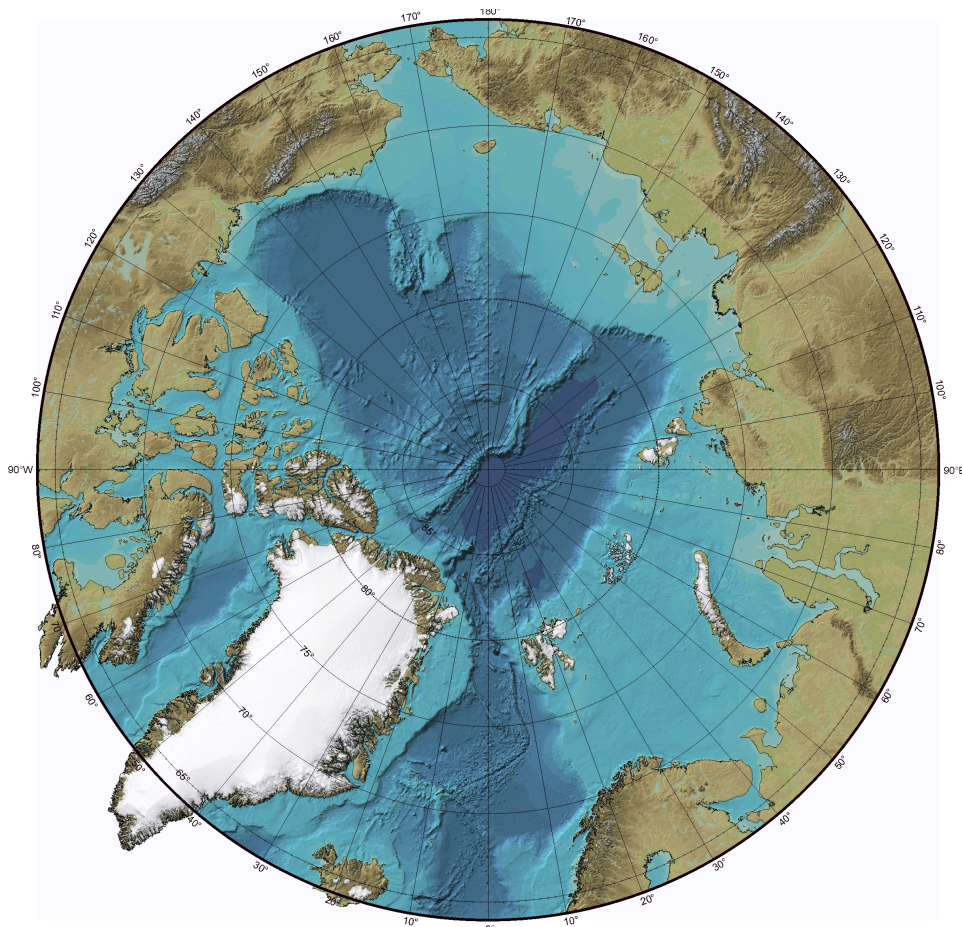


The University of Westminster  
Regent Campus  
School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Languages

# The development of the **Arctic** security discourse

## From securitisation of sovereignty to desecuritisation and governance



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*Marc Jacobsen*  
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*Marc Jacobsen, 2013*

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**In confirm that the above-submitted dissertation is my own work and that all references/sources are duly acknowledged**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AC	Arctic Council
ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment
AEPS	Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy
AWPPA	Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
EU	European Union
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPY	International Polar Year
IR	International Relations
ISS	International Security Studies
NASA	National Aeronautics & Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defence Command
NSR	Northern Sea Route
NWP	Northwest Passage
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
U.S.	United States
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## 1. Introduction

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The Arctic is a region, which throughout the years has been known for its cold, challenging environment and remote location at the very North, which have attracted intrepid adventurers for centuries that have competed to be the first to reach the remaining pristine parts of the world. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the Arctic region was already embodied in the sovereign territories of states, as decided at the Berlin conference in 1884-1885 (Emmerson, 2010:pp.99-100), but the North Pole was yet not explored by man, which made it a prominent object for various expeditions supported by nation states that wanted to strengthen the nationalist prestige and expand their sovereign territories. Several expeditions made the attempt, but it was not until 1926 when the famous Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen reached the North Pole in his airship named 'Norge' that such an achievement was widely accepted. His claim of sovereignty on behalf of Norway was, however, not recognised by the international community and, thus, it is still perceived as a terra nullius (ibid.).

While being a site of national competition for many years, the Arctic has also always been an area of global concern and cooperation, as internationally coordinated scientific expeditions have sought, and still seek, answers to fundamental geophysical and meteorological questions of global concern such as the climate changes, which have a more radical impact on the High North than anywhere else. Since 1951, the Arctic temperatures have ascended 1,5°C, which is twice as much as the global average of 0,7°C (ACIA, 2004:8), and has caused a 15,1 percent decline per decade of the perennial Arctic ice cover from 1980 to 2012 (nasa.gov, 2012).

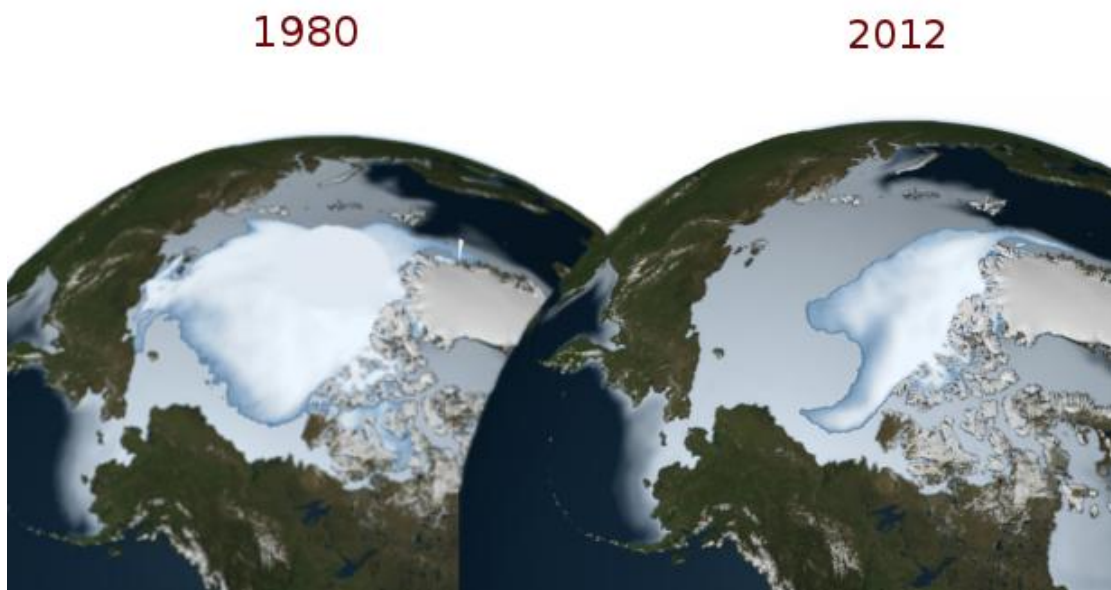


Figure 2: *The decline of the Arctic perennial ice cap from 1980 to 2012* (nasa.gov, 2012)

Concurrently with the vanishing ice and the growing global anxiety, the changes in the Arctic environment reveals a paradox for the legitimate occupiers of the Arctic seabed as new shipping routes emerge and significant reserves of oil and natural gas are registered. Approximately 13 percent and 30 percent of the global undiscovered reserves of oil and natural gas are estimated to be found in this area (USGS, 2008:1), while the emerging shipping routes are proclaimed to be future rivals to the Strait of Malacca, the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal by shortening the route from San Francisco to Rotterdam by 25 percent through the Northwest Passage and cutting the distance from Rotterdam to Yokohama by 40 percent through the Northern Sea Route (Emmerson et al., 2012:pp.29-31).



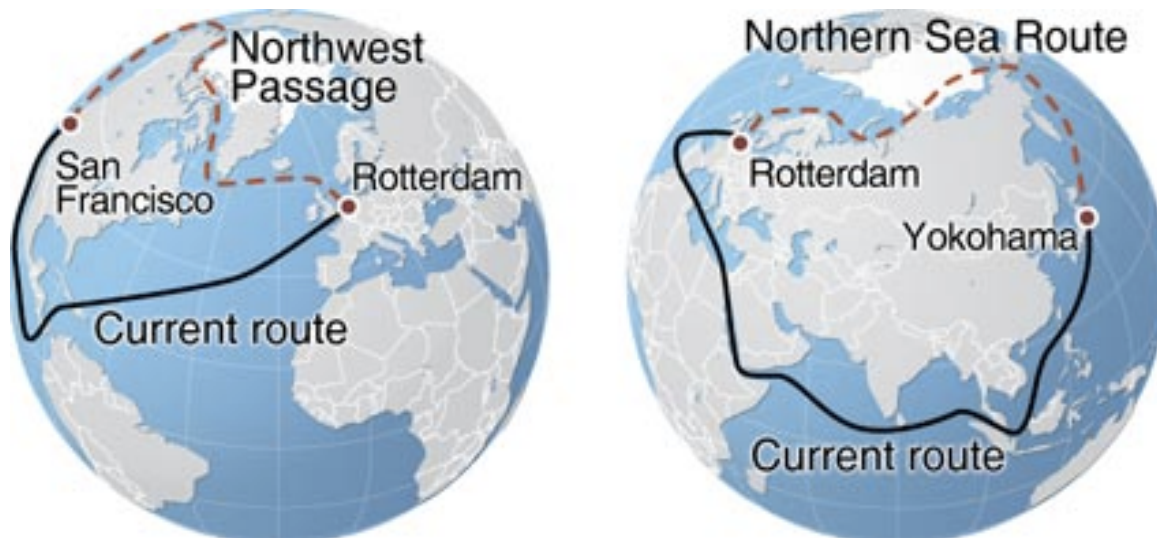


Figure 3: “Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage compared with currently used shipping routes” (grida.no, 2007)

These facts have contributed to the development of the Arctic into a site of complex geopolitics and have drawn the attention of powerful politicians, environmentalist NGO’s, wealthy private companies and the Arctic indigenous populations, who all aim to promote their individual causes by seeking influence on the process of Arctic policymaking. The primary actors in this policymaking and in the present dissertation are the Arctic Five consisting of Canada, The Kingdom of Denmark<sup>1</sup>, Norway, Russia and the United States, which are the littoral states bordering the Arctic Ocean, to which the last main unresolved disputes about delineations of national frontiers are related and, thus, is the area where conflicts could emerge. Other writings about Arctic geopolitics sometimes refer to the Arctic Eight, which additionally include the three other member states of the Arctic Council: Iceland, Finland and Sweden, which do not have any frontiers bordering the Arctic Ocean. This is an important fact that occasionally excludes them from participating in important decision-making meetings and it is also the argument supporting my decision to leave them out of the analysis.

<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of Denmark: Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

Within the study of International Relations (IR) the writings concerning the Arctic has developed from being an area of strategic military interest during the Cold War to an area of more diversified interests concurrently with the increasing effects of the climate changes, adding economic, environmental and societal aspects to the Arctic authorship of IR scholars. Especially since 2008, when new scientific data revealed the wealth of the Arctic seabed, the area has been a more frequent area of IR interest and an academic discussion has evolved about whether the new economic opportunities and the global financial crisis would stimulate interstate conflicts influenced by realpolitik (Borgerson, 2008; Zellen, 2009; Howard, 2009; Berkman, 2013), or, contrary, encourage peaceful cooperation and good Arctic governance (Ebinger & Zambetakis, 2009; Brigham, 2010; Rosamond, 2011; Young, 2012). This debate has triggered my academic interest and has assisted my decision to conduct a critical analysis of the historical development of the Arctic security discourse since the beginning of the Cold War until July 2013. By this analysis I will indicate how the Arctic security discourse has changed from being dominated by zero-sum thinking and realpolitik during the Cold War to plus-sum thinking and good Arctic governance after the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2008. My main argument is that on this day the interstate sovereignty issues between the Arctic Five were desecuritized by an agreement on scientifically based international law and that this agreement enhanced the Arctic governance structures which since then have grown stronger in favour of a more peaceful security discourse.

In the next chapter, I will explain the theoretical concepts that constitute the theoretical framework used when analysing the developments of the Arctic security discourse. First I will elaborate on the Copenhagen School's widened security approach with significant focus on two of their main concepts of Securitisation and Desecuritisation. Second and third I will

explain how the concepts of sovereignty and governance will be used, as the definitions are central for an accurate understanding of how the Arctic security discourse has developed.

The ensuing analysis will be divided into three periods in which I will indicate how the Arctic security discourse has been shaped by national strategies, international treaties and speeches by the five Arctic governments. The first period is the Cold War spanning from 1947 to 1991 during which zero-sum thinking and securitisation of sovereignty defined the Arctic security discourse. The second period from 1991 to 2008 is what I have labelled the Intermediate Period because the primary securitisation of the Arctic shifted from the military sector to the environmental and societal sectors, while the interstate sovereignty issues were continuously discursively dominating. This tendency was stimulated in 2008 by the incipient global financial crisis and by new scientific data that shed new light on the Arctic as an area that could benefit the legal owners. In reaction, the Ilulissat Declaration was signed by which the interstate sovereignty issues were desecuritized through interdependent acknowledgement of scientifically based international law, which enabled further branching of good Arctic governance and plus-sum thinking.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

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The theoretical framework of the present dissertation is inspired by the Copenhagen School's widened take on security and based on its central concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation. The theory has been object for comprehensive critique from various different theoretical positions targeted at its state-centric focus and politically passivity (Booth, 2007), its absence of gender (Hansen, 2000), and most prominently by Bill McSweeney who named the approach in his critique of the concept of societal security, which he criticised for its perception of identity as fixed rather than constructed (McSweeney, 1996). In reply to this critique, the Copenhagen School has emphasised that *"We do take identities as socially constituted but not radically moreso than other social structures"* (Wæver et al., 1998:205) and that it is necessary to analytically omit the process of identity constitution in the study of security discourse and instead use a fixed representation of an identity in favor of the primary purpose (Buzan & Wæver, 1997). I agree that one must prioritise in order to conduct an effective analysis and, thus, I have prioritised the elitist perspective of the Arctic Five governments, which is adequate to the perspective of the Copenhagen School. This prioritisation does not, however, mean that I perceive this perspective as being generally more important than the perspectives of the indigenous communities, the NGO representatives, the private oil and gas companies and the non-Arctic states. It is merely a prioritisation made in order to conduct an effective analysis of the development of the security discourse since 1947.

### **The Copenhagen School: sectors, securitisation & desecuritisation**

In the analysis of the historical development of the Arctic security discourse, my main aim is to indicate *how* the discourse has been constructed throughout the years and hence try to understand *why* the governments of the Arctic Five have operated the way they have. In this

perspective, I find significant inspiration in the theories of the Copenhagen School, which understand security as something intersubjective and discursively constructed where the articulation designating something as an existential threat is the main interest rather than the referent of the utterance (Wæver, 1995:55). This approach is a part of the so called widening approaches of International Security Studies (ISS) that challenged the traditional approaches of IR Realism and Liberalism in the immediate post-Cold War period by formulating a discursive take on security, which included the environmental, the economic, the societal and the political sectors in addition to the military sector that traditionally had been the focus of ISS (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:pp.187-191). The Copenhagen School, as formulated most prominently by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, has solid roots in speech act theory and label themselves radical constructivists regarding security in the way they perceive security as a human product, the securitisation process as self-referential and the outcome of the process as contingent and constantly open for restructuration (Wæver et al., 1998:204). Though the shared perspective on the contingency of discourse, they do, however, not limit the purpose of the theory to merely telling *how* the discourse could have been different like the poststructuralists do, but they further aim to grasp the patterns of the analysis and try to understand *why* it has developed as it has by looking at the motives behind the discursive actions (ibid.:pp 205-206).

In addition to the broader and more inclusive focus on additional security sectors, I find Wæver and Buzan's concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation particularly useful in the analysis, as these discursive processes determine how the Arctic is perceived, which precautions that should be considered as wells describing which actions that may be legitimate to carry out. When something is securitised it is constituted as an existential threat that permits suspension of civil and liberal rights that would normally be respected if the referent object had remained on the lower discursive level of normal politics (Buzan & Hansen,

2009:217). To label something a security problem does not, however, reflect whether the articulated issue is a security threat per se as it, according to the Copenhagen School, is a political decision for conceptualisation that legitimises specific, often state-centered, solutions (Wæver, 1995:65). Whether the securitisation is successful, and hence constructs a certain discourse, is not exclusively a top-down process but is, however, an interrelated social process that depends on the reception of the relevant audience, consisting of politicians, bureaucrats, the media and academics, who decide whether to accept or reject the securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998:pp23-26). The securitisation is declared by a securitising actor who or which securitises an issue by announcing it to be an existentially threatened referent object that has a legitimate right to survive (Buzan et al., 1998:36). In the sectors relevant for the analysis - the military, the economic, the environmental and the societal - the referent objects are the sovereign state, the public or private economy, humankind and large-scale collective identities, which are existentially threatened by externally imposed dangers such as other nation states, bankruptcies, climate changes and migration (ibid.:pp.22-23).

The opposite of security is not, as one might think, insecurity, because insecurity is the mere situation when a security problem is present while no response, however, has not yet been articulated (Wæver, 1995:56). Instead, the binary opposition to security is *desecurity*, which contrary to security follows democratic rules and procedures of transparency and accountability and therefore is found on the lower discursive level of normal politics (Wæver 1995:pp.56-57). Desecuritisation happens when a securitised issue is removed from the sphere of security and can be achieved through three different processes. The first is by simply ignoring the securitisation of an issue, which through ceased discursive association with the realm of security ultimately leads to desecuritisation (Huysmans, 1995:65). Critics of this strategy argue that such passive desecuritisation is not normatively desirable as it may repress

an issue, which should be actively dealt with through democratic discussions (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:217). The second process is more direct as the issue is downgraded by the political community, which actively redefines it by addressing the defined issue away from a perception as being a threat towards a valued referent object (Buzan & Wæver, 2003:489). Third, and most common, is the indirect discursive process through which the political community shifts the orientation of the security discourse towards other issues that are upgraded to the security sphere simultaneously with the reduction of the attention to the issue previously securitised (ibid.).

### **The concept of sovereignty**

Within the study of International Relations (IR), the concept of sovereignty is greatly contested and ascribed to various situations on all levels of society resulting in diverse analyses of the sovereignty of individuals, groups, nations and states. In the articulations concerning sovereignty that will be central in the analysis, the concept is ascribed exclusively to the protection of the national territory, which is congruent with the Copenhagen School's perception of sovereignty as the very identity of a state and the constant referent object of the national military sector (Buzan et al., 1998:150). This perception is shared by the dominant understanding defined by IR Realists and their successors who have the sovereignty of states at the very foundation of their theoretical school. Because of the unilateral focus in the focal documents mentioning sovereignty in the Arctic context, the Neorealist approach is, thus, the one I will describe in the following and the theoretical definition I will refer to in the analysis. Additionally I will, moreover, also include the more neutral definitions determined by the international system, which I will describe in the second paragraph of this section.

The IR Neorealists assume that sovereign states are the principal actors in the international system. The citizens of the state are believed to be skeptical towards one another, and in order to escape what Thomas Hobbes labeled the anarchical 'state of nature' in which *bellum omnium contra omnes* (the war of all against all) is present, they "sign" a social contract by which the citizens abdicate some of their liberty to the sovereign (state) in return for protection from both internal and external threats (Jackson & Sørensen, 2010:64).

The state itself is also believed to be situated in an antagonistic relationship to the other sovereign states in the international community so in order to ensure its own survival and the security of its citizens, the state creates as powerful a military capacity as possible, and if not powerful enough it seeks to make alliances with other states with whom they seek to balance the power in a zero-sum game (Heywood, 2007:pp130-131). This leads to a security dilemma on the international scene as "(...) *the means of security for one state are, in their very existence, the means by which other states are threatened*" (Waltz, 1979:40), which means that the attainment of domestic security is accompanied by inevitable international insecurity that could be solved by an establishment of a world government. This idea is, however, rejected by neorealist academics as being naïve, because such an establishment would force the sovereign states to relinquish their independence and, hence, make them renounce their sovereignty (Jackson & Sørensen, 2010:65). According to neorealism, international peace is, thus, an illusion made impossible by the sovereignty of states.

Though this core position of the concept of sovereignty within the Neorealist framework, the use of the concept is not restricted by theoretical boundaries but is today used in many different context and with four different definitions within the international system. These are domestic sovereignty, interdependence sovereignty, international legal sovereignty and Westphalian sovereignty (Krasner, 1993:pp3-4). Domestic sovereignty is the actual effective



control within the borders of a state recognised by a formal political authority, while interdependence sovereignty is defined by the nation states' collaboration in order to control and regulate the movement of people, information, goods and capital across their mutual borders (ibid.). Westphalian sovereignty, which is the primary reference for the neorealist perception and the concept most relevant for the securitisation of the Arctic during the two earliest analytical periods, is the mere domestic authority of nation states on their own national territory as determined at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that established a prejudice against interference in another nation's domestic affairs (Buzan & Hansen, 2009:pp24, 28-30). International legal sovereignty, which will be significantly relevant in the analysis of the post-Ilulissat period, refers to a supreme legal authority achieved through formal mutual recognition by sovereign states and can be an international organisation that has been attributed with sovereign power to determine justice and injustice in conflicts among nation states (Krasner, 1993:4).

### **The concept of governance**

Like the concept of sovereignty, the concept of governance is debatable and has been applied to various different contexts and fields of study, such as economics, politics and cultural geography, which has increased its complexity and weakened the fixation of one single meaning of the concept (Kjær, 2004:pp.1-2). Traditionally, it has been associated with government and was not a highly profiled concept before it re-emerged in the 1980s when political scientists re-defined it as a term distinct from government by an inclusion of non-governmental actors in the decision-making process with an enhanced focus on the importance of network (ibid.:3). Central to the re-emergence is the intensified globalisation in which both opportunities and threats transcend national borders and existing political jurisdictions, which require new constellations and international cooperation in order to find

adequate solutions to complex issues from economic regulation and environmental degradation to human-trafficking and terrorism (Baylis et al., 2011:pp27-28). In this development, sovereignty is still a principal juridical attribute of states but they have lost some control within their national territory as the sovereign authority is divided between several actors and organisations at local, national, regional and global level in which the tendency that *“domestic politics is internationalized and world politics becomes domesticated”* is intensified (ibid.:28). A tendency, which is utmost present in the Arctic where the extraordinary warming of and the subsequent global risks and opportunities call for cooperation across international borders, sectoral boundaries and levels of society.

Within the study of IR there can be identified at least three perceptions of the concept: a narrow, a broader and a minimal perception, which disagree upon how efficient it may be in an international system where states may decline to participate (Kjær, 2004:pp.81-82).

The minimal perception is equivalent to the neorealist sceptical notion of a world government, which is dismissed as being naïve, while the narrow perception that refers to basically all transnational activities, is found in cosmopolitanism’s democratic global governance where the ideal is that cosmopolitan institutions should have the right to override states in a world where sovereignty is subordinated international law (ibid.:pp.82-96). The broader perception, which is the one I will refer to in the analysis, is represented by the school of IR Neoliberalism which has adopted the concept of governance as one of its core concepts in the research on how to create and maintain institutions that aim to manage the process of globalisation (Baylis et al., 2011:121). This perception does not question the prominence of sovereign states as important actors on the world scene, but it criticises the neorealist unilateral focus on states when they argue that international organisations, transnational corporations, trade between companies

and the general travel of individuals also are essential to the study of world politics (Kjær, 2004:62).

### **3. The Cold War (1947 - 1991)**

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During the Second World War, the Arctic was an important route for delivery of aircraft from the United States to the Soviet Union, used in favor of their common goal of ending the expansions and atrocities by Nazi Germany and Japan (Emmerson, 2010:130). With the beginning of the ensuing Cold War their partnership, however, changed into a superpower rivalry and the collaborative route altered into a direction of reciprocal nuclear threat, as the High North was the only location across which they faced each other directly.

#### **Arctic securitisation through the military sector**

Within the Cold War Western context, the Arctic was first explicitly securitised by General Harp Arnold of the U.S. Air Force in 1946 who stated that: *"If there is a third world war (...) its strategic center will be the North Pole"* (Murphy, 1947:61 in Hough, 2013:25). This utterance was further enhanced by 'The Strategy of Containment' as articulated in the 'Truman Doctrine' of 1947 that propagated the perspective that the U.S. was surrounded by the USSR from East, West and the North (Truman, 1947). A situation, which was analysed by contemporary IR academic Hans W. Weigert who emphasised, that *"In the Far North the situation is obscure. Here the USSR is our immediate neighbor over the top of the world, across the 'Arctic Mediterranean'"* (Weigert, 1947:5). Thus, the Arctic was at the time securitised by politicians, by the military and by academics who, with the western world as the referent object, perceived the Arctic as an area from which existential threats towards the U.S. and its allies could derive. A remarkable outcome of this major securitisation was the establishment of NATO and the Soviet backlash by signing a mutual defense treaty with eight European communist countries in 1955 and thereby establishing the Warsaw Pact, which aimed to balance the power against NATO that had welcomed the Federal Republic of Germany in their

alliance one week prior (nato.int); acts that enhanced the antagonistic relationship between Kremlin and Washington and confirmed the military securitisation of the Arctic.

The Cold War discursive securitisation of the Arctic region materialised into a significant increase in the military presence on both fronts during the ensuing decades with the U.S. and the Soviet Union leading the competition on military capacity and strategy. In 1957, the NORAD was established and soldiers were stationed in Canada, in Alaska and on the Thule Air Base in Greenland, which was a key point in the American nuclear retaliation strategy (norad.mil). For many years, the Thule Air Base was shrouded in mystery, but when an American B-52 Stratofortress crashed near the air base in 1968 it revealed the seriousness of the U.S. presence, as it carried four nuclear bombs which ruptured and dispersed, resulting in radioactive contamination and an immense debate about the U.S. presence on Danish sovereign territory (Hanhimäki & Westad, 2004:300). In the absence of effective missile technology, airplanes and submarines were used as strategic bombers and it was therefore vital to get control over the Arctic airspace and the waters below the ice. This resulted in a three-step-race to construct a submarine, which could resist the tough Arctic waters. First step was achieved in 1954 when the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine, the American 'USS Nautilus', was launched. Second step was Nautilus' passage under the North Pole in 1958, and the third was 'USS Skate''s break through the Arctic ice in 1959, which made it the first submarine to surface the Arctic (Emmerson, 2010:131). These achievements by the American navy and the overall NATO domination of the Arctic Ocean encouraged the Soviet Union to build a nuclear bastion, which increased from fourteen nuclear submarines in 1968 to forty-six in 1980 (ibid.:132); actions which confirmed that the Arctic during this period was perceived through the lenses of the military sector.

The strengthening of the Soviet army's presence in the Arctic was a part of the 'Soviet Grand Strategy' of the 1970s that particularly emphasised the importance of the Kola peninsula as the base of a major surface fleet and ballistic missile submarines with the capacity to carry nuclear weapons, which made the High North the core area of Soviet maritime strategic forces (Kraska et al., 2011:48). In turn, this contributed to an enhanced U.S. and NATO involvement in the Arctic, which was reflected in the 'American Maritime Strategy' of 1979 that rejected "(...) any 'Mare Sovieticum' in the Arctic" (Emmerson, 2010:134), and proposed "(...) a forward deployment of US attack submarines in the Barents Sea which would directly threaten the Soviet Union's strategic submarine 'bastion'" (ibid.). This increasing military build-up among the antagonistic superpowers encouraged the Norwegian Prime Minister Odvar Nordli to offer a nuclear-free-zone treaty, which, however, did not include the Soviet's northern deployments and therefore received a mixed response from the other NATO-members (Apple, 1980:17). This made Prime Minister Nordli rearticulate his suggestion to also include the Soviet sovereign territory, which was well received by Soviet President Brezhnev who in return offered the Scandinavian countries that "(...) they would never be subject to Soviet nuclear attack if they joined in such a zone." (Bloomfield, 1981:4). Brezhnev's offer was received with skepticism and was generally perceived as a part of Kremlin's aim to deflect Western Europe from the December 1979 NATO decision to acquire nuclear weapons and a treaty was, thus, never conducted (ibid.).

Five years later, in December 1986, the Reykjavik Summit between Secretary-General of the Soviet Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. President Ronald Reagan was held, in which important issues such as Human Rights and arms control were discussed in a common aim for warming up the cold relationship between the two superpowers (Gorbachev, 1987:1). The meeting collapsed, but revealed new possibilities for peace building that led to great steps

of demilitarisation of the Arctic one year later. In October 1987, Secretary-General Gorbachev invited the countries of the Arctic region to a discussion in Murmansk about the security issues in the most northern part of the world. At this meeting, he made a key-speech that became crucial for the development of the Arctic security discourse as he articulated that:

*“The militarization of this part of the world is assuming threatening dimensions”* (ibid.:4) and suggested that *“(…) all interested states start talks on the limitation and scaling down of military activity in the North as a whole, in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres”* (ibid.).

Gorbachev further spoke about his desire to establish the Arctic as a ‘zone of peace’; free of nuclear weapons, with cooperation among the Arctic nations in favour of the development of science, environmental protection, rights of the native people, new commercial shipping routes and on development of the natural resources in the area (ibid.:pp.3-6).

The speech was crucial for the ending of the Cold War (Sale, 2009:138) and timely in the way it addressed the security and the environmental concerns as being correlated, which emerged on the agenda during the 1980s. It moreover inspired the process leading to the important ‘Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty’ two months later (armscontrol.org) and to the change in the discursive securitisation sectors of the Arctic during the subsequent period.

### **Sovereignty disputes and emerging economic prospects**

While the securitisation of the Arctic during the Cold War was primarily linked to the military sector’s protection of the nation states’ sovereignty, the Arctic Five simultaneously aimed to expand their Westphalian sovereignty in order to gain important strategic territory that could be decisive for the final outcome of the Cold War. During this period, the entire Arctic coastline of the Arctic Ocean was either controlled by the U.S. and its NATO allies or by the Soviet Union, with the Soviet area covering about half of the total Arctic coastline (arctic.gov). Whilst the U.S. had a greater military capacity than the USSR, they were concerned about their

minor presence in the vital northern area in which their only sovereign territory was Alaska, which they acquired from the Russian Empire in 1867 (Hough, 2013:25). Thus, the United States sought to expand their Westphalian sovereignty by offering to buy Greenland from Denmark in 1946 but was refused by the Danish government, which instead fully included Greenland in their area of Westphalian sovereignty by making it an official province of Denmark in 1949 (Grant, 2010:289). Despite this rejection, the close cooperation between Denmark and the U.S., initiated by the 'Kauffman Treaty' in 1941 that entrusted the protection of Greenland to the U.S. during the Second World War (iblio.org), did, however, continue with the strategically significant U.S. Airbase in Thule as the most visible example.

While the U.S.'s interest in Greenland was a matter of expanding its strategic military territory in order to protect the state from Soviet missiles, other disputes over Westphalian sovereignty emerged from the 1970s and onwards with economic perspectives as the pivotal point. This perception of the Arctic as not merely an area of military interest but as an area that could bring wealth to the respective rulers of the territory, was established after the oil shocks of the 1970s and mirrored in a Soviet publication which noted that the Arctic had significant value for the USSR as it contained "(...) *invaluable depository of major minerals, ores, chemical raw materials, timber, coal, oil and gas*" (Bloomfield, 1981:4); a statement, which was repeated in Gorbachev's famous speech (Gorbachev, 1987:5). This notion was established in the Western part of the Arctic a decade later when Canadian companies announced a planned \$674 million investment for a drilling system in the Beaufort Sea (*New York Times*, 1983), and was accelerated by the 1983 discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oilfield in Alaska, which made the U.S. Interior Secretary James Watt say: "*The big issue in energy is Arctic oil*" (*Business Week*, 1983: pp. 52-56). This made the Beaufort Sea an area of Westphalian sovereignty dispute between the U.S. and Canada, which disagreed whether an actual agreement was present as Canada on



the one hand argued that the 1825 'Treaty of Saint Petersburg' between Great Britain and Russia, which defined the border as being equivalent to the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian still was in effect, while the U.S. on the other hand rejected this treaty and wanted to draw the line on the 'principle of equidistance'<sup>2</sup>. (Bloomfield, 1981:7). The different definitions created an overlap of 21,000km<sup>2</sup> claimed by both nations, which according to Canada's National Energy Board contains 1,000,000,000m<sup>3</sup> of oil and 1,700,000,000m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas, equivalent to twenty years of Canadian supply (Fillingham, 2010).

Another disagreement over Westphalian sovereignty between Canada and the U.S. was, and still is, about who owns the Northwest Passage (NWP), initiated in 1969 when an American oil tanker, the 'SS Manhattan', sailed through the NWP from the United States' West to the East coast (forces.gc.ca). In response to what the Canadians perceived as a violation of Canadian Westphalian sovereignty, Ottawa announced a twelve miles unilateral extension of its territorial seas, notified the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that the territory was no longer under ICJ jurisdiction and passed the 'Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act', which made Canada responsible for the environmental regulation of Arctic seas up to 100 miles from the extended Canadian coastline (ibid.) The U.S. Department of State (USDP) protested that these changes were unacceptable and that international recognition of these territorial changes could lead to abuse of territorial rights anywhere in the world (USDP, 1970). In August 1985, the dispute exacerbated when the U.S. Coast Guard refused to seek official permission from Canada before it sailed through the NWP in order to shorten the route to Thule. In response, the Canadian government redrew the national map by redesignating the northern islands as a Canadian Arctic archipelago and hence claiming full sovereignty over the NWP as 'historic internal waters' effective from January 1<sup>st</sup> 1986 (Dufresne, 2008:3, Claim II). Officially, this

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<sup>2</sup> United States acquired Alaska from Russia in 1867 by its acceptance of a treaty with similar wording as the Treaty of Saint Petersburg (Rothwell, 1996:174).

claim was not accepted by the U.S. but in order to find a pragmatic solution to the dispute that would allow them to continue their close relationship in other aspects, the two countries 'agreed to disagree' as formulated in the 1988 'Arctic Cooperation Agreement' (un.org, 1988).

On the North American East coast Canada also took part in a dispute with neighboring Greenland, which has been under Danish domestic sovereignty since it became a colony in 1814, over the border between them, which originally had been fixated on the median line of the Davis Strait through an agreement in 1973, ratified by the UN (un.org, 1973). The two countries did, however, not manage to define the border across the minuscule Hans Island so this uninhabited and barren island of mere 1.3 km<sup>2</sup> became the object of a disagreement between Denmark and Canada, which has tarnished the close relationship between the two countries. The reason why the island became of interest was, reportedly, due to the revelation of a base near the island for the study of drilling platforms by a Canadian oil company, which was interpreted into a notion that the seabed in the area could possibly contain vast natural resources that would benefit the GDP's of the legal owner of the territory. Though it was not revealed whether the area contained such resources, the dispute escalated slowly during the ensuing years, prompted by Danish flag planting in 1984 and 1988 (Sale, 2009:102).

The last major dispute about Westphalian sovereignty among the Arctic Five during the Cold War was the contested 170,000km<sup>2</sup> of the Barents Sea between Norway and the Soviet Union, which also contains vast resources of oil and natural gas. The dispute was initiated in 1967 when Norway asked for negotiations concerning the delimitation of the continental shelf and seven years later the first formal negotiations with USSR took place. At this meeting they articulated their sovereignty claims for the first time, which, like the conflicting U.S. – Canadian Beaufort Sea claims, both referred to the 1958 UN Continental Shelf Convention while they

disagreed whether the Barents Sea is an area of 'special circumstances' or not (Peimani et al., 2012:150). Norway advocated for the 'median line principle' that delimit the border equidistant from the nearest points of the two countries' coastline, while the Soviet Union claimed that the area was an object of 'special circumstances' based on the population and military circumstances in the area that effectuated a deviation from the median line (ibid.). Thus, the two countries did not manage to find a final solution and instead they made a 'gentleman's agreement' about not to drill in the disputed zone; an agreement, which was violated by Norway in 1984 when StatoilHydro began to develop the 'Snøhvit' gas field (Emmerson, 2010:279). Since then, the negotiations over the Barents Sea were deadlocked with two decades with no signs of a resolution.

#### **4. The Intermediate Period (1991 - 2008)**

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With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the ensuing signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START, 1991) that ended the Cold War, the strategic importance and, hence, the securitisation of the Arctic through the military sector were, though not completely desecuritized, then considerably reduced. Instead, the Arctic became securitised within the environmental sector with the referent objects of the regional citizens and the total global humanity, reflected in the establishment of new institutions and governance networks aiming at minimising the security threat of the climate changes.

##### **Arctic securitisation through the environmental and the societal sectors**

The East-West interrelated existential threat from submarine-borne nuclear missiles was replaced by anxieties over the range of nuclear pollution, organic pollutants and climate changes which resulted in the signing of the multilateral, non-binding Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) between the Arctic Eight in 1991 that securitised the Arctic within the societal and the environmental sectors with the referent objects of the indigenous populations and the total global humanity. This discursive sector change was evident in the wordings of the AEPS, which stated that *"The Arctic countries are committed to international cooperation to ensure the protection of the Arctic environment and its sustainable and equitable development, while protecting the cultures of indigenous peoples"* (ibid.:7). The process leading to the establishment of AEPS was initiated by the government of Finland a few years before when the Arctic Eight were invited to a meeting in 1989 on which they agreed to cooperate on the protection of the Arctic environment *"(...) and work towards a meeting of circumpolar Ministers responsible for Arctic environmental issues"* (AEPS, 1991:1). The process was further encouraged by the gradual change in the perception of the Arctic as famously

uttered by Gorbachev in 1987 and more generally in the growing global understanding of the seriousness of the climate changes. An understanding which had resulted in several significant political actions such as the UN Brundtland Commission report named 'Our Common Future' in 1987 which explicitly used the term 'environmental security' (Brundtland, 1987), the establishment of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the following year and the Bush Senior Administration which articulated the growing U.S. concern with environmental threats as they: *"(...) respect no border. They threaten human lives and violate the territorial integrity of states from both within and without"* (Baker, 1990:3).

The widespread environmental precariousness resulted further in an increased number of policies concerning how to limit the climate changes and in a branching of the environmental governance structure that emphasised the securitisation change from the military sector to the environmental sector. In 1993, the intergovernmental and interregional Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was founded with the objective *"(...) to promote sustainable development in the Region, bearing in mind the principles and recommendations set out in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 of UNCED"* (BEAC, 1993:2), as the participants<sup>3</sup> believed that *"(...) expanded cooperation in the Barents EuroArctic Region will contribute substantially to stability and progress in the area and in Europe as a whole, where partnership is now replacing the confrontation and division of the past"* (ibid.:1). Important for the analysis of the Arctic security discourse is the U.S.'s and Canadian lack of participation due to their geographical location outside the Barents region, which had significant importance to the chance of changing the bipolar antagonistic relationship into a more collaborative one.

In 1996, further steps towards a plus-sum relationship were taken when the AEPS was replaced by the Arctic Council (AC) that was established as a high level forum with the main

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<sup>3</sup> Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the Commission of the European Communities (BEAC, 1993:1)

task of “(...) *promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues*” (The Ottawa Declaration, 1996:1). In addition to the overarching purpose of the AEPS to protect the environment and limit the possible consequences of the climate changes, the AC enhanced the Arctic governance structures by emphasising the societal security aspect of the 500,000 indigenous people living in local Arctic communities<sup>4</sup> (arctic-council.org), whose representatives<sup>5</sup> were included in the new political forum as permanent participants through which they became involved in the discussions and implementations of policies concerning their local communities (ibid).

For the indigenous communities, the climate changes are a double-edged sword because the melting ice on the one hand disadvantages their traditional way of living and threatens their health by elevated ultraviolet radiation levels (ACIA, 2004:11) while on the other hand revealing new possibilities in the form of new species such as the mackerel and the Atlantic cod that are entering the Arctic marine ecosystem, and increased temperatures that allow them to yield broccoli and potatoes (Borgerson, 2008:68). Furthermore, and of significant importance to the improved global attention towards the High North, the vanishing ice, moreover, results in emerging sea routes north of Russia, Canada and Alaska and improves the accessibility to the natural resources of the wealthy Arctic seabed, which both could benefit the Arctic citizens and the governments of the Arctic Five. In 2004, the ‘Arctic Climate Impact Assessment’ (ACIA) provided additional scientific information about these tendencies as it pointed out the worldwide implications of the Arctic climate changes with impact on local and

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<sup>4</sup> In total, 4 million people live in the Arctic region (arctic-council.org)

<sup>5</sup> The Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (The Ottawa Declaration, 1996:3); later the following organisations have been included as well: the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Aleut International Association and Gwich’in Council International (ibid.)

foreign communities, increased marine transport and access to natural resources (ACIA, 2004:pp10-11). Findings that were supported by the IPCC report in 2007, which in addition predicted further raises in the global temperatures (IPCCC, 2007).

### **Rhetorical escalation of the sovereignty disputes**

Simultaneous with the melting of the ice and the gradual broadening of the perception of the climate changes as being an existential threat, the new Arctic possibilities also revived the old interstate disputes, which maintained the issue of sovereignty as the discursively dominating and prevented a full transition to plus-sum thinking and good Arctic governance in spite of the establishment of important governance forums such as the BEAC, the AEPS and the AC.

Two details of the AC establishment are essential in favour of this argument: the first is that the establishment happened as a reaction to the Canadian government's attempt to prioritise and elevate the Arctic issues on the Canadian foreign policy portfolio and general global politics in the beginning of the 1990's (Rosamond, 2011:21). The other is the U.S.'s adamant demand that the AC should not discuss national security issues but merely be a forum of expression of soft political issues, such as protection of indigenous cultures and the environment, without a formal legal charter like the one of the United Nations (Ebinger & Zambetakis, 2009: 1226). This demand was a direct contradiction of the 1991 framework report about a possible establishment of an International Arctic Council that articulated: *"The peace and security of the Arctic must be advanced through means other than the militarization of the region. Significant here is the (...) custom of co-operation, whereby military matters may be addressed directly and effectively"* (carc.org). This rejection of a collective cooperative aim towards Arctic peace through direct military security discussions and the lack of a formal legal charter are vital to my argument that the Arctic during this period was not yet dominated by good governance as it meant that the Arctic states maintained an excluding national security

attitude while the AC did not achieve the right to make legally binding decisions but was constrained to be a forum of normative conversations.

While the climate changes enhanced the perception of a “new” existential threat, they simultaneously reinforced the unresolved sovereignty disputes of the Cold War and revealed new geographical areas of possible interstate disputes over the emerging shipping routes and the prosperous Arctic seabed. New treaties such as the UNCLOS, which was signed in 1982 and came into force in 1994 (un.org, 1994), and the 1995 ‘Agreement on High Seas and Straddling Stocks’ (un.org, 1995) were adopted in the aim to restrict and resolve maritime disagreements, but the success was, however, varying as the acknowledgement of the UN’s international legal sovereignty by the Arctic Five in these cases was downgraded in favour of national realpolitik. This priority was significantly clear in two momentous articulations made by the governments of the two largest Arctic states, Russia and Canada: In an Arctic document of 2001, Kremlin emphasised the military strategic importance of the Arctic region and stated that “(...) *all kinds of activity in the northern regions are in the highest degree connected to providing of national security*” (Zysk, 2010:108). Six years later, Canada’s prime minister Stephen Harper expressed a similar concern as he uttered: “*Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty in the Arctic; either we use it or we lose it, [and] make no mistake this government intends to use it*” (canada.com, 2007), and Harper continued by referring to the societal security with ‘identity’ as the referent object that was sought protected against external treats: “(...) *Canada’s Arctic is central to our identity as a northern nation. It is part of our history and it represents the tremendous potential of our future*” (ibid.). This concern was further reflected in the development of the Hans Island sovereignty dispute which continued unabated with Denmark planting a flag in 2002 and Canada reciprocating the provocation in 2005, resulting in a joint statement on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2005, in which the two



governments articulated *"We acknowledge that we hold very different views on the question of the sovereignty of Hans Island (...) we will continue our efforts to reach a long-term solution to the Hans Island dispute"* (news.gc.ca, 2005). This pragmatic agreement was formulated like the U.S.-Canadian Arctic Cooperation Agreement of 1988 over the disputed NWP, which during this period continued to be further unresolved while, on the other hand, neither had been further worsened. The dispute of the Beaufort Sea, however, escalated further in 2004 when the U.S. provoked a diplomatic protest from Canada by leasing eight plots of land of the seabed for exploration and exploitation of oil (Parker & Byrne, 2004:4); a move that put a significant strain on their neighbourliness.

The East-West antagonistic relationship was, moreover, still present in the Arctic, which was evident in the 2004 Bush agreement with Copenhagen to include the Thule Air Base in the missile defence system (Hough, 2013:27) and the Russian flag planting on the North Pole seabed 4,261 metres below the ice on August the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 (Moscow time) by a submarine named Mir. The flag planting immediately reinforced the antagonistic rhetoric with Canadian Foreign Minister, Peter Mackay, uttering *"You can't go around the world these days dropping a flag somewhere. This isn't the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century"* (thestar.com, 2007). The U.S. Department spokesman Tom Casey joined the critique by saying *"I'm not sure whether they've -- you know, put a metal flag, a rubber flag, or a bed sheet on the ocean floor. Either way, it doesn't have any legal standing or effect on this claim"* (Casey, 2007). Russian explorer and parliamentary deputy, Arthur Chilingarov, retorted: *"I don't give a damn what all these foreign politicians there are saying about this (...) Russia must win. Russia has what it takes to win. The Arctic has always been Russian"* (Associated Press, 2007). Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov further clarified that the flag planting was not a claim in itself (like the American moon landing neither

was) and he explained that the purpose of the expedition merely was to collect evidence to support the pre-existing Russian territorial claims (Emmerson, 2010:96).

This escalation of the sovereignty disputes and the hardening of the rhetoric among the Arctic Five led to significant assessments by journalists and IR scholars who in still larger number advocated for an increased possibility of interstate conflict with the Arctic border disputes as the site of origin. Most (in)famous is the essay 'Arctic Meltdown' by Scott G. Borgerson in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2008) in which he argued that "(...) *the situation is especially dangerous because there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements over Arctic resources or sea-lanes*" (Borgerson, 2008:71), and "*Until such a solution is found, the Arctic countries are likely to unilaterally grab as much territory as possible and exert sovereign control over opening sea-lanes wherever they can*" (ibid.:73-74).

### **Global economic securitisation and Arctic solutions**

In addition to the environmental securitisation, governments, companies and private households also became referent objects of the global financial crisis by the end of this period as the national and private economies were threatened by bankruptcies and the employees threatened by unemployment.

One of the negative effects of the global financial crisis was the heightened global oil prices that reached \$100 per barrel in the beginning of 2008 (Krauss, 2008) and peaked in July 2008 with a price of \$147 a barrel (Hopkins, 2008), which encouraged some companies and states to find alternative and more environmental friendly sources of energy while others sought for new areas of conventional natural resources. One of the most significant new discoveries of conventional natural resources was reported in 2008 when the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) completed a Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal with the conclusion that the "(...) *extensive*

*Arctic continental shelves may constitute the geographically largest unexplored prospective area for petroleum remaining on Earth” (USGS, 2008:1). More precisely: a total of 90 billion barrels of oil, 47.261 trillion m<sup>3</sup> of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of liquefied natural gas (LNG); equivalent to 13 percent and 30 percent of the world’s unexplored oil and natural gas resources (ibid.:pp.1-4). These new promising data initiated a Klondike-like atmosphere in the High North that became apparent on the Arctic Five’s foreign affairs portfolio (Stoltenberg, 2006. Strahl, 2009. Bush, 2009. Zysk, 2010. Espersen, 2011) as a more frequent and elevated point of interest, which encouraged the perception of a future Arctic anarchy as argued by Borgerson.*

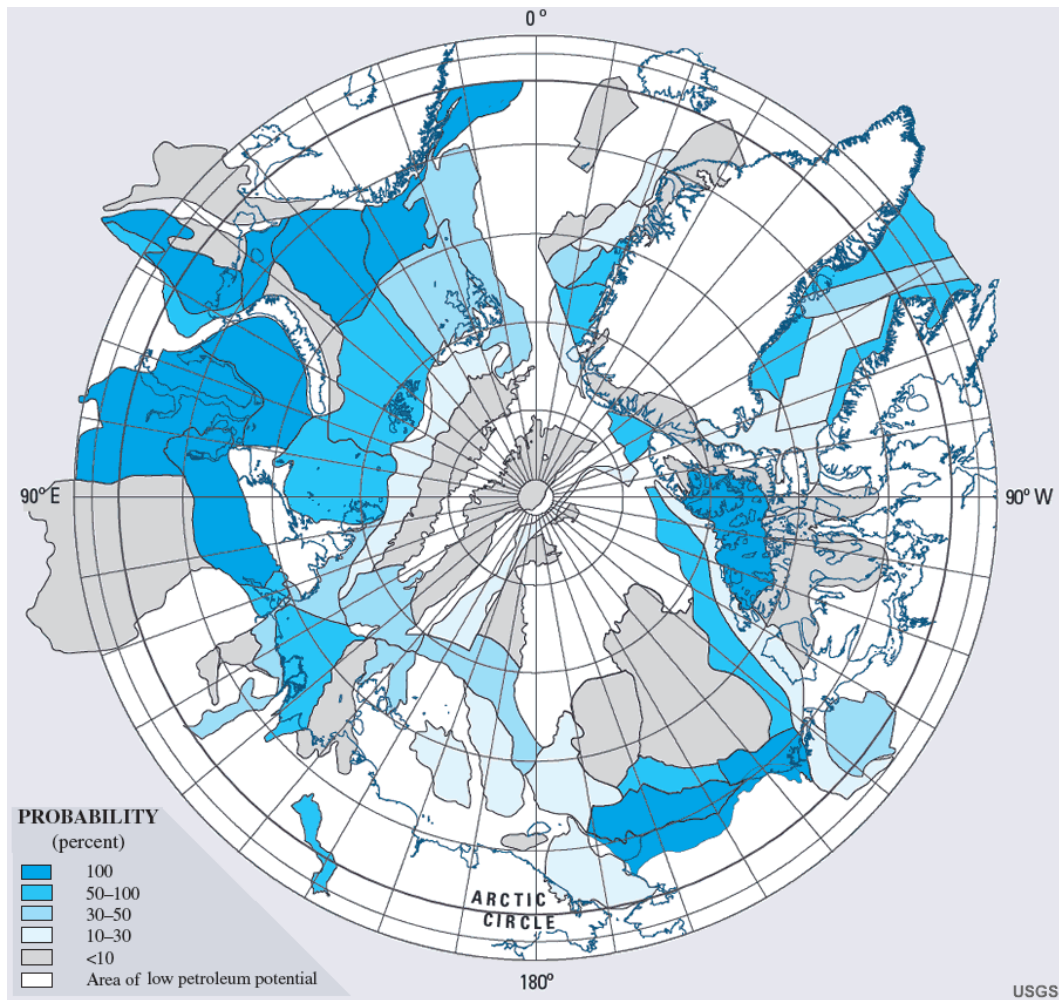


Figure 4: “probability of the presence of at least one undiscovered oil and/or gas field with recoverable resources greater than 50 million barrels of oil equivalent” (USGS, 2008:2)

## **5. Post-Ilulissat Period (2008 - 2013)**

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In the wake of the incipient global financial crisis, the parallel USGS findings and the rhetorical escalations of the interstate disputes, the Arctic experienced a significantly increased external interest from foreign states, NGO's, journalists and academics who contributed to the growing debate about whether the future Arctic history would be written by military conflicts or if it would be a 'zone of peace' influenced by good Arctic governance. The debate and the three major events of the former period encouraged the Danish government to launch an initiative which they presented to the other four Arctic states at a meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland, in the end of May 2008.

### **Desecuritisation of sovereignty disputes**

The meeting resulted in the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration by the Arctic Five, which was the first Arctic agreement to articulate the potential exploitation of the Arctic natural resources as a common area of interest, as it acknowledged that *"The Arctic Ocean stands at the threshold of significant changes. Climate change and the melting of ice have a potential impact on vulnerable ecosystems, the livelihoods of local inhabitants and indigenous communities, and the potential exploitation of natural resources."* (Ilulissat, 2008:1).

In order to cool down the heated interstate sovereignty disputes and to find a solution to the delineation of the Arctic waters, the Arctic Five, thus, agreed to *"(...) take steps in accordance with international law both nationally and in cooperation among the five states and other interested parties"* (ibid.:2), which in the words of IR scholar Annika Bergman Rosamond was *"(...) a step in the right direction towards Arctic stability, peace and good governance (...)"* (Rosamond, 2011:49). This cooperative tone was echoed in the national Arctic strategies of the Arctic Five (Stoltenberg, 2006. Strahl, 2009. Bush, 2009. Zysk, 2010. Espersen, 2011) and was

further reinforced in May 2011 in the 'Search and Rescue Agreement' of the Nuuk Declaration (Nuuk, 2011:3) and in the 2013 'Agreement Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic' (Kiruna, 2013) that became the first and the second legally binding agreements of the AC, which changed its status from an arena of normative conversations to a decision-making forum with political legitimacy, which contributed significantly to a peaceful development of the Arctic security discourse influenced by good governance and plus-sum thinking.

With inspiration from the Copenhagen School, I characterise the Ilulissat Declaration as a desecuritisising act and the Arctic Five as desecuritisising actors as I believe the declaration removed the remaining concerns with the Arctic as an area where from a direct security threat towards the nation states could derive. The Arctic is indeed still securitised within the environmental and the societal sectors, but this securitisation does not hinder further branching of the Arctic governance structures (it rather strengthens it) and it is neither a direct threat towards the sovereignty of the nation states.

*How* the desecuritisising act happened may be explained by the second desecuritisising process described in the theoretical chapter, where the political community responsible for the securitisation (the Arctic Five) also are the actors who directly desecuritisise the issue by discursively eliminating the threat through an interdependent (peace) agreement with the former enemy. In this case, the agreement was based on an interdependent acknowledgement of the UNCLOS' international legal sovereignty and its international law, which is based on unambiguous science that, according to the Ilulissat Declaration, will determine the future maritime borders of the disputed areas and, thus, solve the interstate disagreements.

*Why* the desecuritisising act happened is, however, more uncertain to determine as unofficial motives might have encouraged the five Arctic governments to be more inclined to find a

solution. From the documents analysed and the events occurred at the end of the Intermediate Period, I, however, believe that the agreement was a correlated result of the growing economic threat of the global financial crisis, the newly discovered Arctic economic potential and the hardened interstate rhetoric that called for some kind of reaction.

In short: to reinforce their challenged economies and to prevent war.

The international law relevant for solving the interstate sovereignty disputes is the UNCLOS which in the words of the Ilulissat Declaration will ensure an “(...) *orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims*” (ibid.:2). All of the Arctic Five except the United States have signed and ratified the UNCLOS and there has been a significant internal pressure for a U.S. signature, but it has so far been ignored by a group of senators who fear that the same laws could be used against the U.S. in other instances and more generally because they are “(...) *fearful of ceding too much sovereignty to a supranational organization (...)*” (Ebinger & Zambetakis, 2009:1224). However this resistance, the 2009 U.S. ‘Arctic Region Policy’ mentioned that “*The Senate should act favourably on U.S. accession to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea promptly, to protect and advance U.S. interests, including with respect to the Arctic*” (Bush, 2009:3), which verifies the U.S. signature on the Ilulissat Declaration. Particularly relevant for the Arctic are the articles 76, 83 and 234 concerning the definition of the continental shelf, the delimitation of the continental shelf between states with opposite or adjacent coasts and ice-covered areas (un.org, 1982: pp 53-54, 56, 115-116<sup>6</sup>). The often recited article 76 describes how a country which can prove its continental shelf to extend beyond 200 nautical miles from its coastline automatically will be entitled to the legal rights of exploiting oil, gas and minerals in this area (ibid.:53). This definition is unambiguous as it is based on scientific data collection, but what will happen in the possible cases of adjacent or overlapping

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<sup>6</sup> The indication of pages in the UNCLOS list of contents is not correct. These are the exact pages of the articles 76, 83 and 234

claims are, however, not perfectly clear as article 83 refers to the ICJ as the arena of judgment to such discrepancies (ibid.:56). Such a change of arena from the UN to the ICJ would signify a breach with the principle based on geo-science and could result in diplomatic controversy and re-enter the issue of sovereignty in the Arctic security discourse. The desecuritisation of the interstate sovereignty disputes is, thus, as all discursive acts, temporary and could again change into a future interstate conflict despite the contemporary peaceful situation.

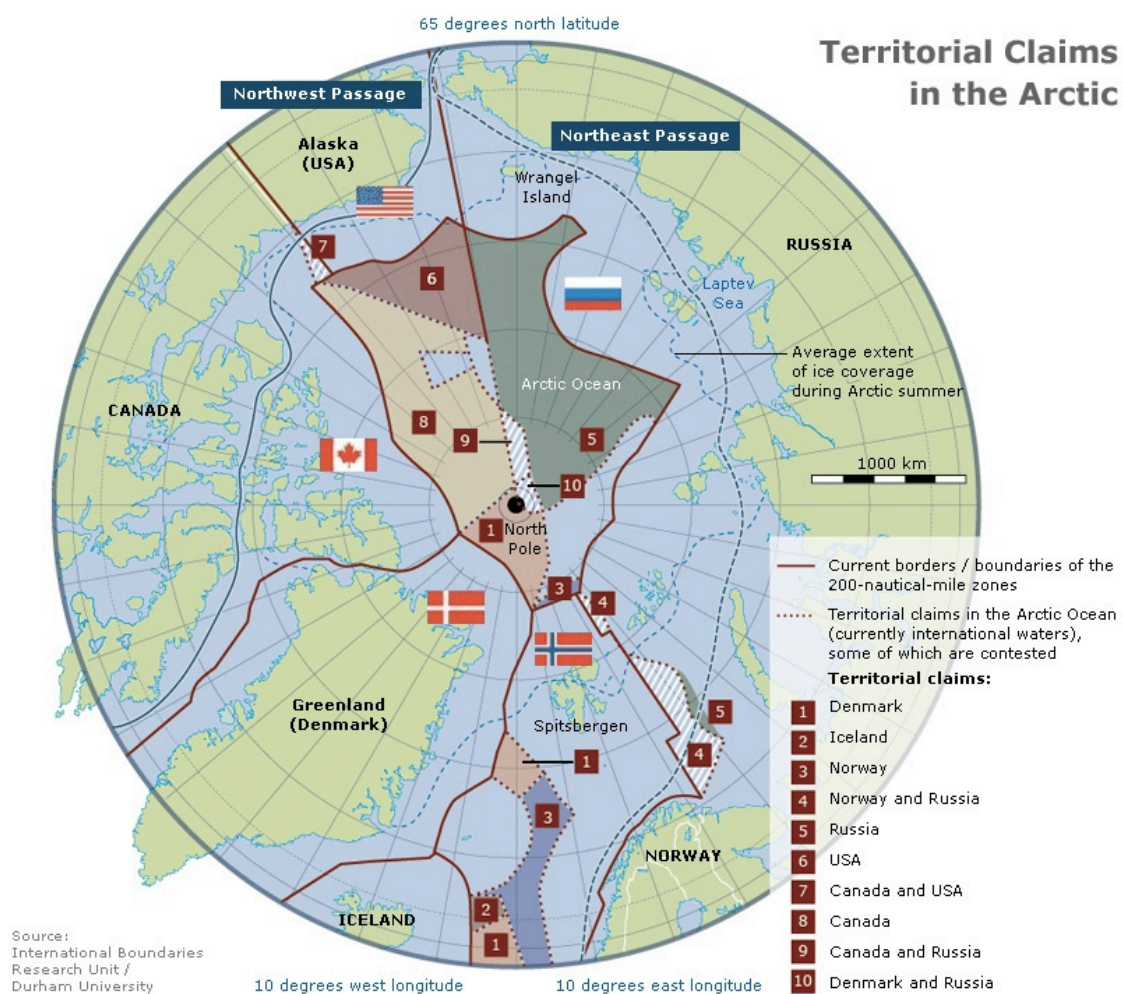


Figure 5: Map showing the territorial sovereignty claims that will be judged by the UNCLOS

(Seidler, 2011)

A final judgment of the territorial claims is expected in about ten years from the last submission of data that was made by Denmark on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 (un.org, 2013).

Though these long perspectives, the Ilulissat Declaration has already encouraged a more peaceful security discourse and has accelerated bilateral diplomacy leading to bilateral solutions to some of the disputed areas indicated on the map above. Especially Russia, whose actions at the end of the Intermediate Period had been interpreted as being confrontational, has revealed signs of plus-sum thinking in relation to Arctic geopolitics by reaffirming the 1991 'START' by signing the 'New START Treaty' that articulated an enhanced limitation of significantly fewer strategic arms (Obama & Medvedev, 2010). This perception of a softer Russian Arctic diplomacy strategy was further confirmed at a press conference on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 when the governments of Canada and Russia called for a strengthening of mutual cooperation in Arctic management issues. A friendly utterance which was followed up by President Putin declaring a large area of the Russian Arctic a national park, *"(...) signaling that Russia apparently has more to gain by following international law and demonstrating ecological sensitivity than by aggressively asserting sovereignty"* (Ebinger & Zambetakis, 2009:1230). A perception that was reinforced the year after when President Putin described the Arctic in the same phrases as Gorbachev did in his famous 1987 speech, as he stated that *"(...) we think that preserving the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation is of utmost importance"* (Putin, 2010:4) and *"(...) I have got no doubts at all that the existing issues in the Arctic, including those related to the continental shelf, can be resolved in a spirit of partnership through negotiations and on the basis of existing international law"* (ibid.:5); a statement which was confirmed in the official Arctic strategy (Zysk, 2010:108).

The most tangible demonstration of the plus-sum thinking characterising the Arctic Five's diplomacy during this period was, however, the Russian-Norwegian 2010 agreement over the disputed delineation of the Barents Sea, which covers an area of 175,000 km<sup>2</sup> that had been an issue between the two countries for forty years (Peimani et al., 2012:pp. 150-151). Initially, the



dispute was about fish but when data revealed that the seabed contained vast petroleum resources, the dispute first became more conflict-ridden and then encouraged the two parts to agree on an equal division of the area in accordance with UNCLOS' article 76 (Stoltenberg & Medvedev, 2010:2). This agreement was a confirmation of the Ilulissat Declaration and it was emphasised as a paradigmatic diplomatic solution by President Medvedev who believed that it is a "(...) *constructive model of how rival Arctic nations should settle their differences*" (Harding, 2010). A message, which Canada and Denmark apparently agree with as Denmark's Arctic Ambassador, Klavs Holm, in March 2013 announced that they will find a similar solution to the disputed minuscule Hans Island during the current Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council (Bennett, 2013).

These events and momentous articulations all indicate that the 2008 desecuritising act by the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration was not mere rhetoric but actual proof of an interdependent interstate desire to solve the sovereignty disputes and hence it actually influenced the security discourse in a more peaceful and cooperative direction in favor of all parts involved.

This tendency further resulted in a growing external interest in Arctic geopolitics and in a broadening and strengthening of the Arctic governance structures.

## **Governance and growing global interest**

The global economic securitisation, the new scientific data on the vast Arctic natural resources and the increased temperatures that improved the accessibility to these resources while simultaneously resulting in emerging shipping routes were accompanied by growing external interest and a myriad of new management issues, reflected i.a. in the new AC working groups<sup>7</sup>.

The improved accessibility in the northern seas is just one example on how a new

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<sup>7</sup> Arctic Contaminants Action Programme (ACAP), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) and Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) (arctic-council.org, 2011:Working Groups)

management issue has emerged concurrently with the retrieving of the ice, as Arctic tourism has become more common and far more global with an increase in the Arctic maritime tourism industry from 1 million tourists in 2010 to 1,5 million in 2012 (Emmerson, 2012:pp31-32). This has both improved the local economies and has caused new challenges to the local coast guard and the pan-Arctic Search and Rescue crew, which was established by the 'Nuuk Declaration' in May 2011 (Nuuk, 2011:7). The same declaration also established a Task Force "*(...) to develop an international instrument on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response*" (ibid.), which was another new problematic issue that attracted global attention. These issues are, moreover, the objects of the AC's two legally binding agreements that improved its political legitimacy and hence strengthened the Arctic governance structures, and I, thus, argue that the environmental securitisation of the climate changes and the consequential new Arctic opportunities were the direct reasons causing the development of good Arctic governance with the AC at its core, which became fully possible after the desecuritising of the interstate sovereignty issues by the Ilulissat Declaration. This change was further emphasised when the AC in January 2013 opened its first permanent secretariat in Tromsø, Norway, which improved the structures of the organisation significantly (arctic-council.org, 2013).

The Arctic natural resources has, naturally, also attracted the attention of oil and gas companies which have the necessary expertise and capital to be involved in the exploration and exploitation of these resources. Concurrently with their growing involvement, the awareness of the high risks of drilling in the Arctic waters has caught the attention of environmental NGO's such as Greenpeace, which has increased its Arctic involvement significantly during the last years. One of Greenpeace's greatest campaigns ever is named 'Save the Arctic' and has been active since 2009 based on a demand for immediate

moratorium on all oil exploration and extraction in the Arctic. As part of the campaign, activists have chained themselves to oil platforms, blocked icebreakers on their way to the oil and gas fields, lowered a capsule with signatures at the North Pole, and latest, climbed the tallest skyscraper in London, The Shard, in order to draw the public attention towards the downsides of the growing economic possibilities (savethearctic.org). The World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) both articulate, though more quietly, related messages as they call for increased research into the possible environmental impacts and suggest that any further investigation should be postponed until more advanced and safer methods of exploration and exploitation have been developed (panda.org; unep.org). Both UNEP and WWF was granted the status of observers to the Arctic Council at the meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, in May 2013, together with ten other NGO's, nine other Intergovernmental and Inter-Parliamentary Organisations and twelve non-Arctic countries, while Greenpeace's request was turned down along with the application from the EU (Kiruna Declaration, 2013:7).

This comprehensive inclusion of observers along with the influential role of the permanent participants is a strong indication of the elevated prioritisation of enhanced governance structures and plus-sum thinking in the Arctic security discourse. At the same time, I perceive the inclusion as a response from the AC to the newly established non-profit organisation named 'the Arctic Circle', which aim to *"(...) strengthen the decision-making process by bringing together as many international partners as possible to interact under one large "open tent" (arcticcircle.org, 2013:Mission)*. This perception is, indirectly, supported by the Norwegian Foreign Minister's reaction to the comprehensive AC inclusion as he articulated that *"(...) they will then be a member of our club"* and therefore *"(...) the danger of them forming their own club will be smaller"* (Ghattas, 2013). One of the members of the Arctic

Circle's advisory board is the author of the sceptical article 'Arctic Meltdown' from 2008 that did not leave much confidence in peaceful cooperation between the Arctic Five.

In July 2013, Borgerson contradicted his 2008 statement in the same media as he wrote: *"(...) a funny thing happened on the way to Arctic anarchy. Rather than harden positions, the possibility of increased tensions has spurred the countries concerned to work out their differences peacefully. A shared interest in profit has trumped the instinct to compete over territory. Proving the pessimists wrong, the Arctic countries have given up on saber rattling and engaged in various impressive feats of cooperation"* (Borgerson, 2013:79).

The loudest voice in the groups of IR advocates of the perception that the Arctic most likely would be a site for potential interstate conflicts influenced by realpolitik was hereby converted, leaving an indisputable support for the present dissertation's main argument: that the current Arctic security discourse is now dominated by plus-sum thinking and good Arctic governance, which, for now, ensures the Arctic as a 'zone of peace'.

## 6. Conclusion

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By using the Copenhagen School's theoretical framework that includes other sectors in addition to the military sector in the study of how a referent object discursively becomes securitised and desecuritised, I have analysed how the Arctic security discourse has developed from being dominated by zero-sum thinking with the main concern of protecting Westphalian sovereignty during the two first analytical periods from 1947 to 1991 and from 1991 to 2008, to being dominated by plus-sum thinking and good governance after the signing of the Ilulissat Declaration on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2008. I thus affiliate my academic contribution with those IR scholars who advocate that the emerged Arctic economic opportunities and the global financial crisis have encouraged peaceful cooperation and good governance between the Arctic Five (Ebinger & Zambetakis, 2009; Brigham, 2010; Rosamond, 2011; Young, 2012).

*How* this development happened, can be identified in the events that caused the transition from one period to another: The first transition happened in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the simultaneous increasing perception of the climate changes as being an existential security threat. This caused a change in the hierarchy of the discursive security sectors from the military sector to the environmental and societal sectors with the referent objects of the Arctic indigenous populations and the total global humanity. Despite the hierarchical change among the security sectors, the Arctic did not become completely desecuritised within the military sector as the sovereignty disputes remained unresolved, and, thus, the growing Arctic governance structures did not yet become fully dominating on the security discourse. This happened at the next discursive transition in May 2008 when the Arctic Five signed the Ilulissat Declaration as a reaction to the global financial crisis, the newly discovered Arctic economic potential and to the rhetorical escalation of the interstate

sovereignty disputes. The declaration was a 'game changer' of the Arctic security discourse as it desecuritized the interstate sovereignty issues by recognising the international legal sovereignty of the UNCLOS as the forum wherein the judgements of the sovereignty disputes should be conducted in accordance with its scientifically based international laws. This change was socially and discursively constructed by the Arctic Five who directly desecuritized the issue by discursively eliminating the threat through an interdependent peace agreement as explained by the second theoretical desecuritising process.

*Why* the Arctic security discourse has developed as it has is, however, more uncertain to determine as unofficial motives and other factors may have influenced the discursive acts leading to the historical changes. Though this uncertainty I will, nevertheless, suggest an understanding based on the documents analysed and the events occurred before and in the wake of the two momentous transitions identified in the development of the Arctic security discourse. The first *why* is relatively straightforward to answer as I believe it is congruent to *how* it developed from a primary securitisation within the military sector during the Cold War to a primary securitisation within the environmental and societal sectors in the ensuing two periods: It was a result of the overall altered major securitisation from an East-West antagonistic division of the world to the widespread global perception of the climate changes as being an existential threat towards the total humanity. It was, thus, a result of the general change in the world order and not a change, which derived regionally from the Arctic.

The answer to the second *why* is more debatable as I argue that the desecuritising of the sovereignty disputes and the subsequent branching of good Arctic governance was a correlated result of the growing economic threat of the global financial crisis, the newly discovered Arctic economic potential and the hardened interstate rhetoric that called for some kind of reaction. In short: to benefit their challenged national economies and to prevent war.

The peace of the Arctic is, thus, secured for the time being as a result of the Arctic Five's desire to benefit from the wealthy Arctic seabed. As pointed out in the analysis of the post-Illulissat period the current situation is merely temporary and the security situation of the Arctic may later develop into interstate conflicts and zero-sum thinking if the UNCLOS fails to determine an unambiguous solution to the cases in which overlapping claims are present. Other threats towards the current peaceful situation that could develop the Arctic security discourse back to a domination of antagonistic rhetoric dominated by national realpolitik may derive from other diplomatic disagreements between the Arctic Five elsewhere in the world. By looking at today's news, a qualified guess could be that such a threat may possibly derive from the present dispute about Russia's rejection of disclosing the American whistleblower Edward Snowden or from the U.S. and its allies' decision to intervene in Syria despite the veto from China and Russia in the UN Security Council. Everything is contingent and nobody can guarantee that the Arctic will remain an eternal 'zone of peace', but for now this is the situation; a situation, which is in the Arctic Five's interrelated interest as peace and cooperation will facilitate their aim to benefit from the wealthy Arctic seabed.

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