ST. FRANCIS' COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS '19

BACKGROUND GUIDE

UNSC

AGENDA:

TERRITORIAL AND MARITIME CONTENTION IN THE ARCTIC.

Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings!
We are highly elated to have you with us for the United Nations' Security Council at The St. Francis' College Model United Nations 2019.
We encourage you to rage against what you feel is not right, call a spade a spade and let us fight for change with our words being our weapons.
The background guide is the first step into delegate's research. It is just an instrument of assistance and not the sole base of research, it will give you a bird's eye perspective to the crux of the issue at hand, delegates are at full liberty to bring up any relevant pressing point into discussion.
We understand that being a first timer can be a highly overwhelming but our aspirations from the delegates has nothing to do with their prior experience but we try to gauge how well can the delegates agree to disagree, work around this, come to a comprehensive solution by extending their foreign policy and debate with the aim of consensus building.
We sincerely hope that this conference helps you gain an experience which further paves the way for you to become a better professional and person in future with an intellectual understating of global issues.

Warm Regards,
Lovansh
(President)
Mohammad
(Vice-president)

I. SUGGESTIONS BEFORE YOU START RESEARCHING:

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.

A challenging, yet highly rewarding
committee, involvement in the MUN conference simulation offers an insight into the dynamics of international relations and politics. Lots of work will be required but as previous participants in similar simulations ourselves, we promise you an exciting experience.

NATURE OF SOURCES/EVIDENCE:
This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources-
1. United Nations:
Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument.
2. Multilateral Organizations:
Documents from international organizations like NATO, NAFTA, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, OPEC, the International Criminal Court, etc may also be presented as credible source of information.
3. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can,
in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as a credible piece of information.
4. News Sources:
(i) Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.
(ii) State operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are – RIA Novosti8 (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency11 (People's Republic of China), etc.
Note- Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the aforementioned criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.

II. United Nations Security Council:

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security, for further information kindly visit: www.un.org

III. Importance of the Arctic

The Arctic has been little exploited for economic purposes, but, because it contains 8 percent of the surface of the planet and 15 percent of the land area, significant resources (both renewable and nonrenewable) may be reasonably assumed to be present. Some of these are known—and being utilized—but there could be enormous expansion if it is required and thought desirable. Exploration for mineral resources in particular has been far from exhaustive.

Resources

Mineral resources

At the present time the most important resources are the minerals, especially hydrocarbons. Two of the world's major producing areas for oil and natural gas lie in the Arctic. Northwestern Siberia contains a petroliferous province discovered in the 1950s, stretching 500 miles from east to west and 750 miles from north to south and producing a large proportion of Russia's output of both oil and natural gas. The North Slope of Alaska produces about one-fifth of the U.S. output, but only 11 percent of U.S. consumption. There are smaller exploitations in the Canadian Northwest Territories (oil at Norman Wells) and elsewhere in Russia (oil and natural gas in the Pechora basin and natural gas in Sakha). Further large discoveries are likely. Drilling is proceeding offshore, and there are promising areas at many points north of Russia, where the continental shelf is very wide. Outside Russia there has been exploration off Svalbard and off both West and East Greenland, but without success. Successful development of these hydrocarbon resources depends largely on pipeline transport. Both the Siberian and the Alaskan fields are effectively served by this means.

Hard-rock mining is also well developed, especially in Russia, where the former Soviet government's desire for national self-sufficiency provided a compelling spur. The major centers are located around Murmansk and Norilsk. The only significant source of diamonds in Russia is in Sakha. There is also gold, tin, nickel, copper, platinum, and cobalt, together with iron ore, coal, and apatite. All these are being worked. For the first four, the north provides probably the largest sources in the country. There is some mining in Alaska and Arctic Canada, especially of lead-zinc, but it is not such a significant addition to national resources as in Russia.

Biological resources

Of renewable resources the most important is fish. The Barents, Greenland, and Bering seas all are rich fishing grounds, jointly producing about 10 percent of the world marine catch; but overfishing is threatening its continuation at present levels. The Russian fishing industry has its major base at Murmansk. Many of the boats operating from there do not, however, fish in northern waters. Murmansk is used because it is the only major port in the whole country that is ice-free year-round, but Russia maintains an extensive fishery in the Barents and Norwegian seas—areas from which other countries are effectively excluded by the rules governing exclusive economic zones (i.e., those areas adjacent to territorial seas to which countries retain exclusive rights to economic exploitation, though international navigation is permitted). There is also significant freshwater fishing, especially in Siberia, but it is relatively small in volume and—since it includes rare and delectable species, chiefly salmonids—caters to the luxury market. In Canada likewise the arctic char is a special delicacy. Whaling, once considerable, has ceased, but sealing continues in the White Sea and off Labrador, where there are populations of harp seal. The marine resources and the minerals cater largely to a demand arising outside the north.

On land, reindeer is the chief biological resource. In Russia and Scandinavia, domesticated herds number about three million head and provide meat for many of the native peoples who tend them. There is a smaller population of wild reindeer (called caribou in North America), which are hunted in some areas. Historically, the resource that first attracted nonnatives was fur. It was the search for fur-bearing mammals such as the sable and the fox that drew Europeans across the north of Asia and America. The value of some furs was very high, and so the industry was able to establish a solid economic base that endured for several centuries. This has been eroded away by a shortage of fur-bearers, use of ranching techniques, replacement of fur by other materials, and, most recently, by the objections of environmentalists.

IV. Transportation

Water transport

Because the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land, it is not surprising that waterways were the first means of transport. Northern natives plied the rivers and lakes in canoes and kayaks, and southerners coming into the area arrived in larger ships either across the seas or down the rivers. The phase of exploration known as the expansion of Europe, beginning in the 15th century, included a search for water routes around the northern end of the continents of the Northern Hemisphere: the Northwest and Northeast Passages. Neither route was discovered for another three centuries, but both are in use today for at least part of, and occasionally along the whole of, their lengths.

The greatest use of water transport is in Russia. The sea route along the north coast of Eurasia, at first known as the Northeast Passage and later called the Northern Sea Route carries the largest volume of traffic of any Arctic seaway. Serviced by about 20 icebreakers of more than 10,000 shaft horsepower—some of them nuclear-powered—a fleet of ice-strengthened freighters carries cargoes totaling several million tons annually to and from the termini at Murmansk and Vladivostok. The shallowness of the water obliges the use of relatively small ships of up to 20,000 tons deadweight. The major constraint is sea ice, which determines the length of the season. This is as little as two and a half months at some points, but at the western end year-round navigation is possible as far as the Yenisey River. Strenuous efforts have been made to extend the season, if possible to the point at which it will be year-round over the whole length. Another possibility for the future could be navigation across the central polar basin, significantly reducing the distance between the termini. But such developments would require further heavy investment in ships and would have to take into account any worsening of the ice conditions (which is predicted by some observers). The present route serves ports at the mouth of the major rivers, the principal freight being general cargo and fuel into the north and ore and timber out of it. The option of using the route for transit between the Atlantic and Pacific is little exercised, but Soviet authorities occasionally tried to interest foreign shippers in doing this. There is also extensive use of the rivers themselves: all the major and many of the minor rivers carry large fleets of barges, tugs, and hydrofoils.

While Russia carries the most traffic, both by sea and by inland waterway, the medium is exploited in other areas too. There is traffic between Greenland and its mother country, Denmark, and in North America both Canada and the United States use sea routes to supply settlements and industrial sites in the Canadian archipelago and Alaska.

The Northwest Passage as such is little used, and indeed the Canadian government claims that is not an international waterway but is wholly under Canadian control—a view disputed by the United States, which in 1985 sent a ship through it and pointedly refrained from asking Canadian permission to do so. Under the terms of a 1988 agreement, the United States began seeking Canadian approval for traversing the passage.

V. Political and environmental issues

Administration

The eight countries claiming Arctic territory—Russia, Canada, the United States, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland—have different systems of central administration and therefore administer their northlands in different ways.

All of them, it may be noted, are technologically advanced states with a relatively high standard of living. But Iceland is the only one in which there is no distinction between a national center and an Arctic periphery: it lies wholly within the Arctic as defined for this article and has no indigenous northern people distinct from the majority. The other countries have had to devise a relationship with their Arctic territories in order to permit the operation of government. Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat) was a colony of Denmark until 1979, when it obtained home rule under the Danish crown; in effect, all government activities take place in Greenland except in matters of foreign affairs and defense. The contiguous Scandinavian countries—Norway, Sweden, and Finland—treat their northlands as any other part of the country but give them special status in some legal contexts, particularly in matters relating to the northern natives (Sami). Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard, however, is subject to special provisions agreed to internationally and set out in the Spitsbergen Treaty of 1920. Alaska, after its purchase by the United States from Russia in 1867, had various forms of colonial status until 1959, when it became a state. Its constitutional position is therefore like that of any other state, although, as in Scandinavia, there is federal legislation concerning the status of Alaska natives, and the feeling of dependence is still not wholly absent. In Canada most of the northlands lie in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon, entities that are administered by the federal government but which have some local self-government. Russia makes no constitutional provision for Arctic territory but legislates for various activities, such as building regulations and labor law, in an Arctic setting. There has been pressure to set up an Arctic province, covering all the country's northlands, but this has never been done. Many, but not all, of the northern peoples of Russia acquired a limited degree of administrative autonomy under the former Soviet government. At first this did not give any real independence, though it conferred a certain status. But, with the radical changes of the early 1990s and the emergence of a sovereign Russia, the two most numerous native peoples—the Komi and the Sakha (Yakut)—seemed likely to make real gains in self-government.

Environmental concerns

The growth of economic activity of many kinds in the Arctic has given rise to concern about the natural environment. While similar concern has been expressed in most parts of the world, the Arctic can be shown to be more vulnerable than elsewhere, and control is also more difficult to exercise. One area of disquiet is the damage that can be done by ships, especially in ice-filled waters. Sea ice is a potent agent for causing damage to a ship's hull or propeller and is a serious obstacle to cleanup operations. A particularly egregious example was the holing of the tanker Exxon Valdez in Prince William Sound, Alaska, in March 1989, although it was rock, not ice, that pierced the tanker's hull and released some 250,000 barrels of oil into the ocean. The operation of nuclear-powered ships in Arctic waters has caused public concern in Russia, and two nuclear submarines have sunk in Arctic waters—in the Norwegian Sea in 1989 and in the Barents Sea in 2000.

Air pollution is another possible source of harm. Norway, Sweden, and Finland have complained to Russia about the release of harmful substances in smoke from the nickel refinery and other plants in the Kola Peninsula. American scientists in Alaska have detected nickel particles in the air emanating from Norilsk. The unpleasant and unhealthy phenomenon known as ice fog—whereby particulate matter suspended in the lower atmosphere is trapped by temperature inversion, reducing visibility and creating luminous pillars and haloes—is linked to air pollution.

On the ground, there are many examples of large-scale and unsightly disturbance of the surface, whether by road building, open cut mining, vehicle movement across the tundra, or other human activities. Oil and gas fields have been particularly bad offenders in this respect. When work on them started—in the 1950s in Siberia and in the 1970s in North America—the reaction of frozen ground to heavy vehicle traffic was not yet widely known, so that many areas of swamp and uneven terrain were inadvertently created.
Human activity has also exercised a strong influence on the wildlife of Arctic areas. Polar bear, walrus, musk ox, and caribou all have been greatly reduced in numbers through hunting. The danger was recognized, and protective legislation has been approved (international agreement on protection of the polar bear, achieved in 1973, was a landmark in this process). All the countries concerned established national parks and wildlife refuges in the late 20th century.

VI. The Arctic in international affairs

All land areas in the Arctic are subject to the sovereignty of one of the eight countries concerned, and there is no possibility of a new discovery of land that might cause argument. But this is not the case for sea areas. The phenomenon of “creeping sovereignty,” whereby nation-states claim rights in the sea areas adjacent to their coasts, has created problems. In particular, the boundary line at sea between two countries’ exclusive economic zones has not in every case been agreed upon. The most pressing of these was the division between Norway and Russia of the Barents Sea continental shelf, a 67,600-square mile (175,000-square km) area that probably contains hydrocarbons. In 2010 the two countries agreed to a boundary that divided the disputed area into approximately equal sections.
Another question of sovereignty—and therefore jurisdiction—is over floating ice. An ice floe in the central Arctic basin, beyond exclusive economic zones, may have structures built on it and people living there. Questions arose at an American scientific station, T-3, when a murder was committed there. It was decided in that case to equate the station with a U.S. ship, and the trial was therefore held under U.S. law. But the argument is not closed, since the ship analogy may not always be appropriate.
Strategy has played an important part in Arctic affairs since 1945. Up to then the technology necessary for operating in the region was largely lacking, but advances during and after World War II have opened the way to many sorts of activity. The Arctic Ocean is a Mediterranean sea that lies, moreover, between the two powers long supposed most likely to be in conflict. Thus each side feared air attack across the Arctic Ocean and built chains of radar stations at high latitudes in its own territory to give warning of this. In North America four such chains were built successively—the Pinetree Line, the Mid-Canada Line, the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, and the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS). Another strategic use of the Arctic Ocean derives from its solid surface, which offers protection to submarines operating under the ice. Both U.S. and Soviet submarines made numerous and extensive patrols in this area, and mastery of the technique allowed Soviet missile-firing submarines (which were designed for this role) to target any part of U.S. territory from an ice-covered location in the Arctic Ocean, probably within close reach of their main base at Murmansk.
Besides these war-oriented possibilities, the Arctic has in the past offered some opportunities for advancing peaceful causes. The openness and emptiness of the Arctic make it a good location for such confidence-building measures as the “open skies” schemes, whereby each side would allow the other to inspect from the air agreed pieces of its Arctic territory. The development of satellite imagery has reduced the relevance of such schemes, but there are still ways in which they could be useful. The former Soviet government took advantage of the remoteness factor to locate a nuclear weapons testing ground on the north island of Novaya Zemlya. Since the late 1980s the presence of the testing site has incurred much criticism from northern natives living in the region.

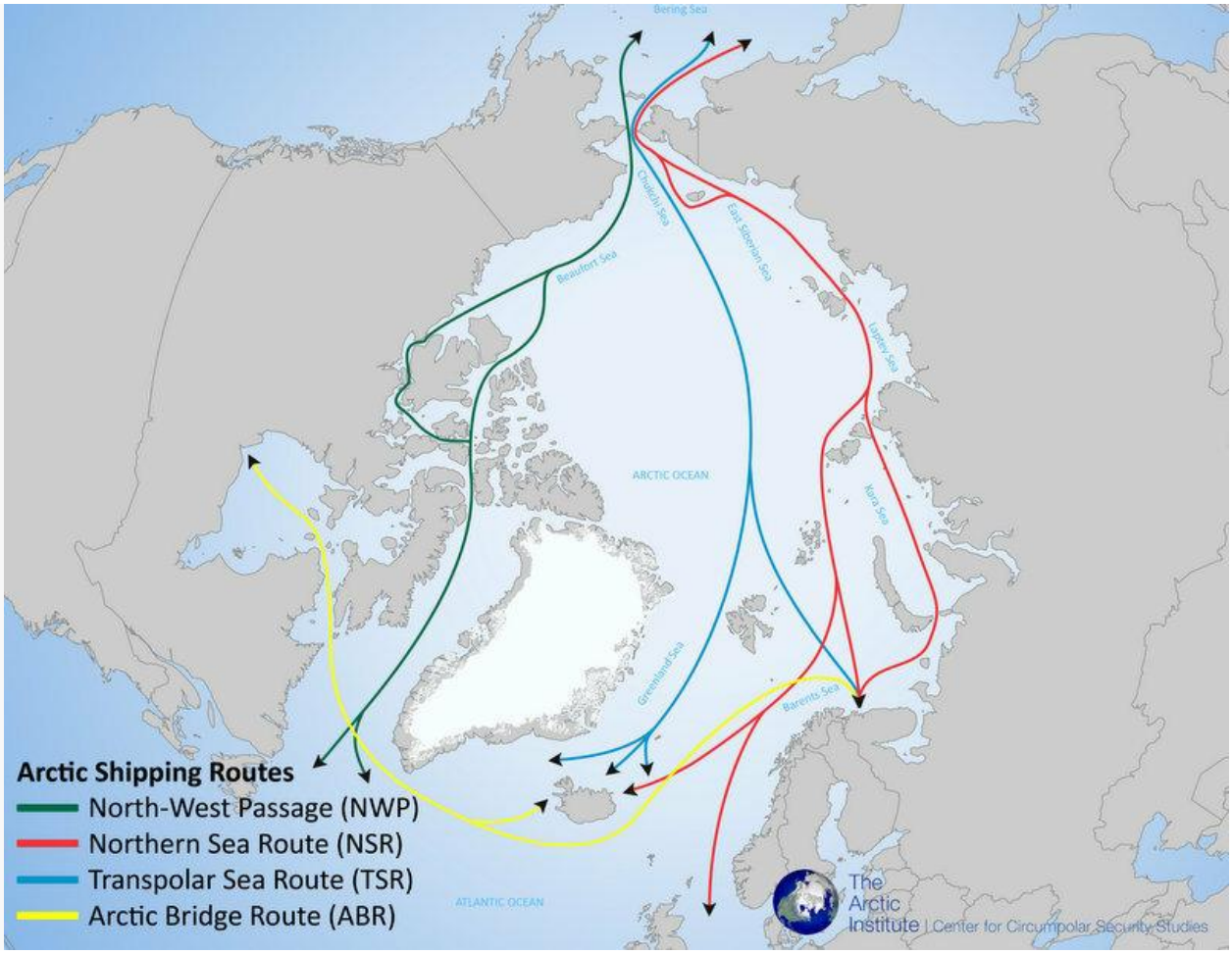
Another important sphere of possible international cooperation is scientific study of the region. There has long been a sense of community among Arctic explorers of many nations, leading often to informal collaboration. In recent years this has become more formalized, and joint programs of investigation have been elaborated, particularly in the fields of geophysics and biology. Such programs have proliferated, and they vary greatly in size and scope. A need has been felt for coordination, perhaps along the lines of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), which worked successfully in the late 20th century. In 1990 the eight Arctic countries set up a nongovernmental International Arctic Science Committee (IASC); other countries with a serious interest in Arctic research could join in the work. It remains to be seen whether this committee, set up with the best intentions by a small group of active Arctic scientists, plays the helpful and useful role it was designed to do or whether it becomes one more bureaucratic obstacle to grassroots initiative.
International cooperation of a different kind is manifested by the creation in 1977 of a Pan-Eskimo movement, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC). First proposed by an Alaskan native, Eben Hopson, this group has provided a forum for discussing issues of common interest to Inuit from the four Arctic countries in which they live—Russia, Canada, the United States, and Greenland. Recognized by the United Nations as a nongovernmental organization, it shows every sign of playing a significant role in Arctic affairs.

VII. Trade routes in the Arctic

Polar caps in the Arctic are receding, creating access to new trade routes for parts of the year. The routes are valuable short cuts for global trade but the waterways are precarious to navigate with unpredictable weather, the need for specialized icebreaking ships, and the necessity to operate at slower speeds, all of which make the routes less commercially reliable and partially offset the savings in time and fuel. But the waterways are highly strategic economically, politically, and militarily, which is why the U.S. Navy is updating its Arctic Strategy, why China has drawn up a Polar Silk Road whitepaper, and why Russia seeks to solidify its control of, and successfully monetize, the route that traverses 3,000 nautical miles along its northern coastline. Here’s your Arctic Trade 101 on the opportunities and challenges ahead in expanding use of the Arctic waterways.

The Trans-Arctic Routes

Three trade routes run through the Arctic. The Northwest Passage runs along the Canadian and Alaskan coastlines from Baffin Bay near Greenland to the Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia. The Northern Sea Route is a national waterway of the Russian Federation that crosses seven time zones as it wends its way along Russia’s coastline. The Central Arctic Route is the shortest possible route connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, running from Iceland straight through the Arctic Circle over the North Pole to the Bering Strait, but this route is still constrained by thick ice caps; experts forecast it could be navigable by around 2050.
Though there are multifaceted reasons for Arctic stakeholders to invest in the development of these routes and to debate their governance, the commercial trade opportunity comes down to saving time and money transporting cargo. By way of example, Arctic Portal analysts estimate that a medium-sized bulk carrier using the Northern Sea Route could save 18 days, 540 tons of fuel, and between 180,000 and 300,000 euros for a trip from Norway to China versus the alternative route from Europe to Asia through the Suez Canal.



Who Has a Stake in the Arctic Routes?

The Arctic Council is the primary organization for international cooperation on arctic exploration and development. Its permanent members are countries that have territory on, or in the vicinity of, the arctic circle (those are “near Arctic states”). Members include the United States, Canada, Russia, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. But other countries have significant interest in the arctic whether for environmental and conservation reasons, national security concerns, or because the arctic is home to significant natural resources in addition to potentially valuable sea routes for cargo. For these reasons, the Arctic Council has official observers (self-designated “Arctic stakeholders”) that include China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, India, Korea, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.
Other regional organizations play a role in shaping the geopolitics and cooperation on arctic policy, such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which works on environment, transport, rescue, and economic cooperation issues as well as the preservation of indigenous culture, and the cultivation of tourism.

Russia Needs to Ship Its Natural Resources

China and Russia emerge as two dominant actors in the race to develop, control, and use these waterways. Russia’s primary economic opportunity in Arctic thawing lies in improved access to minerals, oil and gas, and other valuable natural resources that can be extracted and more easily moved internally to its ports. The United State Geologic Survey estimates that 13 percent of global oil and thirty percent of natural gas are in the Arctic, much of it in

Russia. Russia is also sitting on metals critical to the production of electronics and other technologies, including nickel, palladium, platinum and copper.

Russia continues to build ports along the Northern Sea Route, which they can use to transport natural resources to Europe year-round and to Asia for extended months over the summer, and has developed a fleet of LNG carriers for the task that do not require the assistance of icebreaking escorts – the world's first such ships made by Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding, capable of carrying 170,000 cubic meters of LNG. While exploiting the Northern Sea Route to move its own cargo, Russia could also create a lucrative maritime toll road, charging Chinese and other carriers premiums to use the route.

China's "Polar Silk Road"

China is also making direct investments in oil and gas and mineral industries throughout the region, as well as in the development of ports in Arctic states, so that it can both diversify its energy sources and better control the means to transport them. The value of its cargo moving along Arctic routes is thus far relatively low, but the Polar Research Institute of China forecasts that as much as 5 to 15 percent of China's trade by value could move through the Arctic by 2020.

Redirecting a portion of its commerce to Arctic routes also helps China reduce its dependence on the Strait of Malacca, where there is a U.S. naval presence. Over 64 percent of China's maritime trade transited the South China Sea in 2016, mainly through the Strait of Malacca. China is monitoring Arctic melting from satellites, and building its own fleet for the Arctic; its next icebreaker, the Xuelong 2 will be ready for delivery in 2019, around a year before the United States begins construction of its next icebreaker. China is closely watching the navigability of the Central Arctic Route, which would allow it to avoid the Russian-controlled route.

These routes offer a shortcut that can save time and money in fuel, but navigation is still risky and requires more expensive ships to break the sea ice, which means premium shipping fees and higher insurance costs. Icebreakers capable of moving through ice up to four feet thick will still be required until around 2045 when the ice will be thin enough for cargo ships to get through. It can be difficult to predict when navigable conditions will begin and end each season. Even during the summer shipping season, weather is challenging and variable with the potential for high winds and low visibility.

Given these constraints, the Arctic routes are better suited to moving bulk tonnage – oil and gas and dry commodities like iron ore – than for container goods shipping on just-in-time schedules. Thus, despite the interest in their use, only around two percent of global shipping could be diverted to these routes in the near term; perhaps up to five percent by 2030.

How much more cargo trade ultimately traverses the Arctic will depends on how fast the ice melts, demand for natural resources, global shipbuilding capacity, and other factors such what fees Russia may decide to charge for its route. .

VIII. Economic Hegemony:

The Arctic has been exploited for economic purposes so as to exert power and control, it is also because it contains 8 percent of the surface of the planet and 15 percent of the land area, significant resources are in abundance(both renewable and nonrenewable) are reasonably assumed to be present. Some of these are known—and being utilized—but there could be enormous expansion if it is required and thought desirable. Exploration for mineral resources in particular has been far from exhaustive but it has been an effective tool to showcase countries' power, control and hegemony over the Artic.

With every passing year, new trade routes are opened and become navigable, new mines are dug and new economic ventures start with extremely high rate so as to substantiate the countries' claims on the Arctic.
Coal mines are set up to not only extract minerals but also to create evidence of their presence and hegemonic control.

IX. Soft Power Projection:

Here is an excerpt from an academic paper from the University of Zurich to give you a deep understanding of Hegemonic Control over the Arctic

"When the Russian flag was placed on the ocean floor at the North Pole in summer of 2007, the Western press sought public attention with headlines such as "Arctic Meltdown" or "Arctic Land Grab". Only recently, Kremlin's announcement to strengthen its military foothold in the far north was answered by the Western media in similar fashion, stating that "Russia prepares for Arctic War" or "Start of a very cold war". Even though Russia's activities in the Arctic vary considerably compared to its entanglement in the Ukraine, the media coverage suggests the same sense of antagonism, competition and crisis. Western commentators first of all tend to overlook that planting a national flag at targets difficult to reach is common among explorers as in the case of the Mount Everest, the South Pole or the Moon. Second of all, Russia has ratified the law of the sea convention which prescribes and establishes rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources - a convention which was not ratified by the United States and several other countries (United Nations 2013). The point is not to criticize the Western media coverage or the absent ratification of the sea convention by the U.S., but to draw atten-tion to a possible bias in order to impartially examine what kind of foreign policy Russia actu-ally pursues in the High North.

There is a broad consensus among the vast majority of academics and observers of Russia's Arctic policy, namely that Russia is pursuing an Arctic policy that mainly focuses on compro-mise, collaboration, and stability; therefore, Russia relies on soft power policies such as diplo-macy, multilateral engagement and economic development. For many, this comes rather sur-prisingly, since the political leadership of President Putin is associated with a realist and revi-sionist foreign policy strategy that does not like to follow international rules.

In this sense, this short paper aims to examine the question of what is motivating Russia to pursue soft power policy in the Arctic from different angles. Hence, Russia's interests in the Arctic are outlined in the first chapter. This is followed by a summary of Russia's multilateral engagement and the soft power policy it pursues in order to achieve its interests. A short case study of the Norwegian-Russian delamination agreement aims to exemplify how such peaceful dispute solutions can help Russia to achieve its goals. Drawing on the literature of social con-structivism in the fourth chapter, this theoretical stance is applied in order to explain Russian soft power policy in the Arctic. The paper is concluded by a short discussion of the question asked and by an outlook on Russia's role as a potential soft-power leader in the region.

Russia's Interest in the Arctic

First of all, it is important to recall that the Arctic features a prominent role in Russian political discourse and policy, as it is closely tied with vital interests for Russia's economy and security (Kefferpütz 2010: 2). Over decades, geo-strategists perceived Russia as a landlocked Eurasian heartland naturally opposed to Western maritime nations, which, according to Zbigniew Brzeziński (1997: 197), was "enclosed and contained" by Europe in the west, former Soviet Republic in the southwest, and by India, China, and Japan in the south and east. Often, the northern enclosure of Russia was assumed but rarely directly addressed (Antrim 2010: 18). However, since the Arctic ice is rapidly melting due to global warming, the frozen geopolitical and economic wall in the north is starting to crack, which leads to a reshuffling of the cards in the Far North. No other Arctic country is experiencing the consequences and dynamics of the Arctic melting as immediately as Russia. The causes are its long border, the two million Rus-sians living in the region and the comparatively strong industry located there. Therefore, the following words of the former president, Dmitri Medvedev (2008), should come rather unsur-prisingly: "We must ensure reliable protection in the long-term for Russia's national interests in the Arctic". Russia's general national interests and visions in the Arctic were presented in the document Foundations of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period up to 2020 and Beyond and were updated in 2013 by the Strategy for Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and for Providing National Security in the Period up to 2020 (Russian Federation 2009/2013). The main interests can be grouped into three main priorities, which will all be shortly elaborated upon: military security, economic development and trans-portation.

For a number of reasons, the Arctic is of high strategic military importance to Russia. Russia's main security interest is to ascertain its sovereignty over the Russian Arctic Zone. The close proximity to potential targets and the direct access to the Arctic and Atlantic oceans made the Kola Peninsula-area well-suited for naval operations (Sergunin and Konyshev 2014a: 324). Sea-based nuclear forces, power plants as well as military and sensitive infrastructure are hosted in the area and demand broad security measures (Khramchikjin 2013: 54). Due to the fact that four states of the "Arctic five" are NATO member-states, one of Russia's greatest security concerns is increased NATO presence and an accompanied militarization in the Arctic (Sergunin and Konyshev 2014a: 329).

Economic development is Russia's primary interest in the Arctic because of the vast economic potential which lies underneath its surface as well as in the rich fishing stocks in the Arctic Sea. According to the US Geological Survey (2008), up to 13% of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and 30% of natural gas are possibly located in the Arctic and the

majority is ex-pected to be found in Russian parts of Arctic waters. Today, Russia's biggest export-earner is natural gas, mainly produced in the fields of Zapolyamoye and Nadym Pur Taz in north-west Siberia. However, as gas from those fields is slowly declining, compensations are expected to come from further north, namely off-shore enterprises in the Arctic (Øverland 2010: 870). Transport-wise, Russia is interested in opening the Northern Sea Route (NSR), a shipping route running along the Russian Arctic and connecting the east of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago with the Bering Strait for international commercial traffic, and in developing circumpolar air routes (Sergunin and Konyeshev 2014b: 85). Easier access to and commercial use of the NSR presents a lucrative source of revenue for Russia: nowadays, cargo ships cover about 18'350 kilometres of the traditional Suez Canal route to get from Hamburg to Yokohama, whereas on the NSR the same route is only 11'100 kilometres long (Kefferpütz and Bochkarev 2008: 2). Since the NSR lies within Russia's Exclusive Economic Zone, Russia could charge a fee for the use of the route and reinvest it in the route's maintenance, which again would foster its domestic economy. This, because the NSR links Russia's resource-rich interior, like the No-ril' sk industrial area - which provides nearly 20% of the world's nickel production and hosts large high-grade copper, zinc and tin deposits - with the Arctic Ocean (Kefferpütz 2010: 5). Overall, it can be stated that Russia has numerous, vital interests in the Arctic region as well as in the entire North. However, plans for economic development enjoy highest priority and are linked to the need for improved security and defense measures in the region. Therefore, Russia has no interest in sparking any conflicts in the Arctic, "since this would impede upon its future trade and commercial interests by making the circumpolar north an unstable region" (Rosamond 2011: 42). This already indicates that Russia pursues a rather multilateral, soft and non-aggressive policy in the region. Nevertheless, it should be remarked that Russia's policy in the Arctic is complex, multi-layered and sometimes also contradicting (Zysk 2015: 454). Thus, the focus on Russia's multilateral engagement and soft power policy covers only one part of the bigger picture. However, the focus is not arbitrarily chosen, as it is one of the dom-inating pillars in Russia's Arctic policy; so far, it seems to have brought advantages for both Russia and the Arctic region.

Multilateral Engagement and Soft Power Policy

Besides the young history of political interests in the Arctic, the region has been a witness of remarkable international cooperation. Because of its location on the fault line between the East and the West and the long distance away from the epicenter in Europe, the Arctic served al-ready during the Cold War as a testing ground for pioneering multilateral cooperation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Western states. In the era of detente, the USSR and the four other Arctic circumpolar states ratified the Polar Bear Treaty which fostered cooperation in managing the sustainability of polar bears through prohibiting random, unregulated hunting and holding states accountable for taking "appropriate action to protect the ecosystems of which polar bears are a part" (Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears 1973). In 1987, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev held a widely-noticed speech in Mur-mansk as well as launched the Murmansk Initiative which foresaw to transform the Arctic into "a zone of peace and fruitful cooperation" and was one of the milestones of Gorbachev's greater desire to end the Cold War (Gorbachev 1997). The Murmansk Initiative developed into a catalyst for the emergence of a row of international regimes and intergovernmental organi-zations (IGO) in the Arctic which have increasingly grown in their governance capacities and influence during the 1990s (Åtland 2008: 291).

Today's most important IGO is the Arctic Council (AC) founded in 1996 and consisting of the Arctic Five, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, as well as of six organizations of indigenous Arctic groups, all sharing interests in the fate of the region (Maness and Valeriano 2015: 178). Ac-cording to its statutes, the AC is the "leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic" (Arctic Council 2017). Overall, three functions seem crucial for the roles played by the AC. Firstly, the regular and professional meetings of relatively high state officials have fostered fruitful interstate relations and led to a better under-standing of each other's views and positions. Secondly, the member-states within AC working- groups share the same scientific data and information and carry-out scientific projects; thus, the risk of misunderstandings is reduced. Lastly, because of its clear spatial separation of agenda-setting and the specific grouping of states, an "Arctic Identity" has emerged, enabling the AC to ensure mutual confidence-building (Graszyk and Koivurova 2015: 321)."