



## Department of Political Science

Conflict over territory and maritime routes in the arctic. The case of potential conflict between the US and Russia over resources in the arctic ocean.

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**Abstract:**

Because of climate change, ice on the arctic ocean has been melting at a rapid pace. This environmental change in the arctic made access to the region much easier than ever before. This meant that new maritime routes have been created and the accessibility to the alleged oil and gas reserves in addition to the rare minerals that exist in the area became much easier. Due to the existence of many arctic states, this dissertation focuses mostly on two military powers in the world, the US and Russia. By using content analysis of several newspaper articles, speeches and memoranda to see what are motivations behind the US and Russian claims and whether a potential conflict might occur, the results show that a military action is most likely out of the way, and that dialogue and cooperation are most likely the course of action.

**Key words:** Maritime jurisdiction, arctic, climate change.

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## **1- Introduction:**

Due to massive industrialization that is happening in several countries around the world, our planet has reached a point where action must be taken as soon as possible to tackle the issues of climate change and global warming. According to several scientists, global warming represents the most dangerous threat to human existence, more threatening than a nuclear war. Some of the effects of global warming can be seen in the melting of several areas in the Arctic ocean. The Arctic ocean according to Britannica is considered to be one of the smallest oceans that exist in the planet, it is one of the least discovered areas in the world due to the harsh weather and because most of the surface is covered in large areas of ice.<sup>1</sup> Due to global warming, the ice in the arctic ocean is beginning to melt at a high speed rate, leading to the discovery of new maritime routes and easier access to part of the ocean.<sup>2</sup> According to the U.S. Geological Survey, which is an American organization that specializes in studying our planet, the organization claim that around 25% of the existing oil and gas reserves in the world are located in the arctic area.<sup>3</sup> Since most of the countries in the world are interested in economic development and increasing their prosperity, the countries that are bordering the arctic or have claims to the arctic are beginning to lay out claims to certain areas in order to start benefiting from extracting the natural resources that exist. In total, there are seven countries that have territories in the arctic circle, those countries happen to be, the United States of America, Canada, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. Finland and Sweden, on one hand, do not have littoral zones to the arctic ocean but they still hold territories in the area.<sup>4</sup> To be more specific, the arctic area according to Tan Wei-en in his research paper “After the Ice

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<sup>1</sup> Britannica Academic, s.v. "Arctic Ocean," accessed May 17, 2020, <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/levels/collegiate/article/Arctic-Ocean/109840>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Who We Are". 2020. United States Geological Survey. <https://www.usgs.gov/about/about-us/who-we-are>.

<sup>4</sup> After the Ice Melts: Conflict Resolution and the International Scramble for Natural Resources in the Arctic Circle

Melts: Conflict Resolution and the International Scramble for Natural Resources in the Arctic Circle” consist of the following:

*“the Arctic consists of land, (Note 1) submerged lands, (Note 2) and the ocean of Arctic Circle. (Note 3) There exist different maritime zones in the Arctic Ocean, including territorial seas, exclusive economic zones (EEZ), continental shelves, and the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction known as the high seas”<sup>5</sup>*

Out of the seven countries that have territorial claims over the arctic area, five of them (USA, Canada, Norway, Russia and Denmark) started laying out claims for the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) in order to be able to start monitoring, exploiting, surveying and managing the natural resources that exists in the area. According to article 76 of the United Nation convention of the law of the sea (UNCLOS) *“a state's continental shelf extends between 200 and 350 nautical miles (in) from properly established baselines”<sup>6</sup>.*

The ice melting is putting the seven countries in a critical crossroads, whether at this time or in the future, as each one of them might have claims in each other’s already claimed territories.<sup>7</sup> This might leave one wondering, is there any sort of relationship between the ice melting in the arctic and those states beginning to lay out claims in the territory?

Prior to UNCLOS, several disputes existed in the world over maritime jurisdiction. However, UNCLOS managed to regulate and fix almost all of the maritime conflicts that used to exist.<sup>8</sup> For those countries that claim that part of the arctic extends long beyond the 200 and 350 nm (nautical miles) that the UNCLOS has set up, they must enclose proof of mapping their continental shelf and submit their research to UN and wait for approval.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

However according to Dwayne Ryan Menezes and Heather N. Nicol in their book “The North American Arctic: Themes in Regional Security”, it is pointless for countries to reach out to resources beyond the 200 and 350 nm that was setup by the UNCLOS as 95% of the natural resources are already within their continental shelves and that beyond those areas it is just not profitable to extract those resources.<sup>10</sup> The fact that those countries are still laying out claims despite the non-profitability of extracting these resources rises a serious question, which is why is the arctic area so important for the concerned states? According to the former Canadian prime-minister Stephen Harper, he states that his country’s claim to the arctic area is mainly towards ensuring its security.<sup>11</sup>

He lays out the claim that Canada’s overall sovereignty and security is bound to ensuring that their northern territories are part of it. Canadian scientists were ordered by Harper to conduct studies to ensure that the northern Canadian continental shelf extends beyond its borders to the arctic, however researchers found no evidence that it does, so they were asked to prolong the research and further find ways to include the arctic.<sup>12</sup>

Russia in 2001 laid out similar claims, by launching a submarine that cut across around 1200 miles into the arctic ocean and Russians claimed the whole area as being part of their continental shelf.<sup>13</sup> The fact that the concerned countries are willing to go into a great length to prove their claims are valid and that it is primarily a security issue, can bring out a scenario where conflict might rise in the future when more ice melts and there are easier and more profitable ways to start extracting the resources that exist.

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<sup>10</sup> Menezes, Dwayne Ryan, and Heather N Nicol. 2019. *The North American Arctic: Themes In Regional Security*. 1st ed. UCL Press; 1 edition (November 4, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *After the Ice Melts: Conflict Resolution and the International Scramble for Natural Resources in the Arctic Circle*

## **2- Aim and Research questions**

The purpose of this research is to shed the light on an area of the world that can be considered as the new middle east due its strategic importance to several world powers. The arctic area as I have mentioned in my introduction holds massive oil & gas resources in addition to several other rare minerals. That itself only can lead to tensions between the concerned states and possible conflict in case no agreement is reached. Therefore, the aim of this study will be to use defensive realism theory to explain and gain a deeper understanding on how the concerned states lay out different claims in the arctic area and what would be their political actions. Therefore, the research questions come as follow:

- What kind of motivations behind the claims on the Arctic put forward by the US and Russia?

Sub-question:

- What are the risks that the overlapping claims in the arctic lead to a military conflict between the US and Russia?

## **3- Literature Review**

### 3.1 - Historical context of the claims over the arctic area

Over the years, many states around the world engaged in some sort of territorial conflict over various territories that they deem as being part of their national boundaries. However; as maritime shipping developed and new technologies have been discovered to extract natural resources from the sea, countries started laying out claims over certain parts of the sea that conflicted with claims of other countries. Newly discovered waterways and natural resources made certain areas in the world a potential source of new undiscovered wealth that countries can benefit from. Due to the fact that there were no regulations that governed the sea, many countries started laying out claims to certain parts of the oceans as theirs, therefore there was a necessity to form a body that would regulate maritime borders in order to put an end to several territorial conflicts around the world. In 1982, several United Nations member states

adopted the “Law of the Sea Convention” or the “Law of the Sea Treaty” that established several regulations that govern the sea water resources in the planet.<sup>14</sup>

The treaty managed to resolve several disputes over territorial boundaries, exclusive economic zones, navigation problems and also led to the development of new conflict resolution mechanisms that would help resolve dispute in a peaceful diplomatic manner.<sup>15</sup>

However, despite the United Nation’s convention on the Law of the Sea, certain countries territorial problems were not yet resolved, especially in the Arctic. The arctic ocean is a vast territory, countries such as Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway and Denmark all have claims to certain part of that territory as being part of their extended continental shelf.

Those claims happen to overlap with the claims of other countries which led to certain tensions and potential military conflict in the future due to the fact that ice is melting in a rapid rate because of global warming and the ability to access to several natural resources in addition to having the ability to enhance one’s security. Before going further, it is important to define first what is a claim or what is a land claim, since this concept is widely used in several articles concerning the arctic. According to Macmillan dictionary to lay a claim is t “to say officially that you believe that something belongs to you”<sup>16</sup>

Below, a map of the arctic area and different claims that have been proclaimed by the concerned states in the arctic region.

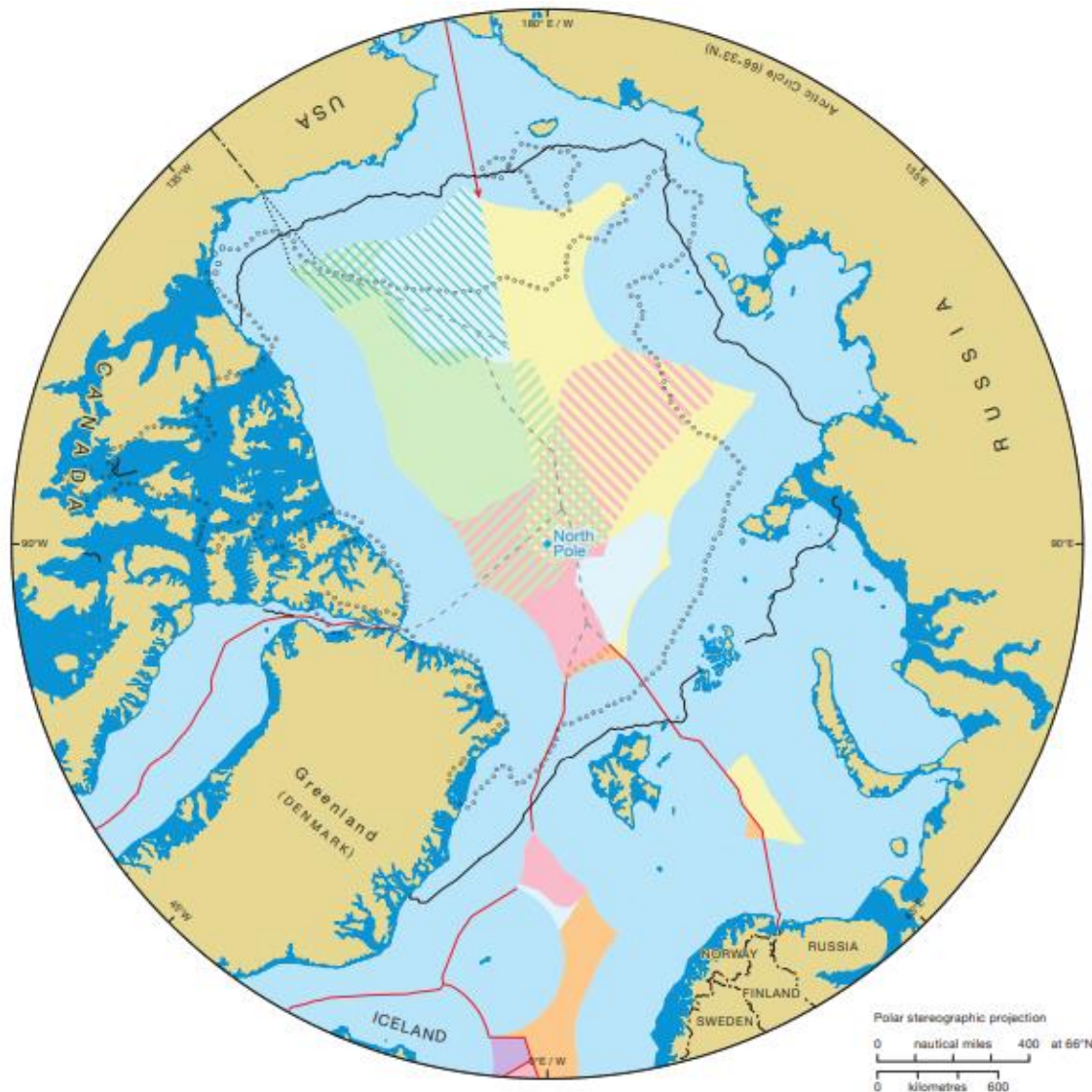
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<sup>14</sup> "Oceans And The Law Of The Sea". 2020. Un.Org. Accessed June 17. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/oceans-and-law-sea/>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "LAY CLAIM TO SOMETHING (Phrase) Definition And Synonyms | Macmillan Dictionary". 2020. Macmillandictionary.Com. Accessed July 12. [https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/lay-claim-to-something\\_1](https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/lay-claim-to-something_1).





Source Durham University department of geography:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic/>

### 3.1.1 - Russia's arctic claims

Russia, considered the largest country in the world signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on March 1997 allowing it to officially claim 200nm of its exclusive economic zone making it the country with the most arctic area in the world. Russia also in 2001 decided to lay out the first official claim under UNCLOS to extend their EEZ beyond the 200nm that's given by the convention, asking the commission to grant it around 1.2 million km<sup>2</sup> of area in the arctic.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike other countries, Russia was the first arctic country to use its military as a way of backing up its claims, by sending bomber jets and moving part of its navy to conduct drills as a way of flexing its military might and to protect their interests in the region.<sup>18</sup>

All the arctic countries that have claims in the area have their claims overlapping with the Russian claims, with a small exception with the United States. The United States managed in 1990 to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union in order to solve some of the disputes in the arctic, but disagreement still exists over other areas in the region. Norway and Russia have a lot of overlapping claims in the arctic, and one of them would be in the Barents Sea. There is an already existing agreement between Norway and previously the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation) in 1957 over Varangerfjord, however the agreement according to Russia is meant to only set up sea boundaries in the area and has nothing to do with borders in the Barents Sea. So far, there has been no official conflict over the area as both countries enjoy fishing freely but no party has yet attempted to extract any hydrocarbons.<sup>19</sup> Russia along with Denmark and Canada are still conducting research on the Lomonosov Ridge in order to find

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<sup>17</sup> Carlson, Jon D, Christopher Hubach, Joseph Long, Kellen Minter, and Shane Young. "Scramble for the Arctic: Layered Sovereignty, UNCLOS, and Competing Maritime Territorial Claims." SAIS Review of International Affairs 33, no. 2 (2013): p.28-31.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

more evidence to enhance their claims to the area, however Russia did an unexpected move and planted a Titanium Russia flag at the bottom of the ocean on the area as a way of marking the territory as their own.<sup>20</sup>

This was meant by strong negative response by Norway, the United States and Japan (who does not have any stake in the arctic) while Denmark and Canada did not react asking for more data to be collected in order for them to react.<sup>21</sup> The reason why Russia is far reaching in the arctic is mainly to the oil and gas reserves in the region, which would make Russia a major energy powerhouse in addition to generating a lot of revenues from potential maritime routes by charging fees to ships to pass through its “internal” waters as Canada does in the northwest passage.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.1.2 - The United States’ hesitation to join UNCLOS and claims to the arctic:

The United States relationship with UNCLOS is rather complex, mainly because of the United States’ internal politics. After UNCLOS was agreed on by the majority of countries in the world and ratified by many of them, the United States still has to decide whether to be part of the treaty or not. Researchers claim that because of the effects of climate change and the rapid melting of ice in the arctic region, the United States stance on UNCLOS might be changing slowly. The initial opposition of UNCLOS in the United States came from President Ronald Reagan and the republican controlled congress, according to President Reagan, he has described the treaty as “socialism run amok and a third world giveaway”<sup>23</sup>, while the conservatives and the republican led congress were strongly opposed to the claim that was

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Carlson, Jon D, Christopher Hubach, Joseph Long, Kellen Minter, and Shane Young. "Scramble for the Arctic: Layered Sovereignty, UNCLOS, and Competing Maritime Territorial Claims." SAIS Review of International Affairs 33, no. 2 (2013): p.36-41.

setup by the convention that “that seabed wealth beyond territorial limits is the world’s common heritage.”<sup>24</sup>

President Obama signed an executive order 13547 (National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes) which is an executive order aimed to setup policies and protect the Oceans, the coasts and great lakes that are under the United States sovereignty.<sup>25</sup> President Obama claims that being part of UNCLOS would solidify the US claims in the arctic. According to President George W. Bush, many of the known fuel deposits that exist in the arctic are currently outside of U.S jurisdiction.<sup>26</sup> During the last year of the George W. Bush administration, the United States started to realize that countries with borders and territories in the arctic are rushing towards submitting claims to the UN for approval in order to extend their maritime boundaries beyond what they have now, therefore the U.S government decided to allocate \$5.6 million in order to create a task force that would be responsible of providing the extension of the Alaskan continental shelf beyond the 200 miles EEZ limit.<sup>27</sup>

One might ask why is the United States allocating funds in order to prove their claims to the arctic? according to the US state department, the arctic has always been an interest for the United States since the purchase of Alaska in 1867. The reason behind that interest in the beginning was purely economical and for national security reasons. That still holds until today.<sup>28</sup> The United States know the benefits it can generate by having a presence in the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Pegna, Melissa Renee. "U.S. Arctic Policy: The Need to Ratify a Modified UNCLOS and Secure a Military Presence in the Arctic." *Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce* 44, no. 2 (04, 2013): 169-194. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/docview/1399149229?accountid=11162>.

<sup>26</sup> Carlson, Jon D, Christopher Hubach, Joseph Long, Kellen Minter, and Shane Young. "Scramble for the Arctic: Layered Sovereignty, UNCLOS, and Competing Maritime Territorial Claims." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2013): 21-43.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "U.S. Arctic Policy". 2009. U.S Department Of State. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/oes/ocns/arc//index.htm#:~:text=U.S.%20Arctic%20policy%20emphasizes%20environmental,well%2Dbeing%20of%20Arctic%20communities>.

arctic, whether through accessing the large undiscovered oil & gas reserves and the minerals, or asserting global dominance and broadcasting itself as the major super power in the world. The US is one of the biggest consumers of energy in the world, and having access to the energy resources in the arctic is one important motivation why the US wants to be involved. Some of the primary reasons why the US wants stakes in the arctic according to the official state department website would include “Promoting environmentally sustainable natural resource management and economic development in the region.” And “Meeting post-Cold War national security and defence needs.”<sup>29</sup> The US considers Russia a threat and a rival militarily, therefore the US believes that in order to enhance their security, it is important to have some kind of push back and presence in the arctic in order to counter Russian military presence.

Most of the existing literature on the field focuses primarily on whether states respect UNCLOS and focuses on the issues of sovereignty and the legality of their claims. However, this research will look at the motivations behind the claims on the Arctic put forward by the US and Russia and whether the overlapping claims in the arctic lead to a possible military conflict between the US and Russia.

#### **4- Theoretical framework and fundamental concepts**

In this section, I will be presenting the theoretical framework and the fundamental concepts that I believe best fit my research. The goal of this research is to explain and explore to what extent is climate change responsible in changing the behaviour of arctic states when it comes to claiming territories in the arctic region. In order to do so, three fundamental concepts and one theory will be my basis and guide through this research. The concepts that I deem fundamental to both my theoretical framework and to my research are climate change,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

maritime jurisdiction, the arctic and natural resources, whereas the theory I will be using would be the defensive realism theory. The reason behind choosing these fundamental concepts and the defensive realism theory is because they enable me to conduct an analysis of how climate change can push those states to adopt different behaviours while setting up claims to the territories, they believe belongs to them in the arctic region. They can help answer several questions on why their behaviour can change. The defensive realism theory can be used in order to predict the behaviour of the concerned states that have claims in the arctic region. The reason behind choosing the defensive realism theory instead of the offensive realism theory is mainly due to the fact that it could help predict that states behave in a rational manner and seek to maximize their powers in order to protect their interests and to maximize their security, that states might act in self-defence if they feel that their interests are being threatened while on the other hand offensive realism theory advocates for aggressive behaviour. The theory states that despite the anarchic nature of the international system, states still act in a rational manner. The theory claim that anarchy is what make states think rationally and carefully about their actions, and that can be pictured in adopting defensive strategies in order to avoid using any aggressive measures. However, the theory also recognizes that in certain scenarios, conflict or limited conflict is inevitable and is therefore necessary in certain scenarios where no other measure works.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, I will try to prove in this research that given the defensive realism theory, the states with stakes in the arctic region are more likely to engage in a conflict in order to protect their interest in case all other methods fail. Even the most peaceful nations in the world, pictured in the Nordic countries, notably Denmark and Norway are beginning to increase their military spending according to their defence ministers, in order to prepare their defensive measures shall a conflict occur. The Danish defence ministry in 2012 created the so called “Joint Arctic

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Command” which is aimed at protecting and ensuring the protection of territorial waters and areas that Denmark claim in the arctic region. Danish defence minister Trine Bramsen also announced the increase in military spending in order to meet the challenges that might face Denmark when it comes to the arctic ocean.<sup>31</sup> This could be a signal that Denmark is trying to maximize its military capability in order to protect itself and in order to increase its security.<sup>32</sup> Same thing goes for Norway. The Norwegians announced on April 2020 that they are increasing their defence spending and laying out the long-term plan for its armed forces, the plan aim at strengthening the Norwegian military with an increased budget and new equipment.<sup>33</sup> According to the government, the aim of that is to increase Norway’s presence in the arctic and be ready when necessary to counter the Russian threat.<sup>34 35</sup> The increase in military spending by those states can be a strong signal that those historically peaceful countries are taking the matter into their own hands, and that the only way they might protect their interests is by investing in a deterrence and a defensive move that can signal that they’re ready to take action if necessary, and I believe that the defensive realism theory is the best tool to explain the situation.

The reason behind choosing the defensive realism theory instead of Liberalism and Constructivism is mainly related to the recent increase in military spending and the push towards more military presence in the arctic by the concerned states. Liberalism theory claims that as states trade with each other and their economies become connected, they’re less likely

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<sup>31</sup> "Denmark To Increase Military Presence In Arctic: Minister". 2019. TheLocal.

<https://www.thelocal.dk/20190820/denmark-to-increase-military-presence-in-arctic-minister>.

<sup>32</sup> "Tasks In The Arctic And The North Atlantic". 2020. Danish Ministry Of Defence. Accessed July 24.

<https://fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/TasksintheArcticandtheNorthernAtlantic.aspx#:~:text=The%20activities%20of%20the%20Danish,into%20a%20joint%20Arctic%20Command>.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Defence. 2020. "Norway Increases Defence Spending To Strengthen Its Capability And Readiness". Regjeringen

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Fouche, Gwladys. 2019. "On Norway's Icy Border With Russia, Unease Over Military Buildup". Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-norway-russia-us-arctic-widerimage/on-norways-icy-border-with-russia-unease-over-military-buildup-idUSKBN1XG0TS>.

to go to war because they're interests will be threatened. Liberalism also advocates for the spread of democracy to other parts of the world, and that by spreading democracy, states will most likely share the same western values and decide to cooperate with one another.<sup>36</sup>

However, this can be considered as one of the weaknesses of the theory, many states in the world are reluctant to adopt democratic values and to change their regimes, which is the case of Russia in this research. Russia has been resisting the adoption of democracy and democratic values for a long while now, claiming that it is not compatible with its society and that it is foreign for Russia. Russia views the western countries as potential enemies that want to intervene in its internal affairs and want to see its regime collapse, this is mainly because of the imposed trade sanctions and the marginalization of Russia in several international organizations. This goes against the foundation of liberalism which advocates for more trade, spread of democracy and cooperation and inclusion in international organizations.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, the reason behind not having constructivism as a theory of choice is due to the fact that constructivism focuses mainly on how social factors affect the political life in a specific country. The theory overall tends to have an extensive focus on sociological thinking and claims that "international politics are not fundamentally different from other spheres of human activity, where practices are produced, reproduced, and contested inside a meaningful and patterned social context."<sup>38</sup> The theory tends to focus on the action of individuals and how the ideas of behaving a certain way comes along. However, after careful consideration and analysis of several US and Russian policies all over the world, it looks like that even though several administrations came from the US side and different changes in the Russian

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<sup>36</sup> Doyle, Michael and Stefano Recchia. "Liberalism in International Relations." In International Encyclopedia of Political Science, edited by Bertrand BadieDirk Berg-Schlosser and Leonardo Morlino, 1435-1439. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011. doi: 10.4135/9781412959636.n326.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Pouliot, Vincent. "Constructivism in International Relations." 2011, 425-31.



government, their policies and behaviour remained relatively the same. This made the researcher opt out from using constructivism in this research.

According to preliminary research, the researcher concluded that given the theory chosen in this research (Defensive Realism), the researcher expect that the results of the empirical analysis will most likely be that both the United States and Russia will do whatever it takes to protect their interests, whether through increase military spending and military presence in the arctic as a form of deterrence against one another, or in the form of cooperation and dialogue in order to find a long sustainable solution to the issue at hand in the arctic. Given defensive realism theory, both US and Russia are rational actors, at the end they will make calculated moves that would guarantee that they reach their results in the most cost-effective way. The researcher predicts that both countries would realize the damage and economic loss that an armed conflict could lead and the repercussion it can have for them and the world. This doesn't necessarily mean that the defence spending would stagnate or decrease or an armed conflict is completely out of the picture. The researcher predicts that the military spending might continue to rise by all the actors in the region in order to reach some sort of balance of power because naturally, states generally are more willing to negotiate and cooperate when they feel that their agenda cannot be pushed further given the status quo. The researcher believe that the theory is the perfect fit for this dissertation as it can explain the motivations that the two countries have in the arctic. The researcher believes that given the theory, the motivations behind Russian and American claims in the arctic would mostly be economic gains, security gains and having gains within international law by using the law of the sea to solidify their claims to the areas in the arctic. Both states would eventually seek to maximize their security mostly because of the hostility towards one another and on the other hand have access to valuable resources that will ensure the continuity of their economic development and technological advancement in addition to winning legal claims under international law.

The environmental, security and international law motivations that I expect to find in the articles are mainly derived from the fact that I speculate that both countries have a lot to gain if their arctic claims are achieved. For the case of the security motivations, I would expect the US to be interested in securing maritime routes in the arctic and ensure that Russia does not have a monopoly in the region where they can do whatever they want. The US security motivations could also be motivated by the proximity of Alaska to Russia and considering that Alaska is part of the US mainland, that could represent a direct threat to the US. That being said, it would be natural and expected from the US to setup military presence in the area in order to protect first their mainland, and other interests in the region such as the economic potential of the arctic. Seeing from past behaviour of the Russian state where they annexed Crimea from Ukraine taking advantage of the instability, there is a potential that the US fears that Russia could act quickly if no US presence is there and claim more lands that deem to be of economic benefit to the US. Concerning international law, Russia & the US have been active in the region by trying to map the area and send missions under the sea in order to determine whether the seabed is part of their continental shelf. Because if they found so, then they would have greater winning positions to win under international law as the treaty of the law of the sea clearly states that if one country can prove that their continental shelf extends beyond, then the territory should belong to them.

The reason behind speculating that international law motivations is expected to be found in the articles that I will be studying is mainly derived from the fact that both countries on several occasions cited laws within the UNCLOS in order to solidify their claims and to strengthen their positions.

#### 4.1 - Climate change

According to J. David Neelin, a professor and chair at the department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), climate is the normal state of our oceans, lands and atmosphere in addition to all the ecosystems that exist within them.<sup>39</sup> The strength and the direction of the wind are also considered as part of the climate in addition to cloud covers, the ocean currents and temperature of the sea surface. The term climate according to Neelin, can often be associated or mixed with the term weather, weather according to him is “the state of the atmosphere and ocean at a given moment in time”<sup>40</sup> while climate as we defined previously is the normal state of the atmosphere, land and our oceans. As the saying goes according to Neelin, “climate is what you expect, weather is what you get.”<sup>41</sup>

Climate however is not limited only to the average or normal state of our oceans, lands and atmosphere, it can also include the average measurement of the weather-related changes.<sup>42</sup> An example of that would be studying the average rain fall that might occur in a specific city in the month of July, or the different and average temperature levels or for example how many hurricanes typically occur in a hurricane season in the United States. Therefore, “Climate may thus be considered to include all quantities defined by averaging over the weather, i.e. over time scales of many weather events.”<sup>43</sup> Since planet earth is known for going through several strong changes on every season, in order to know the normal and average state of the climate, it is important to study those changes within each season for a couple of years in order to come up with an average and to obtain what we call a “climatological value” for each month and season.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Neelin, J. David. *Climate Change and Climate Modeling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2 - The Arctic

What is the arctic? According to Oxford World Encyclopaedia, the arctic is a large icy region located around the north pole of the planet, specifically north of the latitude 66° and 30'N.<sup>45</sup>

The arctic region is a place in the world consisted of vast icy seas and oceans and very cold and harsh climate for most of the time of the year.<sup>46</sup> In the high latitude zone of the arctic, the climate becomes the most extreme, with an average winter temperature around -33°C. The region is also known for low precipitation around the year with an average of less than 250mm on a yearly basis. Because of that, finding large rivers and lakes around the region is rare due to low precipitation but “shallow lakes, ponds, and marshes are common in areas underlain by permafrost”<sup>47</sup>

In the height of the summer, the sun does not set at all, and it does not rise during the depths of the winter season. Several scientists and geographers disagree where the arctic ends, however the most common agreed upon area where the arctic ends would be “the northern boundary of forest growth, others make the limit the summer isotherm of 18°Celsius”<sup>48</sup>.

In the middle of the vast arctic region, the arctic ocean is located. Unlike the other oceans in the world, the arctic ocean surface is largely covered by ice sheets almost all year long, especially in the winter season. The areas bordering the arctic region are the furthest northern lands of North America, the northern lands of Europe and the northern lands of Asia, those areas can also be referred as the subarctic region.<sup>49</sup> Apart from the mostly frozen arctic ocean,

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<sup>45</sup> "Arctic." In World Encyclopedia. : Philip's, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780199546091.001.0001/acref-9780199546091-e-619>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Park, Chris, and Michael Allaby. "Arctic." In A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation. : Oxford University Press, 2013. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780199641666.001.0001/acref-9780199641666-e-451>.

<sup>48</sup> "Arctic." In World Encyclopedia. : Philip's, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780199546091.001.0001/acref-9780199546091-e-619>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

the arctic lands are often covered with ice and snow during the winter, however, during the summer season they are snow-free.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.3 - Maritime Jurisdiction

The concept of maritime jurisdiction is consisted of two important concepts, “Maritime” and “Jurisdiction”. Maritime which means anything bordering the sea or the ocean according to the Cambridge dictionary.<sup>51</sup> Whereas the term ‘jurisdiction’ is a word derived from the Latin word “jurisdiction” which means “the power of administration of justice” i.e. having the ability to enforce the laws over a specific territory or area.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, Maritime Jurisdiction is basically having jurisdiction and the ability to exercise state power on its sea borders. According to Dolliver Nelson from the Oxford University Press, Maritime Jurisdiction is defined as follow: “‘maritime jurisdiction’ may be defined as the exercise—in conformity with international law—of legislative, executive, and judicial functions over the sea and over persons and things on or under the sea.”<sup>53</sup>

#### 4.4 – Defensive Realism theory

In this section I will be introducing the theory that I will be using in my research. Defensive Realism is a theory in international relations that was developed in the early twentieth century derived from the classical IR theory of Realism.

Unlike offensive realists who argue that anarchy acts as the primary factor for states to seek to maximize their power and influence on the so called “never-ending” struggle to achieve

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "MARITIME | Meaning In The Cambridge English Dictionary". 2020. Dictionary.Cambridge.Org. Accessed July 1. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/maritime>.

<sup>52</sup> Schofield, Clive H., Sög-u Yi, and Moon-Sang Kwon. 2014. The Limits of Maritime Jurisdiction. Law of the Sea Institute Publication. Leiden: Brill | Nijhoff.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=686017&site=eds-live>.

<sup>53</sup> Dolliver Nelson. Maritime Jurisdiction.

hegemony, defensive realists on the other hand argue the opposite.<sup>54</sup> Defensive realism argue that anarchy pushes states to think carefully on what's at stake, by adopting defensive and reasonable measures in order to ensure that their interests are not threatened without using any aggressive measures.<sup>55</sup> However, one must understand, that although the theory advocates for defensive calculated measures, it nevertheless recognizes that in occasions, conflict is inevitable and necessary in certain occasions.<sup>56</sup> Conflict is necessary in case a state is subject to aggression from another one therefore threatening its internal security, or in case any type of difference between any two states are beyond repair.<sup>57</sup> The theory in general argues that in the anarchic system, states will continue to maximize their power in order to ensure their own security and the security of their allies, and ensure that the balance of power in the international system remains balanced.<sup>58</sup> Kenneth Waltz states "In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power".<sup>59</sup>

The defensive realism theory basically states that states use preventive measures to defend their interests and their motivations, whether using their military as a defence or deterrence mechanism or by using diplomatic channels to prevent any situation from escalating further. The theory in this research would be of great help to understand and to explain the motivations of the two states. Given the theory, the motivations that are expected to be found in the results are economic, security, environmental and international law gains. The reason behind those expectations is that given the theory, I assume that the concerned states would

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<sup>54</sup> Lobell, Steven E. "Structural Realism/Offensive and Defensive Realism." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies. 22 Dec. 2017; Accessed 4 Nov. 2020. <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-304>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

increase their defensive capabilities to defend any type of hostility of the other party.

Concerning the environmental gains, I would expect the US and Russia to protect the fauna & flora of the region in order to prevent any type of an environmental disaster and on the other hand to ensure that the continuity and the sustainability of the wildlife and fisheries for any type of economic exploitation in the future. The economic motivation could be pictured in the attempt by those countries to use defensive measures in order to protect the areas that have economic potential and ensure they remain within their territories of control. The international law motivations that are expected to be found given the theory, would be the two countries' attempt to use defensive measures to ensure their interests are protected, those states can seek to defend their claims internationally by citing international law and giving credible evidence that could solidify their claims.

## **5- Methodology**

In this section of the research, I will be presenting the research design and the method that I will be using in order to conduct my research. In this first part, I will explain why choosing the method of content analysis is the right course of action in this research. Secondly, I will start by explaining and discussing the reasoning behind choosing two case studies so I can conduct my analysis in order to answer my research question. After that, I will present my findings and after that move on to the analysis.

### **5.1 – Method**

In this dissertation, I believe that the best method that would fit my research would be content analysis. Content analysis is a qualitative method where a series of techniques are used in

order to conduct a “systematic analysis” of several types of texts.<sup>60</sup> The method’s strengths are portrayed in its ability to analyse not only the content but also can help look at the themes, the concepts and the core ideas that exist within the text. After careful thorough and reliable analysis, it is possible to make a generalization depending on the categories the researcher chose.<sup>61</sup> Since I will be looking at several interviews and speeches by important government officials from the United States and Russia, in addition to press releases by the state department and the Russian foreign ministry, I believe that content analysis will help me greatly in my research as it will give me the ability to analyse the content carefully and make a generalization on the possible course of action they might take concerning the arctic territory, whether they’re aiming for an escalation of conflict or finding a diplomatic solution. The articles, interviews and speeches that I will be reviewing will give me a clear picture about the motivations of the concerned states in the arctic as those are most likely to be discussed and said explicitly and publicly. As I have mentioned previously the expected motivations to be found in the documents are most likely to be security motivation, economic motivations and environmental motivations. The motivations are what pushes those states to defend and protect their claims in the arctic, they act as the basis of the arguments laid out by the US and Russia to protect the areas they claim as theirs. However, on the other hand, the US and Russia in addition of having their own motivations in the arctic, they also have their motives in the arctic. The motives of the US and Russia in the arctic cannot be known for sure, it is discussed behind the curtains and never laid out explicitly to the world. The motives usually hold a negative connotation whereas motivations hold a positive one. For example, the US and Russia will never say explicitly we claim this territory because we want to achieve

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<sup>60</sup> Drisko, James W., and Tina Maschi. "Qualitative Content Analysis." In *Content Analysis*, by Drisko, James, and Tina Maschi.. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190215491.003.0004.

<sup>61</sup> Haggarty, Linda. "What Is Content Analysis?" *Medical Teacher* 18, no. 2 (1996): 99-101.



geopolitical dominance or that they want to broadcast their military might in order to show they're the strongest power, which I expect those to be their true motives.

## **6- Research design**

The aim of this study is to determine by using the defensive realism theory in order to explain and gain a deeper understanding on how the concerned states lay out different claims in the arctic area and what would be their political actions. After thorough research, I concluded that the best approach I can use in my dissertation would be a qualitative study. In order to do that, I will be looking at several documents such as research articles and monographs in addition to interviews and speeches of key government figures of the United States of America and the Russian Federation. I believe that the interviews and speeches by the key government figures of the two mentioned countries will help me greatly when it comes to gathering information and data in order for me to start my coding and categorizing some of the concepts, words and themes found in those interviews and speeches. The purpose behind finding those words, concepts and themes and coding, is to start analysing and determining what is the purpose of their presence and why they have been used in various speeches by those key government figures. I will also look at press releases by the state department of the United States and the foreign ministry of the Russian federation, as I believe it will help determine what the course of action might be, and whether the method they're addressing the issue consist of words and concepts that might hint that a military action is always on the table, or whether the tone of the press releases is intended to broadcast military power or aiming for a diplomatic solution. It is crucial that the analysis of the speeches, interviews, monographs and press releases is conducted carefully in order to ensure accurate results. From the analysis that I will be conducting in those documents, and since the defensive realism theory indicates that states will do whatever it takes to avoid any sort of military confrontation and act reasonably and rationally, I expect to find certain themes related to calls for cooperation by both countries in

addition to themes that highlights the concerns and the hostilities that each country have towards one another and that there is a need for dialogue to resolve those concerns and hostilities. I would also expect themes related to the preservation of the peace as I expect the two countries to act rationally and to know that war is not in their favours. I believe that if those themes end up existing and dominant in the documents, it would indicate that there is a low chance of a military confrontation. On the other hand, the defensive realism theory does not rule out the possibility of an armed conflict to happen therefore, I would expect themes related to the reasoning behind the increase of military spending and the increase of the military presence in the region and each country justifying why their presence is crucial to their survival. If those themes ever do exist or dominate the articles, then I would take this as a clear indication that there is a high likelihood of either a limited military confrontation or a possible war.

Since I mentioned previously that I will be looking specifically at speeches, interviews and press releases from both the US and Russia, I will take those two countries as my case study. I believe the choice of choosing those two great powers is mostly because of their previous actions in other parts of the world, and their constant worry about ensuring their security. Another reason why choosing the US and Russia as the case studies is also driven by the fact that these two countries are the most important players, the most active ones and not to mention they are the most military powerful states in the region. The strengths behind using a multiple case study is its ability to allow researchers to analyse data in a specific context. It would help me remain focused on two specific countries and study their behaviour and their way of approaching the situation in the arctic. Taking two cases studies of both Russia and the United States, can give me ability to understand better the situation in the arctic, it can help me provide an answer whether the melting of ice and the accessibility to parts of the arctic

will act as a trigger or a motivator that would lead to those two states changing their course of action and their policy towards to the arctic.

#### 6.1 - Data collection:

In order to conduct the research, the data came from various newspaper articles such as The New York times and The Guardian, in addition to data coming from articles from the two of the top news agencies in the world such as Associated Press and Tass (Russian News Agency). Other data sources include statements and press releases from two US presidents (Obama and Trump) in addition to press releases and statements by Vladimir Putin (President of the Russian federation) and press releases from both the US state department and the Russian ministry of Foreign Affairs, in addition to senior individuals of both the state department and Russia's foreign ministry. The thought process behind the choice of these articles to analyse in my research, is because of the quality of the articles from the New York Times and The Guardian, whereas when it comes to the two new agencies, I took articles from being TASS & AP is because each new agency belongs to one of the countries I will be studying and I wanted to see how each one of them reflect on the issue. The statements and releases by the presidents of both countries and their senior officials act as source of primary information in order to look at their motivations on what makes them act in the arctic. The time frame chosen to collect this data would be a ten-year period (2009 to 2019). The reason behind choosing this time frame is due to the increase of exploration missions by the US and Russia in the arctic and the mobilization of their troops in that area in addition to the increase of meetings between the countries involved under the arctic council as the area became more accessible and more relevant in the world stage today. The statements and press releases coming from President Obama, President Trump and President Putin in addition to their state secretaries and foreign ministers will be useful in gathering data to look at the way they're addressing the issue, proposed solution and possibly hints on what future action might look

like. In total, ten articles were chosen to conduct the content analysis on, five articles from the US side and five articles from the Russian side.

## 6.2 - Ensuring neutrality and avoiding Bias

In order to avoid any skewed results and to ensure that the results are accurate and not biased, I asked another independent individual that have no involvement whatsoever in the study to use content analysis in order to code the same articles chosen by myself. The purpose of this as mentioned previously is to avoid any skewed results or bias, in addition to ensuring the establishment of intercoder reliability. The time taken to conduct coding of the necessary articles is one week. Before the analysis and the coding began, I explained the main purpose of the study, the research question, motivations, the methodology used, in addition to the coding schemes, in order to make the independent individual familiar with the study. After the coding was finished by the independent individual of the same chosen articles, we began comparing the results. The results of the analysis showed that the coders have similarities and agreed on seven out of nine themes. While comparing the results, after I finished the coding and decided on the nine themes, one theme “need for respecting and enforcing international law” was not present on the independent individual results. The independent individual also found out that the theme “Sanctions pushes Russia to adopt aggressive behaviour” is not present on my final list. After careful consideration and discussion about the themes, I decided that it is best to stick to the seven themes and remove the two themes we both don't agree on.

The final themes that I decided to stick with are:

- Theme 1: cooperation and dialogue are key to resolve the conflict
- Theme 2: concerns and hostility felt by the US and Russia
- Theme 3: increased military spending to safeguard interests

- Theme 4: renovating military bases and military readiness in the arctic to tackle any threat
- Theme 5: US motivations in the arctic
- Theme 6: Russian motivations in the arctic
- Theme 7: all states are committed for peace

	Doc 1	Doc 2	Doc 3	Doc 4	Doc 5	Doc 6	Doc 7	Doc 8	Doc 9	Doc 10
Theme 1										
Theme 2										
Theme 3										
Theme 4										
Theme 5										
Theme 6										
Theme 7										

### 6.3 - Data Analysis:

In the analysis that is going to be putting forward, It will be organized as follow. The analysis will contain several citations from the ten articles that I choose to conduct the content analysis on, citations will be coming from both the articles of the American side discussing the arctic and articles from the Russian side. These citations will be analysed individually in order to determine the existence of any evidence from the newspaper articles in addition to the speeches from American and Russian officials concerning the arctic related to the themes that have been agreed upon between myself and my aide. I believe that given the defensive realism theory, I would expect that it is more likely that states would refrain from taking military action and be more willing to be cooperative and try to resolve the issue using diplomatic channels, therefore I expect to find Theme 1 to be present in all of the articles. Since the theory states that we live in an anarchic state system and states have interests, they would likely adopt measures to ensure that their interests are protected, I would also expect the presence of the Themes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to be present on most of the articles. I would say

that given the theory, I would not expect to find Theme 7 to be present widely in the articles I will be analysing, mainly because I think that the theory is unable to answer whether states are always committed to peace. The results will be analysed and discussed in order to determine whether given defensive realism theory, whether the US and Russia are more likely to go into an armed conflict over the arctic.

### 6.3.1 – Citations and Analysis from articles from the Russian side

Article 1: Lavrov says Russia open to mutually beneficial collaboration with its Arctic neighbors

This article is taken from the TASS (The Russian news agency) where acting foreign Russian minister Sergey Lavrov discusses that Russian remains committed into any form of cooperation with their arctic neighbour under the arctic council, highlighting the importance of working together with his counterparts in order to promote the region and ensure peace is not disturbed.

Citation:

"As a co-initiator of this institution, our country is committed to providing the fullest support for its work aimed at intensifying constructive depoliticized interaction in the Arctic for its sustainable development and prosperity of the peoples residing there,"<sup>62</sup>

Analysis:

As we can see from the citation, foreign minister Lavrov highlights the initiative of his country Russia in co-creating or initiating the arctic council, he also highlights the readiness of the Russian state to engage in cooperation in order to serve the arctic population and

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<sup>62</sup>"Lavrov Says Russia Open To Mutually Beneficial Collaboration With Its Arctic Neighbors". 2017. <https://tass.com/politics/929652>.

develop the region's economy in order to ensure prosperity for the locals. He also highlights the importance for depoliticizing the issue and start constructive interactions and cooperation to resolve the issue.

Citation:

"these activities will contribute to further strengthening of regional peace and stability, as well as fostering of the values of partnership based on equality and mutual respect in international affairs." <sup>63</sup>

Analysis:

the Russian foreign minister states that developing the region and cooperation between the arctic states will be strengthening the peace and stability in the region and ensuring that the arctic states treat each other with respect and equality in order for the partnership and the cooperation to work.

Citation:

"We remain open to broad mutually beneficial collaboration with our Arctic neighbours, in particular for joint implementation of projects in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the widest range of areas, from transport and energy to tourism and environment." <sup>64</sup>

Analysis:

According to the quote by the Russian foreign minister, it looks like he keeps highlighting the importance of the cooperation and dialogue between the arctic states and develop the region economically and ensure its sustainable development for future generation and protecting the environment for the mutual benefits of all.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

## Article 2: Putin outlines ambitious Arctic expansion program

This article

This article was taken from AP (Associated Press) where the current president of Russia Vladimir Putin and Russian foreign minister Lavrov discusses in the arctic forum hold in St. Petersburg the importance of securing Russia's claims in the arctic territory and developing the region. He highlights the importance of securing shipping routes and developing necessary infrastructure in order to increase cargo shipments in the region. The foreign minister also assures other world leaders that have claims in the arctic that Russian military presence is there purely for defence purposes in reaction for the recent NATO military drills in northern Norway.

Citation:

“Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that military deployments in the Arctic are intended to protect national interests.” “We ensure the necessary defense capability in view of the military-political situation near our borders,”<sup>65</sup>

Analysis

To put this citation in context, the foreign minister of Russia responded to concerns expressed by Norwegian prime minister concerning the presence of Russian troops in the arctic, and Lavrov assured the prime minister that the deployment of those troops were a response and a defensive measure to the recent NATO military drills conducted in northern Norway, which Russia sees as threat. This shows that according to the statement from the foreign minister, Russia had no intentions of deploying those troops until it felt threatened by the NATO

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<sup>65</sup> ISACHENKOV, VLADIMIR, and IRINA TITOVA. 2019. "Putin Outlines Ambitious Arctic Expansion Program". AP NEWS. <https://apnews.com/article/d0c2eb39a3b44b40ac8ddb1749ebe143>.



military drills, that is why he referred to the military capability as “defensive” instead of “offensive”.

Citation:

“Russia plans to expand the ports on both sides of the Arctic shipping route — Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on the Kamchatka Peninsula — and invited foreign companies to invest in the reconstruction project.” “Other ports and infrastructure facilities along the route will also be upgraded and expanded”<sup>66</sup>

Analysis

This quote by the current president of Russia Vladimir Putin shows the intentions that Russia has in the arctic, from this quote, it is clearly that Russia’s interest are economical, hence why Putin is pushing for the development of necessary infrastructure in order to unlock the economic potential of the region.

Citation:

“The Russian leader emphasized the challenges to the polar region posed by global warming, saying that Russian scientists believe that the climate is changing faster than indicated by earlier estimates.”<sup>67</sup>

“I wouldn’t like to see the Arctic turning into something like Crimea, and Crimea becoming a desert due to our failure to take timely measures,”

“Putin said that Russia has fulfilled its obligations under an international agreement aiming to limit global warming by cutting emissions of greenhouse gases, noting that the U.S. has opted out of the pact.”

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Analysis:

Russia tries to tell the arctic states that Russia respected its past international commitments (in this case climate change agreement) and works towards protecting the arctic region in order to avoid another environmental disaster such as happened in Crimea. I believe that this statement by the leader of Russia is aimed to tell the arctic states present in the forum, that Russia in the past respected its international obligations, and is also committed to working with the rest of the arctic states in order to find a lasting sustainable solution to the situation in the arctic.

Article 3: Remarks by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Arctic Council Session, Tromso, April 29, 2009

Citation:

“We are certain that a specification of the Russian approaches will contribute to the further development of Russian bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Arctic. As President Dmitry Medvedev has repeatedly stressed, many of our national interests in the region can be realized only in close collaboration with the partners. Russia will be a reliable, transparent and predictable partner in the Arctic. This is the chief premise of the Basic Guidelines. Today we are circulating an unofficial document on these issues.”<sup>68</sup>

Analysis:

This statement by foreign minister Lavrov in the arctic council session organized in Tromso, Norway, where he highlights that Russia recognize that any Russian national interest in the region can only be realized if they work with their partners, reaffirming his stance that Russia is looking forward to a diplomatic peaceful solution to the arctic situation. He attempts to

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<sup>68</sup> "Remarks By Russian Minister Of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov At Arctic Council Session, Tromso, April 29, 2009". 2009. Mid.Ru. [https://www.mid.ru/en/press\\_service/minister\\_speeches/-/asset\\_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/296138](https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/296138).

reassure his arctic partners that Russia will be a predictable and reliable partner. The Russian official have not used any word that hints into military confrontation or an aggressive way of addressing the issue, but keeps assuring his partners that Russia wants to resolve this exact situation through dialogue.

Citation:

“There can be no validity in the view of the Arctic as a zone of potential conflicts, because you won't discern either irreconcilable contradictions in the interests of the Arctic states there or any threats requiring force-based solutions or a presence of military-political blocs in the region. On the contrary, the character of the problems, primarily tied to climate change, and the still-severe Arctic conditions predetermine the necessity to act together and build up coordinated joint efforts. We are convinced that the chief trend in the Arctic is the development of broad regional cooperation.”<sup>69</sup>

Analysis:

From this statement by foreign minister Lavrov, Russia doesn't see the arctic as potential zone of conflict. He clearly states that Russia believes that any use of force by any of the arctic states will reach any positive outcome, but states that the main problem in the region is related to climate change. The foreign minister believes that climate change requires the necessary and quick cooperation and coordination between the concerned states to protect and save the region from an economic disaster.

Citation:

“The May 2008 meeting of the foreign ministers of the five Arctic coastal states at Ilulissat, Greenland, reached important accords, in particular, that all likely claims in the Arctic will be

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

solved on the basis of existing juridical norms. Russia will steadfastly follow these accords. The earlier fears that the meeting at Ilulissat might weaken the Arctic Council had turned out to be unjustified. Its participants unanimously expressed complete support to the Council, and the initiatives put forward by them were later practically realized in its framework.”<sup>70</sup>

Analysis:

According to this statement by the Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, he assures the member states of the arctic council that Russia will abide by the rules and follow the accords agreed upon within the arctic council. He addresses the member states in a way of talking that is reassuring and tries to back up his commitment by the accords by showing the member states that Russia has realized in its framework by following the accords at Ilulissat.

Article 4: The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue international forum

Citation:

“The importance of the Arctic has increased manifold. The attention of many nations is focused on the Arctic as a region whose wellbeing determines the global climate, a treasure trove of unique nature and, of course, a region with a huge economic potential and opportunities. Preserving the Arctic as a territory of constructive dialogue, development and equal cooperation is a matter of fundamental importance. This forum, whose theme this year is People and the Arctic, has a great role to play in this.”<sup>71</sup>

Analysis:

President Putin in this quote highlights the growing importance of the arctic. he highlights what he calls a “huge” economic potential of the territory which shows that the economic

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> "The Arctic: Territory Of Dialogue International Forum". 2017. President Of Russia. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54149>.

potential of the region is of big interest to Russia. He later mentions that he believes that “constructive dialogue” is important. In this quote, Putin is using words that show Russia wants to resolve the issue through dialogue and equal respect. As he claims that the arctic should be the concern of the whole world and that it is important to preserve and benefit from it at the same, in a sustainable manner in order to ensure that the region would not face an environmental disaster.

Citation:

“Russia believes that there is no potential for conflict in the Arctic. International law clearly specifies the rights of littoral and other states and provides a firm foundation for cooperation in addressing various issues, including such sensitive ones as the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean and the prevention of unregulated high seas fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean, which is surrounded by the exclusive economic zones of the United States, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Russia. I would like to reiterate that Russia is open to constructive cooperation and does its utmost to create a proper environment for its effective development.”<sup>72</sup>

Analysis:

From this quote of President Putin, he states again that Russia doesn't see anything that could lead to a potential conflict in the arctic, he states that international law is clear on this matter on whatever region belongs to whom. He reinstates that Russia is willing to do what it needs to do to ensure constructive cooperation happens between the concerned states and will do what it takes to ensure the creation of a proper environment where this constructive dialogue happens. Putin so far have not mentioned anything about military confrontation or using an

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

aggressive tone to push forward Russia's claims, which might show that president Putin is interested that the issue should be resolved through cooperation and diplomacy.

Citation:

"Preserving the Arctic as a territory of constructive dialogue, development and equal cooperation is a matter of fundamental importance. This forum, whose theme this year is People and the Arctic, has a great role to play in this."<sup>73</sup>

Analysis:

President Putin once again reaffirms the importance of conducting constructive dialogue, clearly showing his stance on the arctic, which is according to his statement, dialogue must also prevail and cooperation is key.

#### Article 5: Russia Presents Revised Claim of Arctic Territory to the United Nations

Citation:

"Russia has also stepped up military activities and oil and gas exploration in the far north, including by rebuilding Cold War-era naval bases and airstrips on the New Siberian Islands, across the Chukchi and East Siberian seas from Alaska."<sup>74</sup>

Analysis:

This clearly shows that Russia is trying to protect their own interests by rebuilding their military capabilities in the region and have the military readiness to face off any threat coming its way. It is also showing one of russia's interest in the region by getting access to valuable resources for its economic benefits.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> E. Kramer, Andrew. 2016. "Russia Presents Revised Claim Of Arctic Territory To The United Nations (Published 2016)". Nytimes.Com. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/10/world/europe/russia-to-present-revised-claim-of-arctic-territory-to-the-united-nations.html>.

### 6.3.1 – Citations and analysis from articles from the American side.

#### Article 6: Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus

##### Citation:

“Then there's Russia. As a fellow Arctic Council member, Russia – the other Arctic states have fruitfully cooperated in a number of areas – expansive conservation efforts. Those are to be applauded. We want cooperation to continue.”<sup>75</sup>

##### Analysis:

In this quote, Secretary of state Mike Pompeo is admitting that Russia has been playing by the rules, and has been a cooperative partner in the region and also acknowledging the “expensive” conservation efforts that Russia is achieving in the arctic. This clearly shows that Russia is willing to cooperate with the rest of members of the arctic council, and that cooperation between them is possible even though these countries disagree on many things. This possibly show that the concerned states are not looking to start a potential conflict.

##### Citation:

“we are fortifying America's security and diplomatic presence in the area. On the security side, partly in response to Russia's destabilizing activities, we are hosting military exercises, strengthening our force presence, rebuilding our icebreaker fleet, expanding Coast Guard funding, and creating a new senior military post for Arctic Affairs inside of our own military.”<sup>76</sup>

##### Analysis:

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<sup>75</sup> "Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus - United States Department Of State". 2019. State.Gov. <https://www.state.gov/looking-north-sharpening-americas-arctic-focus/>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

As it is with many officials of powerful states in the world, certain officials like to remind their rivals that they have the capability to ensure the defence of their interests. In this case, Secretary Pompeo tries to broadcast US power and their ability to defend their interests. He claims that America's action is in response to Russia's actions. The theory of defensive realism is existing here, that the other states is only acting as a reaction to the action of the other, and that increasing the military presence is just a defensive measure.

Citation:

“Our administration helped the Arctic states seal the Central Arctic Fisheries Agreement. It was one of the first times in history that a region banded together to preemptively solve a threat to environmental resources. We should all be very proud of that.”<sup>77</sup>

Analysis:

From this quote, we can notice that secretary Pompeo does believe that cooperation is key to resolve the arctic, although in the previous quote he appeared to be showing up US military might as a deterrence measure, nevertheless he knows that cooperation is likely to resolve the conflict. This is clearly shown since he mentions that if they managed to agree on the central arctic fisheries agreement, it is possible to agree on other matters through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Article 7: National strategy for the arctic region

Citation:

“The Arctic region is peaceful, stable, and free of conflict. The United States and its Arctic allies and partners seek to sustain this spirit of trust, cooperation and collaboration, both internationally and domestically. Together, we have made much progress on issues of

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



common concern, such as search and rescue, and pollution prevention and response. Working together, we will continue to increase our understanding of the region through scientific research and traditional knowledge.”<sup>78</sup>

Analysis:

In this quote by former US president Barack Obama clearly shows that the US acknowledge the cooperation that has been shown by the members of the arctic council when it comes to attempting to achieve a peaceful solution to the arctic. President Obama states clearly that he believes the cooperation and dialogue is the key to resolve the differences between the concerned states, and he highlights that so much has been achieved by cooperation and that he hopes it continues to do so. As we see in the beginning of his quote, he uses the present tense and clearly states that the region should remain peaceful and free of conflict.

Citation:

“The Arctic is one of our planet’s last great frontiers. Our pioneering spirit is naturally drawn to this region, for the economic opportunities it presents and in recognition of the need to protect and conserve this unique, valuable, and changing environment. As we consider how to make the most of the emerging economic opportunities in the region, we recognize that we must exercise responsible stewardship, using an integrated management approach and making decisions based on the best available information, with the aim of promoting healthy, sustainable, and resilient ecosystems over the long term... Through the National Strategy for the Arctic Region, we articulate our strategic priorities to position the United States to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> "NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE ARCTIC REGION". 2013. Obamawhitehouse.Archives.Gov. [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat\\_arctic\\_strategy.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat_arctic_strategy.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Analysis:

In this quote, former President Obama tries to position the US in order to meet any future challenges and opportunities that might arise since ice is melting slowly and the region is becoming more accessible. This clearly shows that the US has multiple motivations and interests in the arctic, especially economic and environmental motivations which make the region of great interest to the US.

Article 8: The US View on the Arctic

Citation:

“We are committed to a peaceful, stable Arctic. We have provided security in the Arctic for a long time – on the seas, in the air and below the ice. Current US operations in the Arctic, including our military activity at Thule Air Base, contribute to not only the defense of the US homeland, but to our shared security and to regional stability.”<sup>80</sup>

Analysis:

This quote by the US ambassador while in a meeting with high level Danish officials, reinstates his country’s support to a peaceful & stable arctic. although the ambassador tries to bring up US military capabilities, however like his counterparts in several occasion, he affirms that the military measures are there strictly for defensive purposes and the defence of US allies. So far, the US military has not conducted any offense military operations in the arctic, and still continue to push for talks and cooperation with the other arctic states in order to resolve the issue.

Citation:

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<sup>80</sup> "The US View On The Arctic | U.S. Embassy & Consulate In The Kingdom Of Denmark". 2019. Dk.Usembassy.Gov. <https://dk.usembassy.gov/the-us-view-on-the-arctic/>.

“As China and Russia increasingly seek to exploit and militarize the region, the US recognizes that we must do more. And we are. Guided by our National Defense Strategy and our new Department of Defense Arctic Strategy released this summer, we are strengthening our Arctic capable forces, revitalizing our icebreaker fleet and creating a new senior military post for Arctic affairs.”<sup>81</sup>

Analysis:

The US ambassador in Denmark once again wants to highlight that any US military movement in the region is a reaction to the action of other states that the US deems hostile. In this case, he claims that because of the actions of Russia and China to exploit & militarize the region, the US will act in self-defence and strengthen its presence there. The ambassador does not use any reference to offensive measures or an attack, he keeps bringing up the word “defense” which clearly reaffirm his country’s stance on the region to keep it peaceful and out of conflict.

Citation:

“Secretary Pompeo closed his Arctic Council speech last May focusing on 2 principles that defined the Arctic: Partnerships and Courage. He emphasized: “Now is the time for increased vigilance and increased partnership and even more courage – we must hold each other accountable – through courage and partnership we can succeed – and we can look forward to a bright, peaceful, sustainable future for this indispensable region.”<sup>82</sup>

Analysis:

The US ambassador brings up a quote made by Secretary Pompeo as his closing remarks during the Arctic council meeting, where he mentions that all parties within the arctic must

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

increase their partnership and their cooperation to resolve the conflict. Pompeo in his quote aims at promoting cooperation & partnership between all the member states of the council because he believes it is the best solution to resolve the arctic dispute, however despite his constant calls for cooperation and partnership, he mentions the importance of keeping vigilance, which could be highlighted in the increase of military spending by certain arctic council states and more military presence in order to be ready for any possible changes in the status-quo. This doesn't necessarily mean that a conflict may occur, but the concerned states are becoming more ready in case anything occurs.

Article 9: Trump orders fleet of icebreakers and new bases in push for polar resources

Citation:

“Donald Trump has ordered the construction of a fleet of icebreakers and bases to pursue US interests in the Arctic and Antarctic by the end of the decade in a signal that his administration is going to take a more aggressive approach to the contest with Russia and China for polar resources.”<sup>83</sup>

Analysis:

This is quote for the first time while analysing all the other articles, we see the mention of the term “aggressive approach”, this however does not necessarily mean that the Trump administration wants to start an armed conflict. In this case, I believe it's the opposite, I believe the meaning behind aggressive approach is to take faster measures and be more vigilant in order to keep US influence in the region by having the necessary capabilities ready in case anything occurs. However, President Trump remains an unpredictable leader.

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<sup>83</sup> Borger, Julian. 2020. "Trump Orders Fleet Of Icebreakers And New Bases In Push For Polar Resources". The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/09/trump-icebreakers-bases-arctic-antarctic-polar>.

Citation:

“Trump’s memorandum said the new icebreaker fleet would be used for “the full range of national and economic security missions (including the facilitation of resource exploration and exploitation and undersea cable laying and maintenance)”<sup>84</sup>

Analysis:

One of the reasons of the increase of military expenditure and presence by the US in the arctic according to this quote is to safeguard the US motivations in the arctic. It is stated crystal clear in this quote that the purpose of the icebreaker fleet etc. is to facilitate the exploitation & exploration of resources and ensure security, which is a clear indicator of the US economic & security motivations in the region

Citation:

“The aim of the polar security review is also meant to “include the ability to provide a persistent United States presence in the Antarctic region” adding that such presence would be “in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty System”, which requires that the region “be used for peaceful purposes only”<sup>85</sup>

Analysis:

In this citation, it is clear that the Trump administration wants more presence in the arctic to defend the US interests & motivations. Once again, it is referred to the “polar security review” as a peaceful means to an end, stressing the importance of ensuring peace and avoiding any armed conflict.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

## Article 10: Memorandum on Safeguarding U.S. National Interests in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions

Citation:

“The United States will develop and execute a polar security icebreaking fleet acquisition program that supports our national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions.”<sup>86</sup>

Analysis:

After careful analysis of President Trump citation in this memorandum, the Trump administration wants to expand its polar presence in order to ensure security and defend US national interests. This clearly shows that one of the US interests in the region is ensuring security, and the administration actions aims to preserve and fulfil that.

Citation:

“To help protect our national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and to retain a strong Arctic security presence alongside our allies and partners, the United States requires a ready, capable, and available fleet of polar security icebreakers that is operationally tested and fully deployable by Fiscal Year 2029.”<sup>87</sup>

Analysis:

This citation clearly shows one of the US interests in the region, which is ensuring its own security. The purpose of having an polar fleet is to ensure that none of the US interests are harmed or threatened, and the increase of military presence there is aimed at ensuring that.

Citation:

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<sup>86</sup> "Memorandum On Safeguarding U.S. National Interests In The Arctic And Antarctic Regions | The White House". 2020. The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/memorandum-safeguarding-u-s-national-interests-arctic-antarctic-regions/>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

“The Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), shall lead a review of requirements for a polar security icebreaking fleet acquisition program to acquire and employ a suitable fleet of polar security icebreakers, and associated assets and resources, capable of ensuring a persistent United States presence in the Arctic and Antarctic regions in support of national interests and in furtherance of the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, as appropriate. Separately, the review shall include the ability to provide a persistent United States presence in the Antarctic region, as appropriate, in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty System.”<sup>88</sup>

Analysis:

Again, President Trump makes it clear that the purpose of polar security fleet is to safeguard US security interests in the north pole and ensuring that they do not fall behind in terms of equipment and readiness.

#### 6.4 - Findings of the study:

The goal of this study is to conduct research in order to analyse and determine whether climate change can be a factor in pushing states to adopt more aggressive behaviour when it comes to their arctic claims in the arctic region. Because of climate change, the arctic region started generating more interests amongst many states due to the economic, environmental and security benefits it can generate for certain states. In this research the focus was mainly on studying and analysing several articles, press releases and interviews by important decisions makers from two important and major power arctic countries, the United States and Russia. By using the defensive realism theory in addition to content analysis of the articles, the

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

researcher tried to see whether given the theory, what would be the potential behaviour of the US and Russia in the arctic region, as the theory predicts that states generate power in order to defend themselves against any threat that faces them and doesn't rule out the potential of a limited or an armed conflict; what are the motivations behind their claims in the arctic and whether military conflict is on the table.

In this study, ten documents were analysed carefully using content analysis. Those documents came from The Russian News Agency (Tass), the official website of the Russian ministry of Foreign Affairs, Associated Press, The Kremlin official website, the New York Times, US department of State official website, The Obama White House archives, official website of the US embassy in Denmark, The Guardian and the Official website of the White House under the Trump administration. These documents ranged from newspaper articles, press releases, leaders and senior officials' speeches at important arctic forums, and official documents from the white house and the Kremlin. The ten documents analysed in this dissertation are mentioned in page 56 - 57.

After careful analysis and coding of those documents, seven themes were agreed upon with a second individual coder. The themes are as follow:

- Theme 1: cooperation and dialogue are key to resolve the conflict
- Theme 2: concerns and hostility felt by the US and Russia
- Theme 3: increased military spending to safeguard interests
- Theme 4: renovating military bases and military readiness in the arctic to tackle any threat
- Theme 5: Russian motivations in the arctic
- Theme 6: US motivations in the arctic



- Theme 7: all states are committed for peace

After identifying the themes, a second analysis of the article happened in order to try to find the presence of those themes in each of the documents analysed for this research. After careful analysis, table 1 shows the presence of the themes in the articles reviewed and analysed.

Table 1:

The following table shows the themes that have been observed while conducting an analysis of the articles.

	Doc 1	Doc 2	Doc 3	Doc 4	Doc 5	Doc 6	Doc 7	Doc 8	Doc 9	Doc 10
Theme 1	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
Theme 2			x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Theme 3				x		x			x	x
Theme 4			x	x		x		x	x	x
Theme 5	x	x	x	x	x					
Theme 6						x	x	x	x	x
Theme 7	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	

'x' represents the presence of the theme in the documents.

## 6.5 - Discussion of the results

What are the motivations behind the claims on the Arctic put forward by the US and Russia?

When it comes to theme 5 and 6, which is both US and Russian motivations in the arctic.

Both countries explicitly state their motivations over their claims to the arctic ocean.

According to the findings, the motivations behind Russian and American claims in the arctic are similar. Both countries seek economic, environmental and security gains. The two countries know the economic and security potential of the region, whether it is the massive undiscovered oil and gas reserves that lays beneath the arctic ocean, or the other rare minerals that exist in the region. As mentioned previously in the dissertation, it is estimated that around 25% of oil and gas reserves in the world are located in the arctic.<sup>89</sup> The US & Russia

<sup>89</sup> "Who We Are". 2020. United States Geological Survey. <https://www.usgs.gov/about/about-us/who-we-are>

desperately seek access to the area as it would be greatly beneficial for their economic growth and further economic prosperity. This was explicitly mentioned several times by important figures within both the US and Russian administration, highlighting the economic benefit of the arctic region. This was mentioned by President Vladimir Putin where he highlighted his country's goal to develop economic programs in the region, he states "We have drafted a fairly extensive economic programme for the Arctic designed for many years to come. It already includes over 150 projects with investments estimated at trillions of rubles."<sup>90</sup> and benefitting from the future shipping routes that are slowly emerging due to the climate change "This shows that climate change provides more favourable conditions for economic activity in this region. If these trends continue, we can see what will happen. Today, 1.4 million tonnes of goods are shipped along the Northern Sea Route. By 2035, this will be 30 million tonnes."<sup>91</sup> Secretary Pompeo also highlighted the economic motivation behind the US claim where he states that "It houses 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil, 30 percent of its undiscovered gas, and an abundance of uranium, rare earth minerals, gold, diamonds, and millions of square miles of untapped resources. Fisheries galore."<sup>92</sup> The other motivation which was also explicitly mentioned would be the security gains that both countries can benefit from. Due to the hostility that both countries have towards each other, having control over part of the arctic would give them the ability to prepare security measures to safeguard themselves and their interests. This was evident due to the rush to build military bases and increasing defence spending. This could be seen in the article by the Guardian "Trump orders fleet of icebreakers and new bases in push for polar resources" where it is mentioned that the new US ice breakers must have "defensive armament adequate to defend against threats by

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<sup>90</sup> "The Arctic: Territory Of Dialogue International Forum". 2020. President Of Russia. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54149>.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> "Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus - United States Department Of State". 2019. United States Department Of State. <https://www.state.gov/looking-north-sharpening-americas-arctic-focus/>.

near-peer competitors”<sup>93</sup> or when Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov states in the Associated Press article “Putin outlines ambitious arctic expansion program” the following ““We ensure the necessary defense capability in view of the military-political situation near our borders.”

What are the risks that the overlapping claims in the arctic lead to a military conflict between the US and Russia?

After careful analysis of all the documents, the theme “Cooperation and dialogue are key to resolve the conflict” was present in almost all the documents except three. On several press releases and newspaper documents by both Russian and American officials, all of them almost agree that in order to resolve the conflict in a peaceful and sustainable way, continuous dialogue and cooperation are key factors to end the conflict over the arctic area. However, during the trump administration, president trump does not mention or talk about cooperation is key, rather than that, he follows a more aggressive behaviour by ramping up US military expenditure and ordering the manufacturing of new ice breakers and new bases in order to assert US dominance in the region, from the documents analysed from the US side, President Trump does not mention the word “Cooperation” in any of the articles analysed. However, his secretary of state Mike Pompeo, mentioned cooperation in all of the documents analysed and seemed keener on finding a peaceful and lasting solution through cooperation and dialogue rather than using military force. After analysing other documents for the other themes, the presence of Theme 2, Theme 3 and Theme 4 and theme 7 a numerous time in several articles (at least present in 6 out of 10) with exception of theme 3 that’s present only 4 out of 10 times, indicates that increasing military presence and military capabilities is important for

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<sup>93</sup> Borger, Julian. 2020. "Trump Orders Fleet Of Icebreakers And New Bases In Push For Polar Resources". The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/09/trump-icebreakers-bases-arctic-antarctic-polar>.

both states to safeguard their interests in the region. This clearly shows that according to the defensive realist theory, states are increasing their military capabilities in order to guarantee their survival and to protect their interests. According to the theory, states usually behave that way whenever they feel any sort of hostility from their enemies or rivals, in this case the Russians are increasing their military presence in the arctic as a response to NATO military drills in the region, in addition to seeing the US helping other NATO allies in setting up military bases and presence in the arctic. Assistance and help such as the US military assistance to both Norway and Denmark and Iceland. On the other hand, the Americans feel that the fact that the Russians renovated more than 300 bases in the arctic and constructing several ports, airports and runways, in addition to a large fleet of icebreakers, is considered as an act of hostility and an action that signals the beginning of an imbalance of power in the region. So in order for the US to ensure its security and to ensure that the Russians will not take advantage of the imbalance of power in the region, it is normal that the Americans would also increase their military spending and increase their military presence whether in Alaska or whether through building military bases on foreign soil in order to tackle any threat that might arise, whether from the Russians or from others. However, the theory also indicates that states are rationale actors and the decisions they take usually align with what serves them best and what is best for their citizens. This clearly indicates that despite the US and Russia ramping up their military capabilities and broadcasting their military power in the region, which is only natural because they feel threatened by one another, it doesn't necessarily mean that they want to go into an armed conflict. This could be proved by the presence of theme 1 amongst almost all the articles where leaders of both the US and Russia keep insisting on cooperation and dialogue as the best way to resolve the issue. The normal reaction by both countries to increases military capabilities is intended mostly to create some sort of balance of power, they are nevertheless rational actors and they know that armed conflict will not serve their interests

whether in the short or the long term. This is why they mostly choose the other option, which is going through diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation in order to find a sustainable lasting solution in the arctic. This is clearly indicated in almost all of the documents as previously stated. Former US president Barrack Obama, secretary of state Mike Pompeo, US ambassador to Denmark, President Putin and Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov all explicitly state that the way forward is through dialogue, cooperation and diplomacy.

## **7- Conclusion**

The goal of this research paper was trying to come up with an answer using the defensive realism theory in order to determine and explain on how the concerned states lay out different claims in the arctic area and what would be their political actions. In order to do that, a content analysis has been conducted of several articles that deals with the matter at hand and tried to analyses several texts in order to come up with an answer to my research questions. The articles analysed ranged from newspaper articles, speeches by relevant figures within the US and Russian administration to archives and memorandums from the trump administration and the previous Obama administration. After doing so, this research paper came up with two main findings.

First of all, the answer to the first research question What are the motivations behind the claims on the Arctic put forward by the US and Russia, it was looked at from the lenses of the defensive realism theory, the results showed that the motivations behind the US and Russian claims are purely motivated by economic and security gains, whether through exploiting the economic potential of the arctic in order to satisfy their economic needs for their populations, or through ensuring that a balance of power is reached in the region by setting up military outposts in order to have military readiness in case any potential problem might arise.

The second research question What are the risks that the overlapping claims in the arctic lead to a military conflict between the US and Russia, after careful analysis of the texts, this research question has been looked at from the lenses of the defensive realism theory and results have shown there is very little evidence that hints at both countries willing to go into a military confrontation between one another. All the articles analysed showed that both countries prefer to choose the path of dialogue, diplomacy and cooperation in the area because the two countries are rational actors, and that any military confrontation might not serve their interests.

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