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- The «Race for the Arctic» Narrative and its Effects on Norway's High North Policy-

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"The silver lining still remains, the sights I've left to see
So trust that with this end, a new beginning's waiting patiently"
(The Dear Hunter, A Beginning)

Abstract

The recognition of the Arctic as a region in its own right, has led to the creation of space where a distinct culture of the Arctic has flourished. This culture has manifested through formal and informal institutions which has produced and reproduced the narrative of the Arctic as *the* "space" for the 21st century. From a social constructivist perspective, it is in the discourses of academia, media and state socialization processes regarding the Arctic where it has gained nicknames such as "the new energy province of Europe" and the "Polar silk Road". This effect we can argue is and has had a *constitutive effect* on Norway's Arctic strategy. Narratives of the Arctic, together with a discourse heavily influenced by a vision the Arctic promoting an urgency in order to not lose out on the potential that the Arctic has to offer, have resulted in grand policy statements that have artificially inflated the importance of the Norwegian High North region. The 'the race for the Arctic' thus is a result of an intensification period between 2000-2017, catalyzed by climate change, produced by collective knowledge, about resources, transportation, international law and media attention which has affected the Norwegian High North Strategies from 2006, 2009 and 2017. This thesis seeks to explore how this constitutive effect has manifested in the Norwegian High North through exploration and description of the "race for the Arctic" narrative and to assess the impact it has had on Norwegian High North policy. It sheds light on how this discourse has evolved paralleled to and interlinked with the Norwegian 'Euphoria' of the High North of the mid-2000s, as evidenced by Norway's High North strategies.

Keywords: Arctic, race for the Arctic, Social Constructivism, High North, Norway

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Topic

When a Russian exploration sub planted a titanium Russian flag on the seabed of the north pole in 2007 (Parfitt 2007), media-outlets chose to cover the Arctic with explosive headlines about the (supposed) abundance of resource and the looming of a threat of war in the Arctic region (Krauss et al 2005; Hargreaves 2006; Blomfield 2007; The Economist 2007; BBC 2007a, 2007b; Phillips 2008). This had a ripple effects in the academic sector which saw it fit to proclaim a "race of the Arctic" or "scramble for the Arctic" (Borgerson 2008, 2009; Howard 2009; Emmerson 2010; Sale & Potapov 2010; Palosaari 2012). The Arctic became the new hot topic, intensified by climate change and lucrative oil prices (Byers 2013a, p.3). The intensification centered around three main events; reduction of multi-year sea ice, the Russian flag planting of the North pole in 2007, and the discovery of potential oil and gas deposits (Dahl 2015, p.35-36). The period from 2000 and up until today, came to be characterized by the "Race" or "Scramble for the Arctic" ("the race for the Arctic" henceforth) (Sale & Potapov 2010; Sharp 2011; Wegge 2011; Palosaari 2012; Bruun et al 2014; Czarny 2015).

This narrative got the attention of the Norwegian state, which rebranded itself as a Polar nation through strong rhetoric from several Arctic strategies released between 2006 and 2017. This "race for the Arctic" ran parallel to Norway's own focus on their Arctic, *nordområdene* (the High North). Which saw policy makers declaring the High North to be Norway's most important development arena for years to come (Norway 2006). Policy documents were being produced at a higher rate to be all catch all policy for the north, including both domestic and foreign policy in the same document. Thereby, erasing the dividing line between domestic and international policy in the north. As such Norway contributed to constitutive effects through an artificial focus (social construction) on the High North, creating a causality loop where the High North became important for Norway and other Arctic and non-Arctic states. This saw them establishing institutions and a social construction of a vital Arctic, through socialization, production and re-production of what the Arctic could be.

Although the Russian flag planting of 2007 became the focus of reports and articles with titles about a resource craze and a geopolitical scramble, the notions of this race had been brewing since the start of the millennium. Geographical surveys, which had been cited in error numerous times of the area has noted the *potential* vast number of resources located

within the region, both on and offshore (USGS 2000; Bird et al 2008). It is with the first geological survey (USGS 2000) which is a natural starting point for this thesis, as it this assessment which is heavily referenced by scholars who promoted a race for resources, territory and sovereignty in the Arctic (Borgerson 2008, 2009; Blunden 2009; Antrim 2010; Ruel 2011). However, the Arctic has evolved into a region with different levels of regioness (Exner-Pirot 2013), and as an "exceptional space with its own properties" (Dittmer et al 2011, p.203), characterized by imaginative and affective actions through visions of a frontline masculinity and paternal sovereignty. The Arctic became the host of a "narrative race", with climate change and the discourse emphasizing recoverable oil and gas and possible sea-lanes, connecting Europe, North America and Asia as its main drivers (Bruun & Medby 2014, p.916). Finland's minister of foreign Affairs, Alexander Stubb commented on the increased activity stating that "The Arctic is evolving from a regional frozen backwater into a global hot issue" (Stubb, referenced in Dittmer et al 2011, p.206), which is also reiterated by scholars noting that the Arctic is gaining global notoriety (Southcott 2005). Narratives within Internationals Relations (IR) theory have looked at how this narrative has divided scholars in their opinions, separated by theoretical perspectives, and how it will affect the Arctic region going further (Young 2011).

However, the Arctic has also been characterized as a region of interdependence (Beyers 2017). Reports surfaced that the exploration mission to the North Pole seabed was more of a PR stunt than anything else (Blomfield 2007). The Arctic five (Arctic states with a coast to the Arctic sea) reaffirmed the foundations of cooperation and collaboration (Beyers 2013a, p.93), through the Ilulissat Decleration (2008), which has been critiqued as an action to exclude certain Arctic Council observers (China and the EU), and the three remaining Arctic states (Finland, Iceland and Sweden) (Dittmer et al 2011). This combined with unfavorable oil prices stagnated any real 'race for the resources in the Arctic', due to costs (Harsem, Eide & Heen 2011), uncertainty, and a lack of confidence in the possible Arctic sea lanes from the shipping industry (Lasserre 2011; Lasserre & Pelletier 2011; Lasserre et al 2016). Therefore, the race never really took off, not with the same intensity that the narratives illustrated.

Nonetheless, the portrayal of the Arctic in the media has influenced populations who see the attention to the Arctic through the "frame of conflict or a 'scramble' for the Arctic" (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.94), which has led Arctic states' own Arctic policies to reflect a drive for resource extraction and the potential benefits that it may have.

While the international narrative revolves around "the race for the Arctic", within the Norwegian state context there is a similar narrative being portrayed, as *nordområdeeufori* (High North euphoria) (Hønneland & Jensen 2008, p.109; Hønneland 2017, p.11). Rhetoric from Norway's High North strategies' places high priority on the High North, as it states that it is Norway's most important focus area in the years to come (Norway 2006, p.7). From a Norwegian perspective, this narrative was firmly rooted in energy politics/security, and the importance that Norway's High North natural resources has for the country's future (Gjørv 2017, p.38). The Norwegian High North strategies around the mid-2000s paint a picture of unease that the country would be sidelined by other international actors, and emphasized the enormous potential of the Barents Sea, going as far to nickname it the "new energy province of Europe" (Norway 2009, p.67). Some dubbed this period of Norwegian High North policy as a "national project" (Hønneland 2017, p.16). The focus became so intensely accentuated that it started to erase the dividing lines between foreign and domestic development in the north of Norway (Hønneland 2017, p.12).

It has been observed that Norway has rescaled and re-focused prospects for oil and gas in the Arctic. Climate change is increasingly framed as a problem to be managed (through economic adaptation) rather than resolved (through mitigation) (Kristoffersen 2014, p.132). With Norway's own naming of the Arctic, through the 'elastic' concept of the High North (Skagestad 2010) a narrative was created in which the High North became a focal point for Norway in the mid-2000s as the "main strategic interest" (Strandsbjerg 2012, p.820-821). With a new perspective, turning the world on its head, by placing a map with the Arctic in the middle, with oil and gas extraction as primary drivers, the High North became *the* place for Norway's investment strategy in the 21st century, at least from a policy perspective (Pedersen 2011, p.272). There have also been arguments, stemming from specialists in the oil and gas sector of Norway, that the pedestal on which the Norwegian places the Barents Sea is artificial (Kristoffersen 2014, p.142).

This thesis seeks to describe and explore how "the race for the Arctic" narrative can be explained as collective knowledge, using a social political theory developed by Alexander Wendt (1992, 1999). A social constructivist theory allows for an explanation that looks at how the region has evolved into an entity that makes itself salient trough production and reproduction of an Arctic agenda. This is done through an intersubjective understanding which has made the Arctic/High North an important region to focus on from a Norwegian policy standpoint. In order to make the subject more manageable, "the race for the Arctic" has

been divided into four themes which makes up the narrative of "the race for the Arctic"; resources, transportation, international law and media attention. Climate change and increased access will be viewed as catalysts for this contemporary narrative in the 21st century, and the timeline of this thesis will cover from 2000-2017. This will be done by giving a descriptive account of what the race for the Arctic constitutes, and its narratives in media and academia. The latter part of the empirical chapter will be focused on the Norwegian context and its High North strategies from 2006, 2009 and 2017. As such this thesis proposes a different perspective on how the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" has had a constitutive effect on Norway's High North Strategies, manifested as a "euphoria" in their High North policies (Hønneland 2008, 2017).

1.2 Research Question

In order to focus exclusively on the narrative of the Arctic race, I have formulated my main research question around themes of "the race for the Arctic": resources, transportation, international law and media attention. As mentioned earlier, climate change and increased access will be looked as the catalysts for the increased activity in the region. Lastly, the narrative will be looked at in a Norwegian context, focusing on its influence on Norwegian High North policies. This allows me to explore and describe the narrative, and at the same time assess the impact that this discourse has had on Norway's Arctic affairs (Blaikie 2010, p.105). Regarding the formulation of "the race for the Arctic", and its meaning, I have chosen this phrasing as there are have been many different definitions of this sort of attention towards it. "race for the Arctic", "the scramble for the Arctic", "the Arctic race" and "the Arctic gold rush". As there are a multitude of different ways that it has manifested itself, I will use the terms race as an overarching term which refers to the intensification process which primarily revolves around resources, transportation, international law, increased access and media attention. Thus, the main driver for this thesis will be a research question that seeks, primarily to describe and explore the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" and to what degree it has affected Norwegian High North Policy. I have worded my main research question thus:

To what extent did the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" influence the Arctic strategies of Norway?

This research question lets me go more in-depth to what "the race for the Arctic" really is and what it is connected to. The first objective of the research question is to explore and describe the narrative of "the race for the Arctic". Secondly it is to assess this impact on the

Norwegian High North strategies from 2006, 2009 and 2017, and assess, if any, the impact that this narrative has had on Norwegian Arctic policy.

1.3 Historical Background

This section will give a quick historical overview of the Arctic as a region to show that the narrative of the race is not a new one. The process of the race has roots in history and is important to keep in mind as one looks at the Arctic from a contemporary perspective. Present activity is only the most recent phase of a process which has developed over a long period of time.

Curiosity in the development of the Arctic can be traced back as far as the fifteenth century, and the race for the oil in the Arctic also has its roots in history (Howard 2009, p.45). Emmerson points out that the first race for the arctic was not about the oil in the seabed, but oil from whales (2010, p.196). The 'Spitsbergen oil rush' from the seventeenth century involved the first globally traded Arctic commodity. There were also known prospects of geologically formed oil in the Arctic as far back as the eighteenth century (Emmerson 2010, p.197). A fake manuscript began circulating during the nineteenth century through European libraries, which described a voyage through the Northwest Passage (NWP) as early as 1588. The author of this manuscript, Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado, urged Spain to look north, seeing the Arctic as a place which "hold[s] communication with almost all countries of the world" (Craciun 2009, p.103-104). Although the manuscript was false, it nevertheless inspired English expeditions to find and traverse the NWP. A failed expedition was headed by John Franklin in 1845, costing the lives of the entire expedition (129 sailors), but was posthumously credited for discovering the passage (Craciun 2009, p.107).

It wasn't until the Norwegian polar explorer, Roald Amundsen (1872-1928), set out on his Arctic expeditions, that the first expedition to sail through the NWP in August of 1906 was completed (Polarhistorie undated, a). Another Norwegian scientist, Fridthjof Nansen (1861-1930) proved the theories about the polar current when his ship *Fram* got stuck in the ice and drifted through the Arctic. His discovery disputed the supposed theory that there was a landmass under the north pole ice (Polarhistorie, undated, b). Some years after, another discovery was at hand, this time on the opposite side of the Arctic ocean. *Foreign Affairs* declared "a new era of man's relation with the North" (Hopper 1936, p.499) after a Soviet ship managed to sail from Arkhangelsk to Vladivostok in 1932, in a single navigating season. Opening the idea of the northeast passage, or the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as it has been come to be recognized, to the rest of the world. Geographic and infrastructural limitations still

hindered a full-scale investment in the region. During WWII and the Cold-War the region served a different purpose than what had come before. The title of Hopper's article (1936), aptly named "The Soviet Conquest of the Far North", draws similar comparisons with what Craciun describes as how former colonial European states, and the US frames it, i.e. 'conquering' the North (2009, p.104, p.110). For Russia, the Arctic plays an essential role in Russia's Arctic strategy within its economic and security spheres, especially in modern times (Foxall 2014, p.109).

The Cold-War era saw the two superpowers emphasize the strategic location on the region for the Arctic superpowers in their respective policies (Young 1985, p.160), although not in terms landmasses. It concentrated on the air space above the region which became of greater importance as development of long-range missiles dominated Cold-War era tactics (Tamnes & Holtsmark 2014, p.21). The US used its position to build air force capacity on its NATO allies' lands, for a quick response against Soviet aggression (Tamnes & Holtsmark 2014, p.25). Sea-based operations also became crucial for the two superpowers. The Soviet Union saw the Arctic waters as a buffer zone for their homeland. Developing a maritime force for the Soviets became paramount, who aimed to become a fully-fledged sea-power (Tamnes & Holtsmark 2014, p.27).

Since the Cold War, Arctic interest has swelled yet again, and this time it's not only on navigable sea routes, but on untapped resource and industrialization as well. It heralds the idea of a liberal free-market reform which could bring peace and prosperity to the Arctic and become progressively relevant on the international level (Dittmer et al 2011, p.206). Others have warned us to be critical to an over-developing, neo-liberal approach (Rai 2005). Young heralded the "age of the Arctic" as early as 1985 (Young 1985). Later on, Michael Gorbachev, in his famous speech in Murmansk, declared the Arctic as a "zone of peace" (1987). This prompted political leaders at the time to see the region develop in a cooperative mutual interest. The two superpowers sought a more peaceful and supportive approach, thus agreeing on a maritime boundary in the Bering Sea, Bering Strait and Chucki Sea (Byers 2013a, p.1). With the Ottawa Decleration (1996), this new sense of cooperation and collaboration in the Arctic was cemented, although limited in scope and agency, through the Arctic Council. Diplomacy up to the mid-2000s largely went uninterrupted with the focus being on sustainable development and climate change.

1.4 Goal of Research

By taking a constructivist perspective in international relations we can look at the inter-subjective understanding and how states socialize within a region and how this has produced an Arctic agenda through a narrative of the Arctic where formal and informal institutions have been established. A constructivist theory, developed by Alexander Wendt (1992, 1999), allows me to focus on the socialization of Arctic states, and other relevant actors which has artificially focused their attention of the elements of which makes up the race, namely resource, transportation, international law and media attention. The catalyst for this is the increased access which a is brought on by rapid advancement of climate change. The socially constructed focus har allowed a culture to flourish amongst these actors, creating a shared collective knowledge, or culture, of the Arctic which in turn produces and reproduces a salient Arctic, creating a constitutive effect.

The focus as such will primarily be on the narrative inside the academic sector, where there has been a lot of debate about how it came to be and its affects. However, it also will give some focus how the media has reacted and advocated this notion of a race for the Arctic. Lastly, it will also cover the Norwegian High North policies and comments made by Norwegian scholars.

I hope to contribute by adding a social constructivist perspective of how these notions of the Arctic region can have constitutive effects on a state's strategy regarding the Arctic region. It is a response to what Young asks for in his article where he reviews several books about "the race for the Arctic" in search of "articulation of a compelling alternative paradigm to guide our thinking about the Arctic" (Young 2011, p.193). The discourse on "the race for the Arctic" has been observed to divide scholars into a dichotomy of thinking which includes a neorealist, or a "overly 'nightmarish' debate" or neoliberalist approach, which emphasizes state cooperation (Knecht & Keil 2013, p.181). This thesis seeks to offer a different perspective of why the Arctic has evolved as it has; one where the socialization process of the Arctic has culminated in constitutive effects on Arctic states. The Norwegian contexts serves as an anchor and as a focus point for this thesis. As the topic is quite comprehensive, covering a large set of subjects and themes.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The Structure of the thesis will be divided into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic, brief history of the region, research question and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two presents a quick review of the literature, focusing on the Arctic in the contemporary period 2000-2017, and how "the race of the Arctic" has been portrayed in media, policy papers and academia. This chapter will be divided into subsections covering resources, transportation, international law, media attention and increased access.

Chapter three will discuss my methodology and how I developed this thesis, and to which methodological I used/worked with. This chapter will include my choice in employing a content analysis approach, with emphasis on *concepts* as my way of breaking down and operationalize this thesis and its themes.

Chapter four will describe the social constructivist theory of Alexander Wendt (1992; 1999). It will focus on the constitutive effects, private and collective knowledge and culture as common and shared knowledge. It is in this chapter I will employ the concepts that will be relied on to explain the social construction of "the race for the Arctic". Using Wendt's concepts of "constitutive effect", I will argue that "the race for the Arctic" has influenced Norwegian High North policy through a shared knowledge, or culture of the Arctic, through socialization the idea of High North Euphoria, coined by Norwegian scholars (Hønneland 2017).

Chapter five will be where I explain and describe the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" from empirical data that I have collected and read. Highlighting what "the race for the Arctic" is and how it has manifested through development discourse in the Arctic. This section will start with two brief sections covering climate change, and a discussion on how the Arctic has been defined, or augmented, throughout various articles and policies, and how in a Norwegian context it is used as a very elastic concept (Skagestad 2010). Climate change is central to understand why the Arctic is becoming more accessible right now, and acts as a catalyst for how the narrative and discourse has evolved so rapidly at the start of the 21st century. "The race for the Arctic" will be divided into four subsections; resources, transportation, international law and media attention. These topics is what "the race for the Arctic" usually revolved around when looking at the empirical data. This makes it easier to break down, and to keep it more coherent. The oft referenced two USGS surveys (USGS 2000; Bird et al 2008) will be central to this discussion, together with the Russian exploration mission in 2007. Which caused a frenzy in media and inside the academic sector. The last section of the empirical data chapter will focus on the Norwegian High North policy papers from 2006, 2009 and 2017 where I primarily am concerned with oil and gas extraction and the potential for Arctic sea and trade lanes. The main objective going through these policies is to see how

the policies talk and describe certain developmental concepts and in what way they are supposed to be achieved.

Chapter six will be where I discuss and analyze my empirical data and go through the discourse with a critical perspective. I will argue that the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" was an artificially socially constructed concept, through an analysis of the intersubjective relations between Arctic actors regarding what the Arctic might become. The narrative of the "race for the Arctic" will be highlighted through a Norwegian perspective, where it shows how a constitutive effect helped inflate the importance of the High North. The shared knowledge of the Arctic which the Arctic actors operated under, underestimated the sheer cost of infrastructure it needed to be developed as much as the ideas about the High North. The Norwegian context shows how the High North Euphoria was manifested through a developmental narrative which focused on the potential, and not so much of the challenges that the Arctic presented.

Chapter seven will summarize my findings and offer an assessment of how this thesis has developed and what other perspectives or continued what kind of research it could focused on in the future.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The literature under investigation in this thesis is primarily composed of scientific articles and stories from media outlets. Articles that discuss or analyz themes closely related to the discourse of "the race of the Arctic", i.e. climate change and increased access, resources, transportation, international law and the attention that it has gotten in the media, will also be included. Many of the sources are from the geopolitical sphere of IR where a lot of narratives have been discussed, both conflictual or peaceful. Other sources have been collected from studies focusing on geographic aspects and the imminent threat of climate change, on possibilities of shipping and policy papers on energy security. These sources allow a look at how different actors approach this discourse, either from an descriptive position from academics and media, and the other side being the Norwegian state as policy makers.

Dittmer et al (2011), highlights the notion of what an highlighted Arctic could become when confronted with a crossroad, which will define the Arctic based on the direction taken; either a conflict-driven race for the Arctic and its resources and trading routes, or increased cooperation and indigenous self-determination (p.206). Scholars have tried to look at the resurgence of the Arctic in a holistic way and focused on the phenomenon of southern politics

controlling northern politics (Nicol & Heinenen 2014). There are other examples from the Arctic Council and the ICC which presents new opportunities for cooperation and rethinking old sovereign system of mutually exclusive territorial politics (Gerhardt et al 2010, p.999). Others look to how Arctic governance can help solve disputes and potential conflicts, (Young 2005, 2010, 2012), but this approach is not without its own challenges (Koivurova 2010; Pedersen 2012). Scholars have also observed that the conflict that many talked about never materialized pointing out that peaceful approaches was utilized for claims regarding continental shelf claims and other disputes (Pedersen 2011, p.276).

2.1 Resources

A lot of attention regarding the discourse about "the race for the Arctic" has revolved around two geological studies released in 2000 (USGS) and 2008 (Bird et al.), which saw *potentially* in huge amount of hydrocarbon resources in offshore deposits. The operative word in these reports was always the potential for what could be recovered. It is important to look at these surveys with a critical perspective, as they can fuel "probabilistic ideas" (Foxall 2014, p.103). This has sparked controversy as information has been miscommunicated and fueled a narrative that the Arctic actors are in the middle of a race for resources, transport corridors and continental shelf claims (i.e. "the race for the Arctic") (Borgerson 2008). Media has also fueled the narrative of an Arctic boom, claiming that one quarter of all undiscovered oil and gas resources lies in the Arctic (Krauss et al 2005), based on a misinterpretation of the actual data (Baily 2007; Powell 2008). Apart from the oil and gas aspects, there are other resources which have garnered considerable interest. Rocks and precious metals such as gold, diamonds, platinum, nickel, kimberlite and other precious rocks have also gained much attention (Howard 2009, p.92). These resources are all sought after, from Arctic states and non-Arctic states. Even reports from the EU, on *Climate Change and International Security* (2008) specifically states that "One of the most significant potential conflicts over resources arises from intensified competition over access to, and control over, energy resources" (p.5). This is specifically emphasized later in a section dedicated to the Arctic, where the scramble is stated as having the potential of "changing the geo-strategic dynamics of the region" (EU 2008, p.8).

2.2 Transportation

The idea of using the Arctic as an alternative trade route between Europe and Asia is not new (Craciun 2009), but with rapid climate change, the proposed routes become more viable, and can potentially reduce the travel time by sea between the Europe, North America

and Asia by as much as 40% (Borgerson 2008; Howard 2009; Lasserre 2011; Emmerson 2010; Young 2011; Rahman et al 2014; O'Leary 2014; Mietzner 2015). Researchers within the geopolitical discourse have divided the Arctic landscape into the two opposing views, neorealist and neoliberalist (Knecht & Keil 2013, p.181). The neorealist approach emphasizes an "Arctic race", or "scramble for the Arctic" (Killaby 2005; Borgerson 2008; Howard 2009; Emmerson 2010; Sale & Potapov 2010) which they say has intensified concurrently with increased melting of the ice, and emphasizes conflict concerning maritime territories and resources. On the other side we have the neoliberalist approach that focuses on diplomacy and cooperation in the Arctic region (Stokke & Hønneland 2007; Wegge 2011; Pedersen 2012; Exner-Pirot 2013). Young also divides this narrative into a neo-realist vs a 'wishful thinking' dichotomy, asking for a more coherent and compelling narrative (Young 2011, p.186). These are all concurrent narratives happening in the Arctic but are not the focus in this thesis. The Norwegian state identified the High North as a central region to focus on through various white papers. These policy papers also used a new definition of the Norwegian Arctic – the High North (*nordområdene)* which has had a rather 'elastic' meaning to it (Skagestad 2010). While buzzwords like "resource craze" and "Arctic race" are being used in media outlets, studies show that there is more cooperation and a less hostility, despite increased activity (Ruel 2011; Palosaari 2012).

2.3 International Law

In 1996, the Arctic Council was established as a platform to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction between the Arctic states (US, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Ottawa 1996). But the council was restricted to not concern itself with matters of military security, stated as a footnote in the declaration. Discussion in the later years has included debates about the council's role, and what it should be going forward (Young 2010; Young 2012; Pedersen 2012; Dodds 2013). As the Council lacks the political power to enforce resolutions, Arctic states have turned to other arenas do discuss such matters. Pedersen (2012) identifies three different debates concerning various channels of communication concerning the Arctic council's significance (p.152). These debates are identified as the establishment of the council where it ended as a body primarily discussing sustainability and environmental issues (Pedersen 2012, p.153). The second debate divided the Arctic states into two blocks; the littoral states (the Arctic 5) who have coastlines on the Arctic Ocean (US, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Russia) and the remaining three states that does not (Iceland, Finland and Sweden). This ended in the Ilulissat Declaration (2008) where the Arctic five reinforced their sovereignty over the area and stated that these

five countries had a stewardship role in protecting the Arctic. Lastly, the third debate that Pedersen highlights is the insistence by the US on using the Arctic council as the main platform of dialogue (Pedersen 2012, p.153), showing a political shift in US Arctic policy. This action reaffirmed the Arctic Council as the main forum of the Arctic, but also showed that there is concerns about how the Arctic Council deals with certain issues.

Another important aspect of international law in the Arctic is the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) (UN 1982) which is the institution to which states must submit claims of an extended continental shelf. The Convention also laid down several historically important issues regarding shared water resources of the planet. The most important one regarding continental shelves is the establishment of territorial sea boundaries at 12 miles offshore, an exclusive economic zone at 200 miles offshore, and the possibility to extend continental shelf rights up to 350 miles offshore. The adoption of international code of safety for ships operating in polar waters (Polar Code) is another. The Convention is a comprehensive guide, covering the full range of shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in the waters around and two poles (IMO 2016).

2.4 Media attention

A study conducted in 2012 aimed to demonstrate the Arctic's importance in science and showed how the region became a nucleus in the scientific community (Hua et al 2012). The study shows that in recent years, the number of papers related to the Arctic or the Arctic region has swelled swiftly, remarking that it is the "leaps in environmental, political, economic and cultural research", which drivers the research interest (Hua et al 2012, p.705). Hua et al note that among the different methodologies used in Arctic research are employed is *review* (Hua et al 2012, p.707). As the region can be hard, or expensive to travel to, the authors state that it their research is based on secondary empirical data (Hua et al 2012, p.707). They propose that because it is hard to reach the Arctic or experienced the North Pole. Reviewing what others has done is easier to enrich their research (Hua et al 2012, p.708). A table produced by them show that the top-most research fields included geography, anthropology, history, humanities/multidisciplinary and international relations (Hua et al 2012, p.715). The study stresses that the Arctic has had an influx of Arctic research, and that especially in recent years, there is growing trend about the Arctic being conducted (Hua et al 2012, p.716).

Around the time of the Russian flag planting there has been a flurry of articles from media outlets that proclaimed a gold rush for the Arctic was afoot (BBC 2007b; Parfitt 2007; The

Economist 2007). However, this was not a new idea, several publication leading up to the Russian exploration mission (BBC 2007a), had already declared the Arctic as the new resource frontier (Krauss et al 2005; Hargreaves 2006). Others flamed up the Russia vs the West narrative (Blomfield 2007), which added fuel to the fire for the rush for resources in the Arctic (Phillips 2008). This presentation in the media can affect populations as the media becomes a "claims-making arena" (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.83). This also promoted the narrative of a constructed Arctic, which reproduces the important connotations which the region brings with it. As framing is important in any news story, the Arctic as an artificial socially constructed narrative which can shape public perceptions, thus changing policy makers course and rhetoric (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.94).

There is no doubt that the Arctic region is experiencing an explosive interest from Arctic states, and non-Arctic states. As it was once thought of as "a remote and exotic region of interests" (Young 2011, 185), it is now though to be at the center for policy makers. With climate change as the common denominator. Although a lot of media flirt with the notion of a looming conflict spurred by claims over resources and territory, scholars that Young reviews in his article come to more sensible conclusion, advocating peaceful resolutions (2011, p.193).

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter will be dedicated to the Social Theory of International Politics, developed by Alexander Wendt (1992, 1999). It will give me the foundations for which actors I am investigating: actors in the discourse (academics and the media) and policy makers (Norway). Focusing on *constitutive effects*, *private* and *collective knowledge*, a constructivist theory allows me to look at how concepts can have the possibility to influence policy and vice-versa. The social constructivism that Wendt developed looks at the inter-subjectivity in which the Arctic is understood, and at some time it became the norm to think of the Arctic as a place for a race for resources to take place. It is through the social construction of the Arctic and its portrayal, how it is talked about, how it is understood and how it became inflated in an artificial way. This artificial inflation of the Arctic region has led to Norwegian High North policy papers erasing domestic and international foreign policy dividing lines, through constitutive effects.

3.1 Social Constructivism

Social Constructivism (or simply constructivism as it is referred to in International Relations (IR) field) (Jackson & Sørensen 2016, p.206) offers a third approach to the major

IR theories. It highlights ideational, non-material factors such as norms, cultures and identity. Constructivism offers a divergent epistemological tradition where it focuses on the construction of social reality (Wegge 2014, p.85). The theory in the IR field is largely agreed to be introduced by Nicholas Onuf in his book *World of Our Making* (1989), (Wendt 1992; Brglez 2001; Weber 2005; Berenskoetter 2011; Syed & Ali 2018). Taken as a "umbrella term", constructivism is the practice in how one is to request information in a world of unknowns (Onuf 1989, p.38). This is also where Wendt borrows the term of "constructivism" from (1992, p.393). Wendt aims to develop a Social Theory of international politics, is to bridge the realist-liberal and rationalist-reflectivist debates (1992, p.394; Berenskoetter p.649; Weber 2005, p.60). At its core, constructivism deals with social structures, identity and interests, and its processes related to those concepts (Syed & Ali 2018, p.58). Wendt's claim is that the culture of anarchy that dominates the systemic level is not one that dictate state behavior, but that it is dependent on actors (states) intentions and that it is them that dictate the culture of the anarchy through socialization processes and actions taken (Jackson & Sørensen 2016, p.213). Ideas and beliefs which informs actors about the international scene is what is the focus for constructivist (Jackson & Sørensen 2016, p.214).

Social constructivist theory emphasizes the affluent material that the theory provides in terms of how it "conceptualizes interaction between 'material incentives, inter-subjective structures, and the identity and interests of the actors" (Hurrel cited in Hettne & Söderbaum 2000, p.460). Hettne and Söderbaum stress the importance of the shared knowledge that constructivists do and the understanding of inter-subjective structures, and what role interests and identities can change over time, which can lead to new cooperation and communities (Hettne & Söderbaum 2000, p.460). Another important distinction that social constructivism lets us derive is that regions are socially constructed, with shared interests and goals from various actors. These interests and process of socialization leads to institutions and structures manifesting through interaction, inter-subjectivity and shared ideas (Hettne & Söderbaum 2000, p.460). Hettne and Söderbaum advances this notion and references Wendt, quoting him saying "structure has no existence or casual power apart from process" (1992, p.395). Hettne and Söderbaum continues this line of thought when they state that actors' beliefs, interests, motives, ideas and identities are socially constructed by the action of reflection in processes, through challenges and actions with the other (Hettne & Söderbaum 2000, p.460).

Conventional approaches to constructivism aim to explore how identity affect behavior (Berenskoetter 2011, p.649), but this is one of the fallacies of constructivism.

Berenskoetter notes that the concept of identity often is reduced to a simple word, thereby neglecting the logical chain of argument that comes before (Berenskoetter 2011, p.649-650). Weber exemplifies identity through how different it is in a temporal setting, and that it changes daily (2005, p.60). Lifting the gaze to the systemic level, Weber states that "we have to recognize that the character of international anarchy is not pre-given but the outcome of state interactions, and that self-help is not an immutable feature of international anarchy" (Weber 2005, p.63). This is also true for institutions, they are composed and made up through social interactions between different identities (Weber 2005, p.65). This is the socialization process that states in the Arctic has gone through, with example like the Arctic Council, or more specifically in Fennoscandinavia, the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation. Wendt goes on stating that "a fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (Wendt 1992, p.396-397). As such, it is in the intentional action of acting towards an objective in which actors socialize and develop interests and identities. In our circumstance, it is the "race for the Arctic". The Norwegian state acts with intention when developing their High North strategies, it is a way of communicating to other states what they see as important to work towards. However, this is also influenced by what other states see as important. We can therefore we can argue that a causality loop is created. Which is a outcome of a constitutive effect in practice.

3.2 Critique of Social Constructivism

The main opponents to constructivists are neorealist, as noted in Wendt's book, specifically Waltz's developed branch of neo-, or structural realism which Wendt is critical of (Wendt 1999, p.8). Neorealist in general find aspect of constructivists thinking to be unacceptable. Constructivists reliance on norms on a micro- and macro level, and that these norms plays a part when actors interact. But, neorealists places little faith that norms can curb the interest of power from powerful states (Jackson & Sørensen 2016, p.222). Another criticism is that neorealists does not agree with constructivists notion of socializing and becoming allies. Mearsheimer claims that states are inherently bound by the international system and forced to behave egotistical, stemming from the uncertainty which the system produces (1994, p.40). Copeland echoes this sentiment, furthering the claim that Wendt misses the mark on how uncertainties have "a profound effect" on the present and future interests of other states (2000, p.200). This uncertainty will have a substantial effect on states, problems or challenges which may rise from a domestic level, stating that identities are not wholly formed in an exogenous method, but endogenous as well (Copeland 2000, p.203).

Change is another aspect that neorealists claims constructivists fail to account for, and that within its own logic, constructivist cannot predict which discourse will replace the dominant one (neorealism) (Mearsheimer 1995, p.42-43). Jervis argues that constructivism fails at explaining how identities are developed and interests are defined, while it says something about the process, it does not tell us about what this process contains (Jervis 1998, p.976).

Brglez calls Wendts *Theory of International Politics* an attempt at "rescuing" the positivist position, and in doing endangers himself to alienate the core of social constructivism and other post-positivist (2001, p.354). Brglez stats that Wendt's explanations were a step in the right direction, but for the wrong reasons. This reasoning is founded on three notions; the first is that within realist approaches, there is heterogeneity among its subscribers, an abundance of realist and anti-realist positions. Secondly, Wendt is not doing empirical research, nor is there any trace that he has been involved in "double hermeneutics" (2011, p.453), which is also echoed in other critiques of Wendts theory (Dessler 2000, p.1003). Dessler identifies three problems in Wendt's *Social Theory*. Firstly, since Wendt classify neorealists as materialists, Wendt fails to separate laws from theory (2000, p.1003). Secondly, Wendt's explanation of constitutive effect and constitutive theory are too thinly covered. Taking Wendt's argument that "Water is a constitutive effect of H2O", is just *specifying*, but that it does not explain it (Dessler 2000, p.1003). Thirdly, the lack of focus on epistemology, and that it is just a distraction.

3.3 Social Theory of International Politics

In an article from 1992 Alexander Wendt lays the foundation which he builds upon his book which was released in 1999. This theory founds itself based on the more commonplace description of international politics as "socially constructed" (Wendt 1999, p.1). Wendt seeks to establish a bridgehead between the realist-liberal and rationalist-reflectivist camps; by providing arguments based on constructivism within a structuralist and symbolic perspective which then allows international institutions to transform and shape state identity (Wendt 1992, p.394). Wendt argues that it is with roots in a "sociological social psychological form of systematic theory" that lets scholars include variables like identities and interest like independent variables that can be controlled for (Wendt 1992, p.394). Wendt's goal with synthesizing a social theory of international politics is to develop an alternative to the dominant theory of neo-realism, primarily focusing on Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Wendt's main argument against neo-realism is that self-help and power politics do not follow logically from an anarchy state of being, as it does in neo-realism. They

are, however, not processes, but institutions of anarchy, and anarchy is what states makes of it (Wendt 1992, p.394-395). Wendt argues that Waltz's definitions of political structures, ordering principles, principles of differentiation and the distribution of capabilities, does not from the onset predict whether two states will be friend or foe (Wendt 1992, p.396). Wendt's argument is taken from a constructivist perspective where context must be considered before a judgment can be passed about intention of a state. Wendt calls this a "structure of identity and interest" (Wendt 1992, p.396). Comparing states with people, Wendt describes people act towards an objective, where actors take part of a greater collective, society, in order to make sense of experiences and meanings. Such interaction can also be found between states, and thus it is the "collective meanings that constitute structures which organize our actions" (Wendt 1992, p.397). This interaction will have effects on identities, which then becomes dynamic processes, formed in different contexts and situations. Like an individual, a state can have multiple identities or roles, which are highlighted by varying degrees of interests and salience at different points in time (Wendt 1992, p.398). These interactions happen under various forms of institutions, which Wendt defines as "relatively stable set or - structures - of identities and interests" (1999, p.399). Although, not a social construct per se, institutions are structures bound by formal rules and norms, but which are given agency through "actors socialization" and the participation in a shared understanding of said institution (Wendt 1999, p.399).

Actors perceive these structures, or institutions as something above them, that they partake in, and therefore these institutions become real. Wendt advances this thought by defining institutionalization as "a process of internalizing new identities and interests, not something occurring outside them and affecting only behavior" and that *socialization* "is a cognitive process, not just a behavioral one" (Wendt 1999, p.399). It is the collective understanding, understood as an entity, i.e. institutions, which actors preforms under and within which are affected. These institutions and collective understanding between two or more parties forms the parameters of action, either in a conflictual or cooperative manner. Intentions become intersubjective, meaning that interest and the shared collective meanings are in a constant flux (Wendt 1992, p.407).

This is emphasized further in Sheldon Stryker's quote: "The social process is one constructing and reconstructing self and social relationship" (Wendt 1992, p.407). Wendt and Stryker's quote stresses that relationships between states are in motion based on context and collective knowledge and understanding. The Arctic presents this case more clearly, I would argue. Actors and institutions in the Arctic have chosen to not include dilemmas of security

when engaging in dialogue over Arctic affairs. This is especially proven with the Arctic council. As the mandate clearly states that its primary concern is ocean and environmental concerns, and to keep matters as security outside of this sphere of communication. A collective knowledge about the Arctic has become a cultural norm when talking or understanding the Arctic. This becomes a culture/collective knowledge about the Arctic from a state perspective.

3.3.1 Constitutive effect

A constitutive effect is defined through a synthesis between two ideologies, materialists and idealist (Wendt 1999, p.25). These two positions that Wendt proposes have its origin in two different social scientists' camps. Idealist social theory thinkers thinks that society is constituted by ideas rather than material forces. On the other hand, we have modern international relations (IR) scholars are materialist, the same can be said of modern social theory as well (Wendt 1999, p.25). Their difference is exemplified though how the understand the impact of ideas on society. Materialists looks at casual relationship's effects and question, idealists on constitutive relationships, effects and questions (Wendt 1999, p.25).

"States are constituted (in part) by organizational structures that give them a territorial monopoly on organized violence" (Wendt 1999, p.83). The definition of the state presents us an understanding that the internal properties of a state does not cause attributed associated to it, they make them possible, but not dependent on them. They are constitutive of the state, and while the state is an institution built on an array of organizations, giving the state properties, but of which it does not act on all at once (Wendt 1999, p.83). Individualism and holism help us to divide these levels. As individualists seek to explain everything, extreme advocates (atomists) even demands to break everything down to its atomic scale. Wendt argues that an entity that has an internal structure does exactly that (Wendt 1999, p.84). Holists look at states to have external structure of which they are a part of, which also - Wendt argues, have constitutive effects on state through external discursive structures (1999, p.84).

Constitutive theory can help us understand that there are multiple ways of looking at an outcome, argues Wendt (1999, p.87). Important IR concepts like *sovereignty* or *the state* can be understood as different forms throughout time (Wendt 1999, p.87). Wendt argues that when we recognized the existence of constitutive effects, we have the ability to see ideas or social structures that have said effects, and only so when they "create phenomena – properties, powers, dispositions, meanings, etc. – that are conceptually or logically dependent on those ideas or structures, that exist only "in virtue" of them" (Wendt 1999, p.88). An

example from the Arctic context is the establishment of the Arctic council and how it has influence how Arctic and non-Arctic states rhetoric when talking about climate change, as it is often mentioned though states Arctic polices (Russia 2008, p.2; Canada 2010, p.16; Denmark 2011, p.43; Sweden 2011, p.24; Iceland 2011, p.2; Finland 2013, p.38; US 2013, p.7; Norway 2017, p.35). The same can be said of "the race for the Arctic", as a collective accepted narrative, it influences states and other actors that operates and treats the Arctic as an institution.

If we accepted "the race for the Arctic" as a culture on a systematic level between Arctic states, we can use Wendts' argument that culture ("the race for the Arctic") can have constitutive effects (on Arctic states' policies) (Wendt 1999, p.171). Inside IR scholarship, states are regarded as intentional entities, that they act on a basis of desires and beliefs about the world, which are mental phenomena, states Wendt (1999, p.172). Constitutive effects of culture on identities and interest regarding states sees a symbiotic relationship between what actors individually *thinks* to be true, but also what the external understanding *holds* to be true (Wendt 1999, p.177). For a constitutive effect to take place, an external acceptance has to be in place for it to be legitimate; as is exemplified by Wendt – "It does not prevent someone from *thinking* they are a master, wife or a hegemon, but in the absence of a relevant *Other* they are deluding themselves" (Wendt 1999, p.177). The acceptance is accomplished through a socialized process of recognition between more than one party, which leads it to be communal, and not individual, of what creates legitimacy and gives agency. Thus creating a collective knowledge about a distinct phenomenon.

3.3.2 Private and collective knowledge

Wendt uses the concept of ideas and narrows it down to knowledge through how people act towards objects, of which Wendt defines it "any belief an actor *takes* to be true" (Wendt 1999, p.140). Although, a subjective position, Wendt's definition of knowledge is focused on what the individual actor *takes* to be true *relative* to their ideas about the subject. Emphasis should be placed on the individual; this is knowledge which a single individual think and reflects on. People will then act on ideas they have, but also of which they hold to be true, and not react to what they do not believe in - knowledge not shared between individuals. Rational actors can have an idea that they hold positions of power but will not act on that notion as they know it not to be true. This is what Wendt (1999) defines as private knowledge: "information that individual actors believe to be true, but others do not" (p.140).

A society is not only compromised by private knowledge. Knowledge shared through social spaces is what makes up the cultural aspects of a society, knowledge shared between individuals (Wendt 1999, p.141). Thus, we can derive from a collective knowledge foundation, a culture, "a socially shared knowledge" (Wendt 1999, p.141). Shared knowledge can be cooperative or conflictual, as it is indifferent toward the content of the social relationships. This lets culture to take several forms such as norms, rules, institutions, ideologies, organizations, threat-systems and so on (Wendt 1999, p.141). Culture becomes the backdrop of sectors or spheres like politics and economy, as they are understood by shared knowledge bases, i.e. in contextual cultural ways (Wendt 1999, p.142).

3.3.3 Culture as common and shared knowledge

If beliefs and attitudes, or private knowledge are shared through the system, a collective knowledge can be produced and have an impact on international relations (Wendt 1999, p.158). Yet, as Wendt argues for it to reach macro-level, it is imperative that those ideas are *shared*. In the contemporary period, states know a lot about each other, and their culture which influences their behavior. It is also a collective knowledgebase that states operate with and under; concepts like "state", "sovereignty", "international law", "balance of power", "diplomacy" and "war" are all ideas that states share an understanding or idea of (Wendt 1999, p.158). This can also be drawn parallels to the Arctic region. Major actors, institutions and laws are applied and understood with to reach agreement or use as a forum for dialogue and cooperation. They, at the very essence of what Arctic politics is and how they operate.

Private knowledge can influence foreign policy without producing a collective knowledge (Wendt 1999, p.157). Therefore, one must be careful when speaking about an elevated knowledge when it is constituted by private knowledge, even though it can provide an interaction layer to the international structure, it is not collective knowledge. Wendt argues that on a micro-level, common knowledge can provide insightful model of how culture is structured (1999, p.159). However, collective knowledge is constitutive through a constructivist aspect when it is supervened and is not reducible, as it is unique (sui generis) to the macro-level (Wendt 1999, p.159). Common knowledge is an intersubjective phenomenon which interlocks belief (Wendt 1999, p.160), but the difference between common and collective knowledge, is that common knowledge is reducible, and is nothing more than "shared mental models" (Wendt 1999, p.161). Collective knowledge is dependent on foundations on micro-level structures and actions, which believes or acts according to a practice which is supra to its own being (Wendt 1999, p.162). This can be exemplified more

so by Margaret Gilberts (1987) thoughts and examples with a political platform. An individual can be part of a larger group, and not hold every belief of the group personally, but collectively they give the group agency through legitimizing the groups decision to believe in the idea (p.190-192). This sort of thinking allows beliefs to be categorized as "collective memory", concepts like myths, narratives and traditions labels what a group react, how they think and behave (Wendt 1999, p.163). These concepts fit well with the narrative that "the race for the Arctic" have produced. The race has been produced and reproduced to a degree that it has taken a life of its own, in forms of institutions, papers, laws and policy. Advancing the collective memory notion, they are produced and reproduced through the process of socialization and ritual enactment. This action leads stories and narrative to continue through the time, mobilizing collective action, even though the ideas are not personally held by any individual (Wendt 1999, p.163). Culture becomes "communally sustained" and inherently a public phenomenon, and not only made from many private or common hold beliefs held together (Wendt 1999, p.154).

Chapter 4: Methodology

This thesis will take a descriptive content-discourse analysis study approach (Berg & Lune 2012, p.338), with a longitudinal method as the concepts under investigation stretches across multiple instances of time (Berg & Lune 2012, p.339). This will be done through a content analysis, as my main actors under investigation are scholars within the IR field about the Arctic, media and lastly, Norway's three High North strategies. The focus will be on the discourse about the "race for the Arctic" between 2000-2017. It is in the interest of this researcher to describe, explore "the race for the Arctic" as collective knowledge and culture and to assess the impact on the Norwegian High North strategies from 2006, 2009 and 2017, which has been coined the High North Euphoria by Norwegian scholars. The interest in the discourse of how the Arctic became the center for resource development, with notions like a "new gold rush" or a brewing "resource war", is therefore best investigated in the case of this narrative.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of "the race for the Arctic" and see if that has had any effect on Norway's Arctic policy from 2006-2017. I will then describe how the discourse about "the race for the Arctic" evolved from the start of the millennium and how it came to characterize the Arctic going forward. Lastly, I will do an assessment of the impact that this discourse has had on the Arctic region. The discourse regarding "the race for the

Arctic" is interesting as it shows how a fad turned into something that came to define Arctic affairs in the years after the matter.

4.1 Content Analysis

This study seeks to explore and describe the phenomenon within the academic literature known as the "race for the Arctic", I have chosen to use the method of content analysis to better understand the context of what I am investigating. With content analysis I have the option to do a detailed systematic examination with its specific context attached for a better understanding og how the concept of 'the race for the Arctic' is used. It is also in the nature of content analysis that it allows me to capture a phenomenon that is happening in a "natural" setting, in the real world, and allowing me to investigate its complexities with regards to that concept (Leedy & Ormrod 2014, p.141). Berg & Lune defines Content Analysis as "a careful, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (Berg & Lune 2012, p.349). Krippendorf provides a more general definition stating that is "[..]a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (2004, p.14).

Content analysis as a framework opens up the possibility to highlight three distinct purposes; prescriptive, analytical and methodological (Krippendorf 2004, p.29). A prescriptive purpose allows this thesis to be guided by the conceptualization and design og the practical analytical research taken. For this case it is data that concerns itself with discussing "the race for the Arctic" in various forms. The analytical purpose allows gives us the critical examination and comparison of the published content with other published content. Especially important regarding comparing texts with each other. The methodological purpose safeguards the performance criteria and precautionary standards that researchers can apply when estimating continuing content analyses (Krippendorf 2004, p.29). As an important note to have in the back of one's mind when doing content analysis is that the data under investigation are not intended to answer a specific research question (Krippendorf 2004, p.30). Texts are read, interpreted and understood as intended, which are then digested and come under reflection and critical thinking, leading to the readers own recognition and articulated in their own understanding either sequentially or holistically (Krippendorf 2004, p.30). Consequently, one source of data is not to be taken as the only legitimate source, circling around back to the analytical purpose within the content analysis framework of Krippendorf.

Research applying a content analysis method also grounds itself within an empirical study. As the phenomena under investigation is not a tangible object which can be readily observed but are instead characteristics of discourses which is happening (Krippendorf 2004, p.32). Content analysis gives us the ability to study a phenomenon, which is currently inaccessible. That can be examined though a body of text, thereby allowing said occurrence to be observed through content analysis (Krippendorf 2004, p.32-33). The units under investigation in this thesis is a cluster of concepts I have chosen to focus my level of analysis on *concepts* (Berg & Lune 2012, p.360). Concepts lets me use the cluster of words that are grouped together to form an idea (i.e. the race of the Arctic), which also lets me delve deeper into what the different groupings is made out of, i.e. resources, transportation, international law and media attention.

Other forms of units of analysis includes words, themes, characters, paragraphs, items and semantics. Other ways of counting units of analysis could be through *words, themes, characters, paragraphs, items,* and *semantics* (Berg & Lune 2012, p.359-360). My reasoning for choosing *concepts* is because there would be no reason to list how many times an author writes word "Arctic" or "race" or "scramble" and so forth. *Characters* would be more suitable if I were to focus my study on a singular individual relevant to the Arctic developmental discourse. However, as I am looking at a discursive topic, this falls outside of my scope for this thesis. An *item* would be too small in scope as it only covers a unitary piece of work and would limit my empirical data far too much, to say something overall about the investigated cluster of ideas. The same would be said of using paragraphs, as it would not cover the extent that I see fitting within the goal of this thesis. *Semantics* would also be irrelevant in this context as it stresses how a word is strongly or weakly used. Lastly, there is *themes* as a level unit. *Themes* in its simplest form, is a sentence with a subject and a predicate found through a body of text. It could be argued that this unit of analysis also would have worked alone, or in combination with *concept*. As I could target the use of concepts and what kind of themes the author uses it with. Thereby creating a stronger understanding of the contextual usage of the cluster. For this thesis I have opted to use *concepts* as it allows the investigation of "the race of the Arctic" as a cluster with several sub-concepts related to it.

4.2 Empirical Data

"The race for the Arctic" has come under several various descriptions but can usually be defined as a "race for the Arctic" and its potential resources and transportation routes. The different concepts I have decided to focus on are divided into four themes, resources and

transportation routes, international law and media attention. The empirical findings suggest that resources and transportation routes are central to the concept of the race for the Arctic but revolving around these concepts are the ones we can find in the secondary cluster. It is on this basis this thesis has divided the empirical findings into these categories. Since these are real world concepts found in the empirical data that describes a social phenomenon which involves the structures and agency that actors are operating with and within (Blaikie 2010, p.115).

To set up the context of the scramble for the arctic I have included data about the Arctic from the late 1800s and the early 1900s in the historical background chapter. This is to show that the interest of the Arctic is not new, and that "the race for the Arctic" has historical roots, and not just a contemporary phenomenon. However, the main body of analysis will be from around 2000 and up til 2017. The starting point of 2000 I because the oft referenced USGS 2000 assessment was released that year. This gives us a clear start as the 2000 assessment was vital for the narrative of "the race for the Arctic" to gain substance in the *potential* amounts of resources in the Arctic region.

4.3 Describing the Process of Data collection

The process for finding data has mainly been looking up sources that has come up in the various databases I have used. The searches have been limited to "race", "scramble" or "gold rush for the Arctic". A source has then been deemed relevant when it analyzes or describes with the terms such as resources, transportation, international law and media attention. Sources which also have discussed climate change and the increased access has also been included in these searches. Majority of the data has been found from the geopolitical sphere in international relations field, and although this thesis does not fully commit itself to that political theory, it is here that much of the arguments for an Arctic race is found. Using those sources has helped me backtrack the discourse from where it began and to where it is in the contemporary age. Large part of the process has been to go the different references in relevant articles, which allows me to follow the discourse and see how scholars constructed their arguments. For a Norwegian perspective it has showed to be notable scholars, namely Hønneland who has written a great deal about Norway's interest in the High North. His material has been instrumental in finding the discourses and narratives which is related to the international discourse about the race for the Arctic but has also helped this thesis get a better look at the Norwegian context.

Primary internet databases have been ProQuest, Jstor and Scopus. Google Scholar has also been used but only when I am looking for a specific article, as the searches on that site can include a lot of other material not relevant to this thesis.

Chapter 5: Empirical Findings

This chapter will be dedicated to exploring the narrative of "the race for the Arctic". The chapter will be divided into four parts. The first one will be dedicated to how the Arctic as a political narrative have been defined, especially in Norway's own definition – The High North. This is to illustrate that there is a lack of an agreed upon definition, which also is a growth-bed for confusion when Norway introduces its own naming of their Arctic, which has a history of augmentation, adding or removing components as the policymakers see fit. A quick section will be dedicated to the increased access which climate change has stimulated. These sections are there to illustrate the context the Arctic is operating under. "The race for the Arctic" section will be divided into four sub-sections which compromises the narrative – resources, transportation, international law and media attention. Lastly, there will be an overview of the three Norwegian High North strategies from 2006, 2009 and 2017, with basis in the previous described concepts which will be described and explored. The breakdown of "the race for the Arctic" narrative and how it has manifested itself in the academic and media discourse will be covered first. The latter section covering the Norwegian High North policies, together with commentary from Norwegian scholars is meant to look at the policies with a critical view.

5.1 The Augmented Arctic

The Arctic is an area that has several names and boundaries associated with it: The High Arctic, the North, the Far North, High North, and the circumpolar Arctic, or the new Arctic are all different names with its own connotations related to it. Einarsson, Nillsson and Young (2004) highlights the complexities about defining the Arctic as a region, noting that it is not as apparent when talking about the Arctic as a clear-cut region (p.16). Looking at it from different perspective (countries), several problems arise when applying one standard delineation such as the 60°N. From a Canadian perspective (which is the borders of its three territories), which would cut across the southern parts of Fennoscandinavia, which lies much to the south in terms of what's north in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Einarsson et al (2004) ends up with a definition of the Arctic that cuts across several regions and areas along the Arctic nations. This is because they must include the vast number of various peoples in

the Arctic. And even with their Arctic Human Development (AHDR) Arctic definition, there is still other scholars later in the report that has found it necessary to redefine a different Arctic based on their aim and scope (2004, p.17).

Others have suggested a three-way definition of the north; by geography, function and narrative (Tamnes & Offerdal 2014, p.2). A geographic definition confines the Arctic ocean and the littoral five states (US, Canada, Denmark (by way of Greenland), Norway and Russia) as Arctic states, which the Ilulissat Decleration (2008) cemented when the Arctic five was established. This excludes the three other nations (Finland, Sweden and Iceland), which makes up the Arctic eight. The Arctic eight are the states that has land inside the Arctic Circle (66° 32'N), which is another definition, from an astronomical perspective. The Arctic eight established the Arctic Council in 1996 (Ottawa Decleration) as an international forum for dialogue and to address challenges with the aim for cooperation and collaboration on environmental security issues. Within the Arctic Council there are several working groups which also have their own definitions of the Arctic. The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) offers slightly different definitions of what the Arctic contains based on their aims and objectives (Arctic council 2015).

The functional definition of the Arctic largely deals with how the region is used and perceived. Which leads to including regions that lies south of the Arctic circle, sharing the same climactic/cryospheric characteristics, is then included in the definition for functional reasons (Tamnes & Offerdal 2014, p.3-4).

Lastly, the narrative definition of the Arctic springs from cultural, social and political spheres to either connect or distance themselves to the region. An important distinction is made in the second AHDR, that the region is made up of many subregions (Larsen & Fondahl 2014, p.45). This aspect takes into the consideration of the various indigenous peoples of the Arctic that has lived in the region for a long time before western explorers colonized this space (Tamnes & Offerdal 2014, p.5). There is also a contrast towards the different North American Arctic the, European Arctic and the Circumpolar Arctic. The latter one has also been known as "the new Arctic" which primarily concerns itself with environmental challenges such as rapid ice melting sprung out of recent political concepts (Tamnes & Offerdal 2014, p.5). It is also noteworthy to look at certain concepts that have come to be linked with the Norwegian Arctic, namely "The High North". Skagestad argues that the

Norwegian concept of the "High North" has evolved significantly, creating a term that is "elastic, flexible, changeable and fluid." (2010, p.18). In a Norwegian context the word has come to be a defining feature stretching from the 1970s, used primarily by the Norwegian Foreign ministry, and reached a new peak in the mid-2000s (Pedersen 2011, p.271).The use in the Norwegian High North strategies has also varied and seems to rely on its vagueness for its effectiveness and symbol as Norway's new investment area (Pedersen 2011, p.273).

It is important to have this under consideration when reading articles about the region. It speaks to the complexity of what defining the Arctic can lead to, and that even scholars in the same filed use different definitions which suits their needs and aims. Scholars and researchers might not necessarily refer to the same definitions of the Arctic, and use a general statement, rather than a holistic one. The Arctic thus can be presented with a plethora of definitions and approaches. Which has the ability to confuse when new concepts, which has a rather vague terminology, like Norway's High North is introduced into narratives about the Arctic.

5.2 Climate Change and Increased Access

A brief section will be dedicated to the climactic changes specifically related to the Arctic region, and the increased access which this process has led to. This is beneficial to see in the larger context of "the race of the Arctic". Although not the principal focus of this thesis, the issue itself is important to have a dedicated section in this thesis. Therefore, I want to include a short description on how it affects and what consequences it has.

Major concerns have been raised since the Arctic is melting at an exponential rate, with the region experiencing climate change up to two to three times higher than other regions (IPCC 2018). As more Arctic sea-ice is melting and uncover a darker surface, which solar energy is absorbed, there is an exponential loss of Arctic sea-ice (Lenton et al 2008, p.1788). Such a transition has shown itself to be nonlinear, with Lenton stating that a tipping point might be reached with regards to summer sea-ice in the Arctic (Lenton et al 2008, p.1789). A tipping point is defined as "a point at which a relatively small perturbation can cause a large, qualitative change in the future state of a system" (Wassmann & Lenton 2012, p.3). Arriving at such a tipping point can alter the state of that system and have far reaching effects elsewhere on the planet. The Arctic is seeing rapid changes to its ecosystem and increased activity in the region which can further push it past the tipping point (Wassmann & Lenton 2012, p.5). This will impact the ecosystem even more as we see more actor operating in the region.

The Arctic is critical to the rest of the planet and its global climate system (Hoel 2007, p.112). Lenton et al concludes that the Arctic tipping point is one of the most crucial on the globe (Lenton et al 2008, p.1792)

Because of its ecological importance, changes and disruption in its system will have grave ramifications, not just for its own system, but globally as well. Temperatures have shown to rice twice as fast in the Arctic compared to other places in the world. A huge obstacle to combat climate change in the Arctic is the variation and the diversity of the region (Hoel 2007, p.114). Making strategies hard for an all-encompassing policy, and a more contextual sub-regional approach must be adopted. Circumpolar cooperation on environmental challenges has been manifested by the establishment of the Arctic Council. It's mandate to produce knowledge about climate change in the arctic has gained considerable attention (Hoel 2007, p.118), but with a lack of political agency, and its dependence on financial backing together with Arctic nation to lead projects, has slowed its effort to curb the natural forces. This focus on a climate change on a supra national level, but still having its members to be responsible for almost half of the global emission (Hoel 2007, p.131) which can argue for a "Arctic duality".

Climate change will challenge the ideas that permanency and stability, which are cornerstones, historically, of the sovereign, territorial state (Gerhardt et al 2010, p.992). Cryospheric changes will affect indigenous and local people of the Arctic in direct and indirect ways, but to what extent is uncertain (Hovelsrud et al 2012, p.108). Consequences will have effects in the societal and natural spheres, with many having to adapt to both climate changes, but also to the interest of southern ambitions. The IPCC special report on the 1.5°C Global Warming (2018) states that the Arctic ecosystem is at a "disproportionately higher risk" (p.11). This puts the Arctic under pressure on two fronts, natural and human. It is also because of the melting of the Arctic that attention has grown over the years. Accesses to routes, and possible deposits of resources makes the Arctic more salient, if not for environmental reasons, but for the reason of escalation.

There is a point to be made that interest in the Arctic is quite ironic in its recent condition, as states and businesses pushing hydrocarbon industries/extractivism and increased shipping into an area that is vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Palosaari 2012, p.24). Another major business in the Arctic region is tourism (AMAP 2017, p.145). This has grown substantially in the later years which have benefitted the improvements in transport and

increased access to the Arctic from climate change. This has made the region very attractive for tourist in the summer, but also in winter. Cruise tourism especially has had a boom in the Barents region (AMAP 2017, p.146).

Interest between the Arctic states is also growing. Policy papers have been produced at a higher volume during the latter half of the 2000s (Russia 2008; Canada 2009; Denmark 2011, Sweden 2011; Iceland 2011; USA 2013; Finland 2013; Norway 2017), while the start of the 2010s saw even more greater attention from Arctic states, and other non-Arctic actors that see it as a global region (Japan 2015; EU 2016; China 2018; Korea 2013).

Arctic actors must consider not only the Arctic states, but non-Arctic states that wish to be part of the region's development (China 2018; Japan 2015; Korea 2013). China, Japan and South-Korea are all observers on the Arctic council (Arctic Council 2015). The primary foundation of the Asian states' policy is the growing concern about climate change, with a focus on international cooperation. China is the only one of them that classifies itself as a "Near-Arctic State"; citing environmental changes have a direct impact on their "agriculture, forestry, fishery, marine industry and other sectors" (China 2018).

The Arctic region has been characterized by increased interdependence since the Cold War era, where actors operating in the Arctic has been working together, compared to other regions. Arctic states have agreed to set aside questions of traditional security through the establishment of the Arctic Council. However, after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, there have been debates if outside conflict can spill over into the Arctic region. Byers argues that the Arctic region is working towards more of a middle ground between the spectrum of realist thinking and complex interdependence (2017, p.394). Outside actors and influence is growing in the Arctic, which has implications for security on a micro (human) and macro (state) levels. Global interest in the Arctic is rising and is drawing the previously isolated region into a global context (Heininen & Southcott 2010; Wegge 2012; Nicol & Heininen 2014; Tamnes & Offerdal 2014; Heininen 2016).

5.3 "The Race for The Arctic" (2000-2017)

This section will explore and describe what "the race for the Arctic" narrative entails, starting from the start of the 2000s- and up til 2017. Most of the empirical data will be collected from academic sources, but as this section's chief purpose is to chronicle what makes up "the race for the arctic" in the contemporary period, picking sources that have already made an analysis from sources will be beneficial is in this authors interest.

5.3.1 Resources

Before moving on to the several USGS rapports, a quick mention at how resource economic evaluation is done (AMAP 2010). Resource economic evaluation is measured with all of the oil and gas in an area; its volume and its degree of certainty (AMAP 2010, p.2_4). When looking for oil and gas, one must separate between 'resources' and 'reservoirs', however there are no agreed upon definitions of the two. However, they usually agree that 'resources' "refers to all of the known and *potential* volumes of oil and gas", while 'reserves' "refers to the known and *producible* amounts of oil and gas" (AMAP 2010, p.2_4). The keyword being 'potential' and 'producible' which differentiates these two only what *is* and what *is possible to extract*. Resources are therefore all that lies there, and reserves are all that can be produced/extracted. When searching for oil and gas, one looks at the Total petroleum Initially in Place (PIIP). This means that it looks at the total amount of the petroleum in an area. But an important notion is that of the total resource base, the reserves usually account for only 30%, or sometime up to 50% of the total resource (AMAP 2010, p.2_4). There are also other variables one must think of when looking at resource extraction. One of the biggest challengers is how the demand of the commodity, and if it has "Unfavorable current or projected economic conditions" (AMAP 2010, p.2_5). This has the ability to disrupt the demand and therefore make it less economically viable. This is argued by several scholars which argue that it can stagnated the vast economic potential in the Arctic because of declining oil and gas prices in recent years (Raspotnik 2018, p.50; Pedersen 2018, p.148-149). Lastly, looking at undiscovered resources, which chiefly deals with "forecasted, prospective, recoverable or undiscovered *resources*" (AMAP 2010, p.2_5). This means all of the *potential* resources in the area, not all that is producible. Uncoverable sediments such as heavy oil, tar sand and methane hydrate, which are not technically or economically feasible to produce and sell, are also included. This is important to have in mind when looking over the numbers that the various USGS rapports from early to late 2000s gives us.

The USGS (2000) assessment is not not very specific in the content of oil and gas in the Arctic region. It only covers a partial section of the Arctic with only a small section of data collected from inside the Arctic, in the former Soviet Union. That did not stop some outlets to claims much as 25% of all undiscovered oil and gas could be found in the Arctic (Krauss et al 2005; Hargreaves 2006), claiming they got data from USGS sources. This was refuted later by a spokesperson of USGS, citing a misunderstanding between the USGS researcher and the reporter (Bailey 2007; Powell 2008). An important reason for why they went out to dismiss the false information was that the rapport in 2000 from USGS did not

focus on the Arctic because of lack of data from the region (Bailey 2007). Borgerson (2008) also claimed this 25% statement (p.67), although, much of these deposits are unproven (p.68), he goes on saying that a 'scramble' for territory and resources is happening among the Arctic littoral states (p.63).

In 2008, a new assessment from the USGS, this time they specifically looked at estimates of undiscovered oil and gas north of the Arctic circle (Bird et al 2008). It said that as much as "approximately 90 billion barrels of oil, 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of natural gas liquids" could be found, 84% of this are estimated to be found offshore (Bird et al 2008). An observer of this called this the peak of the "Oil Dorado" (Raspotnik 2018, p.50). Around the same time, the United Oil and Gas Consortium Management Corporation stated that the Arctic is the biggest energy story of all time (Powell 2008, p.831), and continuing that a battle for the Arctic was at hand because the world was running out of oil (Powell 2008, p.831). An assessment of the USGS 2008 released in 2009 (Gautier et al) concludes that the area north of the Arctic circle has about 30% of the worlds undiscovered gas and 13% of the worlds undiscovered oil, mostly in offshore and below waters let that 500 meters deep (Gautier et al 2009, p.1175). However, they note in the last paragraph of the uncertainties which these resources are under, highlights the lack of technological or economic risks, predicting that a large amount of these resources will never be produced. They will be dependent on "market conditions, technological innovation and the sizes of undiscovered accumulations", lastly, as these assessments are only a small part of the picture, estimates are surly to change as the years progress which allows more precise measurements to be taken (Gautier et al 2009, p.1178). Researchers also argues for other Arctic challenges, even though the region might hold vast amount of resources, citing two factors which cannot be overlooked: "1) The cost of retrieving the estimated resources and 2) future expectations on oil and gas prices obtained on a market that is constantly in flux" (Raspotnik 2018, p.51).

This is also echoed in other scholars, noting that the opening of the Arctic will give Russia an opening to become a greater maritime power, as it become the next geographical pivot (Antrim 2010). This raised concerns that it will lead to greater militarization of the Arctic where short term competition gains trump long term cooperative benefits (Borgerson 2009; Blunden 2009). The most pressing issues was the rise of the "heightened strategic importance of the region", which could lead to a "vicious spiral of suspicion, nationalist rhetoric and re-militarization" (Blunden 2009, p.137). Other saw the increased intensification as a part of a greater whole. Citing that the biggest threat to the Arctic as the competitive southern

geopolitical rivalries spill out onto the Arctic area and is manifested as a 're-colonization' of the north (Nicol & Heinenen 2014, p.84). Others point out that it was as early as in 2000 where Canada noted that resources could become a point of tension in the Arctic, as is a 'general conception' that struggle over resources usually ends in conflict (Ruel 2011, p.829). It is in the region's 'complexity' and the recognition of that fact which sets the Arctic apart from other regions. Exner-Pirot explanation for the Arctic being a region complex built on environmental security issues (2014), or as the level of regioness that the region endures (Hettne & Söderbaum 2000). Ruel brings up that in Canada, political rhetoric has surpassed diplomatic actions and discussion, leaving the idea in Canadians citizens mind that the Arctic is entirely theirs (Ruel 2011, p.829). It has also been argued that Canada advanced their claim of the north through a closer relationship towards their Inuit population, creating a vision of a "Canadian nordicity", solidifying their claim to the north (Arnold 2012).

Borgerson claims that there is only a matter of time before the Arctic seas is opened up to increased maritime transport and highly lucrative extractive business (Borgerson 2008, p.63). As the ice will continue to recede and melt, the resources might become more available, as most of them are in the seabed (Borgerson 2008, p.68), as there are no overarching political or legal entity that can provide a unitary focus for development (Borgerson 2008, p.71). This, Borgerson argues, will lead to rivalries among the Arctic, and non-Arctic states could lead to an eventual diplomatic gridlock (2008, p.72). As the Arctic council was emasculated by the US in its conception, where it mostly deals with environmental issues, and has stated that security politics will be outside of its scope (Ottawa 1996). Borgerson calls for a more active participation from the US, citing closer collaboration with its northern neighbor, Canada, for a joint effort to steward the region (Borgerson 2008, p.75). A follow-up article in 2009 was posted by Borgerson where he reaffirmed the "the plot is full of characters espousing the rhetoric of cooperation yet pursuing their self-interest, and the conclusion could lead in multiple directions" (Borgerson 2009, p.4). While still urging the US to ratify the UNCLOS, and to take a more leading role in Arctic affairs.

Blunden (2009) frames her article around the increased militarization of the Arctic region and that rapid climate change that is "changing the geostrategic dynamics in the region" (p.121). Linking security, economics and environment as the three foundations Arctic strategic significance. Blunden advocates a cooperative approach, or an "Arctic-approach" (i.e. continuing the collaborative and cooperative approach), but rising tensions could possible result in erosion of these relationship, which could lead to a "vicious cycle" of a more

unstable region (Blunden 2009, p.121). It is pointed out that the geography of the region and the world's oil prices will be determining factor of oil and gas extraction (p.122). Other forms of resources are methane hydrate (Emmerson 2010, p.218), thought to most accessible in the Arctic, although they have been discovered elsewhere as well. However, there is a catch; methane is a powerful greenhouse gas which is twenty times more toxic than carbon dioxide, which, if extraction occurs, could lead to severe results if released to the atmosphere (Emmerson 2010, p.218).

The Northwest Passage (NWP) (over Canada), the Northern Sea Route (NSR) (or the North east passage), and the North Polar (Central Polar) route are all highlighted as potential routes for Arctic transit shipping. Supposedly to cut transit between Europe and Asia with up to 40% (Blunden, 2009, p.122). The sea lanes are described by Blunden as "of great economic significance". The map also illustrates the two underwater ridges; Mendeleev and Lomonsov that gives. All this attention of from Arctic states has also drawn attention from other non-Arctic states such as EU, China and South-Korea, specifically (Blunden 2009, p.124), putting even more pressure to develop the region. Since the Cold War, the focus of extensive collaboration between Russia and other Arctic states. Institutions like the Arctic Council, Ilulissat Decleration of 2008 and the commitment to the 1982 UN Convention on the Laws of the Seas has helped framed the development of the Arctic (Blunden 2009, p.124). Even so, "the High North has been associated with Russia's ambition to re-assert their great power status" (Blunden 2009, p,125). As is pointed out earlier in the Arctic the Russia Arctic is home to 20% of Russia's GDP (Blunden 2009, p.122), with this increased focus on economic development, the militarization of the region has also been emphasized. As such, there has been a lot of reactions from other Arctic states, especially after the Russian expedition to the polar seabed planted the Russian flag (Blunden 2009, p.126). Blunden states that it was a symbolic act, although legally irrelevant, but was a catalyst for a media frenzy that aroused heated debates. Following this event, more military operations took place from Russia with long-range bombing runs being conducted, Norway moved its operational headquarters northward, The Canadian Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper took a more assertive stance towards the Arctic (Blunden 2009, p.126-127). Blunden argues that security in the Arctic is interwoven with economic and environmental issues, which is affecting policy development to a larger degree. Policy makers has to take much more into consideration (Blunden 2009, 133). It should be in the interest of the Arctic states to find common ground for cooperation, management of new sea lanes and communication could be one such avenue

states Blunden (2009, p.133). But, as the Arctic is focusing more on resources, there is a potential for states to lean towards short-term national goals, than long-term planning which has global considerations (Blunden 2009, p.137). It is this consideration, Blunden argues, that can lead Arctic states down a negative spiral where nationalistic interests trump the collective stability of the region.

Antrim (2010) puts the planting of the Russia flag in 2007 as a catalyst for headlines such as "Arctic meltdown", "A new Cold war", and "Arctic land grab" (2010, p.15). Because of increased access, Antrim argues, that a new geopolitical pivot will take place in the Arctic with energy and mineral resources, fishing opportunities, shortened sea-routes as key variables. As the Arctic heats up, a new frontier opens up for Russia (Antrim 2010, p.18), this frontier has the potential for offshore oil and gas deposits that has been referenced from several USGS surveys. Antrim draws upon geopolitical study of the early twentieth century about the East-West relationship, and "the Geographical Pivot of History" (Antrim 2010, p.17). The central mindset of this geostrategic theme was the containment of Russia and its Eurasian heartland (Antrim 2010, p.18). Russia has set its eyes on the Arctic for four distinct categories according to Antrim; economics, security, transportation and development (2009, p.18).

The sheer amount of attention the region has gotten in the last decade is mainly based in the hypothetical/perceived riches that is possible to extract because of climate changes (Young 2011, p.187). This rush for the Arctic has also been described as a "Arctic gold rush" (Howard 2009). The two USGS surveys have been oft cited for its projected amounts of hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic region (USGS 2000; Bird et al 2008). Young argues for a reality that differ from the lofty visions and visages that media and other scholars have produced. Arguing that the Arctic has gotten more attention, it is far from becoming the global center of energy production in the coming years (2011, p.188). Climate change and globalization are two factors that keeps elevating the Arctic region to the outside world (Young 2011, p.191). Yet, Arctic states and non-Arctic states are becoming more concerned with how the changes in climate can affect the rest of the planet. Local population of the Arctic region are another factor when thinking of development in the area. Young states that Arctic cultures have a higher susceptibility towards economic development and ecological disasters, such as oil spills, which can spell disastrous results (Young 2011, p.191). Young does not share other scholars' presumption that more activity will end in armed conflict

(Young 2011, p.190). Concluding that topics like jurisdictional disputes, a new cold war, resource war and armed conflict are more fictional than real (Young 2011, p.193).

5.3.2 Transportation

The NSR was first traversed in 1932 when a single-season transit was completed. This was cemented with the Soviet Union establishment of the Central Administration of the NSR and named the transit route as “”one of its critical dimensions of its national security” (Antrim 2010, p.21). The shipping route drew attention from foreign and non-Arctic actors as well. Becoming a global focus at the dawn of the millennium, but while it offers an alternative, it does not have the capacity or ability to contest already established shipping routes along more southern regions. Challenges were cited as the need for development of infrastructure in the Arctic, further retreat in sea-ice and more availability in ice-capable seafaring vessels (Antrim 2010, p.22).

Trans Arctic voyage through the NSR before 2009, was held back because of ‘exorbitant’ transit, meaning that ships needed icebreaker escorts which was designed for the icy seas, which had high fees (Moe 2014, p.787). The Russian thinking centered around icebreaker fees which would finance the icebreaker fleet. However, the prices were fixed and did not attract much attention from foreign entities willing to pay such high fees. It was not before after Atomflot, the Russian icebreaker fleet, was given permission to give reduced escort prices to attract more customers, that Arctic trans shipping increased (Moe 2016, p.107). Although the Russians reported higher number of transits between 2010-2013, these numbers are not necessarily an international transit, but rather sailings that have started and stopped at a russian port (Moe 2016, p.109). To understand these numbers, it important to separate between transit and international transit. Moe points out that to use just the numbers which the Russians provide, does not paint the complete picture (Moe 2016, p.110). Although the number of ships and cargo have increased between 2010-2013, it doesn’t say if there are more international companies that utilize the NSR. It is still a limited number of commercial transits that sail through the NSR (Moe 2016, p.118). Separating and looking at the numbers in a more detailed fashion can give us a stronger indication of interest from companies to use the NSR.

A scenario where ships travelling from Europe to Asia without speed interference is the optimal idea, but a closer inspection of the circumstances reveals several challenges that must be faced before the transportation corridor can be utilized in the ideal fashion (Lasserre 2011, p.800; Rothwell 2014, p.32). As it stands now, the uncertainty of the area is the primary

concern, as seasonal navigation will have companies gamble on when to start or stop arctic shipping. Harsh climate, with low temperatures that could be dangerous for both crew and cargo. Even though it will be reduced ice, there can be an increased in drifting ice which can be more difficult to anticipate. A way to combat this is to order reinforced hull for ships, but it will become more costly, and insurance companies will demand companies to invest or their premiums get higher (Lasserre 2011, p.801-802). Arctic shipping is not likely to rival the that of Panama and will not see heavy traffic going through but will increase based on the development of resource extraction in the region (Lasserre 2011, p.807). Therefore, destinational shipping and not transit shipping is what is argued will be a closer realistic development (Lasserre 2011, p.808). Two studies followed this article by looking at what the interest from shipping companies of an "polar super seaway", and their interest to use it (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011; Lasserre et al 2016).

The first study hypothesized what a lot of scholars had said about what an Arctic route entail, an automatic growth in traffic because if offered a shorter route (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1466). Hype surrounding the potential that the Arctic route offered with a "polar super seaway", found lack of enthusiasm from shipping companies based in Europe, North America and Asia (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1466). High risk factor and uncertainty casted doubt from shipping companies, citing drifting ice, extreme cold, high discrepancy in ice, scarcity of port facilities and lack of navigational aids (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1467-1468). Data shows that Arctic shipping is increasing; the NSR has seen significantly increase, especially between Murmansk and Dikson (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1470). The NWP has also seen more activity, not only in form of tourism and fishing activities, but also commercial shipping for service to local communities and natural resource exploitation operations (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1470). Lasserre and Pelletier states that the Arctic does indeed provide a shorter sea route between Europe and Asia, but that there is a lack of push from shipowners because of higher risk and uncertainty connected with the region (Lasserre & Pelletier 2011, p.1472). Rise in transit traffic has been slow but has grown much more in the destinational traffic. Which echoes the Arctic council's marine shipping report from 2009 (Arctic Council 2009).

These sentiments were also found, five years later, in a similar study (Lasserre et al 2016). Transit shipping interest from shipping companies remained low, and they focused instead on destinational shipping (Lasserre et al 2016, p. 110). The data collected saw that there is "limited actual market figures", and that it is not just the ice that needs to melt, but an action

that entails a shift in corporate strategy (Lasserre et al 2016, p.111). Arctic shipping is projected to grow, albeit much more in destinational than transit. The latter is linked with service to the Arctic communities and by exploitation of natural resources.

With the possibility of an ice-free summer, and in the future an ice less Arctic, more activity in the area in terms of shipping have been a major source of interest (Lasserre 2011; Lasserre & Pelletier 2011; Moe 2014; Lasserre et al 2016; Lanteigne 2017). It is also gained the nickname as "the Arctic Golden Waterway" by China, as it can provide an alternative route to the Malacca strait which poses some restrictions to ships sizes and political instability (Byers 2013b). The Arctic has already seen an increase from tourist companies which provides tours around Svalbard and Greenland (Howard 2009, p.105). The NSR western side is also used more heavily by the Russians to transport iron ore from the mining complex at Noril'sk to the Kola Peninsula (Howard 2009, p.105). The routes proposed in the Arctic can also see usage from "megaships", built in the late 1990s, as they are unable to fit through the Panama and Suez Canals, and is sailing around the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn (Howard 2009, p.110).

Looking to the NWP, the first commercial shipping voyage was completed by a Danish bulk cargo ship in 2013 (O'Leary 2014, p.118). The trip started in Vancouver, Canada, and ended in Finland. It was estimated that taking the NWP instead of the Panama-canal, saved the shipping company up to $80,000 (O'Leary 2014, p.118). Although there are some challenges which the Canadian government needs to address. The Arctic waters above Canada is claimed by them to be internal Canadian waters, but this notion is challenged by the US, Japan and other countries of the EU which views it as an international strait (O'Leary 2014, p.119-120). Disputes over the Arctic becomes a global challenge as more states outside the Arctic circle see its potential and its global effect of a warming Arctic. Canada's previous prime minister Stephen Harper went out and proclaimed in 2010 that Canada's sovereignty over their Arctic areas are 'non-negotiable', stressing that it is one of the interests of Canadian priority to maintain that status quo (2014, p.120). A strong rhetoric statement, Canada's state presence in the region in still absent (O'Leary 2014, p.120).

Benefits of the NWP is linked with an enormous cost-effective benefit for shipping companies and other businesses that opts for an Arctic route (O'Leary 2014, p.128). A shorter trade route, with a decrease of 40% time between Europe, Asia and North America, is the main selling point, but with this decreased travel time, one can also cut emissions and fuel and

service (O'Leary 2014, p.128). Another attractive feature of the Arctic is the circumvention of the Horn of Africa which has seen increase in piracy in the later years (O'Leary 2014, p.128). Recent activities in the Middle East has also caused the question of the region's political stability, when an incident in the Gulf of Oman when a tanker was damaged by several explosions (BBC 2019). Accusation from the US against Iran has some worried that the region is becoming more unstable, which can have negative effects of the vital trades between Europe and Asia in the region. Thus, making the Arctic a more attractive alternative which also is more stable. Tension also rises during the same month as a US drone was shot down, creating a debate about which airspace it occupied, Iranian or international, thus advancing the tension already linked with the Middle East region and the Gulf of Oman (Ma 2019).

As a non-Arctic state, China is trying to tie closer relations to the Arctic states and show that the Arctic is a region that is not only important to the Arctic states, but to the global world (Lanteigne 2017). The Arctic provides China with a tantalizing alternative as a stable trade route between Europe and Asia as it is a more stable region, politically, as they continue to be more dependent on fossil fuels for energy (Lanteigne 2017, p.121). China, and other non-Arctic states is taking a more moderate approach to the Arctic. Long term-planning is key to cultivate good relationships with the Arctic states for them to use the various trade routes of the Arctic: NWP, the central Arctic passage, and the NSR (Lanteigne 2017, p.122). Rhetoric from Beijing regarding sovereignty in the Arctic region has also been more relaxed as they don't want disputes over straits to be a main concern which might halt development of these shipping routes (Lanteigne 2017, p.123).

Other Asian countries are also becoming more interested in the Arctic as a transit corridor and opportunities, but also concerns over environmental degradation and change. Japan stresses its approach between two pillars of Arctic development (Ohnishi 2016). The first is a reinforcement of Arctic research and observation of how climate change is impacting the Arctic ocean; the second pillar is concerns itself with business opportunities with the NSR, together with exploitation of offshore resources and commercial transit (Ohnishi 2016, p.181).

India is a newly admitted Arctic observer but has had a longstanding relationship with Antarctic as a leading nation within the "democratization of the Antarctic Treaty System (Sinha 2016, p.194-195). India has also a long record of research conducted in the Arctic, with a research station on Svalbard where they focus on climate change and how it can be understood and studied further (Sinha 2016, p.195). Scientific research and technical cooperation are India's first line of commitment to Arctic development, and that business

endeavors such as drilling, shipping and exploration are not inherently their primary concern. They can however contribute a substantial amount of human skilled resources for increased economic activities in the Arctic region (Sinha 2016, p.195).

5.3.3 International law

International law concerns itself with the recognition of territory in which states has sovereignty extending throughout its territory on land, but also with its maritime territories, which are also recognized by other states (Rothwell 2014, p.20). Regarding international law in the Arctic, the first comprehensive agreement to come to fruition was the 1991 Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was developed by the Arctic states, later established as the Arctic 8, and sought to "identify existing and emerging Arctic environmental problems and issues and develop action plans for their management" (Rothwell 2014, p.25). This led to the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996, with the success of the AEPS and its six working groups that was established to tackle these issues (Rothwell 2014, p.25). The Arctic Council offered a forum of common interest amongst the Arctic states, with a permanent secretariat in Tromsø Norway since 2009, and has taken the initiative in Arctic maritime prospects with rapports such as The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment 2009 and an agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (Rothwell 2014, p.26).

International law gives costal state rights over the water columns to a limit of 200 nautical miles (Byers 2013a, p.93), any sovereign rights extending beyond the 200 nautical mile limit, is only related to the seabed and subsoil – under continental shelf regime. The current continental shelf regime was developed in 1982 as part of the UNCLOS (Byers 2013a, p.94). It is under this international agreement that each costal state is entitled to "a distance of 200 nautical miles from its territorial sea baseline as part of the regime of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ)" (Beyers 2013a, p.94). States who has continental shelfs that extends beyond the 200 nautical mile limit, can apply for an extension through article 76 of the UNCLOS, as long as proper geographical data can be presented stating that the continental shelf belongs to the costal state (Beyers 2013a, p.95).

Disputes in the Arctic has been compared with the "Scramble for Africa" regarding places in the region which seems to belong to no one (Howard 2009, p.46). Because of the rapid ice-melting, the continental shelf claims applications have become the *de facto* way to claim extended sovereign territory over unclaimed areas in the Arctic (Howard 2009, p.47). Howard proposes a set of challenging legal conundrums, which he argues, will "underwrite

the variety of border disputes in the Arctic" (Howard 2009, p.48). These challenges range from the Svalbard islands, the Arctic and its uniquely complex geography, establishing a formal declaration like the 1959 Antarctica treaty, but this falls short as the two poles are the exact opposite of each other in terms of geography (while the Antarctic is a continent surrounded by water, the Arctic is an ocean surrounded by land), lastly, if the Arctic falls under a 'special' category of the 1982 UNCLOS (Howard 2009, p.47-48). Byers (2013a) states that disputes over territory is "hardly a major issue in the Arctic politics" (p.26), and that Hans Island, a small island between Canada and Greenland, is the only land that is disputed in the entire circumpolar region. As such, the most pressing concern regarding international law, is the maritime domain (Byers 2013a, p.27). Byers characterizes the Arctic as a region founded on cooperation and international law-making, through an era of changes in the geopolitical environment (2013a, p.5). Most of these boundaries are resolved by negotiations, which is clearly the case in the Arctic (2013a, p.55). One of the most important disputes that was resolved in 2010, between Norway and Russia, regarding the division of the Barents Sea (Byers 2013a, p.39). An area roughly 50,000 square nautical miles, about 10% of the Barents Sea, was a source of debate between Norway and Russia, which also house huge economic interests for both states. As the seabed is on average 230-meters-deep, it gives prime opportunity to harvest resource like fish, oil and natural gas. On the Norwegian side lies the Snøhvit gas field, which has already started producing with an estimated 193 billion cubic meters reserves. The other Norwegian reserve is the Goliat oil field, estimated to have 174 million barrels of recoverable reserves, and on the Russian side, the Shtokman gas field, estimated to house 3.8 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, and 37 million tons of natural gas condensates (Byers 2013a, p.39). The landmark treaty was signed and ratified by both Norwegian and Russian partners in 2010, and resulted in a split in the middle, with a single maritime boundary for both the EEZ and continental shelf (Byers 2013a, p.43). Byers highlights how the importance that this agreement has been for the Arctic, paving the way for letting Russia in, but also to show other Arctic states how to resolves such disputes (Byers 2013a, p.55).

As ice is melting faster and faster every year, Arctic straits are becoming more viable for transit and tourism activities (Beyers 2013a, p.128-129). More activity in the region means more security and environmental risks that can have potential life-threatening accidents, oil-spills, smuggling, illegal immigration, piracy and terrorism (Byers 2013a, p.129). The US contest both the NWP and the NSR as international straits, where vessels can

pass freely (Howard 2009, p.51). Yet, Canada and Russia both protests, citing that their respective passages are internal waters, where access has to be granted in order to traverse them (Byers 2013a, p.130). The US does not agree on the status of the straits, and take a direct stance opposing both Canada and Russia (Byers 2013a, p.169). The US have taken an adamant stance against recognizing the internal waters of Canada and Russia, and as president George W. Bush left office, he issued a directive stating that "freedom of the seas as a top national priority" (Howard 2009, p.52). Specifically stating that both the NWP and the NSR are used for international navigation.

5.3.4 Media Attention

Media coverage has the potential to shape policy outcomes as publications has a possibility to sway public opinion, beliefs and attitudes, which again can influence policy/maker opinions, and thus, policy-outcome (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.83). It is through the expanded use of the internet which media has gained a central role in everyday life. News and stories are published and transmitted at a greater speed, especially with news channels that are on 24/7 (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.84). This has led the Arctic to become closer to the laymen's attention as the exposure of the Arctic are becoming more apparent in the more policy areas. Pincus and Ali identify three clusters of conflict within the Arctic: "the race for the Artic", a new Cold War and conflict between oil interest and environmentalist (2016, p.88). The 'Race' is defined, or implied a rush or, haste in claiming the Arctic, and the resources that are there. Inside the academic sector we can see the various framing and how it is portrayed. Terms which are used as well within the narrative of the race is the "scramble" or "race" (Craciun 2009; Sharp 2011; Borgerson 2013; Bruun & Medby 2014; Czarny 2015; Byers 2017; Nilsson 2018).

The second cluster of conflict from Pincus and Ali is the fear of a new Cold War. This focuses on the deteriorating relationship between the US and Russia, which ultimately can lead to conflict. Nicol and Heininen (2014) uses the term "a new cold war" but are more sceptic in its "prophecy".

Finally, there is the conflict of interest between the oil extraction side and the environmentalist (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.88). They identify, in a broad sense, that 2011 was the year that marked a turning point in media covering Arctic issues regarding potential conflicts, as made clear in their figure 1 (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.89). Key to these findings is how these narratives are framed and presented. From a media perspective, the Arctic is usually framed within issues like oil drilling, ship traffic, Search and rescue incapability's and

growing concern of Russian military presence (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.89). Such frames are also supplemented with dramatic use of language that stresses rivalries between the US and Asian states (and other Asian interest in the Arctic), the Arctic frontier and what kind of frontier it will be; an ecological preserve, economic engine or an area of cooperation or conflict (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.89). Here we can also look to the academic sector which focuses on this concept, describing it as a "gold rush", or "race for resources" (Howard 2009; Jensen 2010; Ruel 2011; Palosaari 2012; Knecht & Kiel 2013; Nilsson 2017).

Another tool of framing narrative, and more so in the 21st century, argues Pincus and Ali, is the use of images and visual aids. Political cartoons are one way to try to condense and try to use common sense which the public "classify, organize and interprets" their understanding of the topic (Greenberg 2002, p.181). Another important aspect of framing is the use of what kind of imagery visuals that are accompanied with news stories, therein lies the use of the various language and sources (Pincus & Ali 2016, p.91). Examples of such visuals are maps and video recordings. Maps in the Arctic context are usually show with the different extended continental shelf claims and turned to show the Arctic ocean in the middle, to signalize its importance and center of international attention. Overlapping claims with different colors also is an know framing tool, where it shows the potential conflict which it has. Pincus and Ali concludes that the framing of the Arctic as a potential theater of conflict does not have theoretical ground and are more based on an anecdotal perspective (2016, p.92).

The Russian flag planting which took place in 2007 by a Russian research vessel planted their nations flag made from titanium on the north pole seabed. A Russian parliamentarian and explorer who undertook the mission, Artur Chilingarov, stated that this would show Russian presence in the area for a "hundred or thousand years to come". The Canadian Foreign Minister at the time, Peter MacKay, responded to CTV stating, "This isn't the 15th Century", "You can't go around the world and just plant flags and say, 'We're claiming this territory'". Repercussions from this action sparked a flurry of statements regarding a "race for the Arctic" in media-outlets (BBC 2007b; Parfitt 2007; The Economist 2007; Phillips 2008) and scholars that have debated the it under different names. Scholars have coined it as an "Arctic meltdown" or a "new cold war" (Borgerson 2008; Borgerson 2009; Blunden 2009; Antrim 2010). These notions however where blown out of proportions, as one of the researchers that took part in the Russian expedition responded to the hype surrounding the stunt saying that "it's nothing more than a PR stunt" (Blomfield 2007). This led to a meeting

of the five littoral Arctic states, where they reaffirmed their goal of cooperation (Byers 2013a, p.93) through the Ilulissat Decleration (2008).

5.4 Norway's Arctic strategies

This section will be dedicated to analyzing three of Norway's Arctic strategies between two cabinets (the labour red/green (2006; 2009), and the conservative blue (2017)) between 2006 to 2017. This be will be done analysis with a focus on the narrative of "the race for the Arctic", focusing primarily on resources and transportation routes in the Arctic, The analysis will look at the how the Norwegian state frames the developmental discourse, and how it positions itself in the international stage of the Arctic. The first two strategies from the center-left government has been described to "re-scale Norway's resources and interests in the High North" (Kristoffersen 2014, p.131). Kristoffersen frames the Norwegian Arctic policy under Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre as "anticipatory: involving forecasting while asserting Norway's geopolitical import" (Kristoffersen 2014, p.131). Oil and gas are a prime export commodity of Norway, ranking as the seventh biggest exporter of oil in 2011, and the second biggest exporter of gas in 2010, globally (Kristoffersen 2014, p.133). For now, three oil and gas fields are operational in the Barents Sea; Snøhvit, Goliat and Johan-Castberg (formerly known as Skrugard) (Kristoffersen 2014, p.133).

In the second strategy (Norway 2009), a paragraph is dedicated to the elastic concept that is used throughout the policies; '*Nordområdene'* (the High North) (p.7). It is not precisely defined and is not only concerned with only Norwegian areas of the Arctic. The policy highlights Norway's interests which transcends its borders in the circumpolar north, stating that Norway have interests connected to development all around the circumpolar north. This understanding of the Artic is articulated as *The High North* from the Norwegian state perspective, and it is this one that is used throughout the policy. Skagestad calls the High North a "metaphor", an expression for the northern dimensions of Norway, at that the term has a rather elastic attribute linked to it (2010, p.17-18). Seemingly expanding and shrinking to the needs of the policy at hand. Hønneland and Jensen defines this period in time after the turn of the millennium the "High North euphoria", as the term in itself the *High North* is too close to a Norwegian context to connect on an international level (2008, p.110). At the time before the High North strategy in 2006, there was a lot of talk about Norway already "loosing" the race in the Barents Sea to other oil and gas competitors (Hønneland & Jensen

2008, p.111). As with the compared "Barentsbegeistringen" (Barents enthusiasm) from the 1990s, Hønneland and Jensen asks if the High North euphoria is decaying, and that looking at similar previous narratives from the 1990s, there is arguments to be made that that is the reality (2008, p.112). Hønneland noted that the euphoria for the High North region was a narrative that ran parallel to the international buzz about the rush for the Arctic (Hønneland 2017, p.3). Norway's motivation for engaging and investing more heavily in the High North was not because of a race for the Arctic resources, but because of "internal issues in Norwegian politics and in the country's relationship with Russia" (Hønneland 2017, p.3). Regionalization was an imperative notion for the Norwegian State after the Cold-War. This response came after an institutionalization period in the 1990s, known as the Barents enthusiasm with the Russians, to draw them closer into the European sphere, done through the establishment of the Barents Euro Arctic-Council (BEAR) (Hønneland 2017, p.7). These and other instances of a regionalization approach to the High North was part of a Norwegian initiative to reclaim their title as a Polar Nation (Hønneland 2017, p.15). Acts like establishing the Arctic Council Secretariat, with its three working groups, in Tromsø, Norway's "Arctic capital". Other examples of institutions are Tromsø university renaming themselves to the Arctic University of Norway, Nord (North) University in Bodø, with its High North Centre, and the Barents Institute in Kirkenes. There is also an abundance of High North/Arctic centric conferences like the Kirkenes conference, the Barents Spektakel (Kirkenes), Arctic Frontiers (Tromsø), High North Dialogue (Bodø) and the Arctic Circle (Reykjavik) (Hønneland 2017, p.84). These institutions and conferences represents are places of socialization and production and re-production of Arctic agendas where interests and ideas are shared among actors inside states.

5.4.1 « The Norwegian Government's Strategy for the High North » (2006)

This policy focuses its attention of the possibilities that the High North offers (Norway 2006, p.5). In one of their main five focus points, the Norwegian state declares that "We will in a sustainable way, utilize the possibilities linked to the Barents Sea as a new European energy-province" (Norway 2009, p.5). Later, they also highlight that the High North represents a crucial strategic development imperative, not only for Norway's northern regions, but for the nation itself, through its resources in the sea, its opportunities and challenges associated with the sea and the Norwegian High North. They sum up the introduction with three keywords; presence, activity and knowledge (Norway 2006, p.6). It is later repeated that the High North signifies Norway's most important focus area in the years to come (Norway 2006, p.7). The Norwegian state lays out a broad an all-encompassing

policy that wants to create a sustainable northern way of living, with job-security in the future, accommodate with health and education services and rich nature and cultural experiences.

A section is dedicated to the petroleum activity in the High North and its potential. It outlines that the Barents Sea can contain large reserves of resources, strategically placed close to Europe so that it can help satiate the increasing energy demand in Europe (Norway 2006, p.45). It is also noted that it can help the growing demand for energy supply in a global context, and a wish to be less dependent on petroleum recourses from the Middle East (Norway 2006, p.45). Norway's focus in the Barents Sea will be on known reserves such as Snøhvit, which is the first milestone of the establishment of petroleum production in the Barents-sea. Other focus areas are the development of the Goliath field, gas production on 'Melkøy', continued surveys of potential resource areas, spillover effects for the counties Finnmark and Troms in northern Norway, and an active cooperative approach with Russia which can yield positive opportunities for Norwegian businesses.

Norway goal is to be a leading actor on "sea security, rescue operations and oilspil-preventions" in the High North (Norway 2006, p.48). It requires a closer collaboration with Russia on sea-safety and oilspil-prevention which will be accomplished through "measures" and installations for enhanced capabilities related to the issues (Norway 2006, p.48-49). It is especially important to establish a good system for securing good transport corridors of petroleum to the markets. This way, Norway paves the way for increased activity in the ocean areas in the High North and shows presence in the region (Norway 2006, p.49). Jan Mayan, an island located northwest in the Nordic sea, is also emphasized as an important strategic location for development of sea-lanes in the High north. Lastly, a strengthening and further developing of meteorological observation services is also noted, as the High North areas of Norway will see increased traffic (Norway 2006, p.49). A very comprehensive strategy, some observers said that it lists all the thinkable challenges in the region. It can be perceived as a catch all sentiment, ultimately managing to remove the dividing lines between a domestic and international sphere (Hønneland 2017, p.12).

5.4.2 « New Building Blocks in the North » (2009)

The follow-up strategy from Norway was released in 2009 and set out to build upon the previous strategy and continue with new building blocks from the previous strategy. The High North strategy is a continuation of Norway's focus on Norwegian sovereignty in the

Arctic, lay the foundation for sustainable renewable and non-renewable resources development (Norway 2009, p.6). The strategy lay out seven focus areas, where number three is to "stimulate sustainable development of petroleum resources and renewable resources at sea" (Norway 2009, p.7).

An important notion regarding sub clusters of institutions that can influence politics at a higher level. The government of Norway wants to develop knowledge 'environments' that will focus on climate and environments in the High North, these institutions are Norwegian Polar Institute, Akvaplan Niva, NINA, NILU, Nofima og the DSA (Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority) (Norway 2009, p.8).

The Norwegian government postulate the notion that an ice-free Arctic will give rise to more sea transportation and new seaway trade routes and trade corridors (Norway 2009, p.21). It is especially mentioned that the Arctic can become an alternative transport corridor instead of the Panama- or Suez Canal, and that more petroleum transportation to and from the Arctic will lead to more ship traffic along the Norwegian coast. This increase in ship traffic can lead to spillover effects into other maritime services along the Norwegian coast and infrastructure that is required for such operations. The Norwegian government is adamant that investing in these sectors/services and infrastructures will yield increased value creation in the northern regions of Norway (Norway 2009, p.21-22). This, in turn, will lead to a wish from the Norwegian state to be world leading in terms of knowledge about maritime activity in Arctic regions (Norway 2009, p.22).

As it is estimated that there are large amounts of petroleum-based resources in the Arctic seabed, and that these resources can help drive further development in the region (Norway 2009, p.23). These resources are crucial for the energy demand that Europe is craving, and so, the policy states that it is not only a national concern, but an international (Norway 2009, p.23). For further prospect, conducting geological knowledge-based surveys are important to gauge possible resource bases which can become new developmental drivers in the High North (Norway 2009, p.23). The policy state that through economic activity and business development, is important cornerstones to secure welfare and employment in the northern regions of Norway. The policy suggests that the petroleum sector can become such an important driver for business development and economic activity in the northern regions of Norway (Norway 2009, p.24). This is dependent on good infrastructure which can provide

services for the extractive industry, and also the maritime sector which needs proper facilities (Norway 2009, p.24).

The policy mentions that Norway, as Europe's most northern nation, which is linked with the what is thought of about what living in the north; the sea and cold coasts, dangerous explorations, polar heroes and winter sports, snow and ice (Norway 2009, p.49). These notions are what outsiders will come to think of when Norway is mentioned, thus it is in this identity we have an advantage we should act on. It is in this governments interest that taking care of our northern countries, Norway assert themselves as an important actor in the north, internationally (Norway 2009, p.50). When the previous strategy was developed in 2006, no concrete definitions of the High North was given. And it usually referred to the areas around the Barents Sea (Norway 2009, p.50). However, in this policy, the Norwegian government recognizes that the High North is getting more and more global, and therefore must include a more international perspective on the High North regions. Receding ice in the Arctic is an immediate concern and is also caused to concern as climate change is ramping up, it is also this which gives more opportunities in the Arctic, either in terms of transport, resources and communication (Norway 2009, p.50). For Norway, this will give it three spheres of operations to focus on. Firstly, a unique way to do research and give us a better observe and see consequences and outcomes of climate change. Secondly, it will allow more ship traffic (in commerce and tourism) to enter and sail, and in longer periods of time in the Arctic, opening up shorter trade routes between Europe, North America and Asia. Lastly, the petroleum resources will become more accessible, even though the climate will offer challenges in extracting it, but advances in technology and methods of extracting will help in these areas (Norway 2009, p.50).

Later in the Policy, the Barents Sea is nicknamed the "new energy province of Europe" (Norway 2009, p.67). An interesting comment is suggested by the policy which is, "By just turning the map, we can place the High North in the center; and not any center, but a new center of resources" (Norway 2009, p.67). It is reiterated that the High North regions is one of the most important developmental areas as a new energy province, but one that is also will secure future generations welfare. The High North regions is viewed as a region that will be a huge driver for en new technological-driven future that will herald a new prosperous era of Norwegian development (Norway 2009, p.67).

5.4.3 «Arctic Strategy» (2017)

This Arctic policy is different than the previous two in that it comes from a different cabinet, now under the Conservative Party in Norway. It is noted that this strategy seeks to pave a more market-oriented approach in further development (Norway 2017, p.9), which emphasizes on local companies in the north Norway to be given greater advantage and increase profitability. This will be accomplished through utilizing the Arctic resources which needs a profitable and adaptable business sector, which is vital for continuing the regions sustainability (Norway 2017, p.9). As much as 10% of Norway's population live within the Arctic circle, making it the highest proportional population living in the Arctic compared to the other Arctic states (Norway 2017, p.3). From a business perspective, the Norwegian government wants to increase the value creation by local companies, basing their operations on local resources (Norway 2017, p.23). The government's goal is that all business activity in the Arctic is to "be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable" (Norway 2017, p.23). For this to be fulfilled, the region needs to tap into its natural resources, but also the human resources and capabilities. These actions can stimulate growth which will advance and give greater rewards for the High North region. This can lead to diversifying the northern business sector in fields like maritime biotechnology, energy, seabed mining, maritime transport and tourism, which the Norwegian state see great potential in (Norway 2017, p.23). The Norwegian government also wants to knit a closer cooperative relationship between research communities and the business sector (Norway 2017, p.24).

Chapter 6: Analysis

This chapter will go into a detailed discussion and analysis based on the empirical findings from the previous chapters. The chapter will highlight the socialization process and the inter-subjective understanding of "the race for the Arctic" as collective knowledge, or culture. As something which has become a narrative where resources, transportation, international law is front and center, and something that states and academics and personnel in media associate the Arctic with.

6.1 "The Race for the Arctic" Narrative

As the Arctic has experienced severe changes in its climate over the decades, the region has experienced the full force of attention in the narrative in Norwegian High North policy, media and academia. Mounting and competing interests are converging from states and thus resulting in a discourse about the Arctic in where an urgency for the *potential* resources and the regions capabilities for a shorter (super)sea-lane between Europe, North America and Asia. These interests bring international law and media attention with

misleading information, into the fray, as other non-Arctic states also see a potential for development and lucrative business opportunities. Norway, as an Arctic state undoubtedly has shown great interest in its own Arctic, the High North. However, looking at the Norwegian policy one can see the high enthusiasm with developing the High North, but also being carried away with slogans such as "the new energy province of Europe". Estimates and assessments of the region has put greater focus on the Arctic since 2000, but there seems to be an overly emphasis of what could be, instead of what is. Strong rhetoric is issued by national strategies, and a euphoric high on the *possibilities* on what the region has to offer. As the socialization process has developed, a space for Arctic and High North affairs has become apparent. It is this production of space in a regionalized setting which can be argued is a constitutive effect, which sees states socialize and share interests and ideas on a focused topic, thus influencing each other. An influx in formal and informal institutions have been paramount in this development. Particularly in a Norwegian context, and their road to reclaim their title as a Polar Nation, where a High North agenda is produced and reproduced. This production through socialization has placed an artificially high emphasis on the Arctic, which has driven the narrative forward. As states socialize to a higher degree, they have also relaxed their stance towards each other, and created a collective knowledge about the Arctic in which where the narrative about "the race for the Arctic" has evolved and has become *the* narrative of the Arctic.

The ironic premise with "the race for the Arctic" is the effect that the level of activity will bring with it. There is already a strong agreement in the scientific community that the Arctic possesses a unique ecosystem which is fragile already (IPCC 2018). Reaching critical tipping points (Lenton et al 2008) will alter the nature of the Arctic to unforeseen outcomes leading to challenges to societal ramifications for the people living in the Arctic and the rest of the world (Wassmann & Lenton 2012, p.5). This will also have a substantial ramification on sovereignty in the Arctic (Gerhardt et all 2010), Arctic governance (Young 2012) and people in the region (Hovelsrud et al 2012). As climate change is the catalyst for "the race of the Arctic" in the 21st century, it is also the effect of what increased activity in the region will produce, more severe damage to its ecosystem, both inside and outside of the region (Young 2012, p.79). This is especially poignant in the Arctic where externally driven environmental forces (for example, the impacts of climate change) together with the impact of globalization (for example, the consequences for Arctic communities of political pressures relating to marine mammals) threaten to swamp cooperative initiatives at the regional level (Young

2005, p.14). An important notion is to what extent there is profitable action if the outcomes leads to crossing climactic tipping points leading to more severe and unforeseen changes. The duality of the Arctic as *the* region to invest in is palpable as we hear about an intensification of melting sea- and land ice, particularly on Greenland, which should be alarming. Yet, "the race for the Arctic" builds on notions that are contrary to helping combat these effects. More activity, more sea-traffic, sea-bed drillings can lead to more oil spills or worsening the ecosystem in the Arctic. Although not a lack of focus, there is a lack of action taken, and there is, in a Norwegian context at least in the oil and gas industry an argument which states the "greener" alternative to Norwegian oil extraction compared to other states which do not hold the same standards in the field. This create a basis from a Norwegian perspective that, Norwegian oil is better and more sustainable than other nations way of producing oil.

Throughout the literature, the USGS surveys (USGS 2000; Bird et al 2008) are at the heart of the driving mechanism for the narrative of a race for resources in the Arctic. The two USGS surveys which have been referenced to the possible resources in the Arctic, seems to lack the mention that the methods used in sampling of the geographic data are "probabilistic geology-based methodology" (Bailey referenced in Dahl 2015, p.49). Another point is that the first of these assessments was a worldwide survey from 2000 (USGS 2000), which did not include much of the Arctic, only partially. This has been misquoted that as much as 25% of the world's undiscovered oil resources would be in the Arctic (Bailey 2007). Bailey even claimed that the Arctic from that survey was "the big hole we didn't do". A follow-up survey was conducted in 2008 (Bird et al 2008) which has also been referenced by many scholars (Antrim 2010, p.4; Blunden 2009, p.122; Brutschin & Schubert 2016, p.147; Weber 2008, p.851). The 2008 (Bird et al.) survey explicitly states that it did not take into considerations the economic costs that it would take to recover these resources. It was pointed out that they also used a "probabilistic geological analysis", which further stresses only the *potential* that the Arctic region offers in terms of resources. This has been left out by many when arguing that a race for the resource was forthcoming. An assessment of the potential resources was released in 2009 (Gautier et al 2009), which sought to explain further what the possible undiscovered resources in the Arctic means. As with the previous mentioned assessment of 2008, Gautier et al emphasizes the lack of technological and economic risks, together with exploration and development costs which were not included in the 2008 assessment (2009, p.1176). Therefore, the numbers that are presented in the USGS from 2008 (Bird et al 2008) are very much only *potential*, and the comment from 2009 (Gautier 2009) even states that

these first estimates are based on scant surveys, leaving only a fraction of the potential resources recoverable. In order for this to be recoverable, development has to be focused so that the resource industry has an infrastructure which can sustain such an enterprise. This leaves the narrative that a lot of "the race for the Arctic" in a very theoretical discourse. Although, there are areas in the Arctic which has been developed for oil and gas, like the Barents Sea. Gas resources in the Arctic is said to be three times more gas than oil in the Arctic (Gautier et al 2009, p.1178). However, Gautier et al also claims that the oil resources which are recoverable in the Arctic are not sufficient to shift the geographic pattern of world oil production (2009, p.1175), thus seemingly putting a damper on what the Norwegian state has declared it to be "the new energy province of Europe". Highlighting the need to build up infrastructure in the region has the possibility to improve the development of the region. However, geographic challenges, vast distances and low oil prices are some considerations which states must consider for their Arctic regions. Transportation is one such route of possibilities, however data from the sector seems to show lack of interest in developing Arctic transit routes. Even in established field like the Barents Sea, has been proven difficult, and these areas are shallower than the rest of the Arctic sea. This might have a sobering effect on the industry, and if we look to the strategies from Norway, only the first two are highlighting oil and gas, while the latter one is a much more modest policy paper compared to the first two. It is also worth mentioning the emphasis on that the development should come from the local rather than a national level. The Norwegian strategy from 2017 highlights value creation and local development, more than oil and gas extraction.

Transport across the Arctic is the other major theme which "the race for the Arctic" narrative revolves around. As the ice recedes further, and the area becomes more ice-free, the greater potential is for it to be used by shipping companies as an alternate route in the south. "The race for the Arctic" has been alluded to the Arctic waterways as the golden silk road to China, and one that can save shipping companies up to 40% of travel-time. Although lucrative as it may sound, the reality paints a far bleaker picture when looking at the empirical data. Interest in using the shipping route is still plagued by uncertainty regarding receding sea-ice and expensive exorbitant transit makes shipping companies hesitant to invest before proper infrastructure is in place (Lasserre 2011; Lasserre 2016). Nevertheless, there has been an increase in shipping, not in transit but in destinational shipping. Especially in the west side of the NSR. Leading to more activity, but not across the Arctic, but on the side of the NSR where there is more infrastructure in place in case of emergencies and already established

operations of resource extraction like the Barents Sea. Thus, the imperative aspect of a more active Arctic shipping is infrastructure, and with a strong focus on Search and Rescue (SAR). The main problem for these operations is the vast distances that must be covered by rescue personnel, and sometimes what kind of equipment that is needed. These operations require bilateral and sometimes multilateral agreements between states for cooperation and coordination.

Increased transportation in the Arctic from Russians has also been an argument from a Norwegian perspective at they should don't lose out on the potential that the Arctic has to offer. Hønneland argued that the increased Russian transportation activity in the mid-2000s as a catalyst for Norway's re-focusing on the High North (Hønneland 2017, p.70). Actors operating in the North became aware that the Russian oil tankers had operated with increased activity along the coast of Norway, and that it meant the Russians were "far ahead" in terms of extracting oil and gas, which was not true. Although it was unclear what exactly prompted the idea. However, Hønneland proposes that it was the disputes regarding maritime delimitations negotiations in the former grey zone, which supposedly includes the "world's richest fishing grounds".

6.2 An Age of Opportunity

The Arctic is entering "an age of opportunity and change, as globalization and climatic transformation finally reunite the four corners of the earth, with the North Pole at its very center" (Zellen, referenced in Dahl 2015, p.44-45). Although the Arctic sees the increase of activity, with some alarmist claiming a looming race for resources and an Arctic meltdown (Borgerson 2008, 2009), there is reason to believe that the region is well versed in cooperative endeavors, citing that Arctic challenges will be met with joint collaborative efforts from Arctic states (Brutschin & Schubert 2016, p.149). Arctic institutions have helped the region with Arctic agendas, making the proposed issues salient which has become a feature of the Arctic and the High North noting that:

> "[…] There is no doubt that the institutions examined […] have succeeded in establishing Arctic affairs as a distinctive international policy area that merits regular attention by decision makers at state, provincial and societal levels. Increasingly also, that distinctiveness is gaining recognition in broader international fora" (Stokke 2007, p.181).

This is also echoed in the Norwegian policy papers with policy regarding the High North are increasingly becoming horizontal, instead of a vertically divided between domestic and

international policy. This is apparent in who has written the various Norwegian policies. The 2006 policy is only written by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 2009 is written by the *Departementene* (Ministries) and with a foreword written by the Prime Minister, while the 2017 is written by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation and the Office of the Prime Minister. This shows to the transcendence of Arctic affairs and how constitutive of an effect it had on Norway's High North Strategy. It is also interesting to note that the 2006 is the one emphasizing an international scope, with a bombastic vision of the rich possibilities of the Arctic, stressing business and science development. The 2009 strategy is observed to be a domestic revolving policy, with only a sparse section dedicated to international affairs (Hønneland 2017, p.67). The 2017 strategy is also commented to be a more of a sober action plan rather than one riding on a High North Euphoria (Hønneland 2017, p.97). It seems more of a piece to keep the major actors appeased with a strategy, than a call to action for development and its *potential* it has to offer.

Such a focus on the Arctic and Arctic affairs has long been the interests of Arctic states. But there have been many challenges which has inhibited development. But the socialization of Arctic states after the Cold-War has increased activity and gained international attention. And, it is the uniqueness in which the Arctic has evolved as a region, that has allowed it to evolve as it has. With regards to environmental issues and environmental security with examples like oil spills, pollution, wildlife protection, adaptation to climate change and fishing regulation, the Arctic can be defined as those themes dominates circumpolar policy (Exner-Pirot 2013, p.123). The disengaged interest that the US has shown towards the Arctic has allowed other Arctic states in more space to operate, shifting priority from security to environmental issues. Other has also postulated a same idea. That the US has largely been a passive actor in "the race for the Arctic" resources, however the situation might escalate radically if the US pursue a more active role (Czarny 2015, p.277).

Interest in the region with regards to resources can also have global consequences affecting Asia and Africa (Czarny 2015, p.274). This sort of region-building, positioning with Arctic and non-Arctic actors as a socialization process allows for a dialogue where security issues is less focused, and more cooperative endeavors are pursued. Such as research and education, business development and SAR. This region building has also helped establish Arctic specific institutions, formal and well as informal, which has the ability to put Arctic affairs on the agenda and make them central. Institutions like the Arctic Council, The Nordic council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, The Northern Forum, The Arctic Institute, and the High

North Center are examples of structures that have helped promote dialogue and cooperation within the region. These are structure and institutions that has come to define the Arctic as a region (Pedersen 2018, p.142). We also have the abundance of Arctic-centric conferences like The Arctic Frontiers, High North Dialogue, International Arctic Forum, Arctic Circle Assembly to name a few, which also will promote Arctic challenges, and invite stakeholders. Actors involved for discourse, and again reproducing and advancing an Arctic agenda. Other institutions that are central to the Arctic is UNCLOS, which is instrumental for states to claim expanded rights to their maritime border territories (Strandsbjerg 2012, p.820). Russia was the first to submit its claim, as early as 2000, when they submitted its claim to the UN Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf (CLCS) (Czarny 2015, p.276). These institutions were cemented as concerning themselves with areas of international law in the Arctic, thus neglecting the need to establish special regulations for such matters, through the Ilulissat Decleration (2008) by the Arctic Five (Czarny 2015, p.281-282).

There is also an important argument to be made that scholars see the Arctic only in an ideal global perspective. Where the zeitgeist of modern society is the commodification of a global culture (Rai 2005). With such an attention to the Arctic on a global level, there is an important task to keep in mind that there are already people living and making a living in the Arctic. These effects are not necessarily as apparent, and some have commented on the notion, stating that "why do these "circumpolar" social science researchers appear to highlight the positive impacts of globalization when the social pathologies that exist in Arctic communities are too obvious to ignore and when depopulation is the dominant demographic trend?" (Southcott 2005, p.116). This is also noted in a Business Index North (BIN) from 2018 in the three most northern counties of Norway was included, where it was stated that one of the hardest challenges that the north regions face is the depopulation, or brain drain. The data from the three most northern counties in Norway saw the early cohorts, 0-19 and 20-39 are emigrating to a greater degree than compared to people that stay in the north (BIN 2018, p.15). It is however shown to be a trend in the population in Norway, and Sweden to be growing, which is from abroad and not from the southern parts of their respective countries (BIN 2018, p.17). The biggest challenge for these regions is to attract and retain younger people that wants to stay and work in the North. These are real challenges that make it hard to see development happen from a northern perspective. A common theme in the Arctic is the making of policy is happening much to the south in the country compared to where this strategy is supposed to guide it.

6.3 Fetishizing the High North

Some scholars have commented on the Norwegian High North strategies from 2006 and 2009, suggested that it is too thinly veiled and overused to the point of being meaningless. Commenting that it seems more like rhetoric rather that a reality, however there are still positive outcomes from the Norwegian High North strategies, like the Delimitation treaties with Russia in the Barents Sea, and Greenland via the Svalbard archipelago, and the outer limits of the Svalbard archipelago (Pedersen 2011, p.279). Though, a large part of the problem for the various strategies and policies lies in the very nature of the concept the *High North.* It is a concept with no international equal, and using the term is adding to the already confusing amounts of different, and vague, definitions of the Arctic discussed above. Skagestad postulates this argument when he says that the High North is "Elastic, and capable of being drawn all-out as well as being squeezed tightly together." (2010, p.17). The High North becomes something that the Norwegian state can augment - adding or removing-components depending on the context. Like the definition that Tamnes and Offerdal refers to, it is a narrative definition of the Arctic (2014, p.2). A malleable concept, confusing in its inception which has continued to persist, through augmentation necessary to the task it is applied to. The concept is consequently open to market swings on the political scale. Just like the policy papers are melting together domestic and foreign policy, so too is the effects on international level more profound in the policy papers. This effect is what we can define as a constitutive effect, with a constructivist political perspective (Wendt 1999). It is this effect that made the Norwegian policy from 2009 to look at the Barents Sea, and proclaim that it has its Europe's "new energy province" (Norway 2009, p.67). Thus, focusing on what the international buzz of "the race for the Arctic" promised, a copiousness amount of riches in forms of oil and gas in the Barents Sea. The latest of these strategies focuses more on business development, infrastructure, education and research, environmental safety and preparedness (Hønneland 2017, p.12). Which based on the material above can be argued to be influenced on riding on a high wave of development in the area, prone to the discourse raging on in the international level in media and academia. The Norwegian 2017 strategy focusses less on the "energy-bonanza" than the previous two strategies, which prompted the Norwegian government to propose larger export opportunities to its allies. However, low interest, and noting the petroleum resources from the Norwegian High North gave nothing new in terms of energy security, the proposal fell through. Again, showing the thin line between domestic and international. This could therefore be a reason why the latest strategy highlights instead increased value-creation and a more business-oriented approach, which stresses local

capabilities, diversifying the business sectors, and with a less focus on oil and gas extraction. The Barents Sea is mostly occupied by Norwegian small and medium based companies and are content with the government's effort that has increased and intensified exploration efforts (Kristoffersen 2014, p.140-141). However, applications from international oil companies are not streaming in, citing that they await applications in the Lo-Ve region to open (Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja), which is estimated to hold more resources and is more accessible (Kristoffersen 2014, p.141). Kristoffersen argues that the reason for a lack of international application for oil and gas exploration in the Barents Sea is the "artificial focus on the Barents Sea", which is argued by specialist in the industry (Kristoffersen 2014, p.142). This artificial focus on the Barents Sea is the also part of the intersubjective understanding from Norwegian policy makers. They have chosen to specifically highlight this area to be the place for investment and the activity.

For the Norwegian government at the time, Norway saw itself as a morally and ethically superior producer of 'clean' oil and gas, which could have the potential to secure an energy security to the global market (Kristoffersen 2014, p.143). Although, Norwegian oil and gas productions produce less CO2 emissions compared to other producers in the business and are in line with the Kyoto mechanism where "investments to cut emissions should be taken where they have the greatest effect" (Kristoffersen 2014, p.144). Kristoffersen states that this opportunistic approach has gained political territory in the Norwegian elites and has had a constitutive reality among the shared energy elites in Norway (Kristoffersen 2014, p.144). We can again draw the lines from a social constructivist perspective in that it is a constitutive effect. Manifested through the Norwegian elite's construct, enroll and legitimate exploitation of the Norwegian High North in various ways, and as such action has been justified through anticipatory logic guides which in turn has legitimized Norwegian oil and gas politics in the Norwegian High North (Kristoffersen 2014, p.144).

6.4 Turning the World on its Head

The race for the Arctic has been a dominant topic within the geopolitical and energy security discourse in the 21st century, both in media and the academic sector. As climate change has continued to affect the geophysical nature of the region, and made it more accessible, likewise has policymakers turned their gaze northwards to what potential riches lies in the Arctic, which has colored Arctic strategies. This Arctic visage can also be found in various Arctic nations strategy policies. The Canadian Arctic strategy states that the North is interlinked with their national identity, cemented in their heritage and cultural history (Canada

2009). The Kingdom of Denmark states that it is "centrally" an Arctic state by way of the Faroe Island and Greenland is included, and that it has strong cultural roots connected to the Arctic (Denmark 2011). Finland describes itself as a state with Arctic expertise, and that Finland's projection of an Arctic image is essential to their national image (Finland 2013). Sweden focuses on their long history of exploration, with famed explorer, Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, together with their Sami population that has a cultural and historic link to the region in the north of Sweden (Sweden 2011). This symbolism becomes politically charged and given agency to which a sense of belonging and community is created to bolster an Arctic identity. As a higher level of socialization has occurred, we can look at how it has managed to produce, reproduce and sustain itself as relevant, with regards to Norwegian High North policy (Pedersen 2018). For Norway, their re-focus on the High North is an opportunity to reassert themselves as a Polar Nation as suggested by Hønneland (2017). Norway's intention as an actor, as we can explain by Wendt's "actor's socialization process" (Wendt 1999, p.399), which can be argued for their focus on establishing Polar or, northern institutions. These institutions as mentioned before, like The University of the Arctic, Nord University, the Polar Institute, BEAR, Arctic Council Secretariat, The High North Center and the Barents Institute. These institutions are contributing to an intention seen explained also by Wendt, which is a part of the collective meaning that Arctic actors partake in (1999, p.407). This is more clearly expressed by the amount of Arctic conferences and how they represent a meeting place between state actors who operate under these Arctic institutions. It is here that their perception of the Arctic becomes intersubjective and ideas and a shared understanding of the High North becomes apparent as they are shared and discussed, reaching a collective understanding, or a socially shared knowledge (Wendt 1999, p.141). This socially shared knowledge is what the perception that the actors can have, as such it can become a culture, which is the backdrop of economic and political spheres and work in front of or within. This has the ability to color narratives and discourses by intention and a shared understanding. This collective knowledge is dependent on micro-level structures and actors which acts according to something above it. This has the ability to create "collective memory", which Wendt defines can be myths, narratives and traditional labels, which a group reacts specifically in how they think about the subject. Furthering this argument, it is here we get to back to the constitutive effects. As actors within these systems are participating in establishing phenomena, such as narratives, which only exist because of them, they produce constitutive effects (Wendt 1999, p.88). We can draw parallels from Wendt's collective memory in how

Norway had created an artificially high focus on the Barents Sea and its High North. Which in itself can be explained by the outcome of a constitutive effect.

This leads into a causality loop which the constitutive effect is very much part of. We can look back to history where the Arctic has always had a central place for Western states. At some time there became a fixation about the Arctic in the possibility of resources. This obsession became at one point intersubjective for the actors operating in the Arctic. And, as the years passed on the focus became more intensive. The establishment of the Arctic as a region, which was part of a socialization process by the Arctic states. Led to the creation of a space where a culture of the Arctic could flourish. This culture has been manifested through formal and informal institutions which has produced and reproduced the agenda of the Arctic as *the* "space" for the 21st century. From a social constructivist perspective, it is in the use of discourse and narratives that the Arctic has gained nicknames like "the new energy province of Europe", or the "Polar silk Road". It is this effect we can argue is and has had a constitutive effect on Norway's arctic strategy. Discussion and socializing processes of the Arctic states, together with a discourse loaded with heavy use of symbol politics has created a vision of the Arctic promoting an urgency in order to not lose the potential that the Arctic has to offer. "The race for the Arctic" thus is a result of an intensification period 2000-2017, produced by the concept of ideas that has historical roots; resources and transportation (Craciun 2009). As an observation of this there is a theme to discuss about the prospect about what the Arctic has been, is, and what it can be. As the mentioned earlier the fascination of the Arctic has long been a staple of western explorers. It represented something to be conquered and dominated. The discourse about the Arctic has had a rose-tinted effect on many who hope that it can bring about real change for them. This is something Hønneland also noted when he attended a conference about the High North. The conference was arranged by the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO) in 2006 who saw attendants from "anybody who is somebody in Norway's business establishment" (Hønneland 2017, p.61). The conference had a circular platform which spun around its own axis, on which the discussion and debates would take place. A relaxed atmosphere was apparent as there was no inherent piercing question that was asked. Instead, it seemed more of a celebration of what the many possibilities the High North would offer the Norwegian businesses. With statements ranging from turning the world on its head, with the Arctic in the center, new established flights from the new periphery; Houston and Bangkok would establish direct air links to Finnmark, and people would flock en mass to the North (Hønneland 2017, p.62). The carousel

of a High North Euphoria was at hand and would overshadow previous ideas and notions about what the Arctic was though of during the 1990s. The round table talks were to some degree a satirical view on how development and policy are created, and even a representative from WWF – Rasmus Hansson – was given five minutes, compared to the seven-hour long conference to air some thoughts. Ending in a comment from the host that everybody agreed except for him. As with the round table talks, there seems to be a symptom of a downward spiral/cyclical evolution where the "romanization" of the Arctic is brought on by advancement of technology and climate change. The French said it best:

"Plus, ça change, plus c'est la même chose" (*the more it changes, the more it's the same thing) - Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr*.

It is the notion of the narrative about the Arctic having a cyclical nature, it always comes back to the idea of the Arctic to be the end all, be all solution for development and other endeavors. "The race for Arctic" resources signify a concern of an immediate action to take place, but in a paradoxical way where one side advocates sustainability and environmentalism, while the other extractivism and shipping lanes which can bring more destruction and unforeseen damages. The Arctic is the planets frontlines when it comes to climate change, it holds significant importance in how we go about developing the Arctic region (Young 2011, p.187). The same ideas being resources and transportation we are drawing ever closer to the point of when the Arctic becomes completely ice free, and the climate is getting warmer, there might be an even greater intensification than what we have seen, and not just only in the discourse. The Arctic is still a young region, and some scholars claim to the young and emerging ways of cooperation that the region encapsulates (Young 2005, p.14). In order to establishes itself as a well-organized institution it needs to structure itself in a way that finds a common ground to be reached.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Through this thesis I have looked at how "the race for the Arctic" narrative has influenced Norwegian High North strategies. With a social constructivist approach, we can explain Norway's behavior and strategies with being affected by constitutive effects in the Arctic region. This constitutive effect placed artificially high focus on the High North region of Norway, which saw it to be *the* investment area for Norway in the years to come from 2006. This Euphoria center around "the race for the Arctic" themes such as resource extraction, transportation, international law and the media attention. Creating a narrative of what the High North is based on a contextual setting, changed from strategy to strategy, based on the potential that it had.

"The race for the Arctic" has undoubtedly had its effect on the Arctic region and on the Global level. As an intensification period after the turn of the millennium where potential resources and the possibility of a shorter sea route where main drivers for a discourse, "the race for the Arctic" managed to entice old and new stakeholders to the Arctic. These ideas were further advanced through climate change, which also has been operating as the catalyst together with advancement in technologies, and the Russian flag planting on the North Pole seabed in 2007. Which increased the geopolitical discourses surrounding "the race for the Arctic". Leading to a flurry of misinformation, the narrative of "the race of the Arctic" came to dominate media-outlets and the general population perception of what the High North could bring if there was enough interest.

Norwegian policy makers used strong rhetoric and through reestablishing themselves as a Polar Nation showed strong influence of an urgency to develop the enduring mechanism of the High North, both in an expanding and contrasting set, based on circumstances and context. With a social constructivist perspective these actions can be explained by a socialization process through regionalization of the Arctic where salient issues was produced and reproduced in formal and informal institutions, which had constitutive effects on Norway's High North policies, which at first saw a strong international focus, which then become more focused on domestic endeavors and projects. Blurring the line between domestic and international affairs for each consequent strategy written and influences can be seen both from a authours perspective and on where the emphasis lies and what to look for.

As "the race for the Arctic" has come to mean resources, transportation, the international law, media attention and climate change together with increased access. Which has helped drive the interest from relevant actors. The Arctic is becoming a global stage, with

a global set of actors, some claiming it to be a region that should be open to all, and the Arctic states trying to find solutions that makes it under their jurisdiction and control. “The race for the Arctic” is not over, as there are resources in the seabed, the sea-lanes are becoming more open, and there will be, based on scientific reading be less ice in the region, making it hotter and easier to navigate through.

Chapter 8: References

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