

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



**CHINA'S BURGEONING INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS IN THE
ARCTIC REGION**

MASTER'S THESIS

Merve Müge ŞENGÜL

Political Science and International Relations Department
Political Science and International Relations Program

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(Y2012.110007)

Political Science and International Relations Department
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JUNE, 2022

ONAY FORMU



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the study “CHINA’S BURGEONING INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS IN THE ARCTIC REGION” which I submitted as a master’s thesis, is written exclusively by me and without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited from are those shown in the reference list.

(14/06/2022)

Merve Müge ŞENGÜL

FOREWORD

I am tremendously grateful to my supervisor and my life-long lecturer, instructor, Prof. Dr. R. Kutay KARACA. The biggest challenge of mine was to see China through the lenses of yours, it is definitely my proud not to disappoint you, which will be always relevant as your supervisee. Thank you for believing in me, Professor.

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June, 2022

Merve Müge ŞENGÜL

CHINA'S BURGEONING INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS IN THE ARCTIC REGION

ABSTRACT

The Arctic, “Icy Curtain” of the Cold War slightly modified its narrative towards “the Age of Arctic”, “Global Arctic” as climate change become more tangible and made remarkable effects over its landscape. Therefore, it is hardly possible not to mention the Arctic without emphasizing apparent physical disintegration. “Frozen”, “Distinct”, “Remove” and the other elemental characterizations of the region is shattering now.

Rapidly changing ecosystem in which the region is warming at an alarming rate has a direct impact on its geopolitics. Promising access to untapped resources and new shipping routes based on the estimations that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free at the end of 2030s was the way enough to catch international attention. In addition to its human consequences, that is, anthropogenic challenges, the region that has global effects requires the international collaborative endeavor both regional and non-regional actors.

Like anywhere in the World, China is one of the Arctic players by adopting proactive policies observed under international scrutiny. China is already aware of “China Threat”, therefore it has to maintain a collaborative identity in order to avoid misperceptions. The relevance of the study is caused by China’s burgeoning interests and motivations toward the region.

The problem of the thesis is how China conceptualizes its Arctic narrative by defining its proactive standing in its selected interests in the region. The study utilizes neoliberalism, using national policy documents, academic journals, books, key newspaper articles, reports, and other important relevant electronic materials and employing qualitative research methodology. China’s identity-building accompanied by its interest and motivations offer China to have a greater say in the Arctic affairs

by publicizing its contribution of know-how and wisdom. The contribution of the thesis is to uncover how China uses scientific activities as a component of its Arctic narrative in order to legitimize its presence in the eyes of regional states. The thesis finally concludes that China's uttermost interest and motivations in the region embed its Chinese dream in the long run by not posturing lawfare in the course of time rather following the international rules and predominant legal instruments in order to strengthen its place. The thesis concludes that all China's interests have different outputs, however, what motivates China is only the geopolitics of connectivity.

Keywords: China, Arctic Region, Chinese dream, geopolitics, connectivity



ÇİN'İN ARKTİK BÖLGESİNDEKİ ÇIKAR VE MOTİVASYONLARI

ÖZET

Soğuk Savaş döneminin “Buz Perdesi” olan Arktik, iklim değişikliğinin sonucunda anlatısını “Arktik Çağı”, “Global Arktik” olarak değiştirmiş, günümüz Arktik anlatısı, bölgenin fiziksel değişimlerinden bahsetmeden imkansız hale gelmiştir. Bir zamanlar Arktik’i betimleyen tüm sıfatlar şu an yok olmaktadır.

Küresel ortalamadan 2 kat daha fazla ısınan Arktik’in hızla değişen ekosistemi jeopolitiğini de önemli ölçüde etkilemiştir. Tahminlere göre 2030’un sonlarında tamamen ulaşılabilir olacak Arktik yeni deniz güzergahları, yeni araştırma sahaları ve enerji kaynakları ile uluslararası ilgiyi artırmıştır. Küresel ölçekli etkileri olan bölge içi değişimler uluslararası iş birliğini ve bölge dışı aktörlerin katılımını gerektirmiştir.

Çin, dünyanın herhangi bir yerinde olduğu gibi Arktik’te de proaktif bir politika izlemiş ve bu durum literatürde hakim olarak endişeyle karşılanmıştır. Çin, “Çin Tehdidi” algısının halihazırda farkındadır, dolayısıyla bu algıyı kırmak için iş birlikçi bir kimlik inşa süreciyle bölgedeki varlığını meşrulaştırmaya başlamıştır. Kimlik inşasının yanı sıra bölgenin uluslararası anlatısı da varlığını desteklemiştir.

Tezin ana problemi Çin’in Arktik Bölgesi’ni nasıl algıladığı ve Arktik girişimlerinde nasıl proaktif bir politika izlediğidir. Teorik çerçevesini Neoliberalizm oluşturan bu tezde nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden faydalanılmıştır.

Çin’in bölgedeki çıkar ve motivasyonları kimlik inşasını zorunlu kılmış, bölge işlerinde söz söyleme hakkı tanımıştır. Tezin literatüre katkısı Çin’in öncelikle bilimsel faaliyetlerini ve kimlik inşasını Arktik anlatısının bir tamamlayıcısı olarak kullanıp bölgedeki meşruiyetini artırmasıdır. Tez, Çin’in tüm bu girişimlerini Çin Rüyası ile sonuçlandırmış; Çin’in bu süreçte uluslararası hukukun çerçevesinde varlığını pekiştirdiğini öne sürmüştür. Buradan hareketle, Çin bölgede proaktif

politika izleyerek birçok çıkar sağlarken, Dünyanın geri kalanına olan bağlantısı ise motivasyonu olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Arktik Bölgesi, Çin Rüyası, Bağlantı,



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ABBREVIATIONS

A5	:Arctic Five
A8	:Arctic Eight
ACIA	:The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment
AEPS	:Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy
AFoPS	:Asian Forum for Polar Sciences
BRI	:Belt and Road Initiative
CAA	:China Arctic and Antarctic Administration
CHINARE	:Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration
CIAO	:China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory
CIMA	:China Institute for Marine Affairs
CLCS	:United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CNARC	:China-Nordic Arctic Research Centre
DSR	:Digital Silk Road
EEZ	:Exclusive Economic Zone
GDP	:Gross Domestic Product
IASC	:International Arctic Science Committee
IASC	:International Arctic Science Committee
IMO	:International Maritime Organization
NATO	:North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSR	:Northern Sea Route
NWP	:Northwest Passage
PLA	:People's Liberation Army

Polar Code	:Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters
PRC	:People's Republic of China
SAR	:Search and Rescue
SLOC	:Sea Lines of Communications
SOA	:State Oceanic Administration
SOEs	:State-owned enterprises
SREB	:Silk Road Economic Belt
UN	:United Nations
UNCLOS	:United Nations Convention of Law of Sea
UNEP	:United Nations Environment Programme
U.S.	:United States of America
USGS	:United States Geological Survey

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Importance of the Study

The Arctic Region attracted the world's attention and became the focus of global interest as a result of climate change and its ramifications over the past two decades, especially right after the publication of 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA).

Rising temperature have altered the vanishing ice-sheet of the region as rising sea water releasing methane from melting permafrost which has direct impact on ecosystem and climate of the region. Region's high vulnerability to climate change as warming at twice the global rate enabling access untapped resources as well as new shipping routes based on the estimations that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free at the end of 2030's took place both regional and non-regional countries' agenda (AMAP, 2017).

The changing physical landscape, ecology of the Arctic will definitely have severe impact on China's economy as well as its environment. China's presence as a global power in the Arctic has been observed under the international scrutiny as a result of which it should justify its presence in order to take advantage of the emerging opportunities. China's burgeoning interests and motivations in the region calls for comprehensive study and there is a need of better understanding dynamics of emerging geopolitics in the region from China's perspective. Therefore, the thesis challenges the understanding Chinese presence in the region, ability to create and consolidate its power with benignity of its long-term interest and multidimensional engagement.

There are increasing discussions amongst academics dealing with the development of the Arctic. The importance of the study is to address China's involvement on broader perspective. There is a need for better-informed discussions about the essential nature of the Arctic, and Chinese involvement with examination of dominant discussions from a holistic framework by building a comprehensive

picture, the study pursue a general approach in order to fully recognize China's presence and utilize in-depth analysis. The study thus will contribute to literature to reveal what Chinese ambition and engagement in the region serve its power in general.

B. Topic

The study analyses China's burgeoning rise and motivations in the Arctic Region. As non-Arctic state, China's stance in the region is based on its cooperation driven by respect, cooperation, win-win result and sustainability as it was stated in the White Paper.

In the study, it was utilized a broad definition of proactivity, as an implication for China's involvement over the region. Among various definitions, proactivity is referring to the maneuvering ability of China to take action on time by avoiding perceptions of "Arctic appetite of China", setting out discursive long term strategies to build recognition, develop global dialogue and engagement, its presence before power and gradually including activities into its agenda.

In the grand scheme of things, Bourgeoning China's Interest and Motivations in the Arctic Region interprets its ability to consider in the long term planning horizon, ability to be player in long lasting game.

C. Research Questions

- How can China's burgeoning engagements and motivations in the Arctic Region be conceptualized and interpreted as proactive?
- What are the discursive strategies of China to build recognition and legitimacy as a non-Arctic State?
- How does China describe its own Arctic strategy and claim right in the region?

D. Study Objective

This thesis aims to examine China's role in the Arctic dynamics since 1990.

E. Assumptions and Hypotheses

- As a rising power, China's presence created increasing concern in the region.
- There is international gap, blinding areas of regulation in the region in which regional states' territorial claims are overlapped.
- Borders of the Arctic Region are politicized amongst the actors involved.

In the lights of these assumptions, following hypotheses are given:

H1: China's proactive stance and policies in the region construct its recognition

H2: As China becomes more proactive stance, Russia, the U.S. will pursue more proactive policies and the future of the region will be spearheaded by these powers.

H3: China regards new rising powers' engagement in the region as threat.

F. Methodology, Technique and Limitations

The study is utilized qualitative research method. The scientific resources are collected and assessed through the use of primary and secondary sources. Qualitative data collected from primary (official government documents, articles, statements or quotes from speeches, books) as well as secondary sources such as journal articles and reviews.

Secondary sources are utilized in order to interpret and analyze the primary sources.

Since there is burgeoning literature on Arctic studies, the data within the study field of this thesis to some extent is limited. Firstly, research area of the thesis is based on English publications. The time window is between the activation of Arctic policy in the late of 1990's and publication of the White Paper in 2018 through constructed narratives with the regional states.

G. Theoretical Framework

This thesis maintains neoliberal theory, as dominant theory of today. Publication of Transnational Relations and World Politics in 1972 and Power and

Independence: World Politics in Transition in 1977 was the biggest contribution to neoliberal theory. As neoliberal thought suggests, the relations between states not only based on conflicts and wars. In order not to be met with suspicion by other actors or lose confidence, international system requires international law, institutions, and regimes to establish cooperation-based mutual relations. China has been integrating to global economic system with introduction of economic reforms in 1979 as the true follower of this thought.

Robert Keohane depicts pursue absolute gains under the provisions of international institutions to promote cooperation and to achieve a common objective such as financial, trade, energy and security, which is clearly seen in China's involvement, which profoundly enjoys its ultimate gain rather than relative gains of the other states. From this perspective, China's growing interests and engagement in the Arctic Region is firstly interest-based to make progress step by step. This engagement enables Beijing not only fortification of market access and new routes but also advance its political and diplomatic ties with the regional states through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

China reiterates the concepts of “cooperation” and “respect” in the White Paper (2018), which are Europeanized concepts, to reclaim its benign power in the manner of policies it pursued. In the 13th five-year plan, as pathway for China's development for 2016-2020, it is mentioned that in order to establish and protect international maritime order, China is eager to establish a new shore-based Arctic observation station through cooperation and build new advanced icebreakers. The goal is also proven as China is preferred partner for the Arctic States (Tillman et al., 2018).

Neoliberal point of view will help to understand dynamics of Arctic involvement through the lenses of complex interdependence concept as well. Sophisticated by Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye in *Power and Interdependence* (1977), complex interdependence clarifies that the connection between societies and states cannot be only through intergovernmental tools, also through multiple relations composing political elites, societies and multifaceted issues which is going beyond state to state relations without hierarchy which can be seen in Science Diplomacy persuaded by China in the Arctic Region. Therefore, multinational companies, international institutions alongside states are the actors of the international system

which makes the states interdependent to each other working in cooperation with regards to goods, services, information and technology. In the case of independency, the states are to be eager to collaborate with other actors for their own interest.

According to Njord Wegge (2012), the concept is also useful tool to understand and analyze overall Arctic affairs. From regional perspective, neoliberal approach to the Arctic Region is also suitable thereof. In the Arctic Region, issues emerging from the livelihoods of local inhabitants and indigenous communities to resource exploitation, ecological issues are all examined under the cooperation. China's participation in the Arctic Region is in line with cooperation, win-win situation, mutual benefits to be explained in the eyes of Neoliberal school. The stakeholders in the Region should cooperate rather than conflict each other the reason of which the cost to sustain the system has more difficulty to build the system itself.

According to Hong (2018), the reason why continuity of the cooperation, which is effective means for China's participation and key concept in all policy papers, between regional or non-regional actors originates in recognition and respect each other's rights in accordance with legal frameworks, mutual understanding and trust, joint endeavors for transregional challenges. Therefore, the cooperation is not only but effective way to be part of the Region.

The logic of the interest-based neoliberal camp will be utilized in the analysis of data with a view to set forth symbiotic relationships between the actors. Therefore, neoliberalism provides pragmatic perspective of analysis in the nexus of China and its Arctic engagements.

H. Literature Review

The Arctic has a distinctive definitions in the literature such as the last unmanaged frontier of the world (Bloomfield, 1981) theatre of military operations (Adelphi Series, 2013), home to indigenous peoples (Arctic Council, 2021). It is also conceptualized by various narratives as distinct (Koivurova et al., 2019), remote (Nord, 2015), vulnerable (Klimenko, 2019), fragile (Hong, 2019) or unique (European Union Parliamentary, 2018). Taking into consideration that Iceland is among Arctic States without falling below Polar circle, ambiguity of where the

Arctic locates or how it can be described is completely politicized thereof (Wilson Rowe, 2018).

Post-Cold War discourse of the Arctic as a distinctive region is no longer efficacious in the era of globalization. The region is fully connected to the world through its climate, economy, and geopolitics. Global Arctic, the narrative first-discussed in the Arctic Circle Assembly in 2014, is characterized by region's global interconnectedness.

Once deemed unbeknownst and isolated from the rest of the world (Ingenfald, 2010), the Arctic unperceivably came into the agenda of the superpowers in the course of 1980's. In the beginning of the same decade, Bloomfield (1981) was arguing that the region would be the stage of cooperation. However, Arctic became known to general public as the result of which developments in military technology and industrialization led to regional transformation. Young (1981) demonstrated the transformation of the region as the Age of Arctic, the region is as important as the Mediterranean significance in the ancient time. A decade ago, the Mediterranean-like emphasis towards Arctic has been made by explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson (Coates et al. 2008). According to Østerud and Hønneland (2014) during the cold war, even "low politics" has geopolitical outcomes.

The region was of inherent strategic importance between the Soviet Union and the U.S., standing for "Icy Curtain" and used to be military theatre (Knecht, 2017) in which superpowers' submarines involved cat and mouse games under the sea-ice in the course of Cold War era. In the bipolar world, the region was the place of military rivalry in which two superpowers involved to assert their hegemony by advancing their capacities over the territory. The Arctic became one of the world's most active and significant area of military operations (Young, 1985), but clearly not featuring considerably regard to diplomatic calculations (Hough, 2013).

The end of Cold War left the region as peripheral and no more critical as front line that it was used to (Young, 2019). However, the Arctic governance came into discussion a result of environmental concerns about transboundary pollution and geopolitical changes in the early 1990's (Wishnick, 2017). The legacy of militarization of the Arctic ended up with nuclear wastes, leaks led to environmental awakening.

Political shift from arena of escalations to a region with common interests and “zone of peace” was asserted by then Soviet Secretary-General Mikhail Gorbachev in Murmansk, in 1987 (Gorbachev, 1987). Zone of peace highlighted arm control to establish nuclear-free zone, civilian cooperation to develop scientific research activities. The importance of the speech was as a major turning point policy of the Soviets, however, it is not immediately noted by the Arctic states most of which approached it with hesitation (Archer, 1989).

Security understanding for military theatre slightly changed its rotation under the concerns of environmental, human or economic security (Åtland, 2008). Yet, soon after the speech, promoting international scientific study on the Arctic and cooperation on environmental protection were realized by the endeavor of the governments in Helsinki and Ottawa. Even though these concepts differentiated in terms of context, their underlying logic was the same: to institutionalize international affairs and to incorporate the Soviet Union in this structure (Keskitalo, 2004). Respectively, the Murmansk, Finnish and Canadian attempts interlocking initiatives prepared the ground for the foundation of the Arctic Council (Axworthy, 2012). The Council is now central organization characterized by a polycentricism of authority.

Arctic Council and 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) contributed Arctic recognition as a region undergoing profound changes (Graczyk & Koivurova, 2015). As a catalyst for the awareness and perception of how important the region is for global climate processes have profoundly increased since then. Recognition, internationalization came along with these policies. The post-Cold War Arctic is wholly based on demilitarization as prevailing mechanism of cooperation as a result of Arctic Council’s activity is restricted from security issues. Even the times of annexation have not cast a little shadow on this cooperation, e.g. remaining cooperation between Coast Guards, due to complex interdependence between the regional states (Byers, 2017), therefore, cooperation has been nothing the short of stewardship component (Deng, 2016). However, adopting an alarmist tone, some scholars committed militarization, rising conflict, possible exercise of military power in the region (Lackenbauer & Lajeunesse, 2016).

Lanteigne (2020) depicts the cleavage of the relations after annexation of Crimea in March 2014, following with a number of sanctions, diplomatic measures, arms embargoes most of which still continue. However, cooperation on search and

rescue joint exercise, shipping as well as fisheries which can be deemed quintessential that the relations has never damaged between the littoral states. As stated by Byers (2019), the reason why cooperation was managed to continue in the region as following: the Arctic relying on soft law and consensus between the states is remote region suffering from “tragedy of commons”.

From different perspective, as claimed by Coates and Holroyd (2019), new narrative on Arctic foreign policy has emerged in the wake of the Russian a titanium flag planting on the seabed of the Arctic in 2007. The event led the change the discussions from regional cooperation to conflict. Since then “Arctic Security” and “Geopolitical Conflicts” are at issue of discussion amongst scholars with an increasing security focus and the phenomenon Arctic Exceptionalism was over (Pic & Lasserre, 2019). As to the phenomenon, the Arctic was conceptualized as a region under zone of exceptionalism, purged from politico-strategic dynamics and cooperation is key determinant of settling disputes (COECSW, 2019). That is, Arctic narrative was “mosaic of cooperation” (Young, 2005), “apolitical space of regional governance” (Käpylä & Mikkola, 2015). According to the phenomenon, the Arctic is unique model of peace in which all states commitment to maintaining peace; unique region characterized by cooperation; unique forerunner of environmental protection and platform for international scientific research cooperation.

On the other hand, Heininen (2012) made comprehensive study of the Arctic State’s regional policies and strategies. In this study, Heininen warned that the region is undergoing geopolitical tensions which would go beyond the conventional conflict and escalations. The second paramount importance of the region deserves more attention is that the Region is getting more and more importance for the world politics. Heininen et al. (2020) expanded the study incorporating in all stakeholders actively participating in the Region with more holistic approach including the Arctic States, observer states, and permanent participants by analyzing how they differ each other addressing the regional issues, indicating the new emerging trends in the region. Involvement of the non-regional states also well studied in the literature, especially right after granting observer status.

Some scholars endeavor to understand the region applying game theories. According to Ghimiş (2013), the littoral states can develop contentious relations as they increase their own claims as far as the international law allows. The potential

zero-sum game may emerge in midst of this environment. However, because the states have not the same capability to exploit the resources, the zero-sum can be distorted. In a consortium and cooperation case, the win-win situation can generate. Accordingly, as new comers involve under the cooperation of littoral states, win-win situation is predictable. But both newcomers and the littoral states actions involve independently, the possibility of conflict situation is high. Having said that, Cole et al.(2014) also employed game theory as useful framework to better understand how the actors shape the future of the Arctic. Accordingly, the authors stress cooperation in the decision making process exemplifying tragedy of commons in case of fishing activity where the players work as facilitators of cooperation on imposing quotas, prohibiting big nets etc. which are socially desirable management.

Schreiber (2021), Goodman (2021), Schmitt (2020), Bildt (2020), Saxena (2020), Bradley and Adamson (2020), Olson (2020), Holmes (2020), Devyatkin (2020), Sittlow (2020) argue that the region is undergoing geopolitical hot spot and will become the region of escalation great power rivalry between the US, Russia and China held in the Russian-dominated Arctic in all likelihood, as exceptionalism is in jeopardy. Lanteigne (2020) explains why the region became a geopolitical hotspot is commonly based on “zero sum thinking”- what is needed to achieve before somebody else does and continuation to expand foreign policy interests of Big-Three. However, it is not unusual that these powers’ rivalry which can be seen elsewhere in the world is not immune from the Arctic, theater of the competition.

Further, as stated by Welch (2020), the one reemerges in the Arctic is not traditional geopolitics but the non-traditional geopolitics likewise human, cultural, energy, economic and environmental security. Adding non-traditional security sectors, the author puts forward the concept of “ecospheric security”, as a new conception of security, owing that ecosphere as part of the Earth, the region is key concern by releasing greenhouse gases from permafrost.

The militarization of the region by Russia is continuously bolstered by reopening bases, renovating radar stations and upgrading its military capabilities since 2011 and claiming expanded jurisdiction over the seabed. While Folland (2021) argues that the revisionist approach of Russia break the tones of cooperative atmosphere by metastasizing to all region, according to Klimenko (2019), military activities of Russia is nothing but accessibility and navigability of the Northern Sea

Route.

The reasons indicated hereinabove, there is increasing hesitance dominating the literature between academics whether the cooperation is managed to maintain as it used to be in post-cold era or the new spirit of the region is to be characterized as competition or escalation of tension as it used to be in the Cold War. The region somehow became the subject of geopolitical competition among great powers especially after accelerating strategic interest of China and the other non-Arctic states.

Geopolitics and security go hand in hand with impacts of climate change over the region, therefore, theme of the post-cold war is now occurring at global level (Heininen, 2019). In other words, what was the impetus to prompt regional actors for cooperation was the regional environmental challenges and pollution that the very same impetus for transboundary cooperation.

Østhagen, (2020) explains these cooperation or interactions at three levels by using good-bad-ugly metaphor: the good (regional relations), the bad (international system and global power politics) and the ugly (bilateral relations). After cold war, cooperative interaction between regional states and indigenous peoples make the region fade from the global power politics until 2000's, as the climate change became more tangible. Meanwhile, the regional stewardship and the efficiency and governance of the Council started to be discussed. Ilulissat Declaration put the final say of these outcries, emphasizing that "the region of cooperation" still prevails. As for global power politics, it can be clearly observed that inner-Arctic relations are not identical with the global politics. The cold war period's buffer zone, slightly shifted its status in which Russia asserts its power, China became a Near-Arctic State and the US took more aggressive politics increased its focus on China. When it comes to bilateral relations between the Arctic States, the relations get uglier. According to the author, the issue of national security matters as Russia militarizes the region.

All in all, the existing literature is highly based on climate change, new accessible resources and shipping routes, unsettled territory. According to this trend, Table 1.1 shows the eras in the Arctic Foreign policy as a whole.

Table 1 Foreign Policy Period

Period	Foreign Policy Determinants
Cold War (1945–1987)	Arctic as a military theater.
Indigenous and scientific collaboration (1965–1987)	More formal environmental, Indigenous and scientific linkages develop across borders and exclusive of states; Polar Bear Agreement.
Glasnost and Perestroika (1987–1991)	Gorbachev promotes Arctic as a Zone of Peace; pan-Arctic collaboration intensifies; Rovaniemi Process.
Institutional Development—Post-Cold War (1991–2007)	Arctic Council established; low politics, soft security issues dominate; non-state and local actors have a high level of influence. Human rights and security a priority in the international system
Arctic Race—Post, Post-Cold War (2007–2018)	Climate change intensifies, commodities boom, shipping, globalization, rise of Asian interest in region, Russian remilitarization, UNCLOS claims.
What’s Next? (2019–?)	Policy shaping and policy making; exceptionalism; sustainable economic development; regional innovation. The Arctic as a model of regional cooperation; the Arctic as a transnational space.

Source: (Coates & Holroyd, 2020).

As it can be seen from the Table, climate change is dominated the policy issues especially Post-Cold War afterwards. Climate change happening in the Arctic is expected to be most rapid than those of any region in the world. As climate change being further documented and tangible, the Arctic debates showed slightly change from scientific to the political agenda with rising public awareness.

The Reykjavik Declaration (2021) signed by Arctic Eight countries at the 12th Arctic Council Ministerial meeting which corresponds to the 25th Anniversary of the Arctic Council is the joint declaration of the countries commitment to “constructive cooperation” which became the current narrative as the region is opening up. Widely noted, this cooperation is still relevant to the Arctic states in the sense that their commitment for sustainable development and environmental protection until today.

There is no doubt that mentioned constructive cooperation calls for practical and strong need in bolstering relations. There has been increasingly identity building trend and/or re-identifying/re-editing national policies/white papers amongst non-Arctic states. As a newest observer country, Switzerland represents itself as “Vertical Arctic”, as representing high altitude of the Alps and the Arctic (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2015). France declared itself as “France, an Arctic player” (France MAEDI, 2016), that of the Britain is “a world leader in Polar affairs and a significant player and the nearest neighbor” (Polar Regions Department, 2018).

According to Heininen et al. (2020), emerging trends of the Arctic States can be listed as state domination for controlling the region, ambivalence of the Arctic development for balance between environmental protection and economic activities, enhancing the role of science to deepen understanding of climate change and hesitation over mitigation or adaptation of climate change. Besides, of the Observer States, pronouncement and updating of white papers, enjoying universal rights by adopting the term “Global Arctic”, deemed the region as space for science are the ones for the non-arctic states narratives. Table 1.2 shows publication of the white papers among Arctic and non-Arctic states based on their strategic interests.

Table 2 Publication of the White Papers

Countries	Year	White Paper
Arctic Council States		
Denmark	2011	Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic
Finland	2010	Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Regions
	2013	Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region
Sweden	2011	Sweden’s Strategy for the Arctic Region
	2016	Swedish Environmental Policy for the Arctic
Iceland	2011	A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy
Norway	2006	The Norwegian Government’s High North Strategy
	2014	Norway’s Arctic Policy
	2017	Norway’s Arctic Strategy
Canada	2009	Canada’s Northern Strategy
	2010	Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy
	2019	Canada’s Arctic and Northern Policy Framework
Russian Federation	2009	Russian Federation’s Policy for the Arctic to 2020
	2020	On the Basics of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period Until 2035

Table 2 (con) Publication of the White Papers

Countries	Year	White Paper
<u>Arctic Council States</u>		
United States	2009	Arctic Region Policy
	2013	National Strategy for the Arctic Region
		U.S. Department of Defense Arctic Strategy
	2014	U.S. Navy Arctic Road Map for 2014-2030
		U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy
	2016	U.S. Department of Defense Arctic Strategy
		U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook
	2019	U.S. Department of Defense Arctic Strategy
<u>Arctic Council Observer States</u>		
France	2016	National Roadmap for the Arctic
	2019	France and the New Strategic Challenges in the Arctic
Germany	2013	Guidelines of the German Arctic Policy
	2019	Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines
Italy	2015	Towards an Italian Strategy for the Arctic
The Netherlands	2014	Strategy for the Netherlands Polar Programme 2016-2020
Spain	2016	Guidelines for a Spanish Polar Strategy
Switzerland	2015	Swiss Polar Research
UK	2013	UK Policy towards the Arctic
	2018	UK Policy towards the Arctic
China	2018	China's Arctic Policy
India	2013	India and the Arctic
Japan	2015	Japan's Arctic Policy
	2017	Japan's Future Priority Areas of Arctic Policy
South Korea	2012	Measures for the Advancement of Polar Region Policy
	2013	Arctic Policy of the Republic of Korea

Source: A Balanced Arctic Policy for the EU, Policy Department for External Relations, 2020

As seen in the Table 1.2, regional and non-regional countries have growing interest and released their respective policy papers after tremendous changes which is called global Arctic in the region. Moreover, it can be seen that the culmination of Chinese White Paper is rather recent. Unprecedented national attentions for policy announcements reveal the state's interests in desire for cooperation in general and ensuring the environmental security (Exner-Pirot & Gullledge, 2012).

The papers roughly includes participation and contribution to scientific researches as well as security and defense issues, overall gist of the papers is to take part in the future of the region. According to Lim (2018), publication of White Papers is important due to the fact that promulgation of these papers includes only key policy issues. The changes cause regional or non-regional states' proclaiming of

their policies to seek a role through diplomatic channels for relations, contribution and participation to scientific activities, climate change, security and defense issues, tourism, indigenous peoples' rights.

As looked into the development of Asian literature, granted observer status and bolstered bilateral relations with the Arctic states has given rise to opposing perceptions over their ambitious. No sooner did they become observer states than increasing number of articles about “Asian participation”, in particular “China Threat”, ranged dramatically (Stensdal, 2016). However, Italy took limited attention and was not considered as such threatening stance (Sharp, 2018).

Table 3 Results for some keywords in Western Media

	Keywords 'Asia' and 'Arctic'	'China' and Arctic'	'Japan' and Arctic'
The Wall Street Journal (US)	368	1074	431
The Telegraph(UK)	407	694	471
The New York Times (US)	483	1003	551
The Washington Post (US)	386	683	391
Le Figaro (France)	80	93	49
The Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany)	108	254	170
The Globe and Mail (Canada)	410	814	352
Sputnik (Russia)	315	753	402
Aftenposten (Norway)	657	571	443

Source: (Babin & Lasserre, 2019)

As newly burgeoning is Western literature on growing Asian involvement, scholars also examine the main factors behind Asian engagement. Drawing the attention that the Asian states are not newcomer to the Arctic Region when taking into consideration their scientific involvements or in some cases Svalbard Treaty, Solli et al. (2013) stressed that the reactions towards their observer status depend on the Arctic States themselves, which envision the region differently. Stokke (2014) discussed the while Asian states are influenced by the regional development, they have the power of influence these developments in return. In his study, Stensdal (2016) stressed that the Asian aspirations are not in the search of policies influence in the region. Babin and Lasserre (2019) analyzed Asian states' involvement in the region driven by prestige and internationalization of the region in which they reclaim their power in different tones. From the Arctic states side, their involvement were

perceived as threat, however, at the same time, ensure promotion of international cooperation and partnership.

While China relatively dominates the literature, the other states took less attention. Additionally, it can be seen in the Table 1.4 that Chinese academic and media articles including the Arctic have been increasing as well. According to Stensdal (2013), before 2008, natural sciences were dominated the Chinese literature on Arctic Region, then the increasing discussion over shipping, research exploitation, governance doubled the figures, It was not until 2007 that Chinese scholars discussed Arctic pertaining to legal issues and strategic interests, also, China never referred Arctic as “Strategic frontier” before 2010. (Alexeeva & Lasserre, 2012a).

Wright (2011), Alexeeva and Lasserre (2012b) and Lackenbauer and Manicom (2013) and many Western scholars analyzed Chinese involvement from different aspects in the Arctic region as evidence of long-term goals of the Chinese government and threatening to the regional states’ territorial sovereignty. However, until the announcement of White Paper, literature was dominated by the opinions that China’s Arctic ambitions is not clear.

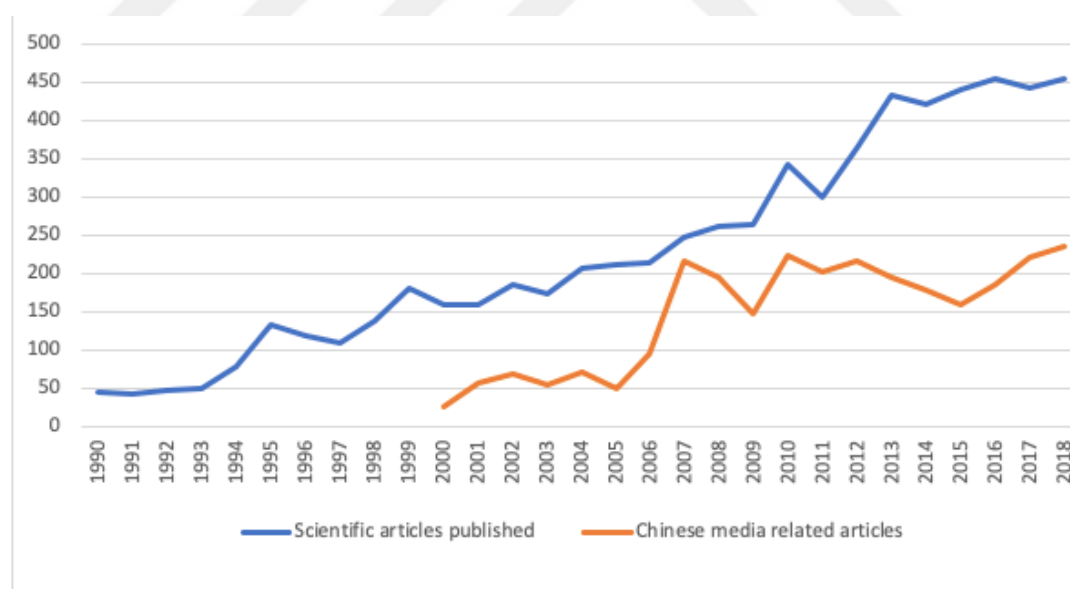


Figure 1 Chinese Academic and Media Articles including the Arctic

Source: China Knowledge Infrastructure, 2019.

Scholarly exaggerated discourse on Asian involvement and presence in the Arctic affairs was conceptualized by Mark Nuttall and Klaus Dodds as “Polar Orientalism” (2016). According to the authors, “Polar Orientalism” is a way of representing, imagining, seeing, exaggerating, distorting and fearing “the East” and

its involvement in Arctic affairs than those of other states, relatively from the West. However, they also discussed that polar orientalism of the West overlooked two solid facts first of which is considerable parts of the Arctic belong to the Eurasian landmass, the second of which trade relations between Asian and Arctic communities are by no means a new phenomenon and instead can be traced back several centuries. Growing Asian interests is triggered by environmental and political-economic globalization, respectively refers to climate change which makes them scientific ambition in order to alleviate its effects and rising Asian economies grown markedly in recent years.

Requiring global efforts and having transnational impacts, the Arctic purely needs participations and contributions in all fields of activities. Therefore, China's involvement in the region changing its route from becoming merely scientific to a series of commercial activities by justifying its own presence. Under the international law, China does not possess territory or claim sovereignty over the region, but advocates implementing UNCLOS, the UN charter and relevant treaties for stewardship of the Arctic affairs. Gaining observer status in the Arctic Region coincided with the time that increasing tensions between China and the U.S. about freedom of navigation over the South China Sea. Therefore, the countries were more sceptics about China's admission (Lanteigne, 2020).

China's long term Arctic strategy was proposed by State Oceanic Administration Director Liu Cigui in 2014 as three periods: from 1980 to 2000 was the preparation period beginning with dispatching scientists to the related areas and purchasing an icebreaker for better understanding the poles, establishing facilitates and joining into agreements. The second period from 2000 to 2015 was the development stage with increasing political role in the region, building stations and its own icebreaker, carrying out more expedition. The last stage till 2030 is polar great power, what is aimed for the period brought China the focus of discussion (Brady, 2018). As gaining global importance as a result of primarily climate change, economic globalization and interdependence, the Arctic became the focal point of scientific researches for exploitation and exploration of the resources, environmental protection, new routes. In the 14th year plan, China announced that R&D (Research and Development) funding support is to increased 10,6%. Polar exploration is one of the sectors that will be given priority in terms of funding and resources (Cai & Chen,

2021).

Before the publication of long-awaited Arctic policy in 2018, China's interests towards the region had wide scholarly attention and created backlash from some regional states as a response to call for transparency about its intention. Therefore, it is noting that the publication of white paper is foremost to deflect anxieties about its growing ambitions, there was nothing new about its strategy but reiteration of previous statements though (European Parliament, 2020). On the other hand, according to Lim (2018), publication of White Paper clearly shows that China abandoned Deng Xiaoping maxim "hide your power, wait your time" as well as low-profile diplomacy. That means China does not follow footsteps of any power anymore, it is now a norm-maker in the international arena.

Besides, charging its scholars to promote discursive power, China elaborately designed the country's perception in terms of articulation of "near-Arctic state" concept for the past five years, which then attached to the national concept itself. The political rhetoric ranging from common heritage to shared future of mankind was the same generated concepts among scientific community (Kobzeva, 2019). Scholars and policy makers addressed China as "near-Arctic state" or "responsible stakeholder" was the part of this perception management (Sun, 2014). Thus, given its status as a great power, the acceptance as observer state conferring legitimate status prompted Beijing to adopt mildly approach dealing with the issues in order not to trigger any concerns by other actors, primarily the regional states. In order to avoid more backlash, English translation of the official statements deliberately conveyed different to the foreign audience to shape positive perceptions (Brady, 2017). This is also true for usage of "Peaceful Rise" concept as "Peaceful Development" in Chinese official speeches (Glaser & Medeiros, 2007). Neither "Peaceful Rise / Development" nor "Chinese Dream" is not the concepts that China does not abolish conflictual occasions when it comes to its national interests, including Arctic Governance. Doshi et al. (2021) argues that speaking with two voices, China emphasizes competition discourse when addressing internal audience in contrast to benign discourse when addressing those of external ones. The same can be seen in English version of the white paper not to face undue restriction.

Brady (2017) asserted that China's geopolitical interest increased after

Russian scientists planted flag on the seabed of the Arctic. China's global interest is increasing rapidly as depending on overseas energy and raw material (Lanteigne, 2014) as well as overseas consumer markets and producers (Descamps, 2019). As of announcement of Open Door Policy by Deng Xiaoping, China has been experiencing phenomenal economic growth around 10 percent per year. The roots of emergency of energy import roughly dates back 1995's, when Deng's economic plan starts to pan out and the consumption figures preceded that of production in the country. Exceeding the security limit, the energy dependency paved the ways for modern China's key project, the most important development project of 21st century in the world, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), for meeting energy need without interrupted and challenges (Karaca, 2012). The BRI, also referred to the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR), while the "Belt" refers to the surface connectivity (China to Europe through Central Asia) and the "Road" to the maritime routes (through the Suez Canal). The BRI realizes 39% of global merchandize trade by encompassing 65 countries (Huang, 2017).

According to Zhenfu et.al. (2019) despite the alarmist approaches, the concept China uses in the White Paper "shared future of mankind" greatly promotes the spread of the concept for the mechanism innovation of Arctic governance. The new thinking of Chinese Arctic policy advocates human-driven than those of geopolitical interest-driven policies. Therefore, the wider range of countries can participate in Arctic governance, the less hegemonic domination reflects therein that China play a role, "Ice Silk Road", by way of example, is an significant practice based on the mechanism mutual respect, and win-win cooperation and Eurasia connection.

Pig and Lanteigne (2015) discuss China's Arctic involvement by advocating constructivism, explaining clash of identities between Chinese and Western perspectives over its policies. Examining the misconceptions, they assert these myths constitute potential avenues for China to shed light on its intentions, which appeared in 2018 with proclamation of the White Paper. According to them, alarming views over China in the Arctic dated back in 2005 when speculations about "super-embassy" spread after China initiated to open a large size embassy in Iceland. Other mistrustfulness over China comes from its relations with Greenland where rare earth elements are abundant. Since rare earth elements are using in developing and

manufacturing advanced technologies, China's debate again began raising security concerns. However, China is one of the countries to express interest in resource development in Greenland. While Guschin (2014) discussed that China whitewashes its true intention with environmental concerns, Rainwater (2013) suggested that China manipulating the legal framework by means of lawfare in order to boost its position. Beck (2014) called into the question to what extent China's involvement in the Arctic can be deemed as lawfare. Finding out that its activities in the region is in compliance with the legal framework and based on economic nature, China advocates reform of existing governance system. The Arctic is latest region that China increased its cross-regional policies, however, China's Arctic diplomacy differs from the any part in the world given its distinct geography (Koivurova et.al., 2019).

Comparative literature on Chinese involvement nexus the Arctic states is also increasing. Heurlin (2019) argues that the success of the U.S.A transformed the region from exceptionalism into great power rivalry and competition in order to keep China out of the Region. From the neorealist perspective, he argues that there is asymmetric power between them for that reason alone China remain a status quo power by exploiting the possibilities. Sørensen (2018) set forth that how China builds strategic partnership with Greenland, and how it uses sophisticated diplomacy so as to ensure great power influence in a long-term. Lackenbauer et.al.(2019) examines China's ambition from holistic approach and what it mean for Canada, they concludes that Chinese involvement in the Arctic will strengthen Canada's legal position as developing international cooperation in science, environmental protection. Therefore, it is should be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. Bowman and Xu (2020) propose avenues for future cooperation and suggest that it is in the interest of Alaska working with China, however, they also highlight it should not be underestimated the geopolitical and risks. Alexeeva and Lasserre (2018) draw a framework for Sino-Russian relations, associating this relation to marriage of convenience. Although there is existing deepening of bilateral relations, proper inputs in greater involvement with the Belt and Road Initiative, the Yamal LNG cover their needs at the expense of the other.

The nexus between global climate change and its direct and future affect its

own country, China engages in the region through cultivation collaborative relationship with the Arctic States on various areas. The ramifications of climate change turns out energy trade, freedom of navigation, and sustainable development for China. China has been already aware that the interests of the regional states are multifaceted and it should establish such relations by not giving rise to “China Threat” perception. As articulated in the White Paper (2018), to understand, protect, develop and participate in Arctic governance are among China’s policy goals constructing on the principles of respect, cooperation, win-win-result and sustainability. China establishes strong and comprehensive relationship with Arctic states and its governance institutions through win-win agreements on research, resource extraction, infrastructure development.

Political, environmental, economic and security-related consequences of changing surface of the region brought the Arctic to the political agenda of both and non-arctic states accordingly. China’s engagement more recently evolved from purely scientific research to claiming “rights and interests” has been scrutinized very carefully. While some scholars interpret the White Paper as step towards more confident policy (Sørensen, 2018), or conceived the attempt for clarification its intentions (Hong, 2018); majority came to end with there is nothing new in the White Paper but justification of its presence. Kobzeva (2019) formulates the factors shape China’s Arctic policies and concluded that acting as an initiator and partner of investment, power, research and cultural projects, China is setting up the environment for its national strategy rooted on “Chinese Dream”, conceptual discursive development of the Arctic policy and regional specifics.

From the geographical framework, China is not an Arctic state, what is more, it is not near-Arctic state. On the basis of the international law framework, China can claim some rights in the region under the United Nations Convention of Law of Sea. As an observer states without voting right in the governance of the Council, China has long run interests to further its international cooperation and deepen its projects, scientific research. Changing landscape of the Arctic Region concerns the interests including Arctic and non-Arctic countries and needs wide-ranged participation and support of the regional and non-regional actors, not simply a political formation imposed by any individual state. By increasing its strategic visibility, China is to be receptive to any overtures from the Arctic States and preserve its role of important

stakeholder rather than performing a revisionist power. Given its lack of territory and subaltern status comparing to regional states, China is nothing but becoming an indispensable stakeholder in the eyes of those for fortification its identity and avoiding negative reactions through alternative ways.

China released its six-specific-policies using “Near-Arctic” concept in 2017, appointed a Special Representative for Arctic Affairs in 2016 just before publication of White Paper in 2018. The denomination itself does not confer any official priority neither in the Council nor the region in general. With the announcement of its much-anticipated white paper, China acknowledged that no country in the world has not sovereignty over Polar Regions, including space (State Council Information Office, 2018).

Although Chinese investments in Arctic Regional states is perceived suspiciously, scientific contribution of China is welcomed by those (Kopra Puranen, 2021). What is perceived as ambitions is that China’s interests in involving actively and legitimately in polar affairs, not only research and environmental protection, but also behind its rising interest in the process of time especially in commercial routes, resource extraction, participating in governance and boosted bilateral diplomacy to name a few. However, China pursues its ambitions based on the principles of “respect, cooperation, win-win result and sustainability” (State Council Information Office, 2018).

Paradigm shifts with the zeitgeist of the time constitutes the history of Arctic region. China slightly updates its projects on a global scale in the light of the opportunities. To juxtapose, there are still technological and territorial constraints, vigilance among countries and challenges ahead of China’s burgeoning interests and motivations to consolidate its presence.

Prompted by Arctic climate change and presented opportunities, China’s rapid growth as well as the proliferation of global interest brought the High North into its political agenda although origins of this participation is dated back to 1925, Svalbard Treaty. China’s emerging interest in the region is sometimes referred as an impulsion of its rising power role, seeking for the status of global power on the international level. On the other hand, China’s Arctic interest has increased substantially over past two decades. Taking into consideration whatever happening in the Arctic has the global impact and consequences, the future of the region cannot be

deliberated in the absence of China, where the effects of the climate change have negatively direct impact on the country's economic and social development. As the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, China's contribution for mitigation and adaptation climate change is an indispensable part of environmental protection of the Arctic, in a broader perspective, of the world. China has been paying close attention to exploration and exploitation of the resources, shipping and tourism in the region in a circumspect manner.



II. THE ARCTIC REGION

The northernmost of the globe Arctic lies at 66° 33' N, known as Arctic Circle, where the North Pole is at the center (Paterson et al., 2006). The roof of the globe, unlike the Antarctic surrounded by oceans, the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by continents.

The Arctic is the shortest point between Asia, America and Europe continents. Without robust definition, the Arctic is a region surrounding the Arctic Ocean, adjacent seas and littoral countries. About 5 million people most of whom are Russian inhabitants accounting for 0.05% of the world's indigenous population live in the Region (Congressional Research Service, 2021). In short course, the Arctic is a mixture of sovereign territories, internal waters, and high seas.

Canada, The Kingdom of Denmark (by virtue of Greenland), Norway, The Russian Federation, The United States (by virtue of Alaska) are the Arctic States that have sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic Region. Five in addition to Sweden, Finland, Iceland are the representatives of the Arctic Council together (Ottawa Declaration, 1996), which constitutes the group of states known as Arctic Eight. The difference between Arctic Five and the Arctic Eight is that while A5 is an adhoc combination, the Arctic Council, namely A8 is quasi-international organization. The Arctic governance contains a mosaic of issue-based cooperation, rather than regulatory in nature.

The phenomenon Climate Change occurring in northern latitudes gave rise recognition of the “Arctic Boom” or “Age of the Arctic”. Coupled with the forces of globalization, the region has become an area of intense geopolitical intrigue between both littoral and non-littoral states (Borgerson, 2008). According to the United States Geological Survey (2008), 30% of the world's undiscovered gas and 13% of the world's undiscovered oil are expected to concentrate in the offshore areas. This is the equivalent of roughly 90 billion barrels of oil, 1669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquid and 22% unexplored oil and natural gas reserves in the world (Jørgensen-Dahl, 2010).

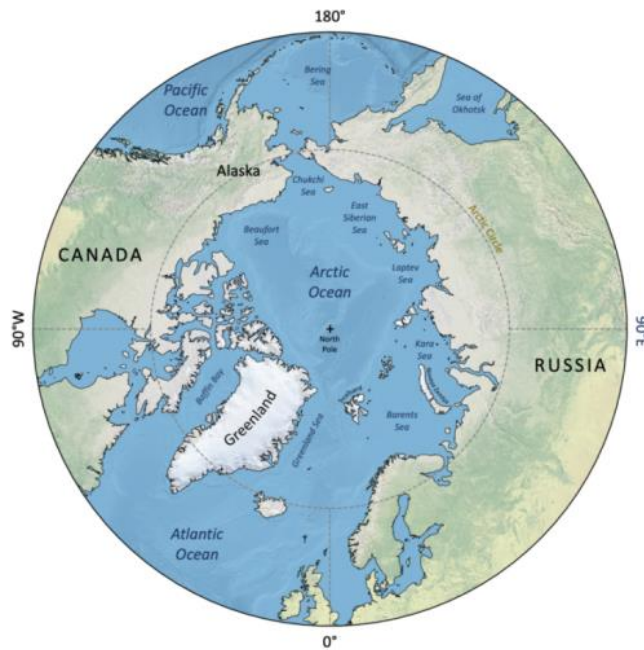


Figure 2 Arctic Map

Source: Copernicus, 2020.

Changing landscape of the Arctic due to climate change presented by thawing Arctic means primarily challenges as well as opportunities for the whole planet. The noteworthiness of the Arctic Region, regulating the climate of the world, is on rise due to economic impact of neoliberal policies, anthropogenic footprints. The Arctic matters because there is great deal of interest at global level canalizes in the region. Complex interests coexist and conflict with one another further growing array of stakeholders. Policies are torn between resource extraction and environmental protection for some actors, i.e., Canada. As a region is ground zero for climate change, arctic exceptionalism is over by giving its way to term of Global Arctic.

The declination of ice cap brings shortest routes between Europe and Asia and untapped resources prompted discussions on broader security issues and sovereignty. Once perceived as impassable, the alteration of accessibility condition relinquished the region with aggravated interests and concerns of primarily littoral states. Firstly, what the littoral states unfamiliar with is maritime traffic. The states are supposed to manage the Arctic borders and territories therein which could lead to transnational crime. Second, the new routes can be also conflictual as the border disputes maintain. Due to the abovementioned reasons, Gricius (2021) asserts that the geopolitical tensions are not only merely climate change concerns and causes over the region but also the effect of those to emerge in the region.

A. Main Actors in the Region

1. Russia

Of the Arctic littoral states, Russia is the most prominent one with its geography and population. Arctic zone of the Russia is the largest one stretching the half of the Arctic coastline, area, indigenous and mineral wealth: it covers 64% of Russian territories accounting for 22.600 kilometers of national border passes through the Arctic Region (Kharlampyeva, 2013). 2.5 million inhabitants, roughly half of those of whole indigenous population, live in the region (The Arctic Institute, 2020). Besides large number of inhabitants, Russian Arctic with its harsh climate contains more industrial cities, namely Murmansk, Norilsk, Vorkuta compared to the other littoral states.

More than half of promising resources are in the West Siberian Basin, Russia holds 58% of undiscovered petroleum resources (USGS, 2008). The Region takes significant place in the economy of Russia: 10% of the GDP and 20% of the total exports are produced in the region (Sorensen & Klimenko, 2017). Therefore, Russia does not consider the Arctic as hard-to-reach territory with harsh climate or difficult living conditions whose it is already familiar with more than any other state, but consider the region one of the main component of its active policies with its numerous cities located in the Arctic, effective usage of Arctic maritime highway. Arctic is highly embedded its national identity and security perception, and therefore, its great power ambitions (Rowe, 2009).

Russian Arctic accounts for 90% of natural gas and 10% of oil production, as the major source of energy of the Russia (The Arctic Institute, 2020). From this point of view, Russian Arctic offers opportunities in terms of its high economic potential. 83% of its gas and 12% its of oil is exploited in Russian Arctic (Central Dispatching Department of Fuel Energy Complex, 2019), while 4 of the 8 new gas liquefaction plants planned in Russia will be located directly in the same area. Huge reserves of hydrocarbons are concentrated in the Arctic zone, which are estimated at 7.33 billion tons of oil and 50.45 trillion cubic meters of gas (Tikhonov, 2020), which are the largest part in the Arctic region (Plotnikov et al., 2018). Therefore, so large Arctic sector is fully integrated into the socioeconomic and political systems that it is not considered Arctic and Arctic governance without presence of it.

Increasing Russian military presence in the region as a result of its ambition is mainly resulted from being recognized as great polar power (Staun, 2020). Since 2014 by establishing the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command, Russia also gradually strengthened its presence by creating new Arctic units, refurbishing old airfields and infrastructure in the Arctic, and establishing new military bases along its Arctic coastline (Department of Defense, 2019). As a reflection this ambition, the Arctic Region is one of the area to reclaim its great power status. Russian enormous border alongside the Arctic, its intention to ensure security of resource development and state control over natural resources, exploitation, maritime activities and the newcomers outside the region are one of the foremost reasons forming Russian military activities to restore military and paramilitary forces, which are mainly defensively oriented (Laruelle, 2020), on the other hand, the items some of which serve dual-use (Congressional Research Service, 2021).

Another case showing Russia's ambition can be seen in the North Sea Route (NSR) policies that the state implemented, although the international legal status of the NSR is yet to well-determined (Congressional Research Service, 2021). Given its claims right to regulate shipping as an integral part of Russian waters in accordance with Article 234, which gives coastal state the right to navigation and the protection in ice covered areas. Opening in 1991, transits through the route gradually increased, however, it is still far behind the conventional routes like Suez and Panama Canal.

The NSR and its development retain high importance to Russia. Russia, however, is torn between economic and security considerations whether open the route to the international shipping or controlling the passage for its national security (Laurelle, 2020). The route is also catalyst for bolstered civilian infrastructure and capacity. In present-day the route needs foreign partners to be financed and Moscow articulated this implicitly which is contrast to its administrative tightening nationalizing the passage that it used to. Especially after Ukraine crisis, sanctions over Russia resulting in increasing Sino-Russian commercial cooperation and Russia became active participant of international cooperation in the Region. Nevertheless, it still carries out constructive cooperation in the region with the U.S. and reclaim its indispensable power therein (Jordan, 2021). There are continuing dialogues and cooperation to ensure stability in the region for its national interests, like search and rescue (SAR).

Because the region constitutes top strategic priority, Russia has been released two strategy papers first of which Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic through 2020 and Beyond (2008) and Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035 (2020). The first document coincided with the fueled discussion in the international community over Russia's planting titanium flag in the seabed in the Arctic. The document highlighted Russian respect to the jurisdiction of the Region. Also it defines the region state's resource base underlines stabilizing the borders and bolsters administrative ways for resource development. Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035 document published to consider progresses of 2008 report and set forth 15-year-plan. This document is focused on expanding the extraction of hydrocarbons in the Russian Arctic over the next 15 years and developing the Northern Sea Route as the primary vehicle for the distribution of extracted hydrocarbons to global markets.

Russia currently has 38 active polar icebreakers, by far the [largest icebreaking fleet](#) amongst the Arctic States to access strategic and economic interests (Arctic Institute, 2021). Russian approach to the Arctic is to expand its development due to increasing strategic importance of the region, construction and upgrading of military bases, icebreakers and ports which connects whole region each other in response to the new global reality. The Region, eventually, holds huge resources already developed and to be developed and promising area for its international reputation and political stance.

2. The United States

Once defined as "Reluctant Arctic Power", the U.S. assumes an attitude aligned with the necessities of the time and geostrategic realities, as an example, increasingly Russian active policies in the Arctic compels it to pursue as active policies as Russia.

The U.S. is entitled as Arctic State after including Alaska into its own territory in 1867 without terrestrial connectivity. The purchase of Alaska was ridiculed in the media as "Seward's Folly", till the time when oil was discovered in the region, it created the impetus for a more coherent U.S. policy approach to the Arctic. Alaska is home to over 731,000 people most of whom located two large cities namely Anchorage and Fairbanks (Arctic Institute, 2021), however, it has little

infrastructure compared to the other littoral states.

The strategic importance of Alaska which is the nearest point to the Northern hemisphere allows the U.S. to reach the Bering and Beaufort sea, the area abundant in hydrocarbons and mineral deposits for the U.S.'s energy needs as well as militarization of the region due to its proximity several capital of the countries more than those of its other states. Alaska is the only way for the U.S., having substantial political, economic, energy, environmental interest , to claim right. However, a survey conducted in 2020 revealed that there is low inclination for Arctic identity and high association Alaska with cold, snow, peripheral (Zachary, 2019).

Alaska's main economic components are mainly oil, gas and substantial energy resources like coal. The report prepared by U.S. Energy Information Administration in 2015 shows that the state's North Slope and Alaska's Prudhoe Bay are amongst largest fields in the nation. The share of Alaska in the U.S. GDP realizes 0,24%, \$54,629 as of 2021 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2021). Alaska stands for 32% of the total fishery value of the U.S. (NOAA, 2019). In 2019, oil production volume was 171 million barrels in Alaska (Statistica, 2019).

The U.S. is the only Arctic state that has not ratified the UNCLOS hence unable to expand its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to explore and extract natural resources including fishing and drilling. Understood as detrimental to its sovereignty and interests is the reason why the U.S skeptic about the UNCLOS (Bromund, 2018). The state, however, is to act in accordance with the convention.

The first comprehensive policy paper by President Bush was a response to Russia's titanium flag event, which give rise to result that Russia's activities and claims in the Region was the catalyst for U.S. policies. The document foremost emphasized that the U.S. is an Arctic nation. Increasing awareness towards Arctic as fragile but abundant in reserves and measures to taken for homeland security and counterterrorism were also mentioned (Arctic Policy, 2009). It was followed up with publication of Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region in 2014, Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic in 2015. More recently, the Arctic Strategic Outlook was released by the United States Coast Guard in 2019 and The Arctic Strategy released by the Department of Defense in 2021 are the strategy papers indicating overall Arctic strategies of the U.S. up to now.

The importance and divergence of the document from previous ones is that it lays bare Sino-Russian activities in the region posing challenges, the U.S.'s increasing presence and Arctic Strategy not only on environmental concerns but also national security and international interests (Department of Defense, 2019). The document openly demonstrates that China and Russia are as the principal challenges to its security and prosperity in long run. The document also answers China's self-proclaimed definition of "Near-Arctic state" as the U.S. doesn't recognize any other nations and claims out of eight Arctic nations. Canada's claim in the Northwest Passage and Russia's claim the Northern Sea Route going beyond the international law is also highlighted.

As response of increasing military activities of Russia, The U.S. engages in more countermeasures against and remains strong defense relationships with the left 6 Arctic States. This is the case, for example, increasing security presence ranging from military bases in Keflavik and Thule to troops in Canada and Norway (Østhagen, 2020). However, The U.S. didn't incline to develop security policies in the region as the same manner as the other Arctic states and mainly focuses European part of the Arctic (Bye, 2020).

The U.S. currently possesses 2 active icebreakers named Polar Star and Healy. Because the Polar Star surpassed its lifespan and the Healy is out of service after recent fire aboard, the U.S heavily depend on Russian and Chinese operational polar icebreaker to meet icebreaking needs and environmental researches (Wicker & Sullivan, 2020; Pane, 2021).

3. Kingdom Of Denmark

Known as Kingdom of Denmark, Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland are 3 parts of "Danish Realm". Denmark is amongst in Arctic Five by virtue of Greenland is centrally situated above the Arctic Circle (Winkler, 2020). The Constitution stipulates that the foreign and security policies of Faroe Islands and Greenland are subject to Copenhagen, which grants it the same voice with the other regional powers. Greenland is geographically part of the North America as the world's largest non-continental but politically bound to Europe with the lowest population density in the world. Greenland is the only indigenous Arctic territory with its exceptionalism in terms of its autonomy.

Arctic and Greenland are one of the relationship-builder between the U.S. and Denmark whose alliance holds on through long ages. The U.S. interests in Greenland is driven by island's strategic location during the Cold War due to the short distances to the Soviet Union (Rahbek-Clemmensen, 2019). Denmark's Arctic policy was driven by using "Greenland Card" to strengthen its relationship with Washington. As the region opens to the human activity leading to security challenges and Greenland's increased autonomy, Denmark changed its route to cooperation with the Arctic States.

4. Canada

Canadian Arctic encompasses 25% of the Arctic, 40 % of the Canadian landmass which has the vast geographic diversities by permafrost and temperatures (The Arctic Institute, 2021). Unlike Russian Arctic, Canadian Arctic is not industrial. Nonetheless, the Arctic identity of the state shows indispensable part of the nation, home to indigenous people with its fragile environment which encourages Canada to assert the preservation of its sovereignty in the North in Beaufort Sea, Hans Island and Lomonosow which are disputed areas in terms of their recognition.

Of the Arctic states, Canada took important steps for the foundation of the Council, environmental cooperation, sustainable development and human security in the region for the last decades. Canada was home to founding of the Arctic Council with the signing of the Ottawa Declaration in 1996, however, it was not until 2009 that Canada's Arctic policy is specified. Canada released its first Arctic strategy: Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future. Following this strategy paper, Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad (2010) and Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (2019) were released respectively. The first document highlights that exercising sovereignty over the Canadian Arctic, coincides with right after Russian flag planting event. Increasing concerns over military security, the region is addressed in Canada First Defense Strategy because increasing accessibility and possibility navigation through new transportation routes and the Northwest Passage (NWP) brought new challenges in terms of increasing illegal activities like over-fishing, organized crime, drug-smuggling and people-smuggling requires for additional military support for exercising control over and defend its sovereignty (Government of Canada, 2009). On the other hand, the other priorities of the State in

the region which covers 40% of its territory is to address the causes and impacts of climate change, renewing the nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, supporting sustainable Northern economic development; promoting Canada as a leader in Arctic science and research (Government of Canada, 2019). According to Lackenbauer and Lalonde (2017), reconciliation of mentioned security and sovereignty, and promising substantial economic benefits and sustainable development alongside cooperation is the very Canadian dilemma.

5. Norway

As a country having long tradition in the region, Norway has jurisdiction over a maritime area more than six times the size of its land territory (Atland, 2010). 80% of the sea territory and 40% land territory encompasses the Arctic Circle. Norwegian Arctic is home to 480,000 people accounting for almost 10 % of the total population in Norway (Arctic Institute, 2021). Its two large cities, namely Tromsø and Bodø have good infrastructure and communication. 10% of the total population lives in the High North. Norway has the leading oil and gas resources in the world, 90% of the state revenues comes from these resources.

Unlike Russia dilemma over the Arctic, as a major maritime state, Norwegian approach is based on pragmatic strategy: both opening the lines and defend its the rights (Lindgren & Græger, 2017). This is largely because decrease of existing resources required to sustain further Norwegian oil and gas production over the Northern areas, such as Barents Sea (Bye, 2020), when considered the area is fertile in fish stocks and hydrocarbons.

Norway's Arctic security policy is based upon well-balanced relations between NATO and the U.S and at the same time, stable relations with Russia (Bye, 2020). Norwegian Northern policies find their roots in neighborhood policy seeking predictability and stability. This is because Norway is centrally and geographically positioned between these powers. Clearly, due to its proximity, Russia is natural component of the Norwegian High North issues and is not deemed threat but uncertainty in the long run lead Norway focus on strengthening military presence. Main drivers behind Arctic strategy is resource development. As an integral part of Norwegian foreign and security policy, the Arctic is a national priority of Norway.

6. Arctic Council

Arctic governance involves a number of issue-specific arrangements. The most prominent instrument of the governance system is The Arctic Council. The Council is established in 1996 by eight regional states namely the U.S., Russia, Norway, the Kingdom of Denmark, Canada, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. Six Arctic indigenous communities have permanent participant status in the council. Additionally, eleven non-Arctic states, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom, have been granted observer status.

Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) as a response to emerging environmental issues and transboundary pollutions provided a basis for the foundation of the Council. AEPS became the initiative comprising of all Arctic States and fueled Arctic Regionalism in the eyes of the international community. The need for new regulations in order to ensure international cooperation on issues such as environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic has been the mainstay of the establishment of the Arctic Council. The focus of AEPS mostly on environmental issues has rendered it incapable of resolving other issues in the Arctic. The need to create a new forum where economic, political and social problems, as well as environmental problems concerning the Arctic and surrounding countries, can be discussed instead of AEPS, which is nonbinding and defined in a limited framework, has accelerated the efforts for the establishment of the Arctic Council. By the Ottawa Declaration, it is ensured that the AEPS founded in 1991 transited into the Arctic Council (Ottawa Declaration, 1996). Therefore, Arctic became the region as an example of voluntary participation where there is no room for the top-down intervention of superpowers.

The Arctic Council is neither an international organization nor does it have formal law-making capacities (Johnstone, 2016), however, it allows the observers to shape norms by working with the states and permanent participants by means of which their proposals may be reinforced (Conley & Melino, 2016). Moreover, it can be perceived as “international institution” which Keohane and Nye describes as taking part in complex interdependency (Byers, 2017).

The council is regarded as “high-level intergovernmental forum” because it is ratified by a declaration, not a treaty. Due to the fact that there is not legal document

implementing in the Arctic akin to the Antarctic Treaty and the main focus of the council is environmental issues sustainable development and scientific research. The council regarded as policy-maker, promoter voice, facilitator of transnational cooperation given its effectiveness is now beyond expectations (Wehrmann, 2020). It is also argued that this low-level form facilitate low tension in the North.

Excluded from addressing security issues, which is a kind of ensuring the cooperation of the council, the council is carries out two major objectives:

- to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states through the involvement of the six Arctic Indigenous communities and other inhabitants,
- to promote sustainable economic development (Ottawa Declaration, 1996).

By the first objective, the Council brings Arctic and non-Arctic states into sharp relief, which means Ottawa Declaration does not employ provision for accepting additional members. The Arctic States have the authority to control all rules of procedure with regards to the activities of the Observers, which consist of non-Arctic states, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. Knecht (2017) describes that it is the Council success that brings together numerous actors in terms of continuity of cooperation. The second objective paves way for including the outsiders.

With limited power, it is noting to say that the UNCLOS, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have greater say in the governance than the Council (Brady, 2017). Having said that, just as conditions differ from those during the 1990s so the premises for the foundation of the council have been eroding even if it is described as successful forum (Young, 2019).

7. Asian States

Asian states' growing interest in governance, science, resource development, education, shipping in the Arctic is one of the current contentious topics. Asian states, notably South Korea, Japan, Singapore, China and India are granted

permanent observers status in the Arctic Council in 2013 providing respect sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal states and indigenous peoples and expected to contribute the work of the Council and working groups (Kiruna Declaration, 2013). This development was also significant indicator for internationalization of the Arctic Region.

According to Dodds and Nuthall (2020), Asian interests are based on:

- Climate change
- Transoceanic and transcontinental routes (shorter sea lines)
- Access to the Arctic energy
- Polar science

These shared interests have long term significance in the areas that they involve which can be the key determinants of the Region by 2050 such as energy and shipping. Because the world's shipbuilding industry in 2021 is dominated by the Asian states, notably Korea, Japan and China (Statistica, 2021), the Asian states are welcomed in terms of their experience and investments in polar research vessels. Moreover, of non-Arctic States, they are actively participating in scientific activities in areas of regional analysis, monitoring and research because their foremost concern is climate change. While South Korea's Arctic interest is based on shipbuilding, resource development from technical aspect, Singapore and Japan's interest are based on energy resources (Dodds & Nuthall, 2019).

When it comes to involvement in governance of the Region, Asian states prioritizes balance of power and diplomacy. Ensuring their economic security, the states effort to enhance international cooperation when it serves their interests, including China (Shibata et al., 2019). Amongst Asian States, South Korea was the first published its white paper in 2013, subsequently Japan in 2015 and China in 2018. Of the Asian States, Japan has been the country actively involving science since 1973 with the establishment of Institute of Polar Research Centre. South Korea, like Japan, has an involvement in Polar research. However, South Korea, most of whose scientific activities were concentrated in the Antarctic, is relatively latecomer comparing to Japan (Holroyd, 2020).

B. Legal Status of the Region

Thawing ice-cap brought security, energy and maritime issues along with the territorial claims discussion into the agenda of the states. In the past, however, massive and permanent icecap brings the question whether the area is subject to sea law or it is deemed land or sea because the law of the sea mentions “ice-covered areas” rather than fluid and frozen waters, that is directly changed the way of fully-fledged claims of littoral states. The littoral states declared that they shall act and all disputes will be solved under the provisions of the UNCLOS in 2008, Ilulissat Declaration (Ilulissat Declaration, 2008).

UNCLOS is the prominent source to solve the controversial claims of the states and the determination of the boundaries of the region, it has the high prominence for legitimacy of the solving the problems. Due to the fact that international legal history of the region was not drawn by the inner actors themselves but the actors geographically and politically non-Arctic, Shibata et al. (2019) asserts that Arctic cannot be governed in the absence of joint involvement of Arctic and non-Arctic states. In a nutshell, the stewardship of the region is an emergency of combination of national legislations, international instruments, and evolving regional management.

- Ilulissat Declaration signed by the coastal states established framework for stewardship of the region. The importance of the declaration for shaping the legal status of the region is that it acknowledges that there is no need to develop international legal framework akin to the Antarctic Treaty to govern the Region (The Ilulissat Declaration, 2008). Coastal states acknowledged one again that the region, not terra nullius territory, will be governed under the conditions of the UNCLOS in this declaration. This also ended the scramble for territory, resources narrative by re-territorializing the Arctic Ocean (Dodds, 2014).
- UNCLOS, referred to as “a constitution for the oceans”, provides a framework for limitations, legal responsibilities, maritime jurisdiction, resource development, freedom-of-navigation rights in the Arctic Ocean. The Arctic is an ocean, and the law of the sea establishes the regulatory. According to UNCLOS, resources in the high seas are common heritage of

the humankind. It also defines the seaways' possessions by the states and international passages that open to navigation of all states (Borgerson, 2008). Norway in 1996, Russia in 1997, Canada in 2003 and Denmark in 2004 ratified UNCLOS. The United States is not signatory to UNCLOS, but accepts and acts in accordance with the nonseabed mining provisions of the treaty. Under UNCLOS, littoral states exercises sovereign rights – but not sovereignty – through their continental shelves. When the claims overlapping, the states should manage through diplomacy and negotiations. Also it has deficiency of resolving the issue managing of fish stocks (Brady, 2017). Article 234 authorizes the coastal states to enter new regulations into force on behalf of environmental protection in their jurisdiction providing that laws or regulations are nondiscriminatory and on the basis of the best available scientific evidence.

- International Maritime Organization: the organization regulates international shipping focusing on safety and antipollution measures. It adopted International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) in 2017. It applies to ships operating in harsh and remote environments like polar regions and sets up mandatory shipping standards. The aim of the Polar Code is to provide safer operation as mitigating its impacts and protecting environment and lives of crews and passengers (IMO, 2021).
- Svalbard Treaty, signed in 1920, acknowledges the sovereignty of Norway over the archipelago of Spitsbergen and gives rights to the parties to enjoy fishing and hunting in the given territories. It also authorized Norway to adopt measures if necessary for flora and fauna and restrained any establishment of any naval base used for warlike purposes (Svalbard Treaty, 1920).

The regional states claim that they have the authority in the Arctic region by virtue not only of their de facto but also of their de jure control, when it comes to addressing needs for governance in the region. They argue that the Arctic already has an extensive system of governance based on international law (Young, 2019). In contrast, As Joyner (2009) set forth, because of the rapid changes happening to the region and existing law is insufficient, comprehensive regal regime to be implemented in the region to enter into force is essential.

Arctic as a bellwether for climate change thus needs stability than ever before. Due to this reason, the Arctic Council has become the forum in which binding treaties are negotiating, although the council is lacking the authority to execute agreements. As of September 2018, the Agreements have been entered into force under the auspices of the Arctic Council as following (Arctic Council, 2021):

- Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (2011).
- The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013).
- The Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation (2017).

C. Maritime Disputes

Dominant narratives about the region are that the region key to geopolitical competition and boundary disputes. The key issue here was how to exploit and regulate the Arctic Ocean, this situation raised disputes over sovereignty. However, in the Ilulissat Declaration, littoral states reaffirmed that any disputes shall be resolved under the provisions of the law of the sea, giving the U.S is not party to the LOSC (Dodds, 2010). Therefore, scholarly exaggerated discourses are misleading.

Even though it is characterized as “dispute”, maritime claims are not necessarily supposed to be “hot” disputes as it can be the case elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the Arctic meltdown came to end with more territorial claims of five Arctic nations than it used to be when there was more inaccessibility. Nevertheless, littoral states have been already delimited maritime boundaries before what scholarly debates emerged (Østhagen & Schofield, 2021). As Dodds and Nuttall (2019) argues, because resource-rich EEZ under the sovereignty of the A5 is undisputed, sparking narrative on “scramble for Arctic” as preemptive strike against increasing global interest resulted from the waters beyond EEZ. According to the UNCLOS the waters beyond exclusive economic zone are international waters. It is the very Arctic Ocean “exceptionalism” that several disputes are settled in practice in contrast to alarmist portrayals. The disputed areas are listed below:

- The Beaufort Sea: Located between Alaska and Canada's High Arctic islands, the Beaufort Sea is abundant in oil and gas. Although there were many attempts, the U.S. and Canada failed to resolve boundaries over the sea from 2004 onwards, however, at least it was suspended in 2011 on the condition that the countries maintain scientific information on the resources.
- Hans Island: there is ongoing dispute between Canada and Denmark since 1970s. Canada and Denmark both claimed the island is part of their territory. Indeed, this inhabited island lies equidistant between them (European Parliament, 2017).
- The Bering Sea: The U.S. and Russia have overlapping continental shelf claims in the Bering Sea which is the third largest sea and the richest fisheries in the world. The sea has importance for the U.S and Russian fishing industries, transport junction traffic from East Asia to Europe and North America and oil and gas deposits (Konyshev & Sergunin, 2014).
- The Barents Sea: 40-year-dispute between Russia and Norway reached successful delimitation treaty in 2010 and achieved an equitable solution by dividing the overall disputed area in two parts.
- The Northwest Passage: Currently, The U.S. and Canada disagree on the legal status of the Northwest Passage. Not the sovereignty but the legal status of the passage whether is subject to internal or international water is the subject of the dispute. While the U.S. claims the NWS as international waterways, Canada claims sovereignty as internal waterways and not subject to the right of innocent passage. It is worth noting that this dispute is not top political priority for both states. According to Huebert (2009), increased defense capability by Canada in the passage is for the benefit of the U.S. national security interests. What is more, to recognize the passage as international waters gives Russians rights to fly military aircrafts over the Passage which would be against the U.S. national security as well. As of 2019, 319 transits under several flag like France, Spain, Italy, Japan, Canada, Russia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Britain, China and the U.S. have been made through the passage.
- The Northern Sea Route: The NSR challenged by the United States as an

international strait in contrast to the Russian claim that major sections of the Route remain internal waters. Ongoing transits through the NSR is officially managed and administered by Russia in accordance with Article 234.

- Lomonosov Ridges: Russia acknowledges Lomonosov Ridge falling under its jurisdiction and claimed it geological extensions of continental shelf in 2001. Following this, Greenland also claimed continental extension of its landmass in 2014. The U.S. argues that Lomonosov is oceanic part of the Arctic Ocean. It is worth noting that the USGS estimates that the Lomonosov Ridge could hold an additional 1.1 billion barrels of oil and 7.16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.



Figure 3 Unregulated Area in the Arctic Ocean

D. Issues in The Arctic Debate

1. Natural resources

Any longer perceived as distinct, frozen area at the roof of the world, current Arctic narrative overwhelmingly depend on resource rich and promising area for investments and sustainable development and data collection as the region becomes

more accessible. The region remained its important resource potential such as mining and fishing throughout history. Increasing demand for oil and natural gas in the 21st century unleashed the importance of undiscovered energy resources in the Arctic.

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS, 2008), 30% of the world’s undiscovered gas and 13% of the world’s undiscovered oil are expected to concentrate in the Arctic Region. This is the equivalent of roughly 90 billion barrels of oil, 1669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquid and 22% unexplored oil and natural gas reserves in the world. It is worth noting that, however, let alone exploitation, even discovery of these promising estimations are ambiguous (Dodds, 2010).

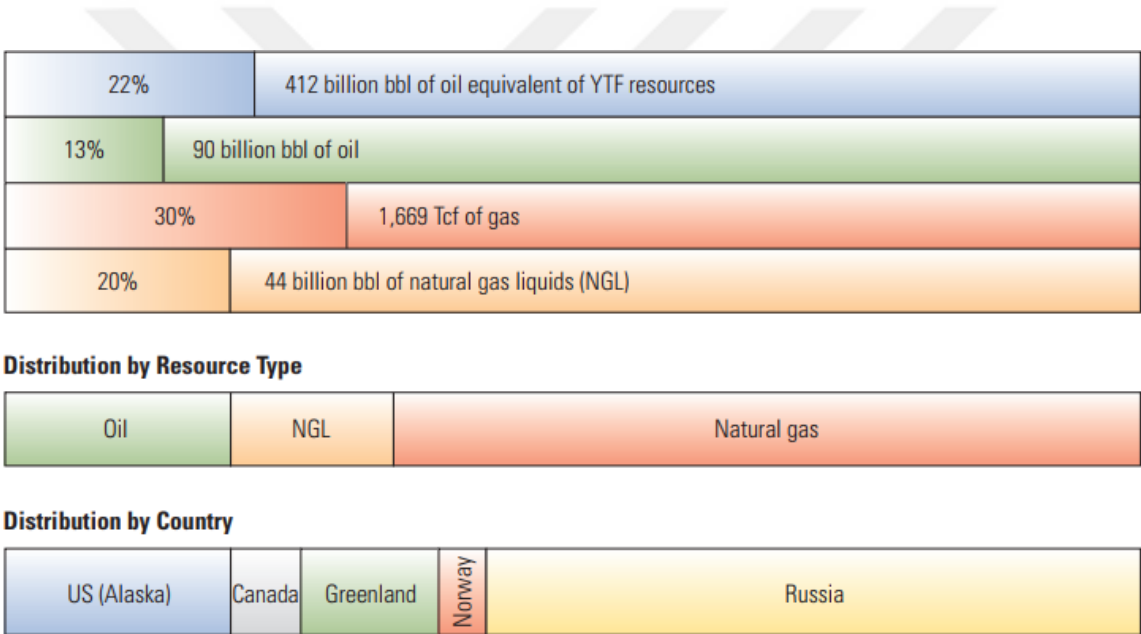


Figure 4 Hydrocarbon Resources by Percentage, Type and Country

Source: Bishop et.al., 2011

The development and potential of discovered and undiscovered oil and gas may differ geographically in the energy landscape of the Arctic. These resources are unevenly distributed and mostly concentrated in the offshore areas in West Siberian, and East Barents Basin as well as in Alaska (USGS, 2008). 84% is expected to be found in offshore areas. Therefore, “undiscovered” or “unproven” reserves are expected to be significant driver for shaping future of the Arctic.

Table 4 Estimated Resources Distribution

Rank	Country	Total estimated resources in oil equivalent (billion barrels)	%
1	Russia	215.94	52
2	USA	83.31	20
3	Norway	47.46	12
4	Denmark	44.49	11
5	Canada	22.08	5

Source: Keil, K., 2013

The energy basins in the Arctic should not be considered only as oil and natural gas resources. The region is also abundant in coal, iron ore, zinc, lead, nickel, precious metals, diamonds and gemstones. Hydroelectric, solar, wave power, geothermal, wind energy, tidal and biomass and biogas are considered as renewable energy resources in the Arctic (Funston, 2009). Resourceful Arctic does also mean exportation of expertise, know-how in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

2. Maritime routes

Further accelerating by thinner ice, reduction in sea ice coverage between 1978-2017 realized by 13% in the Arctic Ocean. This promising access ended up with maritime activities in the region in especially during the northern hemispheric summer season, enabling higher level of shipping activity between the world's most dynamic zones (Ries and Järvenpää, 2011). Given maritime shipping constitutes 80 percent overall global trade worth 14 trillion dollars in 2019 (Statistica, 2021), new routes is one of plausible foray of the newcomers in the region.

Uncertain but supportive estimations suggests that Arctic will be ice-free at the end of 2030's (AMAP, 2017). Bypassing the conventional routes, like Suez Canal and Malacca Street, the NSR and the NWP heralds significant savings both in time and distance reducing 7,400 kilometers maritime distance (Hong, 2018) which is approximately 30% producing less CO₂ emissions (European Parliament, 2018) and more reliable expedition (Lim, 2018) than those of conventional ones. These routes are also the shortest SLOC (Sea Lines of Communications) between North Asia and the North Atlantic (Ries and Järvenpää, 2011).

The estimations show that the NWP and the NSR will be ice-free or more navigable in the relatively near future. Zhang et al. (2013) set forth container traffic through NSR could reach up to 1180 million twenty-foot equivalent units which

coincides with 50% of estimated volumes between the North Pacific and Northwestern Europe. On the other hand, maritime activity through NWP is very modest. The total number of transit through NWP was 33 in 2017 which increased up by 44% compared to the previous year (Levitt, 2019).

According to Conley and Melino (2017) there are several constraints limiting the NSR's potential to navigate. First the NSR offers short shipping season, limited navigable window time (June to September). Second, hazardous expedition conditions results in limited type of ships received Polar Ship Certificate required by the Polar Ship Code to sail through this route. Also, there is lack of schedule reliability for global maritime industry, especially container shipping, operating on just-in-time delivery schedule due to challenging shipping environment which makes more convenient for only bulk goods such as minerals, LNG. In addition, ice floes and tonnage limitations are among other constraints (European Parliament, 2018).

3. Environmental protection

Biodiversity of the region is disappearing at an alarming rate. The reason of why the Arctic warm faster than any region over the past three decades is that as ice melting, ocean surfaces can absorb more heat from the Sun, which is causing multiplication warming. "Arctic Amplification" is the phenomenon put forward to explain that region performing as a refrigerator for the rest of the world is shrinking, it make the region more vulnerable to further melting (NSIDC, 2020).

Overall effects of the results have direct impact on its natural system likewise vegetation shifts leading to carbon cycle changes, marine and northward species shifts and increasing fires. As to impacts on the society; food security, human health are the challenges due to increasing accident rate, climate change related changes of caribous and reindeers migration route and as the very issue of the study access to emerging routes, access to resources as a result of ever-thinning sea ice (ACIA, 2004).

In the Arctic context, the region exposed both globalization and climate change raises catastrophic phenomenon "Arctic Paradox". The region takes the part of global economy, thus, the question regarding whether the unexploited resources need to be utilized or remained become ethical issue in the time when actions should be taken for climate change. According to Palosaari (2019), the more usage of fossil

fuels to get access yet unexploited oil and gas, the greater utilization of the resources in the Region contributes to acceleration of global warming, in return which makes the region a laboratory of the Anthropocene. From this point of view, the author asserts that transformations in the region require a global response to be dealt with rather than just the Arctic states. According to Jarvenpaa and Ries (2017), climate change is one of the trends allowing for greater human activity in the Arctic, which is a laboratory of the Anthropocene, that is, what happening in the Arctic is merely anthropogenic. Therefore, what is at stake in the Arctic is what is at stake for the globe, in other words, developments in the region are of global relevance, developments at the global level are of regional relevance.

The phenomenon we recognize as the Global Warming triggered increasing interests towards the Arctic Region which was merely a frozen wasteland. Changes in the Arctic will in turn affect globe as a result of which release of greenhouse gases and lack of surface reflectivity to absorb even more incoming solar radiation (Screen & Simmonds, 2010). In addition global impact, likewise ocean acidification, changing vegetation and marine food chain are expected at local level.

According to Levin et al. (2012), climate change has four key “super-wicked” dimension. Firstly, as time passed, human communities and ecosystem are badly affected, concordantly, as the development of powerful technologies, it makes contribution to climate change. Secondly, a coordinated global governance system to tackle this issue with reconciliation state-based interests to the global is ever-lacking. Thirdly, seeking for solution to live without greenhouse emissions is dead end. Lastly, short-term benefits of current practices precede future gains amongst the states. Moreover, climate change has been discussed in the context of social justice and sustainability (Mittler, 2014) and climate ethics has been implemented in applied ethics (Rentmeester, 2014).

4. Indigenous peoples

The Arctic Region is home to nearly 4 million inhabitants for thousands of years (Arctic Council, 2021). Circumpolar peoples along with wild life and resources are the very characteristic of the Arctic Region making it different from the Antarctic. Indigenoussness has varied definition and categorization between the Arctic States. While the most common reference is “Alaska Native” in the U.S.,

Russia uses the term “small-numbered people”, Canada defines indigenous peoples as “aboriginal” and “First nations” (Ferris, 2013).

The study (Burnasheva, 2020) shows that the indigenous peoples whose lives definitely are shaped by and through cold itself are the most vulnerable actors to be taken into consideration when talking about the effects of climate change. It is unquestionable that the ways of living from finding fresh water to connection to one another is literally “on thin ice”. What is at stake for these peoples’ altering traditional livelihood, which is up to the preservation of the Arctic environment put them in the spotlight.

Dodds and Nuttall (2019) highlight that the climate change does affect indigenous peoples in different degree, while ones struggle in terms of cultural and economic, ones enjoys promise of economic prosperity. Just as stereotypes about livelihoods and cultures as “traditional”, “vulnerable” is misleading so that kind of general assumptions are misperceptions as well. In case Alaska, there are many native corporations perfectly capable negotiate and build relationships with companies, organizations and the other actors.

Increased military presence and exercise, higher for control of territory, oil and gas exploration taking place their historical lands lead to environmental, societal, cultural risks. Any of these activities should be undertaken by consent of the peoples. Therefore, not only should they be considered as objects of protection but also actors having a say in the region with wider recognition (Heinämäki, 2016). The reality, however, does not as it is assumed. The indigenous peoples historically are not included in even drawing maps, naming places. Because the borders are drawing in the way passing through societies and their traditional practices, food and health insecurity they faced, search and rescue services they need are also relevant, which Klimenko (2018) argues as land fragmentation, in the indigenous lands.

Indigenous peoples are represented in the Arctic Council as permanent participants, which is distinct membership positioned above many observer organizations. However, the fact that indigenous peoples are not included Council's decision-making processes and that the decisions are taken by the states shows that the states are still the most powerful actors in Arctic-specific issues. Six Indigenous Peoples’ organizations as following:

- Arctic Athabaskan Council
- Aleut International Association
- Gwich'in Council International
- Inuit Circumpolar Council
- Russian Arctic Indigenous Peoples of the North
- Saami Council





III. CHINA'S BURGEONING INTEREST AND MOTIVATIONS IN THE ARCTIC REGION

The Arctic is the region over which the repercussions of the climate change and globalization overthrow the recognition of the region considered as a “distinctive”, id est, out of the global affairs. Unusual melting of the icecap as a result of climate change has prompted the global aspirations towards the vulnerable geography warming at nearly two times more than the global average. What brought the once frozen and hardly addressed as region to the global consciousness is both risks and opportunities.. Although profitability of exploitation and extraction is still contentious, these figures are more than enough to catch global scrutiny. China is one of the these countries engaging in the Region.

A. Understanding Ever-Increasing Chinese Interest to the Region

From China's perspective, the Arctic Region, like the Antarctic Region, belongs to common wealth of humankind which means any state can engage in scientific, resource development activities and shape the future of the region. The Arctic Region holding natural resources, scientific research sites and key waterways is of importance for China to reclaim its international power and prestige. Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kong Xuanyou highlighted that China not interfere but, at the same time not being absent from the Arctic affairs in the press conference of White Paper (State Council Information Office, 2018). Therefore, China is eager to be part of any cross-regional or global activities in the Region provided it is based on international law and the respective national regulations under the commitment to promote cooperation. Since the Russians planted the flag on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean in 2007, Chinese strategic thinkers have become interested in the geopolitics of the Arctic. However, this view took alarmist approaches from the mass media and academic researches.

It is worth highlighting how China perceives the World. The vertical map emphasizes the significance of the oceans and polar regions used by State Oceanic

Administration for Arctic and Antarctic since 2004 and People's Liberation Army (PLA) since 2006 (Brady, 2017). To make sure significance of world oceans and polar regions, this map conceptualizes the Arctic Ocean as center and Chinese territory at the bottom of the new order by standing out from the standard vision of the traditional world map.

Placing itself in this new world order, China pushes away Europe and the U.S. remapping the world which demonstrates the World Island domination. Visualization of the new map ensures pragmatism, assertiveness and collaborative strategies that show China's "Realpolitik" from its own geographical perspective (Brady, 2017). This understanding enables us to grasp the strategic implications of the BRI and China's great polar power assertiveness. The map also coincides with what Mackinder's "World Island" (the Eurasian-African landmass), that is, the relationship between geography and history. It is directly the politics of maps. Maps are cultural, historical and political, not necessarily to be geographically accurate. Therefore, China's geopolitical thinking highlights maritime policy and connection.

China published its White Paper, long-awaited policy paper, in 2018. The paper clearly set forth Chinese assertiveness in the region by proposing principles, objectives, priorities (State Council Information Office, 2018). White paper is a combining form of speeches given by Zhang Ming in 2015 and President Xi Jinping in 2017 (Conley, 2018). Kobzera asserts (2019) that the reason of publication the White Paper is based on firstly strengthening of Xi Jinping's power. Secondly, the timing was appropriate for avoiding alarmist approaches to its involvement after accomplishment of relatively scientific and economic experience and capabilities which made the intention reasonable. Then, the Arctic Silk Road is preferably announced in the paper as a way for development of the Arctic. It is a consolidation of the Arctic engagement grand state initiative with the collaboration of the Arctic States. Arctic Silk Road, therefore, is not a plan, it is a mechanism including dialogue and cooperation inside. The White Paper can be deemed as manifestation of Chinese involvement in the regional issues which should not be decided by the Arctic countries themselves, rather, the decision making should be included the overall interests of the international community.

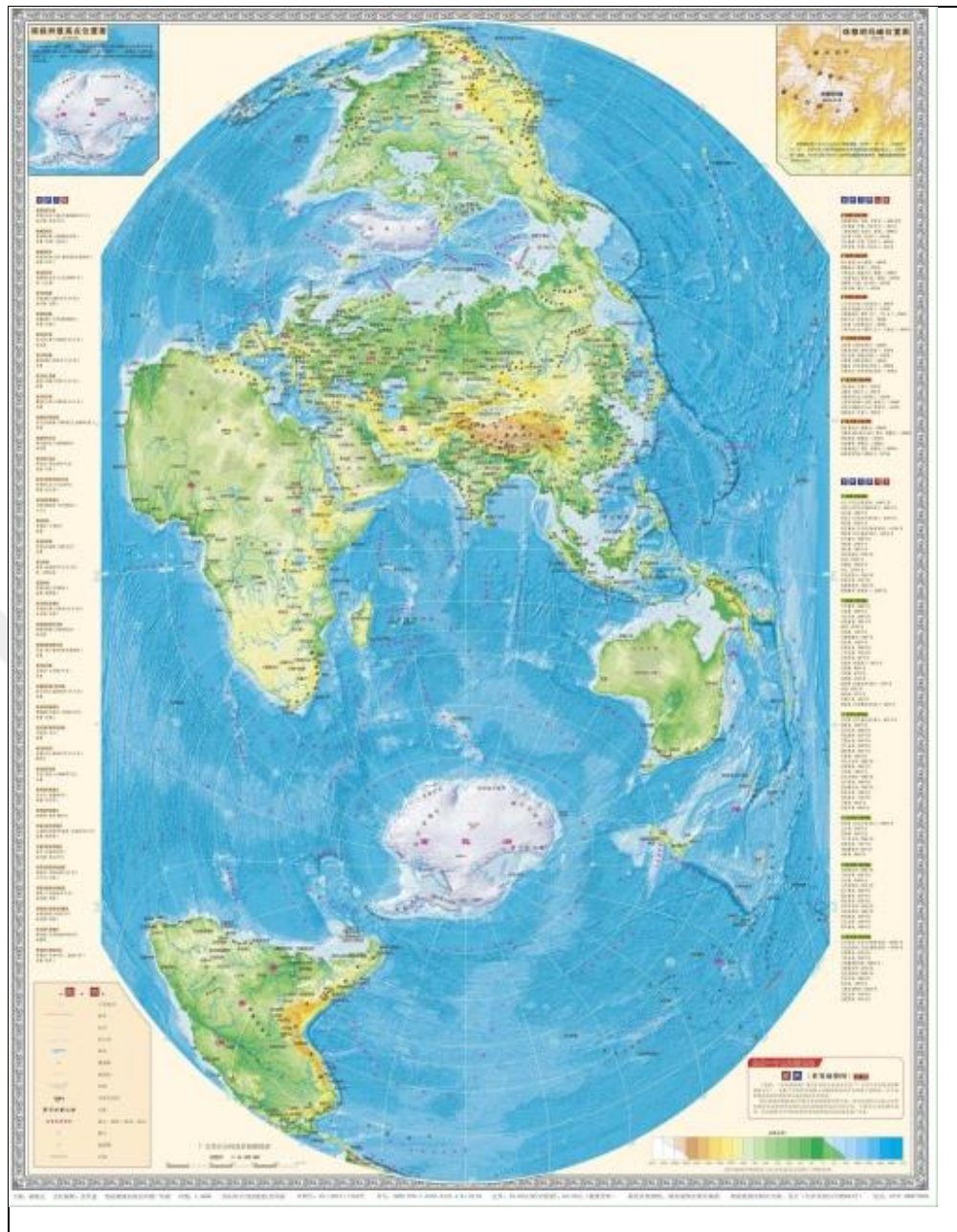


Figure 5 Vertical Map

B. Ideology and Strategic Drivers behind the Arctic Involvement

When considered China's vertical map adopted by the PLA, the high importance for understanding the political mapping to shape the perceptions becomes clear.

China-centered world also highlights centrality of the Arctic, the other oceans. This interconnection also highlights China's maritime strategy, foreign policy. Besides, this visionary of the globe was how the oceans connect the world as re-imagining China at the hearth of the world.

Whatever called “aspiration”, “expectation”, “ambition” or “threat”, China successfully has been embedding its Arctic Dream into Chinese Dream, which are spelled out in the White Paper, avoiding that it covets the North Pole, but rather playing by the rules of the game. This comes to that China is on the verge of the transition from an Arctic “outsider” to an Arctic “player”, which the thesis claims its proactivity. China's activities in the Arctic are inextricably linked to the country's overall strategy, the nature of which has changed since Xi Jinping came to power. The idea of the “Chinese dream” or “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” has become a symbol of the new course of domestic and foreign policy. This has given rise to large-scale initiatives, which include the Asia-Pacific plans, as well as its grand strategy, the BRI project. The White Paper (The State Council Information Office, 2018) intertwined Chinese dream with its Arctic policies by bringing its grand strategy the One Belt One Road Initiative with the Polar Silk Road.

China's Arctic triumphs contributes to the party's narrative of patriotism and ethnic pride, as Karaca (2012) stressed, diversification of energy trade and routes is not only for continuation of the economic development, also for continuation of the party itself and promoting national development. It is worth noting that, the years that the scholar conducted its study, China maintained this partnership only with the less developed or developing countries as a part of realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which paved the way for idea of its grand strategy, the BRI. The initiative is about the fear of choke points and the desire to strengthen China's control over sea lines of communication.

Under Xi leadership and Party strategies, acceleration of foreign political influence, and declaration of “new era” in 2017 China's With the Arctic and its burgeoning presence, China definitely took it times for “understand the status quo”. In order to avoid foreign public opinion towards its activities, China needs time to make required psychological adjustments and ease suspicions and meticulously performs its role. When taking into consideration China's observer application to the Arctic Council rejected 3 times owing to the same concerns, China creates positive international image and neutralization of misconceptions in order to avoid “Chinese Threat rhetoric”, which is a way of demonizing China.

As a part of great rejuvenation of the country, China calls for joint efforts of Chinese people at home and abroad. Based on China's strategies to influence

foreign/domestic audience and enhance the activities which could enhance the policies, efforts to manage community groups, media. As a party's propaganda system, China rehearsals its scientists for its discursive power, not scientific manners required but the governance whatever could be reiterated publicly over constructed scripts. By educating the people on the importance of the Polar Regions with their increasing consent with the help of the state's ideological apparatuses, China put these affairs as a national pride (Brady, 2017).

C. China's Rights in the Arctic Region

China is currently utilizing and can further develop the rights herein mentioned below (Brady, 2017),

- Accessing Arctic waters for scientific, transportation and fishing purposes.
- Enjoying observer status in the Arctic Council, leading intergovernmental forum in the region.
- Utilization cross-Arctic air routes
- Participation international decision-making processes under international governance
- Engaging in scientific and economic activities in the Svalbard islands
- Claiming mineral rights and other economic opportunities as well as deep-sea mineral exploration licenses in international waters.

Table 5 Activity Timeline

Year	Event
1925	Ratification of the Spitsbergen Treaty
1951	First Arctic Research with the Soviets
1964	Establishment of the State Oceanic Administration (SOA)
1882	Chinese scientists take part in First International Polar Year
1995	First Chinese expedition to the North Pole
1996	Establishment China Arctic and Antarctic Administration (CAA)
1996	Taking a seat at International Arctic Science Committee
1999	Dispatching Snow Dragon on first Arctic expedition
2001	Establishment temporary research station (.China Yilite-Morning) Arctic Scientific Expedition and Research Station on Svalbard, Norway
2004	Establishment Arctic Yellow River Station on Svalbard, Norway

Table 5 (con) Activity Timeline

Year	Event
2007	Granted temporary observer status on the Arctic Council
2013	Granted observer status on the Arctic Council China completes its first passage through the Northwest Passage via Yong Sheng
2014	Promulgation to be a “polar great power” for the first time Issued a navigation guide to the Northern Sea Route region
2015	Announcement the polar regions, the deep seabed and outer space as China’s new strategic frontiers
2016	Xue Long sets off on seventh Arctic expedition (COSCO)
2016	Launch of the construction of the first Chinese-built nuclear-powered icebreaker Launch of Polar research vessel Snow Dragon (<i>Xue Long</i>) 2 based on a Chinese-Finnish design
2017	<i>Snow Dragon I</i> crossed the Central Arctic Area for the first time China begins Yamal LNG project China officially proposes Polar Silk Road
2018	CCP reshuffle integrates Arctic and maritime policy within geopolitical strategy making
2018	Chinese Arctic Policy White Paper announces the Polar Silk Road

Source: EU Parliament, 2018; Bowman and Xu, 2020

D. Arctic Identity Building

China’s burgeoning interests and motivations have a direct impact on its identity building process. China’s identity building related to the Arctic Region needs better understanding in order to scrutinize how China canalizes this tool into the policies because it is the central success of China to be accepted as a player in the region (Lanteigne, 2020) or at least not unwelcomed. Given that the identity building has dual processes by the actor itself creation and direction and the other actors, China is conscious that it should avoid backlash and misconceptions of the international community as an observer which is continuously observed. China launched itself under robust Arctic identifications, as an example, White Paper (2018) reiterates China as an “Actor”, “Participant”, “Builder”, “Wisdom Sharer”.

As Wishnick (2017) pointed out, the interpretation of many analysts for signing of the Svalbard Treaty is showing China’s longstanding in the region and it constitutes a normative for China’s involvement. First of all, China needs to create a positive global attitude towards its involvement in the Arctic Region in order to legitimize its presence. The most effective way for China to do so, is to claim the region as international rather than regional. To create international image by

avoiding “China threat” or undue restrictions, the main objective of China is to be considered as peaceful, cooperative and indispensable partner. At the same time, it establishes both hard and soft power. Hard power means polar capacity and soft power means being accepted by the other states and legitimizing its presence with fortification bilateral and multilateral relationships (Brady, 2017). Following this, in the White Paper (2018), it is stated that the Arctic Region holds importance for “interests of the international community... and the shared future for mankind”. “Shared future for mankind”, however, is the discourse that China uses any other region that it has interests in the world (European Parliament, 2018). Additionally, “Shared future for mankind” and “common heritage of humanity” is a discursive strategy for non-regional states participation in the Region. China also uses “window for observing global warming” concept referring to the Arctic in domestic discourse (Andersson, 2021). It’s noting that while China uses “Shared future of mankind” become relevant when it interacts with the Asian states, the “Common Heritage” is a discourse being used as collaborating the Arctic countries (Kobzeva, 2019).

Referring that the environmental changes impacts on its climate, “Near-Arctic State” is one of the concepts that China uses in order to legitimize its presence and have a say in the region without exclusion. Along with “Arctic Stakeholder”, these self-defined Arctic identities positions Chinese involvement as acceptable and collaborative partner rather than an outsider on the ground of “one of the continental States closest to the Arctic” (State Council Information Office, 2018). “Responsible polar power” is the rationale to be part of the development of the region and be accepted by the actors without undue restrictions. China preferably uses this concept also protecting non-regional states’ rights.

China as “great polar power” first-ever mentioned by Chinese scientists in 2005, the year after polar officials revealed their desire to increase research activities, was publicly announced in 2013 as a part of its maritime strategy. Xi Jinping, in 2014, stated that the country would be one of the polar great powers, embedding this key aim into its maritime strategy, which is indirectly reassurance its global power status and national interests (Brady, 2017). Therefore, “polar power” or “polar great power” are the concepts showing China’s ambition. China meticulously picks political terminology when it addressed controversial issues and to be accepted by other actors by pursuing comprehensive approach. This approach, consequently,

includes diplomatic channels, economic involvement, governance which deepens its footprint with the heritage and background of science diplomacy and linkages it produces.

E. China's Interest towards the Arctic Region

1. Interests in governance

Governance of the Arctic is complex because the existing national regulations, international regulation and binding agreements pertaining to the Arctic can be applied to the region. Additionally, there is not a single treaty like Antarctic Treaty applied to the Arctic. The Arctic Council is an important and pioneer actor dealing with broad range Arctic related issues, yet the council has limited power.

China is not an Arctic State. However, without challenging status quo in the region, China desires to be an Arctic partner and player. Although China's roots in the region is dated back to Svalbard Treaty, in 1925, it is not until 2006 that China applied for the observer status in the Arctic Council, the prominent forum in the region. China was granted observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013 after 3 attempts which are rejected. As an observer, China pledged to respect sovereignty and sovereign rights and jurisdiction of the Arctic States in the Region (Kiruna Declaration, 2013).

Gaining observer status is the only formal access to take part in the governance for China. However, while this status also gives China inferior and weak position due to absence of voting, it eventually has the power of influence on agenda-setting or proposing its own ideas and norms in the governance or lobbying with the states to support China's interests (Brady, 2017). Its position from norm-taker to norm-maker is basically based on this status (Koivurova et al., 2019). "To promote sound governance", China emphasizes upholding law-based stewardship with the all participants in the Region (State Council Information Office, 2018).

There is strong emphasizes in the White Paper that China abides by International law and regional governance. Besides, there is clear differentiation between regional and non-regional state's rights over the areas belong to the global commons as common heritage of humanity. That means that the Arctic concerns the world in the field of challenges it faces like climate change, and the new

opportunities it offers like shipping lines which is directly impact on global trade and resources which are the same direct impact on global energy demand. While “Common heritage of the humankind” was misunderstood and alarmist views for China seizing control over the region, that is the way that China efforts to acknowledge internationalization of the region and China’s tactic to get international support rather than monopolization of the seabed by the other littoral actors.

a. Pathways to the Arctic: Law Regulations

Along with the Svalbard Treaty, there are substantial documents that China is a party legitimizes Chinese involvement in the region that further positions to promote its national interests in the Region where China’s entity finds legitimate ground of itself.

- The UN Charter, Article 52, provides any regional arrangement to lend countenance to international security and peace. This charter impedes monopolization of the Arctic Council over the region.
- The UNCLOS, Article 77, provides the coastal state to claim sovereign rights in the region, but definitely, not sovereignty. Further, the Article 234, scientific evidence.
- The Polar Code

China, also, supports strong legal framework and situates itself in norm-maker position. China played active role in Polar Code and the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic. As Lantaigne depicts (2020), supporting legal mechanisms gives China greater visibility and voice in regional debates. It can be seen in the press conference of the White Paper. Kong Xuanyou reassured “protection, respect and development” regarding international governance in the Arctic. (State Council Information Office, 2018). Protection stands for the fundamental legal international framework reiterating that the UN Charter, UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Spitsbergen Treaty are enough sufficient and proved to be effectivity of the governance system. Respect shows prominence of this cooperative international mechanism, while development is achievement of steady and orderly development of international governance.

Also it continuously enhances dialogues with subgovernmental and nongovernmental actors. Moreover, strong emphasis on international law, China adopts a key player position in the Arctic affairs (Koivurova, 2018). In the White Paper, China's commitment to participation Arctic affairs in accordance with law-based governance and international cooperation and global governance requirement emphasize internationalization of the governance, whereas the Ilulissat Declaration, - was an indicator that there is no need international regulation applied to the region, was endorsement of Arctic Regionalism. Because the observer status should be renewed every 4 years, China retains its modest and status quo position in the region (European Union Parliamentary, 2018) without intervening any disputes occurring between the states.

Table 6 Engagement Layers

	Governmental Dimension	Economic Dimension	Scientific Dimension
Supranational	Arctic Council	Arctic Circle	International Arctic Science Committee University of the Arctic United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
International		Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Asian Forum on Polar Sciences China-Nordic Arctic Research Center Pacific Arctic Group
National	Chinese Arctic and Antarctic Administration State Oceanic Administration/Ministry of Natural Resources	China Development Bank	Chinese Academy of Sciences Polar Research Institute of China

Source: Bowman& Qingchao, 2020

As table showing, China has multifaceted layers and formal venues to involve the Arctic affairs. The importance of these organizations is maintenance of Chinese inclusive strategies and create the dialogue between the states. Consequently, China fortifies its “norm-maker” status in the region (Lanteigne, 2020).

According to Kobzeva (2019), the actors shaping Chinese policies can be

divided into 3 groups as following:

- State agencies: Interagency Coordinating Mechanism on Arctic Affairs and the State Oceanic Administration, Chinese Advisory Committee for Polar Research
- Business: CNPC, CNOOC, Sinopec, China National Bluestar, China Investment Cooperation, Sinosteel, COSCO.
- Soft power actors: Scientific institutions, tourist agencies, museums, media, cultural initiatives.

As for China and Indigenous Peoples in the Governance, There is a tacit agreement between the Arctic states that indigenous people should be taken into consideration in any action which impacts their livelihoods. As China reiterates several times “respect” rights, sovereignty of the Arctic states as its key basis for engagement in Arctic issues, indigenous people’s rights are not mentioned in the White Paper.

In one hand China asserts that legitimate interests of local residents including indigenous peoples should be paid regard (State Council Information Office, 2018), on the other hand, in the eyes of investors, negotiation with local residents on the investments and project would be restricting (Koivurova et al., 2019). Opening the region in terms of tourism, resource development definitely requires conservation of indigenous people’s way of living and environment. More attention is needed on maintaining the integrity and vitality of existing ecosystems upon which the Arctic indigenous peoples are so dependent.

2. Interests in Polar Research: Advancing scientific research for strategic purposes

China’s scientific interests in the Arctic region are relatively not new phenomenon (Koivurova et al., 2019). China has long interest and active engagement in polar research compared to the other areas of engagements by enjoying its rights originating Spitsbergen Treaty, which enables China liberal entry. The treaty also utilizes for justification for its current involvement in the Arctic affairs. Before this treaty, historical records show several expeditions to the Region (Hong, 2020).

Starting off its way to Arctic on geoscientific research, China has long been suffered from ‘airpocalypses’ (Zou et.al., 2017) and flooding (Kimmelman, 2017) which threaten domestic political stability caused by primarily climate change. As of 1990, China embarked on scientific activities and climate researches more than Antarctic due to direct impact on its weather.

According to Huang et.al. (2015), China’s largest database search engine Wanfang Data shows that 49% of the articles published before 2008 are all related to climatologic issues where those of 23% was biodiversity, 10% was environment, %10 was technology, 8% was discussed on linguistic and nations. This shows that the Arctic was nothing about political issues for the China but scientific area. China also embarked on social science researches with growing number of Polar Research Institute established several universities, supporting researches to study in this area (Holroyd, 2020) like Shanghai Jiaotong University, Fudan University and Wuhan University (Lackenbauer et.al., 2018).

Two goals “understand” and “protect” of the Arctic Policy underlines how China acknowledge the importance and requirement of improving capability of scientific research. Underlying reason that encourages China to be ambitious for polar research has international and domestic basis. In the White Paper (State Council Information Office, 2018), protecting environment, ecosystem and addressing climate change are indicated as China’s priority in the Region. China also stresses the importance of deepening the exploration of the Arctic.

In this paper, China is committed to:

- Reduce marine pollution.
- Improve Arctic environment.
- Raise the environmental responsibility awareness.
- Strengthen protection of migratory birds.
- Conducts research on migration patterns.
- Improve the Arctic ecological system
- Find out linkages between Arctic and global climate change
- Imminent prediction of risks on Arctic environment

- Advancing Arctic cryospheric sciences

Table 7 Timeline of China's Scientific Engagement

Year	Event
1925	Republic of China signs Spitsbergen Treaty
1951	First Chinese participation in Soviet research in the Arctic
1964	State Oceanic Administration (SOA) is established, with a brief to 'engage in polar expeditions in the future
1987	Chinese Journal of Polar Research journal was published under Chinese Academy of Sciences
	China Institute for Marine Affairs (CIMA) established under the SOA
1990	Chinese scientists paid visit to the North Pole and planted flag
1993	Xue Long (Snow Dragon) was purchased
1995	First expedition to the North Pole
	China's Polar Information Centre created
1996	China joined International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)
	Founded in 1981, The National Antarctic Expedition Committee Office was renamed as the China Arctic and Antarctic Administration (CAA)
1999	CAA dispatches Xue Long on first Arctic expedition
2001	Opening of the temporary research station China Yilite-Morning Arctic Scientific Expedition and Research Station on Svalbard, Norway
2003	Second Arctic Expedition
2004	Opening of permanent Arctic Yellow River Station on Svalbard, Norway
2005	China hosted the Arctic Science Summit Week
2009	The Arctic Strategic Research Department within the PRIC established
2010	the Polar Law and Politics Research Institute established
2013	China completes its first passage through the Northwest Passage via Yong Sheng
	China-Nordic Arctic Research Centre established
2016	Xue Long sets off on seventh Arctic expedition (COSCO)
2016	launch of the construction of the first Chinese-built nuclear-powered icebreaker
	polar research vessel <i>Xue Long 2</i> based on a Chinese-Finnish design
2017	<i>Xue Long</i> crosses the Central Arctic Area for the first time
	China begins Yamal LNG project
	China officially propose Polar Silk Road
2018	China's second research base The China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory (CIAO) was opened
2019	Construction of Xue Long 2 was completed

Chinese State Oceanic Administration (SOA) was founded in 1964 after tremendous effort of a meteorologist, Zhu Kezhen, who believed that the health of Chinese environment completely linked with health of the Polar Regions, which can be regarded as today's arguments of China (Hong, 2020). SOA was in charge of organization the polar expeditions, however, there was some cleavages of the working of the Administration because of Cultural Revolution, but after a decade the administration functioned well. As it can be seen China's footprints in the Polar

Activities, it is seriously prompted by the foundation of Chinese Polar Research Institute and China began fortification its polar programs beyond the Antarctica. The CAA's functions are to determine national strategies on polar issues, to formulate the laws, standards, to organize research activities of the CHINARE, to participate in the international affairs and organizations on polar research. The PRIC is also responsible for scientific and technological studies, environmental monitoring, operation of vessels and stations. The Arctic Strategic Research Department within the PRIC established in 2009, as an indicator of increasing Arctic interests (Lackenbauer et.al., 2018). Academic institution building processes can be seen from the table which is fortified especially in 21th century.

1990's were the years that both scientific institutions' and commercial activities with the Arctic states, research cooperation began on the institutional and civilian scale, semi-official in nature. As the interaction between institutes and civil groups with the government increased, achievements of scientific research increased as well and expeditions bear fruit (Hong, 2020). Meanwhile, China's properties expanded as well. Xue Long (the Snow Dragon), Russian made icebreaker was purchased from Ukraine in 1993, replaced with the Polar which was dispatched for the Antarctic expeditions (Koivurova et al., 2019). The Snow Dragon made its first Arctic expedition in 1999 conducting substantive scientific research under three topics aiming at firsthand data (Hong, 2020):

- The role of the Arctic in global climate change and its impact on China's climate
- Influences of the water mass exchanges
- Influences of the ecosystem and biological resources in the Arctic on fisheries in China

The second Arctic expedition with roughly similar aims organized by the SOA and supported by the Snow Dragon again recorded the world's largest Arctic expedition with the highest number of foreign participants from different disciplines which made the expedition more advanced methods and greater international impact in 2003. Another importance of the expedition is that made-in-China robots were used to collect information sea-ice thickness that cannot be achieved before. Another record was set in 2012 by the Snow Dragon, passing through the Arctic Ocean

(Hong, 2020).

As a result of achievement of these expeditions, China now is ready for further development in polar research, in depth future expeditions. These expeditions are of importance for popularizing Chinese presence in the region in the eyes of domestic and international audiences by receiving coverage in the international and national media. Passing the Arctic Ocean with China flag was also an implication for possibilities of expeditions outside of the EEZ whenever the circumstances of sea-ice allow (Koivurova et al., 2019). The route is also deemed as a future shipping lane for Chinese exports (Lackenbauer et.al., 2018). Attaching great importance by the SOA, Participating the International Polar Year (including the first held from 1882 to 1883 and the second from 1932 to 1933) offered China opportunity to go clear itself and its interests against international alarmist perceptions.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan between 2001-2005 aimed to boost polar expeditions and proposed establishing an expedition station. In 2002, compiled by the SOA, Master Plan on Building Chinese Arctic Expedition Station stipulated establishing the station in Svalbard (Hong, 2020). Finally, China opened its first research base, Yellow River Station including the world's largest space physics observatory, in Svalbard in 2004. Denomination of the station was also interesting. Through the online solicitation, many netizens participated in the voting selected "The Yellow River"; the Yellow River is the mother river that gave birth to the Chinese nation, it is of great significance. This success turned over a new leaf in its polar scientific research and expeditions fortifying its long-term presence.

As it stated in the White Paper (2018), availability and existence of the polar technical equipment operating in the region and actively participating improvement infrastructure is indispensable for China to maintain its activities. As China expanded its polar researches, the Snow Dragon began not to meet the needs. In 2009, the government also announced home-made icebreaker designed for scientific research which was completed in 2019 in cooperation with Finnish shipbuilding firm, the Snow Dragon 2. The Snow Dragon 2 is way advanced and capable than the Snow Dragon 1 and such a mobile platform will enable China to conduct deep seabed exploration to advance its capability for mineral resource exploration, mapping sea bed for submarines without any sovereignty issue (Sharma, 2020). Furthermore, China released its interest in nuclear powered icebreaker in cooperation with Russia

(Eiterjord, 2018).

In 2012, Framework Agreement on Arctic Cooperation between Iceland and China signed, China proposed to build the second Arctic research station. The China-Iceland Joint Aurora Observatory (CIAO) was officially opened in 2018, operating as China's second science station (Koivurova et al., 2019). In order to forficate science exchange between Nordic institutions and universities, in 2013 China-Nordic Arctic Research Centre (CNARC), track-two platform, is established and now working in coordination with 17 institutes to provide a platform for scholarly cooperation (China-Nordic Arctic Research Centre, 2021). The center is bringing Chinese, Russian, American, Finnish, Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian scientists, entrepreneurs and politicians together. Other China's research facility is iceberg stations, that enables China to avoid sovereignty issues. China also established ground receiving stations for its satellites in 2010, remote-sensing ground receiving station at Kiruna, in 2015 and using ice robots, drones, and underwater robotic submarines (Brady, 2017). What is more, with this facility, China can receive satellite datum from all over the world (Sharma, 2020). China also expressed its interest in construction third research station in Greenland (Sørensen, 2019).

As a member of the International Arctic Science Committee and the Ny-Ålesund Science Managers Committee, China's engagements in international cooperation and initiations various projects are increasing as well. 6th Korean Arctic scientific research was conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Marine Research of Norway and University of China scholars in 2015. China also attended expeditions conducted by the U.S., Germany and Canada. In 2016 Sino-Russian Polar Engineering Research Centre established. In 2018, China also joined the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. Trym Eiterjord's study finds that Chinese experts welcome the Polar Code as a binding international law instrument that, in many ways, supports Beijing's globalist vision of the Arctic. In order to use the NSR without any permission littoral states, it is a priority for China to take a part drafting international law instruments.

Between the developed countries conducting Arctic researches, it would be a national pride for China to be substantial player and partner in the Region and not to be left behind them. Cooperation of several countries is a requirement in a region as the Arctic where one country's capability would not be enough. China joined

International Arctic Science Committee in 1996 to boost its dialogue with key Arctic Stakeholders. In due course so much China secured its position in the Arctic science dialogue that it became a partner that cannot be excluded from climate science (Willis & Depledge, 2015).

China conducted several expeditions using its icebreaker ship and research vessel Xue Long, the world's largest non-nuclear icebreaker, and involved in international science cooperation projects. Table 3.2 shows international participation with the scientists from the world working together in the Arctic expeditions conducted by China between 1999-2017. As it can be seen from the Table Arctic expeditions are usually conducted by mutual participation of the countries. As of 2021, China completed its 12th Arctic expedition (The State Council, 2021).

Table 8 Chinese Arctic Expeditions

Time	Chinese Participants	Number and country of foreign participants
1999/7– 1999/9	86	3 (Russia, Japan, South Korea)
2003/7– 2003/9	96	13 (the US, Canada, Japan, Finland, Korea, Russia)
2008/7– 2008/9	110	12 (IPY plan: France, Finland, Pacific Arctic Group US, Japan, South Korea)
2010/7– 2010/9	116	5
2012/6– 2012/9	116	4 (France, Denmark, Iceland)
2014/7– 2014/9	122	6 (The US, Russia, France, Germany)
2016/7– 2016/9	108	(The US, France)
2016/8– 2016/9	11	20 (Russia)
2017/7– 2017/10	96	3 (Canada)

Source: Sun & Mayer, 2018

China has made tremendous efforts to facilitate the early entry into force and implementation of the Paris Agreement and is committed to the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. After the United States announced its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the international community has hoped for China to take a leadership role in international climate politics; to some extent, China

appears to be willing to assume this role.

China, is also a member of the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf which is mostly dominated by the Asian states. From the Arctic States, only Canada and Russia have scientist in the commission making decisions over delineation the outer limits of continental shelf. Additionally, it has 3 mining contracts with the International Seabed Authority (Brady, 2017) and actively part of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).

China is now actively participating following projects under the auspice of the Arctic Council:

- Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON)
- Actions for Arctic Biodiversity
- Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI)
- Air Pollution, with a Focus on Short-Lived Climate Forcers (SLCFS)

a. The Importance of Scientific Cooperation

China has been seeking to forficate its power and prestige in polar affairs by increasing its high profile and status and quality of polar science projects. Providing that the scientific data has the influence beyond their original realm where the scientists are stakeholders, China is primarily considered as “professional partner” between the Arctic states when it comes to science. Therefore, Sun and Mayer (2018) concludes that science diplomacy of China somewhat created rising level of trust by means of the sharing of resources and infrastructure, personal interactions, science-based institutions and spillover effects. According to Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen (2020), empowering scientific diplomacy between China and Arctic States will construct “Sino-Arctic epistemic communities”, transnational expert network producing knowledge about challenges and solutions. Indeed, the early history of scientific activities with the hands of the government or by self-funded civilians themselves as a scholar is full of cooperation with the institutes on Arctic research, investigation possible routes, expedition management, scientific surveys, investigations on GPS technology, investigation of endangered species some of which ended with unfolding Chinese national flag in the seabed (Hung, 2020). When considered the scientists are maintaining their career working in a specialized field

for long years, protracted personal relations between them enhances trust building and further cooperation. The case of Yang Huien, manager of the CPR, representative of IASC and SCAR, leader the Yellow River Station and acting president of IASC. Even the freezing diplomatic relations period between Norway and China, network among scientists was still continuing and the cooperation was not politicized, Norway did not veto China's application for observer status. It is also noting that the years in the time of absence governmental dialogues between China and Russia, there was scientific partnership between them. Also, Norwegian government highly welcomed partnership with China articulating that China's polar research is the best in the world (Hong, 2018). Likewise the Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in 2015 referred China as a "priority partner" in the areas of science and technology (Wishnick, 2017).

According to Brady (2017), China strategically set its projects according to strategic themes, like climate change (impacts its own environment) and polar resources and governance. Producing pioneering projects and research matter to assert its rights to speak and build partnerships with the states. It is accurate to say relations with Denmark, Finland and Norway may be deemed as this kind of relations. This partnership enables China to get access strategic locations, i.e., its second Arctic Stations based on Iceland, manipulate climate change negotiations or make China more competitive. Therefore, without trying to finding out partners, the partners themselves seek to do so.

3. Interests in shipping: Developing alternative Arctic shipping routes

China, world's leading trading nation and one of the largest economic power, depends on maritime trade by value and volume. China is ranked as the 3rd largest merchant marine fleet comprised 6,197 in the world lagging behind Panama and Indonesia (The World Factbook, 2021). That's why China keeps an eye on any changes in the global trade routes. As a country having six of the world's busiest container ports (Ren, 2019), the emergence of the Polar routes provides China significant advantages and redundancies, which is seen as future "Golden Waterway" of China (Bianji, 2015).

China's Sea Lines of Communications to Western Europe is via the Suez Canal, and the Sea Lines of Communications to the United States is via the

Panama Canal. As well as these routes, China also uses the Malacca, Lombok, Bali, and Miyako straits; the Somali coast. 55% of the China's commerce volume is going through the Malacca Strait. Adding Panama is risky route because of privacy and proximity unstable Middle East region, China should takes out expensive insurance. The chokepoints both are under control of the other states and stability of them is at stake since economic and political difficulties that China cannot intervene, they are contested and inclined to attack (Brady, 2017). Because its dependency on these routes, China is eager to develop new opportunities for sea access and diversify its SLOCs.

Table 9 Distances between Major Ports

Origin–Destination	Panama	Northwest Passage	Northeast Passage	Suez and Malacca
Rotterdam–Shanghai	25,588	16,100	15,793	19,550
Bordeaux–Shanghai	24,980	16,100	16,750	19,030
Marseilles–Shanghai	26,038	19,160	19,718	16,460
Gioia Tauro (Italy)–Hong Kong	25,934	20,230	20,950	14,093
Barcelona–Hong Kong	25,044	18,950	20,090	14,693
New York–Shanghai	20,880	17,030	19,893	22,930
New York–Hong Kong	21,260	18,140	20,985	21,570
Rotterdam–Los Angeles	14,490	15,120	15,552	29,750
Lisbon–Los Angeles	14,165	14,940	16,150	27,225

Emerging new shipping routes also promises to increase Sino-European trade volume from 10% up to 20% (Li et.al., 2014; as cited in Kobzeva, 2019). The new routes definitely leaving the Malacca Strait disrepute as “Malacca Dilemma” through which 55% of the trade passing and Suez Canal behind provides strategic alternatives to China whose economic future is directly impacted by any changes in international shipping.

The utilization of Arctic route will greatly enhance its presence and influence in Arctic affairs and expand new areas of cooperation (Deixi, 2021). However, shipping companies have adopted an offensive development strategy (Huang et al., 2015) and reluctant for Arctic shipping (Deng, 2016) due to logistic and technological challenges. Seen as prominent maritime routes between the Asia, Europe and North America, the Arctic routes raise the question on their profitability since operating ice-breaker ships are costly for maritime transportation. When setting aside these challenges, there are other restrictions ahead shipping development in the

Arctic. According to Hong (2018) there are jurisdictional issues whether the littoral states is to determine clear status of international waters on the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route.

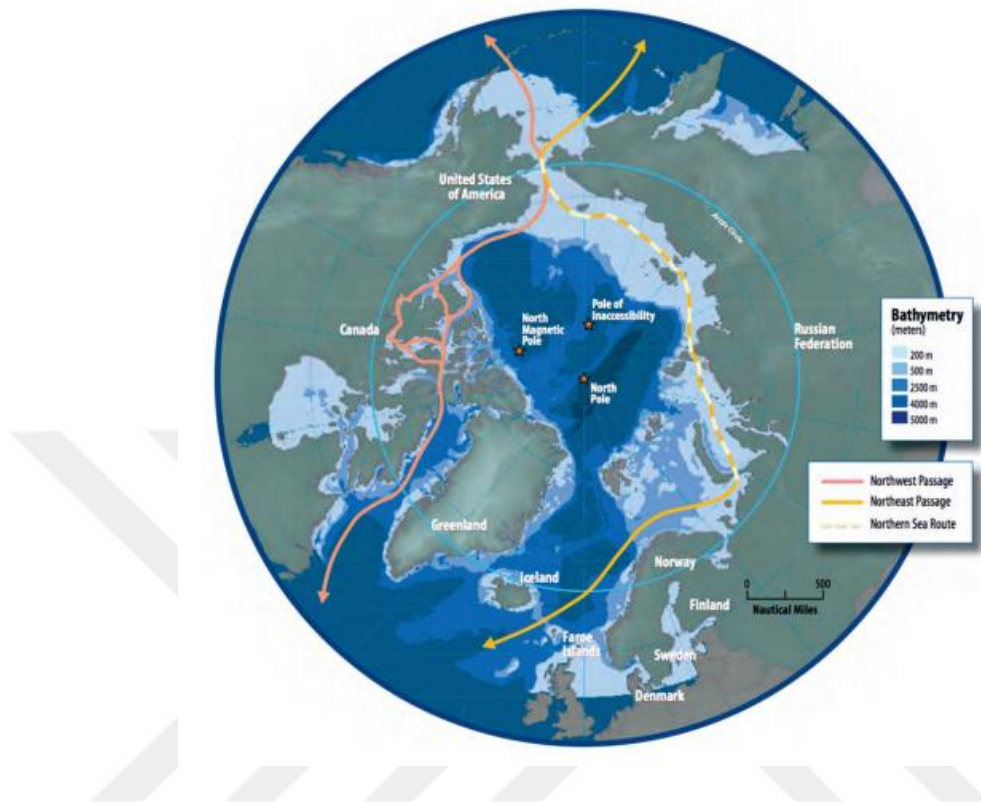


Figure 6 Emerging Passages

Source: Maritime Futures. The Arctic and the Bering Strait Region, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), November 2017, p. 2.

The Arctic Corridor proposed by Norwegian and Finnish governments to extend existing railway system to the Arctic via Norway allowing connectivity between Europe and the Arctic Ocean, the Northern Sea Route and tunnel under the Baltic Sea between Helsinki and Tallinn (Xinhua, 2018) given potential investment from China (Breum, 2018) will stand for shortest route from Asia to Europe boosting Sino-European trade and cooperation (Lim, 2018).

One of the key foreign policy Xi Jinping Initiative is a global the project "One Belt - One Road", which involves development of new routes from China to Europe by land through Eurasia (New Silk Road) and across the southern seas (Maritime Silk Road). Despite general misconception, integration "Polar Silk Road" into the Belt and Road Initiative was advocated as "Polar Silk Road " by Vladimir Putin himself first in order to attract funds, technologies and talents from various

countries to participate in the construction of the Northern Sea Route (Zhenfu et.al., 2019). China announced “Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative”, which connect Northern Europe and East Asia through the Arctic. In the White Paper, Polar Silk Road was officially added to the Belt and Road Initiative as an “integral part” by emphasizing that China shall encourage the enterprises to take part in infrastructure construction for these routes and conduct commercial trial voyages (State Council Information Office, 2018). Polar Silk Road, eventually, will deepen further Chinese integration in the Region.

Alongside Polar Silk Road, China is also making inroads to Data Silk Road, or Digital Silk Road (DSR) embedded its PSR that will provide high speed internet between Europe and Asia through underwater subsea cables (Sharma, 2020) in partnership with Japan and Norway. Sometimes overshadowed, Digital Silk Road is another robust step that China makes into the Arctic. It is well known fact that power is the knowledge in the technologized world and China’s involvement across DSR is to enable its power of intelligent connectivity as well (Khorrami, 2020). Access and control over the data is today’s source of power because tapping the cables enables the countries copy or steal data, espionage activities, cyberattacks in the war time and/or the cables can be legitimate targets. In compare with satellites, they carry over faster and efficient data with high capacity. The grey area of the cable tapping is monopolization of the sector by the hand of private actors like Google, Amazon etc.

The Arctic is suitable for this which is risk-free earthquakes, fisheries or anchor and advantageous to tap shorter cables and lower latency between the continents. China now holds 11% of tapped cables in the world, 24% planned is underway (Wheeler, 2020). DSR is vital for China’s power where the data is the power, transformed from the knowledge. Today sea cables transfer our global telecommunications data (Buchanan, 2018), at the rate of 95 percent of international data, which constitutes a threat for national and hybrid security because there is monopolization of the telecommunications firms, paving way for hacking or sabotage. According to Digital Economy Report 2021, China and the U.S. are the biggest data-driven economies in the world. Therefore, DSR facilitates economic and social development of China by accelerating flow of information, reducing asymmetric information.

As a country 90% goods transported by sea, China definitely takes benefits of the shortest route to save time and cost to decrease its dependence on the Strait of Malacca bypassing important strategic checkpoints to extend that the international law allows and utilizes the routes to boost its export-driven economy. In order to do this, China invests infrastructure projects and research which make China one of the partners of the littoral states. Digital Silk Road can improve China's intelligence gathering capabilities through the NSR and dual-use underwater surveillance capabilities. According to the party, big data is fundamental strategic resource for achieving strategic objectives. DSR also includes the data stored within the border of China which means data localization by China which means control over the flow of the information.

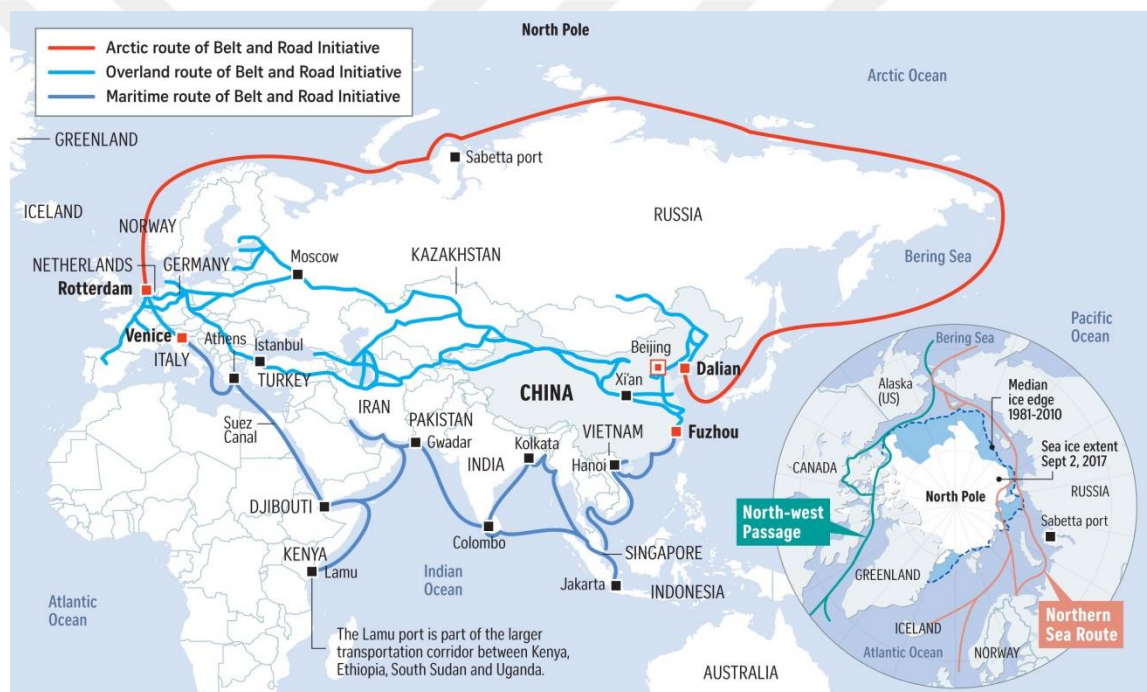


Figure 7 Arctic Route of Belt and Road Initiative

Source: Noi Goh Sui. China's Polar Ambitions Cause Anxiety, *Straits Times*. 20 February 2018.

According to Li et al.(2015), China's strategic objectives pertaining to the Arctic routes can be divided into five main area. Political objectives to be done are to construct "great power diplomacy" network, to reach agreements for comprehensive cooperation, to occupy significant position in the governance. The economic objectives are to build and develop economic cooperation, to shape network of international trade, to construct an international mechanism for responding to

changes in the patterns of international energy trade, to participate in the construction of ports alongside of the navigation routes, to shape maritime industry associations, to increase the volume of energy trade with the Arctic nations. The energy objectives are to strengthen energy cooperation with the states that have the same demands for rights and interests in the Arctic energy resources, to participate in the construction of energy transportation infrastructure along the BRI, to go green in developing Arctic energy resources. Technological objectives are to construct a perfected system for protecting the foundation of scientific research, to construct a collective system for research and development into Arctic navigation routes, to shape and form an international network of technological cooperation for Arctic navigation routes, to foster and educate large groups of new talent regarding Arctic navigation routes, to get a grip on the technology for environmental protection. Legal objectives are to respond to applicable parts in current world legal norms, to push for the formulation of norms for ships and shipping in Arctic navigation routes, to participate in the construction of environmental protection statutory systems in the Arctic, to participate in the institution of a statutory system for Arctic navigation route governance.

With the declaration of Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative in 2017, China added two passages to the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road by placing the Arctic Ocean as a central route in China's larger BRI. This integration advance Arctic related cooperation under a grandiose action plan (BRI) which is based on Chinese goals and principles, later indicated in the White Paper related to Arctic to build a "Polar Silk Road", and facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic, further develop Arctic industries, including Arctic shipping. In the white paper, Chinese Arctic policies are described as complementary policies for its grandiose strategy, BRI. As a non-regional country, China's interest depends on its changing ecosystem as a result of climate change whose effects is happening a way faster in the Arctic than any other region in the world as well.

4. Interests in Resource Development

Exploring and exploiting massive reservoir of untapped and undiscovered energy resources found in quantity as oil, gas and mining resources in the Arctic are inevitably intertwined with development of the Arctic shipping. Concentrating in the offshore areas, 30% undiscovered gas (44 billion barrels) and 13% of global oil

reserves (90 billion barrels) are situated (USGS, 2008) which unleashed new discourses associated with “Arctic Scramble” (Filimonova, 2013), “Arctic gold rush,” (Borgerson, 2008) and more. International Energy Outlook (2011) pointed out that energy consumption would increase by 53% between 2008-2035. Leading Asian economies are major driver of the demand. The Region is also abundant in minerals and rare earth elements like gold, iron, nickel; titanium, cobalt, copper most of which China imports for manufacturing of modern technology (Sharma, 2020).

As Brady (2017) asserted, it was only 1970’s that Chinese scholars began investigations polar resources like the U.S.A drew detailed minerals map in 1974 on the Antarctic resources. The resources are directly linked with China’s energy security. In order to enhance this security, exploration and exploitation is important. Dominated electricity producer is coal, as %70, reserves will meet the demand following 80 years, however, the shift from coal to petroleum-nuclear energy will be realized. It is estimated that the resources will provide up 60% of the state’s ever-growing need for fuel (Kobzeva, 2019). On the other hand, Chinese official and researchers admit that the 88% of the resources located in the sovereign territory of the Arctic States (Brady, 2017), if all submission is accepted by the CLCS (Hong,2020), which make China more assertive about its engagement on resource development in order to diversify its energy need. Additionally, it is also important for China to control over emerging maritime routes. The CAA is placed under auspices of the Ministry of Natural Resources is an indicator how China perceives the Arctic important for utilization of resources (Hong, 2020).

As resource development is accomplished in the region as to ongoing need for external energy supplies, China enhances energy security by all odds. Article 136 and 137 of UNCLOS make resource development in the area beyond jurisdiction of any littoral states vested in mankind possible. Provided that all exploration and exploitation of natural resources shall be in accordance with the provision of UNCLOS, non-Arctic states shall engage in resource development through cooperation because CLCS is not announced yet (Hong, 2018), therefore, non-littoral states shall lay claim to resource access (Hong, 2020). Cooperation is the only way to utilize these resources.

Sanctions imposed on Russia especially in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 were the breakdown for cooperation on the development of oil, gas and

mineral deposits which lead to Sino-Russian cooperation on primarily investment and financing of oil/energy projects (Astaknova et al., 2014). Strategic benefit of partnership is more likely to continue because as Russia is in need of Chinese investments so China is in need of Russian partnership to grasp the opportunities in the region (Wishnick, 2017). As a result of Russian resource oriented policies, China has the opportunity to meet diversification of energy supply. State-owned Rosneft and Novatek are one of the partners of China (Bowman & Qingchao, 2020). The first initiative between the parties, the world biggest energy exporter Russia and the largest energy importer China, is Yamal Peninsula liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects. Launched in 2013 and operated in 2017, the project is expected to transport the gas from Yamal Peninsula to Asia (Lim, 2018). Yamal is not the last resource development project that China conducts in the Arctic region. Chinese COSCO and Russian PAO Sovcomflot is now carrying gas to Asia (Hong, 2020). 9,9% share of YAMAL project was sold to China Silk Road Infrastructure Fund in 2015. Previous year, GAZPROM and China made a 30-year-deal which is postponed (Koivurova et al., 2019).

Nordic States namely Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are the other regional partners of China. The first three are eager for China's financial backing, which are recipients of China's foreign direct investments. Study by Center for Naval Analysis (2017) shows that China invested over \$1,4 trillion in Arctic Nations between 2005-2017, especially after 2008 financial crisis. There is growing China interests in Greenland ports and rare earth minerals. Because Greenland's independence from Denmark depends on island's resource development, China's engagement is playing important role. The lack of infrastructure makes happen more partnership with China. Greenland has 6 diverse projects with China (Hong, 2020). There was investment announcement on geothermal technology between Sinopec and Orka Energy (Iceland) in 2012 (Richter, 2012). Cooperation agreement on Geothermal Research and Development Center was signed between the parties in 2016. The China National Offshore Oil Company was granted oil exploration license by Iceland in the same year. China National Petroleum Company cooperated with Russia to develop three oil sites in Arctic seas in the following year. In 2014, rare earth project in Greenland was proposed with partnership of Greenland Minerals and Energy. China also delineated mineral

deposits in Nunavik(Canada) although it is not as concrete project like YAMAL (Beixi, 2019). China purchased Canadian oil company, Nexen in 2012. China also seeks to get permission for mining operations in Greenland and the Canadian Arctic. Because drilling is protested by environmentalists in Canada and restricted bylaw and China canalized its investments highly to Russia, China investments in Canada is limited (Hong, 2020). China National Offshore Oil Co., Ltd., China National Petroleum Corporation and Novatek, Russia's largest independent natural gas producer, signed an agreement to develop world-class LNG projects in the Arctic in 2019 (Zhenfu et.al., 2019). While Russia needs China's partnership in order to open the area, mining development could give Greenland independence from Denmark. Thus, projects with China is substantial for Greenland, which make the Arctic buyer's market (Brady, 2017).

As a result, changing landscape of the region, which was deemed immune to geopolitical turmoil, became the catalyst to speed up the process of Chinese engagement. Chinese investments in the region realize significant figures when comparing to the size of A8 economies (Rosen and Thuringen, 2017). In order to meet industrial raw material need, investments projects by State-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Nordic countries make inroads in securing China's demand and infrastructure development in these sates (Sharma, 2020).

5. Interests in tourism: opening up the Arctic for tourism

The White Paper (2019) exerts development of tourism in the region. China supports opening up the region for greater tourism. For the creation positive image of China in the Region, China uses tourism as soft power (Kobzeva, 2019), encourages its enterprises in developing tourism (Hong, 2020), as a kind of tactic that China uses for greater visibility in the region.

6. Interest in food security: harvesting Arctic fish and protecting the environment

As a country having the biggest fishing fleet and marine products consumer and ever-growing food security concerns (Brady, 2017), polar fishing accessibility become a priority for China in order to ensure its food security. Both rising income of the population and losing its fish stock caused China oversea fishing. Importing food resources for growing population is the party's legitimacy. China has the right

under the Spitsbergen treaty to enjoy fishing and hunting. It is also important protecting the Arctic environment and maintenance of ecological balance which has direct effect on its agriculture. Also, China shall lay claim to fish in any region beyond the exclusive economic zones of littoral states in the Arctic Ocean. Additionally, China is party to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, -the agreement that the states are not allowed for fishery until understanding the current fish stocks.

F. China and the other Asian states in the Arctic Region

There are five observer Asian states improving their own strategies: Singapore, South Korea, Japan, India alongside China. China along with the Asian states granted observer status in 2013 (Kiruna Declaration, 2013). According to Kobzeva (2019), as a responsible polar power, China is bellwether for improving cooperation between Asian states to develop their own strategies in the Region. They desire to be part of the development and governance in the region, with diverse interests. All Asian Observer States acknowledge beforehand recognize sovereignty and sovereign rights of the Arctic States in the Region. Offering big opportunities, the Arctic is a region not to be neglected and existed.

South Korea is the latecomer to sign Svalbard Treaty in 2016, but published its White Paper in 2013 stressing developing cooperation with the Arctic States, boosting researches and following new ventures as a major player in shipbuilding. The country launched its new icebreaker in 2009. Japan is also seeking scientific partnerships and new maritime routes in order to expand its alternatives as a country mostly depend on resource and energy import, concerned about China's increasing presence and dominant role. Because India geographically is distinct from the Region, it is not announced any White Paper but benefiting the new routes as well as active in polar research for a long time (Koivurova et al., 2019). Except Singapore, the Asian Countries have scientific research stations in the Svalbard. Japan and South Korea have conducted research through the Arctic route (Hong, 2020). Singapore's abstention is mainly based on its gatekeeper position on Malacca Strait, for which the Arctic is anticipated to substitute in the near future. First among equal countries, China, South Korea and Japan, have complex cooperation and confrontation by pushing forward one another to make further steps. For this reason, it can be an

example that after China's proclamation of desire to be observer state, the left took more concrete actions and involvements (Almazova-Ilyina et.al., 2020). The second awakening step is China's accomplishment of crossing the Arctic Ocean in 2021. The future engagements and initiatives of the Asian states thus is committed to China.

Asian Forum for Polar Sciences (AFoPS) has 6 members, national polar research institutions representing China, Japan, South Korea, India, Malaysia and Thailand (AFoPS, 2021). The forum are supposed to foster cooperation for the development of polar sciences among Asian countries. However, there are discrepancies and competition between Japan, China and South Korea, where interests of the countries clashes. Reluctance to end these challenges can be seen in high-level trilateral dialogue organization that did not any concrete outputs up to now (Kobzeva, 2019). Given that the forum could create voting bloc in the Arctic governance, in the reality, they did little connection between them to cooperate (Brady, 2017), the forum became the area to see that there is yet to be first between the equals instead (Almazova-Ilyina et.al., 2020).

China is eager to boost scientific cooperation between the states and encourage them to improve new strategies for regional research (Kobzeva, 2019). Given the competitive nature of their relations and absence of comprehensive Arctic policies, China seeks to greater interaction on science and governance in the Arctic realm with these countries. Asian states testify to the search for like-minded partners, interaction which will contribute to the promotion of its own interests.

G. Great Power Rivalry

China's involvement into the Region has been long due met with suspicions. From the point of polar science, this engagement was regarded as realization construction of its legitimacy. Polar science is an aspiration for China for a long time due to answering the questions on Polar science directly linked with answering the questions by means of national interests and defense plans (Brady, 2017).

As Bertelsen and Gallucci (2016) asserted, China's ambition is driven by becoming a great power. In line with this, this interest is highly strategic. Scientific data is preliminary requirement for fostering China's geostrategic ambitions

pertaining to air links, shipping, and resource extraction (European Parliament, 2020).

China described the Arctic as its “New Strategic Frontier” in which China has major national interests as it has in space and deep sea in 2015 (Pan, 2015). China is officially yet to challenge the rights of sovereign states over the status of their internal waters, supposedly it will do so in the near future. Unlike the U.S., China is content with the existing legal framework about sharing of the Arctic seabed resources (Brady, 2017). China’s official standing between these sovereign powers is international waters and innocent passage.

However, according to Brady (2017), these powers have nothing but cooperation and participation in the Polar governance, maybe more than anywhere else in the world, in order to ensure “structural power” that great powers should seize. The author also sets forth polar-related scientific capacity and scientific research funding; economic, diplomatic and military capacity are the foremost determinant to be considered as the polar power along with high level of international engagement in polar governance.

Table 10 Polar-related Capacity of the Great Powers

Parameters of Power		Rank
Polar-related military capabilities	Polar-capable submarines and surface vessel	1. United States
		2. Russia
		3. China
	Satellites	1. United States (549)
		2. China (142)
		3. Russia (131)
Nuclear Missiles	1. Russia (1648)	
	2. United States (1538)	
	3. China (250)	
Quantity of Arctic Science		1. United States
		2. Canada
		15. China
Arctic Science Budget		1. United States
operation costs / research funds / capital investment		2. Russia
		(non-Arctic states)
		1. China
Citizens in the Arctic		(Arctic states)
		1. Russia
		2. United States (non-Arctic states: scientists, tourists, fishers, workers)
		1. China

Source: Brady, 2017.

Having said that, China should be cooperative rather than being competitive in the region by deepening ties in terms of economy and science with the regional states. Especially scientific involvements ensure China know-how and polar data, which can be transmitted into new form of power (Kefferpütz, 2019), providing PRC more opportunities to consolidate own position on challenges and prospects for the development of the Far North.

Adding to this, they should present new kind of forms like Polar Silk Road. From this kind of view, China's involvement in the region is defensive despite the alarmists interpretations. Nevertheless, according to Lanteigne (2019), strategic Sino-Russian partnership will considerable impact on the U.S.A's stance which can be seen in the report by the U.S. Congressional Research Service in 2019.

The U.S. gradually enhanced its focus on the Arctic as China and Russia become more active. In its strategy paper, the Arctic is reimagined as an era of "strategic rivalry". Seeing the region from the prism of great power rivalry, the U.S. gave more priority in its Arctic policies especially in Trump administration emphasizing more national security concerns. After Pompeo's speech at Ministerial Meeting in 2019, report published by the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS, 2021) stresses that even though there is ongoing cooperation, the region is resuming a geopolitical competition between the U.S., Russia and China. In 2021, the U.S. Army released its first ever Arctic strategy. It has been stated that timely announcement of the "Regaining Arctic Dominance" amidst growing great power rivalry to respond in crisis, conflict (U.S. Army Public Affairs, 2021). These concerns are trenchantly based on militarization of the region from Russian side, even though it is lower than it was used to during the Cold War (Klimeko, 2019), and ever-increasing Chinese involvement and development more comprehensive diplomacy in the region. To counter this, the U.S. seeks to get a grip on offensive diplomacy and economic engagement (Olesen & Nørup, 2019). Given that Russia's presence is endorsement of its great power status in the region, it is keen to open the Arctic under foreign investments especially after 2014 sanctions. That was the very time that China became an ideal partner for funding as it diversifies its energy imports. China has 29 percent in total with the flagship projects (Conley & Melino, 2017). The future of the projects is expected to lead more fruitful projects. In 2017, China and Alaska reached an agreement on Alaska LGN project. (Conley, 2018).

Amongst the discussion whether the region is characterized by cooperation and immune to geopolitical turmoil, escalations are the indicator there may spill over into the region. The Arctic Council has, and still, successfully maintained cooperation over the region without any scheme of hegemonic actor. However, it is noting that China is a latecomer to the Region comparing to the U.S. and Russia which unleashed substitutional gap between them in terms of quantity and quality of the expeditions. According to Hong (2020), the bottlenecks ahead of China are that the number of icebreakers cannot meet China's needs, high-tech observation instruments are still exploratory stages. Therefore, in 2019 China announced its interests in construction nuclear-powered icebreaker. China is the country an increasing number of nuclear power plants (World Nuclear Association, 2018). From the lenses of offensive realism, as we deem Arctic without effective stewardship, due to its anarchic nature, both powers will equally increase their capacities and maximize their powers. In a war-like condition, the Arctic is the closest area between these powers where the ice condition is the best way to hide their submarines (Sharma, 2020). However, when considering there is more effective way to avoid war through cooperation, which is the proposal of neoliberalism, China is actively engaging through the organizations, institutions which is the only way for China to grow up in the realm of the foreign policy (Lanteigne, 2019).

According to Burke and Matisek (2021), there are two intellectual camps in terms of great power narrative in the Arctic: alarmists and apologists. Apologists echoes sentiments that no scramble for Arctic, no need to give Russia a valid excuse to further increase its military capability in the region as expanding the U.S. capacity. Arctic as zone of peace and territory of dialogue is still dominating the region, therefore confronting Russia and tit-for-tat actions can be provocative and power projection should be avoided. On the contrary, alarmists camp argues that there should be immediate corresponding orientation and posturing in order not to end up outmaneuvering position. As a complex domain of great power rivalry, the Arctic is not zone of peace anymore, where Sino-Russian cooperation is literally bandwagoning, according to the camp.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

“The Arctic has emerged. It is now part of the international context for almost every issue you can talk about.”

The Arctic is becoming a reservoir of strong discursive dimension. The biggest narrative of the Arctic in the lights of developments is whether the region will be area of cooperation and low tension as it used to be in post-cold war or conflict as it used to be in the cold war. Whatever the answer is, it is clear that the region is not to be regarded as any less important and World's hottest or the last frontier because super powers are already there. Additionally, China, like elsewhere in the world, pursues further multidimensional engagement in the region in which the US and Russia have their jurisdiction and sovereignty as it does not happen anywhere in the world.

The thesis highlights China's proactivity in the region, the notion of proactivity constitutes less challenger but more competitor spirit of China, taking its steps ahead of the time. China, thus, approaches the Arctic through multidimensional engagement, regional identity building and region's identity building in order to have mobility and operability by admitting distance is the real barrier, literally its weakness. China makes small but determinant steps into the Arctic Region, considering meticulously steps at a time. Its engagement and vivid interests knotting together not randomly, on the contrary, they have dynamic role to get wholly involved in the region. Therefore, the author asserts that China's burgeoning rise and motivations have its roots dated back decades ago, forming according to its long term planning horizon. Like elsewhere in the World, China's stance is not arbitrary, but definitely serves broader goal for its national security in general.

The first chapter of the thesis explains importance of the study and the reason why the topic has been chosen. Objective, assumptions, questions, limitation and hypothesis of the study has been discussed respectively. Explaining the issue of what brings the Arctic to the matter of discussion in international relation studies and how Arctic narrative changed in time and how it was explained by scholars, the chapter

gives broader perspective of the gist of the region.

Because region is fully connected to the world through its climate, economy, and geopolitics, its future cannot be merely designated by regional actors, without multidimensional participation and solution the region could just leave the hand of political actors. That's why Neoliberal theory chosen as framework of the thesis. Apart from the conclusion on its engagement which serves "Chinese Dream", China's spirit of engagement is also neoliberalist inside on account of not referring any absence of conflict for the sake of legitimate national interest.

Neoliberal perspective facilitate to see symbiotic relations on pragmatic perspective. The notion of "cooperation" has been not new for the Arctic Region. Even the cold war period demonstrated the relations between the super powers in terms of cooperation and conflict together, - the situations exists at the risk of the other one. Gorbachev speech in 1987 constitutes solid example for this. During the Cold War period, there was environmental cooperation, the same goes for the period of annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. It is the very complex interdependence between the regional states; the Arctic is so "common" that they cannot refrain from cooperation. The same goes for the outsiders, non-Arctic states, whose numbers are rising. According to the theory, cooperation is not opposite to conflict, however, it emerges when the actors come to terms that is not harmonious, but as a reaction to conflict. The terms cooperation and conflict are not poles apart, instead they exist at the cost of the other. In the Arctic region, which is indicator of the climate change, consequently, international cooperation is inevitable because any ill-considered step taken towards regional utilization shall create conflictual consequences.

In order to test the hypotheses, the second chapter discusses the main actors in the region through the lenses of which are the littoral states, their Arctic identities; legal status of the region in framework of UNCLOS and the other binding regulations; maritime disputes between states, the latest developments and disputes; issues in the Arctic debate, that is, the emergence of the region in the international area were dealt accordingly.

Tremendous significance of the region also is not new phenomenon. Let's say attribution Mediterranean-ish significance at least half century ago, let's say Russian –then Soviets- peaceful including into the Arctic issues and let's say super powers' geographical proximity when taking into consideration abovementioned

explanation, the question is what is new about the Arctic? What is new is regional transformation along with anthropogenic and technological developments. The first directly refers and causes the climate change itself, the second one is accessibility of the region, two of which are intertwined. Recognition, internationalization of the region came along with these –making the region “Global”. The phenomenon Climate Change occurring in northern latitudes gave the rise recognition of the “Arctic Boom” or “Age of the Arctic”. This accelerated by the announcement of United States Geological Survey,- set forth that 30% of the world’s undiscovered gas and 13% of the world’s undiscovered oil are expected to concentrate in the offshore areas. What is more, declination of ice cap brings shortest routes between Europe and Asia and untapped resources prompted discussions on broader security issues and sovereignty.

Once perceived as impassable, the alteration of accessibility condition relinquished the region with aggravated interests and concerns of primarily littoral states. In due course, the Arctic became the area in which geopolitical, environmental and economic drivers prompts the strategies of the states. The Arctic matters because there is great deal of interest at global level canalizes in the region. Complex interests coexist and conflict with one another further growing array of stakeholders.

Of the Arctic littoral states, Russia is the most prominent one with its geography, population, industrialization, urbanization and Arctic identity. Russia does not consider the Arctic as hard-to-reach territory with harsh climate or difficult living conditions whose it is already familiar with more than any other state, but consider the region one of the main component of its active policies. Arctic is highly embedded its national identity and security perception, and therefore, its great power ambitions. Increasing Russian military presence in the region as a result of its ambition is mainly resulted from being recognized as great polar power, however, this is the very area that Russia has been already militarized. But nonetheless, the region is one of the areas to reclaim its great power status. The NSR and its development retain high importance to Russia. On the other hand, the U.S., once deemed as reluctant power, acts upon the necessities of the time, as a reaction of the others- Russia and China literally. It is obvious that the U.S. gradually increased its awareness and policies towards the region in consideration of Russian policies as well as China’s engagement. So embedded its national security, the Arctic Policy

paper is released by Department of Defense, claiming China's non-transparent activities, non-Arctic identity in sense and Russian aggressiveness. While Norwegian approach is based on more pragmatic strategy: both opening the lines and defend its the rights and preserving good relations with neighbor Russia along with NATO and the U.S., Greenland's Arctic has massive opportunities in the way of greater autonomy from Denmark.

Within these kinds of different approaches and policies over Arctic, the Arctic Council becomes instrument of the governance system holding together both insiders along with indigenous peoples and outsiders as well as their different perceptions all together. Once known as politically fragmented area, regionalized Arctic, globalized Arctic and thawing Arctic respectively appropriated the region for the sake of globe. Arctic as a bellwether for climate change thus needs stability than ever before. The increasing number of binding agreements, however, are disperse – issue specific in sense. Additionally, maritime disputes are also exaggerated. Because resource-rich EEZ under the sovereignty of the A5 is undisputed, sparking narrative on “scramble for Arctic” as preemptive strike against increasing global interest resulted from the waters beyond EEZ. Therefore, it is the very Arctic Ocean “exceptionalism” that several disputes are settled in practice in contrast to alarmist portrayals.

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS, 2008), 30% of the world's undiscovered gas and 13% of the world's undiscovered oil are expected to concentrate in the Arctic Region. Increasing demand for oil and natural gas in the 21st century unleashed the importance of undiscovered energy resources in the Arctic. Distribution of the resources ranks by Russia, USA, Norway, Denmark and Canada. The estimated resources mostly concentrated in the EEZ of the given country. If so, what is the matter here? Why does it become important for the outsiders? In the case of China, it matters when the resources exploits with partnership of it. Given example of YAMAL LNG project between world biggest energy exporter Russia and the largest energy importer China, China became stakeholder of the project in return taking the 9.9% share.

The Arctic is holding the power to change maritime traffic and trade all over the world beyond recognition as a result of melting ice-sheet. Provided that the shipping constitutes 80% of the global trade, the Arctic maritime activity offers cost

and time-saving navigation than those of Malacca Strait and Suez Canal, which have tarnished reputation, and the shortest sea lines of communication between North Asia and the North Atlantic. In the current situation of the NWP and NSR, maritime activity through NWP is far modest in compare to NSR. However, the NSR has some constraints such as limited navigable time window – short shipping season- and navigation ability of only limited type of ships in accordance with the Polar Code, lack of schedule reliability – because of just-in-time delivery schedule and tonnage limitations. That is the very reason why Sino-China relationship is focusing regional development.

Effects of the climate change are happening at an alarming rate in the Arctic region. There is literally vicious circle happening in the Arctic which is called Arctic amplification. Arctic amplification is simply the case of multiplication warming - as ice melting, ocean surfaces can absorb more heat from the Sun, in return it ends with greater melting. Melting, thawing Arctic has global results, creating several of security issues: food security, human security, environmental security. When juxtaposing abovementioned developments, catastrophic phenomenon inevitably eventuated: Arctic paradox - the greater utilization of the resources in the Region contributes to acceleration of global warming, in return what makes the region a laboratory of the Anthropocene, which lead to greater warming. That's because climate change has super wicked dimensions, taking the humanity to discuss social justice, climate ethics. This can lead the same result again: what is at stake in the Arctic is what is at stake for the globe. Developments in the region are of global relevance, developments at the global level are of regional relevance.

Indigenous peoples are paid insufficient attention within all these discussions although their livelihoods definitely are shaped by and through cold itself. Therefore, what at stake for these peoples is their traditional livelihood, their culture, economy, food and health insecurity they faced, search and rescue services they need. However, the fact that indigenous peoples are not included Council's decision-making processes and that the decisions are taken by the states shows that the states are still the most powerful actors in Arctic-specific issues.

The third chapter opens with Chinese understanding the Arctic region which is embedded the way of how it perceives the Arctic. With regard to the question of the thesis, the sub titles are formalized accordingly. The facts herein mentioned make

Arctic situation go beyond its spring by necessity. As the Arctic gains its rising strategic importance, it welcomes greater number of actors including China. As an actor party to Svalbard Treaty, China has long-standing in the Arctic Region. China enjoys the rights of scientific research, navigation, overflight, fishing, laying of submarine cables and pipelines in the high seas and other relevant sea areas in the Arctic Ocean. What China is doing now, actually and seemingly, leaving no stone unturned in the Region in accordance with the power and all rights vested by both Svalbard and the UNCLOS.

The most important findings of the thesis, cooperation that China pursues in the region ensures its connectivity as it does in the rest of the world. As a rising power, whose rise has been contentiously discussed whether it is peaceful or not between pundits, what China needs is diversification. Diversification of the energy ensures its rising power. Diversification of the routes ensures its connectivity across the world. Diversification of partnership ensures its soft power, connection and guiding role. All of these serve biggest impetus for China, which holds certainty of reclaiming of global power.

Mainstream discussions escalated the misperceptions about the way of how China's Arctic strategies can be interpreted. Ambiguity in the assessments of the intentions and prospects of China's policy in the Arctic is largely due to the insufficient consideration of this circumstance. Therefore, China's involvement needs more pragmatic considerations, the most reasonable path to take to enclose these activities is required to look beyond the circumstances, that is, the most important is not what China is doing, rather why and how China is doing. The thesis also sticks to the assumption that the China is relatively newcomer, it has been expanding its polar agenda except some historical cleavages, its footprints became more and more visible, burgeoning. Rise of China is reshaping the world politics and dynamics by narrowing the gap between the U.S. year by year. It is the time for China to take advantages of overall strategic opportunities emerging in the Arctic region and beyond. These opportunities are to actively participate international initiatives, organizations, create new partnerships with like-minded states.

China's involvement in the region took enormous attention in the Western community, like the Arctic will be the new South China Sea. In order to avoid alarmist considerations, misinterpretations, China did not talk big about the Arctic

affairs, watch out to speak monotone until publication its ever-anticipated White Paper. In terms of context, there was nothing new declaration in this official sheet but paraphrasing the previous statements. Considering Party's legitimacy and big attribution to the polar sciences even in the eyes of the public, it serves eventually both party power and elimination of alarmist views on China's ambition, China's appetite, China's hunger for energy. White Paper attributes the Arctic to the shared future of mankind, therefore the overall interests of the international community should be included in decision-making. This sentiment paves the way to China for internationalization of the Region.

In China's case, scientific interest in the region changed slightly towards strategic interests. One can assume that it is realization stage of Deng Xiaoping's maxim "hide your power, wait your time". This interest and motivation was caught by "polar orientalism" radar eventually. Even publication of the White Paper in 2018 and promulgation of its interests could not cast a shadow on backlashes or calling for transparency of its intentions. Nevertheless, meticulous usage of language and Eurocentric style of Chinese official announcements took a big part of its identity building. Its discursive power is based on preponderantly not to face undue restriction.

Within the context of its engagement, rising China threaten both regional and non-regional states, calling this interests "threat" or "ambition". However, China successfully became an Arctic player or norm entrepreneur under the very delusion of Chinese Dream. "Chinese dream" or "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", Xi Jinping's signature policy, is the very narrative of new international practice pursued by China. One of the components of Chinese Dream is the realization of the Belt and Road Initiative. Under the doctrine, Polar Regions show up announcement of Polar Silk Road (PSR), embedded the policies one another as complementary policies for its grandiose strategy. White Paper affirmed the importance of the Arctic within its national strategy. Eventually, conceptual development its polar policy widely cemented Polar Silk Road, leading China stand more confident position in the governance of the Arctic. Moreover, Polar Silk Road gained greater fortification with Data Silk Road (DSR). DSR is now overshadowed or overlooked; however, tapping underwater subsea cables shall ensure China hold the source of power indeed. DSR is vital for China's power where the data is the power. Since sea cables hold 95% of

international data flows, it is utmost importance for national security, hybrid security. What needs to be investigated now is whether there are “hidden” motives and objectives behind China’s Arctic Policy.

More importantly, China attributes great deal of values to the oceans and polar regions. As it discussed in the third section, usage of vertical map by the SOA and PLA simply shows how China perceives the world as a whole, from which perspective it sees Arctic Region in a heart of new world order it creates. In today, what China needs is connection to the world. This ambition can be seen in its groundbreaking, massive project: the Belt and Road Initiative comprising of 146 countries out of 195 as a whole. China envisions the Arctic routes as a new Golden Waterway. The fact that China’s global interest is increasing rapidly as depending on overseas energy and raw material as well as overseas consumer markets and producers, what is new about the Arctic then? The Arctic is the last frontier for China to ensure its connectivity throughout the world.

. **H1:** China’s proactive stance and policies in the region construct its recognition

Given the identity building has dual processes by the actor’s creation and direction and the other actors’ perception, China is the foremost country being observed as observing the region. The thesis assumes and reiterates that China’s recognition in the region is based on its identity building. China has been meticulously improving the avenues and paying regard to periodization to pursue its polar activities and its capacity to do so further enhanced. In order to do this, China uses identity building and science is wildcard in its the Arctic game, which are overwhelmingly intertwined. Avoiding any suspicion of its burgeoning Arctic presence, China takes its time for understanding the status quo as well as psychological adjustments. In order to stand apart from “China threat”, China took great pains with building its Arctic identity by using all state ideological apparatuses within or without country.

Maintaining international cooperation may privilege China’s involvement in the region rather than activities recognized as threat. It is for the benefit of China to recognize legal framework and sovereign rights in the Region, because it is the most legitimize the way of China’s engagement in the Region, which has a room for China.

It is noting in here and now that under international law, China shall claim and exercise more robust rights in the region, meanwhile no actor shall exercise sovereignty or sovereign rights. According to the UNCLOS, there is currently no evidence that any country's continental shelf extends to the North Pole, the North Pole and its surrounding areas do not belong to any country, - it is definitely common heritage of mankind. The ice-covered Arctic Ocean belongs to the international waters. Undergoing rapid changing, the Arctic Ocean is to be estimated ice-free middle of this century or even earlier, which means any state can enjoy the liberty of access, exercising scientific activities which are the very Chinese interest. It is one of the reasons why China cannot stand idly for the development of the Arctic.

To open up the Arctic, China pursues internalization of the region which will produce win-win strategy as it asserts in the White Paper. Under "Shared future of mankind" discourse it facilitates, the Arctic is attributed to international community as a whole in order to collaborate with all participants. Chinese officials reiterate the Region having inherently international in nature having global results. To reach win-win situation, it is essential that China should be given equal status which means it is has to be recognized as "important stakeholder". In order to do that, it is vital that China further boosts its multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Therefore, it is expected in the ongoing years China is likely to set more robust policies and its entities is to more visible comparing to other non-Arctic actors in the region. Let's say infrastructure projects, research bases, icebreaker or investments, all ensures China's fortification its presence and security due to absence of rights apart from the UNCLOS.

In the identity building process, science diplomacy plays enormous role towards the regional actors, China ensures justification its presence in the region as "Near Arctic State". As a near Arctic state, rapid changes emerging in the Arctic have direct effects on China's environmental, societal, agricultural and national security. Therefore, science became the wildcard of China for regional affairs in order not to be unwelcomed. In order to legitimize its presence, "Near Arctic State" narrative gives China window for observing global warming under international science with greater cooperation. Additionally, taking into consideration whatever happening in the Arctic has the global impact and consequences, this narrative also made inroads into that the future of the region should be determined under joint

resolution. It is also worth noting that, epistemic communities is of importance for the continuity of the cooperation mechanism in any circumstances. This cooperation environment creates a mechanism of unique situation of the Greater Arctic region. As an “Responsible polar power”, China keeps away undue reactions of the states, contributing its wisdom, ready to collaborate and share its know-how. Publicly announced “Great Polar Power” discourse reassures its global power status and China’s determination in the Arctic.

Under these conditions hereinabove discussed, China slightly creates its presence in order to provide a competitive advantage. Even observer country status in the Arctic Council is a part of this recognition, because observer status gives anything to China to lean on. Observer is just “status” within the game that Arctic States play. Moreover, definitely international law enshrines China more rights than those of the observer status. Observer status and Sino-Russian relations, however, were given more attention – still- in the international community.

China has been already aware that the interests of the regional states are multifaceted and it should establish such relations by not giving rise to “China Threat” perception. China carefully identifies the needs of the given countries and cements its identity building with infrastructural strategies having geopolitical aims. Russia’s necessity to have an alternative market and partner, that of Greenland’s to benefit from melting Arctic, leaving no stone unturned to reach its ultimate goal, becoming great power. Consequently, China successfully creates web of partners in the Arctic where it cannot be excluded from the negotiating table.

In order not to trigger any concerns by other actors, primarily the regional states, China has used Eurocentric notions. What is perceived as ambitions is that China’s multifaceted interests in involving actively and legitimately in polar affairs, not only research and environmental protection, but also behind its rising interest in the process of time especially in commercial routes, resource extraction, participating in governance and boosted bilateral diplomacy to name a few.

As it discussed, nature of China’s proactive stance is based on leaving no stones within its multifaceted interests. All activities China involved leads China to have a say in different areas, which the author argued as maneuver capability. Arctic was nothing about political issues for the China but scientific area, this rooted standing offered China how to understand and how to protect Arctic beforehand.

China, as a country having good ability to turn the crisis into an opportunity like the case of climate change, remains its inclusion to promote sound governance in the Region without challenging status quo. China's footprints prompted by science, evolved into a power. As it discussed, today's power mainly based on data more than knowledge, which China has already had. In due course, China has been slightly secured its position in the Arctic dialogue that it became a partner that cannot be excluded.

H2: As China becomes more proactive stance, Russia, the U.S. will pursue more proactive policies and the future of the region will be designed by these powers.

When it comes to great power rivalry in the region, it is likely the future of the region spearheaded by these actors. Hardly anything holds uncertainty than power of the technology and energy market, which are taken into consideration in the Arctic, the world's barometer of environmental change, as the region undergoes tremendous changes, these super powers takes their position accordingly.

As Russia increases its military/maritime capacity in the region, the regional states eventually start building up their capacity with the help of the other stakeholders. However, it is noting that the Russian militarization does not target directly Arctic, Russia has been already deploying the area inside the Arctic. In case of icebreakers, by way of example, Russia and China are investing heavily in scientific vessels, research stations to [erode American influence](#).

Sino-Russian energy partnership in the region causes the U.S. enormous anxiety; therefore the U.S. pursued more aggressive policies towards the Arctic. In 2019, Pompeo rejects "Near-Arctic" description, saying China is neither "near" nor "Arctic" country. In the long run, it is clear that Russia desires avoiding jeopardize its sovereignty and security in the region.

Scientific cooperation is still rationale between the super powers, the U.S., Russia and China. Therefore, collaborating on scientific research can serve as a compensator the ambiguity amidst a shift in the global balance of power. It is also articulated by John Kerry, special climate envoy, that the U.S. and China cooperation is critical standalone issue to tackle with the effects of climate change.

It is definitely the future of the region will be determined by these powers. On

one side, power competition between the U.S. and Russia, power transition between the U.S. and China dominates the region now. In the region where the U.S., Russia and China exist together with increasing Sino-Russian cooperation, at the same time geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and Russia gave a second thought to the scholars about existence of “Arctic Exceptionalism” is somewhat over because the region ever-increasingly became the contested and contentious with these global powers than it was never used to be.

H3: China regards new rising powers’ engagement in the region as threat.

China’s engagement in the region with several actors differs from each other. When it comes to Arctic insider, China boosts comprehensive economic and scientific partnership and cooperation. When it comes to outsiders, Arctic governance, sustainable development matters, that is, the areas elbowing any outsider to be aware of Arctic which is “shared future of mankind”. In case of Asian states, it is getting narrower. China continues poorly relations with Asian states on the Arctic issues, it makes sense on account of their competition in several areas. Therefore, China’s priority is to have strong partnership with the littoral states than those of outsiders, which could be in return China’s disadvantages.

Multi-dimensionality of China’s Arctic policy needs its counterparts, the first aim of China is to be acceptable partner, which was explained in details with Hypothesis 1. Therefore, internationalization of the region is benefit for China in any circumstances. China thus does hard to keep the region open and accessible for the others. However, it is China’s mid-term strategy ensuring gateway to the region. When considering Hypothesis 2, the great power competition, it will be a scientific, diplomatic competition in the eyes of China against the great powers in the Region. Under Sino-Russian partnership, it is known that Russia is determine but deliberate towards its partnership. New rising powers’ engagement in the region will facilitate China’s recognition, internationalization of the region (H1), China’s determination to be in the region in cost of super powers (H2), however, in the long run, it is China’s disadvantage to lost its scientific precedence which it endeavored.

According to the International Energy Outlook 2021, Asia’s rapidly growing economies as the primary drivers of increasing global energy demand. However, all Asian states have different interest in the region. While Singapore does not want to lost its gatekeeper role in Malacca Strait, Japan is also seeking scientific partnerships

and new maritime routes in order to expand its alternatives as a country mostly depend on resource and energy import.

The thesis drawn a holistic picture of China's burgeoning interests and motivations in the Arctic region and discuss special features of this emerging presence in the light of today's idealized concept of post-Cold-War period, Arctic Exceptionalism within Arctic geopolitics. Arctic Exceptionalism phenomenon also provides its neoliberal nature of Arctic geopolitics.

Today, China's unprecedented growth is reshaping international politics including Arctic. In the region, thus, there is no room without manifestation of presence of China, as taking into consideration power transition from the West to the East with the rise of Asia. China, at the end of the day, became the very solid example of Arctic debate, where there is no debate indeed. If there is China threat, the "threat" does not depict any lawfare activity by China. Once the notion of Arctic security changed, China's involvement changed its shape. Now, what the thesis shows China's involvement influence the notion of security in the region, the regional order is in transitional phase under Sino-Russian partnership, who is not always with each other, but never against each other.

To reiterate, like elsewhere in the World, China's stance is not arbitrary, but definitely serves broader goal for its national security in general. China, now, works inside in the Arctic System as continuously driving its multifaceted interests but ultimate motivation. The thesis concludes that all China's interests has different outputs, however, what motivates China is only geopolitics of connectivity.

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