

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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The new geopolitics of the North Pole: Russia's race to the Arctic
Nova geopolitika na Severnem tečaju: Ruski pohod na Arktiko

Master's Thesis

Ljubljana, 2015

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Abstract

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This thesis deals with the geopolitics of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region. It relies on geopolitical theory, predominantly of Russian-speaking authors for that particular region, to evaluate Russian moves. It addresses the geopolitical activity of Russia which shapes the politics of the Arctic and makes it an arena of competition between Arctic states. Then by using the theoretical framework, the thesis examines current Russian activities, political decisions and moves in the region, particularly its energy, security and economic interests, its goals and the tools of realization – strategies. In particular, all these geopolitical realities contribute to both competition and cooperation in the region. Lastly, it will show the geopolitical situation in the region, examining the governance and territorial disputes, giving special importance to the Russian claim to the North Pole. It will be shown that Russia has already started its race towards that region and both the region and Russian geopolitical realities are in a permanent correlation, as they shape each other and make the Arctic a new geopolitical hotspot.

Keywords: Arctic, Russia, Geopolitics, Energy Resources, UNCLOS, Arctic Council

Povzetek

Nova geopolitika na Severnem tečaju: Ruski pohod na Arktiko

Naloga se ukvarja z geopolitiko Ruske federacije na Arktiki. Za ovrednotenje ruske politike na tem območju se naslanja na geopolitično teorijo pretežno ruskih avtorjev, ki proučujejo to regijo. V ospredju analize je torej geopolitična aktivnost Ruske federacije na Arktiki, katere dejanja spreminjajo Arktiko v tekmovalno prizorišče arktičnih držav. Z uporabo teoretičnega okvirja v nalogi proučujem trenutne ruske aktivnosti in premike v regiji, še posebej njene energetske, varnostne in gospodarske interese, njene cilje ter orodja realizacije le-teh – njene strategije. Vse te geopolitične realnosti prispevajo k tekmovalnosti in sodelovanju v regiji. Nazadnje bom prikazal zdajšnje geopolitične razmere v regiji s proučevanjem vladanja in ozemeljskih sporov, s posebnim poudarkom na ruskih težnjah po Severnem tečaju. V nalogi bo prikazano, da je Rusija že začela svoj pohod v regiji in da sta obe, tako regija kot ruska geopolitična realnost, v stalni korelaciji, saj obe zaznamujeta druga drugo in spreminjata Arktiko v novo geopolitično krizno žarišče.

Ključne besede: Arktika, Rusija, geopolitika, energetski viri, UNCLOS, Svet za Arktiko

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List of abbreviations

Northwest Passage - NWP

Northern Sea Route - NSR

United States Geological Survey - USGS

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program - AMAP

World Petroleum Council - WPC

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - UNCLOS

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf - CLCS

Exclusive Economic Zone - EEZ

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1. Introduction

The goal of the thesis is to research Russian geopolitical concerns about the Arctic region, and how these concerns (can) shape the geopolitical situation of the region. Being sparsely populated with about four million inhabitants (Arctic Centre 2015), until just a few years ago the Arctic attracted little international attention. But the recently surging interest in the Arctic, which has much to do with global climate change, has changed a lot. Global climate change has moved the Arctic into the center of geopolitics, as the melting Arctic ice transforms the region from one of primarily scientific interests into a maelstrom of competing commercial, national security and environmental concerns (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009, 1215). Alongside the rest of the Earth, the Arctic is heating up twice as fast and sea ice is rapidly disappearing during the summer months (Gannon 2014). The Arctic has been projected by several scientists to be perennially ice-free in the late summer by the late 2030s (Rourke 2015, 17). There are two primary reasons/factors for the increasing geopolitical interest in the Arctic: first, there is an abundance of natural resources and second, the thawing ice can open up the trans-Arctic waterways.

Part 11 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) rests on the principle that the deep seabed and its resources are the common heritage of mankind. No state is permitted to claim sovereignty or to assert exclusive management authority over the Area.¹ However, affected by their geopolitical interests, the Arctic states including Russia, Canada and Denmark claimed or are going to claim for the extension of their respective continental shelves towards North Pole, based upon article 76 from the same convention, questioning the status of these territories.²

Among the states that possess territory in the Arctic Circle, Russia is the most important actor, with significant economic, security and governance interests in the region. Russian leaders have in recent months focused on the importance of the Arctic region to their country's security and economic goals in the 21st century (Pilyavski 2011, 1). Russian geopolitical scientists consider Siberia as a reserve of Russia. The northern parts of the Arctic are considered as reserves of Siberia itself. So, these territories are perceived as geopolitical 'reserves of reserves' of Russia. In

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Part 11: Section 2, Art. 136, 137.

² Article 76 from the UNCLOS states that if the state's continental margin extends past the 200 nautical miles beyond its exclusive economic zone, then that state's continental shelf is considered to extend until the end of the continental margin (with limitation of 350 nautical miles. This limitation does not apply for submarine elevations). So the coastal state can extend its continental shelf, if proves where the national land mass ends and the ocean floor begins.

addition to all these claims, Russian leaders also see the Arctic as a location where they can assert their country's status as a major dominant power. Speaking at a National Security Council meeting in April 2014, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, characterized the Arctic as “a sphere of their special interest” (Marzalik 2014). Finally, the military - industrial complex plays a crucial role in a geopolitical organization of Russian space. The overall geopolitical configuration of Russia depends on the Military doctrine. The north is considered as a tremendous military zone of Russia; in fact, it is the most important pillar of its security (Dugin 2000, 324–345).

Russian actions in the Arctic are therefore governed by a combination of factors. The highest priority is the economic development of Russia's Arctic region. There are intentions to develop critical infrastructure for the integration connection of the Russian Arctic to the country, which could create a wholly new geopolitical reality. Russia submitted its revised application to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) upon article 76 of UNCLOS on the 3rd August 2015 (CLCS, Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Commission: Partial revised Submission by the Russian Federation 2015). According to Russian officials, they have gathered enough scientific evidence to prove that the Lomonosov Ridge, which goes straight across the North Pole, is a continuation of the Russian - Siberian continental shelf. Russian interests were well demonstrated during the research expedition ‘Arktika-2007’ in 2007, wherein Russian scientists were the first to descend to the seabed beneath the North Pole, after which they planted a Russian flag and announced that the Arctic had always been Russian (Ria Novosti 2015; Pettersen 2014). If accepted, the claim would grant Russia jurisdiction over approximately half of the Arctic as well as ownership of the natural resources within. In an era of increasing global demand for scarce resources, control of energy resources is of vital geopolitical importance. So, the struggle for domination over the Arctic waters could have a considerable impact on the overall geopolitical situation in the region. The struggle to control the Arctic waterways and resources, has become a very important geopolitical issue, certainly for Russia, under its many concerns in this respect, such as the claim over Lomonosov Ridge. It is likely that countries with a stake in the region will not hesitate to maximize the materialization of their interests. The melting Arctic changes the geopolitical view of Russia towards that region. Just how different that view is or may be will be the core of my research for this thesis.

Therefore this thesis will conduct its research guided by the following question: *What is the impact of Russian geopolitical interests on the Arctic region?*

In my research, I will use a geopolitical theory as a tool in order to better understand the situation present in and over the Arctic. Causality in the progressive form leads us to the fact that the geopolitical theory and its reflection will assist us to better understand moves and arguments of Russia towards promoting its geopolitical interests, which will create a theoretical framework and establish a coherent picture of the particular issue that this thesis is discussing. In general terms, through the research of both primary and secondary sources, with special emphasis on the Russian-speaking sources, the Russian geopolitical concerns in this particular area and the geopolitical situation where they operate will be studied. We have an abundance of data and analyzes regarding Russian geopolitics in the Arctic but most of them are made by western scholars with their own perceptions. The purpose of my reliance on very Russian-speaking sources is to introduce the Russian point of view, drawing on their own thoughts and perceptions for this particular issue.

So, in order to have an accurate tool and coherent structure for my research, the goal of the first chapter is to introduce the geopolitics as a theoretical framework. It could provide us with better arguments in order to better understand the situation present in and over the Arctic as well as the starting point and the groundwork, giving direction for further analysis in the following chapters. The chapter will consist of two parts. In the first part I will introduce geopolitical theory as a whole, referring to both western and Russian authors. This will allow us to gain solid and fundamental knowledge about its basics. In the second part I will put the emphasis on the Russian geopolitics of the north, particularly. It will enable and teach us to observe, analyze and understand the geopolitical value of the Arctic for Russia as only the thoughts of Russian geopolitical scientists for this particular area will be examined. Upon that knowledge the structure of the thesis will be created, representing suitable picture for Arctic geopolitics.

The goal of the second chapter is twofold. Firstly, I will show the importance of Russia in the Arctic from several angles and to explain why it is a key player in the region. Secondly I intend to research, observe, extract and analyze the geopolitical interests, goals and the strategy of the Russian Federation towards the Arctic. This will provide us with a solid ground of knowledge regarding why these geographical factors and region are so important, and it will help us to understand the incentives, priorities and the behavior of the Russian Federation (geopolitical move and strategy in the region). The research in this chapter will be conducted by analyzing both the primary and secondary sources of predominantly Russian-speaking authors.

The third chapter will be composed of three sub-chapters and will examine the current geopolitical situation which hovers in and over the Arctic. To better understand the current geopolitical situation it is necessary to observe the governance system of the Arctic and the territorial issues to make a full picture in a coherent way. The first sub-chapter is about the Arctic governance. In this sub-chapter I will analyze very thoroughly the UNCLOS to understand the legal framework of the Arctic regime and the kind of opportunities it introduces to the Arctic states in general and to Russia, in particular, for the enlargement of their maritime borders. Afterwards I will analyze the Arctic Council as the constituent part of the Arctic governance and soft-law institution for cooperation in the region. I will conclude the sub-chapter by studying the Ilulissat Declaration as the final stamp of Arctic governance. The second sub-chapter will analyze territorial issues within the Arctic with more emphasis on the Russian claim over Lomonosov Ridge. In this chapter, in the third sub-chapter, half of an answer to the research question will be sought, regarding the impact of Russia on the (geo) political situation in the Arctic. This chapter will conduct its research by analyzing both the primary and secondary sources.

The concluding chapter will discuss the findings concerning how and to what extent the Russian geopolitical realities, such as the determination of its interests, goals and regional strategy, affect geopolitical and the overall situation in the region.

1.1 Geographical Factors

Global climate change has moved the Arctic into the center of geopolitics. Gradually melting ice transforms the region from one of primarily scientific interest into a center of competing interests and concerns (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009, 1215). Alongside the rest of the Earth, the Arctic is heating up twice as fast and sea ice is rapidly disappearing during the summer months (Gannon 2014).

Record low extents of sea ice in the Arctic was documented in 2007 and 2012 and it has been projected by the majority of scientists to be ice-free in late summer from the 2030s and its total elimination by September of the 2040s. Also recent research shows that warming will continue through the 21st century, with annual average Arctic temperature increases ranging from +1° to +9.0° C. With climate change the character of ice cover is expected to change also. It is expected to become more fragile, thinner and more regionally variable (Rourke 2015, 17–19). This opens opportunities for transport through the Northwest (NWP) and Northeast passages (Northern Sea

Route - NSR), extraction of potential oil and gas resources, and expanded fishing and tourism (*ibid.*, 1).

So there are two primary reasons/factors for the increasing geopolitical interest in the Arctic. Firstly, there is an abundance of natural resources. In a 2008 report, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) released the first-ever wide-ranging assessment of Arctic oil and gas resources. The aim of the survey was to estimate the region's undiscovered and technically recoverable conventional oil and natural gas resources. According to the assessment, the Arctic shares about 20 % of the undiscovered global hydrocarbon reserves, 13 % of crude oil and 30 % of natural gas. These resources are estimated to be offshore for the most part under less than 500 meters of water (Gautier 2009, 1175).

The USGS believes that the deposits comprise over “90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids” (USGS 2008). Of the total 412 billion barrels of oil equivalent, approximately 84 % is expected to be found offshore and about 2/3 (67 %) of the total is natural gas. Russia is estimated to hold more than half of the total Arctic resources (approximately 52 %), holding the largest amount of natural gas resources, while the largest oil resources are in the US portion of the Arctic (Alaska), holding over 20 % of the total Arctic resources (EY 2013, 2–4).

The melting of the Arctic ice shield will make it easier to extract raw materials. Decreases in the polar ice during the summer months will likely allow for more options for exploring oil and gas in certain offshore areas (Gratz 2012, 1). Similarly, shrinking ice on onshore areas could expose land containing economic deposits of gold, iron ore, nickel and other minerals that were previously covered by glacial ice (Rourke 2015, 28).

However the majority of scientists state that although the Arctic may have tremendous potential in the long run, its contribution to energy resources in the short term should not be overestimated, as other areas where energy resources can be found are cheaper, less contentious and less technologically challenging to exploit. Transport difficulties add to the problems to be overcome. Natural gas requires expensive, complex liquefaction infrastructure and pipelines (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009, 1220). But the biggest determinant of Arctic hydrocarbon extractions is the price of oil and gas in the global market. The plunging price of oil over the past nine months has forced many energy companies and even oil giants to cut back or shrink their spending, especially in Arctic projects, where exploration, drilling, exploitation and delivery of the deposits are more difficult, expensive and risky (Tully 2015). But in any respect, longer ice-

free periods now make it possible to explore for hydrocarbons, in addition, new technological developments in marine surface and undersea logistics, as well as deep-water drilling technology, have increased the salience of issues relating to the extension of coastal states' respective continental shelves and the geopolitical importance of the region (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009, 1216).

Secondly, the Trans-Arctic waterways (the NSR and NWP) are expected to significantly shorten the global shipping routes. The search for a shorter route from the Atlantic to Asia has been one of the goals of maritime powers since the middle ages. The thawing of Arctic ice opens up the possibility of saving thousands of miles and several days of sailing between major trading blocs. Its importance as a viable shipping route could be beneficial for South Korea, China and Japan, since their manufactured products exported to North America or Europe will be less expensive in comparison to other emerging manufacturing centers in Southeast Asia, such as India. So the thawing ice could potentially open up two trans-Arctic routes, the NSR and NWP. The NSR is located on Russia's northern border, stretching from Murmansk to Provideniya. It goes alongside the Russian Arctic coast via parts of the Barents, Kara, East Siberian, Chuckchi, Laptev and Bering Seas,³ comprising 2,600 nautical miles in length. Firstly, it was opened by the USSR to domestic shipping in 1931 and for international shipping after the fall of the USSR in 1991. The NSR would be applicable for trade between northern Europe and northeast Asia.⁴ The biggest advantage of the NSR is that it is almost half the distance of the other sea routes connecting Europe and the Far East (Rourke 2015, 23).

The NWP goes through the Canadian Arctic Islands and it is potentially suitable for trade between the northeast of North America and Northeast Asia, but may be less commercially viable in comparison with the NSR. The first bulk carrier which traveled via the NWP in the summer of 2013 was a ship carrying coal from western Canada to Finland (*ibid.*).

Currently, the majority of cargo ship activity in the Arctic is about the transportation of natural resources from the Arctic region, and the delivery and supplementation of general cargo to communities and natural resource development facilities. However, there are several impediments for Arctic shipping. Yes, warming causes ice melting and this thinner ice can be more easily broken up by icebreakers or ice class ships but more open water in the Arctic lead to another potential barrier for shipping: unpredictable ice flows. The flows of these ice blocks or

³ The NSR connects ports in the European, Siberian and Far Eastern parts of the country uniting them into a one, single national Arctic transportation system.

⁴ The NSR continues to be the bulk of Arctic shipping activity.

icebergs are very difficult to predict and generally they float into potential shipping routes. Generally, the unpredictability of ice flows is a major obstacle for trans-Arctic shipping. Unfortunately ice is not the only obstacle for Arctic shipping. In the case of unfavorable weather, the region experiences unfavorable conditions for shipping such as severe storms, and intense cold which can impair deck machinery. During the summer heavy fog is quite common in this region. So, vessels would face higher operating costs but none of the mentioned impediments for shipping by themselves creating a disadvantage for the Arctic routes/waterways. So, from the perspective of a shipper, shorter does not necessarily mean cheaper, safer and faster. And another, very important impediment for Arctic shipping and for its future development is the lack of basic navigation infrastructure, mostly outside of the Russian Arctic zone (*ibid.*, 24–25).

2. Geopolitical theory

“The fate of Russia is directly linked to the geopolitical fate of the North. This fact is the basis of its future geopolitics. North is the future, it is the fate” (Dugin 2000, 345).

In this chapter, I intend to use and develop the geopolitical theory and its reflection in the Arctic. Causality in the progressive form, as well as cognitive⁵ and management⁶ functions of geopolitics lead us to the fact that the geopolitical theory will assist us to better understand the moves of Russia towards promoting its geopolitical interests. The chapter will consist of two parts. In the first part I will introduce geopolitical theory as a whole, referring to both western and Russian authors. In the second part I will put the emphasis on the Russian geopolitics of the north, particularly.

There are different notions and perceptions about the geopolitical theory as it has evolved with history. From the second part of the 20th century economic processes were added to geopolitical factors. Its influence on the political situation of the world increased dramatically at the end of the twentieth century. The social division of labor mainly connected with technological revolution, the extraction of natural resources and their development, utilization of wastes and other factors lead to the globalization of economic processes. Economic interests come to the

⁵ Cognitive function connected firstly with examination of tendencies of geopolitical development of states and nations, change of various phenomena, processes, events.

⁶ Management function of geopolitics manifested primarily in collecting of empiric data and development of specific solutions and recommendations. Without optimal amount of information, its proper analyzes, conclusions and recommendations made by scientists, political leaders, military leaders, economists will be unable to adopt proper decisions, manage geopolitical processes and etc.

forefront in the establishment of all forms of international relations, which characterize the instability of the current geopolitical situation⁷ (Alekhin 2005, 6). Even after the end of the Cold War a number of politicians and geopolitical scientists announced the end of geopolitics altogether, its eclipse and shift by eco-politics and geo-economics. There was an idea that geopolitics have been left for dead (Dalby and Tuathail 1998, 2).

However, most actors share some basic notions that geopolitics tends to explain and predict international political behavior based on geographical variables. Also, the study of geopolitics includes the study of the ensemble of the relations between the interests of international political actors, interests focused on an area, space, geographical element or ways, which creates a geopolitical system. Geopolitics is concerned with how geographical factors, including territory, population, strategic location, and natural resource endowment, as modified by economics and technology, affect the relations between states and the struggle for world domination. It itself is a form of politics and geography as it is concerned with ongoing social reproduction of power and political economy.⁸ It is a branch of political geography that considers the strategic value of land and sea area in the context of national economic and military power and ambitions. As Dalby and Tuathail say, “Geopolitics are the geographical politics” (Dalby and Tuathail 1998, 1–5; Deudney 2000, 77–80).

Geopolitics studies the basic opportunities, mechanisms and forms of control over geographical space by political institutions but first of all by governments or an alliance of governments. The territory which is/was controlled or wanted to be controlled by a state is characterized by the degree of its connectedness with the center and the level of their relations. This space is named as a geopolitical field. The political space of geopolitics is characterized by defined borders, which is one of the biggest features of the state and a factor of security. The geopolitical issue of borders appear every time the struggle for control, accession, or mastering of the political space begins (Alekhin 2005, 5). Russian political scientist, Elgiz Abdulovich Pozdnyakov, states that geopolitics concentrate on uncovering and studying the probability of the use of political factors of physical medium and influence on it, in interests of state. In practice, geopolitics studies everything that is connected with the territorial issues of governments, its

⁷ As the global economic processes, taking place on the planet became highly dynamic, they determine the instability of the modern geopolitical situation.

⁸ Also called as a critical geopolitics, which carry out witness to the inconvertible plurality of space and the multiplicity of possible constructions of space and is concerned as much with maps of meaning as it is with maps of states.

borders, rational use and distribution of resources, including human resources. It's a system of knowledge about control over space (Isaev 2006, 363–365).

The main category of geopolitics is a perception of the interest which can be class, national or state. In uncovering the national interest of the state it could be possible to define the strategic course of the country. The countries' state interests⁹ can be the improvement and development of its resource capacity and based on this, its economic, military, financial, technological and other capacities of the country, and through all of this to increase its geopolitical influence and power.¹⁰ In order to realize these interests actors either comply with norms and principles or achieve their goals by force and/or power. In practice these interests are achieved mainly by power or/and force without considering any norms and principles. The difference is that geopolitically strong states or the group of states want everything and immediately, in contrast to weaker states which want piecemeal/partially and gradually. So, some realize their state interests in an active and others in a passive expansion. So, geopolitical theory studies the aggregate of geographical, historical, political and other factors which interact between each other, providing a big influence on the strategic potential of states. It analyzes events in global, regional, sub-regional and interstate levels, reflecting the interests of states¹¹ (Alekhin 2005, 6–8).

In order to study geopolitical movements, geopolitical theory uses the common methods which have been used and developed in sciences such as systematic, operational, comparative, historical, normative-value based, functional and also structural-functional analyzes, institutional, anthropological, general-logical and etc. To analyze Russian actions in the Arctic I intend to use systematic, operational and institutional methods (*ibid.*, 9).

Systematic method as a basic principle take a structural-functional approach/analysis. The essence of this method is that it researches every sphere of the public life, science and particularly geopolitics as one complex and self-regulated organism, being in permanent correlation with the environment. In its structure every element has a specific function with the main goal to satisfy certain needs and expectations of the system, which aims to preserve the balance in itself between different pieces, from which the most important is the distribution of wealth and resources. Operational method is designed to analyze the geopolitical picture within its dynamics. This

⁹ Most of authors do not make difference between national and state interest, comprising them into the one.

¹⁰ Specificity of the geographical location of the country, domestic-political, socio-economic, national-cultural and the level of authority of the country in global community form the content of state-national interests. Wherein geographical, natural resource and economic factors play special role.

¹¹ Currently, geopolitics are in a permanent motion and change as the world became more dynamic. New emerging circumstances, developments and factors make geopolitical space richer and more attractive for states and their interests.

method studies geopolitics as a specific, living and objectified activity, as a cyclic process, having its particular stages and phases. This method is the definition of objectives, decision making, organization of the masses and mobilization of resources for its implementation, regulations of groups' activities, control over the realization of the placed goals, results of the analysis for actions and the settlement of new goals and objectives. It makes up the methodological ground for the theory of geopolitical solutions. The institutional method is orientated at the examination of institutional activities. It is an important method as political activities and decisions are carried out with their assistance (*ibid.*, 9–13). So examining the activities of Russian institutions in the Arctic we can extract and get a clearer picture of Russian political moves.

Currently, one of the dominant ideas in the Russian geopolitical thought is the 'Eurasianism' and its renewed version 'Neo-Eurasianism'. This direction was developed in the period of weakening and after fully diminishment of the Marxist ideological censorship and was well developed by Russian geopolitical scientists. The idea behind this approach rests upon the national ideocracy of an empire of a continental scale, opposed to both liberal westernism and nationalism. Russia is seen as a geopolitical axis of the 'big space' and its ethnic mission is clearly identified with the construction of the Empire¹² (*ibid.* 39–45).

One of the most active Russian geopolitical scientists Alexander Dugin inspired by the quality of 'middle' of Russia in the continent and the theory of Heartland¹³ of John Mackinder, formulated and developed 'Neo-Eurasianist' direction. He states that "Russia is itself a Heartland and geographical axes of history. Russia has its own meaning just as a Heartland, as a civilization of the land as a continent. Russia has to accept the role of the leader in the construction of a multipolar world as it is a necessary condition for its existence and real sovereignty". According to him, currently the opposition to US hegemony, globalization and planetary domination of the west and the fate of the global order are decided only in Russia, by Russia and through Russia (Dugin 2013, 266–275).

According to Dugin, the imperative of the geopolitical and strategic sovereignty of Russia is not only to restore the lost regions of the 'near abroad', not only to renew the alliance with

¹² This geopolitical ideology was influenced by the theory of Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev about ethno genesis and ethnic cycles and after then developed by Soviet economist, geographer and philosopher Petr Nikolaevich Savitski. His thought was tied in that Russia is a special civilizational construction determined by the quality of 'middle'. Russia occupies central position in Eurasian continent and this 'middle' ensured a ground to Savitski to announce in his works that Russia is an independent, special spiritual and historical geopolitical reality/realm called 'Eurasia'.

¹³ Mackinder defined 'Russian Big Space' as a *geographic axes of history*.

Eastern Europe but also to include in the new Eurasian continental strategic unit of the state of the West (Franco-German block) and continental East (Iran, India, and Japan). This geopolitical ‘gathering of empire’¹⁴ is not just one of the ways of development but guarantee and necessitate condition for the existence of an independent state. According to him, if Russia does not start to reconstruct or recreate its big geopolitical space and to return its spheres of strategic, political and economic interests lost after the Soviet collapse it will be lunged into catastrophe. This process of ‘gathering of the empire’ has to be firstly orientated on the exit of Russia to the warm and cold seas (Dugin 2000, 173–182).

According to Alexander Dugin, “the status of a regional country for Russia is equal to a self-annihilation” (*ibid.*, 221). The existence of the Russian nation is impossible without an imperial organization. Russians will stay as a nation only in the framework of the New Empire. This empire, according to the geopolitical logic, has to dominate over its previous version (USSR) both strategically and spatially (*ibid.*, 220–224).

He suggests that Russia needs to reorganize its own and its surrounding geopolitical spaces, which could allow it to have direct access to life important geographical objects (ports, seas, resources, key strategic positions), ensure the absence of US military bases and direct political influence, prevent the integration with/of the NATO, contribute to further integration in the Eurasian basis, favor the development of diverse social systems, other than the standard globalist, strengthen the positions of countries or blocks with multipolar orientation, continental and distanced from globalization. So to reorganize the geopolitical space and construct the multipolar world, Russia has to consolidate, accumulate the resources, mobilize the social structures, go to a phase of increased geopolitical activity, requiring intensive political work. There is a need of ‘geopolitical mobilization’ and review of instruments, resources and potential advantages that in times of ‘inertial’ (simple/motional) development do not attract attention (Dugin 2013, 276–277).

With regard to the northern region, Russia has a need of the reorganization of the Arctic zone. The perception of the ‘Russian North’ represents itself as a trapezoid of Eurasia as a whole. Siberia is considered as a reserve of Russia. The northern parts of the Arctic are considered as reserves of Siberia. So, these territories are perceived as geopolitical ‘reserves of the reserves’ of Russia. Besides, the strategic importance of the North in a military sense, in any case, is preserved for Russia, since the meaning of the military presence in the North of the Arctic and its

¹⁴ One of the most urgent thoughts of Dugin is the ‘gathering of the Empire’.

current militarization have a continental character for the Russian military structure. The military-industrial complex plays a crucial role in the geopolitical organization of Russian space. All overall geopolitical configuration of Russia depends on the military doctrine. The north is considered as a tremendous military zone of Russia; in fact, it is the most important pillar of its security (Dugin 2000, 324–345).

In recent years, Russia has placed an increased attention on the Arctic, tightly engaged in legal matters, the implementation of the symbolic Arctic expeditions, extraction and development of deposits and rapidly re-equipping its military and technical facilities located in this zone. All this could be considered constructive steps towards the construction and strengthening of the multipolar construction of the world and the reorganization of the Arctic zone. In short, Russia is taking steps towards ‘gathering an empire’ (Dugin 2013, 310–312).

Another Russian geopolitical scientist Konstantin Eduardovich Sarokin distanced his theory from the idea of Heartland, however doesn’t distance from the fact of the ‘middle’ of Russian geographic location. He starts from the fact that after the collapse of the USSR, Russia and Russian society were engaged in a degradation cycle. The main reason as commonly known was the economy which was in a permanent crisis. It was followed by several problems such as demographic problems, impossibility of the development of Siberian resources, shortage of human resources, bad communications and a drain of intellectual capacity-groups of intellectual work etc. So in that situation Sarokin finds that upon geopolitical parameters it is hard to define Russia as a global power. However, he suggests that Russia also is not a regional power with sub-regional interests, just taking into the consideration the fact that it is located into two continents and has an exit to both huge geopolitical regions. So, he concludes that the status of Russia can be perceived as a ‘trans-regional country’ (Sarokin 1996, 49–51).

To neutralize these negative effects of the geopolitical situation on Russia and regain its global position, it has to use to the maximum extent its main internal and preserved factors/resources. Among them, Sarokin, first of all, includes traditional geopolitical values/wealth of Russia such as natural resources, territory, remaining military power, with a heavy emphasis on nuclear power, separate spheres of industry, especially the military and intellectual production. From here and his conclusions regarding the goals and objectives, “Russia needs to create favorable international conditions, ‘rest’, to improve internal power bases and maximize the realization of the geopolitical resources” (*ibid.*, 51).

He divides three types of strategies for the realization of these objectives. These are expansionist (expansionist line is the involvement in countries and territories far abroad), conceding (allowing compression in spheres of influence and even reducing the physical territory of the country) and positional (aiming to the preservation of the status quo or in extreme cases its fundamental positions). Sarokin gives preference to the positional strategy as currently the aggregate form of the geopolitical power of Russia is inferior to other global centers of power (*ibid.*, 52–53).

The important aspect of Sarokin's thought is that however Russia is in the positional strategy it has to use its still available leverages on global politics, and not only the military-political. He pays special attention to the economic aspect, claiming that it can be much more affective, with more serious consequences in the current politics. According to Sarokin, "Russia is certainly still capable of making such changes in global politics, by varying the exports of oil and gas. To have a long run capacity for the future it has to turn towards the vast Siberian resources" (*ibid.*, 56).

The North Pole became one of the most important geopolitical realms, the importance of which is increasing dramatically. It is a particularly important region for Russia to prove its global geopolitical status and dominant power in the North, who almost aims to shift its geopolitical strategy from positional to expansionist. From the geopolitical perspective, the most important sides of the Arctic for Russia are military control over the shore (military, air and navy bases) and its positional strengthening, extraction and development of natural resources and insuring its energetic security. It is obvious that the Arctic with its strategic location, waterways and resources is one of the main doors for Russia to leave the geopolitical vacuum and an opportunity to improve its geopolitical value in the international arena, which also proves that geopolitics is still alive and very applicable with its current alterations. Currently the overall rhythm of the geopolitical processes have become so silent that the question of geopolitical reorganization in accordance with the above mentioned geopolitical constants have become highly relevant and every inch of the Arctic land or sea borders acquire a special geopolitical value.

In the next two chapters the geopolitical theory will assist me to go into the details of Russian geopolitics in the Arctic. In the second chapter it will assist me to understand the correlation between Russian interests, goals and official strategy and after that in the third chapter to analyze the impact of the Russian geopolitical reality on the Arctic geopolitical space as a whole.

3. Russia as a key actor

In this chapter I will examine the Russian geopolitical mindset. The chapter is composed of three sub-chapters. However, firstly, before starting to examine the Russian geopolitical mindset I will introduce the basics about the Arctic region and to show the Russian position/place in the Arctic geopolitics and its advantages.

During my analysis of the Russian interests, in the first sub-chapter here, I will rely mostly on structural-functional analysis. It analyses the geo (political) system as structurally one organism, composed of a set of structures, where each structure has a definite purpose or function. So it studies geo (politics) as a system of interactions, being in permanent correlation with the environment and composed of several structures/elements performing functions. The aim of this set of structures is to fulfill the needs and expectations of the system. It is the most relevant method as the Russian interests are in a permanent correlation with the environment and its very elements have just one aim, to fulfill the needs of the system, in this case, the needs of the Russian Federation. Because of that I have separated the sub-chapter into three parts, aiming to analyze Russian energy, security and economic interests separately, to be able to understand how these elements correlate and function with each other, trying to satisfy Russian needs and expectations. I have separated energy interests from economic ones as in this situation the Arctic resources are not only a means for economic development but also tools for policy leverage and provision of national security. Due to these reasons, the Russian political move should be examined separately and more thoroughly particularly with regard to oil and gas. Besides the systematic one I will use the institutional method, as well. In the analysis I will show how different institutions operationalize in a system and try to fulfill Russian needs and interests. This sub-chapter will be constructed on predominantly Russian-speaking secondary sources.

In the next two sub-chapters, I will examine the main goals and strategy of Russia. Here, I will also use the operational method, as it seeks to analyze the geopolitical picture in its dynamics. It defines the objectives, decision making, organization of the masses and mobilization of resources for its implementation, regulations of groups' activities, control over the realization of the placed goals, results of the analysis for actions and the settlement of new goals and objectives in accordance with geopolitical dynamics. This method will help me to analyze the geopolitical goals of Russia in its dynamics. Studying the geopolitics as alive and cyclic process, having its particular stages and phases, we can define its current objectives, decision making, the organization of the masses and the mobilization of the resources for its implementation,

regulations of groups' activities, control over the realization of the placed goals, results of analysis for the actions and the setting of new goals and objectives. Russia's main goals will be examined with secondary sources. The examination of the Russian strategy will be based on predominantly primary sources such as the official documents (strategies) of various Russian institutions regarding the organization of the masses and the mobilization of resources for its implementation, regulations of groups' activities and control over the realization of the placed goals, in a short how the goals may be realized.

The Arctic covers a huge region, more than 30 million sq. km which is 1/6 of the planet's landmass, including 24 time zones. The Arctic's total land area is about 14.5 million sq. km composed of the northern territories of the eight Arctic countries; Canada (Canadian Arctic Archipelago), the United States (Alaska), Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway (Svalbard), Iceland and Denmark (Greenland). However, the length of the territorial borders of the aforementioned countries vary a lot. Respectively, Russia and Canada comprise nearly 80 % of the land; the Nordic countries, approximately 16 % and the United States about 4 % (Arctic 2015).

The precise geographical definition of the Arctic is important. The definition of the Arctic boundaries adopted by the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP),¹⁵ "essentially includes the terrestrial and marine areas north of the Arctic Circle (66°32' N), and north of 62° N in Asia and 60° N in North America, modified to include the marine areas north of the Aleutian chain, Hudson Bay, and parts of the North Atlantic, including the Labrador Sea"¹⁶ (Murray 1998, 10). This thesis deals with a narrower definition of the region, with the Arctic Circle in 66°32' of north latitude (See Figure 2.1). The circumpolar region is very sparsely populated. According to the Arctic Human Development Report for definition of the Arctic, the Arctic Circle is inhabited by approximately 4 million people (See Figure 2.2) (Arctic Centre 2015).

The Arctic Ocean which is the smallest of the world's oceans¹⁷ dominates in the Arctic region. The Arctic Ocean's marginal seas are the Greenland, Barents, Kara, Laptev, East Siberian, Chukchi and Beaufort seas. The deepest depth of Arctic waters is 5,502 meters, in contrast the average is 987 meters. There are two principal basins, respectively Eurasia and Amerasia basins that are subdivided into the four smaller basins, respectively Fram and Nansen sub-basins in the Eurasia Basin and Makarov and Canada sub-basins in the Amerasia Basin (Ostenso 2015, 1–2).

¹⁵ A working group of the Arctic Council.

¹⁶ The importance of this assessment is that the AMAP boundary was established to provide a geographical background for the assessment in particular source-related assessment issues such as consideration of sources within and outside the region.

¹⁷ It is about 15.5 million sq. km which is centering approximately in the North Pole

Figure 3.1: Map of geographical boundaries of the Arctic



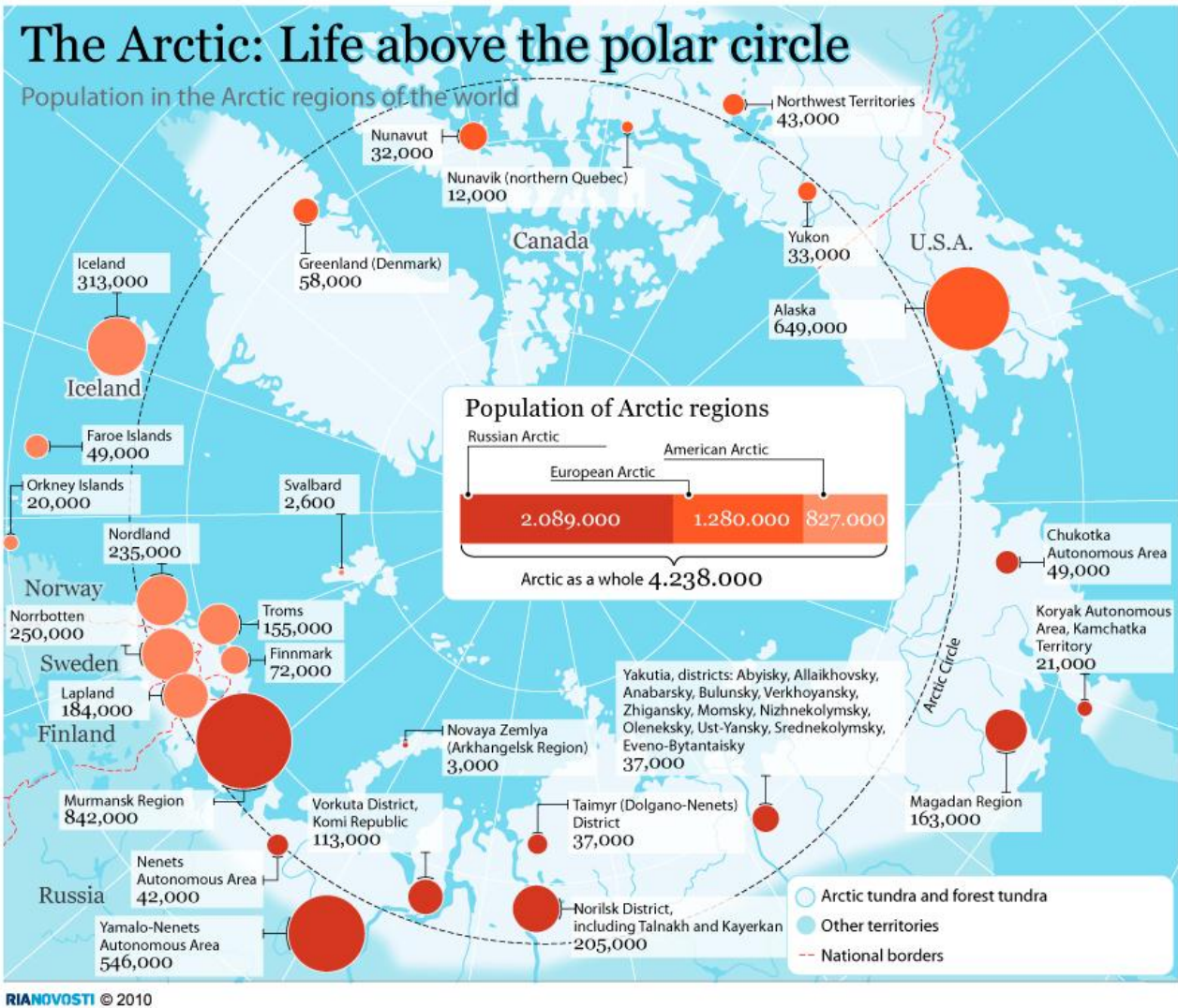
Source: AMAP geographical coverage (1998).

These division into the basins and sub-basins made by four transoceanic submarine ridges, respectively Nansen - Gakkel Ridge, Lomonosov Ridge, Mendelejev Ridge and Alpha Cordillera or Alpha Ridge. But the central of these ridges is the Lomonosov Ridge,¹⁸ as it divides the Arctic Ocean into two physiographical complex basins by extending from the continental shelf of Ellesmere Island to the New Siberian Islands, a distance of 1,100 miles, which is geographically passing straight across to the North Pole (*ibid.*), which means that if the extension of the continental shelf is be done towards this ridge it will lead to the extension of national jurisdictions over a vast territory in the North Pole and consequently to the vast Arctic resources

¹⁸ The Lomonosov Ridge was discovered by Soviet scientists in 1948–49 and reported in 1954. It is named the Lomonosov Ridge after the scientist, grammarian and poet Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov. The width of the ridge varies from 40 to 120 miles and the crest in depth ranges between 944 and 1645 meters.

and navigation routes, which are of a great geopolitical importance for Arctic countries and mainly for Russia (See Figure 2.3).

Figure 3.2: Map of the distribution of Arctic population within the Arctic Circle

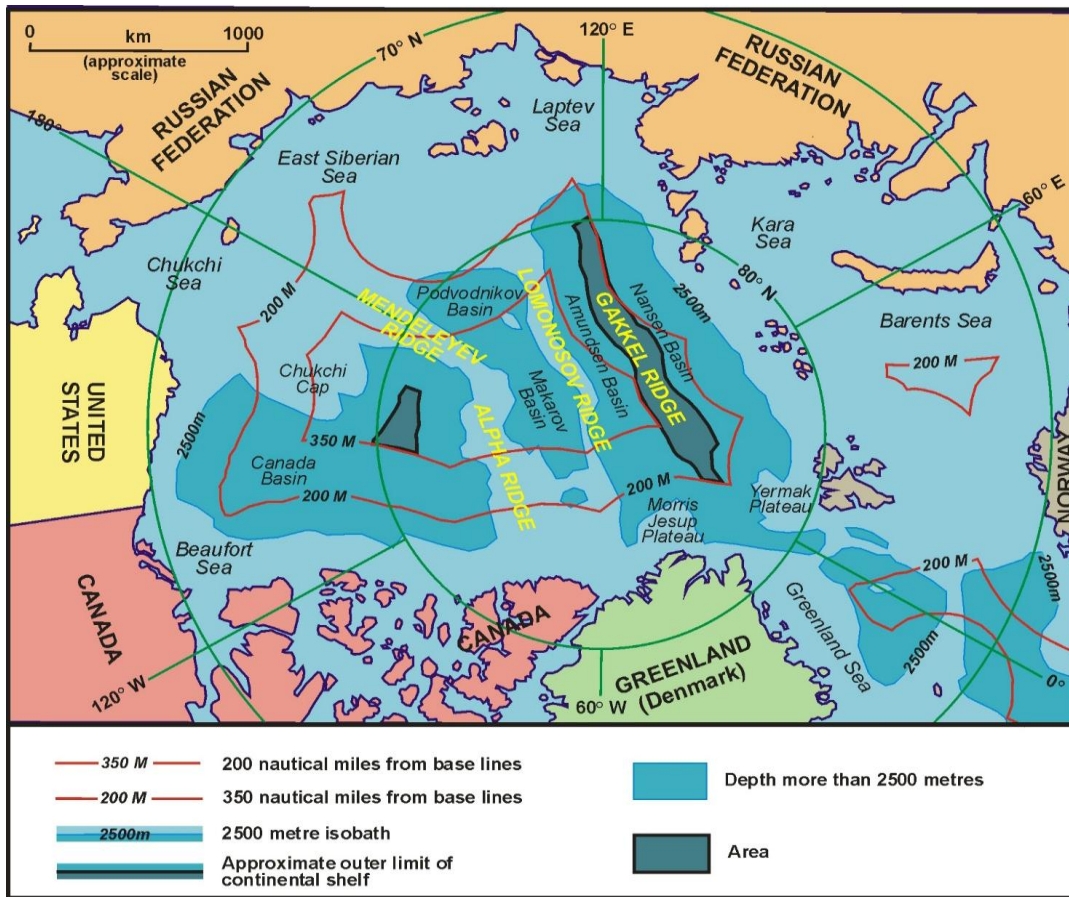


Source: Sputniknews (2010)

What is also important to mention about the Arctic Ocean is that 30 % of its total area consists of continental shelf, which is distributed very asymmetrically. The shelves of Greenland and North of Alaska varies from 60 to 120 miles in width, in contrast to the Siberian and Chukchi shelves which range from 300 to 1,100 miles in width¹⁹ (Nuttall 2005, 1151).

¹⁹ The Siberian shelf is the widest in the world.

Figure 3.3: Physiographical map of the Arctic Circle



Source: Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (2015).

As it was mentioned above, there are eight Arctic countries but in the Arctic region five of them have the real potential and capacity to expand their territories and play an important role in Arctic affairs. These countries are Russia, the USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark. They are known as the ‘Arctic Five’ or countries of the ‘Arctic Circle’. In the 1920s, each of these five Arctic countries gained a part of the Arctic based on their northern boundary. The Soviet Union, which had the longest coastline, gained the largest sector, nearly 1/3 of the whole area of the Arctic. Iceland, Sweden and Finland also presented claims to the Arctic territory and they have been involved very intensively in Arctic affairs through the Arctic Council (Arctic Info 2015). In addition to this, currently 12 countries express their interests in the region, willing to develop deposits and to use Arctic waterways. Among them are India, China, South Korea, Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Singapore, Poland, and United Kingdom with observer status in the Arctic Council (Arctic Council 2011). All the major Arctic nations-Canada, the USA, Norway, Denmark and Iceland are members of NATO. The only Arctic country which

is not a member of NATO is Russia. It is particularly important to note that in the scene of militarization of the Arctic, from security perspective, Russia is a lonely actor in comparison with the states of alliance, additionally fueling its suspicion that forces of opposing countries are massing against it (Stratfor 2015). So this geopolitically important region became a region where national interests of coastal countries collide (Tsvetkov 2014, 1).

From the Arctic Circle, Russia is the key actor, with significant energy, security and economic interests in the region. This importance is caused by several factors. Firstly, the geopolitical importance of Russia in the Arctic is caused by the scale of its presence and role in the considered area. From the overall shoreline of the Arctic which is 38,700 km, Russia's part is the biggest (58 %), comprising 22,600 km. The Arctic zone of the Russian Federation has over nine million sq. km of area which comprises 18 % of the country and more than 40 % of the entire Arctic (Tsvetkov 2014, 2). The dominant role in this region is conditioned also with its military presence. Huge quantities of Russian land ballistic missiles and strategic aviation bases and airfields are located there. Murmansk and Arkhangelsk²⁰ are considered as the biggest Russian and regional military-sea bases (Dugin 2000, 329–331). The Northern Fleet and ballistic nuclear missile submarines are the most mobile forces in the region and keeping the balance of power in favor of Russia (Danyuk 2014).

The second factor which is no less important than the first one is the presence of natural resources. Most of the undiscovered Arctic hydrocarbon reserves are in the Russian Arctic (Kapyła and Mikkola 2013, 3). Russia is estimated to hold approximately 52 % of all Arctic resources, holding the largest amount of natural gas resources²¹ (EY 2013, 3). The parts under Russian jurisdiction or under its claim, own more than 250 billion barrels of oil and gas of oil equivalent (Malisheva 2012). Twenty major oil and gas provinces and basins have been discovered on the Russian shelf, mainly in East Barents, South Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi basins²² (EY 2013, 7).

The third factor which makes Russia a key player in the Arctic geopolitics is that the most powerful industrial complex is the Russian one. The scale of economic activity significantly exceeds the scales of the other polar countries. The Russian Arctic zone produces about 20 % of Russia's GDP and up to 22 % of Russian export, so the proportion of the Arctic in the overall balance of the economy of the country and its prospects for the foreseeable future are huge.

²⁰ Currently Arkhangelsk is not involved into the Russian Arctic zone but it is going to be included until 2020.

²¹ The largest oil resources are in the US part of the Arctic, in Alaska.

²² Ten of them have proved oil and gas reserves.

Besides, Russia has a leading role in the exploration and mastering of the Arctic. It has years of experience in functioning the NSR and polar aviation and has the most developed infrastructure in the region (Tsvetkov 2014, 2). Also Russia has a clear domination of icebreakers,²³ being the world leader with a fleet of 40 icebreakers (See Figure 2.4) (ATKearney 2015, 9–10). Worthy to note that out of the top five of the biggest cities in the Arctic Circle four are Russian and just one, in the fourth place is Norwegian. Though the Murmansk’s population is in decline, it still remains the largest city north of the Arctic Circle with 307,664 inhabitants, followed by Russian Norilsk and Vorkuta with their 175,301 and 70,551 inhabitants, Tromso in Norway with 68,000 inhabitants and Apatity in Russia with 59,690 inhabitants (The World Geography 2011).

Figure 3.4: Index of current and planned icebreakers in the world.

Figure 3

Current and planned icebreakers



Sources: U.S. Coast Guard Office of Waterways and Ocean Policy; A.T. Kearney analysis

Source: ATKearney (2015, 9).

In the Arctic Ocean Russia owns a series of islands and archipelagoes such as Novaya Zemlya, Severnaya Zemlya, Kolguev Island, Franz Josef Land, Wrangel Island and the New Siberian Islands. These territories are of great importance, as they have large reserves of unexplored

²³ It can significantly improve the position of the country as plays crucial role for expeditions and operationalization of Arctic waterways.

natural resources and these areas have strategic importance as they could be used as military bases to provide national security (Arctic Info 2015).

Russian leaders have in recent months been focused on the importance of the Arctic region to their country's security and economic goals in the 21st century (Pilyavski 2011, 1). They see the Arctic as a location where they can assert their country's status as a major dominant power. During his speech at a National Security Council in 2014, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, characterized the Arctic as "a sphere of their special interest" (Marzalik 2014). The Russian actions in the Arctic are therefore governed by a combination of factors.

3.1 Russian Interests

3.1.1 Energy interests

The Arctic has long been considered as a strategic region, which in the nearest future could meet the energy needs of the leading industrial countries of the world and particularly of Russia. As it was mentioned above, most Arctic resources are in the Russian Arctic zone and they are of increasing importance and actually vital for Russian national security and economy. Firstly, oil and gas provide an important leverage for Russian foreign policy, if not the most important and effective one. This is important particularly for energy-dependent Europe, where about 1/3 of the consumed natural gas is imported from Russia. So, the Arctic resources are vital resource bases for Russia. Russia's increasing northward focus is also partially due to the fact that mature Siberian resources are gradually drying up. So to preserve one of its most effective tools of foreign policy from a long term perspective, Russia needs these resources (Kapyla and Mikkola 2013, 3–4).

The overall value of the deposits in the Russian Arctic zone exceed 15 trillion US Dollars. Here 20 % of oil and 62 % of gas resources of Russia are concentrated (Tsvetkov 2014, 2). The overall reserves of fuel and energy resources in the Arctic region of the Russian Federation exceed 1.6 trillion tons and the continental shelf contains about a 1/4 of all offshore hydrocarbon reserves in the world (Kremlin 2014). Russian extractable resources of continental shelf, exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and territorial sea exceed 100 billion tons of oil equivalent containing over 13.5 billion tons of oil and about 70 % of resources found on the continental shelves of Barents, Pechora and Kara seas (Sancin and Dine 2014, 470). According to USGS, "the largest total reserves in Arctic are concentrated in the West – Siberian basin, respectively 3.6

billion tons of oil and 18.4 trillion cubic meters of gas and 20 billion of barrels of gas condensate” (Malisheva 2012).

According to the director of the institute of market problems of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Valeri Tsvetkov, “it is obvious that these resources have to become the fundament for the prosperity of Russia” (Tsvetkov 2014, 2).

To defend its energy interests in the region, Russia took three large and successful steps towards the mastering of Arctic resources. In practice the Arctic exploration was a universal accelerator for the creation and the innovation of more effective technologies in the oil and gas industry, for their exploitation and development.

The first step and the main event towards the Arctic mastering was the realization of the first Russian offshore resource development project in the Arctic. In 2013, the first Russian marine ice-strengthened stationary platform ‘Prirazlomnaya’ (Приразломная) started the oil production in Pechora sea, which comprises 72 million tons of oil reserves, allowing it to achieve 6.6 million tons of annual production²⁴ (Gazprom 2015; Sancin and Dine 2014, 471–472). For the first time, hydrocarbon extraction in the Russian Arctic shelf was carried out and shipped to its buyer in 2014²⁵ (Gazprom Neft Shelf 2014). The License for the extraction and development of the deposits is owned by ‘Gazprom Neft Shelf’ (Газпром Нефть Шельф) which is the daughter company of ‘Gazprom’ (Газпром)²⁶ (Gazprom Neft Shelf 2015).

A few days ago, from the first shipped batch of oil from Prirazlomnaya field, Russian president Vladimir Putin announced that “it is one of the largest, if not probably the largest project in this area: huge, totally cyclopean scale platform, the latest technology and materials, in short, everything for the first time. A huge and serious project is practically the first step in the mastering of the Arctic shelf zone” (Zarubin 2014).

Another important step towards the mastering of the Arctic and its resources was the successful completion of drilling works of the world's northernmost Arctic well ‘Universitetskaya-1’ (Университетская-1) in Kara Sea (Magay 2014). Regardless of the

²⁴ The Prirazlomnaya field is an essential element of Gazprom Group's oil business development strategy. This oil-producing platform is a key pre-development facility. The platform ensures well drilling, oil production, storage and offloading but the main features are its resistance to strong ice loads, long self-sustainability and year-round operability. It weight 118000 tons; it is not floating, it is a stationary; has 110,000 cubic meters of capacity and dwelling quarters for more than 200 workers and engineers.

²⁵ The new variety of oil, produced in the Russian Arctic offshore oil ARCO (Arctic Oil) first entered the world market in 2014 with amount of 70 thousand tons of crude oil. Its delivery to the consumers provide multifunctional icebreakers-tankers ‘Mikhail Ulyanov’ (Михаил Ульянов) and ‘Kirill Lavrov’ (Кирил Лавров), which were built by the order of Gazprom specifically for the transportation of oil from Prirazlomnaya. For 2014 the field was planning to ship more than 300 thousands and produce 600 thousands.

²⁶ Gazprom Neft Shelf is created specifically for offshore oil and gas exploration and production.

international sanctions and of the failure of Gazprom in the Stockman oil-field,²⁷ the Russian oil company ‘Rosneft’ (Роснефть) alongside the US company ‘ExxonMobil’ and with the assistance of the platform ‘West Alpha’, established by the Nordic company ‘North Atlantic Drilling’ successfully drilled the well Universitetskaya-1 in the Kara Sea. It was one of the main events and probably a breakthrough in the oil and gas industry in 2014 (Ponomarev 2014; Kulikov 2013). After the successful drilling the head of the Rosneft Igor Sechin announced that “the preliminary assessment of the resource base only for this, first opened well is estimated 338 billion cubic meters of gas and over 100 million tons of oil,²⁸ and this is only one of the many wells in this field. It is a common victory and we want to call this field ‘Victory’” (Magay 2014). Rosneft also emphasized that the drilling was carried out in record time-one and a half months (*ibid.*).

And the third Russian move is towards Yamal Peninsula and its adjacent waters. The ‘Yamal Megaproject’ (Ямальский Мегaproект) is one of the most important and the biggest Russian projects regarding hydrocarbon development in the Arctic. In early 2002, Yamal Peninsula was identified as a region of strategic interest to Gazprom. It contains around 20 % of the Russian natural gas reserves. The development of Yamal fields will allow Gazprom to extract up to 310-360 billion cubic meters of gas each year by 2030 (Arctic Info 2015). The development of the Yamal’s onshore and offshore fields are essential for the growth and provision of Russia's gas production since 2010, it is one of the most important strategic oil and gas carrying regions of Russia. In Yamal Peninsula and its adjacent waters 11 gas and 15 oil, gas and condensate fields have been discovered. The Preliminary estimation for gas reserves are about 16 trillion cubic meters but the perspective forecasts show that they can reach up to 22. The condensate reserves are estimated about 230.7 million tones and reserves of oil 291.8 million tones. The license for its development was acquired by Gazprom. The maximum annual gas production in Yamal Peninsula and its adjacent offshore areas is comparable to the size of Gazprom's current gas supplies to the domestic market and exceeds twofold the amount of gas exported to the foreign countries. The broad development of deposits in offshore areas of Yamal peninsula in the Kara Sea is projected to start after 2025 (Gazprom 2015).

²⁷ During 2013 Gazprom temporary froze its project for the hydrocarbon extraction from Stockman oil-field in Barents Sea after spending about 2 billion dollars just on preparation works of the project. The Russian media explained the decision reasoning too big expanses, problems connected with the new projects of US and Europe for shale gas extraction, as well as ecological risks. The reserves of Stockman field are estimated 3.9 Trillion cubic meters of gas and more than 56 million of tons of gas condensate.

²⁸ After one month Rosneft and Exxon Mobil officially announced that the resource base of the first well ‘Victory’ estimated 128.7 million tons of oil and 391, 9 billion cubic meters of gas (Interfaks 2014).

Yamal has several advantages for credible development. It is the region that is most studied and prepared for development, it is geographically close to the existing gas infrastructure, has significant reserves and high production capabilities. Nowhere else in Russia is possible to create a similar oil and gas complex in just two decades. For this reason, the development of Yamal's deposits will play a crucial role in the development of the gas industry of Russia in 21st century (*ibid.*).

According to the World Petroleum Council (WPC), from its annual report, "by 2030 Russia will receive 55 % of all extracted hydrocarbons in the Arctic. The oil production in the Arctic shelf of Russia will increase by 3.6 times, respectively from the current 600,000 tons to 2.2 million tons per day by 2030" (Lifenews 2015). After 15 years the main regions for oil production will be the shelves of Sakhalin, Barents and Pechora Seas and the Gulf of Ob with the Kara Sea shelf. According to them, active production growth will occur in the period from 2020 to 2030 as at this point it would be more cost-effective due to the return of oil prices to the level of 100 US Dollars per barrel. The main growth in this period will be directed to the projects of Gazprom and its daughter company Gazprom Neft Shelf (*ibid.*).

Until now, all the licenses for the development of the Russian Arctic deposits have been distributed between the two state-owned companies, Rosneft (total 51 licenses, including 26 on the Arctic shelf) and Gazprom Neft Shelf (total 68 offshore licenses on shelf). The shelf is a strategic direction also for Rosneft as it has 51 licenses on the Russian shelf with an estimated resource base of 309 billion of oil equivalent. According to the current estimations, by 2050 the Arctic shelf will provide from 20 to 30 % of all Russian oil production. In February, Minister of Energy Alexander Novak announced that the investments of Rosneft in the Arctic in the next 20-25 years can reach 500 billion of US Dollars. Russia has got two of the three most promising Arctic shelves, according to the analysts of WPC (Izvestiya 2015).

After the operationalization of the field Prirazlomnaya, Aleksey Miller, the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Management Committee of Gazprom, states, "The Gazprom is the forepost of Russia in the Arctic. Last year, we conquered the Yamal creating a new gas production center on onshore in the Arctic, having no analogues in the world. And today we become pioneered in the development of the Russian Arctic shelf. No doubts that Gazprom will continue its move to the Arctic" (Gazprom Neft Shelf 2013).

3.1.2 Security Interests

In security relations, the Russian interests in the Arctic are determined by several factors. Firstly, as it was mentioned above, the north is a tremendous military zone of Russia, in fact, the most important pillar of its security, since the Arctic stretches from the European to the end of the Asian continent. Also, we should take into account the fact that the total length of Russia's shore comprises about 22,600 km which is the biggest one (58 %) and it spans over 9 million sq. km of area which comprises 18 % of the country and more than 40 % of the whole Arctic. Besides, a significant part of Russia's nuclear missile potential, military-space objects and means, important military-industrial infrastructure and other strategic facilities, enterprises of the defense industrial complex as well as existing and in the stage of implementation strategic and industrial facilities are located in the Russian Arctic Zone. (Tsvetkov 2014, 2–3).

Huge quantities of Russian land ballistic missile and strategic aviation bases and airfields are located there. Murmansk and Arkhangelsk are considered the biggest Russian military sea bases. The Northern Fleet and ballistic nuclear missile submarines are the most mobile forces in the region, which are of increasing strategic importance due to the challenges that Russian land-based intercontinental ballistic-missile capability faces today (Kapyla and Mikkola 2013, 4). The main purpose of these capabilities were and are for nuclear strike towards US during the Cold War. It is the shortest way from Russia to the US through the North Pole. Also these territories are prioritized as a place for Russian Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense systems (Dugin 2000, 329–331).

So, the Arctic territories are considered as vital components of the Russian security and the strategic importance of these huge, geopolitically axial areas are preserved in any case for Russia and need to be protected. Unresolved issues of the national belongings of the Arctic subsoil has increased the probability of collision of national interests in the Arctic and the emergence of the crisis situations (Tsvetkov 2014, 2).

This is a stimulus for the increase of Russian military presence, particularly naval, air and missile forces in the region in case of all kinds of global military-political scenarios, to maintain its ability to wield hard power into an emerging strategic frontier (Bender and Nudelman 2015). In addition, Moscow is concerned with the expansion of foreign presence in the Arctic. Currently Northern Fleet submarines equipped with intercontinental ballistic missiles lay the balance of military forces in the region in favor of Moscow. However, a direct military conflict or

confrontation in the Arctic is quite unlikely, the region experiences very intensive militarization and is gradually becoming a geopolitical hotspot (Danyuk 2014).

The importance of the Arctic for Russian security interests is emphasized in a new military doctrine signed on December 26, 2014 by Russian President Vladimir Putin. It emphasizes the need for the extension of Russian influence in the Arctic region. Pursuing this aim, Russia was engaged in the port construction projects across the Arctic, at the same time intensively restoring the ruined post-Soviet military infrastructure and upgrading its military capabilities in the region (Dadwal, 2015). This comprises construction of a year-round airbase in the New Siberian Islands archipelago, ten air defense radar stations, more than 13 extra airfields, and new Arctic combat training center. In 2015, Russia planning an airdrop operation with paratroopers in the Arctic and is projected to finish the construction of five new icebreakers (Zubacheva 2014). In 2020 it will finish the construction of a new aircraft carrier capable of operating in all climatic zones (Logachev 2014). By the end of last year there were already four military airfields, while this year their number will reach 14. Alongside these, there is a huge increase in the volume of personnel (Ponomarev 2015).

In 2014, during the meeting of the Public Council of the Ministry of Defense, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu talked about the expansion of the Russian military presence in the Arctic, saying that at present three expeditions for the construction of wholly new infrastructure are being conducted in the Arctic islands. According to him, all these actions will secure their national interests in the region (Bojyeva 2014).

In addition to all these claims, Russian leaders also see the Arctic as a location where they can assert their country's status as a global geopolitical power (Dugin 2000, 345). Speaking at a National Security Council meeting in April, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, characterized the Arctic as "a sphere of their special interest" (Marzalik 2014).

3.1.3 Economic Interests

Russian economic interests in the Arctic are determined firstly by NSR and secondly by the abundance of raw materials, other than oil and gas. Before proceeding, it is useful to remember that the Russian Arctic industrial complex is the most powerful and the scale of Russian economic activity significantly exceeds the scales of other the polar countries. The concentration of gas production in the Arctic zone is reaching 91 % (Pilyavski 2014, 1). The Russian Arctic zone produces about 20 % of Russia's GDP and up to 22 % of Russian export (Tsvetkov 2014, 2).

Besides, it is the worldwide leader of icebreakers capacity and from the top five biggest cities in the Arctic Circle 4 of them are Russian (The world geography 2011; ATKearney 2015, 9–10).

As it was mentioned before, some of the richest regions of Russia are its northern territories and Russian economic interests in the Arctic is explained by the presence of huge reserves of minerals (hydrocarbons, non-ferrous and precious metals, and others). So, besides hydrocarbons the Arctic is a crucial region for the Russian economy due to its other raw materials. Numerous reserves of valuable raw materials such as gold, diamonds, nickel, copper, platinum, iron, wood and etc. are present in the Russian Arctic zone. They significantly increase the importance of this region for the country's economy. According to the western estimations the overall value of all minerals of the northern territories of Russia exceeds 22.4 trillion US Dollars.²⁹ Up to 60 % of Russian minerals are exported from the North. The Arctic zone holds much of the Russian gold reserves (40 %), chromium and manganese (90 %), the platinum metals (47 %), diamonds (100 %), vermiculite (100 %), coal, nickel, antimony, cobalt, tin, wolfram, mercury, apatite (50 %), phlogopite (60-90 %). The general conditional forecasts for coal is estimated to be at least 780 billion tones. 100 % of diamonds, antimony, apatite, phlogopite, and vermiculite, 98 % of rare metals, 95 % of gas, 90 % of nickel and cobalt and 60 % of copper and oil are also produced here. Practically 100 % of the reserves of non-ferrous precious metals are concentrated within the Nordic region (Pilyavski 2011, 1–2).

The role of NSR for Russia is difficult to overestimate. It is the national maritime transport route of Russia in the Arctic, in its vast northern region. Originally from the date of its creation this route was designed mostly for domestic destinations and consumption and has been used for the passage of military and civilian ships, transporting goods and raw materials between the Far East and North-West of the country (Krivelskaya 2013).

Today the key action being taken to make the transport system in the region more efficient is the development of alternative routes between Europe and Asia, primarily through the Russian land and sea, through the NSR. Due to the rapid economic development of Asia-Pacific region, NSR can bring considerable income to the budget of the Russian Federation. NSR enables vessels to make the transportation 1.5 times faster compared with the traditional route through the Suez Canal. For comparison, the distance by shipping vessel from the port of Murmansk to Yokohama (Japan) through the Suez Canal is 12,840 nautical miles, while through NSR it is 5,770 miles, reducing the duration of the voyage by ten days, and also saves a lot of fuel - about

²⁹ For comparison, the overall value of all minerals in US part is estimated about 8 trillion US Dollars.

800 tons for the average vessel. So, the NSR can give a powerful impetus to the development of not only the Far East and Northern regions of the Russian Federation, but also to the economy as a whole. However, the NSR will be able to compete with the southern route only in cases where it is cost effective and its infrastructure provides the maximum reduction of additional risks during the navigation in the Arctic ice (*ibid.*).

For international shipping the NSR was opened in 1991, after the collapse of the USSR. Though the most developed infrastructure for navigation in the Arctic Circle is Russian, it has not yet established enough productive management systems for maritime activities. At the turn of 20th and 21st centuries, Russia made the first important steps in the formation and implementation of a national maritime policy (adopted the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, created and operates the Maritime Collegium of the Russian Government, approved the Strategy of Development of Maritime Activities of the Russian Federation) but for countries to take further actions there is a need for new investments³⁰ (Kharlamova 2015).

The current actions of the Russian government and its development strategy is totally about that. It focuses on ensuring the comprehensive development of the region and the creation of a common Arctic transport system as a national sea route, focused on year-round operation, tending to comprise the NSR, the adjacent rivers and rail communications, as well as a network of airports. The Arctic icebreaker fleet is the driving power, allowing Russia to promote its interests. By 2020 it is planned that three new nuclear and six diesel-electric icebreakers will be finished (Pupkova 2014).

Apart from the obstacles mentioned above, in just four years, shipping along the NSR has increased tenfold. In 2013, 40 ships sailed through the NSR and most of them were bulk carriers or tankers carrying iron ore, liquefied natural gas and oil, 1.2 million tons of cargo, from Northwest Russia to China, South Korea or Japan. In addition to that number, 30 ships used the NSR for the Russian inter-Arctic transportation without full transit. In the summer of 2013, over 50 laden cargo ships transited the NSR. Nonetheless there are two predictions about NSR, optimists believe that by 2020 ships will transport 10 times more cargo, about 65 million tons, while pessimists divide this figure by 1.5 or 2³¹ (Sancin and Dine 2014; 469). The most

³⁰ There is a need of a new generations of vehicles (icebreaker fleet, amphibious transport systems), innovative logistics technology, integration of the energy projects and transport system, and the creation of modern communication systems.

³¹ This expected growth will be because not so much from the full transit (today only 30 % of cargo transported via NSR made by the transiting ships) as to the growth of internal supplies for industrial objects, needed for development

promising traffic flows will be in places of hydrocarbon production, located on the Arctic coast and continental shelf of the Russian Federation (Kharlamova 2015).

Currently the question of freedom of navigation through the NSR and its internationalization with international management consortium is discussed very intensively. For Russia, the NSR is still the only transport route, capable of integrating remote areas of the far North of the country and their resource potential in the national and global economy. Without it the problem of the ‘northern delivery’ cannot be solved. Therefore, Russia cannot afford to put economic relations between individual regions within the country currently carried out by NSR under international control. Also, an important aspect is that the freedom and safety of navigation through the NSR is not the same when it comes to the Arctic Ocean. Responsibility for the prevention of damage to the environment from navigation of the vessels not adapted to the arctic conditions is on the coastal Arctic countries. In this regard, it would be much more advisable not only to put these waters under national control for compliance with the requirements of safe navigation, but to develop and approve the general rules of such navigation in the framework of the International Maritime Organization (Voronkov 2012).

3.2 Russia’s key goals

Taking into consideration the geopolitical interests of Russia and its permanent correlation with the environment, Russia has three main strategic goals that it aims to achieve in the Arctic. All of the goals are equally important and inseparably linked to each other.

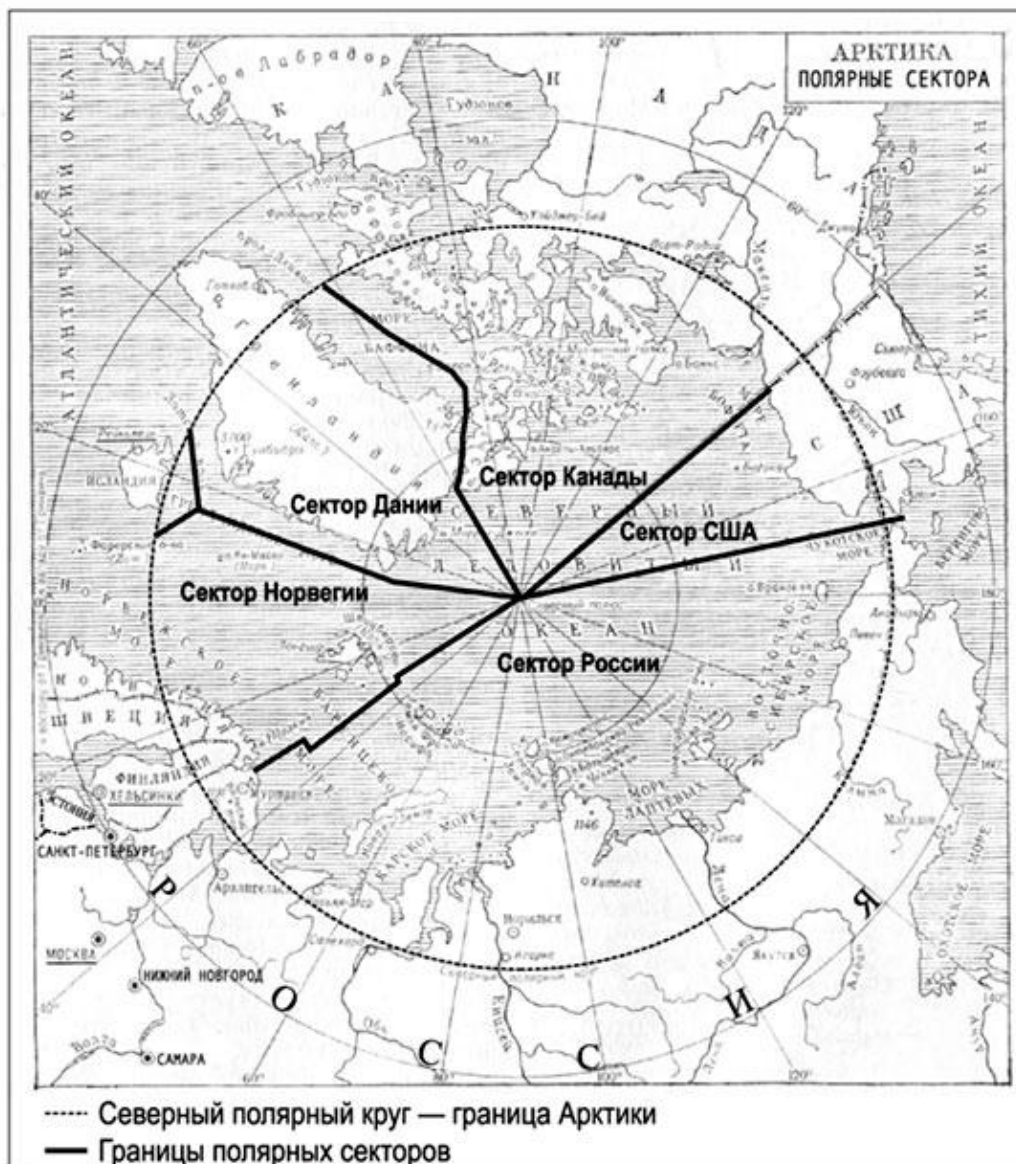
The first strategic goal is the final clarification and consolidation of the borders of Russian continental shelf and the lines of EEZs with other Arctic states in accordance with international regulations and regaining control over the Soviet Arctic sector.³² Russia needs to ensure that the final delineation of Arctic areas will take into account all previous agreements and arrangements achieved between USSR and its successor Russia and its neighboring Arctic countries, in

of natural resources both on the Arctic shelf and the continent as well (The removal of their production expected to be about 40 % of the total cargo via NSR).

³² Historically, it happened that the Arctic sector for each of the states was a space whose base is the coast of the state and the lateral line-the meridians from the North Pole to the eastern and western boundaries of the State. So the total area of the Arctic sector of the Soviet Union to the north of the Arctic Circle was 9.3 million sq. km or 44 % of the area of the total Arctic (See Figure 2.5). However, this principle/provision was not confirmed in the UNCLOS, adopted in 1982. The Russian Federation has ratified the Convention in 1997 and established a 12-mile zone of territorial waters and the 200-mile exclusive economic zone, excluding Russian jurisdiction of these domains, limiting to its coastal territory. Theoretically Russia can regain its control over the Soviet Arctic sector if proves that the Arctic subsoil towards to the North Pole, Lomonosov Ridge, is the natural continuation of the Russian continental margin (Mitrofanov 2006) .

accordance with all of the provisions of internationally legal acts in the field of maritime law and continental shelf given to Russia. Without solving these goals it is not certain that Russia will be able to keep under its full control those Arctic areas which are under its control under the International Law. As was mentioned before, currently the question of the transformation of the status of NSR became actual and intensively discussed (Tsvetkov 2014, 2–3; Zubacheva 2014).

Figure 3.5: Map of the Russian Arctic sector during Soviet Union



Source: Mitrofanov (2006).

The second goal has direct connection with the first one. UNCLOS limits Russian Northern Fleet to its coastline, from 12 to 24 miles, so to keep fleet of that volume becomes extremely hard. So, the second goal is to establish itself as the dominant geopolitical power in the region and to ensure the freedom of movement of its Arctic fleet, which keeps balance of power in favor of Russia and one of its biggest tools to show its dominance in the region (*ibid.*). However coastal state has relatively modest advantages with regard of the navigation rights in continental shelf, it has jurisdiction over the waters of continental shelf (not affecting the legal status of superjacent waters and air space above) (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Part 6, Art. 78). Particularly, it has right of construction of artificial islands, structures and installations on the basis of *mutatis mutandis* (with the necessary changes having been made) (*ibid.*, Art. 80).

So, Russia intends to improve the situation through the extension of its continental shelf, by regaining Soviet Arctic sector, which again would provide Russia roughly with the half of the Arctic and could strengthen its position in the struggle for dominance.

3.3 Geopolitical strategy of Russia

In order to defend its geopolitical interests and achieve its goals Russia has developed a complex of comprehensive strategies. At the core of its action and moves lay ‘The Strategy of the Development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation and Provision of National Security until 2020’, which is helped by the ‘Energetic Strategy of Russian Federation for period until 2030’ and ‘National Security Strategy until 2020’.

President Vladimir Putin adopted the strategy of the development of the Arctic zone on 20 February 2013 (Kremlin 2013). In the core of the document lays³³, “The Basis of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic till 2020 and Further Perspective” (See Figure 2.6) (The Basis of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic till 2020 and further perspective 2008).

³³ In accordance with the Principles of State Policy in the Arctic for the Period up to 2020 and beyond, the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation going to include all parts of the territory of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Krasnoyarsk Territory, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, Chukotka and Nenets and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous regions.

Figure 3.6: Composition of Russian strategy for the Russian Arctic zone



The Strategy of the development of Arctic zone is the more thorough and upgraded Strategy of Russian Federation. The document is composed of seven chapters: 1. Main provisions; 2. Main risks and threats, the objective of the Strategy; 3. Priority directions of the development and main activities; 4. The mechanisms of realization of the strategy; 5. Stages of realization of the Strategy; 6. Main features of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation and provision of national security; and 7. Control over the implementation of the Strategy (Strategy of the Development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation and Provision of National Security until 2020 2013). The framework of realization of the strategy is supported by the consolidation of resources and efforts of all stakeholders of Russian Federation in the Arctic for solution of key problems connected with the development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation and provision of national security. The aim of the strategy is to realize national interests and achieve main objectives of the state policy of Russian Federation in the Arctic by addressing main problems in accordance of the strategic priorities (*ibid.*, Chapter 1, Art. 1). Priority directions are: 1. Comprehensive socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of

Russian Federation; 2. Development of science and technology; 3. Creation of a modern information and telecommunication infrastructure; 4. Provision of environmental security; 5. International cooperation in the Arctic; and 6. Provision of military security, defense and protection of state borders of the Russian Federation in the Arctic (*ibid.*, Chapter 3, Art. 7).

The Strategy envisages the overall improvement of socio-economic conditions and development of the region through better governance, improvement the quality of life and social conditions of the indigenous and whole population (*ibid.*, Art. 8).

According to the Strategy the efficient exploitation and development of the resource base of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation is able to provide significantly Russia's needs of hydrocarbon, aqua biological and other types of strategic raw materials. To achieve these objectives it envisages: formation of the integrated projects and exploration of the continental shelf and coastal areas; preparation of the hydrocarbon reserves and raw materials for their development on the basis of the state program. Important point is that it aims to provide a significant increase of Arctic offshore fields in a balance of mineral reserves. Also it aims to form reserve fund, guaranteeing energy security of the country and sustainable development of the fuel-energy complex in a long run perspective, in the period of the replacement of production in traditional areas of development after 2020. It also envisages intensive construction of settlements for workers at gas and oil objects. In order to ensure the medium and long term domestic and export requirements of the Russian Federation in the non-ferrous, noble and precious metals and scarce types of mineral raw materials,³⁴ it is projected to use the latest technologies and services on the basis of large investments supported by government. The Strategy also envisages the realization of the large infrastructure projects, providing integration of the Arctic zone to the Russian Federation with its almost mastered regions and those on the process such as Thimano-Pechora gas and oil province, continental shelves of Barents, Pechora and Kara Seas and on the floors of Yamal and Gydan peninsulas³⁵ (*ibid.*, Art. 11).

For the purpose of modernization and development of the infrastructure of the Arctic transport system, ensuring the preservation of the NSR as a unified national transport highway of the Russian Federation, the Strategy aims to pave modern transport corridors; to upgrade and build new ports, terminals pipelines, aviation routes, railways and roads with wholly railroad

³⁴ Efficient mining of chromium, manganese, tin, bauxite, uranium, titanium, zinc in the islands of the Arctic Ocean, Kola Peninsula, mountains of the polar Ural and gold deposits from the eastern areas of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

³⁵ In the strategy there was outlined Russian ambitions for an early start of the hydrocarbon extraction from the fields on the continental shelf in Barents, Pechora and Kara seas and development of Thimano-Pechora hydrocarbon field.

administration along the NSR; to construct icebreakers and transport vessels by governmental support; to create a technological fleet for exploration and serving the facilities on the Arctic shelf; to create a unified telecommunication network “Electronic Arctic”, which will link the coastal towns and settlements; to restructure and grow the freight traffic through the NSR; to improve the regulatory framework of the NSR (*ibid.*, Art. 12).

The realization of the strategy is expected in two stages. The priority objectives for 2013–2015 are the creation of the conditions to strengthen national security through comprehensive development of the Arctic area; formation and implementation of the state program of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020; the completion of necessary hydrographic works, and on the basis of them to define the baselines of the territorial waters, economic zone and continental shelf; the achievement of the legal formulation of boundaries of the continental shelf of Russia in the Arctic Ocean, without any kind of territorial or space losses; the creation of a unified national system of monitoring for the protection of ecosystem; the establishment of an integrated information and telecommunication infrastructure; creation and development of the coast guard and rescue centers (*ibid.*, Chapter 5, Art. 28, 29).

In the second phase, by 2020, starts the transition to sustainable innovative socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. In this stage the Strategy aims to provide the realization of the competitive advantages of Russia in the field of mastering mineral resources of the continental shelf of Russia in the Arctic and development of infrastructure of the NSR and fleet, including the icebreaker, for solving the problems of transport maintenance of the Arctic region and Eurasian transit. Also it envisages the exploitation of aquatic biological resources, development of the overall complex of security and creation of new mechanisms for reducing and avoiding negative effects on the environment in Russian Arctic zone (*ibid.*, Art. 30, 31).

In regard to the Arctic policy and strategy the Energy and National Security strategies also have some provisions which in time regulate and accomplish the main one.

On 12 May 2009,³⁶ Russian President Dmitry Medvedev approved, “Russian national security strategy for the period until 2020” (Zysk 2010). In the document economy was emphasized as a main security factor. Stable and sustainable development of Russian economy is impossible without large-scale development of the richest natural resources. It gives a special attention to

³⁶ He replaced the security concept from 1997, which was outdated and was not reflecting Russia’s actual, evolved security environment.

infrastructure development aiming to reduce the economic differences between Russian regions, especially in the Arctic and Far East. The strategy gives a special role to the energetic security, highlighting that the energy resources and its political use significantly strengthen Russia's international position and Russia's influence on the international stage. It asserts the need of gradual incline to northward, focusing on energy resources of the Arctic for a long term perspectives (*ibid.*).

According to the 'Energy Strategy of Russia until 2030' the rate of increase in the parameters of natural gas production is directly linked to the development of new oil and gas producing regions such as the Yamal Peninsula and its offshore areas, Arctic continental shelf, East Siberian fields and Far East reserves (The Energetic Strategy of Russian Federation for Period until 2030).

It gives a priority to the development of the resource potential of Yamal peninsula and its offshore areas. Without Yamal, it would be impossible to achieve the tasks defined by the strategy. Currently, in accordance with the strategy, Yamal Peninsula is engaged into a number of large investment projects, such as 'Integrated development of the deposits of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District and the north of Krasnoyarsk region', part of this program 'the development of the Yamal Peninsula and the adjacent waters', project 'Northern latitudinal way' and as it was aforementioned the development of oil and gas production in accordance to Yamal Megaproject. Special attention is given to ecological monitoring and concerns (Kabilkin 2014, 83–84).

The main mechanisms of implementation of the Strategy are "the State program of socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation for the period till 2020 and other government programs of the Russian Federation, federal and departmental target programs, as well as sectorial strategies, regional and municipal programs, programs of large companies, providing projects, aimed to the complex development of the territory of the Russian Arctic" (Strategy of the Development of the Arctic zone of Russian Federation and Provision of National Security until 2020 2013, Chapter 4, Art. 20). The scope of the work and volume of their funding made from the federal for the fiscal year and the planned period. Extra-budgetary financial support for implementation of the Strategy carried out on a public-private partnership at the expense of development institutions, international financial institutions and foreign investment in the implementation of promising infrastructural, social, innovation, environmental protection and other projects (*ibid.*, Art. 22, 23).

So, taken all together, it reflects the intention of authorities to make the next five years truly turning for the Arctic overall development and integration of the region into the country. The

document establishes the state support in the main directions of state investment policy, for the development of transport, energy and industrial infrastructure, scientific, scientific-technical and innovative activities. The program promises to provide a variety of giant projects. The highest priority are the economic development and integration of Russia's Arctic region into the country, development of minerals and NSR, which can create a wholly new geopolitical reality.

Until now the Russian society perceive the Arctic boundaries as the same as it was during the USSR (Mitrofanov 2006), however its internationally recognized borders in the Arctic are much less then it was, comprising all territories in the northern part of Russian federation within the Arctic Circle and from its coastline until the lines of its EEZ (200 nautical miles). The Strategy gives special importance to the definition of the Russian Arctic zone boundaries, planning to achieve legal formulation of the Russian continental shelf until 2020. The realization of the Strategy will provide Russia its competitive advantages with the view of strengthening its geopolitical influence and position in the Arctic.

4. Current geopolitical situation

This chapter is comprised of three sub-chapters as well. Aiming to provide an insight about the current geopolitical situation, firstly, I will analyze the Arctic governance system, putting an emphasis on the analysis of the UNCLOS, Arctic Council and Ilulissat Declaration. The second sub-chapter will address the territorial issues in the Arctic region, giving special attention to the Russian claim of the extension of its outer limit of continental shelf. And finally, the last sub-chapter will introduce the Russian impact on the geopolitical situation in the Arctic. In order to analyze the current geopolitics in it dynamics I will use all the three methods. I need all of them to make structural-functional analysis through the whole chapter, analyzing various institutions within its dynamics. In this chapter I will use both primary and secondary sources, giving special attention to the analysis of the primary sources.

The geopolitical issues in the Arctic themselves are the reflection of the competing interests of the Arctic states. Taking into consideration the findings from the previous chapter, the geopolitical dynamics in the Arctic are changeable, relying on different factors such as the size of the state, both geographically and politically. The accurate dynamics are specific to the issue at stake, as some of the issues played out bilaterally, while the others multilaterally, as well as clashes of interests and collaborative initiatives can occur at the same time, regardless of whether

the players are allies or adversaries. Also, unlike Antarctica, The Arctic is not a global common, its geopolitics are defined by the interests of the Arctic States, which is an important characteristic of the region's geopolitics (Mychajlyszyn 2008, 1).

Alongside with the impact of climate change on the Arctic geopolitics, the end of the Cold War also had an impact on it. On the one hand, it decreased the level of importance the Arctic from security perspective. On the other hand, it increased issues and disputes connected with territorial sovereignty which complicate relations. All of these have raised the profile of the Arctic dramatically in foreign policy dynamics (*ibid.*, 2).

4.1 Arctic Governance

Geopolitical issues in the Arctic are not exclusively conflicts over interests as they can also reflect cooperative, multilateral initiatives which establishes a level of governance in the region (Mychajlyszyn 2008, 3). Unlike Antarctica, the Arctic has no single international governance regime.³⁷ Arctic governance regime is largely recognized as a complex, multi-layered system of fragmented international and regional (bilateral and national standards) regulations, which are supported by binding and non-binding soft law mechanisms (Arctic Center). The dominant institution of legal-binding regime in the Arctic Ocean is the UNCLOS, which is complemented by the Arctic Council as a non-binding soft law mechanism and Ilulissat Declaration (Mychajlyszyn 2008, 4).

4.1.1 Arctic under UNCLOS

UNCLOS came into force in 1994. Being a comprehensive treaty, dealing with a various of international law issues relating to the high seas, territorial seas and coastal areas, including “navigational rights, territorial sea limits, economic jurisdiction, legal status of resources on the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, passage of ships through narrow straits, conservation and management of living marine resources, protection of the marine environment, a marine research regime and, a more unique feature, a binding procedure for settlement of disputes between States” (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1998). The United Nations Secretary-General described the treaty as, “Possibly the most significant legal instrument

³⁷ The main reason of that is the fact that the Antarctica is an uninhabited continent covered by ice and surrounded by ocean, while the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land and ice masses, composing the territories of sovereign states.

of this century”³⁸ (*ibid.*). Currently, it is ratified by 167 countries (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 2015). So the treaty suits many and diverse boundaries stretching from the coast to the high seas, including internal waters, territorial waters, contiguous zone, EEZ, continental shelf limit and international waters and defines specific rights to the coastal country accordingly (Isted 2009, 349)

The Arctic Ocean is governed by UNCLOS, due to of that fact that it is mainly consists of ice-covered ocean rather than land. From the Arctic coastal states UNCLOS is ratified by four from five coastal states, subsequently it is ratified by Canada, Denmark, Norway and the Russian Federation, however, not by US (Arctic Controversy 2015).

The sovereignty of a coastal state extends beyond its land territory and internal waters,³⁹ stretching from the baseline outward 12 nautical miles.⁴⁰ This space known as territorial sea and the sovereignty of the costal State stretch to the air space over the territorial sea as well as to its bed and subsoil. Within this region, the coastal state save its right to regulate and use the natural resources. (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Part 2, Section 1, Art. 2 and Section 2, Art. 3, 8; Nordquist 2002, 66, 77). Foreign ships, regardless coastal or land-locked have the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea, in conformity and compliance with laws and regulations adopted by coastal State and all generally accepted international regulations relating to the prevention of collisions at sea (*ibid.*, Part 2, Section 3, Art. 17, 21; *ibid.*, 153, 186–187).

For another 12 nautical miles from territorial sea or 24 nautical miles from the baseline extends the contiguous zone. The coastal state has the right to exercise necessary control and enforce laws that prohibit and prevent smuggling or illegal immigration, to enforce sanitary laws and regulations and to punish violator (*ibid.*, Part 2, Section 4, Art. 33; *ibid.*, 267–268).

The EEZ extends beyond the territorial sea, stretching from 12 to 200 nautical miles from the baseline and shall not extend beyond it⁴¹ (*ibid.*, Part 5, Art. 55, 57; *ibid.*, 514, 547). Within this zone the coastal country has very broad jurisdiction, too. Within the EEZ, its superjacent waters to the seabed and its subsoil coastal state has sovereign rights of exploration, exploitation,

³⁸ The Convention was adopted as a ‘package deal’, aiming to be as a whole, in all its parts and provisions without moderation on any aspect.

³⁹ The UNCLOS provides that “the waters on the landward side of the baseline are internal waters of the coastal state” (except Archipelagic States) (Nordquist 2002, 107). The coastal nation is free to enjoy and regulate navigation and natural resource exploitation, while foreign nations lack the right of passage.

⁴⁰ 12 nautical miles is the maximum permissible breath.

⁴¹ The EEZ is composed of the seabed and water column from the outer limit of the territorial sea to the outer limit of the EEZ, therefore its maximum breath is 188 nautical miles, being subject to the specific legal regime in the Part 5 of the Convention.

conservation and management of the natural resources, both living and non-living;⁴² sovereign rights with regard to other activities connected with economic gain, exploitation and exploration of the zone such as the production of energy from the water and winds, drilling for oil and gas; as well as exclusive rights for the establishment, authorization, operation, construction and use of artificial islands, other structures and installations such as laying pipeline and submarine cables (it also specifies certain limitations and conditions for their removal if they are either abandoned or no longer in use); to conduct marine scientific research, to fish and test naval jets (*ibid.*, Part 5, Art. 56, 60, 61, 62; *ibid.*, 525, 573, 596–597, 616). Within its EEZ, the coastal country is empowered with the jurisdiction to enact and enforce laws such as boarding, inspection, arrest and judicial proceedings, when it may be necessary to assure compliance with the laws and regulations adopted regarding its sovereign rights to explore, exploit, conserve and manage living resources in its EEZ (*ibid.*, Part 5, Art. 73; *ibid.*, 786). In the EEZ, all States, regardless coastal or land-locked have the freedom of navigation, overflight, laying of pipelines and submarine cables and other internationally lawful uses of the sea. However, they shall take into consideration the rights and duties of the coastal country and comply with the laws and regulations adopted by it, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention and other rules of international law (Articles 56 and 58 constitute the essence of that specific regime of the EEZ) (*ibid.*, Part 5, Art. 58; *ibid.*, 555–556). If there are overlapping claims between to States for the delimitation of their EEZs with opposite coasts, the solution shall be affected by agreement between them on the basis of international law) (*ibid.*, Part 5, Art. 74; *ibid.*, 800–801).

The continental shelf limit provides another possible extension of a coastal nation's jurisdiction over marine territories. "The continental shelf of a coastal State comprises the seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the natural prolongation of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin"⁴³ (*ibid.*, Part 6, Art. 76). If the State's continental margin extends past the 200 nautical miles beyond its EEZ, then that state's continental shelf is considered to extend until the end of the continental margin. Nonetheless, regardless of the length of the continental margin, the continental shelf cannot extend more than 350 nautical miles from the baseline or 100 nautical miles from its isobaths, 2500 meter. This provision does apply on submarine ridges and it is not applicable for submarine

⁴² The coastal country must promote the objective of optimum utilization of the living resources in the EEZ.

⁴³ "The continental margin comprises the submerged prolongation of the land mass of the coastal State, and consists of the seabed and subsoil of the shelf, the slope and the rise. It does not include the deep ocean floor with its oceanic ridges or the subsoil thereof" (*ibid.*).

elevations, which are natural components of the continental margin (*ibid.*; *ibid.*, 841, 879). The importance of the continental shelf limit is that the UNCLOS provides a coastal country with exclusive rights to explore and exploit natural resources located within the continental shelf's seabed or subsoil, including mineral and other non-living resources together with living organisms. If the coastal country does not exploit its natural resources or explore the continental shelf, no one can do these activities without the consent of the coastal country (*ibid.*, Part 6, Art. 77; *ibid.*, 895, 897). In order to extend its jurisdiction over its continental shelf coastal state must prove the outer limit of its continental shelf. It means that the coastal country must prove where the national land mass ends and the ocean floor begins. This process made on the basis of the application submission by the coastal country to the CLCS. The Commission makes recommendations to coastal States in regard to the establishment of the outer limits of their continental shelf which are recognized as 'final and binding' (*ibid.*, Part 6, Art. 76; *ibid.*, 882). Foreign countries have all freedoms related to the navigation and other rights provided by the Convention (*ibid.*, Part 6, Art. 78; *ibid.*, 825–826).

Part 11, Section 2 of the Convention rests on the principle that the deep seabed and its resources are the common heritage of mankind. No state or other juridical person such as corporation are allowed to claim sovereignty or to assert exclusive management authority and private-property rights over the Area (*ibid.*, Part 11: Section 2, Art. 136, 137).

4.1.1.1 The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

The CLCS operates in accordance to the Annex 2 of the Convention. If state has ratified the Convention, it must follow the recommendations of the Commission during the delimitation of its continental shelf. The CLCS has two functions. Firstly, it provides scientific and technical advice⁴⁴ to the countries preparing submissions and review submissions, (it sets the terms for how must be gathered and documented the scientific data for the submission of a legitimate claim to an outer limit of the continental shelf). Secondly, after collecting data and making graphical representations, the country submits its findings to the Commission, which considers that data and other material submitted by coastal States, and makes a recommendations in accordance of art. 76 (*ibid.*, Annex 2, Art. 3; *ibid.*, 1003, 1015). The Commission is composed of 21 experts in the field of geology, geophysics or hydrography. The members of the Commission are nationals of member states of UNCLOS and elected for 5 years, having opportunity to be reelected. They

⁴⁴ If the coastal State requested for it during the preparation of the data.

usually meet twice a year (*ibid.*, Art. 2; *ibid.*, 1014). Annex 2 sets a 10 year time limit from the date of the ratification of the treaty after which the state would be able to make its submission (*ibid.*, Art. 4). Unless the Commission decides, it establishes and operates by sub-commission made up of 7 members (*ibid.*, Art. 5). The sub-commission reviews the data and makes a recommendation to the Commission. After the approval by the majority of Commission, 2/3, it makes its own recommendation and submit it in writing to the coastal country and the United Nations Secretary-General (*ibid.*, Art. 6; *ibid.*, 1016–1017). If the Commission's recommendations are in disagreement with the coastal country's submission, then the coastal country has to gather more data and revise it within reasonable time (*ibid.*, Art. 8). The important aspect is that, despite the Commission provides scientific determinacy on the delineation of a countries continental shelf, it does not resolve and prejudice issues of delimitation of boundaries between States with opposite or adjacent coast. The Commission's role is only to make recommendations relating the other limit of continental shelf, not to be involved into the negotiations and disputes of the countries with overlapping claims and opposite coasts (*ibid.*, Art. 9; *ibid.*, 1017).

This notion is applicable in that case where different states share continental shelf land mass and consequently can have overlapping claims. The recommendations of the Commission just provide the scientific data, regarding the shelf's outer limit, leaving the final establishment of maritime boundaries to the submitting states (Isted 2009, 352–353).

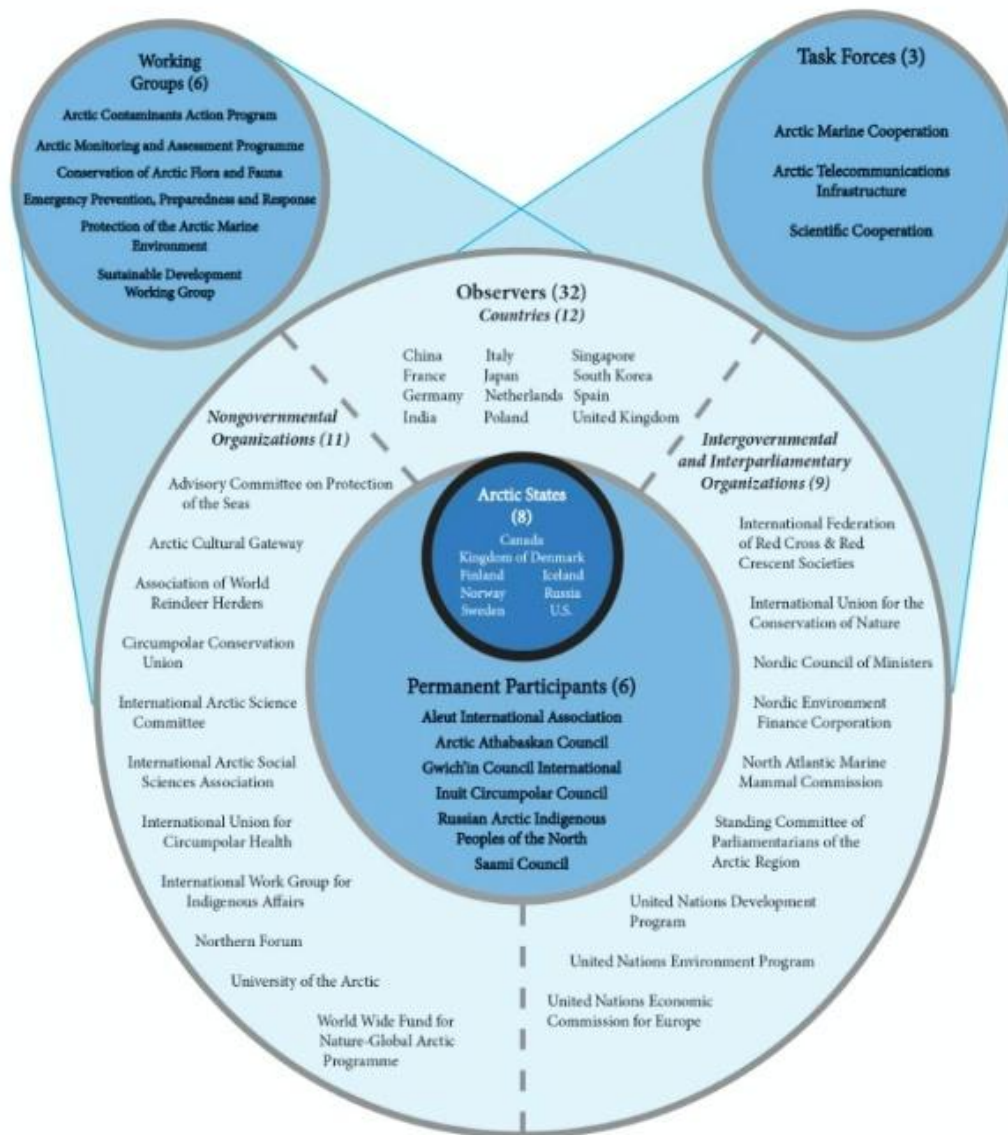
On the basis of positive recommendation of CLCS, coastal country can establish its outer limits of the continental shelf, which will be final and binding (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Part 6, Art. 76; Nordquist 2002, 882).

4.1.2 Arctic Council

The first comprehensive attempt to realize a wide regime, dealing with the protection of the Arctic environment began with the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy from 1991 which had eight Arctic States as parties of the treaty. After the realization of the success of this initiative, the Arctic eight states formed the Arctic Council, aiming to provide a high-level, intergovernmental ministerial forum for discussion of issues relating to the common interests and concerns amongst the Arctic States (Rothwell 2008, 8–9). Established on the basis of Ottawa Declaration in 1996 to ensure environmental protection and to promote sustainable development, the Arctic Council expanded largely over the years (Ottawa Declaration 1996). Composed of

three distinct groups-members, permanent participants and observers, it is the last group that has increased the most, connected with new emerged geographical factors (deposits and waterways). Due of realization of its goals the work of the Council is done in six working, expert groups and three task forces, having a permanent secretariat in Tromso, Norway (See Figure 3.1).

Figure 4.1: Structure of the Arctic Council



Source: US Department of State (2015).

So the Council is a promoter of soft law such as non-binding norms. Numerous no legally binding special programs, regional agreements and declarations (the most important and relevant

ones)⁴⁵ for protection of Arctic Ocean space, sustainable development and scientific cooperation have been adopted by the Arctic Council. (Joyner 2009, 217). However, regardless of its status the scientific and policy work and management of the Arctic environment of the Arctic council are well respected (Charron 2014).

The ability of representation with one voice within the Arctic Council has been cast into doubt during 2007 when only five of the eight Council members (Denmark, Norway, Russia, Canada and US) started discussions regarding Arctic Ocean issues and signed declaration in 2008 (Rothwell 2008).

4.1.3 The Ilulissat Declaration

In late 2007, Denmark invited the other, four, Arctic coastal countries (Norway, Russia, Canada, and the U.S.) to a conference. The aim of the conference was the confirmation of the commitment of all the coastal states to an orderly process for the resolution of national claims in the Arctic region. Implicitly, the invitation was considered as a response to the Russia's flag-planting on the seabed of Arctic and caused controversy. Besides, even the composition of the planned conference itself became a case of controversy as the other, three members of the Arctic Council (Iceland, Sweden, and Finland) and the six permanent participants, representing the indigenous peoples were clearly excluded and were undermining the role of the Council itself. Nevertheless, the conference was held in Greenland in May, 2008. After few days, in May 28, 2008, a document was signed by the foreign ministers of the five Arctic coastal states and became well known as Ilulissat Declaration (Yeager 2008).

Highlighting the climate change and its impact on the Arctic, the Declaration is concentrated into the 3 points. Firstly, they reconfirm their obligation to the orderly resolution of issues concerning territorial claims, delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf and jurisdiction, within the existing legal framework, UNCLOS, as well as refuse the need for a new comprehensive international legal regime for the Arctic governance; secondly, they note the

⁴⁵ The latest two declarations are the most relevant ones for the current situation. The first and latest one is the Kiruna Declaration adopted on 15 May 2013 in Sweden. Kiruna Declaration is important as it establishes new task forces for the protection of Arctic environment, improvement of economic and social conditions and for acting the climate change. However the turning in this declaration is that India, China, Japan, Singapore, Republic of Korea and Italy were finally welcomed as new Observer States (Kiruna Declaration 2013). The Nuk Declaration adopted on 12 May 2011 in Greenland is important particularly for the strengthening of the Council. It announced, "The Agreement in Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, as the first legally-binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Council" (Nuk Declaration 2011). Also it established a new expert group on Arctic Ecosystem as well as a task force for Arctic marine environment (*ibid.*).

uniqueness of the Arctic ecosystem and affirm to take new steps, both nationally and in cooperation among them and other interested parties to ensure the protection and preservation of the Arctic marine environment in accordance with international law and joint work with International Maritime Organization. They affirm to improve and strengthen the safety measures of maritime navigation and reduce ship-based pollution in the region. Thirdly, five coastal countries express the need and their intention of strengthening the cooperation in science and exchange of research information, including data concerning the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment and other scientific researches, aiming to promote safety of life in the region, including through bilateral and multilateral arrangements between or among them (The Ilulissat Declaration 2008).

Although not explicitly, the Ilulissat Declaration is the very important document and part of the Arctic governance. Perhaps the most important point in Declaration is that the 5 coastal countries asserted their dominant role in the region, addressing both territorial issues and issues connected to resource development.⁴⁶ It is a clear challenge for the non-coastal or non-Arctic states to exert claims and interests in the Arctic resources. Besides the reaffirmation of the commitment to the UNCLOS is especially important message for Russia and US in light of Russia's flag planting on the seabed and of the fact that the U.S. has not yet ratified the convention. Thirdly, by this Declaration the Arctic Five explicitly expressed their opposition to new regime and legal constraints connected with their ability of resource development in the region. The Declaration confirms that the existing international legal framework provides "a solid foundation for responsible management by the five coastal states, and other users of this Ocean, through national implementation and the application of relevant provisions" (Yeager 2008). Also, the declaration is ambiguous with regards of other non-Arctic, non-coastal states or to non-governmental entities, who wish to influence the utilization of resources and navigation of the Arctic Ocean. Declaration notes a role for 'interested parties', but it avoids recognizing such interests with any specificity or formalize of any Arctic interest on behalf of non-Arctic states in a new multi-lateral legal regime. So the central point of this document is to deter efforts of non-Arctic, even non-coastal countries to exert their interests in a domain which is considered to be primarily the affair of the Arctic five coastal states (*ibid.*).

As the thesis discussing particularly the Russian geo (political) moves it is important to be aware of its position towards the aforementioned institutions.

⁴⁶ The declaration emphasized the unique and dominant position of them in addressing the possibilities and challenges connected with issues of sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction.

So, after the adoption of Ilulissat Declaration the most obvious result was that Russia is not going to deviate from the legal procedures of the UNCLOS. Even, to show Russian attitude towards the UNCLOS, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov especially emphasized that “the episode of Russian flag planting hadn’t have more legal consequences than the planting of US flag on the moon” (Prokhorov 2008). However, the case of a Greenpeace ship acknowledged that yes, Russian attitude towards UNCLOS is loyal but with a little reservation.⁴⁷

Before the ministerial meeting of Arctic Council in Canada from 24 to 25 of April 2015, the Senior Arctic Official of the Russian Federation Vladimir Barbin gave a solid response regarding Russian position towards the Arctic Council during the press interview to the publishing house ‘Kommersant’ (КОММЕРСАНТЪ). During the interview he announced:

It is very important for us to show that we are interested in the cooperation in Arctic, where Russia has leading positions, taking into account that it was one of that countries who initiate and support the establishment of the Arctic Council. Arctic is believed to be a region of dialogues and collective response to the challenges, to the challenges connected with science, technology, climate change, with everything, what Arctic opens up for economic mastering/development. In all of these spheres we have to act in concert, jointly. It is our approach. We want to strengthen and develop the cooperation (Chernenko 2015).

4.2 Territorial issues

The major geopolitical issue in the Arctic region concerning the Arctic states is the question of sovereignty and national jurisdiction over Arctic territory, which have born territorial disputes among them (Mychajlyszyn 2008, 2).

Currently, the four Arctic coastal states Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark are either in the process of preparing territorial claims in the Arctic, including claims for expansion of EEZs, and continental shelves, or they have almost done it.⁴⁸ In addition to these processes there are four unresolved Arctic territorial disputes. The US and Canada are negotiating over the maritime

⁴⁷ In 2013, Dutch-flagged Arctic icebreaker ‘Arctic Sunrise’ and 28 activists along with 2 journalists have been arrested in Russia, in Murmansk, being charged with piracy and then hooliganism, after the protest at Gazprom’s Prirazlomnaya platform (Sharp 2014). In 2013 Moscow announced that “the Russian side has informed the Netherlands and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea that it does not accept the arbitration procedure in the ‘Arctic Sunrise’ case, and is not planning to take part in the tribunals” (Sputnik News 2013). During the ratification of UNCLOS in 1997, Russia submitted an accompanying statement according to what, “it would not accept procedures that led to the tribunal making binding decisions concerning national sovereignty” (*ibid.*). Taking as the bases this statement Russia insisted that it’s not obliged to recognize the authority of the maritime tribunal, rejecting to participate in disputes concerning ‘sovereign rights’ and ‘jurisdiction’ (*ibid.*). After spending three months in a Russian detention center all 30 activists were free (Greenpeace 2014). The ship was freed after 10 months (Vidal 2014).

⁴⁸ As mentioned earlier the US has not ratified the UNCLOS and consequently cannot submit a claim under article 76 of the UNCLOS.

boundaries in the Beaufort Sea; the US and Russia have disputed area in Bering Sea;⁴⁹ Denmark and Canada have disagreement connected with Hans Island;⁵⁰ and jurisdictional question regarding Northwest Passage.⁵¹ There was also one dispute between Norway and Russia for the so - called 'Grey Zone' in the Barents Sea, an area expected to hold big volume of hydrocarbon deposits but on September 15, 2010, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed an agreement in Murmansk which divides the area by half, giving to each country 175,000 sq. km. It provides fishing rights and joint development of future oil and gas finds in the boundary line (Rourke 2015, 21–22).

However from all of these issues the most important and sensitive are the claims for the extension of the outer limits of continental shelves in accordance of article 76 of the UNCLOS. The Lomonosov and Mendeleev-Alpha Ridges are in the center of the conflicting claims of Russia, Denmark and Canada. Each country claims that the ridges are natural geological extensions of their continental margins and each of them collecting geological and scientific data to support its claims (Ebinger and Zambetakis 2009, 1228).

On 15 December 2014, Denmark submitted its application to the CLCS in accordance with Article 76 of the UNCLOS. Its claim contains 895,541 sq. km, including the Lomonosov Ridge. According the Danish claim the Lomonosov Ridge is the natural extension of the Greenland shelf and in fact its claim contains the North Pole itself (See Figure 3.2) (Russia Today 2014; The Economist 2014).

Canada has also pretensions towards the North Pole and its follow - up submission will include a claim to the Lomonosov Ridge too, extending Canada's claim 200 nautical miles beyond the North Pole (The Guardian 2013). Firstly, Canada was planning to submit its own Arctic claim in December of 2013 but at the last moment the government rewrote its Arctic claim, aiming to involve the North Pole and to make more survey to strengthen its claim (Zerehi 2015).

⁴⁹ In 1990 they signed an agreement regarding to that area but Russian Duma has not ratified it yet.

⁵⁰ The disagreement is about the territorial right and control over the island.

⁵¹ Canada wants to maintain its control over the Passage, while the US, EU and others assert that the passage would constitute an international strait.

Figure 4.2: Map of the Danish claim for the extension of its continental shelf in the Arctic



Source: The Economist (2014).

4.2.1 Russian claim towards the North Pole

From all of these claims and disputes the most prominent and important is the Russian one. The first Russian claim towards the Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges were made on 20th of December 2001. Russia's submission was in accordance with article 76 of UNCLOS and all regulations of CLCS. The central claim was that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges are not oceanic ridges per se but the extensions of the Eurasian continent, of its continental margin and by nature they are submarine elevations. However, in 2002, the CLCS neither rejected nor accepted the Russian submission as it was insufficiently documented, recommending to carry out additional research and scientific data to strengthen its position (Benitah 2007). After the recommendation of Commission, Russia realized two big Arctic expeditions for strengthening its claim. Firstly, in August 2007, Russian expedition 'Arktika-2007' (Арктика-2007) planted the Russian flag on the seabed of Lomonosov Ridge, with the prominent announcement made by the head of the expedition, Arthur Chilingarov that the Arctic was always Russian and secondly, during 2014 it was launched 'Arktika-2014' (Арктика-2014) to gather more scientific data for

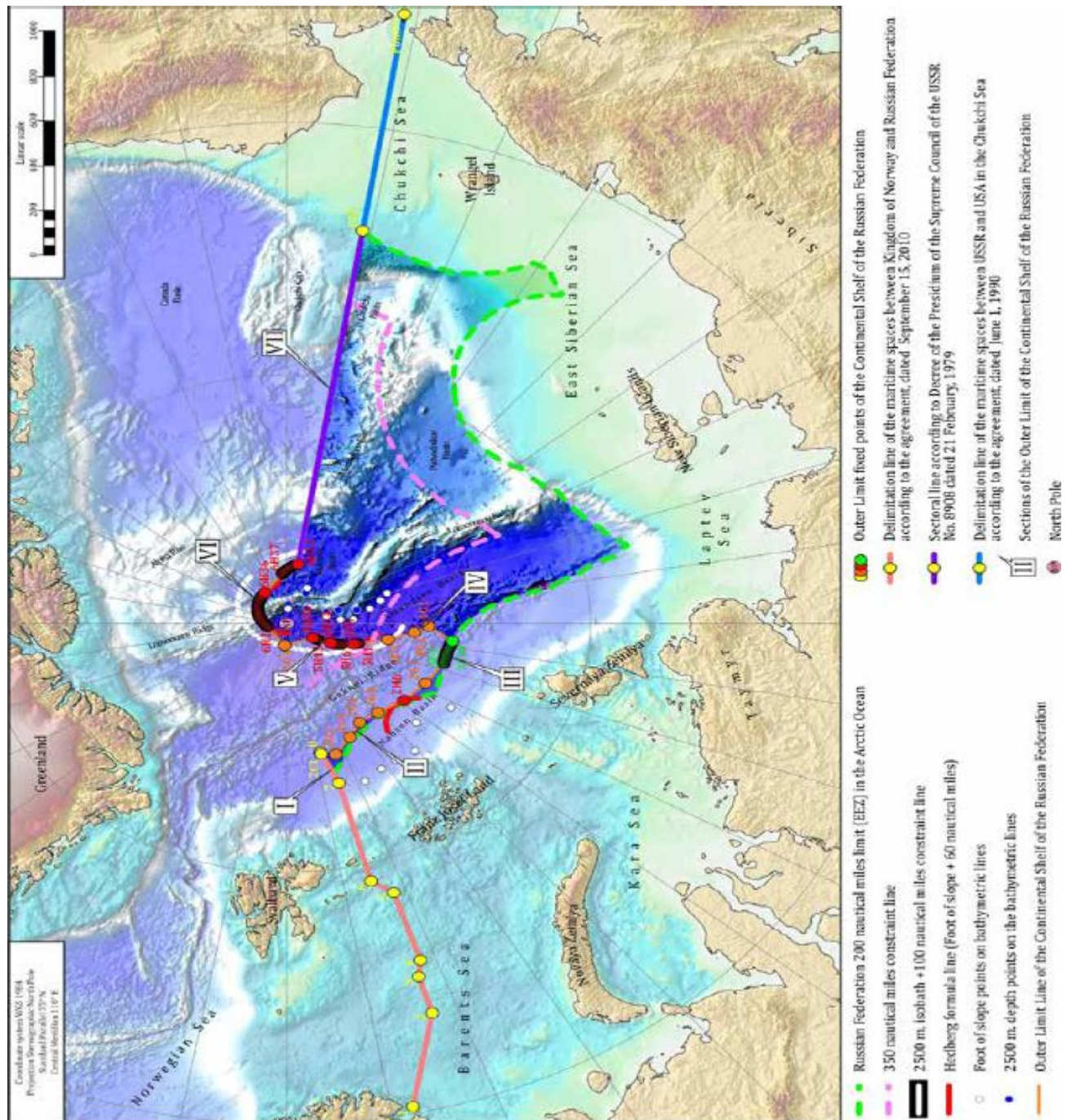
the submission to CLCS. According to Russian officials, they have gathered enough scientific evidence to prove that the Lomonosov Ridge is a continuation of the Russian-Siberian continental shelf (Ria Novosti 2015; Pettersen 2014).

“On 3rd August 2015, the Russian Federation submitted to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, in accordance with Article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, and with reference to its Submission of 20 December 2001, information on the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of its territorial sea is measured in respect of the Arctic Ocean” (CLCS, Outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines: Submissions to the Commission: Partial revised Submission by the Russian Federation 2015).

According to the partially revised submission, the area for the extension in the Arctic Ocean is 1,191,347 sq. km, containing Lomonosov Ridge, Mendeleev-Alpha rise slopes, claiming that they are submarine elevations, natural components of the continental margin (See Figure 3.3) (Partial Revised Submission of the Russian Federation to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in Respect of the Continental Shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean: Executive Summary 2015, 20, 23). So, Russian application contains the territory extending more than 350 nautical miles from the coast (about 650 kilometers) (Isachenkov 2015).

According to Russian Foreign Ministry they have used an enormous array of scientific data collected during many years of Arctic researches, in order to justify their rights over that area. According to the rules of procedures of the Commission, Russia's application may be considered on a priority basis, taking into account the fact that this application is the revised version of the 2001 and made upon the recommendations of CLCS from 2002. It is expected that the Commission will start with the Russian proposal in the autumn of 2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2015).

Figure 4.3: Map of the Russian claim for the extension of its continental shelf in the Arctic



Source: Partial Revised Submission of the Russian Federation to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in Respect of the Continental Shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Ocean: Executive Summary (2015, 23).

So, first of all to be succeeded in its claim, Russia has to prove that the Lomonosov Ridge is not an ‘ocean ridge’, since the oceanic ridges⁵² are the constituent part of the deep ocean floor and recognized as a common heritage of mankind and cannot be claimed by any state or juridical person for authority rights. Secondly, it has to be proven that it is not a ‘submarine ridge’⁵³ as the submarine ridges are considered the prolongation of the land-mass, but nonetheless it would be limited by the provision of the limits of continental shelf with 350 nautical miles. If, however, Russia proves that the Lomonosov Ridge is a submarine elevation⁵⁴ of its land mass, the ridge will be counted as part of the continental margin and will be free from the limitation by 350 nautical miles as this provision is not applicable for submarines elevations (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Part 6, Art. 76; Nordquist 2002, 879–881; GNS Science 2015).

So theoretically Russia can regain its control over the Soviet Arctic sector if it proves that the Lomonosov Ridge is a submarine elevation and the continuation of the Siberian continental platform instead of being an ocean ridge. But even if the data from Russian expeditions provided to CLCS is successful, it cannot expand its territory as there are overlapping claims with Denmark and CLCS cannot resolve it. However, in Ilulissat Declaration the five Arctic countries reaffirmed their commitment to the UNCLOS and agreed to settle any possible overlapping claims and disputes. So the issue of maritime boundary lies in bilateral negotiations and efforts between Arctic states via bilateral talks, in accordance with international law.⁵⁵ The process of evaluating a claim to the shelf can take as much as 10–15 years. So the issue will not be resolved soon, it will be achieved after long and hard discussions between coastal countries.

4.3 Impact of Russia on geopolitical situation of Arctic

So, the Arctic region has become one of the centers of geopolitics. It has become a new geopolitical hotspot where the geographical factors affect national interests of the Arctic state and rise controversies among them. Currently, all the controversies are due to the unsettled borders,

⁵² Oceanic ridges are neither component of the continental margin nor a part of the land territory of the coastal country.

⁵³ Submarine ridge is a part of the continental shelf but it is not a natural component of continental margin as it's not a submarine elevation.

⁵⁴ Submarine elevation is the natural component of the continental margin and it can be either continental or oceanic in its origin. Differentiation between submarine ridge and submarine elevation is made by different methods such as tectonic, morphologic and geologic.

⁵⁵ As the example of Norway and Russia in Barents Sea in 2010, when they signed an agreement in Murmansk which divides the area by half, giving to each country 175,000 sq. km. (Rourke 2015, 19).

caused by the newly emerged geographical factors due to global warming. We should also take into consideration the scarcity of natural resources, their growing demand, the growing dependency of the global economy on energy resources such as oil and gas in the 21st century which push the governments to reconsider their politics for the promotion and defense of their national interests. It is likely that countries with the stake in the region will not hesitate to maximize the materialization of their interests.

Taken all together it is hard to underestimate Russia's impact on the Arctic geopolitical situation. Its impact is multilayered, through the promotion of its various interests through the Strategy for Arctic. All energy, security and economic interests shape the geopolitical situation in the whole region, causing a gradual transition from the peripheral to the global region. This gradual globalization is mostly caused by the promotion of its energy-economic interests. As we have analyzed above, aiming to develop its Arctic sector, Russia implements a wide range economic activities in the region (Arctic zone produces about 20 % of Russia's GDP and up to 22 % of Russian export). In order to access, develop and deliver natural resources to global markets Russia aims to develop critical infrastructure in the NSR and its adjacent waters and rivers, including construction and restoration of the ports, search and rescue centers, route administration, ice-breaking capability, pipelines, aviation routes, railways and roads, improvement of the overall socio-economic conditions of the region appearance of global transport, energy, information and telecommunication systems, mechanisms for environmental safety and monitoring, provision of military security and reliable protection of the state borders. So the development of the oil and gas industry and the NSR as a new global, alternative route connecting south-eastern Asia and Europe are directly linked and complement each other and they are precondition for overall development of the Russian, the biggest Arctic part. As for the globalization, the overall improvement of the region in the socio-economic plan and its availability for the others (navigation and cooperation in resource development), efforts of Russia are necessary conditions, even taking into account the fact that without its icebreakers fleet it would be much harder to operationalize the NSR and scientific researches.

However, one of the main findings is that Russian race, particularly to the North Pole (the extension of the continental shelf more than 350 nautical miles) is not so much for the resources and waterways as for the assertion itself as a major dominant power in one region where its opponents are western countries, taking into consideration the fact that most of the Arctic resources are almost either in its EEZ or until the limitation of 350 nautical miles. If Russia is

successful with its application for the delimitation of its continental shelf, it would get roughly half of the Arctic which could create completely a new geopolitical reality in the Arctic geopolitics and the whole region.

5. Conclusion

The melting Arctic affects the geopolitical view of Russia towards this region. Relying on the Russian geopolitical scientists, particularly on the thoughts of Alexander Dugin it is clear that the imperative of the geopolitical and strategic sovereignty of Russia is linked to the North. The perception of the 'Russian North' represents itself as trapezoid of the Russia and it is obvious that the first steps of geopolitical 'gathering of empire' (of the North) is not just one of the ways of development but it is guarantee and necessary condition for Russia to leave the geopolitical vacuum and to establish its dominance not only in the region but also to regain its positions globally. Referring to the thoughts of Konstantin Sarokin the importance of Arctic again is unarguable. To regain its global positions Russia needs to use one of its most effective tools, the oil and gas. For long run perspective Russia needs these resources as they provide a leverage in its foreign policy both in relations with post-Soviet countries (in policy of integration on Eurasian basis) and for energy dependent Europe (which is supplied by 1/3 of Russian gas). Even to depart from the Russian geopolitical scientists and to make an attention on the Russian geopolitical mindset this region was and will be the constituent part of the Russian traditional sphere/space of interests, having colossal importance for its future. Finally, the perception of the 'Russian North' among Russians is mostly due of that fact that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges were discovered by Russians, named by Russian expeditors 'Mikhael Lomonosov' (Михаил Ломоносов) and 'Dmitri Mendeleev' (Дмитрий Менделеев) and actually 'were' Russian until the fall of USSR. Until now in Russian geopolitical mindset and society more than persistent the idea of 'Russian North', being considered as a fact than disputed area.

As we have analyzed above, this region has special strategic, geopolitical importance for Russia. Besides the fact that it is the most important pillar of its national security, it also provides a solid ground for the implementation of foreign policy through the use of energy resources as a leverage. To be able to keep this leverage and improve its position additionally, through the operationalization of the NSR as a new alternative sea highway to Suez Canal, Russia needs to promote and defend its interests in the region. So, we have a correlation between the geographical

factors which affect the geopolitics of the Russian Federation and the geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation which through the realization affect the whole Arctic region as a geopolitical space.

The impact of Russian geopolitical interests on the Arctic region is multilayered and hard to ignore, stretching from the development and globalization of the region to the challenges and controversies in the governance. Russian geopolitical interests have caused the intensification of the Arctic geopolitics, and give rise to both negative and positive tendencies in the region.

On the one hand it can be considered that Russia started race towards the region, by its real (2001 CLCS claim) and symbolic (Arktika-2007, the planted flag and the announcement of the head of the expedition Arthur Chilingarov that the Arctic was always Russian) acts, which was a stimulus for the other Arctic states to oppose its claims and to make the region a geopolitical hotspot. The current militarization of the Arctic is mostly due to the controversies caused by Russian ambitions for that region. So in one point affected by its geopolitical goals and interests, by new emerged geographical factors, Russia caused the intensification of disputes and controversies in the region, which actually could not be avoidable, taking into consideration the scarcity of the natural resources and increasing demand of them in the 21st century.

However, on the other hand it proves that cooperation is more than possible and desirable in this region. The Ilulissat Declaration, cooperation within the Arctic Council and joint projects with western companies relating to the deposits' extraction and development in the Russian Arctic zone are the obvious examples of that (For example, regardless of western sanctions related to Ukraine crises, Russian and western companies continued to cooperate with each other in the well Universitetskaya-1). So, being a pragmatic player, Russia seeks to use all available tools and leverages to strengthen its geopolitical position but on the same time tries to improve the stability and security of the Arctic geopolitics in the framework of international cooperation. Taking into account the thought of Sarokin regarding to the way of the realization of the Russian objectives, it is likely that Russia is making transition into its strategy, from positional to expansionist.

To conclude, my findings suggest that Russia is likely to be a key player in the Arctic, and that it will be able to resist and carry out the geopolitical challenges in the region, acknowledging that its future and status of the dominant power is directly linked to this region. The promotion of its interests caused both negative and positive tendencies, turning the region into an arena of both international cooperation and competition.

Povzetek magistrskega dela v slovenskem jeziku

Cilj magistrske naloge je raziskati ruske geopolitične interese na Arktiki in kako (lahko) ti interesi vplivajo na oblikovanje geopolitičnih razmer v regiji. Globalne klimatske spremembe so vplivale na dejstvo, da se je Arktika znašla v središču geopolitičnih debat, saj taljenje ledu spreminja regijo, ta pa je bila sprva tarča predvsem znanstvenih interesov, danes pa je tarča vrtinca trgovskih, nacionalno-varnostnih in okolijskih interesov (Ebinger in Zambetakis 2009, 1215). Obstajata dva primarna razloga za povečan geopolitični interes na Arktiki: prvič, Arktika je bogata z naravnimi viri in drugič, staljeni led lahko odpre nove trans-arktične morske poti.

Med državami, ki posedujejo teritorij v Arktičnem krogu, je Rusija s svojimi trgovskimi, varnostnimi interesi in interesi po vladanju nad tem delom, najpomembnejši akter. Ruski voditelji so se v zadnjih mesecih osredotočili na pomen arktične regije za ruske varnostne in gospodarske cilje v 21. stoletju (Pilyavski 2011, 1). Ruska dejanja na Arktiki so tako vodena na podlagi različnih dejstev. Največji pomen za Rusijo ima gospodarski razvoj regije. Kontrola nad arktičnimi morskimi potmi in viri je postala zelo pomembna geopolitična zadeva, posebno za Rusijo in njene interese v regiji, kot je na primer zahteva po Lomonosovem grebenu. S taljenjem arktičnega ledu so se spremenili tudi ruski geopolitični pogledi glede te regije. Osrednja raziskava magistrske naloge bo osredotočena na to spremembo ruskih pogledov oziroma na to, kako naj bi se ti pogledi spremenili.

Magistrska naloga bo raziskavo temeljila na slednjem vprašanju: Kakšen je vpliv ruskih geopolitičnih interesov v arktični regiji?

Raziskava bo narejena z analizo primarnih in sekundarnih virov s poudarkom na analizi ruskih virov, sestavljena pa bo iz uvoda, treh poglavij in zaključka. Prvo poglavje bo analiziralo geopolitično teorijo kot orodje, s katerim bo postavljen teoretični okvir in ustvarjena koherentna slika problema, ki ga naslavlja magistrska naloga. Cilj drugega poglavja je raziskati rusko geopolitično miselnost (interese, cilje in strategije na Arktiki). V tretjem poglavju bo analizirana trenutna geopolitična situacija z raziskavo arktičnega vladanja (UNCLOS, Arktični svet in Deklaracija Ilulissat) in teritorialnih problemov (ruska zahteva po Severnem tečaju). V zaključku bodo obravnavane ugotovitve glede vprašanja, kako in na kakšen način ruske geopolitične realnosti, kot je določitev njenih interesov, ciljev in regionalne strategije, vplivajo na geopolitično in splošno situacijo v regiji.

Taljenje arktičnega ledu vpliva na geopolitični pogled Rusije na to regijo. Opirajoč se na ruske geopolitične znanstvenike in rusko razmišljanje, ostaja očitno, da je geopolitična in strateška

suverenost Rusije vezana na sever. Ta regija je bila in bo ostala konstitutiven del tradicionalne ruske interesne sfere in bo imela velikanski vpliv tudi v prihodnje. Vpliv ruskih geopolitičnih interesov v arktični regiji je večplasten in hkrati težko spregledljiv, saj se razteza od razvoja in globalizacije regije do izzivov in polemik v vladanju. Rusija kot pragmatični akter stremi k uporabi vseh možnih orodij in vzvodov/vplivov za krepitev svoje geopolitične pozicije vendar želi hkrati tudi izboljšati stabilnost in varnost geopolitičnih teženj glede Arktike v okviru mednarodnega sodelovanja.

Moje ugotovitve kažejo, da bo Rusija po vsej verjetnosti ostala ključni akter na Arktiki in se bo sposobna upirati in hkrati izvajati geopolitične izzive v regiji, upoštevajoč, da sta njena prihodnost in status dominantne moči direktno povezana s to regijo. Zavzemanje za ruske interese je povzročilo tako negativna kot pozitivna nagnjenja in spremenilo regijo v prizorišče mednarodnega sodelovanja in tekmovanja.

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