Securing the Arctic
An analysis of Sweden's construction of security in the Arctic (2020-2023)

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the Arctic region is portrayed and constructed as a security matter within Swedish state discourses from 2020 to 2023. Focused on the escalating geopolitical significance and the transformative impact of climate change in the Arctic, the thesis scrutinizes Sweden's portrayal of security in the region. The research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the Arctic region is constructed in Swedish discourses and the possible implications of this. This thesis employs securitization theory, which is useful for understanding who securitizes, on what issues, for what reasons, and with what results, as well as under what conditions. The findings show that securitizing moves are more prevalent in the traditional security sector, but that environmental security is also gaining prominence. Through critical discourse analysis and securitization theory, the thesis unveils different representations and discourses used by various actors, as well as cross-references between the environmental and traditional security sector.
Table of contents

Abstract 2
Table of contents 3
Abbreviations 4
1. Introduction 5
  1.1. Introduction and research problem 5
  1.2. Aim and research questions 6
2. Previous research 7
  2.1 Arctic security 7
  2.2 Arctic and Sweden 10
  2.3 Arctic and Securitization 11
3. Theoretical framework 12
  3.1 Securitization theory 12
  3.2 Traditional security 17
  3.3 Environmental sector 19
4. Methodology, method and material 21
  4.1 Methodology 21
  4.2 Method 22
  4.3 Material 25
  4.4 Time-frame 26
  4.5 Ethical considerations 26
  4.6 Analytical framework 27
5. Empirical analysis 28
  5.1 Traditional security 28
  5.2 Environmental security 38
  5.3 Discussion 46
6. Conclusion 50
  6.1 Suggestions for future research 52
Bibliography 53
Abbreviations

NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
AC- Arctic Council
CDA- Critical discourse analysis
MUST - Military Intelligence and Security Service
NORDEFCO- The Nordic Defence Cooperation
EU- European Union
OECD- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction and research problem

The Arctic is a region with increasing geopolitical relevance. Due to the consequences of climate change, increased attention has been directed towards the Arctic region as the availability of resources and sea routes are becoming more accessible (Scopelliti & Perez, 2016; Depledge, 2021). This has spurred interest from other international actors. For example, China has initiated a new scientific and economic cooperation and expanded their BRI initiative to include the Northern Sea routes (Gjorv et.al, 2020). Moreover, military action in the Arctic has received more attention in NATO planning during the past years. For example, through military exercises, the establishment of a Joint Force Command for North Atlantic and High North operations and a higher prioritization of monitoring activities (particularly Russian) in the region (Depledge, 2021; Gjorv et.al, 2020; Schaller & Sam-Aggrey, 2020). Literature on the topic has shown concern that rivalry over access to resources and sea routes could increase tensions and risk of militarization in the Arctic (Åtland, 2014; Heininen, 2020).

Research on Arctic security has recognized these ongoing changes and attention given to the Arctic region, some scholars have argued that following 2014 a shift occurred in Arctic relations due to worsening relations between Western countries and Russia following the invasion of Crimea (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2017; Schaller & Sam-Aggrey, 2020; Pincus, 2020). While existing literature has acknowledged these changes, there is a notable gap in understanding how Sweden, an Arctic state and member of the Arctic Council (AC), perceives Arctic security amidst these developments.

As an Arctic state and member of the Arctic Council, Sweden has a way to influence Arctic governance (Arctic Council, n.d). Thus, understanding Sweden's approach to the Arctic is of
relevance. Through securitization theory, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the Arctic is presented as a security issue in Sweden. Securitization theory has been chosen as it is useful for understanding who securitizes, on what issues, for what, why, and with what results as well as under what conditions. Therefore, it is suitable to understand the official Swedish perception of the Arctic region (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Sweden has now abandoned its non-aligned stance and sought NATO membership, as well as released a new Arctic policy in 2020 (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020; Regeringskansliet, 2023). This study is of relevance as there is a lack of research where recent internal and external developments and their impact on Sweden's Arctic approach have been considered as well as due to a lack of research utilizing securitization theory to understand how the Arctic is constructed as a security matter in Sweden.

This research aims to fill this gap by looking at contemporary discourses to understand how/if the Arctic is securitized within Sweden. Moreover, this contribution can be argued to be relevant as Sweden is an Arctic actor who yields influence on Arctic governance, thus increasing knowledge about Swedish discourses on the Arctic will enhance our understanding of the Arctic region and Arctic governance, making this research relevant and timely.

To summarize, this research will contribute with knowledge of the Arctic region and security within a Swedish context, add to existing literature by including contemporary empirical material, and consideration of recent changes both in the Arctic region as well as in Sweden's policy on security and defense.

The research continues to be highly relevant, especially given the shifting geopolitical dynamics in the Arctic region, impacting all states especially those in its proximity.

1.2. Aim and research questions

This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the Arctic region is constructed in Swedish discourses and the possible implications of this. To reach this objective, this thesis uses securitization theory to describe how the Arctic region is portrayed and constructed in Swedish state discourse in relation to security. This is of relevance and interest as it can
explain how the Arctic has (potentially) been securitized in the Swedish context. The result may allow us to see if there have been any changes in how the Arctic region is perceived as well as distinguish what sorts of threats it has to be protected from.

The changes in both the external environments, as well as policy changes regarding security and defense in Sweden, could have had an impact on the nature of the discourse and how the Arctic is framed, both in terms of the referent object, what is threatening it and who is the securitizing actor.

- Research questions
  - How is the Arctic constructed as a security issue within Swedish state discourse?
  - To what extent has the Arctic been securitized in Sweden?

2. Previous research

2.1 Arctic security

Since the end of the Cold War, the Arctic region has often been described as a region of stability and cooperation. The Arctic Council is often understood as an impressive example of regional cooperation due to coordinated activities regarding scientific research and environmental protection. Even though the region is still relatively peaceful and stable, there have been debates about a possible reappearance of a security dilemma and the potential of an Arctic race (Wilhelmsen et.al, 2018; Scolpetti & Perez, 2016; Åtland, 2014; Gjørv et.al 2020; Heininen, 2020; Breitenbauch et.al, 2019).

The Arctic is considered a region with great economic potential and increasing geopolitical and strategic relevance. The Arctic holds resources such as oil, natural gas, minerals, fishing stocks, etc. Moreover, the melting ice opens up for navigation through new sea routes
(Scopelliti & Perez, 2016; Hilde, 2013). It is evident that the Arctic is becoming a more and more important region for economic, security, and foreign policy (Sergunin &Konyshev, 2017; Åtland, 2014). All of the Arctic states have developed strategies specific to the region, and littoral states have developed measures to protect their interests in the region. Measures that may unintendedly make others feel less secure and thus pressured to respond. Moreover, littoral states have a higher tendency to mention sovereignty and military defense in relation to Arctic policy whereas the non-littoral Arctic states have focused more on international cooperation and geopolitical stability (Åtland, 2014; Heininen, 2020).

In recent years, the idea of an emerging Arctic race where states and other international actors compete for resources and territory has received increased attention (Scopelliti & Perez, 2016; Hilde, 2013; Gjorv et.al, 2020). Following the planting of a Russian flag on the North Pole sea floor in 2007, concerns among the Arctic states were raised regarding the regional security environment and Russian behavior in particular. States have adopted national security and defense strategies regarding the Arctic, emphasizing the need for increased monitoring and actions to protect national interests in the region (Scopelliti & Perez, 2016; Hilde, 2013). Increased Chinese interest and activity in the region have raised concerns as China has sought to build relations with Arctic states to expand its influence in the region, for example using economic leverage as a way to achieve political goals in the Arctic. Increased China-Russian cooperation has also been understood as threatening to the Arctic region (Pincus, 2020; Almén & Weidacher Hsiuing, 2022; Fravel et.al, 2022).

However, some arguments oppose this view. Scopelliti and Perez rather argue that there is a possibility for increased regional stability (2016). Breitenbauch et.al asserts that changes in the Arctic can enable new opportunities and increase stability, believing that the Arctic consists of states that have institutional and problem-solving capabilities that could avert new conflicts from emerging. However, it comes with increasing pressure on the existing bilateral and multilateral relations in the region ( Breitenbauch et.al, 2019). Hilde argues that rather than geopolitical competition driving increased military investments in the Arctic, concerns for human and environmental safety as well as protecting national jurisdiction are the core motivations behind Arctic military investments (Hilde, 2013).
Some argue that 2014 can be understood as a shift in Arctic relations. Russian aggression in Crimea in 2014 resulted in deteriorated relations between Western countries and Russia, with Russia being described as an aggressive power and a potential threat to liberal values (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2017; Schaller & Sam-Aggrey, 2020; Pincus, 2020). Wilhelmsen et.al look at how relations between Russia and Western countries impact relations in the Arctic. They argue that external events can influence Arctic security and cooperation. One example of this is how Russian aggression in Ukraine has impacted military planning in Norway as they decided to prioritize the development of capabilities to operate in the North (Wilhelmsen et.al, 2018). Scopelliti and Perez also look at how regional cooperation could be affected due to the deterioration of relations between Russia and Western states following aggression in Ukraine (2016).

It is evident that there are different perceptions of the Arctic region, some hold that the region is still characterized by peaceful conditions, cooperation, and low tension, while others hold that the region has more strategic and military characteristics (Pincus, 2020; Hilde, 2013; Sergunin Konyshev, 2017; Heininen, 2020). Heininen asserts that despite some disputes over maritime borders and the growing interest globally in the Arctic as well as arguments of an Arctic race and expected conflict, the region has maintained its stability in a resilient manner. However, he also acknowledges that increased tensions between Russia and Western states threatens this stability (Heininen, 2020).

Following the literature discussed above, most recognize that the Arctic is still a relatively stable and peaceful region but that there is a possibility that the situation could deteriorate. Some argue that great power competition could drive increased militarization in the area while others hold that a conflict in the Arctic would likely be an effect of external events and spillover of a conflict elsewhere (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2017; Hilde, 2013; Scopelliti & Perez, 2016; Pincus, 2020).

There seems to be a consensus on the need for a forum where issues related to hard security and military dimensions can be discussed. This could work as reassurance for the Arctic states as it could decrease uncertainty about the intentions of other Arctic states. More
transparency and dialogue on the military dimension could be reassuring for states and prevent destabilization of the region. Åtland also acknowledges this as he claims that the underlying issue at hand is the uncertainty about other states or actors' intentions (2014). Moreover, he argues that states and actors' ability to understand how their defense policies may be perceived by others could improve relations. Military cooperation could thus improve trust and transparency in the region enabling the continued development of a stable security region in the Arctic. Another suggestion discussed is the implementation of confidence and security-building measures to further the development of a regional security system in the Arctic (Sergunin & Konyshew, 2017; Åtland, 2014; Scopelliti & Perz, 2017).

2.2 Arctic and Sweden

According to previous research on Sweden and the Arctic, it is evident that Sweden lacks a strong Arctic identity and that the Arctic region previously has been of relatively low priority in Sweden (Eklund, 2020; Durfee & Johnstone, 2019; Bergh & Klimenko, 2016). A shift in Arctic priorities came when Sweden took on the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2011, around the same time Sweden developed its first Arctic policy. Sweden's engagement focused on softer issues such as climate and environmental issues, economic development, scientific cooperation, polar research development, and the rights of indigenous people. Thus, the Arctic policy of Sweden centered on multilateralism and social, economic, and environmental developments (Eklund, 2020; Durfee & Johnstone, 2019; Bergh & Klimenko, 2016).

Eklund looks at the Arctic from a Swedish perspective seeking to explain how and if considerations of Arctic security influence perceptions of national security in Sweden (2020). According to Eklund, the Arctic region has seldom been included in Swedish debates regarding hard security, rather it usually emerges in discussions on climate change and contributions to knowledge-building regarding the Arctic (Eklund, 2020). In regards to hard security, the Arctic is often mentioned within a wider discussion on defense, often in reference to increased Russian engagement and activities in the region and its influence on national defense strategies (Bergh & Klimenko, 2016). However, Klimenko and Bergh also assert that Sweden has attached little importance to challenges of hard security in the Arctic, rather Sweden has recognized security components of existing challenges according to a wider definition of security (2016).
2.3 Arctic and Securitization

Knecht argues that how Arctic states have imagined the High North's spatial configuration over different periods, impacts Arctic politicization and securitization. According to Knecht, geopolitical discourse significantly influences the region's political developments. Using a critical geopolitical approach, the paper identifies three distinct periods of Arctic interrelations characterized by varying securitization patterns, challenging the notion of a fixed international order based solely on individual state entities (2012). He recognizes three intervals; securitization of the Arctic following World War 2 and throughout the Cold War, de-securitization in the post-Cold War era, and a new kind of securitization in the post-post Cold War, distinguished from previous securitization by expanding to include issues of environmental, social and energy matters and not only military-political issues.

According to Knecht the evolution of Arctic affairs post-Cold War can be examined through the interconnected lens of geopolitics and securitization. These concepts are intertwined: how the Arctic spatial order is collectively constructed influences the security agenda. For instance, if neighboring states perceive the Arctic basin as a dividing line between opposing blocs, military tensions and economic rivalry might overshadow peaceful cooperation in shared waters. Additionally, how issues are framed in terms of security impacts policy choices and how actors prioritize their preferences (2012).

Through a combination of securitization theory and discourse analysis, Jensen looks at discursive trends in security following Norway's High North Initiative in 2005 (2013). Aimed at investigating the discursive processes where the security of the High North became important in a broader range of political matters as well as received increased attention. The goal is to demonstrate that present security perceptions are influenced by historical events and that ideas about security are interconnected and subject to constant evolution. On a more practical level, specific trends and patterns revealed by the extensive data are emphasized. Jensen concludes that a combination of securitization theory and discourse analysis is useful to find discursive processes that are moving towards securitization. Securitization theory has received some critique stating that it does not pay sufficient attention to the period before
securitization of an issue occurs. Jensen argues that his approach could be useful to highlight attempts at securitization and enhance our understanding of how an issue area progresses, under specific circumstances and conditions, toward a potential endpoint of securitization, even if it doesn't necessarily reach that point (Jensen, 2013).

There has also been research utilizing securitization theory in the Arctic with a focus on the societal sector, looking at how indigenous people understand security in the region by positing indigenous communities as the referent object of security or as securitizing actors (Hossain, 2016; Greaves, 2016).

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Securitization theory

For this research, the Securitization theory will be utilized to explain how the Arctic region is portrayed in official Swedish discourse. Securitization theory is a constructivist approach in international security studies that was developed by the Copenhagen School in the 1990s. The Copenhagen School follows a discursive approach where security is defined through a speech act, to analyze security it is important to understand the process of how issues become securitized through the discursive construction of security threats and the response of relevant audiences (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Before describing the process of securitization, the concept of security has to be discussed. What makes something a security issue? From a traditional military-political perspective, security is about survival, when an issue is presented as posing a threat to a referent object, and thus legitimizes the use of extraordinary measures (Buzan et.al, 1998).

According to Securitization theory, security is when an issue moves beyond politics and the established rules towards an area above politics or a special kind of politics, i.e. the move from politicized to securitized. An issue has been securitized when it is displayed as an
existential threat that requires urgent measures and justifies these measures that usually are not considered. Thus, Buzan et.al puts forward a spectrum ranging from non-politicized issues through politicized to securitized, noting that this process can be executed in forums other than the state as well. Thus, the meaning of security derives from how it is used, for example, an issue can be a security issue if it can be argued that it is important and should take priority and that extraordinary measures may be necessary for handling it (Buzan et.al, 1998).

The authors argue that security should not be defined either objectively or subjectively, instead, security should be approached as an intersubjective process. Thus, in the authors’ view securitization is socially constructed and intersubjective. In this context, if a referent object gains legitimacy as something that should be safeguarded and survive, actors can then identify it as a threat, persuading others to follow or at least tolerate actions that might otherwise not be considered legitimate (Buzan et.al. 1998).

The Copenhagen school first developed securitization theory as a framework in international relations and security studies that seeks to understand how certain issues are constructed and framed as security threats, thereby justifying measures or policies out of the ordinary. Securitization theory broadens the concept of security through the inclusion of other referent objects than the state as well as presenting five sectors of security: military, societal, economic, environmental, and political. Thus rejecting traditionalist approaches where security often is limited to one sector (military). Securitization theory allows us to distinguish between the processes of securitization and politicization, enabling us to identify who has the capacity to securitize and the specific conditions under which this occurs (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Buzan et.al, 1998).

Securitization refers to the process of putting forward something as a security issue or threat, entailing that security is not simply either an objective or subjective condition. Focus is on the construction of a threat, and the referent object that is securitized by securitizing actors (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Using securitization theory entails looking at discourses and political constellations, successful securitization has three parts: existential threats, emergency actions, and effect on the audience (Buzan et.al, 1998).
According to securitization and the speech-act approach three types of units involved in analysis need to be distinguished. First, the referent objects i.e. what is to be understood as threatened and have a claim for survival. According to securitization theory, anything could be the referent object, in practice however some objects have proved to be more suitable/favorable for success due to constraints of facilitating conditions (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Second, the securitizing actor, who through a speech act tries to proclaim a referent object as threatened. Examples of common securitizing actors include political leaders, governments, lobbyists, bureaucrats, and pressure groups. One issue with the notion of an actor is that it can be difficult to specify who or what is the actor as collectives can be broken down into subunits or individuals. For instance, this research is interested in official documents, i.e. where the state could be argued to be the securitizing actor, however, it could be argued that is not the state, rather it is a particular department, or particular individuals. However, while individuals can always be considered actors, especially if they hold prominent roles, it is often more relevant to view them as the speakers of collectivities. For instance, states, political parties, or pressure groups are represented by authoritative individuals (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Determining the securitizing actor ultimately revolves around understanding the logic that guides the action. It's not just about identifying who delivers the speech, but understanding the underlying logic: is the action based on individual reasoning or organizational principles? Moreover, considering which entity – individual or organization – is generally held accountable by others can also provide insights. Focusing on the organizational logic behind the speech act is likely the most effective way to identify the securitizing actor (Buzan et.al, 1998)

This research embraces organizational logic, as official documents typically represent the collective stance of the state, they often encapsulate organizational logic rather than individual perspectives. Through discourse analysis, this research aims to examine how the state, as an entity, communicates security concerns and to understand how the Arctic is securitized within the framework of official state documents (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Moreover, a securitizing actor needs to consider internal and external facilitating conditions. Internal conditions include the use of security grammar, the construction of a threat and the
creation of a security discourse made in a way that is accepted by the audience. External conditions depend on the social conditions regarding the authoritative role of the securitizing actor, for instance, if the securitizing actor is in a position of power and the threat seems valid the likelihood of a successful securitization increases (Buzan et.al 1998).

Third, functional actors who also shape the dynamics of a sector without being the referent object or the entity arguing for the securitization of the referent object. These are actors who wield substantial influence over security-related decisions within a specific domain. (Buzan et al. 1998).

The criticism against securitization from traditional state-centric security analysts is rooted in their belief that security inherently revolves around states and should primarily concern the military and political domains. Their argument entails that widening security beyond these areas leads to problematic securitizations, like environmental security (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Those holding the state-security position argue politically against efforts to broaden security references to non-state entities. They assert that only through the state can the securitization process be democratically controlled and regulated, emphasizing the state's role as the legitimate and effective entity in managing security concerns. The authors recognize that the link between state and security holds political legitimacy while claiming that they must reject that approach in accordance with the logic of the securitization approach. Within their approach the state-centric position is possible but it is not a predetermined outcome, entailing that when using securitization one could find the state to be an important security referent, but that this is open to change. Rather they understand security as an area of rivaling actors, while recognising that it is inherently biased in favor of the state as the primary historical entity entrusted with security responsibilities and structurally equipped for the task. This recognition highlights the distinction between a state-centric perspective and a state-dominated environment (Buzan et. al 1998).

Securitization theory has received criticism for overlooking what happens before securitization occurs. According to Jensen, discourse analysis can provide valuable insights into the processes that lead to the securitization of a specific issue. Understanding the dynamics of discourse and identifying the prevalent discourses in a specific context helps us gain deeper insights into how and under what conditions an issue moves towards, and sometimes reaches, securitization (Jensen, 2013).
In Gad and Petersen’s (2011) conceptual analysis on securitization theory the authors identify 3 strands of criticism that have been dominant in the debate on securitization. The first one revolves around the explanatory power of securitization theory and has sought to alter the framework to create operational criteria. It has also been criticized whether the theory is applicable beyond the West. A second strand of scholars have argued against the normative implications of securitization theory and debated about the interpretation and preference for de-securitization. Influenced by Critical Security Studies, some academics have expressed worries about the theory potentially reinforcing the existing liberal order, especially in its articulation of de-securitization. A third strand of scholars has argued that securitization theory struggles to capture the everyday emergence and evolution of new security issues and politics within bureaucratic practices. This criticism extends to how the theory overlooks developments beyond a specific modern governance framework tightly linked to the nation-state (Gad & Petersen, 2011).

Balsacq questions whether the speech act understanding of security is adequate to explore security practices in real situations and argues that it reduces the meaning of security. The author proposes a more nuanced understanding of securitization as a strategic and pragmatic practice. In this view, securitization is seen as occurring within a complex web of circumstances, including the context, the psychological and cultural disposition of the audience, and the power dynamics between speakers and listeners. This approach acknowledges the dynamic and context-dependent nature of securitization, emphasizing the importance of persuasion and contextual clues in convincing the audience and obtaining a mandate for action against the identified threat. The critique thus challenges the overly formal and inflexible portrayal of securitization, advocating for a more adaptable and context-sensitive understanding of the phenomenon (Balsaq, 2005). Through discourse analysis this research will be more attentive to contextual surroundings, recognizing that texts achieve meaning through the context they are situated in as well as their interconnectedness with other texts (Balsaq, 2005; Jensen, 2013).

To summarize, applying securitization theory entails looking at how certain issues are framed and constructed as security issues or threats. A securitized issue could be dealt with at an accelerated pace and could include measures not taken during normal circumstances. This approach focuses on discourses, framings, and political constellations to understand how something is securitized (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Buzan et al., 1998).
3.1.1 Delimitation

Research on the Arctic naturally encompasses different perspectives of security including environmental, economic, military, political, and societal sectors. To delimit the scope of this research, the thesis will focus on the military, political and environmental sectors.

As previous literature asserts, Sweden's approach to the Arctic has had a strong focus on environmental issues and climate change, emphasizing sustainable development, cooperation and polar research (Eklund, 2020; Durfee & Johnstone, 2019; Bergh & Klimenko, 2016). In light of recent changes, the security situation in Sweden's nearby area has changed, which could impact relations in the Arctic (Ds 2023:19). Therefore, it is of interest to examine whether this has influenced Sweden’s perception of the Arctic to encompass more traditional, military and political matters, and to gain a better understanding of how Sweden portrays environmental matters in the Arctic. Moreover, these sectors have been chosen as they, in accordance with previous literature, cover security matters that are prevalent in the Arctic.

However, recognizing that sectors may intertwine, if themes relating to the societal or economic sector appear it will be noted.

3.2 Traditional security

For this thesis, the military and political sectors proposed by Buzan et.al will be integrated into a cohesive traditional security sector. The political and military sectors are interconnected through the partial interchangeability of force and consent within the governance process. The military agenda as well as the interaction of military capabilities among states is deeply influenced by political relations. Moreover, as noted by Buzan et.al, threats in the political sector could be delivered through military means, further intertwining the sectors. However, the traditional security sector is not limited to sole matters of military security (Buzan et.al 1998).
By combining the military and political sectors into a traditional security sector, this thesis provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how Sweden approaches security discourse in the Arctic, considering both military and non-military dimensions.

This sector encompasses both military and political security dynamics, considering both external and internal threats to the state. The logic of threats and vulnerabilities is shaped by historical, geographical, and political conditions (Buzan et.al 1998).

The primary referent object as well as securitizing actor for the traditional security sector is the state, with a focus on protecting territorial integrity and sovereignty. Referent objects of traditional security could also include society, citizens, institutions, ideology and identity of the state etc (Buzan et.al 1998).

Buzan et.al also discuss systemic referent objects whose survival could be argued for. These could include international institutions/organizations as well as principles that are deemed necessary to maintain stability and essential for international or regional order. For example, international law or stability could be what needs to be protected (Buzan et.al 1998).

Regarding external threats, traditional security often revolves around the interaction and perceptions of military capabilities and intentions between states. When securitizing actors perceive or portray other states and their armed forces as a threat it could trigger the classic military security dilemma. Thus, military capabilities can facilitate securitization efforts. The security dilemma could encompass arms races, formulation of policies for defense and deterrence, and proliferation of military technologies. On the other hand, efforts can also be made to alleviate this dilemma through for example arms control, alliance, and other strategies (Buzan et.al 1998; 51-52)

Even though threats and security matters are socially constructed, certain conditions can facilitate securitization such as history, geography and political factors. As discussed above military capabilities can facilitate securitization efforts, however on its own, military capabilities cannot lead to securitization, rather it is along with other variables such as geographical proximity or previous experiences that it shapes securitization (Buzan et.al 1998; 59).

As mentioned, the state is often the referent object in this sector, and states commonly have designated representatives, leaders, and structures on who can speak on behalf of them.
Especially regarding military matters, security is often institutionalized. State representatives and governments are legitimized to speak security on behalf of the state, however, other actors could participate in the discourse of security such as defense intellectuals, intelligence services, and pressure groups. Moreover, functional actors, who are not the referent object or securitizing actor, also wield influence. Such actors could include the armed services, arms industries, subunits within the state, etc (Buzan et.al 1998).

3.3 Environmental sector

Securitization attempts in environmental matters are relatively new, as the discourse was first evident in 1972 following the United Nations conference on the human environment (Buzan et.al,1998; 71). Buzan et.al present two types of referent objects that are found in the environmental sector; “the environment itself and the nexus of civilization and environment” (Buzan et.al, 1998; 76). Loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation, pollution, endangering species, and disruption of ecosystems are examples of threats to the environment. The survival of civilization is intertwined with concerns related to vital resources such as water, fertile land, energy, and clean air. This sector of security recognizes that without the preservation of the environment and its ecosystems, the sustainability of the achieved level of civilization becomes untenable (Buzan et al 1998). Thus, referent objects in the environmental sector do not only encompass individual species/the environment itself but also expand to human collectivities such as states and communities and possibly the whole biosphere (Buzan et.al 1998).

Environmental threats can generate securitization moves. The perceived urgency of environmental issues influences to what extent issues are securitized or politicized (Buzan et.al 1998). Concepts such as resource scarcity, sustainability, natural disasters, biodiversity, etc. can be used to mobilize concerns, however, it is more common that these issues are politicized rather than securitized. Moreover, Buzan et.al mentions that several matters on the agenda in the environmental sector commonly overlap with other sectors.

Buzan et al note that a prominent attribute of the environmental sector is that there are two agendas in play, a scientific one and a political one, these overlap and influence each other. The scientific agenda is rooted in sciences and nongovernmental activity and is often constructed by scientists and/or research institutions (Buzan et.al 1998). The political agenda
is concerned with policies and decision-making that influence and address how to manage environmental concerns. These agendas coincide in public debates and media, and the foundation for securitizing moves is often found in the scientific agenda (Buzan et.al 1998).

The political agenda revolves around main areas; how well the state and public are informed about the scientific agenda related to environmental issues; whether the political agenda acknowledges the responsibility for managing environmental concerns; and considerations on how to address and handle environmental issues within the political sphere. Buzan et.al highlights that a distinctive feature of the environmental sector is the influence of scientific arguments. For the political agenda, an important aspect is how the threats to the environment are perceived as urgent enough to become a political issue, immediate threats are more likely to spur a securitizing move than threats in the future. Security issues in the environmental sector often refer to more remote and ambiguous threats, decreasing the possibility of successful securitization if there is no extreme urgency (Buzan et.al 1998).

Buzan et.al identify the system (global) level as dominant, driven by an international environmental community that shapes the security agenda. However, the unit level (states) is also crucial, as global concerns are politically relevant at a local level. Thus, localized approaches are important in addressing environmental security challenges (Buzan et.al, 1998). As this thesis is interested in Sweden’s portrayal of security matters in the Arctic, there will be a focus on the unit level.

In consideration of different regions and actors, it is evident that cause and effect don't always align. For example, emissions in one area can cause an effect in another area. Understanding this is crucial in deciding whether causes or effects are seen as urgent security matters (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Buzan et al. introduce the concept of lead actors, entities with a strong commitment to effective international action on specific environmental issues. Strategies employed by lead actors include raising awareness through financing research, informing public opinion, utilizing environmental epistemic communities, and engaging in diplomatic efforts. However, it's essential to distinguish these initiatives from securitizing moves; they constitute politicization rather than securitization. Leading actors are often found near troubled areas.
affected by environmental degradation, emphasizing the geographical proximity of actors to areas of concern (Buzan et.al, 1998).

Environmental security underscores the inseparable link between human civilization and the environment, highlighting the urgency of addressing threats through a combination of scientific insights and political action. The sector's unique feature lies in the coexistence of scientific and political agendas, both playing important roles in shaping the discourse and policy responses (Buzan et.al 1998).

4. Methodology, method and material

This research will use critical discourse analysis, looking at elite discourses and different types of material found in official documents to see how the Arctic region is approached concerning security and how actors perceive the current situation in the Arctic.

4.1 Methodology

This research employs an interpretivist research design, thus following the interpretive presuppositions concerning ontology and epistemology. The ontological position of interpretative research assumes that reality cannot be observed objectively, entailing that research cannot be objective as our perceptions are intricately tied to a complex network of beliefs and experiences (Hollis, 1994; Bevir, Rhodes, 2016). According to interpretivist tradition, reality is socially constructed and there is a focus on the making of meaning. Rather than seeking the cause of behavior, interpretive research is interested in the meaning of action, believing that the social world must be understood from within. Thus, from an interpretive standpoint, we need to understand the relevant meanings behind to understand political phenomena. The interpretivist stand on language emphasizes that language composes the world as we know it as well as how we function (Schwartz-Shea, P.& Yanow, 2012; Hollis, 1994; Bevir & Rhodes 2015). Moreover, interpretive research recognizes that meaning-making is always situated in different contexts (Schwartz-Shea et.al. 2012).
This research follows an abductive logic of inference. Abductive inference is a strategy employed in research to generate hypothetical conjectures and feasible explanations from puzzling observations. It involves reasoning from a perplexing set of observations to propose a likely explanation that goes beyond the observed facts. Thus, abductive research involves the move from observations/data to plausible explanations. Consequently, it is more about generating conjectures rather than arriving at definitive conclusions (Wight, 2012).

In abductive research, the process typically begins with identifying something puzzling, and the researcher seeks to explain it by uncovering conditions or circumstances that make the phenomenon less surprising or puzzling (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, p.28). This research, focusing on how Sweden frames the Arctic region as a security matter, employs abductive reasoning to offer explanations. The use of securitization theory contributes to understanding this process (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow, 2012).

Conducting interpretive research also demands a degree of flexibility from the researcher, as one cannot predict what might occur or be found in the research process, possibilities and limitations can not always be anticipated. Ongoing learning throughout the research process can influence the research design and it might be revised during the process. (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012)

Interpretive researchers engage with unexpected puzzles, allowing their understanding to evolve, leading to continuous refinement of the research design. This flexibility is important for addressing unforeseen challenges and adapting due to ongoing learning. (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012).

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

This research aims to explore how the Arctic region is securitized in Sweden and what impact increased tensions and engagement in the Arctic have on Swedish policy and strategy. This will be done by conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA) within a political context to
see how the dominant discourse is constructed about the Arctic region and security, and to understand how discourses are used to produce meaning that precedes actions (Weldes, 2014; Gentry, 2016).

CDA is useful to investigate the construction of meanings that shape action in a particular context. In this case, the construction of security issues that influence Sweden’s strategies and behavior in the Arctic region. In discourse analysis, there is often an assumption that language is used to bring about action (Weldes, 2014; Schwartz-Shea, P. & Yanow, 2012). Thus, in using critical discourse analysis this research follows the assumption that language is a powerful tool in producing actions. Putting forward certain discourses influences how we understand the world, how we make meaning and how we produce knowledge (Gentry, 2016; Weldes, 2014; Milliken, 1999; Fairclough, 2015; Schwartz-Shea, P. & Yanow, 2012).

This thesis will employ CDA that asserts a focus on representations and discourses (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2016). Discourses can be found in different representations and these representations are a way of making meaning, moreover, it is important to acknowledge that representations always are contextually situated (Weldes, 2014). CDA can provide insight into why a certain mode of representation was adopted over another as well as the implications of this (Milliken, 1999). According to Fairclough’s approach to CDA, discursive practices are important in shaping the social world as they are significant in the creation and interpretation of texts. CDA is useful for uncovering how texts construct and reproduce representations of the world and power dynamics. Moreover, it is important to recognize that discourse in turn also is shaped by other structures and social practices (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Fairclough, 2015).

Fairclough & Fairclough, from a critical discourse perspective, emphasize the significance of political discourse analysis in terms of its role in perpetuating and contesting political power through language (2016). This research agrees with the claim that political discourses both warrant and constrain action, entailing that forming the discourse holds power (Fairclough, 2015). As put by Weldes, discourses “are sources of power because ruling some meanings in and others out is already and fundamentally an exercise in power” (2014; 229-231). When discourses are treated as if they are transparent and representative of “the real ” they become common sense, further showing how powerful discourses can be (Weldes, 2014). As discourses typically maintain a certain level of regularity in social interactions, they produce
prerequisites for action. Consequently, it proves valuable and useful in describing state perceptions, the premise behind political decisions, and the reasons alternative options were disregarded (Neumann, 2008; p. 66). In accordance with critical discourse analysis, this thesis is focused on representations and discourses rather than on actions and genres (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2016). Looking at political discourses regarding the Arctic and security within a Swedish official context can increase understanding of how Sweden perceives the Arctic region as a matter of security, the reasoning behind decisions on the Arctic and give insights into why certain types of issues have been put forward over others. For this research, regarding security in the Arctic, presenting something as a matter of security enables the move from politics to above politics and securitization.

Some scholars favor text-centered definitions of discourse and linguistic approaches, often defining discourse as the study of language in use. Others embrace wider definitions of discourse, expanding it beyond text, writing, and speech, Jensen in his article on Norwegian securitizing discourses defines discourse as “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, which brings an object into being” (2013; 82). Following a wider perspective on discourse, individual texts do not have inherent analytical meaning. Their significance emerges through their connections with other texts, the various discourses they are part of, and how they are created, shared, and understood (Jensen, 2013). This is often referred to as intertextuality in interpretative research processes, intertextuality is important to consider when using CDA. The concept draws attention to the fact that no text is read in isolation, rather they are read and understood in relation to other texts. Intertextuality underscores the complex web of relations that link different forms of textual representation, contributing to our understanding of power dynamics in the discourses of international politics (Weldes, 2014; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, this research aims to consider these factors to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Sweden portrays the Arctic region.

CDA was chosen as it is compatible with the research questions as well as the theoretical framework used for this research. CDA enables an understanding of the discursive construction of Arctic security in Sweden. Moreover, the use of discourse is coherent with securitization theory, as Buzan et.al puts it “the obvious method is discourse analysis’ (Buzan et.al, 1998; 176).
4.3 Material

For this research I will mainly make use of high data, looking at official sources of policy
documents and statements to obtain an understanding of the main representations offered by
policy elites (Weldes, 2014). For example, strategy documents, defense preparations, official
statements, policy declarations, etc., will be looked at. This evidence is chosen to analyze the
language and representations used about Sweden and the Arctic region.

Another form of high data that could have benefited the research is media sources such as
ewspapers. According to Weldes, media sources play an important role in the dissemination
and reproduction of official discourses, they can also be important players in the contestation
of discourses (Weldes, 2014). Moreover, Jensen argues that including, for instance, media
discourses could be useful to integrate “the audience” into the analysis (2013). This research
focuses on dominant discourses drawing on official sources, as it is interested in how the
Swedish state discourse portrays the Arctic region. The inclusion of media discourses could
have been a way to include the audience and to identify possible conflicting discourses,
however, it is out of scope for this thesis due to the focus on state discourses and time
limitations.

This research recognizes that data is co-generated, meaning that the evidence generated is not
an objective reflection of the world, as discussed earlier, the researcher can’t be outside of the
study and thus the prior knowledge of the researcher can affect the evidence (Schwartz-Shea,
Peregrine & Yanow, 2012). This thesis aims to be transparent and reflect upon how evidence
was generated, to take into consideration how I, as the researcher, have influenced the
generation of evidence.
4.4 Time-frame

Research on Sweden and the Arctic has shown that the Arctic, at least up till 2011 has been of low priority in Sweden. Sweden developed its first Arctic strategy at the same time it took chairmanship over the AC. Since then, one new policy has been developed in 2020. This thesis is interested in recent developments of Sweden's approach to the Arctic and whether the Arctic has received increased attention, thus looking at documents from 2020 and onwards.

4.5 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, it is important to acknowledge and reflect on positionality and the possibility of unconscious bias, entailing an understanding of the effects of researcher-presence. In accordance with interpretive thought, researchers cannot be objective and thus as a researcher, I need to be aware of the potential position I am coming from as a researcher and how it could impact the research (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012).

Therefore, throughout the research process, I aim to be reflexive i.e. aware and transparent on how my identity and way of making meaning can influence the research process. Reflexivity means that a researcher actively thinks about how their understanding, influenced by personal experiences and the research process, connects to the knowledge they present. It involves recognizing the researcher's impact, considering personal characteristics, and evaluating how the scholarly community and broader social context affect the research (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012).

Reflexivity is a methodological concern that should be considered throughout the whole research process and could be understood as a counterpoint to positivist objectivity (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012; p.100). Being reflexive has methodological value as it generates transparency on how knowledge is generated and how my sense-making could influence data generation and analysis. It can increase trustworthiness as it enables assessments of knowledge claims for potential readers and increases transparency (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012).
An important facet of interpretive research design, as discussed earlier, is its inherent flexibility, where the initial design and research questions may evolve during the research process. This aligns with the logic of the hermeneutic circle and highlights the iterative and recursive nature of interpretative research. While entering this research, I, as the researcher, have made decisions about the evidence and research approach. However, I acknowledge that these initial plans are subject to change as new insights, knowledge, and understandings emerge throughout the process (Schwartz-Shea, Yanow; 2012).

4.6 Analytical framework

This analysis will be done by looking at official sources and identifying what representations regarding the Arctic are put forward as well as in what context. Through the focus on official documents, this analysis looks at political discourses as these can be understood as sources of power and representative of the official Swedish state perceptions on the Arctic (Weldes, 2014;179). This analysis aims particularly to see how the Arctic is discussed and mentioned in relation to security.

When collecting and reading the material, the author will look for recurring themes and representations of the Arctic region to see whether Arctic matters are moving from politicization towards securitization. Moreover, this thesis aims to identify the context in which the Arctic is mentioned and whether any measures are suggested in response to securitizing moves.

The analytical framework used for this thesis is inspired by the vocabulary presented by Balsacq which suggests three levels of analysis, each containing subunits (2011). These levels are 1; Agents, 2; Acts, and 3; Context. For this analysis, Balsacq’s framework has been revised into two main levels (1) Agents and (2) Acts, whereas contextual factors and aspects will be integrated into these levels rather than being analyzed separately. This decision was taken as it enables a more coherent analysis, where context will be discussed in relation to agents and acts throughout the analysis, as well as in the discussion.

*Level 1 Agents* - This level centers on the actors and relationships that shape securitization. The analysis will identify and examine securitizing actors, functional actors, referent objects, and threats as well as power dynamics (Balzacq, 2011).
**Level 2 Acts**—This level focuses on practices supporting the securitization process, including facilitating conditions, discourses and securitizing moves. This entails analysis of language and rhetorical techniques, looking for the frames and storylines that are put forward. Moreover, suggested measures and policies resulting from the securitization process will be examined (Balzacq, 2011).

These levels will guide the analysis and provide a structured and comprehensive understanding of potential securitizing moves regarding the Arctic region in Swedish state discourse.

This analytical framework is coherent with the method (CDA) and securitization theory. Important aspects of CDA include analysis of representations, intertextuality, power dynamics, and context awareness; these are also captured through the analytical framework (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2016; Balzacq, 2011). Moreover, it encompasses the units that are presented in securitization theory; referent object, securitizing actors, functional actors, and measures (Buzan et al., 1998).

**5. Empirical analysis**

This research employs securitization theory and critical discourse analysis to examine how Sweden constructs the Arctic as a security issue. The analytical framework is utilized to explore the agents, acts, and contexts influencing the securitization of the Arctic. The focus is on understanding who securitizes, on what issues, and with what outcomes, emphasizing conditions that facilitate securitization.

The analysis will be structured into two main parts: The traditional sector and the environmental sector. These will in turn be structured according to the analytical framework, divided according to the levels. The analysis concludes with a discussion of the findings.

5.1. Traditional security
5.1.1 Level 1- Agents

*Actors*

This thesis adopts an organizational logic, considering official state documents, statements, strategies, etc. as indicative of the state's perception. The reliance on government documents positions the government as the primary securitizing actor, aligning with the perspective of Buzan et al. According to their framework, the government, especially in liberal-democratic states, is typically recognized as the authorized actor with the legitimacy to articulate security concerns on behalf of the state, particularly within traditional sectors such as the military and politics (Buzan et al., 1998).

As noted by Buzan et al., the power position of the securitizing actor serves as an external facilitating condition influencing the securitization process (1998). If the securitizing actor is a legitimate authority that holds power, and the threat that is put forward is understood as reasonable, the probability of a successful securitization would likely increase (Buzan et.al, 1998). Given that this thesis focuses on material disseminated through official state channels, the securitizing actor, represented by state authorities, holds significant power and influence in decision-making and discourse creation.

Sweden posits itself as an actor with both interest and responsibilities in the Arctic, implying that Sweden has an important role in Arctic policy and relations (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1,5,22; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; Ds 2023:19: 128). The Arctic strategy of Sweden recognizes ongoing changes and developments in the Arctic, requiring the government to adopt a new approach to the region (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1,5-6,9). This portrayal aligns with Sweden's perception of itself as a legitimate securitizing actor in the Arctic.

Another category of actors to consider is functional actors, those capable of influencing the securitization process without being the referent object or securitizing actor. Typically, these actors are influential within specific domains (Buzan et al., 1998). Among the selected material, this thesis identifies The Swedish Armed Forces and The Swedish Military Intelligence Agency (MUST) as functional actors in the traditional security sector.
This thesis draws upon material from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Defense Committee, the Swedish Armed Forces, and MUST. All these entities could be considered legitimate and authoritative representatives of the state, influencing state discourse and securitization processes.

The annual reports from the Swedish Military Intelligence Agency (MUST) are used as a basis for government decisions and provide information about the current global situation, development trends, and potential threats to Sweden’s security (MUST, 2021:3,5). Therefore, MUST influences decisions in the defense and security policy sector, while they are not the referent object. As a functional actor, they take part in shaping Swedish discourse on the Arctic. Moreover, these reports are relevant to understanding how Sweden perceives and constructs security matters as well as ongoing developments around the world and their possible effects on Sweden.

The Swedish armed forces provide the government with annual reports containing information on activities that have been carried out throughout the year (Försvarsmakten, n.d.). Moreover, they produce reports that contain military-strategic trends, global developments, predictions of future conflicts and developments in nearby areas, and proposals for organization and priorities. Thus providing the government with information to use as a basis for political decisions (Försvarsmakten, 2022:1).

Following the above, it is evident that military and defense institutions, such as the Swedish Armed Forces and MUST, function as pivotal actors in implementing security measures. Their role is not only to identify threats but also to propose and enact responses to perceived security challenges. Therefore, they could be understood as functional actors who can influence and shape the discourse on security as well as decision-making.

Referent objects and threats

A referent object found in the traditional security sector discourse is the "peace and stability" of the Arctic region, the referent object entails something that is threatened and needs to be protected. (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1-5; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; DS 2023:19:128; Försvarsmakten, 2022b: 21). For instance, the Defense Act states that an objective in the Arctic region is to preserve it as a region of peace and stability (Proposition 2020/21:30:39).
The report “Allvarstid” from the Defense Committee also emphasizes that Sweden has both interests and responsibility in promoting peaceful, stable, and sustainable development as well as international cooperation in the region (Ds 2023:19:128). This framing is also put forward by former minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde in the foreword of the Arctic strategy (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1). Moreover, peace and stability are mentioned together 18 times throughout the document, the repetition of these words is a way to strengthen this perception of the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020; 3-6, 9,12,14,11,21-23,25). This aligns with securitization theory, where the referent object represents the value perceived to be under threat and in need of protection. In the discourse, the Arctic is portrayed as a region of strategic importance as well as characterized by increasing geopolitical rivalry and tensions. The referent object is not only the absence of conflict but also the sustainable development and cooperation that characterize a stable Arctic. Several threats to the stability and peace in the Arctic can be found in the Swedish discourse on the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1,5; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; Ds 2023:19;128 Utrikesdepartementet, 2022a).

In Swedish security discourse, the Arctic is often mentioned in the context of deteriorating relations between Russia and the West, consequences of climate change, and increasing geopolitical rivalry (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:19,22; Försvarsmakten 2022b:14,21; Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39; Ds 2023:19;28,45,64,96,127-128;MUST, 2021:17; MUST, 2022:12).

In the traditional security sector, the main threat presented is Russia, both for Sweden and for the stability in the Arctic region. In the Swedish Defense Act for the period 2021-2025, Russian behavior is mentioned as the main cause of the deteriorating developments in Sweden’s nearby area (Proposition 2020/21:30:33,39). Military build-up, unpredictable intentions and actions, cooperation with China, etc. are used in the construction of Russia as a threat to peace and stability in the Arctic region. The defense committee’s report Allvarstid states that Russian behavior should “constitute the main basis for the development of Swedish total defense” (Author’s translation) (Ds 2023:19:97). A study from the Swedish Armed Forces, states that Russian behavior, specifically the invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent break in the Arctic Council’s cooperation can have a long-term negative impact on the stability and security in the Arctic (Försvarsmakten, 2022b:21). This example shows how Russia is constructed as a threat to the referent object, i.e. peace and stability of the
Arctic region. One could also detect a change in the perception of Russia as a threat. In the Arctic strategy released in 2020, it is stated that the cooperation has functioned well in the Arctic region despite deteriorating relations with Russia (Utrikesdepartementet 2020:14). However, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine there has been a slight shift and increase in the portrayal of Russia as a threat, as well as the impact of subsequent NATO application by Sweden and Finland (Ds 2022:7:50; Ds 2023:19:54,117,128; Försvarsmakten, 2022b: 21).

Consequences of climate change are constructed as threatening to the Arctic region in several ways. In the traditional security sector, concerns revolve around increasing tensions and the risk of conflicts. Climate change enables new opportunities for the extraction of natural resources and access to sea routes, increasing the geostrategic importance of the Arctic. Moreover, it increases the risk of competing claims and disputes regarding resources and freedom of navigation (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,22; Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39,67). Climate change is also presented as enabling increased military presence, as the thawing of permafrost has changed conditions in the Arctic (Ds 2023:19:45). The latest report by the Defense Committee presents climate change as a long-term and serious threat. The use of the word serious could be understood to increase a sense of urgency, especially as the report states that it impacts the structure of Sweden’s armed forces and suggests measures to be taken (Ds 2023:19:45).

Regarding increasing geopolitical rivalry, both China and Russia are presented as specific concerns and potential threats. Regarding China there is a dual perception, on the one hand, cooperation and scientific development in the climate area are deemed important in the Arctic. But there is also a rising concern regarding China's intention to insert more influence in the Arctic and the possibility of it resulting in a conflict of interest. It is stated that China has no military presence in the Arctic today, but that the build-up of naval forces could be a potential sign for future Arctic military presence(Proposition 2020/21:30:39, 52; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:22-23; MUST, 2021: 17). Moreover, concerns are expressed about the risks of increased cooperation between China and Russia (Utrikesdepartementet,2020:23; Ds 2023:19: 106,128). Competition between great powers, the US, Russia, and China, is also argued to influence Sweden and its nearby area, including the Arctic region as it is of strategic military interest, especially for these actors (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23; Ds 2023:19:28; Proposition 2020/21:30:67; MUST, 2022:16) The report from The Defense Committee that was released in 2023 portrays the
Arctic as an area where great power rivalry takes place in Sweden’s nearby area. Especially due to Russia's increasing military build-up and increasing strategic interests by China (Ds 2023:19:28).

Buzan et.al discuss systemic referent objects whose survival could be argued for. These could include international institutions/organizations, as well as principles that are deemed necessary to maintain stability and essential for international or regional order. For example, international law or stability could be what needs to be protected (Buzan et.al, 1998). In the Swedish discourse on the Arctic, systemic referent objects could be found whose survival is portrayed as necessary and important. For instance, in the Arctic strategy, international law and cooperation in the Arctic are often portrayed as threatened and argued to need protection. Especially cooperation and sustainable development through the AC is portrayed as a value that needs to be protected to increase trust and promote peaceful relations in the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:11-12,21-22; Utrikesdepartementet, 2022a; Utrikesdepartementet, 2022b).

5.1.2 Level 2- Acts

Discourses and securitizing moves

The material suggests that changes and developments in the Arctic region threaten peace and stability. As shown in the previous section, a certain type of language, rhetorical techniques, and invocation of emotions and memories are used to construct threats in the Arctic region. Phrases such as increased risks, military build-up, unpredictability, increased tensions, disputes over resources, etc. all signal that several risks are evolving in the Arctic that have to be dealt with. These are often used in the context of climate change, increased geopolitical attention, and great power rivalry. Russia is often constructed as a threat both in regards to stability in the Arctic region and as a potential aggressor in Sweden’s immediate area (Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:14,23; Ds 2023:19:28,130). In the upcoming section, examples of securitizing moves are highlighted, facilitating conditions are identified and the construction of threats are emphasized.

The Defense Act emphasizes that a conflict in the Arctic region will impact Sweden, as northern Europe, including the Arctic, constitutes a military geographic connected area
Asserting that potential conflict in the Arctic will draw Sweden into conflict as well, could be understood as facilitating securitization of the Arctic as it signals that there is an interconnectedness between the two.

Securitizing moves can be found where climate changes are presented as a threat, entailing a cross-linkage between environmental and traditional security where environmental concerns have a securitizing effect in the military and defense sector. In the Defense Act 2021-2025, climate change is described as a serious increasing threat to global security that will lead to strains and tensions around the world, and for Sweden “especially due to our geopolitical position as an Arctic state” (Proposition 2020/21:30; 127). The discourse in the traditional sector consistently presents climate change as a cause for increased tensions and potential conflicts, resulting in a heightened sense of insecurity and instability in the Arctic region (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,22; Proposition 2020/21:30: 38-39,67; Ds 2023:19:45).

As Buzan et.al notes, external threats often revolve around the interaction and perception of military capabilities and intentions among states, which can facilitate securitizing moves and potentially generate a security dilemma (1998). This is also prevalent in the Swedish discourse on the Arctic. Increased military presence and activity in the Arctic region have had negative impacts on security policy, and according to Sweden’s Arctic strategy, there are concerns that the increasing military activity could escalate into a conflict situation. Here, increased military capabilities and uncertain intentions facilitate the construction of threats (Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39,; Ds 2023:19:28,64,128, 172; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020: 22-24).

One example can be found in the construction of Russia as a threat in the Arctic, which emphasizes military capabilities and the unpredictability of Russian behavior. Thus, referring to uncertain intentions and military capabilities in the security discourse, aligning with the emphasis on these as facilitating securitization (Proposition 2020/21:30:33,38-39; Ds 2023:19:64,128-130; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23; Buzan et.al, 1998). Using this sort of language portrays Russia as a hostile actor and a threat to the Arctic and Sweden’s immediate area. Thus, the securitizing move is evident in the portrayal of Russia's military activities in the Arctic as a destabilizing force. Phrases such as readiness for aggression, military build-up, deteriorating relations, etc. contribute to the securitization narrative by emphasizing Russia's
potential for hostile actions. This linguistic framing is critical in shaping the perception of Russia as a threat to the stability and peace in the Arctic.

Important to note that military capabilities alone are not enough for securitization, rather they can facilitate securitizing moves when combined with other factors (Buzan et.al, 1998). This is evident in the discourse where military capabilities, along with facilitating conditions, enable securitizing moves. Buzan et.al argues that security and threats are socially constructed, and that facilitating conditions can ease the securitization process (Buzan et.al, 1998). Geography, history, and political relations are all conditions that are used in representations of Russia in the Arctic to enhance the perception of Russia as threatening and create a conducive environment for securitization. Geographically, Sweden’s proximity to Russia, especially in the Arctic region where Russia bases large parts of its military capabilities, is emphasized in various documents (MUST, 2021:16-17; MUST, 2022:16-17; Ds 2023:19:28,96,127; Proposition 2020/21:30:33; Försvarsmakten, 2022b: 3,21; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23). Previous experiences of Russia as a threat to the West and a history of conflicts in Sweden's immediate area could facilitate the view of Russia as an aggressive neighbor. Concerning political relations, the deteriorating relations between Russia and the West are referenced several times (Ds 2023:19:96; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:14 ; Proposition 2020/21:30:33; Försvarsmakten, 2022b:13,20;). Other examples include the Russian assertion that NATO membership by Sweden will result in repercussions, the interruption of cooperation in the AC due to Russian behavior, and concerns about increased political and military cooperation between China and Russia impacting Arctic relations (Utrikesdepartementet, 2022a; Utrikesdepartementet, 2022b; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23; Proposition 2020/21:30:34; MUST, 2022:12; Ds 2023:19:106,128).

However, military capabilities and intentions could also generate mitigating efforts to counter the risk of a security dilemma (Buzan et.al, 1998). Attempts to enhance international cooperation and increase trust between Arctic countries could be understood as mitigating efforts (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,9-12; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; DS 2023:19:128-129; Försvarsmakten 2022b: 21).

This way of constructing threats in the Arctic region, arguing for increased risk of tensions and conflict, that measures have to be taken and as important for the security of Sweden and its immediate area could be understood as securitizing moves.
Measures

Analyzing Swedish discourses on the Arctic reveals a recognition of ongoing developments in the region that demand attention. The Arctic strategy outlines a dual-track approach for managing the challenges in the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020; Proposition 2020/21:30; Ds 2023:19).

Firstly, it emphasizes international cooperation as a primary mechanism to manage challenges in the Arctic, particularly through the AC. This cooperative approach is framed as essential for preserving the Arctic as a peaceful and stable area, aligning with diplomatic means and peaceful solutions, within the bounds of international law. According to the Arctic strategy, this also fulfills a confidence-building function, fostering trust between actors and thus decreasing the risk of conflict. This could be understood as a way of mitigating the risk of security dilemma (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:14,16,21-22,24; Utrikesdepartementet, 2022a; Utrikesdepartementet, 2022b; Proposition 2020/21:30:39). Secondly, it underscores the necessity to strengthen national capability and planning to address the changing landscape in terms of climate change, geopolitical shifts, and military build-up. This comprehensive approach advocates using a full range of security policy instruments ranging from political and diplomatic channels to economic and military means (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:21-22; Proposition 2020/21:30:68,115; Försvarsmakten, 2022b: 4,22,34 ). This could be understood as a way to open up the possibility of using military means in the Arctic. Potentially attempting to justify extraordinary measures in the Arctic as changes and developments in the region threaten peace and stability.

The importance of participation in international cooperation and adherence to international law on Arctic-related issues is repeated throughout the material used in this thesis, underscoring its critical role. Cooperation extends across various levels, including bilateral and multilateral engagements, involving diverse institutions and organizations. This encompasses multiple dimensions, such as military, environmental, economic, and more (Proposition 2020/21:30:68,115; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:21-22; DS 2023:19: 117,128-129; Försvarsmakten 2022b:4,22,34). The principle of shared responsibility among Arctic states is highlighted, primarily regarding collaboration within the Arctic Council. However, recognizing the AC's limitations in covering security and military matters, there is
a need to increase access to cooperation formats addressing these issues to counter attempts
to exert influence and destabilize the region. (Proposition 2020/21:30:39;
Utrikesdepartementet 2020:11-12,14,16)

Defense and military actors stress the importance of cooperation and reinforcing military
capabilities in reference to the increasing strategic significance of the Arctic region. Includes
directing attention and resources toward the northern parts of Sweden and the Arctic as well as strengthening cooperation among Nordic countries. Annual reports from the Swedish Armed Forces between 2020-22, consistently mention the Arctic in the context of military exercises and cooperation through Nordefco (Försvarsmakten, 2021:57; Försvarsmakten, 2022a:65; Försvarsmakten, 2023:155). The emphasis on cooperation and shared responsibility aligns with the characterization of Northern Europe as a region interconnected through military ties (Proposition 2020/21:30:68,39; Ds 2023:19:194). Moreover, it acknowledges that Arctic developments have global repercussions and are influenced by the broader global security landscape (Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39;Ds 2023:19:96, 128-129; Utrikesdepartementet,2020:5, 22-23). Some proposed military measures include the re-establishment of a regiment in Arvidsjaur, increased training of fighter battalions trained to operate in Arctic and subarctic environments, and expansion of military capabilities in response to the current security situation in Sweden’s nearby area (Proposition 2020/21:30:49,115; DS 2023:19:129; Försvarsmakten, 2022b:4,51).

NATO cooperation, solidarity, and responsibility are important in Swedish security policy and military planning. The prospect of future NATO membership is discussed as a way to enhance collective defense. Sweden and Finland's NATO membership is anticipated to improve capabilities related to the Arctic, extend the strategic depth and border of NATO, and alter the strategic situation for Russia's military planning. However, potential risks and challenges associated with NATO expansion are acknowledged, including the potential for increased militarization and great power rivalry (Ds 2023:19:117; Försvarsmakten, 2022b:21; Billström, 2023).

These measures discussed above show that the Arctic is on the security agenda in Sweden and that different measures are being taken and considered. One important aspect of securitization theory is urgency, entailing prioritization, and rapid responses (Buzan et.al, 1998). The Arctic strategy recognizes that conditions and context in the Arctic are changing.
Due to the increase in geostrategic relevance and consequences of climate change, the Arctic strategy acknowledges that Sweden has to alter its Arctic approach accordingly (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:6). This could be interpreted as a way of arguing for the importance of the Arctic region as well as the need for responses to deal with ongoing changes and challenges in the Arctic. However, these are often described as long-term threats that should be used as a basis for decisions on foreign and defense policies, which do not entail urgent out of the ordinary measures. Rather it influences the political direction going forward. Russia's rapid military build-up and willingness to use force signals some urgency, along with the realization of a deteriorating security climate in Sweden's immediate area (Proposition 2020/21:30:26,33,39;Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23). Russian behavior is described as hard to predict which further increases the need for prioritization of responsive measures. Sweden is to some extent considering an increase of its military presence and activities in Arctic/near-arctic areas, potentially signaling a securitization if measures out of the ordinary are decided upon and accepted by the audience (Proposition 2020/21:30:33; Ds 2023:19:129;Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:21,23 Buzan et.al, 1998). This dualism could reflect an attempt to securitize the Arctic issue by not only seeking collaborative solutions but also preparing for potential military measures if required.

The material highlights the importance of the northern and Arctic parts of Sweden, reinforcing the notion that these areas are of strategic significance and require specific security measures. Moreover, framing the Arctic as a military geographically connected area reinforces the idea that security concerns in the Arctic have direct implications for Sweden, contributing to the justification of security measures. The discourse of strengthening military capabilities is framed as a response to the current security situation, creating a sense of urgency and necessity for these measures.

5.2 Environmental security

5.2.1 Level 1- Agents

*Actors*
In regards to actors, most of what is put forward in the traditional sector holds. Here, I will add to the previous discussion on actors while focusing on actors in the environmental sector. The utilized material ranges from documents and statements disseminated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, the Prime Minister's office and other political actors.

Functional actors in the environmental sector include scientific actors, as the scientific agenda often influences political decision-making regarding environmental issues. Moreover, it could also include businesses, industries, and economic actors who want to be/are part of various activities in the Arctic. For instance, as previously mentioned, resources are becoming more accessible, and new sea routes are opening up. This can spur the interest of different actors (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:22). For example, even though Sweden is not directly participating in energy policy cooperation, Swedish industry, especially in the Arctic region, plays a functional role. It contributes to sustainable production, develops environmental technology, and helps create conditions for secondary extraction, thus these industries could be influential (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:45-46). Other functional actors are indigenous communities, they are recognized as important participants in decision-making and policy discussions as they hold unique experiences and knowledge of the Arctic environment. The Arctic strategy emphasizes that indigenous communities should be active participants in addressing the challenges in the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:40-41,56),

This thesis looks at material from the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, which is a government agency focusing on research and monitoring concerning climate change and environmental developments. The research and insights they provide can influence discourses on environmental issues in the Arctic as well as how policy-makers understand the Arctic region, therefore they can be understood as a functional actor (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:38,40; Polarforskningssekretariatet, n.d).

Buzan et.al discuss lead actors in the environmental sector i.e. actors who have a strong commitment to environmental issues, engage in international cooperation and employ strategies to manage these. Sweden could be understood as a lead actor as Sweden posits itself as a principal actor in the environmental sector, drawing on its long history and
experience in polar research. Aligned with the goals of the 2030 global agenda, Sweden underscores the necessity for continuous research and Arctic observations (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:32; Proposition 2020/21:60:66, Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023). This stance is reinforced by the report from The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat in 2020 that begins with a reference to the Arctic strategy, emphasizing Sweden’s aspiration to become a world-leading actor in polar research (Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2020:4-5, Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:37). Sweden aims to maintain a leading role in promoting and shaping international cooperation in the Arctic region, working on reducing harmful effects and risks associated with resource extraction due to the high sensitivity of the Arctic environment. This commitment positions Sweden as a crucial actor in environmental initiatives, contributing to the securitization process by highlighting the significance of knowledge and understanding in addressing environmental challenges (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5.6,11,29;34; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Proposition 2020/21:60:15,).

Referent objects and threats

In the discourse on environmental security, we can identify themes and referent objects that align with securitization theory. For instance, the environment in itself, and the interconnectedness of civilization and the environment. The consequences of climate change and the importance of protecting and monitoring the environment are common themes found in the state discourse (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:9,43; Proposition 2020/21:60:19,66; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Buzan. et.al, 1998;76).

The environmental sector can cover a broad range of issues. This concurs with the findings in the Swedish discourse. The referent objects in the environmental sector extend beyond individual species to encompass human civilization, Arctic ecosystems, and the entire biosphere, aligning with the principles of environmental security outlined by Buzan et.al (1998). The survival of these entities is linked to the preservation of the environment and its ecosystems. To give some examples, threats to the environment range from endangered Arctic species, disruption of Arctic ecosystems, decrease of biodiversity, pollution, and lack of resilience in regional communities. These are perceived as threats to the environment as well as to civilization as they can cause deteriorating living conditions for humans (Buzan et.al,1998). For example, the Arctic strategy highlights the consequences of climate change on the Arctic population; it asserts that these could alter living conditions for humans,

A press release issued in 2023 by the Prime minister's office, following a meeting between leaders of the Nordic countries and the US, further emphasized that climate change and the decrease of biodiversity are some of the most critical challenges that our planet faces. Portraying climate change as a critical challenge asserts a certain amount of urgency, and here the planet is referred to as what needs to be protected, arguing that development in the Arctic has a global impact (Statsrådsberedningen, 2023).

Every fourth year the government puts forward a research policy proposition where the direction of government policy on research, innovation, and higher education is set out. Proposition 2020/21:60 states that developments following climate change and global warming are especially prevalent in the Arctic. These rapid changes in the Arctic are hurtful to the environment, disturbing the Arctic ecosystem and influencing living conditions for humans (Proposition 2020/21:60:66). As resources and sea routes become more available, economic activity in the Arctic is likely to increase, The Arctic strategy recognizes that this could negatively influence the Arctic environment, elevating the need for sustainable means and processes (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,6,43-44).

The yearly reports provided by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat from 2020 and 2021 only mention Russia in terms of cooperation (Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2022). The report from 2022 recognizes that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has harmed the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat's possibilities to plan and execute research in polar areas. This is evident as several Arctic expeditions were canceled due to the deteriorating security situation in Europe and within some research cooperations, Russian participation has been stopped. Here, Russia is not explicitly described as threatening but there is a recognition that Russian behavior is an obstacle to polar research and scientific cooperation in the Arctic, which requires consideration in future agenda-setting in polar research. However, this does not constitute any measures out of the ordinary (Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2023:3,9-10,14,18,23).
5.2.2 Level 2- Acts

Discourses and securitizing moves

A characteristic of securitization theory is the rhetorical structure centered on survival and priority of action that can be used to identify relevant actors and referent objects (Buzan et.al, 1998). The material employs some securitizing rhetoric by portraying climate change as a global crisis requiring increased attention and close cooperation. Using terms like crisis, serious challenges, and risks, frames climate change as a critical challenge that requires measures. The material highlights that there are threats to the environment as well as to human civilization. There is a sense of urgency in addressing environmental threats, as they are described as serious and crucial, that is recognized at multiple levels, including national and international perspectives (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020: 31,35,38; Proposition 2020/21:60:19:66; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Statsrådsberedningen, 2023).

The Swedish government emphasizes the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, living conditions in the Arctic, and the region's economic significance, asserting the need for increased attention in these areas. This aligns with the securitization theory, where measures are justified to protect referent objects perceived as under threat, however, as seen in the section below, measures proposed here are most evident in the political sphere rather than constituting securitizing moves (Buzan et.al, 1998; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,9,22,29,32).

A press release from the Prime Minister's office in 2023 emphasizes the importance of climate change and decreasing biodiversity as critical challenges for the planet. By framing climate change as a crisis, the discourse implies the need for protective measures, contributing to the securitization attempts of these environmental issues (Statsrådsberedningen, 2023).

The yearly reports from the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat between 2020 and 2022 do not talk about the Arctic in terms of security, threats, or risks. Rather there is a strong focus on promoting scientific innovations, international cooperation and on spreading knowledge and enhancing understanding of sustainable development and environmental matters. The
reports do emphasize that polar research is becoming increasingly important to understand and manage climate change and its consequences. However, rather arguing that polar research should receive more attention on the political level than for securitization (Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021:4,30; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2022: 3,11,26-27; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2023:26-27,32,).

Global warming and environmental changes are identified as threats, with consequences for biodiversity, living conditions in the Arctic, and the economic significance of the region. The importance of addressing climate change is highlighted by framing it as a critical challenge with global implications. The discourse acknowledges the long-term threats posed by climate change, making it a complex issue that may be harder to securitize. However, the portrayal of climate change as a critical challenge suggests a sense of urgency (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5-6,30-32; Proposition 2020/21:60 :19,66-67; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Statsrådsberedningen, 2023).

The Arctic environment is described as sensitive, especially to risks associated with resource extraction that require careful management to not harm biodiversity and ecosystems. This type of language and choice of words reinforces the perception of something that needs to be protected, however, the lack of an immediate threat to human civilization decreases the likelihood of securitization (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:30-31,34-35,45; Proposition 2020/21:60:66; Buzan et.al, 1998)

As stated by Buzan et.al, a distinguishing feature of the environmental sector is the existence and interplay of a scientific and political agenda. This is evident in the Swedish discourse as political documents often include references to science and highlight the importance of research on the Arctic to deal with challenges there (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:9,37-38; Proposition 2020/21:60: 66-67,143; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Buzan. et.al, 1998).

The material underscores the intertwining of scientific and political agendas in the environmental sector. The scientific agenda, rooted in research and non-governmental activity, may provide the foundation for securitizing moves. The political agenda, on the other hand, revolves around how well the state and the public are informed about environmental issues and whether there is a perceived urgency to address these concerns. The material emphasizes the influence of scientific arguments as well as research to understand how to manage environmental developments and how to adapt to the effects of climate
change (Proposition 2020/21:60:66; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021:4). This is for instance evident in a press release by the Department of Education, stating that the government believes that data and research on the Polar areas contribute to the understanding of how to manage issues related to climate change. Moreover, the section devoted to polar research in the Arctic Strategy emphasizes the significance of polar research and Sweden’s ambition to be world-leading in the area (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:37-38; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Buzan. et.al,1998)

In the discourse on environmental security, more attention is given to the scientific agenda, aligning with Buzan et.al's thoughts on the interplay of different agendas. Sweden aspires to contribute to reducing emissions that impact the climate on both a national and global level in accordance with scientific findings and protect and promote sustainable development in the Arctic. Arguing for the need to strengthen work to protect the Arctic environment in cooperation with other states, civil society, and other regional and local actors. Here, polar research and environmental monitoring are put forward as crucial measures (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:9,29-30,37-38; Statsrådsberedningen, 2023; Proposition 2020/21:60:25,66; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023).

**Measures**

The material reflects the recognition of shared responsibility, especially among Arctic states, further reinforcing the idea that environmental security involves collective efforts. Press releases from the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's office emphasize the interconnectedness of the Arctic's sensitivity to climate change with global environmental developments, reinforcing the notion that environmental security is a global concern. This aligns with securitization theory, which argues that environmental security is most common at a global level. The importance of international cooperation and increased research funding aligns with securitization moves aiming to address and manage the effects of climate change. Sweden will encourage initiatives through organizations such as the AC, the EU, OECD, and the Nordic Council as well as through other bilateral and multilateral forums (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:11,14,17,43 Proposition 2020/21:60:17,66, Statsrådsberedningen, 2023; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023).
Here, we can discern the argument in securitization theory that cause and effect do not always align, as it is evident that emissions and developments elsewhere impact the Arctic environment. Buzan et al. discuss the importance of distinguishing whether it is the cause or the effect that is potentially being securitized, as mentioned above the effects of climate change are addressed in the Swedish discourse arguing for increased research and attention to understand and manage these effects. This could also help explain why Sweden highlights the need for collective and international action, as causes and effects are found both on a global and local level (Buzan et al., 1998; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:12,30,35,38,63; Proposition 2020/21:60:66).

The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat’s yearly reports also promote international cooperation with various institutions and actors. Moreover, the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat has participated in several research initiatives within international frameworks as well as multilaterally (Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021:4-5, 28-29; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2022:4,26-27; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2023:26).

Increasing resilience to climate change is also important, especially for local communities and indigenous people who rely on the maintenance of biodiversity and Arctic ecosystems to preserve their traditional lifestyle. Recognizing the vulnerability of local communities and indigenous people to climate change, the strategy emphasizes increasing resilience, involving indigenous populations in decision-making, and encouraging knowledge exchanges (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:44-45,54-56).

Environmental issues are addressed through increased cooperation and funding of research, as seen in the research policy proposition, the Arctic Strategy, and through official statements. Increased funds for polar research and environmental monitoring, including expeditions with the research icebreaker Oden, demonstrate a financial commitment to addressing climate change, biodiversity, and ocean-related challenges. This financial allocation aligns with securitization theory, emphasizing the prioritization of these issues and shows how Sweden could be understood as a lead actor (Proposition 2020/21:60:17,66,143, Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:37-38,40; Utbildningsdepartementet, 2023; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021; Buzan et al., 1998).
As mentioned previously, Sweden could be understood as a lead actor in the environmental sector. Buzan et al. identifies typical strategies employed by lead actors as raising awareness through financing research, informing public opinion, engaging in diplomatic efforts, and dedication to international cooperation on these issues. All of these strategies are employed by Sweden in the environmental sector, as seen in the analysis. However, according to Buzan et al., these measures and activities are not understood as securitizing moves, rather they are seen as politicizing (Buzan et al., 1998).

The suggested measures in the Arctic strategy align with existing international conventions, frameworks, and agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, conventions on biodiversity, Agenda 2030, and cooperation in the Arctic Council. The strategy aligns with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, emphasizing reducing global emissions, conserving biodiversity, and creating a non-toxic circular economy. Recognizing the need to improve human and nature's capacities to adapt to climate change reinforces the securitization narrative by underlining the importance of proactive measures (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,14,29-31; Polarforskningssekretariatet, 2021:5,70).

5.3 Discussion

The analysis has revealed securitizing moves and discursive practices that are evident in the Swedish state discourse on the Arctic. Especially in the traditional sector, whereas in the environmental sector, concerns seem to be more on the politicized level.

Critical discourse analysis reveals cross-sectoral dynamics, where traditional security and environmental concerns intersect in the securitizing practices in relation to the Arctic. Climate change is perceived as a threat in both the traditional security sector and the environmental sector. Actors in the defense and military sectors tend to highlight the consequences of climate change in a more traditional security manner. Here, climate change is portrayed as a potential driving force for increased tensions and risks of conflict as natural resources and sea routes become more accessible, raising the risk of competing claims and disputes regarding freedom of navigation (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:5,22; Försvarsmakten, 2022b:14; Proposition 2020/21:30:38-39,67; Ds 2023:19:45). Whereas in the environmental
sector, climate change is presented as harmful to ecosystems, biodiversity, marine life, and living conditions for humans (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:30-32; Proposition 2020/21:60:66).

The analysis demonstrates how the military threat narrative and environmental changes are not isolated but intertwined. The interconnectedness of these discourses reflects an integrated approach to security, where military capabilities and climate change are addressed simultaneously.

In the environmental sector, the analysis identifies several overlaps and cross-linkages between sectors, references to both the societal and the economic sector can be identified. According to Buzan et.al, overlaps between sectors are common, especially in the environmental sector there is a tendency for environmental matters to spill over to other sectors (Buzan et.al, 1998). For example, overlaps with the economic sector are evident as economic activities can both cause and be impacted by environmental issues. For instance, climate change, by making resources and sea routes more accessible, attracts the interest of economic actors who wish to utilize these resources, which in turn could hurt the environment (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:22,44; Buzan et.al., 1998). Additionally, environmental security exhibits signs of overlapping with the societal sector. Environmental changes can significantly impact living conditions and influence the ability of indigenous communities to maintain their traditional lifestyle. An example from the Arctic strategy highlights the potential threat to the Sami culture and identity due to environmental changes, jeopardizing their traditional livelihoods dependent on high biodiversity and intact Arctic ecosystems (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020; 55-57; Buzan et.al, 1998). While this research does not extensively explore these overlaps, it acknowledges their significance. Future studies could delve into cross-references and intersections between sectors, offering a broader understanding of the complexities involved.

The analysis unveiled distinct frames, rhetorical techniques, and discursive practices employed by the different actors within the state discourse when addressing the Arctic. A departure was observed in the discourse of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education compared to the actors in the defense sector. Unlike the prevalent military-centric language of conflict, threats, and geopolitical tensions in the defense discourse, these actors adopt a more diplomatic approach. Their language focuses on promoting and protecting,
emphasizing cooperation, research, and innovation as solutions, especially documents and statements from the Ministry of Education.

Buzan et al. highlight the varying power positions of different actors in discussions on security, suggesting biases in the field. The analysis underscores this by revealing that entities like the Ministry of Defence, The Defense Committee, and The Swedish Armed Forces are widely accepted as legitimate voices on security, evident in their frequent framing of Arctic issues in terms of security and threats. Conversely, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs use a distinct language, notably more absent of terms like threats and conflicts. In proposition 2020/21:60, emphasis lies on the significance of research and scientific cooperation, addressing the negative impacts of climate change with a forward-looking focus on predicting, mitigating, and managing its effects. This highlights a semantic distinction, with the recognized security and defense voices using terms like risk and threat and enhancing military capabilities, while actors like the Ministry of Education and the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat focus on collaborative research to address future challenges posed by climate change without employing security-related language. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could also be understood as an actor authorized and accepted as a speaker on security on behalf of the state, discussing threats and climate change in relation to geopolitical tensions and disputes over resources. However, the language used is more diplomatic, focusing on cooperation and diplomacy rather than military means.

These divergent frames could potentially be explained by considering the core functions of each ministry. The Ministry of Defence serves as an institutionalized mechanism for addressing insecurity, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses diplomatic means to establish security (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998: 28–30).

The findings of the analysis correspond to some extent with results and themes from previous research on the Arctic. The state discourse identifies securitizing rhetoric and moves regarding the Arctic in the traditional security and the environmental security sector, however not to the same extent.

Previous literature identified some themes surrounding research on the Arctic. Some of this is evident in the Swedish discourse as well. For example, the importance of the Arctic being characterized by peace and stability as well as recognition of ongoing changes in the Arctic
that threaten this (Sergunin & Konyshew, 2017; Åtland, 2014; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:1-5; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; Ds 2023:19:128)

As Wilhelmsen et.al argued, it is evident from the analysis that external events and global developments influence Arctic security and cooperation (2018). In the Swedish discourse, the Arctic is often described as a region affected by the global security situation, great power rivalry, and climate change. Moreover, it is evident that Russian behavior influences how Sweden portrays Arctic security, for example, Russian aggressions are referenced when discussing deteriorating relations in the Arctic (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020; Försvarsmakten 2022b:21, Proposition 2020/21:30:33,39; Ds 2023:19:19,97; MUST, 2022:16). This is in accordance with the view put forward by for example Heininen (2020), Hilde (2013), Wilhelmsen et.al (2018), and Scopelliti & Perez (2016).

Swedish state discourse also aligns with the notion that there is a need for a forum where matters related to hard security can be discussed to increase mutual trust and counter destabilizing attempts (Sergunin & Konyshew, 2017; Åtland, 2014; Scopelliti & Perz, 2017; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; Utrikesdepartementet 2020:14-15,21,23-24)

In accordance with previous literature on Sweden and the Arctic, Sweden still emphasizes softer issues such as environmental matters, research cooperation, sustainable economic development, and the rights of indigenous people (Eklund, 2020; Durfee & Johnstone, 2019; Bergh & Klimenko, 2016; Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:9,29; Proposition 2020/21:60:66)

However, there is also a military dimension recognizing that ongoing global developments and military-build up in the Arctic has to be acknowledged. Moreover, Sweden's application for NATO membership has also resulted in more emphasis on Arctic capabilities as a contribution to collective defense (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:23; Proposition 2020/21:30:39; Ds 2023:19:117; Försvarsmakten, 2022b:21). According to Klimenko and Bergh, matters of hard security in the Arctic have previously been discussed in relation to Russia (2016). This is still evident in the Swedish discourse, however also in relation to other aspects such as geopolitical rivalry and consequences of climate change (Utrikesdepartementet, 2020:19,22; Proposition 2020/21:30:38-29; Ds 2023:19:28,45,64 Försvarsmakten, 2022b:14,21).
Thus, in accordance with previous literature, the Swedish state discourse on the Arctic acknowledges that Russian behavior and deteriorating relations with the West threaten peace and stability in the Arctic region.

6. Conclusion

The analysis has provided a deeper understanding of how the Arctic region is portrayed in relation to security in the Swedish state discourse. The analysis has identified securitizing moves in the construction of threats in the Arctic region and recognition of ongoing developments that influence securitization processes. The focus on contemporary discourses, from 2020-2023, enabled an understanding of Sweden’s construction of Arctic security where recent internal and external developments are considered. Including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden’s application for NATO membership, increased great power rivalry, and recent developments in the Arctic. The analysis showed that security matters, threats and potential conflicts in the Arctic were often mentioned with reference to the current global security situation and the increased tensions and interest in the Arctic.

Different referent objects have been presented. Regarding traditional security concerns, peace and stability are most frequently presented as what needs to be protected. This entails a desire to promote peaceful cooperation and resolution of potential disputes through diplomatic means. However, another dimension presented is the need for military capabilities that can operate in the Arctic environment. This need is often argued for in relation to the increased military activity and presence by other states, especially Russia, as well as acknowledging that as resources and sea routes become more available, tensions and military build-up in the Arctic could rise. Security issues and threats were often brought up in the context of climate change, geopolitical tensions, and deteriorating relations between Russia and the West. Increased tension and engagement in the Arctic are often referenced when presenting potential threats and risks that are prevalent in the region, thus the current geopolitical climate and global security situation are important factors when describing the Arctic as a security issue.
In the environmental sector, concerns are addressed both on a global and regional level. On a regional level, concerns are raised regarding harm to Arctic ecosystems, biodiversity, and marine life as well as to living conditions for local communities. Globally, there is a recognition that due to the vulnerability of the Arctic environment, global emissions and developments impact the environment in the Arctic and effects of climate changes are especially prevalent there. Moreover, developments in the Arctic have an impact on the global level as well. These arguments are used as a basis for the promotion and enhancement of international cooperation to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases, and other sorts of pollution on a global scale as well as increasing research and monitoring to learn how to adapt to the ongoing environmental developments.

Moreover, cross-references in both sectors were identified as climate change was perceived as a threat in both, however in different ways. According to Buzan et.al linkages between sectors are common and are one of the reasons why the sectors can not be treated as isolated systems (Buzan et.al, 1998).

According to the findings, the Arctic is on the security agenda in Sweden. However, mostly in relation to other developments and existing tensions. The representation of the Arctic as a security matter is mostly evident in relation to traditional security concerns. Environmental matters as well are presented as crucial for sustainable development, however, securitization moves are not as prominent, rather these matters are in the politicized area. Perceived threats in the environmental sector are often more ambiguous and remote, however still very important, but not understood as an immediate existential threat thus complicating securitization efforts (Buzan et.al, 1998). However, the analysis still identifies Sweden as a lead actor in environmental security matters.

The conditions for successful securitization put forward by Buzan et.al. assert that being on the security agenda and portrayed as a security issue is not enough to claim that the Arctic has been securitized. According to securitization theory, measures out of the ordinary must have been legitimized and accepted by the audience. The discourse signals that extraordinary measures are suggested or in the least discussed. However, this research focuses on state discourses, and whether these measures have been accepted by the audience has not been sufficiently considered in the analysis.
However, as Jensen mentioned, it is still of relevance to understand and identify discursive processes that are moving towards securitization. Following the findings presented in the analysis, the increased references to the Arctic on the security agenda, and the perception of potential threats and risks of conflict in the Arctic could be defined as securitizing moves, or as discursive processes moving towards securitization (Jensen, 2013). Thus, the analysis has revealed discursive processes that are moving towards securitization, i.e. securitizing moves. As Jensen argues, securitization theory and discourse analysis are valuable as they can highlight securitization efforts which in turn improves our understanding of how an issue can move towards securitization, even if it is not there yet (Jensen, 2013).

6.1 Suggestions for future research

As this thesis solely focused on state discourses, future research could expand on the topic through the inclusion of other sorts of material to include more perspectives. For example, looking at media discourses and identifying differences and similarities in the discourses. Incorporating media discourses and/or public opinions could also be a way to include the audience in the analysis. A more diverse set of sources could also include other non-governmental perspectives. For example, looking closer at indigenous populations in the Swedish Arctic to see how their perception corresponds or diverges from the official state perception.

This research focused on traditional (military and political) and environmental security. Looking at all of the sectors put forward by Buzan et.al could enable a more comprehensive picture of Arctic security as well as identify cross-sectoral themes, helping to explain security complexes.
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