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The European Arctic after the Cold War: How can we analyze it in terms of security?

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Sammendrag

Som sikkerhetspolitisk arena har nordområdene gjennomgått store og viktige endringer etter den kalde krigens slutt og Sovjetunionens oppløsning. Under den kalde krigen var Barentshavsregionen et av verdens tyngst militariserte områder. Sovjetiske så vel som vestlige tilnærminger til regionen var langt på vei styrt av overordnete sikkerhetspolitiske hensyn. I dag betraktes regionen i økende grad som en arena for grenseoverskridende samarbeid, og ikke som et sensitivt militært operasjonsteater.

Demilitariseringen og kommersialiseringen av mellomstatlige relasjoner i nordområdene er imidlertid verken total eller irreversibel. Nye sikkerhetsutfordringer har kommet til, og stereotype oppfatninger fra den kalde krigen setter fortsatt fra tid til annen sitt preg på trusselbilder og øst-vest-relasjoner i regionen.

Siktemålet med denne rapporten er å diskutere styrker og svakheter ved ulike teoretiske tilnærminger som kan anvendes i analyser av nordområdene som sikkerhetspolitisk arena etter den kalde krigen. Teoriene diskuteres på bakgrunn av regionens spesielle særtrekk og historie. De fire tilnærmingene som diskuteres er strategiske studier, sikkerhetiseringsteori (”securitization theory”), teorien om regionale sikkerhets-kompleks (”regional security complex theory”) og teorien om menneskelig sikkerhet (“human security”).

Rapporten konkluderer med at alle fire tilnærminger har mye å tilføre til vår forståelse av temaet, men at den såkalte Københavnerskolens sikkerhetiseringsteori kan være spesielt relevant.

English summary

The strategic environment in the European Arctic has undergone significant changes since the end of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union. In the Cold War period, the Barents Sea region was among the most heavily militarized regions in the world. Both Soviet and Western approaches to the region were dominated by security concerns. Today, the region is increasingly seen as an arena for trans-border cooperation, and not as a sensitive military theater.

The apparent demilitarization and commercialization of interstate relations in the European Arctic is, however, neither total nor irreversible. New security concerns have arisen, and stereotypes from the Cold War still occasionally leave their mark on threat perceptions and east-west relations in the region.

The purpose of this report is to discuss the relevance, strengths and weaknesses of four theoretical approaches that may be used to analyze the European Arctic as a post-Cold War security arena, taking into consideration the specific features and history of the region. The approaches discussed in the report are: Strategic studies, securitization theory, regional security complex theory, and human security.

The report concludes that all of the four approaches have much to add to our understanding of the topic, but that the securitization theory of the Copenhagen school of security studies may be of particular relevance.

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Preface

This report is a revised and updated version of a paper presented by the author at the PhD course *Security Theory: Critical Innovations*, held in the period from 27 November to 1 December 2006 at the Danish Political Science Research School, located at the Department of Political Science of the Copenhagen University. The author would like to thank his fellow course participants and professor Ole Wæver for useful comments and suggestions.

The report was primarily prepared for theoretical purposes. The author does, however, believe that the content and findings of the report can be of relevance to policymakers. It may also be of interest to scholars, officers, journalists, students and others who take an interest in the concept of security and the complex mechanisms that are at play in the post-Cold War European Arctic.

Kristian Åtland

1 Introduction

Figure 1.1: The European Arctic

As an arena for security policy, the European Arctic[1] has undergone significant and important changes since the end of the Cold War. Up to the late 1980s, the arctic part of Europe was largely perceived as a Cold War "front zone". The region featured one of the world's largest concentrations of military forces, including a large number of missile-carrying nuclear submarines on the Kola Peninsula, frequently passing though the Barents Sea. Today, the region is increasingly seen as an arena for trans-border cooperation, and not as a sensitive military theater. The defense-related restrictions on commercial activities in and around the Barents Sea have gradually been lifted. With its proven and estimated reserves of oil and gas, offshore (Norwegian, Barents and Kara Seas) as well as onshore (Western Siberia), the European Arctic stands out as one of the world's most promising new energy provinces.[2]

The approach of this report is, in short, the opposite of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's approach in *Regions and Powers*.[3] Instead of applying one security theory to different parts of the world, I try to figure out if and how different security theories can be applied to one and the same region – the

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[1] See figure 1. My definition of the term "the European Arctic" derives from that of Geir Hønneland in *Russia and the West: Environmental co-operation and conflict*, London: Routeledge 2003, p. 141, i.e. the parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and European Russia that are located north of the Arctic Circle, plus the Barents Sea, the Svalbard Archipelago and the Russian archipelagos of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land. For some purposes, it may also be fruitful to include the western and northern parts of the European Arctic, including the European part of the Arctic Ocean. Iceland (located south of the Arctic Circle) and Greenland (located on the North American continent) are both "borderline cases".

[2] The Shtokman gas field on the Russian Barents Sea shelf is said to contain enough natural gas to supply Germany's energy needs for 25 years.

[3] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003.

European Arctic. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different theories, which factors add to and subtract from their relevance, and how do they relate to each other? My approach is, in other words, that of an "area specialist gone security theorist", rather than that of a "security theorist gone area specialist". The report is to be read as a survey of theories that may be used in the analysis of security issues in the post-Cold War European Arctic.

The concept of security is not static. After the Cold War, numerous efforts have been made to redefine its meaning. There has been a fierce debate between "traditionalists", who essentially want to stick to the post-World War II meaning of the concept (the military security of states), and "wideners"/"deepeners", who want to include other sectors and other referent objects (the military and non-military security of states and other referent objects). The "wideners"/"deepeners" do not constitute a homogenous group. They are again divided over *how far* to expand the concept of security, along both the horizontal (sectors) and the vertical (levels) axis (see figure 1.2). The "traditionalists", on their part, maintain that if the concept of security is extended to encompass almost every sphere of human activity, it may lose its meaning.

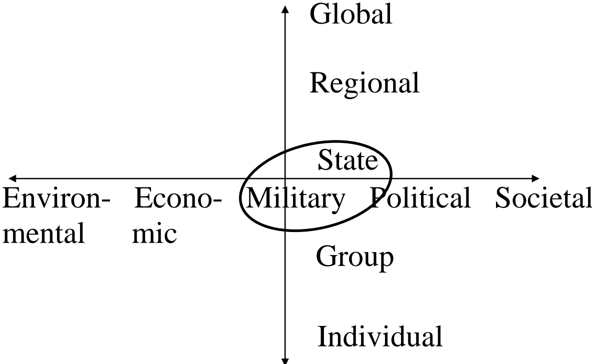

Figure 1.2: The "widening" and "deepening" of the concept of security

The selection of theories in this study is based on an over-all assessment of the field of security studies, as well as on general characteristics of the Euro-Arctic region. Emphasis is placed on covering the entire spectrum from traditional realist approaches (*security studies*), via the "widening"/"deepening" approach of the Copenhagen school[4] (*securitization theory* and *regional security complex theory*), to more critical theories at the radical end of the spectrum (*human security*). The approaches also range from "old" (i.e. approaches conceived and developed in the Cold War period) to "young" (i.e. approaches conceived and developed after the end of the Cold War). Security studies fall into the first category, whereas the three others fall into the latter.

When it comes to the level of theorizing, it may be argued that *securitization theory* and *regional security complex theory*, to some extent also *human security* theory, are more comprehensive and

[4] The term "Copenhagen school" was first used by Bill McSweeney in "Buzan and the Copenhagen school", Review of International Studies, Vol. 22 (1996), in reference to the theoretical works done at the time by a group of researchers associated the Center for Peace and Conflict Research, established in 1985 and later renamed Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI). Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde are seen as the "school's" main contributors.

detailed than *strategic studies*, and that this complicates comparisons of the four (the "apples and oranges" argument). Certainly, it can be argued that strategic studies, at least in the U.S. tradition, is more of a "field" than a "theory". The purpose of strategic studies is rarely detailed beyond being about the interaction between "political aims and military means".[5] Still, all of the four approaches are represented within the security studies community, and in principle applicable to the geographical area discussed in the report.

The remainder of this report consists of six parts. Starting with a brief presentation of five "characteristic features" of the European Arctic, the report goes on to present and discuss each of the four theoretical approaches listed above. Each section starts with a description of the *main elements* of the given approach, then discusses the *strengths, weaknesses and limitations* of the given approach[6], and ends with a provisional *conclusion*. The findings of the analysis are summarized in the concluding remarks.

2 Five Characteristic Features of the European Arctic

Feature 1: A Region of Peripheries

The first thing that needs to be said about the European Arctic is that it cuts through the borders of four states: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Rather than being a region of *states*, it is a *transnational region* consisting of *sub-state entities* (Nordic counties and Russian Federation subjects) whose main common denominator is that of being located in the northern periphery of the European continent. Geographically, the region also includes the Barents Sea and the archipelagos of Svalbard, Novaya Zemlya and Franz Joseph Land.[7] The region has climatic conditions (cold, wind, permafrost, winter darkness, etc.) that most would describe as "extreme". Like the rest of the Arctic, the European Arctic is sparsely populated.[8] The biggest concentrations of people are found in Russia's northwestern corner.

Feature 2: A Region Rich in Natural resources

Secondly, the region is rich in natural resources, both hydrocarbons and marine resources. An overview of the global oil resources by the US Geological Survey suggests that the circumpolar Arctic could conceal as much as 25 percent of the world's total remaining petroleum resources. As far as Norway is concerned, the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate has calculated that the northern-most part of Norway's continental shelf might hold a third of the country's undiscovered oil and gas resources. Both Russia and Norway have signaled a desire to intensify offshore exploration in the European Arctic. Among the areas specified for such expansion are north-western Russia and the continental shelf in the Barents and Kara Seas. The region's living marine resources are also seen as being of great value, not only to Norway and Russia, but also to third country fishers.

[5] Richard K. Betts: "Should Strategic Studies Survive?" World Politics, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1997), p. 9.
[6] The approaches are primarily discussed with the *European Arctic* in mind. However, the discussion also includes some observations with regard to the approaches' *general* strengths and weaknesses.
[7] Which are not included in area of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) cooperation.
[8] Of Norway's population of 4.5 million people, only 380 000, or appr 8.4 percent, live in the north.

Feature 3: A Region with Unresolved Legal Issues

A third important feature of the European Arctic is the existence of some complex and unresolved issues of international law. These include the issue of the delimitation of Norway and Russia's continental shelves and economic zones in the Barents Sea and the legal status of the fisheries protection zone around Svalbard. The Norwegian-Russian delimitation issue has figured on the two countries' political agenda for more than 30 years. The lack of a solution can be attributed to the two countries' diverging interpretations of the legal basis of the delimitation.[9] The Fisheries Protection Zone is a 200 nautical mile zone of fisheries jurisdiction around the Svalbard archipelago, established in 1977. Norway exercises full and absolute sovereignty over Svalbard, in conformity with the provisions set out in the Svalbard Treaty of 1920. There is, however, disagreement over the geographical scope of the Treaty[10], allowing for different interpretations of the rights of other states in the Zone.

Feature 4: A Region of Strategic Significance

For Russia, the strategic importance of the European Arctic has historically been related to the Northern Fleet's bases and port facilities on the Kola Peninsula. The concentration of sea-, land- and air defense forces in the northwestern corner of the Soviet Union during the Cold War was not primarily related to military or other threats in the region itself. Security challenges in the country's southern and eastern regions have traditionally been far greater than challenges in the north and west. The historical reason why one of the world's largest fleets was based on the remote Kola Peninsula was rather the favorable ice conditions in the southern Barents Sea, the easy access to the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans and the geographical proximity to potential targets on other continents. These conditions made - and still make - the area well suited for naval operations.

Feature 5: An Arena for Transnational Cooperation

Another feature that characterizes the post-Cold War European Arctic is the fact that the region is increasingly becoming an arena of regional cooperation. In the last 10-15 years, the Arctic has become the focal point for a wide range of initiatives involving transnational cooperation. Some, like the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996, involve straightforward intergovernmental agreements, while others feature leagues of subnational actors drawn together in pursuit of common interests. The establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional cooperation in 1993 was a significant development that opened a new phase of East–West interaction in the region. The Barents Council serves as an important meeting place for representatives of Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden, and the European Union. It has contributed to promoting cooperation and stability in one of the world's most heavily militarized regions.

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[9] Norway claims the "median line" principle, whereas Russia claims the "sector line" principle.

[10] Norway has always based itself on the position that the treaty applies only to the archipelago and the territorial waters. Other states claim that the treaty also applies to maritime areas beyond the territorial waters.

3 Approach 1: Strategic studies

3.1 About the Field

As a subfield of international relations (IR) studies, strategic studies deal primarily with *strategy*, i.e. "the application of military power to achieve political objectives".[11] Strategy represents the linkage between military means and political objectives, and the undertaking of strategic studies requires knowledge not only of politics, but also of the different aspects of military operations. Knowledge of the latter type is often absent or weakly represented at (civilian) foreign policy/IR research institutions.

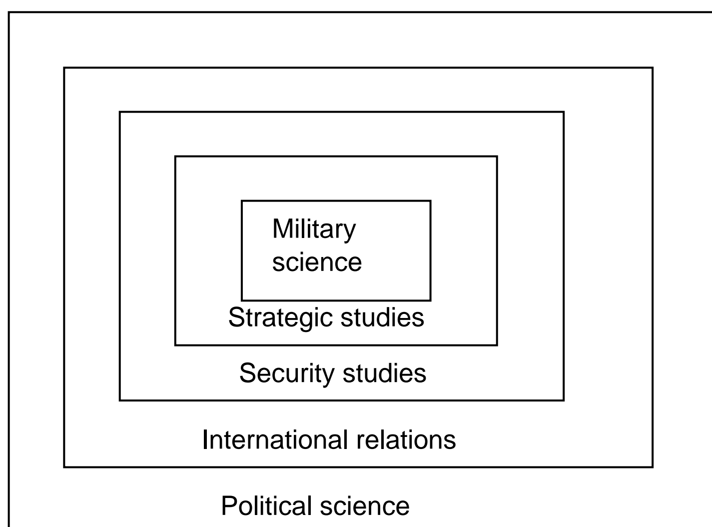

Figure 3.1: The relationship between different sub-disciplines of political science

According to one of the subfield's most prominent advocates, Professor Richard Betts at Columbia University, *strategic studies* ("how political ends and military means interact under social, economic, and other constraints") are broader in scope than *military science* ("how technology, organization, and tactics combine to win battles"), but more focused than *security studies* ("everything that bears on the safety of a polity").[12] The relationship between the different disciplines is illustrated in figure 3.1.

In the broader sense, strategy is "the theory and practice of the use, and threat of use, of organized force for political purposes."[13] Even broader is the concept of *Grand Strategy* which deals with a nation's (or group of nations') use of all available resources (military, political and economic) towards a political aim. Despite their special focus on the role of military power, strategic studies

[11] John Baylis et al: *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, p. 3.
[12] Richard K. Betts, op. cit., p. 9.
[13] Colin S. Gray: *Modern strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999, cited in Baylis et al, op. cit., p. 3.

are – or aim to be – interdisciplinary. It is essentially a pragmatic and practical discipline, more concerned with "how to do it"-questions than with "compulsive and mindless theorizing".[14]

As a modern academic discipline, security studies emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom after World War II, and its subsequent upswing was, in part, related to the Cold War and emergence of nuclear weapons.[15] In his 1949 article "Strategy as Science"[16], Bernard Brodie, who came to be known as "the American Clausewitz", made the case for developing strategy as a field of systematic analysis. In the 1950s and 60s, the field of strategic studies prospered, and new ideas, theories and concepts were developed, particularly on nuclear deterrence. Nuclear war was – since it had never occurred – more theoretical than empirical and thus well suited for theorizing by civilian analysts.[17] The field's weakness in this period was, however, that strategic analysts tended to neglect the non-nuclear security challenges, which became clearly visible during the Korean and Vietnam wars. Also, the Soviet-American *détente* of the early 1970s removed much of the urgency about nuclear deterrence, and indirectly weakened strategic studies in relation to other IR fields.

When the Cold War tensions intensified in the late 1970s and early 1980s, strategic studies had a renaissance.[18] But when the Cold War abruptly ended in 1989, academic research on the operational, empirical and technical questions that had dominated most of the 1980s almost came to a halt. Strategic studies came under pressure, and questions where raised about the utility and adequacy of strategic studies as an independent academic discipline in the post-Cold War setting.

Skeptics of strategic studies, including Betts' Columbia colleague David Baldwin argued that rather than continuing to be a separate subfield, the study of the threat, use and control of military force should be (re)integrated into the wider field of IR/foreign policy analysis, and that strategic analysts should devote more of their attention to the study of non-military threats and non-military ways to deal with them.[19] This suggestion has been strongly rejected by Richard Betts and others, who argue that strategic studies are highly relevant and necessary also in the post-Cold War world.[20]

3.2 The Post-Cold War European Arctic: What Can Strategic Studies Offer?

In the Cold War period, Western historians and strategic analysts devoted much time and energy to analyzing Soviet security policy and strategic thought with regard to the Arctic.[21] The topic

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[14] Albert O. Hirschman: "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding", World Politics, (April 1970), p. 329, cited in Betts, op. cit., p. 31.
[15] David A. Baldwin: "Security Studies and the End of the Cold War", World Politics, Vol. 48, No. 1 (1996), p. 119.
[16] Bernard Brodie: "Strategy as Science", World Politics, No. 1 (July 1949), pp. 467–488.
[17] Betts, op. cit., p. 14.
[18] See Alexei G. Arbatov: *Lethal Frontiers: A Soviet View of Nuclear Strategy, Weapons, and Negotiations*, New York: Praeger 1988, pp. 78–80.
[19] Baldwin, op. cit, pp. 136–141.
[20] Betts, op. cit.
[21] See for instance R.B. Byers & Michael Slack (eds.): *Strategy and the Arctic*, Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies: Polaris Papers 4, 1986; Helge Ole Bergesen, Arild Moe & Willy Østreng: *Soviet Oil and*

seems to draw considerably less attention today. Contemporary research literature on Russia's north tends to focus mostly on regional economic issues[22], environmental protection[23], center-periphery relations[24], indigenous peoples[25], etc. These are all important issues that deserve scholarly attention, but additional analyses of the frequently neglected *security policy aspects of Russia's northern policy* – and possible implications thereof – could add to our understanding of the complex dynamics that determine developments in Arctic Europe.

Despite the many changes that have taken place in Russian-Western relations in the past 10–15 years, military power continues to be a relevant factor in the European Arctic, though not nearly as dominant as it was prior to 1989. The Cold War is over, but the age of nuclear weaponry is not. The key function of the Russian Northern Fleet – to provide nuclear deterrence from the sea – is still considered relevant. The submarine-based nuclear weapons on the Kola Peninsula constitute an important part of Russia's nuclear arsenal, and they contribute to upholding the country's great power status. Russia's recent economic upswing, largely caused by high oil prices, has given the country a boost to modernize its armed forces, including the naval nuclear forces, the bulk of which are concentrated in the European Arctic.[26]

Furthermore, the Russian Northern Fleet and the Russian Coast Guard/Border Guard is currently in the process of taking on a more central role than today in safeguarding and defending Russia's economic interests in the maritime areas of the European Arctic. This applies to the living marine resources as well as to the hydrocarbon resources on the continental shelf. The defense of commercial tanker shipping and future petroleum installations such as oil rigs, pipelines, terminals and refineries, is already becoming an important *raison d'être* for the Russian Northern Fleet. Oil and LNG[27] tankers and petroleum infrastructure on land and at sea are seen as vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Similarly, the Norwegian Navy and Coast Guard are also being strengthened in order to become more efficient in preventing illegal fishing and resource extraction and defending vulnerable industrial infrastructure.

Security Interests in the Barents Sea, London: Frances Pinter Publishers 1987; Clive Archer: *The Soviet Union and Northern Waters*, London: Routledge 1988; and Ola Tunander: *Cold Water Politics: The Maritime Strategy and Geopolitics of the Northern Front*, London: Sage Publications 1989.

[22] See for instance Bjørn Brunstad et al.: *Big Oil Playground, Russia Bear Preserve or European Periphery? The Russian Barents Sea Region Towards 2015,* Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers 2005; and Fiona Hill & Clifford Gaddy: *The Siberian curse: how communist planners left Russia out in the cold*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press 2003.

[23] See for instance Geir Hønneland: *Russia and the West: environmental co-operation and conflict*, London: Routledge 2003.

[24] See for instance Geir Hønneland & Helge Blakkisrud: *Centre-periphery relations in Russia: the case of the northwestern regions*, Aldershot: Ashgate 2001; and Helge Blakkisrud & Geir Hønneland: *Tackling Space: Federal Politics and the Russian North*, London: University Press of America 2005.

[25] See for instance Bruce Grant & Alexander Pika (eds.): *Neotraditionalism in the Russian north: indigenous peoples and the legacy of perestroika*, Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute 1999.

[26] As of August 2006, 11 of Russia's 15 operational strategic nuclear submarines (SSBNs) are based in the Northern Fleet, and the remaining 4 in the Pacific Fleet. See Mikhail Barabanov: *Sovremennoye sostoyanie i perspektivy razvitiya rossiyskogo flota* (*Present state and development perspectives for the Russian Navy*), Moscow: Centr oboronnoy informatsii 2006, p. 58.

[27] Liquified Natural Gas.

In a longer time perspective, Russia, Norway and other states' increasingly active pursuance of oil, gas and fishery interests in the European Arctic is likely to have a profound impact on the region's future as a security policy arena. An important question in this regard is whether the announced arctic oil and gas bonanza will lead to an *increase* or a *decrease* in the level of military tension. Provided that Russia, the United States, the European Union and Norway find ways to settle the unresolved legal issues and cooperate in the spirit of mutual benefit, the European Arctic may gradually disappear from the countries' security agendas. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that we in a not-so-distant future could be facing an uncontrollable "resource race", and eventually a remilitarization of inter-state relations in the Arctic.

Today, strategic military analyses with regard to the European Arctic are often seen as "politically incorrect", especially in Norway. In the Norwegian Government's 2005 white paper *Opportunities and Challenges in the North,*[28] strategic issues are largely left out. The Norwegian Defense Ministry's *Strength and Relevance: Strategic Concept for the Armed Forces*[29], published in 2004, devote some attention to the regional dimension of Norwegian security and defense policy, but without any in-dept analysis of the issues mentioned above. Finland is probably the Nordic country where strategic issues in the North have been studied most seriously after the Cold War.[30]

In the case of the United States and the United Kingdom, more pressing security challenges in other parts of the world seem to be drawing the attention of what is left of the strategic studies community. A look at the web pages of RAND Corporation[31] and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)[32] confirms this impression. The rapid decline in interest shown towards arctic security issues by the U.S. and British strategic studies community in the post-Cold War period is understandable, both in view of the new global security agenda, and the emergence of more "modern" theoretical approaches (including the ones discussed below) to international relations.

Still, "the case for continuity" needs to be considered.[33] The Russian Federation is, and is in the foreseeable future likely to remain, the most important single actor in the region. Russia controls by far the most sizeable oil and gas reserves in the European Arctic, both offshore and onshore, and the country's military arsenal on the Kola Peninsula is still significantly bigger than that of other countries in the region. Strategic issues pertaining to the Arctic are frequently debated in Russian defense-related-journals[34], and Russia has long since begun to consider ways to use her

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[28] *Opportunities and Challenges in the North*, Report No. 30 (2005-2006) to the Storting, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/248836/STM030-engelsk.pdf

[29] *Styrke og relevans. Strategisk konsept for Forsvaret*, Oslo 2003: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, http://www.dep.no/fd/norsk/dok/andre_dok/veiledninger/010051-120082/dok-bn.html.

[30] See for instance Lassi Heininen & Gunnar Lassiantti (eds.): *Security in the European North: From 'Hard' to 'Soft'*, Rovaniemi: Arctic Centre, University of Lappland 1999.

[31] http://www.rand.org/

[32] http://www.iiss.org/

[33] Betts, op. cit., 28.

[34] See for instance A. Smolovskiy: "Archipelag Shpitsbergen i bezopasnost' Rossii" (The Svalbard Archopelago and Russian security"), Morskoi sbornik, No. 2, 2000, pp. 38–43; M.V Motsak: "O

naval forces in the Arctic theater as a foreign policy tool.[35] Russian nuclear deterrence theory is also currently being subjected to critical analyses that are worth studying.[36]

Other nations – particularly those for whom the Arctic part of Europe is politically, economically and militarily important – would benefit from getting a deeper and better understanding of the strategic/military dimensions in the North through policy-oriented strategic studies. Such studies might contribute to filling the vacuum caused by political correctness. The military dimension is a natural and integral part of any national *Grand Strategy* with regard to the European Arctic. As pointed out by Betts, the purpose of strategic studies is not to encourage the use of violence as a means to induce political change, but rather to promote stability and avoid armed conflicts.[37]

3.3 Weaknesses and Limitations of Strategic Studies

There is – perhaps more so in Europe than in Russia and the United States – a profound and apparently growing skepticism toward the relevance and utility of strategic studies, in the political establishment as well as in academic circles. In our context (the European Arctic), the skeptics seem to fall into either of two categories: (1) Those who find strategic studies *generally* weak and/or unduly conservative, and (2) those who recognize the value of strategic studies, but not with regard to *specific* topics and/or regions, such as the generally peaceful post-Cold War European Arctic.

Adherents to the first group often criticize strategic studies for their narrow military focus, "hardware fetishism", state centrism, lack of theorizing, and their inability to analyze complex, increasingly non-military, security challenges of the 21st century. The end of the Cold War has given rise to numerous suggestions that the financial resources once devoted to the study of military threats should be transferred to the study of non-military threats such as "domestic poverty, educational crises, industrial competitiveness, drug trafficking, crime, international migration, environmental hazards, resource shortages, global poverty, and so on".[38]

Similarly, doubts have been raised over the axiom that military security at any given time is more important than non-military policy goals, such as "breathable air, drinkable water, economic welfare, and so forth".[39] Challenges relating to the latter category can not be met with military means, but require mobilization of the entire arsenal of foreign policy instruments. Another

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natsional'nykh interesakh Rossii v Arktike" ("About Russia's national interests in the Arctic"), Voyennaya Mysl, No. 6, 2000, pp. 8–10; V. Gundarov: "Rossiyskie pozitsii v Arktike" (Russian positions in the Arctic"), Morskoi sbornik, No. 4, 2002, pp. 24–27; V. Popov: "Zakonodatel'noe obespechenie natsional'noi morskoi politiki i ekonomicheskoi deyatel'nosti v Arktike" ("The legal basis for national [Russia's] maritime politics and economic activity in the Arctic", Morskoi sbornik, No. 9, 2006, pp. 46–50.

[35] See "Neft' pod zashitoi flota" ("Oil protected by the Navy"), Strana.ru, 16.05.06.

[36] See for instance Alexei Arbatov & Vladimir Dvorkin: *Yader'noe oruzhie posle "cholodnoy voyny"* (*Nuclear weapons after the Cold War*), Moscow: ROSSPEN 2006, and Alexei Arbatov & Vladimir Dvorkin: *Beyond Nuclear Deterrence: Transforming the U.S.- Russian Equation*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie 2006.

[37] Betts, op. cit., pp. 29–30.

[38] Baldwin, op. cit., p. 126.

[39] Baldwin, op. cit. p. 128.

problematic point is the relationship between *strategic studies* and *realism*. Most, if not all, strategic analysts adhere in one way or another to the school of (neo)realism. The realist emphasis on the anarchic nature of the international system makes it difficult to incorporate domestic affairs in the treatment of security issues.[40]

Adherents to the second group – those who recognize the adequacy of strategic studies also in the post-Cold War and post-9.11 era, but not with regard to stable regions like the European Arctic – seem to include the majority of European and American policymakers as well as significant parts of the international strategic studies research community. Internationally, the geographic and thematic focus of strategic studies seem to have shifted from former Cold War ”front zones” and nuclear deterrence to the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Northeast Asia and the challenges of transnational terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The military activity level in the European Arctic is nowhere near what it was in the days of the Cold War. The level of military tension in Europe’s northeastern corner is, at least compared to that in present-day hot spots like Afghanistan, Iraq or North Korea, low enough to be ignored. Despite certain concerns with regard to the domestic political development in Russia the notion that “Russia does not constitute a military threat to Norway”[41] or other Western countries seems to be accepted by most of the political community.

It can be argued that many of the general objections against strategic studies are highly relevant in relation to the European North. It is an environmentally fragile region, exposed to pollution originating both in the region itself and in other parts of the world. Non-military security challenges related to the region’s deep “welfare gap” figure centrally on the foreign policy agenda of the Nordic countries, to some extent also that of Russia. Nowadays, Russia is seen as a threat not by virtue of its military strength, but by virtue of its economic weakness. For instance, an accident at the Kola nuclear power plant on one the Northern Fleet’s nuclear submarines would first and foremost represent a threat to *societal* security or the security of *individuals* living in the region, and not to *state* security. And non-traditional threats like organized crime, nuclear proliferation or contagious diseases can not be dealt with by military means.

On the other hand, the argument can also be made that strategic studies may contribute to covering important, and sometimes crucial, “white spots” in our understanding of national strategies and inter-state relations in the European Arctic. Though not as dominant as in the Cold War period, the military/strategic dimension in the North is still important, and probably not sufficiently understood neither by the political community nor the research community. The lack of attention to, and knowledge about, the role of military power in the European Arctic may in the long run weaken our over-all understanding of the region, and particularly the interplay between the military sector and other sectors.

[40] Baldwin, op. cit., p 130.
[41] ”The Further Modernization of the Armed Forces in the Period 2005–2008”, Proposition to the Storting, No 42 (2003–2004), Oslo 2003: Ministry of Defense, pp. 29–30, http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/208105/STP0304042-TS.pdf.

3.4 Conclusion

Though essentially a small, conservative and practically oriented subfield of international relations, strategic studies have matured and to some extent transformed since their "first" and "second cycles".[42] Post-Cold War, or "third cycle", strategic studies deal with a wide array of important and interesting issues such as civil-military relations, organization theory, arms control, strategic culture, coercion, and grand strategy[43], most of which are highly relevant in the European Arctic. But rather than attempting to cover the whole spectrum of security-related issues, the subfield of strategic studies aims at maintaining its strategic/military core. In doing so, strategic analysts may be able to provide in-dept analyses of considerable value, not only to policymakers, but also to IR researchers of other theoretical inclinations.

Other theories, such as "human security" (see below), may have more to offer when it comes to the security of individuals living in the European Arctic, the Circumpolar Arctic, or the world at large. And liberal/institutionalist perspectives may arguably correspond better with Western approaches to the region. But in the case of Russia, the European Arctic is still largely seen in a state-centric, realist perspective where "national interests" are at the top of the agenda, and where one state's gain is unimaginable without another state's loss. The prevailing Russian "zero-sum-game" perspective on the region adds to the relevance and adequacy of strategic studies.

The European Arctic is still a security arena and – as such – it is an important factor in the security and defense policy planning of Russia, Norway and other countries. It can not be excluded that the inter-state conflict potential in the region may increase, either due to developments in the region (for instance a resource-related conflict in the Barents Sea), or outside the region (for instance a conflict between Russia and another nuclear power such as the United States or China). The announced modernization of Russia's naval forces in the region, and the increasing attention paid to the use of military force for political and/or economic purposes, are also relevant topics for strategic analysts with an interest in the European Arctic.

Military factors do not have to be at the forefront of High North-related research, or for that matter the forefront of IR/foreign policy research. But the strategic perspectives need to be represented and considered, just like the non-military perspectives. The reality of today's situation, at least in the West, is not that strategic studies are dominating over other approaches to the region. The situation is rather that strategic issues in the post-Cold War European Arctic have been under-researched to the point where research in other and related fields has declined in quality, due to lack of knowledge (or use of obsolete knowledge) about the military dimension.

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[42] See Betts, op. cit., pp. 13–21. Betts dates the "first cycle" to the 1950s and 60s, and the "second" from the late 1970s to the end of the Cold War. For an overview of the different theoretical aspects contemporary strategic studies, see for instance Colin S. Gray: *Modern Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999; or Richard Shultz, Roy Godson & Ted Greenwood (eds.): *Security Studies for the 1990s*, Washington: Brassey's 1993.

[43] Betts, op. cit., p. 21.

4 Approach 2: Securitization theory

4.1 About the Theory

The terms "securitization" and "desecuritization", introduced in the 1990s by the so-called Copenhagen school of security studies[44], refer to the processes that take place when an issue or development is placed on, or removed from, an entity's security agenda. According to one of the school's most prominent representatives, Danish political scientist Ole Wæver, securitization is to be understood as "the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have political effects".[45] The task of security analysts – as the Copenhagen school sees it – is not to assess, rate or rank pre-defined "objective" threats, but rather to study

> when, why and how elites label issues as "security" problems; when, why and how they succeed and fail in such endeavors; what attempts are made by other groups to put securitization on the agenda; and whether we can point to efforts to keep issues *off* the security agenda, or even to de-securitize issues that have become securitized.[46]

Securitization theory, as well the Copenhagen school's concepts about sectors[47] and regional security complexes[48], sprung out of the increasingly polarized debate in the 1980s over a wide/constructivist versus a narrow/traditionalist concept of security. The Copenhagen school emerged as some kind of a "middle position".[49] It rejected not only the traditionalist notion that security was to be found only in the political and military sectors of states, but also the "wideners" call for a radical extension of the security field, allowing it to encompass almost any aspect of human endeavor.

The essence of securitization theory is that security is a "speech act", i.e. an utterance whereby "[...] a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it."[50] This does not mean, however, that anyone, regardless of position and context, can securitize anything. In order for a "securitizing move"[51] to be successful (i.e. result in *de facto* securitization), the "securitizing

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[44] See footnote 4.
[45] Ole Wæver: "Securitisation: Taking stock of a research programme in security studies", draft paper, February 2003, p. 11.
[46] Ole Wæver: "Securitization and Desecuritization", in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.): *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press 1995, pp. 57–58.
[47] The distrinction between military, political, economic, environmental and societal security, see Barry Buzan Ole Wæver & Jaap de Wilde: *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.
[48] See next chapter, largely based on Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003.
[49] Ole Wæver: "Securitisation: Taking stock of a research programme in security studies", draft paper, February 2003, p. 8.
[50] Ole Wæver: "Securitization and Desecuritization", in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.): *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press 1995, p. 55.
[51] The act of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object.

actor(s)"[52] need(s) to have a certain authority in relation to the "audience"[53], and the alleged threat needs to be perceived by the audience as being of an "existential" nature in order to justify "emergency measures".[54] The receptiveness of the audience to the securitizing actor's claim about the existence of an existential threat is often related to factors such as internal security demand, position of the securitizing actor, and the historical pretext of the alleged threat – factors referred to as "facilitating conditions of the security speech act".[55]

Securitization theory distinguishes clearly between the "referent object" of threats (who or what is threatened and whose survival is at stake), and the "securitizing actor" (the one making the argument about the threat). This contrasts the theory with traditionalist approaches, where the state is typically seen as both actor and object. Securitization theory also distinguishes between "securitizing actors" and "functional actors". The latter category of actors is not directly involved in securitization but greatly influence the dynamics within the sector where the securitization takes place.[56]

Further, securitization can be either "ad hoc" (case by case) or "institutionalized" (persistent or recurring threats being dealt with on a more or less permanent basis, for instance by a military bureaucracy, on the basis of previous cases).[57] Processes of securitization can be either "overt" (out in the public) or "covert" (secret).[58] Involving the general public in the process, for instance in the form of a parliamentary approval, can give securitization more legitimacy. On the other hand, *not* doing so can prevent disclosure of sensitive information and/or "counter-securitization" by other parties

Whether an issue is securitized or not has implications for how it is handled, as well as for how others react.[59] Securitization can have far-reaching consequences for states, societies, and individuals. It can alter the political situation in a region by stimulating conflict, security dilemmas and escalation.[60] But it can also contribute to the containment of dangerous situations by facilitating adequate responses to existential threats.

4.2 Relevance of Securitization Theory to the Post-Cold War European Arctic

The European Arctic is a former Cold War front zone, which used to be heavily militarized on both sides of the Norwegian-Soviet border – NATOs only shared border with the Soviet Union on the northern flank. The superpower confrontation brought Norway (and the Soviet Union) into a

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[52] The one(s) that makes the argument about a threat to a referent object.
[53] Those who approve or reject the securitizing move.
[54] See Wæver (2003), op. cit., pp. 11-12, and Wæver (1995), op. cit., pp. 21–22.
[55] Wæver (2003), op. cit., pp. 14–15; Buzan et al (1998), op. cit., p. 32.
[56] For example the defense industry within the military sector, or a polluting company within the environmental sector.
[57] Buzan et al (1998), op. cit., p. 27.
[58] These are my phrases, Wæver uses the term "legitimized in public", Buzan et al (1998), op. cit. p 28.
[59] Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 20.
[60] Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 18.

local "tension field" that in reality was little more than a reflection of the global tension field.[61] But it led to the securitization of a wide array of issues and issue areas at the regional level. The European Arctic has been, is, and will continue to be a meeting place for the security concerns and needs of the states in the region, most notably Norway and Russia. In this context, it is crucial to understand the dynamics of securitization, desecuritization, and resecuritization, not least on the Russian side, and their impact on the region as a whole.

The strategic significance of the region has historically been – and still is – primarily related to the Russian Northern Fleet and the role of the Kola Peninsula in the context of nuclear deterrence. In the Cold War period, people-to-people contacts and cross-border industrial cooperation at the level of companies were considered a potential threat to national security. Such contacts were discouraged through strict visa practices and the establishment of extraordinary regimes of secrecy (such as the "closed cities" on the Kola Peninsula). The military were seen as the primary actor in the region, and civilian and commercial interests were subordinated the interests of the military. This was seen as necessary in view of the international situation.

Other characteristic features of the region, such as its economic significance and the presence of unresolved jurisdiction issues, were not directly linked to the superpower confrontation, but were often interpreted in an East-West context. The issue of the delimitation of Norway's and the Soviet Union's continental shelves and economic zones in the Barents Sea was heavily securitized in the early stages of the now 30-year long negotiation process, but largely desecuritized after the end of the Cold War.

Likewise, the construction oil and gas terminals in the Murmansk area, in the vicinity of the Northern Fleet's home bases, was not allowed for security reasons in the 1980s and early 1990s, but this issue too seem to have become desecuritized in the 2000s, as indicated by the recent decision to build an international LNG terminal in the (closed) Northern Fleet garrison town of Vidyayevo. A third example is the issue of whether or not, and to what extent, the naval yards in Severodvinsk should be allowed to convert from military (nuclear submarine) to civilian (petroleum industry hardware) production. These are all interesting topics for desecuritization case studies.[62]

The end of the superpower confrontation seems to have had a profound impact on the European Arctic as a security arena. Russia has significantly redefined its strategic interests in the region in order to facilitate tanker shipping and offshore petroleum activities. Inter-state relations in the region are today marked by desecuritization, demilitarization and political normalization. But the picture far from clear, and some would claim that Russian-Western relations in the European Arctic are still largely marked by mutual fear and distrust. Military power is still a relevant factor

[61] Kristian Åtland et al: *Hvor går Russland? Fem scenarier om Russland og norsk sikkerhet i 2030* (*Where to, Russia? Five Scenarios for Russia and Norwegian Security in 2030)*, Oslo: Abstrakt forlag 2005, pp. 172–177.

[62] Kristian Åtland: "Russisk oljeindustri og Nordflåten – interessekonflikt eller strategisk partnerskap?" (The Russian Oil Industry and the Northern Fleet: Conflict of Interest or Strategic Partnership?"), *Internasjonal Politikk*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 2004, pp. 199–216.

in the north, and the region still occupies a significant place in the security thinking and defense planning of Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

This can partly be explained by the phenomenon that Russian philosopher and scientist Valentin Turchin in a different context called "The Inertia of Fear".[63] Once a specific issue, or cluster of issues, has been securitized, it may take a long time to desecuritize it. There may be actors who have a strong interest in maintaining *status quo*, either because their world views are more conservative than those of the ruling elite, or because they have vested interests that may be threatened by the consequences of a large-scale desecuritization (typically, the military establishment or the military-industrial complex). In the case of Russia it would, however, be wrong to place the leadership of the Northern Fleet squarely in the *status quo* camp. The Northern Fleet has in recent years shown a good deal of flexibility in dealing with the new realities in the north, in contrast to the more conservative General Staff in Moscow.[64]

Another interesting phenomenon to study is that of "resecuritization". In the 1990s, Russian-Western relations went trough a number of "ups" and "downs". For instance, the eastward enlargement of NATO and the Kosovo air campaign appear to have had clearly negative effects on Russian perceptions of NATO. This again led to a partial revival of Soviet-era security thinking and defense planning, also with regard to the European Arctic. A little known concept is that of the "Northern Strategic Bastion", which was (secretly) introduced by First Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin in the mid 1990s, and got the approval of president Yeltsin in 1998. The idea of this concept was, in short, to reorganize Russia's naval, land and air defense forces in and around the Barents Sea, as the primary stationing area for strategic nuclear submarines, in order to deter a Western attack on the Russian mainland.[65]

The launch of the "Northern Strategic Bastion" concept and similar more or less successful "(re)securitizing moves" in post-Cold War Russia could maybe be written off as insignificant expressions of superpower nostalgia. But it can also be argued that they are important, for at least two reasons: First, they can help us understand the Russian security logic and the mechanisms at play.[66] Secondly, the moves may serve as material for analyses of the under-researched dynamics of "overt desecuritization + covert (re)securitization", or for that matter "overt (re)securitization + covert desecuritization". In the field of security, states operate with open and hidden agendas, and researchers need to keep an eye on both in order to get a deeper understanding of processes of (re)/(de)securitization.

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[63] Valentin Turchin: *The Inertia of Fear and the Scientific Worldview*, Oxford: Martin Robertson 1981.
[64] This point was, for instance, made by scientists at the Kola Science Center in Apatity, in reference to the Vidyayevo issue, during a visit by the author in September 2006.
[65] Kristian Åtland: "High-Flying Rhetorics and Harsh Realities: The Introduction, Adoption and Implementation of Russia's Northern Strategic Bastion Concept, 1992-1999" (forthcoming).
[66] Who are the securitizing actors, how do they go about to achieve their objectives, who is the audience, what are the driving and counter forces, why do securitizing moves succeed or fail, and what are the consequences, etc.

4.3 Weaknesses and Limitations of Securitization Theory

The Copenhagen school has been criticized by, among others, (neo)realists and "human security" proponents for diverting attention from "real" threats, and for paying too little/too much attention to the *state* as a referent object for security.[67] Securitization theory's notion that security is neither a "subjective" nor an "objective" phenomenon, but rather an "intersubjective" one, seems to be particularly hard to swallow.[68] And the introduction of "society" as a referent object for security, with "identity" as its core value, has give rise to accusations of undue "reification".[69]

In addition to these and similar objections against securitization theory, which are all of a general/principal nature, the argument can also be made, on the basis of region-specific factors, that the European Arctic is not the best place to look for material for securitization case studies, and/or that other approaches are more applicable to this particular part of the world in the present time.[70] It is also possible to envisage a combination of the "general" and the "region-/time-specific" reservations, for instance in the form of a claim that the "real" security challenges in 2006 are found other places than in the north.[71] We therefore have to discuss both categories of objections.

First, "threats", in the Copenhagen school's sense of the word, do not have en independent existence. Hence, there are no "objective" threats. Threats essentially originate from actors' fears, but "whether an issue is securitized is not decided on by individual perceptions – it is an inter-subjective, political process of negotiating the possible acceptance of a specific kind of argument"[72], allowing for the issue to be lifted out of the sphere of ordinary politics and into the sphere of security.

Securitization is, in other words, "a more extreme version of politization".[73] It is not necessarily a practice that should be encouraged, since it can have far-reaching internal and external consequences. On the other hand, it should be noted that securitization is not synonymous with *militarization*.[74] Those looking for factors explanation the outbreak of wars may find the theory insufficient. This has to some extent been alleviated by Iver B. Neumann's contribution about the

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[67] See for instance Olav F. Knutsen: "Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization", Security Dialogue, Vol. 32, No 2 (2001) and Gunhild Hoogensen (2005), op. cit.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Bill McSweeney: "Buzan and the Copenhagen school", Review of International Studies, Vol. 22 (1996), p. 84.
[70] Compared to the Baltic Sea region, the Barents Sea region has so far been subjected to astonishingly few securitization studies. Whether this is accidental or not, is hard to tell. As regards the "time" factor, Olaf Knutsen argues that securitization theory is "more appropriate to the security politics of the Cold War years than to the post-Cold War period", since security agenda-setting is now "much easier to influence" by actors outside the military establishment. Knutsen, op. cit., p. 359.
[71] This argument has frequently been made in the Norwegian defense debate by the advocates of increased Norwegian participation in international peace-keeping operations.
[72] Ole Wæver (2003), op. cit., p 12.
[73] Buzan et al (1998), op. cit., p. 23.
[74] Taylor Owen, (2004) op. cit., p. 380.

concept of "violization" as the highest step on the securitization ladder (non-politicized – politicized – securitized – violized).[75]

Secondly, on the issue of "identity": The main argument in Bill McSweeney's critique seems to be that the Copenhagen school's notion about society being a referent object for security – in other words, that identity can be securitized – may be used to justify anti-immigrant policies.[76] Identity is, in Mc Sweeney's view, "not a fact of society", but rather "a process of negotiation among people and interest groups".[77] This critique has been responded to at length by the Copenhagen school[78], which has long since been aware of the political dangers of its "societal security" concept.[79]

A third frequently expressed argument against the Copenhagen school is that it does not engage in discussions about what security "should" be. Its "observe how others advocate" approach places the school in a middle-of-the-road position between the "observe; let others advocate" approach of traditional security studies (TSS), and the "to observe is to advocate" approach of critical security studies (CSS).[80] Though more radical than TSS, securitization theory is not nearly as radical as CSS and does not claim to be "activist" in the sense of telling the world what security "should be".

With regard to the alleged lack of "region-" and "period-specific" relevance of securitization theory to the European Arctic in the post-Cold War period it can be noted that the region is still perceived as an important security arena for the states in the region, even though the level of military tension is much lower today than it used to be, and lower than in other parts of the world. However, non-traditional security issues well suited for securitization studies, such as environmental security, nuclear safety and nuclear non-proliferation, are increasingly seen as important in the region.

4.4 Conclusion

Can securitization theory be a fruitful approach to the post-Cold War European Arctic? In view of the region's characteristic features, five of which are listed in the introduction, the answer to this question is clearly affirmative. Not only the region's "inherited" strategic significance (feature 4), but also the combination of richness in natural resources (feature 2) and unresolved legal issues (feature 3) makes the European Arctic a particularly interesting object for securitization studies.

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[75] Iver B. Neumann: "Identity and the Outbreak of War: Or Why the Copenhagen school of Security Studies Should Include the Idea of 'Violisation' in Its Framework of Analysis", The International Journal of Peace Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1998).
[76] Bill McSweeney, op. cit., p. 91.
[77] Bill Mc Sweeney, op. cit., p. 85.
[78] Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver: "Slippery? contradictory? sociologically untenable? The Copenhagen school replies", Review of International Studies, Vo. 24 (1997), pp. 241–250.
[79] This was a major topic in Ole Wæver et al: *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London: Pinter 1993.
[80] Johan Eriksson: "Observers or Advocates? On the Political Role of Security Analysts", Cooperation and Conflict, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1999), pp. 311–330.

Future developments in the region, for instance with regard to oil and gas exploration, will largely degree depend on the extent and tempo of on-going and future processes of securitization, desecuritization and resecuritization. Russia and other states seem to have recognized that the region's old security regime (closed borders, closed maritime zones, closed cities, and little or no civil-military interaction, etc.) is largely incompatible with the spirit and principles of normalization, "marketization", regionalization, and globalization. Still, there are forces that wish to maintain *status quo* or facilitate a return to the way things were in the days of the Cold War. The recent (October 6, 2006) decision to not allow foreign companies to participate as co-owners in the development of the Shtokman gas field in the Barents Sea[81] may be an indication of this. Other recent examples are the proposal to widen the (closed) Russian border zone from five to 25 kilometers, and the putting up of red "mine" warning signs on the Norwegian-Russian border.[82]

The historic role of the European Arctic as a former Cold War "front zone" makes it a particularly relevant topic for securitization and desecuritization studies. By mapping and tracing short-, medium- and long-term trends and identifying possible turning points in Russian and Western threat perceptions and security policy approaches to the European Arctic, we can get a better understanding of the mechanisms at play, not only at the state level, but also at the level of societies and individuals. We can also get a better understanding of the interplay between the different levels. In addition, the region is also well suited as a platform for *comparative* analyses in securization and desecuritization, particularly in relation to other former Cold War front zones, such as the West German/GDR border zone or the Greek-Bulgarian border zone.

After the Cold War, and particularly after 9.11, it has not been *comme il faut* in the West to discuss the European Arctic in terms of security, and even less the "the politics of security", which is often said to be the main focus of securitization theory. But as Ole Wæver points out, securitization theory is about more than security agenda setting.[83] It is about formulating a new and more consistent theory of what security is and is not, drawing on both "traditional" and "radical" perceptions.[84] Securitization theory makes it possible to analyze how threats are perceived and managed, on different levels as well as within different sectors. This includes analyzing the *effects* of securitization and desecuritization, which should be of interests not only to analysts, but also to practitioners of security policy, as well as to analysts and practitioners of other policy fields. In the case of the European Arctic, developments within a variety of sectors are influenced by, and influence, the security dynamics. Understanding the security dynamics is therefore the key to understanding the region.

[81] Anatoly Medetsky: "Foreign Partners Shut Out of Shtokman", Moscow Times 10 October 2006.
[82] Kjell Dragnes: "Mystisk skilt på grensen" ("Mystic sign on the border"), Aftenposten, 6 October 2006.
[83] Ole Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 33.
[84] Ibid.

5 Approach 3: Regional Security Complex Theory

5.1 About the Theory

The term "regional security" is not new. Neither is the recognition by researchers and practitioners of security policy that different parts of the world have different security dynamics, and that security issues can be analyzed not only at the *system* and *state* levels, but also at the level of *regions*. However, until the late 1990s, the regional level of security had not been systematically explored in terms of theory. In the Cold War period, security research was largely dominated by state- and system-based approaches such as realism and neorealism.[85] These were again largely inspired by the predominantly bipolar nature of international relations.

In the post-Cold War period, the regional level of security seems to have gained in relative importance, and it has been explored – theoretically as well as empirically – in both Russia[86] and the West[87]. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver's *Regions and Powers* (2004), in which they develop a theory of "regional security complexes" and apply it to different parts of the world (the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East), constitutes the most comprehensive account of regional security so far.

The essential idea of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) is that "most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones", and that security interdependence is therefore normally "patterned into regionally based clusters".[88] Rather than looking at regional security dynamics from above ("seeing regional systems as mainly shaped by and relating to the global level"), RSCT takes a look from below ("to capture the particularities of regions and then assemble the global picture form these components").[89] The advantage of the "bottom-up" over the "top-down" approach is that it isolates the regional level as a separate field for typological analyses, while at the same time allowing for more thorough analyses of the interplay between the regional level and other levels, both downwards (to the local level), horizontally (region-to-region) and upwards (to the global level).

Regional security complexes come in a variety of forms. They may be either *standard* (i.e. not dominated by a global power) or *centered* (i.e. dominated by a global level power, or sufficiently integrated by collective institutions to have "actor quality" at the global level). They can also be *great power complexes* (bi- or multipolar complexes with great powers as the regional poles), or

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[85] Gunhild Hoogensen: "Bottoms Up! A Toast to Regional Security" (review of Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver: *Regions and Powers*), International Studies Review, No. 7, 2005, p. 269.

[86] See for instance A. V. Vozzhenikov, M.A. Vybornov & N. V. Sineok (eds.): *Regional'naya bezopasnost': Geopoliticheskie i geoekonomicheskie aspekty (teoriya i praktika)* (*Regional Security: Geopolitical and Geo-economic Perspectives (Theory and Practice)*, Moscow: RAGS 2006.

[87] David Lake & Patrick Morgan (eds.): *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, University Park 1997: Pennsylvania University Press; Emanuel Adler & Michael Barnett (eds.) *Security Communities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998; and Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003.

[88] Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 4.

[89] Ibid., pp. 84–85.

supercomplexes (strong level of interregional dynamics caused by great power spillover into adjacent regions).[90] RSCs can also contain one or more *subcomplexes* (“half-level” SCs with distinctive patterns of security interdependence, embedded within a larger RSC).[91]

External involvement in RSCs is analyzed in the context of *penetration* (when outside powers making security alignments with states within a RSC) and *overlay* (when external great powers dominate RSCs so heavily that local security dynamics seize to operate).[92] RSCT also explores the historical and present role of *buffers* (states or mini-complexes *within* a RSC and whose key function is to separate rival powers) and *insulators* (states or mini-complexes located *between* RSCs, facing “both ways”).[93]

According to RSCT, the essential structure and character of each RSC are defined by two key factors; (1) *power relations* (“polarity”), and (2) *patterns of amity and enmity* (“who fears or likes whom”).[94] The second factor has traditionally been far less explored in IR theory than the first, and often requires knowledge of background factors such as history, culture, religion, and geography.[95]

5.2 Relevance of Regional Security Complex Theory to the European Arctic

The question of the degree of relevance and utility of RSCT in relation to the European Arctic is difficult to answer. Buzan and Wæver’s comprehensive analysis of Cold War and post-Cold War patterns of regional security[96], featuring not only “full-fledged” RSCs but also “pre-“, “proto-“, “sub-“ and “super complexes”, contains no mention of neither the Circumpolar nor the European Arctic region. Neither of the two regions is defined by state borders, since they are both “regions of peripheries” (characteristic feature 1).

With the possible exception of Iceland, the Arctic includes no whole states, only parts of states. The *European* Arctic cuts through two RSCs; the “European”, arranged around the European Union, and the “post-Soviet”, centered on the Russian Federation. The *Circumpolar* Arctic also includes parts of the “North American” RSC, centered on the United States. It has, however, been suggested that the European Arctic qualifies as a RSC of its own.[97] The starting point of Johan Eriksson’s 1994 analysis is that the political structure in and around the Euro-Arctic area is a “polity puzzle” consisting of units on (at least) four different levels:

[90] Ibid., p. 62.
[91] Ibid., p. 51.
[92] Ibid., p. 49.
[93] Ibid., p. 41.
[94] Ibid., pp. 47 and 49.
[95] Ibid., pp. 49–50.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Johan Eriksson: ”Coping with Insecurity”, in Peter Bröms, Johan Eriksson & Bo Svensson: *Reconstructing Survival: Evolving Perspectives on Euro-Arctic Politics*, Stockholm: Fritzes 1994, pp. 22–26.

- *territorial state*s (Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia)
- *subnational regions* (counties and federation subjects)
- *transnational regions* (Sámpi, the BEAR and the North Calotte)
- *external polities* with important links to the Euro-Arctic area (the Baltic Sea Region, the EU, USA, etc.)[98]

The fact that many of the polities listed above overlap or are included in each other adds to the political complexity of the region and makes it difficult to identify clear demarcation lines between "internal" and "external", or between "us" and "them". It necessitates a closer look at the relationship between the different *levels*, the distribution of *power* within the region as well as between the region and external polities, and the historic and present patterns of *amity and enmity* in the region.[99]

In the Cold War period, the regional *level* played a minor role, if any at all. Security relations in the European North were defined by the superpower rivalry. Post-WWII Europe was largely "overlaid" (i.e. dominated) by global powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and the region's own security dynamics were suppressed.[100] On both sides of the Iron Curtain, the European Arctic was seen as a "flank zone" of tremendous strategic importance (feature 4), and the existence of unresolved legal issues at the bilateral level (feature 3) added to the conflict potential in the region.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the overlay was lifted and the regional level became more important as an arena for security interaction. Notions of "common security challenges" in the region became more prominent, at least in the West, but did not completely replace the old security paradigm. Security in the European Arctic was now approached using what Eriksson calls "two parallel agendas" – one focusing on military defense of sovereignty, and another one focusing on regionalization and civility.[101] In the case of Norway, the NATO membership continued to be the main body for security and defense discussions. But one also tried to draw Russia closer to Europe by establishing sub-regional cooperation arrangements, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the Baltic Region (feature 5).

In terms of *power*, Russia could not measure up to the former Soviet Union, at least not in the 1990s. But it retained the status of a "great power", and despite the fall of the Soviet Union it continued to dominate large parts of the post-Soviet space. In the European Arctic, the country is still seen as a major player, politically, economically and militarily. And the European North has largely disappeared from the radar screen of NATO. The Atlantic alliance has redirected its attention and resources towards other and more troublesome parts of the world, leaving Norway to deal with Russia on its own. And as an EU non-member, Norway is increasingly isolated, particularly after Finland and Sweden's decision to join the European Union, in 1994 and 1995.

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[98] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., pp 22–23.
[99] These analytical terms are explained in Buzan and Wæver (2003), op. cit., pp. 45–51.
[100] Buzan and Wæver (2003), op. cit. p. 351.
[101] Johan Eriksson, op. cit. p. 42.

Still, as far as patterns of *amity and enmity* are concerned, Sweden and Finland are closer to Norway than the Nordic countries are to Russia. The Nordic states share a common history and cultural heritage, as well as many of the same security concerns. "Norden" may be well described as a "security community", in the sense that the use of military power between the states can be ruled out[102], but it does not qualify as a RSC, since it does not constitute a separate group of states with interdependent security concerns different from those of surrounding regions.[103]

Dealing with "tricky" geographical entities such as "The European Arctic" or "Norden", it is important to bear in mind that RSCs are not defined by the criteria of practitioners.[104] Regions may be *labeled* as RSCs for political purposes, without necessarily being so according to the analytical criteria, i.e. the *de facto* security practices. Identities may be politicized and manipulated. A relevant question in this regard is whether there is a collective (cross-border) identity in the European Arctic, and if so, how strong it is. Obviously, northern peripheral regions in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia share many similar challenges in relation to their capitals, located further south.[105] This is particularly true with the Saami population, which is represented in all of the four countries, and has an identity of its own.[106]

As far as *threat perceptions* go, the environmental sector is probably the sector that has the greatest potential of serving as a platform for mobilization at the regional level. The Barents Sea is *one* ecosystem, surrounded by actors who recognize its vulnerability to human disturbances at the regional level. Within the military sector, however, there is still a strong tendency among northern Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians to identify as Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians, rather than as multiethnic "northeners", facing region-specific security challenges. Thus, the "East-West" identity gap seems to be deeper than the "North-South" gap.[107]

5.3 Why the European Arctic and RSCT is Not a Perfect Match

According to Barry Buzan's original definition, security complexes are defined by the overall patterns of relations and security perceptions within a particular geographical area:

> A security complex is defined as a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another.[108]

The European Arctic is obviously not "a group of states", and can therefore not be said to qualify as an RSC according to this definition. The definition was, however, modified by Buzan and Wæver twelve years later, in order to accommodate the need of including units other than states. According to the 2003 definition, an RSC is

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[102] Karl Deutsch et al: *International Political Communities*, New York: Anchor Books 1966, p. 2.
[103] Buzan and Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 47–48.
[104] Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., p. 48.
[105] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 30.
[106] See figure 2.1 in Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 39.
[107] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 24.
[108] Barry Buzan: *People, States & Fear*, Harlow: Pearson 1991, p. 190.

> [A] set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.[109]

The Euro-Arctic region can be described as consisting of "a set of units" (sub-national regions), so the question then becomes whether and to what extent the region has a security dynamic of its own, different from that of the "European" and "post-Soviet" RSCs. The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) organization has certainly played an important role in the development of the internal dimension in the aftermath of the Cold War. It became an arena for regional-level cooperation on "soft security" issues, such as regional political stability, political demands of ethnic groups, environmental pollution, nuclear safety and organized crime.[110]

However, an implicit prerequisite for the establishment of the BEAR was that the regional level should not interfere in "hard security" issues, i.e. issues relating to the threat of interstate war. Such issues were still to be dealt with at the national level, and in the cases of Norway, Sweden and Finland, also at the level of external polities like NATO and the EU. Threat perceptions and main-stream processes of securitization and desecuritization in the northern part of the wider European RSC have in fact little in common with similar processes in the northwestern part of the post-Soviet RSC. Whereas the primary focus of the Nordic states has shifted from state security issues to issues of societal and environmental security in the region, Russia is still devoting much attention to the military dimension, and to the state level.[111]

The notion that "the Euro-Arctic area is [in military terms] a subcomplex of the wider European security complex"[112] also makes little sense, since the area also includes the northwestern part of Russia, belonging to the post-Soviet RSC. According to Buzan and Wæver's definition, a security subcomplex has to be "firmly embedded within a larger RSC".[113] Regional security complex theory rejects the possibility of overlapping membership between RSCs.[114] This has been described as a weakness of the theory, particularly in relation to the transnational regions like the Arctic:

> [S]hared security concerns can occur in regions that transcend [state] boundaries, such as the Arctic. The problem is that the Arctic cuts across states, and if forced into regions defined by state boundaries (which it must be according to Buzan and Wæver's scheme), it becomes lost within the North American, European Union, and Russian complexes.[115]

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[109] Buzan and Wæver (2003), op. cit., p. 491.
[110] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 25.
[111] See for example V. Vladimirov: "Istochniki nestabil'nosti v Zapadnoy Arktike" ("Sources of instability in the Western Arctic"), Morskoi sbornik, No. 12, 2003, pp. 25–31, which singles out NATO as the primary threat to Russian security in the north, 15 years after the end of the Cold War.
[112] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 24.
[113] Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., p. 51.
[114] Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., pp. 52 and 483.
[115] Gunhild Hoogensen: "Bottoms Up! A Toast to Regional Security" (review of Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver: *Regions and Powers*), International Studies Review, No. 7, 2005, p. 273.

Another possibility could be to define the European Arctic as an “insulator” between the European and the post-Soviet RSC, just like Turkey is an insulator between the European, the post-Soviet and the Middle Eastern RSC. Insulators do not necessarily have to be separate states, but can in principle also be “mini-complexes” consisting of, or including, substate actors. Insulators do, however, have to define “a location where larger security dynamics stand back to back”.[116] That can hardly be said about the European Arctic. It is not a “zone of indifference” to the security logics of the two RSCs that it extents into.

Similarly, it would be wrong to define the Euro-Arctic region as a “buffer”, since buffers are located *within* an RSC (not between two or more RSCs) and typically serve as separator between rival powers within the RSC.[117] It could, of course, be argued that the European Arctic has the function of a “mini-complex buffer” between Western Europe and Russia in the context of the greater European “supercomplex”, but that too would probably be a little far-fetched, partly because the European supercomplex is still too weak to be of any real significance to security identities.

When the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) cooperation was established in 1993, its founding fathers, particularly within the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, were apparently well aware of the fact that the arctic parts of the Northern countries and European Russia belonged to different security complexes, respectively the European and the post-Soviet. The idea of trying to *bridge* the two complexes appears to have been a significant part of the motivation behind the initiative. It was, in the words of Anders Kjølberg, “a security-building concept”.[118] As such, it has obviously had some success. But security identities have not merged, and the vision of a genuine Russian-Western security community in the Arctic has still not materialized.

5.4 Conclusion

The European Arctic does not seem to fit easily into the models of RSCT. Buzan and Wæver argue that “the world in a sense consists of three things: RSCs, insulator states, and global level powers”.[119] Based on their insistence of the “exclusivity” of RSCs and the impossibility of “overlap” between RSCs, the European Arctic can not be classified as an RSC. It is also neither an “insulator state” nor a “global level power”. And despite whole-hearted efforts by political elites in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia to create a “Euro-Arctic” identity, depicting the establishment of BEAR as the rebirth of a century-long “Pomor” tradition[120], a common identity at the regional level has yet to develop. The European Arctic is rather a case of “strange bedfellows”[121] with separate identities, cooperating in functional issue-areas.

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[116]Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., p. 490.
[117] Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., p. 41.
[118] Anders Kjølberg: “The Barents Region as a European Security-building Concept”, in Olav Schram Stokke and Ole Tunander (eds.): *The Barents Region: Cooperation in Arctic Europe*, London: Sage Publications 1994, pp. 187–199.
[119] Buzan and Wæver, op. cit., p. 483.
[120] Rolf Tamnes: *Oljealder (Norsk utenrikspolitikks historie, bd. 6*), Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1997, pp. 333–334.
[121] Johan Eriksson, op. cit., p. 33.

Regional security complex theory is applicable to different geographical *areas*, different *levels* (local, regional, and global), and different *sectors* (military, political, economic, environmental, and societal).[122] The dynamics of securitization and desecuritization within specific geographic areas are often related to specific units and/or specific sectors. The strength of RSCT lies in its ability to cover all three dimensions. It also provides a framework for analyses of how the security dynamics of regions develop and change over *time*. Some would argue, however, that the theory is overly focused on the state level, leaving out transnational regions that could potentially have been subjected to security analyses. This is particularly relevant to the Arctic.

At the state level – and within the military sector – neither the Circumpolar nor the European Arctic qualifies as RSCs. The regions comprise parts of two (or in the case of the circumpolar Artic: three) different RSCs with their own specific security dynamics. Within the environmental sector, however, there are many common and shared security concerns in the north, for instance related to the Barents Sea, which is the core of the Euro-Arctic region, and the Arctic Ocean, which is the core of the Circumpolar Arctic. Regional security complex theory, in its present form, may not accommodate the needs of those who want to explore "sector-specific" security dynamics in transnational regions like the European or the Circumpolar Arctic.

6 Approach 4: Human Security

6.1 About the Theory

Unlike strategic studies, which have traditionally focused on the security of *states*, human security focuses on the security of *individuals*. The first significant political reference to the term was made in the United Nations' 1994 *Human Development Report*. This edition of the annual UNDP publication advocates a wide – rather than a narrow – interpretation of security. It identifies seven specific elements that comprise human security: (1) economic security (freedom from poverty), (2) food security (access to food), (3) health security (access to health care and protection from diseases), (4) environmental security (protection from dangers such as pollution and depletion), (5) personal security (physical safety from torture, war, criminal attacks, domestic violence, etc), (6) community security (survival of traditional cultures and ethnic groups as well as the physical security of these groups), and (7) political security (enjoyment of civil and political rights, and freedom from oppression).[123]

Though obviously authoritative, the definition included in the *Human Development Report* is not to be seen as the only and final definition of human security as a field of research and/or policy. Human security is still fiercely debated, not least among the field's own proponents, and different

[122] See figure in Buzan, Wæever and de Wilde (1998), op. cit., p. 165.
[123] United Nations Development Program: *Human Development report, 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press 1994, pp. 22–24.

definitions – some narrower than others – are still flying through the air.[124] The proponents of a narrower focus of human security typically refer to the need for greater conceptual clarity and analytic rigor.[125] The proponents of broad conceptualizations, on the other hand, emphasize that security means something more than safety from violent threats, and that issues such as poverty, disease, and environmental disasters have to be included in the concept.[126]

The governments (and academic circles) of Canada and Norway have been among the most active promoters of human security through the establishment of a “Human Security Network”[127], and introduction of new research programs, such as the “Human Security Program”[128] at the University of Tromsø. Both governments have used the concept of human security to elevate humanitarian issues to the sphere of “high politics” and to justify the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the ban on land mines, and the regulation of international small arms trade.[129]

Opponents of human security have frequently criticized the field, not only for being “slippery”, “vague” or “all-encompassing”, for also for deliberately trying to cultivate the vagueness and ambiguity of the concept in order to attract supporters:

> The idea of human security is the glue that holds together “a jumbled coalition of ‘middle power’ states, developments agencies, and NGOs – all of which to shift attention and resources away from conventional security issues and toward goals that have traditionally fallen under the rubric of international development.[130]

Well aware of the danger that human security could become a “hit-and-miss tool of activism”[131], the advocates of human security have in recent years made attempts to clarify the concept, for instance by introducing various threshold-based definitions. These definitions reiterate the “all human lives“ perspective but recognize that threats must surpass a certain threshold of *severity* in order to be included in the concept.

One of the most precise definitions so far states that “[t]he objective of human security is to

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[124] See the articles in the September 2004 issue of Security Dialogue, and Taylor Owen’s comments in “Human Security – Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 373–387.
[125] Keith Krause: “The Key to a Powerful Agenda, if Properly Delimited” Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 267–268; Andrew Mack: “A Signifier of Shared Values”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 366–367; S. Neil Macfarlane: “A Useful Conceot that Risks Loosing its Political Salience”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 368–369.
[126] Jennifer Leaning: “Psychological Well-Being Over Time”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 354–355; Sabina Alkire: “AVital Core that Must Be Treated with the Same Gravitas as Traditional Security Threats”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 359–360; Lloyd Axworthy: “A New Political Field and Policy Lens“; Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 348–349.
[127] The network consists of states (presently 13) and various non-governmental organizations.
[128] The main project of this program is related to “Human Security in the Arctic”.
[129] Astri Suhrke: “Human Security and the Interests of States”, Security Dialogue, Vol. 30, No. 3. p. 266.
[130] Roland Paris: ”Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” International Security, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), p. 88.
[131] Taylor Owen, op. cit., p. 378.

safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfillment".[132] This (working) definition maintains the people-centered and multidimensional nature of the concept and keeps its focus on both violence and poverty as threats to human security ("freedom from premature preventable death"). At the same time the definition narrows down prior definitions by focusing on *critical and pervasive* threats to the *vital core* of people's lives, and proposes that the objective of human security be further specified and translated into operational policies.[133]

6.2 The European Arctic: What Can Human Security Approaches Offer?

There seems to be a growing recognition among politicians and researchers in international relations that traditional (Cold War) conceptions of security – based on military defense of territorial integrity of states – in many instances fail to capture the essence of threats and vulnerabilities that people experience in their everyday lives. People may be "secure" in the traditional sense of the word, but still fundamentally insecure in terms of their daily existence. There is no denying that many of the threats and challenges that today face people living in the European Arctic – as well as in other parts of the world – are of a *non-military* nature. A good example is the "welfare gap" that still cuts through the Euro-Arctic region. It represents a significant security challenge that can not be addressed by military means.

A shift of focus from the *state* to the *individual*, as well as the *region*, as referent objects of security in the European Arctic may add substantial value to security analyses and policy formation processes in the region. It may contribute to providing alternative venues where individuals and groups can voice their security concerns, and to linking and transcending states in region.[134] The European Arctic is, as previously noted, not only a region of peripheries but also a region of transnational cooperation. The "Barents Euro-Arctic Region" project, launched in January 1993, was largely motivated by a desire to counteract and reduce inter-state military tension in the region by creating a multilateral framework for regional cooperation.[135] "Bottom-up" research and policy approaches to security issues in the post-Cold War European Arctic may supplement – and even replace – traditional "top-down" approaches.

The apparently increasing awareness that regional security may be as relevant as international security has so far not led to an inclusion of the northern part of the globe, and even less the Arctic, in discussions of regional security.[136] As far as human security is concerned, "the North" has generally been understood as secure, whereas the "South" has been understood as inherently insecure.[137] Certainly, the Arctic, and particularly the European Arctic, is less exposed to violent

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[132] Sabrina Alkire: "Conceptual Framework for Human Security" (Excerpt), 16 February 2002, p. 1, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/activities/outreach/frame.pdf.
[133] Sabina Alkire (2002), op. cit., p. 1.
[134] Gunhild Hoogensen: "Human Security in the North: Is It Relevant?", IHDP Newsletter, 3/2004, p. 8.
[135] Johan Jørgen Holst: "The Barents Region: Institutions, Cooperation and Prospects", in Olav Schram Stokke & Ola Tunander: *The Barents Region: Cooperation in Arctic Europe*, London: Sage Publications 1994, p. 12.
[136] Gunhild Hoogensen, op. cit., p. 9.
[137] Ibid.

conflicts, poverty and diseases than, say, Sub-Saharan Africa. But that does not mean that human security approaches are of less value in the European Arctic than in other parts of the world. Violence and deprivation is not exclusively a phenomenon of the South:

> There are all kinds of vulnerable groups and individuals also in the North; there are mutual vulnerabilities between and among regions, and common economic and environmental vulnerabilities may well become more severe in the future if globalization continues apace.[138]

Environmental issues are frequently referred to as a particularly important and insufficiently addressed concern[139], which is natural in view of the indisputable vulnerability of the Arctic to potential negative effects of on-going and planned petroleum activities, long-transported pollution and radioactive contamination. Many of the environmental threats to human security in the European Arctic are directly related to military- and defense-related activities during and after the Cold War, such as the Russian underground nuclear tests on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, and the presence of a large number of nuclear submarines and reactors on the Kola Peninsula.

The European as well as the circumpolar Arctic is also characterized by the presence of a considerably large *indigenous population* whose perspectives on security are seldom addressed. Growing pressure from the commercial use of natural resources, and the increasing volumes of oil and gas transportation trough the region, may harm indigenous groups who make a living from reindeers, polar bears, walruses, seabirds, seals, whales and marine resources. Human security approaches may give a political voice to vulnerable and otherwise politically marginalized groups and help creating arenas where their security concerns can be voiced, analyzed and addressed.

Another potential advantage of the human security approach is its emphasis on the need for *interdisciplinary* analysis.[140] The European Arctic is a complex region where different policy fields (industrial policy, environmental policy, security policy, etc.) are largely interwoven and hard to analyze separately. National policy strategies for the region sometimes claim to be "comprehensive" and "coherent"[141], but often leave important perspectives out (like that of "hard" security), or fail to put the different perspectives into a larger context. Human insecurity often arises from the complex interaction of numerous variables, such as the ones identified in the 1994 Human Development Report. Analyzing them requires not only knowledge of political science and security theory, but also cooperation with natural science researchers.

6.3 Weaknesses and Limitations of the Human Security Approach

The broad perspective on security offered by the field of human security, both with regard to the

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[138] Astri Suhkre: "Human Security and the Interests of States", Security Dialogue, Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 273.
[139] In his speech, "The High North – top of the world – top of the EU agenda?" Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre described the region partly as "a frontier for addressing climate change and environmental impacts".
[140] Taylor Owen, op. cit., p. 380.
[141] See the Norwegian Government's 2005 White paper, *Opportunities and Challenges in the North*, op. cit., p. 5.

numbers of *sectors* included (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security) and the number of *referent objects* for security (individuals, regions, states and the international community), is both its strength and its weakness. By extending the field of security to encompass almost every aspect of human activity ("bad things that can happen")[142], one runs the risk of doing security research a disservice by diluting the meaning of the term "security".

Though alleviated by the introduction of certain severity "thresholds", the generally holistic approach of human security makes it difficult to distinguish "real" security issues from other issues, such as social welfare, human development or environmental protection. The question here is not whether the latter category of issues, all of which are highly relevant in the European Arctic, should be dealt with or not, but rather whether or not they are best dealt with in a security context. Many would argue, for instance, that environmental insecurity is fundamentally different from military insecurity, in terms of how it arises as well as how it is dealt with. Unlike military threats, environmental threats are generally *unintended*.[143] Placing them in the same category as military threats may complicate their prevention, since the concept of security tend to imply state-centered and/or militaristic responses[144] and promote "us-versus-them" thinking[145], rather than to facilitate collective, non-military responses.

Environmental issues in the European Arctic can be, and are being, studied and addressed – and perhaps more successfully – outside of the security context. Norwegian political scientist Geir Hønneland's 2003 article "East Meets West: Environmental Discourse in the European Arctic"[146] may serve as a good example. In his article, Hønneland analyses the environmental interface between Russia and Norway in the European Arctic, particularly with regard to marine living resources, nuclear safety and industrial pollution, drawing on discourse analysis theory. He illustrates how ("eco-centric") Norwegian modes of talking about the environment have little or nothing in common with their ("techno-centric") Russian equivalents, and suggests ways to overcome the differences in perception and approach.

As for less controversial elements of the human security conception, notably the parts that relate to freedom from "the threat or use of violence", the Russian northwest is for instance being studied with the help of gender theory.[147] The challenge here, however, seems to be that Russian

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[142] Taylor Owen, op. cit., p. 375.

[143] Barry Buzan: "Environment as a Security Issue", in Paul Painchaud (ed.): *Geopolitical Perspectives on Environmental Security* Quebec: Studies and Research Centre on Environmental Policies, GERPE Paper 92-05, 1992, p. 1 and 24f, cited by Ole Wæver: "Securitization and Desecuritization", in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.): *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press 1995, p. 63.

[144] Richard H. Moss: "Environmental Security? The Illogic of Centralized State Responses to Environmental Threats", in Paul Painchaud (ed.), op. cit., pp. 24 and 32, cited by Wæver, op. cit, p. 63.

[145] Daniel Deudney: "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security", Millennium, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1990), p. 467, cited by Wæver, op. cit, p. 64.

[146] Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2003), pp. 181-199.

[147] This topic is currently being addressed in Kirsti Stuvøy's PhD project Human Security and Gender: The Case of Northwest Russia, University of Tromsø, Institute of Political Science. See Gunhild Hoogensen & Kirsti Stuvøy: "Gender, Resistance and Human Security", Security Dialogue, Vol. 37, No. 2 (June 2006), pp. 207–228.

approaches to the topic "security in the European Arctic" mainly, if not exclusively, center on issues of *national* security. The existence of security referent objects other than that state – such as "individuals", "society", and "other objects" – is recognized in the Russian theoretical literature[148] as well as in the National Security Concept[149]. But issues relating to the security of individuals living in the Russian northwest, as well as to societal security in the region, are in practice almost absent from the country's security research and policy agenda. This makes it difficult for human security researchers in the West to identify Russian counterparts.

The lack of conceptual clarity over what human security is, and the absence of a clear demarcation line between the human security field and fields outside the security realm, has given the field a reputation of being stronger policy-wise than theory-wise.[150] By including a wide array of socioeconomic conditions in the concept, one can facilitate the coming together of researchers, institutions, organizations and agencies that in one way or another deal with human vulnerabilities in different parts of the world, as seen in the previously mentioned "Human Security in the Arctic" project. The tricky part, however, is to convert the theory into practical analyses and policy.

Being presented both as an "end-state of affairs" ("safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression") and as a "process" (protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life")[151], human security may easily lead to the conflation of dependent and independent variables and complicate the study of causal relationships:

> Because the concept of human security encompasses both physical security and more general notions of social, economic, cultural, and psychological well-being, it is impractical to talk about certain socioeconomic factors "causing" an increase or decline in human security, given that these factors are themselves part of the definition of human security.[152]

Another concern is that human security approaches to the European Arctic may contribute to what Barry Buzan describes as "a mistaken tendency to idealize security as the desired end goal".[153] A radical widening of the sphere and agenda of security policy may not necessarily make the region a safer place. Maybe the referent objects of security in the region – be that states, societies or individuals – would be better off with a *contraction* of the security policy sphere (i.e. "desecuritization", see below), accompanied by a renewed focus on social development, human rights and other policy goals.

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[148] See A. A. Prochozhev: *Obschaya teoria natsional'noi bezopasnosti* (*Common national security theory*), Moscow: RAGS 2005, p. 45.
[149] "Kontseptsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii" ("National Secruity Concept of the Russian Federation"), 10 January 2000, http://www.armscontrol.ru/start/rus/docs/sncon00.htm.
[150] Taylor Owen, op. cit., p. 377.
[151] *Human Development report, 1994*, cited in Astri Suhrke, op. cit., p. 271.
[152] Roland Paris, op. cit. p. 93.
[153] Barry Buzan: "A Reductionist, Idealistic Notion the Adds Little Analytical Value", Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3 (2004), p. 369.

6.4 Conclusion

Unlike strategic studies, human security is a relatively new field of research, and it does not come with the Cold War "baggage" of having been developed and formed in a context of superpower confrontation. Human security is associated with values such as human rights, international humanitarian law, and socio-economic development based on equity.[154] It is "people-oriented" and multidimensional, and it has elements of political activism, in the sense that it may serve as a banner under which research institutions, governments, NGOs and international agencies can unite.

With regard to the European Arctic as a potential object of human security studies, it must be noted that the extreme forms of human insecurity (violence, extreme poverty, natural disasters, etc.) are far more severe, and far more widespread, in parts of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Even other parts of Europe (the Balkans) and the former Soviet Union (Caucasus and Central Asia) appear as more natural areas for human security studies and human security-related policy initiatives, if the extent of human insecurity is to be the selection criterion for field studies.

However, a shift in research and policy focus on the European Arctic from *state* security to *human* and *regional* security, as well as an increased attention towards non-military security issues, may add to our understanding of increasingly complex security dynamics in the region. It may also shed light on the interesting interplay between human, regional and state security, both in the region and as a more general phenomenon. Human security is, however, not the only field to argue in favor of a "widening" (multiple sectors) and "deepening" (multiple levels) of the scope of security analyses. This is also done, and some would say with greater theoretical solidity, by the so-called Copenhagen school.[155] Even strategic analysts have realized that security in today's world is about a lot more than the military security of states.

The relationship between *human* security and *national* security is an interesting one. Some would claim that the two are in direct conflict, since governments acting in the name of national security can pose profound threats to the security of individuals. The human security perspective raises – indeed relevant – questions with regard to how far a state can go in not fulfilling its responsibility for alleviating, or at least not causing, human suffering within its own borders. The principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention have been basic building blocks of the international system ever since the peace of Westphalia in 1648. Still, modern notions of justice, closely related to human security concerns, can no longer be said to support an anti-interventionist regime.[156]

Others would argue that national security and human security are not mutually excluding, and that the two forms of security can and should be *mutually enforcing*. Both national and human security analysts attempt to identify "critical and pervasive threats to the security of key populations, on the basis of empirical evidence and strategic analyses", try to "develop

[154] Astri Suhrke, op. cit., p. 266.
[155] See Barry Buzan: *People, States & Fear*, Harlow: Pearson 1991.
[156] Michael J. Glennon: "The New Interventionism: The Search for a Just International Law", Foreign Affairs, Vol. 73, No. 3, p. 2.

systematic, comprehensive, durable, and coordinated institutional responses to selected threats", making use of "legal, political, sectoral, and economic as well as authorized military instruments".[157]

The main weakness of human security as a research and policy tool lies in the lack of a clear and generally agreed-upon (consensus) definition of what human security *is*, and more importantly, what it is *not*. The UNDP definition is too wide and vague to serve as a practical guideline for research, prioritizing and political implementation. The introduction of "threshold-based" definitions has sought to overcome this problem, but the concept needs further clarification in order to become viable. It has even been said that human security – as a policy initiative – has already "stalled".[158] The international security agenda has in recent years been dominated by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and Washington's "with us or against us"-rhetoric. The fact that human security concerns are perceived as being of little or modest relevance to the security agenda of some of the world's leading powers (USA, Russia and China) does not bode well for the future of human security as a research and policy field.

7 Concluding remarks

A good starting point for a comparison of the four approaches is to look at how they define the *objects* of security (who or what is perceived as threatened?) and the nature of *threats* (what is perceived as threatening?). In traditional security studies (approach 1), *states* are perceived as the only – or at least the primary – object of security, and threats are mainly sought within the *military* sector. This contrasts strongly with the "human security" approach (approach 4), which also includes *societies*, *groups*, and *individuals* as objects of security, and operates with an extensive list of potential threats, including not only war and violence but also *poverty*, *pollution*, *diseases*, etc. The Copenhagen school (approaches 2 and 3) occupies some kind of a "middle-of-the-road" position, claiming that security refers not only (but conceptually) to the *state*, and seeing threats as something arising within five clearly defined sectors (*military*, *political*, *economic*, *environmental* and *societal*). The relationship between the different approaches is illustrated in figure 7.1 on page 39.

The choice of theoretical approach to the European Artic can, and probably should, depend on which *dimension* of the region the researcher wishes to spotlight, much like an artisan who picks his tool depending on the job.

The *strategic studies* approach may contribute to illuminating the region's strategic significance (feature 4) and clarifying the different (state) actors' views of the relevance and utility of military power as a post-Cold War foreign policy tool. Strategic studies may also bring a better understanding of the conflict potential in the region, not least on view of the region's economic

[157] Sabina Alkire (2002), op. cit., p. 5.
[158] Astri Suhrke: "A Stalled Initiative", Security Dialogue, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 2004), p. 365. Suhrke refers, *inter alia*, to the fact that membership of the so-called Human Security Network is still at a modest level (13 states).

significance (feature 2) and the still unresolved issues of international law (feature 3). However, strategic studies is more of a “field” than a “school”, and many would classify it as generally “under-theorized”, which may turn out to be a weakness in relation to other approaches.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">Nature of threats
(What is perceived as threatening?)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Military</td><td>Military, non-military, or both</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Object of threats (What is perceived as threatened?)</td><td>States</td><td>Approach 1 “National security” (conventional realist security studies)</td><td>“Redefined security” (environmental and economic security at the state level)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Societies, groups, and individuals</td><td>“Intrastate security” (civil war, ethnic conflict, and democide)</td><td>Approach 4 “Human security” (environmental, economic and other threats to societies, groups, and individuals)</td></tr>
</table>

Approaches 2 and 3 ”The Copenhagen school”

Figure 7.1: Focus and scope of strategic studies, human security, and the Copenhagen school.[159]

By defining “security” as a “speech act”, and “securitization” as “the intersubjective establishment of existential threats”, *securitization theory* stands on firmer ground than both strategic studies and human security studies. Adherents to the Copenhagen school can draw on comprehensive theoretical and empirical works, detailing how and why issues are defined into – and out of – the sphere of security. Understanding the mechanisms of securitization and desecuritization is the key to understanding the security dynamics of the Euro-Arctic region. The combination of valuable natural resources (feature 2), unresolved legal issues (feature 3), and strategic significance (feature 4) makes the region an interesting object for securitization and desecuritization studies, within all of the five sectors singled out for such studies.

When it comes to the third component[160] of the theoretical works of the Copenhagen school – *regional security complex theory* – the European Arctic appears not to be the best fit. The region comprises parts of two separate regional security complexes, and does – despite claims to the contrary – not qualify as a regional security complex of its own. Those wanting to study the European Arctic as an arena for transnational cooperation (feature 5), for instance from the perspective of environmental security, may find this to be a weakness of RSCT. Others would claim that the insistence on “exclusivity” of RSCs is a necessary to the consistency of the theory as a whole. In any event, it is not necessarily a waste of time to discuss how to define and deal with the European Arctic and similar geographical units in meaningful RSCT terms.

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[159] The matrix is a modified version of that in Roland Paris, op. cit., p. 98.
[160] The two first ones being *securitization* and *sectors*.

Researchers who wish to highlight the "multi-peripheral" character of the region (feature 1) by studying security dynamics at non-state levels may find the *human security* approach utterly attractive. The "human security" approach may also yield more than strategic studies when trying to understand and explain the internal and external dynamics of transnational cooperation arrangements in the region (feature 5), such as the BEAR organization, or the Arctic Council. Human security analysts must, however, be prepared to fight for the continued existence of their discipline, which has been – and will be – accused of having a vague definition of the term "security".

How can we summarize the findings of this survey? Clearly, all of the four approaches discussed in this report, two of which are closely related (securitization theory and regional security complex theory[161]), have their specific strengths and weaknesses. Even though some of the approaches may be more fruitful than others, at least in relation to sector-specific topics, none of them can be written off as *irrelevant* to our understanding of the security dynamics in Euro-Arctic region. Further efforts to clarify why, where and how they converge or diverge can add to our understanding of not only the Euro-Arctic region, but also the phenomenon of security.

[161] They are related in the sense that regional security complex theory is partly based on securitization theory. Still, the scope and focus of the two theories are different, and this is the reason why they have been treated as separate theories in this report.