

***ONE REGION, MULTIPLE REPRESENTATIONS***  
*HOW DISCURSIVE PRACTICES IN ARCTIC POLICY DOCUMENTS LEAD TO  
DIFFERENT ARCTIC POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND INFLUENCE THE  
POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE AREA*

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

Recently, the Arctic has received much attention. Global warming creates new opportunities in the area but also reveals the Arctic's vulnerability. Scientists call attention to the decreasing amount of ice in the area. They are worried about the apparently irreversible effects of global warming. Due to expected economic activities the Arctic has become the subject of several territorial disputes. In 2007, Russia made a bold move to claim the North Pole as part of its territory. On July 28 of that year, a special envoy of the Russian President for International Cooperation in Polar Regions, Artur Chilingarov, planted a flag on the sea floor at the North Pole to mark this as Russian territory. The action evoked strong reactions from the other Arctic states. They stated that they did not acknowledge Russia's claim on the North Pole. The incident received huge media attention and had a severe impact on the Arctic discourse. People started to worry about 'a race for the Arctic', and the region attracted significant political and economic interests.<sup>1</sup>

The debate about a possible conflict in the Arctic led some nations to formulate new Arctic strategies and Canada and Russia increased their military infrastructure and presence in the area. The European Union (EU) also worried about the security implications of a race for the Arctic and began to develop an Arctic policy.<sup>2</sup> In March 2008 the High Representative and the European Commission issued a joint paper on climate change and international security in which they also discussed the Arctic. They stated that there is 'an increasing need to address the growing debate over territorial claims and access to new trade routes by different countries which challenge Europe's ability to effectively secure its trade and resource interest in the region and may put pressure on its relations with key partners.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louwrens Hacquebord, 'The history of Exploration and Exploitation of the Atlantic Arctic and its Geopolitical Consequences', *Lashipa; History of large scale resource*

<sup>2</sup> Njord Wegge, 'The political order in the Arctic: power structures, regimes and influence', *Polar Record* 47 (2011) 165-176, 166; Kristine Offerdal, 'The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence', *International Journal* (2011) 861-877, 867.

<sup>3</sup> EU Commission and the High Representative of the EU, 'Climate Change and International Security', *S113/08* (2008), 8.

The Union seeks to protect its own interest in the Arctic and therefore wants to influence Arctic politics. The EU wants to be seen as a legitimate actor in the area and wants to step up its engagement with its Arctic partners to jointly meet the challenges of safeguarding the environment while ensuring sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> But the past few years have shown that it is difficult for the EU to exert its influence in the area. Europe's effort to receive the status of permanent observer in the Arctic Council is a striking example. Even though the EU has submitted its application in 2009, Europe still has not received this status.<sup>5</sup> The often-heard explanation for the fact that the EU has little influence in the Arctic is the lack of an Arctic coast. Three European Union members, Denmark, Sweden and Finland are Arctic members but they do not have an Arctic coastline.<sup>6</sup> This makes the position of Europe weak in a system that is ruled by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The developments in the Arctic political system have led to increased attention from scholars. They explain the political situation and Europe's position in the Arctic from different perspectives. Njord Wegge argues in his article that we should treat the Arctic region as a system in its own right based on the region's unique characteristics of being osculated by a polar ocean and having its own intergovernmental cooperation. He sees the position of the EU in the Arctic as a striking and illustrative example of the fact that the Arctic is a unique system in the world order. The fact that the EU has an important global position as a key actor within International Relations, but that it does not hold this position in the Arctic today, shows that the qualities and attributes of the global system are not necessarily directly transferable to the Arctic.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> EU Commission and the High Representative of the EU, 'Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps', *JOIN/2012/19final* (2012).

<sup>5</sup> Timo Koivurova, Kai Kokko, Sebastien Duyck, Nikolas Sellheim and Adam Stepien, 'The present and future competence of the European Union in the Arctic', *Polar Record* 48 (2012) 361-376, 361.

<sup>6</sup> Denmark is an Arctic state due to the fact that Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark and therefore has an Arctic coast. After Denmark became member of the European Community (EC) in 1973, Greenland automatically also became part of the Community. But in 1982 a majority of Greenlanders voted in a referendum to leave the Community. They saw EC membership as a threat to their traditional lifestyle and economy and formally left the Community in 1985. That is the reason why, even though Denmark is a European member state, the EU is not an Arctic coastal state. See: Njord Wegge, 'The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making', *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* 3 (2012) 6-29, 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Wegge, 'The political order in the Arctic', 165-166.

Koivurora et al. argue in their article that the political and legal role of the Union is seriously misunderstood in the region. They claim that examining the legal competences which the EU already has for taking action in various fields in the Arctic tells more about the importance of the EU for the Arctic than focussing on its geographical and institutional presence in the region. Through the European Economic Area Agreement, the EU can adopt legislation that will be effective in Norway, one of the Arctic coastal states, as well. Furthermore, the EU has shared competences in environmental policy and can therefore join international environmental treaties. The EU also has shared competences in the transport policy area and energy policy, which is relevant to the Arctic due to the expectations of increased shipping activity and oil and gas drillings in the Arctic Ocean. Lastly, the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy falls under the exclusive competences of the EU. This makes the EU's policy role in the Arctic very important and gives the Union instruments to influence Arctic policy.<sup>8</sup>

Pieper et al. focused their research on the actorness of the EU in the Arctic. Actorness is primarily a research tool for measuring the role of the EU on the basis of four interrelated criteria: recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion. They argue that the concept of actorness makes it possible to look beyond the absoluteness of establishing whether the EU bears similarity to one of the great powers and enables a more detailed look into the unique nature of the EU's foreign policy involvement. They have looked at three relevant Arctic issues – maritime affairs, border delimitation and environmental issues – to determine the actorness of the EU in the Arctic. They showed that Europe's actorness varies, depending on the issue discussed. With regard to maritime affairs they concluded two different things. The EU has a strong position in the dispute on the legal nature of the Northwest Passage. Canada claims the strait to be territorial waters but the EU uses its economic weight together with the United States to argue that it should be an international strait. However its influence in creating a regulatory framework for Arctic shipping is weak. The same applies to border delimitation. The drawing up of borders touches the core

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<sup>8</sup> Koivurova et al., 'The present and future competences of the European Union in the Arctic', 361-376.

of national sovereignty and the Arctic coastal states try to keep the EU out of all the discussion regarding this issue. With regard to environmental research the EU has relatively much influence, but its effort to exert indirect authority via regulatory policies have met criticism by third parties and has split the EU internally. Thus when we look at different aspects of Arctic governance the actorness of the EU varies immensely.<sup>9</sup>

These studies are conducted from the viewpoint of the European Union. Therefore, it looks as if the Arctic is a political unity. In reality, states are following a very individual strategy regarding the Arctic.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is interesting to investigate their perspective on the region. Several scholars have done so by looking at the Arctic from a discourse analytical perspective. Grindheim has done an in-depth research to the way the EU and Norway frame climate, environmental and energy issues in their strategies towards the European Arctic.<sup>11</sup> Jensen et al. have looked at the Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses on the European Arctic and wanted to investigate how the approaches towards the European Arctic are framed through foreign policy discourses in Norway and Russia.<sup>12</sup> Ingimundarson has investigated Iceland's role in the Arctic by tracing territorial discourses in Iceland's foreign policy.<sup>13</sup>

This research fits within this tradition of studying the Arctic by tracing discourses through official Arctic policy documents. However, I will take a broader scope by using documents from multiple actors. Based on the idea of region-building I want to investigate the perspective of the Arctic actors on the region as presented in their Arctic policies. The basic concept of region-building is that a region, such as the Arctic, is not something that is out there, but it is constructed by humans. Regions are what we make them to be and are created by text and speech. The most important actors in the area determine how we

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<sup>9</sup> Moritz Pieper, Markus Winter, Anika Wirtz and Hylky Dijkstra, 'The European Union as an Actor in Arctic Governance', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 16 (2011) 227-242, 227-242.

<sup>10</sup> Hacquebord, 'Back to the Future', 12.

<sup>11</sup> Astrid Grindheim, 'The Scramble for the Arctic? A Discourse Analysis of Norway and the EU's Strategies Towards the European Arctic', *FNI Report* 9 (2009) 1-51.

<sup>12</sup> Leif Christian Jensen and Pål Wilter Skedsmo, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses on the European Arctic', *Polar Research* 29 (2010) 439-450.

<sup>13</sup> Valur Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's Role in the Arctic', in: James Kraska (ed.), *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change* (Cambridge 2013) 174-190.

think about the region and how the region will develop.<sup>14</sup> So the creation of the Arctic today has consequences for its future. Since the political situation in the Arctic is still under development, it is relevant to investigate the creation and formulation of this region by the most important actors. Their perspectives on the Arctic region have consequences for the influence Europe can exert in the area.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore this study will focus on the following question: What is the dominant perspective of the Arctic states – Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and the United States – on the Arctic region as presented in their Arctic policies and how does this influence Europe's position in the area?

In my analysis, I will not discuss the policies of Finland and Sweden. Both Arctic states are part of the European Union. Their policies are to a large extent influenced by EU policies, which makes their perspectives less relevant for this study. Greenland is not part of the European Union, therefore I will discuss Denmark/Greenland's policies. I will use the official Arctic policy documents of the Arctic states. These will give me the most reliable and detailed information about the ideas and visions of the Arctic actors. It will show how they have constructed the region in their texts. In order to do so I will use discourse analysis. Discourses are important for region formation since regions are first constituted through language.<sup>16</sup>

In the first chapter I will elaborate on the analytical framework. I will discuss the way discourse analysis can be used as a method and the ideas behind discourse analysis. I shall not elaborate on the different theories within the discourse analytical tradition, this is outside the scope of this research.<sup>17</sup> I will also present the sources I use for my research. In the second chapter I will provide the context of the Arctic region. In order to place the policy documents in the right context, it is important to first establish the characteristics of the

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<sup>14</sup> Carina Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building, Development of the Arctic as an International Region', *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 42 (2007) 187-205, 188-190.

<sup>15</sup> Grindheim, 'The Scramble for the Arctic?', 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building', 188.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about different theoretical perspectives on discourse analysis see: Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (1999) 225-254; Marianne Jørgensen and Louise J. Philips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London 2002).

region we are talking about. I will discuss the international and geopolitical situation of the Arctic and explain why the region is important nowadays. In the third chapter I will discuss the analysis of the policy documents and in the conclusion I will provide an answer for the research question based on this analysis.



## **CHAPTER 1. THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1. Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is part of social constructivism, an empirical approach to the study of international relations. According to constructivists the international system is constituted by ideas, not by material forces, and only exists as an inter-subjective awareness among people. The social world is only meaningful and understandable to people who made it and live in it. Their concept goes against International Relations theories which focus on the distribution of material power, such as military forces and economic capabilities. They argue that the most important aspect of international relations is social, not material, and that this social reality is not objective or external. Therefore, the study of international relations must focus on the ideas and beliefs that inform the actors on the international scene as well as the shared understandings between them.<sup>18</sup>

According to the constructivist philosophy there is no objective truth in the world. It is a world of human consciousness, of thoughts and beliefs, ideas and concepts, language and discourses, of signs, signals and understandings among human beings, and it is only accessible through categories and representations. This is where discourse analysis comes into play. Discourse analysis is a way of studying the social construction of an area. The starting point of discourse analysis is the claim that our access to reality is always through language. Language is not only a channel through which information is communicated, it also plays an active role in creating and changing our constructed reality. It is through our expressions that social relations and identities are communicated, and this does not happen in a neutral way.<sup>19</sup>

Discourse analysis has its roots in the ideas of Michel Foucault. He defined a discourse as follows: 'We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation [...Discourse] is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations. Theories and approaches* (Oxford 2007), 162, 168.

<sup>19</sup> Jørgensen et al., *Discourse analysis as theory and method*, 4-9; Grindheim, 'The Scramble for the Arctic?', 4-8.

defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form [...] it is, from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality.’<sup>20</sup> According to the Foucauldian theory, truth is a discursive construction and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false. The world we live in is structured by knowledge. Certain people or social groups create and formulate ideas about the world, which can, under certain circumstances, turn into unquestionable truths. Foucault’s aim was to investigate the rules for what can and cannot be said and the rules for what is considered to be true or false. The majority of contemporary discourse analytical approaches follow his idea of discourses as relatively rule-bound sets of statements which impose limits on what gives meaning.<sup>21</sup>

A discourse is a specific way of grouping or categorizing the world. According to Neumann, representations that are put forward time and again become a set of statements and practices through which certain language becomes institutionalized and ‘normalized’ over time. A discourse is made up when people who mouth the same representations organise.<sup>22</sup> So a discourse is a set of spectacles that constrain the way we look upon, talk and treat different things. It operates as background capacities for persons to differentiate and identify things, given them taken-for-granted qualities and attributes, and relating them to other objects. The dominant discourse defines ‘the truth’. Therefore it becomes an instrument of power since it defines what is common sense about development and excludes alternative interpretations in this process. It contains what is acceptable to say in relation to certain areas or issues and directs what is considered natural and what are natural actions in a given situation. But since there is always more than one possible outcome, discourses do not determine actions completely.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London 1972), 117.

<sup>21</sup> Jørgensen et al., *Discourse analysis as theory and method*, 12-14.

<sup>22</sup> Iver B. Neumann, ‘Discourse Analysis’, in: Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (ed.), *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A pluralist guide* (London 2008) 61-77, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Grindheim, ‘The Scramble for the Arctic?’, 2-3; Jackson et al., *Introduction to International Relations*, 210; Neumann, ‘Discourse Analysis’, 62; Milliken, ‘The Study of Discourse in International Relations’, 231.

Since discourses do not exist out there in the world but are structured by human interaction, discourse analysis focuses on utterances in order to map the patterns in representations. Discourse analysis is not about sorting out which of the statements about the world in the research material are right and which are wrong, but it is about exploring patterns and identifying the social consequences of different representations of reality. It makes the social world more transparent by demonstrating how its elements interact. Often researchers focus their study on texts, but any sign may be analysed as texts. One method that is suitable for studying these utterances in texts is predicate analysis. Predicate analysis focuses on the language practices of predication, the verbs, adverbs and adjectives that attach to nouns. The language practices of these predications construct the discourse as a subject with specific features and capacities.<sup>24</sup>

Discourse analysis cannot be based on only one text because a single text cannot be claimed to support empirically arguments. But since the quantity of texts is enormous, it is crucial to draw some lines. By choosing the sources to use for the research, problems with delimitation are inevitable. The choices made concerning these sources must always be justified and defended. Some texts have more authority than other sources and will show up as crossroads or anchor points. These are called canonical texts or monuments. The importance of the documents depends on the authority of the author, the genre and the availability of the text. Political documents, such as white papers, policies or strategies, are considered to be monuments and these are the sources I will use for my research.<sup>25</sup>

## **1.2. The Sources**

In my research I will use the Arctic policy strategies of the Arctic countries, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and the United States. Some countries have updated their policies in recent years and I will use the

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<sup>24</sup> Neumann 'Discourse Analysis', 62-63; Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations', 231-233; Jørgensen et al., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, 21; Senem Aydin-Düzgit, 'Critical discourse analysis in analysing European Union foreign policy: Prospects and challenges', *Cooperation and Conflict* 49 (2014) 354-367, 356-357.

<sup>25</sup> Neumann, 'Discourse Analysis', 66-67; Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations', 233-234; Grindheim, 'The Scramble for the Arctic?', 3.

most recent version of the policy documents. These documents will give me the most up-to-date information about how the Arctic states think about the region at this moment. The materials I use are not enough to do an in-depth research to the Arctic discourses of the different countries. I will need more policy documents and other written or spoken statements about the Arctic in order to unravel these discourses. But these documents are monuments and give a general idea about how the different countries see this region and how they think the Arctic should be developed in the future. The materials I use are available online and everybody can consult them. Furthermore, the policy strategies are written by politicians. They are a group within the society who have considerable power to establish a discourse or set the agenda. Politicians are in a unique position to establish their perceptions within a discourse through public debate. So by analysing policy documents, I can get access to the viewpoints of these actors.<sup>26</sup>

The Arctic strategy of Canada is called *Canada's Northern Strategy. Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future*. Within the document the text is translated in three languages; English, French and Inuktitut. The document was published in 2009 under the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. It provides an overview of the integrated Northern Strategy of the Canadian government and elaborates on their vision and strategy for their activities in the Arctic. Furthermore, Canada has also published in 2010 the *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad*. This statement sets out how Canada will achieve the goals presented in its *Northern Strategy* by means of its foreign policy. Whereas the first document is mainly focused on domestic and internal policies, the latter is focused on its external foreign policy.<sup>27</sup>

In 2009 the Bush government published the *2009 National Security Presidential Directive 66 – Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25*. This directive establishes the policy of the United States with regard to the Arctic

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<sup>26</sup> Grindheim, 'The Scramble for the Arctic?', 3-6.

<sup>27</sup> The Government of Canada, *Canada's Northern Strategy. Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future* (Ottawa 2009); The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy. Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad* (2010).

region and directs related implementation actions. The *National Strategy for the Arctic region*, published in 2013, sets forth the government's strategic priorities for the Arctic region. It implements the 2009 Arctic policy and guides, prioritizes and synchronizes the efforts of the US government in the Arctic. Furthermore, the US Department of Defense has, in November 2013, published its *Arctic Strategy*. This policy paper outlines how the Department of Defense will support the implementation and realization of the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, and shows the priorities of the Arctic strategy of the USA.<sup>28</sup>

The Russian Arctic policy, *The foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic until 2020 and beyond* (in Russian: *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalneishuiu perspektivu*) was adopted in 2008 by the President of the Russian Federation, President Medvedev. In 2013, President Putin came with a development strategy for the Arctic zone, *The Russian Strategy of the Development of the Arctic Zone and the Provision of National Security until 2020* (in Russian: *Strategiya Razvitiya Arkticheskoi Zony Rossiyskoi Federatsii Obespecheniya Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti na Period do 2020 Goda*). The second document is more elaborate than the first and defines basic mechanisms, ways and means to achieve the strategic goals and priorities set out in the policy document of 2008.<sup>29</sup> Both documents only have been officially published in their native language and since I cannot read Russian, I have to work with a translation of these documents. This is not as reliable as the real policies and I will therefore need secondary literature that makes use of the original policy document to support my research.

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<sup>28</sup> The White House President George W. Bush, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD – 66 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD – 25* (Washington 2009); The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington 2013); Department of Defense of the United States of America, *Arctic Strategy* (Washington 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Philip Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiyskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalneishuiu perspektivu*, 01 December 2010, available at [http://icr.arcticportal.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1791%253](http://icr.arcticportal.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1791%253); Author unknown, 'The development strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation', translation of *Strategiya Razvitiya Arkticheskoi Zony Rossiyskoi Federatsii Obespecheniya Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti na Period do 2020 Goda*, 14 April 2013, available at <http://www.iecca.ru/en/legislation/strategies/item/99-the-development-strategy-of-the-arctic-zone-of-the-russian-federation>.

Norway was the first Arctic actor who developed a policy for the area. In 2006 the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*. Three years later, in 2009, the Norwegian government presented a second document called *New Building Blocks in the North. The next step in the Government's High North Strategy*. This document is a completion of the High North Strategy and presents a series of strategic priority areas that will serve as new building blocks in the policy. Together they make up Norwegians High North policy. Both documents have also been published in English. Furthermore, in 2014 the Norwegian government published a report on their Arctic policy called *Nordkloden*. They have made an English version of this report, called *Norway's Arctic Policy. Creating value, managing resources, confronting climate change and fostering knowledge. Developments in the Arctic concern us all*, but this report is an extract and updated version of the Norwegian report. The report mainly consists of facts about the Arctic region and action points that have been taken by the government.<sup>30</sup>

The Danish strategy is called *Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands: Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020* and is published in 2011. The Kingdom of Denmark consists of three countries, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Both the Faroe Islands and Greenland have extensive self-government and home rule and Greenland is the only country in the Kingdom that has an Arctic coast. In this document, the three governments have set out the most important opportunities and challenges for the Arctic region. The policy was also published in English.<sup>31</sup>

Iceland, together with Sweden and Finland, does not possess a coastline in the Arctic Ocean. But it is part of the Arctic Council and therefore has the status of Arctic state. Iceland has published *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*. This policy paper was approved in 2011 and sums up

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<sup>30</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy* (Oslo 2006); Ibidem, *New Building Blocks in the North. The next Step in the Government's High North Strategy* (Oslo 2009); Ibidem, *Norway's Arctic Policy. Creating value, managing resources, confronting climate change and fostering knowledge. Developments in the Arctic concern us all* (Oslo 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020* (Copenhagen 2011).

Iceland's principles that encompass their Arctic policy. The policy is available in English.<sup>32</sup>

The policy documents of the Arctic states all have been developed and published in different years. The changing situation in the Arctic and the increased international attention for the area have been the incentive for most of the countries to formulate an Arctic policy. Especially the flag-planting incident of Russia has placed the region on the agenda of politicians and many states felt the need to create their own policies after this action. From the titles of the documents we can see that several countries use different formulations to describe the Arctic. Most countries talk about an Arctic policy, but Norway has called the Arctic in its strategy the High North and Canada talks about its Northern Strategy. Even though they use different terms to describe the region, all countries talk about the same geographical area.

The policy documents differ in length and the amount of information within these documents. Norway has very elaborate policy documents which consists of more than seventy pages. Canada and Denmark's documents have between fifty and sixty pages. Iceland, the United States and Russia have the shortest policy documents, all with less than twenty pages. This has consequences for the quality of my analysis. Analysing the perspective of a country that has more policy documents or a rather extensive policy will give a more elaborate and reliable result than countries that have just one policy document or a rather short one. I have to keep this in mind when doing my research and I will therefore support my findings with secondary literature.

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<sup>32</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy* (2011).

## ***CHAPTER 2. THE CONTEXT***

Resources in the Arctic have been exploited for centuries. In the sixteenth century explorers first undertook expeditions to this icy area. They were searching for a new trade route to Asia. They slowly mapped and named the area and claimed the place by planting their flags. In the seventeenth century companies started to undertake economic activities in the Arctic. They hunted whales for oil and other mammals for furs and ivory. In the nineteenth and twentieth century companies started to mine coal on Spitsbergen. After the Industrial Revolution there was an enormous demand for coal in Europe and prices for coal on the world market were high enough to finance mining activities in the Arctic. Nowadays the activities are focused on oil and gas drilling and new shipping lanes. The area is rapidly changing and this creates new possibilities.<sup>33</sup>

In this chapter I will first discuss the region we are talking about and the political and legal framework of the Arctic. I will show how this region has been created and I will discuss the Arctic Council, the most important inter-governmental organisation in the Arctic, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the legal framework. Then I will show why this region has become so important by discussing the changes in the area and its consequences. Lastly I will discuss the European Union Arctic policy and Europe's interest in the area.

### ***2.1. The Arctic Region***

#### **Creating a new region**

The Arctic area can be defined in several ways, by a minimum temperature boundary, by the tree line or by latitudes. Today, the Arctic region is defined as the area above 60° northern latitude in North America, Iceland and eastern Russia, and above the Arctic Circle (66°) in Norway, Sweden, Finland and northwest Russia. The 60° northern latitude delineation was developed by

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<sup>33</sup> Hacquebord, 'The History of Exploration and Exploitation', 2-5.



Canada, which used this line to make a division between the northern and southern provinces, whereby the southern provinces of Canada have more extensive decision-making rights.

The idea of using the 60° parallel originated from the Antarctic Treaty. This Treaty, created in 1959, defined the Antarctic as the area below 60° south latitude. The 60° delineation has later been applied by Canada in Arctic cooperation internationally. In Europe, using the 60° latitude would mean that Sweden down to Stockholm and almost all of Finland and Norway would be included in the Arctic area. Since these areas are much warmer, they have chosen to use the Arctic Circle as delineation of the Arctic in Europe. The Arctic Circle, at 66° north, serves only to define the area where the disc of the sun does not rise above the horizon for at least one day in mid-winter.<sup>34</sup>

While the 60° latitude works fine for the Antarctic, in the Arctic this is much less straightforward. There are great differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic. The Antarctic is a continent surrounded by oceans, while the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by continents. While several indigenous people live in the Arctic area, the Antarctic is uninhabited. Furthermore, the Antarctic is governed by the Antarctic Treaty, making it an area for scientific research with a ban on military activity.<sup>35</sup> For the Arctic there is no equivalent to the Antarctic Treaty to govern the region.<sup>36</sup> So while the Antarctic really is a separate area in the world, the Arctic is a region created by men. The delineation of the area is more historical and mythical than based on regional characteristics.<sup>37</sup>

## **UNCLOS**

Since the Arctic is a maritime area, UNCLOS provides the main legal basis.<sup>38</sup> The Convention, created in 1982 after a nine-year long Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, provides the Arctic with a highly complex and sophisticated legal regime, covering all segments of the ocean space and specifying rules on a wide

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<sup>34</sup> Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building', 190-193.

<sup>35</sup> Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 174-176.

<sup>36</sup> Louwrens Hacquebord, *Wildernis, woongebied en wingewest. Een geschiedenis van de poolgebieden* (Amsterdam 2015), 236.

<sup>37</sup> Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building', 201.

<sup>38</sup> Wegge, 'The political order in the Arctic', 168.

range of uses. It provides rules on the delineation of national territory and it established a commission, the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (hereafter: UN Commission), which makes recommendations about the limits of the continental shelf. All of the Arctic states have ratified UNCLOS, except the USA. Both American policy documents urge the American Congress to ratify the Convention, but until now this has not happened yet.<sup>39</sup>

UNCLOS distinguishes several different zones. A coastal state has full sovereignty over its internal waters. These are the waters on the landward side of the baseline, a boundary normally determined by the low-water line along the coast. In this area a state has the same monopoly on regulation and enforcement of all activities as they do on land. Extending from the baseline twelve nautical miles outward is the territorial zone of a country. Within this zone, the state has the right to regulate and use the natural resources. Foreign nations have the right of 'innocent passage' in the territorial zone, a right they do not have in internal waters. This means that foreign vessels can sail through a country's territorial zone if they do not pose a threat to the peace, good order or security of the coastal state.<sup>40</sup>

Through a country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf limit, the jurisdiction of a nation extends even further. The EEZ extends 200 nautical miles from the baseline. A nation has exclusive rights to fish, conduct scientific research, drill for hydrocarbon resources, or carry out other activities for economic gain. Furthermore, the nation is empowered with the jurisdiction to enact and enforce laws protecting the marine ecosystem. But the EEZ is not a national space since coastal states do not have full sovereignty. Navigation, due to its global nature, remains a high-seas freedom within the EEZ of a country.<sup>41</sup> Article 234 of UNCLOS provides an exception to this rule. This article gives a country the right to adopt and enforce non-discriminatory laws and regulations

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<sup>39</sup> Olav Schram Stokke, 'A legal regime for the Arctic? Interplay with the Law of the Sea Convention', *Marine Policy* 31 (2007) 402-408, 402-404; Hacquebord, *Wildernis, woongebied en wingewest*, 243-246; Ekatrina Piskunova, 'Russia in the Arctic. What's lurking behind the flag?', *International Journal* 65 (2010) 851-864, 851; The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*; The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Kathryn Isted, 'Sovereignty in the Arctic: an analysis of territorial disputes & environmental policy considerations', *Journal of Transnational Law & Policy* 18 (2008-2009) 343-376, 349-350; Stokke, 'A legal regime for the Arctic?', 403.

<sup>41</sup> Isted, 'Sovereignty in the Arctic', 349-351; Stokke, 'A legal regime for the Arctic?', 403.

for the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from vessels in ice-covered areas within its EEZ.<sup>42</sup>

A country can extend its rights to explore and exploit marine sources up to 350 nautical miles. Article 76 dictates that if the continental shelf extends past the 200 nautical miles boundary of its EEZ, a nation can submit a claim on this area to the UN Commission. Countries have ten years after the ratification of UNCLOS to submit their claims. This submission has to be supported by scientific data. The areas beyond the EEZ and continental shelf are international waters and the resources found there are defined by UNCLOS as 'common heritage of mankind'. Based on article 76, several countries have submitted overlapping claims in the Arctic. UNCLOS does not provide clarity on these issues and leaves many questions unanswered. The Arctic littoral states have to cooperate with each other to reach an agreement about these disputes.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Arctic Council**

The political climate of the Arctic is characterized by cooperation between the Arctic states. The idea of cooperation in the circumpolar areas matured in the 1980s. The Arctic states were worried about the growing military-strategic tensions during the Cold War and the environmental changes. The Murmansk Speech of Mikhail Gorbachev is often seen as the start of Arctic cooperation. In 1987 Soviet Union's general secretary Gorbachev gave a speech in which he proposed to make the Arctic a 'zone of peace'. In 1991 the Arctic states heeded this idea by establishing the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS).<sup>44</sup>

During the Second World War the military significance of the Arctic was already clear to the belligerents. After the war, when the tensions between the

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<sup>42</sup> Albert Buixadé Farré, Scott R. Stephenson, Linling Chen, Michael Czub, Ying Dai, Denis Demchev, Yaroslav Efimov, Piots Graczyk, Hendrik Grythe, Kathrin Keil, Niku Kivekäs, Naresh Kumar, Nengye Liu, Igor Matelenok, Mari Myksvoll, Derek O'Leary, Julia Olsen, Sachin Pavithran.A.P., Edward Petersen, Andreas Raspotnik, Ivan Ryzhov, Jan Solski, Lingling Suo, Caroline Troein, Vilena Valeeva, Jaap van Rijckevorsel & Jonathan Wighting, 'Commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage: routes, resources, governance, technology, and infrastructure', *Polar Geography* (2014) 1-27, 12-14.

<sup>43</sup> Isted, 'Sovereignty in the Arctic', 351-353; Stokke, 'A legal regime for the Arctic?', 403; Piskunova, 'Russia in the Arctic. What's lurking behind the flag?', 851.

<sup>44</sup> Torbjørn Pedersen, 'Debates over the role of the Arctic Council', *Ocean Development & International Law* 43 (2012) 146-156, 147-149; Timo Koivurova, 'Limits and possibilities of the Arctic Council in a rapidly changing scene of Arctic governance', *Polar Record* 46 (2010) 146-156, 146-147.

West and East increased, the Arctic became an important military component in the strategies of the USA and the Soviet Union. It was the shortest distance between the two nations. The other Arctic littoral states, Canada, Norway and Denmark/Greenland were important partners of the United States during this period. Iceland also became involved in the area when the USA, in order to develop its defence, signed a treaty with the country. Furthermore, Finland and Sweden became strategically important since these countries were situated between NATO countries and the Soviet Union. So after the Cold War, eight states were involved in Arctic affairs and together they established the AEPS.<sup>45</sup>

Five years later, in 1996, the AEPS working groups were integrated in a new intergovernmental organisation, the Arctic Council. The Ottawa Declaration, signed on September 19, 1996 by the eight Arctic states, established a high-level forum designed to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states on common Arctic issues, principally environmental protection and sustainable development, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities. The ministerial meetings were to be held biennially and the chairmanship would rotate between the eight members. The Council cannot adopt decisions or measures that would legally bind its members since it was not established by a treaty.<sup>46</sup>

Today, the Arctic Council is the main political forum in the Arctic. Besides the Arctic states as members and the indigenous peoples' organizations as permanent participants, the Council has admitted several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), scientific organisations and countries with an established historical interest in Arctic exploration, such as The Netherlands and Great Britain, as permanent observer.<sup>47</sup> Other non-Arctic states have shown increased interest in the region and have applied for permanent observer status. In 2013 China, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea and Singapore were welcomed as new observer states. The European Union's application was received affirmatively but the final decision on the implementation is deferred until the Council ministers can agree by consensus.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building', 193-194.

<sup>46</sup> Pedersen, 'Debates over the role of the Arctic Council', 147-149.

<sup>47</sup> Keskitalo, 'International Region-Building', 190-191.

<sup>48</sup> Arctic Council Secretariat, *Kiruna Declaration* (Kiruna 2013).

The Ilulissat Declaration, signed in 2008 by the five Arctic coastal states, weakened the position of the Arctic Council and caused a division between the Arctic states.<sup>49</sup> In this Declaration, the signatories declared their commitment to UNCLOS as the main legal framework for the Arctic. Furthermore they stated that 'by virtue of their sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large areas in the Arctic Ocean the five coastal states are in a unique position to address these possibilities and challenges.'<sup>50</sup> It appeared as if Arctic politics evolved in an exclusive affair between the littoral states. The other three Arctic states had criticized this meeting and warned that this would undermine the effectiveness of the Arctic Council.<sup>51</sup>

In 2010 Canada hosted another meeting between the Arctic Five in Chelsea. This meeting turned out to be the turning point in the debate between the Arctic Five and the Arctic Eight forum. Secretary Hillary Clinton of the USA stated that everybody who has a legitimate interest in the region should be included in international discussions on Arctic affairs. One year later, a U.S. secretary of state attended an Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting for the first time. During this meeting the USA praised the Arctic Council as the preeminent forum for international cooperation in the Arctic. Thereby, they dismissed the Arctic Five forum and put an end to the debate. Today, there is still a discussion about the future competences and role of the Arctic Council and every Arctic state has a different opinion about it.<sup>52</sup>

## ***2.2. Challenges and Opportunities***

### **Climate change**

In 2004 the Arctic Council together with the International Arctic Science Committee published the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. They stated that climate change is more apparent in the Arctic than anywhere else on earth and that the average temperature in the Arctic has increased at a higher rate than the

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<sup>49</sup> Haquebord, 'The History of Exploration and Exploitation', 9-11.

<sup>50</sup> Arctic Ocean Conference, *The Ilulissat Declaration* (Ilulissat 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Offerdal, 'The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence', 867-869.

<sup>52</sup> Pedersen, 'Debates over the role of the Arctic Council', 149-152.

global average.<sup>53</sup> Due to a higher average temperature in the Arctic the sea ice is melting. This transforms highly reflective sea ice into dark, heat-absorbing open water, making global warming in the Arctic a self-reinforcing process.<sup>54</sup> According to the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment the average extent of sea ice cover in summer has declined by 15 to 20 per cent over the previous three decades.<sup>55</sup>

In the international scientific community there is a consensus that the global climate change is exacerbated by human-induced factors. The primary factor is emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, produced by burning of fossil fuels. Another major contributor to global warming are soot particles.<sup>56</sup> While the changes in the Arctic are most notable, the consequences for the area are also more profound than anywhere else in the world. The unique Arctic ecosystem, due to the short growing season and small variety of flora and fauna, is extremely vulnerable to changes in the environment. Furthermore, these changes create new security challenges and exploitation possibilities in an area that used to be inaccessible for human activities.<sup>57</sup>

Due to climate change, the Arctic opens up for economic activities. The expected activities in the Arctic are the extraction of fossil fuels and other minerals, new shipping possibilities, fisheries and tourism. But these economic activities come with a price. There are all sorts of risks for the Arctic environment such as oil spills and pollution from ships and platforms. The International Maritime Organisation is in a process of developing a mandatory Polar Code, which provides guidelines for vessels operating in Arctic waters. Nowadays, this code is still only advisory but it is scheduled to be mandatory in 2017.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Arctic Council and the International Arctic Science Committee, *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment scientific report* (Cambridge 2005), 39.

<sup>54</sup> Michael Byers, 'Cold peace. Arctic cooperation and Canadian foreign policy', *International Journal* 65 (2010) 899-912, 900-901.

<sup>55</sup> Arctic Council, *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*, 30-31.

<sup>56</sup> Hacquebord, *Wildernis, woongebied en wingewest*, 236-238.

<sup>57</sup> Isted, 'Sovereignty in the Arctic', 345-347.

<sup>58</sup> Farré et al., 'Commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage,' 11-15.

## Hydrocarbon exploration

The expectations of oil and gas drillings in the Arctic are particularly high and it is one of the main drivers behind the continental shelf claims of the Arctic states. Due to the retreat of ice in the Arctic, new hydrocarbon resources become available for exploitation. The US Geological Survey of 2008 estimates that 13 per cent of the potential world reserves of oil and 30 per cent of the potential world gas reserves are to be found in the Arctic. All states have a significant interest in developing these oil and gas fields, especially since it is predicted that the world demand for oil and gas will only grow in the coming years. This will increase the world market prices for these resources and makes drilling in the Arctic feasible.<sup>59</sup>

Even though the potencies for hydrocarbons in the Arctic are enormous, especially in the Barents Sea, Kara Sea and Beaufort Sea, there are still major difficulties to overcome. The harsh Arctic climate creates several challenges for oil companies. Drilling activities can only take place in the summer and drilling equipment must be able to handle extreme winter conditions. Furthermore, fragile ice, due to global warming, is more moveable by strong winds and can therefore be expected to move at a greater speed compared to the older, more stable ice.<sup>60</sup> Operating in this climate demands a tougher standard for pipelines, platforms and ships used in exploration, extraction and transportation in order to reduce the risk of destruction or damage from ice packs.<sup>61</sup>

In addition, oil and gas activities in the Arctic pose a major threat to the unique ecosystem. The harsh climate and less predictable ice movement increases the risk of oil spills in the Arctic and makes clean-up operations difficult. Meanwhile, the ice makes current oil spill response technology, like in-site burning, far from admissible and the lack of infrastructure in the Arctic makes it impossible to launch a large-scale mobilisation of people. Furthermore, if an oil spill happens in the winter, the clean-up operations have to take place in total darkness or be postponed to the summer. This can have disastrous impacts

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Johnston, 'Arctic Energy Resources: Security and Environmental Implications', *Journal of Strategic Security* 3 (2012) 13-32, 14; BP, *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, June 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Øistein Harsem, Arne Eide and Knut Heen, 'Factors influencing future oil and gas prospects in the Arctic' *Energy Policy* 39 (2011) 8037-8045, 8039-8040.

<sup>61</sup> Johnston, 'Arctic Energy Resources: Security and Environmental Implications', 17-19.

on the Arctic environment and is one of the reasons why NGOs are campaigning against hydrocarbon activities in this area.<sup>62</sup>

Even though, considerable oil and gas activity in the Arctic are being carried out in Canada, the USA, Norway and Russia, drilling offshore in the Arctic Ocean is still moderate. But it is expected to increase in the future and this has resulted in several border disputes between the Arctic states. In 2010 the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Russia and Norway signed a treaty that established the maritime boundary between the two states in the Barents Sea.<sup>63</sup> Several other disputes, such as a disagreement between the US and Canada over the division of the Beaufort Sea, a dispute between Canada and Denmark over the sovereignty of Hans Island and several different claims on the Lomonosov Ridge, are still not solved.<sup>64</sup> These claims have been interpreted as 'a race for the Arctic', but so far, all disputes have been solved by agreements.<sup>65</sup>

### **New shipping lanes**

The opening up of the Arctic also creates the possibility of new transit routes for ships. There are three possible shipping routes that can be developed in the Arctic, namely the Northern Sea Route (NSR), encompassing the route along the Norwegian and Russian Arctic coast, the Northwest Passage (NWP), above Canada and Alaska, and the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR), across the Arctic Ocean.<sup>66</sup> The NWP was first ice-free in 2007 and it is estimated that the TSR may also open up over the coming decades.<sup>67</sup> Navigation on the NSR is relatively easier due to lower overall ice extend and open water in the Barents Sea. Of all three shipping routes the NSR has the highest potential to enable economic activity in the Arctic.<sup>68</sup>

The NWP and NSR are presented by Canada and Russia as substitutes for the current transit routes through the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal. Both

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<sup>62</sup> Harsem ed., 'Factors influencing future oil and gas prospects in the Arctic', 8037-8042.

<sup>63</sup> Hacquebord, *Wildernis, woongebied en wingewest*, 246.

<sup>64</sup> Isted, 'Sovereignty in the Arctic', 353-362.

<sup>65</sup> Offerdal, 'The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence', 363-364.

<sup>66</sup> Farré et al., 'Commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage', 2-3.

<sup>67</sup> Malte Humpert and Andreas Raspotnik, 'The Future of Arctic Shipping', *The Arctic Institute. Center for Circumpolar Security Studies*, October 11, 2012, available at <http://www.thearcticinstitute.org/2012/10/the-future-of-arctic-shipping.html>.

<sup>68</sup> Farré et al., 'Commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage', 4-5.



canals approach their carrying capacity and have become chokepoints in international shipping. Furthermore, there are problems with piracy which raises the insurance costs for shipping companies.<sup>69</sup> Shipping through the Arctic would save about 40 per cent of travel time and subsequent fuel and labour costs. Diminishing sea ice and rapid melting of multiyear ice will further promote shipping activity in the Arctic and will allow large tankers to sail the route.<sup>70</sup> Russia and Canada would both benefit from more shipping activities in the Arctic and are investing in the marine infrastructure of the area. However, it is unlikely that the NWP and NSR would become appealing substitutes for contemporary shipping lanes in the near future due to the lack of infrastructure, the remoteness and climatological aspects of the area.<sup>71</sup>

Both shipping routes are contested waterways. Russia claims extensive sovereignty over the NSR based on Article 234. Russia has invoked this article to regulate the passing of ships sailing in ice-covered waters beyond its territorial seas. The few ships sailing the NSR are currently following Russia's terms. The USA and the EU have contested this interpretation of Article 234 and claim freedom of navigation in these waters.<sup>72</sup> A similar conflict occurs on the NWP. Canada regards the channels between its Arctic islands as internal waters and foreign vessels require permission to enter where the full force of Canadian domestic law applies. The United States considers the waters international straits, open to ships from any country without constraint. Since UNCLOS does not provide clarity on these issues, they have not been solved yet and constrain the development of these waterways.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Margaret Blunden, 'Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route', *International Affairs* 88-1 (2012) 15-129, 117-120.

<sup>70</sup> Bjørn Gunnarsson, 'The Future of Arctic Marine Operations and Shipping Logistics', in: Oran R. Young, Jong-Deog Kim and Yoon Hyung Kim (ed.), *The Arctic in World Affairs. A North Pacific Dialogue on the Future of the Arctic* (Seoul 2012) 37-61, 45.

<sup>71</sup> Gunnarsson, 'The future of Arctic Marine Operations and Shipping Logistics', 45.

<sup>72</sup> Farré et al., 'Commercial Arctic shipping through the Northeast Passage', 12-13.

<sup>73</sup> Byers, 'Cold peace. Arctic cooperation and Canadian foreign policy', 908-909.

### ***2.3. The European Union and the Arctic***

#### **First steps**

The changes in the Arctic and the expected opportunities have spurred the interest of other non-Arctic states, such as China, Japan, Singapore and the European Union. The new economic possibilities in the area have severe implications for the EU. Arctic oil and gas can contribute to Europe's energy security and about half of the fish caught in polar waters are consumed in the EU. Europe also controls 40 per cent of the world commercial shipping fleet and three EU member states are Arctic states. Furthermore, European countries are to a large extent responsible for global warming and the EU sees itself as a leader in fighting climate change and promoting sustainable development.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the EU believes it has a legitimate interest in the Arctic and wants to be accepted as a natural partner in Arctic affairs.<sup>75</sup>

The development of a EU Arctic policy has not been without struggle and the EU has gone through a learning process on Arctic matters. The idea of creating an Arctic policy was first proposed in the blue book on an integrated maritime policy in 2007. It stated that in 2008, the European Commission would produce a report on strategic issues for the EU relating to the Arctic Ocean. Prior to 2007 the EU engagement in Arctic issues was uncoordinated and ad hoc. In 1997, during the Finnish presidency, the initiative to create the EU's Northern Dimension was launched. This is a partnership between the EU, Norway, Iceland and Russia for regional development and cooperation. Even though the Northern Dimension has 'an Arctic Window', it does not really focus on the Arctic. It is primarily concerned with the Baltic area.<sup>76</sup>

In 2008 the European Commission presented its first Communication on the Arctic. The document focused on three key issues: protecting and preserving the Arctic in unison with its population, promoting the sustainable use of resources, and contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance. As part of the policy, the European Commission submitted its application for the status of permanent observer in the Arctic Council. The idea of promoting the

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<sup>74</sup> Weber et al., 'Breaking the ice. The European Union and the Arctic', 849-851.

<sup>75</sup> Offerdal, 'The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence', 862.

<sup>76</sup> Wegge, 'The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making', 13-15.

development of an Arctic Treaty along the line of the Antarctic Treaty, as proposed by the European Parliament, was not mentioned in the Communication. This proposal had created a great deal of unrest among the Arctic states. They claimed that the legal framework that applied to the Arctic was sufficient.<sup>77</sup> José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission at the time, echoed this idea when he stated that ‘we can say that the Arctic is a sea, and a sea is a sea. This is our starting point.’<sup>78</sup>

### **Next steps**

The EU Council of Ministers concluded its 2009 *Conclusions on Arctic issues* with a request to the European Commission to present a report on the progress made on Arctic issues in 2011. In addition, the European Parliament and Council adopted the same year a ban on imports of seal products. This ban on seal products was already announced in the Communication of the EU Commission. Canada perceived the ban as discrimination and reacted strongly after the ban was adopted. Since seals are not an endangered species, the ban was viewed by many Arctic states as an example of Europe’s lack of knowledge concerning Arctic affairs. It is also one of the main reasons why the EU is still not accepted as a permanent observer in the Arctic Council.<sup>79</sup>

Prior to the second Communication, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution in 2011 in which it had abandoned the idea of an Arctic Treaty and had joined the European Council and Commission in recognizing UNCLOS as the main legal framework. One year later, the European Commission presented its Arctic Communication, *Developing a European policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps*.<sup>80</sup> In this Communication the European Commission stated that ‘the EU has an important role to play in [...] helping to meet the challenges that confront the region.’ In order to do so the EU

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<sup>77</sup> Adele Airoidi, *The EU and the Arctic. Developments and perspectives 2010-2014* (Copenhagen 2014), 11-14.

<sup>78</sup> Jose Manual Barroso implied with this statement that UNCLOS should be recognized as the legal framework of the Arctic after a joint meeting in Brussels on November 12, 2008 with the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. See Wegge, ‘The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making’, 17.

<sup>79</sup> Offerdal, ‘The EU in the Arctic. In pursuit of legitimacy and influence’, 869-871; Wegge, ‘The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making’, 20-21.

<sup>80</sup> Airoidi, ‘The EU and the Arctic. Developments and perspective’, 12-14.

Commission proposed to take action in three areas: knowledge, responsibility and engagement.<sup>81</sup>

Europe's policy encompasses actions concerning climate, environment, research, sustainable development, shipping activities, fisheries and social dialogue with the indigenous population.<sup>82</sup> Since the changes in the Arctic are expected to significantly affect the lives of European citizens, the EU wants to exert influence in the area. The EU sees itself as 'the world's strongest proponent [...] to fight climate change'<sup>83</sup> and is dedicated to protect the Arctic environment by undertaking research activity in the area. Furthermore, the EU stresses its strong links with the Arctic, such as historical, economical and geographical links, and therefore believes to have a responsibility in the area.<sup>84</sup>

With the Arctic Policy, the European Union found itself in an unusual position. The EU tries to exert influence in an area with a stable political and legal framework which is dominated by strong states. Normally, in a European regional policy, the underlying idea is to approximate the domestic order to Europe's model. In the Arctic this is out of the question. The usual carrots to externalize its internal order, such as trade preferences, external assistance and the possibility of EU membership, cannot be used in this area. Furthermore, most of EU's neighbourhood policies have been based on reciprocity and contractual relations, while the EU Arctic policy is mainly a proposal of the EU to take actions in the region with no contractual elements. Therefore, Europe's position in the Arctic is difficult and the EU had to adopt another tactic by trying to convince the Arctic states that its proposals can be useful and of value to them.<sup>85</sup> As already discussed in the introduction, it is debatable to what extent Europe has managed to do so.

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<sup>81</sup> EU Commission and the High Representative of the EU, 'Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps', 3.

<sup>82</sup> Piotr Kobza, 'Civilian Power Europe in the Arctic: How Far Can the European Union Go North?', *EU Diplomacy Papers* 1 (2012) 1-30, 6.

<sup>83</sup> EU Commission and the High Representative of the EU, 'Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps', 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, 8.

<sup>85</sup> Kobza, 'Civilian Power Europe in the Arctic', 7-10.

## ***CHAPTER 3. THE ANALYSIS***

In every Arctic policy document, countries express their worries about climate change and the effect it has on the Arctic. Therefore, every country has included statements about the protection of the Arctic in their policies and they all indicate that they want to enhance international cooperation in order to tackle global warming. In addition, all countries conclude that the changes in the Arctic climate open up the area for new activities, thereby creating new opportunities but also new challenges. These developments make it necessary for the Arctic states to formulate an Arctic policy.

I will analyse the policies of the Arctic states, in alphabetical order. In order to explore the main perspective of the Arctic states, I will search for words that indicate a certain importance, such as 'key areas', 'priority', 'main interests' and 'fundamental aims'. Furthermore, I will also focus my research on the verbs used in the policy documents to describe certain actions a country intends to undertake. Verbs such as 'must', 'should', or 'will' indicate a certain obligation and determination to take action, while verbs such as 'intend' or 'promote' have a less compulsory connotation. Therefore, the use of verbs indicates the importance of an action. Moreover, the kind of words a state frequently uses in its policy, for example geographical words such as 'sovereignty', 'jurisdiction' or 'territory', or words with an economic connotation, such as 'growth', 'sustainability' and 'potential', tells something about the representations of the Arctic.<sup>86</sup>

### **3.1. Canada**

With 40 per cent of its land mass situated in the north, Canada has extensive jurisdictions and sovereign rights in the Arctic. It has the largest land and sea area in the Arctic after Russia. The Harper government takes an active stance concerning Arctic issues. When Prime Minister Stephen Harper won the parliamentary election in 2006 he promised to work on an Arctic 'sovereignty

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<sup>86</sup> Neumann 'Discourse Analysis', 62-63; Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations', 231-233.

plan', aimed at building-up Canada's defences to the north. At the international stage, Canada has been one of the most vocal Arctic actors. They reacted strongly after the flag planting incident when an outraged Peter MacKay, the Canadian Foreign Minister, said: 'This isn't the 15<sup>th</sup> century. You can't go around the world and just plant flags and say 'We're claiming this territory.'"<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, in 2009 Canada denied the EU the status of permanent observer in the Arctic Council, in retaliation for the ban on the import of seal products in the EU.<sup>88</sup>

In its policy document, Canada has created an Arctic region that is central to the Canadian identity and fundamental for the country's future. The Arctic 'is embedded in Canadian history and culture, and in the Canadian soul' and how the Arctic evolves 'will have major implications for Canada'.<sup>89</sup> The title of Canada's Arctic policy itself, *Canada's Northern Strategy. Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future*, speaks volumes. It shows how essential the Arctic is for Canada. In its policy documents, Canada has also included several quotes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to underline this notion: 'We are a northern country. The true north is our destiny, [...] not to embrace the promise of the true north [...] would be to turn our back on what it is to be Canadian.' (Prime Minister Stephen Harper, August 2008, Inuvik, Northwest Territories).<sup>90</sup> By using the words 'soul' and 'destiny', and by emphasising that the Arctic is part of Canadian heritage and identity, Canada has given the Arctic nationalistic and historical characteristics and has, through speech, created a mythical 'true north'.<sup>91</sup>

These representations show that the Arctic is very important to Canada and stresses Canada's links with the area. Changes in the Arctic will have a great impact on Canada and 'few countries are more directly affected by changes in the Arctic climate – or have as much at stake – as Canada.'<sup>92</sup> Canada's vision of the

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<sup>87</sup> Oleg Alexandrov, 'Labyrinths of the Arctic Policy. Russia Needs to Solve an Equation with Many Unknowns', *Russia in Global Affairs* 7 (2009) 110-118, 113.

<sup>88</sup> Nikolaj Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy: The Ilulissat Initiative and its Implications', in: Nanna Hvidt and Hans Mouritzen (ed.), *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2009* (Copenhagen 2009) 35-78, 47; Byers, 'Cold peace. Arctic cooperation and Canadian foreign policy', 909-910; The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 3.

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem, *Canada's Northern Strategy*, 3.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, 3-5; The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 3, 27; Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 117; P. Whitney Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', *International Journal* 65 (2010) 879-897, 880.

<sup>92</sup> The Government of Canada, *Canada's Northern Strategy*, 8.

Arctic is 'a stable, rules-based region with clearly defined boundaries, dynamic economic growth and trade, vibrant Northern communities, and healthy and productive ecosystem'.<sup>93</sup> Canada needs 'to take concrete action'<sup>94</sup> to turn this vision for the North into reality. In order to 'unlock the North's true potential'<sup>95</sup> Canada has formulated four areas in which to take action. Exercising sovereignty is the first and most important pillar in the policy. The other pillars are promoting economic and social development, protecting Canada's environmental heritage and improving and devolving Northern governance.<sup>96</sup>

The emphasis on exercising national sovereignty and protecting borders is a common thread throughout both policy documents. Canada uses strong rhetoric to assert its status as an Arctic power and a leading country in the region. Canada takes 'robust leadership' and exercises its sovereignty daily through good governance and responsible leadership.<sup>97</sup> Both policy documents highlight the leading role of Canada in several Arctic issues. Canada, as IMO member, takes a leading role in developing the Polar Code. It plays a leading role in the Arctic Council on several initiatives and projects, such as the new health-related projects and the Arctic Ocean Review, and Canada is a global leader in Arctic science, according to the policy documents. Thereby, Canada is creating an image of itself as an active and leading Arctic actor, which is 'committed to exercise the full extent of its sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the region' by using leadership and stewardship.<sup>98</sup>

In pursuing strengthened Arctic Ocean stewardship, Canada will work closely with other interested partners and users of the Arctic Ocean through regional and international organizations, including the Arctic Council. The USA is Canada's premier partner in the area. From Canada's perspective the Arctic Council needs to be strengthened to ensure that it is equipped to address tomorrow's challenges. Furthermore, there must be recognition that the Arctic states remain best placed to exercise leadership in the management of the

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<sup>93</sup> The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, *Canada's Northern Strategy*, 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 5.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, 5-24.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, 5-7; Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', 893.

<sup>98</sup> The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 14-22; *Ibidem*, *Canada's Northern Strategy*, 24.

region. Canada takes a tough stance when it comes to outsiders who want to meddle in Arctic affairs. It states that 'while many of these players could have a contribution to make in the development of the North, Canada does not accept the premise that the Arctic requires a fundamentally new governance structure or legal framework. Nor does Canada accept that the Arctic nations are unable to appropriately manage the North as it undergoes fundamental change.'<sup>99</sup> The idea of creating an Arctic Treaty, as suggested by the European Parliament and several NGOs, was not well received in Canada.<sup>100</sup>

By using words as 'our heritage', 'our home', 'our destiny and 'part of our soul', Canada has, based on the mythical idea of 'the promise of the true north', constructed an Arctic region that is inextricably linked to Canada's identity. This implies that the Arctic is a fundamental part of Canada, and that Canada is a fundamental part of the Arctic. Therefore, Canada highlights in its strategy that it has a unique position in the Arctic and it stresses the need to protect and exercise its sovereignty and to show leadership in the area. These possessive representations of the Arctic have consequences for cooperation in the area. While other Arctic states are accepted as partners in Arctic governance, since the Arctic is also part of their homes, Canada has more problems with accepting interference of outsiders, especially if these outsiders show a different attitude towards the region.<sup>101</sup>

### **3.2. Denmark/Greenland**

As already mentioned before, the Kingdom of Denmark consists of three countries: Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Greenland is the only country in the Kingdom which has an Arctic coast. In June 2009, Denmark introduced 'Self Rule' (Selvstyre) for Greenland. Greenland's Self Rule constitution recognizes the people of Greenland as a nation under international law with the inherent right to independence. It therefore includes the option of

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<sup>99</sup> The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*, 8-9, 23-25; Ibidem, *Canada's Northern Strategy*, 33-36.

<sup>100</sup> Stokke, 'A legal regime for the Arctic?', 402.

<sup>101</sup> The Government of Canada, *Statement on Canada's Arctic foreign policy*; Ibidem, *Canada's Northern Strategy*; Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', 894-895.



independence if the people of Greenland would desire, which would mean that Denmark would lose its status as an Arctic state. Furthermore, it gives the Greenlandic government the sole ownership of Greenland's underground, including its offshore seabed and the resources it might contain. Self Rule does not include new competences in the field of foreign affairs. Defence, foreign policy, sovereignty control and other authority tasks still remain a formal Danish prerogative.<sup>102</sup>

The Kingdom of Denmark is centrally located in the Arctic and 'the Arctic makes up an essential part of the common cultural heritage, and is home to part of the Kingdom's population.'<sup>103</sup> Due to its location in the Arctic, Denmark has specific rights and obligations in the region. An Arctic strategy is first and foremost a strategy for a development that benefits the inhabitants of the Arctic, according to the Danish strategy. The common objective of the Kingdom is that 'the Arctic and its current potential must be developed to promote sustainable growth and social sustainability'<sup>104</sup> and to 'seize as many opportunities in the Arctic to create more growth and development'.<sup>105</sup> The overall goal is to create a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future for the Arctic. So Denmark uses economic terms to describe the Arctic area, whereby 'growth and opportunities' are combined with 'sustainable development' in order to 'realize its huge economic potential'<sup>106</sup> and create a prosperous area that is 'beneficial' for the indigenous peoples.<sup>107</sup>

In order to ensure a peaceful, secure and collaborative Arctic the area has to be managed internationally on the basis of international principles of law. Therefore, 'the Kingdom must play a key role in the future of international cooperation that lies ahead' and 'strengthen [its] status as global player'.<sup>108</sup> Denmark has to maintain its international leading position in a number of research fields concerning the Arctic and promote national and international

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<sup>102</sup> Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy', 36-37; Kristian Åtland, 'Interstate Relations in the Arctic: An Emerging Security Dilemma?', *Comparative Strategy* 33 (2014) 145-166, 156.

<sup>103</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic*, 7.

<sup>104</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>105</sup> Ibidem, 23.

<sup>106</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>107</sup> Ibidem, 10; Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy', 53-54.

<sup>108</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic*, 11.

Arctic research. Even though the region is characterized by peace and cooperation, there will be 'a continued need to enforce the Kingdom's sovereignty'.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, Denmark wants to develop a visible presence of armed forces in the region.<sup>110</sup>

The country sees the Arctic Council as the main governance body of the Arctic and 'attaches great importance to confidence building and cooperation with Arctic partner countries.' Canada, the United States, Norway and Iceland will remain Denmark's key partners for close cooperation. Denmark has clear ideas about the Arctic Council and how this body must be developed. According to Denmark, the Arctic Council 'must evolve from a 'decision-shaping' to a 'decision-making' organisation' and 'must be reinforced as the only relevant political organization'.<sup>111</sup> By consistently using the verb 'must', Denmark expresses a necessity for the Arctic Council to be altered and indirectly indicates that, at the moment, the organisation of the Arctic Council is not sufficient. Denmark recognizes that beyond the Arctic states other stakeholders also have increase interest in the Arctic and that the Arctic Council 'must cooperate with all relevant countries and organizations with interest in the Arctic.'<sup>112</sup> These interests are particularly linked to research, climate change, and transportation and exploitation opportunities.<sup>113</sup>

Following this logic, the EU also has a legitimate interest in the Arctic according to Denmark. Denmark is a member state of the EU and pays attention to development of the EU's Arctic policy in its own strategy.<sup>114</sup> Greenland left the European Community in 1985 after a referendum<sup>115</sup> but is still one of Europe's Overseas Countries and Territories associated with the European Union. On March 19, 2015 Greenland and the European Union signed a new joint declaration that provides an umbrella-framework for the relations between the EU, Greenland and Denmark. In this joint declaration the EU and Greenland express their intentions to continue and further strengthen their relations and

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<sup>109</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic*, 20.

<sup>110</sup> Åtland, 'Interstate Relations in the Arctic', 156.

<sup>111</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic*, 52.

<sup>112</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>114</sup> Airoidi, *The EU and the Arctic. Developments and perspectives*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Wegge, 'The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making', 13-14.

cooperation in, inter alia, Arctic issues.<sup>116</sup> In addition, as part of the partnership Greenland receives about 25 million Euros annually in budget support for its education sector.<sup>117</sup>

In its policy document, Denmark states that it 'will work to ensure that the EU has a place in the Arctic, including in relevant institutions such as the Arctic Council where the Kingdom supports the EU's wish for observer status.'<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, Denmark 'will actively contribute to the shaping of EU policies relevant to the Arctic' and seek to avoid 'further cases where the laws, traditions, cultures and needs of Arctic societies are neglected', alluding to EU's seal ban.<sup>119</sup> According to Denmark, the EU and its member countries have an interest in research, transportation and access to Arctic hydrocarbon and natural resources, and the EU has indirect influence on the Arctic through, for example, its environmental laws. So according to Denmark, the EU has a role to play in the region and 'the Kingdom will contribute towards the EU having a space in international discussion on the Arctic.'<sup>120</sup>

Denmark approaches the Arctic from a more economic perspective. In its policy, Denmark describes the Arctic as a region with 'huge economic potential' and opportunities which can be realized by 'sustainable growth and social sustainability'. Thereby, creating a 'healthy, productive and self-sustaining community' and a peaceful and prosperous Arctic region. In order to do so, the Kingdom must play a key role in international cooperation and collaborate with all Arctic states and other legitimate stakeholders, including the EU. Due to this economic perspective, Denmark demonstrates openness to the idea of other stakeholders playing a role in the Arctic since the country can benefit from their resources and expertise. The geopolitical aspects, such as sovereignty protection and security issues, are less prominent in Denmark's policy. The emphasis is on stimulating growth and economic development through cooperation.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The European Union, the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, Joint Declaration on relations between the European Union and Greenland (Brussels) 19 March 2015.

<sup>117</sup> Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic*, 36.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibidem*, 52

<sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, 23-40.

### 3.3. Iceland

During the Cold War, Iceland's position was of great strategic importance as an air/naval bridge for the United States. It was during this period that the country became involved in Arctic affairs and after the Cold War, its status as Arctic states was fixed. Today, Iceland's economy is highly dependent on the seas surrounding the country. Fishing is one of Iceland's main economic activities and fishery contributes to 40 per cent of Iceland's export revenues. Iceland expects to play a more important role in future Arctic affairs now that the Arctic is opening up for new economic activities. Especially the new transport routes in the Arctic are seen as an opportunity for Iceland to become a key transarctic commercial hub, and a centre for reception, distribution and transshipment. Furthermore, the melting of the ice means that new fishing grounds become accessible, which provides the Icelandic fishing industry with new possibilities.<sup>122</sup>

The Icelandic policy states that 'Icelanders, more than other nations, rely on the fragile resources of the Arctic region'.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, 'Iceland has great interests at stake in the Arctic'<sup>124</sup>, mainly in the areas of fishing, tourism and energy production. Iceland emphasises the fact that the country is not only geographically located in the Arctic, but that it is also highly dependent on the area. Thereby, Iceland highlights its identity as an Arctic states and aims to enhance its position in the north.<sup>125</sup> In order to 'secure Icelandic interests' the policy sums up twelve 'principles'.<sup>126</sup> The two most important principles are promoting and strengthening the Arctic Council and securing Iceland's position as a coastal state within the Arctic.<sup>127</sup>

Iceland tries to safeguard its interests through 'civilian means' by enhancing the Arctic institution in which Iceland has an influential position and by gaining international recognition for Iceland's Arctic status. Iceland is

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<sup>122</sup> Klaus Dodds & Valur Ingimundarson, 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', *The Polar Journal* 2 (2012) 21-37, 26-30; Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 176-177.

<sup>123</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>124</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>125</sup> Ibidem; Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 32.

<sup>126</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>127</sup> Ibidem.

opposed to militarisation of the area partly because it does not have the resources to become a significant military power in the Arctic. Therefore, Iceland prefers civilian means. Iceland wants to 'increase the Arctic Council's weight and relevance in decisions on the region where necessary'.<sup>128</sup> Iceland saw the development of the Arctic Five forum as a threat to its own interests and the country protested strongly against being excluded from the Ilulissat meeting. According to Iceland, individual member states 'must be prevented from joining forces the exclude other member states'.<sup>129</sup> This would undermine the Arctic Council and could dissolve the solidarity between the eight Arctic states.<sup>130</sup>

Gaining recognition as an Arctic littoral state would be another way to secure Iceland's position and contribute to the creation of the Icelandic Arctic identity. Iceland's argument for being a coastal state is based on 'the fact that the Arctic region both extends to the North Pole and the portion of the North-Atlantic region which has closest ties with the Arctic'.<sup>131</sup> Iceland's EEZ extends well into the Arctic Greenland Sea as an outlying portion of the Arctic Ocean which makes Iceland an Arctic littoral state.<sup>132</sup> So 'an understanding should be promoted' that the Arctic should be viewed as 'an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters'.<sup>133</sup> It stresses the need to prevent the Arctic from being turned into a narrowly defined and self-contained geographical area. Since Iceland is major stakeholder concerning fishery, the country would benefit from managing the Arctic Ocean together with its surrounding or adjacent seas and not as a limited geographical area where only Arctic littoral states can exert influence.<sup>134</sup>

Based on the idea of the Arctic as an extensive ecological, economical and political area, Iceland acknowledges that the interest in the region is not limited to Arctic States themselves. It is necessary for Iceland to build and develop 'partnerships and agreements with states, stakeholders and international

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<sup>128</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>130</sup> Ibidem; Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 32.

<sup>131</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>132</sup> Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 25.

<sup>133</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>134</sup> Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 26.

organisations, both in the Arctic and outside the area, regarding issues where Iceland has an interest'.<sup>135</sup> Iceland mainly names agreements regarding fisheries management in this context. China, Japan, the EU and NATO are mentioned as states and alliances that have an increased interest in the region. Iceland has an ambivalent relationship with the EU<sup>136</sup> but mentions in its policy that it wants to encourage international organisations, such as the EU, to sponsor Arctic research in Iceland.<sup>137</sup>

The Arctic area is very important for Iceland, not only for its economy but also for its foreign policy identity. The emphasis on being recognised as an Arctic coastal state is a corollary of it. This discursive practice would not change Iceland's geographical position, but it would enhance its foreign policy identity as an Arctic state and its position in the Arctic area. Iceland's policy thereby is a clear example of the importance of speech in international relations. Iceland is a small country in Arctic politics. This means that Iceland's policy is focused on civilian means to safeguard Iceland's interests, such as strengthening the Arctic Council and cooperate with other (non-)Arctic states regarding issues where Iceland has an interest. It has also consequences for the rhetoric Iceland uses in its policy. Even though Iceland's strategy is a proactive policy, emphasised by references to 'take action' and 'work', the rhetoric is rather careful. This is highlighted by the fact that the policy encompasses twelve 'principles', or ideas, on which the Icelandic government 'will concentrate its efforts' or which it 'will promote'. Since Iceland is not challenging UNCLOS with its coastal state demand

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<sup>135</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

<sup>136</sup> In 2009, Iceland submitted its EU membership application after Iceland experienced a major economic and political crisis. The application was a desperate effort to restore economic stability at home but it did not reflect the domestic political will and the EU membership bid was highly controversial. The EU hoped to increase its legitimacy as an Arctic actor when Iceland also became a member of the EU. But on March 12 of this year, Iceland dropped its EU membership bid and Icelandic Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson wrote that 'Iceland's interests are better served outside the European Union.' Iceland still is part of the European Economic Area and a partner in the Northern Dimension. See: Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 29-31; EurActive, Iceland officially drops EU membership bid, 13 March 2015, available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/enlargement/iceland-officially-drops-eu-membership-bid-312877>.

<sup>137</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.

and by using this rather soft rhetoric, it has not generated protests among the other Arctic countries and Iceland can continue its efforts for recognition.<sup>138</sup>

### 3.4. Norway

Norway has a long tradition of Arctic activism. Developments in the High North have been Norway's highest foreign policy priority since 2005. Norway was the first Arctic country to develop an all-encompassing Arctic policy. The term 'the High North' was introduced in Norway's first Arctic policy and capitalized to emphasize its importance. It was defined as the geographical area stretching northwards from the southern boundary of Nordland County in Norway and eastwards from the Greenland Sea to the Barents Sea and the Pechora Sea. Politically, this region encompassed Nordic cooperation with Sweden, Finland and Russia, relations with the USA and Canada through the Arctic Council, and relations with the EU through the Northern Dimension. According to its second policy, 'the High North is not precisely defined [...] and internationally the terms "the High North" and "the Arctic" are used interchangeably.'<sup>139</sup> This open-ended understanding of the High North can be a political advantage. Politicians can use the strategic definition that suits them best, at different times. The alteration in definition shows how language can change an area and that discourses are dynamic.<sup>140</sup>

Norway is Europe's northernmost country, and this position characterises both the way Norway perceives itself and the way others perceive the country. These characteristics make Norway unique and distinguish the country from other countries in Europe. Precisely, those elements that make a country unique often 'contribute most to forming one's identity'.<sup>141</sup> Thus, in the case of Norway, the elements associated with its Arctic position, such as icy coasts, heroes of

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<sup>138</sup> Icelandic Parliament, *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*; Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 32; Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 187.

<sup>139</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*, 7.

<sup>140</sup> Grindheim, 'The Scramble of Arctic?', 11-13; Jensen et al, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 442; Dodds et al., 'Territorial nationalism and Arctic geopolitics: Iceland as an Arctic coastal state', 32-33; Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy', 50.

<sup>141</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*, 49.

polar exploration and snow, contribute most to its identity. Therefore, the Arctic plays an important role in Norwegian politics and the High North 'is Norway's most important strategic priority area'.<sup>142</sup> It is Norway's 'responsibility to look after the opportunities of the High North for the benefit of those who live there, but also for the country as a whole'.<sup>143</sup> So the fact that Norway is perceived and perceives itself as a northern country creates responsibilities and Norway feels obliged to take action in the area. It explains Norway's 'hyperfocus' on the High North.<sup>144</sup>

In its policy document, Norway often mentions that it 'will continue' to do something, that it has 'long traditions as a polar nation', and that it 'has shown' to act in a credible, consistent and predictable way.<sup>145</sup> Hereby, Norway emphasises its historical links with the Arctic and shows that the country has proven to be responsible actor which takes its obligations seriously. Previous success shows that Norway is able to take leadership in certain areas, primarily in knowledge development and stewardship of the environment and natural resources. Norway 'must lead the way in the environmental area' and being the 'best steward of the environment' is an important part of Norway's policy.<sup>146</sup> Norway connects knowledge and environmental protection to good governance in the area and intends to be one of the most knowledge driven regions of growth in the world. Thereby, the country will become the most appropriate steward and Norway will be able to meet the challenges in the area and 'seize the opportunities in the north'.<sup>147</sup>

Taking advantage of the opportunities in the High North is one of Norway's most important priorities. It is based on the prospect that the Barents Sea could become a new, strategically important petroleum province and Norway presents the Barents Sea as 'a new European energy province' in its policy.<sup>148</sup> The resource potential of this area has made 'energy a key dimension

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<sup>142</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*, 6.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibidem*, 49.

<sup>144</sup> Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 187.

<sup>145</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, 30.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibidem*, 8.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Norway's Arctic Policy*, 14; Grindheim, 'The Scramble of Arctic?', 16-18.

<sup>148</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, 5.



of the High North dialogues<sup>149</sup> which Norway has been conducting with, inter alia, the European Commission.<sup>150</sup> Consistent with Norway's image of responsible steward, exploitation activities must be undertaken 'in accordance with the principles of sustainable development', and Norway will take 'environmental and climate considerations' into account in everything it does.<sup>151</sup> Since Norway shares the Barents Sea with Russia, relations with Russia 'occupy a special place'.<sup>152</sup> Norwegian-Russian cooperation is vital in order to solve challenges in areas such as environment and resource management.

Other important cooperation partners are the Arctic Council members and key EU countries. Norway is intensifying its diplomatic efforts in the Arctic vis-à-vis the other Arctic States, the EU and the new Asian observers.<sup>153</sup> It is striking that Norway does not differentiate in importance between the Arctic cooperation bodies. While most Arctic states mention the Arctic Council as the primary forum in the area, this is absent in Norway's policy documents. The Arctic Council is mentioned as one of the regional cooperation forums in which Norway participates, next to the Nordic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension.<sup>154</sup> The Arctic Council is primarily seen as a way to seek 'increased international understanding of the urgency of addressing climate change' and Norway's membership allows Norway to 'make an important contribution' to this understanding.<sup>155</sup> It shows the importance of regional cooperation bodies for Norway and even though Norway used a broader and more vague understanding of the High North in its second policy document, Norway's policy is still largely focused on the nearby area.

In Norway's policy documents we can distinguish two different representations of the Arctic. First of all, the policy presents the Arctic as a

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<sup>149</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, 13.

<sup>150</sup> Jensen et al, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 443.

<sup>151</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, 5, 63.

<sup>152</sup> Ibidem, *New Building Blocks in the North*, 53.

<sup>153</sup> Ibidem, *Norway's Arctic Policy*, 18.

<sup>154</sup> The Nordic Council is an inter-parliamentary body in the Nordic Region and consists of 87 elected members from the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission work together in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and it is a forum for intergovernmental cooperation in the Barents area.

<sup>155</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*, 81; Ibidem, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*, 15.

region that faces environmental challenges and that has to be managed through responsible stewardship and good governance. According to Norway, good governance is connected to knowledge and environmental protection. The Arctic thereby contributes in two ways to Norway's national identity. Norway is Europe's northernmost country and the Arctic elements of the country determine to a large extent the way Norway is perceived by others and perceives itself. Furthermore, by emphasising the fact that Norway has a responsibility in the area and 'will continue' its successful leadership, it presents Norway with an opportunity to reinforce its international reputation as a leading nation in environmental policy and one of the world's most knowledge-driven economies. In addition, by using this discursive practice, Norway has created an important role for itself in the area. The country has proven to be a responsible steward and 'must lead the way' in environmental issues.<sup>156</sup>

Secondly, the Arctic, and especially the Barents Sea, is presented as a new resource basis for the Norwegian petroleum industry. The expectations of the Barents Sea as Europe's new energy province has resulted in a more regionally focused Arctic strategy. This is shown by the fact that Norway attaches as much value to regional cooperation institutions as to the Arctic Council, and by the focus on cooperation with Russia in its policies. It also means that the EU plays an important role in Norway's strategy since Europe is the main destination for Norway's hydrocarbons. Through these two representations Norway has created an area that is vital to its national interests and where Norway, a relatively small player in international affairs, can be an influential and important actor.<sup>157</sup>

### **3.5. Russia**

Russia is in many ways one of the key players in the Arctic. It has the largest Arctic coastline and its jurisdiction extends far into the Arctic Ocean.

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<sup>156</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*; Ibidem, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*; Ibidem, *Norway's Arctic Policy*; Grindheim, 'The Scramble of Arctic?', 16-18.

<sup>157</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Building Blocks in the North*; Ibidem, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy*; Ibidem, *Norway's Arctic Policy*; Grindheim, 'The Scramble of Arctic?', 23-25; Jensen et al, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 443.

Furthermore, the area accounts for around 20 per cent of Russia's gross domestic product (GDP), and 22 per cent of total Russian exports. Russia mainly exploits Arctic hydrocarbon resources in the area and exports large quantities of oil and gas to Europe. Since the Russian economy partly depends on this sparsely populated area, Russia's stakes in the Arctic are high. Russia has submitted several claims to the UN Commission and its actions in the Arctic have gained international attention. The flag planting incident, as part of a scientific expedition to bolster the country's claim, was covered by media all over the world. It provoked reactions from the other Arctic states, ranging from outraged and alarmist (Canada, the USA and Denmark) to restrained and pragmatic (Norway). The Russian foreign minister dismissed the action as a publicity stunt and Russia said to be surprised by the fierce reactions of the other states.<sup>158</sup>

In the media, this incident was seen as an example of Russia's increasing assertiveness in the Arctic. When discussing Russia's Arctic policy, the emphasis often is on the aspects of military security, defence and border protection. But military security is a small part of Russia's strategy and other aspects of the Arctic policy are mostly neglected. By focusing only on the military aspects and Russia's ambitions to extend its jurisdiction in the Arctic, Russia is portrayed as an assertive and aggressive Arctic actor. This is perhaps more telling of how the western media still interprets Russia's actions in Cold War terms. Russia's Arctic strategy documents show a more nuanced image of Russia's interests and intentions in the north.<sup>159</sup>

The main underlying assumption of Russia's Arctic strategy is the expectation of large oil and gas fields in Russia's Arctic territory.<sup>160</sup> Russia's main national interest in the region is the 'usage of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation as a strategic resource basis, allowing for the solution of problems of

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<sup>158</sup> Alexandrov, 'Labyrinths of the Arctic Policy', 113-114; Ekaterina Klimenko, 'Russia's evolving Arctic strategy. Drivers, Challenges and New Opportunities', *SIPRI Policy Paper* 42 (2014) 1-25, 1; Klaus Dodds, 'Flag planting and finger pointing: The Law of the Sea, the Arctic and the political geographies of the outer continental shelf', *Political Geography* 29 (2010) 63-73, 63; Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy', 44.

<sup>159</sup> Jensen et al, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 446; Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', 880.

<sup>160</sup> Barbora Padrtová, 'Russians approach towards the Arctic Region', in: M. Majer, R. Ondrejcsák and Tarasovič (ed.), *Panorama of global security environment* (Bratislava 2012) 339-350, 344.

socio-economic development.<sup>161</sup> Since Russia's oil and gas exports are its main source of income, Russia believes that developing Arctic resources will contribute to solving its socio-economic problems. Therefore, Russia emphasises the strategic importance of the Arctic in its policies.<sup>162</sup> Other main interests are safeguarding the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation, the conservation of the Arctic's unique ecosystems and the development of the Northern Sea Route. The NSR is important for Russia as Russia expects it to become a transit route between Asia and Europe. Therefore, it stresses the fact that the use of the NSR by international shipping falls under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.<sup>163</sup>

Both policy documents are focused on the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. This is a unique part of the country due to climate conditions, low population density, the remoteness and the low stability of ecosystems.<sup>164</sup> Because of this national focus, most of the strategy is concerned with the social-economic development of the area. Russia's strategy is a point-by-point policy. It sums up Russia's main national interests, the main objectives and strategic priorities, the basic problems, the means and mechanisms for realization, and it provides Russia with a timetable for implementing this policy. Russia's Arctic policy is therefore more an action plan for developing Russia's Arctic. It deals with topics that are not mentioned in other strategies, such as the development of information technology and communication, especially on the NSR. The policy is rather general and cautious in its approach. Russia often states that it has to 'modernize', 'optimize' and 'improve' certain aspects in the area. Using these

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<sup>161</sup> Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*.

<sup>162</sup> Padrtová, 'Russian approach towards the Arctic Region', 342-343; Piskunova, 'Russia in the Arctic. What's lurking behind the flag?', 854-855.

<sup>163</sup> Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*; Klimenko, 'Russia's evolving Arctic strategy', 3-12; Padrtová, 'Russian approach towards the Arctic Region', 344.

<sup>164</sup> Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*.

verbs enhances the characteristics of an action plan and indicates that Russia want to work towards a certain goal.<sup>165</sup>

Russia wants to develop the Arctic as its 'leading strategic resource base'<sup>166</sup> by 2020. In order to do so, Russia needs a stable and peaceful Arctic where it can take unilateral actions to modernize and improve the region and where Russia has 'mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral'<sup>167</sup> cooperative relations with other Arctic states. The upkeep of a favourable military operational regime in Russia's Arctic Zone is instrumental to safeguard the Arctic as a zone of peace. Furthermore, Russia acknowledges the international system of the Arctic and wants to strengthen 'through regional organisations – including the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council – good relations between Russia and Arctic states'.<sup>168</sup> It shows that Russia follows a pragmatic line in its policy and that it will abide to the international legal system.<sup>169</sup>

So Russia sees the Arctic mainly as a basis for economic development and the area is very important for Russia's economy as it provides 20 per cent of Russia's GDP. The idea that the Arctic could contribute to Russia's socio-economic development is based on the assumption of oil and gas fields in Russia's Arctic and the expectation of the NSR becoming a transit route between Europe and Asia. The government has created an action plan to develop the area. Implementing the policy will enable Russia 'to retain its role as the leading Arctic Power.'<sup>170</sup> The language Russia uses in its policy is very moderate. It uses verbs as 'improve', 'modernize' and 'create'. It demonstrates that Russia's policy mainly focuses on Russia's Arctic territory and creates an image of Russia as a pragmatic Arctic actor.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Jensen et al, 'Approaching the North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 446. Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*;

<sup>166</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>167</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>168</sup> Ibidem; Klimenko, 'Russia's evolving Arctic strategy', 12-13.

<sup>169</sup> Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', 881.

<sup>170</sup> Burgess, 'The Foundations of the Russian Federation's State Policy in the Arctic Until 2020 and Beyond', translation of *Основы государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу*.

<sup>171</sup> Ibidem; Author unknown, 'The development strategy of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation', translation of *Strategiya Razvitiya Arkticheskoi Zony Rossiyskoi Federatsii Obespecheniya Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti na Period do 2020 Goda*; Jensen et al, 'Approaching the

Russian actions sometimes contradict this image and show an assertive, almost aggressive, Russia. By planting a flag on the sea bottom, Russia boldly claimed the North Pole as part of its territory. Russia often holds military exercises near the borders of other Arctic states whereby it provokes other countries. In addition, concerns have been raised about Russia's territorial ambitions after the events in Ukraine. It has forced many Arctic states to re-evaluate their relations with Russia and has raised questions about the sustainability of international cooperation in the Arctic. So even though Russia stresses in its policy that it wants a peaceful and cooperative Arctic region, its actions do not always support this idea.<sup>172</sup>

### 3.6. The United States

Alaska is positioned in the Arctic, which makes the United States an Arctic coastal state. While the USA is the strongest economic power of all Arctic states, it is not necessarily the most influential Arctic actor. America's share of the Arctic land territories is relatively small and just a few thousand citizens of the United States live in the Arctic. Furthermore, the USA has not ratified UNCLOS and therefore cannot raise formal claims concerning the continental shelf to the UN Commission. The Arctic is far from the top of Washington's foreign and security policy agenda and the country has kept a low profile in the Arctic until quite recently. The actions of other Arctic states, especially the flag planting incident of Russia and Canada's claim on the jurisdiction of the NWP, have gained the attention of the USA and Washington adopted a new homeland security directive on the Arctic in 2009.<sup>173</sup>

In its policy, the USA states that the Arctic region is 'primarily a maritime domain'.<sup>174</sup> In this domain, human activity is increasing and will increase even more in the future. This development requires the US to 'assert a more active and

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North: Norwegian and Russian foreign policy discourses', 446; Lackenbauer, 'Mirror images? Canada, Russia, and the circumpolar world', 881.

<sup>172</sup> Klimenko, 'Russia's evolving Arctic strategy', 13-14; Piskunova, 'Russia in the Arctic. What's lurking behind the flag?', 855-863.

<sup>173</sup> Wegge, 'The political order in the Arctic', 169; Åtland, 'Interstate relations in the Arctic', 154; Petersen, 'The Arctic as a New Arena for Danish Foreign Policy', 48-49.

<sup>174</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*.

influential national presence to protect its Arctic interests and to protect sea power throughout the region.<sup>175</sup> The changes in the Arctic are described by the USA as 'very real challenges'.<sup>176</sup> In order to address changing regional conditions and protect its strategies, the USA must be 'proactive and disciplined'.<sup>177</sup> The *National Strategy for the Arctic region* is 'intended to position the United States to respond effectively to challenges and emerging opportunities arising from significant increases in Arctic activity'.<sup>178</sup>

It is thus mostly a reactive and defensive policy and the highest priority of the USA is to 'protect the American people, our sovereign territory and rights, natural resources, and interests of the United States.'<sup>179</sup> Meeting national security and homeland security needs are the most important fields of action in all three policy documents, and the United States 'remain vigilant to protect the security interests of the United States and [...] allies.'<sup>180</sup> The fact that the United States Department of Defense also has created an Arctic policy indicates the importance of security in the Arctic for the USA. The Department of Defense has identified the desired end-state of the Arctic as 'a secure and stable region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded, the U.S. homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges.'<sup>181</sup> These interests include missile defence and early warning, deployment of sea and air operations, and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.<sup>182</sup>

Freedom of the seas is a top national priority for the USA. According to the USA the NWP is a strait used for international navigation, the NSR includes straits for international navigation, and the 'regime of transit passage applies to passage through those straits.'<sup>183</sup> A lot of actions the USA wants to undertake in the Arctic are focused on protecting certain rights of the country, such as protecting maritime commerce, protecting the homeland and protecting the free flow of resources. Furthermore, the USA must preserve the 'international legal

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<sup>175</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>176</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 5.

<sup>177</sup> Ibidem, 4.

<sup>178</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 2.

<sup>179</sup> Ibidem, 6.

<sup>180</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>181</sup> Department of Defence, *Arctic Strategy*, 2.

<sup>182</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*; Åtland, 'Interstate relations in the Arctic', 154.

<sup>183</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*.

principles of freedom of navigation and overflight and other uses of the sea and airspace related to these freedoms'.<sup>184</sup> In order to do so the USA will identify, develop, and maintain the capacity and capabilities necessary to promote safety, security, and stability in the region, including military capabilities.<sup>185</sup>

Another central goal of the USA's Arctic policy is 'protecting the unique and changing environment of the Arctic'<sup>186</sup> and to pursue responsible Arctic stewardship. According to the USA, what happens in one part of the Arctic region can have significant implications for other Arctic states as well as for the whole international community. Therefore, the USA will 'seek to strengthen partnerships through existing multilateral fora and legal frameworks dedicated to common Arctic issues'<sup>187</sup>, such as the Arctic Council and the IMO. Due to common interests, the Arctic states are the 'ideal partners in the region'.<sup>188</sup> In its strategy, the USA indicates that it should consider new international arrangements or enhancements to existing arrangements as appropriate. However, this does not apply to the Arctic Council. The USA is one of the most distinct opponents to enlarging the mandate of the Arctic Council. According to the United States, the Arctic Council 'should remain a high-level forum [...] and not be transformed into a formal international organization'.<sup>189</sup>

The Arctic is less important to the USA than it is to other Arctic states since the country's territory in the Arctic is relatively small and its strategic interests are focused on other parts of the world, such as the Middle East.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, the area has traditionally not been used for identity-building purposes to the extent seen in Canada, for example.<sup>191</sup> But over the last few years there has been a growing awareness of the importance of the Arctic. The developments in the Arctic create new challenges for the USA so the country felt the need to develop an Arctic policy. For the USA, the Arctic is primarily a maritime area where, due to increased human activity, new security issues have arisen. The USA uses rather defensive language in its strategies, by often

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<sup>184</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 10.

<sup>185</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*.

<sup>186</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 7.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibidem*, 8.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibidem*, 9.

<sup>189</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*.

<sup>190</sup> Ingimundarson, 'Territorial Discourses and Identity Politics. Iceland's role in the Arctic', 176.

<sup>191</sup> Átland, 'Interstate relations in the Arctic', 154.



emphasising that the USA needs to 'protect' or 'safeguard' something. The USA is much less focused on developing economic opportunities in the area than other Arctic states. The emphasis is on geopolitical aspects and on protecting its freedoms and homeland security, giving its Arctic strategy the characteristics of a security strategy.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> The White House, *National Security Presidential Directive*; The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

## ***CONCLUSION***

The analysis shows that the Arctic states all approach the region from a different perspective. It indicates that a region is not something that exists out there in the world, but that it is constructed by humans through text and speech. This is certainly true for the Arctic. There are no regional characteristics that separate the area in the north, and the 60° and 66° latitudes we use as demarcations are rather historically and mythically grounded. The most important actors determine the way we think about a region and how this region will develop. So their perspective on the area influences the political dynamic and has consequences for the position of outsiders. In this case, the most influential actors are the Arctic states and their perspective on the area has consequences for the position of the European Union.

Discourse analysis is a method to reveal these perspectives. Discourse analysis focuses on the discursive practices of texts by analysing the verbs, adverbs and adjectives attached to nouns. The method is based on the same assumption as the region-building theory, namely that international systems are constituted by ideas, not by material forces. The documents I used are not enough to establish the Arctic discourses of the Arctic states. A single text cannot provide enough empirically arguments to support a discourse.<sup>193</sup> But by analysing the discursive practices of the Arctic policy documents, I can uncover the main perspective of the Arctic states.

Analysing these perspectives helps to explain the difficult position of the EU in the Arctic. The EU wants be involved in the management of the area, especially now that the area is rapidly changing. Global warming has a more profound effect on the Arctic and opens up the area for economic activities. It is estimated that the Arctic is rich with natural resources, especially hydrocarbon resources. Furthermore, the melting of sea ice creates new transit routes for shipping, opens up new fishing grounds and stimulates Arctic tourism. This has led to an increased interest in the area from the Arctic states as well as non-Arctic states.

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<sup>193</sup> Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations', 233.

The Arctic states have stepped up their activities in the area and submitted overlapping claims on the Arctic continental shelf. It has led to several disputes and shows that the Arctic region is still in development. The EU indicated in its Arctic policy that it wants to step up its engagement in the area, but in order to influence Arctic politics, it has to be recognised as a partner in Arctic affairs. So far, Europe has achieved mixed results in the area. The EU has extended its research activities in the Arctic but the EU is still not accepted as a permanent observer in the Arctic Council.<sup>194</sup> The fact that all Arctic states want to protect the Arctic environment, makes EU's contribution to Arctic research an asset. Therefore, the EU has been successful in extending its research activities. But on other issues its involvement is much less straightforward.

The ideas of the Arctic states influence to a large extent the position of the EU in the Arctic. The analysis has shown that the Arctic is not a political union. Every state has its own perspective and interests. Some countries often use words and verbs associated with geopolitics in their strategies, such as 'exercising sovereignty', 'jurisdiction', and 'protecting' their territories. We can most notably find this in the policy documents of Canada, the United States and Iceland. This perspective makes it difficult for the EU to be seen as a legitimate partner in the area. The European Union is a highly complex supranational and inter-governmental organisation which does not have an Arctic coastline. Therefore, the EU has no jurisdiction in the area and no legitimate position.

In Canada, the geopolitical aspects are combined with identity building practices. The Arctic is inextricably linked to its identity and Canada's strategy is focused on protecting and exercising its sovereignty. This perspective makes Canada hesitant to allow non-Arctic states to exert influence. Canada reacted strongly to the European ban on seal imports and the idea of creating an Arctic treaty. This was a confirmation for Canada that non-Arctic states lack knowledge about Arctic affairs and that the current political situation of the Arctic is sufficient. Besides, it is largely due to Canada that the EU has not yet received the status of permanent observer.

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<sup>194</sup> EU Commission and the High Representative of the EU, 'Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps', 12-18.

Iceland and the USA are less assertive in their policy documents. The USA is primarily concerned with homeland security issues and the protection of maritime freedoms. Even though the USA does not mention the EU in its policy, they have overlapping objects. Both are large maritime economies and benefit from freedom of navigation on the new Arctic transit route. They have both contested the jurisdictional claims of Canada and Russia on the NWP and NSR. So even though the United States' perspective on the Arctic would make the EU's position in the Arctic weak, in certain issues they can be partners to reach common objectives.

Iceland's policy is largely focused on safeguarding its interest by enhancing its position in the area. Therefore, Iceland wants to be recognised as a coastal state. The Arctic should not be limited by a narrow geographical definition, but should be defined as an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters. Based on this idea, other non-Arctic states also have a legitimate interest in the Arctic. The position of the EU would be enhanced if the other coastal state would accept Iceland's position, but so far Iceland has not been recognised as a coastal state and its influence is still rather limited.

The other Arctic states have a more economic and environmental perspective, with the emphasis on 'development', 'sustainable growth', 'optimize and modernize' the area and 'seizing the opportunities' in their documents. Since the EU is a strong economic power and a leader in fighting climate change, its engagement in the area could be an asset for these countries. Denmark's strategy is primarily concerned with using the Arctic's huge economic potential for the benefit of the indigenous people and with creating a healthy, productive and self-sustaining community in Greenland. The EU already contributes to Greenland's economy by supporting the country financially. Furthermore, Greenland and the EU have signed a joint agreement in which they renewed their cooperation in several areas, among which the Arctic. Since Denmark is part of the EU, Denmark benefits from further EU engagement in the Arctic and Denmark indicates in its policy that it wants to enhance the European Union's position in the area.

The Arctic presents Norway the opportunity to play an important role in environmental protection and knowledge building and thereby reinforces its image as a responsible steward which will continue to show good governance in the area. Norway and the EU both prioritize the protection of the environment and thus pursue to a large extent the same objectives. Furthermore, due to the expectations of petroleum activities in the Barents Sea, Norway's policy is to a certain extent regionally focused. This means that regional cooperation bodies, such as the Northern Dimension and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, play an important role in Norway's Arctic policies. The Union is already an actor in these regional bodies. In addition, the EU is the main destination of Norwegian petroleum resources. This makes the EU a legitimate partner in the Arctic, according to Norway's perspective.

The discursive practice in Russia's policy indicates that the country sees the Arctic from an economic perspective. Russia is mainly concerned with developing its Arctic Zone, allowing the region to contribute to solving its socio-economic problems. But where Norway and Denmark stresses the importance of international cooperation for economic development and environmental protection, Russia's policy is primarily focused on unilateral actions. Russia's focus on the use of the NSR under national jurisdiction runs counter to Europe's interest. In addition, even though Russia shows in its policy documents a pragmatic and economic orientated strategy, its actions sometimes contradict this image. Relations between Russia and the EU have always been a little tense and they have deteriorated by the Ukraine crisis. Combined with the fact that Europe's interests in the area are different than Russia's, it is more difficult for the EU to be acknowledged by Russia as a partner in Arctic affairs.

This analysis shows that there are different perspectives on the Arctic which influences the actions of the Arctic states. Thus, the position of Europe in the Arctic and its influence does not only depend on the issue area<sup>195</sup> or the competences of the EU<sup>196</sup>, but also depends on the perspectives of the Arctic states. Since they all have different perspectives, it makes it difficult for the EU to be recognised as a natural partner in Arctic affairs.

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<sup>195</sup> Pieper et al., 'The European Union as an Actor in Arctic Governance', 241-242.

<sup>196</sup> Koivurova et al., 'The present and future competences of the European Union in the Arctic', 370.

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