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THE EU AS AN ARCTIC POWER

Narratives from Norway and Russia

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Abstract

In recent years, the Arctic region has gained much attention as an area of new opportunities and challenges. This has attracted the interest of non-regional players, including the European Union (EU). The EU has explicitly demonstrated its interest in the Arctic region. It is developing its Arctic policies and adopting regulatory documents with extra-territorial effect on the region, as well as participating in a number of international conventions and agreements concerning the Arctic. However, so far only a few approaches have put forward perspectives from the Arctic states on EU actorness in the Arctic. To study the EU's Arctic engagement from the viewpoints of these states, the master thesis analyses the articles published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms. The study identifies four core narratives of the EU's engagement in the Arctic and concludes with the findings of the EU as an actor in the Arctic.

Keywords: The European Union, the Arctic, Norway, Russia, EU engagement in the Arctic, perceptions, narratives, actorness

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Content

- 1. Introduction 4
- 1.1 The EU and the Arctic 5
- 1.2 Norway and Russia in the Arctic 9
- 1.3 Outline 10
- 2. Previous Research 11
- 2.1 EU Interests and Concerns in the Arctic 11
- 2.2 The EU as an Arctic Actor 12
- 3. Aim and Research Question 17
- 4. Theoretical Foundations 18
- 4.1 Normative Power Europe 18
- 4.2 Ideational Diffusion 19
- 4.3 Operationalisation of Theoretical Concepts 20
- 5. Method and Data 21
- 5.1 Narrative Analysis 21
- 5.2 Case Selection and Empirical Material 22
- 5.3 Quality, validity and ethical considerations 27
- 6. Analysis and Results 28
- 6.1 Norwegian Articles 28
- 6.2 Russian Articles 34
- 6.3 Identified Narratives 39
- 6.4 Discussion of Results 40
- 7. Conclusion 44
- 8. Bibliography 47

Introduction

The Arctic region is made up of eight states, whose territories are passed by the Arctic Circle (Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America). Institutionally these countries are bound by the Arctic Council (AC). Even though the European Union (EU) does not have an official status in the AC, the Arctic is also on the EU's agenda.¹ In these circumstances it is relevant to study the EU's place in Arctic affairs. Therefore, the general purpose of this master's thesis is to shed light on representations of the EU by Arctic stakeholders.

In recent years the Arctic region has gained much attention as an area of new opportunities and challenges. The complex processes of climate change caused by the global warming have provoked geostrategic, political, economic and environmental rethinking of the Arctic by the international community. The reduction of the ice cover makes available the exploitation of new resources, opens new areas to fisheries and provides shorter sea routes such as Northern Sea Route (NSR) and North West Passage (NWP) and, all in all, increases the economic activity in the region.

On the other hand, a greater activity in the region implies a high-level risk for the fragile Arctic environment and also the traditional lifestyle of indigenous peoples. The experts foresee a higher pressure on Arctic ecology in near future and forecast a number of upcoming environmental challenges connected with rising activities in the region. Firstly, there are higher risks of oil spills caused by off-shore oil and gas extraction. Secondly, it is expected that new shipping routes will attract more shipping vessels into Arctic waters, and as a consequence, it will result in increasing emissions. Thirdly, warmer waters might increase the productivity of some fish stocks, change the harvesting sites and demand new fisheries management measures. Fourthly, climate change can be crucial for Arctic landscapes and wildlife, making some species endangered. Therefore, there are strong assumptions of future negative effects on the marine ecosystems and wildlife in the Arctic region.

In the view of rising opportunities and needs for the solutions, the Arctic is getting more attention from inside and outside the region. One of those new actors in the Arctic has become the European Union at beginning of the 21st century. In recent years the EU has

¹ Lui et al. (2017) p.1

explicitly demonstrated its interest in the Arctic region. “The EU aims to ensure sustainable development in and around the Arctic region on the basis of international cooperation.”² The EU has been trying to become an observer in the Arctic Council ever since 2009, but it still has not been granted such an official status. However, in 2013 the EU received the right to observe the AC’s meetings as an “observe in principle” without a formalised status.³ Nevertheless, the EU is acting in the Arctic, it develops its Arctic policies and issues regulatory documents with extra-territorial effect on the region. Besides, the EU as an international actor is a participant in a number of international conventions and agreements concerning the Arctic (e.g. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in Northeast Atlantic Fisheries).

This thesis is an attempt to understand how EU policy and actions regarding the Arctic are perceived and represented by the Arctic states, and theoretically the thesis aims to contribute to the debate of the EU as a normative power. Methodologically the thesis is based on content analysis of narratives about the EU’s Arctic policy and attempts to approach the region published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms. The empirical analysis will be limited to narratives that represent EU presence in the Arctic and its engagement with Arctic governance in issue areas such as commercial sealing, offshore oil and gas operations and fisheries management.

1.1 The EU and the Arctic

The European Union’s borders overlap the Arctic region. Three of eight Arctic states are also EU member countries: Finland, Sweden, Denmark (Greenland withdrew from the EU in 1985 and now it is one of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU), while Iceland and Norway (excluding Svalbard) belong to the European Economic Area (EEA) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). However, the EU does not have a coastline in the Arctic Ocean.

In recent years the EU has developed a number of policies relating to the Arctic. According to the collection of documents relevant to Arctic governance in “The Arctic in International Law and Policy” (2017) by Kristina Schönfeldt, the list of EU Arctic policies includes the following ten specific policy initiatives:

² Lui et al. (2017) p.1

³ Hossain (2015) p. 90

- European Parliament, Resolution on Arctic Governance (9 October 2008);
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: The European Union and the Arctic Region (20 November 2008);
- Council of the European Union, Conclusions on Arctic Issues (8 December 2009);
- European Parliament, Resolution on a Sustainable EU Policy for the High North (20 January 2011);
- European Commission/High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint Communication to European Parliament and the Council, Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: Progress since 2008 and next steps (26 June 2012);
- Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on EU Arctic Policy to address globally emerging interests in the region – a view of civil society (17 April 2013);
- European Parliament, Resolution on the EU strategy for the Arctic (12 March 2014);
- Council of the European Union, Conclusions on developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region (12 May 2014);
- Joint Communication to European Parliament and the Council: An Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic (27 April 2016);
- Council of the European Union Conclusions on the Arctic (20 June 2016)

According to E. Conde Pérez and Z.V. Yaneva (2016) every relevant EU Arctic document addresses some important elements: 1) protection of the Arctic nature along with the preservation of the traditional lifestyle of the local indigenous population, considering the growing speed of the climate changes and their inevitable impacts; 2) promotion of a sustainable development of the region through sustainable and wise use of living and non-living natural resources; and contribution to 3) enhance the existing regional governance through implementation of relevant agreements and arrangements, emphasizing the need for maritime security and fishing regulations.⁴

Conde Pérez et al. argue that paying attention to the aspects mentioned in the official EU documents seems as its attempts to stabilise the role in the Arctic, and carry out a range of activities in cooperation with other regional actors or interested parties on a series of

⁴ Perez&Yaneva (2016) p. 447

environmental and maritime issues. The present the EU's Arctic policies constitute a guide for the future implication of the EU in the Arctic and contains the idea of Arctic management, which should be established and based on current multilateral agreements and mechanisms. They include, for instance, the UN Convention on Law of the Sea, the Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization.

The EU has also demonstrated its involvement into Arctic affairs by a number of Arctic-related regulations on seal ban, offshore oil and gas activities as well as fisheries management. All of these issues have environmental implications, but of different character, such as animal welfare, marine environment and sustainable fisheries.

The European Parliament and the Council issued the Regulation (EC) No. 1007/2009 on trade in seal products, which came into force on November 20, 2009. The ban was driven by the aspiration to enhance animal welfare and public morality. The regulation claimed closing the EU market for seal products originating from commercial seal hunts. In other words, the ban concerned trade in seal meat, oil, fur, skins and clothing in all EU members. However, the EU regulation contains three exceptions, which allow seal products to enter the EU's common market if they originate: 1) from seals hunted by Inuit or other indigenous communities; 2) from seals hunted for the purpose of marine resource management; 3) or brought into the EU by travellers under certain conditions.⁵

Due to geographical fact that the commercial sealing takes place mainly in the Arctic, the regulation caused misunderstanding between the Arctic states and the EU. As soon as the ban was issued, it challenged obtaining the official status of the EU in the Arctic Council. "Arctic Council members have pointed to the EU seal policy and its insensitivity to indigenous hunters as a principal reason for the Arctic Council to block the EU's membership bid."⁶ The regulation revealed a tight relation between the environmental issue in the EU legislation and its effect on geopolitical position of the EU in Arctic affairs today. Eventually, the European Commission had to amend the regulation and adopted its Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1850 of 13 October 2015. In the interview to High North News Nikolas Sellheim (a researcher from the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge) expressed the opinion that "this amendment basically scrapped the exemption

⁵ Conconi&Voon (2016) p. 212

⁶ Fakhri (2017) p. 209

concerning products originating from by-products of hunting and also set higher animal welfare standards to products, which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities.”⁷

The EU is interested in implementing effective regulations, which can provide high safety standards for offshore oil and gas operations at global level. The EU contributes to the safety of offshore exploitation by the Directive on Safety of Offshore Oil and Gas Operations (2013/30/EU). The directive contains a reference to the Arctic waters, moreover, it obliges the EU and EEA member states to require their oil and gas companies working outside the Union to report, on request, any circumstances of major accident in which they have been involved.⁸ The directive can be viewed as a “diplomatic tool” for the EU, sharing best practices and improving standards in cooperation with third countries.⁹

Another dimension where the EU has its legal competence in the Arctic is fisheries. Even though the EU has no coast line in the Arctic, it receives rights either by grants from Arctic countries’ to fish within their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) or by being allocated rights within a Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) area regarding the high seas.¹⁰ To date the commercial fisheries is impossible and does not occur in the central Arctic Ocean. Moreover, Canada, China, Denmark, the European Union, Iceland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the US have reached the ‘Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean’ (2017). The agreement is aimed at preventing unregulated commercial fishing in the high seas area of the central Arctic Ocean. “It is scheduled to last for 16 years and to be automatically renewed every five years until a science-based fisheries quota and rules are put in place or a country objects.”¹¹ Besides, the EU would promote sustainable fisheries internationally (including the Arctic) by internal policies such as the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the EU Regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU).¹²

⁷ Raspotnik 16/08/2016

⁸ Lui (2015) p.227

⁹ Jessen (2017) p. 353

¹⁰ Lui (2017) p. 281

¹¹ Benson Wahlén 07/12/2017

¹² Lui (2017) p. 290

1.2 Norway and Russia in the Arctic

Norway and Russia are neighbouring countries in the Arctic and share a common border of the 196 km length. Geographically Russia has the longest Arctic coastline among other Arctic states. It is expected that 80% of the Arctic's undiscovered oil and gas reserves to be under Russia's jurisdiction, while Norway manages northern sea areas that are six times the size of Norway's land territory.¹³ Both countries play an important role in Arctic affairs, which is depicted in their national strategies. Norway defines itself as a 'leading Arctic state', while Russia refers to itself as an 'Arctic power'.¹⁴ Both countries regard the territory as a potential resource province, they pay attention to the security issues of the region and have discourses oriented towards protecting their national interests in the Arctic.¹⁵

According to Staun (2017) Russia's approach to the Arctic has two foreign policy directions. One of them is motivated by security concerns, power issues and national interests. Another one puts cooperation first and emphasises 'respect for international law', 'negotiation' and 'cooperation', and labels the Arctic as a 'territory of dialogue', underling that the peaceful cooperation will be the most beneficial for the Arctic states.¹⁶

On one hand, Staun maintains, Russia utilises security argument and focuses on balance of power and zero-sum game logic, and is often patriotic and nationalistic.¹⁷ The melting ice in the Arctic can increase the accessibility of the Arctic waters, facilitate ship transportation for a longer season and enable extraction of some natural resources. Since, Russia has the longest coastline in the Arctic Ocean, these opportunities are also seen as challenging for the national security. "Thus, the northern flank, which until now in all practicality has been inaccessible for foreign militaries' land and sea forces, in the eyes of the Russian military may become more open when the ice melts."¹⁸

However, on the other hand, Russia shapes the Arctic region as a territory of international cooperation. This approach favours pursuing of national interests together with other states,

¹³ Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 76

¹⁴ Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 73

¹⁵ Jensen&Skedsmo (2010) p. 448

¹⁶ Staun (2017) p. 314

¹⁷ Staun (2017) p. 327

¹⁸ Staun (2017) p. 319

and, therefore, regards other countries in the Arctic as partners, making power and gains more as absolutes.¹⁹

Norway has a special leadership role in the Arctic affairs. The country has its expertise in the Arctic within a successful oil and gas industry, thriving northern fisheries and possession of widespread, populated Arctic territories and surrounding sea areas.²⁰ Additionally, Norway is recognised as a strong funder of Arctic activities.²¹ Norway's approach to the Arctic can be characterised by several features. Firstly, the country supports work through institutionalised multilateral settings. In 1993 Norway initiated Barents cooperation between the Nordic countries and Russia. Moreover, the Arctic Council Secretariat is situated in Tromsø. Secondly, Norwegian high north politics have made emphasis on leading through knowledge and science, through knowing the high north best.²² Thirdly, Norway encourages cooperation with Russia in the Arctic. Norwegian – Russian cooperation in the north provides Norway with a certain level of prestige and a uniquely important role through its closer relationships with a 'great power', Russia.²³ This kind of relationship gives Norway an advantage as a special status in Arctic multilateralism and privileged access to Russian policymakers.

1.3 Outline

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter 2 presents previous research on the EU's interest and concerns in the Arctic as well as scholarly publications in regard to EU actorness in the region. Chapter 3 introduces the aim and the research question. Chapter 4 holds the theoretical basis for the thesis: Normative Power Europe and theory of ideational diffusion. Chapter 5 explains the methodological approach, case selection and choice of research materials. The empirical results are demonstrated and analysed in Chapter 6, which is divided into four sections, the first analyses Norwegian articles, the second section analyses Russian articles and the third presents the found narratives, the fourth discusses the results from the analysis. The final Chapter 7 entails the conclusion and suggests future research areas.

¹⁹ Staun (2017) p. 324

²⁰ Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 77

²¹ Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 76

²² Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 75

²³ Wilson Rowe (2014) p. 77

Previous Research

The EU's involvement in the Arctic affairs has encouraged a debate on its role in the regional governance. First, the available research pays attention to the EU's rational reasons to be engaged in the regional development, which are motivated by the combination of commercial interests and environmental concerns. Secondly, the existing literature conceptualises the EU's role in Arctic governance. The scholars examine EU actorness, power and competence in relation to the Arctic. Therefore, this section on previous research has two subject matters. On one hand, it will discuss the literature that explains to EU's interest and concerns in the Arctic in general. On the other hand, it will take a closer look at EU actorness in the region.

2.1 EU Interests and Concerns in the Arctic

The EU's main actions in the Arctic are dictated by rational interests in natural resources, both living and non-living (such as fisheries and oil and gas) and transportation. The EU plays a big role in usage of the resources coming from the Arctic. According to Hossain (2015), one fourth of the oil and gas from the Arctic as well as approximately one-third of the fish caught in the region are consumed by the EU.²⁴ Moreover, being dependent on energy imports, the EU could consider the Arctic as a secure energy provision of oil and gas. The Arctic region is a worthy diversifying means for the EU, the region is more stable than the Middle East, and has a great resource potential. Besides, the scholars point out that the navigation option of the Arctic offers the EU substantial benefits in trade.²⁵ Europe controls 40% of the world's merchant fleet²⁶ and it makes new Arctic shipping routes attractive for European companies, since the navigation via the Arctic Ocean can save time and energy.

Furthermore, the EU has expressed its concerns about the climate change and the rights of indigenous peoples in the Arctic. Hossain refers to these as the EU's "stewardship" role in the region. The author explains this by the fact the EU is aware of its role as a global leader in combating climate change and in doing so assuming responsibility for protecting the Arctic environment.²⁷ Perez and Yaneva (2016) agree that the fight against the process of climate

²⁴ Hossain (2015) p. 94

²⁵ Lopez-Ibor Mayor (2016) p.120

²⁶ Hossain (2015) p. 94

²⁷ Hossain (2015) p. 94

change is one of the greatest concerns that are moving the EU in the High North.²⁸ They believe that the engagement in the global negotiations and active research in climate change can help the EU to directly target the Arctic.

Using the status as a major player in international cooperation, norm building, and policy setting, the EU tries to promote the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples across the world and facilitate their participation in decision-making processes. “The EU policy documents concerning the Arctic repeatedly draw attention to the region’s inhabitants, including its significant number of indigenous peoples.”²⁹ In the case of the Arctic the EU is dealing with the Sami people (the only one indigenous community in the EU), who inhabit in northern parts of Finland, Sweden, Norway and the northwest part of Russia. Hossain argues that the rights of indigenous peoples with regard to their culture, livelihood, and participation in any decisions that affect them are a core value for EU policy goals as well as for sustainable resource and ecosystem management in the Arctic.³⁰

The researchers mainly define the EU’s engagement in the Arctic as a combination of economic interests and environmental protection. Hossain argue that this paradoxical platform allows the EU to pursue further resource-related and commercial interests on the one hand, and to protect the Arctic environment on the other.³¹ Perez and Yaneva explain that the environmental protection and support for multilateral governance serve as means to gain more strength in the Arctic and securing the EU’s interests in regional development and shipping. Lopez-Ibor Mayor (2016) points out that the EU has struggled to create consensus and assert itself in the Arctic region as dominantly as some other major economies have.³² Therefore, the EU has to develop a different approach which incorporates the balance between environmental protection and engagement with commercial, transportation and energy potential of the Arctic.

2.2 The EU as an Arctic Actor

Even though the EU is actively demonstrating itself in Arctic governance, the scientific debate questions what kind of Arctic actor the EU is. Today there are diverse views on

²⁸ Perez&Yaneva (2016) p. 443

²⁹ Hossain (2015) p. 95

³⁰ Hossain (2015) p. 95

³¹ Hossain (2015) p. 93

³² Lopez-Ibor Mayor (2016) p. 119

actorness of the EU in the Arctic based on different approaches. The general arguments for the EU's status as an Arctic actor include geographical proximity and the EU's position in the global arena. Furthermore, the EU's engagement in the Arctic and its leadership status in environmental protection also contribute to that. Moreover, EU policy linkages to the Arctic and its interests in the region play an important role. On the contrary, the lack of permanent observer status in the Arctic Council and the EU's certain weakness in Arctic governance challenge the EU's position in the region.

The article 'The European Union as an Actor in Arctic Governance' by Pieper et al. (2011) studies the emerging role of the EU in Arctic governance, contributing to the field of EU actorness. The researches examine the EU's engagement in Arctic governance in the issue areas such as maritime affairs, border delimitation (which includes the exploitation of future energy resources), and environmental protection. The analysis applies the concept of actorness developed by Jupille and Caporaso. Pieper et al. propose a model in which actorness is derived from the interrelated criteria of recognition, authority, autonomy, and cohesion.³³ They refer to the EU's in the Arctic as "an actor in the making". The EU has strengthened its position in the Arctic, and it has already demonstrated the efforts to increase its presence in the region, but, however, the EU does not own permanent observer status in the Arctic Council.

The findings of the research have demonstrated different degree of EU actorness in the Arctic. In the area of maritime governance the EU has proved its strong position in the dispute over the Northwest Passage. However, the EU has very limited authority in proposing legal regulation of shipping, because this sphere is mostly controlled by the Arctic states. Moreover, the Arctic states prevent the EU from being fully emerged into research and development in the Arctic region. Finally, the EU is not a member of the most important organisations dealing with maritime governance. In the area of border delimitation of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean, the EU resulted in the low degree of recognition and autonomy. The Arctic states manage to keep the EU out of the discussion on maritime claims, additionally, the lack of territorial possessions in the Arctic Ocean limits the EU's authority. In the analysis of EU actorness in Arctic environmental policy, the scholars argue to adopt a twofold perspective. "Whereas the EU scores comparably high on all four criteria in matters

³³ Pieper et al. (2011) p. 229

of environmental research, its efforts to exert indirect extra-territorial authority via regulatory policies have not only met criticism by third parties but also split the EU internally.’³⁴ In the article the authors make a statement that the EU cannot be counted as a fully-fledged international actor. They explain that by the EU’s capability to defend its economic interests, but the extra-territorial impact of its internal rules and regulations remains limited.³⁵

In the article ‘The European Union – An Arctic Actor?’ Andreas Østhagen (2013) discusses the motives of the EU in developing Arctic policy, how it approaches the goals and to what degree it seeks to become an Arctic actor. The author argues that the EU, on account of its geography and policy linkages with the Arctic, possesses an overriding interest in participating in the international debate on the region.³⁶ The scholar starts with explaining what the basis of EU’s Arctic policy is. Firstly, the EU’s involvement in Arctic affairs is designated by its role as a foreign policy actor. In order to legitimise its Arctic engagement, the EU tends to emphasise more strongly on the foreign policy aspects in its Arctic communications, whilst also using domestic policies.³⁷ Then, due to geography and policy linkages the EU and its member states participate in Arctic development. The author identifies shipping, fisheries, energy, research and territorial cooperation programmes as the main interests for EU Arctic policy. These interests serve as drivers and provide additional legitimacy for EU’s engagement in the Arctic. Finally, EU Arctic policy as a supranational strategy facilitates one common European policy and links all its member states with the region.

Further in the article Østhagen takes into consideration three issues dominating the EU-Arctic debate, namely the ban on the trading of seal products, oil and gas moratorium as well as governance and the Spitsbergen Treaty. The analysis of these examples demonstrates the controversy in EU-Arctic affairs and the lack of knowledge about the Arctic. The author concludes that the EU will continue to possess a legitimate stake in the region, however, it has some overriding interests in the Arctic, which go above and beyond the individual Arctic strategies of each member state concerned with the topic.³⁸ The EU utilises the approach, which tackles the whole region, but does not target its own Arctic. According to Østhagen, the

³⁴ Pieper et al. (2011) p. 241

³⁵ Pieper et al. (2011) p. 242

³⁶ Østhagen (2013) p. 72

³⁷ Østhagen (2013) p. 73

³⁸ Østhagen (2013) p. 84

EU would benefit from articulating more directly national and regional linkages with the region and by including a narrowing and a widening into its approach.

Other researches in order to estimate the EU's involvement in Arctic affairs studied its competence in relation to the region. In the article 'The present and future competence of the European Union in the Arctic' by Koivurova et al. (2012) the scholars discuss the EU's presence in the region. They consider the EU as a complex international actor, which gained the power from its member states. They believe that the role of the EU in Arctic governance is underestimated, because the EU is a relatively new player, and the other actors have a hard time to understand its importance in the region. The research includes the analysis of EU competences in regard to environmental problems, economic activities facilitated by the decreasing ice cover and the ban on seal products. The experts conclude that the EU's policy role in the Arctic is very important even though it does not have a shoreline on the Arctic Ocean and its territorial presence in the region is limited.³⁹ They also argue that including the EU in Arctic governance would be beneficial for both the EU and the other Arctic actors, since it will increase awareness of the EU and provide an opportunity for sensitising EU policies and discourses to the Arctic realities.

Another article 'The EU as an Arctic Power: Analysis of the Competences of the EU in the Arctic by Policy Areas' by Armand de Mestral (2012) tries to shed light on the role of the EU in Arctic governance. The author states that the geographical factor alone is making the EU an Arctic power. "Beyond this, the EU has various competences which may ultimately be exercised in the Arctic and it unquestionably has significant long-term economic and political interests that will move it in the same direction."⁴⁰ The article features a comprehensive analysis of the EU's competences in several areas: foreign affairs, integrated maritime policy (IMP), maritime shipping, fisheries, resource exploitation on the continental shelf and in the international seabed area, environment protection and scientific research. De Mestral argues that despite many efforts to develop a coherent policy for the Arctic, the EU still has a very restricted and contested role in the region.⁴¹ Moreover, the other Arctic stakeholders have not accepted the EU as a permanent observer in the Arctic Council and in doing so demonstrated their hostility to the EU. However, the EU has possibilities that could facilitate the dialogue

³⁹ Koivurova et al. (2012) p. 368

⁴⁰ De Mestral (2012) p. 331

⁴¹ De Mestral (2012) p. 354

with other Arctic stakeholders and strengthen its role in the region, which include specialised international instruments and economic influence.

Kamrul Hossain's (2015) article 'EU Engagement in the Arctic: Do the Policy Responses from the Arctic States Recognise the EU as a Legitimate Stakeholder?' also contributes to the debate on EU actorness and competence in the Arctic. The researcher provided the analysis of EU interests in the Arctic and its policies towards the Arctic. Hossain points out that the EU itself is not an Arctic actor in the "strict" geographical sense, nor is it an "officially" designated observer in the main intergovernmental forum on Arctic affairs, the Arctic Council.⁴² Even though the Arctic states do not tend to recognise the EU as a legitimate actor in the region, they nevertheless do not deny its importance in the promotion of an Arctic agenda.⁴³ The EU's recognition can be drawn from its Arctic links and the stewardship role especially in protecting environment. Since, the scholar identifies the EU's Arctic policies as somewhere between internal and external policies, the same definition is used for the EU's competence in the Arctic, and it is neither purely internal nor purely external.

The foregoing literature review contributes to the subject of the EU's role in Arctic affairs. Firstly, it shed light on the EU's interests in the Arctic region, rational motivations behind the involvement into the regional governance. Secondly, it provided various approaches to EU actorness in the Arctic. The literature review also revealed that the EU seeks the ways to secure its position in the Arctic region mainly through its commercial interest and environmental concerns. Furthermore, the previous research demonstrated different views on EU actorness. Drawn from the analysis of the EU's Arctic policies, competences and regional engagements the researchers reach the consensus that the EU's presence in the Arctic is important, but it is often seen insufficient to be fully recognised as an actor.

⁴² Hossain (2015) p. 97

⁴³ Hossain (2015) p. 103

Aim and Research Question

The previous research on the subject of the EU as an Arctic power is mainly based on the analysis of EU legal competences, interests, and Arctic policies. At the same time, so far a few approaches have put forward perspectives from the Arctic states on EU actorness in the Arctic. In the given circumstances, when the EU has not received a formal observer status in the Arctic Council, but is actively engaged in Arctic governance, it is valuable to study the EU's Arctic engagement from the viewpoints of the Arctic states.

The aim of this thesis is to study the perceptions of the Arctic states on the EU's role in the Arctic region. The research addresses the lack of research about the Arctic states' views on the EU's engagement in the region, and will make an attempt to identify these representations in the form of narratives to estimate how the EU is perceived as an Arctic actor. Therefore, the research question of the master' thesis is the following:

What are the Norwegian and Russian media narratives of the EU's Arctic engagement?

The theorization about 'normative power Europe' will guide the empirical analysis of Norwegian and Russian media narratives on the EU's Arctic engagement.

Theoretical Foundations

This chapter discusses the theoretical foundations of studying the EU as an Arctic power. The first section of it addresses the concept ‘normative power Europe’ by Ian Manners. The second section covers a reading of Manner’s normative power concept as ideational diffusion and its impact on regionalism. Finally, the section proposes the way to operationalise the empirical part of the thesis applying the concepts.

4.1 Normative Power Europe

Even though two of the EU members are the Arctic states, the EU regards the Arctic region as a subject of external affairs. A similar view is supported by the Arctic states’ perspective, the EU has always been seen as an external power to the region.⁴⁴ Therefore, the issue of the EU’s power in the Arctic should be seen as its international pursuit and be paced within the debate of ‘normative power Europe’.

The concept ‘normative power Europe’ was developed by Ian Manners, who considers the EU’s international identity and its role as a normative power. Manners argues that the EU has a different normative basis, which is defined by its historical experience, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution. Unlike historical empires and contemporary global powers, the EU was created in a post-war period inspired by the values of peace and liberty. Constitutionally the EU is founded on elite-driven, treaty based, legal order. That is why constitutional norms play an important role for EU international identity, and its external relations are accompanied by the universal norms and principles. In other words, the political form of the EU disposes it to act in a normative way.

The EU’s normative basis is grounded on a series of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions. Manners identifies five ‘core’ norms: *peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law*, and respect for *human rights* and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, there are four ‘minor’ norms: the notion of *social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development* and the principle of *good governance*. The reinforcement and expansion of the norms above-

⁴⁴ Lui et al. (2017) p. 360

mentioned allows the EU to present and legitimate itself as being more than the sum of its parts.⁴⁵

An integral part of the ‘normative power Europe’ is how EU norms are diffused. Manners suggest six diffusion mechanisms in international relations: *contagion* (unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors), *informational* (strategic and declaratory communications), *procedural* (inter-regional co-operation agreements or membership of an international organization or enlargement of the EU itself), *transference* (the exportation of community norms and standards or financial rewards and economic sanctions), *overt diffusion* (physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations), *cultural filter* (learning, adaptation or rejection of norms in third states).

4.2 Ideational Diffusion

When the EU demonstrates the actorness in the Arctic, it approaches the region by the means of normative power. The ideational diffusion conceived from the concept ‘normative power Europe’, denotes a helpful theoretical tool in the realm of regionalism. According to Tobias Lenz, Europe’s ideational influence on regionalism can be fruitfully understood as the largely indirect process by which the EU experience travels to other regions through socialisation and emulation.⁴⁶

Normative power represents an influence, which spreads immaterial or ideational impact, capturing processes that emphasise changes in behaviour based on cognition and identity.⁴⁷ This involves two mechanisms socialization and emulation. Socialisation is a process, when actors are achieving normative understanding of the world through their norms and practices, persuasion and teaching as well as naming and shaming. Socialisation at the regional level happens through institutional channels such as cooperation agreements, political dialogues and teaching assistance programmes. The second process is emulation, when actors adopt better practices and norms through learning or coping. In the case of the EU, its self-construction as a successful experiment in regional integration can be viewed as a source of

⁴⁵ Manners (2002) p. 244

⁴⁶ Lenz (2013) p. 212

⁴⁷ Lenz (2013) p. 214

power. In other words, ideational diffusion works in indirect fashion, when outcomes are often removed from the direct impact of the EU as an actor.⁴⁸

At the regional level EU ideational diffusion occurs through local actors as in the way how the norms and practices transmit to other locales. The local actors can be civil society actors, educational and research institutions and various government officials. Different reasons encourage the local actors to promote EU norms among them advanced technical solutions, appropriateness or legitimacy of the norms as well as their competitive edge in certain situations.

Since, there are structural variations across the regions, EU ideational diffusion might have different outcomes. The main limiting factor of ideational diffusion in regionalism is sovereignty, which often has a shared character in regional governance. If governments are less willing to share national sovereignty in order to benefit in cooperation, it may result in norm clashes or changing of original norms. The latter is known as a phenomenon of decoupling, when the imported norms and practices are modified to be sufficient in new circumstances.

The concept of diffusion lies in the subject of the EU as an international actor and is more focused on its external influence or receiving party, allowing researchers to assess independently the normative desirability of the EU's international impact.⁴⁹

4.3 Operationalisation of Theoretical Concepts

The theoretical concepts discussed above will be applied to the empirical analysis of Norwegian and Russian media narratives and will enhance the understanding of how the EU's Arctic engagement is perceived. 'Normative power Europe' will be used in the analysis to evaluate how the narratives describe what norms the EU are perceived to promote in the Arctic.

The concept of ideational diffusion will be applied for analysing the ways the EU utilises in approaching the region and how it is represented in the narratives. This will help to understand how the Arctic actors follow socialisation and/or emulation pattern in the cooperation with the EU in the Arctic, or on the contrary, they decouple with it.

⁴⁸ Lenz (2013) p. 216

⁴⁹ Lenz (2013) p. 224

Method and Data

This chapter explicates the choice of the research method, country cases and empirical materials. It discusses the narrative analysis and the methodological approach. It also pays attention to the limitations of the method. Further section explains the country cases of Norway and Russia, research materials for this study, choice criteria for the media articles and disadvantages of the selection approach. The chapter also contains quality, validity and ethical considerations.

5.1 Narrative Analysis

This thesis is inspired by the following facts: the EU is involved into Arctic governance and develops its Arctic policies towards the region, however, its attempts to become a formal observer in the Arctic Council have not been successful so far, and the member states have rejected the EU's application to the organisation several times since 2009. This resulted in the decision that this thesis would attempt to describe and analyse what texts from the Arctic states narrate about the EU in the Arctic and how they see the EU's attempts to have an influence in the region. But also explore what kind of power the EU is in the Arctic according to the narratives from the Arctic states. The most appropriate way to carry out a descriptive and exploratory thesis would therefore be a narrative analysis where the narratives constitute the representations from the Arctic states about EU power ambitions in the region.

Narrative methodology is used in different fields of science: anthropology, literature research, history, sociology, political science and European studies, etc. Narrative represent sources of information of how people construct disparate facts in their own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of the reality.⁵⁰ Therefore, the narratives can be studied to understand media texts and people as political beings. Patterson and Monroe (1998) argue that narratives play an important role in the construction of political behaviour and, thus, can be regarded as sources for interpretation of political realities. Patterson et al. provide main features of narratives and what makes narratives different from other modes of discourse. First of all, narratives usually require agency. Secondly, narratives suggest the speaker's view. Thirdly, narratives represent sequential ordering of events and in doing so

⁵⁰ Patterson et al. (1998) p. 315

reveal the speaker's mode of mental organisation. Finally, narratives demand narrator's perspective.

The limitation of the method is that the narrative analysis reveals the narrator's concept of self. "The speakers create the context to be analysed by drawing in what they consider relevant cultural influences."⁵¹ Thus, the narrative represents a contextual sense that a speaker has in relation to others as well as in the context of their attitude.

In the article 'Doing Narrative Research. Analysing Personal Stories Line by Line' Fraser (2004) proposes seven phases to carry out narrative analyses of interviews. Fraser argues that narrative analysis is not meant to be governed by formulas or recipes and accepts the modification or reordering of the ideas.⁵² Inspired by Fraser's ideas, the following steps can be used in order to identify, analyse and categorise narratives in media articles:

1. Finding the narratives
2. Identifying the common themes in each narrative
3. Finding what relationship the narratives have to particular topics
4. Looking for commonalities and differences in the narratives

Heather J. Richmond (2002) states that the resulting analysis moves towards a reduction of the narration to answer the question "what is the point of this story?".⁵³ In practice it results in 'core narrative' structure and helps to form a story map, which enables a cross-case comparison. Richmond explains that the narrative analysis attempts to reduce the story to a set of elements that may reveal a particular case in a certain time or place.⁵⁴ Therefore, if narratives have common themes, it allows in some cases to picture the story maps in cross-case comparisons. According to Richmond, this comparison may provide evidence for the researcher of the usefulness and trustworthiness of the methodology.⁵⁵

5.2 Case Selection and Empirical Material

The case countries for this master's thesis are Norway and Russia. The importance of the Arctic region for Norway and Russia (discussed in Section 1.2) and features that these two

⁵¹ Patterson et al. (1998) p. 316

⁵² Fraser (2004) p. 186

⁵³ Richmond (2002)

⁵⁴ Richmond (2002)

⁵⁵ Richmond (2002)

countries are sharing make them sufficient cases for relevant research on the subject and comparison. Firstly, these two countries are littoral states of the Arctic Ocean and form an informal group the Arctic 5 along with Canada, Denmark and the USA. In 2008 the meeting of the Arctic 5 resulted in the Ilulissat Declaration, which emphasized their sovereign rights in large areas of the Arctic and declared that there is “no need to develop a new comprehensive legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean.”⁵⁶ Secondly, Norway and Russia are neighbouring countries, which are not members of the EU. Thirdly, the countries develop bilateral relations and regional cooperation in the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the Arctic Council. In 2010 Norway and Russia have signed an agreement on an Arctic border in the Barents Sea, which opened significant opportunities for resource development by both countries.⁵⁷ The two countries also have collaborative arrangements Joint Russian-Norwegian Fisheries Commission and Joint Commission on Environmental Protection. Moreover, the EU is particularly dependent upon Norwegian and Russian oil and natural gas produced in the region.⁵⁸ Norway’s and Russia’s experiences with far north and Arctic resource extraction make them advanced in offshore development in extreme northern climates. These two countries have started their explorations of the Arctic oil and gas activities in the 1970s in Norway and the 1980s in Russia.

Therefore, the study uses the articles published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms as empirical material in order to identify what the views on the EU’s engagement in the Arctic region are in Norway and Russia. The articles published on the Norwegian and Russian media platforms cover the period from 2008 to 2018, from the year of the first EU actor-ship manifestation in the Arctic till the current year. During these years the EU has tried to become an observer in the Arctic Council, developed a number of Arctic policies, adopted Arctic-related regulations and agreements in relation to commercial sealing, oil and gas operations and fisheries management, and demonstrated its actorness through funding and research in the region. Consequently, these four EU actor-ship manifestations are considered as the selection criteria for the search of media articles. Since the analysis is aimed at identifying Norwegian and Russian opinions, as expressed in publicly available media, the chosen types of texts are editorial, column, opinion or analytical articles, because their style of narration expresses the

⁵⁶ Stang (2016) p. 13

⁵⁷ Report: Opportunities and challenges for Arctic oil and gas development p. 17

⁵⁸ Hossain (2015) p. 93

writer's opinion. In order to maximise the diversity of narratives, the research material is extracted from all available open sources. The media platforms represent different actors such as independent news agencies, business magazines as well as independent and government newspapers. It is to be hoped that this strategy will ensure capturing various spectrum of opinions on the EU's involvement in the Arctic. The chosen languages for the research material are English and Russian, due to the pragmatic reasons: language capacity of the thesis author and the lack of relevant articles for the study in English published on Russian media platforms.

Though, this approach has limitations, as the diverse media platforms and their materials on different languages might tackle varied audiences. Norwegian publications available in English are aimed not only at the Norwegian public, but also for a wider audience, while articles in Russian are primarily focused on Russian speaking readers. In other words, Norwegian publications in English are spreading messages for a larger international society, rather than serving for local readers in case with the materials in Russian. Moreover, the sampling procedure being focused on retrieving mainly opinion articles may leave out the most popular and the most read news media platforms in these countries. In other words, the selection criteria are focused on finding and analysing opinions, rather than studying the main media discourses on the EU and the Arctic in Norway and Russia.

The Norwegian articles are retrieved from three online news services:

1. BarentsObserver used to be a news service financed by the Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes (2005-2015) which covered developments in the Barents Region. The site presented news stories in categories: Energy, Security, Nature, Business, Arctic, Culture, Borders, Politics and Society. <http://barentsobserver.com>
2. The Independent Barents Observer is a non-profit, journalist-owned newspaper, based in Kirkenes. The resource produces news and multi-media contents aimed at global audiences interested in Arctic issues in the topics of climate change, energy and industry, shipping, civil society, borders, politics, ecology, national security and indigenous peoples issues. <https://thebarentsobserver.com>
3. The High North News is an independent newspaper published by the High North Centre at the Nord University. The main emphasis the newspaper makes on news and analysis of politics and business in the North. <http://www.highnorthnews.com>

The Russian media sources comprise ten different media platforms:

1. Oreanda-Novosti is an independent news agency, it offers news on various topics in Russia. <https://www.oreanda.ru>
2. REGNUM is a federal news agency covering the news in Russia and post-Soviet countries. <https://regnum.ru>
3. DeloNovosti is an informational-analytical agency aimed at publishing materials about Russian and foreign politics, economy and businesses. <http://delonovosti.ru>
4. Gazeta Kommersant is a private independent daily newspaper focused on socio-political issues. <https://www.kommersant.ru>
5. Rossiyskaya Gazeta is a daily newspaper published by the Government of Russia. The newspaper provides the official publications of government documents. <https://rg.ru>
6. Odnako is a Russian business magazine operated in 2009-2015. <https://www.odnako.org>
7. International Affairs is a journal covering issues of international politics, diplomacy, and global security. The founder of the journal is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. <https://interaffairs.ru>
8. Geopolitika is a non-profit scientific and analytical project. The main aim of the project is to discuss the issues of globalised world as well as publishing of relevant materials. <http://www.geopolitics.ru>
9. EvraziyaEkspert is an informational-analytical portal about the Eurasian region. <http://eurasia.expert>
10. Russian International Affairs Council is a non-profit academic and diplomatic think tank engaged in integration of Russia into the global world. The Council provides a platform for collaboration between scholars, business, civil society and the state. <http://russiancouncil.ru>

The data collection includes the following media articles:

- I. Norwegian media articles
 1. Pilyasov, A. (2014, May 12) The Arctic Council's Ukraine challenge. *BarentsObserver* – 1809 words
 2. Østhagen, A. & Raspotnik, A. (2015, April 29) The EU's Arctic Policy: Eventually Getting Somewhere? *High North News* – 1176 words

3. Raspotnik, A. (2016, February 01) The EU is an Arctic player and will engage further. *High North News* – 720 words
 4. Raspotnik, A. (2016, March 1) EU postpones its next Communication on Arctic matters. *High North News* – 321 words
 5. Koivurova, T. (2016, March 03) The EU in the Arctic: Correcting Misconceptions. *High North News* – 1521 words
 6. Raspotnik, A. (2016, April 12) The EU is not in revolutionary mode when it comes to the Arctic. *High North News* – 717 words
 7. Raspotnik, A. (2016, April 27) Is the EU eventually “integrating” the Arctic? *High North News* – 1102 words
 8. Staalesen, A. (2016, April 29) EU opens up for new Arctic infrastructure. *The Independent Barents Observer* – 582 words
 9. Raspotnik, A. & Stepien, A. (2016, June 21) The EU pledges to actively follow-up on its Arctic commitments. *High North News* – 1107 words
 10. Raspotnik, A. (2016, November 02) The European Parliament does not drop the Arctic. *High North News* – 839 words
 11. Nilsen, T. (2017, February 01) EU wants ban on heavy fuel in Arctic. *The Independent Barents Observer* – 506 words
 12. Raspotnik, A. (2017, March 3) Can the EU boost Nordic cooperation? *High North News* – 965 words
 13. Raspotnik, A. & Stepien, A. (2017, March 27) The European Parliament heading towards icy Arctic waters – again. *High North News* – 2268 words
 14. Stephen, K. (2017, June 07) Finland will work to keep tensions low in the Arctic. *High North News* – 1074 words
 15. Staalesen, A. (2017, August 18) Member of European Parliament bikes to Norway's Arctic coast, makes statement about need for new railway. *The Independent Barents Observer* – 683 words
- II. Russian media articles
1. Germanovich, Ch. (2009, February 06) Арктические шахматы. Часть 2. *Oreanda-Novosti* – 1068 words
 2. Gulevich, V. (2011, August 16) Арктический вопрос во внешней политике ЕС. *International Affairs* – 1020 words

3. Utkin, S. (2012, March 21) ЕС и Арктика: присматриваясь к будущему. *Russian International Affairs Council* – 1267 words
4. Vishnyakov, A. (2013, February 25) Разогрев Арктики. *Odnako* – 3656 words
5. Chernenko, E. (2013, May 14) Россия ограничивает полярный круг. *Gazeta Kommersant* – 738 words
6. Semushin, D. (2013, May 18) Евросоюз рвется к арктическому сырью: заседание Арктического совета Кируне. *REGNUM* – 1419 words
7. Tulupov, D. (2014, February 10) «Остров свободы» в Арктике. *Geopolitika* – 1785 words
8. Naumova, E. (2015, October 29) Арктика: интересы нециркумполярных держав в регионе. *DeloNovosti* – 1008 words
9. Dmitrieva, E. (2016, April 27) Через европейские санкции пройдут российские ледоколы. *Gazeta Kommersant* – 429 words
10. Eremina, N. (2016, December 22) Евросоюз включается в «большую игру» в Арктике. *EvrasiyaEkspert* – 1817 words
11. Fomchenkov, T. (2017, March 21) Лед без пятен. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* – 365 words
12. Samoiova, V. (2017, June 09) Битва за Арктику: ЕС рвётся на север. *REGNUM* – 1330 words

5.3 Quality, validity and ethical considerations

The articles are mainly written by the experts of the field or professional journalists and represent their qualified opinions. The article collection covers a period of ten years, which enables to observe a dynamics of visions and make a comparison of the changes in narratives over the time. The data is extracted from open resources and freely available on the Internet, it does not contain identifying information on persons. It is recognized that the complexity of the issue and the amount of potential available data is beyond the scope of the proposed research.

Analysis and Results

This chapter begins with the classification of collected research materials from Norwegian and Russian media platforms on the bases of general topics found in the articles. Then, the descriptive phase is followed by the consideration of core narratives regarding the EU's engagement in the Arctic, and concludes with the discussion of the results.

The analysis of the articles starts with the classification of material in order to find the narratives on the bases of general topics. Then, the analysis continues with identifying common themes in the narratives and the relationship they have to the EU on particular issues of Arctic engagement. This enables finding commonalities and differences in the Norwegian and Russian views on the EU's involvement in the Arctic. Eventually, the analysis results in answering the research question of the master thesis.

6.1 Norwegian Articles

The analysis of articles coming from Norwegian media sources identified four topics in relation to the EU's involvement in the Arctic affairs: 1) the EU's contribution to Arctic research and funding; 2) the EU and its observer status in the Arctic Council; 3) the EU's Arctic policies; 4) EU ban relating to the Arctic.

Among the analysed materials the only one article uses EU Arctic research and funding as an independent topic of narration. The article "Member of European Parliament bikes to Norway's Arctic coast, makes statement about need for new railway" (Atle Staalesen, The Independent Barents Observer, 18/08/2017) tells about the prospects of EU finding for railway road Rovaniemi-Kirkenes. The article expresses MEP's concerns about more environmental friendly transportation as rail roads and benefits of a new cross-border rail connection. It is also pointed out that the transportation line will be significant for the region and provides the argument:

Supporters argue that the new infrastructure will become of major importance as Arctic ice is melting and economic activity and shipping in the Arctic pick pace.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Staalesen 18/08/2017

The opinions on the EU's attempts to become an observer in the Arctic Council can be found in the articles, covering different topics, and express opposite views on the formal status of the EU in the organisation. The article "The Arctic Council's Ukraine challenge" (Alexandre Pilyasov, BarentsObserver, 12/05/2014), addressing the functioning of the AC in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, argues that the formal observer status for the EU in the AC is contradicting in a sense. First of all, it would create uncomfortable precedent for other intergovernmental organisations like OECD or ASEAN, which cannot be included to the Council due to its rule. Secondly, Finland, Sweden and partner Norway can articulate EU interests and there is no need to double the EU's representation in the AC. However, the article pays attention to the EU's capacity in Arctic research and financial support to the projects. Pilyasov calls the EU as one of the key players in Arctic research:

It [the EU] plays an amazing role in advancing knowledge for the entire Arctic community of nations and the whole of the human race. These efforts deserve extensive support, including the granting of research rights in the Russian Arctic.⁶⁰

However, the author states that the Arctic research by the EU cannot be viewed as a right to participate in governing the Arctic, because no EU countries have an access to the Arctic Ocean.

The other article "Finland will work to keep tension low in the Arctic" (Kathrin Stephen, High North News, 07/06/2017), covering the presentation of the Arctic Council Chairmanship of Finland in Berlin, stresses the opinion of Finnish ambassador Aleksi Härkönen on the EU status in the AC. According to Mr Härkönen the European Union continues to be a de facto observer and Finland will continue the US practice towards stronger involvement of observers in the Council.⁶¹ The ambassador supported this argument by exemplifying Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation as a good tool to engage observers.

The most dominating topic, which occurs regularly on the period from 2015-2017 in the analysed articles, is the EU's Arctic policy. In the selected articles this topic is mainly centered around the Joint Communication to European Parliament and the Council: An

⁶⁰ Pilyasov 12/05/2014

⁶¹ Stephen 07/06/2017

Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic (27 April 2016). The articles debate about either the upcoming policy or provide the analysis of the issued communication or discuss the following documents.

The article “The EU’s Arctic Policy: Eventually Getting Somewhere?” (Andreas Østhagen and Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 29/04/2015) speaks about the year of 2015 for the EU in the Arctic and the possible directions for the future the EU’s Arctic policy. One of the main points of the article is that the EU’s role in the Arctic can be strengthened by focusing on the European Arctic. It is also proposed that the EU should look beyond its observer status in the Arctic Council and “spend energy and political clout on other aspects of its Arctic engagement.”⁶² Moreover, the writers highlight three main aspects for the successful the EU’s Arctic engagement: 1) regional development; 2) cooperation with Russia in the Arctic; 3) the EU’s experience in maritime and environmental policy areas.

A very similar view is expressed in the article “The EU is an Arctic player and will engage further” (Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 29/04/2015), covering the seminar at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), where the upcoming Joint Communication was discussed. The EU struggle to gain Arctic legitimacy is linked with the incapacity to balance issues and policy responses for different parts in the Arctic region and points out that the EU has weakness to formulate a coherent and integrated policy for the region:

[...] the EU’s Arctic endeavour can best be described as a cat-and-mouse game with an observed European inability to effectively shape the Arctic-regional agenda [...].⁶³

In the circumpolar Arctic the EU’s role is described as a secondary player due to the lack of acceptance by the dominant Arctic states, while the EU is viewed as a key player in the European Arctic, because it provides the funding for developmental and cohesion programmes through EU tools. Therefore, in order to ensure the EU’s role in the Arctic, it is recommended that

[...] the EU should emphasise those policy areas where it carries a high degree of relevance for the Arctic, like in the maritime or

⁶² Østhagen&Raspotnik 29/04/2015

⁶³ Raspotnik 01/02/2016

environmental domain, and focus on the parts of the Arctic closest to the European home.⁶⁴

Discussing the process of the adoption of the Joint Communication on the EU's Arctic policy 2016, the articles provided some expectations for the future policy document. The main expectations were that the policy should have been motivating for the further the EU's engagement in the region:

[...] it [Joint Communication] should give a strong signal to the EU's internal and external stakeholders that the EU is committed to the Arctic and remains engaged and ready to take its responsibilities vis-à-vis this region.⁶⁵

Besides, the policy document was going to prioritise the European Arctic and sustainable development:

It is assumed that the new policy paper will have a strong focus on the challenges and opportunities of the European Arctic and how to effectively interlink the various European resources for the sustainable development of the region.⁶⁶

In the article "The EU in the Arctic: Correcting Misconceptions" (Timo Koivurova, High North News, 04/03/2016), discussing the misunderstandings of the EU as an Arctic actor, the upcoming EU policy document concerning the Arctic was described as an enhancing engagement with the region:

This [statement] is a logical next step that builds upon the EU's earlier policy documents in 2008 and 2012 that identified the broad contours of the EU's policy and activities in the Arctic.⁶⁷

The article also pays attention to the EU's significant contribution into the Arctic through research and funding and the EU status in the Arctic Council. It is stated that the formal

⁶⁴ Raspotnik 01/02/2016

⁶⁵ Raspotnik 01/03/2016

⁶⁶ Raspotnik 12/04/2016

⁶⁷ Koivurova 04/03/2016

acceptance of the EU as an observer would increase mutual dialogue and understanding between the Arctic actors.

Right after the Joint Communication “An integrated European Union policy” was issued both newspapers published materials, giving the evaluation of the new policy document. However, the materials highlight different aspects of the policy. The article “Analysis: Is the EU eventually ‘integrating’ the Arctic” (Andreas Østhagen and Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 27/04/2016) provides the comparison of the document with the previous the EU’s Arctic policies. It is concluded that the new policy ‘did not come with many surprises’, but offers a new insight on approaching the Northern frontier and beyond by the EU:

However, in general the update continues to tell the same Arctic story, perhaps with the exception for enhanced focused on the European Arctic and its economic development.⁶⁸

While the article “EU opens up for new Arctic infrastructure” (Atle Staalesen, The Independent Barents Observer, 29/04/2017) stresses the importance of the issue of infrastructure development and regional investments in the new policy and connect this with the possible approval from the Finnish side. The reason for that is Finland’s promotion among neighbouring countries Norway, Sweden as well as in the EU and the need for infrastructure development. There is a plan to construct a railway road connecting Rovaniemi and Kirkenes in the upcoming years, which can bring a global significance to Finland due its position between the EU and the Arctic:

For the Nordic country, infrastructure development is the key thing and on top of the wishing-list is a new railway connection between northern Finland and the Norwegian Arctic coast.⁶⁹

The connection between the Joint Communication on the EU Arctic policy 2016 and the Nordic cooperation is also found in the article “Can the EU boost Nordic cooperation?” (Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 03/03/2017). The article covers the report ‘Arctic Europe: Bringing together the EU Arctic Policy and Nordic cooperation’ produced by the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, which discusses the essential steps to develop the

⁶⁸ Østhagen&Raspotnik 27/04/2016

⁶⁹ Staalesen 29/04/2016

northernmost regions of Finland, Norway and Sweden in line with the new policy document. This approach is triggered by the emphasis on the European Arctic in the new policy document. It is argued that the European Arctic has significance for the rest of the Union, because it could promote and strengthen sustainable and low-carbon innovations for and in the EU.

Other discussions around the Joint Communication on the EU Arctic policy 2016 are generated by the following EU institutions documents, where they expressing the views on Arctic matters. The Council's Conclusions on the Arctic were characterised as vague and brief due to the nature of the document and the possibility to avoid a frustration. However, one statement in the Conclusions gained a special attention "firm support for freedom of research in the Arctic region". This phrase is described as ambiguous in the article "The EU pledges to actively follow-up on its Arctic commitments" (Andreas Østhagen and Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 21/06/2016), because the authors consider that it might find resistance from some non-EU Arctic states.

European Parliament resolution on EU policy for the Arctic 2017 was firstly discussed as a draft and then as an adopted text. The draft text of the resolution gave the insight to the full version of the document and was regarded as "the logical continuation of an 8-9 year old Brussels-based policy process."⁷⁰

The EP's resolution of 2017 on EU policy for the Arctic was interpreted as "the EP's continuous aim to show some kind of Arctic engagement"⁷¹ and received some criticism. For instance, the resolution is criticised for stressing the role of corporate social responsibility without specified suggestions for that instead of using the EU's market power. Despite the document points out to many issues such as environmental protection, security risks, regional development, and the article concludes:

The European Parliament's 2017 Arctic Resolution is an interesting read as one catches a glimpse of the Arctic state of

⁷⁰ Raspotnik 02/11/2016

⁷¹ Raspotnik 27/03/2017

mind of EU policy-makers. However, it is certainly not a document that causes sleepless Arctic nights.⁷²

The analysed articles cover not only the EU's Arctic policy documents, but also other EU policies, which have a relation to the Arctic region. In the article "The EU is not in revolutionary mode when it comes to the Arctic" (Andreas Raspotnik, High North News, 12/04/2016) the material tells about the upcoming EU Global Strategy for its Foreign and Security Policy. It is discussed that the strategy will emphasise the cooperative mode of the EU in the Arctic region, but the perception of how the EU and its institutions view the Arctic can only be elaborated from the regional policy.

The analysis of fifteen Norwegian articles also revealed one material "EU wants ban on heavy fuel in Arctic" (Thomas Nilsen, The Independent Barents Observer, 01/02/2017) about the proposed EU ban on heavy fuel in the Arctic. The article discusses the implications of the ban and EU concerns in relation to the Arctic region. The article predicts the cost effect consequences caused by the ban:

If put into force, such a ban would dramatically increase the costs of sailings to Arctic Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Russia, Canada, Alaska and trans-Arctic shipments between Europe and Asia via the Northern Sea Route.⁷³

It is the only one narrative, which can be described as an exceptional in the collection of Norwegian articles, because its topic is unlike the others and is focused on a proposed regulation by the EU rather than implemented regulations.

6.2 Russian Articles

The narratives coming from Russian media sources can be classified in three main topics, covering the EU's involvement in the Arctic affairs: 1) the EU and its observer status in the Arctic Council; 2) the EU's Arctic policies; 3) EU ban relating to the Arctic.

In the analysed articles the discussions on the EU's observer status in the Arctic Council are motivated by different topics. The article "Арктические шахматы. Часть 2" (Cheslav

⁷² Raspotnik 27/03/2017

⁷³ Nilsen 01/02/2017

Germanovich, Oreanda-Novosti, 06/02/2009) describes the main players in the Arctic region and pays attention to the EU. The article tells that the EU is interested in using the natural resources of the Arctic in order to guarantee its energy security. According to the author, this factor encourages the EU to submit its application for an observer to the Arctic Council to be able to participate in development of Arctic resources. This proposition is supported by the project of multipurpose boat Aurora Borealis, which combines an icebreaker, a drilling ship and a research vessel.

Other article “Остров свободы в Арктике” (Dmitriy Tulupov, Geopolitika, 10/01/2014) discusses the role of Iceland in the Arctic region and touches upon the question of EU status in the Arctic Council. The article tells that during the negotiations on Icelandic accession to the EU, Iceland was paying attention to the possible common actions in the Arctic. Iceland was interested in offering the EU assistance in getting a formal status in the AC in order to reach an agreement on the issue of fishing quota. The author evaluates this opportunity as attractive, but outdated, because this role of an Arctic leader in the EU has been performing by Denmark since 2000s. Besides, in the case of the EU, the potential role of Iceland in the question is found insufficient due to major misunderstanding between Canada and the EU over the seal ban.

One more article discussing the EU’s status in the Arctic Council is “Россия ограничивает полярный круг” (Elena Chernenko, 14/05/2013, Gazeta Kommersant). The article informs about the meeting of the AC in Sweden and tells about the main contradictions among the Arctic states. One of them is the issue of observer status of the EU in the AC. So, Denmark, Sweden and Finland would support the EU as a formal observer in the AC, while Russia would oppose that. The Russia’s main argument is that the three above-mentioned countries are EU-members and if the EU gets a formal status in the AC it would result in double membership and influence in the organisation. Moreover, the author maintains that Russia is concerned about the EU’s idea of new regulations necessary to settle down disputes in the region, which was expressed in the recent Arctic policy document. The Russian side is certain that the current international legal regime is enough to guarantee the stability in the region. As the article informs, the Russian position on the EU in the AC was supported by Canada and Iceland, but due to the dispute over the seal ban.

The second topic regarding the EU's engagement in the Arctic is the EU's Arctic policies. In the analysed Russian articles this topic was covered in the period of 2011-2017. The articles discuss the EU's Arctic policy documents and elaborate their implications to international relations in the Arctic region. Thus, writing about the Arctic in the EU's international agenda, the author of the "Арктический вопрос во внешней политике ЕС" (Vladislav Gulevich, International Affairs, 16/08/2011) analyses the Communication 2008 and basing on it, offers the views on EU further involvement into the region. Gulevich argues that in order to strengthen the position in the Arctic, the EU should take foothold in strategically important Greenland, which belongs to Denmark, but has a huge autonomy and borders with Canada. The author explains the attractiveness of the Arctic region by its rich natural resources, and sees this factor as a reason for competition between Brussels, Ottawa and Washington. According to Gulevich, only political tools and pragmatic diplomacy can facilitate the complicated issues of Arctic affairs.

Debating about the EU's role in the Arctic, the author of the article "ЕС и Арктика: присматриваясь к будущему" (Sergey Utkin, Russian International Affairs Council, 21/03/2012), touches upon the EU's Arctic policy documents such as Communication 2008 and Parliament Resolution 2011. The author argues that the EU has limited influence in the Arctic region, and tries to play the role of a normative power by proposing standards and models of conduct, which can be adopted by other Arctic actors. Utkin also points out that there is a difference in Arctic opportunities for Brussels bureaucracy and the EU's businesses, the EU has limited political tools in the region, while European business can find attractive prospects there. The author refers to the EU's Arctic policy as to "outline sketch", because of the low level of coordination on this issue. However, it is expected that in future the EU will be forced to be more consolidated, since the majority of EU-members are not able to maintain individual presence in the Arctic. The author also stresses the importance of Norway and Russia for the EU's Arctic policy, as the bilateral international relations could result in win-win situation for the EU and the countries.

In the regard of rejection EU application to the Arctic Council, the article "Евросоюз рвется к арктическому сырью: заседание Арктического совета в Кируне" (Dmitriy Semushin, REGNUM, 18/05/2013) covers the EU's Arctic policy documents: Communication 2008 and Joint Communication 2012. The author pays attention to the references to environmental

protection and sustainable development in the mentioned documents, which serve as explanation of the EU's concerns in the region. The changing climate in the Arctic creates new economic opportunities and, according to the author, such references have become a tool for competitive economic struggle. The article emphasises that Brussels looks for its place among Arctic stakeholders by developing the EU's Arctic policy documents and seeking a formal status in the Arctic Council. Despite the fact that the EU did not receive an observer status at AC meeting in Kiruna, Semushin doubts that this could stop the EU from further development of its Arctic policy.

In the article “Арктика: интересы нециркумполярных держав в регионе” (Elena Naumova, DeloNovosti, 29/10/2015), the author draws the EU's interests in the Arctic from the EU's Arctic policy documents of 2008 and 2012 (Parliament Resolution, Communication and Joint Communication). The author argues that the EU uses the developed environmental law as an argument for its presence in the Arctic. However, despite being worried about the environmental protection in the Arctic, the EU's aim is an access to the natural resources of the region and transport links offered by the Northern Sea Route. Besides, Naumova points out that the EU's Arctic policy is connected with the promotion of ideas, limiting the jurisdiction of the Arctic states (the International Seabed Area in the Arctic Ocean, the Arctic as a common good, the Polar Code). In view of this, the author concludes, the EU's activity in the Arctic will not only bring new opportunities for cooperation with Russia, but also challenge diplomatic relations due to inevitable controversies.

Among the analysed Russian materials only two articles explicitly discuss the Joint Communication 2016. The article “Через европейские санкции пройдут российские ледоколы” (Elizaveta Dmitrieva, Gazeta Kommersant, 27/04/2016) highlights the main priorities in the new policy document such as the issues of global warming, safeguarding the Arctic environment, dialogue with local communities and international cooperation. The author is concerned by the followed press release, where Russia is not mentioned as a key Arctic partner unlike other countries. Even though the writer cites the words by Federica Mogherini that the EU will work together with all Arctic states including Russia, then Dmitrieva points out that the European sanctions against Russia affect developments in the Arctic.

The other article “Битва за Арктику: ЕС рвётся на север” (Valentina Samoylova, REGNUM, 09/06/2017) is triggered by the interest of non-Arctic states to the region. Among the discussed actors is the EU with its recent Joint Communication 2016. In this article the policy document is characterised as means to internationalise the Arctic region by a number of projects, which will compete with already implemented and current programmes and initiatives at the regional level.

Discussing the EU’s Arctic policy over the time, the author of the article “Евросоюз включается в «большую игру» в Арктике” (Natalia Eremina, EvraziyaEkspert, 22/12/2016) point out its incoherence at several moments. First of all, Eremina finds the word ‘EU Arctic policy’ confusing, because the EU has Arctic status due to its member-state Denmark, though Greenland, the Arctic territory of Denmark, is not in the EU. Secondly, the author considers EU activity in the Arctic controversial. It is explained by lack of legislative instruments for overarching initiatives, even though the EU is a contracting party of Arctic-relevant organisations. Although it is pointed out that the EU has not yet obtained a formal observer status in the Arctic Council, it finances some programmes and research in the region. Thirdly, the author thinks that EU institutes have not yet realised what it is essence of the EU’s Arctic policy. Forth, the author point out that the EU’s Arctic policy creates circumstances for the competition with other stakeholders in the Arctic. The statement is exemplified by the EU’s policy documents, which usually do not elaborate enough the issue of cooperation with Russia. This brings the author to the proposition that the EU places stake on its member-states and the US, especially in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. The author summarises that the EU has become an Arctic player, but other states often do not recognise it. In order to be perceived as Arctic actor, the EU should identify a more precise strategy in approaching the region.

A slightly different attitude to the EU’s Arctic policy can be found in the article “Разорев Арктики” (Alexander Vishnyakov, Odnako, 25/02/2013). In this article the author talks about the EU’s Arctic policy in relation to US agenda in the Arctic. Vishnyakov discusses the press release “Knowledge, responsibility, engagement: the EU outlines its policy for the Arctic” and the memo “EU’s Arctic Policy: Questions and Answers” published on 3rd of July, 2012 and the fact that these publications were issued one month later after the visit to the Arctic of Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State. The author considers this fact as the evidence of joint

actions of two major global players and concludes about the future significant role of the Arctic for the world.

The analysis of twelve Russian articles also revealed one material “Лёд без пятен” (Taras Fomchenkov, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 21/03/2017) about the proposed EU ban on Arctic oil drilling. The article discusses the opposition caused by this proposed regulation among Russian experts. The article expresses their argument that there is a possibility to utilise clean technologies instead of banning the exploration and production in the Arctic. Besides, the article provides the opinion that this proposition could be harmless for the EU, because the EU does not own any deposits in the Arctic shelf, and the operations of the European companies in this sector then would not be harmed. The topic of this material is rather exceptional for the collection of Russian articles, since it does not focus on the EU’s engagement in the Arctic through already implemented policy documents.

6.3 Identified Narratives

Judging from the main topics identified through the analysis of the materials published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms, the articles convey four core narratives regarding the EU’s engagement in the Arctic: *the EU ‘seeker’*, *the EU ‘contributor’*, *the EU ‘player’* and *the EU ‘prohibiter’*.

The EU ‘seeker’

This narrative can be found in Norwegian and Russian media articles and unites all the articles, which main topic is the EU and its observer status in the Arctic Council. It tells about the EU’s continuous aspirations to become a formal observer in the AC and points out to the opportunities and consequences in connection to this.

The EU ‘contributor’

This narrative can be found only in one Norwegian media article and refers to the topic the EU’s contribution to Arctic research and funding. It tells about the importance of EU financial resources for the periphery of Northern Europe and portrays it as a donor of the significant project for Europe.

The EU ‘player’

This narrative can be found in Norwegian and Russian media articles and it is constructed by the articles on the topic of the EU's Arctic policy. It narrates about EU policy documents in relation to the Arctic and describes the place of the EU in Arctic affairs on the basis on these policies. This narrative treats the EU with the respect like a partner, but also with certain criticism like a competitor. Besides, the EU is portrayed as an acting participant of the Arctic game.

The EU "the prohibiter"

This narrative can be found in Norwegian and Russian media material and inspired by the articles on the topic of the EU Arctic bans. It narrates about the proposed EU regulations on limiting or modifying the activities in the Arctic. This type of narrative expresses the caution of the outcomes of the proposed ideas and offers more gradual alternatives to them.

6.4 Discussion of Results

By exploring the narratives in the media articles published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms between the years 2008-2018 it was possible to find the answer for the research question: What are the Norwegian and Russian media narratives of the EU's Arctic engagement?

Norwegian and Russian articles regarding the EU's involvement in Arctic affairs constitute four core narratives: *the EU 'seeker'*, *the EU 'contributor'*, *the EU 'player'* and *the EU 'prohibiter'*.

The EU 'seeker' is a narrative which covers the story of EU attempts to obtain a formal status in the Arctic Council in order to become a recognised actor in the region. The identified articles on this topic in Norwegian media have different modes. Thus, there are two opinions on EU observer status in the AC: the EU does not need the representation in the organisation and the AC should engage observers including the EU. While the Russian articles on the topic picture this issue as an important endeavour for the EU, which demands the EU special efforts such as to maintain relation with the Arctic or reach understanding with other Arctic states in order to be recognised. The incoherence of Norwegian opinions on this matter can be the result of articles' character, since they are published on Norwegian media platforms in English and represent the thoughts of foreign experts. So, the authors of the Norwegian articles covering the EU and its status in the AC are Alexandre Pilyasov ("The Arctic

Council's Ukraine challenge", BarentsObserver, 12/05/2014) who is Head of the Center for Northern and Arctic Economies in Russia, while Kathrin Stephen ("Finland will work to keep tension low in the Arctic", High North News, 07/06/2017) is a scientist at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Germany. Therefore, in this case the Norwegian platforms articulate the opinions coming from different countries and provide diverse arguments on EU membership in the AC.

The narrative *the EU 'contributor'* about the EU's contribution to Arctic research and funding was found only among Norwegian articles. This narrative tells about the EU's engagement in the Arctic as an important investment into the infrastructure of peripheral regions of the Northern Europe. This finding can be connected with the fact that Norway is an EEA member and cooperation with the EU provides funding tools that bear certain meaning for northernmost regions of the country and cooperation with neighbouring EU members in the Arctic.

The EU 'player' is a narrative telling about the development of the EU's Arctic policy and the EU's place among other Arctic actors in connection to these policies. The narrative expresses the opinion on the EU's Arctic policy, which is found incoherent with limited influence or insufficient tools for further engagement into the Arctic. The main difference in the Norwegian and Russian texts covering the EU's Arctic policy is the stress they put on documents. The Norwegian articles view the EU's Arctic policy documents as means for the enhancing engagement with the region, provide analytical thoughts on it and offer the advices how to strengthen the position of the EU in the Arctic on paper. Besides, some Norwegian articles see the EU's Arctic policy as a source for further integration within the EU/EEA by developing common projects in infrastructure or innovations in the Northern Europe. This hope is motivated by the emphasis on the European Arctic in the Joint Communication 2016, which proves that this direction of the EU's Arctic policy was correctly chosen and can provide the EU with more involvement into the Arctic.

In the Russian media the topic of EU Arctic policy is perceived as a matter of a larger issue of international relations in the Arctic. Even though the Russian articles pay attention to the EU's Arctic policy documents, they discuss that the actions that the EU could undertake in order to strengthen its position in the Arctic. The Russian articles link a stronger position of the EU in the Arctic with political consolidations. These consolidations include the political

influence over Greenland, cooperation with Russia and Norway, the articles also mention the coordination within the Union and with the US. Furthermore, these articles point out that the present EU's Arctic policy can be challenging for the EU – Russian bilateral relations due to different views on legislative framework of the Arctic region and European sanction against Russia.

These variations lead to the reflection that different statuses of Norway and Russia in international arena form their attitudes to the EU's Arctic policy. Since, Russia is not an allied state, it is important for the country to forecast developments in international affairs and predict how certain policy documents could shape the bilateral relations with the EU. Unlike Norway which is bound with the EU by the EEA agreement, another dimensions of the EU's Arctic policy come to the first place.

The analysis also identified the narrative *the EU 'prohibiter'* about the proposed bans relating to the Arctic. The narrative pictures the EU as a source of prohibition proposals, which can affect the activities in the Arctic. Even though the Norwegian and Russian articles exemplify different bans, in the Norwegian article it was EU ban on heavy fuel in the Arctic (February 2017), in the Russian article it was EU ban on Arctic oil drilling (March 2017), both bans are considered inappropriate and consequential for the industries in the Arctic.

This finding seems extremely fascinating due to several reasons. First of all, one of the guiding topics for the search of articles was already implemented EU Arctic-related regulations and agreements (e.g. the seal ban, the oil and gas directive, fisheries management in the Arctic Ocean), but the analysis has not identified any article, which would deliberately cover this topic and conform the other search criteria. Instead, the analysis identified two articles published almost at the same time on Norwegian and Russian media platforms covering the proposed EU regulations relating to the Arctic. Moreover, these articles express concerns if these bans would be reasonable for the Arctic. This demonstrates that Norway and Russia have less consent with the EU on the issues of industrial development in the Arctic. The already implemented regulations such as the seal ban, the oil and gas directive and fisheries agreement in the Arctic Ocean have got less attention in the media, while the proposed bans are highlighted due to potential bothering for the transportation and energy sectors in the Arctic. Besides, this finding also proves that the EU has extra-territorial power,

and in case of adaptation of these proposed bans, it might have had implications for other Arctic states.

The findings in the narratives also shed a light on how the EU is perceived as a normative power in the Arctic and what mechanisms are involved in the process of norm diffusion. *The EU 'seeker'* implies the norm of good governance. The EU is pictured as a seeker of a formal observer status who wants to promote good governance in order to further develop legal regime in the region. This norm promotion can be described as decoupling and the modification of imported norm. The narrative tells about the unsuccessful attempts of the EU to become a formal observer in the AC. In reality the EU have got the right to attend the meetings and participate in some working groups in the organisation, and these results neither in a formal status nor complete rejection. *The EU 'contributor'* indicates the norm of sustainable development and socialisation process in transferring it. The EU is described as a contributor to the development of peripheral regions in the Northern Europe. This is reported as a good practice, which finds the understanding and support among other Arctic states. *The EU 'player'* bears the meaning of two norms: sustainable development and human rights. In this narrative the EU stands for better practices in the region, developing innovations and environmental protection. Besides, the narrative contains references to the EU's Arctic policy provisions regarding the human rights protection of indigenous peoples. This norm is diffused in decoupling manner due to the Arctic states often find the EU's ideas incoherent in the policy documents. *The EU 'prohibiter'* manifests the EU's aspiration for sustainable development in the Arctic, but it points out to norm clash between the EU and the Arctic states. In the narrative the Arctic states do not support the promotion of restrictive regulations, which can enhance the environmental protection, and offer the alternative views on the EU bans in the Arctic.

Conclusion

Previous research drawn from the analysis of the EU's Arctic policy documents, competences and regional engagements showed that its presence in the Arctic is important, but it is often considered insufficient for the EU to be fully recognised as an actor. This approach leaves aside the perspectives of the Arctic states on the EU's engagement in the region. Besides, there had been no research on how these states see the EU's involvement in the region. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to analyse the perceptions of the Arctic states on the EU's role in the Arctic region. To do this, the study gathered articles published on Norwegian and Russian media platforms. The chosen articles cover the period from 2008 to 2018 and coincide with EU manifestations of its presence through multiple attempts to become an observer in the Arctic Council, adaptation of the EU's Arctic policy documents and Arctic-related regulations and agreements (e.g. the seal ban, the oil and gas directive, fisheries management in the Arctic Ocean) and reflect upon the above-mentioned issues.

Based on the qualitative analysis of the texts, the results identified four types of core narratives in Norwegian and Russian articles: *the EU 'seeker'*, *the EU 'contributor'*, *the EU 'player'* and *the EU 'prohibiter'*. The narratives were identified on thematic bases and correspond to the following topics: the EU and its observer status in the Arctic Council; the EU's contribution to Arctic research and funding; the EU's Arctic policies; and EU bans relating to the Arctic. There are some differences in the description of the EU's presence in the Arctic depending on whether the articles are Norwegian or Russian. However, the identified narratives support the consensus of previous research that the EU's involvement is important for the Arctic, especially in the research, infrastructure development and funding of projects, but it is not sufficient to be fully recognised as an Arctic actor due to the lack of formal status in the Arctic Council, restrictive legal proposals in the Arctic, an incoherent Arctic policy and misunderstandings with the Arctic states.

The narrative analysis of the Norwegian and Russian articles identified three main differences in the materials. First, the narrative *the EU 'contributor'* only exists in Norwegian. Second, the articles regard the EU policy documents as issues of different domains – as an enhancing engagement with the region on Norwegian media platforms and as a concern of international relations in the Russian articles. However, both Norwegian and Russian materials agree that the EU's Arctic policy needs to be more coherent. As the study showed, these two differences

are caused by the statuses of Norway and Russia. Norway's status as an EEA member provides the country with access to EU funding and participation in European projects. Also, the articles from Norwegian media platforms put forward the argument that the EU's Arctic policy can be a tool for further integration in the European Arctic. Russia's status as a big Arctic power obliges its media to consider the EU's Arctic policy as a broader question of international affairs. Finally, due to the different audiences of the Norwegian and Russian media platforms (international compared to local), Norwegian articles covering the EU's status in the Arctic Council express opposite opinions, whereas the Russian articles have a more homogeneous view.

This master thesis contributes to the field of European studies and focuses on the Arctic region. The results provide a deeper understanding of the EU as an Arctic actor and the perceptions of the EU's engagement in the Arctic. The outcome further contributes to research through analysis of how the EU's involvement in the Arctic is regarded in Norway and Russia. By reaching these results, the thesis has also identified aspects that create differences in attitude towards the EU in the Arctic in both countries. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the discussion of the EU as a normative power. The study identified three norms that the EU promotes in the Arctic: good governance, sustainable development and human rights. The analysis also revealed the diffusion mechanisms that the EU faces in approaching the Arctic: socialisation, decoupling and norm clashes.

Future research can continue in the same direction and study the perceptions of other Arctic stakeholders on the EU's engagement in the region. This can be perceptions of other Arctic states, permanent observers in the AC, or international organisation such as the Arctic Council or Barents-Euro Arctic Council. Future research can continue with the analysis of media articles in the national languages of the countries or materials published as a source of communication with the international audience (conference reports, speeches). The results of current master thesis motivate to analyse the perceptions of the EU's engagement in the region shaped by an Arctic state, which is also an EU member. Research of this type will seize the gap of already studied perception from Norway (an EEA member) and Russia (a non-EU country).

In closing, it can be concluded that the EU's Arctic policy should be deliberated more carefully so that to turn the EU's engagement in the region into a positive cooperation. In

order to maintain productive partnerships in the Arctic, the EU should work collaboratively and inclusively with all Arctic states.

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