



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

# Frozen Diplomacy

Regional Causes for the Increased Militarization in the Arctic

*Elsa Hellqvist*

Bachelor's thesis  
Autumn 2020  
Uppsala University  
Department of Government  
Political Science C  
Supervisor: Johanna Pettersson  
Word count: 12 023  
Pages: 32

**Author**

Elsa Hellqvist

**Title**

*Frozen Diplomacy- Regional Causes for the Increased Militarization in the Arctic*

**Key words**

Arctic, International Relations, Climate Change, Militarization, Regions, NATO

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Aim and Research Question	7
<b>2. Past Research</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Diplomacy in the Arctic	9
2.2 Arctic Security and Militarization	9
2.3 NATO and the Arctic	11
2.4 Chapter Conclusion	11
<b>3. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Why the Regional Security Complex Theory?	13
3.2 A Regional Security Complex	13
3.3 Tools for Analysis	15
3.4 Definition of Security in the RSCT	16
3.5 Great Powers and Superpowers in RSCT	17
3.6 Past applications of RSCT on the Arctic	17
3.7 Criticism and Response	18
3.8 Chapter Conclusion	19
<b>4. Design and method</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Choice of Case	20
4.2 Choice of Material	21
4.3 Tools for Analysis	22
4.4 Operationalization	22
4.5 Critical Reflection	23
<b>5. Results</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1 Changed Polarity	25
5.2 Referent Objects	27
5.3 Shipping Routes	29
5.4 Conquest of Land	30
5.6 Critical Reflection	31
<b>6. Conclusion</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1 Encouragements	34
<b>List of References</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>38</b>
Appendix 1:	38



# 1. Introduction

In the academic literature the Arctic has, since the 1970's, gained increased acknowledgement as a distinct region, composed of the eight sovereign *Arctic states*: Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark (through Greenland and The Faroe Islands), Iceland, Canada and the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> However, this acknowledgement doesn't settle the general question of exactly what the Arctic is, where its boundaries goes and who owns the rights to different parts of the region. Instead, this is still a topic of discussion amongst governments and scholars and there is no clear answer.<sup>2</sup>

The Arctic contains undefined areas which several countries have claimed belong to them. These claims are made with the help of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS declares that coastal states have sovereign rights to an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that can extend 200 miles from their shore, or under special circumstances, longer.<sup>3</sup> As can be seen in the attached map from Durham University (See Appendix 1), this creates clashes in terms of claims in the Arctic region, as several of the Arctic states are claiming the rights to the same areas. Some of the conflicts of ownership have been solved and others remain unsolved.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to imagine that these geographical disputes will ease, with regards to the increasing geostrategic and economic importance of the Arctic region that comes as a direct consequence of climate change.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, five of the Arctic States met for the *Arctic Ocean Conference* and already at this time, they recognized that the Arctic is going to go through significant changes due to a changing climate.<sup>6</sup> As Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SPIRI) finds in their report on the geopolitics of the Arctic, many climate change related transformations in the region are going to lead to an increased insecurity in a large range of areas, such as food security, water security and health security. Furthermore, that effects from climate change will fuel the earlier mentioned discussion regarding sovereignty and application of international law, since the melting ice creates significant economic and strategic opportunities connected to new shipping lanes and extraction of natural resources.<sup>7</sup> A clear example of these new economic opportunities are the findings of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), which proves that the area

---

<sup>1</sup> Charter and Greaves "Arctic" in Sperling *Handbook of Governance and Security* p.123

<sup>2</sup> Klimenko "The geopolitics of a changing Arctic" p.2

<sup>3</sup> UN "The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea"

<sup>4</sup> IBRU Durham University "Maritime jurisdiction and boundaries in the arctic region"

<sup>5</sup> Klimenko "The geopolitics of a changing Arctic" p.7

<sup>6</sup> Centre for International Law "Ilulissat Declaration"

<sup>7</sup> Klimenko "The geopolitics of a changing Arctic" p.4-7

inside the Arctic circle might hold thirteen percent of the world's unrecovered petroleum stock, as well as thirty percent of the world's natural gas.<sup>8</sup>

These economic opportunities have caused the interest in the Arctic to grow steadily for 20 years and this has led to worries of possible future conflicts in the region.<sup>9</sup> The interests in the Arctic are not only shared amongst the Arctic states; likewise other Asian countries such as Japan and India,<sup>10</sup> China has started a deeper engagement in the Arctic. China is trying to establish themselves as an important actor who will participate in the region's future governing.<sup>11</sup> Also the European Union, with three of its member states being part of the eight Arctic states, has an interest in the governing of the Arctic. As the importance of the Arctic is growing in relation to questions regarding climate change, where the EU has been taking an international leading role, both the European Parliament and the European Council have called for the European Commission to create a more coherent framework for the EU's Arctic policy.<sup>12</sup>

The increasing international recognition of the importance of the Arctic region, the region's wide range of security issues, its undefined legal status and its already ongoing disputes of state boundaries, creates a need for international unity and collaboration in the Arctic region.<sup>13</sup> And, the eight Arctic states have, since the end of the cold war, acknowledged that necessity for cooperation in the region.<sup>14</sup> Their cooperation seems to have been rather successful and the Arctic has, since the cold war, been identified as a relatively peaceful area.<sup>15</sup> It has been governed through diplomacy with the help of various regional organizations, the most acknowledged one being the Arctic council.<sup>16</sup> The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum made up by the eight Arctic states. Its aims are to promote cooperation and interaction between Arctic actors as well as to promote sustainable development in the area. Several indigenous groups have been allowed to actively participate in the decision making of the Arctic Council.<sup>17</sup> Maybe, the Arctic has been operating in a

---

<sup>8</sup> Lanteigne "The Role of China in Emerging Arctic Security Discourses", p.151

<sup>9</sup> Klimenko "The Geopolitics of a Changing Arctic" p.8

<sup>10</sup> Padrtova, "Applying conventional Theoretical approaches to the Arctic" in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security* p.40

<sup>11</sup> Lanteigne, "The Role of China in Emerging Arctic Security Discourses" pp.150-155

<sup>12</sup> Airoidi, "Security Aspects in the EU Arctic Policy" in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security* p.339

<sup>13</sup> Cassotta et al. "Climate Change and Human Security in a Regulatory Multilevel and Multidisciplinary Dimension: The Case of the Arctic Environmental Ocean" in Filho et al. *Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience and Hazards. Climate Change Management*. p.19

<sup>14</sup> Hoogensen Gjørvi, Lanteigne and Sam-Aggrey, "Understanding Arctic Security" in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security* p.2

<sup>15</sup> Schaller and Sam-Aggrey, "NATO, OSCE, AND THE ARCTIC REGION" in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security* p.349

<sup>16</sup> Chater and Greaves, "Arctic" in Sperling *Handbook of Governance and Security* p.125

<sup>17</sup> Arctic Council "Declaration on the establishment of the Arctic Council"

way that will be more and more common in the future, where Climate Change and globalization requires broadened international cooperation and diplomacy.<sup>18</sup>

However, in recent years, as the relations between Russia and the other seven Arctic states have been freezing due to Russian aggression in eastern Europe and Asia, in the conflicts of Georgia, Ukraine and Syria, there has been an increase in military activity around the Arctic.<sup>19</sup> The eight Arctic countries have previously attempted to keep other conflicts out of the arctic discourse, but this attempt has been described as to be failing now.<sup>20</sup>

In the past 20 years, at least five of the Arctic states have undergone a rearming with direct relation to the Arctic. To give some examples; Canada has had an expansion of special Arctic forces; Denmark has developed a Joint Arctic Preparedness Force for operation on Greenland and other Arctic areas; Russia has made its Arctic forces bigger and more modern, as well as increasing their number of exercises.<sup>21</sup>

Not only are the majority of the Arctic countries rearming, the same thing goes for the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) which contains five of the eight Arctic states. In 2018, NATO performed their biggest military exercise since the end of the cold war; Trident Juncture 2018, which took place in one of the eight Arctic states: Norway.<sup>22</sup>

The implementation of Trident Juncture 2018 can be identified as to be part of this trend in the Arctic region where all actors are increasing their military capabilities. Hence, the motives for NATO to militarize can be studied to further understand the reasons behind this increased militarization in the region.

## 1.1 Aim and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to understand the circumstances triggering increased militarization in the Arctic region. This will be done with the help of the Regional Security Complexes Theory. The theory will be used to analyse the difference over time in NATO's construction of security in the Arctic region. This paper will be based on the research question:

---

<sup>18</sup> Hough, "Conclusions: Coming in from the Cold" in Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic- Coming in from the Cold* p.139

<sup>19</sup> Chater, Greaves and Sarson, "Assessing security governance in the arctic" in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security* p.52-53

<sup>20</sup> Hoogensen Gjørsv, Lanteigne and Sam-Aggrey, "Understanding Arctic Security" Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. p.2

<sup>21</sup> Wezeman, "Military Capabilities in the Arctic: A new cold war in the high north?". pp 1-14

<sup>22</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Trident Juncture 18"

*How can the study of the evolution of NATO's security construction in relation to the Arctic help explain the current development of increased militarization in the region?*

The purpose will be to find out if there has been a change in NATO's perception of security in the Arctic region between the years 1999 and 2010. Furthermore, to find out if this possible change in how security is constructed might have happened due to an internal or external transformation in the Arctic Regional Security Complex. At last, to investigate whether this possible transformation and change in security perception could explain the increased militarization in the region.

The Regional Security Complexes theory will provide adequate tools for the analysis. The results of the analysis will be that the construction of security made by NATO in the Arctic has changed. It will be proven that the region has undergone an internal transformation because of the new polarity that has been formed and the new conquests of land that has been made there. Furthermore, that NATO's choice of what to securitise has changed, from a state-centric securitization to a more region-centric securitisation. These two things combined will be found to be suitable explanations for NATO's changed threat perceptions in the region and additionally explain why NATO feels the urge to increase their military presence there. Additionally, the results might be generalised and used on several other Arctic actors as well.



## 2. Past Research

There is a great variety in the research regarding the Arctic. Therefore, this chapter will seek to highlight only some key points and questions from the literature regarding Arctic security, militarization and diplomacy. It will explain common ways in which the past literature tries to explain the increased militarization. Furthermore, it will expose existing gaps or contradictions in the literature which provides this paper with interdisciplinary relevance.

### 2.1 Diplomacy in the Arctic

The post-cold war era has meant an increased institutionalization of the arctic, where cooperation and peaceful resolutions to common issues have been favoured.<sup>23</sup> However, literature today is putting forward concerns regarding the possible drawback of this type of diplomacy and a renewed military focus in the Arctic region.<sup>24</sup>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) explains the failure of the diplomacy in the Arctic today by examining The Arctic Council and its role in Arctic negotiations. The authors of IPCC find the Arctic Council to be a unique institutional body that allows for international cooperation in the Arctic. However, they find the problem of the Arctic Council to be the state-centrism of the organization. They claim that globalization and transnationalism, in combination with Climate Change, might require reconstruction of the Arctic Council for the governing to continue working.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.2 Arctic Security and Militarization

The aim of this paper will be to try and understand this militarization with the help of the Regional Security Complexes Theory. However, scholars have taken a great variety of approaches to try to understand the conflict development of the Arctic region. An application of conventional approaches on the Arctic is made by Hough in the book *International Politics of the Arctic*. According to him, the realist approach would explain any increased international involvement in the Arctic as a consequence of increased rivalry of the powerful Arctic states, as they aim to

---

<sup>23</sup> Chater, Greaves and Sarson, "Assessing security governance in the arctic" Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. p.47

<sup>24</sup> Chater and Greaves, "Arctic" Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. p.135

<sup>25</sup> IPCC, "Polar Regions". p.270

improve their position on the international arena.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the evolution of international forums and intergovernmental organizations, like the Arctic council, can according to him be explained by a neo-realistic approach as nothing more than a mean through which U.S power is projected.<sup>27</sup> From a liberal perspective, the Arctic is an example of international cooperation. From that point of view, any obstacles to this cooperation can be overcome by even deeper integration and the interdependence this deepening provides.<sup>28</sup>

Buitrago takes on a more constructivist approach and tries to explain increased aggressions in the Arctic region with the help of what he calls “Risk Representations”. He focuses on the actors Russia, Canada, The United States and China and says that they have all constructed an idea regarding the Arctic as a region which provides opportunity and gain. Because of this, they have all concerns for their national interests and sovereignty in relation to the Arctic region. They are therefore using a very determined or aggressive communication for the protection of these interests. These are the risk representations, which he says might materialize into confrontational actions and actual conflict.<sup>29</sup>

Buitrago does not hesitate to say that security concerns about the increasing influence of China in the Arctic region is part of what is creating tensions there. He says that China expanding in the region jeopardizes the region’s future stability.<sup>30</sup> This seems a bit counterproductive for China as another scholar, Lanteigne, draws the conclusion that for China, an increase in military activity in the Arctic region, especially as a consequence of rivalry between the United States and Russia, would be a nightmare scenario. This, due to fear from China that increased tensions will leave non-arctic states like themselves excluded from the Arctic diplomacy and the decision-making regarding issues that China consider to be of international nature. Regardless of its consequences, Lanteigne expects that the importance of participating in Arctic governing will grow for China, as long as China’s political and economic rise continues, and they continue on the road towards becoming a new international superpower.<sup>31</sup>

Hence, there seems to be a contradiction in the way that China would not gain from increased militarization, but still might be part of creating this militarization. And this is far from the only contradiction to be found in the literature regarding international relations in the Arctic. In his paper, Alexandr Golts’ identify yet another contradiction in the Arctic region. According to him, the value of the natural resources in the Arctic is questionable and therefore a war over these resources very unnecessary and unimaginable- at the same time as he points out current Russian

---

<sup>26</sup> Hough, “International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in from the Cold”. p.14

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.112

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp.116-117

<sup>29</sup> Buitrago, De, “Risk Representations and Confrontational Actions in the Arctic”. p.28

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp.27-28

<sup>31</sup> Lanteigne, “The Role of China in Emerging Arctic Security Discourses”, p. 155

rearming in relation to the Arctic.<sup>32</sup> He is not the only scholar to find this contradiction, Chater and Greaves claim the same thing- that it is acknowledged that increased militarization in the Arctic is unnecessary- at the same time as increased militarization is happening.<sup>33</sup> Golts´ tries to explain this contradiction by saying that the Arctic is like a playfield where powerful countries can express their ambitions just to impress voters in their own countries.<sup>34</sup>

## 2.3 NATO and the Arctic

It is important for the relevance of this paper that NATO is actually identified as aiming its military rearming towards the Arctic region. According to Hoogensen Gjørsv, Lanteigne and Sam-Aggrey, NATO’s Trident Juncture exercise 2018 was directed towards the Arctic and towards Russian military presence in the region.<sup>35</sup> This is emphasized again by Sam-Aggrey in a different article that he has written together with Sam Schaller. In that same article, the same authors also explain that the region is of importance for NATO and its member states. They highlight security issues that are relevant for NATO, such as the protection of the GIUK-gap and the fear of build-up of Russian military infrastructure in the Arctic.<sup>36</sup>

However, the aim of the Trident Juncture 2018 exercise according to NATO themselves is described as a way of testing their collective defence and ability to respond to any threat.<sup>37</sup> The identification of the Trident Juncture exercise as directed towards the Arctic is therefore an assumption made by scholars, probably due to the placement of the exercise; in Parts of Norway, the Baltic sea and the North sea, as well as the airspace of Finland and Sweden.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.4 Chapter Conclusion

The academic literature has acknowledged that the peaceful cooperation of the Arctic is decreasing, and militarization is increasing. Furthermore, several scholars are identifying an odd contradiction in how they cannot find the motivation for this militarization- yet it is happening. Actually, the Arctic literature contains a lot of contradictions, such as the one describing China as an active actor trying to grow

---

<sup>32</sup> Golts´, “The Arctic: A clash of interests or clash of ambitions?”. p.59

<sup>33</sup> Chater and Greaves, “Arctic” in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. pp.136-42

<sup>34</sup> Golts´, “The Arctic: A clash of interests or clash of ambitions?”. p.59

<sup>35</sup> Hoogensen Gjørsv, Lanteigne and Sam-Aggrey, “Understanding Arctic Security” in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. p.3

<sup>36</sup> Schaller and Sam-Aggrey, “NATO, The OSCE, And the Arctic Region” in Hoogensen, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge handbook of Arctic Security*. pp.350-352

<sup>37</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Trident Juncture 18”

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

in the region in a way which might trigger conflict, which they do not wish to happen. It is important to figure out the reasons for these contradictions, and this is what this thesis aims to contribute in doing- to find answers for the contradiction of why there is an increased militarization where there seems to be no need for it.

NATO has been found in various articles as directing some of their military exercises towards the Arctic and is therefore assumed to be part of this militarization.

Something worth noting in the academic literature is that there are a lot of empirical descriptions and explanations of increased militarization, examples of this can be taken from sources of this paper, such as the SIPRI reports and background papers, or most of the articles from the Handbook of Arctic Security, and the sources to which they are referring. This paper identifies a lack of theory-based analysis of the situation, where answers to increased militarization is further investigated, rather than the nature and empirical facts of the militarization itself being outlined again. Therefore, this paper will do a theory-based analysis of the development in the region.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will outline the main points and, for this paper, important aspects of the Regional Security Complex Theory. The chapter will describe the theory in a way that will make it applicable and easy to use later on during the analysis. It will furthermore introduce ways in which the Regional Security Complexes Theory previously has been used to analyse the Arctic and how this paper can further develop the research that has been done on the Arctic with the help of the theory.

### 3.1 Why the Regional Security Complex Theory?

The Regional Security Complex Theory, from now on referred to as RSCT, has been chosen for this paper as it might provide very relevant theoretical tools to use in the search for answers to the increased militarization of the Arctic region. The theory is taken from the book *Regions and Powers: The structure of International Security* by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver. According to the authors, the theory has a historical dimension which allows for current developments to be analysed with the help of both cold war- and post-cold war patterns in the international system.<sup>39</sup> This makes the theory relevant for the research of this paper since international relations in the Arctic have been characterized by the Cold War, especially the transformation of the international system that came with the end of it.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the authors describe the theory as a model that helps one to analyse and explain developments within any region,<sup>41</sup> which is exactly what this paper aims to do when searching for explanations for increased militarization in the Arctic region.

### 3.2 A Regional Security Complex

The RSCT rests on the idea that security is socially constructed. It claims that the regional system will not be shaped solely as a consequence of power distribution within and outside the region, but also as a consequence of amity and enmity among actors inside the region.<sup>42</sup> A regional security complex (from now on referred to as a RSC), according to this theory, is not made up by units that are necessarily connected by cultural or economic factors. Instead, RSCs are defined as “A set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked

---

<sup>39</sup> Buzan and Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security” p.40

<sup>40</sup> Åtland, “Mikhail Gorbachev and the Murmansk Initiative” p.305

<sup>41</sup> Buzan and Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security” p.40

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p.40

that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.”<sup>43</sup>

As mentioned above, RSC's are affected by enmities and amities between their units. Therefore, they can very often be influenced by historical factors such as a longstanding friendship or hostility between two regional units.<sup>44</sup> This is an important notion for the analysis of this paper, as two of the units in the Arctic RSC are the United States and Russia- who can be argued to have a history of enmity between one another.

It is important, however, to note that the units of the theory do not necessarily have to be states. The theoretical framework is not state-centric. As written by Buzan and Waever, the definition of what is a unit in the theory is yet to be defined by history.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, in this thesis, units will be defined by the author as any important, power-holding actor in the region, such as states, organizations, alliances and councils.

The RSCT is built on the idea that the international system is anarchical. Additionally, that every region inside the international system also has its own anarchical system. Moreover, it is also building on the premises that threats are more or less strong for a unit depending on whether they come from far away or from a shorter distance- as many security threats travel more easily over shorter distances. Also, that geographical factors can have an effect on which security threat is dominant in a region. All of these things combined create regions of security interdependence. The interdependence is stronger between the units inside a region than between units from two different regions.<sup>46</sup> Thus, for a set of units to qualify as a RSC they need to have an interdependency strong enough to differentiate them from surrounding security regions and establish them as linked.<sup>47</sup>

Based on these premises, this paper identifies the Arctic as a Regional Security Complex. This means that the Arctic is a region in which there is an anarchical system where several units operates and together constructs the security environment. The strongest geographical factor affecting the region's security is the effects of climate change and the melting of the Arctic ice, which is also what creates the security interdependence between the units inside the region. This, because climate change, as described in the introduction of this paper, creates a great variety of security issues that must be solved through cooperation and diplomacy. Issues such as health insecurity, food insecurity, water insecurity and conventional insecurity. In other words, all units in the region are connected and must collaborate to find shared solutions to issues affecting them all, which are caused by the geographical factor climate change.

---

<sup>43</sup> Buzan and Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security” pp.43-44

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p.45

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p.44

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. pp.45-46

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp.47-48

### 3.3 Tools for Analysis

Buzan and Waever provide tools of analysis on four different levels for scholars to use when doing empirical studies of regional security. The following things are to be examined:

1. The domestic stability of states in the region and how these can affect states threat perceptions;
2. State-to-state relations: how states behave towards one another and what allies or enemies exist;
3. What type of interaction the region has with neighbouring regions;
4. The role of global powers in the region, how they affect the region's security and the polarity, whether they are part of the region or not.<sup>48</sup>

The focus in this paper will be on tool number 1, 2 and 4. Tool number 3 will not be used at all, because this thesis is defining Arctic as an RSC, which the authors do not originally do. It would therefore be too speculative to investigate what type of interaction the region has with other regions, as the other regions would have to be re-defined as well.

Besides the tools of analysis, Buzan and Waever presents three possible evolutions that might happen to an existing RSC:

1. The maintenance of status quo;
2. An internal transformation, which means that there are changes made within the context of the existing outer boundary. An internal transformation could mean changes in the *anarchic structure*, changes to the *polarity* of the region, due to circumstances such as different growth rates or conquest of land, or changes in the dominant pattern of *enmity or amity* in the region, due to circumstances such as new types of leaderships or ideological changes in the units;
3. An external transformation, which means that the structure of the RSC changes, due to the expansion or contraction of the outer boundary. An external transformation might, for example, happen if an RSC gets new members or merges into another RSC.<sup>49</sup>

According to the authors, there are several different types of RSC's, one of which is the "Great power RSC": A Regional Security Complex that is defined by having *more* than one unit inside it which is also a global great power. From such an RSC, one can expect greater spill-over from the region into other regions, as well as a greater influence on the global dynamics than other RSC's have. This type of RSC can be analysed the same way as a regular RSC, but it also requires an

---

<sup>48</sup> Buzan and Waever, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security" p.51

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p.53

understanding that the actions the Great Power units in the Great Power region will take, might have an effect on global security dynamics.<sup>50</sup> The Arctic is in this paper defined as a Great Power RSC, due to the fact that two of the Arctic states, Russia and U.S, are global powers, and furthermore that several other global powers are gaining interest in the region. This makes the importance of the research even greater, as the risk of spill-over effects from the region makes it relevant from a security perspective of other regions as well.

Another type of RSC that could have been relevant for this paper is the “Superpower-centred” region. This, considering the fact that the global super-power of the U.S in this paper is part of the Arctic region. However, for a region to qualify as a superpower-centred region, it needs a dynamic where there is a superpower in the region into which the other units merge, like eastern European states did with the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup> As we have already seen in the introduction and past research of this paper, the Arctic states act with great sovereignty and are not merged into the present superpower. Therefore, this type of classification will be ignored in this thesis. The same goes for all other possible classifications, as the Great Power RSC suits this subject best.

### 3.4 Definition of Security in the RSCT

The authors make sure to create a defined description of what security is in the RSCT. They take on a constructivist approach and they declare that security in the RSCT is something broader than simply military-political security. There are a few distinctions to be made to further understand their idea of security: One has to make a distinction between *Referent objects* and *Securitising actors*, where referent objects are to be secured and the securitising actors are the ones declaring the need for this security. By using these definitions, one can formulate a theory regarding who is securitizing something on behalf of another. A security issue is hence defined as something that is assumed by a securitising actor as a threat to a referent object. The referent object might be a nation as well as a specific economic order, an ideology or a natural object. All that is required from the referent object to be classified as a referent object is that it is claimed by someone to have a *right* to survive. This right of survival constitutes an argument for the securitising actor to use extraordinary means for the protection of the referent object.<sup>52</sup> The idea of securitising actors and referent objects will be put to use during the analysis of this thesis, as a mean through which one can understand how NATO constructs security.

---

<sup>50</sup> Buzan and Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security” p.59

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.56

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.70-71



### 3.5 Great Powers and Superpowers in RSCT

Buzan and Waever distinguishes three different levels on which states, that have more power than the usual states, can be divided. There are *Regional powers*, *Great powers* and *Superpowers*. The regional powers of today are countries such as Brazil, which are powerful and will affect the dynamics within their region, but not globally. The great powers existing after the cold war are identified as Japan, China, Russia and the EU. The last one mainly due to the constellation of Germany, France and Great Britain, so with Brexit it might not be considered a Great power anymore. In the post- cold war period, the only superpower is the United States, although challenged today by China.<sup>53</sup>

Buzan and Waever makes sure to emphasise that in all empirical cases in which there are a mixture of superpowers and great powers, the analysis always has to figure out how these relate to each other, as well as how they relate to the regional level and how the global structure relates to the regional level of which they are part.<sup>54</sup> As the Arctic region contains a mixture of superpowers and great powers, this will be taken into account during the analysis of this thesis.

### 3.6 Past applications of RSCT on the Arctic

The original outlining and application of the RSC theory in 1998 and the revised version of 2003, did not include the Arctic as an RSC or as part of any RSC.

However, in past research there have been scholars defining the Arctic as an RSC. Charter and Greaves used the RSCT in their paper *Arctic* to characterize the Arctic as an environmental regional security complex. This, due to the fact that contemporary security issues in the region are strongly affected by climate change.<sup>55</sup> In this paper, the notion from the past research of how affected the Arctic region is by climate change will continuously be taken into consideration.

In his Article *Considering the Arctic as a Security Region: The roles of China and Russia* Lanteigne mentions the RSCT as a possible future method of understanding Arctic security. He thinks that the Arctic's importance as a region is growing due to the emergence of traditional and non-traditional security issues in the area. He calls for future studies to consider the regional aspects in their analysis and to investigate how and why power politics has affected so many areas of the Arctic's security thinking and governance.<sup>56</sup> This paper takes notes of his urging and will during the analyse try to find regional answers to how and why power-politics, in the form of increased militarization, are exercised in the Arctic.

---

<sup>53</sup> Buzan and Waever, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security" p.34-37

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p.39

<sup>55</sup> Charter and Greaves, "Arctic" in Sperling *Handbook of Governance and Security* p.142

<sup>56</sup> Lanteigne, "Considering the Arctic as a Security Region: The Roles of China and Russia" in Hoogensen Gjørsv, Lanteigne, Sam-Aggrey *Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security* p.320

### 3.7 Criticism and Response

The most important contribution of this paper will not be to test whether the Arctic is qualified as an RSC on all aspects and from all possible points of view. Instead, the RSCT is to be used in the paper as a tool to reach deeper understanding regarding increased militarization in the Arctic region.

There is a possible issue in analysing NATO in this context, with this specific theory. NATO is, according to how units are defined in this paper, an active unit in the Arctic. However, it is only so due to the fact that some of its member-states are part of the Arctic States. The relevance of Arctic for NATO member-states such as Turkey and Italy is questionable. Regardless of this, one can argue that the application of the theory works. This, due to the fact that the Article 5 of NATO's core principles claims that an attack on one NATO state is an attack on them all.<sup>57</sup> Hence, the security interdependence of the Arctic region will be passively transferred to every NATO state as they have to be concerned about possible conflicts in the Arctic, that might engage them through Article 5. Therefore, NATO is a very relevant unit in the Arctic region, and it is possible to analyse with the RSCT.

As for the quality of the RSCT, it has been criticised and reviewed by several different scholars. An example of this is Christopher Freeman who is of the opinion that the RSCT is faulty in its assumptions regarding the anarchical, state-centric international system. Furthermore, he is of the opinion that geographical proximity might not always be what decides how much of a threat something is perceived to be.<sup>58</sup> Matt McDonald is another critique who finds it problematic how, in the RSCT as well as in the Copenhagen School of international relations on which it is based, a threat is always created by the actors. Furthermore, he finds it problematic how threats require meaning only by being articulated and defined. He is afraid that when analysing solely this, one might miss out on threat perceptions that are less state-centric or less based on ideas of amity and enmity as the threats in the RSCT are. He does conclude his critique by saying that the framework provided by the Copenhagen school might come handy for a research more focused on the broader construction of Security.<sup>59</sup>

By using the RSCT, this thesis will have to ignore the critique of the core assumptions of the theory, as it is important for the analysis to assume that the core principles are correct. A critique of a theory can always be made and would occur regardless of what theory is chosen. Again, this thesis is not testing the RSCT, it is using it for the purpose of finding explanations of militarization. As for the critique of the construction of threats, this thesis will not find it too much of an issue as the

---

<sup>57</sup> NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty (1949)" in *Towards the New Strategic Concept- A selection of background Documents* p.3

<sup>58</sup> Freeman, "The European Security Complex- Fait Accompli?" p.7-9

<sup>59</sup> McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security" pp.1 pp.27

thesis itself seeks to analyse the broader construction of security threats, rather than focusing on smaller cases.

### 3.8 Chapter Conclusion

As a summary; RSC are regions made of units which have a strong security interdependence. An RSC will be defined by how its units interact with each other, and this in turn can be influenced by regional factors as well as global factors. Ultimately it will be defined by the securitisation made by its units.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Buzan and Waever, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security" p.72

## 4. Design and method

With the Arctic defined as a Great Power Regional Security Complex and the theory properly outlined, this thesis aims to make use of it to understand the increased militarization in the Arctic region. The mission will be to find out if NATO constructed security in the region differently the year 1999 from the year 2010 and how the possible change in their perception of Arctic security might have been caused by a change in the Arctic RSC. Furthermore, however this change might have affected their decisions regarding rearming and military activities.

### 4.1 Choice of Case

The choice of analysing NATO rests on the notions that NATO is a military active unit in the Arctic region and five out of eight Arctic states are being part of the alliance. It can therefore be assumed that actions taken by NATO will influence the development and security of the region. Furthermore, NATO provides an interesting case to analyse as they themselves are a regional constellation, which operates inside the regional constellation of Arctic, while only being partly part of the region of Arctic.

NATO's actions and behaviour are a result of what its member-states want and do not want. It is in itself mirroring an internal powerplay and the will of several member-states. If something can be found to trigger militarization from NATO, then it might therefore also fit as explanation for militarization from some of NATO's member states. It might even be possible to generalise the results to understand militarization from non-member-states.

NATO is also chosen as it represents a clear opponent to one of the great powers of Arctic: Russia. As emphasised in the theory, when analysing a RSCT containing great powers and superpowers, one has to figure out how these relate to each other and how the structure on the global level might influence the regional level. It therefore seems fitting to analyse a unit in which the superpower of the Arctic region, the U.S, operates. It also seems fitting that the NATO's history is so tightly connected to one of the great powers of the region, Russia. This, because it makes the power-play between these always present in the discussion, so that the importance of analysing how they relate to each other is not forgotten in the analysis.

## 4.2 Choice of Material

To understand the increased militarization, this paper will analyse the Strategic Concept of NATO year 1999 and 2010. The Strategic Concept is an official document published by NATO which according to them is supposed to outline the alliance's purpose and fundamental security tasks, as well as specifying the elements of NATO's approach to security. It is furthermore expected to review the current global security environment and reflect changes to the world that has happened since the founding of NATO 1949.<sup>61</sup> The Strategic Concept suits the research of this paper excellently and provides it with great validity, since the paper aims to explain increased militarization by looking at how NATO might perceive security different today than it did before, and the Strategic Concepts literally aim to specify how NATO sees security in the world on the day the Strategic Concept is written.

In addition to that, the strategic Concept will be analysed as it provides the best opportunity to see if there has been any change in NATO's approach towards security between the years of 1999 and 2010. This, due to the fact that it is the same type of document in both of the years, with the same type of purpose. A change between the two documents will therefore probably be a consequence of changed NATO policy, rather than a change due to the papers being made in different manners.

Since 1949, NATO has only released 7 strategic concepts, the ones of 1999 and 2010 being the newest ones.<sup>62</sup> The arguments for the choice of the newest ones go as such: (1) As this paper continuously repeats how the importance of the Arctic region currently is growing due to climate change, it has always been seeking to analyse as contemporary documents as possible. (2) 11 years of time should be long enough time to be able to identify changes in threat perceptions.

Except for the Strategic Concept, the analysis will find support in two more types of sources. Firstly, a speech by NATO's former Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in San Francisco in 2014. The speech itself is not meant to tackle the Arctic question, but it touches it as Fogh Rasmussen speaks about security in relation to Climate Change. This speech is chosen as a complement to the material, to help the analysis identify security issues directed towards the Arctic, as Arctic is never explicitly mentioned in the Strategic Concepts. This, to further strengthen the validity of the paper by making sure that what is meant to be analysed, NATO's security perceptions in the Arctic, is actually analysed. It will not be used as the main base for the analysis.

Secondly, a few statistical sources will be used to find information on the number of ballistic missiles in the world, the global rising temperatures and applications to UNCLOS. These will provide further strength to some arguments formulated in the analysis but will not form a base of any conclusion on their own.

---

<sup>61</sup> NATO, "Strategic Concepts"

<sup>62</sup> NATO, "Strategic Concepts"

## 4.3 Tools for Analysis

The tools for the analysis of this thesis are provided by the theoretical framework. Recalling what is written in the theoretical chapter of this paper, the analysis will, when needed, find adequate help from three questions when analysing NATO's perception of security in the Arctic:

1. How is the domestic stability of states in the region affecting other states threat perceptions?
2. What state-to-state relations exist in the region and what enemies or allies exist?
3. How is the region's security and polarity affected by global powers and what role do global powers have in the region?

When asking these questions to a material over time, one might find that there has been a change in, for example, enmities in the region, or in how affected the region is by global powers. And, recalling again from the theoretical chapter, there are three evolutions for a region that might come as a consequence of these changes in the region:

1. The maintenance of status quo;
2. An internal transformation, which means that there are changes made within the context of the existing outer boundary. An internal transformation could mean changes in the *anarchic structure*, changes to the *polarity* of the region, due to circumstances such as different growth rates or conquest of land, or changes in the dominant pattern of *enmity or amity* in the region, due to circumstances such as new types of leaderships or ideological changes in the units;
3. An external transformation, which means that the structure of the RSC changes, due to the expansion or contraction of the outer boundary. An external transformation might, for example, happen if an RSC gets new members or merges into another RSC.

Constantly, when analysing how security is constructed in the Arctic RSC, the idea of referent objects and securitising actors will be considered. The tools provided for this is simply the notion that a referent object can be anything, as long as it is claimed by someone to have a right to survive. A securitising actor is an actor claiming that the referent object needs protection.

All of this will constantly be analysed through the lens of NATO. That is, to take the construction of security made by NATO in the Arctic and apply the theory on top of that.

## 4.4 Operationalization

The analysis in this paper will have to be done in several steps. Looking at one relevant theme of the Strategic Concepts at a time, the first step of the analysis will

be to identify if there has been a change in the way NATO describes the security environment of 1999 versus 2010. Furthermore, to find this change or description of security as directed towards Arctic or Arctic related security issues.

If so, the second step will be to make use of the tools and ask questions such as: Is this change in how NATO is constructing security happening due to the member-states being affected by domestic stability in other states in the region? Is it happening due to the construction of new enemies or allies? Is it happening due to new relations forming between states in the region? Is it happening due to global powers actions in the region? Is it happening due to a change in polarity in the region? Is it happening due to the construction of new referent objects?

Once the proper answer to why the construction of security in the Arctic has changed is found, the next step will have to be to figure out what this means for the region. Does this mean that there has been an internal or external transformation of the region?

If one of the steps fails to be done accordingly, one has to consider that maybe nothing has changed, that the region has kept its status quo, which means that there must be something else causing increased militarization in the region.

As a last step in the analysis, discussions must be made regarding how any of this can possibly lead to rearming of NATO. That is, to take the findings of how NATO's perception of security in the Arctic can be analysed and ask however this can explain why NATO choose to increase military capabilities. An example of this could be that the analysis can find proof of an external transformation happening, due to a change in borders, which can be argued to trigger insecurity and therefore trigger militarization.

## 4.5 Critical Reflection

There are problems with analysing official documents from a military treaty organization, as these usually speak in very broad terms and as the main task is to read between the lines- or even to acknowledge what is not even between the lines. However, the choice is between doing this or not tackling the issue at all. To tackle the issue of uncertainty, the most important thing in this analysis will be transparency on each step of the way in the analysis.

Reliability is provided this paper as the method for the analysis is thoroughly described above. Furthermore, as the analysis will be done in a transparent way that is easy to follow. Therefore, anyone could redo what is done in this paper and reach the same type of results.

A problem that might occur with the validity in the paper is related to the broadness of the material. The paper aims to explain increased militarization in the Arctic, but one can never be sure that what is analysed in the Strategic Concepts is really directed towards the Arctic region. The Strategic Concept will always describe

NATO's idea of contemporary security, which is good for the paper, but it will never be really clear whether this description of the security environment is written with the Arctic in mind. For the paper to have the ultimate kind of validity, it would probably need to analyse meetings behind closed doors and unofficial documents, which is unfortunately not possible.



## 5. Results

In this chapter, the instruments of the RSCT will be used to analyse a potential change in how NATO perceives security in the Arctic and why this might be happening. Ultimately, to find explanations for increased militarization in the Arctic region. The chapter will be concluded with some reflection and relevant criticism of the study.

### 5.1 Changed Polarity

In the Strategic Concept of 2010, in the outlining of the current security environment, NATO calls for a recognition of conventional threats by the quote:

However, the conventional threat cannot be ignored. Many regions and countries around the world are witnessing the acquisition of substantial, modern military capabilities with consequences for international stability and Euro-Atlantic security that are difficult to predict. This includes the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which poses a real and growing threat to the Euro-Atlantic area.<sup>63</sup>

Conventional warfare is the type of warfare that is more traditional, in which two or more units meet in an open confrontation. As can be seen in the quote, NATO describes how many regions and countries all over the world are providing themselves with a significant amount of modern military capabilities, which NATO identifies as a threat for international stability and Euro-Atlantic Security. They specifically mention the proliferation of ballistic missiles, without mentioning any specific countries. Although NATO refuses to make any naming on who they refer to as proliferating ballistic missiles, it is worth noting that year 2017 there were according to *Arms Control Association* around 200 ballistic missiles in the world, with China possessing 24 of them and Russia possessing 18. This is comparable to the NATO countries of France, USA, Turkey and the U.K who at that time possessed respectively four, four, two and one ballistic missiles.<sup>64</sup> Probably this can reflect the distribution of ballistic missiles in 2010 as well. As we know from earlier in this paper, both Russia and China are very active actors in the Arctic region. They are besides that also global powers, which accordingly to the RSCT do not even have to be part of a region to affect it.

In the Strategic Concept from 1999 conventional threats are not at all as emphasised. Instead of portraying them as an acute threat, NATO at that time simply states:

---

<sup>63</sup> NATO "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" p.10

<sup>64</sup> ACA "Worldwide Ballistic Missile Inventories"

Notwithstanding positive developments in the strategic environment and the fact that large-scale conventional aggression against the Alliance is highly unlikely, the possibility of such a threat emerging over the longer term exists.<sup>65</sup>

There is a clear difference in how severe and critical conventional threats are portrayed as between the strategic concept of 1999 and 2010. In 1999, conventional threats are simply seen as a possible long-term problem, while in 2010 NATO calls for recognition of the problem's contemporary existence. So, if assumed that the issue of conventional threats is connected to Russia, China and the Arctic, one can find a difference in how NATO constructs security in the Arctic between the years of 1999 and 2010. Due to the involvement of the two global players China and Russia, one could argue that what has caused this change in threat perception might be a change of polarity in the region, happening when China and Russia increase their power. Recalling from the theory, a change in polarity means that there has been an internal transformation in the region. So, from this we can draw the conclusion that an internal transformation might have happened to the Arctic RSC.

With the global powers of China and Russia having stronger military capabilities than before, thanks to the internal transformation, the NATO/Arctic countries, as for example the U.S and Canada, might see a shift in who has the strongest decision-making power in the Arctic region. This can explain increased militarization made by NATO as the member-states seeking to meet and challenge this new polarity. This possible explanation for increased militarization is strengthened by the speech made in 2014 by NATO's Secretary General at the time, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. He mentions how Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, has expressed an intention to strengthen Russian military presence in the Arctic region. In addition to that, he says that it is important that NATO follows up on this closely. He mentions the Arctic Council and says that it is a good instrument, through which he hopes that the disputes can be solved, but stresses that: "(...)sometimes, a firm and determined deterrence is the best way to facilitate peaceful, diplomatic and political processes".<sup>66</sup>

Based on this speech, one can clearly identify that NATO sees at least Russia as a threat in the Arctic. In addition to that, they see it as a threat which cannot only be tackled by diplomacy. This goes well with the ideas of the Strategic Concept of 2010 of conventional threats being identified as present today. It also fuels the argument that NATO's changed threat perception is related to the Arctic and that it is happening due to an internal transformation with a change in polarity in the region. This, as Anders Fogh Rasmussen seems concerned about Russia further increasing strength in relation to Arctic, which could destabilize the polarity even more.

---

<sup>65</sup> NATO "The Alliance's Strategic Concept (1999) in *Towards the new Strategic Concept- A selection of background documents* p.36

<sup>66</sup> NATO "America, Europe and the Pacific"

## 5.2 Referent Objects

In his speech 2014, Anders Fogh Rasmussen argues for NATO's interest in the area by saying:

(...) a number of NATO Allies are bordering the Arctic region or they have territory in the Arctic region. And of course, they would expect that NATO's Article 5 applies to all NATO territories, including a NATO territory in the Arctic region. So seen from that perspective, we also have obligations to make sure that the Arctic region remains a region of peace and stability.<sup>67</sup>

It seems from this that NATO takes on a role as what is described in the RSCT as a securitisation actor, claiming the need of protection of its referent objects. However, there are some difficulties in identifying exactly what is the referent object here. Is it the member-state? Or is it the Arctic region? By recalling from the theory, one can remember that for something to be classified as a referent object it has to be claimed to have a right to survive. Looking at the quote, it seems as if it is the peacefulness of the Arctic region that has a right to survive, not the member-states. But, that the right of the region to survive is motivated by the fact that it borders several member-states of NATO.

So, if the referent object for NATO around the year 2014 is the region of Arctic, it is interesting to further investigate if the securitisation in the Arctic by NATO in 1999 and 2010 looked the same. To see if there have been any shifts in what NATO chooses to securitize and, in that case, investigate if the shift happened due to an internal or external transformation of the region. Furthermore, to see if this possible shift can explain NATO's increased military capabilities in the Arctic region.

And, one can see that, although environmental challenges and climate change related security issues are mentioned briefly at three places in the Strategic Concept of 1999,<sup>68</sup> it is not given the same type of attention as in the Strategic Concept of 2010. When describing the current security environment in the 2010 Strategic Concept, NATO dedicates a full paragraph to environmental- and resource constraints, such as climate change, writing:

(...) Key environmental and resource constraints, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs will further shape the future security environment in areas of concern to NATO (...)<sup>69</sup>

As already outlined here in the paper, the Arctic is said by the secretary general of NATO to be an area of concern for the alliance due to the fact that 5 NATO member-states are bordering the Arctic region. Furthermore, the Arctic is in this

---

<sup>67</sup> NATO "America, Europe and the Pacific"

<sup>68</sup> NATO "The Alliance's Strategic Concept (1999)" in *Towards the new Strategic Concept- A selection of background documents* pp.25, 37, 52

<sup>69</sup> NATO "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" p.13

thesis assumed to be an area where the security environment is shaped by climate change, as temperatures there have been increasing more than double the speed of the rest of the world temperatures rising, according to IPCC.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, it seems that in this part of 2010's Strategic Concept, NATO is, just like in 2014, acting as a securitising actor towards the Arctic region. This identification is based on how they write that climate change will affect "areas of concern for NATO" instead of writing that it will affect each member-state. It seems that the region is what needs protection, but it needs protection due to the fact that it contains the member-states and therefore affects NATO. Is this different from what threats and referent objects NATO identified in 1999?

In the Strategic Concept of 1999, apart from putting a large amount of attention on nuclear weapons and the spreading of new warfare technology, NATO is detecting a threat in the way domestic conflicts in unstable Euro-Atlantic countries might spill over into NATO member-states. This is a threat that is not given as much attention in 2010, where it is put in a small paragraph as to explain the emergence of threats such as terrorism, trafficking and extremism by the quote:

Instability or conflict beyond NATO borders can directly threaten Alliance security, including by fostering extremism, terrorism, and trans-national illegal activities such as trafficking in arms, narcotics and people<sup>71</sup>

In the paragraph devoted to this issue in 1999, NATO instead says:

(...) Some countries in and around the Euro-Atlantic area face serious economic, social and political difficulties. (...). The resulting tensions could lead to crises affecting Euro-Atlantic stability, to human suffering, and to armed conflicts. Such conflicts could affect the security of the Alliance by spilling over into neighbouring countries, including NATO countries (...)<sup>72</sup>

Looking at this, the referent object in 1999 seems to be the NATO member state, whereas in 2010 it is more unclear, as NATO says "Alliance security" rather than "country" as they do in 1999.

In 1999, the member-state's security is constructed, by NATO, to have a need of protection from domestic instability of other undefined countries. This, because the domestic instability might spill-over directly onto the member-states, not passively through the creation of terrorism etc. as described in the strategic concept of 2010. The member state's right to survival is motivated by the fact that the conflicts, if reaching member states, can affect the security of the Alliance. How does this possibly explain increased militarisation in the Arctic region?

---

<sup>70</sup> Meredith et al. "Polar Regions" in Pörtner et al. *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* p.205

<sup>71</sup> NATO "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" p.11

<sup>72</sup> NATO "The Alliance's Strategic Concept (1999)" in *Towards the new Strategic Concept- A selection of background documents* p.36

Remembering the three tools for analysis which are used in this paper, one could argue that in 1999, the fitting analytical framework would have been to investigate the domestic stability of states in the region as well as state-to-state relations. This, as it seems that in that time, NATO's threat perception was much depending on the domestic stability of neighbouring states, possibly in the Arctic region, and however they could keep their conflicts away from NATO member-states. Today, as there has been a shift in NATO's threat perception, one might instead investigate the role of great powers in the region to understand the increased militarization: For NATO, the security threats towards the Arctic region, that comes with climate change, might be the increased interest of global Great Powers in the Arctic Region, as the economic importance of the region increases. As shown earlier in the paper, the fear might be of increased influence in the Arctic of China or Russia, as well as from the European Union.

This, again, leads us back to the idea of Polarity and internal transformations. It seems that for NATO, the polarity of the Arctic has changed from 1999 to 2010, as several Great Powers are engaging in the region, creating a new security environment. Maybe the changed polarity is additional proof that an internal transformation has occurred in the Arctic, just as described earlier in this chapter. NATO is acting in 2010 as securitising actors towards the Arctic region, instead of, as in 1999, towards the member states. Again, the militarization might then just be an effort to meet and challenge this new perceived polarity which they see as a security threat to their referent object.

However, an alternative explanation would be that the militarization is connected to globalisation and uncertainty regarding what it is that global common threats might bring to the international arena. As NATO changes its referent object from the member-state to a vulnerable region, it seems that they are changing their idea of security, from purely state-centric to more global. Maybe the militarization is a response to a fear of not knowing what is going to happen in the future due to the emergence of globally shared issues such as climate change.

### 5.3 Shipping Routes

Something worth noting in the difference between the Strategic Concept of 2010 and the one of 1999 is that in the outlining of the Security environment of the 2010 Strategic Concept, one full paragraph is dedicated to the question regarding transportation security. NATO describes it as such:

All countries are increasingly reliant on the vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend. They require greater international efforts to ensure their resilience against attack or disruption. (...) As a

larger share of world consumption is transported across the globe, energy supplies are increasingly exposed to disruption.<sup>73</sup>

As described in this paper, the possible new shipping routes in the Arctic, evolving due to climate change, are of large economic importance and is part of why the interest in the Arctic region are growing. It is not presumptuous to assume that NATO had this in mind when writing this paragraph of the Strategic Concept of 2010.

In the strategic Concept of 1999 this subject is mentioned. However, as with many other subjects already discussed in this paper, what differs between the two strategic concepts is that in one year, in this case 2010, it is dedicated a full paragraph, while in 1999 it is solely mentioned in various places, often lumped together with other issues such as terrorism, through quotes such as:

Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organised crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources<sup>74</sup>

How can the RSCT be used to analyse this situation and how can it explain increased militarization in the Arctic? It seems that again, the change that has happened between 1999 and 2010 is that NATO has made themselves into a securitising actor, this time with the referent object of shipping routes, whose protection they can use to motivate the use of extraordinary means, that is, increased militarization. Communication and transit routes need protection; however, the question is, against what or who? It seems likely that NATO has constructed some new idea of security, maybe based on a new idea of enmity. It must be that NATO sees some actor in the Arctic as more threatening towards the shipping routes now than before, otherwise this need for protection wouldn't exist. Again, changing enmities in the region is connected to internal transformations of the region. So, what one can take from this is further proof that an internal transformation has occurred in the Arctic region.

## 5.4 Conquest of Land

The newly opened shipping routes and NATO's concern about these awakens further possible questions and applications of the RSCT on the Arctic area. This, with regard to the places that before were almost unreachable because of the sea ice, that now, just like the shipping routes, are appearing and therefore getting attractive. It was not until 2001 that Russia made their first claim of an EEZ in the

---

<sup>73</sup> NATO "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" p.12

<sup>74</sup> NATO "The Alliance's Strategic Concept (1999)" in *Towards the new Strategic Concept- A selection of background documents* p.37

Arctic with the help of UNCLOS<sup>75</sup> and it was not until 2019 that a NATO-country like Canada did the same.<sup>76</sup>The question is, as these claims keep getting solved, or at least discussed, and countries keep expanding their boundaries, is this to be considered an external transformation of the Arctic RSC? With other words, is it an expansion of boundaries? Or is it actually the opposite- an internal transformation, due to the conquest of land which is happening when a country gets permission to the land that it claimed?

If we assume the expansion of boundaries in the Arctic region, made with the help of UNCLOS, to be an internal transformation of the Arctic RSC, this might help explain increased militarization. Because, regardless if one is looking at the strategic concept of 1999 or 2010, NATO's primary purpose over time remains the same. Its strategic concepts are all based on the same core articles written in 1949. One of these articles being Article 4, which says that "The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial "integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened."<sup>77</sup>

If an internal transformation occurs in the Arctic, caused by the conquest of land, with several disputes and overlapping claims happening regarding the ownership of the land, this might threaten the NATO member state's territorial integrity. This, because a NATO member state might claim the same land as a non-member state. Hence, in this case, there has been no change in the strategic concept from 1999 to 2010, but rather a change in the RSC, and internal transformation, calling for the application of article 4 for and an increased militarization from NATO as a response to the threatened territorial integrity.

## 5.6 Critical Reflection

As already dealt with in the method section of this paper, the greatest weakness of the analysis is the amount of assumptions that it contains. Because of the nature of the strategic concepts, the very general way in which NATO is expressing themselves, it is difficult to say anything of relevance without making assumptions and interpretations. Such an assumption is made when this paper identifies the fear of conventional threats to partly be connected to the fear of conventional threats in the Arctic. One could argue that NATO's idea of increasing conventional threats is not connected to nor China or Russia and the Arctic, but rather other countries

---

<sup>75</sup> UN "Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS)  
Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines:  
Submissions to the Commission: Submission by the Russian Federation"

<sup>76</sup> UN "Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS)  
Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines:  
Submissions to the Commission: Partial Submission by Canada"

<sup>77</sup> NATO "The North Atlantic Treaty (1949)" in *Towards the new Strategic Concept- A selection of background Documents* p.3

possessing a large number of ballistic missiles such as Iran and North Korea. However, from the material, this is impossible to know for sure, and it is therefore necessary for scholars to dare to construct their own ideas and analysis around it.

Another possible weakness of this paper is the fact that the unit being analysed is an Alliance, and the possible intentions of each member-state of this Alliance not being thoroughly investigated. As the theory rests on the idea of constructed security, it would naturally be very good for the analysis to contain some reflection on how each member states sees the security in the Arctic and what possible impact that has on the policies of NATO. Furthermore, as the role of global powers in the RSCT is always very emphasised, it would be interesting to investigate how much of NATO policy is just a reflection of U.S or EU policy. This is something that would be of great interest in future research.

Something interesting that is worth noting is that the academic literature mentioned in this thesis puts a lot of focus on China as an important actor and possible driver of militarization. However, this thesis has barely managed to make any references to Chinese involvement in the Arctic through the reading of the Strategic Concepts. Maybe, to understand the involvement of China in the Arctic, it would have been more relevant to read official papers from China, or from a country such as the U.S. Therefore, this is something that future researchers hopefully will do.



## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to use the RSCT and to analyse the evolution of NATO's threat perceptions in the Arctic, to find possible explanations for the increased militarization in the region. This was motivated by how past research has put forward that there is an odd contradiction in how the Arctic is being militarized at the same time as there seems to be no need for this. As presented with the help of past research, a majority of the Arctic states have in the past years had an increased militarization in relation to the region. Furthermore, NATO has increased its military capabilities in relation to the Arctic. To find explanations for this contradiction, this paper investigated NATO's threat perceptions of the Arctic by reading Strategic Concepts of NATO from both year 1999 and 2010. These were complemented with a speech of the former Secretary General of NATO in which the Arctic is mentioned, as well as with some relevant statistics.

By studying the Arctic as a RSC, this paper has found that one of the reasons for increased militarization in the Arctic might be that there has been an internal transformation in the Arctic RSC: The polarity in the region has changed at the same time as new conquests of land has been made. This internal transformation has been identified as triggering a militarization of NATO towards the Arctic, as they seek to meet and challenge these changes that they construct as security threats. It is possible to imagine that this result can be generalised and applied on other Arctic actors as well, such as Russia, Sweden and Finland, to in the same way explain their increased militarization.

Another possible explanation for increased NATO militarization in the Arctic has been found to be the change in ideas regarding what referent objects NATO has in relation to the Arctic and what motivates that they need protection. From being about dangers of spill-over effects from nearby, domestically unstable countries towards member-states, to being danger of climate change related security issues towards the Arctic region and the need for protection of shipping routes. It seems that between 1999 and 2010, NATO's construction of security has moved, from being very state-centric to being more focused on regions, shipping routes and "The alliance" as such. This realization goes well together with the explanation from IPCC that the Arctic Council is failing in its meddling in Arctic diplomacy due to its state-centrism. Maybe they are right, and the Arctic Council is failing due to state-centrism, because the states that are part of the council are actually moving toward a more regional or global way of thinking about security, as the member-states of NATO seems to do. Militarization in the region can then be explained as a consequence of regional organizations such as the Arctic Council not adapting to the more transnational world of today, leaving its participants in a situation where they themselves have to meet this new transnational world. Lacking other means of

diplomacy, the countries then rely on increased militarization for the insurance of safety and protection of their referent objects.

To sum up, by studying the evolution of NATO's construction of security in relation to the Arctic, this paper has found the explanations for the Alliance's increased militarization in the region to be a reaction to an internal transformation in the region, as well as to a change in what referent objects NATO chooses to construct there. Most likely, these results can be generalised and used to explain militarization from other Arctic units as well, as NATO in the end reflects the fears, wills and ambitions of its member-states.

## 6.1 Encouragements

Climate change has a huge impact on the world today and will continuously shape the security environment of regions such as the Arctic. The emerging security issues of the Arctic calls for even deeper international cooperation and for common solutions to shared problems. With regards to the urgency and contemporary relevance of the issue, it is important for future studies to continue on the same path as this one, to further understand what is causing militarization in the region and what could instead encourage peaceful solutions. An important task would be to analyse the next of NATO's Strategic Concepts to come, as the importance of the Arctic region will most likely not decrease in the eyes of NATO or any other strategic actor on the international arena any time soon. As already mentioned, another important task would be to investigate the roles of every member-state of NATO through the lens of the RSCT, to further understand the militarization with the help of an adequate theoretical framework. Lastly, as also previously mentioned, to find a way analyse the role of China in the region and how they affect the stability of its polarity.

## List of References

Atland K. *Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic*. *Cooperation and Conflict*. 2008;43(3):289-311. doi:10.1177/0010836708092838

Arctic Council, *Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council*, 19 Sep 1996, Available at [https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/85/EDOCS-1752-v2-ACMMCA00\\_Ottawa\\_1996\\_Founding\\_Declaration.PDF?sequence=5&isAllowed=y](https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/85/EDOCS-1752-v2-ACMMCA00_Ottawa_1996_Founding_Declaration.PDF?sequence=5&isAllowed=y) (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

de Buitrago, S. R. 'Risk Representations and Confrontational Actions in the Arctic', *Journal of Strategic Security*, 12(3), 2019

Buzan, B. and Wæver, O. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=221064> (Accessed: 10 December 2020).

Centre for International Law, *Ilulissat Declaration*, 28 May 2008. Available at <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2008-Ilulissat-Declaration-1.pdf> (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

Comission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, *Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Comission: Partial submission by Canada*, Updated on 07 May 2020, Available at: [https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs\\_new/submissions\\_files/submission\\_can1\\_84\\_2019.html](https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_can1_84_2019.html) (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

Comission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, *Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Comission: Submission by the Russian Federation*, Updated on 30 Jun 2009, Available at: [https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs\\_new/submissions\\_files/submission\\_rus.htm](https://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_rus.htm) (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations *Overview - Convention & Related Agreements*. Nov 2020 Available

at: [https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/convention\\_overview\\_convention.htm](https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm) (Accessed: 10 December 2020)

Freeman, C. *The European Security Complex - Fait Accompli? a critique of the copenhagen school*. out./dez. 2001

Golts, Alexandr.' THE ARCTIC: A CLASH OF INTERESTS OR CLASH OF AMBITIONS. Edited by Stephen J. Blank, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2011, pp. 43–62, RUSSIA IN THE ARCTIC, [www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12068.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12068.6). (Accessed 29 Dec. 2020)

Hoogensen Gjørsv, G., Lanteigne, M. and Sam-Aggrey, H. (eds) *Routledge handbook of Arctic security*. London; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

Hough, P. *International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in from the Cold*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=1211711> (Accessed: 10 December 2020).

IBRU, *Maritime jurisdiction and boundaries in the arctic region*, International Boundaries Research Unit, Durham University, 2012. Available at: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic/> (Accessed: 18 December 2020)

IPCC *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, M. Tignor, E. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Nicolai, A. Okem, J. Petzold, B. Rama, N.M. Weyer (eds.)]. In press.

Klimenko, E. *The geopolitics of a changing Arctic*, SIPRI Background paper, 2019. Available at <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2019/sipri-background-papers/geopolitics-changing-arctic> (Accessed 29 December 2020)

Lanteigne, M. *The Role of China in Emerging Arctic Security Discourses*, *Sicherheit & Frieden*, 33(3), 2015, doi: 10.5771/0175-274X-2015-3-30.

Leal Filho W., Musa H., Cavan G., O'Hare P., Seixas J. (eds) *Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience and Hazards. Climate Change Management*. Springer, Cham. 2016. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39880-8\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39880-8_5)

McDonald, M. *Securitization and the Construction of Security*. European Journal of International Relations, [S.L.], v. 14, n. 4, dec. 2008. SAGE Publications. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1354066108097553>.

NATO, *America, Europe and the Pacific*, Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Marines' Memorial Club Hotel in San Francisco, NATO. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_111659.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_111659.htm) (Accessed: 10 December 2020).

NATO, *Exercise Trident Juncture, 2018*, NATO. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/157833.htm> (Accessed: 10 December 2020).

NATO, *Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 19 Nov 2010, Available at [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_publications/20120214\\_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf) (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

NATO, *Strategic Concept*, Updated in 24 Sep 2020, Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_56626.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm) (Accessed 29 Dec 2020)

NATO, *Towards the New Strategic Concept- A Selection of Background Documents*, 2010, Available at [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_publications/20120412\\_Towards\\_the\\_new\\_strategic\\_concept-eng.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120412_Towards_the_new_strategic_concept-eng.pdf) (Accessed 28 Dec 2020)

Sperling, J., *Handbook of Governance and Security*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014

Wezeman. *S.T Military capabilities in the Arctic: A new cold war in the high north?* Solna, SIPRI Background Paper, Oct 2016. Available at: <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2016/sipri-background-papers/military-capabilities-arctic> (Accessed: 29 December 2020)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1:



### Maritime jurisdiction and boundaries in the Arctic region

