

Introduction

Redefining Arctic security: Military, environmental, human or societal? Cooperation or conflict?

Lassi Heininen, Heather Exner-Pirot & Justin Barnes

The Arctic Yearbook is an initiative of the UArctic Thematic Network on Geopolitics and Security. Yet since our first publication launched in 2012, we have never elected to produce a volume on the theme of security itself, focusing instead on topics such as human capital, innovation, regional governance, development, and the Arctic Council.

In one respect that has been because, as security thinkers, we see all of the above issues and more as inherently addressing security. If security is everywhere and always, then it does not need its own volume.

And yet, in the past two decades, conceptions about Arctic security have shifted. What attracts many of us in the Thematic Network to the study of the Arctic region is its unique model of defining and seeking security. Famously, while traditional security issues are alive and well, the region has uniquely accepted and embraced discourses on environmental and human security issues including environmental protection, Indigenous self-determination, safety, interregional cooperation, development, and the rule of law.

This volume seeks to articulate how security has been redefined in the Arctic region. As a field of study, Arctic security studies exhibit many – dare we use the term – *exceptional* characteristics that can help inform how security may be redefined across the globe as environmental issues and local challenges become more pertinent vis à vis traditional state security issues across the globe. It can also show how environmental and societal challenges are increasingly becoming ‘traditional’ security issues in and of themselves.

“An arena of global power and competition”?

The first question asked by media, immediately after the provocative speech by US State Secretary Michael R. Pompeo on 6 May 2019 in Rovaniemi in which he called the Arctic “an arena of global power and competition”, was if his words would cause damage, not only to the work of the Arctic Council (which resulted for the first time in no joint declaration), but also to international Arctic cooperation generally, by increasing political tensions. Some similarly wondered whether Pompeo’s speech, which was given on the day before the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting, would mark a turning point in Arctic governance: would the turbulence & uncertainties in international politics, and increasing great power rivalry, overtake the Arctic and its high geopolitical stability and inclusive cooperation? Others asked if this would instead be remembered as an odd episode, and if the constructive cooperation in the Arctic Council was more likely to continue?

However, the speech, as no single speech or event ever proves anything, has not resulted in a dramatic impact, yet. But the critical question remains as to what extent these kinds of generalizations, stereotypes and tropes influence Arctic discourses. Internal and external images, visions and perceptions, for example reinforce the region as an ‘Eldorado’, a ‘sink for pollutants’, a ‘tipping point for the Earth system’, a ‘race for resources’, a ‘Global Arctic’, or a ‘Homeland’. Many security narratives also prevail, such as ‘high latitudes - low tension’, ‘emerging conflicts’, ‘great power rivalry’, ‘Zone of Peace’ and ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ or a ‘new Cold War’. From all of these, the two main narratives, or discourses, which dominate and compete with each other, are: ‘high latitudes - low tension/Zone of Peace’ representing the reality of relevant Arctic stakeholders and being a resilient narrative of Arctic geopolitics, versus the more hypothetical narrative of ‘race for resources with emerging conflicts’ often pushed by the media.

Theory: Discourses, premises, paradigms...

Theoretical discussions about security, including security threats, concepts of security, categories of military presence, and confidence-building measures, are needed, even required, when evaluating and analyzing the current globalized and international political system with its turbulences, growing uncertainties and wicked problems. What is security all about what? Who is security for?

Securitas (Latin) means a lack of something, whereby someone feels (mostly unconsciously) to be ‘unsecured’. That is to say that out there is a danger or threat, whether materialized or not. Thus, a threat is based on its credibility, and is often self-created and reflexive; unlike a risk, which is based on a probability calculation.

If security appeals to basic human instincts and is interpreted to be a “legitimated search for almost everything” (Westing, 1989) - like oxygen - then ‘securitization’ is interpreted to mean that everything could be or become a security issue, as the ‘Copenhagen School’ interprets it (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998).

All this means that there are many ways to understand, define and interpret, or simply feel, security. Further, security is always paired with discourses, premises and paradigm(s), as well as with actors. Consequently, the most critical question to ask is: whose security = security for whom?

Indeed, the unified states system has taught us to think that there is (only) one real 'actor' of security: a/the State. This national security officially means the nation/people of a State, though in practice, it means the elites of a nation, as they have the power to define the national security of a state.

However, in reality there are several actors or subjects of security: individuals/citizens, (civil) societies, and the international community, or simply humankind.

Different concepts of security

As mentioned earlier there are several concepts of security, beginning with the idea of national security as guaranteeing state sovereignty. Behind this is the idea that "security through its history had a connection towards a state" (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). For this traditional, weapons-oriented security the state is the main subject of security, which usual means national security, and the only legitimized user of violence.

This "unilateral competitive national military security" (Newcombe, 1986) includes all categories of military presence and war, as well as preparation for a war. Most of them have been, and still are, present, and have been further developed in the Arctic since the end of the 2nd World War, especially after the militarization of the Cold War: naval bases, airports, ICBM bases, other infrastructure; radar stations (e.g. DEW Line), sonar detectors (e.g. GIUK-gap), nuclear submarines including SSBNs & SSNs; submarine & anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and the 'Cat and Mouse' game; air patrolling (e.g. long-range bombers); military exercises, weapons and strategy testing; nuclear tests; and radioactive leaks & accidents.

Confidence-building measures, such as arms control (e.g. SALT 1 & 2, START), disarmament (e.g. Enmod, INF Treaty), denuclearisation (e.g. nuclear-weapon-free-zones), and demilitarization (e.g. Svalbard, the Antarctic) are meant to protect national security and increase peoples' security. As the issues with, as well as negotiations on, arms control and disarmament are between states/governments, mostly nuclear weapon powers, there is no room for non-state actors, not even for actors within the United Nations, though peace movements such as the movement against Euro-missiles, CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), used to forget this every now and then, and act against nuclear weapons and arms race, or militarization in general.

Among other main concepts of security are first, environmental/ecological security, with a focus on the role of the environment, and includes access to (renewable) natural resources, quality of resources, and human population growth (Dwivedi, 2011). It emphasizes environmental, societal and human aspects of security, which are in danger due to hazardous environments, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, resource-based conflicts, all leading to environmental 'insecurity'. Sustainable development, as an example of environmental & comprehensive security, relies on mechanisms which also draw on culture & civil society, economics, democracy, international cooperation and global governance. This security concept became relevant in the Arctic in 1980s and 1990s due to pollution, in particular radioactivity.

Second is human security, which focuses on human beings as individuals (e.g. UN Report, 1994). It is a loose and vague definition, but means 'everyday security' of people beyond the military - e.g. from the growing (economic) inequality between elites and the masses, and the physical impacts and related uncertainty of (rapid) climate change. In the Arctic region, this is threatened by sources

of insecurity, as Indigenous peoples have experienced (see e.g. Cepinskyte in this volume). The fact that human security, i.e. people, are the first victims of pollution and climate change manifests an importance to redefine people as subjects of security, instead of the abstract 'state'. Following from this, security may become less mystified, when people for example face climate change related uncertainty every day, as many Arctic residents do. This kind of 'civil security' means that citizens have both rights and duties (Griffiths, 1993) such as the international community's 'Responsibility to Protect'.

Both environmental and human security concepts are part of the concept of comprehensive security, which started to challenge the traditional military based security discourse and its paradigm in 1980s. Instead, it was understood, much due to radioactivity, chemicals, long-range pollution and the ozone hole, that there are keen interrelations between security, the environment, development, and peace, as well as between the environment and security, including the military (e.g. Galtung, 1992). As Kalliojärvi (2019) writes "Security is no longer primarily about geographical society-based threats...but increasingly characterized by a borderless society-based narrative of vulnerability and the stabilization of technical and societal systems."

Phases of the Arctic security nexus

In the Arctic context, the same processes can be found when evaluating and analyzing different phases of Arctic security, since WWII, based on different security concepts, as well as changes in security discourses and premises (Heininen, 2019).

The Cold War's security nexus (1950s-1980s) meant a shift for the Arctic from being a 'military vacuum' to a 'military flank', and further to a 'military front'. This phase was dominated by traditional (national, military) security and the military, in particular the strategic importance of nuclear weapon systems (as the most advanced military technology). This led to a militarization of the Arctic, including viewing the northern seas as a military 'theatre'. It further introduced the threat of nuclear accidents and other environmental degradations from military activities. Behind this was the hegemonic competition and arms race between the Soviet Union and the USA.

The transition period's security nexus (1980s-1990s) brought on the one hand, arms control & disarmament between the Soviet Union and the USA (a 'thaw'), in particular between Soviet president Gorbachev and US president Reagan (for example through the Reykjavik Summit in 1986). On the other hand, new kinds of security threats and the consequences of new discourses (based on risk society theory & constructivism) were obvious due to the growing concern of nuclear accidents and radioactive wastes. This led to functional cooperation on environmental protection and nuclear safety - for example the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation (AMEC) between Norway, Russia and the USA - and thus the application of 'environmental security' to the Arctic region.

Finally, the Post-Cold War's security nexus (since the 2000s) saw geopolitical stability balance out military presence, new security premises and searching for paradigm shifts (e.g. Heininen and Exner-Pirot 2019), and also the question of NATO in the Arctic. This phase has been dominated by the commitment of the Arctic states "to maintain peace, stability and constructive cooperation in the Arctic" (e.g. Rovaniemi Statement by the Chair of 2019), the state sovereignty/national security of the Arctic (littoral) states, and human security (e.g. climate change, self-determination

and economic development). This has led to geopolitical stability despite or because of the heavy military (nuclear weapons) structures (global deterrence), impacts of climate change, better access to exploitation of the region's resources (known as the 'Arctic paradox'), as well as the rise of human security as an important security concept (see e.g. Goes and Greaves in this volume).

Indeed, the main categories of the military are still going to be present in the region through the 2020s, and, we expect, there will still be an absence of disarmament discussions. Neither arms control (e.g. demilitarization) nor disarmament (e.g. denuclearization or nuclear-weapon-free-zones) are gaining momentum, but rather manifesting a new Arctic dilemma: we are somewhere between militarization and disarmament (see Exner-Pirot in this volume, also 2019). There are new nuclear submarines, aircrafts, vessels, more efficient radar stations (see e.g. Ackren, and Takahashi et al in this volume), missile defense systems, and better quality & efficiency through modernization of weapon systems in operating these. There are also bigger, more international, military exercises (e.g. *Trident Juncture*, *Vostok-2018*) (see Landriault and MacDonald in this volume). But most of these are concomitant with the growing activities in and accessibility of the region, in particular due to a reduction in sea ice.

Furthermore, according to the current policies and strategies of the Arctic states (see Heininen, Everett, Padrtova & Reissell, forthcoming), on the one hand, security *per se* is emphasized by Canada, Iceland and the USA; Canada and Finland discuss security most comprehensively; sovereignty is covered by Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Finland (though marginally for the latter); armed forces are mentioned by Canada, Finland, the Kingdom Denmark, Norway and Russia (plus Germany and the UK of the AC observer states); and NATO is explicitly mentioned by Iceland, the Kingdom of Denmark and Norway (plus Germany and the UK). On the other hand, stability-building is emphasized by Canada, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and the USA, as well as high geopolitical stability supported by all Arctic states; maritime security & the Coast Guard is emphasized by Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland and Sweden; and environmental protection is emphasized by all. Thus, security is top of mind, but is exhibited in all of its variety and complexities.

A 'Regional Security Complex'?

As the Arctic states have reconstructed their realities in the post-Cold War geopolitics, they have gone beyond traditional power & hegemony games by redefining environmental protection as an ultimate aim, implementing the discursive devolution of power (based on knowledge) and soft-law, and applying the interplay between science, politics and business into a dialogue across sectors (Heininen, 2018). This narrative seems to be resilient, as it has been repeated in the declarations of all Arctic Council Ministerials since Nuuk 2011, even after the annexation of Crimea (see Rovaniemi Statement by the Chair of 2019). It is even described by some as an exceptional success story. Behind this are the common interests amongst the Arctic states "to decrease military tension and increase political stability" as an ultimate aim for transboundary cooperation, functional cooperation on environmental protection and scientific research, and region-building & circumpolar cooperation (Heininen, 2018). Based on this, the Arctic can be interpreted, if not as a 'Security Community', then as a 'Regional Security Complex' (see Exner-Pirot, 2013; Greaves and Melas in this volume). At the same time the above-mentioned Arctic dilemma or challenge remains: we are between militarization and disarmament.

Thus, in the globalized Arctic of the 21st century there is less military tension, fewer alarming situations (e.g. *Able Archer 83* by NATO in the Cold War), and more political stability, as well as better recognition of the mutual benefits of sharing and promoting common interests. As well, there are the direct & indirect impacts of pollution and climate changes, as well as the related uncertainty of rapid climate change, such as impacts on food security. According to the Inuit Circumpolar Council Arctic policy, “For true Arctic security to be achieved, there must be greater global security. New concepts of common security are urgently needed that incorporate environmental, health, social, cultural, and economic aspects” (ICC, 2010: 16). The goal of this must be the attainment by “general and complete disarmament under effective international control... [here it] is essential that the concept of an Arctic zone of peace be formally accepted by Arctic states and others as an explicit and political objective” (ICC, 2010: 18).

Searching for alternative approaches and a paradigm shift

It is necessary to emphasise environmental, societal and human aspects of security, as well as a comprehensive, holistic approach, when (re)defining security in a world with wicked problems and new non-military threats and risks. In this global context, security problems, such as nuclear proliferation and international terrorism, are listed as universal problems along with overpopulation, scarcity of natural resources, pollution and climate change, refugees and human right problems, and diseases (e.g. Hakovirta, 2005). Furthermore, this requires a bigger role for non-state actors, and more room for alternative thinking on security, as well as changes in security premises and paradigms.

All of these global problems, also defined as security problems, are already present in the Arctic (Heininen, 2010). It is no wonder then that there are already alternative discourses, unorthodox thinking and searching for a paradigm shift (see e.g. Heininen & Exner-Pirot, 2019). For example, the concept of ‘societal security & uncertainty’ and its related integration processes are essentially a novel, ambitious and holistic narrative for developing the Arctic region under growing uncertainty and opportunities (see *FutArcSoc 2019*). The term is not, however, yet used in the national policies of Arctic states or in those of the AC observer states.

The above analysis does not mean there has been a turning point in Arctic geopolitics or that governance will turn inevitably toward rivalry. The high geopolitical stability based on constructive cooperation between the Arctic states has shown its benefits and its resilience. At the same time, there is an ‘ambivalence of Arctic development’, a concurrent seeking of environmental protection and climate change mitigation alongside new economic activities (see Heininen, Everett, Padrtova & Reissell, forthcoming). This phenomenon, as well as a lack of arms control and disarmament, is much due to a political inertia, even political ‘inability’, amongst the Arctic states. There is stability in the Arctic, yes; but not much progress in achieving security, or rather, achieving desecuritization in the region.

Arctic Yearbook 2019

Such fundamental issues are addressed in full in this volume on redefining Arctic security. The sections are organized around assessments of traditional Arctic security; evaluations of Arctic human security challenges and manifestations; theoretical approaches to thinking about Arctic security; and the role of non-Arctic actors in regional security as a manifestation of the globalized

nature of the region. Taken together, this Arctic Yearbook provides excellent insight into the state of the field of Arctic security at what may, or may not, be an important juncture in the region's history.

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Finally, we are pleased to bring Justin Barnes on as the new assistant editor of the Arctic Yearbook. He helps fill the gap left by Joël Plouffe, who has gone on to work at the Arctic Council Secretariat. Joël was a co-founder of the Arctic Yearbook and worked tirelessly in the first years of this publication to ensure its success and accessibility. He remains a dear friend.

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