HOW TO READ THE ARCTIC: STRUCTURAL THEORY AND THE BALANCE OF ARCTIC POWERS

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ABSTRACT

Since 2007, Arctic sea ice has undergone a rapid melt that is increasingly making the region available to political and economic activities that were previously prohibited. The retreating ice has exposed a potential treasure trove of 21st century wealth, as well as new sources of potential danger, that Arctic states, and in particular the Russian Federation, are only now beginning to address in earnest. This paper explores a structural realist explanation of the newly emerging balance of power in the melting Arctic. It is argued that the global international structure is undergoing a shift from unipolarity to multipolarity and that as this occurs, the ‘greatest Arctic power’, Russia, is now pursuing the means to preponderantly shape the Arctic balance. Russia is doing so for five principal reasons: immense energy and natural resources; globally significant maritime transport routes; increased territorial sovereignty and control; a perceived need to reverse strategic vulnerabilities that have emerged since the Cold War’s end; and finally, an attempt to press advantages against an ‘absentee’ America. In sum, the combination of interests and capabilities will all but ensure that Russia emerges as the preponderant Great Power in the Arctic. Yet, here structural theory and balance of power analyses do little to explain the consequences of the climatic change that has opened the Arctic to these processes. As such, the very value that the region is expected to bestow may yet turn to be a future and damning incarnation of the ‘tragedy of great power politics.’
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1 INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Cold War, the high north was one of the most militarized regions on earth.¹ For most of the twenty years since, the strength of American unipolarity, the severe weakness of the Russian Federation,² and the harsh physical barriers of perpetual ice and snow ostensibly locked the region away from the international system. Rapid climatic change has begun to melt away whatever calm may have settled, heightening sovereign uncertainties over national interests, and bringing the pressures of international politics back to the region.

Melting Arctic sea ice is one of the most dramatic consequences of global warming induced climate change. This past summer, Arctic sea ice retrenched by 18% compared to the previous all time record set in 2007, leading some climatic scientists to conclude that the "final [ice] collapse ... is now happening and will probably be complete by 2015/16."³ The US National Academy of Sciences reports that the region has been warming at roughly twice the rate of the current global average, melting both seasonal and permanent ice cover, and, for the first time, opening the region's resources to ill advised exploitation by competitive global forces.

The Arctic region holds one of the largest reserves of natural wealth left on Earth. In addition, the Arctic seas connect strategically vital transport and trading naval routes unlike any previously developed. By some estimates, passage through the Arctic could cut travel distances between the Ports of Northern Europe and East Asia by up to forty percent.⁴ The gains are expected to be so advantageous, that Petteri Tuohinen has declared, "who rules the Arctic trading routes commands the new transit system and

² Relative to the strength enjoyed by its antecedent state, the Soviet Union
strategies of global trade.\textsuperscript{5} Yet, these boons are not and cannot be distinguished from the cause of their accessibility, echoing the warning of Lucretius through the words of Byron: \textit{"Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom springs."} Accordingly, Rob Huebert et al. argue that the Arctic is now a 'bellwether' for how climatic changes are creating new geopolitical realities.\textsuperscript{6}

The Arctic encompasses three major geographic regions, comprising eight nations: Canada, the United States, Iceland, Denmark/Greenland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Russian Federation. Of these eight, six are littoral states and only five are heavily concentrated in Arctic affairs\textsuperscript{7}. Relative to all other Arctic states, the Russian Federation is considered the preponderant actor, or Great Power, in the region. Boasting 17,500 kilometers of Arctic coastline, two million citizens living above the Arctic Circle, the vestiges of an Arctic military force that's begun to regain its lost composure, and development that exceeds any relevant comparison with competitor states\textsuperscript{8}, Russia is the primary source from which geo-political developments in the Arctic will likely emerge.

Thus, to borrow from Michael Roi, Russia is the Greatest Arctic power\textsuperscript{9}, and according to structural realist theory, as a Great Power, it will have preeminent structural consequence in shaping emerging regional development and the balance of power.

Recent actions undertaken by Russia in, or regarding to, the Arctic have captured the attention of critical observers. Most of the interest has been drawn to the potential economic treasure waiting to be claimed. The then Russian President Dmitri Medvedev stated that up to 20% of Russian GDP derives from above the Arctic Circle\textsuperscript{10}, which will expand as northern development ensues. In conjunction with expanding


\textsuperscript{6} Rob Huebert et al., \textit{Climate Change & International Security: The Arctic as a Bellwether} | Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES, May 2012).


\textsuperscript{8} Here, development refers to economic activity, infrastructure, human capital, as well as the deployment of military forces, particularly the strategic presence of the North Fleet. Blunden, "The New Problem of Arctic Stability," 122.


\textsuperscript{10} Blunden, "The New Problem of Arctic Stability," 122.
economic and social projects is an increased development of military capabilities that carry significant combat potential, begging the question of what role these forces are meant to serve as the Arctic ice begins to retreat. Since 2007, Russia has begun to bolster the power of the state in several security related domains, including: resuming Arctic strategic bomber, submarine, ballistic and tactical missile tests, and surface navy patrols, which had not occurred with any meaningful frequency since the days of the Soviet Union; modernizing and expanding Arctic military forces; and investing large sums of capital in the development of security infrastructure along its most Northerly borders. When the Fiend, in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, bellowed that the Arctic "ice is not made of such stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable and cannot withstand you if you say that it shall not," his words were more prescient then perhaps intended. Fyodor Lukyanov observes that "simultaneously, Russia is seeking to preserve the world order in those areas where it finds it advantageous, and to promote changes in all the other elements. Russia is dreaming of a great future..." Indeed, if military power is fungible, then it appears Russia may be aiming to cash in on its Arctic holdings.

Most commentators have privileged the various governance structures, from the United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), and the Arctic Council, as mechanisms to ensure the peaceful division of the 'spoils' among Arctic states. Yet, figures such as Artur Chilingarov, Putin's newly

13 Robert J. Art provides a very succinct account of the 'fungible' nature of power. He states: "there are two fundamental reasons why military power remains more essential to statecraft than is commonly thought. First, in an anarchic realm (one without a central government), force is integral to political interaction. Foreign policy cannot be divorced from military power. Second, force is "fungible." It can be used for a wide variety of tasks and across different policy domains; it can be employed for both military and nonmilitary purposes." Robert J. Art, "American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force," Security Studies 5, no. 4 (1996): 8, doi:10.1080/09636419608429287.
appointed special adviser for Arctic and also Antarctic affairs, whose claim to fame in the West came as a result of a daring planting of a Russian flag on the North pole seabed, continue to advise that Russia withdraw from international commitments to bolster unilateral claims. While not giving too much weight to the counsel above, what an institutional/legal reading of the Arctic tends to miss is the burgeoning pressure of interests and power that is currently stalking the retreating ice. Robert W. Murray notes that, while an emphasis on "international institutions and non-governmental organizations are focused on human-centric variables of global politics" the Arctic is presenting a case whereby inter-state power politics is developing in the traditional sense. Others have moved to the other side, highlighting the potential for conflict by citing peculiar aggressive intentions on behalf of Russia and the aggrandizement of the capabilities possessed by weaker Arctic states such as Canada and Denmark. In the middle, lies an interesting attempt to deconstruct the spatial identity that particular discourses of the Arctic have advanced: namely, the construction of a 'masculinist fantasy and adventure' of the High North that disempowers non-state and non-capital actors that live in the region.

What cooperative, 'bear-baiting', and constructivist Arctic interrogations tend to lack, however, is an adequate grounding in international relations (IR) theory, the structure of international politics, and the central variables that interact to drive

18 Dittmer et al., "Have You Heard the One About the Disappearing Ice?"
19 A reference to the tendency of commentators to look for aggressive peculiarities in Russian actions as a source of instability.
20 A notable exception to this statement is Murray's work on the Arctic and multipolarity, and Wegge's on IR theory and the Arctic. However, for all its merit, Murray's work at times eclectic includes examples that are not theoretically cogent in order to further the argumentative point being made, while the latter makes dubious claims regarding theoretical stability mechanisms in the region. See: Murray, "Arctic Politics in the Emerging Multipolar System"; Wegge, "The Political Order in the Arctic."
overdetermined\textsuperscript{21} systemic outcomes therein. In contradiction with the criticisms levied by John Lewis Gaddis\textsuperscript{22}, the 21\textsuperscript{st} century Arctic provides a robust regional setting for which to explore the explanatory utility of structural realism. The region combines several key features that make it unique, including: a significant trove of unclaimed natural resources, a lack of firmly established national sovereignties, a highly strategic geographical position, and an uncertain balance of power among circumpolar nations. Indeed, the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI) 2012 report on the European and Northern Atlantic security environment concluded that the Arctic is where the greatest challenges to 21st century security intersect.\textsuperscript{23} When taken together, these features help turn the Arctic into one of the earth’s last regions where the ‘high’ politics of international relations can be said to begin in earnest, and one in which the study of should help illume concrete contours of structural tendencies animating inter-state behaviours in real time.

This essay explores a structural realist reading of the new Arctic security dilemma in five sections. First, in response to Jeffery W. Legro & Andrew Moravcsik’s and John A. Velasquez’s challenge on the ‘degenerating’ tendencies in contemporary realist work, this paper deduces and defines the central assumptions that are necessary for a coherent utilization of neorealist theory. The second section analyses the concept of the balance of power, how it is currently changing from unipolarity and US hegemony to a more multipolar distribution of powers, and what this may mean for the near future of international politics. Thirdly, building from this theory, the paper identifies Russia as the best positioned Great Arctic power, and as such, the current preponderant and centrally important state shaping the development and regional polarity. Fourth, an

\textsuperscript{21} The concept of overdetermination employed here is taken from the thought of Althusser. Adapting the idea from Freud, he argues that overdetermination is the confluence of multiple causes, each of which may be sufficient on their own, which tend to over ‘explain’ the causes of a given phenomenon. Here, the junction of power, interests, anarchy, the balance of power etc. overdetermine the causal relationships in the structure of international politics. See: Louis Althusser, “Contradiction and Overdetermination,” \textit{New Left Review} no. 1 (1967): 41.

\textsuperscript{22} Gaddis charged that the failure of Neorealists to predict the end of the Cold-War renders the theory about as efficacious as ‘star-gazing.’ However, from a Waltzian perspective, it is argued that a social scientific theory’s utility can be best surmised by its ability to explain, not predict, given the restrictions of its subject of study. John Lewis Gaddis, “International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War,” \textit{International Security} 17, no. 3 (December 1, 1992): 78–79, doi: 10.2307/2539129.

analysis of the interests Russia has in the Arctic and how these relate to its expanding regional power. In particular, the importance of the region for Russia's strategic nuclear forces and how present vulnerabilities to American counter-force capabilities are informing Russian fears and security policy responses. And lastly, an exploration of the emerging Arctic balance of power through the two most important states within the system: the United States and the Russian Federation. This paper will conclude by highlighting the theoretical limitations of a structural realist reading of the Arctic engendered by the unforeseen consequences of global warming and climate change in the region. Echoing Bertolt Brecht's Galileo, Alex Callinicos could well be adding the Arctic to the added that unhappy is "the land that becomes the focus of major geopolitical forces."24

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2  THE AXIOMS OF STRUCTURAL REALISM

Establishing the study of international politics proper has not been smooth, nor has it been given that the subject constituted a unique field of study in its own right.\(^{25}\) It was not until the 20th century was well underway that a case for international studies, hence known as international relations, as a distinct academic discipline was made, developed, and subsequently entrenched within the western academic canon. The project, however, was not a neutral endeavor. It was, and continues to be, pioneered by those predisposed to a particular theoretical bent: realism. Since Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson's seminal work 'Politics Among Nations',\(^{26}\) the study of international relations began in earnest, and with it, the association of realism as its theoretical standard bearer.\(^{27}\)

However, while Morgenthau and the early IR theorists were successful in mapping out the contours of their field of study, namely, power, interest, and the rational state,\(^{26}\) their theoretical rigour, conceptual clarity, and variable operationalization

\(^{25}\) As Waltz argues in 'Man, the State, and War', the field was divided along different terms of references, and it drew upon theoretical traditions from outside of anything considered International Relations proper. See: Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 2nd Revised edition (Columbia University Press, 2001).\(^{26}\) Realism, initially, was parsimoniously summarized by Morgenthau in his 'Six Principles of Political Realism.' These principles, forming the foundation on which realism has been built, are abridged as follows: 1) Politics is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature; 2) Interest is defined in terms of power; 3) Interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but whose meaning can change; 4) Universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in the abstract - the circumstances of time and place must be considered; 5) The moral laws that govern the universe are distinct for the morals of any one nation; and 6) The difference between political realism and other schools is real and profound. While structural theory was initially inspired by these principles it has since moved on. See: Hans Joachim Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (Knopf, 1985).\(^{27}\) Though, this is not to say the Realism was the 'first' theoretical tradition to exist within the study of international relations in history, or the 20th century in particular. For instance, the foreign policy principles of the Woodrow Wilson administration are often cited as articulating a liberal conceptualization of international politics, almost twenty years before Hans Morgenthau's work. However, what makes realism unique, is that the tradition helped formulate both the distinct study of international politics and realism proper, concurrently. See: Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* no. 110 (April 1, 1998): 29–46, doi:10.2307/1149275.\(^{26}\) The question of state rationality is ambiguous in structural realism. Legro & Moravcsik and Schweller argue that rationality is, at least in a 'conventional sense', is axiomatic for realism.
required refinement. The field was ripe for the entrance of Kenneth Waltz and his two works that revolutionized Realism and the study of IR: 'Man, the State, and War' and the 'Theory of International Politics.' From these two contributions, Waltz has, contentiously, provided the definition for what IR distinctly is and established what realism has to offer for its explanation.

Waltz harshly separated the study of human nature, tradition, and the domestic sphere from the study of the international politics. This distinction can be summarized as the autonomy of international relations from other political processes. As Waltz argues "theories isolate one realm from others in order to deal with it intellectually." According to Waltz, the study of IR only comes into itself as a self-sufficient discipline after politics is understood to accord to its own autonomous system. This system has an ordering principle (structural anarchy), which bounds the units of its analysis (states), within a co-determinant logic that "...makes a theory about it possible." Clarity, regarding this formulation, is fundamental in order to understand what thus far has made a theory about international politics possible, how necessary assumptions are then subsequently

Mearsheimer, moreover, contends that without the assumption of rationality structural theory lacks an integral mechanism to explain state behavior. For Waltz, however, the "theory requires no assumptions of rationality" because it does not purport to explain the outcomes of state foreign policies. This paper agrees with Waltz and argues that structural theory is not built on a foundation of pervasive or 'universal' rationality - it is 'an elastic assumption', but with one caveat: the introduction of strategic nuclear forces may have a distinct structural effect on states that posses them which will enforce conditions of rationality that will be specific to any possible consideration of use of such weapons. For further discussion, see: Jeffrey W. Legro & Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" International Security 24, no. 2 (October 1, 1999): 5-55.; Randall L. Schweller, "New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, Not Refuting, Waltz's Balancing Proposition," The American Political Science Review 91, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 927-930.; John J. Mearsheimer, "Reckless States and Realism," International Relations 23, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 241-256.; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics in Robert O Keohane, ed., Neorealism and Its Critics. 336. (Columbia University Press, 1986), 322-345.

29 Largely uncontroversial, there has been an appetite recently for some scholars to re-open the debate on whether these charges against Classical Realism are, in fact, accurate. For more on this discussion, see: Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose, "Why Are Revisionist States Revisionist? Reviving Classical Realism as an Approach to Understanding International Change," International Politics 45, no. 1 (January 2008): 19-39, doi:10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800217.

30 This generally conforms to Waltz's distinction between first, second, and third image conceptualizations of International Relations. These distinctions correspond with IR explanations from assumptions on: human nature, forms of state, and international structures, respectively. For direct reference to these three images, please see Waltz, Man, the State, and War; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," Journal of International Affairs 44, no. 1 (1990): 21-37.

31Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," 27.
deduced, and what this speaks to the specific theoretical orientation neorealism should contend.\textsuperscript{32}

In his famous essay 'Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes', Imre Lakatos argued that a research program must have a "hard core" of basic propositions from which its analyses is built upon. Although Stephen Walt, in response, strongly disagrees with this necessity, the purpose of this section is to argue that, other failings aside, Vasquez and Legro & Moravcsik are largely correct in that a lack of axiomatic clarity/agreement has led to flaws in contemporary realist research and IR theory in general, with the implications that contemporary international structures, such as the developing balance of power in the Arctic, are incorrectly understood. At the risk of relying too heavily on what Richard K. Ashley terms the 'Sovereign voice\textsuperscript{33}', what follows is a modest 'Lakatosian' elaboration of the assumptions at the core of neorealist theory.\textsuperscript{34} I contend that these assumptions, largely developed from the deductions of Thomas Hobbes, Waltz, and John J. Mearsheimer, provide a frame for how international politics is understood and what this means for interpreting developments in the Arctic today.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32}This point has been, and continues to be, vigorously debated in the field of international relations and neorealist theory. In large part, the subsequent discussion was inspired by the arguments raised by Waltz in 'Realist thought and Neorealist Theory', Vasquez's critique on the degenerating tendencies within Realisms research program; and Legro & Moravcsik's analysis on the encroachment of 'minimal realism' or 'mid-range theory' against 'stronger', but more restrictive, structural theories. See: John A. Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative Versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," \textit{The American Political Science Review} 91, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 899–912, doi:10.2307/2952172; Legro & Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?"; Peter D. Feaver et al., "Brother, Can You Spare a Paradigm? (Or Was Anybody Ever a Realist?)," \textit{International Security} 25, no. 1 (July 1, 2000): 165–193, doi:10.1162/016228800560426.


\textsuperscript{35}Though Hobbes is usually not referenced in regard to the core assumptions of neorealism, a careful reading of the 'Leviathan' next to, for example, the 'Theory of International Politics' and the 'Tragedy of Great Power Politics' illustrates a marked similarity - particularly in the elaboration of Man (units), Power (means), the State of Nature (anarchy/structure), scarcity, competition, and war. See: Thomas Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan} (Penguin Classics, 1982); John J. Mearsheimer, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics}, Reprint (W. W. Norton & Company, 2003).
can hope to divorce itself from the web of metatheoretical and philosophical assumptions that sustains it, then a clear articulation of said assumptions is required at the outset.\footnote{Robert BJ. Walker, "The Prince and 'the Pauper': Tradition, Modernity, and Practice in the Theory of International Relations," in \textit{International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics}, ed. James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (Lexington Books, 1989), 25–48.}

First, the fundamental structure of international politics is anarchical. This statement, all realists, most liberals, and some constructivists will, more often than not, all agree.\footnote{However, while most IR theorists do agree that anarchy can be considered the basic ordering principle of international politics, they may disagree on the anarchy itself varies. Wendt, for instance, likens anarchy described by realists as a particular 'competitive anarchy', but which should not be held as a constant state of affairs. He states: In a conflictual system power and interests matter, but what makes a system conflictual is an underlying structure of common knowledge." The implication being, that if ideational systems change, then so to would anarchy. Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy Under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State," \textit{International Organization} 49, no. 04 (1995): 689–721, doi:10.1017/S0020818300028484.} Anarchy, though denoting a negative condition, delimits the structure, or 'ordering-principle' that preponderantly shapes and defines the relations between states in the world. It is the ordering principal that all states exist within, relate to each other by, and interact with - tragically illustrated by the war-ridden histories of nations rising and falling, from antiquity to the present.

States are the basic unit of analyses. This is based on the principal of sovereignty, whereby, all things considered, the state, or central governing body of a political community holds a monopoly of force within the confines of its territory. The degree to which a state's monopoly of force is not superseded would similarly indicate the degree to which a state is sovereign. Thus, the spatial distance that comprises the sum territory over which a state can be said to wield a monopoly of force (while closely corresponding to the deployment of martial power, this would also include the additional components of economic, legal, and cultural instruments) marks the extent, or border, of its sovereign domain.

This conception of state sovereignty is controversial to say the least. RBJ Walker, for instance, claims that the "difficulty with realism in this sense is not the insistence on the importance of the state, but the lack of much serious analysis of what a
state is." Historical materialists, likewise, attempt to problematize the coherence of the concept by emphasizing it as a site of 'practice' and contestation continually being constructed and reified by social forces. However, Robert Gilpin provides an eloquent retort by arguing that the centrality of the state in structural realism "does not presume that the nature of the state need always be the same and that the contemporary nation-state is the ultimate form of political organization." Certainly, the state, as we have come to experience it, is a particular political manifestation of current historical experience. Realism does not purport that it has always been so, or that it always will be. The functional point realism makes is that anarchy has hitherto not been transcended in international politics, and until it is the principal actors of the system (currently states) will be faced with its necessary consequences.

Secondly, because all states fundamentally relate as sovereign entities, the structure of anarchy presumes that any one state is equal to every other state, "none is entitled to command; none is required to obey." There is no ontological differentiation from one state to the next that could find any basis in the international system. Anarchy, unlike providence, does not offer laws on high nor judicious distinctions to dispense to its attentive congregation. However, as we observe in the history of international politics, the theoretic equality of nations does not correspond to observed inequality between states that may exist in any given point of time. All states may be equal, but they do not all have the means to act as equals do. For example, because of the unrivalled power of America, including its forward forces that ring Afghanistan through the Gulf states, the

39 However, both Callinicos and Harvey stand out from this tradition in arguing that though the state is a practice in flux, the realm of international politics has an autonomous ordering effect from socio-political processes that embed state formation. As such, neorealist reductions of the state to a singular identify may be unproblematic within the confines of its field of study. See: Callinicos, "Iraq"; Alex Callinicos, "Does Capitalism Need the State System?," Cambridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 533–549, doi:10.1080/09557570701680464; David Harvey, "Comment on Commentaries," Historical Materialism 14, no. 4 (2006): 157–166; Gonzalo Pozo-Martin, "Autonomous or Materialist Geopolitics?," Cambridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 551–563, doi:10.1080/09557570701680480.
United States is more able to unilaterally strike its 'enemies of state', whether they are found in Pakistan, Libya, or Yemen and irrespective of the 'sovereignty' that these nations possess, then could be equally said for India or China. Similarly, Russia is more equal when acting (striking) in Georgia, France in Mali etc. Thus, the legal scholarly convention of treating all states as functionally equal is rather disingenuous. Though in principal sovereign states are not ontologically differentiated, in much the same way as individuals are considered equal before a social law, some are more than equal by virtue of the capabilities and means they possess in the pursuit and securing of their interests. As with most structural conditions in international politics, the concept is a relative one and is not meant to suffer from the frozen confines of absolutist interpretations.

Explaining this, structural theory posits that power, or the relative degree to which a state possesses power, is the primary means by which states are said to differ. The more powerful a state, the greater its effective international influence, the more able it is to efficaciously covet its desired wants and extend its reach into the affairs of others. In other words, power bears close accord to the "domination of man by man", and as Inis Claude notes, is a "problem... here to stay; it is, realistically, not a problem to be eliminated but a problem to be managed." Under anarchy, power is the fuel that feeds...

42 Hobbes describes power as 'the present means to achieve some future apparent good.' Realism, here, can be said to only differ from this definition by how it is operationalized in international politics. E.H. Carr, identified three types of power states could possess: economic, military, and psychological. In his structural theory, Waltz refined these indicators to the "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence." Mearsheimer, for his part, emphasized population, territory, and capabilities. Adding to these, Gilpin highlights the technological capabilities of states, while Grieco, and the more contemporary Waltz, stress the particular importance of the economy in determining power relations. However, what is key in determining a conception of power, is to isolate those material indicators which, as Hobbes formulated centuries ago, enable a state to act in ways, and achieve the ends, that it otherwise would not be able to do. In the case of structural theory, the material indicators best suited to the task are the forces of military power. See Hobbes, Leviathan, 150; Edward Hallett Carr, Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, 1ST ed. (Harper Perennial, 1964); Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 131; Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics; Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: a Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," International Organization 42, no. 03 (1988): 485–507, doi:10.1017/S0020818300027715.
43 Morgenthau and Thompson, Politics Among Nations, 11.
the activity of states; "it is the currency of international politics"\(^{45}\); it denotes the extent to which a state is able to act and acquire within and without its borders.

The third consequence of anarchy is the "absence of a central monopoly of legitimate force."\(^{46}\) International anarchy, much like Hobbes' state of nature, is devoid of a body that has the power to adjudicate and enforce order upon and between states. Further, the world that states cohabit is finite, and the goods they covet are scarce. With all states being equal, differentiated only by their efficacious ability to act and acquire a good pursued, points of conflict and competition are innumerable. Consequently, states experience the structural conditions of anarchy as a form of endemic uncertainty, or 'long shadow of the future.' Echoing the deductive form of Hobbes' 'State of Nature', the equality of states, the scarcity of goods pursued, and the uncertainty of what the future might bring, compels states to competition and conflict with each other. Without recourse to a third party that has an inviolable power to mediate, irrespective of the power differentials between concerned parties, each state is left to their own devices in a potentially hostile and uncertain world.

Fourth, as such, structural theory contends that all states seek security above all else\(^{47}\). Though other goals and interests may exist, and may be violently sought after, each and every good a state could possess is dependent on the prior condition of relative security – or, the ability of the state to ensure its own existence. In distinction from classical realism, with its somewhat essentialist wedding of a Freudo-Niesschean ‘Will to Power’, where the pursuit of power is considered the end in itself that states

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\(^{47}\) The centrality of security is a contentious point in structural theory. For instance, Jack Snyder has stated : that "at Realism's core is the belief that international affairs is a struggle for power among self-interested states." This is of course true, but ending the discussion there is misleading. Realism *is* the study of power in international politics, but only through its capacity to purchase security. It is a means not an end. See: Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy* no. 145 (December 2004): 53.
pursue, structural realism maintains that power is the means by which security is attained. Under anarchy, power is meaningless if it cannot, or ceases to be, secure.

The precise definition of what 'security' means is a constant source of irritation in the study of international politics. Waltz himself offers, at times, only a very general tendency in that: "at a minimum (states), seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination." Definition of what this means in practice is

48 According to Waltz, arguments that rely upon assumptions on the biologic or transhistorical valuation of human desire or will are First Image conceptualizations of international politics. Realism, Waltz contends, has since developed into a proper theory.

49 The most nuanced difference between the concept of security here and how it may be elaborated elsewhere is on the question of 'survival.' If security largely refers to survivability, then, once a certain threshold of power is attained, and survivability is all but assured, structural pressures of the system would tend towards the status quo. This has led most scholars to implicitly bias a 'minimum' of power (defensive) necessary – usually well before a state becomes a Great Power. However, some swing to the opposite side of the spectrum. For example, though Mearsheimer states that need for 'security' is an axiomatic assumption for realism, he spends a great deal of time contending that it is regional hegemony, or the domination of one state against any potential peer competitor, that is the operative goal for all able Great Powers. As a consequence, Great Powers will seek to aggressively maximize their power, almost for its own sake, until no peer competitors are able to challenge them. This logic, and its corollary deductions, is known as offensive realism. However, regarding 'offensive realisms' challenge, I offer three points: first, that offensive realists are correct to criticize the 'status quo bias, but not a necessary tendency, of which a 'defensive' reading of security seems to entail (a point emphasized by Schweller). Second, that the logic of power maximization applies primarily to Great Powers, and thus pertains to a particular analytic refinement of structural theory rather than being a counter structural proposition. And lastly, that regional hegemony is, in effect, simply another way of conceiving the threshold for how much security is enough for Great Powers to pursue. Therefore, the key is that both offensive and defensive realist interpretations of international politics agree that security, in one formulation or another, is the ultimate goal of states. Their differences amount to particular prejudices on how states interpret, rational or not, the pressures of anarchy and international politics. On this point, Peter Toft (2003) argues, both may combine to create a more coherent structural theory. See Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory"; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Kant, Liberalism, and War," The American Political Science Review 56, no. 2 (June 1, 1962): 331–340, doi:10.2307/1952369; Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics; John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," International Security 15, no. 1 (July 1, 1990): 5–56, doi:10.2307/2538981; Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," International Security 19, no. 1 (July 1, 1994): 72–107, doi:10.2307/2539149; Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealism's Status quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?," Security Studies 5, no. 3 (1996): 90–121, doi:10.1080/08944900602107918; Peter Toft, "John J. Mearsheimer: An Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power," Journal of International Relations and Development 8, no. 4 (December 2005): 381–408, doi:10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800065; Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally Against the Leading Global Power?", International Security 35, no. 1 (2010): 7–43, doi:10.1162/ISEC_a_00001.

50 While Legro & Moravcsik, among others, argue that this formulation lacks precision, it is argued here that the 'vagueness' afforded to how states pursue security is in accord with the randomness
the primary disagreement animating debates on the defensive (status-quo survivalists) or offensive (revisionist power-maximizers) bias of the international system. However, it is contended here, that this debate is, essentially, secondary to the coherent logic driving the pursuit of ‘security’ among states. Specifically, the propensity to seek ‘preservation’ or ‘domination’ represents the continuum of possible strategies available to states that are structured to desire ‘security.’ This line of reasoning strongly follows that of Morgenthau, when he stressed that the difference between both is a strategic preference that is not determined by structure.

The operative distinction is, under which structural conditions are biases toward preservation or domination prejudiced. Here, Mearsheimer’s concept of regional and global hegemony is illustrative. In a world of insecurity, the only absolute threshold for the attainment of security is to achieve hegemonic power in the international system. But, because global hegemony is impossible, and regional hegemony is unlikely, states are generally forced to pursue ‘relative’ security instead, which leads to contingent outcomes that defy stringent predictions. In this sense, the tendency towards status quo bias or power maximization (Mearsheimer’s addition) is theoretically superfluous - it of state behaviours observed in history. It is interesting, then, why structural theory is both accused of ‘ahistoricism’ and ‘determinism’ while also being lambasted for its lack of predicative specificity. See: Legro & Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?,” 13; Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 118.

51 The former is largely attributed to Waltz while the latter was developed by Mearsheimer.
52 Morgenthau and Thompson, Politics Among Nations, 50–51.
speaks more to the mutability of distributions of power than to the core assumptions of structural theory.\textsuperscript{54}

Security is a fluid good: it points to the direction of its treasure but not its specific location. In order to achieve security, states will identify and seek out their interests as they may be narrowly defined.\textsuperscript{55} Interests refer to the goods a state hopes to secure in order to increase its power relative to competing states. As such, interests may exist in one of two qualities: goods that increase the relative security of the beneficiary (power); or goods which can be converted into resources that increase the relative power, and thus its virtual security, of the beneficiary (capacity/latent power).\textsuperscript{56} Interests, thus conceptualized, as material goods to be acquired, can be generalized to the possible interests of all states, but more importantly for Great Powers, as in, those interests which are seen to increase a state’s power and/or capacity are goods universally sought. According to Legro & Moravcsik, these interests are considered constant for all Great Powers and would include such strategic goods as energy, resources, productive land, defensible borders, contiguous territory etc.\textsuperscript{57}

This leads to what Legro & Moravcsik, Edward Hallett Carr, Morgenthau, and Waltz allege is the assumption that frees structural theory from a ‘messy’ reduction into

\textsuperscript{54} For an interesting discussion on the possible differences between status quo and revisionist states, Levy argues that the geographic proximity of land powers versus the ‘stopping power of water’ amongst sea powers has a correlation with the power projection tendencies of states. Mearsheimer takes up a similar argument in the ‘Tragedy of Great Power Politics.’ Note, however, that the causal mechanism pertains to material conduits of power, and as such, does not purport any theoretical contradiction with structural theory – only potential refinement. See: Levy and Thompson, “Balancing on Land and at Sea.”

\textsuperscript{55} Though interests can vary according to the contingent needs of states, according to Legro & Moravcsik, neorealism assumes that the variable interests it studies are in fact, fixed, hence scarce, and thus conducive to competition and conflict. Likewise, in the Arctic, all states are concurrently claiming interests in three contested goods: natural and energy resources; sea-lanes and transportation routes; and extended territorial sovereignty. For an alternative analysis of how the distribution of interests may interact with the structure of international politics, please see: Stephen M. Walt, \textit{The Origins of Alliance} (Cornell University Press, 1987); Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” \textit{International Security} 9, no. 4 (April 1, 1985): 3–43, doi:10.2307/2538540; Legro & Moravcsik, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?”

\textsuperscript{56} This is adapted from Mearsheimer’s concept of military and latent powers. Mearsheimer, \textit{The Tragedy of Great Power Politics}, 55.

\textsuperscript{57} Note, most if not all of the interests states are pursuing in the Arctic have such strategic value.
unit-level determinants. Without which, the distinctiveness of structural theory, and its peculiar insights into the world, would be compromised by 'degenerative' variables, tautology, and dubious generalizations. However, because interests require states to interpret them as such, whether or not all states identify the same good as an interest is subject to some variability and unit-level (internal) processes. Structure can quietly whisper the goods that are necessary, but states are free to hear what they want, until, systemic circumstances are such that they are 'made' to listen.

Fifth, each state under anarchy, securing its interests, and surrounded by potentially hostile challenges to its security must engage in 'self-help'. Self-help is defined as the means through which sovereign states attempt to increase their relative power in order to improve their security. These means can vary widely, from targeted industrial strategies that can improve economic comparative advantage, cultivating shared norms and values between states, joining alliances, to mobilizing armies, fighting wars, and acquiring territory and influence. However, the point to be stressed is simply stated: that in a self-help world, each state is responsible for itself, and to itself alone, in

58 Morgenthau and Thompson, Politics Among Nations, 2–12; Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 18–37; Waltz, "Realist thought and neorealist theory."); Legro & Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," 13. Gilpin refines this formulation by contending that states do not have an 'interest' or 'utility functions' in the same way that any organization or federation of people similarly does not. Interests are a human variable. However, for the purposes of structural abstraction, a state can be said to have an interest through sum of its parts. Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics, 18–19. However, unlike Rousseau's 'General Will', the sum interests of a state have marginal political determination. Rather, the space for political choice within the security related 'subtext' of a state's raison d'etre is largely a consequence of the power it has at its disposal.

59 Self-Help, as a competitive reaction to the necessities of structure, can also be argued to come from Hobbes 'Leviathan.' Consider: "And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himself, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed. Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion of men, being necessary to conservation, it ought to be allowed him." Hobbes, Leviathan, 184–185.
the pursuit of security against uncertainty and the shifting dangers of competition in international politics.  

This is not to say, as critiques of structural realism will at times attest, that cooperation, institutions, shared norms and values, and ideational prejudices will not, to some degree, mediate the pressures exerted under anarchy and enable behaviours that seem to contradict a self-helped sovereign state. Rather, without any appeal to contingent circumstances, the anarchical structure of international politics that humanity has hitherto endured reduces the survivability of all sovereign states to the capabilities of its own power—a zero-sum competition over resources of scarcity. Dynamics may change, nuance can creep in, and relationships can seemingly fly in the face of this restrictive deduction. However, while states attempt to reconcile with the structure of anarchical uncertainty, they still exist under its long shadow, and they are thus compelled to help themselves navigate through. Thus, as Mearsheimer argues “states operating in a self-help world almost always act according to their own self-interest and do not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states, or to the interests of the so-called international community. The reason is simple: it pays to be selfish in a self-help world.”

Further, the exogenous influence of these 'cooperative' mechanisms, normative appeals, and regimes of the 'common interest' is doubtful. The deficiency of 'idealism',


61 Glaser attempts to make this point when he cites Waltz regarding anarchy: "makes the cooperation of parties difficult... Rules, institutions, and patterns of cooperation ... are all limited in extent and modified from what they might otherwise be." See: C. L. Glaser, “Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-help,” International Security 19, no. 3 (1994): 50; Waltz, “Reflections on Theory of International Politics: a Response to My Critics,” 336.

62 This is a critical point for Legro & Moravcsik. They assert that the tendency for contemporary realists to subsume all variables that have the potential to intervene between state and structure must be included in the assumptions of theory, rather than explained by them, and that this necessary leads to realism's theoretical 'over-inflation.' Legro & Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," 6.


64 Here, idealism is broadly defined as any philosophical tradition that appeals to the primacy of cognitive/emotive constructs in influencing the development of history. Rather, materialist philosophy, including realism, is more likely to posit that ideational content is a subjective 'mirror' of objective external forces. Fittingly, Marx provides one of the strongest accounts of this relationship between subjective and objective materials: "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of
cited by historical materialists and structural realists alike, is the failure to interrogate how intemperate power lurks behind the masks of its taming. Drawing a parallel with Oscar Wilde's 'The Critic as Artist: "men are the slaves of words. They rage against Materialism, as they call it, forgetting that there has been no material improvement that has not spiritualized the world...and few spiritual awakenings that have not wasted the world's faculties in barren hopes, and fruitless aspirations, and empty or trammeling creeds." E.H. Carr holds a similar sentiment, and is widely credited with formulating the critique of idealism in politics best: "We shall never arrive at a political order in which the grievances of the weak and the few receive the same prompt attentions as the grievances of the strong and the many. Power goes far to create the morality convenient to itself, and coercion is a fruitful source of consent." Or perhaps more simply, "morality is the product of power." A modern restatement of the Melian Dialogue, in language apt to capture the intended audience, the problem identified in realism is that any tendencies disposed to mediate the consequences of anarchy are necessarily forged by power, endogenous to it, and, in the end, trapped by it. Like the planets bound in orbit by the gravity of the sun, states that sufficiently self help themselves to Great Power ensnare the ideational instruments that abound around them.

production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (Charles H. Kerr, 1904), 11–12.

65 Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist (Upon the Importance of Doing Nothing and Discussing Everything), ed. Andrew Moore (New York: Mondial, 2007), 33.
66 Carr, Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939, 217.
67 Ibid., 63.
68 Art draws a very similar association. He states that: "The war-waging use of military power is akin to a powerful flood: it washes away all before it. The peaceful use of military power is akin to a gravitational field among large objects in space: it affects all motion that takes place, but it produces its effects imperceptibly... Most of the time the effect of military power looks more like gravity than a flood; therefore, the usefulness of military power should not be equated simply with its physical use."Art, "American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force," 9–10. Similarly, this paper is less concerned with the active 'flood like' war-fighting power of military force than it is with the 'gravitational' effects said power will cause to reverberate throughout international systems. The larger question, left unexplored here, is how deeply the 'gravitational' well of power bends human affairs in general.
Sixth, in pursuing security, states will invariably develop the means to inflict harm upon each other.\(^6\) This tendency produces a structural environment of possible unlimited offensive threats, which causes states to fear their competitors.\(^7\) The state's ability to cause harm, through war, conflict, and competition, with the potential to destroy each other outright, renders international politics fatally dangerous in a way wholly different from other vectors of competition, such as in the economic marketplace. Accordingly, the "horrible consequences of war sometimes cause states to view each other not just as competitors, but as potentially deadly enemies."\(^8\) Because the potential for existential catastrophe is always a possibility, fear of and distrust towards competitors is a reality for all states, but especially the Great Powers who are forced to endure explicit or implicit threats to their very survival. It is this structural condition towards violence that is often ignored by writers operating within liberal and constructivist traditions. However, the relationship between politics and violence, whether within the international or domestic dimension, is vital to deconstructing why violent competition and conflict are so intimately bound - in fact, "to begin to acknowledge the historical and material forms of the existence of violence is to confront the 'tragic' dimension of the practice of politics. Just as this practice can never abandon itself to violence, so it can never altogether abandon violence..."\(^9\)

Seventh, and perhaps most importantly, under anarchy, the differences in power between equal sovereign states forces each to be preponderantly concerned with relative as opposed to absolute gains that can be achieved in international politics. Behaviors geared towards absolute gains, that is the pursuit of payoffs/ends that

\(^6\) While most structural realists would agree, this point is primarily stressed by Mearsheimer. It can be argued that because of all state's 'inherent' offensive power potential, Great Powers are structured to assume the worst of each other's intentions, or otherwise face he deadly consequences. Here, intentions are irrelevant to the theory because it is argued that the ability to cause harm is not reducible to intention - it is an existential constant. Like a swinging sword, irrespective of the motives that sent it in motion, will slice its victim just the same. See: Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 30–31; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (December 1, 1994): 10, doi:10.2307/2539078.


\(^8\) Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," 11.

maximize the amount of return on any given good, may be ideal within a hierarchical structure of international politics; but under anarchy, because power and security is relative, states are forced to pay attention to the relative proportion of gains that are systemically distributed. Stephen D. Krasner keenly argues that absolute gains cannot stack up to relative considerations because rivals must always be concerned that gains made by a competitor could at one point be used against them, and thus imperil their security (both in the short and long term). Indeed, Joseph M. Grieco contends that states "worry that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy in war, and fear that achievements of joint gains that advantage a friend in the present might produce a more dangerous potential foe in the future. As a result, states must give serious attention to the gains of partners."

Eighth, the sum total of the accrual of relative gains, in the pursuit of power and security, leads to the security dilemma, whereby any action undertaken by a state to increase its own security potentially threatens the security of others. John Herz's original statement on the dilemma summarizes it best:

"Striving to attain security from . . . attack, [states] are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing unit (states), power competition ensues and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on."

It is this structural 'fear' induced by though the security dilemma that Thucydides had identified as perhaps the leading cause driving the struggle between classical Athens and Sparta in the Peloponnesian War: "what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Lacedaemon."

Lastly, the relative distribution of power among states, by their self-helped pursuit of security and its corollary consequences, produces, with varying configurations,
a balance of power. This system is constantly shifting as states negotiate, through conflict or cooperation, the distribution of relative gains and the powers this grants within the realm of international politics. Morgenthau writes that it is "the aspiration for power (security) on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain (status quo powers) or overthrow (revisionists) the status quo (present conditions of disadvantage/advantage), leads of necessity to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it." As such, the balance of power illustrates the effective results of the actions of Great Powers as they seek security in an anarchical world. These results, in turn, correspond to the historical experience of structure that conditions the systemic outputs we observe in international politics.

and Mearsheimer cites five. However, I argue that the discrepancy arises from two principle causes: the assumption of state rationality and the overemphasis on predictive utility. The above nine assumptions, while in greater number than the preceding examples, is closer to a Waltzian formulation and does not incorporate any attempt to theorize a structural or systemic variation in state preferences. Though one may very well exist, to my knowledge there has not been the development of a theory to sufficiently make the case. See: Schweller, "New Realist Research on Alliances," 927; Legro & Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," 12–18; Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, 30–31.

79 Morgenthau and Thompson, Politics Among Nations, 163.

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The balance of power defines the specific structural pressures that will be exerted upon competitive states; moreover, it provides the contingent intelligibility, as opposed to absolute intelligibility (assumed rationality), through which states can interact with, and respond to, the above-described system. Above all, the overbearing effect of the balance of power is, as Waltz described, the tendency of the international system to correct an unbalanced distribution of power between states, as in the greatest amount of relative power commanded by the fewest number of states with a more or less balanced configuration, understood as the greatest amount of relative power distributed amongst the largest number of states, determined through the fearul interplay of competitive forces.\textsuperscript{80} Further, because the more power a state has the greater its effect will be upon the overall balance, it is the quality (relative amount of strength each state commands) and quantity (the number of great powers in an international system) of Great Powers that structural theory is most concerned with.\textsuperscript{81} As Waltz contends, structures vary according to the changes in the balance of their major units.

A balance of power is shaped by the acts of balancing on the part of Great Powers against one another. Balancing, Randall Schweller states, is the creation of military power through either the build-up of internal forces (internal balancing) or in the joining of alliance to protect territorial integrity and deter domination by a competitor state (external balancing).\textsuperscript{82} Because asymmetries in power threaten the security of states that are weaker against the stronger, there is a structural tendency to for states to balance against over concentrated power and improve their standing in the international system.


\textsuperscript{81} This is why, traditionally, neorealist literature tends to focus upon either the same states, configurations of states, or time periods in which Great Powers were notable - they are the states best situated in the best position from which to explore the tendency of, and effects upon, their corresponding international political structure. See: Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," 618.

Strategies to do so may include direct or indirect balancing, such as off-shore balancing, buck passing, soft-balancing, band-wagoning, chain-ganging, leash-slipping etc. The determining factor in which strategy is privileged by states is the current structure of the balance of power in which they act, in a constant struggle towards equilibrium.

This mutable tension, produced by changes in the number of Great Powers, between balance and imbalance, is what we observe as the onerous rise and fall of nations. Like security, the balance of power is not and cannot be a static system under the conditions of anarchy; or, as Nicholas J. Spkyman observed:

"Political equilibrium is neither a gift of the gods nor an inherently stable condition. It results from the active intervention of man, from the operation of political forces. States cannot afford to wait passively for the happy time when a miraculously achieved balance of power will bring peace and security. If they wish to survive, they must be willing to go to war to preserve a balance."

The implications of this logic are twofold. First, the effect of structure upon states, and in particular Great Powers, generates a relative sameness in behavior states pursue as they emulate and learn from each other the most successful strategies. This is what Waltz refers to as the "certain repeated and enduring patterns" induced by the system. It is through the process of socialization and competition, he argues, that the variety of

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84 This list presents what is arguably the most prominent strategies identified by the literature, but it is by no means fulsome. For instance, Schroeder identifies hiding, transcendence etc., as other possible means states pursue. See: Paul Schroeder, “Historical Reality Vs. Neo-realist Theory,” *International Security* (1994): 117.
85 Waltz likens this process as a 'low-mortality' rate amongst states, through which it is hard to discern the mechanisms that contribute to state decline over the course of an individual's lifetime. What is required, on the other hand, is a long historical view that distills these elements of mortality from the immediacy of political events. See: Kenneth Waltz and James Fearon, "A Conversation with Kenneth Waltz." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (2012): 1–12, doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-020511-174136.
86 Nicholas John Spykman and Yale University Institute of International Studies, America's *Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1942), 25.
87 The full quote reads "whenever agents and agencies are coupled by force and competition rather than authority and law," they exhibit "certain repeated and enduring patterns." Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 117.
state behaviors and systemic outcomes are reduced.\textsuperscript{88} Christopher Layne adds that all "Great Powers are similar because they are not, and cannot be, functionally differentiated and must produce the same security related tasks."\textsuperscript{89}

And second, the effect of structure upon state, and state upon structure, is codetermined. Structure, largely observed through the balance of power, affects the outcomes in any given international system just as a system is itself affected "depending on the resources and aims of their units and on the fates that befall them."\textsuperscript{90} "Structure does not account for everything," Paul Schroeder states, nor does its theory, "...explain or predict everything. The changes in international politics...occur at the unit level; but only if hierarchy (a central monopoly of legitimate force) replaced anarchy would its structure be changed."\textsuperscript{91} International Structures 'shape and shove' encouraging states to adopt certain behaviours, punishing others, and adding up the results of all in the current structural configuration of the system. "Because states coexist in a self-help system, they are free to do any fool thing they care to, but they are likely to be rewarded for behavior that is responsive to structural pressures and punished for behavior that is not."\textsuperscript{92} The operative distinction to be made in any subsequent analysis of international politics, then, is what is the nature of the international structure under study, how does this explain the behavior of states therein, and why this could create opportunities for states to influence the formation of a new balance of power that is perhaps more favourable.

Structural theory attempts to explain the outcomes of the behaviors of states, under the given conditions of its assumptions, without necessary recourse to any of the innumerable capricious 'motives' or 'policies', beyond their 'security related tasks', that states may have. Indeed, Legro & Moravcsik have eloquently shown that when "theoretical explanation of empirical findings...consistently relies on auxiliary assumptions unconnected to core assumptions to predict novel facts...we learn little

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[88] Ibid., 74.
\item[89] Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion," 16.
\item[90] Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: a Response to My Critics," 343.
\item[91] Schroeder, "Historical Reality Vs. Neo-realist Theory," 113.
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about the veracity of those assumptions." Accordingly, this paper follows an avowed structural realist logic and attempts to provide an adequate frame for how to explain and understand the balance of power in the Arctic through highlighting the preeminent interests and capabilities animating the regional balance, rather than predict whether states are subjectively disposed to regional cooperation or conflict specifically. Moreover, it restricts its analysis to the preponderant actor in the region – in this case, Russia, in order to mitigate a dilatory discussion that would ensue by assuming each Arctic state has comparable influence and is acting off of relatively equal footing. As Waltz has for a long time contended, any adequate litmus test for a theory must be found in its ability to explain something about the world rather than automatically predict its exact future developments. Sometimes rigorous parsimony can say more than expansive complexity.

"If there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it." To date, neorealism has identified three general forms that the balance of power can take: unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity. These three can be further distinguished into particular variants, such as Mearsheimer's concepts of balanced and unbalanced multipolarity. Jack S. Levy, in highlighting this penchant, notes that while the balance of power is one of the most widely used ideas in the study of international politics "it is also one of the most ambiguous and intractable ones." However, the important distinction to be made is that the specific form of the balance is useful in identifying the contingent structural effects on how Great Powers are induced to operate. Currently, in conjunction with Waltz, Mearsheimer, Layne, and Murray, it is

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93 Legro and Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" 9.
95 Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 117.
96 Further, authors including Hedley Bull and Alastair Buchan have argued for up to seven different balance of power systems. However, for the purposes of this paper, a focus on the multipolarity will suffice; and more specifically, the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity within the nuclear age.
argued that the international system is transitioning from a unipolar balance of power to a multipolar one.  

3.1 MULTIPOLARITY

Multipolarity is defined as the division of the balance of power between Great Powers. It is largely argued to be the balance most prone to conflict and war for several reasons. First, possible conflict dyads are multiplied by the number of competing Great Powers and their respective coalitions. Second, the relative distribution of power becomes extremely sensitive to the shifting coalitions of states that may form around the various poles. Third, because relative powers may change more easily, the importance of power asymmetries between competing Great Powers is maximized, pushing states to exploit relative gains and the weaknesses of rival to the best of their abilities. In this regard, William C. Wohlforth is in agreement with Mearsheimer when he states that under multipolarity "states are presumptively revisionist in that the absence of a settled hierarchy (or, in his case, the absence of a hegemon) provides incentives to establish one."

Further, these asymmetries in power are more conducive to conflict, according to Mearsheimer, because the structure provides the least stable power distributions to

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99 Though, especially in the current international context, this does not entail a logical equality in the division of power. Take the United States for instance. It is conceivable that the overwhelming power of the US can coexist with several competing Great Powers that are each considerably weaker than the former. Such a skewed multipolar division of powers would seem to correspond most with an unbalanced system.


101 However, the disagreement between the two emerges when Wohlforth considers the unipolarity of the US and it's structural 'changing' effects. See: William C. Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," 40.
deter an aggressive strategy of self-help. In effect, multipolarity structurally privileges the increased possibility that Great Powers will seek the efficacious use of military forces as a means to tip the balance of power in their favour against competing rivals.\textsuperscript{102} The more balanced the distribution of power, the more severe the competition between Great Powers. Lastly, the greater potential for changing configurations of Great Powers to shift the balance towards one pole, the more likely this competition may develop into open conflict.\textsuperscript{103} In addition, because power is fungible for those states that have amassed a relatively high amount of it, states that possess strong military forces are able to convert these into assets outside of the security domain, including political leverage and economic influence amongst competitors. As such, if Russia were the most powerful state in the Arctic, then it would be expected that regional political economic outcomes would be similarly weighted in its favour.

3.2 IS MULTIPOLARITY ON THE HORIZON?

Any given balance of power, whether it is the bipolar order of the Cold-War or the unipolar order of US hegemony, can explain the structural tendencies in which states are forced to respond and the outcomes that the system produces without necessitating the intervention of a unitary analysis of the variable processes that configure states in 'practice'. Here, the question of when and why a state chooses to respond to the balance of power, for example, why the Gorbachev regime decided to retrench Soviet Power when it did, is less consequential to explaining structural outcomes than the

\textsuperscript{102} The history of the Peloponnesian and Punic Wars might, at first, seem to contradict this point. After all, they are seemingly powerful examples of two powers in a bipolar system vying for hegemony in open war. However, it is arguable that in each case the support of third parties amongst the contending powers was extremely important in determining the evolution of the conflicts. As such, examples from Antiquity might better be understood as various configurations of unbalanced multipolarity to help clarify underlying structural pressures. And of course, the lack of strategic nuclear weapons perhaps made open warfare a bit easier to stomach.

\textsuperscript{103} The build-up and outbreak of World War 1 is considered a classic example of how states sensitively attuned to shifting tides in the balance of power under multipolarity can lead to intense conflict and war. In this case, the rising capabilities of Germany put immense security pressure on Britain to maintain its power advantages. However, this is challenged by Van Evera's argument that the offence/defense balance was more important than polar power configurations in the outbreak of the Great War. See: Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," International Security 9, no. 1 (July 1, 1984): 58–107, doi:10.2307/2538636.
growing asymmetries in relative power between the US and Soviet states,\textsuperscript{104} which over time helped usher in a new balance.\textsuperscript{105} Similarly, Waltz states that "Balance of power theory claims to explain the results of state's actions, under given conditions, and those results may not be foreshadowed in any of the actors' motives or be contained as objectives in their policies."\textsuperscript{106} Hence, the structure of the system can tell us, rather accurately, what the shape of the future may look like, without needing to predict how individual states will behave within. It is, quite simply, a theory of international politics, not foreign policy.\textsuperscript{107}

The unipolar moment has been defined by the preponderance of US military and economic power, and by the failure for any relevant Great Power to emerge and challenge the US position.\textsuperscript{108} Does this amount to a fundamental weakness in Waltz's structural theory, as some have suggested?\textsuperscript{109} Absolutely not! In 1992, before the Cold

\textsuperscript{104} Wohlforth, however, contends that because Gorbachev's reforms were initiated at a specific time that, barring a tumultuous shift in power capabilities between the Soviet Union and the US, certain domestic variables operating within the Soviet Union are required to explain what changed the Soviet leaders minds if the balance is not up to the task. Without recourse to the debate on the inertia within the Soviet Union regarding their relative power decline, the point that is missed is that explaining the peculiar responses of any state in a localized spatio/temporal point is a question for a theory of foreign policy, not a theory of international relations and its structure. Moreover, Mearsheimer effortlessly critiques this logic purported by Wohlforth through the argument that because subjective factors, such as ideational shifts among agents of state, tend to percolate at certain times rather than at seemingly random historical instances, the only convincing dimension that can properly frame this variation is the material background of a shifting balance of power. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," 106–109; Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," 37–47.

\textsuperscript{105} Though scholars such as Wohlforth, Schroeder, and Wendt vehemently disagree on this point, their criticism tends to oscillate between granting causal primacy to agent subjectivity in abstraction and the changing material 'superstructure' as a spark for corollary shifts in dominant discourses. If the former is correct it would have to be taken on 'faith' since no causal force is identified that would suggest an impetus for variation; If the latter, then there would be little disagreement with neorealist analyses.

\textsuperscript{106} Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 118.

\textsuperscript{107} A reference to a contention Waltz has made his entire career. For a work specifically on this topic, see: Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," Security Studies 6, no. 1 (1996): 54–57, doi:10.1080/09636419608429298.


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War was barely a year concluded, the Pentagon already began planning for the strategic aims of deterring the rise of a rival competitor anywhere in the world. Pursuing a strategy of power maximization, not because structural theory requires it, but for the reason that security is relative and states will utilize their power to the degree that the structure allows, the US attempted to ‘hedge’ its privileged position for perpetuity. Waltz, however, has been clear in arguing that under anarchy states cannot afford to trust excessive power, and citing Alexander Hamilton to illustrate the point: hegemons will always find the means to abuse their privilege, providing incentives for other powers to balance against them - history allows for no exceptions. This ‘Hegemon’s dilemma’ is acute, and since 2005 the unipolar system has been in decline due to “economic, military, and political constraints placed on American power capabilities” and the cumulative effects of differential rates of growth that have allowed states to start 'leash-slipping' from under American power. "When historians look to pinpoint the end of US hegemony," Layne contends, "they likely will point to two moments": the Beijing Olympics and the Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008. American decline was further underscored by the Great Recession of 2008 that began in the United States, and which "heralded the impending return of multipolarity."


Callinicos, "Iraq." 598.

Waltz and Fearon, “A Conversation with Kenneth Waltz.”


Layne has been the primary advocate for the concept of leash-slipping in the post-WW2 international system. Rather questionably, a large part of the case he makes rests on the arguments that both Britain and France attempted to buttress their own relative powers against absolute subordination to American hegemony and pursue aims that better corresponded to their interests during the Cold-War (Britain’s Third Force and Charles du Gaulle’s France). However, in both cases, the persuasiveness is limited. Rather, it is perhaps better to consider leash-slipping as a balancing process that occurs more substantially with Great Powers that have a greater number and more immediate strategic interests that conflict with those of the Hegemon. In this case, the concept may better serve to explain the cases of Russia, China, and perhaps India and Germany. See: Layne, “The Unipolar Illusion Revisited.”

Simply put, the 'American pacifier'\textsuperscript{115} has become too expensive to hold in place, let alone effectively suppress new eruptions of competition and conflict as it had effectively done so since World War 2.\textsuperscript{116} Indeed, Layne argues that US decline "is part of a broader trend in...the shift in economic power from the Euro-Atlantic core to rising Great and regional powers," including China, India, Russia, Indonesia, South Korea, and Brazil.\textsuperscript{117} Further, as the fortunes of US unipolarity continue to reverse, and differential rates of growth strengthen rising Great Powers, gaps in capabilities will likewise shrink as countries such as China, Russia, and others convert economic gains into military ones.\textsuperscript{118} Today, the Arctic presents a stark case in which US hegemonic decline is now being met by a rise in interest and capabilities of Russia's growing regional Great Power.

Structure, for all of its abstraction, is not solely a tool for the scholar-agents, princes, and statesmen can see it too. Following Russia's war with Georgia Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev had this to say: "the world should be multipolar...unipolarity is unacceptable, domination is impermissible. We cannot accept a world order in which all decisions are taken by one country, even such a serious and authoritative country as the United States of America. This kind of world is unstable and fraught with conflict."\textsuperscript{119} What is often missed regarding the above quote, or any other seemingly 'revisionist' line coming from Moscow, is that the sentiment expressed, as it concerns international relations, does not speak to the subjective quality of the orator; rather, more importantly, it articulates the position of Russia in a multipolar balance of power. Too often critics of the Russian apparatchiks, such as Pavel Baev, or similarly critics of the American neo-

\textsuperscript{115} This is a reference to Mearsheimer's argument that the presence of American preponderance in all strategic theatres of influence, but particularly in Europe, has had the pacific effect of allowing states to 'free ride' on the immense American military power for their own respective security costs. See: Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier."

\textsuperscript{116} Here, Mearsheimer cites the inevitably rise of Great Powers in East Asia and how a US presence would not only be unable to prevent it, but may also get caught in a conflict that it otherwise may not have. Ibid., 58–59.


\textsuperscript{118} Layne and Mearsheimer are perhaps the two most aggressive authors of this argument. The logic is simple — if security is both relative and elusive, eventually, states that have the capability to become Great Powers will be forced to do so or potentially unguardedly suffer the capricious shifts in international politics. Though both authors are principally concerned with the rise of China, it is argued that the same dynamic is on display in the Russian Arctic. See: Ibid., 210; Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm."

conservative ascendency during the 'unipolar moment', reduce the determinants of ostensibly 'irrational' aggressive Great Power politics to a question of personality, ideology, cronyism, or corruption. It is to presume that the forces that compel the Russian assertion of its 'sovereign' rights, or American global 'hubris', are anomalies holding the world hostage from fulfilling the promises of a Kantian empire of reason—a Hegelian mix of equal parts idealism and liberalism. What structural theory can elucidate, however, is that statements such as the one cited above, whatever their subjective quality, when issued from Great Powers are preponderantly shaped by the corresponding relative share of power amassed by that state and its corollary position within the international system.120

120 Mearsheimer all but suggests this by contending that the strategies pursued by Great Powers are largely shaped by the quality of the international system. Here, the argument goes farther by stating that even discourse within states can be a reflection of the distribution of powers.
Despite a seismic reduction in both military and latent capabilities, a number of scholars continue to maintain that Russia possesses the capabilities to still be considered a Great Power, albeit with various caveats. In 2007, several North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) generals seemed to speak for the Western defense establishment when they wrote that "it is Russia's weakness that is a cause for concern in the West, no longer its strength." Indeed, accurate in so far as it may be true for any Great Power relative to the hegemon and during this period of unipolar transition - Russia's weakness, especially in comparison with the US, is too great for Russia to ignore, and must, as it may now be doing, act accordingly to the interests of its position in international affairs.

In 2006, Alexei Pushkov, speaking at the 2006 St. Petersburg G-8 summit, identified three factors that solidify Russia's current status as a Great Power: its strategic nuclear arsenal; its relative economic strength as a major energy producer and holder of large currency reserves; and its geographical 'indispensability'. All three of these factors correspond to the main determinants of power Mearsheimer and others have previously identified - military, latent, and geographic. Only now, however, since the Cold War's end is Russia's international standing beginning to show some clarity. However, Lukyanov contends that the Russian international position is by no means certain, and will require 'titanic' efforts by the state to carve out an effective 'pole' in the international

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121 For example, Mearsheimer argues that Russia is the only country capable of being a Great Power within two continents, but is the weakest contender in each; Wohlforth likens Russia to a 'second tier great power in the making'; Dimitrakopoulou & Liaropoulos argue that recent Russian policy suggests its attempting to regain Great Power; and Roi asserts that, in the Arctic, Russia may be the greatest power with a connoted lack of global power projection. See: Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," 50–53; William C. Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War," 54–66; Sophia Dimitrakopoulou and Andrew Liaropoulos, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020: A Great Power in the Making?," Caucasian Review of International Affairs 4, no. 1 (January 2010): 35–42; Roi, "Russia."
system. This is perhaps most true for the Arctic, which continues to prove to be a unique strategic interest for Moscow. Speaking on this point to the Russian Security Council in 2008, Medvedev stated the Arctic held “great strategic meaning and that it was directly linked to meeting the long term challenges of the country and its competitiveness in global markets.” If Russia is or will be considered a Great Power in any measure beyond the possession of nuclear forces, the Arctic is a significant reason why.

Accordingly, Russia, among other Great Powers, is converting its economic gains into increased military capabilities. For instance, despite the severity of the Great Recession, after the Georgian War (2008), Russia has increased defence spending by 16%, with an increase of 9% in 2011 alone. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and the Military Balance 2012 reports show that Russia, in line with its bombastic state pronouncements, has begun recuperating from its devastating military retrenchment after the Soviet Union collapsed. Given current budget estimates made by the Ministry of Economic Development, spending on ‘National Defence’ projects is expected to further increase by 59% in 2014, approaching close to 5% of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Thus, in spite of the historically novel collapse in

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126 China, for instance, though spending far less than Russia and the US on defence relative to the size of its economy, has nonetheless steadily and significantly increased its defence budget over the past 20 years. See: Background Paper on SIPRI Military Expenditure Data, 2011 (SIPRI, April 17, 2012), 5–6.
127 This includes the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), computerized command and control systems, warplanes, modernizing the navy, antiaircraft and antimissile systems Pavel Felgenhauer, “Moscow Sees Military Threats from All Directions,” The Jamestown Foundation, May 22, 2012, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bswords%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=Arctic&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39167&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=01a47df2169ab52c7f0988d901832191.
128 Though this still represents a fraction of the total amount the US spent in 2011 ($71.9b to 711b, respectively), it does mark a turning point in post-Soviet Russian military expenditures and rising capabilities. However, the relative share of GDP this increase will entail frequently differs. For instance, Russian Defense Committee chairman Valdimir Komoedov states that this rise in defense spending by 2015 should only equal 3.7% of GDP. Though the exact figures vary, and this is perhaps attributable to the variability in global energy markets, the consistent trend is that military spending is being prioritized over other obligations by the Russian government “Russia to Boost Defense Spending 59% by 2015,” RIA Novosti, October 17, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121017/176690593.html; “Russia to Boost Defence Budget by
state power after the Soviet Union's dissolution, Russia appears to have significantly slowed its power 'hemorrhaging' and begun to build upon its position as the third largest military spender worldwide and possessor of the world's second most potent military forces.

What the emergence of multipolarity will mean, according to Layne and others, is that anarchy, the security dilemma, and the absolute importance of relative gains will, once again, assume a more prominent, observable effect in the future. This does not necessarily entail a return of Great Power war. As Waltz has vociferously argued, the possession of nuclear weapons and the deterrent effect they produce among the Great powers effectively negates the possibility of competition coming to blows. Instead, he contends that economic and technological competition is likely to become keener. Similarly, this competition, while not leading to war, will increase conflict rather than reduce it. He states that: "conflict grows all the more easily out of economic competition because economic comparisons are easier to make than military ones. Economically, however, the consequences of price and quality differentials quickly become apparent." Further, Art has shown that "what nuclear weapons have done is to alter the ways in which states that possess such weapons use their military power."

Specifically, they have moderated, but not fundamentally changed, conditions of anarchy and the relative value of military power in influencing interstate relations, which peacefully occur through 'spill-over' effects and 'linkage politics'. Because power is fungible, Art maintains, albeit perhaps less so than money, it will continue to have significant effect on how and what Great Powers are able to achieve in international politics, and in spite of the deterrent consequences that nuclear weapons produce.

What this suggests is that the return to multipolarity entails that Great Power competition...
over interests will become more acute, economic gains will be more readily available for translation into military capabilities, and that the pursuit of security will be increasingly sensitive to how relative powers are distributed.

This is particularly important regarding the melting Arctic. What had previously been a Cold War battleground for position, a post-Cold War derelict region of decaying Soviet over-reach, is now a potentially vital strategic asset that could alter the fortunes of Great Powers in a multipolar world. The region contains two important dimensions within the international system: first, the regionally specific Arctic balance of power, and second, the Arctic as a region that will carry significant implications for the global international system. Consequently, the relationship between the Arctic as a ‘region’ unto itself and as one ‘region’ among many in the great game of interstate competition is dialectical and likely to evolve with changing geo-political and environmental conditions.

Currently, there are only two Arctic states that can lay claim to being a Great Power: the US and Russia. However, the position of both are almost mirror opposites of each other. On the one hand, the US is a global superpower, unrivaled by any one single state, yet lacks significant Arctic capabilities and relatively robust interests in the region. While on the other, Russia is significantly weaker and mostly confined to actions within contiguous geographies, could be potentially challenged by a number of other Great Powers, yet has more observable Arctic capabilities than any other state and has the most to gain, as well as lose, from its increased accessibility. As such, the current Arctic structure is one of seemingly virtual unbalanced bipolarity, in which


135 It is important to note that because the capabilities of states are not always publicly known, the extent of the Arctic forces available to a country such as the US, especially given its previous history during the Cold War, must never be completely discounted.

136 Bipolarity is virtual in so far as the United States is relatively absent from the region while simultaneously maintaining the ability to be the preponderant Arctic power. Why the US chooses to relegate itself to this ‘phantasmagoric’ presence is elaborated in the previous discussion on structural theory: namely, relative interests and capabilities define the field of Great Power activity. In so far as the US appears less eager to engage in the Arctic, it may not expect high relative gains in the region, lack the impetus to significantly expand its presence therein, and lastly may not consider the Arctic to be a vital strategic region relative to competing locations such as Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. In addition, and perhaps most controversially, this
Russia is consolidating its interests and expanding its capabilities against a potentially preponderant US and allied NATO and Nordic states. However, because the balance is virtual, Russia remains the de facto Great Power of the region – not great enough to assume unrivaled hegemony, but certainly in the strongest position relative to any competitor. Consequently, it is through the Russian prism that the trajectory of the regional structure is most likely to be divined.

In this light, Russia is emerging as the dominant Arctic state, at least in the near future. As the global multipolar structure deepens, non-Arctic Great Powers such as China, India, and Germany will find increasing motive and ability to strategically engage the region, creating new balancing configurations that Russia will have to negotiate.\textsuperscript{137} Without unforeseen shocks to the international structure the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity will continue. Unbalanced power is compelled to be checked by challengers where and in whatever form they may arise. In this case, the Arctic is an emerging front of strategic relevance to the changing global order for Russia as a potential ‘challenger’ to US primacy, both in the region specifically and in its position within the international system. Moreover, it is favourably situated to do so by virtue of the gains it is expected to accrue and the capabilities it commands and plans to expand. It thus presents a dual case of Russian balancing against US power as well as expanding its own regional primacy against rising, and all but certain, future Great Power competition.

4.1 THE VALUE OF THE ARCTIC

Mearsheimer writes that it is common to define polarity of the international structure from the global balance at large. However, arguments citing polarity are still valid for explaining systemic outcomes within a particular region, so long as the regional

balances are distinguished and specified.\footnote{Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," 7.} Further, it is argued that the structure of an emerging polarity can be discerned from the interests and capabilities of the most powerful state or states acting within the area of focus. In this case, the state with the greatest regional interests and power capabilities to secure them is Russia. It possesses the greatest amount of Arctic territory, the largest Arctic population, the most extensive and powerful Arctic military force, the most advanced Arctic economy and the most to gain from economic development of the region.\footnote{Roi, "Russia," 561–564; James Kraska, "From Pariah to Partner - Russian-American Security Cooperation in the Arctic Ocean," \textit{ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law} 16, no. 2 (2009): 6.} In a comprehensive report published by The Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) on Russia in the Arctic, Alexandr Golts writes that "today the Arctic is an ideal field for the expression of Great Power (particularly Russian) ambitions."\footnote{Alexandr' Golts, "The Arctic: a Clash of Interests or Clash of Ambitions," in \textit{Russia in the Arctic}, ed. Stephen J Blank (Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 59.} Roi goes further, contending that Russia is not only a Great Power, but also specifically the greatest Arctic Power.\footnote{Roi, "Russia," 551.} As such, the position of Russia as the preponderant actor in the Arctic should have a decisive structural effect in determining how interests in the region are pursued and secured.

As has been previously stated, the Arctic is a region in which interstate competition, over the strategic interests currently 'defrosting', may develop in patterns similar to classical Great Power rivalries.\footnote{Murray, "Arctic Politics in the Emerging Multipolar System," 7.} Several reports commissioned since 2009 attest to the potential value circumpolar states see in the region. Principally, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimated that roughly "30% of the world's undiscovered natural gas and 13% of the world's undiscovered oil may be found (in the Arctic), mostly offshore and under less than 500 meters of water."\footnote{Donald L. Gautier et al., "Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas in the Arctic," \textit{Science} 324, no. 5931 (May 29, 2009): 1175–1179, doi:10.1126/science.1169467; Blunden, "The New Problem of Arctic Stability," 122.} This immense 'prize' is becoming available at a time when energy security has become a leading concern for Great Powers in the 21st century. Furthermore, this figure may be even larger if unconventional sources of energy extraction are considered.\footnote{Huebert et al., \textit{Climate Change & International Security}, 5.}
While just the tip of the iceberg, the Arctic contains immense strategic interests for Russia, circumpolar, and non-Arctic states such as China, Japan, India and Korea, that are all currently vying for access. The interests that states are competing correspond to four goods that structural realism would predict all Great Powers would covet: energy and natural resources; sea lanes and naval transport routes; maritime territorial sovereignty; and strategic deterrence. Rather bombastically, Russia has at times not minced words on how much value is placed on these interests. Then Russian Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, in an interview with Vesti-24, released in the Wikileaks Arctic Cables, had this to say: "The twenty-first century will see a fight for resources, and Russia should not be defeated in this fight... NATO has sensed where the wind comes from. It comes from the North." Clearly, the frigid weather is preventing deterrent logic from warming Rogozin's imagination. Recently, however, he has expressed the sentiment more pointedly: "two-thirds of the aggregate wealth of the Arctic is created in Russia," ...and if the country fails to secure its interests in the region,

it will lose out on a potentially brutal competition for natural resources in the 21st century. According to his comments, his insights are an apt expression of what Great Power's must consider when the balance of power is in question.

The following section highlights these four areas of value, with particular emphasis on Russia, whose interests and activities can act as an 'owl of Minerva', distilling structural tendencies that are taking shape under the melting ice.

4.1.1 Energy and Natural Resources

Differential rates of growth that have accrued through relative distributions of economic gains over the past 20 years have created the conditions for new Great Powers to emerge. One of the primary drivers of interest in the Arctic today is the immensity of resources available for states, and in particular Great Powers, to secure. For a Great Power such as Russia, the ability to ensure a preponderant share of Arctic resources will help the state hedge its privileged position in the regional balance as well as improve its relative security in the larger international system. Outlined in 2009, the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment conducted in 2009, that Arctic natural resources are key drivers in developing the future of the Arctic. As it stands, the Arctic is already at the heart of the world's geopolitical energy environment: producing around 10% of the planet's available crude oil and 25% of its natural gas. Russia, which has the largest territory north of the Arctic Circle of any state power, accounts for 99% and 80% of this production of natural gas and oil, respectively. In addition, Russia has twenty-five operational mines extracting uranium, up to 90% of the nickel and cobalt, 60% of the copper, 96% of platinoids, and lastly, 100% of apatite concentrate of all available Arctic

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147 "Russian Sovereignty 'at Risk' in Arctic: Deputy PM Rogozin," RIA Novosti, December 4, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/russia/20121204/177915726.html. Relying on the statements by Rogozin on Russian national security can be problematic. Over the past several years, he has acted as an international 'provocateur', making statements that appear to be targeted to nationalist circles within Russian society and elite. In this sense, for example, his role is comparable to former Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman. Yet, the literality of these statements is less important than the geopolitical pressures that inform the content and narrative for which Rogozin gives voice. Specifically, the nationalistic 'provocations' and competitive 'sensitivities' highlighted in these statements contain a distilled structural argument for Russia's position and future aspirations in the global balance of power.

148 Huebert et al., Climate Change & International Security, 5.
mineral resources. This advantageous domination of the Arctic energy and resource market has driven Russian policy in the region since 1980's.

The USGS report indicates that the majority of Arctic resources are divided into six regions, criss-crossing various Arctic territories: the Alaska Platform (US), the Canning-Mackenzie Basin (Canada), the North Barents Basin (Russia/Norway), the Northwest Greenland Rifted Margin (Denmark/Greenland), and the North and South Danmarkshavn Basin (Denmark/Greenland). Of these, however, it is now estimated that, specifically in relation to hydrocarbons, Russian Arctic territory, including the Barents and South Kara seas, will amount to 25% of all global reserves, and in particular, 70% of total Arctic gas reserves. Indeed, Russia stands to easily be the biggest winner in the grab for Arctic resources.

Leading development, state-owned energy giant Gazprom is in process of developing 113 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, particularly in the Barents Sea Shtokman field. Although relatively far from the coast (roughly 550km out to sea) and not easy to extract from (approximately 280m-380m deep), the Shtokman field is potentially the largest offshore natural gas field on earth. Regarding oil, in order to extract holdings in the Pechora Sea, Russia is building the world's second largest oil platform. The Russian Ministry of Natural Resources now ambitiously predicts that the Arctic territory

149 Oleg Alexandrov, "Labyrinths of the Arctic Policy," Russia in Global Affairs 3 (September 2009); Ariel Cohen, "Russia in the Arctic: Challenges to U.S. Energy and Geopolitics in the High North," in Russia in the Arctic, ed. Stephen J Blank (Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 5.
153 The field's reserves of gas have been estimated at 3.2 trillion m3. Yet, difficulties have emerged. For example, the 'Nord Stream' pipeline, a project between Germany and Russia to transport LNG from the Shtokman field to European markets has been met with considerable challenge, including a lack of off-shore technical expertise from Russian companies. The project is now expected to be delayed till sometime after 2013. Atland, "Russia's Northern Fleet and the Oil Industry--Rivals or Partners?", 367.
either currently claimed or controlled by Russia will produce as much as much as 586b barrels of oil – compared with Saudi Arabia’s current 260b barrels of proven reserves.¹⁵⁵

Russia, already a global energy power, is the largest producer of natural gas and equal to Saudi Arabia in oil production. Further, it is possible that Arctic natural gas reserves are equal to the current amount of proven reserves currently controlled by Russia.¹⁵⁶ The Russian energy sector has grown to massive proportions – totaling 33% of GDP and half of all government revenue. Gazprom alone, for instance, provides about 25% of the Russian state’s tax income.¹⁵⁷ Developing the Arctic hydrocarbon industry may be a necessity for securing future energy markets within rising East Asian Great Powers. Accordingly, the main sources of Russian ‘wealth and power’ are fueled by its control of energy production and markets, which, similarly, renders the Arctic extremely valuable.¹⁵⁸

Writing in the SSI report entitled ‘Russia in the Arctic’, Ariel Cohen projects that because of increased regional political instability in the Middle East, war, and the escalating demand for energy in growing markets outside of ‘US control’ will ensure a high value in Arctic energy resources.¹⁵⁹ In the same report, Alexandr Golts contends that if Russia can successfully exploit these resources, it will provide "Moscow with unbelievable wealth."¹⁶⁰ As Sean M. Lynn-Jones notes, the available resources within a territory help to shape the costs and benefits of the strategies states employ to secure them.¹⁶¹ Preponderant energy resources lie in the Russian sphere. How potential Arctic ‘wealth’ stacks up with global relative distributions is unknown, but regionally, it would surely fund increased Russian power capabilities.

### 4.1.2 SEA LANES AND NAVAL TRANSPORT ROUTES

¹⁵⁵ However, the Russian estimate by the MNR includes both proven and unproven sources. Bergerson, “Arctic Meltdown,” 67–68.
¹⁵⁷ Huebert et al., Climate Change & International Security, 31.
Nineteenth-century geo-strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan argued that the "use and control of the sea has been a decisive factor in history."\(^{152}\) Similarly, Mearsheimer and Levy & Thompson both found that preponderant sea powers, through the 'stopping power of water', may have a structurally unique position in the balance of power - namely, through the propensity to act as an 'off-shore balancer'.\(^{153}\) The maritime benefits available in the melting Arctic, correspondingly, contain immense strategic value for the Great Powers able to secure them.

The Arctic Ocean presents new maritime geopolitical realities that will profoundly alter the ability for Arctic and non-Arctic states to travel, communicate, and control the flow of goods globally. The closest analog the ocean has is the Mediterranean Sea, which throughout history has proven pivotal in shaping the destinies of kingdoms, empires and nations across the classical, medieval, and modern worlds.\(^{164}\) Like the Mediterranean, the Arctic is ringed by powerful states, two of which, the US and Russia, possess the world's largest military capabilities, and are each better connected and more efficiently reached through these warming waters than any other current ocean or sea should the melt continue as predictions auger. Indeed, Canadian geographer Viljamur Stefansson is noted for having predicted that the Arctic would eventually become a 'polar

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\(^{152}\) Cited from Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," 116–117.

\(^{153}\) While both authors tend to argue that this serves as a geographic disadvantage in that the greater the stopping power of water the less likely a state is able to project force across its borders. However, Mearsheimer in particular, then goes on to catalogue a number of advantages that seemingly result. Namely, water tends to dampen the corollary likelihood that a rival Great Power is able to attack you. In addition, if water barriers are significant distances between Great Powers, such as the US in North America, Great Britain on the western fringe of Europe, and Japan on the eastern edge of Asia, then each state 'protected' from other Great Power rivals by such bodies of water would be able to expand into the affairs of its weak neighbours and have a better shot at driving towards regional hegemony. The historical record would appear to lend credence to this advantage in that the US, Great Britain, and Japan were far more successful in each of their respective attempts to achieve regional hegemony than were rival land powers such as France, Germany, and Russia/Soviet Union. Regarding the Arctic, it cannot be argued that it provides the same defensive protection as the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, given that Russia, in particular, is still vulnerable through the Eurasian land mass. However, in so far as the Arctic ocean develops as a region distinct from its surrounding continental theatres, then the maritime dimension of its control will remain vitally important, Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Levy and Thompson, "Balancing on Land and at Sea."

\(^{164}\) Briefly, consider the role control of the Mediterranean has played in the Persian Wars (date), the Punic Wars (4th century bc), the Umayyad expansion (7th-8th century ce), the Crusades (11th-12th century ce), the Napoleonic wars (1803-1815), and the Battle for the Mediterranean (1940-1945).
In the near future, most of the world's trade and transport may pass through the Arctic Ocean before it reaches any major destination.

The most important sea-lane set to open in the Arctic is the Northern Sea Route (NSR), along Russia's coastal Arctic territory. The importance of the route is perhaps the pivotal element that makes the Arctic so valuable moving into the future. In 2008, an advisor to Putin offered these words: "because of the NSR, the Arctic is the leading economic region of Russia. The Arctic will develop much more quickly than all the rest of Russia." With the Arctic warming 'twice as fast' as the current global average, the NSR is becoming increasingly navigable and open to activity. The route first became fully navigable in 2007, which, at the time had the lowest amount of Arctic summer sea ice cover ever recorded. Since then, tankers carrying energy resources have been using the route consistently during the summer since 2009 - assisted by Russia's world leading 21 conventional and 7 nuclear icebreakers. As such, Russia has been developing increased hydrocarbon loading terminal capacities, and in 2009, launched the world's first icebreaking oil tanker (the Kiril Lavrov) to assist the flow of Arctic energy resources to global markets. Symbolically, this was reinforced by one of the largest supertankers, the Suezmax-class, successfully sailing the NSR, with escort from two nuclear-powered icebreakers (50 Years of Victory and Yamal) from Russia to Thailand in 2011. Indeed, in 2011, the NSR's summer season saw a five-fold increase in shipping,

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165 cited from, Dodds, “A Polar Mediterranean?,” 308–310.
166 Backus and Strickland, Climate-derived Tensions in Arctic Security., 34.
169 “First Supertanker Along Northern Sea Route,” Barentsobserver, August 24, 2011, http://barentsobserver.com/en/articles/first-supertanker-along-northern-sea-route. In comparison, the Northwest passage, through the Western Parry Channel, has only been open for the past three years, is shallower, and generally more perilous. Similarly, However, the gains to be made from a seasonally open route through the North West Passage (NWP) are less stark than through the NSR, for two reasons. The first is that the distance saved is less significant. A journey from Rotterdam to the northwestern US city of Seattle through the NWP is around 7,000 nm, compared to a 9,000 nm journey through the Panama canal. While this would also cut out Panama Canal fees, the savings are not as dramatic, and the Rotterdam-Seattle route is not the busiest shipping lane. A more well-used route between New York/Jersey and Shanghai, China, would not significantly shorten the distance covered. Hart, Jones, and Steven, Chill Out: Why Cooperation Is Balancing Conflict Among Major Powers in the New Arctic, 18; Christian Le Miére and Matthew Clements, Chill Winds: The Race for Resources in the Arctic, Jane’s Intelligence Review (IHS Jane’s, November 10, 2011), 3.
which is increasingly convincing companies and governments alike that the transit's value is only going to go up.\textsuperscript{170}

State control over opening sea-lanes is becoming one of the most important and contentious interests of dispute. Both Russia and Canada combine for roughly two-thirds of all Arctic coastlines. Canada, for its part, is pushing to establish a regulatory regime for any travel sailing through the North West Passage (NWP). Similarly, in the NSR, Russia asserts the right to review all maritime traffic and charge a 'toll' for icebreaker services.\textsuperscript{171} Each is arguing that their respective passages correspond to 'internal waters'.\textsuperscript{172} Though other countries, particularly the United States and non-Arctic powers have expressed concern that this may grant too much power to Russia, Andrew Hart et al. report that any dispute over Russia's rights in the NSR represent a challenge to their national security\textsuperscript{173}, which, would lead to the conclusion that Russia would not fail to insure that the NSR remains firmly under control so long as it retains the capabilities to do so.

Major trading ports and world markets stand to gain immensely from the NSR. For Instance, utilizing the NSR, a ship traveling from Germany to Japan would travel 4,150 nautical miles less than it would by using the current major route between the Straits of Malacca and Suez Canal, save on transit fees, would not be bogged down by heavy 'canal traffic', and would be relative secure from the growing piracy threat along more southern climes.\textsuperscript{174} Further, the historical instability of the Suez passage for Northern trading states must make the Arctic that much more important for energy

\textsuperscript{170} Le Mière and Clements, Chill Winds: The Race for Resources in the Arctic.
\textsuperscript{171} The cost of these icebreaker fees is not sufficiently established. However, most reports agree that transit costs through the NSR will be less prohibitive than the Suez Canal Authority toll and insurance costs. Further, the NSR toll regime is likely to undergo continual restructuring as the environment continues to rapidly change and Russia completes augmentation of its Arctic infrastructure. Accordingly, so long as Russia is able to maintain a sizable monopoly on NSR transit capabilities, one can expect a toll regime geared towards supporting its geopolitical and economic strategies.
\textsuperscript{173} Hart, Jones, and Steven, Chill Out: Why Cooperation is Balancing Conflict Among Major Powers in the Arctic, 6.
\textsuperscript{174} Alan L. Kollien, Toward an Arctic Strategy, February 2009, 5; Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," 115–120; Backus and Strickland, Climate-derived Tensions in Arctic Security., 33.
security. For example, the closure of the Canal after the 1967 Six-Day War, forced Soviet supply shipments to Vietnam to find a longer and more expensive route around Africa.175

Travel through the NSR instead of the Suez Canal would translate to roughly 8-50% reduction in distance in any trade between any northern European, to North American, to any East Asian ports as far south as Hong Kong.176 Currently, Russia expects 64 million tons of cargo to be transported through the NRS as early as 2020; although, even at this volume, the Suez Canal had ten times that amount pass through in 2010 alone.177 Still, newly re-elected Russian President Vladimir Putin contends that the NSR is "an international transport artery capable of competing with traditional maritime routes."178

However, most of the current traffic along the NSR is regional to Russia. Global use of its transport possibilities is still in the experimental stages. For example, a German company conducted the first non-Russian commercial voyage across the NSR in 2009, from South Korea to Rotterdam. Using the NSR, the trip saved $600,000 in reduced travel expenses. Similarly, a Norwegian research vessel, the Polarcus Alima, shaved an estimated 13 travel days off of its voyage to New Zealand, "giving a glimpse of the potential global possibilities."179 Vice president of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, Konstantin Sivkov, has said that, "in a time when the center of economic growth is migrating from Europe to the Asia-Pacific region, the significance of the Northern Sea Route becomes more important."180 As Margaret Blunden notes in her recent study of the NSR, "changes to transport routes have historically

175 Howard, "Russia's New Front Line," 148.
179 Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," 118.
entailed...unforeseen shifts in the balance of economic and political power." Indeed, these 'global possibilities' have the potential to radically influence the distribution of economic gains to be had between Arctic and non-Arctic Great Powers in the oncoming multipolar era.

4.1.3 TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY

The value of territory, both in terms of defense and acquisition, has been a central variable in structural realist analysis of international politics. Mearsheimer, for instance, suggests that insular (continental) Great Powers are sometimes compelled to expand as a means to increase power through the 'conquered' territory. Glaser, although coming from a 'realist as idealist', perspective, demarcates the motive a state may have to act aggressively on how much value is placed on territorial acquisition. Currently, the Arctic plays host to contested territorial claims by Russia, the US, Norway, Canada, and Denmark. However, unlike contested territory on land, the value that sovereign control would confer to a state is limited. The Arctic is an ocean, cold, navigable only in summer, and in winter covered under a blanket of perpetual night and ice. Yet, control of the sea and the resources that can be extracted from it, as noted above, are reason enough for territorial disputes to remain a Russian, and therefore regional, concern.

Since 2001, Arctic states have been engaged in collecting data to support their respective claims to the extended seafloor continental shelf. Excluding the United States, the remaining four Arctic powers, as signatories of UNCLOS, are required under Article 76 to submit evidence supporting their maritime territorial ambitions to the CLCS, which is responsible for issuing non-binding recommendations for each state's claim.

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181 Blunden, "Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route," 129.
184 This is true save for the benefits sovereignty would confer for the reasons stated above.
Yet, many of these claims overlap, because, as Charles K. Ebinger & Evie Zambetakis note, the Arctic is a semi-closed geographic system that is more conducive to bilateral divisions rather than multilateral approaches.\textsuperscript{186}

States are making territorial claims in order to retain legal recognition for their respective countries potential exclusive economic zones (EEZ). One of the pillars of UNCLOS, EEZs are territories in which "coastal states have preeminent economic rights," to the resources contained within 200 nautical miles (370km), extended from their coast line.\textsuperscript{187} If a state is able to prove that it's continental shelf extends far enough beyond the coast, then the claiming state can extend its EEZ territory by an extra 150 nautical miles. If no state is able to prove ownership, then the territory is considered the 'common heritage of mankind', which, of course, any capable Great Power would be compelled to subvert.\textsuperscript{188}

Currently, the most contentious overlapping claim of the Arctic is over the extended continental shelf of the Lomonosov Ridge. The ridge stretches across the entire polar clime from Greenland to Siberia. Russia, Canada, and Denmark all argue that the ridge is an extension of their respective shelves, are thus claiming a larger proportion of EEZ territory in the Arctic than they currently posses. As part of the Brooking Institute's \textit{Managing Global Order} project, Hart et al. argue that this dispute creates a potential for conflict, but does not elaborate much further.\textsuperscript{189} Yet, without clear indication of the resources states have access too, and the ability to extract, the depth of competition over claims in the deep Arctic is probably muted. Further, if push comes to shove, as long as the US remains neutral in the evolution of these disputes, it is unlikely that Canada or Denmark would find a resolution that did not primarily benefit the Russian position.

\textsuperscript{188} Le Mière and Clements, \textit{Chill Winds: The Race for Resources in the Arctic}, 5.
A secondary dispute exists between Russia and Canada over the Mendeleev ridge. Similar to the Lomonosov, this ridge extends to the top of the Arctic and contains a huge swath of Arctic territory. Putin, for his part, has recently stated that Russia will not back down on either claim and that its geopolitical interests will be defended "firmly and consistently." As Hart et al argue, it is unclear how Russia may respond to an unfavorable ruling by the CLCS on the ownership of these ridges. It could simply unilaterally take control of them, or, revise and resubmit claims indefinitely thereby undermining the integrity of the process, though other Arctic states might also find this strategy attractive if their interests require it. Kenneth Yalowitz et al. identify the same possibility, but argue that it's probably unlikely. The key factor in how Russia will react, and how the future Arctic balance may be tipped according to Hart et al., may be whether a major energy find is discovered in the deep Arctic.

Citing the extent to which Russia has visibly laid claim to the shelf, Roger Howard opines on the possibility that the Russian government might already know of scarce natural resources that are ripe for harvesting, if it could only get its sovereign ownership sorted out. Likewise, in a report for the IHS Jane's Intelligence Review, Christian Le Mièrè and Matthew Clements point out that only 20% of the Kara and Barents Sea (areas further from the coast) have been explored. The profitable potential in this 'uncertainty' has led to a joint venture between Rosneft and ExxonMobil to invest

190 Remaining territorial conflicts are even less contentious. For example, the US and Canada are currently debating a 'small slice' of an EEZ in the Barents Sea, and both have a 'soon to be resolved' dispute in the Beaufort Sea; Canada and Denmark continue a minor dustup of Hanz Island, and have overlapping claims in the Lincoln Sea. In all cases, the disputes are relatively minor, between states that are currently wedded to the hegemonic status quo, and involve territories of questionable economic value. Brosnan, Leschine, and Miles, "Cooperation or Conflict in a Changing Arctic?," 195.
196 Howard, "Russia's New Front Line," 144.
3.2 billion USD in Kara Sea development, where it is estimated that Exxon may find reserves 50% larger than its current global assets. Yet, regardless of future finds, Hart, et al. note that roughly 85-90% of the Arctic's undiscovered resources lie in undisputed territories. Still, they maintain that resources which lie in contested 'waters' have the greatest potential to incite conflict over their control.

In the end, however, efforts to clamour for territorial sovereignty will count for little if valuable goods are not identified along these 'ridges of the deep.' Further, extractable resources may compel states to settle agreements peacefully in order to speed up development. For instance, the Treaty on Maritime delimitation and cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean, signed between Russia and Norway, settled a thirty year border dispute in an area rich in resources. As such, the potential for conflict over territorial disputes between Russia and surrounding states seems unlikely. Yet, observers have noted that the Barents Sea treaty appears to have been concluded so as to increase the speed at which Norwegian and Russian industries can safely invest in resource extraction. Indeed, in contradistinction to some liberal claims, it is more likely that legal and institutional agreements will be reached more easily today, than in the past, not because of ideational shifts, but rather simply because only now is the Arctic ripe for economic exploitation. Still, structural pressures would be weakest where interests are few and the possible distribution of relative gains between competitors is not apt to tip the regional balance of power in favour of one Great Power or another.

4.1.4 STRATEGIC VALUE

The last significant area of interest for the Arctic to be discussed in this paper is the role it plays in Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. As noted above, nuclear weapons have fundamentally changed the how the structure of international politics operates. For their possessors, they are weapons that all but assure Great Power status while also deterring almost any conceivable war with any other Great Power that

197 Le Mièr and Clements, Chill Winds: The Race for Resources in the Arctic, 3.
possesses them.\textsuperscript{200} In this vein, Yalowitz et al. note that the Arctic is a 'hard' security issue for Russia, principally, because of the strategic nuclear submarine fleet stationed around the Kola Peninsula.\textsuperscript{201} Indeed, throughout the Cold War the Murmansk Oblast was one of the world's largest military bases and housed roughly two-thirds of Russia's strategic naval forces.\textsuperscript{202} However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has come to rely more, not less, on the purported 'invulnerability' of strategic submarines in the region in order to ensure the survivability of its nuclear deterrent while its general power capabilities shrunk rapidly.\textsuperscript{203} This strategy came to be known as the 'Strategic Northern Bastion'. Michael Wallace and Steven Staples report that the strategic submarine force bears 23 percent of Russia's strategic warhead count - and this figure is expected to rise over the coming decade.\textsuperscript{204}

However, nuclear weapons are instruments that end hostilities, not start them.\textsuperscript{205} In fact, reliance upon strategic nuclear forces, as Russia does in the Arctic, does more to suggest an attempt to compensate for a relative weakness in available conventional forces.\textsuperscript{206} The 'hidden' nuclear face of the region suggests that any possible conflict between Russia and her competitors is likely to be pursued through means other than a clash of arms. Moreover, the importance of the Arctic for housing Russia's deterrent forces will almost make certain that Great Power accommodation will rule the day. In this sense, the Arctic as host to Russian strategic interests diminishes, rather than increases.

\textsuperscript{200} So long as a second strike strategic force is secure.  
\textsuperscript{201} Yalowitz, Collins, and Virginia, The Arctic Climate Change and Security Policy Conference: Final Report and Findings, 15.  
\textsuperscript{202} Roi, "Russia," 564.  
\textsuperscript{203} Golts, "The Arctic: a Clash of Interests or Clash of Ambitions," 52.  
\textsuperscript{205} So much so in fact, according to many neorealists, it is argued that nuclear proliferation may significantly reduce the likelihood of interstate conflict between their possessors. This point is controversially argued by Waltz in regards to the Iranian nuclear program. While Scott Sagan, on the other hand, posits that accidents and command and control deficiencies may increase the risk that nuclear weapons could increase instability, the structural logic of deterrence remains sound. See: Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb," Foreign Affairs, July 1, 2012, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb; Scott D. Sagan, "How to Keep the Bomb From Iran," Foreign Affairs, September 1, 2006.  
the likelihood of conflict over interests and relative gains leading to any meaningful armed struggle.

Yet, at the same time, the fundamental importance of the region in ensuring an effective and capable strategic deterrent renders this same propensity to peace, fatally important to the Arctic and global balance of power. Specifically, the plausible nuclear, or counter-force, primacy of US forces, may be the particular threat aggravating contemporary Russian fears regarding its strategic deterrent capacities, and thus compelling deepening militarization of the region. Kier Lieber and Daryl Press note that US efforts to maintain conventional and nuclear force superiority has created a situation in which, for the first time since the early days of the Cold War, the US may be able to effectively destroy the strategic forces of Russia in a first strike. While some of the vulnerabilities identified by their study are only now being ameliorated by Russia, it still remains that her strategic forces, and by consequence the nuclear stability of the Arctic, is questionable.

Moreover, even at the height of Soviet Arctic Naval power in the 1980's, the US Maritime Strategy called for an aggressive policy of neutralizing the Northern Fleet, which was and still is the most significant component of Russia's sea based nuclear deterrent. This strategy largely centered on the concept of 'counter-force coercion', whereby Soviet strategic ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) would be targeted and destroyed in order to disable their sea based deterrent forces, and thus force the Union to back down and or capitulate from any endeavours deemed intolerable by the US. The threat this strategy posed has only increased over time as the inadequately numbered Soviet nuclear attack submarines (SSN) have seen a further reduction since the Russian state took over their reins. This virtually ensures that any Russian SSBN deployment, especially in the Arctic which retains the vast majority of Russia's remaining

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208 In particular, Lieber and Press highlight the severe reduction in the number of Russian strategic ballistic missile submarines (SSBM) patrols and their effective vulnerability while stationed at port. However, since the publication of their piece, Russia has expanded their number of annual SSBN patrols, and as of 2012 have at least one strategic submarine deployed at all times. See: Ibid., 12; "Russian Strategic Subs to Resume Routine World Patrols," *RIA Novosti*, February 4, 2012, http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120204/171127327.html.

209 Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep."

naval nuclear forces, will be at substantial risk to American anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and strategic counter-force capabilities. Though Mearsheimer previously argued that the destruction of Soviet/Russian sea based nuclear forces would not end the nuclear logic of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), stating that: "as long as the Soviets (Russians) maintain this capability, they can ignore an unfavorable nuclear balance"\textsuperscript{211}, the subsequent findings by Lieber and Press suggest that all Russian strategic deterrent capabilities are at deepening risk.

In order for the 'nuclear peace' to hold, strategic parity between Great powers must conceivably be such that any conflict leading to nuclear escalation could result in MAD.\textsuperscript{212} If this condition is not attained, or seriously undermined, then the defensive utility provided by strategic forces are potentially negated, exposing a Great Power to security vulnerabilities not experienced since the aftermath of World War 2. As such, given time and the increases in power asymmetries between the US and Russia, Russia cannot help but seek to stymie any further reverses in the strategic balance, particularly in regards to the Arctic sea-leg of its deterrent triad. In this regard, the deepening vulnerability of Russia's nuclear forces is arguably the most important input informing its unfolding Arctic security policy.

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\textsuperscript{211} Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep," 53.
\textsuperscript{212} Note, MAD is ensured in so far as devastating nuclear retaliation could and not necessarily would happen. This line of argumentation, principally taken up by Waltz, suggests that deterrent logic operates irrespective of variable strategic psychologies that may operate between Great Powers through time. In this sense, nuclear weapons are structural and not subjective elements of international politics. See: Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities."
\end{footnotesize}
5 BALANCING IN THE ARCTIC

According to neorealist theory, skewed distributions of power will, in some form or another, bear structural pressures upon Great Powers towards a formation of a more equitable, but not necessarily stable, balance of forces. Through what historical materialists refer to as uneven development and what structural realists call differential rates of growth, the probability that any one state can dominate the international system for perpetuity is simply unsustainable. If, as been contended, the current global balance of power is defined as waning unipolarity with multipolarity dawning on the horizon, then Great Powers, such as Russia, would be incentivized to balance against the United States where able. Indeed, Barry Posen states that at a minimum a Great Power is "to act to buffer themselves against the caprices of the US and will try to carve out the ability to act autonomously should it become necessary." However, the Arctic, as it relates to US hegemonic primacy, is rather unique. The region contains immense value that, in theory, all Great Powers would have an interest in coveting. Yet, the current balance is primarily defined by the absence of the hegemon. Hence, it is a virtual bipolar system existing within a greater transition towards multipolarity in the global international structure.

5.1 THE UNITED STATES

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, immediate Arctic primacy belonged to the United States, which retained the "largest and most capable Arctic Navy and Air Force" in the world. Over time, however, the US, pressed by other geopolitical imperatives in Africa, the Middle East, and now Asia, seemingly left the region to be governed by Russian weaknesses and European negligence. In 2009, the twilight of the Bush administration, the US drafted a new Arctic policy that identified the nation's security interests in the region. The policy stated that changing Arctic conditions required a new

security architecture to protect Arctic interests. Article III, subsection B1 of the policy states that the US:

"has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard those interests. These interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight."\(^{215}\)

In order to accomplish these goals, the directive pledges that the US is to develop greater capacities, increase Arctic maritime and economic activities, preserve Arctic military mobility, and project US forces in the region to protect interests. Yet, no major moves have been made by the US to implement this policy, and current US capabilities rely almost exclusively on holdover infrastructure from the Cold War.\(^{216}\)

Currently, the US has very weak capacity to carry out continuous operations. Its Arctic presence is principally manned by the US Coast guard, which operates only three ice breakers, with only one being relatively new (the Healy), two being as old as some of the Soviet variants (the Polar Star commissioned in 1976 and the Polar Sea commissioned in 1978\(^{217}\), and all three operating without nuclear power. Further, the Polar Star has not been operational since 2006.\(^{218}\)

Subsequent policy developments, from the ambitious tone of in 2009, have been increasingly modest. The 'Arctic Roadmap', published by the US navy in late 2009, did not stress a military role for the navy in the region. Further, then newly elected President Obama's US National Security Strategy, and the following US National Military Strategy of 2011, skirt attention to the Arctic; and the 2012 map of 21st century US security

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\(^{218}\) Packard C. Trent, "An Evaluation of the Arctic--will it Become an Area of Cooperation or Conflict?" (Naval Post Graduate School, 2011), 81, http://calhoun.nps.edu/public/handle/10945/10783.
concerns skips it completely. The Department of Defense, for its part, reiterated the sentiment of Bush's Arctic Policy in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, but this did not lead to any new initiatives. Lastly, a study commissioned by the National Research Council entitled, 'National Security Implications of Climate Change for US Naval Forces' finds that American Arctic reticence, particularly in not signing on to the UNCLOS convention, undermines US force flexibility. Yet, as before, little has changed and American forces are nowhere closer on the chase towards the retreating ice. For now, at least officially, the United States has found the Arctic a region to be absent from.

Still, the US fields a very powerful surface navy that has proven to posses at least some capability operating in northern climates. For example, aircraft carrier battle groups, including amphibious warfare ships, have participated in the Northern Edge and Alaska Shield summer military exercises in both 2004 and 2009. As well, with increased American surface ship accessibility in the Arctic, Alexander Kramchikhin argues that the US could easily deploy a ready "missile group of three-four cruisers and four-six destroyers" in northern latitudes to provide a hard counter to Russian forces. Yet, because US naval forces are not based in the Arctic and have not sufficiently demonstrated that their forces can currently sustain long deployments in the region, questions remain regarding actual Arctic capabilities. For effective operation in the icy seas, ships require double-hulled surface vessels and, according to the US Department of Defense, it is not certain whether significant US naval forces have been adequately reinforced for the task.

Under the sea, however, US forces are significantly more powerful. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2012 report on Arctic military capabilities states that most of the United States "53 nuclear attack submarines," (SSNs) "are known to be able to operate under the Arctic ice and break through the ice from

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219 Siemon Wezeman, Military Capabilities in the Arctic (SIPRI, March 2012), 10–11.
221 Trent, "An Evaluation of the Arctic--will It Become an Area of Cooperation or Conflict?," 6.
222 Wezeman, Military Capabilities in the Arctic, 12–13.
below; they regularly transit under the ice or break through the ice and surface near the North pole. SSNs are designed to carry out multi-role missions that both threaten the integrity of a rival surface and sub-surface naval forces, ballistic missile, and strategic systems, as well as carrying out covert strike missions (landing personnel), intelligence collection/surveillance, electronic warfare, special warfare, marine mining, and larger naval support. In 2011, this capability was on display as two US SSNs participated in the Ice Exercise (ICEX) that took place off of the icy Alaskan coast, for which Moscow expressed reservations. Hence, the extent of US power capabilities under the Arctic Ocean is at the very least potentially dominant, yet uncertainly so.

The US’s most visible presence, however, is also its most destabilizing. The US maintains no forward base or deep water port in the region. It does operate two fairly large air force bases in Alaska, which house combat and support aircraft, but their long-range maritime patrol abilities are similarly limited. However, the US does make extensive use of the Thule air base in Greenland. This base is a vital pillar in the US Ballistic Early Warning System (BMEWS) and the US Global Missile Defense System (BMD), but does not actually house any aircraft. In addition, though these bases do not provide a strong platform for the US to project conventional power in the region, they do aggravate Russian fears that American BMD systems are a direct counter to its strategic deterrent capacities based in the Arctic. This is perhaps the most destabilising US presence in the region, which will compel Russia to redress its security vulnerabilities and ensure that the spectre of Arctic militarization remains constant. In so far as strategic forces blunt the opportunities for open conflict amongst Great Powers, the extent to which counter measures may threaten the integrity of deterrence systems correspondingly destabilizes the regional and global structural balance. Indeed, Blunden notes that it was the Bush administration’s upgrading of its BMEWS capacity at the

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225 Background Paper on SIPRI Military Expenditure, 2011 (SIPRI, April 17, 2012), 13. Huebert et al Arctic bellweather pg 34
Thule and Fort Greely, Alaska, bases, which added missile defense capabilities, may have ‘inadvertently’ begun the new balancing drive in the region.²³⁰

Moreover, if considering most of the forces available through Arctic countries in NATO, including Canada, Denmark, and Norway, forces allied to the United States would have the immediate capabilities of carrier transports, over 400 combat aircraft, and a network of naval bases, and personnel that are trained to operate in the environment. Further, up to 50% of all Arctic territory is owned by NATO states, with of course the other half belonging singularly to Russia.²³¹ According to Golts, Russian military potential may be significantly lower than that of the combined NATO Arctic forces.²³² Though it is unclear if NATO has the appetite to provide balancing functions in the Arctic, given its prior commitments in other regions and dubious mission legitimacy, it is a possibility that a competing Great Power would be foolish to ignore. As such, when former NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer states that ‘there will be a NATO military presence in the Arctic,’²³³ Russia must sense its own insecurity, and couch the supposed preponderance of its own regional capabilities in the frame of ‘potential’ US allied force projections.

5.2 THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In response to this threatening ‘non-presence’ of the United States, and the growing multipolarity of the global structure, Russia appears to be pursuing a path towards establishing a new balance that would favour its Arctic power and interests.²³⁴

²³⁴ Though it is stated here that balancing tendencies would be in relation to the United States specifically, Russia tends to single out NATO as the force that causes most concern in the Arctic. However, as structural theory would suggest, the institution of NATO is primarily an instrument of its most powerful state: in this case, the United States. As such, the distinction between the two is superfluous as their exerted power is viewed by Russia as one in the same.
On this point, Karen Ruth Adams argued in 2003 that US encroachment on the interests of nuclear powers, including Russia, would propel the development of a new balance 'just around the corner.' Russian Chief of Staff Lurii Baluevskii has been more direct; stating that US commitment to its hegemony "expanding its economic, political, and military presence in Russia's traditional zones of influence" is the country's top national security threat. As a consequence, it is difficult to isolate the regional security dilemma and polarity trends in the Arctic from the larger international environment. For example, Hubert et al. note that events such as the Russian Georgian war could easily have led to 'chilled' relations among Arctic Council states as a result of many of these states also being members of NATO. Secondly, Huebert argues that because both the US and Russia are Arctic Great Powers, any drive to increase power capabilities is likely to have an effect on the Arctic balance, and hence, is an Arctic security issue. Thus, the Arctic security dilemma is in many ways inexorably linked to outcomes within the international structure. From this vantage, the ability of Russia, or any comparable Great Power, to conduct itself in the Arctic isolated from the global environment is unlikely. The value of the region is too great, relative gains are too important, and Great Powers will strive to attain a more favourable balance where their power is most fungible.

This tendency directly contrasts with non-structural or neoclassical hypothesis such as the balance of threat or contingent realism. Regarding the latter, for example, Charles Glaser suggests that states which "possess large nuclear arsenals and that rely heavily on nuclear deterrence for their security should not be inhibited from security or economic cooperation by security-related relative gains constraints." But what Glaser may miss, which fortunately is not by Waltz, Art, Mearsheimer and Layne, is that strategic weapons do not negate the security dilemma among Great Powers, they simply alter the mechanisms under which this process will be allowed to take place. Relative gains will still produce differential rates of growth that will improve the position of beneficiary states in the balance. States that have the capacity to become a Great Power will, accordingly, be aware of these opportunities to 'tip the balance' even when

237 Huebert et al., Climate Change & International Security, 6.
239 Glaser, "Realists as Optimists," 79.
concerning competitors who possess strategic nuclear forces. For Russia, the Arctic is a means to that end. But, as structural realists have contended, this competitive pursuit for favourable gains will be primarily fought over economic, technological, and political fronts — and one of the best means Great Powers have to leverage their position along these vectors is to increase the relative power of their military forces. Consider Medvedev's own summary of the Arctic situation: "this region has strategic significance for us. Its development is directly tied to solving the long-term tasks of the state and its competitiveness on global markets."240

As such, rather than privileging 'hard balancing' against US primacy, which critics of structural theory endeavour to locate and then chastise neorealists when such tendencies fail to be observed, Layne argues that new Great Powers may be developing through a strategy called 'leash slipping', in which potential great powers "build up their military capabilities to maximize their ability to conduct an independent foreign policy."242 It is not a direct challenge to the international status quo per se, but is meant to 'hedge' against the capricious turns of fortune that 'weaker' powers are less able to resist.

Accordingly, a leash slipping Russia does "not necessarily fear an increased threat to its physical security...rather it is concerned about the effects of that state...on its general position, both political and economic, in the international (or regional) arena."243 In order to cut a greater share of the Arctic pie, increase its relative power and security, and improve its position in the international system, Russia is attempting to slip out from underneath the primacy of the United States. Any potential Great Power, similarly placed, should attempt to do the same given the anarchical nature of international politics and its corollary implications. As a German Chancellor said in 1896, in response

241 In this sense, hard balancing is the direct attempt to counter the power of a rival competitor. During the Cold War, for instance, both the US and Soviet Union were long engaged in hard-balancing strategies against each other. However, in the absence of a direct enemy to balance against, Great Powers may pursue less directed policies, such as leash slipping. Yet, the structural tendencies underlying both conditions are relatively similar in that Great Powers look for opportunities to redress uncomplimentary distributions of power in an international system.
to British maritime hegemony: "Unless we are prepared to yield at all times and to give up the role of world power, then we must be respected. Even the most friendly word makes no impression in international relations if it is not supported by adequate material strength." 244

The strategy of leash slipping is strongly reflected in the National Security Strategy through 2020 (NSS 2009), the Basics of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Region (2001 and 2008), and the Russian 2010 Military Doctrine; all of which highlight a new global multipolarity, the importance of Russia's natural resources for geopolitical security, and the need to develop stronger power capacities to defend interests regionally and abroad. 245 The NSS is perhaps most clear on all three points. In paragraph 11, it states that:

"The attention of international politics in the long term will be concentrated on controlling the sources of energy resources in the Middle East, on the shelf of the Barents Sea and other parts of the Arctic, in the Caspian Basin and in Central Asia...In case of a competitive struggle for resources it is not impossible to discount that it might be resolved by a decision to use military might. The existing balance of forces on the borders of the Russian Federation and its allies can be changed." 246

Irrespective of the failure to acknowledge exactly how the state envisages conflict between states armed with nuclear weapons, the point is clear: Russia identifies energy security, including the Arctic, and the ability to defend its assets militarily, as central to the future regional balance.

The specific Russian strategy in the Arctic is outlined in The Basics of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Region, first endorsed in 2001 and updated in 2008. Unequivocally, it states, "all types of activity in the Arctic are tied to the interests of defense and security to the maximum degree." These security interests include the effective functioning of strategic naval forces, threat responses, and 'reliable'

244 Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion," 23.
control over Russian land and maritime Arctic territory to secure national interests. In the 2008 document, in keeping with the importance of energy security as the identified main challenge of 21st century multipolarity, developing Russia's Arctic hydrocarbon and strategic raw materials resources base was added and significantly emphasized as central to its interests. Indeed, as Murray has noted, the significance of the Arctic to Russia today cannot be understated. With the melting of the shackles of ice, the region's resources prize has been freed from hegemonic American guard. Thus, Russia is keen to seek gains that may help widen the Arctic regional balance in its favour and begin to redress the global balance. Russian leaders, perhaps, also may be fearfully aware of portentous future consequences should they fail to adequately do so.

Hart et al. have noted that the combination of territorial and maritime trade route disputes in the Arctic bear the hallmarks of a brewing classical security dilemma. In careful language, they observe that while no one stands to gain from conflict, it is yet understandable that states have begun to 're-arm' in the event that an uncertain future requires such tools to be used. Kristian Atland has previously argued that the Arctic is blending economic and national security imperatives within the same region, and within the same doctrine. However, whereas Atland claims that economic imperatives have invariably 'de-securitized' Russia's Arctic Seas, it is more likely the case that the hybridization of the economic with the strategic more readily reflects leash slipping and the tenuous emergence of a new regional and international structure. Of the increasing military budget of the Russian Federation, it is unclear how much is being devoted to the Arctic specifically. Yet, from observing the modernization, rearmament, and development of new forces the proportion of the Arctic share would be significant.

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250 Atland, "Russia's Northern Fleet and the Oil Industry--Rivals or Partners?", 364–366.
251 Earlier this year, the Russian government stated it would spend $44 billion USD before 2020 on economic and social projects, which would be partnered up with $2.7 billion USD from private markets. In addition, another $4.27 billion USD added to an investment of $3.51 billion USD since 2003 has been promised to go towards building state border facilities. Targets for military funding are, however, more opaque. See "Russia Plans to Spend $44 Billion on Arctic Projects Until 2020," RIA Novosti, accessed October 9, 2012, http://www.rianovosti.com/russia/20120405/172618998.html; Jacob Kipp, "Russian Strategic
Russian Arctic policy calls for the creation of "general purpose military formations drawn from the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, [as well as] other troops and military formations (most importantly, border units) in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, capable of ensuring security under various military and political circumstances." Correspondingly, the state is developing and deploying its first Arctic Special Forces and motorized infantry Brigade, with another one on the way, stationed on the Kola Peninsula close to the Norwegian border. According to Anatoly Serdyukov, these troops are there to defend 'interests' in the Arctic and their deployment was made in parallel with similar moves made by Finland, Norway, and Sweden. However, given the lack of US forces, and the severe power asymmetries between Russia and the Nordic states, Russia appears to be on a policy of power and security maximization through an ambitious increase in Arctic military forces.

Russia has also begun to modernize and expand air force capabilities. While most Arctic nations, including Canada and Norway, are similarly investing a relatively large amount of resources into building Arctic air capabilities, primarily suited for combat missions, Russia's efforts remain the most potent and robust. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of Russia's Arctic airfields were closed down. However, with the deployment of land brigades and the drive towards increased capabilities, the Arctic air infrastructure is being revitalized, especially on the strategically located Novaya Zemlya and Franz Joseph Islands. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, Russia plans to deploy a squadron of the MiG 31 and 31 ABM interceptors to these forward bases. The Ministry claims these are the fastest interceptors in the world, and will provide a number of functions including anti-air, anti-naval, and anti-BM missions from

the 'Laptev to Barents Seas'. While it is unknown how many of these interceptors will be deployed, it could be as many as 100. Furthermore, Russian plans to field over 60 of the newly developed Sukhoi's PAK FA fifth-generation fighter aircraft, while not yet slated for deployment in any specific theatre, will surely have a role in the Arctic, especially when considering recent USAF deployments in Alaska of F-22 Raptor aircraft and possible acquisition of F-35 strike aircraft by American NATO allies.

First and foremost, however, the Russian claim to Great Power in the Arctic rests upon the relative strength of its navy through the Northern Fleet. The Northern Fleet is the largest of Russia's five (Pacific, Baltic, Black Sea, Caspian, and Northern) and is the beating heart of Russia's Arctic military presence-stationed from Arkhangelsk to Severodvinsk, and Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula, surrounding both the Barents and White Seas. The fleet currently operates "Russia's only aircraft carrier, the world's only

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257 However, the mainstay of Russia's Arctic air force is from older strategic bombers and air reconnaissance, such as the Tu-22 bomber and Tu-142 and Il-38, which support the Northern Fleet. Wallace and Staples note that these planes are declining in utility rapidly and whose main role is to provide a virtual strategic deterrent. Indeed, the Voice of Russia reports that this older long-range aviation force has little capacity to do anything but fight a nuclear war. It is this point that may prove to be the fire animating Russian grand strategy in the region. Though Sokov has previously interrogated the limited strike nuclear doctrine Russia endorsed after the dark days of the 1990s, because the Arctic is so vital to the Russian strategic deterrent, the integrity of her nuclear forces in the North may be mired in an endless race of defence 'catch-up' to American advances in strategic/conventional counter force measures. Ilya Kramnik, "Russian Air Force Holds War Games in Arctic," Voice of Russia, June 22, 2012, http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_06_22/778956626/; Wezeman, Military Capabilities in the Arctic, 9; Wallace and Staples, Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons, 5.


259 The North Fleet is the largest and most powerful of Russia's five navies. Because of its location in the Arctic, as Huebert notes, any move by Russia to advance its naval powers will similarly impact the security dilemma in the Arctic as well, whether intended or not. Huebert, "The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment," 15–16; Marlène Laruelle, "Russian Military Presence in the High North: Projection of Power and Capacities of Action," in Russia in the Arctic, ed. Stephen J Blank (Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 66–69; "Northern Fleet Protecting Russian Arctic," RIA Novosti, June 2, 2009, http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20090602/155147701.html; Atland, "Russia’s Northern Fleet and the Oil Industry—Rivals or Partners?".

260 However, while the North Fleet is tasked with Arctic operations, it is similarly responsible for larger global operations that may not be specifically related to Arctic security. For instance, during one of the longest naval deployments since the end of the Cold War, a Northern Fleet battle group, led by the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov (otherwise affectionately known as the 'Ship of a Thousand Names', began a two-month deployment in February 2008 during which it spent a period in the Mediterranean. As a result, any changes to the North Fleet can complicate whether
nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser and its largest destroyer and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) ship units", in addition to eleven SSBNs, three SSGNs and SSNs, and supporting aircraft, comprising roughly two-thirds of all Russian naval power. Similar to US operations, Russian power projection in the Arctic has largely been conducted through the aegis of its submarine forces. The advantages of this approach are obvious: it enables both countries to maneuver under the cover of ice and does not require the direct support of icebreakers and other vulnerable surface ships.

The fleet in its current condition, however, in and of itself, would not necessarily be capable of expanding Russian Arctic preponderance if it were not for the significant modernization and rebuilding of its forces currently underway. Outlined in the 2007–2015 Russian State Armament Program, strengthening the Northern Fleet, especially its submarine force, is deemed a top strategic and national security priority. The apple of this program, so far, has been the development of the new fourth generation Borei class SSBN, to be equipped with the simultaneously tested Bulava SS-N-32 multiple warhead strategic missiles (designed as a hard Russian counter to US led BMD development), as well as the upgraded Sineva and Layner strategic missiles (currently being tested with the six Delta IV class SSBNs of the North Fleet), and the Yasen class SSN. In total, by 2020 Russia plans to have built over fifty surface combat ships and more than twenty developments are intended principally for the Arctic or other theatres. Yet, Huebert is unequivocal when he states: "Even if a build-up is occurring because of other global issues, the fact remains that the Russian geopolitical reality means that the Arctic region will be involved." Huebert, "The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment," 5; James Hacket, ed., "Chapter Four: Russia," in The Military Balance, vol. 109, 2009, 207.

"Northern Fleet Protecting Russian Arctic"; Wezeman, Military Capabilities in the Arctic, 10; Golts, "The Arctic: a Clash of Interests or Clash of Ambitions," 54–55.

Although, Atlant points out that depth limitations of the Arctic Seas render significant portions of the region unsuit to submarine activity on a year-round basis. In addition, Wezeman suggests that as Arctic ice continues to melt, the need to deploy surface escorts and patrol aircraft will increase. Atlant, "Russia's Northern Fleet and the Oil Industry--Rivals or Partners?", 370; Wezeman, Military Capabilities in the Arctic, 10.

submarines, including eight Borei and seven Yasen subs, most of which are to be deployed to the Arctic region.\footnote{264}{Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, “Military Encirclement and Global Domination: Russia Counters US Missile Shield from the Seas,” \textit{Centre for Research on Globalization}, October 30, 2012, \url{http://www.globalresearch.ca/russia-counters-the-us-missile-shield-from-the-seas/5310516}.}

A tall order, especially given how many of these new systems are designed to replace Soviet naval capabilities that were burdensomely developed during ‘better days’. Still, this has not prevented fiery figures such as Deputy Prime Minister Rogozin from claiming that by “2012, production capacities at Russian shipyards will allow us to build six submarines and one aircraft carrier (Russia plans to have two aircraft carriers built by 2027, one of which to be paired with the Admiral Kuznetsov in the North Fleet) every year (on average)” and that Russian naval production will surpass the Soviet record.\footnote{265}{“Russia to Build 6 Submarines Annually – Deputy PM,” \textit{RIA Novosti}, February 2, 2012, \url{http://www.rianovosti.com/military_news/20120202/171099357.html}. Interestingly, however, though Russian Naval production is optimistically slated to surpass the Soviet record, this new goal is still short of the projected US navy (USN) procurement program till 2043, which will averages roughly 8-10 new ships produced annually. See: Ronald O’Rourke, \textit{Navy Force Structure and Shipbuilding Plans: Background and Issues for Congress} (Congressional Research Service, December 10, 2012).}

In addition, the recent acquisition of four Mistral class amphibious assault ships from France, which Russia’s Ministry of Defence has confirmed will be reinforced for Arctic operations, will significantly augment Russia’s offensive powers on the sea.\footnote{266}{Le Mière and Clements, \textit{Chill Winds: The Race for Resources in the Arctic}, 7; Huebert et al., \textit{Climate Change & International Security}, 18.} Critiquing these plans, Baev seriously doubts their logic and viability - suggesting that the very possibility of Russian naval capabilities to reach this level is invariably grabbing the attention of the US and NATO towards the ‘Northern flank’, and leading to diminishing returns in security.\footnote{267}{Wezeman comes to the same conclusion regarding cost feasibility, but then states that the final development of the fleet will continue substantially toward projected targets. Pavel Baev, “Russia’s Arctic Policy and the Northern Fleet Modernization,” \textit{Russie.Nei.VisionsIFRI} 65 (August 2012): 4; Wezeman, \textit{Military Capabilities in the Arctic}, 10.} Yet still, Russia’s Arctic relative power continues to grow, and with it, so too will her influence in shaping the Arctic international system.

President Putin has already stated that these forces will be utilized in the Arctic, and that Russia “will be setting up a network of support bases along the entire Northern Sea Route where Emergency Ministry officers will be deployed to respond promptly and efficiently to any unexpected developments along the Northern Sea Route...and ensure...
the country's security in the North." Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev added that strategic infrastructure hubs will be built along the Northern Sea Route to service the combat and border guard ships that will patrol the area, all of which conforms to the strategic policies outlined in the 2008 Arctic policy. From these examples it is clear that Russia is planning to develop many significant military capabilities in its Arctic territory. Additionally, these forces are in line with relevant security policy directives regarding the region.

Yet, the expansion of Russian power in the Arctic is somewhat peculiar and not drawn to make easy comparisons. This is a result of the contingent circumstances faced by Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, namely: what to do with an aging and taxing security infrastructure that the new state can ill afford? As such, the build-up of the Northern fleet is not necessarily a reflection of 'aggressive' intentions, so much as it is a particular response to changing international structural conditions and domestic constraints. Similarly, Lukyanov contends that it is not Russia's intention to necessarily challenge the United States, however, it "rejects the principal of global hegemony." In consequence, an Arctic balance of power that tilts towards Russia will contribute to the chipping away at the stability of regional, and perhaps global, US unipolarity.

While shying away from a particular theoretical interpretation, Hart et al come to a similar conclusion. They find that it is difficult for other states to determine the 'offensive or defensive' intentions of Russia's growing Arctic military capabilities.

271 This is not to say that the Russian state is actively seeking to be a direct challenge to US order and power, though it may vary well be. Rather defensively, Russian Arctic military capabilities suggest that strategic thinking for the region may be tied to rebuilding a counter value second-strike (CV2) capability above all else. However, even if this is the case, the sum-effect of these efforts by Russia contain latent structural consequences for the balance of power more generally. Distributions of power tend to swerve, like the transfer of energy between bodies of matter, through paths of least resistance. Thus, even if Russian intentions are otherwise, insofar as power is fungible, their attempts to address strategic vulnerabilities will itself alter the systemic conditions of unipolarity that informed this particular policy response.
272 Hart, Jones, and Steven, Chill Out: Why Cooperation Is Balancing Conflict Among Major Powers in the New Arctic, 7. Similarly, Golts questions the utility of strategic forces designed to
Indeed, the question of ‘intentions’ confounds realist theory in general. However, rather than descend into a discussion of whether Russia in the Arctic is peculiarly aggressive,\textsuperscript{273} or the degree to which it is 'perceived' as threatening by other states,\textsuperscript{274} Waltz and Mearsheimer have been clear: Great Powers worry about capabilities rather than intentions because the future is long, and its course is dark; relations that are cooperative today may not be so tomorrow, and as such, the question of intentions falls to the single most important variable - relative power. Great Powers must balance against power as they cautiously seek to cope with the mercurial nature of security. Speculation about intentions is a luxury only dominant great powers can afford.

The current US Arctic ‘reluctance’ is in direct relation to the weak relative gains expected from US Arctic interests. While it would benefit from resources in and around Alaska, the Beaufort seas, Chukchi seas, and the internationalization of Arctic sea passages, the amount of investment required to strengthen the American Arctic position is seemingly prohibitive given its commitments in more concurrently active environments – notably, the pivot towards Asia. For now, at least, US interests in the Arctic do not justify an expansion of capabilities and force projection. Ironically, the security dilemma will put pressure on the US to reconsider its position as Russian regional power rises relative to its own and weaker allied circumpolar states. Huebert et al. have noted this consequence, observing that as states, in particular Russia, invest in and build up Arctic military forces, the value of the region goes up. Once a certain threshold is reached, US Arctic interests could force its hand and either compel it to redress a Russian lead in the regional balance of power, by new military commitments to the region to re-establish clear American regional hegemony, or try to tepidly ‘contain’ Russian strategic ambitions. In either case, uncertainty and instability will be deepened. In sum, the ‘reluctant’ Arctic power can only remain so if it believes Russia is strong enough to establish a stable regional order, wise enough to defuse potential conflagrations arising from the security dilemma, and restrained enough not to threaten US interests, however few they might be.

\textsuperscript{273} See: Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit.”
\textsuperscript{274} See: Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power.”
Russian interests, on the other hand, are extremely valuable relative to most other regions where Moscow could be engaged. Unlike the United States, Russia lacks a strong foothold in the ‘great treasure trove’ that is the Middle East. Not only has the United States been far and away the dominant power in the region for the past twenty years, but Russia’s currently meager holdings, notably one of its only foreign naval bases at Tarsus in Syria, is in serious jeopardy following the ongoing geo-political ramifications of the Arab Spring. Further, Russia currently lacks the ‘blue water’ naval capacity to meaningfully engage in the Asian and Pacific theatre. As Baev and Golts have noted, most of Russia’s current naval and air force capacities are aging, localized along its Western Arctic territories, and lack the support and infrastructure to conduct missions far abroad.275 It is revealing how Russia tried to stimulate so much fanfare regarding its missions to South America and the Sub Continent – what the US is able to do on a somewhat regular basis, Russia spends years planning and preparing for.276

Russia is compelled to exploit its interests and increased power capabilities in the Arctic, more than any other nation, because its value is greater than any other available geopolitical theatre. Though it certainly lacks the capability to ‘hegemonically’ dominate the region, it can and will act to ensure that its interests are not threatened by becoming the preponderant Arctic power. The same is not true for the US. As such, the virtual bipolar balance of power does and will continue to favour Russia, even if tentatively so. This will remain stable in so far as Russia develops the capacities to provide order, development, and suppress significant revisionist policies by competing Arctic powers. Failing that, militarization is sure to intensify. The Arctic is primarily a maritime theatre, and US primacy therein is not questioned, nor can it be realistically challenged. But the specific conditions of the region today give Russia certain advantages that, it appears, are being pressed upon. As Murray has argued, the decline of global US hegemony, the rise of China (and perhaps India), and the return to relative multipolarity would suggest as much. In an international environment principally defined by anarchy, Great Powers cannot help but seek the relative protection of security against

275 Baev, “Russia’s Arctic Policy and the Northern Fleet Modernization”; Golts, “The Arctic: a Clash of Interests or Clash of Ambitions.”
the amorphous dangers posed by rival states - or, to borrow from Jacques Lacan, the big 'Other' of international relations.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ The concept of the 'big Other' is too large to explore here. Suffice it to say that the reference is an attempt to draw a connection between the structure of international politics and the symbolic measures of a state against 'all others' as an identity forming process. In this sense, politics and subjectivity are deeply related with both being structured by the ordering principal of the system. See: Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," in Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English, trans. Bruce Fink, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 6–48.
6 CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to make a case for a structural realist reading of the emerging Arctic balance. It has been contended that, based on the core assumptions of structural theory, that the distribution of power in the international system and in the Arctic is preponderantly shaping how Russia, as a Great Power, is responding to its interests in the region. These interests and responses are 'constant' to any Great Power that would find itself similarly placed in the changing hierarchy among states. Hence, the Arctic balance of power provides a strong measure for explaining systemic outcomes, rather than in predicting the behaviors of any one state, including Russia, within the confines of its inquiry. The influence of intervening influences, such as international institutions, regimes, and domestic idiosyncrasies is both limited in scope and endogenous to shifts in state interests, power capabilities, and the effects of fungibility.

The possibility for open conflict to ignite this region is marginal. The presence of strategic nuclear weapons, and the role they play in Russian and American Arctic interests, instead, renders the possibilities of a heated clash over interests cold. Yet, as Waltz, Mearsheimer, Art, and Layne have contended, this does not mean that competition and conflict cease to be a structural condition in international politics. Rather, as would be expected from the effects differential rates of growth, Great Power 'insecurities' are played out through other means, such as economic rivalry, sensitivities to relative gains, and an expansion of capabilities, both conventional and nuclear. Summing up this state of affairs, Howard concludes, "complete demilitarization is unrealistic simply because the Arctic has (significant) strategic importance...the United States, as well as Russia, has vital assets north of the Arctic Circle."

It is at this point that the creative utility of polarity arguments may end. It is a theory for explaining the structural pressures that states act within and upon.

278 Howard, "Russia's New Front Line," 151.
6.1 A NOTE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

International politics, conceived as best as we have come to understand it, carries with it a *deus ex machina* that appears to have brought us to a dead end. As civilization marches onward into completely novel technological and historical conditions, the great competitive game that all states are bound by is preventing international politics from seriously addressing new significant threats that all states will increasingly have to resolve: namely, global warming induced climate change. If survival is the ultimate ‘telos’ of states and Great Powers alike, a new logic of international relations beyond relative gains, the security dilemma, and the spell-binding *spectacle* of nuclear weapons is required to help ensure that interstate competition does not result in our collective failure to ensure our survival. This is particularly pressing regarding the Arctic and the potentially calamitous effects global warming and environmental degradation that is at hand. Commenting on this state of affairs, Slavoj Zizek declares: “an extraordinary social and psychological change is taking place right in front of our eyes — the impossible is becoming possible...we know the (ecological) catastrophe is possible, probable even, yet we do not believe it will really happen.”

Structural theory has little to say on how international politics can and should manage a rapidly changing climate, even if this process threatens the vaunted security that Great Powers are structurally pushed to covet. According to the World Energy Outlook report for 2012, if current aggregate global green house gas emissions continue as they have been trending, and if policy responses remain constant to what they are today, then there is an 83% chance that the world’s average temperature will increase by 4 degrees Celsius within this century. The consequences of this change are widely expected to be ‘catastrophic’, both for sensitive ecosystems such as the Arctic and human civilization at large. Even if,” Scott Bergerson states “the international community manages to slow the pace of climate change immediately and dramatically, a

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certain amount of warming is irreversible. Speaking of Russia specifically, Craig ZumBrunnen argues that the windfall profits to be gained in the Russian energy market will likely ensure that strategic interests dominate concerns over climate change. Thus, according to Alun Anderson, further than the balance of power, international politics will irrevocably damage the Arctic and all things unique therein. "We will have transformed an enormous area of the planet and created a new set of losers and winners (questionable) and myriad political challenges." Indeed, the impending environmental collapse of the Arctic may very well be a new chapter in the 'tragedy of Great Power politics.'

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282 Bergerson, "Arctic Meltdown," 63. In order to arrest the pace of climate change quickly and 'drastically' the World Energy Outlook 2012 report estimates that it would require a global investment of roughly $16 trillion USD in greenhouse gas emission reduction policies; a figure so absurdly unlikely given today's geopolitical conditions that it truly borders on the 'tragic.' World Energy Outlook 2012, 241.


284 And this is the tragic dimension of international politics, that as yet continues to devour the 'children of history' and confounds our best efforts to produce the contrary. Writing on tragedy in Shakespeare, the words of Bradley could suffice as an apt description on the condition of international politics: "They strike into the existing order of things in pursuance of their ideas. But what they achieve is not what they intended; it is terribly unlike it. They understand nothing, we say to ourselves, of the world on which they operate. They fight blindly in the dark, and the power that works through them makes them the instrument of a design that is not theirs. They act freely, and yet their action binds them hand and foot. And it makes no difference whether they meant well or ill." A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear & Macbeth (Echo Library, 2007), 15.
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