Implications of the Arctic’s Changing and Strengthening Position in World Politics – viewpoint(s) of Finland and Sweden

Energy Security and Geopolitics in the Arctic Conference
Singapore 9-10 January 2012

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Behind: Implementations of main schools of Geopolitics

- Classical geopolitics: the resource models (= energy), the technology models (= the military)
- New geopolitics: Geo-economics, Indigenous peoples, Northern dimension (of the EU)
- Critical geopolitics: Arctic (internal / external) images, knowledge and power, the uncertainty related to climate change
The early-21st century Arctic I

• The post Cold War world society promoted through the sets of interrelated processes of “civilianization”, “regionalization” and “mobilization” (by Östreng 1999)

• Regional and cross-border activities by Indigenous peoples and other local / regional actors
• ‘Northernness’ as a metaphor for new kind of regional dynamics
• New approach in state politics: ”From confrontation to cooperation”
• New institutional landscape based on wide international cooperation with several external structures
• The Arctic / circumpolar North as a new region!
The early-21st century Arctic II

Main themes / trends of the post-Cold War circumpolar Geopolitics and IR:

1) Increasing circumpolar cooperation by indigenous peoples’ organizations and sub-national governments
2) Region-building with states as major actors
3) New kind of relationship between the circumpolar North and the outside world

(Heininen in AHDR 2004)
The early-21st century Arctic III

- A peaceful region with high stability based on a wide intergovernmental and regional cooperation
- Legally and politically divided by national borders and internal waters (of the Arctic states)
- Importance of state sovereignty and national interests
- Major military structures (nuclear weapon systems) and capability for national defence still there
- No conflicts - but disputes on maritime borders, land claims and asymmetric environ conflicts
- Major challenges: climate change and long-range air and water pollution, and globalization
The early-21st century Arctic IV

New significant, multi-functional – environ, geoeconomic and geopolitical – change has occurred into the region

• A growing interest toward the region and its rich natural resources (both inside and from outside)
• New actors with their interests influence the region (e.g. EU, China)
• Emphasis on energy security, and options for that
• Globalization and the globalized world economy
• A manifold growth in the geo-strategic importance of the Arctic which plays more important role in world politics
• --- The post-Cold War period is over!
The Arctic States

• The role and position of the Arctic states was changed due to the first geopolitical change – the A8+ was defined
• The five littoral states with their ministerial ad hoc meetings – the A5 was defined - and the Arctic redefined?
• A state still the most important actor in the Arctic, but ..
• .. there are new actors e.g. indigenous peoples’ organizations
• Emphasize the importance of the AC, but have their own interests, agendas, priorities and policies
• E.g. have recently accepted their arctic/northern strategy/state policy
Summary of priorities / priority areas

- Sovereignty and national defence: Five littoral states
- Comprehensive security: Finland, Iceland, Sweden
- Economic development: All the strategies
- Regional develop and infra: Most of the strategies
- Transport: Finland, Iceland, Russia, USA
  -- Aviation: Iceland and Russia
- Environment: Almost all the strategies
- Governance / Safety: All the strategies
- Peoples: Most of the strategies
  -- Indigenous peoples: Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden
  – Research: Most of the strategies

(Heininen, Arctic Strategies and Policies: Inventory and Comparative Study, 2011)
Self-identification and (re)definition as an Arctic / Northern country / state

- **Canada**: “the global leader in Arctic science; “The North is central to the Canadian national identity”
- **Denmark**: “to strengthen the Kingdom’s status as global player in the Arctic”
- **Finland**: as an “Arctic country is a natural actor in the Arctic region”
- **Iceland**: “the only country located entirely within the Arctic region”
- **Norway**: “the High North is gradually becoming more synonymous with the Arctic”...“a Norwegian perspective”
- **Russia**: to “maintain the role of a leading Arctic power”
- **Sweden**: “there are many connections to tie Sweden to the Arctic”
- **USA**: an “Arctic nation”
Finland

• ‘Strategy for the Arctic Region’, adopted by Finish Cabinet Committee on European Union (June 2010)

• The main substantial sectors of the Strategy:
  – The environment (e.g. climate change, nuclear safety)
  – Economic activities and know-how (e.g. technology-based expertise on shipping and energy, and mining)
  – Transport and infrastructure (e.g. new routes for commercial navigation and their better safety)
  – Indigenous peoples (the Saami)

• Plus, a list of means for to reach these policy goals
Interesting findings

• Emphasizes the Arctic as a stable and peaceful area
• Neither mention of sovereignty nor conflicts or military
• Recognizes the special features and risks of “fragile arctic nature”, and supports research on environ protection as a basis for decision-making
• Highest priorities of the Strategy appear to be economic interests based on Finnish expertise and know-how on winter shipping, transport and in megaprojects of the Barents Sea
• --- Is there a contradiction?
• Supports indigenous peoples’ participation in international arctic cooperation (but no ratification of ILO 169 Convention)
• Emphasizes the importance of the multilateral northern cooperation, and supports the AC as the main forum..
• .. and the role (and importance) of the EU in the Arctic region
Sweden

• ‘Sweden’s Strategy for policy in the Arctic Region’, adopted by the Swedish Government (May 2011 – Sweden started its AC chairman at the same day)

• The three areas, which are defined as the priorities:
  - Climate and the environment (e.g. climate, biodiversity)
  - Economic development (e.g. mining, petroleum, forestry, and transport)
  - The human dimension (e.g. human health, impacts of climate change, resistance of Saami languages)
Interesting findings

• The Strategy clearly states that multilateral cooperation in, and dealing with, the Arctic is the main priority for Sweden --- this is much along the tradition of Sweden’s foreign policy
• Neither mention of sovereignty nor conflicts or military
• Among the three priorities economic development and interests is the most rich and multifunctional, and thus, some sort of top, priority of the Strategy
• Also climate, the environment, and ‘resilience’ are emphasized
• Final, shows, even emphasizes, many ties which connect / have connected Sweden to the Arctic
The European Union

• The European Union’s ‘Commission’s Communication on the Arctic Region’ was launched in November 2008

• It was followed by the European Council’s Conclusions on Arctic issues (March and December 2009)

• The main policy objectives of the Communication are:
  – Protecting and preserving the Arctic environment and its population
  – Promoting sustainable use of resources
  – Contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance
The EU impacts on the Arctic

- Climate change: EU has recognized the Arctic region as a key area to influence the Northern Hemisphere climate, and the EU plays a central role in international climate change negotiations in the UNFCCC.

- Fishery and fish trade: the EU member-states only hold a minor share of all the catches in the Arctic, the EU is the major export destination from the Arctic states (e.g. 80% of all Icelandic and 60% of Norwegian fish exports).

- Research: the EU policies and a European research agenda e.g. on the environment, and the climate system and climate change.
Non-Arctic States: main interests

• Economic: utilization of natural res. (e.g. fishery)
• Energy: hydrocarbons - energy security
• Transport: new global sea routes, safety-rescue
• Security/Military-policy: sanctuary for SSBNs
• Juristical/Legal: parties of international treaties
• Science: IPY, research on the environ / climate
• Climate change: knowledge on impacts on sea ice, glaciers, and models for future action
• The Commons: biodiversity of nature and life
Globalization in the Arctic

- Global relations are nothing new (whaling, sealing, fur trade), and colonialism, (pre)industrialization, exploration of natural res. and militarization, and
- .. long-range (air and water) pollution and other global environ problems and environ ’awakening’, and
- .. growing consciousness of own identity by indigenous peoples, democratization, self-government and regionalization.
- Now growing global interest toward the region and its resources by Asian and European powers
- Global perspective not much taken into consideration by Arctic states – except Finland and Kingdom of Denmark
The Arctic in world politics

Region’s position greatly strengthened in the last 20 years:
• Geopolitical point of view: as a highly strategic area
• Geoconomic point of view: as highly strategic due to utilization of natural resources (esp. energy sources)
• Diversity of life: as a distinct component of a nature, and diversity of indigenous peoples/cultures
• Scientific point of view: as a ‘laboratory’/‘workshop’ for research on the environ and climate change
• Human capital: innovations in governance, and political/legal arrangements, devolution of power
• Stability and peace: as not overtly plagued by any big regional problem or armed conflict