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**Liberal Values or Realist Interests? An Analysis of the Shifting Security  
Narratives in the Arctic Region.**

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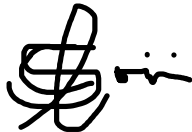
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Arctic today has changed dramatically since the 1990s. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, during the past decade, the surface area of the Arctic Sea ice has reached its lowest levels since 1850. Not only has climate change caused the Arctic ice to melt at unprecedented rates, but it has also heated geopolitical tensions within the region.

Due to its global impact, the preservation of the Arctic has become a critical international governance issue. The Arctic ice melt has led to irreversible natural consequences, and it also has the potential to become a major crisis with ramifications for international security. While the environmental dynamics underway in the region risk undermining the world's strategy to curb climate change, they have also opened up opportunities for a new phase of exploitation of fossil fuels, yet research into this topic remains limited. Such opposing dynamics (environmental preservation in the interest of the international community vs. exploitation of natural resources for national interests) offer an interesting context to study potential shifts in the chosen states' policy narratives. In order to achieve that and respond to the knowledge gap, this research quantitatively analyses and compares the key policy documents issued by all relevant states before and after 2015, which is the year when the current climate change commitments were made and the new UN strategies (Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) were established. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to identify shifts in policy narratives that trend toward support of either the liberal approach (international collaboration) or the realist alternative (national interest).

This research uses the theoretical framework of liberalism and realism to guide a quantitative content analysis of the key policy documents. In turn, the overarching goal of the current study is to determine which of these two theoretical approaches best represents the countries' discursive position on the Arctic. This may cast additional light on what governance dynamics may prevail in the region in the future. Essentially, this study concludes that liberalism remains the dominant narrative within the Arctic region. However, after 2015, the general trend, in every country's policy document (except for Iceland) is a decrease in relevance for liberal policies and an increase in realist positions.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMAP	Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CATA	computer-assisted textual analysis
CLCS	United Nations' Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CNARC	China Nordic Arctic Research Centre
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
GLACIER	Global Leadership in the Arctic Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement, and Resilience
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IR	International Relations
MOSPA	Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSR	Northern Sea Route
NWP	Northwest Passage
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SAR	Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

The Arctic: a hitherto untouched, pristine, fragile, and icy region. This is the image one tends to envision when thinking about this part of the world. However, the Arctic today has changed dramatically from the past (Heininen 2012:2-3; Young 2016:99). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), during the past decade, the surface area of the Arctic Sea ice has reached its lowest levels since 1850 (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2021:9). Not only has climate change caused the Arctic ice to melt at unprecedented rates, but it has also heated geopolitical tensions within the region (Conley & Rohloff 2015:1; Nadarajah 2020:306). In this regard, Heininen et al. (2020:8) argue that various nations seeking to expand their influence within the region do not align with the present narrative that portrays the Arctic as an untouched and delicate environment that requires increased safety and conservation. As such, growing issues within the region are addressed by the Arctic Council.

The Arctic Council is the leading forum for Arctic governance and was formally established by the Ottawa Declaration in 1996 (Arctic Council 2021). According to Article 1(a) of the Declaration, the Arctic Council was created to “provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States” (Arctic Council 1996:2). The Council consists of eight Arctic States, six Indigenous Permanent Participant Organisations, six Working Groups, and 35 Observer states and organisations (Arctic Council 2021). The eight Arctic States are Canada, Denmark<sup>1</sup>, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (US)– see Figure 1: Arctic Ocean Map with North Pole and Arctic Circle (Furian 2016). Furthermore, the thirteen Observer states (Non-arctic States) are China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (UK).

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<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of Denmark comprises three territories: Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Greenland is a centrally located state in the Arctic and thus, the Kingdom of Denmark is an Arctic State (Winkler 2022). In this research, Denmark and the Kingdom of Denmark are synonymous and are thus, used interchangeably.

Figure 1: Arctic Ocean Map with North Pole and Arctic Circle (Furian 2016)



The melting of the Arctic ice<sup>2</sup> has opened the region to a plethora of unforeseen threats and challenges such as increased military activity, as well as new opportunities, such as opened shipping routes, along with an abundance of valuable resources (McPherson 2015:10-11; Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program 2021:9). As such, during the past decade, the Arctic has been put at the centre stage of global concerns. Keil (2014:163) maintains this view as she mentions that the region's position in International Relations (IR) is moving from a marginal to a central position. For this reason, as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) contends, "a new Arctic needs new rules<sup>3</sup>" (World Wide Fund for Nature 2021). For instance, Young (2019:2), a leading Arctic scholar, argues the need to reform Arctic governance, vis-à-vis the Arctic Council, to meet the changing security dynamics in the region. Furthermore, a report released in 2021 by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) mentions that ecosystems throughout the Arctic are at risk, and some are even

<sup>2</sup> This process will be referred to hereinafter as 'the Arctic ice melt'.

<sup>3</sup> "A new, warmer Arctic cannot continue to operate under rules that assume it is ice-covered and essentially closed to fishing, resource exploration and development and shipping" (World Wide Fund for Nature 2010).

disappearing, due to the changing cryosphere<sup>4</sup> (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program 2021:2). It is therefore crucial for nations to be united with regards to the governance of the Arctic as ecosystems in the region transcend political borders.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this research is to analyse the policy documents of countries within the Arctic Council before and after the adoption of the 2015 United Nations (UN) Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement to curb climate change, with a view to determine what shift, if any, has taken place in their policy narratives. This research uses the following countries: Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US.

## **1.2. The Arctic in the International Relations Debate: A Literature Review**

During the Cold War, the Arctic was a hostile buffer zone between the two major superpowers, the Soviet Union and the US (Padrtova 2020:29). After the end of the Cold War, interest in the region significantly decreased because it had very little strategic value as a result of the Arctic's high density of snow and ice, which made the area inaccessible and inhospitable (Zellen 2009:4; Lanteigne 2015:151). More recently, however, the increasing speed of polar ice erosion has prompted global interest in the region due to the potential for oil and gas explorations (Heininen 2012:3; Lanteigne 2015:151; Sejersen 2015:20). As a result, during the past decade, the Arctic has become a region of complex geopolitical change. Various factors such as climate change and growing great power competition have affected developments in the Circumpolar North<sup>5</sup> (Kingdom of Sweden 2020:22-23). These factors will be summarised in four geopolitical trends below, followed by a discussion of the current Arctic narratives.

### **1.2.1. Emerging Arctic Trends**

Firstly, there has been an explosion of renewed interest in the region as the Arctic ice melt has exposed its economic value. Indeed, global warming has made it easier to drill for natural resources throughout the region as the ice sheets become thinner. The Arctic's rich oil and gas reserves have the potential, for those concerned with energy

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<sup>4</sup> A cryosphere is a place where water is in its solid form (National Snow and Ice Data Center 2022).

<sup>5</sup> The Circumpolar North is the area covered by the terms "Arctic" and "Subarctic". It consists of the northern lands of Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US (University of the Arctic 2021). Note that Circumpolar North, the Arctic, and the Arctic region will be used interchangeably throughout this research.

security, to provide independence from depleting energy sources (Young 2011:188). According to McPherson (2015:11), “the Arctic may hold about 13 percent of the world’s undiscovered oil and 30 percent of its natural gas”. However, according to international law, the Arctic Ocean does not belong to any sole country (Wallace 2020). The discussion surrounding who owns the Arctic is a contested topic as most of the region is not land but sea. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea<sup>6</sup> (UNCLOS) has established a set of rules for all maritime activities. In Article 3, the Convention mentions that “every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles” (United Nations 1982:27). A nation further assumes 200 nautical miles beyond its territorial sea, in which it gains jurisdiction over the exploitation of maritime resources. This is referred to as an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2003). To make a territorial claim, nations need to present their case to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf<sup>7</sup> (CLCS) (Suarez 2010:132). In the case of the Arctic region, various territorial disputes exist, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Secondly, the Arctic sea ice melt has opened up new commercial shipping routes, reducing travel distance by thousands of kilometres (Young 2011:188). The World Economic Forum (WEF) states that as the ice melts, sea routes will remain traversable for longer periods of time, considerably altering international trade and shipping (World Economic Forum 2020). Two notable trans-Arctic sea routes that are opening up are the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and the Northwest Passage (NWP) (The Arctic Institute 2021). The NSR is considered a shorter shipping route between Asia and Europe. According to The Arctic Institute (2011), the NSR can shorten shipping distances by up to 50% compared to the currently used shipping routes via the Suez Canal. For example, a trip from Japan to Europe generally takes 22 days through the Suez Canal, whereas it takes ten days through the Arctic Ocean (The Arctic Institute 2011). Russia considers parts of the NSR to be in territorial waters and has asserted exclusive rights to control commercial shipping in these waters. These claims have been disputed by

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<sup>6</sup> UNCLOS was adopted in 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica. However, the treaty only came into effect in 1994 (International Maritime Organisation 2019; Wallace 2020).

<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the CLCS is to assist the implementation of UNCLOS in “respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles (M) from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured” (Suarez 2010:132).

various countries, including the US, which deems those waters to be international waters (The Arctic Institute 2021; Congressional Research Service 2022:28). The NWP is a potential shipping route between the northeast of North America and northeast Asia (Congressional Research Service 2022:56). Canada, like Russia, claims that the NWP passes through Canadian water in which passing ships are subject to Canadian law. The US has also contested Canada's claims over the NWP (Lasserre 2017:107). Interestingly, Russia and Canada support each other's claims over their respective sea routes in the Arctic (The Arctic Institute 2021).

Thirdly, the Arctic has become a central focus point for geopolitical conflict. In the past, the region has been defined by 'Arctic exceptionalism'<sup>8</sup>. However, the growing rivalry between China and the US, coupled with geopolitical tension between Russia and the US, has replaced the idea of Arctic exceptionalism with a new narrative about the Circumpolar region as an emerging arena for great power competition (Saxena 2020; Raspotnik & Østhagen 2021). A report from the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) (2022:1) expresses its concern regarding growing geopolitical competition in the region between the US, Russia, and China (Congressional Research Service 2022:1). This trend accompanies the last development, referred to as the 'militarisation of the Arctic', which sees increased military activity in the Arctic region (MacDonald 2015:18; McPherson 2015:26; Choi 2020:61).

According to The Arctic Institute, for the first time in three decades, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) warships were deployed in the Barents Sea, near Russia's Arctic Coast, in 2020 (Devyatkin 2021). Furthermore, over the past decade, Russia has been expanding its military capabilities in the Arctic by reopening and restoring various military bases, radar stations, and airfields (Klimenko 2019:8). It is important to note that other countries have also placed an increased focus on their military policies towards the region; however, this will also be elaborated further in Chapter 4. Ultimately, two conflicting narratives have emerged from the developing geopolitical trends in the Circumpolar North (Østhagen 2020a:2).

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<sup>8</sup> A romantic tradition of thought that refers to the Arctic as an untouched, pristine, and fragile environment where the indigenous peoples of the North live in harmony with their environment, detached from the forces of modernity (Käpylä & Mikkola 2015:5).



### **1.2.2. Arctic Narratives**

A vast array of literature exists on the discussion between cooperation and competition within the Arctic, as many authors agree that the region presents many opportunities and challenges (Young 1992; Zellen 2009; Brosnan et al. 2011; Young 2011; Eurasia Group 2014; Conley & Rohloff 2015; Dodds & Nuttall 2016; Godzimirski & Sergunin 2020; Weber 2020). Yet, the future trajectory of the Arctic region remains uncertain. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, two conflicting narratives have emerged regarding the Arctic's political environment.

#### *1.2.2.1. Liberal Narrative*

The first narrative is based on liberal assumptions, which highlight the Arctic as a “zone of peace” (Gorbachev 1987:4), where relative peace and stability in the region are maintained (and will be maintained) by international organisations and cooperative initiatives (Heininen et al. 2014:5; Young 2020:49). In her book, *Arctic Governance*, Rowe (2018) explores the cooperative nature of Arctic governance by discussing how “relations of power matter in shaping cross-border cooperation and diplomacy in the Arctic”. Similarly, in their work, *Diplomacy on Ice*, Pincus and Ali (2015:2) discuss the potential for regional cooperation through innovative diplomacy and efficient framing of issues.

Maintaining the liberal narrative, Albert and Vasilache (2018:10) argue that there is a rise in international organisations concerned with the Arctic region. Arctic-related issues have gained significance that extends beyond the framework of UNCLOS and the Arctic Council. An example is the Arctic Economic Council (Albert & Vasilache 2018:10). Furthermore, a study released by the RAND Corporation illustrates various examples of cooperation among Arctic states in the form of organisations and agreements (Pezard et al. 2017:20). Cooperative examples include the International Maritime Organisation, the International Arctic Science Committee, and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (Pezard et al. 2017:21). Additionally, Østhagen and Schofield (2021:6) argue that maritime claims made by the Arctic states are mainly in accordance with international law. They conclude that “the region has been characterised by substantial scientific and legal cooperation – not conflict” (Østhagen & Schofield 2021:6). In a similar vein, Kriz and Chrastansky (2012:111) argue that pessimistic predictions of conflict escalation in the Arctic usually count on partial data,

along with overgeneralised assumptions and thus, cannot provide an accurate portrayal of reality within the region. Nevertheless, although the region is characterised by vital cooperation among states, the US CRS (2022:1) notes that increasing great power competition among China, Russia, and the US, coupled with growing human activity in the Arctic, has introduced aspects of competition into the Arctic environment.

#### 1.2.2.2. *Realist Narrative*

The second narrative is based on realist assumptions, which underline the competitive nature of states pursuing their national interests in the region, thus making the Arctic an arena for potential competition (Brosnan et al. 2011:17; Heininen et al. 2014:5; Østhagen 2020a:5). For instance, Keil (2014:165) argues that weak organisations, coupled with security-anxious states, have increased the competitive nature of states within the region. As seen in the four emerging Arctic trends, territorial and maritime disputes, geopolitical conflict, and military expansion further demonstrate looming tensions in the Arctic (Janjgava 2012:95). Cook (2020) supports this view, mentioning that “geopolitical rivalries in the region have been reignited”. In a similar vein, Lanteigne (2019), a well-known Arctic researcher, notes that the region is facing a possible “revenge of Realpolitik<sup>9</sup>” regarding regional security matters.

Both narratives share one mutual yet tacit assumption: the Arctic is characterised by increasing stakes (Keil 2014:165). Considering the potential benefit at hand, nations are eager to stake their claims in the most northern ‘treasure trove’ on the planet. However, it remains uncertain how competition and cooperation will play out in the future of the Arctic, especially against the backdrop of global commitments to establish common governance mechanisms to curb climate change and promote sustainable development (Young 2020:48).

### 1.3. **Research Problem and Questions**

Due to its global impact, preserving the Arctic has become a critical international governance issue. The Arctic ice melt has led to irreversible natural consequences, and it also has the potential to become a major crisis with ramifications for global security (Bellen 2019). While the environmental dynamics in the region risk

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<sup>9</sup> “The term ‘Realpolitik’ is widely used today as a synonym for ‘power politics’ and understood as the realist approach to foreign policy” (Ikenberry 2017).

undermining the global strategy to curb climate change, they have also opened up opportunities for a new phase of exploitation of fossil fuels, yet research into this topic remains limited (Abdel-Motaal 2020:376). Such opposing dynamics (environmental preservation in the interest of the international community vs. exploitation of natural resources for national interests) offer an exciting context to study potential shifts in the chosen states' policy narratives. To achieve that and respond to the knowledge gap, this research quantitatively analyses and compares the key policy documents issued by all relevant states before and after 2015, which is the year when the current climate change commitments were made and the new UN strategies (Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) were established. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to identify shifts in policy narratives that trend toward support of either the liberal approach (international collaboration) or the realist alternative (national interest).

The main research question, therefore, is:

- What discursive changes (regarding policy narratives) have taken place in the policy documents of the countries within the Arctic Council before and after 2015?

The sub-question for this research is:

- Which narrative is thus the most predominant throughout the policy documents?

#### **1.4. Research Methodology**

This research uses the theoretical framework of liberalism and realism to guide a quantitative content analysis of the key policy documents. In turn, the overarching goal of the current study is to determine which school of thought best represents the countries' discursive position on the Arctic. Ultimately, this may cast additional light on what governance dynamics may prevail in the region in the future.

Coe and Scacco (2017:1) define a quantitative content analysis as a research method in which various terms throughout a text are methodologically categorised and then recorded for analysis. In this case, the 'liberalism versus realism' theoretical framework is used to help create categories for the content analysis. In other words, different categories are associated with the theory to suggest that terms used in the strategic

policies of the chosen countries imply liberal or realistic assumptions, such as cooperation versus competition. The overarching categories are accompanied by sub-categories, which are terms that have similar meanings. Furthermore, an essential feature of quantitative content analysis is the different types of computer-assisted textual analysis (CATA), which are especially useful for analysing numerous amounts of texts (Coe & Scacco 2017:3). The CATA that assists this research is ATLAS.ti, which is one of the most common tools used by CATA researchers. Chapter 3 will provide an in-depth explanation of the research methods.

As mentioned, 2015 is a clear watershed moment, given that both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were established by the UN to address climate change. The Paris Act Agreement is significant because, for the first time regarding multilateral solutions to climate change, an agreement binds all states into a common cause to embark on bold efforts to prevent climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2021). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also important as it outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to equip nations with a collective vision of sustainable development (United Nations 2018:7). Therefore, the assumption is made that after 2015, the countries strategic policies in the Arctic would have changed to align with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

### **1.5. Research Structure and Demarcation of Chapters**

The research is laid out as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides the introduction, background to the research, and methodology.
- Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework and conceptual clarification of realism and liberalism. The UN and its environmental/climate change frameworks are also discussed.
- Chapter 3 provides an in-depth explanation of the methods used in the quantitative content analysis.

- Chapter 4 presents and discusses the data from the quantitative content analysis. Findings and observations on the nine countries' Arctic policies are also made.
- Chapter 5 concludes and reflects on the research conducted throughout this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the key elements of the two theoretical approaches indicated by the study, that is, realism and liberalism, in which a conceptual clarification of concepts associated with each approach will also be provided. Thereafter, the UN and its environmental/climate change frameworks will be discussed.

### **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

Realism and liberalism are often the two overarching theoretical frameworks used in academic debates concerning the Arctic region and can help explain the shifting policy narratives therein (Godzimirski & Sergunin 2020:22; Padrtova 2020:30). While it is difficult to comprehend the wide array of explanations and developments in the Arctic, this section will provide some theoretical underpinnings for both realism and liberalism, which will be applied to understand the security landscape of the region. The section will also lay the groundwork to generate the necessary conceptual categories for a content analysis of the primary policy documents.

#### **2.2.1. Realism**

Realism is considered the most prominent theoretical tradition in IR and is a diverse constellation of theories and approaches (Burchill 2005a:31). For example, Diez et al. (2010:53) contend that realism does not maintain one single specific position, but instead has variations within an overarching belief system. Nevertheless, realists share common assumptions within the academic realm of IR. Essentially, realists view the world as a dangerous and insecure place, where violence is undesirable but prevalent (Mearsheimer 1995:9). In their explanation of world politics, realists argue that states are the principal actors in an anarchic<sup>10</sup> international system (Grieco 1988:488; Burchill 2005a:31). The absence of a central authority allows states to maximise their national interests, which according to realists, is rooted in power (Elman 2008:12). As such, realists believe that the main driving forces of global politics are the pursuit of power and national interest. In order to simplify this complex tradition of thought, this framework focuses on classical realism as was initially developed by

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<sup>10</sup> "Lack of a central authority at the global level to regulate relations between states" (Diez et al. 2010:57).

Thomas Hobbes and, more recently, elaborated by Hans Morgenthau and John Mearsheimer. The main concepts underpinning realist approaches are discussed below.

#### 2.2.1.1. *National Interest*

One of the most important aspects of a nation's foreign policy is its national interest. The concept of national interest is strongly related to realism, where security is the main objective (Humphreys 2015:571). Nuechterlein (1976:246) defines national interest as one sovereign nation's needs and wants in connection to other sovereign nations. In his book, *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau (1985:5) argues that the state's national interest is defined in terms of power<sup>11</sup>. In this regard, he mentions that the main driving force behind state behaviour is the desire for power, as the goal of foreign policy is to either maintain power, enhance power, or demonstrate power (Morgenthau 1985:21). This means that states are always pursuing opportunities to dominate their competitors (Burchill 2005a:36; Diez et al. 2010:53). In a similar vein, Schuman (1941:261) contends that politics is ultimately a struggle for power, and powerful leaders enjoy getting subordinates to follow their command. In *Scientific Man Vs. Power Politics*, Morgenthau (1947:145) maintains that "man is born to seek power". Therefore, for realists, the desire for power is ingrained in the imperfect nature of humanity, as states, like men, behave in a self-interested manner (Slaughter 1995:722; Williams 2008:17).

#### 2.2.1.2. *Competition*

According to Blake et al. (2018:5), competition involves the effort to increase advantage, often in relation to others considered to be a threat, through the egoistic pursuit of power, security, prosperity, and authority. Realists argue that the flawed nature of humanity explains the competitive and conflictual nature of states (Williams 2008:17). In this regard, the international system is seen as an arena for competition and rivalry in which nations aim to outperform each other in pursuit of status and power (Blake et al. 2018:5). For Hobbes (1651:77), global politics is characterised by a war against all. He explains that war is a condition of an anarchic international system, and without a central government, nations compete for survival.

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<sup>11</sup> "Power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the power of man over man .... from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another" (Morgenthau 1985: 9).

### 2.2.1.3. *Balance of Power*

In order to analyse how power is dispersed in the international system, realists have developed the concept of 'balance of power'<sup>12</sup>. In his book, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer (2001:2) posits that it is vital to draw on the balance of power logic to comprehend global politics. He argues that states pursue competitive policies to adjust the adversarial balance of power for their advantage (Mearsheimer 2001:2; Little 2007:214). To clarify, states pursue security in terms of relative gain<sup>13</sup> instead of absolute gain<sup>14</sup>. Waltz (1959:198) also highlights the importance of relative gain over absolute gain in his book, *Man, the State, and War*.

Realists argue that the balance of power is an inevitable feature of the international system (Mearsheimer 1995:12; Sheehan 1996:7). Ultimately, the objective of statesmen is to modify the national interest according to changing events in the global realm in order to maintain a balance of power. Therefore, for Morgenthau (1947:93), the balance of power is the stabilising factor of international relations in which the distribution of power is subject to continuous fluctuations. However, this understanding of security is also related to the 'security dilemma' concept. It essentially signifies a situation whereby a nation's actions (mainly in the form of military capabilities) to maximise its own security triggers reactions from other nations, which thus decreases its original security position (Booth & Wheeler 2008:135).

### 2.2.1.4. *Traditional Security*

The traditional security paradigm is a state-centric approach, in which the state is seen as the referent object<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, this view is mainly focused on war as the main threat to security. As such, a state is only secure if it can defend itself against military threats (Ayoob 1984:41; Lin 2011:12; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams 2015:20). Maintaining this view, Mearsheimer (1995:11) mentions that states seek to maximise their military capabilities to maintain military advantage over other states. Ultimately, realists argue that military strength (also referred to as hard power<sup>16</sup>) is the dominant

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<sup>12</sup> The balance of power "is a mechanism which operates to prevent the dominance of any one state in the international system" (Diez et al. 2010:61).

<sup>13</sup> Relative gain is essentially a zero-sum game in which one nation's gain is another nation's loss (Gilpin 1981:201).

<sup>14</sup> Absolute gains is when a nation focuses solely on their individual gain, and is not concerned with gains achieved by other nations (Grieco 1988:487).

<sup>15</sup> The referent object is the object that is to be secured (Buzan 1983:10).

<sup>16</sup> "Hard power is achieved through military threat or use, and by means of economic menace or reward" (Grey 2011).



means to pursue power (Burchill 2005b:56). In a similar vein, Bially et al. (2000:133) contend that the ultimate measure of national power is military strength whereby military capabilities provide nations with a means to protect themselves against rivals. In his classical work, *Leviathan*, the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1651) was one of the precursors in defining security as the primary objective of state policies. In particular, he argues that international relations are like a state of nature, in which mutual suspicion is a driving force leading to a constant war of everyone against everyone. In this regard, he describes the nature of humankind to be short, lonely, destitute, nasty, and ruthless (Hobbes 1651:78). Ultimately, the traditional security approach, underscored by realism, characterises the international system as an arena for competition amongst states in pursuit of power, in which security is understood chiefly in terms of military strength.

#### 2.2.1.5. *Criticisms of Realism*

As mentioned before, realism is the most dominant theoretical tradition in IR; therefore, it has been subject to much criticism. Other schools of thought, such as constructivism and liberalism, are critical of realism. For constructivists such as Wendt (1992:394), the traditional realist approach to studying IR and security has marginalised the vital significance of social construction. As Katzenstein (1996:2) mentions, “interests are constructed through a process of social interaction”. For example, Wendt (1995:74) argues that realists misunderstand the nature of security dilemmas. Although Wendt (1992:395) does not deny the condition of anarchy in the international system, he asserts that states’ relationships with each other vary and therefore, as he claims, “anarchy is what states make of it”. This means that historically amicable states are less likely to distrust each other. To explain this point further, Wendt (1995:73) mentions the following:

500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not, and amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings.

Therefore, Wendt contends that military capabilities are insignificant when explaining the security dilemma, as the international system is comprised of a structure of shared knowledge (Wendt 1995:73). In short, power politics is socially constructed.

Liberalism is another school of thought that has developed a critique of realism. Liberals, such as Doyle (1986:1151), challenge the notion that anarchy determines states' behaviour. He argues that liberal states are fundamentally against war and will resolve their disputes without resorting to aggression (Doyle 1986:1151). Liberalism is also used as this study's second theoretical framework and therefore, it will be discussed below.

### **2.2.2. Liberalism**

By the 1980s, conflict was no longer a defining characteristic of the international system. As a result, cooperation became an increasingly important feature of international relations as states started pursuing common interests (Diez et al. 2010:24). As such, realism's failure to predict the end of the Cold War enabled liberal literature to gather pace at the end of the twentieth century (Lebow 1994:249; Wohlforth 1995:91). Furthermore, for Fukuyama (1989:3), the end of the Cold War also signified the triumph of Western liberal democracy. It is important to note that liberalism has numerous sub-schools of thought; however, the framework for this current study will draw on the work of classic liberals such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant, and contemporary theorists such as Michael Doyle and Robert Keohane. Classical liberalism is built on values of individual freedom, liberty, equality, peace, and furthermore, promotes the free market and democracy (Burchill 2005b:55; Diez et al. 2010: 23-24). Maintaining these values, liberal institutionalism further holds that institutional arrangements are an essential feature of international relations. In this regard, liberal institutionalists claim that human-constructed institutions facilitate cooperation and dialogue between states (Keohane 2018:2). The key concepts underpinning liberal thinking are elaborated below.

#### **2.2.2.1. Cooperation**

Liberalism highlights the possibility and attraction of cooperation between nations to enable a more peaceful global order (Dorussen & Ward 2008:190). However, according to Keohane (2018:11), cooperation is not autonomous with harmony. He explains that cooperation requires planning and diplomacy as it is a political process—a process where influence is secured through persuasion and interdependence on economic and military resources (Keohane 2018:11). For liberals, cooperative measures include international law, multilateral diplomacy, international organisations,

and human-centric approaches to security (Dorussen & Ward 2008:190; Keating 2014:51). In line with the notion of cooperation is the 'democratic peace' thesis, which was developed Doyle (1983) in his article, *Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs*. It is a central theme in liberalism, in which Doyle (1983:213) explains that "liberal states have yet to engage in war with each other". In other words, democratic peace is the idea that democratic nations are less likely to go to war against each other than non-democratic nations (Doyle 2005:464; Gat 2005:73). Doyle's (1983) viewpoint builds on Kant's (1795) argument that individuals are more likely to choose peace and cooperation over war and conflict.

#### 2.2.2.2. *Common Interests*

For the second key concept of common interests, Keohane (1984:43) argues that institutions<sup>17</sup> can provide a common ground for interaction amongst states to encourage cooperation. In addition, proponents of liberalism assert that institutions foster mutual trust between countries and contribute to effective international cooperation (Navari 2008:41). Therefore, states that share common interests are more likely to facilitate sustained cooperation (Keohane 1984:43). The UN, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the European Economic Community (EEC) are examples of international organisations that have facilitated state cooperation through mutual interests (Keohane 2018:14).

#### 2.2.2.3. *Collective Security*

Thirdly, collective security is a crucial concept regarding liberalism within security studies. Jordaan (2017:163) explains collective security as a legally binding agreement between countries that ensures the use of force will not be used to settle disputes. Generally, collective security exists when nations follow liberal norms and rules to stop war and conflict (Jordaan 2017:164). As Miller (1999:303) elaborates, it seeks a community of power instead of a balance of power. Although Kant (1795) did not coin the concept, the idea of collective security can be seen throughout his work. In *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, Kant (1795:118-119) outlines the idea of a peaceful community of states. Essentially, he argues that a league of nations has the potential to limit conflict and promote peace amongst nations. The first global

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<sup>17</sup> Mearsheimer (1995:8) defines institutions as "a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other".

intergovernmental organisation was the formalised League of Nations, established in 1920. It was an institution that allowed collective action to be taken by states against aggressor states to maintain peace (Eloranta 2011:5). Although the League of Nations foundered in 1946, many of its elements were incorporated into the UN (Diez et al. 2010:33). NATO is also another example of collective security.

#### 2.2.2.4. *International Law*

Law is often considered the foundation of civilisation and is found in all contemporary societies. In a broad sense, international law is what regulates nations and other international actors. Furthermore, international law is divided into private and public branches (Heywood 2014:339). The former relates to the regulation of private relations between individuals and companies across national borders, whereas the latter refers to the law that takes place in the absence of a sovereign international authority or legislative body (Heywood 2014:339). International law is enshrined in treaties, standards, and conventions, regulated by various organisations such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the WTO, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Liberals believe international law is crucial for cooperation among states in the international arena (Dorussen & Ward 2008:190; Keating 2014:51).

During the twentieth century, liberals became increasingly concerned with moral universalism. As such, human rights law is a vital component of public international law (Dams & Van Der Putten 2015:6). Furthermore, to maintain world peace, liberals argue that measures protecting and promoting individual rights should be implemented. In this regard, individual liberty and human rights are of the highest political significance for liberals (Diez et al. 2010:27). In his book, *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke (1690:9) mentions that “no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions”. Essentially, Locke’s (1690:10) central claim is that no legitimate government can infringe on individuals’ rights, nor can they implement any type of absolute power as this is equivalent to slavery. Furthermore, liberals believe that individuals who are fundamentally free in a society will be transparent, rational, and cooperative regarding national security matters (MacPherson 1980; Walker & Rousseau 2017:54). It is important to note that individual rights are important when it

comes to the Arctic as any new activity that takes place in the region will affect the Arctic indigenous people.

#### *2.2.2.5. Criticisms of Liberalism*

Liberal thought has a long intellectual tradition, and thus, various criticisms have also developed over the years. For example, challenging the democratic peace thesis, Rosato (2003:592) argues that shared democratic values do not guarantee that nations will respect and trust each other. In this regard, liberal states are less likely to maintain peaceful relations when national interests clash. Similarly, Downes and Lilley (2010:266) explain that several cases show that democracies have used aggressive means short of war to get rid of democratically elected governments from authority. They have identified this phenomenon as 'covert foreign regime change' (Downes & Lilley 2010:267). A case in point is when the US and the UK orchestrated 'Operation Ajax', which engineered the deposition of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953 (Gasirowski 1987:261). Therefore, covert foreign regime change undermines the democratic peace thesis. As Van Evera (1990:76) concludes, democracy is only favoured by American leaders when it has created governments that promote American policy.

Another criticism of liberalism is seen in the work of Mearsheimer (1995:13). He argues that cooperation through institutions is conditional. Mearsheimer (1995:13) states that nations operate through institutions based on the belief that the regulations indicate a nation's calculations of self-interest created mainly on the international distribution of power. Essentially, the most powerful nations uphold their share of power in the international system by shaping institutions (Mearsheimer 1995:13). Grieco (1988:499) maintains this view as he argues that a state will limit commitment, leave, or decline admission to an international organisation if it believes that other states are likely to attain comparatively greater gains. That said, the development of international organisations has led to greater interconnectedness between nations on security concerns. For example, the UN has set up various frameworks to deal with environmental issues.

### 2.3. United Nations' Climate Change Commitments

The UN was established in 1945 after the Second World War by (then) 51 nations dedicated to preserving international peace and security (Williams 2013:1299). Today, the UN has 193 Member States. Furthermore, the organisation is guided by principles outlined in its founding Charter<sup>18</sup> (Williams 2013:1299). The main purposes of the UN include maintaining international peace, protecting human rights, and solving international problems in the economic and social realms (Nadin 2019:12). The UN has also set up various mechanisms to combat climate change, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC was signed by 154 countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development<sup>19</sup> (UNCED) in 1992 and thereafter entered into force in 1994 (Blobel & Meyer-Ohlendorf 2006:19). Its ultimate objective is to prevent “dangerous human interference with the climate system” (United Nations 2022a). To carry out this objective, the UNFCCC birthed the Paris Agreement.

The Agreement was adopted by 196 governments at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 21 in Paris in 2015. It is a lawfully binding treaty on climate change that aims to limit global warming (United Nations 2022b). The overarching goals of the Paris Agreement, as outlined in Article 2(a), include “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels”, as well as “pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels” (United Nations 2015a:3). In addition, the Agreement, as stated in Article 2(b), hopes to increase “the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions” (United Nations 2015a:3). Essentially, each country determines in what way and how much they can contribute to achieving this goal in accordance with the Agreement’s principle of “common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances” (United Nations 2015a:1). To hold states accountable, COP meets every five years to record the progress of Parties towards accomplishing the Agreement’s purpose (Streck & Von Unger 2016:5).

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<sup>18</sup> The UN Charter is essentially the founding document of the UN which was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco (Nadin 2019:14).

<sup>19</sup> UNCED is also known as the Earth Summit and was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. “It marked the culmination of the most ambitious effort at environmental problem analysis” at the time (Weiskel 1993:13).

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was also launched during the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York. The Agenda mentions that climate change is an immense global challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. No country is exempt from the impact of climate change, and thus, it is a global responsibility (United Nations 2015b:6). In this regard, the Agenda comprises 17 SDGs with 169 connected targets (United Nations 2015b:7). Goal 13 is to “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” which includes various measures to combat climate change such as “integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning” (United Nations 2015b:25). Ultimately, 2015 is a noteworthy year as both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were established by the UN to address climate change and its inevitable impacts on Earth.

#### **2.4. Moving Forward**

The information provided in this chapter is relevant to the study as it provides a framework to shape and demarcate the quantitative content analysis. Realism and liberalism are both relevant to this study as they both outline the two conflicting narratives that have emerged in the Arctic region, as seen in the literature review of Chapter 1. As such, the overall frameworks provided by realism and liberalism, as well as their respective key concepts are also relevant to this study as they will be used to gauge potential shifts in the policy narratives of the main countries involved in the governance of the Arctic with a view to assess which narrative has become more predominant in official national discourse.

The Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are also relevant for this study as they were both created in 2015, and thus make it a significant and defining year for domestic policies regarding environmental security and climate change. Therefore, this study will observe changes of policy narratives in the policy documents of the relevant countries before and after 2015.

#### **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a theoretical framework for both liberalism and realism, in which a conceptual clarification of concepts associated with each theory was identified and discussed. It is clear that concepts such as national interest, competition, balance of power, and traditional security are associated with realism, whereas concepts such

as common interest, cooperation, collective security, and international law are associated with liberalism. Furthermore, a critique of each theory was also provided in order to show that other schools of thought exist outside mainstream theories. In using the before-mentioned theoretical frameworks, the next chapter will give a quantitative content analysis of Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US's policy documents regarding the Arctic before and after 2015 to identify shifts in policy narratives that trend toward support of either the liberal approach or the realist alternative.



## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the research methodology used in this research is a quantitative content analysis. This chapter will outline the research framework adopted to steer the content analysis.

### 2.2. Research Documents

The research analyses official documents from nine countries, namely Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the US, and China. The first eight countries listed are the main Arctic states in the Arctic Council, whereas China has been granted observer status. Observer states are invited to meetings held by the Arctic Council, and their major role is to observe the work of the Council (Arctic Council 2022a). Essentially, the reason why China has also been included as a country of focus is that it is a self-proclaimed “near-Arctic state” (De Buitrago 2020:98). In addition, China has increased its attention in the Arctic region in recent years due to the area’s growing strategic value (De Buitrago 2020:98).

Figure 2 lists the documents analysed for each country. All documents are official governmental documents and have been accessed online. It is important to note that although the Kingdom of Denmark has announced its next Arctic policy document, the *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2021-2030*, it has not been released to the public yet. Furthermore, China has only released one Arctic policy document. Therefore, the analysis of both Denmark and China will rely on only one document.

*Figure 2: Policy Documents for Each Country*

Arctic State	Strategies
<b>Canada</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement on Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada’s Northern Strategy Abroad (2010)</li> <li>• Canada’s Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (2019)</li> </ul>
<b>Denmark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020 (2011)</li> </ul>
<b>Finland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region (2010)</li> <li>• Finland’s Strategy for Arctic Policy (2021)</li> </ul>
<b>Iceland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy (2011)</li> <li>• Iceland’s Policy on Matters Concerning the Arctic Region (2021)</li> </ul>

<b>Norway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norway’s Arctic Policy: Creating Value, Managing Resources, Confronting Climate Change and Fostering Knowledge (2014)</li> <li>• The Norwegian Government’s Arctic Policy (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Russia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond (2008)</li> <li>• Foundations of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2035 (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>Sweden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweden’s Strategy for the Arctic Region (2011)</li> <li>• Sweden’s Strategy for the Arctic Region (2020)</li> </ul>
<b>The United States</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)</li> <li>• Implementation framework for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2016)</li> </ul>
<b>Observer State</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<b>China</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China’s Arctic Policy (2018)</li> </ul>

In total, 16 documents were accessed, coded, and analysed. As indicated in Chapter 1, the analysis compares the policy documents before and after 2015, which is the year in which the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted: as a consequence, for each country (with the exception of China and Denmark) there will be a comparative analysis of the pre-2015 policy document and the post-2015 revision. This enabled a comprehensive overview of the countries’ discursive approach to the Arctic which may cast additional light on what governance dynamics may prevail in the region.

**2.3. Categories and Sub-Categories**

The research uses the theoretical frameworks of liberalism and realism to guide a quantitative content analysis of the key policy documents and Figure 3 lists the categories and sub-categories used for this research. For example, the liberalist ‘lens’ was used to identify key terms such as cooperation, common interest, collective security, and international law, while the realist theoretical tradition was instrumental in establishing a key set of terms such as national interest, competition, balance of power, and traditional security. The purpose is to be able to discern the extent to which a liberal language is predominant vis-à-vis its realist alternative. It should be noted that terms were added to the sub-categories as the research progressed. This is because each country uses its own language and thus, different terms that have similar

meanings are used throughout the various documents. For example, ‘global agreement’ and ‘international agreement’ are different terms, yet they share the same meaning.

Figure 3: Categories for the Quantitative Content Analysis

<b>Realist Terminology</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	
<b>National interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National interest</li> <li>• National priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National security</li> </ul>
<b>Competition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Conflict</li> <li>• Conflicting interests</li> <li>• Disagreements</li> <li>• Disputes</li> <li>• Military force</li> <li>• Military hostilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military threats</li> <li>• National security challenge</li> <li>• National security threats</li> <li>• Tensions</li> <li>• Threats</li> <li>• War</li> </ul>
<b>Balance of power</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arctic power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great power</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed forces</li> <li>• Arms race</li> <li>• Combat capabilities</li> <li>• Defence forces</li> <li>• Defence policy interests</li> <li>• Defence capability</li> <li>• Deterrence</li> <li>• Fighting capability</li> <li>• Military activity</li> <li>• Military capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military developments</li> <li>• Military exercises</li> <li>• Military formation</li> <li>• Military presence</li> <li>• Military security</li> <li>• Military strategic importance</li> <li>• Military strength</li> <li>• National defence</li> </ul>
<b>Liberalist Terminology</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	
<b>Cooperation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arctic diplomacy</li> <li>• Bilateral agreements</li> <li>• Bilateral cooperation</li> <li>• Bilateral dialogue</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Diplomacy</li> <li>• Global agreement</li> <li>• Global negotiations</li> <li>• International agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International collaboration</li> <li>• International cooperation</li> <li>• International decisions</li> <li>• International diplomacy</li> <li>• International engagement</li> <li>• International negotiations</li> <li>• International organisations</li> <li>• Multilateral cooperation</li> <li>• Peace</li> </ul>
<b>Common interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective interest</li> <li>• Common goal</li> <li>• Common interest</li> <li>• Common objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual interest</li> <li>• Shared goals</li> <li>• Shared interest</li> </ul>
<b>Collective security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allied security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective security</li> </ul>
<b>International law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global rules and standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International legal regulations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global treaties</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Indigenous people's rights</li> <li>• Indigenous rights</li> <li>• International contract</li> <li>• International law</li> <li>• International legal framework</li> <li>• International legal norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International regulations</li> <li>• International rules</li> <li>• International standards</li> <li>• International treaty</li> <li>• legally binding agreement</li> <li>• Rights</li> <li>• Rules-based</li> <li>• Rules-based world order</li> </ul>
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A total of eight categories guided the quantitative content analysis, along with 81 respective sub-categories. The content analysis was conducted in ATLAS.ti, which enabled an accurate and systematic analysis of the data.

**2.4. The Content Analysis**

Computer software can help a great deal with quantitative data analysis. Although there is a vast array of CATA software, the chosen software to assist this research is ATLAS.ti. It is one of the most recognised, popular, and multifunctional CATA tools (Archer et al. 2017). Furthermore, ATLAS.ti offers easy access to data, and further allows for efficient and accurate analysis. The procedure, as well as processing and presenting the data, will be discussed below.

**2.4.1. The Procedure**

The methods used are as follows:

- i) The documents are selected, and then uploaded onto ATLAS.ti.
- ii) The categories and sub-categories are selected, and then transferred into ATLAS.ti, which is called the 'code manager'.
- iii) Each document is read thoroughly, and quotes are highlighted throughout the document.
- iv) The quotes are then coded according to the category it is identified with. An example of this is seen in Figure 4, which is an extract taken from *Norway's Arctic Policy: Creating Value, Managing Resources, Confronting Climate Change and Fostering Knowledge* (2014).

After each document is coded, the coded data is summarised in the code manager. Each category contains its associated sub-categories with their relevant codes. It must be noted that the data, at this stage of the content analysis, represents the frequency of how often the categories/sub-categories are mentioned throughout the documents. After gathering all the data in ATLAS.ti, it is then transferred to Excel in which a spreadsheet is created to organise and further process the data.

Figure 4: Example of a Coded Quote in ATLAS.ti

is also important in the context of the Arctic.  
 Respect for international law and international cooperation are crucial for promoting stability and predictability in the north. These fundamental values



### 2.4.2. Processing and Presenting the Data

The results are moved to Excel in order to organise the data extracted from ATLAS.ti. Figure 5 provides an example of how the data is initially organised in Excel, before being processed.

Figure 5: Example of the Raw Data Extracted from ATLAS.ti

Table 1 - Raw Data Extracted From Atlas.ti												
Code	Sub-code	Canada			Denmark		Finland		Iceland			N
Liberalism:		pre	post	pre		pre	post	pre	post	pre		
o Cooperation	756	43	36		102	0	76	61		31	32	
	o Arctic diplomacy									3		
	o Bilateral agreements	3			2							
	o Bilateral cooperation	1	3		2		1	1				
	o Bilateral dialogue	1										
	o Cooperation	18	18		80		65	44		22	21	
	o Diplomacy										1	
	o Global agreement				3							
	o Global negotiations	2			2							
	o International agreement	4	1		3			1		1	2	
	o International collaboration	2	7									
	o International cooperation	1	2		6		7	14		1	4	
	o International decisions									2		
	o International diplomacy											
	o International engagement	1										
	o International negotiations	5										
	o International organisations	3	1				1			1	1	
	o Multilateral cooperation	2	2				2				1	
	o Peace			2	4			1		1	2	

The data needs to be processed from the total number of quotes coded in every document, into the percentage of total quotes coded for each category. This is because all the documents were different lengths, thus, if one document was 100 pages, it would naturally contain more quotes as it contains more words. Therefore, the data needs to be processed into percentages to fairly represent the data recorded from each document, for a more accurate comparison.

Figure 6: Example of Processed Data

	Finland (Post 2015)		Iceland (Post 2015)	
	# Quotes	% Quotes	# Quotes	% Quotes
<b>Liberalism:</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>86%</b>
○ <b>Cooperation</b>	61	67%	32	63%
○ <b>Collective security</b>	0	0	0	0
○ <b>Common interest</b>	1	1%	1	2%
○ <b>International law</b>	12	13%	11	21%
<b>Realism:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14%</b>
○ <b>Competition</b>	5	5%	1	2%
○ <b>National interest</b>	1	1%	6	12%
○ <b>Balance of power</b>	3	3%	0	0
○ <b>Traditional security</b>	8	8%	0	0

The total number of quotes can be misleading. Figure 6 shows that Iceland’s post 2015 document represents liberalism (86%) more than Finland’s does (81%), despite Finland having more quotes. As all the documents have varying lengths, converting the number of quotes into percentages allows for a more accurate comparison between documents to identify which document prioritises either liberalism or realism more. Lastly, graphs are created in Excel to visually present the final data. These graphs are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

The following factors must be taken into consideration for this analysis:

- Each sentence is a new quote that can be coded, as opposed to a paragraph.
- If there are multiple categories from the same theme (liberalism or realism) in a sentence, then only one code will be applied. Example: “Respect for International law and international cooperation is crucial for promoting stability and predictability in the north” (Kingdom of Norway 2014:11). The following sentence contains two terms, ‘international law’ and ‘international cooperation’,

from the same category. However, this sentence is only coded once within the 'Cooperation' category.

- If a sentence contains categories from both themes, then one code for each theme will be applied. Example: "Fourthly, towards 2014 a comprehensive analysis of the armed forces future tasks in the Arctic is to be carried out, including opportunities and potential for closer cooperation with partner countries in the Arctic concerning surveillance and the like" (Kingdom of Denmark 2011:21). The following sentence contains two terms from different themes, 'armed forces' and 'cooperation'. Thus, one code will be allocated to both themes, within their respective categories.
- The quotes are coded in context. Example: "Sweden's growth and competitiveness stand to benefit from increased free trade and active efforts to counter technical barriers to trade in the Arctic region" (Kingdom of Sweden 2011:6). The term, "competitiveness", used in this sentence does not apply to the 'Competition' category, as competition used in this context is related to economic competition and not the traditional realist understanding of competition.
- This research uses UK English spelling, however, the spelling in the quote reflects the original text.
- The percentages in each indicator are rounded to the closest whole number and represent the percent of the total number of quotes coded for each document.

It is also important to note that codes are not applied when:

- The category/sub-category is used to describe an organisation.
- The category/sub-category is used in a heading.
- The category/sub-category appears in an appendix at the end of a document.
- A category/sub-category is used in a formal name or proper noun.

Example:

"The Strategy's key global frames of reference include the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN (2030 Agenda), the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the negotiations on the Biodiversity Beyond National

Jurisdiction (BBNJ) instrument as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (Republic of Finland 2021:13).

In the above quote, “Rights of Indigenous Peoples” will not be considered as a code for the ‘International Law’ category, as it a name of a declaration.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a thorough discussion of the research methods conducted in the quantitative content analysis. Several rounds of reading, highlighting, and coding have been carried out for each country’s policy documents to ensure accurate results. Based on the quantitative content analysis, the main themes (i.e. liberalism or realism) are reflected in each policy document. This will be discussed and analysed further in Chapter 4.



## **CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND OBSERVATIONS ON POLICY DOCUMENTS**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter will build on the findings of the quantitative content analysis conducted in Chapter 3. Firstly, this chapter will discuss the changes that have taken place in the strategic policies of the relevant states before and after 2015. After that, overall observations will be given with a view to assess which narrative has become more predominant in the official national discourse.

### **2.2. Strategic Policies of Each Country**

This section will discuss the changes that have taken place in the policy documents of the Arctic member states before and after 2015. Due to word constraints, not every category can be discussed in the tables: only the most important observations will be discussed.

#### **2.2.1. Canada**

Approximately 40% of Canada's land is considered part of the Arctic; thus, the region is a crucial component of the country's national identity (Arctic Council 2022b). As stated in Chapter 3, the two Canadian policy documents used in this research are the *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad* (2010) and *Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework* (2019). Figure 7 presents Canada's processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis.

Figure 7: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Canada (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>
Cooperation	59	49
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	4	0
International law	11	24
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
Competition	3	3
National interest	11	4
Balance of power	3	0
Traditional security	9	20

Cooperation is a significant concept in Canada’s policy towards Arctic matters. In 1996, Canada played a vital role in the Ottawa Declaration<sup>20</sup> that established the Arctic Council, the dominant organisation for international cooperation in the region (Canada 2019). Additionally, in both Canada’s policy documents, cooperation is quoted the most (59% in the 2010 Policy and 49% in the 2019 Policy). It is manifested in bilateral and multilateral forms, such as the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US for the protection and supervision of a shared polar bear population, as well as Canada’s work with Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden to develop mutual interests in the areas of environmental protection, trade, ocean management, and the rights of indigenous peoples (Canada 2010). In the 2019 Policy, Canada maintains its commitment to “enhance bilateral cooperation with Arctic and key non-Arctic states and actors” (Canada 2019). However, although Canada upholds a cooperative stance, Figure 7 shows that the “Cooperation’ category is quoted 10% less in the 2019 Policy, whereas the ‘International Law’ category is quoted 13% more after 2015 (11% in the 2010 Policy and 24% in the 2019 Policy). This is due to the increasing tensions within the region as the Arctic countries seek to uphold international law regarding the surge of issues in the Arctic. This is evident as the 2019 Policy states, “Canada is also a signatory to several legally-binding international agreements that address Arctic-specific issues” (Canada 2019). An example of a relatively recent legally binding agreement is the *Agreement on Enhancing*

<sup>20</sup> Representatives from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US signed the Ottawa Declaration, in Ottawa, Canada, on 19 September 1996 (Canada 2017).

*International Arctic Scientific Cooperation*<sup>21</sup>, adopted in 2017 (Tsui 2019:1). Overall, the liberal theme accounts for 74% of the total coded quotes in the 2010 Policy and drops by 1%, to 73% in the 2019 Policy, because of the increasing realist narratives in the region, discussed in Chapter 1.

In 2006, Canada released the *Canada First Defence Strategy*. It gives prominence to the Arctic region, in which it states the government acknowledges that “if they are to be effective in such difficult and diverse environments as the Arctic ... the Canadian Forces need adequate resources for training” (Canada 2008:18). This is actualised in both policy documents as the 2010 Policy states, “Canada is also expanding the size and capabilities of the Canadian Rangers ... that provide a military presence” (Canada 2010:6). Similarly, the 2019 Policy states, “Canada will enhance the Canadian Armed Forces’ presence in the region” (Canada 2019). Figure 7 also indicates the ‘Traditional Security’ category is quoted 11% more after 2015 (9% in the 2010 Policy and 20% in the 2019 Policy). This is because, as the government notes, “increased interest in the Arctic reflects concern about the global impacts of climate-driven changes in the region, including its increasing strategic and military importance” (Canada 2019). As such, in the 2019 Policy, Canada expands more on traditional security by outlining key roles of the Canadian Armed Forces, such as conducting “regular operations and exercises in the Arctic and the North to enhance their ability to operate and demonstrate presence”, among other things (Canada 2019). Overall, the realist theme accounts for 26% of the total coded quotes in the 2010 Policy and increases by 1% to 27% in the 2019 Policy.

### **2.2.2. China**

In 2018, China released its first-ever official Arctic White Paper, *China’s Arctic Policy*, which outlines its Arctic strategic policy goals. Figure 15 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis.

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<sup>21</sup> “This Agreement aims to improve access for scientists to the Arctic region and to promote scientific cooperation” (Tsui 2019:1).

Figure 8: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category After 2015 for China (%)

Categories	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>98</b>
Cooperation	57
Collective security	0
Common interest	8
International law	33
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>2</b>
Competition	0
National interest	2
Balance of power	0
Traditional security	0

China officially defines itself as a “near-Arctic state”, and has emphasised its legitimate interests and rights in the region (Kopra 2020). The 2018 Policy states that these include the right to fish, explore natural resources, carry out scientific research, and lay pipelines, as stipulated in UNCLOS and general international law. As such, China’s 2018 Policy emphasises the importance of international law with the ‘International Law’ category accounting for 33% of the total coded quotes (Peoples Republic of China 2018:3).

China is aware that because it does not poses any Arctic territory, its involvement in the region is entirely dependent on relations with Arctic states. Thus, its main focus is to establish strong relationships with other Arctic states, and increase its presence in Arctic institutions (Sørensen & Hsiung 2021:190). This is also articulated in the 2018 Policy, which states, “China has exerted more efforts in the exploration of the Arctic, expanding the scope of activities, gaining more experience and deepening cooperation with other participants” (Peoples Republic of China 2018:3). Essentially, China has several strong bilateral and multilateral relations with various Arctic states, and thus, has a strong presence in the region (Figure 8 shows that the ‘Cooperation’ category accounts for 57% of the total coded quotes). For example, China operates the Yellow River Station in Svalbard, Norway, as well as the China-Iceland Arctic Science Observatory. The China–Finland Arctic Monitoring and Research Centre is also being developed by the two countries. Moreover, Sino-Russian bilateral dialogue has been ongoing for ten years. Another example is the China Nordic Arctic Research

Centre (CNARC), which was created in 2013 to develop collaborations in Arctic research (Sørensen & Hsiung 2021:190-193).

China’s national interests (2% of the total coded quotes in Figure 8) in the region are also linked to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to establish a Polar Silk Road that connects China and Europe via the Arctic Ocean (Tillman et al. 2018:346). Ultimately, China’s interest in the Arctic is mainly linked to commercial and research endeavours. Yet, at the same time, China’s increasing prominence in the region has triggered scepticism from Arctic states over its long-term goals, including possible military activity (Sørensen & Hsiung 2021:191; Demirci 2022). For instance, the US rejects China’s claim as a “near-Arctic state” claim and describes China’s active role in the Arctic as “disconcerting” (Fang 2020).

### 2.2.3. Denmark

The Kingdom of Denmark comprises three territories: Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Greenland is a centrally located state in the Arctic. As such, it represents these three united territories as one voice in the Arctic Council (Winkler 2022). Figure 9 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis, which will be discussed below.

*Figure 9: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before 2015 for Denmark (%)*

Categories	Before 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>82</b>
Cooperation	60
Collective security	1
Common interest	5
International law	16
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>18</b>
Competition	1
National interest	1
Balance of power	0
Traditional security	16

In 2008, former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Møller, and former Premier of Greenland, Hans Enoksen, invited the five coastal Arctic States, namely, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the US, to hold discussions which resulted in the

adoption of the Ilulissat Declaration<sup>22</sup> (Dodds 2013:45). At the time, this signified the Kingdom of Denmark's determination to foster a cooperative Arctic environment. The cooperative and peaceful stance of the Declaration is further emphasised in the *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, as Figure 9 shows that liberalism accounts for 82% of the total coded quotes. In this regard, the 2011 Strategy states that the Kingdom strives for “a peaceful, secure, and safe Arctic”, as well as “close cooperation with international partners” (Kingdom of Denmark 2011:11). Similar to Canada, the ‘Cooperation’ category is quoted the most (60%). Various cooperative measures are outlined in the 2011 Strategy, such as the continental shelf project shared with Sweden, Canada, and Russia; multilateral fishing agreements with Norway, Russia, and the European Union (EU); and bilateral research partnerships with Canada (Kingdom of Denmark 2011).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Kingdom of Denmark has yet to release its next Arctic strategy. However, the cooperative determination of the country has not wavered. For instance, on the topic of territorial disputes discussed in Chapter 1, a five-decade-long dispute over Hans Island between Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark was resolved in June 2022 (Coletta 2022). Essentially, an agreement was signed in which both countries agreed to divide the island. According to *The Washington Post*, this “historic” agreement is a case in point of how border disputes can be settled peacefully (Coletta 2022). Yet, at the same time, renewed interest in the region has caused Denmark to revise its Arctic policy. In a report released by the Danish Ministry of Defence, Danish Minister of Defence, Trine Bramsen, stated that the country has “seen an increase in foreign activities in the Arctic and the North Atlantic. For this reason, we need better surveillance and presence in the region” (Danish Ministry of Defence 2021). As such, in 2021, the Kingdom of Denmark increased its military spending, allocating an ‘Arctic capacity package’ of roughly 235 million dollars (Jacobsen 2022). Essentially, the budget shift comes as a response to US demands for improved airspace supervision over Greenland (Olsvig & Gad 2022). Furthermore, in the same report, Bramsen explained that “these efforts take place in cooperation with the US and other allies, while founded in NATO” (Danish Ministry of Defence 2021). Therefore, although

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<sup>22</sup> The Ilulissat Declaration, adopted in Denmark in 2008, is a commitment of the coastal Arctic States to negotiate and cooperate peacefully when it comes to disagreements, challenges, and opportunities in the region (Kingdom of Denmark 2011:10).

liberalism is likely to remain the dominant theme in the country’s next Arctic strategy, realism, particularly the ‘Traditional Security’ category (currently at 16%), is expected to increase.

#### 2.2.4. Finland

Approximately one-third of Finland’s landmass lies within the Arctic Region, in the Lapland province. As a result, Finland is an active actor in matters regarding the Arctic (Vuorimäki 2022). As stated in Chapter 3, the two Finish policy documents used in this research are *Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region* (2010) and *Finland’s Strategy for Arctic Policy* (2021). Figure 10 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis.

Figure 10: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Finland (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>81</b>
Cooperation	68	67
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	4	1
International law	22	13
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>
Competition	1	5
National interest	5	1
Balance of power	0	3
Traditional security	0	9

For several years, Finland has been a committed participant in various cooperation forums and international agreements regarding the Arctic region, and in particular, the Barents Region<sup>23</sup>. In 1997, Finland initiated the Northern Dimension<sup>24</sup> as one of the EU’s regional policies (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009:1). During this period, Finland also aimed to be the middle ground for Russia and the EU to work alongside each other in the interest of developing the Arctic (Shliamin & Titov 2012). These initiatives demonstrate Finland’s commitment to preserve cooperation in the

<sup>23</sup> “The Barents Region consists of northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and North-West Russia. Sometimes the area is also referred to as the Euro-Arctic Region. The geographical area covers 1,75 million km<sup>2</sup> of which about 75% is located in Russia” (The Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2022).

<sup>24</sup> The Northern Dimension is a cooperative framework that aims to enhance mutual dependence between Russia and the EU, as well as to foster sustainable development, economic welfare, and stability through cooperation in the Nordic region (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009:1).

Arctic. Finland maintains its cooperative position throughout both policy documents, stating that “international cooperation and international treaties lay the foundation for Finland’s activities in the Arctic” (Republic of Finland 2010:10), and further that “Finland’s goal is a peaceful Arctic region marked by constructive cooperation” (Republic of Finland 2021:15). Maintaining this narrative, Figure 10 shows that the ‘Cooperation’ category accounts for 68% of the total coded quotes in the 2010 Strategy, and 67% in the 2021 Strategy.

Over the years, Finland has strived to maintain an amicable relationship with Russia and thus, it is one of Finland’s main strategic partners in the Arctic (Telegina & Morgunova 2012). For instance, the 2010 Strategy states that “Finland plans to strengthen its representation, especially in Russia’s northern regions” (Republic of Finland 2010:10). It further mentions that cooperation with Russia in the Barents Region is also vital to Finland (Republic of Finland 2010:10). However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, during 2022, has affected bilateral relations between the two countries.

Although plans to join NATO are not explicitly mentioned in Finland’s 2021 Strategy, Figure 10 shows that the ‘Traditional Security’ category is quoted 9% more after 2015 (0% in the 2010 Strategy and 9% in the 2021 Strategy). The 2021 Strategy states that the Arctic region’s security is “closely linked to the security situation in the Baltic Sea area and the rest of Europe, which has been marked by increasing tensions” and further that “Russia is systematically strengthening its military presence in the Arctic region” (Republic of Finland 2021:18). This is a clear indication that Finland recognises the increasing militarisation of the Arctic, discussed in Chapter 1, and has started to adapt traditional approaches in its Arctic security policy (Figure 10 shows that realism has increased from 6% of the total coded quotes in the 2010 Strategy to 18% in the 2021 Strategy).

### **2.2.5. Iceland**

The Arctic Circle passes through Iceland’s northernmost territory, Grimsey Island, approximately 40 kilometres north of Iceland. Iceland is thus regarded as an Arctic State (Ásgeirsson 2022). Figure 11 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis, which will be discussed below.



Figure 11: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Iceland (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>86</b>
Cooperation	56	63
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	4	2
International law	13	21
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>
Competition	13	2
National interest	14	12
Balance of power	0	0
Traditional security	0	0

After Iceland became independent in 1944, its national security remained dependent on the US. However, in 2006, the US military withdrew its permanent presence in Iceland, marking an end of an era. As Hansson and Hauksdóttir (2021:164) mention, “Iceland felt a sense of abandonment, and the need for a new strategy”. Consequently, in 2011, Iceland’s parliament passed *A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland’s Arctic Policy*, which centres on the importance of international cooperation, as well as resolving disputes with the framework of UNCLOS in the Arctic (Republic of Iceland 2011:1-2). One of Iceland’s overarching policy positions mentioned in the Resolution is “strengthening relations and cooperation with other States and stakeholders on the issues facing the region” (Republic of Iceland 2011:1). Essentially, cooperation is a crucial aspect of Iceland’s Arctic policy as Figure 11 shows that the ‘Cooperation’ category accounts for 56% of the total coded quotes in the 2011 Resolution.

Iceland assumed Chairmanship of the Arctic Council from 2019 to 2021, in which the theme was *Together Towards a Sustainable Arctic* (Republic of Iceland 2019). At the time, Iceland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “Iceland’s Chairmanship will strive to enhance the constructive cooperation that has always been a key strength of the Arctic Council” (Arctic Council 2019). As such, throughout its chairmanship, Iceland maintained its cooperative stance and further highlighted the need for states to work together regarding matters in the Arctic region (Arctic Council 2019). This stance is further reiterated in *Iceland’s Policy on Matters Concerning the Arctic Region*, released at the end of 2021. It mentions various agreements that Iceland has signed to promote international cooperation, such as the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on

Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (SAR), the 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (MOSPA), the 2017 Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation, and the 2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (Republic of Iceland 2021). As a result, Figure 11 shows that the 'Cooperation' category is quoted 7% more after 2015 (56% in the 2011 Resolution and 63% in the 2021 Policy).

It is important to note that Iceland does not have a military (explaining why the 'Traditional Security' category is 0% in both documents in Figure 11). As a member of NATO and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Iceland's national security remains structurally reliant on the US and Europe (Hansson & Hauksdóttir 2021:164). Furthermore, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) notes that escalating hostility in the Arctic has prompted renewed US interest in Iceland, made evident by the official visits of former US Vice President Mike Pence and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in 2019 (Cela & Hansson 2020). In the same year, the US revealed plans to improve services at the Keflavík airfield in Iceland to advance US activity in the Arctic, where Chinese endeavours had captured the interest of NATO. However, China has also increased its presence in Iceland, with bilateral agreements such as the MoU on geothermal energy in 2012 and a free trade agreement in 2013, as well as the creation of the China-Iceland Arctic Observatory in Kárhóll, which was launched in 2018 (Cela & Hansson 2020). Therefore, the various international agreements, coupled with increasing bilateral relations show that Iceland has adopted a liberal approach to security within the region. Figure 11 shows that liberalism increases by 13% after 2015 (73% in the 2011 Resolution and 86% in the 2021 Policy).

### **2.2.6. Norway**

Almost half of the Norwegian country is considered Arctic territory, which is home to approximately 500000 people. Although this is only one-tenth of the Norwegian population, Norway is still a core and active member of the Arctic Council (Høglund 2022). As stated in Chapter 3, the two Norwegian policy documents used in this research are *Norway's Arctic Policy: Creating Value, Managing Resources, Confronting Climate Change and Fostering Knowledge* (2014), and *The Norwegian*

*Government's Arctic Policy (2020)*. Figure 12 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis.

*Figure 12: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Norway (%)*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Before 2015</b>	<b>After 2015</b>
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>69</b>
Cooperation	73	53
Collective security	0	4
Common interest	5	1
International law	4	11
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>
Competition	4	8
National interest	5	8
Balance of power	0	0
Traditional security	9	15

As the world turns its attention to the Arctic region, the Norwegian government has positioned itself as a responsible actor in the Arctic region by advocating for strong international cooperation. In its 2014 Policy, the Norwegian government contends that it will ‘play a leading role in promoting cooperation with other countries based on trust and openness’ (Kingdom of Norway 2014:16). For instance, in 2014, Norway held various discussions regarding the north<sup>25</sup> with Canada, Finland, Germany, Iceland, and Singapore. In the same year, Norway strengthened its bilateral relationship with the US on Arctic matters, established a partnership with Finland to intensify scientific and economic cooperation in the region, and also created the Arctic Frontiers Plus, which is an informal forum for discussions between Observer states and Arctic Council member states (Kingdom of Norway 2014:18). Norway’s predominantly cooperative stance in 2014 is further evident in Figure 12 as the ‘Cooperation’ category accounts for 73% of the total coded quotes in the 2014 Policy.

It is important to note that 2014 was also the year that Crimea was annexed by Russia. This weakened the relationship between Norway and Russia, as military contact between both countries was halted by Norway (Østhagen 2022). Another point of friction between both countries is the Svalbard archipelago, found in the Arctic Ocean

<sup>25</sup> The ‘north’ is a term commonly used by the Norwegian government used to refer to the Arctic region.

and part of Norway. Under the terms of the 1920 Svalbard Treaty (previously known as the Spitsbergen Treaty), “citizens of the 46 signatory states do not require work or residence permits to settle in Svalbard” (Wither 2022). Furthermore, Article 9 of the Treaty specifies that Svalbard cannot be used for “warlike purposes” (Spitsbergen Treaty 1920:4). The Norwegian understanding of Article 9 forbids all foreign military activity; however, it does not prevent Norway’s military to conduct excursions in the archipelago. This interpretation has caused disputes among other signatories such as Russia (Wither 2022). Additionally, in a report in 2017, the Russian Defence Ministry further declared Svalbard as a potential locus for conflict between NATO and Russia (Østhagen 2020b). The 2020 Policy also notes deteriorating relations between NATO and Russia as a result of Russia’s involvement in eastern Ukraine (Kingdom of Norway 2020:15). As a result, Figure 12 shows that the ‘Competition’ category is quoted 4% more after 2015 (4% in the 2014 Policy and 8% in the 2020 Policy). It should also be noted that relations between Norway and Russia have further deteriorated since the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Østhagen 2022).

In 2018, Norway held Exercise Trident Juncture, the biggest NATO-led military exercise since the Cold War, with approximately 50000 troops from 31 nations. The exercise stimulated a potential invasion triggering Article Five<sup>26</sup> collective security commitments from NATO member states (Watling 2018). Although Trident Juncture 2018 highlighted rising tension between the Western<sup>27</sup> states and Russia, the exercise mainly aimed to boost international confidence in the Alliance (Watling 2018). Norway also hosts Exercise Cold Response<sup>28</sup> bi-annually. In addition, according to the 2020 Policy, Norway is “Strengthening its presence in the Arctic by investing in strategic capabilities most notably F-35 fighter jets, P-8 maritime patrol aircraft and new submarines” (Kingdom of Norway 2020:17). Ultimately, Norway contends that a progressively complex security threat is developing in the Arctic. Therefore, as shown above, the country is bolstering its traditional security in the region. Figure 12 shows that the ‘Traditional Security’ category is quoted 6% more after 2015 (9% in the 2014

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<sup>26</sup> Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty states, “Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence” (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation 1949:1).

<sup>27</sup> The “West” refers to countries mainly in Europe and North America.

<sup>28</sup> “The exercise gives NATO Allies and partners an invaluable opportunity to test themselves against some of the harshest conditions” in northern Norway (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation 2022).

Policy and 15% in the 2020 Policy). Overall, the realist theme accounts for 18% of the total coded quotes in the 2014 Policy and increases by 13% to 31% in the 2020 Policy.

### 2.2.7. Russia

One-fifth of Russia’s landmass is found within the Arctic Circle, which is home to roughly 2,5 million people, accounting for almost half of the total Arctic population (Derevyagin 2022). Figure 13 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis, which will be discussed below. The two Russian policy documents, as stated in Chapter 3, used in this research are the *Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond* (2008) and *Foundations of the Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2035* (2020).

Figure 13: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Russia (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>
Cooperation	26	26
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	0	0
International law	9	8
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>
Competition	6	16
National interest	32	26
Balance of power	6	0
Traditional security	21	24

Russia’s relationships with other members of the Arctic Council remain complex and delicate. Most country’s Arctic policy documents note Russia’s increasing military activities in the Arctic (Kingdom of Sweden 2020:23; Kingdom of Norway 2020:15; Republic of Iceland 2021:21; Republic of Finland 2021:18). However, at the same time, these countries still aim to expand on cooperation with Russia in terms of the Arctic. For example, the Kingdom of Denmark’s 2011 Policy Document states, “the Kingdom also wants to further expand and develop cooperation with Russia” (Kingdom of Denmark 2011:54), while in Sweden’s 2020 Policy Document, it is stated that although relations with Russia have worsened due to its breaches of international law, “cooperation with Russia in the Arctic Council has functioned well” (Kingdom of

Sweden 2020:19). Furthermore, Russia also highlights its will to maintain cooperation in the Arctic. For example, one of Russia's main goals in the Arctic stated in the 2020 Document, is "to conduct mutually beneficial cooperation and peaceful settlement of all disputes in the Arctic based on international law" (Russian Federation 2020:6). For instance, Russia and China have been collaborating in oil and gas projects in the region (Goa & Erokhin 2020:7). Yet, the liberal narrative remains less prominent in both Russia's policy documents (Figure 13 shows that liberalism accounts for 35% of the total coded quotes in the 2008 Document and 34% in the 2020 Document).

As relations with the West deteriorate, especially since the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia has adopted a more competitive perspective on the Arctic (Rumer et al. 2021:3). Figure 13 shows that the 'Competition' category increases by 10% after 2015, from 6% of the total coded quotes in the 2008 Document to 16% in the 2020 Document. The duty to "protect national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region" appeared for the first time in the Russian Military Doctrine implemented in 2014 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia 2015). In addition, the Doctrine names NATO as a military risk as member states expand military infrastructure near Russian borders (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia 2015). Therefore, as illustrated in Chapter 1, great power competition narratives have emerged concerning the Arctic region.

Russia's approach to the Arctic region is grounded by its historical position as an Arctic power. Furthermore, it has a significant economic interest in oil and gas exploitation in the region and thus, is an area of high stakes for the country. Over the years, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Russia has steadily expanded its military presence in the Arctic (Gricius 2021). The 'Traditional Security' category, in Figure 13, has increased by 3% after 2015, from 21% of the total coded quotes in the 2008 Document to 24% in the 2020 Document. This increase is not necessarily significant because Russia has expanded its military presence since the early 2000s (Melino & Conley 2020). Since then, Russia has re-opened various airfields and radar sites and has increased its number of military exercises in the Arctic (Klimenko 2015). More than 475 new military outputs have also been built (Gricius 2021). More specifically, Russia has improved operational readiness in the Kola Peninsula<sup>29</sup> at its Severomorsk-1 air base,

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<sup>29</sup> The Kola Peninsula is found in the extreme northwest of Russia and is also located in the Arctic region.

Gadzhiiyev submarine base, and Okolnaya submarine support base. The RS-24 YARS<sup>30</sup> is also located at the Peninsula (Bermudez 2020). In 2014, Russia created a strategic command centre for the Arctic to enhance security throughout the region (Gricius 2021). Furthermore, in 2019, Russia conducted large-scale military drills such as Exercise Ocean Shield<sup>31</sup> and Grom-19<sup>32</sup> (Teslova 2019). In addition, at Russia's Nagurskoye base, military drills and simulated offensive air operations are often conducted (Olesen & Sorensen 2019:11). Essentially, as Olesen (2021) asserts, Russia's military capabilities in the region far exceed that of other Arctic states. Overall, the realist theme accounts for 65% of the total coded quotes in the 2010 Policy and increases by 1% to 66% in the 2019 Policy.

It is important to note that Russia is the current chair of the Arctic Council, however, since the invasion of Ukraine, all Arctic member states have suspended participation in the Arctic Council, as well as contact with Russia regarding Arctic cooperation (Saric 2022). This has led to a further deterioration of relations between Russia and the Arctic states.

#### **2.2.8. Sweden**

Sweden's two northernmost regions, Norrbotten and Västerbotten, are a part of the Arctic Circle and are roughly one-third of Sweden's landmass (Calais 2022). Furthermore, Sweden has released two documents that outline the country's Arctic strategy, *Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region* (2011) and *Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region* (2020). Figure 14 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis.

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<sup>30</sup> The RS-24 YARS is a Russian intercontinental ballistic missile.

<sup>31</sup> "A total of 49 warships, 20 fast attack crafts and service boats, and 58 aircraft, as well as almost 11000 soldiers and sailors" took part in the Ocean Shield-2019 drill (Teslova 2019).

<sup>32</sup> "Grom-19 was a significant exercise in October 2019 which engaged Russia's strategic nuclear forces. It included 10 Russian submarines, eight of which were nuclear powered. Grom involved all four of Russia's naval fleets, 12000 troops, and the launch of two nuclear warheads in the Barents Sea and several other ballistic missiles" (Melino & Conley 2020).

Figure 14: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for Sweden (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>
Cooperation	78	67
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	1	2
International law	15	15
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>
Competition	0	1
National interest	6	3
Balance of power	0	1
Traditional security	0	11

The principle of international cooperation is a core element of Sweden’s foreign policy, given its small population size of approximately 10 million people and modest geopolitical power on the international stage (Khorrami 2019). This is evident in its 2011 Arctic Strategy, as cooperation is quoted the most (78% in Figure 14). The Strategy also states, “efficient, multilateral cooperation on the Arctic is a main priority for Sweden” (Kingdom of Sweden 2011:19). In this regard, Sweden aims to increase its focus on Arctic-related issues and projects in the Arctic Council, the European Union, Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and the United Nations (Kingdom of Sweden 2011:19-20).

The 2011 Strategy states that the “use of civil instruments is preferable to military means” as “security policy tensions are low” in the region. Thus, traditional security measures are not prevalent in this strategy (Figure 14 shows that the ‘Traditional Security’ category is 0% in both documents). However, in the 2020 Strategy, Sweden acknowledges the changing security environment in the Arctic, mentioning that “there is a new military dynamic in the Arctic region” (Kingdom of Sweden 2020:23). Consequently, Sweden contends that it will enhance its military capabilities in the northern part of the country (Kingdom of Sweden 2020:23). Figure 14 shows that the ‘Traditional Security’ category increased by 11% after 2015 (0% in the 2011 Strategy and 11% in the 2020 Strategy). For instance, in 2017, Swedish Armed Forces



conducted Exercise Aurora 17<sup>33</sup>, and in 2019, conducted Exercise Northern Wind 19<sup>34</sup> (Allison 2019; Svenska 2019). Sweden also participates in Norway's biannual Exercise Cold Response and annually hosts Exercise Winter Sun<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, in 2020, Sweden's parliament increased its defence budget by 40% for 2021-2025, bringing the annual defence budget to 10.6 billion dollars by 2025. According to Sweden's Defence Minister, Peter Hultquist, this is due to increasing tensions in the Baltic Sea region (Keyton 2020). It is also important to note that in May 2022, Sweden officially submitted its application for membership in NATO. NATO's potential expansion into the Nordic region will further destabilise the Arctic balance of power (Demirci 2022). Yet, at the same time, Sweden still prioritises peace, security, and stability in the region (Kingdom of Sweden 2020:23). Although Figure 14 shows that the 'Cooperation' category decreases by 11% in the 2020 Strategy, it still remains the highest quoted category with 67% of the total coded quotes after 2015. However, overall, the liberal theme accounts for 94% of the total coded quotes in the 2011 Strategy and increases by 10%, to 84% in the 2020 Strategy.

### **2.2.9. The US**

After Alaska was purchased from the Russian Empire in 1867, the US became an Arctic state (Crishock 2022). This research will focus on the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (2013), and the *Implementation framework for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (2016). An interesting observation is that since 2016, the US has not released another coherent Arctic strategy nor updated the 2016 Document. Figure 15 presents the processed data conducted from the quantitative content analysis, which will be discussed below.

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<sup>33</sup> "A national exercise to build a stronger defence and increase the overall capability to face an attack on Sweden" (Svenska 2019).

<sup>34</sup> An exercise "designed to enhance high intensity war-fighting skills in a multinational environment with extreme weather conditions" which "comes as the Swedish Army aims to increase their ability to face an attack on northern Sweden" (Allison 2019).

<sup>35</sup> An exercise that is held 80 kilometres below the Arctic Circle, where tanks, artillery and roughly 900 soldiers are set as rivals (Nilsen 2021).

Figure 15: Total Percentage of Quotes Coded in Each Category Before and After 2015 for the US (%)

Categories	Before 2015	After 2015
<b>Total (Liberalism):</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>
Cooperation	49	58
Collective security	0	0
Common interest	7	2
International law	13	8
<b>Total (Realism):</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>
Competition	0	0
National interest	25	16
Balance of power	0	0
Traditional security	6	16

For more than 40 years, the US has expressed its interests in the Arctic, starting with former President, Richard Nixon's 1971 *National Security Decision Memorandum 144* (Melino & Conley 2019). The principle of international cooperation is a prominent aspect of the US's Arctic strategy (the 'Cooperation' category accounts for 49% of the total coded quotes in the 2013 Strategy and 58% in the 2016 Strategy). In 2015, former US President, Barack Obama, was the first US president to visit the Alaskan Arctic to chair the Global Leadership in the Arctic Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement, and Resilience (GLACIER) conference (Melino & Conley 2019). To maintain its cooperative stance in the region, the US is a part of numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Due to the increased interest in the Arctic, the US has expanded cooperative measures with other countries, especially NATO member states (the 'Cooperation' category increases by 9%). Canada, Denmark, and Norway have noted that the US is their main partner for close cooperation in the Arctic. (Canada 2008:6; Kingdom of Denmark 2011:54; Kingdom of Norway 2020:18). This comes as Russia continues to increase its military capabilities in the region, especially after 2014. As a result, the US is expanding its traditional security in the Arctic (the 'Traditional Security' category increases by 10%). For example, the Ice Exercise<sup>36</sup> conducted in 2016 by the US Navy (Chakraborty 2016). It must be noted that because the second document was

<sup>36</sup> The exercise was attended by multiple nations aimed to assess and test operational scopes in the Arctic region (Chakraborty 2016).

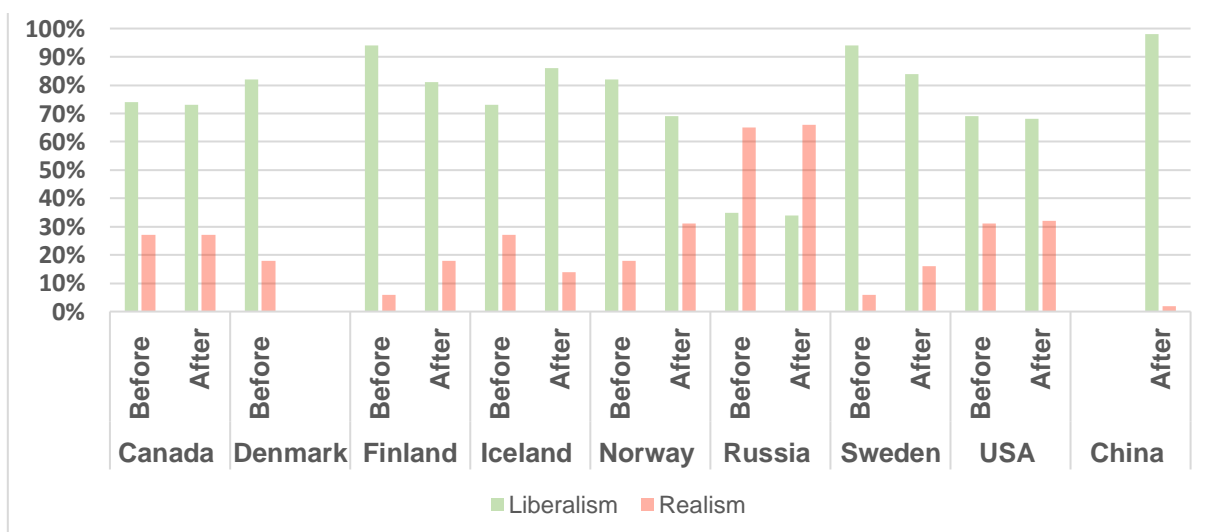
released in 2016, this research cannot give examples of military exercises after 2016, or else the data will not represent the true time periods.

Overall, liberalism only decreases by 1% after 2015, from 69% of the total coded quotes in the 2013 Strategy to 68% in the 2016 Strategy. This outcome will likely change after the US releases a more recent and relevant Arctic strategy. Additionally, realism (especially the ‘Traditional Security’ category) is expected to increase given the current tensions identified in US President Joe Biden’s *Interim National Security Strategy Guidance* (2021), between the US and Russia, as well as the US and China.

### 2.3. Overall Observations

Liberalism remains the dominant narrative within the Arctic region. The mean percentage of liberalism before 2015 is 75% and drops to 74% after 2015, whereas, for realism, the mean percentage before 2015 is 25% and increases to 26% after 2015. Figure 16 further shows that liberalism is the predominant theme in each country’s Arctic policy documents before and after 2015 (except for Russia). However, after 2015, the general trend in every country’s policy document (except for Iceland) is a decrease in liberal policies and an increase in realist policies. Russia is the only country where realism is higher than liberalism in both its policy documents, and Iceland is the only country where liberalism increases, and realism decreases in its policy document after 2015. Overall, Sweden has the highest percentage of liberal quotes throughout both of its policy documents, and Russia has the lowest.

Figure 16: Comparison of Countries Before and After 2015 (%)



After conducting this research, it became evident that terms such as 'collective security' and 'common interest' (main concepts in liberalism), as well as 'competition' and 'balance of power' (main concepts in realism) have become less relevant. Although core themes in their respective tradition of thought, these concepts were consistently quoted the least, if not at all, throughout all the policy documents. This indicates that traditional concepts associated with IR theories may become redundant to security as it evolves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and discussed the various changes in the relevant states' policy documents before and after 2015. It is clear that countries have started adjusting their policies toward the Arctic region due to its changing security dynamics. Although liberalism remains the predominant narrative throughout most country's policy documents, realist policies are becoming more prevalent. The assumption, stated in Chapter 1, was that after 2015, the country's strategic policies in the Arctic would have changed to align with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda (where liberal policies would increase). However, this is not the case as the realist narrative is slowly increasing in the region. Moving forward, it is crucial to recognise that strong cooperation is needed on security issues in the Arctic region. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Evidently, the Arctic today has changed dramatically since the 1990s and thus, scientists, organisations, scholars, and academics alike need to shift their thinking regarding the region. In concluding this research with the goal to determine what shift has taken place in the relevant country's policy narratives, this chapter will provide an overview of the research, main findings, and limitations. It will also provide ideas for further research.

### **5.2. Overview of the Research**

Chapter 1 introduced the changing geopolitical environment of the Arctic because of climate change, and thus, the region has opened to a plethora of challenges and opportunities. As a result, the Arctic has been put at the centre stage of global concerns. The chapter, therefore, provided a literature review in order to contextualise the Arctic in the IR debate. This step outlined two emerging narratives regarding the Arctic's political environment, namely a liberal or realist narrative. Yet, as explained in Chapter 1, research into this topic is limited as it remains uncertain how cooperation and competition will play out in the future of the Arctic, especially against the backdrop of global commitments to curb climate change. This offered an interesting context to study the potential shifts in the relevant country's policy narratives concerning the Arctic that trend towards advancing either a liberal approach or the realist alternative. Furthermore, the region has become highly relevant as it has the potential to become a zone of conflict with ramifications for international security, hence, the motivation and reason for this research. Chapter 1 also outlined the research problem and questions, as well as the research methodology.

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework of liberalism and realism, in which four main concepts associated with each theory were identified and clarified. The main concepts for realism were national interest, competition, balance of power, and traditional security, whereas the main concepts for liberalism were cooperation, common interest, collective security, and international law. Chapter 2 also discussed the UN's environmental/climate change frameworks. This step was vital as it identified 2015 as a temporal marker this study as both The Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development were created in this year. Chapter 3 provided an in-depth explanation of the methods used in the quantitative content analysis, guided by the theoretical framework of liberalism and realism in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 presented the data from the content analysis and discussed the findings and observations.

### **5.3. Overview of the Findings**

The aim of this research was to identify changes regarding policy narratives in the policy documents of the countries within the Arctic Council before and after 2015. Each country's policies reflected noteworthy changes. After 2015, the liberal narrative weakened in the following country's policy documents: Canada, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US. Iceland was the only country in which the liberal narrative strengthened. Although the liberal narrative weakened for most countries, the cooperative stance was still the most prominent in eight of the countries' Arctic policies, even after 2015. The 'Cooperation' category accounts for roughly 50% or more of the total coded quotes, before and after 2015, in the policy documents of Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the US (All countries except Russia). Nevertheless, the general trend in every country's policy document (except for Iceland) is a decrease in the liberal narrative, with an increase in the realist narrative after 2015. The most noteworthy change was an increase in a traditional security approach toward the Arctic region. After 2015, the 'Traditional Security' category increased in the policy documents of Canada, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US.

### **5.4. Limitations of the Research**

There are three limitations to this study. As previously noted in Chapter 3, Denmark has not released its next Arctic policy, and China has only released one Arctic policy document. Therefore, this research could not compare the policies of these countries before and after 2015. This hindered the research outcome, although not significantly, because the trend was based on seven countries, instead of nine countries. However, it is unlikely that the overall trend would have changed. Secondly, due to the word count limitation, this research could not discuss every category outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. This may leave room for questions or debates about why some countries' categories decreased or increased after 2015. The last limitation is the number of countries used for the quantitative content analysis. Although nine countries are

enough to conduct an analysis, these nine countries alone cannot determine the future trajectory of the Arctic. Many other Observer states, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), working groups, and permanent participants are involved in the Arctic Council and the region. Nevertheless, the findings of this research can assist policymakers and inform governments about the changing security dynamics in the Arctic. It can also contribute to rethinking Arctic governance in the Arctic Council and pave the way for future areas of study.

### **5.5. Further Areas of Research**

The discipline of IR has been defined by an endless 'grand debate' between liberalism and realism (Ikenberry 2009:204). However, Ikenberry (2009:205) notes, "the debates themselves within and between these two grand traditions have evolved a great deal since the early- and mid-twentieth century". As mentioned in Chapter 4, terms such as 'collective security' and 'common interest' (main concepts in liberalism), as well as 'competition' and 'balance of power' (main concepts in realism) have become less relevant. In line with Ikenberry's statement, this indicates that concepts associated with IR theories may become redundant to security as it evolves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This research, therefore, presents an opportunity for further reflections on the changing narratives and concepts within IR, to better suit the changing security dynamics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To gain a deeper understanding of the changing security dynamics in the Arctic, future research should build on the nine countries used in this study and expand the scope of analysis to include more countries, as well as other actors in the Arctic. This could give a more detailed outcome to better inform researchers, policymakers, and even governments on the changing security dynamics in the region. Another area of research that can augment this study is the investigation of adapting governance and international law to the changing needs of the Arctic region in order to provide a framework for governance in the Arctic. Similarly, other research areas could focus on the limitations of the Arctic Council and how it could be reformed to meet the increasing traditional security issues within the region.

## 5.6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Arctic region has become a new frontier as states worldwide recognise the importance of the northernmost part of Earth. It is evident that the geopolitical significance of the Arctic is rapidly changing. As states scramble to adapt their Arctic policies to meet the changing security dynamics within the region, it is vital that Arctic governance, vis-à-vis the Arctic Council, follows suit. This research clearly indicates that a changing Arctic needs new rules. Not only does this research provide a guideline for expanding the scope of Arctic governance, but it also provides quantitative evidence that countries are expanding on their traditional approaches to security in the region.

According to Yoneva (2017:42), “for many years, the Arctic Council has been criticised for not discussing issues of traditional security and distancing itself from the main geopolitical events”. Therefore, this research further stresses the need for the Arctic Council to adapt to the changing security dynamics within the region. Although the Council was created to provide a platform for cooperation among Arctic States, traditional security cannot be overlooked. To address increasing tensions in the Arctic, as well as to prevent future international security crises, the Arctic Council should:

- Hone in on current developments regarding hard security in the Arctic.
- Establish an Agreement regarding the militarisation of the Arctic. The Agreement should provide a guideline, as well as limitations on military activities in the region.
- Expand its Agenda to incorporate the evolving security threats.
- Create a platform for states to resolve territorial issues and boundary disputes. The Council can take this further by setting specific rules for international Arctic waters.
- Create an Arctic forum for states to discuss hard security issues.
- Facilitate discussions on how to regulate military activity in the region.



In conclusion, Heitman (2014) encapsulates the necessity of policy reform, and in this case, it is crucial for the Arctic Council to reform Arctic governance:

We are in an era of rapid change, economic, social, technological, and strategic, and defence policy, strategy and organisation must be intellectually and physically agile, able to adapt and evolve to meet new and evolving challenges.

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