping concerns reveal that separate systems and processes may need to be addressed through policy partnership efforts to reduce incompatible factors that transcend state antecedence. While accounting for relevant facts and assumptions, filtering primary actors through principal-agent theory facilitates efforts to identify policy limitations as well as areas to strengthen policy cooperation. Regional perspectives make matters even more complicated. For example, European Union officials, on no less than three separate notable occasions, negotiated to impose a variety of significant restrictions on Arctic offshore activities, including an Antarctic-like treaty as well as total drilling bans (Council of the European Union & European Parliament, 2013; European Parliament, 2008; Stępień & Raspotnik, 2017). Such
efforts have failed thus far. Especially notable was the demise of the concept for the Antarctica-like treaty, soundly marginalized after the "Arctic Five" (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Russia, and the United States), signed and reaffirmed the Ilulissat Declaration in 2010 and 2012 respectively, announcing clearly to the world that UNCLOS remains the instrument of choice to manage Arctic maritime sovereignty issues.

Canadian scholar Michael Byers (2013) presented an enduring and compelling assessment of existing environmental agreements and efforts, stating that "more cooperation is needed, and quickly, on regional standards for oil spill prevention." Such sentiment essentially represents the current circumstances for the Barents Sea. As industrial activity in the Barents Sea predictably grows, continued research can provide much needed and value-added perspectives for any number of complex political and economic dynamics. Finally, in the relatively early stages of energy production in the Barents maritime environment, further exploration of national interests and resulting behaviors emphasizes the need to contribute additional knowledge that helps foster cooperation and policy development.

"Integration of Scientific and Local Knowledge in the Protection of Sacred Sites in the Russian Arctic," Tatiana Petrova and Tamara Semenova, milleniumassessment.org, 2006 [77]

Abstract:

There is a lack of scientific information about the biodiversity of marginal and remote Arctic ecosystems. Yet in the Russian Arctic, the share of natural protected areas is relatively high (6-10%) compared to the rest of Russia (2%). But the protection of these vast territories cannot be secured adequately. Paper describes the importance of indigenous and local beliefs and knowledge through the lens of sacred sites. Sacred sites accumulate the local knowledge and cultural values of the Russia Northern communities. In addition, sacred sites are often located within important natural areas with significance for biodiversity conservation. The protection of the sacred sites by indigenous peoples can make a substantial contribution to biodiversity protection in the Russian Arctic. Sacred sites also provide an opportunity to establish environmental and social monitoring by the local community. We also stress the importance of the ecosystem management of the sacred sites that could be a vital component to the indigenous community sustainable development. More focus to economic, social and environmental interlinks could bridge the gap between the traditional local knowledge and modern science.

Current & Relevant Information:

Indigenous peoples have inherited a rich culture, including that of social behavior and environmental perception, their ancestors accepted a code of conduct that may
serve as a basis for sustainable development. This code comprises the core of traditional knowledge and determines their traditional way of life.

Traditional way of life of indigenous peoples includes subsistence economy, environmentally sustainable land use and utilization of natural resources; these practical skills ensured preservation of the natural and cultural heritage in the vast areas of the North for the future generations, and have protected intact and pristine nature for the global civilization. We are proud of aboriginal resilience and adaptation capabilities, insuring survival in extremities of harsh climate and protection of the fragile Arctic ecosystems. In fact, indigenous peoples have created efficient subsistence economy and continue to develop it in a sustainable manner.

Holistic vision and perception, peculiar features of traditional philosophy are the fundamentals of the concept of sustainable development elaborated by indigenous peoples. Human being is a part of nature, a component of environment – this is the traditional attitude of the aboriginal peoples. Holistic approach is an ideal for the modern, integrated and highly specialized and differentiated science, that is still not capable “to grasp” a problem in its complexity and propose an integrated way for its solution. Integration of the science and traditional knowledge would be mutually beneficial and is highly needed.

These principle ideas have been formulated in the document “The Sustainable Development of the Traditional Lifestyle” that has been developed by the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) based on the proposals from the indigenous peoples of the Russian North, Siberia and the Far East.

The main objective of the RAIPON activity in the biodiversity conservation is the involvement through observations and traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples both into the registration of environmental change, and into the assessment of relevant impacts and the human vulnerability to the ecosystem transformation.

The ecosystem approach has gained a greater significance since declaration of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in 1998. One of the principle objectives of the CBD is the maintenance of the ecosystem functions covering diversified human needs - health and welfare, environmental safety, cultural, spiritual and esthetic values provision. The ecosystem approach has also fostered the participation of the indigenous peoples and other local communities as principle stakeholders for the implementation of the CBD principles. Transferring stewardship of ecosystems to local people has increased the role of the traditional knowledge.


Abstract:
Russia is one of the most important players in the Arctic zone with significant economic, security, and political interests in the region. This is primarily because of significant natural resources, in particular oil and gas, on the Russian Arctic territories. Paper is devoted to the research of development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, particularly to the investigation of legal regulation of the region development and innovation infrastructure of the Arctic zone. The objective of this paper is to develop main principles of innovative development of the Russian Arctic from a perspective of legal regulation and innovation infrastructure development, taking into account crucial role of mineral resource complex for the Russian Arctic.

Necessity of innovative development of the Arctic region is defined. The analysis of legal and regulatory framework of the Arctic development as the basis of innovative activity in the region is carried out. The main approaches to development of innovative infrastructure of the Arctic region are represented. As a result, we offer the approach to creation of innovation infrastructure in the Arctic and main principles of development of mineral recourses complex of Russian Arctic, based on effective legal regulation and innovative development of the region. The main problems of innovative development of the Arctic region are revealed and the directions of further scientific research are defined.

**Current & Relevant Information:**

**Introduction**

The Arctic zone of Russia is the part of the Arctic under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.

According to “The Strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation development and national security system for the period till 2020”, complex socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic zone, realized through the effective progress of science and technology, i.e. innovative development, is one of the key directions in development of the Russian Arctic zone.

The majority of the proven reserves and forecast resources of Russia is located on the Arctic territory that defines its strategic importance. It produces more than 96% of the platinum metals and more than 90% of nickel and cobalt; it is extracted about 80% of Russian gas and 60% of oil, about 60% of copper. In different raw material production (nickel, cobalt, diamonds, platinum metals, oil and gas, rare earth metals, etc.), the Russian Arctic plays a significant role in the world. And the more complex are the conditions for the extraction of resources - technological, climatic, mining and geological, geographical, etc., the more implementation of scientific research and innovations is required.

Development of the Russian Arctic Shelf, characterized by really high capital intensity (for example, drilling offshore in 3–5 times more expensive than on land), requires new scientific based approaches to sustainable long-term development of the Arctic territories in the light of technological, economic, legal, and social issues.
The special role in this issue is assigned to up-to-date extraction technologies and oil and gas recovery technologies, providing energy effectiveness and ecology safety, and also to the innovative development of the Russian Arctic zone, based on effective legal regulation and development of innovation infrastructure on these territories. Due to the fact that Russia’s mature hydrocarbon sources in Western Siberia are slowly drying up, extensive strategic importance of the Arctic hydrocarbons considerably increases. In this paper we investigate modern development of the Russian Arctic zone by analyzing the existing legal regulation in Russia related to Arctic development, as well as the level of development of innovation infrastructure in the region. As a result, we offer the approach to creation of innovation infrastructure in the Arctic and main principles of development of mineral recourses complex of Russian Arctic, based on effective legal regulation and innovative development of the region.

Conclusions

Therefore, the Arctic region of the Russian Federation is strategically important for the State development due to its unique mineral raw material base, prospects of the logistics and infrastructure development and other factors. The development of the Arctic zone requires innovative approach to all spheres. Only development and implementation of effective legal basis supported by particular plans, system of monitoring and control, as well as effective use of significant investments, aimed at the comprehensive development of the region, can make achievement of the assigned tasks possible.

Moreover, now legal documents on regulation of the development of the region and innovation activities have rather declarative nature. The effective development of the region requires the adoption and justification of specific activities and measures, taking into account all the geographical, climatic, demographic, economic and social conditions of the separate entities of the Russian Federation Arctic region. Tightening of the State control over the innovative policies in the territorial entities, especially in cases of financial resources distribution is a prerequisite.

“Russian Political Reactions to a Changing Climate: Environmental Cases in the Arctic and Siberian Hydrosphere,” Elizabeth Trammell, Wesleyan University, April 2010 [79]
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4171/07f2122d71ac5d9d2d3934c3aea0faa7a26c.pdf

Overview:

The post-Soviet period was marked by a severe economic recession that coincided with the fall of the USSR. The slow economic recovery and rampant political corruption obscured the goals of the reform movement that Gorbachev began in the 1980s. Promises that were made during perestroika lost their foundation and were buried by the chaos of transition. The environmental damage of the Soviet era (that
environmentalists in the 1980s were beginning to address with state support and attention) was ignored while a new government gathered its strength.

The rapid and haphazard pace of industrialization in Russia during the Communist Era has left its natural habitats in ruins. Engagement in the Cold War pushed the Soviet Union to technological and social development that was fueled by civilian nuclear power and widespread use of hazardous chemicals. Even today, the disregard for the environment continues. Train cars run along the Trans-Siberian Railroad with stacks of huge trees, products of illegal logging and shipments to China. Mountains of trash pile the highways on the edge of otherwise pristine forests. Recycling plants are nonexistent. This paints a picture of a government that does not care for or protect its vast natural resources, relying on the quantity of available stock and not the quality of what will remain.

Western academics blame the continued environmental destruction on Russia’s underdeveloped civil society and the lack of government responsiveness to any environmental movements. While Russia still has a long way to go on big-picture environmentalism, this thesis shows that local environmental organizations are shaping environmental policy to protect their “own backyards.”

Current & Relevant Information:

Historical Background

Russia extends across 11 time zones, with the terrain ranging from boreal forest, to swamp, to tundra. This vast land expanse factors into Russian cultural and historical development and helps to explain the emergence of a resource-based economy. Western historians have long been fascinated by Russia’s unique history, culture, and geography. Russia’s unique characteristics force Western academics to consider Russian policy as having “Russian characteristics,” preventing the adoption of Western norms into Russian society. Although Western models claim universality, Russia necessitates its own tailored explanation of environmental policymaking. Russia is truly a special case, where western models and theories are unlikely to function, and where further study is almost always necessary. This observation is no less true when considering the history of science from the tsars to the Soviet Union to present day.

Scientists in Russian society have faced dramatic political obstacles, filling a range of roles that illustrate their struggle as a special case. Historians have qualified this assertion of uniqueness: “…the intensity of the conflicts between science and the state in Russian history has been far greater and more dramatic than in any other of the European or North American powers with which Russia has been frequently compared” (Graham 1993). Graham (1993) asserts that Russian scientists have, since the tsarist period, experienced an alternating cycle of rejection and embrace by the State (158). The history of organization of science and technology can be broken up into four stages: the tsarist system (1861-1914), the early Soviet system
(1917-1921), the late Stalinist (1928-1953) and Brezhnevite Period (late 1970s), and the reform era after 1986. The tsarist period was a time of rejection, leading into the Bolshevik era, where a distrust of scientists (as members of the intelligentsia) was prevalent in the rhetoric of the 1917 revolution. This changed, however, under Lenin, who came to rely and grow close to scientists under NEP (1918-1921). Stalinism and the Cultural Revolution caused the state and science to move apart, a distance that was echoed again under Brezhnev’s tightening of political controls in the late 1970s. Gorbachev (1985-1991) closed the gap between scientists and the state, allowing scientists and engineers to play influential roles in policymaking. Overall, the period before Soviet collapse in 1991 was marked as a time where scientists were considered valuable to policymakers, especially in terms of environmental conservation: “The scientific high intelligentsia tradition in nature protection monopolized the field for many decades” (Weiner 1999).

The collapse of the Soviet Union had negative consequences for the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), hailed by the Soviet state as the highest scientific institution. The RAS was founded by Peter the Great and persisted through the Soviet era, combining expertise from scientists all over the Soviet Union. The RAS, although self-governed, belonged to the Soviet state from 1925-1991 and relied on financial support from the government. Without financial support from the government, “scientists found that their salaries were in many cases lower than those of taxi drivers or industrial workers” (Graham 1993, 195). Many research scientists emigrated abroad, and others stayed within Russia but moved away from the Russian Academy of Sciences. Those that kept their affiliation with RAS were unable to sustain themselves on the meager income and took supplemental jobs in universities, NGOs, or landed the occasional grant (Ostergren 2002).

The benefit of this migration from RAS is that “NGOs are infused with highly trained scientists familiar with the scientific basis for policy positions” (Ostergren 2002). NGOs have a larger arsenal to collect information to support their desired policy outcome through the use of these well-respected scientists. The migration, however, also signifies a shift away from scientists in a position of prestige, which has led to a deficit of new young scholars into scientific fields: “…young people no longer see the benefits or status that accompanied conservation scientists during the Soviet era” (Ostergren 2002). Instead of being directly linked to the government, most scientists advocate from a university or NGO setting, oftentimes starting a program to support their previous scientific work (Marina Rikhvanova was an established ecologist before founding Baikal Ecological Wave). Scientists from all disciplines have taken a “back seat” in environmental policy decisions since the fall of the Soviet Union—a large leap from their prestigious role in the USSR.

**Summary of Findings**

This thesis seeks to merge the chosen Western models and apply the theories directly to Russian environmental policymaking in a three-tiered case study. In so
doing, several key questions are explored: how knowledge of science affects the
analysis of environmental case studies, if Western models can be applied
seamlessly to Russian environmental policy, and whether or not Russia has a
"functioning" civil society. Insights to these questions are given with the final
conclusions (Chapter 5).

In evaluating these theoretical models, this thesis finds in its conclusions that the
case for Russian uniqueness holds true. While the models can be applied to each
case study in part, none are able to fully explain the resulting policy outcomes. The
"universality" of the Western theoretical models is challenged by the varying scope
of the case studies described in this thesis. As the cases became more global, the
Western framework was unable to explain the resulting policy outcomes. This
observation is described in detail in the analysis of each theoretical model in Chapter
5 of this thesis.

In terms of each theory’s individual success, Pielke’s (2007) role of scientists’ model
and Keohane et al.’s (1993) institutional effectiveness model fare the worst at
explaining Russian policy. Both models were constructed for use in Western
democracies, without any real provisions for application to governments that function
differently. Both models were still useful for helping to explain some aspect of
environmental policymaking in Russia, but fall short of explaining several key
decisions—especially the emergence of the exogenous "Putin’s hand" factor.
Henry’s (2009) levels of transnationalism best explain the anomalies in Russian
environmental policymaking that the other two models fail to cover. Part of this
success can be attributed to the fact that Henry is a Russia scholar, and her theories
are meant to be applied directly to Russia. While Henry’s (2009) argument cannot
explain Russian environmental policy as a whole, it does contribute greatly to
scholarly understanding of how it is formed. Henry’s (2009) thoughts on
transnational pressure also best explain the emergence of the exogenous “Putin’s
hand” factor of top-down policymaking. These conclusions are discussed in depth in
Chapter 5 along with alternative explanations for how Russian environmental policy
is formed, including rhetoric, regional nationalism, and Russian historical cycles.

Through the analysis of these theoretical models and their application to a three-
tiered case study structure this thesis contributes to the growing field on
environmental policy studies in Russia. It fills a void in the literature on Russian
environmental policy by undertaking in-depth case studies to explain the importance
of including science and the influence of a growing civil society in Russia. Many of
the stories told through the case studies are complex, interwoven tales with
uncertain outcomes. This thesis proves that more research and further study
specifically focused on Russia must be done in order for policymakers, scholars, and
environmental actors to fully understand the complexities of Russia and ensure the
success of future environmental policy.
Abstract:
Throughout the Cold War, the international community often feared the worst concerning environmental behavior in Russia. However, post-Soviet Russia continues to make significant progress in environmental stewardship in one specific region – its Arctic coastline and maritime region. The contrast between on- and offshore priorities remains notably disparate, especially in policies and behaviors. While previous examination remains lacking in this context, it is important to ask – how, and especially why, does Russia maintain a significantly different Arctic offshore emphasis concerning the environment? The argument supported in this article suggests that, while Russia maintains a discernible difference between Arctic land territory versus maritime behaviors, initial intuition behind “why” indicates that Russia might possibly be setting conditions in order to eventually leverage soft powers, and ultimately, jurisdiction of an expanded amount of maritime surface territory in the Arctic. In support of the examination, the use of authoritarian environmentalism provides the framework in which to view the evidence and perspectives. Two case studies provide methodology, including aspects: 1) involving notable environmental problems within Russian Arctic land territory located around Norilsk mining as well as the Usinsk oil pipeline, and 2) focusing on Russian efforts toward offshore environmental remediation, prevention, and protection efforts. The actual differences in policies and behavior seem clear as a result, and perhaps helps establish the start of a discussion concerning the “why” in order to start investigating the potential greater reasoning behind such environmental behaviors, and maybe even what to anticipate.

Current & Relevant Information:
Introduction
Throughout the Cold War the international community often feared the worst concerning environmental behavior in Russia. Several factors contributed to the decline in environmental quality under the Communist system, including disincentives toward conservationism as well as the nation’s enormous size and natural resource wealth supporting a sense of complacency (Henry & Douhovnikoff, 2008: 438-439). The global community’s suspicions of the USSR’s transgressions ranged from onshore oil and mining issues to severe air pollution through nuclear-related contamination (Bronder et al., 2010: 56). However, since the fall of the Soviet Union, and especially during the last decade, Russia has made significant progress.
in environmental stewardship of its Arctic coastline and maritime region. The northern coast and waters continue to benefit from strong Russian governmental support, investments, and promotion of environmental issue remediation, prevention, and protection. Conversely, the same focus and magnitude of concern for land territories does not exist. The contrast between on- and offshore priorities remains notably disparate, especially with regard to policies and behaviors. Comparative literature remains lacking on this topic and offers an opportunity to explore the differences in terrestrial and Arctic maritime environmental stewardship policy characteristics of the Russian Federation.

What explains how, and especially why, Russia has such a notable and stewardly emphasis concerning the Arctic offshore environment? The argument supported in this article suggests that Russia not only enables deliberately different behaviors, but could also be setting conditions through its Arctic maritime environmental priorities in order to eventually leverage soft power for the purposes of contesting established international rules. The Russian regime continues to suppress transparency of issues to its civil society, supported largely by state-controlled mass media which helps to ensure how state actors critically shape and narrate legitimate concerns (Poberezhskaya, 2015: 106; Smyth & Oates, 2015; Sundstrom & Henry, 2016). Therefore, to support the hypothesis, authoritarian environmentalism helps provide the theoretical framework from which to view perspectives and evidence – an application not yet applied to Russia based on the available literature. The methodology follows themes based on two post-Soviet case studies. The first involves significant environmental issues within Russian Arctic land territory. In particular, this case examines the notable environmental problems associated with Norilsk mining in the central Siberian region (Shiklomanov & Laruelle, 2017: 254) as well as the Usinsk oil field problems in the west (Wilson & Society, 2016: 77-79). The second case focuses on Russian Arctic coastal and offshore environmental remediation, prevention, and protection efforts. Of note, the secondary part of the argument concerning "why" – although necessary to provide a fuller contribution – should be considered and understood only as an initial plausibility probe. This means that the findings hopefully provide an emerging opportunity to begin consideration, however speculative at first, into one of any vast number of possible consequences; perhaps even drawing further interest and perspectives.

Conclusion

October 1st, 1987, President Gorbachev conducted a speech in Murmansk during an awards ceremony, stating the Arctic needs to be a “Zone of Peace” and went on to describe his vision for the Northern Sea Route and economic opportunity as well as security throughout Russia’s maritime Arctic – with almost prophetic vision (“General Secretary Gorbachev’s Speech in Murmansk, October 1987”, 2014). Little did the West know that Putin’s regime would aggressively pursue these objectives even beyond Gorbachev’s imagination. Under Putin, exploitation of natural
resources expanded. Production often means some degree of environmental sacrifice though. One astute question posed in Stephen Brain’s (2016) contribution to the Oxford Research Encyclopedia asks to what extent has the Russian historical tendency toward authoritarianism facilitated predatory policies that have degraded the environment?

The research question for this study required an examination of the differences in on- and offshore environmental issue prevention and remediation in the Arctic Zone of Russia, and why. The theoretical use for this article focuses on how public-sector governance of the environment can be exploited for industrial and national security purposes. The case studies illustrate the significant differences and suggest that Russia’s behavior concerning the Arctic offshore might be facilitating conditions that it can leverage as soft power in order to deviate from international norms in the future. One way to view potential outcomes might be to think of Russia’s current policies and behaviors in its maritime Arctic as necessary and with sufficient conditions (for the Russian Federation) to eventually claim customary law in order to supersede instruments such as UNCLOS. Such an assertion could greatly expand the amount of maritime surface (and water columns) territory under ‘Russian Federation jurisdiction’ – a term heavily used in Russia’s two primary national Arctic strategies (Presidential Decree, 2008, 2013). Assuming this study provides legitimate perspectives, further research could address the limitations of this article and expand on similar topics. Principles such as “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities” (CBDR) and “Sustainability” both characterize defining methods for environmental management. Yet, even though both principles could be invoked to satisfy international commitments, how they will be achieved at the domestic level depends greatly upon the environmentalism approach – either democratic or authoritarian.

5. Potential Detrimental Impacts:


Abstract:

Relations between the West and Russia have worsened since Russia annexed Crimea in February 2014. This article explains how this deterioration has affected the Arctic Council. The council is an international institution with eight member states with territory in the Arctic (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States) as well as six indigenous peoples’ organizations. The mandate of the institution is to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic. There is currently a debate in the media about the impact of Russia’s actions on Arctic governance. Some accounts argue that the Arctic Council’s work continues unabated in the aftermath of Crimea, while
others point to worrying signs that the institution is experiencing difficulty. This research helps settle this debate by empirically demonstrating Russia’s behavior. It concludes that the breakdown in Russian-United States relations has not had an immediate impact on the council. The article employs descriptive statistics to understand Russia’s patterns of activity in the council in three periods (1998–2000, 2007–2009 and 2013–2015). It examines Russia’s participation in meetings and its sponsorship of initiatives. It draws from a variety of council documents. It shows that earlier in the history of the council, Russia’s participation was similar to the Nordic countries. The article empirically demonstrates that Russia’s participation in the Arctic Council has increased over time.

Current & Relevant Information:

Can Arctic governance survive Crimea? The Cold War, with its antagonism between two superpowers on opposite sides of an ideological war, made international collaboration in the Arctic next to impossible. Yet, international relations improved greatly following the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of communism. In 1996, the Arctic states, including Russia, created the Arctic Council, the premier governance institution for the region. Russia invaded and annexed Crimea from Ukraine in February 2014, which presented the worst crisis in Russian-American relations since the end of the Cold War. The United States and its allies subsequently hit Russia with waves of harsh sanctions. Slightly under the radar, Russia and the United States both remain members of the Arctic Council. This paper examines how the deterioration in relations between Russia and Western countries has affected the Arctic Council. This paper argues that Russia scaled back on outward shows of Council support, but overall supports the institution more than ever before. The breakdown in Russian-United States relations has not had an immediate impact on the Council, raising hope that a new Cold War is avoidable. This paper employs descriptive statistics to understand patterns of Russian activity in the Council.

First, what is the Arctic Council? It is an international institution consisting of the eight countries that have Arctic territory, namely Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. A unique feature is that it includes six indigenous peoples’ organizations as members, together representing 659,000 indigenous people from every Council country (with the exception of Iceland). These groups (also known as permanent participants) are the Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich’in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Saami Council, and Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). The Council also consists of 32 observers, which includes 12 countries, such as Britain, China and France. The Arctic Economic Council, three task forces and two expert groups are Council initiatives that work with the institution. The Council’s mandate, as articulated in the 1998 Iqaluit Declaration, is to “provide a means for promoting co-operation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States... with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous
communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.” The Council can address any issue except military security. Yet in practice, it provides governance on environmental protection and a loosely defined version of sustainable development in the Arctic. The Council mostly completes research on environmental and human security issues, with policy recommendations for state action. The institution has recently completed some work to encourage economic development in the Arctic, but this work represents a minority of the Council’s output. In the past, international agreements and formal policy were not part of the purview of the Council. However, that fact has changed, as the Council has created two international agreements, on search and rescue in the Arctic and response to oil spills.

This article contributes to academic literature on the Council. Most literature focuses on the Council’s role in regional governance (as either an institution that facilitates research or a soft-law body), namely work by political consultant Terry Fenge [2012], political scientist Rob Huebert [1998], international lawyer Timo Koivurova [Koivurova and Heinamaki, 2006], as well as political scientists Olav Schram Stokke [2007] and Oran Young [2005]. This work adds to this literature by considering the role of greater international relations in the Council’s attempt to provide regional governance. It considers the relative contributions of each Council member to regional governance.

This research also helps settle a controversy in media accounts of the Council. Recent media have hypothesized that Russia and the United States are moving toward a new Cold War (for example, see [Barnard and Shoumali, 2015]), as recent events “have effectively put an end to the interregnum of partnership and cooperation between the West and Russia” [Trenin, 2014]. Some media have indicated that Russia still participates in the Council and circumpolar relations are generally strong, as the Council “has hung together” [Bell, 2015]. Other reports have indicated that the breakdown in relations has already negatively affected the Council, as officials balance which meetings to attend amid concerns over optics [Exner-Pirot, 2015]. This work presents a case to understand the nature of Russian-Western relations and assess conflicting reports about its impact on the Council. It demonstrates that Russia’s participation in the Council remains strong, despite new tensions in regional relations and anxieties in media accounts of the institution.

This paper proceeds in three sections. The first section describes the function of the Council, in order to discuss the paper’s method in the second section. The third section discusses Russia’s participation in the Council in three eras.

This paper systematically examines patterns of Russian behavior in the Arctic Council and its impact on the institution. Questions of causality, or why Russia participates in the Council the way it does, are beyond the scope of this paper. These questions form a basis for future research. The conclusion discusses several
competing explanations for Russia’s behavior in the Council over time, though future 
research is necessary to establish which explanation is most accurate.

“Counterterrorism in the Russian Arctic: legal framework and central actors,”
Ingvill Moe Elgsaas, Arctic and North, 2017 [82]
http://arcticandnorth.ru/upload/uf/d52/AaN-29.pdf#page=110

Abstract:
Russia’s strategic interests in the Arctic coupled with a complex and diffuse terrorist 
threat has produced a niche topic: Arctic counterterrorism. Arctic counterterrorism is 
a new and underdeveloped topic that has received only limited attention. This article 
contributes a discussion of the legal framework and the main actors involved in 
countering terrorism in the Russian Arctic. The author finds that the legal framework 
for counterterrorism is extensive yet centered in core documents. Similarly, 
counterterrorism involves many and varied actors united in a relatively simple and 
streamlined national system for counterterrorism. Current legal regulation and 
organization provide a solid base that may support efficient management of 
counterterrorism, also in the Arctic. A notable strength is the concentration of 
coordination responsibilities in the hands of one central actor, the FSB. Another 
important characteristic is that the system is symmetrical and follows Russia’s 
federal organization with coordinating bodies for all regions including those in the 
Arctic. Counterterrorism legislation is kept up to date and the trend is towards 
tougher punishments and a wide understanding of terrorist offenses. A potential 
weak spot is the unclear role of the newly formed National Guard. The uncertainty 
surrounding the role of the National Guard in the fight against terrorism may 
challenge the FSB and weaken coordination of the system for counterterrorism in 
the future.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

President Vladimir Putin includes terrorism among the threats that must be 
considered to ensure comprehensive safety and security in the Russian Arctic.
Although both “terrorism” and “the Arctic” are current topics, they seldom appear 
together. As much as we hope that this separation may persists and that the Arctic 
may remain relatively untouched by terrorism; there are good reasons why we 
should, as the Russian President does, include terrorism among the many 
challenges that we must be prepared to face in the Arctic. According to the Global 
Terrorism Index, terrorist activities have increased substantially over the last years 
and resulted in higher death tolls and a wider spread of high fatality attacks. While 
most attacks take place in specific geographic regions far from the Arctic, recent 
attacks and terrorist propaganda show ability and will to strike outside regions 
commonly associated with terrorist activities. Furthermore, focus on the Arctic as a 
strategic asset and resource reserve runs the risk of the region being perceived as a
prestigious target for terrorists aiming to expand the reach of terrorism further. Coupled with increased activities in and access to the Arctic this may entice also unwanted activities such as terrorism.

This study discusses Russia’s counterterrorist system with a focus on the Arctic. The objective is to understand the current state of Russian counterterrorism in the Arctic and the direction for further developments. The study presents developments and recent events in terrorism, Russian interests in the Arctic, the relationship between terrorism and the Arctic, and the methods and sources used in this study. It then proceeds with discussions of the legal framework for Russian counterterrorism, central actors in Russia’s system for counterterrorism, and counterterrorist activities in the Russian Arctic, before it concludes.

Conclusion

Counterterrorism in the Russian Arctic has become a recurring topic in relevant discourses, the discourse on Russia’s interests in the Arctic and — to a lesser degree — the Russian discourse on counterterrorism. That said, the Arctic counterterrorism is a minor topic, also in the discourse on Russian interests in the Arctic, and it is an underdeveloped topic. Its inclusion on the agenda appears as an effort to cover all bases, rather than as a response to any direct threat. While this complicates the task of studying Arctic counterterrorism, the nature of terrorism calls for just such a better safe than sorry attitude.

Russian attention to the Arctic counterterrorism is related to the country’s goal of making the Arctic its main base for strategic resources, and the fear that this may draw terrorists’ attention to infrastructure of the Northern Sea Route and other maritime facilities. This fear is fueled by recent developments in international terrorism with terrorist organizations moving beyond their traditional areas of operation. Russia is one of the countries in the world that are most affected by terrorism. In addition to the threat of international terrorism, Russia also has home-grown terrorist organizations whose cause is supported by international terrorist organizations.

While the timeframe set for the AZRF to become Russia’s main base for strategic resources is highly unrealistic, the importance of the Arctic and its strategic resources in the long term is cause for preventive measures to be taken. What will likely become the region’s strengths are areas of activities that have long been favored among terrorists, energy and transport. Coupled with the potential wide reach and detrimental effects of cyberterrorism it is inevitable that we must consider the Arctic as a possible (if not, at present, very probable) target for terrorists.

This paper’s main objective has been to provide an initial case study of counterterrorism in the Russian Arctic. The goal has been to produce insights into the current state of Russian counter-terrorism in the Arctic and the direction for further developments. This case study has addressed two formal aspects of Arctic
counterterrorism, its legal foundation and its organization. The selection of these two focal points rests with the novelty of the topic and the need to lay down a fundament for further analyses into what may well become a salient topic in the future.

The legal framework for Arctic counterterrorism is extensive, as is often the case in Russia’s legal tradition. The existence of relatively recent core documents nevertheless makes this a relatively well-regulated area. We also see that counterterrorist legislation is kept up to date through revisions. This is positive, even though some observers take issue with some of the concrete revisions.

Russia’s national system for counterterrorism complete with coordinating bodies on the two levels of state power has been established to make the counterterrorist effort more effective. We saw that the FSB enjoys a prominent role in this system. As of late, the FSB’s status may be challenged by the newly formed National Guard. If so, the national system for counterterrorism may fall prey to a turf war between security bodies, a scenario that has a familiar ring to it in the Russian context. Such an eventuality would likely hamper smooth operations of the national system for counterterrorism.

A benefit of the national system for counterterrorism is that it streamlines Russia’s counter-terrorist activities across the federation, including the Arctic. Counterterrorist measures are also visible through regular exercises aiming to improve cooperation and coherence among actors involved in counterterrorism. These exercises and their scenarios reflect the perceived potential threat to economic activities and infrastructure in the Russian Arctic.


Overview:
While the world focuses on managing the consequences of novel coronavirus, other global risks warrant political attention. As the sea ice retreats and the permafrost collapses due to climate change, the growing nuclearization of the Russian Arctic should be high on this list.

The largest concentration of nuclear installations – both civilian and military – is in Northern Russia. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union kept a significant portion of its nuclear weapons arsenal in the Arctic, carried out extensive nuclear weapons testing at Novaya Zemlya, and used its waters as nuclear dump sites. Russia’s inability to effectively deal with this nuclear legacy created the potential for an environmental catastrophe and became a major post-Cold War challenge. During the period 1996-2006, defense agencies of the United States and Norway – later joined by the United Kingdom – worked with Russia to jointly manage transboundary
radioactive waste issues under the aegis of the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation (AMEC) program.

Today, almost three decades after the international cleanup started, a new generation of nuclear reactors are coming to the Arctic. In 2019, The Independent Barents Observer reported that there are 39 nuclear-powered vessels or installations in the Russian Arctic, with a total of 62 reactors. This is set to increase considerably over the next 15 years. According to some estimates, the Russian Arctic will constitute the most nuclearized waters on the planet by 2035.

Russia’s poor record on nuclear management, coupled with insufficient emergency preparedness capabilities in the Arctic, raises safety concerns. These include potential incidents involving nuclear contamination, which could severely harm the Arctic marine environment and population alike, and pose a serious threat to Russia, Europe, and potentially the United States. We should not wait to put in place early warning and transparency mechanisms that reduce the risks of a dangerous nuclear incident in the Arctic.

Current & Relevant Information:

‘Nuclearization’ of Russian Arctic in recent years

In 2018, the Russian government assigned the management of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) to state-owned nuclear corporation Rosatom. With Rosatom in charge, there has been a greater prioritization of using nuclear power for shipping, infrastructure development, and the extraction of natural resources in the Russian Arctic.

Russia’s first floating nuclear power plant, the Akademik Lomonosov, was deployed in 2019 in Pevek to provide clean energy to people and businesses across the Chukotka region. Rosatom sees this as a pilot project and hopes to deploy a fleet of such units in Russia, and to export this technology abroad.

Only five nuclear-powered icebreakers exist in the world and they all belong to Rosatom. By 2035, Russia’s Arctic fleet is expected to operate at least 13 heavy-duty icebreakers, nine of which will be nuclear powered. In addition to crashing the ice to enable passage along the NSR, the nuclear-powered ‘50 Years of Victory’ also serves as a North Pole expedition cruise for high paying travelers. Three such voyages were initially planned for the summer of 2020 but were cancelled.

Russia is also increasing the number of nuclear-powered submarines. The Northern Fleet’s submarine force currently consists of 32 vessels. By 2027, ten Borei-class (or fourth-generation ballistic missile) submarines will be built and commissioned, half of which will serve in the Northern Fleet. In addition, five Yasen-class submarines will be deployed with the Northern Fleet. Not only are the numbers increasing but the levels of submarine activity are also growing. As Thomas Nilsen of the Barents Observer points out, “tensions between Russia and NATO have led to more sailings
with reactor powered submarines, especially in the Norwegian, Barents- and White Seas, but also under the ice in the high Arctic." Given the growing submarine activity, the more tensions rise, the more likely submarine accidents will be.

Moreover, Russia continues to use the Arctic as a testing site, most recently for its new nuclear-powered cruise missile and underwater drones. This Autumn, the Arctic waters will be used to test-launch the nuclear-powered Poseidon underwater device – dubbed the ‘doomsday drone’.

In addition to increasing the number of reactors, by 2030 the Russian government intends to lift several pieces of radioactive debris from the seabed, including the K-159 and the K-27 nuclear submarines, for decommissioning and long-term storage. Although the cleanup is hailed as an important first step to reduce risks from potential radioactive contamination of the marine environment, Ingar Amundsen of the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority warned that an accident during a lifting operation could release more radiation into the environment. Conducting a risk assessment is important for Russia to minimize these risks.


Abstract:

The Artic area is becoming of bigger importance and it gets more attention in the media. The purpose of the thesis is to assess the Norway-Russia relations in the Arctic and the Norwegian perception of Russia. The thesis uses the Copenhagen School as an analytical framework and methods of content analysis and chronological sequences as tools. Last but not least, the aim is to determine whether the Russian expansive foreign policy influenced the Norway-Russia relations and the Norwegian perception of their neighbor.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the Arctic region is getting more and more attention of not only politicians and scholars but also of the public. This change originates in well-known processes such as globalization and climate change which are of interest to many actors. The prospect of natural resources extractions and commercial shipping is attractive for many companies; on the other hand, environmental NGOs and indigenous people’s organizations take interest in their activities. Clearly, these changes affect also individuals and have a political impact.

There has been written a lot of literature about challenges which arise together with these changes, including security. Nevertheless, most of the literature deals with the region as a whole. The author of this thesis would like to contribute to the field of international relations by analyzing the security aspect of a particular bilateral
relation – between Norway and Russia, focusing on the Norwegian perception of Russia in the Arctic.

The goal of the thesis is not only to analyze Russian behavior in the Arctic, but especially to ascertain how particular actors (the government, NGOs, media, etc.) in Norway perceive this behavior. This is due to the fact that security is a rather an abstract concept; in practice, an issue becomes a security issue ‘not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat.’ Scholars agree that the conflict potential in the Arctic is overestimated. Nevertheless, the security regarding Russia is a topic in Norway, and therefore, I would like to analyze whether there is a gap between the reality and the perception of the Russian threat.

The Norway-Russia relation is historically characterized by the absence of an armed conflict. However, it is also important to point out that even though we have witnessed a long history of a successful cooperation in the region, and the conflict potential in the Arctic might be exaggerated, security is indivisible, and the Arctic cannot be seen in isolation. Conflicts or events in other parts of the world might have an impact in the Arctic too. In this sense, it should be interesting to analyze the Norwegian perception of the Russian security threat after the Russian military intervention in Georgia in 2008 and after Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. A conflict in the Arctic seems to be more likely caused by a spill-over effect from tensions in other regions than to emerge from within.

Firstly, the author points out in the literature review that there is a gap in literature and therefore a need for such a research. Moreover, she introduces the methodology and data used in the theoretical part. The thesis uses the Copenhagen School as an analytical framework and the methods of content analysis and chronological sequences as an analytical tool. In the analytical part, the author provides the historical context of Norway-Russia relations; however, the main body of the text is divided according to the five sectors developed by the Copenhagen School: military, political, societal, economic and environmental parts of the perception. Besides analyzing the sectors by the means of chronological sequences, the author adds also the quantitative aspect to the analysis: by the means of content analysis, she ascertains which of the sectors are most covered in the media, and whether the events in 2014 increased the interest in the topic of Norway-Russia relations.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the presented thesis is to analyze Norway-Russia relations in the Arctic and Norwegian perception of Russia in the area. Even though the Arctic comes to focus of international relations researchers, there is still a lot of gaps in the literature. Another goal of the thesis is to ascertain whether the Russian expansive
foreign policy, demonstrated by the situation in Ukraine, influenced the Norwegian perception of its neighbor.

The author used the Copenhagen School as an analytical framework and the methods of content analysis and chronological sequences as tools.

For better understanding, the analysis was disaggregated into five sectors: military, environmental, economic, societal and political. The content analysis has shown that the political and military sectors are the most present when Norwegian media (NRK, Aftenposten and Nordlys) write about Russia in the Arctic. The statistical analysis also confirmed a correlation between the number of documents and the milestone 2014.

Thanks to the chronological sequences applied on the individual sectors, the research questions could be answered. Firstly, the analysis proves that the Arctic is a foundation for both Norway-Russia relations and the Norwegian perception of Russia. Despite the fact that the Ukraine crisis strongly affected the relations, Russia is not considered a threat in Norway. The most influenced are the political, military and economic sectors. Cooperation in the other two, environmental and societal, continues more or less without negative impacts. Nevertheless, generally, the tensions increased.

As a simplification, the author suggest that the overall relations are rather good. After 2014, there is visible worsening, however in most of the sectors, improvement takes places from 2017 onwards.

To conclude, the question is in which direction the Norway-Russia relations are going. As for now, the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and the Russian President Vladimir Putin met in the spring of 2019. This, together with the analysis conclusions, suggests normalization in the relations. Therefore, the author believes that the Arctic remains one of the most peaceful regions in the world.

“Russian Foreign Policy in the Arctic: Balancing Cooperation and Competition,” Stacy R. Closson, Wilson Center, June 2017 [85]
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no24-russian-foreign-policy-the-arctic-balancing-cooperation-and

Abstract:

The Arctic region presents a particularly interesting case study of Russian foreign policy. In a time when Russia is showing renewed aggression on three fronts – the Baltic Sea region, Syria, and Ukraine – and meddling in Western democratic processes, Russia’s behavior in the Arctic is so far largely cooperative. The question is: Why?

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction
Russia's behavior in this region is far from uniform. On the one hand, Russia planted a flag in 2007 on the far northern Arctic seabed during a scientific expedition to bolster their case for expansive polar sovereignty. On the other hand, Russia signed an agreement with Norway in 2010 to delineate maritime boundaries. Russia has increased its military activity in the Arctic, but is also adhering to binding agreements that enhance maritime safety and security.

As a result of Russia’s non-uniform behavior, Western assessments of Russia in the Arctic have led to polar opposite conclusions: Russia is a menacing military presence with expansionary designs; yet it is also a constructively engaged actor addressing neighborly concerns. This dichotomy in Russia’s foreign policy is not especially new. Throughout its history, Russia has simultaneously managed cooperation and competition with its neighbors and rivals. For example, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union sold oil and gas to Western Europe and bought Western goods, while maintaining the Warsaw Pact as a strategic buttress against NATO.

In examining Russia’s doctrine, discourse, and developments across the Arctic region, a picture emerges of Russia adopting different foreign policy behaviors depending on the context. Russia strives to maintain its competitive great power status in relation to the U.S. and NATO in the pan-Arctic. At the same time, Russia is a cooperative member of the Arctic Council, as well as a regional partner alongside its northern European neighbors in the Barents Sea region.

The reason for Russia’s simultaneous cooperative and competitive approach is that the Arctic is critical to Russia’s future economic growth and international standing. Estimates vary, but Russia’s High North is predicted to generate about 20 percent of its GDP and 22 percent of its exports. As Western Siberian hydrocarbons wane, Russia hopes to tap into the estimated 13 percent of the world’s oil, 30 percent of the world’s natural gas, and rare earth minerals located within in its Arctic zone. Russia anticipates a huge growth in the use of its maritime Northern Sea Route, connecting European and Asian markets and providing expanded opportunity to the approximately 2 million Russians residing near the Arctic coast.

However, Russia cannot sustain the development and potential use of its Arctic zone without the other Arctic states as partners. Russia requires investment, technology, know-how, and markets to ensure that its Arctic zone thrives. Russia’s strategy is therefore to balance its expansionist designs and military posture with constructive regional engagement in order to maximize the potential for economic growth in the Arctic.

**Conclusion**

For now, the Russian government talks and acts very confidently about its ability to balance cooperation and competition in the Arctic. It is perhaps the only region left in the world where Russian and Western leaders meet on an equal level, promising to abide by international accords in demarcating boundaries, concluding binding
agreements on softer security measures, and encouraging people-to-people contacts.

Arctic states should continue to encourage Russian constructive leadership in such areas as maritime safety and security, and scientific cooperation. Russia may ascend to a new maritime power status given its advantage in available ice cutters, Arctic ports, hydrocarbon development, and readiness to increase usage of the Northern Sea Route. We can expect to see Russia continue to pursue its interests in global organizations like the Arctic Council and the Barents regional organizations. How Russia (and other states) conduct themselves across this spectrum will be a key driver in Arctic developments.

At the same time, Russia's competitive approach to securing more territory, resources, and Arctic military readiness could upset this delicate system of regional cooperation. There is the potential for the Arctic states to dispute territorial boundaries, particularly the North Pole and in the Barents Sea. Differences among Arctic states over strategic goals and visions elsewhere may also spill over into the Arctic, as the Ukraine crisis has shown. In this instance, Russia’s ability to balance cooperation and competition will become even more important.


Summary:

Russia has declared its commitment to international cooperation in the Arctic, but it has invested massively in the modernization of its nuclear arsenal concentrated on the Kola Peninsula and has consolidated its military positions in the Barents region and along the Northern Sea Route. The growing need to gain political advantage from this investment leads to the following escalation of risks:

• In the evolving confrontation with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the situation in the Arctic theater is rare for Russia, because the level of threats to its interests is low and its capacity for threatening the interest of NATO member states is high.

• Strategic nuclear assets of the Russian Northern Fleet are augmented by new capabilities for long-distance, high-precision missile strikes and protected by the air defense system, which amounts to extending the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) “bubble” to the Western part of the Barents region.

• Russia’s new Arctic command puts its main emphasis in planning and training on amphibious operations supported by missiles strikes on shore, and one possible target for this power projection could be the undefended Norwegian Svalbard.
• Russia’s program for constructing new naval and air bases along the course of the Northern Sea Route is completed, but they amount to neither heavy military presence nor increased safety of navigation.

• Emphasizing the need to defend itself against “hybrid” threats from the West, Moscow is developing capabilities for unconventional warfare, integrated with its nuclear and conventional forces in the Arctic, and adding new elements to its significant military superiority over NATO and its partners in the Western part of the Arctic theater.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

The Arctic theater is strongly prioritized in Russian strategic planning, and this priority requires critical examination because the rationale is not obvious. Russia’s security interests in the High North are not directly threatened. The shift in Russian political attention toward the Arctic was prompted by Arthur Chilingarov’s flag-planting expedition to the North Pole in summer 2007, which alarmed commentators and stakeholders in the West, though it was a nongovernmental enterprise with Western sponsors. Greater interest of many global actors in Arctic agendas is driven by the growing awareness of global warming, which is a matter of little concern for the Russian leadership. Its basic assessment of a steadily intensifying geopolitical competition in the Arctic is derived from a general proposition on growing global tensions between competing powers, which is reflected in all basic documents, including the National Security Strategy. These documents camouflage rather than clarify the assessments of threats to Russia’s interests in the Arctic, so an in-depth analysis of this particular focus in Russian strategic culture necessarily involves identifying real pieces of data in the fog of propaganda. This exercise will constitute a point of departure for examining the strategic guidelines pertaining to the three key directions in Russian military buildup in the Arctic: nuclear-strategic, the Barents Region, and the Eastern littoral.

Conclusion

Ambitious plans for expanding Russia’s military presence and activities in the Arctic are proceeding with mixed success, yet Moscow has achieved a significant strengthening of many strategic positions in the last few years. This situation grants the Russian leadership a remarkably wide range of strategic choices, a rare advantage in the perceived pattern of confrontation with the West. What makes it possible for the Kremlin to enjoy this freedom of maneuvering is the underlying assessment of low threat to Russia’s interests in the High North combined with its capacity to threaten the interests of its Arctic neighbors.

Russian mainstream experts seek to downplay the significance of military activities and insist on Moscow’s preference for cooperation in the Arctic, and there are
indeed compelling reasons for shifting the allocation of dwindling military resources to the theaters where risks are high and capabilities lacking, as well as for engaging in international cooperation in order to alleviate many social and economic problems in the High North. The problem with the proposition of acting on Russia’s own slogan of the Arctic as a “zone of peace and cooperation” is that there are presently few material benefits to be harvested from it, while such a stance denies Russia the opportunity to exploit the highly valued position of power it holds in the Barents region.

There are good reasons for Western strategy-makers to focus on the risks immanent to a situation in which Russia’s power projection capabilities exceed significantly NATO’s capabilities for containment. Various demonstrations of military might in 2014–2017 had an effect opposite to that desired by Moscow, as the Nordic states have come closer together in the security domain. This effort cannot preclude Russian aggressive moves, and one target that appears easy is Svalbard. Norway exercises sovereignty over this archipelago but cannot station any military force there according to the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty. The most worrisome options are related to Russia’s nuclear capabilities concentrated on the Kola peninsula. Moscow keeps investing colossal resources in modernizing this arsenal, and in the situation of a protracted confrontation with the West, it can hardly afford not to try to gain any political advantage from this investment.

It needs to bring these capabilities into the political fray, and Putin’s elaboration on missile weapons systems in his March 2018 address, reiterated in the February 2019 address, exemplifies the readiness to resort to threats. Any direct use of nuclear weapons remains in the realm of the unthinkable, but one feasible plan is a resumption of nuclear testing on the Central Testing Ground (Zone B) at the Novaya Zemlya archipelago in the Arctic Ocean. The political resonance from this breach of international norms is certain to be massive, and Moscow may count on exploiting discord in the West.

The Arctic occupies a more prominent place in Russian strategic planning and thinking than the scope of national interests and the character of threat to them justify. This phenomenon determines the high risk of a proactive use of military force in this region as the political instrument of choice in the evolving Russian strategic culture.


Abstract:

The territorial disputes in the High North are seen by Russian strategists as a significant threat to the country’s security. Some of these conflicts were successfully settled down while others are still waiting for their resolution. This study examines
four cases – the U.S.-Soviet/Russian dispute on the Bering Sea, Norwegian-Russian dispute on the Barents Sea, Svalbard issue and the Russian claim on the extension of its continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. The paper argues that currently Russia’s Arctic strategy represents a mixture of the expansionist/revisionist and soft power policies. On the one hand, Moscow is quite assertive as regards its claims on the Arctic continental shelf as well as demonstration of its sovereignty over the Russian part of the Arctic and military presence in the region. On the other hand, the Kremlin underlines that all territorial disputes should be resolved peacefully – through negotiations and on the basis of international law and institutions.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

Russia has important economic, societal, environmental and military-strategic interests in the High North. These interests include the access, exploration and development of the Arctic natural resources (especially the hydrocarbon ones).

Russia tries to modernize and further develop the industrial base of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) which makes a significant and valuable contribution to the country’s economy.

Moscow is also interested in opening up of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) for international commercial traffic and developing circumpolar air routes. Moscow is deeply concerned about the debilitating ecological system in the AZRF and trying to stop and reverse the negative trends in this sphere. Russia still has considerable military-strategic interests in the region. These have not lost their relevance with the end of the Cold War. This continuity can clearly be seen in Russia’s security perceptions of the Arctic as a region of both challenges and opportunities.

The territorial disputes in the High North are seen by Russian strategists as a significant threat to the country’s security. It should be noted that the Arctic region has inherited a number of territorial disputes from the Cold War era and Russia was a party to them. Some of these conflicts were successfully settled down while others are still waiting for their resolution. The analysis in this report addresses four cases – the U.S.-Soviet/Russian dispute on the Bering Sea, Norwegian-Russian dispute on the Barents Sea, Svalbard issue and the Russian claim on the extension of its continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean.

Conclusion

Currently, Russia’s Arctic strategy represents a mixture of the expansionist/revisionist and soft power policies. On the one hand, Moscow is quite assertive as regards its claims on the Arctic continental shelf as well as demonstration of its sovereignty over the Russian part of the Arctic and military presence in the region. On the other hand, the Kremlin underlines that all territorial
disputes should be resolved peacefully – through negotiations and on the basis of international law and institutions (such as UNCLOS and UN CLCS).

More generally, it is safe to assume that in the foreseeable future Moscow’s strategy in the region will be predictable and pragmatic rather than aggressive or spontaneous. In contrast with the internationally wide-spread stereotype of Russia as a revisionist power in the High North, there are some grounds to believe that Moscow will continue to pursue a double-faceted strategy in the region: On the one hand, such a strategy aims at defending Russia’s legitimate economic and political interests in the region. On the other hand, Moscow is open to cooperation with foreign partners that are willing to partake in exploiting the Arctic natural resources, developing sea routes and solving residual territorial disputes and numerous socio-economic and environmental problems of the region.

“Offensive Structural Realism and Russian Expansion in the Arctic,” Brandon C. Halaychik, The Spetsnaz Group: Slavic Defense and Strategic Policy Center, August 2018 [88]

Overview:

The Russian Federation has attempted to reestablish itself as a global power since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation is expanding its foreign policy and national security objectives to pre-Soviet designs. One such area of concern is the Arctic region a 14.5 million square kilometer area situated at the top of the world with several states claiming territory to this strategically important zone. These states include the United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark, and the Russian Federation. Out of the five states listed, the Russian Federation lays claim to the largest portion of the Arctic accounting for 17,500 kilometers of land (Blunden 2009). This vast area holds a strategic monopoly for any state which can effectively lay claim as it not only holds undiscovered natural gas and oil reserves but new shipping lanes such as the northern sea routes across the top of Russia and the Northwest passage which allows access through the Canadian archipelago (Blunden 2009). It is therefore important for United States National Security interests to challenge claims by the Russian Federation to these areas and establish itself as the hegemonic power in the region.

Current & Relevant Information:

Introduction

According to a United States Geological Survey conducted in 2009, the Arctic region holds approximately 30% of the world’s undiscovered natural gas reserves and
approximately 13% of the world's undiscovered oil reserves, which are at a depth of 500 meters or less of water (Åtland 2009). This is a significant fact for the Russian Federation as the Russian economy is 68% based on the production and sale of natural gas and oil to external clients such as China and Europe. Although the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea established in 1982 lays out the theoretical framework of the established rights of states bordering the Arctic, the Russian Federation leadership has continuously expressed the importance of the Arctic as a strategic resource base for Russia as it enters the twenty-first century (Ermida 2016). As such, the Russian Security Strategy through 2020 identifies explicitly for the control of the energy resources in the Arctic and the Barents Sea that could develop into a potential source of conflict and the expressed possibility of military confrontation on the issue with other state powers (Piskunova 2010). To achieve their establishment in the region, the Russian Federation has already established several key military bases in the Arctic. These bases include Northern Clover on Kotelny Island, Arctic Trefoil in Franz Josef Land, and four additional bases located at Rogachevo, Cape Schmidt, Sredniy, and Wrangel (BBC 2017). Although the claim of these bases by the Russian Federation is to promote oil and natural gas exploration in the region, the bases hold approximately 150 military personnel and hold strategic offensive and defensive armaments such as anti-air defense units, which hold concern for the United States strategic abilities (BBC 2017).

The Russian Federation’s drive to reestablish itself as a global power has severe security implications for the United States, its Arctic neighbors, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a whole. The former Commander of United States Naval Forces Europe Admiral Mark Ferguson noted that the remilitarization of Russian security policy in the Arctic is one of the most significant developments in the twenty-first century adding that Russia is creating an “Arc of steel from the Arctic to the Mediterranean” (Herbst 2016, 166). Although the Russian Federation postulates its expansion into the Arctic is for purely economic means, the reality of the military hardware being placed in the region by the Russians tells otherwise. Implementation of military hardware such as anti-air defenses is contrary to the stipulated purposes of the Russian Government in the region. Therefore, is the Russian Federation building strategic military bases in the Arctic to challenge the United States hegemony due to the mistreatment against the Russians by the United States and NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Conclusions

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the fledgling Russian Federation under the direction of then President Boris Yeltsin, looked towards the United States and Western states to assist in its rebuilding process and to be brought closer to Western systems such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Promises and partnerships were made to include Russian membership in the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization and the NATO-Russian Council which promised that Russia would be consulted regarding former Eastern bloc states prior to NATO involvement and that NATO would not expand into these areas in which Russia had a viable vested interest. This unfortunately was short lived when NATO entered into discussion of membership with the Ukraine and several other former Eastern bloc states knowing that they held a strategic interest for the Russian Federation. This resulted in an indefinite suspension of the NATO-Russian Council after Russia, feeling threatened by the expansionist policies of NATO and the West, engaged in a Georgian conflict and annexed Crimea from the Ukraine.

The Russian Federation entered into these two conflicts not to engage the West into another Cold War, but to stop the West and NATO from strategically surrounding the Russian Federation from what it perceived as an old adversary reneging on promises of peace and cooperation. One could make the argument that had Russia partnered with Mexico and Canada to establish a new military partnership and that offensive and defensive military equipment was placed on their respective boarders of the United States, that the United States would act in kind to what the Russian Federation has done through its perceived interventions in Georgia and the Ukraine. From a strategic standpoint, Russia was left with no other option but to invade Georgia and assist in the destabilization and annexation of the Ukraine and Crimea before they become members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and were covered under Article 5 of the treaty.

Offensive Structural Realism states that the anarchic nature of the international system is subsequently responsible for the aggressive state behavior in international politics. No finer example of this theory holds truer than what is being observed by the Russian Federation in response to the movements of NATO, the United States, and other Western countries. As a result of such Western policies, the Russian Federation has had to take both offensive and defensive steps to counter the Western chess movements which has resulted in the offensive posturing of Russian strategic military forces in the Arctic region. As more and more polices which place the Russian Federation at a strategic disadvantage continued, Russia will seek to exploit more areas similar to the Arctic in an attempt to circumvent the West and protected its citizens from a perceived threat of violence. This, however, could be prevented if NATO, the United States, and the other Western allies understand the reasoning behind the aggressive military expansionist policy by Russia and reset the table by bringing them closer to Western Institutions. Although it would be a hard fault battle to accomplish this mission based on the slights that have already occurred, trust could be rebuilt by the nations overtime and provide for a more stable and secure world.
Endnotes


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