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ARCTIC SECURITY – DOES THE MELTING ICE CAP EQUATE TO INCREASED CONFLICT?

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JCSP 41

Exercise Solo Flight

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Introduction

Recent Canadian Governments have tried to increase the profile of issues in the Arctic. In Steven Harper's 2005 federal election campaign, he made the Canadian Arctic a core part of his platform. Since forming a majority government, he has maintained the focus on the Arctic by annual trips to the North.¹ Be it sovereignty, security, economic development or native peoples' issues, the narrative that is being expressed by the government is that the Canadian Arctic is important to all Canadians. Canada is not the only country focusing on Arctic issues. Nowhere in the world is the impact of climate change more readily apparent than in the Arctic. Areas that were beneath tons of ice just twenty years ago are now accessible as glaciers recede. The fact that areas are ripe for exploitation is not lost on the circumpolar Arctic nations. As the ice melts, international relations are freezing. Franklyn Griffiths questions if we are seeing the start of a new Cold War "tied to a race for resources, and international scramble to claim the riches of a newly accessible region, and the buildup of military capabilities designed for Arctic operations."²

Although climate change will allow greater access to the wealth in the arctic through both the exploitation of previously inaccessible resources and the opening of efficient trade routes, does not mean that arctic and non-arctic nations are on a path towards conflict. Prior to active conflict, an issue must be securitized to the point that a state sees the use of military force as feasible or even necessary. It will be argued that

¹ Katherine Sinclair, "Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship," *Arctic* 65, no. 4 (12, 2012), 5.

² Franklyn Griffiths, Robert N. Huebert and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 1.

arctic concerns have not transitioned from the politicized to the securitized realm as defined in the Copenhagen School model.

To understand the security challenges of the north, one must first examine International Relations (IR) theories through a historical lens to assess which IR theory can provide insight into the challenges posed when tackling such a complex issue. Predicting the future is never particularly easy, and it becomes even more difficult when assessing the future of the arctic with its social, economic, environmental and political aspects. Are the militaries of Arctic and non-Arctic nation's part of the problem or part of the solution?

In order to demonstrate that we are not on a path towards conflict, this essay will analyze the past, present, and future of the Canadian Arctic through the lens of IR theory. In part one, the Neorealist viewpoint will be used to focus on the security concerns at the end of the Cold War, and to argue that the Neorealist view of IR is insufficient to understand the present and predict the future. In part two, Neoliberalism will be used to help understand the Arctic security issues and international governance that developed after the Cold War and which is in place today. However, both Neorealism and Neoliberalism are insufficient in addressing the question of Arctic conflict in the future. It is argued that a pre-cursor to conflict is the securitization of an issue. Part three will analyze this issue from the Canadian viewpoint using the securitization model developed by the Copenhagen school and demonstrate that the Arctic is not securitized and is unlikely to become securitized in the near future.

Part 1 – Arctic Security from the Neorealist Viewpoint

To help one understand if the Arctic is being securitized, it is relevant to examine the Arctic through IR theory during the Cold War and compare it with the situation now and in the near future. Realism comes in many varieties, but they all share three common elements. Charles Glaser describes these as (1) the international system is anarchic – meaning that there is no authority above the state. (2) Power is the main factor in the relation between states. This is directly related to the anarchic nature of relations. States must have the power to counter threats or if they do not have this power, they will form alliances with other states to counter larger powers. (3) States are considered as single actors and their interests apply to the states as a whole.³

During the Cold War the Arctic was certainly securitized. The Arctic provided the former USSR the shortest way to strike at the USA. This made the Arctic a strategic theatre of operations for long range bombers, nuclear submarines, intercontinental ballistic missiles and early warning.⁴ As predicted by Neorealist theory the Arctic became both militarized and securitized. Canada, as a much smaller power, had to seek alliances to survive in the anarchic system, and this is the reason why the North American Air Defence Organization was created. During the Cold War period, Neorealism theory was an accurate model of international relations in the Arctic, but this was to change following the end of the Cold War. Setting aside the fact that the end of the Cold War and

³ Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

⁴ Christian Le Mièrè and Jeffrey Mazo, *Arctic Opening: Insecurity and Opportunity*, Vol. 440 (Abingdon: Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013), 82.

the breakup of the USSR was unexplainable in terms of Neorealism,⁵ the Arctic nations appeared to try to capitalize on the peace-dividend and commenced reducing their military capabilities in the Arctic; however, with the growing knowledge that climate change was going to open up previously inaccessible Arctic regions, nations have started to rebuild their military capacity in the North.⁶ On the surface this is certainly in line with Neorealist theories, and if taken further, these theories would predict that the anarchic environment would lead to increased tensions between the powers involved; however, a more thorough examination of the situation shows that this is not the case. Frederic Lasserre, Jérôme Le Roy and Richard Garon's statistical analysis of the Navies of the Arctic nations concludes that new ship acquisition is not in response to Arctic policies per say; rather, it is a policy to replace older ships as a part of standard nation lifecycle programs. In the specific case of Russia's Northern fleet "neither do they show a recent and determined course that could be explained by the desire to control threatened new Arctic sea zones."⁷

If a strictly military buildup is not in the process of occurring, Neorealism would predict that as the wealth of the Arctic becomes accessible, strong economic competition would occur. This is further exacerbated by the fact that there are a number of competing claims on territory in the Arctic, and the lack of an overarching legal framework with which to address these claims (once again due the anarchic nature of the international system). Scott Borgerson's uses this as the basis of his scenario for armed conflict in the

⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer2000, 2000), 5-41.

⁶ Frederic Lasserre, Jérôme Le Roy and Richard Garon, "Is there an Arms Race in the Arctic?" *Journal of Military & Strategic Studies* 14, no. 3 (04, 2012), 1-56.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

Arctic.⁸ Zdenek Kriz and Filip Charastansky describe three general categorizations for these conflicts. The first of these is that of the Demarcation of the borders between two states. Examples of such scenarios include the dispute between Canada and the USA over the border in the Beaufort Sea or the dispute between Canada and Denmark over the border in the Davis Strait.⁹ The second category of conflict is that of dispute over the control of Straits. An example of this is the North West Passage; the USA will argue that this is an international strait, were Canada's position is that the North West Passage is Canadian internal waters and thus under Canada's direct control.¹⁰ The final type of conflict is that of the continental shelves. Nations control the resources in the water column and the resources on the sea bed of the Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ). This extends two hundred miles from a nation's shore; however, when a continental shelf extends past two hundred miles a nation can submit a claim to control the resources past the EEZ.¹¹ In the case of the Arctic, and specifically the continental shelf under the North Pole, Russia, Canada, USA, and Denmark have differing views as to what part of the pie that extends from the North Pole belongs to which country. Some of these specific disputes will be discussed in greater detail later, the main point here being that Neorealism theory would argue that these types of disputes would lead to much greater conflict; however, when they are examined in greater detail the military conflict predicted by Neorealism is not present. In the case of the USA - Canada dispute over the boundary in the Beaufort Sea, significant resources are up for grabs. Neorealism would suggest that

⁸ Scott G. Borgerson, "Arctic Meltdown," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 2 (Mar, 2008), 63-77.

⁹ Zdenek Kríž and Filip Chrástanský, "Existing Conflicts in the Arctic and the Risk of Escalation: Rhetoric and Reality," *Perspectives: Central European Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 1 (07, 2012), 111-139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

power dynamics involved would mean that the stronger power would push its own position and not compromise. However despite the current deadlock, both nations favor cooperative solutions.¹² The conflict between Canada and the USA over the North West Passage is another example that challenges the Neorealist. Despite rhetoric from the USA and the two times they executed a passage of the North West Passage with Icebreakers, the USA and Canada have come to the agreement where the USA will always ask permission before they transit the North West Passage and Canada will always grant authority for said transit. An argument could be made that the above examples were all drawn from USA - Canada relations, and with two countries that have such a history of cooperation; they are the exception that prove the Neorealist rule. However, one only needs to look to the Russia - Norway boarder dispute for an example of two nations that are not traditional allies, but were still able to come to a solution in regards to their dispute, without resorting to Neorealist power dynamics.¹³

What proceeded was not an attempt to invalidate Neorealist theories; rather, it was an attempt to examine Arctic security issues through a Neorealist lens. As an example, the Cold War was a period where Neorealism was a useful tool to understand the relations between the Arctic states. In light of this, perhaps there needs to be a threshold of risk for Neorealist principles to come into play. The USSR was a power that posed an existential threat to the USA and Canada. The same could be said if the power dynamics was viewed from the Soviet perspective. The end of the Cold War has

¹² Griffiths, Huebert and Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship*, 118.

¹³ Križ and Chrástanský, *Existing Conflicts in the Arctic and the Risk of Escalation: Rhetoric and Reality*, 120.

permitted greater cooperation between nations and the expansion of international governance; while there is still anarchy in the international system, the evolution of international institutions could very well be the reason why Neorealism is found somewhat wanting when disputes in the Arctic are examined; as such, the following second section will revisit Arctic security issues from the perspective of the Neoliberal Institutionalists.

Part 2 – Arctic Security Through the Neoliberal lens

Liberalism shares some characteristics with Realism. The state is still the main actor in an international system that is also considered anarchic; however, it is in the way a state responds to that anarchy which sets Liberalism apart from Realism. Realism pessimistically predicts the self-help competitive nature of international relations leading to conflict, while Patrick Morgan describes the more optimistic nature of "... [Liberalism's] distinctive approach to international politics. Perhaps the most obvious is that it is fundamentally optimistic ... about politics, economics, and the broad prospects for international politics, including cooperation."¹⁴ Indeed where Neorealism fails to predict the cooperation between Arctic nations, Neoliberalism (particularly its Institutionalists variant) does. A closer look at the Arctic Council and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) will be used as examples to address Neoliberalist view of security in the Arctic. It will be shown that while these aforementioned examples are characteristic of Neoliberal cooperation in the Arctic, they fall short of answering the question of securitization in the Arctic.

¹⁴ Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 29.

The genesis of Arctic cooperation can be traced back to Mikhael Gorbachev's speech in 1987. This was truly the beginning of the thaw in Arctic relations when he called for "a zone of peace and fruitful cooperation."¹⁵ The first phase of this Arctic cooperation was achieved by the creation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991 by the eight Arctic nations. The second phase of Arctic cooperation was achieved by the creation of the Arctic Council that was formed in 1996.¹⁶ The AEPS had very ambitious goals, but it had nothing to do with traditional security issues; rather, it was created to deal with environmental issues only. The mandate of the Arctic Council expanded from that of the AEPS and was envisioned to include common Arctic issues. This is certainly along the lines of Neoliberal theories, however it is significant to note what was left out of the Arctic Council's mandate. As Timo Koivurova and Nigel Hasanat describes "common issues could include almost any international policy issue, except for matters related to military security."¹⁷ The consequence of the Arctic Council's mandate is that it is not a venue which could be used to resolve any of the three types of Arctic conflicts previously described, and therefore falls short of the international cooperation espoused by Neoliberal theories.

Unlike the Arctic Council, UNCOS has the potential to provide the necessary governance to address some aspects of the three potential sources of conflict. Sovereignty is a key factor in understanding the basis for these disputes. Hebert describes the three key elements for sovereignty; first there must be an accepted governmental system that

¹⁵ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, "The Murmansk Speech," *Current Digest of Soviet Press* (1987), 1-19.

¹⁶ Timo Koivurova, E. C. H. Keskitalo and Nigel Bankes, *Climate Governance in the Arctic*, Vol. 50 (New York: Springer, 2009), 52.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

governs the area in question. Secondly there must be people to govern, and finally there must be international agreement on the boundaries in question.¹⁸ UNCOS was finalized in 1982 and came into effect in 1994. It was the international agreement that defined the previously described zones in the Maritime domain – the extension of the EEZ based on the continental shelf and the international strait - internal water distinction. UNCOS provides a mechanism for resolving disputes over such boundaries. For example if a nation believes it has a claim to the continental shelf past the EEZ, it must provide the Commission of Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) with scientific proof that their claim is accurate. If the CLCS accepts the evidence and there is no other nation with an overlapping claim, then the claim would be accepted. In the case of the continental shelves of Arctic Nations, Russia, Canada, Denmark and the USA could make claims. Russia, Canada and Denmark have already done so. Signatories of UNCLOS have agreed to resolve any disputes peaceably and the treaty itself provides four separate ways of achieving this. This appears to be in line with Neoliberals theories, but a closer look reveals some problems. The USA is not a signatory to the treaty and it is not known how this will impact the disputes. Likewise, when Norway made a claim under UNCLOS, Russia, despite being a signatory, conducted aggressive military operations in the disputed area. Although the Russians did not go as far as breaking international law, they did challenge the spirit of the “all peaceably means” section of UNCLOS.¹⁹ In 2008 Russia made the statement “all disputes arising over the Arctic continental shelf would be

¹⁸ Griffiths, Huebert and Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship*, 310

¹⁹ K. J. Battarbee and John Erik Fossum, *The Arctic Contested*, Vol. 28 (Bruxelles: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2014), 123.

dealt with peacefully and in a cooperative spirit.”²⁰ However despite this very Neoliberal statement, events following it in Georgia and the Ukraine point to a more aggressive Russia.

Like its inability to account for the end of the Cold War, Neorealism theory failed in the Arctic because is unable to account for the lack of open conflict that should be present according to its tenants when the stakes are as high as they are in the Arctic. There should be strong international institutions that permit cooperation if Neoliberalism were accurate in describing Arctic relations; however, this does not seem to be the case. The Arctic Council is a very limited institution with the ability to do little more than enable scientific research and discuss general policy. UNCOS is a treaty that comes closer to the Neoliberal mark, but with the USA as a non-signatory it remains ineffective. Both Neorealism and Neoliberalism hold the state as the key actor. Perhaps this is the weakness in determining if an issue (in this case the Arctic), is or will become securitized as a necessary step prior to conflict. The Copenhagen school maintains that the state alone is not the only actor that determines if an issue becomes securitized. It also widens security from the traditional military; as such, the next section will apply the Copenhagen school’s securitization model to the Arctic in order to determine if the Arctic is being securitized.

Part 3 – Copenhagen School Model of Securitization

We have seen that it is difficult to come to terms with security issues in the Arctic when examined through traditional IR theory. This weakness in post-Cold War security

²⁰ Klaus Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, "Law of the Sea," and Arctic Ocean," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 33, no. 2 (Summer, 2013), 45-55.

studies was recognized, not only in the Arctic, but across the field. It is for this reason that the Copenhagen school developed its model of securitization. In its model, it expands the categories of security issues from solely military security to: military security, political security, societal security, economic security and environmental security. Any existential threat to a referent object can be articulated by a security actor. Ralf Emmers describes referent objects as normally the state, but unlike traditional IR theory, they can also be considered threats to sovereignty, ideology, national economies, collective identities, and species. He also defines security actors as “actors who securitize issues by declaring something, a referent object, existentially threatened.”²¹ These actors are normally government officials, but they can also lobbyists, NGOs or other pressure

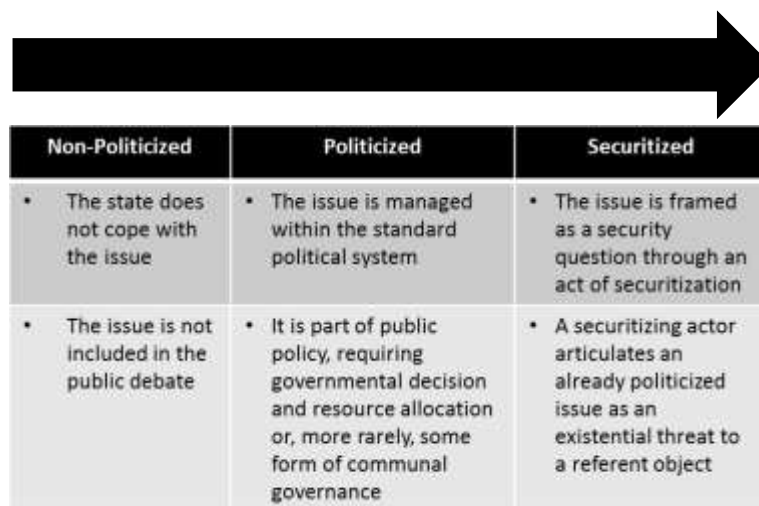


Figure 1 – Securitization Spectrum

Source - *Contemporary Security Studies*

groups. As depicted in Figure 1, a security actor must first identify a referent object that is threatened. If accepted, it moves to the politicized realm. If the object in question is then accepted as being under existential threat, it can move to the securitized realm. It is

²¹ Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies* 132

important to note that the Copenhagen school model also allows a referent object to move in the opposite direction – from securitized to non-politicized. In the case of Arctic security, the five dimensions of security will be examined to determine if there is evidence that security issues have moved from left to right on the securitization spectrum. This analysis will mostly draw from Canadian examples, but when relevant, foreign or international examples will also be used. The first category, military security, is certainly the one that dominated during the Cold War, but since that period, Arctic nations have been cutting their military capabilities. More recent assessments of wealth and its accessibility have led some authors to use examples of military exercises in the North to support their argument that there is building tension. This is typified by Scott Borgerson's article in which he assumes that

climate change will enable access to the enormous natural wealth of the Arctic. Moreover, the receding of ice also opens up the Arctic Ocean to lucrative sea transportation. That is why states will attempt to control the largest possible area of the Arctic ... With respect to the value of the stakes, arctic fever and armed confrontation are real threats.²²

However, despite the fact that his article was frequently quoted by the media, it was not supported by the evidence. The authors that have examined potential sources of conflict have determined that there is no evidence of conflicts developing in a military sense.²³ Authors that have examined military capacity have also determined that there is no

²² Borgerson, *Arctic Meltdown*, 63-77

²³ Kříž and Chrástanský, *Existing Conflicts in the Arctic and the Risk of Escalation: Rhetoric and Reality*, 111-139

evidence of military buildup.²⁴ The Copenhagen school emphasizes the importance of a speech act, which is defined as “the discursive representation of a certain issue as an existential threat to security.”²⁵ There is no evidence of speech acts that portray military security in the Arctic as an existential threat. Some may argue that in the context of securitization, nations like Canada and Denmark who have specific Arctic military shipbuilding programs, that the military security has moved at least to the Politicized domain; however, the fact that these programs are more in support of constabulary activities rather than military, would invalidate the idea that military security moved to politicized domain.

Environmental security is a category which certainly has transitioned to the politicized domain. Environmental security was the reason for establishing the AEPS, and later on of the main reasons for establishing the Arctic Council. Climate change worldwide has been politicized to the point that international conferences are organised in order to mitigate its consequences; however, despite many environmental groups trying to frame environmental security in the Arctic as an existential threat to habitats, species and even ultimately humanity, these speech acts have not achieved the Copenhagen school’s key criteria for moving an issue to the securitized domain – namely being accepted by the specific target audience. As Emmers describes “In a democratic society, the audience still has the right, however, to reject the speech act – namely, the representation of a certain issue as an existential threat.”²⁶ In the case of environmental

²⁴ Lasserre, Roy and Garon, *Is there an Arms Race in the Arctic?*, 1-56

²⁵ Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 134.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

security in the Arctic, it is a political issue, but it has not yet received sufficient support to become a securitized issue.

Societal Security is the third aspect of security in the Copenhagen model and deals with collective identity. This issue has certainly been politicized in Canada and many nations. With respect to the Canadian Arctic this can be viewed from two points of view. The first point of view is that of Canada as an Arctic nation. The government playing the part of a security actor has promoted this issue, and administrations have used the issue as a platform in previous elections.²⁷ An EKOS Research Associates poll indicated that the government was successful in politicizing the issue:

Responses in both the North and South suggest that the Arctic is a cornerstone of national identity, that it is the country's foremost foreign policy priority, that environmental issues are the North's primary concern, and that the region is under-resourced.²⁸

The second point of view is from that of the Northern native peoples. Aboriginal peoples have made great progress over the last forty years in societal security. Robert Bone describes them as “have[ing] taken giant strides towards securing a place in Canadian Society.”²⁹ They have moved from reliance on the south, to self-government. They also have a specific seat at the Arctic Council in

²⁷ Griffiths, Huebert and Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship*, 23.

²⁸ News CBC, "Canada's North, South Agree on Arctic: Study," CBC, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canada-s-north-south-agree-on-arctic-study-1.1027460> May 07, 2015).

²⁹ Robert M. Bone, *The Canadian North: Issues and Challenges*, 4th ed. (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2012), 225.

recognition of their trans-polar collective identity. Despite having been politicized, there has been no speech acts or security actors that have proposed securitization of societal security.

Political security is the fourth aspect of security in the Copenhagen model. Political security deals with both national sovereignty and ideological issues. Sovereignty is at the core of all three categories of conflict described in part one. The Demarcation of the borders and the claims for the continental shelf past the EEZ both involve sovereignty over natural resources. The control of Straits is an issue over sovereignty and the ability of states to regulate traffic in their waters. The analysis of sovereignty using the Copenhagen model shows that it has been politicized. Using Canada as an example and Referring to Figure 1, Arctic sovereignty is being managed with the political system and is part of the public policy. The Government of Canada issued its Northern Strategy on 26 July 2009, demonstrating that Arctic sovereignty is part of its public policy.³⁰ The question is if Canada's Arctic sovereignty has transitioned from the politicized to the securitized domain? As previously discussed, this transition is started by a speech act. Examples of these can be found. In the case of Canada's response to Russia planting a flag at the North Pole with a submersible, Prime Minister Steven Harper declared "Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty in the Arctic. We either use it or lose it. And make no mistake this government intends to use it."³¹ The second requirement is that the proposed securitized issue must be accepted by a targeted audience. In the case of Arctic sovereignty there is no evidence to support the argument

³⁰ Griffiths, Huebert and Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship*, 227.

³¹ Le Mière and Mazo, *Arctic Opening: Insecurity and Opportunity*, 91.

that Canadians see Arctic sovereignty as an existential issue; therefore, according to the Copenhagen school model it cannot be said to have achieved full securitization.

Economic security is the fifth and final category in the Copenhagen school model. The fundamental reason why Arctic security in general has come to the forefront as a possible security concern is because of the potential wealth that Arctic nations perceive will become available as the Arctic becomes more accessible. As Melissa Bert describes in her article from *American Foreign Policy Interests* “with an estimated 30 billion barrels of oil, 220 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, rare earth minerals ... the Alaskan Arctic can be measured in trillions of dollars.”³² Economic security is closely tied to political security. It is really the sovereign control over these resources which is at stake. As seen with sovereignty, the issue of economic security is politicized and in some may consider tied to those same speech acts; however, it is hard to make a case for economic security to have moved into the securitized domain because there is no evidence of an existential threat. It is clearly at the higher end of the politicized domain as can be seen by the number of non-Arctic nations that are developing Arctic strategies. The United Kingdom is hardly a new comer to the Arctic and is working on its policy.³³ Non-traditional Arctic nations from Asia are also developing Arctic economic strategies.³⁴ Despite lacking an existential threat, it is with caution that a non-securitized assessment of economic security is made. This is perhaps a weakness with the Copenhagen school

³² Melissa Bert, "The Arctic is Now: Economic and National Security in the Last Frontier," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 34, no. 1 (Jan, 2012). 5.

³³ DUNCAN DEPLEDGE, "Emerging UK Arctic Policy," *International Affairs* 89, no. 6 (11, 2013), 1445-1457.

³⁴ Stephen J. Blank, "ENTER ASIA: The Arctic Heats Up," *World Affairs* 176, no. 6 (Mar, 2014), 19-28.

model, because a student of history could find a number of conflicts that, at their core, were about resources and not about the existential threat to a referent group.³⁵

Arctic security was examined using the Copenhagen school model on securitization and was assessed using the five elements of the securitization model. The results are portrayed in Figure 2. Military security is assessed as in the non-politicized

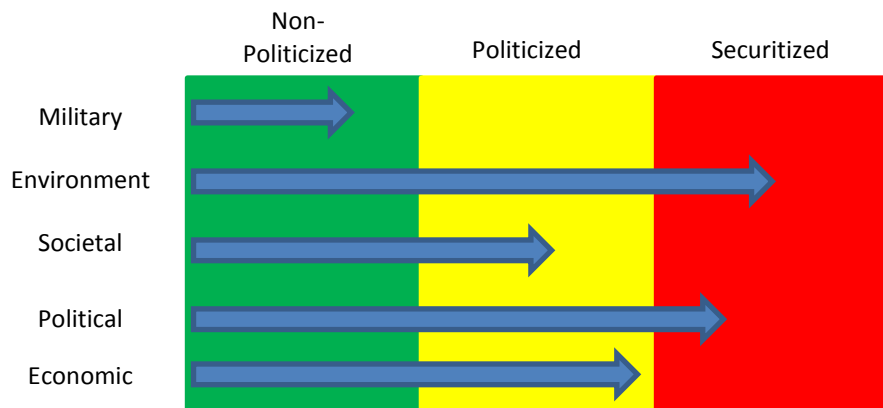


Figure 2 – Analysis Summary of Arctic Security using Copenhagen Model

domain. Societal and economic security is both politicized, but no security actor has made use of speech acts to convince national or international audiences that these issues are or should be securitized. Finally, speech acts can be attributed to both environmental and political security; however, it is judged that target audiences have not fully embraced the idea that there is an existential threat in regards to either of these security elements.

Conclusion

What preceded was an examination of Arctic security using tools from IR theory. The past and present security concerns in the Arctic were first analysed using Neorealism

³⁵ Karel Malinovský, "Interstate Conflicts Over Natural Resources and Raw Materials from the Water-Rich Areas in the Asian Region," *Political Sciences / Politické Vedy* 17, no. 4 (10, 2014), 157-179.

IR theory. It was concluded that Neorealism theory, although an adequate theory for explaining Arctic security in terms of military threats in the past, was lacking when used to try and shed light on today's issues. Neoliberalism was then used to examine present day security issues. While doing a better job than Neorealism because its tenants do account for the establishment of international institutions that assist in dealing with Arctic issues, it does not explain why these institutions are so weak, and it does not help us determine if the Arctic is being securitized. Finally, Arctic security was examined using the Copenhagen school model for securitization.

It can be concluded that based on the Copenhagen school model (summarized in Figure 2) the Arctic is not securitized and that conflict in the Arctic is unlikely – at least in the near future. It also sheds some light on why the two traditional IR theories were found lacking. Both generally refer to the state as the referent object and deal mostly with military security. The Copenhagen school model allows for much greater fidelity of both security actors and security issues – they expand the definition of security actors to more than just the state and recognize that issues other than military can be securitized. In this case, military security was not considered politicized; however, all of the four other security categories (political, societal, economic, and environmental) were at a minimum politicized, while political and environmental issues were both partly in the securitized domain. What was lacking for these two issues to be considered fully securitized, according the Copenhagen school model, was an audience to accept them as existential threats. Noting the assessment of all five of the areas of security in Figure 2, it would not take much of a change in public perception to actually move three of the five areas into the securitized domain, hence the caveat on the possibility of conflict restricted to the

near future. There may well be a flaw in the Copenhagen school model that places too high an emphasis on the “existential threat” as a necessary requirement prior to securitization of an issue. One need not look any further than the current conflict in Ukraine to question if there is an existential threat underlying that conflict – particularly from the Russian perspective. Is this just a revitalized Russia falling back into what a Neorealist would consider a predictable behaviour? A comprehensive survey of conflicts since the Cold War using the Copenhagen school model would be a useful endeavour to validate the existential threat criteria. In summary, the Copenhagen school model has shown that although conflict in the short term is unlikely, there remains the potential for conflict in the longer term if the Copenhagen model’s emphasis on the “existential threat” is wrong or, if it is correct, the public believes that there are sovereignty, environmental or economic related existential threats.

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