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MA thesis

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**New Regionalist Approach to Multilateral Cooperation  
in the High North**

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## **Abstract**

The thesis at hand deals with the different aspects concerning the regional integration process in the Arctic. As a region with huge economic potential and a relatively heterogeneous set of regional actors, consisting of nation-states, NGOs and indigenous populations, the Arctic certainly merits researches of this type to be conducted. The theoretical foundation of this paper relies on the concept of New Regionalism (also New Regionalism Approach – NRA) which concentrates on the new type of regional formations emerging in the post-Cold War era. Incorporating a wide range of issues and a multi-level approach to regional integration, NRA provides a good analytical framework for investigating a region such as Arctic, where, since the end of the Cold War, regional integration process has been on full speed.

As a result of the analysis conducted in this thesis, it was found that although the regional integration process has gained significant momentum in the last two-and-a-half decades, it has reached to a point where stagnation (or even reversal of the integration process) is more possible than further integration. As an explanation, several factors, such as limited political agenda and competing sovereignty claims, can be brought out. Nevertheless, it was also determined that the overall potential for military conflict in the region remains low (although not completely absent). It was also found that factors such as global warming, whilst contributing to some elements of regional integration, can be seen as having a negative effect on others. Finally, it was concluded that as the region is in constant change (both in political and climatic sense), new studies should be conducted periodically to stay on top of things.

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## **Introduction**

The thesis at hand focuses on the process of region-building in the globe's northern periphery – the Arctic. This inhospitable part of the earth had remained unexplored, and thus unknown to the world, except for the indigenous communities living there, for a long time. It was only in the 1920s when scientific progress resulting in long-range flight made it possible to reach the North Pole and finalize the mapping of the region (Keskitalo 2007). In the more recent decades however, the Arctic region has gone through the most rapid process of integration in its entire history and the thesis at hand is concerned precisely with this increase of regional cooperation in the Arctic within the structure of post-Cold War international system.

The theoretical part of my work will rely on the New Regionalism Theory (NRT), proposed and advocated chiefly by Björn Hettne and Frederik Söderbaum.

Whilst the regionalism itself has gone through a kind of rebirth since the late 1980s (primarily associated with end of Cold War alliance system and increasing economic integration and globalization, where no little part was played by the seemingly successful integration in the European Community (Fawcett 1995), it has mostly been concerned with regionalist projects like the European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) or the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995). According to Hettne and Söderbaum however, “it is necessary to avoid the obsession with formal regional organisations” and that “the actors behind regionalist projects are not states only, but a large number of different types of institutions, organisation and movements and non-state actors” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 471). Thus a broader picture of different mechanisms and actors in charge of regional integration is needed.

The objective of this thesis is intended to be two-fold. Firstly I seek to unveil the process of regional integration by determining the actors behind it and the mechanisms by which integration take place on different (sub-state, state and international) levels. Secondly I try to approach the topic of integration from policy-specific angle. Hence, I

hope to determine which policy areas are more apt for cooperation and which are more sensitive where states are prone to limit the amount of cooperation or where they abstain from it totally.

The thesis at hand has five main chapters. In the first chapter I provide the reader with an overview of the theory of regionalism, including its fairly “ambiguous” and “contested” nature (Hurrell 1995:38). This is followed by an account of developments within the study of regionalism in the modern era and the rise of the “new” wave of regionalism. In this chapter I am also introducing the analytical categories I will later adopt for analysing Arctic regionalism. The second chapter aims to give a historical account of the Arctic region. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to the developments that took place before Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1987 speech, claimed by many to be the turning point in the Arctic cooperation (Åtland 2008; Keskitalo 2007; Rosamond 2011), whereas the second part deals with post-Cold War situation in the region. The third chapter will explain the research method and present research questions. The fourth chapter is also divided in two. In the first part I will use the five levels of regionness proposed by Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) to analyse the depth of Arctic regional integration. In the second part I will carry out a category based analysis of regional actors in the Arctic to determine the scope of Arctic regionalism. The fifth chapter is intended for the discussion of the results. In this part I will examine the results of the analysis conducted in the previous chapter and provide a coherent account of past, present and possible future developments regarding the regional cooperation in the Arctic. The sixth chapter is reserved for concluding remarks.

## 1. Theoretical Background

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overview of the regionalism theory, more precisely a sub-field of that – the New Regionalism Approach (NRA, sometimes also referred to as New Regionalism Theory or simply New Regionalism/Neo-Regionalism) which serves as a theoretical foundation of this thesis. I will start off with an account of the most significant developments in the study of regionalism since the end of the WWII. In this part I will also explain the academic debates surrounding the “old” regionalism which concerned itself with mostly European integration. The next part of this chapter is focused on the change from “old” to “new” regionalism. This section will touch upon issues such as the reason for the shift of focus from “old” to “new” regionalism, main tenets of the NRA and differences between the two types of regionalism. The third part will introduce the analytical categories provided by NRA that I will later on use to determine the scope and depth of Arctic regionalism. The final part of this chapter is reserved for the criticisms on the NRA.

As is often the case when looking at things retrospectively, everything makes a lot more sense when put in the correct historical context. It has also been claimed to hold true for regionalism and its development in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000).

Given the historical context of era when the “old” regionalism first emerged – 1950’s – it is not unsurprising that at the time, most approaches to regionalism tended to be more, rather than less, concerned with peace and security (Hettne 2005; Hettne and Söderbaum 1998). Hettne (2005: 547) has underlined Europe as “the centre of the debate about old regionalism”. He highlights federalism, functionalism and neofunctionalism as the relevant theories or approaches to “old” regionalism (or regional integration) and gives an account of the expectations these three theories have for the future of regional integration in Europe.

An important difference between the three is that only one of them, neofunctionalism, would qualify as a theory in the strict academic sense. Federalism bears more resemblance to a political programme than an academic theory and functionalism can be seen more as an approach to peace building than a theory (Hettne 2005). The

resemblance between the two was the presumption that nation state should go, as to how it would be done, the sentiments were different. Federalism (and regional integration in general) was criticized by functionalists because of their territory based foundations which was condoned by functionalists as part of the Westphalian system, thus a source for war and conflict. (ibid)

Neofunctionalist logic follows a different path however, as it in some sense manages to link up some of the ideas put forward by the proponents of federalism and functionalism. The advocates of neofunctionalism, led by Ernst Haas, stressed the importance of process and purposeful actors. The key concept behind the neofunctionalist understanding of European integration was “spillover” what can be defined as “the way in which the creation and deepening of integration in one economic sector would create pressures for further economic integration within and beyond that sector, and greater authoritative capacity at the European level” (Haas 1968, cited in Wunderlich 2013: 14). The problem with neofunctionalism was that, although initially successful in describing (and even prescribing) the developments on ground, the misfit grew bigger since the mid-1960’s. It was proposed that integration could not spread from fields such as economics, considered part of low-politics, to fields such as security, seen as part of high-politics. This, together with the process known as “Eurosclerosis” in European integration and relative failure of regional organizations elsewhere in the world, led to regionalism being disregarded for a time (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000). Nevertheless, in the mid-1980’s, in relation to several structural transformations in the world, the new wave of regionalism started to emerge.

In their 1998 article, Hettne and Söderbaum point to six, in their mind, most crucial structural transformations which contributed to the emergence of NRA:

- The decay of Cold War era bipolar structure and the emergence of multipolar world system.
- The relative recession of U.S hegemony coupled with a more positive approach towards (open) regionalism.
- The reorganization of the global political economy resulting in three major blocs: the EU, the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and Asia-Pacific, all based on different forms of capitalism.

- The growth of social, economic and political interdependence and transnationalism which, together with the Erosion of Westphalian nation-state system, has resulted in new ways of interaction both on state and non-state level.
- The globalization of finance, trade, production and technology, which resulted in the New International Division of Labour (NIDL)
- The end of third-worldism.

With these changes in mind, it would be appropriate to first look at what changed in the nature or the content of regionalism itself. The first considerable differences between the “old” and “new” waves of regionalism present themselves when one looks at the focus of the regional arrangements, who are the actors in charge and which level they are operating on. It has been pointed out that whilst in the case of old regionalism, the regional arrangements in place mostly had a relatively narrow focus, had nation states as main actors and operated on state-level (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998; Hettne 2005). In the case of new regionalism, the range of issues approached at the regional level is much wider, the actors are both states and non-state entities and they operate on global, regional, national and local level (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000). Altogether there are five key distinctions between the old and new forms of regionalism, which are given below (adapted from Warleigh-Lack and Robinson 2011):

	Old regionalism	New regionalism
Type of environment	Bipolar, Cold War international system	Multi-polar, globalized international system
Outside influence	Dependent upon superpower patronage	Dependent on participant state preferences
Function	Function-specific	Multi-purpose
Inward/outward orientation	Protectionist, exclusive	Open, inclusive (in terms of potential members)
Main actors	Sovereign states	Both state and non-state actors

*Table 1. Differences between “old” and “new” type of regionalism.*

Since one of the key concepts NRA is often linked with is globalization, the association between the two concepts perhaps merits further explanation.

It has thus far been established that NRA is a phenomenon that is taking place in an increasingly globalized world. If some would probably claim that new regionalism emerged as a mean to balance the effects of globalization, others are convinced that the two are “mutually constitutive” and that both exist “within a broader context of global change” (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998: 3). With respect to the ties between new regionalism and globalization, Björn Hettne refers to contemporary globalization as a “double movement” (Hettne 2005: 548). He explains that whilst the first movement is represented by the expansion of market, it is countered by a second movement which is of a more interventionist nature and constitutes a response to societal ruptures attributed to market penetration (ibid). Apart from social issues, new regionalism can also be seen as a means by which states are trying to cope with global challenges to national interests, at the same seeking to preserve and protect their role as sovereign actors (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998).

In order to advance towards the substantive part of the NRA, a clarification of the key concepts used is necessary. Since dealing with a theory of regionalism, one would do well to first look at the term “region” and how it has been conceptualized by different authors.

As is probably to be expected, the term is relatively fluid in substance and there exists a multitude of claims as to the meaning of it. One thing that most authors agree on however, is that there are no “natural” or “given” regions (Hettne 2005: 544; Warleigh-Lack and Robinson 2011: 6; Mansfield and Milner 1999: 591). Instead, regions are “socially constructed and politically contested” (Hurrell 1995: 38) or as put by another author, regions are “forged and constructed by the application of different norms, principles, identities and imaginations of the various actors involved” (Wunderlich 2004: 29). In order to make a comprehensive distinction between different regions, one should take into account factors such as social cohesiveness (ethnicity, race, language,

religion, culture, history, consciousness of common heritage), economic cohesiveness (trade patterns, economic complementarities), political cohesiveness (regime type, ideology) and organizational cohesiveness (existence of formal regional institutions) (Hurrell 1995: 38). Including all these factors would be an enormous task for the researcher and equally perplexing for the reader and as a result, most studies do not aim for such levels of complexity and approach the question from a specific angle.

In the case of regions, geography is probably the most obvious and most common way of approaching. It is generally understood that the involvement of a geographical element is necessary in the study of regions and it has even been proposed that the minimum definition for a region constitutes “a geographical relationship and a degree of mutual interdependence” (Hettne 2005: 544; Hurrell 1995; Hettne and Söderbaum 1998). In addition, there are also studies which do not put so much emphasis (if at all) on physical proximity, but rather on economic or cultural ties. An example would be given by countries sharing linguistic similarities (francophone countries for example) or countries with preferential economic arrangements such as U.S – Israel Free Trade Area (Mansfield and Milner 1999).

In relation to the multifaceted definitions attributed to the concept of region, the meaning of two other concepts important to NRA should be explained. These are regionalism and regionalization. As explained by the main proponents of NRA, Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, regionalism is best understood as an ideology or “the urge for a regionalist order, either in a particular geographical area or as a type of world order and is usually affiliated with a political programme or strategy ” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 457). Regionalization however designates “the process that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space” (ibid: 458). In order to make sense of the “semantic cacophony” (Warleigh-Lack and Robinson 2011: 6) surrounding the essence of region, Hettne and Söderbaum have come up with the concept of “regionness” as a tool which can be used to evaluate the “degree to which a particular area in various respects constitute s a distinct entity” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 461). So in other words, by leaving aside the quest for an all-encompassing definition and concentrating

on how a random geographic area is transforming (or transformed) into a specific (political) entity, the NRA is also hoping to shed more light on the essence of region.

I will now proceed to the core of NRA – the concept of regionness. According to its main proponents, regionness can be understood as a “process whereby a geographical area is transformed from a passive object to an active subject capable of articulating the transnational interests of the emerging region” (ibid). Since the concept of regionness designates a process, a certain continuum along which regions can move back and forward, it is evident that the amount of regionness can be bigger or smaller. In order to trace this process, Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) have established five general levels or categories of regionness which can be used to describe a certain region in terms of regional integrity and community.

*Regional space* is the first of five levels of regionness. Even though the geographical aspect pertaining to regions should not be overstated (as mentioned earlier, there are studies which do not look at physical closeness as a “must” when it comes to defining regions), the NRA functions on the understanding that a region is strongly based on territorial space. Being the “lowest” level of regionness, and understood mainly in geographical terms (Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, North America, the Southern cone of South America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, or Indian subcontinent), this level can also be referred as a “proto-region” or a “pre-regional zone” (ibid: 462). It is worth mentioning however, that the geographical borders of a region do not necessarily respect the existing state borders (Warleigh-Lack and Robinson 2011). The societal component, interaction between different groups and communities is scarce at this stage and in order for the regionness to increase, the so far isolated groupings would need to move towards some kind of translocal relationship, generating a regional social system, or as it is known in NRA – a regional complex.

*Regional complex* is the second level of regionness. Although the translocal relations – both positive and negative - are more frequent at this stage, the overall character or regionness still remains low. Best described in terms of nation-building and state-formation, regional consciousness is discouraged and largely outweighed by the lack of mutual knowledge and trust towards people belonging to a different territorial state. In security terms, the best example of such regional order would be the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Europe with the balance of power as the only security mechanism. As for economic interactions, the situation would be much the same. Dominated by unscrupulous and exploitative intentions, economic interactions are unstable and shortsighted, motivated by self-interest, rather than interchange and mutual benefit. In order to move to next level of regionness, states need to become more open to external relations so that the interdependence can increase.

*Regional society* can be identified as the level where the regionalization process really kicks off. With the emergence of a number of other actors, this level is not dominated by the state-centric logic anymore, but rather by an intricate network of interaction between various types of actors. The nature of these actors varies, as they can belong to either economic, political, social or cultural realm and be formed on the basis of professional, ideological, ethnic or religious ties. At the regional society level, two types of regions can be identified: “formal” regions and “real” regions, with the former having a stronger organizational element (such as the existence of regional organization) and the latter being more reliant on potentialities and less precise criteria such as socially or market induced regionalization. Given that the nature of interactions between the “formal” and “real” regions follows a generally complementary and mutually supporting direction, one should expect the regionalization process move towards further institutionalization and community-building.

*Regional community* represents the fourth level of regionness. On this, already relatively high state of regional integration, the region is said to possess the characteristics of a distinct entity, with institutionalized or informal actor capability, having the legitimacy and the structure of decision-making with relation to a responsive regional civil society. From security perspective, this level of regionness would be best understood as a “security community” i.e. it would be unthinkable to solve conflicts (both between and within states) by violent means. From an economical perspective, there must be mechanisms in place that ensure social security, welfare and regional balance. At this level, a common regional identity has started to emerge which means that relations within the region are increasingly defined by mutual trust and social learning. As a result of community and common identity formations, it has been proposed that dividing lines within the regional communities start to dissipate and a growing

distinction is made between those within the region and those outside of it. Keeping in mind the multidimensional and spontaneous nature of the regional interaction, it should be noted that the inclusion of new members has to follow already established paths. In other words, the formal region has to act in accord with the real region, otherwise the regionalization process might be hindered.

*Region-state* is the fifth and final level of regionness. In order not to confuse region-state with (Westphalian) nation-state, some inherent differences between the two should be outlined. Firstly the region-state will not strive for the same amount of sovereignty and homogeneity as the classical nation state. Secondly (and linked to the first point), instead of cultural standardization limited to one single ethnic model, a mutually corresponding relationship within a pluralist culture is needed. Thirdly, in region-state, authority, power and decision making are layered, rather than centralized. This kind of arrangement will include local, micro-regional, national and macro-regional-supranational levels. Although at present moment understood largely as a theoretical/hypothetical construction, the region-state should nevertheless be considered as a viable future outcome of the regionalization process.

The end of this chapter is reserved for various criticisms of the NRA. The point most frequently made is to do with the relatively blurry and “evasive” nature still associated with attempts to conceptualize region (Hettne 2005: 565; Harrison 2006: 29) – exactly the problem the concept of regionness and the idea of it being a process is meant to surpass. Another common criticism is related to theories of regionalism and regional integration paying too much attention on the European (EU) experience and trying to apply the European model elsewhere (Wunderlich 2004). Yet, this particular argument is more related to the past than the present state of regional integration studies, as the lack of comparative examples is no longer the case (Hettne 2005). A third point that has been made in relation to alleged shortcomings of new regionalism is its excessive focus on economic factors, leaving social and cultural factors in the background (Harrison 2006). It is for precisely this reason I have deemed it necessary to include a category based analysis of regional actors in my research, as it will help me avoid putting too much emphasis on one single type of integration process.

## **2. Histocial account of the Arctic region**

### **2.1 Cold War Arctic environment**

Considering the focus of this paper, I will not give a detailed historical account of the Arctic region prior to 20<sup>th</sup> century as it would not serve the purpose of analyzing Arctic from regionalism perspective. Taking into account the remoteness and inhospitable nature of the region, it is not unsurprising that Arctic was one of last places on the earth to be “conquered” by mankind. It was not until 1920’s when the technological advancements, such as airships and long-range flight made it possible to finalise the mapping of the region and reach the North Pole (Keskitalo 2007). During these early days of Arctic exploration, the region was surrounded with an aura of adventure and the conquering of polar areas was seen as an example of “white man’s endurance and heroism” (Palosaari and Möller 2004: 258). Arctic explorations were also fueled by the persistent search for national prestige and international recognition by newly independent countries such as Norway (ibid). At that time, the contact with the local indigenous population was low, limited to only a handful of explorers taking interest and providing accounts of local Inuit people (Keskitalo 2007).

Although the interest in the region was initially motivated by the quest for prestige and reputation, it gradually became evident that there was also a military and strategic component to Arctic. This resulted in a situation where, although the cooperative aspect was not entirely missing from the region, existent in several bilateral agreements of mostly environmental nature (Knecht 2013), the process of immense militarization overshadowed all other features of the region (Palosaari and Möller 2004).

It has been proposed that in the early days of the Cold War, the Arctic was not seen as a comprehensive region but its importance to the two superpowers- the US and USSR – rather lied in the fact that it was the shortest distance between the two countries (Keskitalo 2007). This, paired with the emergence of strategic nuclear weapons and naval technology (nuclear-powered submarines) capable of operating in the Arctic, further augmented the level of militarization in the region (Palosaari and Möller 2004).

In the late 1970s and onwards however, the overwhelming military and strategic focus slowly started to retreat, leaving room for some forms of cooperation. It has been argued that this change occurred due to several separate factors, some which are more regional in nature, others more related to the process of globalization (Keskitalo 2007). From the economic point of view, the increase of the exploitation of oil and gas resources in the Far North has been portrayed as the most influential catalyst for cooperation (Rosamond 2011). The economic rationale for cooperation was further strengthened by political initiatives launched by Finland and Norway, aiming at the increase of regional stability through the normalization of state-relations in the region and calling for a more political approach to security. Canada was another actor who showed initiative to extend the Arctic agenda outside the strict limits of military-strategic affairs by putting emphasis on environmental matters (such as pollution) and the issues of ethnicity movements and native rights (Palosaari and Möller 2004). This was also the time when more and more scholars started to refer to Arctic as a “region” (Keskitalo 2007: 194).

## **2.2 Post Cold War Arctic environment**

In the mid-1980’s, the political situation in the Arctic started to change. The catalyst for the alteration of the Arctic political environment is most commonly seen in the speech delivered by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in October 1987 in Murmansk which contained several policy initiatives meant to tune down the tensions in the Arctic (Åtland 2008; Keskitalo 2007; Rosamond 2011). As the Murmansk speech has an essential role to play in the foundation of the Arctic regional setting which persists down to the present day, it merits a closer look.

It has been argued that the Murmansk speech in itself is a good example of desecuritization (Åtland 2008) which is a reference to the concept used in the Copenhagen School literature and can be defined as “the shifting of issues out of the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere” (Buzan et. al 1998: 4). Being a characterizing element for the Cold War era as a whole, excessive securitization was even more so evident in the border regions such as Arctic. This, as argued before, rendered all meaningful forms of cooperation impossible or as put by one author: “[excessive securitization] had brought cross-border interaction to a

halt, stifled civil society and was threatening to cripple the economy” (Åtland 2008: 292). In the light of this, Gorbachev’s calls for “bilateral and multilateral cooperation”, “radical lowering of the military confrontation in the region” and letting “the North of the globe, the Arctic become a zone of peace” (Gorbachev 1987) were definitely a step towards a more cooperative environment. The most substantial part of the speech, the eight initiatives put forward by Gorbachev, were analyzed by Kristian Åtland who distinguished between two types of initiatives. Firstly, he argues, there were initiatives belonging to the military sector: De-nuclearization, Naval arms control and Confidence-building measures. Secondly there were issues which are of non-military nature: Energy cooperation, Scientific cooperation, Indigenous peoples, Environmental cooperation and Opening the Northern Sea Route (Åtland 2008). The author claims that although the desecuritative aspect was present in both (military and non-military) issue areas, the course through which these issues were desecuritized was somewhat different in nature. With non-military issues, the case was pretty much straightforward - by declaring that cooperation on the aforementioned five non-military issues would not constitute a threat to national security, these issues were consequently removed from national security agenda and moved to the sphere of normal politics (ibid). In Copenhagen School literature, this process, through which issues are moved from security politics to the domain of normal politics, is known as “desecuritization through transformation” (Roe, 2004; Jutila, 2006). As for the military issues, the process was somewhat different. Since it would not have been possible to simply remove issues like nuclear weapons and naval arms from security discourse, the problem called for a different approach. This approach, again having its origins in Copenhagen School literature, is known as desecuritization through management (Wæver, 2000) and essentially means that something is accepted as a security issues but it is tried to manage in a manner which does not generate “security dilemmas and other vicious spirals” (ibid: 285). In reality it meant that instead of resorting to continuing military build-up, the Soviet Union called for a political solution including arms reduction talks and establishment of confidence building measures (Åtland 2008). The author also notes that although not initially visible, there was a cross-sector spillover through which cooperation in the “soft”, non-military areas started to positively affect the cooperation in military sphere as well (ibid).

It has been pointed out that although often seen as a declaration of the significance of the Arctic, Gorbachev's Murmansk speech probably had much more general political and economic impetus, linking it with his overall policy of openness (Keskitalo 2007). This understanding has been supported by the claim that the concept of "zone of peace" which Gorbachev used in reference to (the future of) the Arctic in his Murmansk speech, was also used by him in regional peace initiatives in Mediterranean and Asia-Pacific region (Åtland 2008). This does not however lessen the overall effect the Murmansk speech had on the post Cold War Arctic political, economic and social environment.

As a turning point in Arctic regional cooperation framework, Gorbachev's Murmansk speech paved a way for a process sometimes referred to as an "Arctic boom" (Keskitalo 2007), referring to the wide array of regional cooperation initiatives launched during and after the end of Cold War. Since the most significant regional cooperation initiatives will be analyzed later on, this part aims to provide a chronological overview of the development of regional cooperation framework in post-Cold War era Arctic.

The first significant evidence of improved cooperation in the region was the establishment of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991 which was preceded by a series of preliminary meetings by the eight Arctic countries (Keskitalo 2007; Palosaari and Möller 2004). The significance of AEPS lies mainly in two facts: firstly it was the "first form of real international cooperation in the Arctic" (Palosaari and Möller 2004: 260) and secondly it established the eight-state Arctic (USA, Canada, Russia, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark) as an institution (Keskitalo 2007).

Another important milestone from the early 1990s was the signing of Kirkenes declaration in 1993 which established the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). The declaration was signed by Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia and the European Commission with the general aim to promote regional cooperation in northernmost counties of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. In addition, it aimed to

facilitate the (regional) cooperation between EU and northwestern Russia. (Palosaari and Möller 2004)

In 1996, the Ottawa declaration was signed to replace the AEPS with newly established high-level intergovernmental forum for the Arctic – the Arctic Council (AC). The declaration established the eight Arctic states as *members* of the Arctic Council and three organizations of indigenous people as *permanent participants* of the Arctic Council. As to the latter, the declaration states that “The category of Permanent Participation is created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council” (Declaration on the Establishment of the AC 1996). The active involvement of indigenous groups is seen by many as one of the innovative strengths of the AC, making it “open and democratic” and at the same time “unique compared to many other regional organizations” (Rosamond 2011: 21; Knecht 2013: 11). Concerning the intentions of the newly established organization, the declaration asserted as its primary objective the need to “provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic” (Declaration on the Establishment of the AC 1996).

With its topical focus on programs established under the AEPS, namely the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPRP) and having the working group on sustainable development also included in the area of expertise of the Council (Declaration on the Establishment of the AC 1996; Keskitalo 2007), the AC has come up with several important reports which, with the aim to document major issues that have emerged in the region and make key policymakers aware of the existence of such issues, provide a “comprehensive” and “authoritative” account on the state of Arctic affairs (Young 2005: 11). An example is provided by two reports that were delivered in November 2004, at the biennial ministerial meeting of the AC. First report is known as Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and it supplies “a wide-ranging expert

assessment of about 200 climate researchers from 11 countries of the effects of climate change on the Arctic, including land area and ocean and with some focus on important renewable resource industries and indigenous peoples” (Keskitalo 2007: 191). The second report is called The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) which provides an extensive account about human well-being in the region, as well as the status of human and social capital (Young 2005).

For the first ten year of its existence, the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS), with the purpose of supporting the Chair of AC, was organized in a way that its location rotated biennially with the Chairmanship of the AC. Before their consecutive chairmanship periods however, Norway, Denmark and Sweden agreed to share the Secretariat for the period of their chairmanship duties which started in 2006 spring. It was decided that a temporary Secretariat will be located in Tromsø, Norway. At the Nuuk Ministerial Meeting in May 2011, it was decided that the Standing Arctic Council Secretariat will be set up at the same location and the Standing Secretariat became operational 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2013 (AC 2015). This move is, by some, seen as “making it [the AC] less a forum and more an international organization” (Sellheim 2012: 70).

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the situation regarding the regional cooperation in the Arctic is not without complications. Although the establishment of AEPS and its subsequent integration into the AC agenda determined the Arctic Eight (together with environmental NGOs and indigenous peoples organizations) as the pre-eminent form of regional cooperation, this was (at least to some extent) put into question by the Arctic Ocean Conference in Illulissat, Greenland that took place in May 2008 and led to the joint Illulissat Declaration by the five Arctic littoral states (i.e. Denmark, Norway, US, Canada and Russia) (Rosamond 2011: 49). This “separatist move” (Knecht 2013: 8) was in fact triggered by the need to arrive at a common position with regards to issues such as melting ice, the retreat of glaciers, oil and gas exploitation, disputes on sovereignty and new sea routes (Rosamond 2011), all of which can potentially severely hinder Arctic cooperation.

In relation with the issues that served as an incentive for the Illulissat Declaration, there is also a growing interest in the Arctic from outside the sphere of traditional Arctic actors. In this case, the biggest stimulus is probably provided by the hopes of increased

access to energy, shipping and fishing grounds (Keil 2014; Hong 2011). It has been argued that, amongst others, UK, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea and China in particular are getting more and more engaged in Arctic matters (ibid).

### 3. Research method and questions

In order to analyze Arctic regionalism, the thesis at hand uses two theoretical conceptions provided by the NRA. Firstly the concept of regionness is used to establish the position of the Arctic region on the theoretical continuum ranging from a region being understood solely on the basis of geographical limitations to a regional entity so integrated that it could be called a region-state. With this purpose in mind, all five levels of regionness and their correspondence with the Arctic will be analyzed. This method is particularly useful as it will help to establish how the Arctic regionalism has changed in time and to determine the causes for said changes.

Secondly, a category specific analysis of Arctic regionalism will be provided. Partly being of complementary nature, this will allow providing a more specific focus on the roles of different actors in the regional integration process and their contribution to it (or counteraction with it).

I have chosen the Arctic as a case-study for two main reasons: Firstly the Arctic region has some fairly unique characteristics. It has been proposed that compared to land-space regions, the “liquid” Arctic region is “much more reactive and output-oriented towards a restricted set of collective action problems” (Knecht 2013:4). The second reason lies with the enormous geopolitical significance of the region which can be contributed to previously unobtainable natural resources and trade routes that have become available due to reducing levels of sea-ice. The economic importance of the region, coupled with Russia – the country which holds rights over the biggest portion of the Arctic – turning back to nationalist rhetoric and state-centric Arctic development (Conley and Rohloff 2015), will serve as an indicator whether the region will continue on the path towards growing integration or will the interests of nation-states outbalance the desire for cooperation.

The main research question this thesis seeks an answer to is *What is the current degree of regional integration that can be attributed to the Arctic region?* This is complemented by the following sub-questions:

- Which policy areas are most touched by the regional integration process?

- What is the relationship between state and non-state actors in the regional integration process?
- How is the Arctic perceived by actors from outside the region?

Naturally, the thesis at hand is not without limitations. As the general purpose is to determine the overall status of regional integration process, the main emphasis is put on nation-states and the Arctic Council as the preeminent regional actors. Although other regional actors are also included in the research, their exact role in the regional integration process merits further research which is outside the scope of current study. Furthermore, although it would be useful to look at regional integration process in the Arctic in comparison with other regions that share similar characteristics, the sheer amount of work needed for such study makes it impossible to include it in the present thesis. Lastly, it should be noted that given the rapid changes that have undergone in the Arctic region since the end of Cold War, it is likely the results obtained in this research will soon prove to be, at least partly, outdated. Thus, a need for resumed research can be underlined. Nevertheless, I believe that the results obtained in this research prove to be valuable as they can be used as a solid basis for conducting new studies.

## **4. Analysis of Arctic regionalism**

### **4.1 Arctic regionness**

In the following chapter I will adapt the five levels of regionness introduced in the theoretical section to the empirical situation in the Arctic region. I will argue that according to this method of analysis, Arctic constitutes a case of a region entity which can be position between the third and fourth level of regionness i.e. between regional society and regional community.

#### **4.1.1 Arctic regional space**

The first part of this chapter – the regional space – will provide an account of the physical limitations of the Arctic region. I will start by highlighting some of the key features Arctic as a sea-based region retains. These features will be later on used to explain some of the more distinct aspects of Arctic regionalism. Next off, I will describe the debate over what should constitute the Arctic region, along with different understandings how to approach it. I will conclude with explaining the differentiation between Arctic 8 and Arctic 5.

In order to fully comprehend the process of Arctic regionalism, one should first take into account that, not alike many other subjects to the study of regionalism, what is generally known as Arctic, consists mainly of water, i. e. the Arctic Ocean. It has been proposed that this somewhat peculiar feature of the Arctic physical geography accounts for several aspects in which the regionalization process in the Arctic is distinct from land-space regions. Knecht (2013) distinguishes between four of those aspects: fuzzy boundaries, limited political agenda, contested state sovereignty and a tendency towards exclusive (marine) regionalism. As the latter three aspects can be better explained when dealing with higher levels of regionness, the next part of this section is used to describe the relative vagueness of Arctic delimitations.

Proceeding from most simplistic to more complicated understandings of Arctic delineations, I will firstly introduce an outlook which is based on political geography (see Figure 1 below). According to this logic, the Arctic region is composed of Arctic

Ocean – in large part High seas under no state authority – and eight countries surrounding it (ibid). As this is also the view of the Arctic Council, the political limitations to Arctic are fairly straightforward and generally accepted. It is worth noting however, that, as previously mentioned, the geographical borders of a region do not necessarily respect the existing state borders. This is precisely the case with the Arctic. As one can probably imagine, the Arctic region does not include all parts of the eight states. Arctic Council for example has its geographical focus on area that is above 60° northern latitude in North America, Iceland and eastern Russia, and above 66° (i.e. above the Arctic Circle) in Norway, Sweden, Finland and northwest Russia (Keskitalo 2007). In order to understand the reasoning behind this, one would have to go back in time and look at, interestingly enough, the developments concerning its southern counterpart – the Antarctica.



*Figure 1: Political Map of the Arctic Region*<sup>1</sup>

In 1959, the Antarctic Treaty, a governance programme for the region, defined Antarctic as the area below 60° southern latitude. Correspondingly, a mirror delineation was developed by Canada which was applied to mark the border between its southern provinces and northern territories (Keskitalo 2007). Yet, using the 60° parallel as a limit

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Hugo Ahlenius, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, 2008; Retrieved 5.04.16 from, [http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/arctic-map-political\\_1547](http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/detail/arctic-map-political_1547)

to the region is much more controversial in the Arctic than in the Antarctic. Firstly, there are no state borders or permanent (human) population to consider in the Antarctic. Secondly, applying the delineation based on 60° northern latitude in northern Europe would mean including almost all of Finland and Norway together with most parts of Sweden which, being warmed by the North Atlantic Drift, enjoy much warmer temperatures than equivalent latitudes in North America (ibid). Consequently, in northern Europe and northwestern Russia, the southern limit of the Arctic is marked by the Arctic Circle at 66° northern latitude (ibid). Being in several senses imperfect, the astronomical boundary of 66° northern latitude does not establish a border for any type of fauna or flora. It does provide however, together with 60° parallel in North America, a geographically simple, longitudinal delineation of the Arctic region, which in the course of last few decades has also been determined politically (Keskitalo 2007).

#### **4.1.2 Arctic regional complex**

To give a historical perspective, a regional complex in the Arctic would best fit to the era from the beginning of Cold War up to the 1987 Murmansk speech. The latter can be seen as a milestone, after which some notions of being a regional community started to emerge in the Arctic.

In the present section I will first explain why, according to the NRA, Cold War era Arctic would constitute a regional complex. For this I plan to explain how the overall global environment, to a large degree, defined the intra-state relations in the Arctic. In the latter part of this chapter I will introduce the few cooperative arrangements that were present at this era. The purpose for this is two- fold: Firstly it would help to point out that although heavily dominated by security politics, the cooperative aspect was not entirely missing from the region. Secondly, the few cooperative arrangements that existed at that time were nearly all environmental in nature (Knecht 2013), it points one in the general direction of Arctic cooperative arrangements, which is even today dominated by environmental concerns.

Protected from extensive human influence by natural barriers (in the form of sea-ice) and harsh climate conditions, the Cold War era Arctic was mainly defined in the context

of east-west relations. More precisely, the region was involved in the strategic contest between the United States and the Soviet Union that took place on a global level (Griffiths 1988). This fits well with the argument put forward by Hettne and Söderbaum (2000: 464) that “[In regional complex] actors may also look towards the larger external system, rather than the region”. The extra-regional influence on the region, although to a smaller scale, remains significant to this day as one of the distinct characteristics of the Arctic regionalism (Young 2005). This influence, asserted on the Arctic region by the metropolises located far in the south, is much to do with keeping in mind the global (and not regional) interests. The overall Cold War environment, described as: “The dominant security conceptions were based on state interests and narrow military security; security interests of individuals or groups of people mattered little” (Palosaari and Möller 2004: 269), can be connected to another point made by Hettne and Söderbaum (2000) that in regional complex, (nation-) states monopolize external relations and are likely to have a high degree of mistrust and skepticism towards each other.

Although heavily dominated by the confrontation between the two superpowers, the Cold War Arctic discourse is not entirely ignorant of smaller states. In fact, one might argue that the opposed-force perspective of the era is precisely the reason why countries like Iceland, Sweden and Finland were involved in the Arctic issues. In the case of Iceland, the reason lied in a defense agreement signed with the US, which made the former innately part of the Arctic security framework (Keskitalo 2007). Sweden and Finland became implicated in the Arctic Cold War simply because of their position between the Soviet Union and NATO countries (ibid). It has been proposed that although the governments of Iceland, Sweden and Finland had an active role in international politics and were demanding arms control, nuclear disarmament and nuclear free zone, “These actors...did not, however, have a real influence in the European North, one of the hottest ‘military theatres’ of the Cold War” (Heininen 1999: 87). Despite these ominous sounding titles, the cooperative aspect was not completely missing from the Cold War era Arctic. Two things should be stressed here however: Firstly cooperative projects that were undertaken in the Cold War era environment had very little effect on the domain of “high” politics, such as foreign or security politics. Instead, the few attempts for collaboration concentrated on scientific and environmental

questions. Secondly, cooperative arrangements in most cases did not include all regional actors, not even all littoral states were included. Rather, the general type of agreement was a bilateral agreement between direct Arctic neighbours (Theutenberg 1988; Knecht 2013). An example is provided, for instance, by the U.S.-USSR Marine Mammal Project (1973), the U.S.-Canadian Joint Marine Pollution Contingency Plan for the Beaufort Sea (1974), the Agreement on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd (1987), and the Danish-Canadian Marine Environment Cooperation Agreement (1983) (Knecht 2013).

There was however also some cooperation which covered military domain. The best example here would be provided by military cooperation between NATO countries: The United States, Canada, Denmark/Greenland and to some extent Norway as well. Iceland, although a NATO member state and at the time housing a NATO airbase in Keflavik, had no standing army of its own and was thus an “inactive” member of the alliance (Möttölä 1988). Despite some irritations from Danish and Canadian over US manning and operating military installations on their territory, the cooperation was generally fruitful and helped to improve northern links between the countries in question (Armstrong et. al. 1978). Another, more sinister outcome was that military cooperation under the auspices of NATO added even more tensions to the already suspense environment (ibid). The more productive era for Arctic cooperation started only after Mikhail Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech in 1987.

#### **4.1.3 Arctic regional society**

In this chapter I will provide an account of the Arctic boom that followed the Gorbachev’s Murmansk speech. I will demonstrate how the changed global situation gave rise to an increase in regional initiatives focused on cooperation and integration. I will touch upon both formal (state-level) and more informal (non-state e.g. indigenous groups) cooperative arrangements. The last part of this chapter is concerned with limitations of Arctic regionalism, most importantly with limited political agenda, which become more important at this level of regionness.

Hettne and Söderbaum (2000: 464) claim that “This [regional society] is the level where the crucial regionalization process develops and intensifies, in the sense that a number

of different actors apart from states appear on different societal levels and move towards transcendence of national space, making use of a more rule-based pattern of relations”. In the case of Arctic, before this level of regionalization was to be achieved, something had to change in the global system. The change – politics of *perestroika* in a wider sense and Murmansk speech calling for more cooperation and openness in the Arctic, in a stricter, more regional sense, brought about gradual transformation of the Arctic political environment. As elaborated before, the Murmansk speech was essentially a desecuritative speech act – by taking the security out of the equation, cooperation on non-military issues was open to political debate. Understandably, the question was, and remains to be, more complicated with military issues which continue to be relatively unaddressed on regional level.

As suggested in the previous chapter, some form of regional cooperation existed prior to Murmansk speech. The type of cooperation that grew out of the Murmansk speech followed the same vein, being mostly concerned with environmental issues but due to changed political climate, more attention was paid on normalization and stability in the region (Palosaari and Möller 2004). Another deviation from the previous line of cooperative arrangements was that the one’s adopted after the Murmansk initiative and the end of Cold War were much more inclusive in terms of members. This is seen both in the case of AEPS (later to become the AC), which included all eight Arctic states already since the preparatory stages (Koivurova and Vanderzwaag 2007), and BEAC including all Nordic countries, Russia and the European Commission. The latter, by definition, could not include Canada and the US. Nevertheless the two, among 7 other states, are incorporated as observers. In addition to being inclusive in terms of states, new regional initiatives were also more admitting in terms of other groups, most notably indigenous people. During the Cold War era, the life of indigenous people, most of all of those living in Soviet Arctic, was heavily affected by industrialization and militarization which resulted in the pollution of fishing grounds and waterways (Åtland 2008). Several authors (Keskitalo 2007, Palosaari and Möller 2004), single out Canada as the most significant advocate for the inclusion of northern indigenous people in new cooperative arrangements. Within Canada, one organization in particular: The Inuit Circumpolar Council (until 2006 Inuit Circumpolar Conference), had a significant influence on transnational concept of the Arctic (Fabbi 2012). The influence of

indigenous people on Arctic regionalism will be examined more closely in the chapter dealing with society induced regionalism. As for Canada's intentions of giving indigenous people more say in Arctic matters, a good example would be the original Canadian proposal that indigenous people (along with NGOs and nation states) should have direct representation in the AC (Palosaari and Möller 2004). However, mainly due to resistance by the US, this idea was rejected and the model where nation-states enjoy more power than other participants, prevailed (ibid).

Apart from nation states and indigenous people, there were also other actors involved in Arctic community building initiatives. These undertakings involved NGOs such as the International Arctic Social Science Association (IASSA), the International Council for Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic, the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH), the Winter Cities Association and the Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) (Nord 1999).

Whereas the end of Cold War has given rise to a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing region coherence and integration, the process has not been without hindrances. Although the overall level of militarization has been reduced, international relations in the Arctic are still dominated by security issues (Palosaari and Möller 2004). This has given cause for worry that the reluctance to replace military oriented strategic visions of the regions, coupled with changing climate conditions that allow better access to natural resources and potential shipping routes, will turn desecuritization into remilitarization (ibid). Desecuritization, as noted by some authors, is not an irreversible process and given that right preconditions arise, the re-emergence of threat perceptions from the past is a valid possibility (Åtland 2008). Furthermore, there is also an issue with limited political agenda which can, at least partly, be explained by the maritime nature of the region. As opposed to land regions, maritime regions such as the Arctic, "rather than having a 'natural' character of their own, are defined only by common interests in the oceans" (Alexander 1977: 108-109 cited in Knecht 2013: 7). On the one hand it means that in some domains, cooperation is encouraged by the physical conditions. For example, it is fairly certain that no country can tackle the impacts of global climate change on its own. It is equally clear that issues related to tourism, sustainable use of natural resources or social welfare can reasonably

be solved only when all participants share the responsibility. On the other hand, Arctic states are fairly reluctant to engage in regional initiatives that can be solved unilaterally or worse, have an impact on their national sovereignty (Knecht 2013). As one author puts it: “ocean-based nature of the Arctic region has contributed negatively to many of the issue areas that other international regions collaborate on” (Exner-Pirot 2013: 9 cited in Knecht 2013: 7). A third point to be made here is about cooperation being hindered by different perspectives and understandings of the Arctic. These differences existed both within and between different states. For example, as a response to policymakers advocating for cooperative initiatives, some Arctic professionals expressed their concerns that “national policymakers and administrators often show little knowledge of, much less interest in, the concerns of local or subregional constituencies” and they tend to “approach these issues from the vantage point of Ottawa, Helsinki and Moscow” (Young 1992: 21-22 cited in Keskitalo 2007: 200).

When it came to creating a common agenda for dealing with different indigenous issues, it was found that there are profound differences on how these issues were seen and handled in different parts of the Arctic. The most prominent distinction in this sense was between North America and Europe. For example it has been claimed that whilst “In North America, the ‘native people’s question’ has become probably the most important single issue” (Armstrong 1978: 271), “In northern Scandinavia, the Saami have long been a small minority. There the distinction between aboriginals and immigrants becomes somewhat hazy, for some of the latter have been there a thousand years” (ibid: 273). Thus the notion of ‘indigenous’ (or ‘immigrant’) can have a different meaning in different parts of the Arctic. Similarly, there are significant differences between how different indigenous groups manage their livelihood and commercial activities. As an example, Keskitalo (2007) highlights differences between an industrialized and fully modern commercial-fishing community in Iceland, and indigenous subsistence fishing villages in Alaska. Another example comes from Riseth (2006: 543) who describes Saami reindeer herders in terms of being a “modern regulated, motorized and market-oriented industry”.

These examples serve to highlight the fact that Arctic regionalism definitely has its limitations and despite the rapid growth of different regional initiatives after the end of

the Cold War, these initiatives are often met with a certain amount of skepticism both on sub-state and state level. In fact, a point could be made that in some domains, the Arctic regionness stops with this level. For example, in security terms, the Arctic is far away from becoming a “security community” as proposed by Hettne and Söderbaum (2000). In addition, with reference to regional collective identity, it can be claimed that national identities still prevail over a common Arctic identity (this will be elaborated further on in the chapter dealing with regional identity). Despite these shortcomings, there are some aspects of Arctic regionalism that indeed fit into the next level of regionness which is known as the regional community.

#### **4.1.4 Arctic regional community**

As already argued, many aspects corresponding to regional community level in the NRA are in the case of the Arctic only theoretical and can (but might not) appear in the future. One of the outcomes of Arctic regional integration that actually corresponds to the regional community level is the Arctic Council (AC). Since the NRA understanding of regional community is as a “process whereby the region increasingly turns into an active subject with a distinct identity, institutionalized or informal actor capability, legitimacy and structure of decision making in relation with a more or less responsive regional civil society” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 466), this chapter has its focus on the “institutionalized” part of this argument. I will look at what kind of rule-making power (if any at all) does the AC have and does it lie more in formal arrangements or in informal settings. I will also touch upon the subject how the AC has chosen to distance itself from dealing with military security issues and how that can be seen as an obstacle to regional cooperation. Finally, I will briefly explain the last two distinct aspects of Arctic as a marine region: contested state sovereignty and a tendency towards exclusive (marine) regionalism, and explain their relation with the AC.

Although in principle having the authority to deal with a wide range of common Arctic issues, the main pillars on which the AC mandate rests are protection of the Arctic environment and sustainable development (Koivurova and Vanderzwaag 2007). Albeit taking place without a legal mandate, the AC (and AEPS before that) has indeed had an impact on Arctic cooperation. It has been proposed however, that in evaluating this

impact, not too much effort should be placed on how successful the cooperation has been in terms of fulfilling its formal objectives, but rather how the AC and AEPS have been able to adequately demonstrate the need for circumpolar cooperation (ibid).

As Knecht (2013) argues, there are at least three ways in which the AC can be seen as an autonomous actor (in the sense being independent from its member states) in the Arctic arena. He claims that the main leverage of the AC lies in the research and advice it offers through its six working groups. The working groups do not only publish reports which monitor and record the changes in the Arctic but they also offer detailed policy recommendations on how to deal with these changes. An example is provided by the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) report released in 2009 by the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group, which offered a number of suggestions how to improve environmental protection and marine safety. Another indication of the AC being (at least partly) an autonomous actor is its agenda-setting ability, implemented by the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) who are appointed by Arctic states to manage their interest in the AC. As stipulated by the AC rules of procedure (2013), the SAOs (together with the representatives designated by permanent participants) should act as a “focal point for Arctic Council activities”. The role of SAOs should be to “receive and discuss reports from working groups, task forces and other subsidiary bodies and [to] coordinate, guide and monitor Arctic Council activities in accordance with the decisions and instructions of the Arctic Council”. Although still a relatively new phenomenon, the AC Secretariat also retains increasing power, as its deepened interaction with various regional actors such as indigenous organization, observers and working groups might mean more bargaining power in relation to member states (Knecht 2013). Finally, the autonomous role of the AC has been reinforced by two legally binding agreements – 2011 Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, and 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (Knecht 2013). Due to national interests still heavily dominating Arctic arena, it is hardly possible that non-compliance to these agreement will result in heavy punishment. Nevertheless, there is hope that monitoring of state practices will lead to policy adaptations or “race for best practices” (Knecht 2013: 15).

In order for the AC to gain more autonomy, there are several obstacles on the way. Probably the most severe of those is the complete exclusion of military security related issues from the AC's agenda. The exclusion of such issues can be seen as a hindrance to Arctic cooperation mainly in two ways: First is to do with operational reasons and the second is to do with the inter-linked nature of Arctic cooperation. As for the first point, Willis (2013, cited in Wilson 2016: 63) argues that "the armed forces, beyond their responsibility for handling all contingencies, are also the only agencies with both the requisite monitoring instruments and the physical capabilities to operate in such a vast and inhospitable region". Although still mostly true, the 2011 Maritime Search and Rescue Agreement (SAR) serves as an example that efforts are made to remedy the situation. Since the Maritime SAR agreement lists several military oriented institutions, such as Coast Guard and Border Guard, as search and rescue agencies of the parties (Arctic Council 2011a), there remains the possibility that in the future, cooperation might spread to "hard" security domain. However, the growing military build-up in the region that will be discussed in the next part of the work has raised some doubts that this will be the case. Another reason why military issues should be included in the AC agenda is the link between military security and environmental issues in the Arctic. This issue is strongly related to legacy of Cold War era nuclear arms race. It has been proposed that, having little attention to its environmental consequences, Soviet Union had, between 1960 and 1988, disposed of sixteen nuclear reactors in the Kara Sea, along the eastern coast of Novaya Zemlya (Sawhill 2000). Whilst there are mechanisms, such as Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation (AMEC), that are developed specifically for this issue, the powerlessness to deal with such issues raises questions about the AC's overall capabilities as a regional actor.

There are also other factors which have a potentially deterring effect on the AC becoming a fully functional regional organization with legitimate decision-making power. Two in particular should be brought out here – contested state sovereignty and exclusive marine regionalism – which can both be explained by the peculiarities of Arctic as a marine region. The first is a reference to the "Article 76 of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which permits coastal states under certain conditions to claim seabed rights past the 200 nautical mile limit that marks the furthest extent of a state's EEZ" and thus concerns mostly the Arctic littoral states – the

US, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway and Russia (Gerhardt et al. 2010: 996). With the exception of the US who has not yet ratified the UNCLOS, other littoral states have made claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS 2016). The problem here is that, firstly, in the case of any overlapping claims (as is the case with the claims submitted by Russia and Denmark for example (Staalesen 2015)), the CLCS does not rule in one or other party's favor, it simply decides whether the claim is in accordance with UNCLOS, and secondly, the process of getting a ruling is very long, with some estimations stating that it will take the CLCS up to 27 to clear its current workload (Wilson 2016).

The other factor – exclusive marine regionalism – means that in addition to competing sovereignty claims in the midst of Arctic states themselves, there is also a growing interest in the region from outside. This encompasses NGOs (such as Greenpeace and WWF), states (China, India, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Italy given observer status in the AC in 2013) and international organizations like the EU (Knecht 2013; Wilson 2016). The increased interest in the Arctic matters might however lead to Arctic states being more protective of their exclusive status as individual and collective shot-callers in the Arctic (Wilson 2016).

#### **4.1.5 Arctic region-state**

In the case of the Arctic, this, the fifth and final level of regionness, is purely hypothetical. As demonstrated earlier, the Arctic is still very far away from having the necessary capabilities to be classified as a region-state. At this moment, the national states still retain their position as the most powerful actors in the region. Whereas the AC has some attributes which may refer to the possibility of some day becoming the backbone around which the Arctic integration could concentrate, at the present day, there still remains an ample amount of obstacles to overcome before that can happen. Although some measures have been undertaken to empower NGOs and indigenous people's organizations, their potential vis-à-vis the capabilities of nation states, remain relatively insignificant.

To conclude, I have tried to demonstrate the evolvement of Arctic regionalism by using the five levels of regionness proposed by Hettne and Söderbaum. I have determined that on this regionness continuum, ranging from regional space to region-state, Arctic would fit somewhere between the third and the fourth level, i.e. between regional society and regional community. The reason for that is although the Arctic region can not be classified as a regional community in terms of civil society, societal cohesion and security politics, there is however an emerging entity in the form of the AC. Even when taking into account its imperfections, most significantly the exclusion of affairs related to military security from its agenda, the AC can be seen as possessing the “institutionalized or informal actor capability” (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000: 466). In addition, the AC can be seen as retaining certain legitimacy in the Arctic affairs. This is most explicitly demonstrated by states that are becoming more interested in the Arctic affairs, needing to apply for observer status in the AC.

How the regional actors themselves interact with one another will be more specifically demonstrated on the next chapter dealing with category based analysis of regional actors.

## **4.2 Category based analysis of Arctic regionalism**

Whilst the previous chapter was trying to determine the state of Arctic regionalism by way of applying the five levels of regionness and consequently positioning the Arctic as being in between regional society and regional community, the current chapter will provide a category based analysis Arctic regionalism. The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader more information on the mutual relationship between different Arctic actors and define their role in the integration process. The analytical framework used here was again put forward by Hettne and Söderbaum (1998) who in turn rely on Hurrell (1995). According to Hettne and Söderbaum, it is possible to distinguish between four categories that cover a variety of phenomena related to regionalism: 1) intergovernmental regional cooperation and state-promoted regional integration, 2) market- and society- induced regionalization, 3) regional convergence and coherence, and 4) regional identity. Correspondingly, this chapter is divided into four subsections, each of which deals with an according topic.

#### **4.2.1 Intergovernmental regional cooperation and state-promoted regional integration**

In essence constituting of two distinct phenomena, intergovernmental regional cooperation and state-promoted regional integration, this section will deal primarily with the former. The reason behind the imbalanced focus is that the latter, conceptualized by Hettne and Söderbaum (1998: 14) as “a deeper form of joint action, which refers to a process whereby the individual states voluntarily merge and mingle, wholly or partly, into a single regional economy or political system”, does not hold true in the case of the Arctic where states very much retain their sovereignty. One could however, argue that the former, conceptualized as “an open-ended process, whereby individual states act together for mutual benefit in certain fields...and in order to solve common tasks” (ibid), would fit the current state of affairs in the Arctic. As all eight Arctic states have published strategy papers expressing their visions of the Arctic cooperation and its formats, a brief overview of those will be presented next.

#### **Finland**

Finland’s Arctic strategy dates back to 2013 and it rests on four pillars of policy outlined by the government: an Arctic country, an Arctic expertise, Sustainable development and environmental considerations and International cooperation (Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013). The text itself offers a following clarification for these policy areas:

- **Finland is an Arctic country** The Arctic identity of Finland has been shaped by climate, nature, geography, history and experience. Finland as a whole is a truly Arctic country: after all, one third of all the people living north of the 60th parallel are Finns. The Saami’s status as the only indigenous people within the European Union is duly recognised and their participation in issues affecting their status as indigenous people is ensured. The northern parts of Finland must remain a stable and secure operating environment.

- **Finland is an Arctic expert** The Arctic region is undergoing a major transition. Finland possesses the top-level expertise and the know-how it takes to understand, adapt to and even make use of this transition. Maintaining and developing a high standard of expertise and research are of primary importance. Finland's ambition is to set an example as an Arctic expert both in research and in the responsible commercial exploitation of such expertise.
- **Finland complies with the principles of sustainable development and respects the basic conditions dictated by the Arctic environment** Understanding the global effect of climate change, the sustainable use of natural resources as well as recognising the basic conditions imposed by the Arctic environment lie at the very core of Finland's Arctic policy.
- **International cooperation in the Arctic** Reinforcing its Arctic position, promoting international cooperation and maintaining stability in the Arctic region remain Finland's key objectives.

In the context of this paper two main observations can be brought out regarding the Finland's Arctic Strategy: Firstly the strategy is relatively business-oriented (Bailes and Heininen 2012); whether the case be taking advantage of natural resources or applying Finland's know-how to Arctic shipping, there is a clear business-related angle to the strategy. Although not completely casting them aside, the strategy pays no significant attention to security issues.

Secondly, when it comes to international cooperation, Finland's position is defined very clearly and involves the recognition of EU as an important Arctic player. This is illustrated by one of the objectives defined by the strategy is to "Support efforts to consolidate the EU's Arctic policy and its observer status in the Arctic Council" (Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013: 61). Moreover, Finland also supports the reinforcement of the Arctic Council by increasing its political weight and expanding its operations into new sectors (ibid). It is argued however that being too supportive of EU can have negative consequences on multilateral relations in the region as the "Opinion regarding the role of the EU as an Arctic actor varies significantly among the Arctic states and indigenous peoples, reflected in somewhat hesitant responses to the EU's efforts" (Bailes and Heininen 2012: 71).

## Sweden

Out of the Arctic 8, Sweden was the last one to come out with its own Arctic strategy, which was adopted in May 2011. Interestingly enough, Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region was published on the same day as Sweden officially took over the Chairmanship of the Arctic council. It can be seen as an important milestone for the country to be more involved in the Arctic matters as in Sweden, although a co-founder of the Arctic council, only a few official speeches and statements were made in relation to the Arctic matters prior to 2011 (Bailes and Heininen 2012). The Sweden's Arctic strategy, however, leaves little room for argument whether the Arctic region plays an important role for Sweden or not as it emphasizes the historical, economic, cultural, climate and environmental, research and security policy related ties between Sweden and the Arctic.

In comparison to the other Nordic countries, Sweden's strategy stands out as being to most focused one, pinpointing three priorities: Climate and the environment, Economic development and The human dimension (Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region 2011). The first of three, climate and the environment emphasizes, amongst other, the vulnerability of the Arctic region, importance of the reduction of greenhouse gas emission and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the region. The second priority, economic development, encompasses, amongst other, promotion of free trade in the Arctic, sustainable extraction and use of natural resources, cross-border cooperation and the promotion of Swedish expertise and know-how. Lastly, the human dimension of Swedish Arctic strategy highlights the need to tackle negative health and social effects of climate change, hazardous substances and the anticipated increase in the use of Arctic resources. It also emphasizes the commitment to preserve and promote the identity, culture and traditional industries of the indigenous people amidst changing Arctic (social) climate.

In relation to Arctic cooperation, Sweden's strategy highlights the need for "more common policy and concrete projects. Similar to Finland, Sweden supports the AC as "the main multilateral arena for Arctic-specific issues" (ibid: 19) and stresses the importance of Finland, Sweden and Iceland (i.e. the non-littoral Arctic states) to be included in the AC decision-making process in cases where they have legitimate interests (ibid: 22).

Probably the most distinctive element of Sweden's Arctic strategy in relation to the other countries in question is that it pays surprisingly little attention to the EU. Out of the 50 page document, only a few lines are dedicated to throw light upon the stance Sweden has towards EU Arctic policy. Being supportive of the EU's objectives in the Arctic, the reason for that could be simply that since the Arctic agendas of the EU and Sweden are in many aspects overlapping, reiteration would be of little use. It has been proposed however that there is also "a strong tradition in the foreign policy of Sweden of seeking freedom for national activism outside the bounds of the EU" (Bailes and Heininen 2012: 83) which can account for the relative noninvolvement of EU in Sweden's Arctic strategy.

## **Denmark**

With regards to Arctic policies, Denmark is a somewhat special case. This is due to the fact that it is not Denmark proper who is part of the Arctic region but a part of the Kingdom of Denmark – Greenland. In fact the strategy paper proposed by the Danish government stipulates that all three governments of the parts which make up the realm: Denmark, Greenland and Faroe Islands "have set out the most important opportunities and challenges as we see them today and in the near future" (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020: 7). Thus the strategy paper can be seen as having a two-fold task, as it makes an effort to emphasize Greenland's (and to a lesser degree, Faroe's as well) territorial autonomy and "equal partnership" (ibid: 10) with Denmark proper. On the other hand, Denmark would very much like to see that Greenland's territorial autonomy and certain rights that come with it, are seen globally not as Denmark's exit from the Arctic region but as accomplishment in terms of the rights of indigenous people (Bailes and Heininen 2012).

Another thing to note here is that Denmark via Greenland and unlike Finland, Sweden and Iceland, is part of the so called Arctic 5, Arctic littoral states. Being part of the Arctic 5 format provides Denmark with an opportunity to be more engaged in the Arctic matters (vis-à-vis its Northern neighbors). With regards to international cooperation, Denmark's strategy reiterates the importance of AC as "the primary organ for concrete cooperation in the Arctic" (Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020:

52), at the same time retaining the Arctic 5 as a forum needed to deal with issues related to the issues of coastal states. It is worth to mention that with regards to EU, Denmark's strategy makes a point to note the relevance of the fact that "the EU's involvement in the Arctic takes place on the Arctic population's own terms" and that it is important to "avoid further cases where the laws, traditions, cultures and needs of Arctic societies are neglected" (ibid).

One final aspect of Denmark's Arctic strategy which stands out is the part dealing with exercise of sovereignty and surveillance. The strategy posits that although "The Arctic is and must be a region characterized by peace and cooperation"..."there will be a continuing need to enforce the Kingdom's sovereignty, especially in light of the anticipated increase in activity in the region" (ibid: 20). Furthermore the strategy provides four initiatives as to the increased activity of Danish Armed Forces in the Arctic.

## **Norway**

Norway's Arctic Policy, published in 2014, singles out five issue areas that have the highest priority for Norway: International cooperation, Business development, Knowledge development, Infrastructure, and Environmental protection and emergency preparedness.

In the part dealing with international cooperation, the main emphasis is put on cooperation with Russia. Given the geographical proximity of the two countries, cooperation with Russia was already an integral part of Norway's Arctic strategy from 2006 (Bailes and Heininen 2012). The 2014 Policy however states, in the light of Russia's actions in Ukraine, international law and international rules are fundamental for stability in the Arctic. Furthermore, the report affirms that Norway "will take a clear and firm approach to upholding its rights and fulfilling its duties in maritime areas under its jurisdiction in the high North" (Norway's Arctic policy 2014: 11). Nevertheless, the Policy also constates that targeted cooperation in areas where two countries have shared interests has had an enhancing effect on maritime safety, actions to reduce the risk of radioactive pollution and higher cod quotas (ibid). Apart from the

need to cooperate with Russia, the report also underlines the AC as “the most important arena for dealing with the common challenges facing the eight Arctic states – and the rest of the world – in the Arctic” (ibid: 12).

## **Iceland**

The Iceland’s Arctic policy consists of eight specific issues: the increased significance of the Arctic in international affairs, utilization of natural resources, ecological considerations, sovereign rights, international law, disputes over continental shelf rights, security issues, and issues related to the inhabitants of the Arctic region (Althingi 2011). Similarly to Sweden and Finland, the two other non-littoral Arctic states, Iceland’s Arctic policy puts much emphasis on the role of the AC “as the most important forum of for international cooperation on Arctic issues” (ibid). What is different from Sweden’s and Finland’s strategies however, is the firm opposition to the Arctic five format on Iceland’s part. On this subject, Iceland’s Arctic policy states that “...individual Member States must be prevented from joining forces to exclude other Member States from important decisions, which would undermine the Arctic Council and other Arctic States, including Iceland” and “The Icelandic Government has publicly, as well as in talks with the five States in question, protested their attempts to assume decision-making power in the region. Despite denying that the forum is a step towards a consultation forum on Arctic issues, clearly some of the States in question are willing to develop cooperation in this direction” (ibid: 6). This, compared to Sweden and Finland, very vocal protest can be explained by Iceland’s own aspirations to be recognized as a coastal state (Dodds and Ingimundarson 2012). This is based on the claim that Iceland’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends into the Greenland Sea, actually establishes Iceland as an Arctic littoral state (ibid). Related to the contested nature of Arctic delimitations, Iceland’s Arctic policy advocates for a more “fluid” understanding of the region, stating that “The Arctic region should...be regarded as a single vast area in an ecological, political, economic and security-related sense, but not in a narrow geographical sense with the Arctic Circle, tree line or a temperature of 10 degrees centigrade in July as a reference point” (Althingi 2011: 7).

## **United States**

The 2013 United States' Arctic strategy (an advancement of the Arctic Region Policy established in 2009) is built on three lines of effort: 1) Advance United States security interests; 2) Pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship and 3) Strengthen international cooperation (National Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013: 2). Being somewhat more general in terms of stating its policy objectives with regards to Arctic cooperation, three observations can be made. Firstly the US puts more emphasis on securing its own interests in the region. The statement that safety, security and stability in the region will be promoted "through a combination of independent action, bilateral initiatives and multilateral cooperation" (ibid: 6) is, to some extent, different from strategies previously looked at, in which the highest priority is usually given to multilateral cooperation. Secondly, although US Arctic strategy recognized the AC as "a forum for facilitating Arctic states' cooperation on myriad issues of mutual interest", it claims that this should be done "within its current mandate" (ibid: 9). Thus the US, unlike the Nordic countries, does not seem to advocate for more powers given to the Council. The last observation to be made here is to do with a fairly different position, with respect to other littoral states, the US finds itself in, due to not having acceded to the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, which would allow it to present its own extended continental shelf claim within the established legal framework. Thus the strategy underlines the importance of US acceding to the Convention which would allow it to "maximize legal certainty and best secure international recognition of [US] sovereign rights" (ibid).

## **Canada**

Canada's Northern Strategy published in 2009 and a subsequent Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy in 2010, single out four areas which are deemed most important for Canada. These are: exercising sovereignty, promoting economic and social development, protecting our environmental heritage; and improving and devolving Northern governance (Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy 2010: 3). Despite labeling the sovereignty issue as the most prominent one and undertaking several initiatives to improve Canada's sovereignty (including military presence) in the region,

the strategy claims that there are no concrete claims that threaten Canada's sovereignty (with the exception of Hans Island which is claimed by Denmark). There are also "managed disagreements" between Canada and the US, and between Canada and Denmark regarding the maritime boundary in Beaufort Sea and Lincoln Sea respectively (Canada's Northern Strategy 2009: 13). These disagreements however, are "well-managed and pose no sovereignty or defence challenges for Canada", similarly "they have had no impact on Canada's ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the United States, Denmark or other Arctic neighbours on issues of real significance and importance" (ibid).

With regards to Arctic regional organization, Canadian Policy makes reference to both the AC and Arctic five, stating that although the former is "the primary forum for collaboration among the eight Arctic states" (Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy 2010: 9), cooperation within the Arctic five format i.e. between Arctic coastal states on issues that are particularly relevant to the Arctic Ocean, is also carried out. Additionally, the importance of bilateral cooperation with United States is also brought out. In its Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy (2010: 9), Canadian government makes a specific effort to stress the current regional organization with Arctic nations in charge needs to and/or is likely to change.

## **Russia**

Being somewhat general in terms of priorities and objectives, the Russian Arctic policy, published in March 2009 (although signed six months earlier), lists six basic objectives (belonging to the spheres of social and economic development, military security, environmental security, information technologies and communication, science and technology, and international cooperation) together with ten strategic priorities (State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period 2020 and Beyond, 2009). When it comes to inter-state cooperation, the most important point to gather from Russia's strategy is that priority is given to cooperation within the Arctic 5 format. Although cooperation within the framework of regional organization e.g. the AC is also mentioned, when it comes to Arctic delimitations, the strategy explicitly mentions Russia, the US, Canada, Norway and Denmark as the five sub-Arctic states.

Two topics amongst other stand out as seemingly most important for Russia: social and economic development (with emphasis on economic), and military security. From the comprehensive list of problems to be solved in the economic domain, together with the statement that the Arctic zone would serve as a strategic resource reserve for Russia (Policy, 2009), it can be derived that the region indeed has a huge economic importance for Russia. This is further strengthened by claims that as much as 90 percent of the hydrocarbon reserves found in the entire Russian continental shelf is located in the Arctic (Zysk 2010:). As for the second topic, unlike other Arctic strategies, the Russian one pays significantly more attention to (Russia's) military security in the region, partly in relation to its interests towards the Northern Sea Route which is also mentioned in several instances.

The prominence of economic and security issues in Russia's policy has led to an interesting situation as noted by Zysk (2010). She claims that the economic and material impetus would indicate that it is in Russia's best interest to sustain the Arctic as an arena for international cooperation. On the other hand, the growing economic importance, both for Russia but also more broadly would indicate that as economic activities increase, Russia's military presence is also likely to increase.

To conclude this section, some aspects of the intergovernmental regional cooperation should be underlined, especially with regards to the scope of current paper. As an indication of intergovernmental regional cooperation, I chose to concentrate on official strategy papers published by state governments. Although at times lacking of detailed policy arrangements and (perhaps) deliberately vague and declarative, I would argue that in order to provide an essential understanding of different state policies towards the Arctic in general and intergovernmental cooperation in particular, using official strategy papers is justifiable. An alternative would be to look at different countries actual policies on ground which, although undoubtedly more fruitful, would demand much more both in terms of time and resources. In addition, one can expect to confront various obstacles on the way, especially those that are to do with national policy documents being in foreign languages and at times not accessible to wider public.

As far as the topical focus of this section is concerned, there are indeed indications of all countries being interested in, or at least mentioning, some form of intergovernmental

cooperation. Unsurprisingly, the three non-littoral Arctic states i.e. Finland, Sweden and Iceland all strongly advocate for the Arctic Council to preserve its role as the pre-eminent forum on regional issues. Out of the three, Iceland stands out as it both advocates for stronger AC and argues against it being left out of the Arctic five format. Out of the five littoral states, Norway is the exception as it also seems to advocate for more cooperation under the auspices of the AC. Of the remaining four states, both Denmark's and Canada's strategies reveal a certain dichotomy between Arctic eight (i.e. the Arctic Council) and Arctic 5. More specifically, both strategies state that although the AC is important as a forum for circumpolar cooperation, there are some issues (for example those related to the claims of extended continental shelves) that are best dealt with amongst the five littoral states. In reference to the strategies of the US and Russia, both of them seem to put more emphasis on the cooperation between Arctic littoral states, Russia even going as far as not including Finland, Sweden and Iceland in the list of Arctic countries. Another aspect that of the last two strategies is the way national interests were presented. Naturally an integral part of all strategies, Russia especially but also the US stand out as the states who see the Arctic arena mostly in terms of their own strategic interests and not so much as a domain governed equally by all participants.

Whilst this section dealt uniquely with intergovernmental cooperation, the next section will aim to shed more light on the non-state level, more precisely on market and socially induced aspects of Arctic regionalism.

#### **4.2.2 Market- and society-induced regionalization**

In this section I will explain the effect both market- and society- induced elements have had on Arctic regionalism. The first part of this section concentrates on cooperation on the market (economy) related areas. I will start by showing how the Arctic, due to the effects of global warming, has undergone a rapid change in terms of economic potential and how, in order to realize that potential (but also to tackle its side-effects) stronger intra-state cooperation is advised. In the second part of this section, I will offer an account on how regionalization has undergone in societal level. I have chosen to concentrate on indigenous groups who, although a minority in Arctic (Ahlenius 2008),

are significantly more active than the “immigrant” communities in organizing themselves. Hence, the main emphasis is put on indigenous organizations (particularly those that are permanent participants of the AC), but also on different NGOs, with the objective how defining their role in and impact on the regionalization process.

The effects of global warming in the Arctic can essentially be divided in two. There is of course the deteriorating effect of it: loss of permafrost, reducing levels of sea-ice, increasing water temperatures and so on. The exact impact of these changes on the Arctic flora and fauna remains uncertain at the moment, but as indicated by the fact that the temperature increase in the Arctic is about twice the global rate and that environmental security is already at the top of the list of priorities for Arctic nations (Huebert et. al. 2012), the situation is in need of immediate action. The situation is even more alarming since, in correlation with the changes related to fauna and flora, the global warming also has a significant effect on the indigenous population of the Arctic region. It has been proposed that already, indigenous villages have been moved due to coastal erosion caused by global warming (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009). Similarly, due to wildlife migration caused by the effects of global migration, traditional ways of hunting and thus providing their communities with livelihood are in danger (ibid).

There is however another perspective to the effects of global warming, especially when seen in terms of material gains. As a result of reducing levels of sea-ice, the region’s economic potential has increased massively. As one survey suggests, about 30% of the world’s undiscovered gas and 13% of the undiscovered oil may be found in the Arctic (Gautier et. al. 2009). The exact value of Arctic’s economic value remains uncertain as the region has just recently opened up to exploration, but apart from oil and gas deposits, Arctic also holds significant mineral deposits (Huebert et. al. 2012). In addition, commercial fishing and shipping also play an important role in the economic prospects related to the Arctic. The latter is especially important as it has been proposed that trans-Arctic shipping routes might reduce the distance ships need to cover in order to transport goods between Europe, North America and Asia by up to 4000 nautical miles, which would add up to about two weeks in shipping time (ibid). What is paradoxical about Arctic’s economic potential is that the exploitation of the natural resources, causing a “feedback loop” on the Arctic environment, will inevitably cause

the already fragile environmental situation to further worsen. Possible threat scenarios include graying of the ice-cap due to incomplete hydrocarbon combustions and possible damage to landscape as a result of building land-based energy infrastructure (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009: 1215).

The essential task of the Arctic states in relation to economic potential revealed by the effects of global warming thus seems to be following: in the process of exploiting natural resources that have become available due to changed climatic conditions, measures must be taken to ensure minimum damage to (both natural and social) environment that is already negatively affected by global warming. When looking back at the section considering intergovernmental regional cooperation and the topical focus of national arctic strategies, one can see evidences of both (i.e. economic and environmental) themes generally placed at top of the agenda. An important factor to consider here is that, keeping in mind the herculean nature of the tasks at hand, it would be very hard to imagine a state, even as powerful as the US or Russia, being successful in tackling these issues on its own. Therefore a conclusion can be made that the economic considerations within the Arctic arena actually have a two-fold effect on regional integration process. Firstly, the newly revealed economic potential will augment the sovereignty argument, thus contributing to the distinction between Arctic and non-Arctic states. Secondly, both the environmental and economic impacts of the global warming are best tackled in cooperation with other states which, keeping in mind the first point, acts as an impetus for cooperation with the region.

Albeit so far mostly approached in terms of sovereign states' interests, the regional integration process encompasses other actors as well. From the societal perspective, the emphasis should be placed mostly on the indigenous population whose interests are promoted by organizations of indigenous peoples, some of which like the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) are also included into the most prominent regional organization, the Arctic Council, as Permanent Participants. Nevertheless, the role they play in the decision making process within the AC should not be over-estimated. Although the 1996 Ottawa Declaration states that "The category of Permanent Participation is created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council", it also states that the

decision to appoint new Permanent Participants lies with the members of the Council i.e. nation states. Furthermore, it is stipulated that “The number of permanent participants should at any time be less than the number of members” (Declaration on the Establishment of the AC 1996). With regards to the number of indigenous organizations, the three original indigenous organizations (ICC, Saami Council and Russian Association of Indigenous People of the North (RAIPON) have been joined by the Aleut International Association, the Athabaskan Council and Gwich’in Council International, raising the number of Permanent Participants in the AC to the total of six.

Arguably the most influential of those groups has been the ICC, who since its foundation in 1977, has been considered as “an influential political voice in regional, national and international fora” (Dingman 2013). Currently representing the interests of approximately 150.000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia; the ICC singles out four of its principal goals, which are as follows: 1) strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; 2) promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level; 3) develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; 4) seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of circumpolar regions (ICC 2016). In 2009 the ICC issued a Declaration of Sovereignty in which they highlight several shortages with respect to indigenous peoples’ rights in the Arctic. Particular attention is paid on the insufficient involvement of indigenous groups in Arctic matters and their respective sovereign rights in the region (ICC 2009).

Whilst the ICC is been relatively active in promoting the indigenous agenda, particularly in Greenland, where the 1979 Home Rule Act and 2008 self-government referendum have resulted in considerable autonomy from Denmark, but also in Canada, where discussions on indigenous issues between Inuit and Ottawa resulted in the formation of the Inuit self-governing territory of Nunavut in 1999 (Dingman 2013), other indigenous organizations have not been as visible as ICC. The reasons for this discrepancy can generally be divided in three. Firstly, it has been argued that the way how indigenous questions are approached (including amongst indigenous groups themselves) is affected by different historical backgrounds. Armstrong et. al. (1978: 273) for example highlight the difference between North American and European experiences with regards to indigenous communities by stating that “In northern

Scandinavia, the Saami have long been a small minority. There the distinction between aboriginals and immigrants becomes somewhat hazy, for some of the latter have been there a thousand years. ... Most Lapps gain their livelihood in just the same way as most immigrants and the factors that are common to the two groups greatly exceed in importance the factors that distinguish them". Secondly, there have been indications of disagreements taking place between various indigenous organizations, on how different topical questions are approached. An example is provided by the Joint Statement of Indigenous Solidarity for Arctic Protection which called for: 1) A ban on all offshore drilling in the Arctic shelf; 2) A moratorium on onshore oil drilling in the Arctic; and 3) All extraction and industrialization on Indigenous land only be carried out with the explicit consent of the Peoples of the land (Joint Statement 2013). The Statement was signed, amongst others, by the representatives of Arctic Athabaskan Council and RAIPON. Furthermore, the initiative was supported by Greenpeace who stated that the AC should "stop wasting time and resources on useless documents that do nothing to hold government or industry accountable, go back to its initial mandate of Arctic protection and listen to the original inhabitants of this land" (Greenpeace News Release 2013). Surprisingly enough, this was met with stark criticism by the international vice-chair of the ICC, who claimed that: "We [Inuit peoples] are the stewards of our own Arctic homeland, we are the negotiators of what takes place in our own back yards, and we will weigh and determine the cost-benefit of development for ourselves as a people. We certainly have no need or appetite to invite environmentalist groups to come to the Arctic and do the work under their logos and on our behalf" (Smith 2013, cited in Wilson 2016: 62). Thirdly, there appears to be some state resistance to political aims manifested in indigenous agendas. The best example here is provided by Russia who, due to supposed irregularities in its organizational structure, ordered in November 2012 that RAIPON's operations be suspended for six months (Conley and Rohloff 2015). Despite the official claim that the shut-down was due to its statutes not being in line with federal law, many observers saw it as yet another move designated to facilitate the exploitation of region's valuable resources. Met with severe international concern, RAIPON was permitted to reopen in March 2013 (ibid). Nevertheless, shortly after its reopening, issue of the state interference was raised yet again, when Pavel Sulyandziga, an indigenous rights activist surprisingly withdrew his candidature for organizations

new president and the post was awarded to Gregory Ledkov, a deputy of the State Duma and a member of the United Russia political party (Nilsen 2013).

In the light of the issues pointed out here, it can be concluded that both market- and society- induced regionalization are phenomena whose concrete impact on the Arctic is very hard to establish. Both phenomena are, in addition to being in constant change, multi-faceted and contain a multitude of factors that need to be taken into account. With regards to market-induced regionalization, I concentrated on the economic perspectives that are opened up in the region, in large part, due to the effects of climate change. I have established that while having a negative effect on environment, the climate warming has also helped to establish several economic prospects regional actors. The key challenge is here that a balance between economic activities and environment should be found where the former's negative effect on latter is minimized. With regards to society-induced regionalization, I have determined that although indigenous people are involved as Permanent Participants in the AC, their inclusion is partial because 1) not all indigenous organizations are given the Permanent Participant status and 2) in the AC hierarchy, members (states) take priority over Permanent Participants. Nevertheless, the ICC is a good example how indigenous people have organized in order to have a bigger role to play both at national level, and in wider circumpolar arena.

#### **4.2.3 Regional convergence and coherence**

When the previous sections were more concerned with the developments within the region, this region will provide an account how the Arctic region relates to the rest of the world. In this section, I will first explain what is meant by the relatively unambiguous notions of “convergence and coherence”. I will then continue by identifying what the consequences of Arctic regionalism are for: 1) the non-Arctic actors interested in Arctic affairs; and 2) the Arctic states themselves.

In order to establish a conceptual foundation for section, it is necessary to take another look at regionalism in a theoretical perspective. Hurrell (1995) puts forward that regional cohesion can be understood in two ways: 1) When the region plays a defining role in the relations between the states (and other major actors) of that particular region and the rest of the world; and 2) When the region forms the organizing basis for policy

within the region across a range of issues. With respect to these points, he further argues that “For those outside the region, regionalism is politically significant to the extent that it can impose costs on outsiders” and “For those inside the region, regionalism matters when exclusion from regional arrangements imposes significant costs...and when the region becomes the organizing basis for policy within the region across a range of important issues” (ibid). Next, I will attempt to put this theoretical construction into Arctic-specific context.

With regards to the first statement – region playing a defining role in the relations between states of that particular region and the rest of the world, it can be said to, at least partly, hold true. Although, due to the fact that aside from Iceland, no other country is located entirely within the Arctic region, Arctic can not be the sole most important issue in relations between Arctic and non-Arctic states, it certainly has its place. The criteria which are used by the AC for admitting observers is a good example to look at here. Adopted in the 2011 Nuuk Ministerial Meeting, these criteria contain, *inter alia*, statements that observer states should “Accept and support the objectives of the Arctic Council defined in the Ottawa declaration”; “Recognize Arctic States' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic”; and “Recognize that an extensive legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean including, notably, the Law of the Sea, and that this framework provides a solid foundation for responsible management of this ocean” (Arctic Council 2011b). By accepting these criteria, observer states are required to acknowledge the role of Arctic states as primary regional actors, even though some, like China, would much rather emphasize the “global commons” approach to Arctic, according to which the Arctic is seen as a global heritage of mankind (Kopra 2013: 3).

With regards to the second theoretical postulate – region being an organizational basis for policy across many issues, one can see evidences of it (at least relating to some policy areas) in the previously discussed national Arctic strategies. One of such examples is environment, where approaches taken by different Arctic states demonstrate a rather large amount of cohesion. At the same time it is worth mentioning however, that policy directions adopted in strategies might not necessarily correlate with developments on the ground. In terms of actors suffering costs due to exclusion from

certain regional arrangements, two examples can be given here. The first pertains to Iceland and its exclusion from the Arctic five, which prevents the country from taking part in, at least from its own point of view, important discussions. The second example is to do with the US not having ratified the UNCLOS, which essentially means that the country “has little credibility in any discussion on Arctic sovereignty, and cannot assert rights over resources off its Alaskan coast beyond the 200 nm of its EEZ” (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009: 1224).

In conclusion, this section has helped to clarify the question of regional cohesion by emphasizing two phenomena. Firstly it can be established that non-Arctic actors interested in becoming observers in the AC are forced to acknowledge the current regional arrangements which give most power to the eight Arctic Council member states. Secondly, although not valid for all policy areas, such as military, there is indeed significant policy cohesion on some issues, such as the environment. Finally, it has been established that regional cohesion is enhanced by the fact that exclusion from certain regional arrangements (or those that are foundations for such arrangements) can result in serious costs for these states. One other factor which might have an impact on regional cohesion is identity, and more precisely – regional identity, which, due to its multi-faceted nature, merits a section of its own.

#### **4.2.4 Regional identity**

Regional identity can be understood as “the shared perception of belonging to a particular community” and is often defined with reference to common culture, history, or religious traditions (Hurrell 1995: 41). Thus, in connection with the emphasis on common values, the regional identity can also be defined against some external “other” (ibid). In this section, I will try to determine if there is indeed a specific Arctic narrative in different national identity formulations and if so, how this narrative is constructed.

It has been proposed that, when it comes to demonstrating their belonging to the Arctic, one of the biggest challenges Arctic states and their leaders are faced with, is justifying the costs of Arctic political involvement, research, and investment to their respective constituencies for whom these issues often seem very distant as they are living in

southern regions (Medby 2014). Thus, it can be established that being an Arctic state does not automatically translate to being an Arctic nation. A good example here is the US whose formulation of itself as “an Arctic nation” can be seen as part of an effort to be more involved in Arctic matters, being in turn partly motivated by claims that the US was not keeping up with others in the Arctic “race” (Heininen 2012). To be fair, only a fraction of US total population lives in the Arctic (737.625 according to 2015 statistics [Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2016]), hence it would be very difficult to cultivate a national Arctic identity.

A better example is provided by Canada whose national identity has lot stronger ties to history and culture than its southern neighbor’s. It has been proposed that Arctic is a part of Canada’s core myth and helps to define Canada as “a unique northern nation comprised of vast wilderness that is distinct from United States” (Williams 2011: 116). More precisely, notions such as resourcefulness, hard work, resilience and adaptability to cold climate, and closeness with nature can be seen as indications of Arctic having an important part of Canada’s national identity (ibid). As a consequence, the important role Arctic plays in Canadian national identity has provided Canada with an impetus to put more emphasis on sovereignty issues in the region.

A similar perspective to Arctic can also be noted in Russia, where Arctic or North in a wider sense, is part of national identity formulation. Some authors even single out Russia and Canada as countries with most nationalistic attitudes towards the Arctic (Conley and Rohloff 2015). Historically speaking, the Arctic narrative in Russian national identity can be seen as resting on two intertwined pillars: the relationship between man and nature, and industrial progress (ibid: 8). The relationship between man and nature is seen in terms of man conquering the forces of nature. An important notion here is *osvoenie* which can be understood as “the drive to master forbidding places” (Manicom 2013: 67). This notion, being important both in Imperial and Stalinist times, still resonates in Russia today, indication of which can be seen in claims that Russians as “northern people” are more likely to bring upon themselves the risks and costs affiliated with Northern development (Manicom 2013). It has been claimed that, being expansionist and nationalist in nature, the contemporary Russia’s posture towards the Arctic can also be explained in terms of searching compensation for lost territories

in the aftermath of the collapse of Soviet Union, coupled with an attempt to renew Russian patriotism (ibid). The integral role Arctic plays in Russian national identity formulations sometimes brings about seemingly aggressive statements from Russian officials. A good example here is Deputy Prime Minister Dimitry Rogozin who, in addition to statements such as “tanks don’t need visas” (Vale 2015), has claimed that the 1867 sale of Alaska was a “a betrayal of Russian power status” and made reference to Arctic as Russia’s Mecca” (Pettersen 2015, Tharoor 2015, cited in Conley and Rohloff 2015: 9). Another example of Russia’s ostentatious behavior is how, during a scientific expedition in 2007, Russian flag was planted on the sea bottom at the North Pole. This controversial act was later on complemented with a comment from the leader of said expedition, Anton Chilingarov, who stated that “The Arctic is Russian. We must prove the North Pole is an extension of Russian coastal shelf” (Reynolds 2007, cited in Conley and Rohloff 2015: 31).

With regards to Nordic countries, the question of having a specific Arctic identity remains questionable. In Norway’s case for example, a survey was conducted, in which over 200 young people were asked about their sense of Arctic identity. The report on the results of this survey indicate that although a majority (62%) associated the term “Arctic” with Norwegian territory, this response was more common amongst Northern Norwegian, than Norwegians in general (Medby 2014: 260). Furthermore, the same report posits that whilst there was moderate agreement on Norway being an Arctic country, opinions on which other countries belong to the Arctic were varied and did not reflect a circumpolar understanding of Arctic (Medby 2014). While I have not been able to find similar surveys being conducted in Sweden and Finland, geographical and cultural similarities make it probable that Arctic identity formation follows roughly the same path in Sweden and Finland as it does in Norway. A somewhat different example is provided by Iceland who until very recently did not over-emphasize Arctic in its political and cultural imaginations (Dodds and Ingimundarson 2011). In relation to increasing geopolitical importance of the Arctic on the one hand and search for a renewed foreign policy identity on the other, Arctic has become one of the key areas of Iceland’s foreign policy (ibid). However, the effect these political considerations have on actual identity formulations remains yet to be seen.

Promotion of a more trans-regional (as opposed to national) Arctic identity is also present but can mostly be attributed to indigenous populations, such as the Inuit, whose communities are distributed across the territories of various nation states. The emergence of a more regional Inuit identity can be associated with the redefinition of Inuit collective, which, formerly defined mostly in cultural terms, is more and more defined as a civic identity (Légaré 2013). The Inuit understanding of themselves as sovereign Arctic indigenous people with the right to self-determination essentially means that their identity provides them with a “legal right to participate in Arctic governance that coexists with and cannot be trumped by state sovereignty” (Griffith 2011: 136, cited in Fabbi 2012: 168).

In conclusion, two main points about Arctic identity formulations should be highlighted. Firstly it is relatively clear that what is visible today in the Arctic is how the region is seen as part of national identity, as opposed to post-national regional identity. Essentially this means that all Arctic countries have or claim to have a specific place reserved for Arctic in their national identity discourses. Depending from country to country, the emphasis on being an Arctic country or nation can be stronger or weaker. What is evident however is that these identity formulations are to do with national identity and not regional identity. Thus, getting to the second point, it can be established that in the case of the Arctic, regional identity can be seen more as a dividing, rather than uniting, factor. This is especially true since often the claim of being an Arctic state or nation can be seen as something states use to promote their sovereignty claims in the region. It is worth mentioning however, that these, very state-oriented conceptions of regional identity are recently being challenged by indigenous groups, most significantly the Inuit, who are increasingly moving towards establishing a circumpolar Arctic identity.

## 5. Discussion of the results

The first part of previous chapter aimed to provide an analysis of the Arctic regionalism by determining its level of regionness. The aim of the second part of chapter three was to further elaborate on the subject by looking at different categories which could be used for analyzing the degree of regionalism. By trying to determine the degree of regionness pertaining to the Arctic, it was established that, most suitably, Arctic can be positioned somewhere between the third (i.e. regional society) and fourth (i.e. regional community) level of regionness. In the analysis it was found that, whilst historically somewhat ambiguous and fuzzy, there now exists relative consensus over Arctic delineation. Thus, in geographical terms, Arctic can be seen as constituting a separate regional space. Subsequently it was determined that although at one point in time (during the Cold War), the Arctic constituted a regional complex where virtually all regional interaction was shaped by the overall global environment, this is no longer the case as post-Cold War regional arrangements are more in compliance with the third level of regionness – regional society. According to NRA, regional society level is where the regionalization process really takes off as a number of different actors on different levels of society appear and contribute to the process. In the case of the Arctic, the shift from regional complex to regional society comes with Mikhail Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk speech which was vital in providing the necessary impetus for increased cooperation in the region. In post-Cold War times, both indigenous groups and NGO's together with Non-Arctic states have been progressively included in Arctic matters. Whilst many aspects of Arctic regionalism stop with the regional society level and some, such cooperation on military security issues, are virtually untouched at the regional level, there are some aspects that go beyond regional society level. The fourth level – the regional community implies some kind of institutionalized actor capability and although not a perfect example, it can be argued that the AC fits in this category. The fifth level of regionness – the region-state remains for now purely a theoretical construction and would merit further investigation when obstacles such as limited political agenda are removed. It should be noted however that due to the fact that the Arctic consists of, in large part, water, removing those obstacles is not easy. It is unlikely that states would extend

currently existing cooperative arrangements into domains that will put their sovereignty under question. Furthermore, it is likely that the increased interest in the region from outside will further reinforce the sovereignty claims of the Arctic states.

The second part of chapter dealing with Arctic regionalism was written with the aim of providing more information on how different regional actors interact with one another and whether these interactions can be seen as having a reinforcing or deteriorating effect on the overall regionalization process. The first section, dealing mostly with intergovernmental regional cooperation, had the intention of determining which format of intergovernmental states deemed suitable. In order to do this, an overview of national Arctic strategy papers was provided with specific emphasis on sections that dealt with circumpolar cooperation. It was found that whilst all countries mention some need for intergovernmental regional cooperation, the exact form in which it should take place varies significantly. Out eight Arctic states, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway encourage cooperation under Arctic 8; Denmark and Canada mention both Arctic 8 and Arctic 5; and the US and Russia put the main emphasis on cooperation between Arctic 5 i.e. the littoral states. The discrepancy between the approaches of different countries can be seen as an indication that some states do not consider others as equal partners and can lead to further disagreements, especially when decisions concerning all Arctic states are dealt with in a format that is excluding some of the states. In the next section, dealing with market- and society-induced regionalism, the main emphasis was put on newly emerged economic prospects in the region and how different non-state actors are included in the integration process. It was found whilst the economic prospects might have a positive effect on regional cooperation, they should be approached with great care as unexpected side-effects of activities such as exploitation of natural resources and increased shipping can hold potentially disastrous results on Arctic ecosystem. With regards to society-induced regionalism it was found that although indigenous groups and NGOs are included in the main regional forums, such as the AC, their position and agenda-setting power remains secondary to that of eight Arctic states. The third section, dealing with regional convergence and cohesion, established that when taking into account policy areas where states are willing to cooperate, such as environment, there is indeed a significant policy cohesion. This can be explained by the fact that tackling environmental issues on its own would bring about enormous costs. Furthermore, states

are more interested in being included in cooperative arrangements because this will provide them with the opportunity of being part of the decision making process. It was further discovered that regional cohesion is strengthened by non-Arctic actors becoming more and more interested in the Arctic affairs who at the moment are forced to accept the AC and its eight member states as the main regional power. Lastly, the fourth chapter attempted to discover if there exists a trans-national Arctic identity. It was established that, although evidence of such phenomenon can be seen in indigenous groups such as the Inuit, nation-states retain Arctic as part of their national identities. This means that although identifying themselves as Arctic nations (which is somewhat questionable in the case of countries such as the US), little or no emphasis is put on larger regional identity. Thus, with regards to Arctic regionalism, identity can be seen more as a dividing, rather than a uniting factor, especially because it can and is used by states to promote their sovereign interests in the region.

## 6. Conclusion

The main purpose of the thesis at hand has been to shed more light on the process of regional integration taking in one of the most remote areas on earth – the Arctic. The theoretical part of the work was based on the conception labeled as New Regionalism approach (NRA) which provided a suitable analytical framework to study the developments relating to regional integration in the Arctic. One of the main advantages of the NRA is that it allows merging the two concepts that are paramount to understanding regional integration – regionalism and regionalization. The former, commonly understood as an ideology or strategy of regional order, being distinct from the latter, which is best understood as a multi-level process where different actors become more and more involved with each other in a cross-national geographic space. Conveniently, NRA provides a useful analytical tool which integrates the two distinct, but often intertwining and overlapping concepts. This conceptual tool is known as regionness. Consisting of five different levels: regional space, regional complex, regional society, regional community and region-state, the concept of regionness is best understood as a continuum along which a certain geographical entity can move backwards or forwards, i.e. towards a lesser or greater degree of regionness.

The reasoning behind why Arctic was chosen for the empirical analysis is two-fold. Firstly the Arctic region has gone through an immense change in the last 20-odd years, having transformed from a global periphery to a region with institutionalized actor capability and considerable regional agenda. Although not the main focus of the thesis at hand, the importance of Arctic region on global arena has been greatly increased by its newly emerged economic potential made possible by global warming and climate change. The second reason is the marine nature of Arctic region, or simply put, the fact that to a large extent, it consists of water. This distinct element of the region which makes it an interesting subject to study, as it might produce some outcomes or special characteristics that can not be attributed to land-based regions.

The empirical part itself had three main sections. In the first section, a historical account of Arctic region was provided. The main aim of this section was to provide the reader

with some background information about both historical and contemporary developments concerning the region. In addition, this part was intended to underline the very rapid and extensive change the region has gone through since the end of Cold War. The second section, divided into two segments, was reserved for analytical discussion of Arctic regionalism. In the first segment, the concept of regionness was applied to Arctic region with the aim of determining the level that corresponds to current state of affairs in the Arctic. It was discovered that the Arctic best fits between the third and the fourth level of regionness, i.e. between regional society and regional community. Having surpassed the first two levels – regional space and regional complex, Arctic most accurately fits with the regional society. However, due to the fact that the main regional intergovernmental body, the Arctic Council, is slowly but surely becoming more and more influential (even if only in certain fields and mostly as a normative power), it would be reasonable to position Arctic somewhere between the two. It should be noted here that for the time being, in lieu of constant increase (what has happened since the end of Cold War), it is plausible that a status quo will emerge, or instead, that Arctic regionness will decrease. This estimation rests of several considerations taking into account the limitations to political agenda of Arctic cooperation, the absence of common Arctic identity and states sovereignty claims in the region. In the second segment, a category based approach to analyzing Arctic regionalism was adopted. Four specific categories and their role in regional integration process were looked at: intergovernmental regional cooperation, market-and-society-induced regionalization, regional convergence and coherence, and regional identity. The findings in this section largely correspond to the findings in the first segment. It was found that although Arctic definitely can be seen as a distinct regional entity (a notion which is reinforced by non-Arctic states showing more interest in the region as this makes Arctic states more protective of their hegemonic role in the region), it is heavily dominated by nation-state interests. Although indigenous population and different NGOs are included in the AC, the main power rests with the nation states. Furthermore, a distinct Arctic identity only seems to present itself in the case of indigenous communities that are scattered over the territories of several Arctic states. Although nation states identify themselves as Arctic states or Arctic nations, this does not translate into a larger circumpolar identity. Not least so because it can often be seen as means by which states justify their sovereignty

claims in the region. The third and last section of the empirical part explains and discusses these results in more detail.

Without going into too much detail on any specific aspect of Arctic regional integration, the main intention of this thesis is to give the reader a general account of the current state of affairs regarding the topic. Moreover, a historical account of the region was included to highlight the very rapid change the Arctic has been through in the post-Cold War era. This thesis serves best as a basis for further research on Arctic regionalism as the field is relatively new and not significantly dealt with. In addition, due to the effects of climate change and increasingly unstable international political climate, it is likely that the Arctic region will have to face new challenges in not so distant future.

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## **Kokkuvõte**

### *Neoregionalistlik käsitus mitmepoolsest koostööst Kaug-Põhjas*

Käesoleva magistr töö peamiseks eesmärgiks on analüüsida regionaalset integratsiooni Arktikas. Antud regioon on töö teemaks valitud peamiselt kahel põhjusel. Esiteks on Arktikas alates külma sõja lõpust toimunud suured muutused, mille käigus on regioon muutunud sisuliselt globaalsest ääremaast eraldiseisvaks üksuseks. Parima tõestusena sellele võib välja tuua Arktika Nõukogu kui regionaalse poliitilise jõu esilekerkmise, mis hõlmab endas nii riike, põliselanikke ühendavaid organisatsioone kui ka valitsusväliseid organisatsioone. Tasub siiski mainida, et praegusel juhul on Arktika Nõukogu mõju regiooni poliitilisele tegevuskavale tugevalt normatiivse iseloomuga. Teiseks põhjuseks on Arktika kui geopoliitilise regiooni üks oluline eripära, täpsemalt see, et suures osas on tegemist ookeaniga. Antud eripära olulisus seisneb peamiselt selle mõjus regionaalsele integratsioonile teatud valdkondades. Näiteks võib väita, et Arktika riigid on võrdlemisi koostööaltid tegelemaks teemadega nagu keskkonnakaitse ja loodusvarade jätkusuutlik kasutamine just sellel põhjusel, et need puudutavad võrdselt kõiki regioonis asuvaid riike. Lisaks võib siinkohal välja tuua globaalse soojenemise suure mõju Arktikale kuna antud protsessil on tähtsus ka regionaalse integratsiooni seisukohalt. Näiteks on globaalne soojenemine muutnud kättesaadava(ma)ks Arktikas asuvad loodusvarad ning seeläbi suurendanud regiooni tähtsust globaalsel areenil.

Töö teoreetiline osa põhineb kontseptsioonil nimega neoregionalism (ka uusregionalism, New Regionalism). Põhjuseks, miks just uusregionalism on valitud töö teoreetiliseks aluseks, on antud kontseptsiooni poolt pakutav analüütiline raamistik, mis on eriti sobiv analüüsima Arktika regionaalset integratsiooni. Uusregionalismi aluseks olev 'regioonlikkuse' (regionness) mõiste võimaldab analüüsida valitud piirkonna regionaalse integratsiooniga seotud arenguid viiest etapist koosneval pidevustikul. Lisaks valitud piirkonna regionaalse integratsiooni ulatuse kindlaks määramisele käimasoleval ajahetkel, saab antud vahendit kasutada ka tagasiulatuvalt. Näiteks võimaldab see analüüsida valitud piirkonna regionaalse integratsiooni suurenemist (või vähenemist) ajaloolises perspektiivis.

Töö empiirilise osa koosneb kolmest peatükist. Esimene neist annab ülevaate Arktika ajaloo ja selle eesmärgiks on viia lugeja kurssi regiooni puudutavate oluliste arengutega (nii ajaloolises kui kaasaegses perspektiivis). Ühtlasi on antud peatüki eesmärgiks rõhutada viimase paarikümne aasta jooksul toimunud arengute järsku ja ulatuslikku olemust. Töö empiirilise osa teine peatükk on jagatud kaheks ning sisaldab endas analüütilist arutelu Arktika regionaalse integratsiooni teemal. Peatüki esimeses pooles analüüsitakse Arktika regionaalse integratsiooni hetkeseisu, eesmärgiga hinnata regiooni asukohta 'regioonlikkuse' pidevustikul. Analüüsi tulemusena selgub, et Arktika asub kolmanda ja neljanda astme, ehk regionaalse kogukonna (regional society) ja regionaalse ühiskonna (regional community) vahel. Olles läbinud kaks esimest taset (regionaalne ruum – regional space ja regionaalne kogum – regional complex) külma sõja ajajärgul, on regionaalne integratsioon Arktikas külma sõja järgsel ajal järjest tihenemine. Siiski selgub analüüsi tulemusel ka see, et hetkeseisus ei ole regionaalse integratsiooni tihenemine tõenäoline, pigem on võimalik stagnatsioon või arengud vastupidises suunas. Põhjuseks võib siinkohal tuua näiteks Arktika poliitilise tegevuskava limiteerituse ning riikide liigsed (regionaalse integratsiooni seisukohalt) püüdlused kinnistamiseks oma suveräänseid õiguseid regioonis. Peatüki teine pool analüüsib Arktika regionaalse integratsiooni hetkeseisu kasutades selleks nelja kategooriat: valitsustevaheline regionaalne koostöö, turu ja ühiskonna poolt ajendatud regionaliseerumine, regionaalne koondumus ja sidusus, ning regionaalne identiteet. Peatüki teises pooles läbi viidud analüüsi tulemused kattusid suures osas esimese osa tulemustega. Selgus, et kuigi Arktikat võib kindlasti vaadelda kui eraldiseisvat regiooni, siis regiooni siseselt domineerivad selgelt riikide (mitte muude osapoolte, nt põlisrahvaste esindajate või erinevate valitsusvaheliste organisatsioonide) huvid. Lisaks puudub Arktikas regiooni ühendav Arktika-identiteet. Kuigi ametlikes dokumentides identifitseerivad kõik piirkonda kuuluvad riigid end Arktika riigi või rahvusena, siis mõne riigi, näiteks USA puhul, tekib kahtlus taolise formulatsiooni paikapidavuse suhtes. Analüüsi tulemusena oli regiooni-ülene identiteet täheldatav vaid mõne põlisrahvuse puhul, kelle asuala on jaotatud mitme riigi vahel. Ühise Arktika-identiteedi puudumine on oluline ka sellepärast, et Arktika riigid kasutavad oma rahvuslikes identiteedikonstruktsioonides sisalduvat Arktika elementi tihti peale kui abinõud tugevdamiseks oma mõju regioonis. On aga kaheldav, et taolised tegevused omaks

positiivset mõju üldisele regionaalsele integratsioonile regioonis. Empiirilise osa kolmas peatükk pakub lugejale detailsema ülevaate analüütilise osa leidudest ning nende tähtsusest regionaalsele integratsioonile Arktikas.

## **Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks**

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