



# The Arctic Contradiction

A Framework to Understand Cooperation and Security in Arctic Politics



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## *Abstract*

There is a dualism in Arctic politics, on one hand, the region is characterised by a web of institutional agreements and bilateral cooperation on common regional governance. The Arctic states have displayed a strong willingness to peaceful coexistence through a commitment to international cooperation, that extends beyond the normal East-West dichotomy of international politics. At the same time, the Arctic states are mistrusting each other's intentions and have not shied away from increasing their military presence in the region. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Finland and Sweden renounced their traditional foreign policy preference of neutrality in favour of NATO. This suggests the Arctic region is not unaffected by the international system and can be just as prone to security dilemmas as anywhere else in the world. A traditional cooperation/conflict analysis is not sufficient to address the complexities and nuances of Arctic politics. This research suggests peripheral realism and the levels of analysis framework can offer key insight into resolving the Arctic contradiction. The levels of analysis framework can allow us to separate international politics and foreign policies into three levels, the first is pressures from inside the state, the second is regional politics and the third is pressures from the international system. Imaging politics to take place on three different levels with their own rules and dynamics can allow us to better conceptualise the complexities of international politics and make sense of apparent contradictions. Peripheral realism approaches international politics as seen from the "smaller states" perspective and their interests, unlike neorealist theory which is more preoccupied with the international system as seen from "great powers" perspective it is more prone to predict conflict and power competition as a driving force of international politics. This makes it poorly equipped to address the complexities of Arctic politics because great powers have different freedoms and capabilities whereas "inferior" states are more restricted and hence have different needs. Although the Arctic region is home to two great powers, the majority of states are remains "smaller peripheral" which will leave its mark on the outcome of regional politics, although they are still subjected to the great powers' interests.

*List of Abbreviations*

AEPS	<b>Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy</b>
EEZ	<b>Exclusive Economic Zone</b>
EU	<b>European Union</b>
ICC	<b>Inuit Circumpolar Council</b>
GDP	<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>
NATO	<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</b>
NORDEFECO	<b>Nordic Defence Cooperation</b>
SSBNs	<b>Ballistic Missile Submarines</b>
UN	<b>United Nations</b>
UNCLOS	<b>United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea</b>
USA	<b>United States of America</b>

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# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

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Climate change marches ever on. Leaving melting ice in its wake, opening up and granting new access to once inaccessible land and sea, and presenting new political, economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges for the Arctic region.<sup>1</sup> The allure of considerable economic and political potential for the decades to come has shifted the Arctic from the periphery of international politics toward a more central role.<sup>2</sup> In response to the increased interest, foreign ministers in the Arctic states began empathising with the Arctic as a peaceful and cooperative region.<sup>3</sup> Today the region is characterised by a web of institutional agreements and cooperation of common governance of the Arctic, this contributed to the view of a region hailed as exceptional and exempt power politics that so often characterises international politics.<sup>4</sup> The Ukraine Crisis in 2014 was a major turning point in Arctic politics as the East-West relations deteriorated and the West enacted sanctions on Russia for the annexation of Crimea. Cooperation in the Arctic scaled down but endured.<sup>5</sup> The War in Ukraine following the Russian invasion in February 2022, profoundly impacted the Arctic, causing disruption and uprooting what had for a very long time been regarded as an unusually peaceful and highly cooperative region in international politics by the breaking of diplomatic relations.<sup>6</sup> Including an expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the Arctic with Sweden and Finland submitting

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Hall, "A New Cold War: mining geopolitics in the Arctic Circle", 20.12.2020, Mining Technology, (2020), available at: <https://www.mining-technology.com/features/a-new-cold-war-mining-geopolitics-in-the-arctic-circle/> (Accessed: 13.02.2023)

<sup>2</sup> Kathrin Keil, "The Arctic: A new region of conflict? The case of oil and gas." Cooperation and Conflict, vol. 49, (2), (2014), pp. 163-164

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia, China and the EU." Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, (2019), p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Mikkel Runge Olesen, "The end of Arctic exceptionalism? A review of the academic debates and what the Arctic prospects mean for the Kingdom of Denmark", in Fischer., Kristian, Mouritzen., Hans, (eds), "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2020", DIIS, (2020), p. 103

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107

<sup>6</sup> Colin Wall, Njord Wegge, "The Russian Arctic Threat." NUPI, pp. 1-???, available at: <https://www.nupi.no/en/publications/cristin-pub/the-russian-arctic-threat-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war> (Accessed: 24.04.2023)

their membership application to the alliance.<sup>7</sup> Then a mere year after diplomatic relations broke off, the Arctic States has begun expressing interest in continuing cooperation in the Arctic<sup>8</sup> and slowly began indicating interest in re-engagement.<sup>9</sup> This begs the question of how can we reconcile this contradiction, or, dualism in Arctic politics? For clearly the Arctic is not free from the influence of power politics or international political concerns, yet the incentive for Arctic cooperation remains strong. Arctic Politics can be understood as operating with its own subsystem within the international system with regional dynamics. Regardless Arctic politics is still connected to the wider international system, and the influence of international politics will impact the region.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kristine Haugevik, "Hva skjer med sikkerhets og forsvarspolitikken i Norden?", 21.10.2022, den norske Atlanterhavskomiteén (2022), available at: <https://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no/ukens-analyse/hva-skjer-med-sikkerhets-og-forsvarspolitikken-i-norden> (Accessed: 15:02:2023)

<sup>8</sup> Astrid Edvardsen, "Russia's Top Arctic Diplomat: We Still Consider the Arctic Council an Important Forum.", 11.04.2023, (2023), available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/russias-top-arctic-diplomat-we-still-consider-arctic-council-important-forum> (Accessed: 08.05.2023)

<sup>9</sup> Hilde-Gunn Bye, "Here Are Norway's Priorities For the Upcoming Arctic Council Chairship." 28.03.2023, High North News, (2023), available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/here-are-norways-priorities-upcoming-arctic-council-chairship> (Accessed: 06.05.2023)

<sup>10</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, "The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?" Polar Record, vol. 53, no. 1, (2017), p. 1

## Chapter 2:

### Methodology and Theory

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#### 2.1 – Methodology

Since the Cold War, the Nordic Balance was a foreign policy doctrine that was used to explain the stability of Arctic politics, why war or otherwise armed conflict would not start in the Arctic. This doctrine maintained a semblance of relevance during and after the Cold War. The idea was understood as the balance of power was between the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union through Norway, Denmark and Iceland's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), neutral Sweden and Finland with Finland aligning closer to the Soviet Union/Russia. At the same time, the Nordic countries maintained close cooperation and dialogue, allowing dialogue and careful balancing between the interests of the great powers. However, in response to the escalation of the war in Ukraine with Russia invading the country both Sweden and Finland has started the process of joining NATO.<sup>11</sup> The implication of a NATO expansion in the Arctic poses a serious challenge to the notion of a Nordic balance of power. This challenge require a rethinking of how international politics and security are understood and approached in the Arctic.

The scope of this paper is to provide a peripheral realist reassessment of why armed conflict is unlikely to start in the Arctic despite growing tensions by complimenting the analysis with Level of Analysis framework. Separating the Arctic into three dimensions, or realms of analysis could allow us to understand how conflict (tensions) and cooperation can coexist by looking at the relationship between the state, the region and the international system. I will first start with a theory section. Here the Level of Analysis framework will be presented, followed by a deliberation on the realist school to equip the reader with a broader understanding of realism,

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<sup>11</sup> Kristine Haugevik, "Hva skjer med sikkerhets og forsvarspolitikken i Norden?", 21.10.2022, den norske Atlanterhavskomiteén (2022), available at: <https://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no/ukens-analyse/hva-skjer-med-sikkerhets-og-forsvarspolitikken-i-norden> (Accessed: 15:02:2023)



then present the theory of peripheral realism. The third chapter will provide background and context for this paper. The aim of the third chapter is to present the Arctic as a geographical region, then identify where the Nordic countries fit in the peripheral realist framework and provide a deeper explanation of the Nordic Balance doctrine. Chapter four will describe why Arctic governance can be regarded as its own separate sphere in international politics and explain how regional cooperation occurs within the international system as driven by the Arctic states' self-interests. The last chapter before providing a conclusion to the analysis will describe how the international system seeps into the Arctic, causing tensions and security issues to rise. Allowing the contradiction of Arctic politics of coinciding tensions and cooperation to emerge.

## **2.2 – Level of Analysis**

Although the notion of different levels, realms, spheres or frames of analysis was introduced to international relations theory by Kenneth Waltz in his book 'Man, the State, and War' published in 1959, through the relationships between the first, the second and third images of international relation, which are concepts that will be elaborated on later in this section. This concept that politics operated on different levels was formalised into a cohesive theoretical framework by David Singer in his article 'Levels-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations' from 1961. The idea proposed by Singer was there exist different layers, or, if you may call it levels to an international relations system. The aim of Singer was to address criticism prevalent in international relations theory at the convoluted and overlapping aspects of domestic politics, states and international politics when explaining foreign policy of his time.<sup>12</sup> The backdrop Singer criticized his contemporaries was their tendency to limit their scope of analysis to the state/national level only and how they relate to each other in an international system. Meaning all agency for foreign policy was centred around the political organisation of a country. His argument was if a scholar limits the scope of analysis by only looking at only one part of a particular issue, they will only reach a conclusion that reveal a partial understanding of a topic.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Diez., Ingvild Bode, Aleksandra Fernandes da Costa, "Key Concepts of International Relations), SAGE Publications, (2011), p.126

<sup>13</sup> David J. Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations" World Politics, vol. 14, no. 1, (1961), pp. 78

For instance, a scholar may wish to make predictions on grand strategy or systemic changes and may conduct a systemic analysis to explain conflict or stability in international politics, thus reach deepen their understanding of the big picture of politics. Meanwhile, a scholar may focus on politics at a national or local level may find a deeper understanding of the nuances in politics. In essence, the mantra of levels of analysis can be understood as research on different levels seek to uncover and explain different aspects, puzzles or aspects of a puzzle and thus cannot be easily integrated as different theories are used. Different theoretical frameworks accompanies its own set of assumptions, biases, logic and sometimes competing concepts like for example liberalist theory versus realist theory.<sup>14</sup>

The level of analysis theory belongs to a scientific conceptualisation of international relations, meaning it belongs to a positivist tradition of scholarship. They have an embedded belief that an objective reality exists and it is a scholar's task to uncover this.<sup>15</sup> In the 1950s it was common to frame analyses in terms of casual explanations which required definitions and variables, gathering of data and then test the validity of hypotheses based on this. This was the backdrop that sparked the academic debate on whether it was possible to conduct systemic analyses using sub-systemic variables.<sup>16</sup>

Waltz argued it was difficult, if not borderline impossible to explain specific foreign policy, such as the case of going to war without making reference to specific individual or state levels. In Waltzian terminology referred to the different levels politics operating on as the first, second and third image. The first image referred to the individual agency, the second image as the agency of the state, while the third image referred to the pressures from the international system, which is the framework all states relate and act within.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Diez, Bode, Fernandes da Costa, (2011), Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Singer, (1961), Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Diez, Bode, Fernandes da Costa, (2011), Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis", Columbia University Press, (1959), pp. 330-338

Singer used the ideas set out by Waltz when he wrote on the difference between an international level of analysis and national sub-systems of analysis. For instance by studying the international system as a whole is a useful endeavour to uncover patterns and general causes for trends in international politics, such as the creation and dissolution of coalitions, understanding the distribution of international power, stability and responses by formal political institutions. This level of systemic analysis allows for conducting international relations as a whole, it is useful by allowing an easy to grasp comprehension of changes and events in international politics, but it is prone to sacrifice depth over breadth in its explanations. Also, such analysis has a tendency to exaggerate the impact of international politics on domestic and national actors, while discrediting their potential impact of a country's foreign policy.<sup>18</sup> The problem with this position of universality is that it does not allow for the divergence of behaviour and interests, which makes it poorly equipped in addressing apparent contradictions,<sup>19</sup> like for example the Arctic as a region of both tensions, stability and cooperation.

On national sub-systems Singer argued, by studying the national, its national sub-systems and organisation can offer more depth to the analysis at the cost of understanding the big picture.<sup>20</sup> This level of analysis run into the same difficulties as with the systemic analysis, but in the opposite direction. For instance, by maintaining a key eye on the national and sub-national level of analysis it is easy to exaggerate the differences between countries, as well run into the risk of glorifying the differences and virtues of one country over another. Thereby, risking distorting the analysis away from the objective reality into a self-gratifying nationalistic fever dream and into a we-them mentality.<sup>21</sup> The advantage of this approach is it can reveal whether other actors than formal state institutions exert influence on the decision making-process which can steer national interests away from mere security and national survival toward the pursuit of other goals, which in turn influences a country's foreign policy.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Singer, (1961), *Ibid.*, p. 80

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-84

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87

The goal of adding these two approaches together is that they provide a clearer explanation of understanding the developments in international politics.<sup>23</sup> That said a major challenge for conducting an analysis using level of analysis theory is the insistence of using neorealism as the international system. This presents challenges when applying the theory in practice to explain foreign policy that act against national security concerns which is predicted in the international order as a state of anarchy thesis.<sup>24</sup> This paper will address this issue by introducing peripheral realism, because it adhere to the major assumptions of neorealism with a few tweaks which will be explained below,<sup>25</sup> but first it is important to gasp a better understanding of what realism and neorealism entail.

### **2.3 – Realist theory**

To compliment the Level of Analysis theory in order to make it more suitable tool for investigating why armed conflict are unlikely to occur in the Arctic regardless of tensions between the states, I will complement the theoretical framework provided with the Levels of Analysis with peripheral realism. Before explaining the theory of peripheral realism it is important to understand the theoretical backdrop it belongs, which is the realist school of thought. The most fundamental assumption in realist thought is the state of anarchy. Waltz describe this state of war between state in the absence of a single sovereign in international politics to enforce its authority leads to violence. This is because each unit in the international system, these being states, are free to define their own interest and develop means to achieve these. The primary goal and interest of any state is to secure its own survival and independence within a self-help system.<sup>26</sup>

There are two major traditions of realism, these are the classical realists and neorealists. The following section will describe these traditions starting with classical realism, followed by a

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-91

<sup>24</sup> Diez, Bode, Fernandes da Costa, (2011), Ibid., 129

<sup>25</sup> Luis Schenoni, Carlos Escude, "Peripheral Realism Revisited." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 59, no. 1, (2016), p.4

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "Theory of International Politics", Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, (1979), pp.104-105

neorealism and ending with a brief discussion on the application of realism. Classical realism builds on the many conception laid out on Thomas Hobbes' magnum-opus the Leviathan. There is an inherent belief that states behave like humans locked in a Hobbesian state of nature, a war against all, and without a sovereign to consolidate power and enforce peace.<sup>27</sup> Within this state of nature states as actors are viewed as rational, egoistic and constantly on the look out to elevate its own position by any possible. Seen in this light states as actors are constantly locked in a state of survival of the fittest, a never ending competition against each other in pursuit of increasing its own power while limiting other states' power.<sup>28</sup>

The second tradition of realist thought is the neorealism. Scholars of neorealism agreed with the central tenant of classical realism of anarchy in politics, but developed it into a structural theory by empathising the central importance of the absence of a sovereign in international politics. The consequence in terms of analysis is that all states became units operating, interacting and relating to each other within an anarchic system.<sup>29</sup> This meant scholars became interested in identifying the distribution of international power, distribution of capabilities and hierarchical ordering between states within the international system. Thus, it became of central importance to be able to identify '*polarity*' in international politics. This refers to the number and distribution of great powers and is organised as such,: a) unipolar world order refers to a world dominated by a single great power, or superpower. B) a bipolar word order refers a world dominated by two rivalling great powers, whereas c) multipolar world order is a world consisting of more than two great powers.<sup>30</sup> It is crucial for states to be able to recognise which world order they currently find themselves in, the distribution of power capabilities and their own capabilities relative to others in order to ensure their own security and national interest.<sup>31</sup>

The two most significant concepts of neorealist thought is the *security dilemma* and *balancing of power*. The security dilemma refers to the situation that arises when states competing for the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.177

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth Waltz, (1979), Ibis., pp.39-50

<sup>30</sup> Diez, Bode, Fernandes da Costa, (2011), Ibis., pp. 178-179

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 179

distribution of capabilities. There is an inherent mistrust between countries for they can never be sure of what other states' intentions. When a state is confronted by an adversary that are vastly more powerful than they are themselves, this will be perceived as a threat to national security. The solution to the security dilemma is addressed through balancing of power. This can be achieved through increasing own capabilities such as increasing military expenditure, increase the investment and development of military technologies. This notion within realist thought is called internal balancing. The second solution to the security dilemma is external balancing, which is about building coalitions and alliances against a more dominant country, be it a rivalling country, great power or hegemon. The security dilemma can be understood as thus, the inherent mistrust present in international politics on the intention of others, pressures states to pursue a policy of balancing of power when faced with uncertainty.<sup>32</sup> This means the logic of the structure of international politics will always be prone to tensions, to the point to the point it can be regarded as a natural state of politics in the absence of a central sovereign. For example nobody caused the Cold War, but it was the consequence of structural pressures between two great powers of USA and the Soviet Union. Alongside with the sum of smaller countries caught between the two superior great powers, who formed coalitions against each other under the leadership of the two great powers to ward each other off.<sup>33</sup>

In realist scholar tradition international politics are power politics, hence there is a theoretical bias toward focusing on and referring to the politics of the great powers at the time. Because of this it was only natural for political realists to concern themselves on the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the USA, which when analysed gave rise to debates on bipolarity and defensive realism. This was based on the interest of explaining why conflict did not break out between the two powers. They concluded a system with bipolarity would promote peace because the two great powers would strive for relative balance of power to the point they even out their power capabilities, meaning they would keep each other in check<sup>34</sup>. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1992 scholars rethought their position and went about to analyse the effects of unipolarity. They concluded a unipolar world order maintained peace through the sheer

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-181

overwhelming power of a single great power which would assume the role as a global hegemon. The hegemon would maintain its power because of the cost of forming coalitions outweighs the benefits without another great power to rally around to counter balance the hegemon, vis-à-vis the USA. Another consequence of being the only remaining superpower, the USA was now uncontested and free to maximise its capacities, thereby increasing the gap between the hegemon and other states. This uncontested power maximisation became known as offensive realism.<sup>35</sup> Eventually the hegemonic power will be contested as other states strive to catch up to the hegemon's uncontested capabilities, for according to the state of anarchy proceeds constraints to unipolarity as smaller states display the tendency to imitate their rivals' successful characteristics in order not to fall behind.<sup>36</sup>

## **2.4 – Peripheral realism**

Among peripheral realism's main contributions to international relations and the realist debate was how it addressed the 3 main critiques addressed against neorealist thought: the being the a) the concept of the state as a unit of analysis, b) the issue of security as the primary state interest, and c) state of anarchy as the primary ruling principle of the international system.<sup>37</sup>

A) According to peripheral realist thought the notion of the 'state' is often confused with terms like 'nation', 'country' and 'government' in literature on international relations. This can potentially be quite problematic in state-centric theories like realism. To address this potential confusion this may cause, peripheral realists follow a state-society configuration, meaning countries are units made up of its societies, also known as its people, and its political organisation which refers to its state. The social structures and political regime act as variables that intervene in a country's foreign policies which influences whether foreign policy objectives serve the interests of its elites (bourgeoisie), its people (citizenry) or single statesmen.

B) In event of a smaller state aligning itself to a stronger state to act as its guarantor of its security and independence. The smaller state will then be free to direct its national interests away from security and survival as this is secured by the stronger party, instead national interest may

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Schenoni, Escude, (2016), Ibid., pp.2-3

be directed toward economic development and citizen welfare. This is because politics cannot exist in a vacuum free of economic constraints and interests.<sup>38</sup>

C) Regarding the realist assumption on the structure of international politics is locked in a state of anarchy, peripheral realism contends this notion arguing instead that international politics is more akin to a loose hierarchy of states, because of the differences of power between states great powers and smaller states. That said peripheral realists recognise international politics as more fragile and disorderly compared to internal politics inside state borders, this is because the absence of a Sovereign to enforce rule of law and authority internationally in the same manner as within state borders.<sup>39</sup>

The above paragraph laid out a brief description of peripheral realism and how it sought to elevate the shortcoming of neorealist theory. The following section of this chapter will elaborate in more detail how peripheral realism addressed these issues. Peripheral realism is an international relation theory developed in Latin America with the purpose of contributing a rationale and agency for peripheral and non-great power states to navigate and seek autonomy in world politics dominated by much more powerful states. The theory belongs to the school of realism and was developed to provide a systemic explanation for how various conditions for autonomy would be possible.<sup>40</sup> The backdrop of which the theory was developed was what Carlos Escudé, deemed as a systemic political confrontations Latin American countries experienced with the USA, to the point the USA existed as an external constraint for political and economic development in the region. To make sense of the issue of how peripheral states could cope with the asymmetrical relationship to a much more powerful neighbour, became a focal point to which Escudé developed his theory to address. He contested the base conception of the international system as anarchic, rather he argued the international system resembled a more ordered and hierarchical structure akin to a core-periphery structure of the international

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p.1



order, leaning into the influence of earlier dependency theorists. In other words the international order resembled a sort of a proto-hierarchy.<sup>41</sup>

Before elaborating on what Escudé meant that the international order resembles more of a hierarchical ordering of the structure rather than anarchical, it is important to understand how peripheral realism define peripheral states. A persistent challenge of realism as a theory is its predisposition of focusing on great powers, which begs the question on the difference between great powers and non-great power states. Particularly in regard to attempting to explain foreign policy of smaller states, or, rather peripheral state. For instance a smaller state may be rich, but small in territory and population, or large in size and territory yet weak economy.<sup>42</sup> Hence peripheral realism define peripheral states as those economies that are deeply affected by the cycles of boom and busts of the world economy, but whose position is such that it has little to no power to influence the established rules and institutions of the international system, be it written or unwritten rules.<sup>43</sup> This means within this definition as Escudé (2014) explains this include “the entire Third World, including most-so-called emerging powers, plus small and medium-sized fully developed countries whose vulnerability would be great if they played their interstate politics game without due attention to system constraints” (p.46)<sup>44</sup> Peripheral realism operates with a core-periphery view of the international system.

Neorealism follows the assumption that the international system is structured in a state of anarchy. In which states are ‘units’ that function in a relatively same manner of competing against each other to maximise their own security. The shortcoming of this assumption is that it does not take into account differences in power projection capabilities. Peripheral realism address this by introducing a core-periphery relationship of international power in which the role of states are distributed between three groups of states.<sup>45</sup> These are rule-making states, these are

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<sup>41</sup> Escudé, (2014), *Ibid.*, p.46

<sup>42</sup> Schenoni, Escude, (2016), *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

<sup>43</sup> Escudé, (2014) *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Schenoni, Escude, (2016), *Ibid.*

colloquially known as great powers in literature on political science and international relations. These includes members of the United Nation's Security Council and Germany, the latter seen in regard to its position within the eurozone. It must be noted the dominant capabilities of rule-making countries make them the principal rule breakers in international politics, which feeds into the neorealist argument of the state of anarchy.<sup>46</sup> What characterises rule-making states is its capabilities to decide and influence the written and unwritten rules of international politics, as well sometime may assume the role and mantle of a hegemonic power.<sup>47</sup> The second group of states are rule-followers, these are the states who do not have the capacity to challenge the established order/system and choose to follow the rules set by rule-making states as it does not want to damage its own economic interests. The majority of states are rule-followers, these include both advanced industrial- and developing economies.<sup>48</sup> With the aforementioned definition of what constitutes a peripheral state it is possible to further classify rule-following states into three subgroups:

**Class A rule-takers:** Highly industrialised countries without world-destroying capabilities and full integration into the core economy.

**Class B rule-takers:** Developing countries with capacities to provide own security over peripheral neighbours.

**Class C rule-takers:** Developing countries without capacity to provide own security, whose independence is secured through interstate consensus.

The subcategorization of rule-taking states is flexible and states may develop or lose its capabilities. Neither does it denounce the possibility of trade and economic conflicts, as states may use its capabilities in pursuit of autonomy (within limits) and interests.<sup>49</sup>

The last and final grouping of states is the rebel states. These are the states that lack the capacity to establish their own rules in international politics, but nevertheless go rogue in pursuit of autonomy in the international system at the cost of the wellbeing of their citizenry.<sup>50</sup> When

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p.6

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp 8-9

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp.6-7

peripheral states seek to break the status quo by defying the rules set out by rule-makers in pursuit of achieving the same freedoms that much more powerful states have, they do so at the expense of the wellbeing of their people. This is illustrated by cases such as North Korea's nuclear weapon programme and Iran through its financing of armed insurgencies and terrorism, like Hezbollah and Hamas.<sup>51</sup> This state behaviour stand in stark contrast to the rule-following states of Latin American and the European continents. To illustrate the existence of a proto-hierarchical ordering of international politics Escundé points to the post-war situation in Europe following Second World War, instead of resuming the usual great power politics that had defiled the continent for centuries, most western-European countries delegated the security responsibility to the USA as the full cost of maintaining security outweighed governability in face of the Cold War compared to ensuring the wellbeing of their citizens.<sup>52</sup> The consequence of which was that the European continent became partially occupied by the USA through the stationing of troops and military equipment on their land. The western-European countries turned to USA to provide its security immediately after the break out of the Cold War as they could not afford to deter the Soviet Union militarily on their own as their war-torn lands were in shambles which made the economic recovery and development a priority.<sup>53</sup>

If a state want to increase its freedom to set its own international agenda and manoeuvre freely requires a great investment in human and material recourses to which the margins for maneuverer is smaller for poorer states, unless the state can mobilise its subjects, its people, with a higher degree of state power away from social programs towards developing and maintaining its hardpower capabilities. This implies that more authoritarian and elite oriented state-configurations are more likely to go rogue, as the domestic social pressures are much more easily quenched compared to a more democratic and socially oriented state-configuration.<sup>54</sup> Hence, it is easier for peripheral rule-following states to bandwagon under the international order established

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<sup>51</sup> Carlos Escundé, "Realism in the Periphery" in Dominguez., Jorge. I., Covarrubias., Ana (eds), Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World, London: Taylor and Francis, (2014), p. 46

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 48

<sup>53</sup> Hubert Zimmermann, The Improbable Permanence of a Commitment: America's Troop Presence in Europe during the Cold War. *Journal of cold war studies*, (2009), 11 (1), p. 7

<sup>54</sup> Escundé, (2014) Ibid., pp. 48-52

by the rule-makers, this is because more citizen-oriented states do not wish to better the wellbeing of their citizenry without sacrificing a level of autonomy and wellbeing their citizenry cannot bear.<sup>55</sup> Although the international order can never be democratic or equal in the absence of a sovereign, there is however a loose form of hierarchy between states due to unequal distribution of power capabilities. Rebel states who rebel against the status-quo and the existing interstate hierarchy are almost always likely to lose because the international isolation brought about by the majority of states are rule-followers and adheres to the status-quo, which is illustrated by the situation of North Korea, Iraq under Saddam Hussain and Argentina under Leopold Galtieri.<sup>56</sup> The international order is fixed as illustrated by the resurgence of Germany and Japan following their defeat in the Second World War. Both countries accepted their fates and placed themselves under the USA's security sphere following World War 2, they instead redirected their effort to develop their economies to the point they are now economic powerhouses with the potential in becoming great powers.<sup>57</sup> This is further underpinned by current debates on the implications of the rise of China as it moves toward becoming a core country within the international system.<sup>58</sup>

A weakness in peripheral realism is its focus on peripheral states' relationship to a unipolar superpower, namely the USA. It does not take into account the rise of China and how Beijing provide incentives for rule-taking states to expand their trade relations and engagement with rivalling powers. Another shortcoming which fuels the aforementioned weakness is that it does not provide a rationale for countries squeezed between two rule-making powers, such as the situation in the Arctic with Russia and the USA. Nevertheless, peripheral realism is a good tool to provide a theoretical rationale for weaker states in navigating a realist understanding of international politics.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Schenoni, Escude, (2016), *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>56</sup> Escudé, (2014), *Ibid.*, p.48

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Li Xing, The rise of China and its impact on world economic stratification and re-stratification. *Cambridge review of international affairs*, 34 (4), (2021), pp. 545–547

<sup>59</sup> Schenoni, Escude, (2016), *Ibid.*, p.12

## 2.5 – Method and application of theory

This analysis can be regarded as an attempt to contribute to the academic debate of Arctic Exceptionalism. This is a notion that contends the Arctic is somehow unique in that it is somehow except of power politics due to its remoteness from the affairs of the world. Harsh climate and poor infrastructure has made the region a place for cooperation, stability, peace and scientific endeavours.<sup>60</sup> The aim of this paper is not to defend or denounce this position, but to nuancing it by trying to understand and reconcile the apparent contradiction of conceptions of Arctic Politics. One position contend the Arctic is not isolated from the international system and is in a position to become a hotbed for a new international scramble and competition, including the possibility for conflict.<sup>61</sup> Whereas the other side of the academic debate defends the notion of an Arctic Exceptionalism.<sup>62</sup>

This paper will address the question of why armed conflicts are unlikely to occur in the Arctic. This will done by combining the concepts in the level of analysis as laid out by David Singer and peripheral realism as the base for the analysis. Both level of analysis and peripheral realism operates within a state-society configuration which will inform the foreign policy considerations and how states determine national interests, hence the first level of analysis will be the state-society level. The Arctic as a region is traditionally depicted as a region in exception of world politics. Referring to a region of peace, cooperation, trust and common regional governance based on the rule of law and science. To this end, bilateral agreements and the Arctic Council has played a key role in segmenting the notion of Arctic exceptionalism.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, in order to better contextualise Arctic exceptionalism and its relationship with world politics the second level of analysis will be Arctic Governance. The third level of analysis will be International

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<sup>60</sup> Mikkel Runge Olesen, "The end of Arctic exceptionalism? A review of the academic debates and what the Arctic prospects mean for the Kingdom of Denmark", in Fischer., Kristian, Mouritzen., Hans, (eds), "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2020", DIIS, (2020), pp. 103

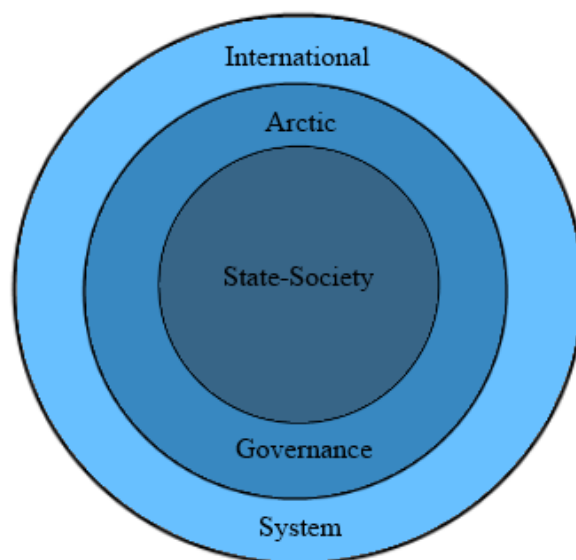
<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-107

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 103

<sup>63</sup> Matthias Finger, Lassi Heininen, "Contemporary Arctic Meets World Politics: Rethinking Arctic Exceptionalism in the Age of Uncertainty." Finger., Matthias, Heininen., Lassi (eds), *The GlobalArctic Handbook*, Springer, (2019), pp. 155–156

Politics which will address how pressures from the international system influences Arctic policy and the relationship between Arctic politics and international politics. This will be done by drawing on the concepts found laid out in peripheral realism on the international structure resembling a proto-hierarchical order. The three levels of analysis can be visually understood as shown in Figure 1.0. This figure illustrate how the levels of state-societies and Arctic Governances form realms of their own within a larger international structure. The assumption in this model is that although politics can take shape and exist within their own realm (level) with relative isolation from one another, they are not unaffected by impulses from the wider structure.

**Figure 1.0 – The three levels of Arctic politics**



*Figure 1.0 represent a model on the three levels of which Arctic politics. The first level consist of the state-society configuration, which refers to the interaction of the social and political organisation a country. The second level illustrates Arctic governance, this is based on the perception of the Arctic as a space for cooperation and common regional governance. The third level is the international system which the first and second level operates within.*

Realist theory, which peripheral realism belongs, is a problem-solving theory. Meaning it takes the world as it is. It derive its theoretical assumptions and construct knowledge based on the prevailing social structures, power relationships, institutions in the world and how they are

organised. The aim of problem-solving theory is to take the existing conditions to solve or understand specific and practical problems in the most efficient way by working within the existing structures. Unlike critical theory which look at the world holistically and questions the existing world and institutions, the aim of critical theory is often to understand how the world came to be with the intention of transcending or overcoming the existing structures, because of this critical theory is often accompanied by a normative agenda, a vision of how the world ought to be. That said both theories has their place in the scholarship of international relation and they serve specific purposes.<sup>64</sup> This paper will use a realist theory to construct knowledge that will deepen our understanding of why within the existing structures armed conflict is unlikely to erupt in the Arctic. Realist theory calls on policy-makers and other actors involved in international politics to always keep in mind the most fundamental ‘objective’ of politics which is maintaining national security and survival in a mostly anarchic system.<sup>65</sup>

This paper will primarily rely on the qualitative method relying on secondary academic literature, policy reports, and official documents for the analysis using the model and theory presented in this chapter. That said at the reader’s discretion this paper will concern itself primarily from the point of view of Nordic countries since these make up the majority of Arctic states and is deemed to share a significant number of characteristics of their state-society configuration, otherwise known as the Nordic Model, which will allow for a more convenient analysis for this paper’s scope. All the Nordic states belong to Class-A rule-following states. This paper will address the shortcoming of peripheral realism in addressing the unique situation of Nordic states located between two great powers by using a perception of threat logic, as well determine the relationship between the second and third level. According to the perception of threat, peripheral states are unlikely to form a coalition or pursuit a policy to balancing of power if there is no security dilemma to begin with. In turn depends on the behaviour of the great power. If a great power conducts itself in a manner that is seen as posing no immediate threat to the peripheral states, then it will be a more attractive policy option for the weaker party to

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<sup>64</sup> Matt Davies, «IR Theory: Problem-Solving Versus Critical Theory», E-International Relations, 19.09.2014 (2014): 1-2, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/09/19/ir-theory-problem-solving-theory-versus-critical-theory/>

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Diez., Ingvild Bode, Aleksandra Fernandes da Costa, “Key Concepts of International Relations), SAGE Publications, (2011), p.176

bandwagon the public goods offered by the hegemonic state, or pursuit a policy of cooperation., Invertedly elevating and strengthening the power of the hegemonic powers of a great power.<sup>66</sup>

On the choice of data in Chapter 4 on cooperation in the Arctic, it was deemed important to supplement and cross-reference where necessary the academic literature with the primary data found in newspaper articles of the time and international agreements. This stands in contrast to Chapter 3 which predominantly used descriptive data to set the stage of the analysis and to understand the state-society configuration of the Nordic countries. Nevertheless the choice for Chapter 5 on the influence of the international political system on Arctic security politics provided to be the most challenging in regard to data collection for two reasons. The first challenge in the data collection was to distinguish between what describes the reality and the agenda the states wish to convey to the public. This was necessary to do because of the particular sensitivity of the topic and secondly, because it addresses an ongoing subject area that continues to evolve. Again this chapter has followed the same trajectory as the previous chapter, by primarily drawing on secondary literature while supplementing the content with primary data when possible albeit more casually and critically than the previous chapter. A last note on Chapter 5, both the influence of China and the Climate Crisis can be regarded as having an influence on international politics and the international system as a whole. This chapter will predominantly use the Ukraine Crisis of 2014 and the War in Ukraine as points of reference, because of the impact these crises had on Arctic Politics to the point they may be considered turning points.

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas Diez., Ingvild Bode, Aleksandra Fernandes da Costa, "Key Concepts of International Relations), SAGE Publications, (2011), pp.156-151



## Chapter 3:

### Context and Background

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#### 3.1 – Introduction

In order to address the main question of why armed conflict is unlikely to start in the Arctic despite tensions, it is important to understand the context the Arctic is situated. This chapter will begin with a section on Arctic geography in order to clarify what constitutes as Arctic and identify the relevant actors in Arctic politics. In order to use peripheral realism as a framework for analysis, it is first important to identify the state-society configuration for the units of analysis, which are the Nordic countries. This is necessary to determine whether the state embodies a rule-maker, rule-follower or rebel state and thus make it possible to find a meaningful trajectory for the analysis. The final section of this paper will explain the Nordic Balance as this was an important doctrine during the Cold War to maintain the balance of power in the Arctic. Furthermore, the doctrine created a tradition of cooperation that would lay the foundations for Arctic cooperation after the end of the Cold War.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the Nordic Balance serve as a good example of demonstrating the Level of Analysis framework in practice to illustrate how tensions and cooperation can coexist.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Arne Olav Brundtland, "The Nordic Balance: Past and Present", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 1, no. 4, (1966), pp. 30

<sup>68</sup> Andreas Østhagen, «Nuances of Geopolitics in the Arctic.» 07.01.2020, The Arctic Institute: Centre for Circumpolar Security Studies, (2020), available at: <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/nuances-geopolitics-arctic/> (Accessed: 10.04.2023)

### 3.2 – Arctic geography

The Arctic is located above the 66°33'N in the planet's northern hemisphere as illustrated in Figure 2.0.<sup>69</sup> There are no large landmasses that constitute as a continent although on the northernmost pole of the planet although landmasses such as islands and archipelagos exist. This means the defining characteristic of the Arctic is an ice sheet that covers a significant portion of the Arctic Ocean. The freezing point of the Arctic Ocean is below the freezing point of water, generally at -1,9°C. This is because the freezing points change with the concentration of salt as in seawater.<sup>70</sup> The large sheets of ice play a crucial role in the Arctic ecosystem, large warm-blooded animals like polar bears, whales, seals and birds use the ice sheets as hunting grounds, migration routes and nesting places for protecting and raising their offspring. The ice is also crucial for protecting algae by insulating them against the harsh winter temperatures, this allows for photosynthesis to occur during the spring and summer months, as well as contributing significantly to the marine food chain.<sup>71</sup> From this one can conclude that ice has a significant role in the Arctic environment and is reflected in the conception of Arctic geography.

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<sup>69</sup> Chris Burn, "The Polar Nights", Scientific Report no. 4, The Aurora Research Institute, (1996), available at: <https://nwtresearch.com/sites/default/files/the-polar-night.pdf> (Accessed: 05.04.2023)

<sup>70</sup> Christopher Krembs, Jody Deming, "Sea ice: a refuge for life in the polar seas?", 02.03.2011, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, United States Department for Commerce, (2011), available at: [https://www.pmel.noaa.gov/arctic-zone/essay\\_krembsdeming.html?trk=public\\_post\\_comment-text](https://www.pmel.noaa.gov/arctic-zone/essay_krembsdeming.html?trk=public_post_comment-text) (Accessed: 04.04.2023)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 2.0 – Map of the Arctic**

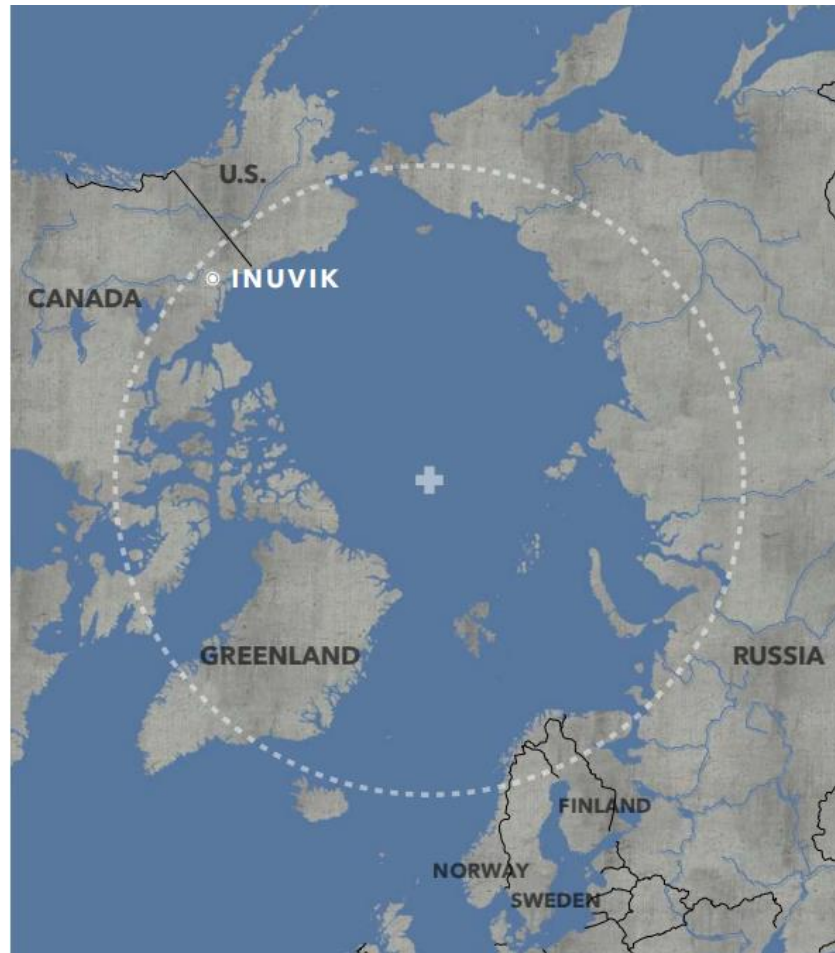


Figure 2.0 depict a map of the Arctic Circle according to the 66°33'N north of the equator.

Source: Herrington, Susan, (2013), "Designing with Water Above the Arctic Circle: East Three School." *Journal of Landscape Architecture* (Wageningen, Netherlands), vol. 8, no. 2, p. 45

However, this is a scientific understanding of the Arctic, which means the geographical definition of the Arctic is contested between the scientific, political and cultural lines. Delimiting the Arctic border to the mere Arctic Circle would exclude many southern communities that contend them belong to the Arctic,<sup>72</sup> like the Greenlanders living in the south of Greenland to name an example.<sup>73</sup> To complicate matters further many of the fixed geographical boundaries, and characteristics are eroding and changing due to climate change, this is seen in the extension

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<sup>72</sup> Klaus Dodds, Mark Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles: the Geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic*. Polity Press, (2016), pp. 12-13

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11

of the treelines, melting permafrost, withdrawal of glaciers and sea ice which opens up the Arctic for more travel. Including hope for finding new shipping routes.<sup>74</sup> By all accounts the long-term trend of the climate change in the Arctic is pointing toward further warming, which will affect the physical geography severely in regard to the density and distribution of sea ice, stability and availability of permafrost and raising acidity in the sea which will affect maritime life. The changes in geography by climate change have been regarded as presenting economic and political opportunities, as well as challenges in Arctic politics.<sup>75</sup>

The term the High North is another important concept in regard to understanding Arctic politics, particularly when engaging in Norwegian literature and policies. The High North is used as the English translation of the term *nordomerådene* which refers to the hospitable and populated parts of Northern-Norway, Svalbard and Norway's territorial waters. Whereas the term Arctic is used to refer to the Arctic Ocean in addition to the uninhabitable ice desert in the high Arctic.<sup>76</sup> Thereby for the sake of simplicity, the term High North will be used to refer to the hospitable areas of the Arctic, while the name Arctic will be used to refer to the region as a whole.

Acknowledging different conceptions and understanding what constitutes the Arctic is important to keep in mind when studying the Arctic. However, working with a relativistic catch-all definition is of little use when conducting an analysis with the intention of providing a deeper insight into Arctic politics. Therefore, it is more useful to use a definition that captures all relevant actors for the analysis and these are the countries that hold a permanent seat in the Arctic Council, these are Canada, the USA, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark,<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13

<sup>75</sup> Dodds, Nuttall (2016), Ibid., pp. 19-20

<sup>76</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?" Polar Journal 11 (1), (2021), p, 77

<sup>77</sup> Arctic Council, "Ottawa Declaration: Declaration on the establishment of the Arctic Council." Arctic Council, (1996), available at: <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/85> (Accessed: 05.04.2023)

with Greenland represented on the council through Denmark. Whereas the great powers of the Arctic are Russia and the USA.<sup>78</sup>

### **3.3 – The Nordic state-society configuration**

In order to conduct an analysis using peripheral realism and Level of Analysis to address why armed conflict is unlikely to start in the Arctic. It is first important to understand the state-society configuration of the units of analysis, which are the Nordic countries. For clarity to the reader this paper will use the term Scandinavia to denote Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and the term Nordic to refer to the Scandinavian countries plus Finland and Iceland.<sup>79</sup>

Within the peripheral realist framework, the Nordic states classify as class-A rule takers as they are all regarded as small states with advanced economies, open economies<sup>80</sup> and a political system organised as multiparty parliamentary democracy. These economies are heavily exposed to external financial shocks and follow the cycles of boom and bursts in the world economy, that said their economies allow for effective domestic responses to mitigate the worst effects of global recessions and allow for effective use of stimulus packages.<sup>81</sup> This came to the fore during the Financial Crisis of 2008, unlike Germany and Britain which responded to the economic crisis through substantial deregulation and rolling back their welfare states using austerity measures. The response by the Scandinavian politicians was to rely on cooperating with existing societal structures, namely tripartism which is so integral in the Nordic state-society configuration. That was the Scandinavian countries rode through the economic crisis relatively unscathed without cutting back on their welfare programmes and increased investment in human and social

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<sup>78</sup> Margrét Cela, "Towards Nordic Peace: a Small State Approach." Nordia Geographical Publications, vol. 40, no. 4, (2011), pp. 57-58

<sup>79</sup> Rebecca Thandi Norman, "Where is Scandinavia? A guide to the Scandinavian Countries", 16.05.2022, (2022), Scandinavian Standard, available at: <https://www.scandinaviastandard.com/where-is-scandinavia-a-guide-to-the-scandinavian-countries/> (Accessed: 05.04.2023)

<sup>80</sup> Francis Vitek, "Spillovers to and from the Nordic Economies: A Macroeconometric Model Based Analysis." International Monetary Fund, (2013), p. 5

<sup>81</sup> Vitek (2013), Ibid.

capital.<sup>82</sup> The key characteristic in the Nordic Model is tripartism. This means engagement of trade unions, employer-organisations and the state is a central tenant in the policymaking process. This often takes place through participation in public commissions, this contributes to dialogue that allows a shared understanding of the problems and challenges of the economy, labour, political considerations and business. This shared understanding ensures continuing support to the Nordic Model by political and societal organisations across the political spectrum, which has resulted in a mutual dependency that curbs self-serving short-term thinking and fosters long-term planning, encourages inclusive consultations and negotiations which characterises much of the Nordic states' political structure, work life and welfare state.<sup>83</sup> The political system in these countries is organised as parliamentary democracies, in which the government as the head of the state is ultimately held accountable to its people through elections.<sup>84</sup>

A feature of Nordic societies is a union of a strong belief in the community and communal values that are balanced by individual liberty and needs. The strong national community are centred around the political organisation of the state which in turn is responsible to redistribute national wealth and provide the opportunity for a good life to all members of society, not just the political and economic elites.<sup>85</sup> The Nordic countries have opted to follow a policy of universality, which means the state has taken on the responsibility to ensure human rights in the broadest sense to its population, this means the state is responsible for maintaining social,

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<sup>82</sup> Nik Brandal, Øivind Bratberg, "Small-state Scandinavia: Social Investment or Social Democracy?" in Baldersheim., Harald, Keating., Michael (eds) "Small States in the Modern World. Vulnerabilities and Opportunities", Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, (2015), p. 125

<sup>83</sup> Fredrik Engelstad, Anniken Hagelund, "Introduction: Institutional Change in a Neo-Corporatist Society", in Engelstad., Fredrik, Hagelund., Anniken (eds) "Cooperation and Conflict the Nordic Way: Work, welfare and Institutional Change in Scandinavia", De Gruyter, (2015), pp. 4-12

<sup>84</sup> Torbjörn Bergman., Kaare Strøm, "Nordics: Demanding Citizens, Complex Politics" in Bergman., Torbjörn, Strøm, Kaare (eds) "The Madisonian Turn: Political Parties and Parliamentary Democracy in Nordic Europe", Michigan University Press, (2011), pp. 356-359

<sup>85</sup> Nik Brandal, Dag Einar Thorsen, "Between individualism and communitarianism: The Nordic way of doing politics," in Witoszek., Nina, Midttun., Atle (eds) "Sustainable Modernity: The Nordic Model and Beyond." Routledge Studies in Sustainability: Routledge, (2018) pp. 163

economic and cultural rights. Thus, the state acts as a guarantor for providing access to work, health, education and minimum levels of wealth to its citizenry.<sup>86</sup>

The egalitarian characteristics of the Nordic societies are a result of strong, institutionalised social organisations. A conception of ‘equality as sameness’ is prevalent in the people of the Nordic countries has led to the creation of spaces in which social movements can influence the state.<sup>87</sup> The best example of this is the strongly formalised relationship between labour, capital and the state. This means the state-society configuration among the Nordic countries is such that policies of regional cooperation are generally encouraged and supported by civil society.<sup>88</sup> In turn, this is reflected in the many shared foreign policy objectives among the Nordic countries, such as a steadfast commitment to upholding what Nordic policymakers call the ‘rule-based international order’ which is the belief that international politics are best conducted through international institutional cooperation. Put more plainly the Nordic states support the rule of law, democratic values, good governance and multilateral cooperation as part of their foreign policy agenda.<sup>89</sup>

### **3.4 – The Nordic Balance and the Cold War**

The consequence of the Danish handover of Norway to Sweden in 1914 was an unprecedented period of peace between the Scandinavian countries, then in 1905 the peaceful dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden became regarded as evidence that Scandinavia was different from the other European countries. This impression of otherness became more pronounced following the great falling of 1914 as the Scandinavian countries were able to stay out of the first world war. However, the first world war had left the three countries with a sense of uncertainty in their relationship with the world.<sup>90</sup> Brandal and Bratberg describe

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 167

<sup>88</sup> Cela, (2011), Ibid., p. 63

<sup>89</sup> Kristine Haugevik, Ole Jacob Sending, “The Nordic Balance Revisited: Differentiation and the Foreign Policy Repertoires of the Nordic States.” *Politics and Governance*, vol. 8, no. 4, (2020), pp. 110-113

<sup>90</sup> Brandal, Bratberg, (2015), Ibid., pp. 113-115

this moment as when Scandinavian countries adopted a small-state ideology in their foreign policy, referring to the turn toward pursuing a policy of international cooperation, trade and seeking security through international organisations.<sup>91</sup> Whether or not this change classifies as an ideology or not is irrelevant, what is important is that this is the marking point when the Scandinavian countries recognised their belonging to the periphery of international politics and adopted a policy strategy toward the role of a rule-follower. First and foremost the Scandinavian countries sought cooperation among themselves and the other Nordic countries, this was due to geographical proximity along with shared history, a sense of shared culture, and a language community through the mutual intangibility of the Scandinavian languages as well as similarity of political systems.<sup>92</sup> Several decades of Nordic cooperation have created a low-barrier culture for Nordic officials and politicians to reach out to each other and cooperate on international issues.<sup>93</sup>

During the Cold War, the Arctic became heavily militarized and played a key role in the military operational planning on defence and security. At the end of the 1940s, the Arctic region was identified as a potential zone of conflict in the emerging cleavage between the East and the West and the Cold War that ensued. Military installations and infrastructure were constructed and a significant number of troops and equipment were stationed in Northern Canada, Alaska and the Kola Peninsula. Both sides of the Cold War treated the Arctic as a region of central concern and potential conflict.<sup>94</sup> In this environment a combination of different historical experiences during the Second World War, and close Nordic cooperation. The notion of a Nordic Balance emerged as a foreign policy doctrine for the Nordic countries to navigate the cold war.<sup>95</sup>

The Nordic Balance forms the historical foundations of modern Arctic politics and it expresses itself in all three dimensions of the Level of Analysis model, 3) the international system, 2)

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Haugevik, (2020), Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Douglas C. Nord, "The Changing Arctic: Creating a Framework for Consensus Building and Governance Within the Arctic Council". Palgrave Macmillan, (2016), pp. 25-26

<sup>95</sup> Haugevik, (2020), Ibid.



Arctic governance and 1) the interaction between the state-society and international interests.<sup>96</sup> The Nordic Balance as a notion consisted of three factors, the first component were the Norwegian, Denmark and Iceland's NATO, along with the absence of foreign military bases in Norway and Denmark. The second component was the recognition of Swedish neutrality, and the third was Finland's pro-Soviet neutrality while the Soviet Union acted with restraint in regard to Finland.<sup>97</sup> This configuration stood as the balance of power and maintained stability in the Arctic between the great powers during the Cold War and its aftermath.<sup>98</sup> The formation of the Nordic Balance was not planned but resulted from historical experiences during the Second World War.<sup>99</sup> Sweden had been able to maintain its neutrality during the war which resulted in them affirming this position as the Cold War emerged. The Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1945) had underpinned the importance for Finland to maintain a working relationship with the Soviet Union in order to avoid future conflict with their much bigger neighbour.<sup>100</sup> Neutrality had failed Norway and Denmark when both countries fell under German occupation during the war. It became strikingly clear that in order to ensure state survival they had to align themselves under the protection of a great power. NATO membership became and USA alignment became the only viable option as a reaction to Joseph Stalin's aggressive foreign policy between 1947-1949, the 1948 Soviet-backed coup in Czechoslovakia became the point of no return for NATO alignment.<sup>101</sup>

A constant in Norwegian security policy has been the pledge of not allowing permanent foreign military bases<sup>102</sup>, along with reservation toward stationing nuclear weapons unless attacked or threatened by attack. The Norwegian base policy follows the rationale it would not invite a cause for a pre-emptive strike, thus the country will not pursue a policy where it presents itself as an

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<sup>96</sup> Brundtland, *Ibid.*, p.30

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Haugevik, (2020), *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Brundtland, (1966), *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34

<sup>101</sup> Einar Gerhardsen, «Samarbeid og strid: Erindringer 1945-55», Tiden Norsk Forlag, (1971), pp. 190-209

<sup>102</sup> Hilde-Gunn Bye "Norge, inngår ny forsvarssamarbeid med USA." 16.04.2021, High North News (2021), available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/nb/norge-inngar-ny-avtale-om-forsvarssamarbeid-med-usa> (Accessed: 10.04.2023)

aggressor state. This gave the Soviet Union and its successor state the Russian Federation incentive to behave in a manner that is not seen as aggressive or threatening by their neighbour. Unless they want to invite American forces stationed at their Arctic border.<sup>103</sup> The Nordic Balance doctrine expressed itself more evidently in the Danish reservation to foreign military bases. Then prime minister of Denmark Hans Hedtoft argued against establishing American military bases or deploying nuclear weapons in Danish territory would increase Soviet pressure on Finland. President Urho Kekkonen of Finland used a similar argument without stating it overtly when he met with Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union in Novosibirsk to resolve the Note crisis of 1961.<sup>104</sup> The crisis began when the Soviets proposed to Finland to begin a consultation process for a common defence against Western aggression and the remilitarisation of Germany, the event coincided with the detonation of the first Soviet hydrogen bomb.<sup>105</sup> Kekkonen argued the Soviet's sabre-rattling risked triggering "war psychosis" among the other Nordic countries, Sweden might change their neutrality policy, and give cause for Denmark and Norway to revoke their low-tension NATO policy and invite American presence. Nearly 30 years later it was revealed by the Soviet participants at the meeting that Kekkonen's argument had swayed the Soviets to step down.<sup>106</sup>

The formation of the Nordic Balance was not planned but resulted from historical experiences during the Second World War and Nordic policymakers' consideration of the political situation for their neighbouring countries.<sup>107</sup> Although the Nordic Balance has become less relevant and useful in explaining the current Arctic security situation, its relevance is nevertheless how it enabled the condition for the idea of conflict to persist alongside ideas of Arctic cooperation and governance.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Brundtland, (1966), Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Hans Mouritzen, "The Nordic Model as a Foreign Policy Instrument: Its Rise and Fall." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 32, no. 1, (1995), p. 13

<sup>105</sup> Brundtland, (1966), Ibid., pp. 40-41

<sup>106</sup> Mouritzen, (1995), Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Østhagen, (2020), Ibid.

### 3.5 – Summary

Regarding Arctic geography, there are contested definitions depending on what field of science that are studied. A recurring determinant feature of the Arctic is that it is located on the northernmost part of the planet, and that ice plays a significant role in the Arctic environment. Although the simplest and most straightforward definition of the Arctic is above on above the Arctic Circle. Whereas the actors in Arctic politics are the members of the Arctic Council, which consists of Canada, the USA, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark (through Greenland). The Arctic is also unique in the sense it is home to two competing great powers of Russia and the USA, which both has the role of rule-making states in international politics. This means rule-taking states like the Nordic countries are expected to pursue a foreign policy strategy of cooperation and balance between the interests of the rule-making powers. Particularly since the state-society configuration in those countries is tilted toward pursuing a policy strategy to enhance the well-being and prosperity of its people through the internal structuring of these countries. The presence of strong and formalised institutions between the labour, capital and the state means the state is discouraged from pursuing a policy that would put unnecessary burdens on its society. This has fostered a foreign policy tradition of cooperation, trade and development in these countries. The policy of cooperation and balancing between the interests of the rule-making powers was evident during the Cold War through the doctrine of the Nordic Balance which was made possible because of the tradition of cooperation and dialogue between the Nordic countries. The Nordic Balance had created a policy environment of trust between the Arctic states, this allowed for the emergence of the idea that Arctic politics was a separate entity, isolated from the power competition international system, a place for cooperation and common governance. This notion of Arctic governance will be explored further in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4:

### Cooperation in the Arctic

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#### 4.1 – Introduction

The last chapter demonstrated the principal relationship between the Arctic and the International System was regarded as the potential conflict zone should war break out. It was the land where the East and the West met in a military standoff and thus became militarized accordingly. Norway was one of two NATO countries sharing a border with the Soviet Union (the other being Turkey),<sup>109</sup> and together with the other Nordic countries, used the Nordic Balance doctrine and low-tension policies to foster dialogue and an environment for cooperation. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, there was a major shift in the distribution of power in the international system as the world moved from bipolar world order to a unipolar order. The USA as the sole remaining superpower enjoyed an unprecedented pre-eminence both militarily and economically.<sup>110</sup> Although weakened the Soviet Union's successor state the Russian Federation retained its role as a great power and a rule-making state within the Arctic, given its geographical position, influence and capacity.<sup>111</sup> The two first decades of the unipolar world order were remarkably peaceful and stable, although conflict still persisted throughout the world there was no longer a threat of war in the Arctic or a major world war. The unprecedented concentration of power to the USA meant that the power hierarchy that emerged meant that no state had the capacity to pose a threat or challenge to the USA.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, in the first decade, the USA used its hegemonic role as a supreme rule-maker to build international agreements and international institutions rather than behaving aggressively toward other states. With a low perception of threat, states do not have to worry about their own security, they become free from the systemic constraints of the international system and become free to divert

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<sup>109</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia, China and the EU." Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, (2019), p.9

<sup>110</sup> Robert W. Murray, "Arctic politics in the emerging multipolar system: Challenges and consequences", *Polar Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1, (2012), p. 12

<sup>111</sup> Rebecca Pincus, "Three-Way Power Dynamics in the Arctic." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* : SSQ, vol. 14, no. 1, (2020), pp. 50-57

<sup>112</sup> Murray, (2012), *Ibid.*,

their recourses to other national interests, such as economic development and environmental protection. The Arctic followed the same systemic pattern of peaceful coexistence, cooperation and institution building.<sup>113</sup> This chapter will describe how this political environment created the second dimension of *Arctic Governance* in the Levels of Analysis in Arctic Politics, starting with the creation of the Arctic Council which became the principal organisation for international cooperation and governance in the Arctic.<sup>114</sup>

## 4.2 – The Arctic Council and the emerging Arctic governance

### *The Finnish Initiative*

An early morning in April 1986 deep inside the Soviet Union in the Soviet Republic of Ukraine near the Belorussian border, on the outskirts of Pripyat reactor 4 of the local nuclear powerplant exploded. The explosion spread 6,7 tonnes of material from the core into the atmosphere, spreading radioactive isotopes more than 200.000 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>115</sup> The fallout of the Chernobyl Disaster even affected the Nordic countries and the Arctic.<sup>116</sup> Finland had for a long time been concerned about the potential pollution coming from the industrial sites in the Soviet Union seeping into Finland, particularly in regard to the quality of air, contamination of soil and water.<sup>117</sup> The Finns used the opportunity presented by the Chernobyl Disaster to address these issues by inviting all the Arctic states to address cross-border pollution and contamination across the Arctic. This call was issued in early 1989 and became known as the Finnish Initiative. After the detection of radioactive pollution in the Arctic environmental groups, civil society and the indigenous people of Innuits and Samis became concerned with environmental protection for the entire northern region and began pressuring their respective states to respond to the crisis regardless of the division lines in the Cold War.<sup>118</sup> The other Arctic states accepted Finland's

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Matthew S. Wiseman, "The Future of the Arctic Council", in Coates., Ken S, Holroyd., Carin (eds), "The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Policies and Politics", Palgrave Macmillan, (2020), p. 441

<sup>115</sup> Mark Peplow, "Chernobyl's Legacy." *Nature* (London), vol. 471, no. 7340, (2011), pp. 562-563

<sup>116</sup> Lassi Heininen, "Special Features of Arctic Geopolitics – A Potential Asset to World Politics." in Finger., Matthias, Heininen., Lassi, (eds), *The Global Arctic Handbook*, Springer, (2019), pp. 221

<sup>117</sup> Douglas C. Nord, "The Changing Arctic: Creating a Framework for Consensus Building and Governance Within the Arctic Council". Palgrave Macmillan, (2016), p. 28

<sup>118</sup> Heininen, (2019), Ibid.

invitation and the Finnish Initiative led to the establishment of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991.<sup>119</sup>

### *Establishing the Arctic Council*

The second key event was the Murmansk Speech by Premier Gorbachev of the Soviet Union in 1985, although the speech was held on the occasion of awarding the City of Murmansk the Order of Lenin. The Murmansk Speech was not mainly directed to the citizens of Murmansk, but a much wider audience as it was broadcast on national and international television covering international issues. The speech named the Arctic a Zone of Peace<sup>120</sup>, it called on ending the military build-up and called for a comprehensive plan to protect the Arctic environment. Therefore Gorbachev proposed the creation of a common Arctic Research Council to further science and to the benefit of all the peoples in the Arctic.<sup>121</sup> The Murmansk Speech proposed a breadth of political initiatives that invited other countries to collaborate as it allowed different countries to collaborate according to their national interests.<sup>122</sup>

These two coinciding events led to de-escalation and easing of tensions in the Arctic, creating a political environment for more dialogue and cooperation in the Arctic that carried over after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Russian successor state.<sup>123</sup> The AESP began producing reports that revealed unsettling high levels of pollution in the Arctic. Furthermore, AESP revealed lower life expectancy among indigenous people, particularly among the indigenous people living in Russia who suffered from poor health and poverty. These revelations caused the Inuit interest organisation Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), which represents the interests of Canadian,

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<sup>119</sup> Carina E. Keskitalo, "The 'Arctic' in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and Arctic Council: An Environmental, Indigenous, and Foreign Policy Concern." *Negotiating the Arctic*, Routledge, (2004), pp. 53-56

<sup>120</sup> Nilsson., Annika E, Christensen., Miyase, (2019), "Arctic Geopolitics, Media and Power", Routledge, p. 55

<sup>121</sup> Nord, (2016), *Ibid.*, p. 28-29

<sup>122</sup> Nilsson, Christensen, (2019), *Ibid.*, p. 56

<sup>123</sup> Nord, (2016), *Ibid.*

Russian, Greenlandic and American Innuits to lobby the Canadian government to create a comprehensive multilateral organisation responsible for Arctic governance.<sup>124</sup>

Although the idea of an Arctic Council had laid dormant in Canadian academic circles since 1971 had been pushed to the fore by the increased Arctic cooperation on science and pressure from the ICC. In March 1990 the Arctic Council Panel, a Canadian public commission presented its report 'To Establish an Arctic Council Basin Council' which became part of the Canadian foreign policy agenda.<sup>125</sup> However, the idea of establishing an Arctic Council was initially met with a mixed response, Russia gave their full support to the initiative, while Norway and Finland were concerned it would detract attention away from the environmental agenda and refused to participate unless both Russia and USA joined. The most reluctant party was the USA which was worried about the original proposal of diminishing military activity in the Arctic would undermine the American security-oriented Arctic policy, as well creating a bloated bureaucratic organisation.<sup>126</sup> This led to the Canadian initiative stalled in the period between 1990-1996.

Eventually, the Americans relented on the condition the military aspect of the initiative was removed and the aim of the organisation was redirected from a comprehensive organisation to promote lasting change in the Arctic, to become project-oriented in its focus.<sup>127</sup> Then in 1996 the Ottawa Declaration on the establishment of the Arctic Council was signed by the eight Arctic states.<sup>128</sup> The mandate given to the Council was to promote sustainable development in all aspects, not just environmental but economic and social aspects also. AESP's agenda and its subsidiaries became integrated into the Council.<sup>129</sup> The outcome was instead of being the multilateral institutional organisation Canada had intended, the organisation became an inter-state entity for dialogue and policy cooperation. The establishment of the Arctic Council

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<sup>124</sup> Wiseman, (2020), Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Nord, (2016), Ibid., pp. 31-40

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Arctic Council, (1996), "Ottawa Declaration: Declaration on the establishment of the Arctic Council." Arctic Council, available at: <https://oarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/85> (Accessed: 05.04.2023)

<sup>129</sup> Nord, (2016), Ibid.

illustrates the workings of the proto-hierarchical ordering of international politics in practice, as the final product resembles much more an American foreign policy product than a Canadian since the USA had used its rule-making position to coerce Canada to scale down its initiative to appease the Americans. This was further exacerbated by the peripheral states' unwillingness to take part in an international framework without accounting for the great powers as reflected by the Nordic states' concerns.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, the significance of the Ottawa Declaration as it stands, was that it provided a framework which integrated the Arctic dimension into international relations<sup>131</sup>, to which Arctic governance was developed within the larger international system as shown in Figure 1.0 on the three levels of Arctic Politics in chapter 2.

### 4.3 – The Ilulissat Declaration

In the early 2000s, the media<sup>132</sup> and academics alike began predicting the possibility of war and a race for scarce Arctic resources and a scramble for territorial control.<sup>133</sup> This became heightened in combination of peak oil prices in 2008 of USD147 per barrel, and the discovery that the region was estimated to contain approximately 90 billion barrels of oil, 44 billion barrels of liquefied natural gas and 47.2608m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas, with 84% of these yet to be exploited resources located offshore.<sup>134</sup> Scott Borgeson's (2008) argument presented in his article The Arctic Meltdown captured the main argument of these reports in that the weak political and legal frameworks in the Arctic are not equipped to manage disputes on territorial claims in an orderly and legitimate manner. This could spiral the Arctic region into conflict in the scramble to grab as much territory as possible and secure as much control over the resources as possible, not to mention the control of the emergence of the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 41

<sup>132</sup> David Shukman, "Conflict fear over Arctic borders", 10.09.2008, BBC, (2008), available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7606132.stm> (Accessed: 21.04.2023)

<sup>133</sup> Wiseman (2020), Ibid., p. 446

<sup>134</sup> Øistein Harsem, Arne Eide, Knut Heen, "Factors Influencing Future Oil and Gas Prospects in the Arctic." Energy Policy, vol. 39, no. 12, (2011), pp. 8038

<sup>135</sup> Scott G. Borgerson, "Arctic Meltdown." Foreign Affairs, vol. 8, no. 2, (2008), pp. 67-68



Scholars like Borgerson feared the Russian flag-planting event would spiral into a series of conflicts with the aim of grabbing as much territory as possible, particularly in light that Russia had submitted a claim to the United Nations (UN) for around 749.298 km<sup>2</sup> in 2001.<sup>136</sup>

The Russian flag-planting event occurred in 2007 when a Russian submarine planted the Russian flag on the North Pole seabed.<sup>137</sup> The Canadian response to the flag-planting event compared the act to a 15<sup>th</sup>-century land grab by foreign powers exacerbated the media attention and debates on whether a new conflict in the Arctic was brewing.<sup>138</sup> The Norwegian foreign minister at the time Jonas Gahr Støre was quick to respond and used this opportunity to promote the Arctic region as a space for multilateralism and cooperation.<sup>139</sup> The European Union (EU) reacted to the scaremongering by calling for the creation of an Arctic Treaty based on the Antarctic Treaty from 1959. This would have transformed the Arctic into a global common for all mankind, this would put the territorial sovereignty aside for environmental protection and scientific collaboration.<sup>140</sup> In the EU's proposal, it would assume responsibility for the Arctic in order to protect what it described as a fragile environment and combat climate change. Moreover, the proposal saw the EU as a balancing actor to between promoting decarbonisation policies and Russia's fossil-fueled-based domestic policy. It contended that an environmental dimension must have been integral to the dialogue framework between Russia and the West in order to achieve sustainable development in the Arctic.<sup>141</sup> This was not a vision of Arctic governance shared by the Arctic coastal states. Fearing encroachment of outside actors that would undermine the Arctic states' interests, Denmark after pressure and coordination with Greenland took the initiative to invite the Arctic coastal states to Greenland the following year after the Russian flag-planting

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 63

<sup>137</sup> Tom Parfitt, "Russia plant flag on the North Pole seabed." 02.08.2007, The Guardian, (2007), available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/02/russia.arctic> (Accessed: 21.04.2023)

<sup>138</sup> Klaus Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, 'Law of the Sea,' and Arctic Ocean." The SAIS Review of International Affairs 33 (2), (2013), pp. 46-47

<sup>139</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?" Polar Journal 11 (1), (2021), pp. 79-80

<sup>140</sup> Dodds, (2013), Ibid., p. 50

<sup>141</sup> Kamrul Hossain, "EU Engagement in the Arctic: Do the Policy Responses from the Arctic States Recognise the EU as a Legitimate Stakeholder?" Arctic Review on Law and Politics, vol. 6, no. 2, (2015), pp. 94-95

event, in order to negotiate and sign a treaty that would give the coastal states the stewardship role of the Arctic Ocean. The outcome of this meeting was the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration.<sup>142</sup> The significance of the Declaration is that it places the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the governing principle of the Arctic.<sup>143</sup> UNCLOS stipulate coastal states have the right to establish an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) 200 nautical miles beyond the continental shelves. The coastal state is entitled to the entitled the exclusive right to exercise the sovereignty of the resources inside their respective EEZ.<sup>144</sup> This means any territorial claims must be proven to be a natural extension of the respective countries' continental shelf. Making the Canadian, Danish and Russian claims of the Lomonosov Ridge which extends 1000 nautical miles north of Greenland and across the north cap must be proven with scientific data that are submitted and evaluated by an impartial third party within the UN.<sup>145</sup>

That said, the declaration was also the outcome of domestic Danish-Greenlandic politics. The Danish government and particularly then foreign minister Per Stig Møller had been deeply involved in climate change diplomacy.<sup>146</sup> In 2005 he launched the Greenland dialogue with the intention to place climate change and its implications on the foreign policy agenda. Particularly in regard to resource extraction, shipping, maritime management and territorial ownership. The Russian flag-planting event was used as an excuse that Russia had begun a scramble for the Arctic by the Danish government, the scramble was grounded in the apparent uncertain governing principles of Arctic Politics. Therefore, Denmark took upon the role to invite all the coastal states to clarify the uncertainty.<sup>147</sup> As a peripheral state the Danish initiative would never successfully in establishing governing principles of the Arctic Ocean without the approval of the

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<sup>142</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, Gry Thomsen, "How Has Arctic Coastal State Cooperation Affected the Arctic Council?" *Marine Policy*, vol. 122, 104239, (2020), p. 3

<sup>143</sup> The Ilulissat Declaration, "The Ilulissat Declaration: Arctic Ocean Conference Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2009." 28.05.2008, Arctic Portal, (2008), available at: <https://www.arctic-report.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/2008.05-Ilulissat-Declaration.pdf> (Accessed: 23.05.2023)

<sup>144</sup> Ron Macnab, "Nationalizing the Arctic Maritime Commons: UNCLOS Article 76 and the Polar Sea." *The Yearbook of Polar Law*, vol. 2, no. 1, (2010) pp. 171-174

<sup>145</sup> Dodds, (2013), *Ibid.*, p. 50

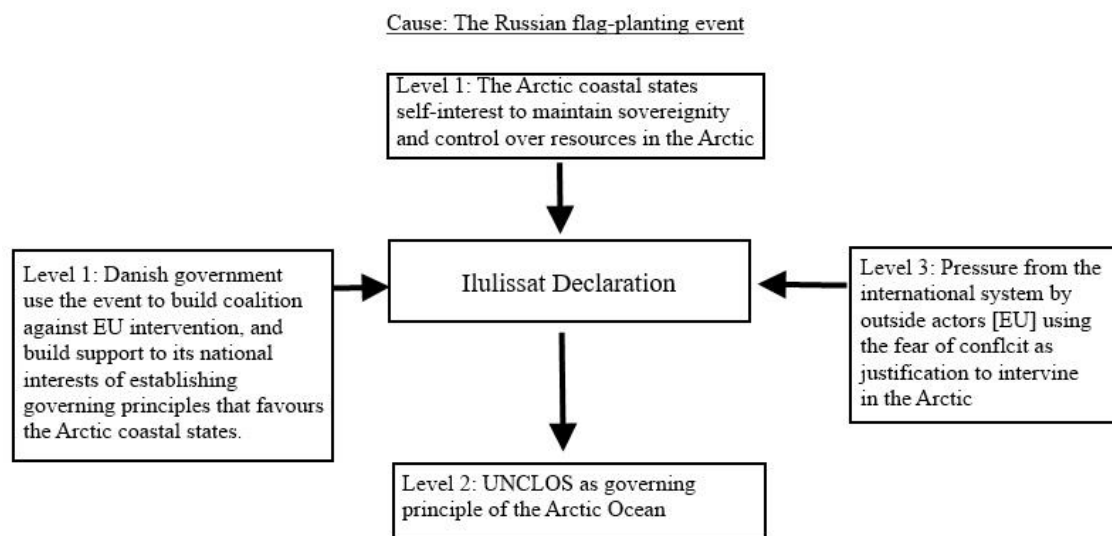
<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

rule-making states'. This is exemplified by the reassurances given to states like Russia that their sovereignty would be secured through the Declaration.<sup>148</sup>

Figure 3.0 depicts a model which illustrates this process and how they relate to the three levels of analysis model of Arctic Politics. The overarching self-interest of the Arctic coastal states (Level 1) was to maintain sovereignty and control over the Arctic and its resources. They reacted to the pressure from the International System (Level 3) when the EU wanted to use the Russian flag-planting event as a justification for intervention and gain influence in the Arctic. Denmark (Level 1) used the event by appealing to the fear of conflict to legitimise its own action to build a coalition against the EU and support for its own foreign policy agenda. The outcome of which was the Declaration which resulted in establishing governing principles on governance of the Arctic Ocean (Level 2). This reinforced the Arctic dimension as its own level of analysis in the Levels of Analysis model.

**Figure 3.0 – Ilulissat Declaration and the Three Levels of Analysis Model of Arctic Politics**



*Figure 3.0 represents how the three levels of analysis model of Arctic Politics in action. Level 1: State-Society self-interest to maintain sovereignty in the Arctic reacts to pressures from Level 3: the International System, which Level 1: Denmark used to*

<sup>148</sup> Klaus Dodds, Mark Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles : the Geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic*. Polity Press, (2016), p. 92-93

*legitimise its own action and build a coalition against EU intervention and support for its own foreign policy agenda. This results in establishing governing principles in Level 2 on Arctic Governance. This reinforces the Arctic dimension as its own position in the three levels of the analysis model.*

#### **4.4 – Cooperation and Stability in the Arctic**

Let us return to oil and gas for a moment because it was used as an argument as a potential cause for conflict by the proponents for a coming conflict in the Arctic.<sup>149</sup> Figure 4.0 depict the major oil and gas fields in the Arctic, and the grey areas illustrate ongoing oil and gas exploitation. The largest oil and gas fields are located in Russia with 45 large fields, followed by 11 large fields in Canada and lastly, 1 large field discovered in Norway.<sup>150</sup>

**Figure 4.0 – Location of oil and gas fields in the Arctic**

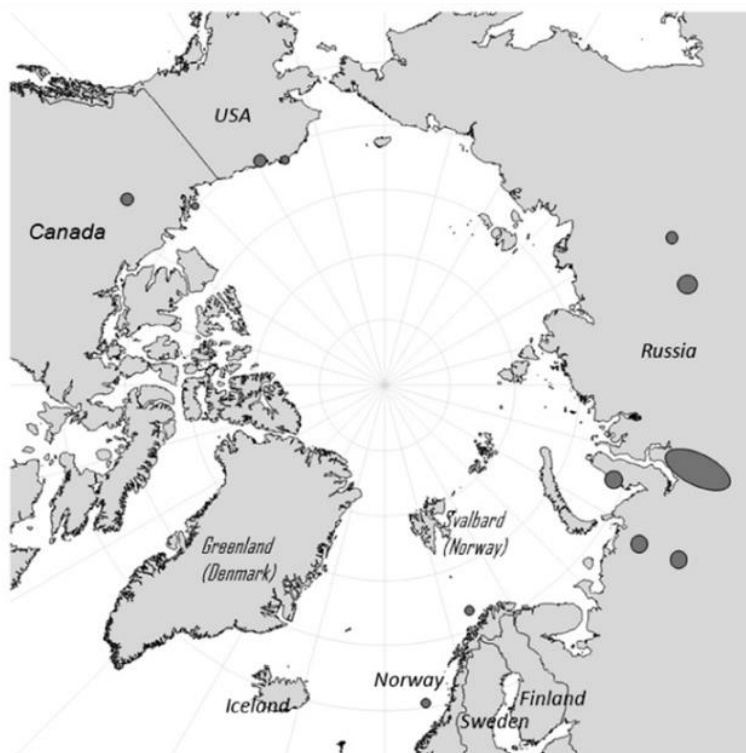


Figure 4.0 depict a map of oil and gas fields in the Arctic.

Source: Harsem, Øistein, Eide., Arne, Heen., Knut, (2011), “Factors Influencing Future Oil and Gas Prospects in the Arctic.” Energy policy 39 (12), p. 8038

<sup>149</sup> Borgerson, (2008), Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Harsem, Eide, Heen, (2011), Ibid.

The noteworthy part of this map is most of the available oil and gas fields are extracted and produced in the Norwegian and Russian part of the Barents Sea, this is also an area where most of the exploratory wells has been drilled. The climatic conditions around Greenland and Alaska make the area much more inaccessible as well as lacking the necessary infrastructure to support these activities. This means even with another peak price on oil and gas the production will most likely remain a specialised activity centred around Russia and Norway due to the economic realities.<sup>151</sup> This is reinforced by climate change has made the Arctic weather more turbulent and unpredictable which makes exploratory drilling a more risky and costly endeavour. The increased frequency of storms makes long-term planning difficult for oil companies, in the combination of governments' unwillingness to issue drilling licences without careful consideration of the environment has deterred oil companies' interests in developing the oil and gas sector in the Arctic.<sup>152</sup> This makes an argument of conflict caused by a scramble for oil and gas resources unlikely and most probable an exaggeration, particularly when considering that approximately 90% of the fields are already distributed in the EEZs. This makes the conquest for oil and gas more a matter of internal economic development inside a country than a matter between states.<sup>153</sup>

The Arctic states have shown a preference for a stable political environment where they can maintain dominance in the region. Pressures from the outside world and the international system seeking entry into the Arctic have led to increased cooperation and dialogue between the Arctic coastal states. This was particularly apparent in the Ilulissat Declaration and its subsequent incorporation into the Arctic Council in affirming the primacy of UNCLOS in Arctic governance.<sup>154</sup> These developments benefit the Arctic states more than anyone else and ensure the authority of Arctic politics and issues are concentrated among the Arctic states at the expense of other actors.<sup>155</sup> Among the criteria for outside actors seeking entry to Arctic politics must first affirm the primacy of UNCLOS as the governing principle in the Arctic, even China a country

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<sup>151</sup> Østhagen, (2019), Ibid., 5

<sup>152</sup> Harsem, Eide, Knut, (2011), *ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Østhagen, (2019), *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Østhagen, (2019), *Ibid.*, p. 7

regarded with uncertainty by the Arctic countries<sup>156</sup> has played according to the ‘Arctic rule-book’ by affirming UNCLOS and empathising cooperation in its Arctic Policy.<sup>157</sup> The UNCLOS framework encourages common governance and cooperation in order to regulate resources more efficiently, particularly in regard to transboundary maritime resources. The management of these resources is often reduced to bilateral issues, thus, stands as an example of states cooperating with each other in the Arctic with little regard to the larger geopolitical considerations in the international system. This is well exemplified by the joint maritime regulation of the Barents Sea between Russia and Norway. Both countries recognised early on, in 1975, that common governance of maritime resources in the Barents Sea would be a more sustainable solution than unilateral action. The transboundary migration of fish stock care little for borders drawn by humans, hence common governance would yield a more optimal outcome of resource management of maintaining the population, keeping third parties away and supporting social and economic development in their northern territories.<sup>158</sup>

In September 2010 the foreign ministers of Norway and Russia, Jonas Gahr Støre and Sergei Lavrov wrote a joint article in the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* where they affirmed the Arctic as a region of peace, cooperation and the rule of international law. The occasion they were writing about was the signing of the ‘Treaty Concerning Maritime Delimitation and Co-Operation in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean’, which concluded 40 years of negotiation on how to delimit the 175.000 km<sup>2</sup> maritime border between Russia and Norway. The Ilulissat Declaration which introduced the UNCLOS as the principle governing principle in the Arctic, provided a framework which enabled the negotiations to be concluded. This treaty agreed on joint governance on fisheries, and exploitation of oil and gas. In the article, both foreign

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 3

<sup>157</sup> Xinhua, “China’s Arctic Policy”, The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, (2018), available at: [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2018/01/26/content\\_281476026660336.htm](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm) (Accessed: 23.04.2023)

<sup>158</sup> Ian G. Brosnan, Thomas M. Leschine, Edward L. Miles, “Cooperation or Conflict in a Changing Arctic?”, *Ocean Development & International Law*, vol. 42 no. 1-2, (2011), p. 194

ministers affirmed the Arctic Council as a crucial forum for dialogue and building trust between the countries.<sup>159</sup>

Although the Arctic Council does not have the mandate to enact legally binding policies, instead it serves first and foremost as a forum to facilitate dialogue and policy coordination, opting for a policy strategy of deliberation and inclusivity by non-state actors like indigenous groups. However, the Arctic Council has proven to be effective for negotiation as it succeeded to make its members adopt its first legally binding agreement on Search and Rescue during the 2011 Ministerial Meeting.<sup>160</sup> This was followed by an Agreement on Cooperation on Maritime Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response, and an Agreement on Cooperation on Enhancing Arctic Scientific Cooperation two years later. In 2017 the Arctic Council was the venue for the adoption of the International Maritime Organisation's Polar Code, which is an international agreement to establish universal safety standards to protect sailors, ships and passengers traversing the polar waters.<sup>161</sup> The 2014 Ukraine Crisis was a turning point in Arctic politics as Western relations with Russia deteriorated, and Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea, which resulted in scaling down on military cooperation between Russia and the West. Despite the tensions, Arctic cooperation largely continued as exemplified by the continuation of Search and Rescue cooperation, fisheries, respecting UNCLOS rules on the continental shelves, navigation and engagement in the Arctic Council.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Sergei Lavrov, Jonas Gahr Støre, "Canada, take note: Here is how to resolve maritime disputes", 21.09.2010, The Globe And The Mail, (2010), available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/canada-take-note-heres-how-to-resolve-maritime-disputes/article4326372/> (Accessed: 28.03.2023)

<sup>160</sup> Wiseman, (2020), Ibid., pp. 441-446

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., pp. 446-448

<sup>162</sup> Mikkel Runge Olesen, "The end of Arctic exceptionalism? A review of the academic debates and what the Arctic prospects mean for the Kingdom of Denmark", in Fischer., Kristian, Mouritzen., Hans, (eds), "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2020", DIIS, (2020), pp. 106-112

## 4.5 – Summary

The scientific cooperation that began in AESP, eventually led to the establishment of new structures of the Arctic Council in Arctic governance. The societal pressures in the state-society configuration across the Arctic followed by the Chernobyl Disaster and awareness of the high pollution levels in the region pushed the states to engage with each other to address common problems. The good experiences of working together to tackle a common issue led to the adoption of more institutionalised cooperation. This allowed for the building of mutual trust and dialogue, thus mitigating the systemic mistrust in the international system.<sup>163</sup> The Canadian attempt to establish a comprehensive multilateral institutional framework in the Arctic failed because it compromised the American's security-oriented Arctic policy. It was only after the comprehensive intention, security and defence aspects of the Arctic Council were removed that it was finally created through the signing of the Ottawa Declaration. The processes around the establishment of the Arctic Council and Ilulissat Declaration reveal the proto-hierarchical structure in international politics, as the peripheral states were unable to enact influence in international politics without accounting for the great powers' (rule-making powers) interests. In contrast to the Canadian initiative the Danish initiative in establishing governing principles of UNCLOS through the Ilulissat Declaration were initially much more successful, because Denmark did not compromise the national interests of the rule-making powers.

The Ilulissat Declaration can be regarded as a pre-emptive action to maintain low-tension regional politics in the Arctic, by minimising the occurrences of potential security issues that can cause misunderstandings that feed into the insecurity inherent in international politics by establishing a shared agreement on the governing principles of Arctic governance.<sup>164</sup> The Ilulissat Declaration is also interesting because it demonstrates the Three Level of Analysis Framework of Arctic Politics in practice by revealing how the Arctic states reacted by establishing an Arctic governance level in order to maintain regional dominance in reaction to

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<sup>163</sup> Heininen, (2019), *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222

<sup>164</sup> Marc Jacobsen, Jeppe Strandsbjerg, "Desecuritization as Displacement of Controversy: Geopolitics, Law and Sovereign Rights in the Arctic." *Politik*, vol. 20, no. 3, (2017), pp. 15–19



the systemic pressures from the international system. Contrary to sensationalist media reports on the possibility of war and the scramble to secure the scarce resources and territories in the Arctic, the mundane day-by-day politics of the Arctic is rather dull in how peaceful it is. This comes down to the practicalities of collaboration within the existing international framework of Arctic governance.<sup>165</sup>

The high stability in the Arctic is grounded in common interests among states over managing shared issues, such as maritime management, fisheries, search and rescue and using the Arctic Council as an international forum. This is strengthened by the Arctic states' own commitment to international cooperation in their Arctic policy.<sup>166</sup> The success of the Ilulissat in embedding UNCLOS in Arctic governance was reflected in its incorporation into the Arctic Council framework explicitly banning any treaty made by any outside actors on the governing of the Arctic Ocean to come into effect.<sup>167</sup> Despite international crises that cause the heightening of international tensions, the Arctic Council has largely been able to continue its work. This suggests mechanisms exist to mitigate great power politics in the Arctic. The key takeaway is to *mitigate* not remove power politics and security, this will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.<sup>168</sup> Part of the Arctic Council's endurance as an international framework is its avoidance to address sensitive hard power politics, rather it readdresses its focus to "softer" policy areas like sustainable development, environmental protection and indigenous rights. This allows the Arctic states a breather from power politics and competition which in turn allow policymakers to focus on less sensitive and controversial matters, which in turn encourages dialogue and mitigates the inherent mistrust in the international system. The sum of which contributes to creating an own regional level of governance in international politics with its own structures and mechanics that serve to mitigate the effects of the international system in regional governance.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Olesen, (2020), Ibid., p. 448

<sup>166</sup> Heininen, (2019), Ibid., p. 220

<sup>167</sup> Rahbek-Clemmensen, Thomasen, (2020), Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Olesen, (2020), Ibid., p. 119

<sup>169</sup> Wiseman, (2020), Ibid., pp. 449-451

## Chapter 5:

### Influence of International Politics on the Arctic Security Environment

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#### 5.1 – Introduction

International cooperation has played a significant role in establishing and maintaining common Arctic governance on various common issues such as environmental protection, climate change, Search and Rescue, common management of maritime resources, safe passage on the sea, economic development and even ensuring indigenous rights. To achieve this each state's own commitment to peace and cooperation, combined with the Arctic Council as the principal facilitator of dialogue and regional governance, hailed the region with a reputation as a particularly well-functioning system of governance. The Iluissat Declaration ensures a common agreement on the governing principles of the Arctic Ocean and places UNCLOS in the centre of Arctic politics.<sup>170</sup> All of this cemented the notion of Arctic Exceptionalism, that the Arctic was an exceptionally peaceful region of cooperation between states, isolated from the power politics of international politics.<sup>171</sup> The deterioration of East-West relations following the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 revealed that the Arctic was not as isolated and remote as once thought, as the influence of the international system seeped into Arctic politics and gradually security and defence made its re-entry.<sup>172</sup> This chapter will explore the third level of the international system in Figure 1.0 the three levels of Arctic Politics in Chapter 2 reveal themselves and interact with Arctic politics. Although the international system is always present, the Ukraine Crisis of 2014 and the War in Ukraine are two events that particularly revealed and made apparent the impact of the international system on Arctic politics.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, "The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?" *Polar Record*, vol. 53, no. 1, (2017) pp. 1

<sup>171</sup> Mikkel Runge Olesen, "The end of Arctic exceptionalism? A review of the academic debates and what the Arctic prospects mean for the Kingdom of Denmark", in Fischer., Kristian, Mouritzen., Hans, (eds), "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2020", DIIS, (2020), pp. 103

<sup>172</sup> Rahbek-Clemmensen, (2017), *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Karsten Friis, "Hard security in the High North: Gloves off?" in Friis., Karsten, Wilson Rowe., Elana, Straga., Mike, Sverdrup., Ulf (eds), "Navigating Breakup: Security realities in freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic," Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs|Wilson Center,(2023), pp. 53-56

## 5.2 – Understanding Russia’s Arctic Policy

Before looking at the influence and impact of international politics on Arctic politics it is first important to have an understanding of Russia’s Arctic Policy, due to the central role Russia holds in the Arctic region and politics as the most dominant great power.<sup>174</sup> This makes Russia a natural point of reference when discussing the impact of international politics on the Arctic.<sup>175</sup> The argument that Russia would cause a conflict to grab the Arctic is unlikely,<sup>176</sup> considering they already control more or less half of the Arctic region. Furthermore, the Russian Arctic is regarded as Russia’s economic lifeline and resource base for economic development. A conflict in this region would set back any economic investments made in the region and stifle international investments needed in the region. Lastly, a conflict in this region would undermine Russia’s energy security which will damage Russia’s credibility as a reliable energy exporter.<sup>177</sup>

### *Russia’s Arctic Policy*

The Arctic region has deep historical roots and has important for Russian nation-building. Although the importance of the Arctic has fluctuated in Russian politics. Russia has once again affirmed its Arctic policy with the growing global interest in the Arctic region. After the fall of the Soviet Union, a key priority was the economic recovery and the government turned its gaze to the wealth and resources in the Russian Arctic. Hence, the Arctic came to serve a dual function in Russian politics, that of military deterrence and economic development.<sup>178</sup> To put the economic importance of the Russian Arctic into perspective, before the War in Ukraine the

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<sup>174</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, Jane Leggett, Laura B. Comay, Jonathan L. Ramseur, John Frittelli, Pervaze A Sheikh, Caitlin Keating-Bitonti, Brandon S. Tracy, “Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress”, Congressional Research Service, (2022), pp. 27-75 available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41153/189> (Accessed: 31.03.2023)

<sup>175</sup> O’Rourke, Leggett, Comay, (2022), Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Scott G. Borgerson, “Arctic Meltdown.” Foreign Affairs, vol. 8, no. 2, (2008), pp. 67-68

<sup>177</sup> Elizabeth Buchanan, “The Ukraine War and the Future of the Arctic.” 18.03.2022, The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, (2022), available at: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraine-war-and-future-arctic> (Accessed: 01.05.2023)

<sup>178</sup> Gail Foundahl, Aileen Espirita, Aytalina Ivanova, “Russia’s Arctic Regions and Politics”, in Coates., Ken S, Holroyd., Carin (eds), “The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Policies and Politics”, Palgrave Macmillan, (2020), pp. 194-195

Russian Arctic accounted for approximately 10% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 20% of export in the Russian economy.<sup>179</sup>

Russia was the second country to formulate an Arctic policy after Norway, and is mainly derived from the 2008 “Foundation of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic to 2020 and Beyond,” 2013 “Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Guaranteeing National Security to 2020,” 2014 “Social-Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation”,<sup>180</sup> and 2020 “Foundations of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2035.”<sup>181</sup> A recurring notion in the Russian policy strategy is its emphasis on the Arctic’s role of providing strategic resources for the development of all of Russia. At the same time underlying the need to preserve peace and cooperation in the region, environmental protection, and development of the Northern Sea Route as a viable shipping route, which would reduce the travel time between the European and Asian continents by 30%.<sup>182</sup>

The policy priorities in the 2008 Foundation policy laid out the key tenants for the Russian policy for the Arctic, firstly, to secure the Arctic as a strategic resource base, secondly, to preserve the Arctic region as a place for peace and cooperation, thirdly, environmental protection, and lastly, develop the Northern Sea Route. In a Russian context, the aim of economic development is understood first and foremost to satisfy domestic needs. The 2013 strategy policy strategy confirmed the goals set out in the 2008 strategy<sup>183</sup> and likewise did the 2020 strategy with an added security dimension<sup>184</sup>. A consequence of the Ukraine Crisis in 2014

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<sup>179</sup> Friis, (2023), *Ibid.*, p. 55

<sup>180</sup> Foundahl, Espirita, Ivanova, (2020), *Ibid.*, p. 204

<sup>181</sup> Anna Davis, Ryan Vest, “Foundations of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2035”, translated edition, Russian Maritime Studies Institute/United States War College, (2020), pp. 1-28, available at:

[https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/ArcticPolicyFoundations2035\\_English\\_FINAL\\_21July2020.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=DSkBpDNhHsgjOAvPILTRoxIfV%2FO02gR81NJSokwx2EM%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/ArcticPolicyFoundations2035_English_FINAL_21July2020.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=DSkBpDNhHsgjOAvPILTRoxIfV%2FO02gR81NJSokwx2EM%3D) (Accessed: 04.05.2023)

<sup>182</sup> Foundahl, Espirita, Ivanova, *Ibid.*, pp. 195-204

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>184</sup> Davis, Vest, (2020), *Ibid.*, pp. 6-14

was the reintroduction of hard military security and deterrence to Arctic politics. In this period Russia began to build up its capacities in the Arctic and the military became entangled in civil economic development which will be elaborated on in more detail in the section below.<sup>185</sup> Regardless this suggests there is a dualism of Russian Arctic politics. On one hand, there is a serious commitment to international cooperation and a desire to maintain low tensions as reflected in their participation in the Arctic Council and the signing of the Iqaluit Declaration in 2015, which affirmed the importance of the Arctic Council framework and commitment to tackle climate change, promote sustainable development and support indigenous rights together with the other Arctic states.<sup>186</sup> Russia also co-authored a resolution with the USA on an “Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation” in 2017 that was adopted by the council. Then at the same time, Russia is committed to building its military might and increasing its presence and capabilities in the Arctic.<sup>187</sup>

### *Militarisation of the Russian Arctic*

In 2014 the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command became responsible for the military command and military operations in the entire Arctic as part of a series of military reforms.<sup>188</sup> The ramification of these reforms implied a shift in strategic priorities by moving the naval and operational forces away from the Western Strategic Command in Saint Petersburg to the Northern Fleet Strategic Command stationed in Severomorsk, giving more priority to the Russian Arctic coastline.<sup>189</sup> Russia inherited the naval doctrine of the Soviet Union that was built around the ‘bastion’-concept, which refers to maintaining a large fleet of Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs) which would linger behind the defensive lines of the Russian coasts. This

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 206

<sup>186</sup> Arctic Council, (2015), “Iqaluit Declaration”, Arctic Council, available at: <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/662> (Accessed: 17.04.2022), pp. 1-6

<sup>187</sup> Foundahl, Espirita, Ivanova, Ibid., p. 210

<sup>188</sup> Jonas Kjellén, “The Russian Northern Fleet and Russian (Re)militarisation of the Arctic”, Arctic Review on Law and Politics, vol 13, (2022), pp. 37-38

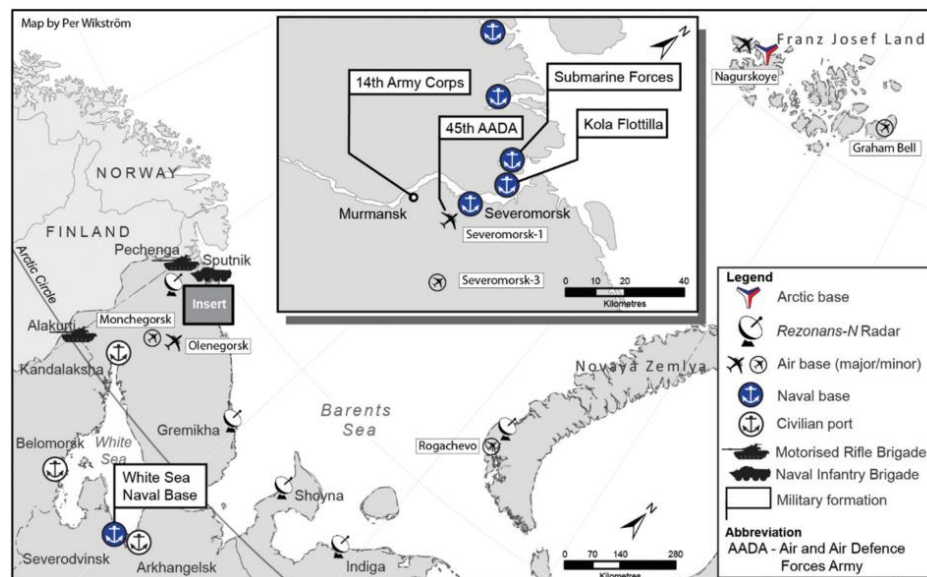
<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

meant the SSBNs would enjoy full protection by naval, land and air forces while projecting Russian capabilities.<sup>190</sup>

The Northern Fleet continues to be Russia's main force in the Arctic as well as being the largest fleet, surpassing the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets in size and capabilities. The fleet is tasked with maintaining Russia's presence in the region, providing security, power projection, supporting out-of-area operations on a global scale and sustaining Russia's nuclear capabilities at sea.<sup>191</sup>

Figure 5.0 show the distribution of important Northern Fleet bases and garrisons on the Kola Peninsula. The most obvious sign of militarisation of the Arctic is the build-up of new military infrastructure and military deployment on Franz Joseph Land, Novaya Zemlya and the construction of 5 stealth detecting Rezonans-N radars along the Russian Arctic coast as depicted on the map below.<sup>192</sup>

**Figure 5.0 – Map of military and civilian instalments to support the Northern Fleet**



Source: Kjellén, Jonas, (2022), "The Russian Northern Fleet and Russian (Re) militarisation of the Arctic." *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, vol 13, p. 41

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-40

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-42

These military installations around the Russian Arctic have closed free access to and along the Northern Sea Route, and serve to increase Russia's defensive capabilities, as well renew the credibility and capabilities of the Northern Fleet's bastion doctrine.<sup>193</sup> This means Russia needs its military bases in the Russian Arctic to maintain its great power capabilities and to keep its role as a rule-maker in international politics.<sup>194</sup> The secondary purpose of the Russian military build-up in the Arctic is that it ties together with the economic development strategy of the region. This means the expansion of the military goes hand in hand with the expansion of the civilian sphere. Increased military activity and shipping along the coast have also increased civilian activity and the building of infrastructure to support civilian and economic activities. For instance, the reliance on icebreakers from the military keeps the Northern Sea Route free of ice and enables transportation. In turn, this strengthens the civilian transport sector through improved infrastructure in ports and airports. This suggests there symbiotic relationship between the military presence and economic development in Russia's Arctic Policy.<sup>195</sup>

### **5.3 – The Nordics Arctic Policy and a Security Dilemma in the High North**

Foreign and security policies among the Nordic states are conditioned along structural factors, such as policy considerations according to their state-society configuration, and *realpolitik*.<sup>196</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Nordic states are class A rule peripheral states, meaning they are rule-taking states in the international system. This means the Nordic countries are dependent on positioning themselves in relation to more powerful powers on the international stage.<sup>197</sup> This is reflected in many of the shared foreign policy objectives among the Nordic countries, most notably in their commitment to upholding, what Nordic policymakers describe, as the 'rule-based international order'. Said differently the Nordic countries share a foreign policy preference for maintaining the current world order as characterised by a web of

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Pavel K. Baev, "Russia and geopolitical contestation in the Arctic," in Friis., Karsten, Wilson Rowe., Elana, Straga., Mike, Sverdrup., Ulf (eds), "Navigating Breakup: Security realities in freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic," NUPI | Wilson Center, (2023), pp. 31-32

<sup>195</sup> Kjellén, (2022), Ibid., p. 47

<sup>196</sup> Kristine Haugevik, Ole Jacob Sending, "The Nordic Balance Revisited: Differentiation and the Foreign Policy Repertoires of the Nordic States." *Politics and Governance*, vol. 8, no. 4, (2020), pp. 110-112

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

multilateral agreements and institutions.<sup>198</sup> This supports Escunde's argument that peripheral rule-following states display a foreign policy preference for the status quo in international politics, and support the established world order to maximise their standing through economic development within the existing frameworks and international hierarchies.<sup>199</sup> This is illustrated for instance if one looks at the Arctic Policy Strategies of the Scandinavian countries respectively. All three strategies share many key similarities, such as stressing the importance of maintaining low tensions and empathising high level of regional cooperation through both bilateral relations and multilateral engagement in the Arctic Council as the most important international forum for dialogue and cooperation in the Arctic.<sup>200,201,202</sup> It must also be understood that Denmark's Arctic Policy is entangled in a deep constitutional crisis of maintaining the internal unity of the Danish realm. This means much of the Danish Arctic Policy is centred around strengthening the core-periphery ties between Denmark and Greenland, thus by extension national unity.<sup>203</sup> That said, these strategies affirm the role of UNCLOS as the principal governing principle and that all external actors with interests in the Arctic are expected to respect the rules and conventions of international law in the Arctic.<sup>204</sup> The primacy of UNCLOS in Arctic governance as we saw in Chapter 4 benefits the Arctic states more than outside actors by concentrating the authority on the Arctic states in regard to governance, and political and economic interests in the region.<sup>205</sup> Lastly, this ties back to Escunde's argument that peripheral states' bias toward the current world order allows them to allocate resources in pursuit

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<sup>198</sup> Haugevik, Sending, (2020), Ibid., p. 110

<sup>199</sup> Carlos Escundé, "Realism in the Periphery" in Dominguez., Jorge. I., Covarrubias., Ana (eds), Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World, London: Taylor and Francis, (2014), p.46-48

<sup>200</sup> Udenrigsministeriet, "Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020", Udenrigsministeriet, (2011), pp. 49-55, available at: <https://um.dk/en/foreign-policy/the-arctic> (Accessed: 10.05.2023)

<sup>201</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, "Sweden's strategy for the Arctic Region." Government Offices of Sweden, (2020), pp. 11-14, available at: <https://www.government.se/contentassets/85de9103bbbe4373b55eddd7f71608da/swedens-strategy-for-the-arctic-region-2020.pdf> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

<sup>202</sup> Regjeringen, "Norway's Arctic Strategy: Between geopolitics and social development." 06.07.2017, Regjeringen.no, (2017), pp. 17-18, available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/arctic-strategy/id2550081/> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

<sup>203</sup> Udenrigsministeriet, (2022), Ibid., p. 57

<sup>204</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020), Ibid., p. 14

<sup>205</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia, China and the EU." Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, (2019), p. 7



of economic development affirmed in the Nordic countries' Arctic Policy Strategy. Although economic development is a component in all the Nordic countries' Arctic Policy.<sup>206</sup> It is particularly evident in the Norwegian Arctic Policy, which is founded on the aforementioned state-society configuration in the Nordic Model. Improving the wellbeing of its citizens is regarded as an important policy objective, because of internal constraints within the country. This is reflected by the inclusion of local voices of the people, business interests and indigenous people living in Northern Norway during the policy creation process,<sup>207</sup> therefore an important policy objective in the Arctic Policy is embedded in the economic development of the region.<sup>208</sup> Likewise, Sweden regards the economic development of the Arctic region as a potential source for long-term economic growth, but any economic development measure must strive toward sustainable development that satisfies both environmental and social needs.<sup>209</sup> Hence, maintaining low tensions in the Arctic is regarded as a national interest to encourage economic development and attract international investments to the region.<sup>210</sup>

All the Nordic countries have been staunch supporters of the rule of law, democratic values, and good governance, as well as multilateral and bilateral cooperation as part of their foreign policy agenda.<sup>211</sup> This ties into security politics by following the logic of defusing the perception of threat within the international system by not feeding into the security dilemma. However, this means the security dilemma is not present in the Arctic.<sup>212</sup> The fact that maintaining stability and predictability in the High North is considered the most important policy objective for the Norwegian government suggests there is a security dilemma.<sup>213</sup> This becomes more evident

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<sup>206</sup> Ian G. Brosnan, Thomas M. Leschine, Edward L. Miles, "Cooperation or Conflict in a Changing Arctic?", *Ocean Development & International Law*, vol. 42 no. 1-2, (2011), p. 193

<sup>207</sup> Regjeringen, (2017), *Ibid.*, p.3

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-33

<sup>209</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020), *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48

<sup>211</sup> Haugevik, Sending, (2020), *Ibid.*, p. 113

<sup>212</sup> Thomas Diez, Ingild Bode, Aleksandra Fernandes da Costa, "Key Concepts of International Relations", SAGE Publications, (2011), pp.156-151

<sup>213</sup> Anniken Huitfeldt, "Foreign Policy Address to the Storting 2023." 03.05.2023, Regjeringen, (2023), available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/foreign-policy-address-to-the-storting-2023/id2967341/> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

when taking into account that NATO membership is the cornerstone of the Norwegian<sup>214</sup> and Danish security policies.<sup>215</sup> The primary security concern from a Norwegian perspective is the shared land and sea border with Russia.<sup>216</sup> That is why engagement and dialogue are considered key policy strategies regarding its relationship with Russia. The good neighbourhood policy as it is known is regarded by Norwegian policymakers as important to maintain stability and predictability in the region,<sup>217</sup> to the extent despite the Ukraine Crisis the continuation of the good neighbourhood policy outweighed the violations of Ukraine's sovereignty by Russia when they annexed Crimea in 2014.<sup>218</sup> The Norwegian response to the Crisis illustrates how peripheral states are much more confined by geography relative to a possible aggressive great power and their relationship with said power. In comparison, great powers have much greater freedom to pursue to set their foreign policy agenda, such as when the USA and EU decided to respond to the annexation of Crimea by imposing sanctions to punish Russia's behaviours.<sup>219</sup> Despite the promotion of multilateralism and cooperation with Russia the security dimension never disappeared from the equation. Although cooperation is embedded in the Norwegian Arctic Policy, the year 2007-2008 marked a significant shift in the Norwegian defence and security policy.<sup>220</sup> Coinciding with the Russian flag-planting event and the Ilulissat Declaration Norway underwent a significant modernisation of the military, they began building up its military capabilities and presence in the High North. It was in this that Norway began to prioritise NATO engagement in the Arctic as a foreign policy objective as well as promoting the relevance of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), the latter of which will be elaborated on in more detail later.<sup>221</sup> In May 2023, Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt reaffirmed NATO as the cornerstone of Norway's security policy. This policy strategy must be regarded in relation to Norway's geographical location, as a neighbouring country to Russia and the inequality of hard-

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<sup>214</sup> Regjeringen, (2017), p. 18

<sup>215</sup> Udenrigsministeriet, "Udenrigs- og sikkerhedspolitisk strategi 2022", Udenrigsministeriet, (2022), pp. 19, available at: <https://um.dk/udenrigspolitik/aktuelle-emner/udenrigs-og-sikkerhedspolitisk-strategi-2022> (Accessed: 10.05.2023)

<sup>216</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?" *Polar Journal* 11 (1), (2021), p, 77

<sup>217</sup> Regjeringen, (2017), *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>219</sup> Rahbek-Clemmensen, (2017), *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>220</sup> Østhagen, (2021), *Ibid.*, p. 81

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

power capabilities between the two countries.<sup>222</sup> In short, the role of NATO serves as a balancing of power measure by providing credible deterrence to compensate for the inequality of power capabilities.<sup>223</sup> This means at large Norway's Arctic Policy's central objectives are two folded, these being security and regional economic development. The policy is inherently intertwined with Russia and will be determined by the relationship between the two countries and Russia's actions.<sup>224</sup> However, Russia's more assertive foreign policy along with its military modernisation in the Russian Arctic has made Russia a more unpredictable actor in the eye of Norway and the other Arctic states.<sup>225</sup> This has in turn accelerated the militarisation of the Arctic since 2014 following Russia's actions during the Ukraine Crisis and has been a source of growing suspicion between the Arctic states and Russia.<sup>226</sup>

#### **5.4 –NATO's Engagement in the Arctic**

All the major powers in the world have expressed strategic interests in the Arctic, with NATO, the USA and Russia has expressed particular concerns about the mounting tensions in the region, indicating it is not in their interest to increase tension in the Arctic, but are merely responding to each other's actions.<sup>227</sup> Since the Ukraine Crisis the Arctic's role in international politics has gradually taken on the role of deterrence. While Russia uses the Barents Sea for weapon testing and base of operation for the Northern Fleet. NATO has coincidentally increased its activities and exercises in Norway, such as Trident Juncture in 2018 with Cold Response in

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<sup>222</sup> Huitfeldt, (2023), Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> NATO, "Strategic Concept", adopted by Heads of State and Government at NATO Summit Madrid, 29.06.2022, (2022), p. 4, available at: <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html> (Accessed: 12.12.2022)

<sup>224</sup> Østhagen, (2021), Ibid., p. 82

<sup>225</sup> Siemon T. Wezeman, "Military Capabilities in the Arctic: A New Cold War in the High North?", SIPRI Publications, (2016), p. 1, available at: <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2016/sipri-background-papers/military-capabilities-arctic> (Accessed: 31.03.2023)

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23

<sup>227</sup> Karsten Friis, "Hard security in the High North: Gloves off?" in Friis., Karsten, Wilson Rowe., Elana, Straga., Mike, Sverdrup., Ulf (eds), "Navigating Breakup: Security realities in freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic," Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs|Wilson Center, (2023), p. 56

2022 being the last most major exercise.<sup>228</sup> Russia has for a long time been concerned about Western military activity in the Arctic and has often responded in kind to NATO exercises by hosting its own signalling operations in the Arctic, such as for instance despite the ongoing War in Ukraine the Northern fleet conducted a large naval exercise in August 2022.<sup>229</sup>

From an American and NATO perspective, the Russian arsenal of nuclear and hypersonic weapons capabilities in the High North poses a serious security threat and has been so since the Cold War. This in relation to Russian militarisation in the Russian Arctic has caused increased attention by USA, NATO and Canada on the security situation in the High North, as a result, these actors have sought it necessary to build up their anti-submarine capabilities, intelligence gathering and military deterrence in the region.<sup>230</sup> The USA has so far shown limited interest in the Arctic region beyond its security-oriented policy and to preserve the current world order. To this end maintaining regional stability has been regarded as an important strategy to achieve this. Therefore the USA had an interest in containing the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 away from the Arctic region, as reflected by the prioritisation of low-tension policy focuses such as on environmental protection during the 2015-2017 American chairmanship of the Arctic Council.<sup>231</sup> Although the Ukraine Crisis did achieve creating a sense of urgency and a need for collective defence operational planning together with NATO among Swedish and Finnish policymakers, thus began strengthening their ties and collaboration with NATO.<sup>232</sup> Since 2015 the Finnish and Swedish militaries have worked on making their NATO partnerships even more comprehensive, which included developing operational plans for joint operations in the event of crisis and war, the so-called ‘operational cooperation beyond peacetime’ as it became known.<sup>233</sup> In September 2020 representatives from Sweden, Finland and Norway met at Posangermoen 200km away from the

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<sup>228</sup> Karsten Friis, “Hard security in the High North: Gloves off?” in Friis., Karsten, Wilson Rowe., Elana, Straga., Mike, Sverdrup., Ulf (eds), “Navigating Breakup: Security realities in freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic,” Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs|Wilson Center, (2023), p. 55

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 56

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 55

<sup>231</sup> Rahbek-Clemmensen, (2017), Ibid., pp.6-11

<sup>232</sup> Håkon Lunde Saxi, “Alignment but not military Alliance: Nordic Military Cooperation, Arctic Review on Law and Politics, vol 13, (2022), p. 58

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-60

Russian border in Northern Norway to sign an agreement on closer military and defence cooperation. The agreement gave their defence ministers the mandate to begin discussions with their respective militaries to make plans for coordinated operations in areas of shared interests with each other.<sup>234</sup> A similar agreement was made between Norway, Sweden and Denmark in September 2021 to coordinate common operations and planning in the North Sea, Kattegat, the Danish Strait and the Baltic Sea. These agreements are part of a process that began in 2014 as a response to the Ukraine Crisis,<sup>235</sup> although NORDEFCO has existed since 2009, it has become increasingly more comprehensive since the Crisis.<sup>236</sup> The purpose of NORDEFCO is to take the Nordic military cooperation beyond peacetime and make it operational in the event of an armed conflict. The Nordic states have over the last decade created an expectation that they would support each other in the event of a breakout of a crisis or armed conflict.<sup>237</sup> Although NORDEFCO is not a formal alliance, meaning should a war break the guarantees for receiving aid is much more uncertain compared to the obligations an alliance would entail. That said the Swedish and Finnish partnership with NATO has become so comprehensive that an EU expert commission on security in 2015 described their relationship as a semi-alliance. Regardless NORDEFCO and the NATO partnership can be regarded as an attempt at the external balancing of power by Sweden and Finland toward Russia while they aimed at preserving their deeply embedded policy of neutrality.<sup>238</sup>

Although Sweden's neutrality can be through long historical lines and can in part be described as tradition. The Finnish neutrality policy was grounded in a much more pragmatic security strategy, in which neutrality was not an end in itself, but to ensure the survival of the Finnish state as a sovereign entity. Hence, Finnish policymakers had from time to time reminded both Russia and their own people alike of the so-called 'NATO option as an alternative to

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 52-53

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-55

<sup>236</sup> NORDEFCO, "Memorandum of Understanding on Nordic Defense Cooperation", 04.11.2009, NORDEFCO, (2009), pp. 1-8, available at: <https://www.nordefco.org/Files/nordefco-mou.pdf> (Accessed: 26.04.2023)

<sup>237</sup> Saxi, (2022), Ibid., pp. 54-56

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

neutrality.<sup>239</sup> When President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin began referring to the near-abroad as Russia's sphere of influence, the Finnish President Sauli Niinistö was quick to remind Putin of the NATO option and Finland's freedom to align themselves to NATO, including applying for membership should Russia overstep and act in a way that is perceived as threatening to Finnish security.<sup>240</sup> Therefore soon after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, both Sweden and Finland who had shown little interest or desire to join NATO before soon applied for NATO membership. Both countries eying Russia's display of willingness to attack a neutral neighbouring country led them to lose confidence that a policy of neutrality could guarantee security assurances.<sup>241</sup> That said the Finnish road to apply for membership was much quicker than the Swedish, because of a deeply engrained tradition of neutrality within the Swedish state-society configuration, through a national self-perception of a country deeply committed to peace and moral values over the pursuit of power politics. Ultimately the realities of international politics soon caught up to Sweden and public opinion on NATO membership shifted from 34% in January to 58% in May 2022. Then in a bid to avoid being strategically isolated, Sweden followed the Finnish initiative to join NATO to achieve its security needs.<sup>242</sup> The inclusion of Sweden and Finland would allow the complete integration of the northern geographical region to NATO's operational capacity, by connecting the Arctic and the Baltic Sea to one continuous region of operation.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, their membership will entail full Nordic participation in NATO which will strengthen NORDEFCO through closer integration of the Nordic militaries. This means Russia's power projecting and operational capabilities in the Arctic and the Baltic Sea will be reduced,<sup>244</sup> for instance, the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad will find itself isolated and surrendered by NATO on all sides.<sup>245</sup> Lastly, due to the long-held stance

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<sup>239</sup> Stéfanie von Hlatky, Michael Fortmann, "NATO Enlargement and the Failure of Cooperative Security Mindset," in Goldgeier., James, Shiffrinson., Joshua R. Itzkowitz (eds), "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to Russia-Ukraine War", Palgrave macmillan, (2023), p. 531

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., pp. 548-549

<sup>241</sup> Rajan Menon, William Ruger, "NATO Enlargement and US Grand Strategy: A Net Assessment," in Goldgeier., James, Shiffrinson., Joshua R. Itzkowitz (eds), "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to Russia-Ukraine War", Palgrave macmillan, (2023), pp. 198-199

<sup>242</sup> Von Hlatky, Fortmann, (2023), Ibid., pp. 549-550

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 550

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Kimberly Marten, "NATO Enlargement: Evaluating its Consequence in Russia," in Goldgeier., James, Shiffrinson., Joshua R. Itzkowitz (eds), "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: From Cold War Victory to Russia-Ukraine War", Palgrave macmillan, (2023), pp. 217-218

of neutrality, it has been necessary for Finland and Sweden to maintain higher military expenditure compared to most NATO members to compensate for their freedom of alliance. This means at least in the short term both Sweden and Finland will be contributors to NATO's capacity rather than consumers of security in the alliance.<sup>246</sup> That said at the time of writing Finland and Sweden are yet to formally join the alliance.

## **5.5 – The War in Ukraine Spillover to the High North?**

All things considered, the likelihood of a conflict emerging over the Arctic continues to be low as there are no looming political conflicts in the region. Most issues over sovereignty, economic rights and international boundaries have been settled through the framework of governance provided by the Ilulissat Declaration. Therefore any tensions and conflicts are most likely to spill over from international politics emerging outside the Arctic region.<sup>247</sup> The War in Ukraine is a clear example of such. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has created mistrust among policymakers in the Arctic states toward Russia.<sup>248</sup> The War in Ukraine impacted Arctic politics in more ways than simply pushing Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership, as demonstrated by the closure of the Arctic Council when in March 2022 the USA, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland made a joint statement where they condemned the Russian invasion as a violation of the current multilateral world order. In the statement, the Arctic states announced that they would pause their participation in the Arctic Council for the duration of Russia's chairmanship in protest.<sup>249</sup> The collective economic sanctions against Russia

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<sup>246</sup>Von Hlatky, Fortmann, (2023), Ibid., p. 551

<sup>247</sup> Friis, (2023), Ibid., pp. 53-54

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 53

<sup>249</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine", 03.03.2022, (2022), available at: <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (Accessed: 19.04.2022)

are examples of how the USA<sup>250</sup> and the EU<sup>251</sup> used their rule-making power to punish the Russian invasion for breaking the status quo, by challenging the current unipolar world order and its multilateral and institutional governing characteristics through further making foreign interventions an acceptable and legitimate tool to reach political goals.<sup>252</sup> Peripheral realism as aforementioned predicts that rule-taking states are biased toward preserving the current world order<sup>253</sup>, this aligns with the Nordic country's foreign policy preference of maintaining a 'rule-based international order'.<sup>254</sup> This explains in providing a rationale for why the Nordic states such as Norway<sup>255</sup> and Iceland, who are not part of the EU also joined the sanctions against Russia and demonstrates the proto-hierarchical structure of international politics in action.<sup>256</sup>

The General Secretary of NATO Jens Stoltenberg was quick to criticise Russia's actions in the War in Ukraine following the invasion when he remarked that: "Authoritarian regimes are clearly willing to use military intimidation and aggression to achieve their aims. At the same time they are stepping up their activities in the Arctic,<sup>257</sup>" in reference to the Russian military activity and presence in the region, and China's involvement in the Arctic as a call to justify the increased NATO presence in the region. The purpose of NATO in the Arctic is to serve as a

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<sup>250</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Treasury Announces Unprecedented & Expansive Sanctions Against Russia, Imposing Swift and Severe Economic Costs." 24.02.2022, U.S. Department of the Treasury, (2022), available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0608> (16.05.2023)

<sup>251</sup> European Commission, "EU agrees 10th package of sanctions against Russia\*", 25.02.2023, European Commission, (2023), available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_1185](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1185) (Accessed: 16.05.2023)

<sup>252</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, (2022), Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Escude, (2014), Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Haugevik, Sending, (2020), Ibid., p. 110

<sup>255</sup> Regjeringen, "Norway introduces additional sanctions against Russia." 26.08.2022, (2022), Regjeringen.no, available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-introduces-additional-sanctions-against-russia/id2925555/> (Accessed: 11.05.2023)

<sup>256</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "War in Ukraine – Iceland's response", 09.03.2023, Government of Iceland, (2023), available at: <https://www.government.is/topics/foreign-affairs/war-in-ukraine/#Tab3> (Accessed: 16.05.2023)

<sup>257</sup> Jens Stoltenberg, "In the face of Russian aggression NATO is beefing up Arctic security." 24.08.2022, The Globe and Mail, (2022), available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-in-the-face-of-russian-aggression-nato-is-beefing-up-arctic-security/> (Accessed: 26.04.2023)



counterbalance and deterrence to Russia in order to ensure the security of its member states,<sup>258</sup> with other words, NATO's goal in the Arctic according to Stoltenberg is to achieve a balance of power in face of an ambitious China and a more unpredictable and aggressive Russia.<sup>259</sup> Moreover, Finland shares an approximately 1340 km long border with Russia and it could be reasonably expected Russia will give greater priority to increasing its security and defence along its north-western border once NATO has expanded further into the northern regions.<sup>260</sup> The short-term consequence of the War in Ukraine is Russia's power projection and its ability to sustain large-scale military operations in the Arctic region has diminished. Considering its security needs in the Arctic remain unchanged has rendered the Russian Government more inclined to use threats of nuclear attacks as part of its foreign policy.<sup>261</sup> The Norwegian Intelligence Service presented similar views in their 2023 annual risk report, that the Russian war effort in Ukraine has been detrimental to its capabilities and become a less modern military as a result. Additionally, its ability lost replenishing lost military equipment has been slowed down as a result of the Western sanctions.<sup>262</sup> That said according to the Norwegian Intelligence Service's observation the Russian reliance on nuclear threats has resulted in growing international instability and uncertainty.<sup>263</sup> Although Intelligence Services can a source of keen insight into how states perceive the world, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that these agencies serve a mission and one should engage their reports critically. That the risk of a nuclear incident in the Arctic remains low, as indicated by the usual attempt to cover up by the Russian authorities following the failed Burevestnik nuclear-powered missile test in 2019 where five people died at

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Marten, (2023), Ibid., p. 234

<sup>261</sup> Baev, (2023), Ibid., p. 35

<sup>262</sup> Etterretningstjenesten, "Fokus 2023: Etterretningstjenestens vurdering av aktuelle sikkerhetsutfordringer", Etterretningstjenesten, (2023), pp. 23-35, available at: [https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/fokus-norsk/Fokus2023%20-%20NO%20-%20Weboppslag%20v3.pdf/\\_attachment/inline/c1a9a458-aa1d-4bf6-a558-9cec57acde8f:9b2050d897a2b2db1bddc8e505db7b666e608b98/Fokus2023%20-%20NO%20-%20Weboppslag%20v3.pdf](https://www.etterretningstjenesten.no/publikasjoner/fokus/fokus-norsk/Fokus2023%20-%20NO%20-%20Weboppslag%20v3.pdf/_attachment/inline/c1a9a458-aa1d-4bf6-a558-9cec57acde8f:9b2050d897a2b2db1bddc8e505db7b666e608b98/Fokus2023%20-%20NO%20-%20Weboppslag%20v3.pdf) (Accessed: 16.05.2023)

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-11

Novaya Zemlya.<sup>264</sup> The attempted cover-up suggests the mutual nuclear restraint in the Arctic is valid despite what political rhetoric might suggest.<sup>265</sup>

## 5.6 – Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that the notion that the Arctic region is somehow region in how peaceful and free from the political straitjacket that is power politics and security is false. Quite the contrary the influence of the international system is very much present in Arctic politics and is possible to co-coexist with the policy of cooperation as demonstrated by the Russian and Norwegian Arctic policies. The most obvious presence of the international system in Arctic politics is found in the Arctic states' relationship with Russia. The Nordic states that make up the majority of the Arctic states are first and foremost reactive actors to Russia's actions on the international stage, as peripheral states they regard it necessary to maintain good relations with both Russia and the USA, however, trust is a precious commodity in international politics and Russia's actions of using its military as a dual function of providing security and promoting economic development have had adverse consequences on the Arctic's state's ability to trust Russia's intentions. This culminated with the Russian invasion during the War in Ukraine which shattered all notions of trust in Russia and accelerated the Security Dilemma in the Arctic, with Sweden and Finland seeking membership in NATO as a counterbalance to Russian aggression. NATO is regarded as the main counterweight to maintain a sense of balance of power. This was demonstrated by the Swedish and Finnish approach to NATO following the Ukraine Crisis in 2014, and the recurring reaffirmation that NATO is regarded as the cornerstone of Danish and Norwegian security. This means NATO is regarded as the main provider of security assurances to the Arctic countries in order to deter Russia. Peripheral realism predicts that rule-taking states with their securities assured through delegating it away will be freer to pursue a policy of economic development, this can be verified by looking at the Nordic state's Arctic Policy

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<sup>264</sup> Thomas Nilsen, "Russia readies Burevestnik testing at Novaya Zemlya." 19.08.2019, The Barents Observer, (2019), available at: <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2021/08/russia-readies-burevestnik-testing-novaya-zemlya> (Accessed: 26.04.2023)

<sup>265</sup> Baev, (2023), Ibid., p. 35

strategies to which economic development is a major component in their respective Arctic Policy.

Regional conflict will depend on the link between the great powers' regional interests and global interests. A great power may be deemed to isolate a region from conflict spillover if it serves their strategic interests. A spillover of conflict will then remain contained if the other states agree that avoidance of conflict will serve their regional interests.<sup>266</sup> The peripheral states will most obviously display a preference toward maintaining low tensions in the region since they are an inferior party in relation to a great power and will have little to gain by provoking a great power unnecessarily. This position is reflected in the Norwegian Arctic Policy mantra of "High North, low tensions," which is how Norway ideally wants the Arctic to be, but reality does not always reflect this.<sup>267</sup> The Russian military interests in the Arctic are primarily defensive. The Kola Peninsula plays a key role in the Russian military strategy as this is the home of the Northern Fleet and its nuclear deterrence capacities through the bastion doctrine, hence it is in Russia's interests to keep tensions low and attention away from the Arctic.<sup>268</sup> Secondly, the Russian Arctic plays a key role in the development of the Russian economy as a resource base to feed Russia's national and international economic interests, hence economic development is given priority in Russian domestic politics, a conflict in the region would deter the international investments necessary to develop the region and the Northern Sea Route. Overall a conflict in the Arctic is contrary to Russia's interest and is reflected in its commitment to international cooperation in its Arctic Policy Strategy. Regarding, the second great power present in the Arctic has mostly been aloof in Arctic affairs aside from its security-oriented policy and desire to maintain international stability. That said the Americans have displayed aggressive behaviour in the Arctic before, the likelihood the Americans would start a conflict in the Arctic is low as this would undermine the international stability and predictability that the USA seek to uphold. This is supported by statements made by American diplomats that they desire to maintain low

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<sup>266</sup> Rahbek-Clemmensen, (2017), *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>267</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "Norway's Arctic Policy: Still High North, Low Tension?" *Polar Journal* 11 (1), (2021), p. 88

<sup>268</sup> Colin Wall, Njord Wegge, "The Russian Arctic Threat." NUPI, (2023), pp. 1-16, available at: <https://www.nupi.no/en/publications/cristin-pub/the-russian-arctic-threat-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war> (Accessed: 24.04.2023)

tensions in the Arctic and not create alternative international institutions, they imagine in time the Council will resume its activities.<sup>269</sup> This aligns with the overall defensive objective to maintain stability and predictability by being a purely defensive force in the Arctic region.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Astrid Edvardsen, "USA's Arctic Coordinator: 'We Do Not Want to Change the Structure or Membership of the Arctic Council'" 18.05.2023, (2023), High North News, available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/usas-arctic-coordinator-we-do-not-want-change-structure-or-membership-arctic-council> (Accessed: 01.05.2023)

<sup>270</sup> NATO, (2022), *Ibid.*, pp. 4-9

## Chapter 6:

### Conclusion: The Arctic Contradiction

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#### 6.1 – Introduction

There is a dualism in Arctic politics. On one hand, there is a commitment to peace and international cooperation, on the other the Arctic states focus on building and maintaining their military might. This begs the question how can we make sense of this apparent contradiction, this Arctic contradiction? If one wants to understand and make sense of the Arctic contradiction it is necessary to ask the question of why conflicts are unlikely to occur in the Arctic. This research has attempted to do exactly that.

The Nordic Balance doctrine could offer provide a rationale for understanding the Arctic contradiction through the notion of balancing of power. It was most prominently used as an explanation of the regional stability during the Cold War. This doctrine relied on Nordic cooperation and the distribution of interests of the great powers between the Nordic countries. Here Iceland, Norway and Denmark would ensure that American interests were preserved through their membership in NATO, a neutral yet Soviet-friendly Finland would account for ensuring the Soviet's interests in the region, whereas neutral Sweden would balance between the two. Then the good relations and close dialogue between the Nordic states would act as a mitigator and deterrent to the great powers and prevent them to take drastic measures.<sup>271</sup> The Nordic Balance doctrine became a less prevalent model for explaining the stability in Arctic politics following the end of the Cold War. The aftermath of the Cold War led to an increased awareness of climate change and public concerns over the pollution levels in the region, the pressured the Arctic states to come together to tackle common issues.<sup>272</sup> These early expressions of cooperation produced positive experiences and slowly built trust among the Arctic states and eventually resulted in more comprehensive Arctic cooperation and the eventual creation of the

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<sup>271</sup> Arne Olav Brundtland, "The Nordic Balance: Past and Present", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 1, no. 4, (1966), pp. 30-41

<sup>272</sup> Douglas C. Nord, "The Changing Arctic: Creating a Framework for Consensus Building and Governance Within the Arctic Council". Palgrave Macmillan, (2016), pp. 28-29

Arctic Council.<sup>273</sup> Arctic cooperation and common regional governance through the Arctic Council gave rise to the notion of Arctic Exceptionalism when explaining the stability of the Arctic. This idea supported the notion that regional stability was founded in the region's exceptionality, stability was ensured by the high levels of Arctic cooperation which ultimately made the region usually peaceful and powers politics became except regional politics.<sup>274</sup> Although the notion of Arctic Exceptionalism may account for the cooperative side of the Arctic contradiction, it fails to provide an account for the security and militarising aspects of Arctic politics. That said it could argue be the Nordic Balance held a semblance of plausibility in addressing the Arctic contradiction at the end of the Cold War, by providing an account of the balance of power combined with international cooperation. The Swedish and Finnish ascension to NATO have rendered the model absolute as its premise that regional stability could be explained by the distribution of the great powers' interests would lead to a balancing of power, fell apart.<sup>275</sup>

As aforementioned this research has set to address the Arctic contradiction and answer the question, of why conflicts are unlikely to occur in the region by combining the levels of analysis framework and peripheral realism. The usefulness of the levels of analysis framework is that it conceptualises politics as happening on different levels within the international system (see Figure 1.0, chapter 2, p.21). These levels of the state-society (level 1), regional (level 2) and international system (level 3) can exist as their own entities, or, dimensions within a later structure with their own logic and mode of operation.<sup>276</sup> Peripheral realism disagree with the neorealist assumption that the international system is characterised by the state of anarchy. Instead they suggest the international system resembles more a proto-hierarchy where a

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<sup>273</sup> Matthew S. Wiseman, "The Future of the Arctic Council", in Coates., Ken S, Holroyd., Carin (eds), "The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Policies and Politics", Palgrave Macmillan, (2020), p. 441

<sup>274</sup> Mikkel Runge Olesen, "The end of Arctic exceptionalism? A review of the academic debates and what the Arctic prospects mean for the Kingdom of Denmark", in Fischer., Kristian, Mouritzen., Hans, (eds), "Danish Foreign Policy Review 2020", DIIS, (2020), pp. 103

<sup>275</sup> Kristine Haugevik, "Hva skjer med sikkerhets og forsvarspolitikken i Norden?", 21.10.2022, den norske Atlanterhavskomiteén (2022), available at: <https://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no/ukens-analyse/hva-skjer-med-sikkerhets-og-forsvarspolitikken-i-norden> (Accessed: 15:02:2023)

<sup>276</sup> David J. Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations" World Politics, vol. 14, no. 1, (1961), pp. 78-87

country's position is dictated by the differences of power and capabilities between the great powers and smaller peripheral states.<sup>277</sup> Great power is recognised as 'rule-making states' because they have the capabilities to enforce their own foreign policy and influence the written and unwritten rules of international politics. Peripheral states do not have the capabilities to challenge the established political order and choose to follow the rules set out by the rule-making states.<sup>278</sup> According to peripheral realism, a smaller state may address the security dilemma by aligning itself with a stronger state, and letting the stronger party act as a guarantor of the smaller state's security and independence., thus becoming dependent on the stronger state. This will allow the smaller state to redirect its national interest away from security toward economic development and the welfare of its citizens.<sup>279</sup>

## **6.2 – Settle the Arctic Contradiction**

This research suggests structures exist in international politics that promote cooperation and common governance in the region, that make up a separate Arctic dimension within the international system. These structures are made apparent in the Arctic states, both great powers and peripheral states alike are committed to regional stability and predictability which are translated into a commitment of international cooperation. The USA has taken a comparably aloof stance toward Arctic politics compared to the other states, they are primarily grounded in their own security policy as well as maintain global stability and predictability in order to protect the current world order, they see Arctic cooperation as a way to achieve this.<sup>280</sup> Russia has been far more proactive in Arctic politics. It is in Russia's national interest to maintain low tensions and stability in the Arctic region, to achieve they also recognise the role of international cooperation and common governance in their Arctic policy, as demonstrated by their commitment to the Arctic Council and bilateral relations.<sup>281</sup> The Russian interest in maintaining

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<sup>277</sup> Luis Schenonim, Carlos Escude, "Peripheral Realism Revisited." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, vol. 59, no. 1, (2016), p.3

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>280</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, "The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?" *Polar Record*, vol. 53, no. 1, (2017) pp. 6-11

<sup>281</sup> Gail Foundahl, Aileen Espirita, Aytalina Ivanova, "Russia's Arctic Regions and Politics", in Coates., Ken S, Holroyd., Carin (eds), "The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Policies and Politics", Palgrave Macmillan, (2020), pp. 194-210

stability and low tensions in Arctic politics is two folded, firstly a conflict in the region would be detrimental to the Russian efforts of economic development of the Russian Arctic and make the Northern Sea Route a viable shipping route.<sup>282</sup> Secondly, the Kola Peninsula is the home of the Northern Fleet which houses the strategically important SSBNs. These are important components to the Russian naval bastion doctrine, referring to the Russian second-strike nuclear strike and international power projection capabilities.<sup>283</sup> Therefore, it is in Russia's interest to keep unwanted military attention away as much as possible from the Kola Peninsula and the Russian Arctic, as this attention could infringe on Russia's operational capabilities and discourage international investments. The Nordic countries' interest in maintaining regional stability must be understood in relation to the power inequalities and their inferiority in relation to the great powers.<sup>284</sup> The Nordic countries' geographical proximity to Russia has made the USA the preferable ally to ensure their national security, they have regardless made it their priority to maintain good relations and cooperation with Russia and have been regarded as important components to maintain regional stability and predictability in the Arctic.<sup>285</sup>

Contributing to the notion of an Arctic dimension within the international system can be seen as common governance of the Arctic. This is not just a result of the Arctic states' own national interests in maintaining predictability and stability in the region, but it is also an expression of power politics and the proto-hierarchical order. The establishment of the Arctic Council was delayed for 6 years,<sup>286</sup> because the original Canadian proposal for establishing a comprehensive multilateral Arctic Council to curb military activity in the Arctic infringed on the American security-oriented Arctic policy. It was only after Canada made concessions to the USA to remove the security aspect along with other amendments that the Council was permitted to be

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., pp. 195-204

<sup>283</sup> Jonas Kjellén, "The Russian Northern Fleet and Russian (Re)militarisation of the Arctic", *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, vol 13, (2022), pp. 37-42

<sup>284</sup> Anniken Huitfeldt, "Foreign Policy Address to the Storting 2023." 03.05.2023, Regjeringen, (2023), available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/foreign-policy-address-to-the-storting-2023/id2967341/> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

<sup>285</sup> Regjeringen, "Norway's Arctic Strategy: Between geopolitics and social development." 06.07.2017, Regjeringen.no, (2017), p. 3, available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/arctic-strategy/id2550081/> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

<sup>286</sup> Douglas C. Nord, "The Changing Arctic: Creating a Framework for Consensus Building and Governance Within the Arctic Council". Palgrave Macmillan, (2016), pp. 31-40



established in 1996.<sup>287</sup> Another example to demonstrate how Arctic governance is motivated by international politics and realist considerations is the Ilulissat Declaration of 2008, the significance of which is that it established UNCLOS as the governing principle of the Arctic Ocean. This was not just a milestone in the sense that Arctic coastal states had for the first established clear governing principles for common governance of the region. Its significance it was a reaction to the EU's attempt of establishing an Arctic Treaty modelled after the Antarctic Treaty.<sup>288</sup> This would have transformed the Arctic region into a commons for humanity and undermined state sovereignty. Part of the EU's proposal was to appoint itself as the steward of the Arctic by becoming a balancing actor that could enact pressure on Russia to move away from its fossil-based economy.<sup>289</sup> Fearing encroachment by the outside the Arctic coastal states came together under the Danish initiative to agree on a common vision of Arctic governance, this culminated with the Ilulissat Declaration.<sup>290</sup> The proto-hierarchy of the international system came to the surface during the process in the sense Denmark had assurances to Russia that the Declaration would ensure that sovereignty and control over resources remained with the state, which it indeed did by establishing UNCLOS as the governing principle included the state's right to establish an EEZ.<sup>291</sup> The Ilulissat Declaration was successful in concentrating authority in Arctic politics to the Arctic states that it was incorporated into the Arctic Council, this meant any outside actor had to affirm and respect UNCLOS as a prerequisite for engaging in Arctic politics.<sup>292</sup> Moreover, the Ilulissat Declaration reinforced the idea of Arctic governance as its own dimension in politics because it allowed states to strengthen bilateral cooperation and

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Klaus Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, 'Law of the Sea,' and Arctic Ocean." *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 33 (2), (2013), p. 50

<sup>289</sup> Kamrul Hossain, "EU Engagement in the Arctic: Do the Policy Responses from the Arctic States Recognise the EU as a Legitimate Stakeholder?" *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, vol. 6, no. 2, (2015), pp. 94-95

<sup>290</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, Gry Thomasen, "How Has Arctic Coastal State Cooperation Affected the Arctic Council?" *Marine Policy*, vol. 122, 104239, (2020), p. 3

<sup>291</sup> Klaus Dodds, Mark Nuttall, *The Scramble for the Poles : the Geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic*. Polity Press, (2016), p. 92-93

<sup>292</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia, China and the EU." *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*, (2019), p.7

management over common resources regardless of geopolitical trends,<sup>293</sup> as well as enabling Russia and Norway to settle their maritime border dispute in 2010.<sup>294</sup>

A counterargument to the existence of deeper structures in Arctic politics which pushes states toward seeking cooperation and common governance can be found in the closing down of the Arctic Council following the War in Ukraine.<sup>295</sup> The consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the substantial deterioration of relations between the USA and the Nordic countries.<sup>296</sup> The importance of the Arctic Council was that it eventually became the principal forum for international cooperation and governance in the Arctic.<sup>297</sup> The reactions to the War in Ukraine can be interpreted using peripheral realism, it predicts rule-following states are more likely to adopt a foreign policy preference toward the current established world order, in other words, they prefer the status quo in international politics.<sup>298</sup> This aligns with the foreign policy objective of the Nordic states of supporting a 'rule-based international order'.<sup>299</sup> This ties into the American foreign policy objective of also maintaining the current world order and its influence in it. Russia's actions in Ukraine have upset the status quo in international politics, the ramification could contribute to further legitimising war as a legitimate means to achieve foreign policy goals, thus undermining the legitimacy of the unipolar world order as characterised by multilateral and governance international institutions.<sup>300</sup> In reaction, the EU and the USA used

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<sup>293</sup> Matthew S. Wiseman, "The Future of the Arctic Council", in Coates., Ken S, Holroyd., Carin (eds), "The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Policies and Politics", Palgrave Macmillan, (2020), p. 441-446

<sup>294</sup> Sergei Lavrov, Jonas Gahr Støre, "Canada, take note: Here is how to resolve maritime disputes", 21.09.2010, The Globe And The Mail, (2010), available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/canada-take-note-heres-how-to-resolve-maritime-disputes/article4326372/> (Accessed: 28.03.2023)

<sup>295</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine", 03.03.2022, (2022), available at: <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (Accessed: 19.04.2022)

<sup>296</sup> Ronald O'Rourke, Jane Leggett, Laura B. Comay, Jonathan L. Ramseur, John Frittelli, Pervaze A. Sheikh, Caitlin Keating-Bitonti, Brandon S. Tracy, "Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress", Congressional Research Service, (2022), p. 29 available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41153/189> (Accessed: 31.03.2023)

<sup>297</sup> Wiseman, (2020), Ibid., p. 441

<sup>298</sup> Carlos Escundé, "Realism in the Periphery" in Dominguez., Jorge. I., Covarrubias., Ana (eds), Routledge Handbook of Latin America in the World, London: Taylor and Francis, (2014), p.46-48

<sup>299</sup> Haugevik, Sending, (2020), Ibid., p. 110

<sup>300</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, "U.S. Treasury Announces Unprecedented & Expansive Sanctions Against Russia, Imposing Swift and Severe Economic Costs." 24.02.2022, U.S. Department of the Treasury, (2022), available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0608> (16.05.2023)

their rule-making powers to punish Russia by breaking the status quo and enacting economic sanctions. The framework of peripheral realism's contribution is that it provides a rationale for why Norway and Iceland who are EU members also joined the economic sanctions. It also illustrates why the Nordic states reacted much more punitively toward Russia following the War in Ukraine compared to the Ukraine Crisis. Since the Russian flag-planting event in 2007 and particularly after the Ukraine Crisis of 2014, the Arctic has increasingly taken on the role of deterrence and militarisation among all the actors.<sup>301</sup> Military presence and armament do not represent a security risk that could threaten a war. Although military presence is accompanied by the increased risk of an incident of misunderstandings occurring which could escalate into unforeseeable consequences. Experiences from the Cold War when tensions were much higher and the presence of NATO and Soviet military vessels was 10x higher than today suggest the likelihood of such misunderstandings is remarkably low.<sup>302</sup> Lastly, the presence of NATO in the Arctic is regarded by the Nordic states as an attempt at the external balancing of power as a counterweight to the inequalities of state capabilities, in order to address what they perceive to be a security dilemma when faced with in their eyes an increasingly more assertive and unpredictable Russia.<sup>303</sup>

That said, I contend the argument that structures exist that promote international cooperation and common governance in the region is still valid. Although one must be mindful when making predictions on ongoing political events and display utmost caution and discipline as a scholar of international politics. In light of new emerging evidence in regard to the surge of support for the Arctic Council. In March 2023 all the Arctic states issued a joint statement where they recognised the importance of the Arctic Council.<sup>304</sup> Additionally, in the joint statement, the

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<sup>301</sup> Karsten Friis, "Hard security in the High North: Gloves off?" in Friis., Karsten, Wilson Rowe., Elana, Straga., Mike, Sverdrup., Ulf (eds), "Navigating Breakup: Security realities in freezing politics and thawing landscapes in the Arctic," Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs|Wilson Center,(2023), p. 56

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>303</sup> Siemon T. Wezeman, "Military Capabilities in the Arctic: A New Cold War in the High North?", SIPRI Publications, (2016), p. 1, available at: <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2016/sipri-background-papers/military-capabilities-arctic> (Accessed: 31.03.2023)

<sup>304</sup> Arctic Council, "Arctic Council Statement on the occasion of the thirteenth meeting of the Arctic Council", 11.03.2023, (2023a), available at: <https://oarchive.arctic-council.org/>

Arctic states recognised the Arctic region as a region of constructive peace and cooperation.<sup>305</sup> In May 2023 the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Anniken Huitfeldt vowed during her address to the Norwegian Parliament, the Storting, restoring and maintaining the Arctic Council will be the Norwegian government's main foreign policy priority following the Russian handover of the presidency to Norway.<sup>306</sup> Likewise, Russia's Arctic Officer Nikolay Korchunov said Russia is willing to resume the Arctic Council for as long it is beneficial to Russia's Arctic interests.<sup>307</sup> Similarly from an American point of view, the Arctic Council hold great value to promote cooperation in the Arctic. It did not take long before announcing its ceasing of participation in the Arctic Council, the US Coordinator for the Arctic Region, Hames P. Dehart, who is responsible for coordinating and promoting American interests in the Arctic region, made it clear the USA have no interest in creating alternative institutions for Arctic governance.<sup>308</sup> This is further underpinned by a background paper issued for a debate in the American parliament, the American Congress, which stated the pause in the Arctic Council does not equate to the end of Arctic cooperation, as most of the cooperation in the region is bilateral, but activities involving Russia had been put on hold because of the political situation following the invasion.<sup>309</sup> When one looks at the programme for the Norwegian chairmanship of the Arctic Council there is a clear emphasis on low-tension policy focuses, such as ecology, indigenous rights, climate change and sustainable development.<sup>310</sup> This suggests Norway are attempting to repeat the American's

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[council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/3146/SPXRU202\\_2023\\_Final-Draft-AC-Statement.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/3146/SPXRU202_2023_Final-Draft-AC-Statement.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) (Accessed: 27.05.2023)

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Anniken Huitfeldt, "Foreign Policy Address to the Storting 2023." 03.05.2023, Regjeringen, (2023), available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/foreign-policy-address-to-the-storting-2023/id2967341/> (Accessed: 09.05.2023)

<sup>307</sup> Trine Jonassen, "Russia Will Stay in the Arctic Council as Long as it Serves Our Interests", 11.05.2023, High North News, (2023), available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/russia-will-stay-arctic-council-long-it-serves-our-interests> (Accessed: 27.05.2023)

<sup>308</sup> Astri Edvardsen, "USA's Arctic Coordinator: "We Do Not Want to Change the Structure or Membership of the Arctic Council" 18.05.2023, High North News, (2022), available at: <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/usas-arctic-coordinator-we-do-not-want-change-structure-or-membership-arctic-council> (Accessed: 01.05.2023)

<sup>309</sup> Ronald O'Rourke, Jane Leggett, Laura B. Comay, Jonathan L. Ramseur, John Frittelli, Pervaze A Sheikh, Caitlin Keating-Bitonti, Brandon S. Tracy, "Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress", Congressional Research Service, (2022), p. 31, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41153/189> (Accessed: 31.03.2023)

<sup>310</sup> Arctic Council, "Norges lederskap arktisk råd 2023-2025/The Norwegian Presidency of the Arctic Council Programme for 2023-2025", (2023b), pp. 1- 20, available at:

strategy to contain the Ukraine Crisis from spilling over to Arctic Politics during their chairmanship in 2014.<sup>311</sup> To set what unfolding into perspective it is worth taking into consideration, part of the Arctic Council's endurance in international politics prior to the War in Ukraine was founded in its avoidance to address sensitive hard power politics. Instead, it focused on "softer" policy areas like sustainable development, environmental protection and indigenous rights. The consequence of this gave the states a breather from power politics and competition that is usually found in the international system. This allowed policymakers to focus on less sensitive and controversial matters, in turn, this fostered dialogue and migrated the inherent mistrust of the international system.<sup>312</sup> In conclusion, there is nothing exceptional about the politics in the Arctic region, but the argument could be made there are particularities which influence the interactions and relationships between the states in the Arctic region. The delicacies of Arctic politics are more complex than what a general conflict/cooperation analysis might suggest. The relationship between the Arctic states and Russia is generally determined by the security environment of international politics, rather than derived from internal tensions and dynamics of Arctic politics. This means that international tensions and cooperation can coexist and make their relationship fluctuate.<sup>313</sup> Yet because of a commitment to regional stability, and the mitigating effect Arctic cooperation has on the security dilemma makes conflicts unlikely.

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<sup>311</sup> Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, "The Ukraine Crisis Moves North. Is Arctic Conflict Spill-over Driven by Material Interests?" *Polar Record*, vol. 53, no. 1, (2017) pp. 6-11

<sup>312</sup> Wiseman, (2020), *Ibid.*, pp. 449-451

<sup>313</sup> Andreas Østhagen, "The New Geopolitics of the Arctic: Russia, China and the EU." *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*, (2019), p.12

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