The Arctic Front
A study using the Securitization Theory to analyse in which way the Arctic region is perceived a security and defence concern within Swedish Arctic discourse

Linnéa Risfelt
Master’s Thesis, 30 ECTS
War Studies
Master’s Programme in Politics, Security and War
Autumn 2023
Supervisor: Matthew Ford
Word count: 17 423
Acronyms

Arctic Council - USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Cap of The North – regions in Sweden, Norway and Finland located above the Arctic Circle, within the Arctic region.

FOI – Swedish Defence Research Agency.

GoS – Government of Sweden, referred to as the specific empirical documents created by the government.

MUST - Military Intelligence and Security Service.

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

SDD – Swedish Defence Department.

SDF – Swedish Defence Force.

SNSA - Swedish National Space Agency.

The Arctic states - USA, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

The Arctic Region - region north of the Arctic Circle.

The Arctic discourse - the Swedish Government and state agencies discourse.

The Swedish Government – general term for the Swedish parliament and government, not the specific one who created the used empirical material.

The Western Arctic states - USA, Canada, Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

USA - United States of America.
Abstract

The Arctic region is a region defined by change. Climate change, militarization and a growing interest from both Arctic and non-Arctic states are increasing the geopolitical significance for the region. As a consequence, concerns about the Arctic region's security and what threat the region might constitute have grown.

The following thesis seeks to study in which way the Arctic region is perceived as a security and defence concern by the Swedish government and state agencies in Swedish state discourse from first of January 2019 to the 19th of June 2023. By using arguments from the Copenhagen schools Securitization Theory, the thesis aims to understand to what extent the Swedish state discourse has securitized the Arctic region and what and/or who the is presented as security issues and defence threats. The findings argue that the Swedish Arctic discourse does not securitize the Arctic region, however, patterns of securitization could be found which indicate that the region might be securitized in the future. The Swedish Arctic discourse recognise several security issues and defence threats and present cooperation with other states as well as strengthen military capabilities in northern Sweden as countermeasures. This further indicates that the Swedish Arctic discourse recognise security and defence concerns connected to the Arctic region even if they are not presented by the terms of securitization.

Key Words: The Arctic, Arctic region, Securitization Theory, Sweden, Swedish state discourse, Arctic discourse, WPR-framework, climate change, military dynamic, Swedish surrounding, Swedish vicinity.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Arctic\(^1\) has a long history of being a heavily militarised meeting point between the West and the East, even if the region during the first two decades following the Cold War was characterised by peaceful international cooperation\(^2\). This appears to be reversing (Åtland 2008:306). Climate change is transforming the Arctic region, leading to a growing geopolitical importance, which has created concerns about the security and peace in the Arctic. States both in and outside of the Arctic region are changing attention towards issues related to security and defence as well as energy and infrastructure in the Arctic region. On a military level, an open Arctic Ocean represents a new environment for the military to operate within the region (Berbrick et al 2022:1,12).

“Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace.” (Gorbachev 1988:335).

Climate change has raised concerns about the future of the Arctic environment and lead to potential opportunities as melting ice in the Arctic could lead to new shipping lanes such as the Northern Sea Route, connecting China and Europe through ports in northern Russia. Further, climate change results in access to minerals which generates a debate between states about rightful claims. Greater maritime access would also lead to social and economic development for littoral towns (Nilsson and Christensen 2019:1, Conley et al. 2023:3, Berbrick et al. 2022:10). Competition or disagreement over recourse-rich territories could raise the risk of conflicts between states and the Arctic is seen as such a region where claim over certain territories could violently escalate (Powell and Dodds 2014:3-7).

Even if Sweden has been a strong advocator for peaceful resolutions in the Arctic region, they have been providing training opportunities for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members to exercise in an Arctic climate, as well as military collaboration with their

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\(^1\) This following thesis will define the Arctic as the region north of the Arctic Circle, the same definition the regional forum Arctic Council uses. The Arctic states are Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada, the United States of America (USA), Iceland and Denmark, which are also all members of the Arctic Council (Government of Sweden 2020:7).

\(^2\) The West is in the following thesis defined as the states within Europe and North America and the East is defined as mainly Russia but also some Chinese influence.
Nordic neighbours. This indicates that there might be defence and security concerns regarding the region (Spohr et al. 2013:55). All four Nordic states, who are all also Arctic states, have as a consequence of the changing geopolitical security climate shifted their focus from out-of-area missions to territorial defence. The perceived security and defence threats of the future appear to concern their close surrounding (Brommesson et al. 2023:17).

1.2 Research problem

Changes have occurred during the last decade in the geopolitical, military-, security- and defence environment regarding the Arctic region, consequently, the Swedish relationship to the Arctic has been affected (Brommesson et al. 2023:17). By applying Buzan, Weaver and Wilde’s Securitization Theory to the case of Sweden and the Arctic region the theory would help understand and give clarity to the current Swedish security and defence relation with the region. The Securitization Theory would enable the thesis to study the Swedish state’s Arctic discourse, the discourse created by the Swedish Government and state agencies in official documents and reports regarding the Arctic region (from here on, the Arctic discourse). By studying speech acts within Arctic discourse, the thesis would explain in which way the Arctic is viewed as a concern for Sweden and what is threatening in the region. Why the Arctic would even be a security and defence concern for Sweden, despite lacking a neighbouring coast, constitutes and drives this thesis’s puzzle.

According to my knowledge, the previous research about the official Swedish defence and security stance on the Arctic from a securitization perspective is limited. Thus, previous research is deficient. The strategic and geographical focus during the last decades has not been on the northern area, consequently, there is a lack of northern perspectives in a contemporary setting (Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) 2019:19). The Arctic region has not been prioritised.

Applying the theory to the Swedish case would contribute to the limited previous research by analysing in which way the Arctic is perceived as a defence and security concern for Sweden. The problem constituting this thesis is therefore not only the growing security and defence concern in the Arctic region but also, to my understanding, the gap in previous research regarding the Swedish contemporary Arctic discourse. Consequently, this thesis will contribute to the limited research on the Swedish relation with the Arctic region. Research
about the Arctic region is necessary to strengthen the contemporary knowledge in Sweden about a potential growing security concern that is located in the nearby surrounding area.

Sweden is a member of the Arctic Council which entails Sweden both with power and influence over decisions made about the Arctic (Arctic Council 2021:4). Without direct contact with the Arctic Ocean such power and influence could be viewed as disproportional considering how small amount of Swedish territory is part of the Arctic region (Shadian 2014:187). It’s important to study and understand the Swedish Arctic discourse regarding the Arctic as it would contribute to understand one part (Sweden’s stance) of the global Arctic discourse and the complexity of the wider Arctic policies (Shadian 2014:187-8).

1.3 Research question and aim

The thesis’s aim is to study how the Arctic is presented in Swedish Arctic discourses, based on the Copenhagen School’s Securitization Theory. The goal is to reduce the deficiency in previous research and provide an alternative approach that would give a better understanding of in which way(s) the Arctic is a security and defence concern for Sweden. By using the Securitization Theory and examine to what extent the Swedish officials\(^3\) have securitized the Arctic during the period from first of January 2019 to the 19\(^{th}\) of June 2023, the thesis will bring answers regarding in which way the Arctic is a defence and security concern to Sweden. This will add knowledge about the potential securitization of the Arctic from a Swedish perspective in an understudied context. The thesis will also add to the requested knowledge from Wilson Rowe (2013), by contributing to the Swedish internal Arctic discourse and relationship to the Arctic region.

The thesis further aims to explain what military countermeasures that have been proposed to meet the potential presented defence threats and security issues. This will help analyse traces of securitization that might not be distinctly formulated, as presented countermeasures could indicate how threatening Sweden perceives defence and security concerns in the region. By using Arctic discourses, the thesis will be able to provide an accurate view of what actions the Swedish military has to take.

\(^3\) By officials this thesis refers to the Swedish Government and state agencies/authorities.
The following research questions has been created based on the theoretical framework of Securitization Theory and the thesis aim:

*In which way is the Arctic a security and defence concern for Sweden?*

To assist the analysis in answering this question the following questions are constructed:

- To what extent do the Swedish officials securitize the Arctic region?
- What/who are the presented security issue(s) and/or defence threat(s)?
- What military defence countermeasures have been presented to counter security and defence concerns in the Arctic region?

First and foremost, it's essential to examine if, and if so, to what extent Swedish officials have securitized the Arctic region. Then it's important to understand in which way the concern(s) in the Arctic region is viewed as an issue or threat to Sweden, what/who is presented as the issue(s) or threat(s) and lastly what military measures are proposed to meet the presented concerns. This will create knowledge of the Swedish relation to a region of growing concern that is in the direct surroundings of Sweden. It's important to first understand if, and if so, to what extent a state with no coastal border can securitize the Arctic region and present it as a defence or security concern. The study would contribute to the contemporary knowledge about Sweden and its official relation and view of the Arctic. With the Arctic high on the agenda for several states, this is significant to understand to raise awareness about the growing tension and concern in the Arctic region.

### 1.4 Delimitation

The following thesis will cover a time between first of January 2019 to the 19th of June 2023. The timeframe is chosen as it will cover the latest Arctic discourse produced by state agencies and government and create a contemporary view on the subject. The chosen date of the 19th of June is due to the release date of the report from the Swedish Defence Department (SDD), regarding the security policy development in Swedish surroundings and on a global level. The thesis doesn’t include texts after this date as it would risk missing documents that
has not yet been published when this thesis is written and would not give an accurate view within the stated timeframe.

This thesis focuses on the official Swedish state discourse. The focus will be on the defence and security relation presented by the Swedish Government and state agencies regarding the Arctic region, and by studying official documents regarding the region such depiction will be created. The thesis will only focus on the Swedish Government and state agencies’ published documents and reports about the Arctic region.

The aim is not to study other aspects of the Swedish relation to the Arctic such as the Swedish work with indigenous rights or environmental protection. Media and the public debate will not be covered. If media were included another dimension would be taken into consideration that could broaden the study, but as stated it’s a dimension this thesis doesn’t intend to cover. Therefore, the potential Swedish securitization of the Arctic region will not be studied from a public point of view, nor will the thesis take into consideration if the public in Sweden accepts the presented official Swedish view. Nor will the thesis study if accomplished securitization has occurred.

The study aims to explore the official Swedish stance on the Arctic region and as the Swedish Government represents the Swedish state the study will limit the material to documents produced by the governmental and state agencies. The aim of the thesis is also to understand what military and defence measures have been proposed to counter the threats or issues presented concerning the Arctic. This will help analyse traces of securitization that might not be distinctly formulated, as presented countermeasures could indicate how Sweden perceives concerns in the region.

The thesis will not analyse, cover or include other aspects of the region's future such as indigenous populations living in the region or the consequences of climate change for the Arctic residents. This is because this thesis focuses on the defence and security concerns, from a Swedish state perspective and a military and national security point of view only. This delimitation is made to enable the thesis to focus on state discourse. The decision is made with the awareness that it might neglect indigenous people’s voice in the matter. This aligns with the critique presented in the theory chapter regarding the Securitization Theory overseeing the ‘security as silent’. However, the decision is made to enable the thesis to focus

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4 Accomplished Securitization will be explained in chapter 3.1.
on the Swedish state discourse to fulfil the research aim and questions. If other perspectives were included the focus would not be on the Swedish state discourse, instead moving toward other perceptions. Further, to include and analyse all aspects and views regarding problematic issues in the Arctic would not be possible within the scope or time of a master thesis. Climate change is one of the most prominent concerns worldwide and will be mentioned as a threat, but measures to handle climate change in the region will not be analysed.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two is an overview of previous research made regarding the Arctic region and securitization. The third chapter will present, motivate and illustrate critique regarding the thesis theory. The fourth chapter will present the method, research design and their limitations. The fifth chapter will consist of the analysis where the material will be analysed and followed by discussion, conclusions and suggestions for further research in chapter six.

2. Literature review

This chapter will briefly describe previous research on the securitization of the Arctic region and research about the Arctic region’s security concerns and issues from a wider perspective. The aim is to create an overall understanding of the region, grounded in previous studies and how it may have been securitized from other states or approaches.

A new military challenge, different from the one during the Cold War seems to grow in the Arctic region. A challenge that might arise from the claim over and race towards raw materials and new sea routes, that due to climate change, have become accessibility. As well as strategic competition and miscalculations caused by the different state’s military forces deployed in the region. The Western Arctic states and Russia seem to have created an Arctic discourse where they view and represent each other as hostile and threatening in the Arctic region, making the perception spill over in all types of encounters in the region (Luszczuk 2016:40, Wilhelmsen and Gjerde 2018:400-1). Securitization of the Arctic from different
perspectives has been identified or suggested both in recent years and before the last decade’s security developments (Wilhelmsen 2021:1, Åtland 2008:290, Jensen 2013:94).

Elena Wilson Rowe and Helge Blakkisrud analysed the media's influence on the representation of security and defence concerns in the Arctic. Their study points to the fact that media and the way they present the Arctic region play a crucial role in how the region is perceived by a state’s population (Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud 2014:66). Russian media coverage regarding the Arctic during 2008-2011 shows a Russian Arctic discourse constituted by cooperation, stable relationships, and a positive image. The framing of the region in such terms seemed sufficient for Russian politics and policy during this time (Wilson Rowe and Blakkisrud 2014:82). The same approach appeared in Norway which emphasised stabilisation during the mid 00s. A discourse that later changed for both states (Jensen 2013:94) and was not the only discourse emerging regarding the region. Arctic coastal states’ policy documents imply that they were aware of their interests in the region and those were best served through cooperative arrangements. Looking at international media this is not how the Arctic were exclusively framed. A discourse of the Arctic as an area on the edge of conflict emerged in the early 2010s. The growing military presence of Russia together with its economic and geostrategic interest in the region raised concerns from other Arctic states (Wilson Rowe 2013:238-9, Nilsson and Christensen 2019:116). Wilson Rowe argues that the real interest and tension lie between the national and international levels of policymaking within the states. Studies regarding a state’s internal policies should be developed to later be able to understand the wider growing tension between the states in the Arctic region, which this thesis intended to do (Wilson Rowe 2013:241).

Kristian Åtland claimed that a trend toward desecuritization could be identified from the late 1980s up until 2008 in the Arctic region. The changes that the region experienced after the Cold War could be captured by the desecuritization concept, as the region moved away from heavy tension, rivalry, and militarisation, toward interstate relations and collaborations (Åtland 2008:305-6). However, such a trend is not irreversible and in 2008 signs of changes toward (re)securitization could be identified (Åtland 2008:305-6, Jensen 2013:94). Mutual and multifaceted securitization from both the West and Russia increased the image of each other as a threat in the military domain but also within other dimensions. Portraying the other as a threat, both in the Arctic region and within other aspects, creates an image of one another.

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5 This article is not peer-reviewed. However, as the author has written other articles on the subject that are peer-reviewed and as the content of the article aligns with others, I have chosen to include it.
as dangerous in all encounters and military means become a logical and legitimate way of connection. This is what has happened between Norway and Russia who went from a collaborative partnership where they prioritised cooperation, to a hostile relationship in the Arctic, enabling securitization discourses to emerge (Wilhelmsen 2021:2, Wilhelmsen and Gjerde 2018:399, Jensen 2013:94). The change in the Norwegian discourse begun in 2013, before the conflict in Ukraine 2014. At the same time, there was a shift in the Russian view of Norway in the region. They both interpreted what the other is, does and wants to achieve in the Arctic region as a threat towards their security. This enables fear, creating a hostile environment where both sides provoke and securitize each other. This will in turn lead to spiralling behaviour, both verbal and practical, where defence from one will appear offensive to the other and this legitimizes their shift in discourse and policies (Wilhelmsen 2021:14, Wilhelmsen and Gjerde 2018:400, Jensen 2013:94).

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 Sweden applied for NATO membership and the effects when/if the application is approved will influence the Swedish Arctic relationship. Membership will unite all Arctic states except Russia and intergrade a strategic space for NATO in the Arctic region, which will affect the security climate as well as evolve NATO’s deterrence and defence capabilities in the region. The Russian invasion does not seem to have decreased their military presence or focus on the Arctic, rather increasing the tension and instability (Alberque and Schreer 2022:70-71, Conley et al. 2023:4).

The growing military activity and training from both Arctic and non-Arctic states in the region are notable. With the concept of ‘train where you expect to fight’ and the fact that military exercises are a peacetime activity that simulates war, it’s noticeable that Western-led military exercises have increased in the Arctic region. It suggests that there is a concern among Western defence planners that the region is experiencing a growing probability of dealing with the grey area between peace and war (Depledge 2020:288-9). To further emphasize this is the fact that training in the Arctic region is difficult and costly, meaning that to prioritise these exercises there must exist a concern about the region. The fact that Russia strongly opposes Western military exercises in the region raises the risk to provoke a serious conflict. This indicates that Western states have a good reason to conduct these exercises. NATO’s exercise Trident Juncture that unfolded in 2018 was partly a response to Russia’s increased military presence in the region, even if NATO stated that the activity was not to be seen as threatening (Nilsson and Christenson 2019:117, Depledge 2020:289). Duncan
Depledge argues that one reason behind the expansion in military exercises, is that small states in the region feel vulnerable and demand NATO’s return to the Arctic region. Combined these reasons have played a key part in the increase of military exercises to signal capabilities, competence and ability to defend. The danger with such exercises is that they are made to deter an adversary but can be misread and instead increase the probability of a conflict and contribute to the surge of military forces in the Arctic, adding to the risk of provocation, misunderstanding and miscalculations. Depledge conclude that “...train where you expect to fight...”, or at least where you have the intention to deter (Depledge 2020:298, Depledge 2021:1-3, Wilhelmsen and Gjerde 2018:401).

Marc Lanteigne argues that the role China and Russia play in the current view of the Arctic region is prominent. There is a large probability that future incidents where non-Arctic security concerns and great-power disagreement spill over into the Arctic discourse and policies. The Russian conflicts and war with Crimea and Ukraine indicates that cooperation and securitization of the region have evolved (Lanteigne 2020:314-16). Both Arctic states and non-Arctic states have expanded their presence and encounters with each other in the region. The focus has initially been on soft-balancing diplomatic approaches rather than hard military strategies. This does not mean that the Arctic is removed from securitization trends, as stated above. It implies that Western security concerns regarding Arctic affairs are increasing at the same time as attention on the development of resources in the region is growing (Lanteigne 2020:317). The latter will likely result in the Arctic becoming increasingly securitized through resource and economic diplomacy. The ongoing strategic concerns regarding the region suggest that it will be securitized or further securitized if it already is and studied as its own security region. The fact that Russia tries to frame the region as a security concern from their standpoint, and furthermore China tries to become an Arctic power through policy approaches such as the Northern Sea Route, shows that the Arctic region is an individual security region (even if China lacks propinquity to the region). Lanteigne argues that regional analysis to understand how and why politics has affected the region’s security thinking is important to consider (Lanteigne 2020:319-20).
3. Theory

3.1 Theoretical concept

The chosen theory of this study is found in the Copenhagen School’s Securitization Theory. The Securitization Theory is a constructivist analytical tool that has its origin in Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde’s “Security, a New Framework for Analysis” (1998). This thesis shares the definition of security as “…survival in the face of existential threats, but what constitutes an existential threat is not the same across different sectors…” as it’s defined within the field of international relations (Buzan et al. 1998:4-5). The Securitization Theory argues that something becomes a security threat when a securitizing actor presents a problem or issue and labels it as dangerous toward themselves or the referent object. The issue is then perceived as a threat by the addressed group or population. This gives the securitizing actor freedom to use drastic measurements they otherwise would not be allowed to, or the process to use them would be long and debated (Buzan et al. 1998:23-24). Buzan, Weaver and Wilde don’t claim that the theory studies whether the issue really is a security threat or not. They argue that security is “…quality actors inject into issues by securitizing them, which means to stage them on the political arena…” in a specific way and then have the audience accept them as such, enabling the actors to use drastic defensive measures (Buzan et al. 1998:204).

Securitization is rooted within three main frameworks. First is the Schmittian understanding of exceptional politics and security, the second is speech act theory and the third is traditionalist security debates. These three frameworks combine, and the outcome is a general concept of security drawn from the constitution within national security discourse. The security discourse implies a priority on authority, confrontation of threats, the ability to make decisions and the capacity to adopt emergency measures (Buzan and Hansen 2016:213). The concept of security has a political and discursive force, and it does something, namely securitizes, rather than only being an objective or subjective condition (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan and Hansen 2016:214).

Securitization is the process that occurs when a concern is taken from either the non-politicised or politicised status and moved to the securitization sphere by being presented in security terms, specifically as an existential threat. Which in turn grants the securitization actor to use extraordinary means, emergency actions or policies in the name of security (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan and Hansen 2016:214). Security issues and defence threats are
made such by securitization acts. By the use of a speech act the process of securitization occurs, the securitizing actor declares the referent object as existentially threatened and it’s the utterance of the words that are the very securitizing act. It’s the discursive power of securitization that merges actors and objects together (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan et al. 1998:25-26).

Securitizing actors are defined as the one(s) who securitize a concern and present it as an existential threat towards the referent object. The referent object is defined as the one(s) existentially threatened by the issue or problem. The referent object is often referred to as the state (survival of the state) or collective populations from middle-range to macro-range. The securitizing actor(s) are often referred to as political leaders or governments. Lastly, there are functional actors who affect the securitization process without being the securitizing actor or the referent object. The functional actors are defined as actors who influence decisions or the debate (Buzan et al. 1998:36, Buzan and Hansen 2016:214).

The concept of security frames the concern as either above politics, or as a specific sort of politics. The security spectrum for public issues and problems has a range from non-politicised – meaning the state doesn’t consider it as a concern and it’s not made an issue of public decision or debate, – through politicised – meaning that the concern is a part of public policy debate, demanding the state to make decisions and make resource allocation, – to lastly securitization – the concern is no longer viewed in a way that requires the state to debate it as a political question but rather as a threat that allows them to deal with it in ways and at a pace that would not otherwise be approved, as the ways might violate normal social and legal rules (Buzan and Hansen 2016:214, Buzan et al. 1998:23). Buzan, Weaver and Wilde argue that when a securitizing actor uses rhetoric where they present the threat as existential and take the concern away from what would be conditions of normal politics, they have created a case of securitization. The rhetorical structure is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Securitization Theory, entailing a priority of action due to the magnitude of the argued security concern. The threat is presented in terms of urgency, and a need to be handled rapidly or otherwise it will be too late since the referent object and the actor will not exist to handle the situation (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan et al. 1998:25-26).

The precise criteria and definition of securitization are constituted by an established intersubjective view of a presented threat with a sufficient prominent probability to have significant political effects (Buzan et al. 1998:25). Buzan, Weaver and Wilde argue that the
way to use securitization is by studying political constellations and discourses. It examines when arguments with this distinct rhetorical and semiotic structures create enough effect, that the securitizing actor can violate rules that would normally have to be obeyed without the addressed population argue against it. The security act is happening between the securitizing actor and the referent, consequently internally, as mentioned merging them together by the discursive power of securitization (Buzan et al. 1998:25-26).

By having a discursive conception of security, the Securitization Theory makes the definition of security dependent on how successful its speech construction is in the discourse (Buzan and Hanzen 2016:213). The survival of the sovereign state is a vital part of security, the absence of objective and subjective threats against the sovereign state is what creates security. What is considered relevant threats are those that threaten the sovereignty or population of the referent unit (state) (Weaver 1995:52-53). If the securitizing actor manages to break free from rules or procedures they otherwise would be bound to and uses the means of argument regarding the urgency of the defence and security concern, a successful securitization has occurred. In other words, if the securitizing actor manages to present a concern as an existential threat and convince the population of the urgency, i.e create a security narrative, and the population adopts the presented view allowing actions they otherwise would not accept, the issue has been successfully securitized (Buzan et al. 1998:25). An issue or problem that simply is presented as an existential threat towards a reference object does not directly create accomplished securitization, this is called a securitizing move. Accomplished securitization occurs when or if the addressed population accept and views presented issue as an existential threat. If such acceptance does not exist from the population the issue or problem has not reached accomplished securitization (Buzan et al. 1998:25).

The means argued to counter the threat don’t need to be implemented, the existential threat just has to be presented and gain sufficient support for a platform to be made. A platform from where it’s later possible and legitimizied to launch the countermeasure that would otherwise not have been possible if the discourse about the threat had not been centred around urgency or existential and accepted as such. The distinction between a securitizing move and accomplished securitization is important to understand (Buzan et al. 1998:25). To clarify, successful securitization has three components; existential threat, emergency actions, and effects on interunit relations through side-stepping established rules (Buzan et al. 1998:25).
This thesis will not study if accomplished securitization has occurred, the aim is to study if securitization moves are present within the Arctic discourse.

Securitization is an intersubjective process, the sense of threat, security and vulnerability are socially constructed and not objectively present or absent. Regardless, if it exists some external conditions, it may be easier to achieve securitization. Some examples of this may be heavily armed state neighbours or neighbours with a history of aggression that are easier to portray as threatening than states without such traits. An illustrated example is how NATO members view(ed) the intensity of threat from the Soviet Union/Russia in a variety of ways, showing that different societies will frame, respond and view the same objective security issue different. Buzan, Wilde and Weaver argue that there are very few objective threats apart from tanks rolling over state borders (Buzan et al. 1998:57-58). Military threats are a threat to everything in society, and they do so in a manner where everything will be affected, and rules of civilized behaviour fail to function. Military threats are existential threats per definition for a state and its population, making them crucial to study (Buzan et al. 1998:57-58).

Within the Securitization Theory, regions are used as a level of analysis. Regions are viewed as locations where the researcher can find sources of explanations or outcomes, hence, regions are objects of analysis in themselves (Buzan et al. 1998:9). The theory categorises different sectors where they state the typical object(s) and existential threat(s). By using sectors as categorizing tools when analysing the textual material, you can identify how security is presented (Buzan et al. 1998:7-8). The referent object in the military sector is typical of the state and its survival. However, in advanced democratic states such as Sweden, the defence of the state is not the only function of the armed forces. Other obligations such as peacekeeping operations are also given attention. The political sector usually views existential threats in terms of the state’s sovereignty or ideology. Sovereignty could be threatened by anything that would question the legitimacy, recognition or governing authority. Even if an advanced democratic state’s armed forces have several obligations – referent objects – the most important one is the state (Buzan et al. 1998:22,49). For this thesis the empirical material will be analysed through the military and the political sectors.
3.2 The Choice of Securitization

The choice to use the securitizing theory, to study to what extent the Swedish officials have securitized the Arctic, was made to enable the thesis to study and understand in which way the Arctic is presented as a defence threat and security issue for Sweden. Securitization will both provide a way to reveal what measurements are proposed to counter the security concerns and present a way to study declared issue(s) and/or threat(s) in the Arctic discourse. And furthermore, viewing the official Arctic discourse and examining if arguments with securitizing rhetoric regarding the Arctic occur. As mentioned above, when there exist external conditions such as a history of aggression, the probability of securitization increases. In the Arctic region, such conditions exist as there is a history of instability and aggression from Russia which could be used by a securitizing actor (Åtland 2008:306).

To understand a state’s position, you need to look within the state’s discourses and politics which the Securitization Theory will help the study do. Studying securitizing acts and moves within the Arctic discourse will reveal what defence threats and security issues are presented, not whether they are real threats or not. Buzan, Weaver and Wilde argue that when a securitizing actor uses rhetoric where they frame the threat as existential and take the issue away from what would be conditions of normal politics, they have created a case of securitization. This study aims to explore if a securitizing case has occurred and if securitization acts or moves are present in the discourse. Rhetorical characteristics of the Arctic will be analysed and reveal in which way Arctic is a defence threat and security issue for Sweden by analysing how it's presented. This thesis will not study if accomplished securitization has occurred, only if the rhetoric of securitization has been presented within the Arctic discourse. The potential securitizing actors are the Swedish Government and state agencies, the referent objects are the security of the Swedish state and population.

3.3 Critique against Securitization Theory

As an established theory securitization has generated criticism, particularly from Critical Security Studies. Ken Booth (2007:163-169) argues that the theory is too state-centric, discourse-dominant and elite-centric. Booth claims that securitization only allows actors who have the ability and power to create discourse to be the securitizing actor, and those who do
not, are unable to participate in securitizing processes, which makes the theory elite-centric. The elite-centric approach implies that the securitizing actor often are people with power. Consequently, minorities or people in unequal social settings are overlooked. Booth claims that the discourse-centric approach makes the theory miss the whole picture of security as it focuses on who said what to whom in a specific context. This enables the theory to miss parts of reality as it doesn't consider threats that exist outside the discourse (Booth 2007:163-169).

The Securitization Theory has also been criticized for its failure to identify the silent security dilemma as the majority of the Securitization Theory focuses on the verbal or printed speech act methodology. The silent security dilemma (security as silent) occurs when the potential group(s) who are subjected to the security issue have limited or no ability to speak about its security issues, for example, women in unequal social settings (Hansen 2000:294). As mentioned, the theory focuses on the verbal speech act methodology and the correct articulation of the security concept is an epistemological and methodological criterion needed to be fulfilled for security issues to be identified in a discourse. If these explicit articulations are not identified in the discourse a security issue does not show in an analysis (Hansen 200:294). Further critique regarding the Securitization Theory's inability to recognize the silent security dilemma is voiced by Claire Wilkinson who argues that it reveals the unacknowledged Western-centric focus. The Western-centric focus implies that there is an assumption of free speech and political structures that guarantee the protection of individuals. Such conditions don't exist everywhere (Wilkinson 2007:12). Aligning with this critique is the notion that securitization is racist and European-centric. Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit argue that the Securitization Theory perceives ‘normal politics’ as civilized and reasoned and securitization as a racially coded uncivilized position. Securitization justifies by “…privileges Europe as the apex of civilized ‘desecuritization’, sanitizing its violent (settler-) colonial projects…” (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020:3). Securitization constructs a white framework that uses speech act theory to uncover developments towards desecuritization and ‘normal politics’ as in Europe, therefore becoming like Europe is considered as vital. Securitization prioritizes order over justice and positions the theorist as “…the defender of (white) ‘civilized politics’ against (racialized) ‘primal anarchy’.” (Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020:3).

Critique has also been raised regarding the Securitization Theory’s de-securitization concept, meaning that the security concern is removed from the existential threat sphere and back into the normal logic of politics (Huysmans 1998:572-3). The danger of first presenting a
A securitized issue or problem is that it gives official leaders the legitimacy to disregard laws and rules. In the de-securitization process, it's important that the concern is not just normalised, letting the government continue with the drastic countermeasures, but moved to the politicised spectrum. The critics argues that it’s not desirable to de-securitize if it only implies repression of an issue (Huysmans 1998:574).

4. Methodology

In this chapter, the thesis methodological choice will be presented and motivated. The thesis will follow an interpretive research approach and discourse analysis as a method.

4.1 Research design

This thesis is an interpretive study of the Swedish state’s potential securitization of the Arctic. In the interpretive approach, the moldability of meaning-making and systems of symbols that are used to communicate and express meaning, both to others and oneself, are presumed to create multiple interpretations. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow state that “...this is, ontologically, the reason for attending to humans’ use of language in constructing their worlds and, epistemologically, in making sense of them.” (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013:46). This thesis aims to analyse and interpret the empirical material (texts) to see if securitization or traces of securitisation of the Arctic region have occurred and in which way it’s perceived as a threat towards Sweden. The thesis does not aim to test the Securitization Theory, only use it as a means to analyse. The ambition is to reveal what is observed in the material studied.

When conducting interpretive research, the possibility of several meanings is one part that is critical when creating connections to context. This means that the reason that things take the particular forms and meanings they do, has to do with the specific context of place and time they are interpreted within (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013:46). When executing interpretive research, it's important to acknowledge the researcher’s presumptions and knowledge. In the interpretive field, it's assumed that prior assumptions and knowledge have a significant role in constructing the research idea as well as the conduction of the research.
and the analysis (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013:26). And when working with discourse analysis within a field close to oneself it’s hard to treat discourses as socially constructed meaning-systems, because the researcher is often part of the culture in chosen discourse. This leads to the sharing of common-sense and taken for granted understandings (Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:21). Consequently, it’s important to acknowledge my place with the Arctic region and the Swedish stance of the region. To my understanding, there has been a growing concern in Sweden as well as in all Arctic states about potential future conflicts in the region. This is due to both climate change and the effects that it has on sea routes and recourses. But also, the militarisation in the region from Russia as well as their military acts in other parts of the world are creating a security and defence concern in the Arctic region.

4.2 Method

Several methods could be used for analysing securitization, for example, both content analysis and process tracing would enable the thesis to study the Swedish state’s potential securitization of the Arctic. However, discourse analysis has been claimed as the most sufficient method when studying securitization and its consequences, thus discourse analysis will be this thesis’s method of choice (Balzacq 2011:39, Buzan et al. 1998:25). Discourse is understood as a specific way of understanding and talking about the world or one chosen aspect of it (Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:1, Oswick 2012:473). Jörgensen and Phillips mean that discourse can be explained as “...language is structured according to different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains in social life.” (Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:1). Language help people to create a context and representations of reality. Discourse then depends on how people construct their understanding of the representations, and language is the creator that generates and constitutes the social world (Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:8-9).

Discourse analysis is the study of the pattern people’s utterances follow, the examination of language-in-use, of language that is in use to say and to do things. Discourse analysis is a linguistic analysis of texts or speeches to understand the discursive foundations of social realities (Gee 2011:1, Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:1, Balzacq 2011:40). Discourse analysis does not seek to reveal if statements in chosen discourses are right or not. It’s a method that explores what has been said or written by exploring patterns and identifying the consequences of the discursive representation (Jörgensen and Phillips 2002:21).
Discourse function in the background and provide the researcher with the capabilities to identify and differentiate things, giving them qualities and attributes as well as relate them to other objects. Discourses are not socially independent beings but rather structures created in their regular use by people through language practices (Milliken 1999:231). By using a discourse method, the thesis will be able to interpret what is written and said within the chosen discourse and interpret beyond the written words by studying the choice of language and words. Since the thesis uses Arctic discourse as the material, the interpretation of such texts will create an understanding of the national stance and relationship to the Arctic region. Accordingly, being able to interpret in which way the Arctic is a security and defence concern for Sweden.

To conduct such *linguistic analysis* of the potential Swedish securitization of the Arctic region the analysis will follow a modified framework by Carol Bacchi called ‘What is the problem represented to be’ (WPR). The WPR-framework presents a step-by-step framework in understanding the purpose and content of policies. WPR especially pays attention to identifying the main issues addressed, the underlying premises and the solutions proposed (Bacchi 2009:1-3). Bacchi presents six questions to apply when using the framework, and this thesis will use three of them to fulfil this thesis research’s aim of studying in which way the Arctic is a security and defence concern for Sweden. The three questions chosen will help in understanding what the security issue(s) and defence threat(s) are described to be in the Arctic discourse, to what extent the Swedish Arctic discourse has securitized them and what countermeasures have been proposed. If all of Bacchi’s questions were included another type of analysis then what is intended would occur, as it would force the thesis to study other aspects removing the focus from this thesis’s aim (Bacchi 2009:2-15).

Bacchi argues that the initial step is to identify what the problem(s) are. Such identification will be conducted by an in-depth analysis of the thesis material. To understand what has caused the problem one must identify the underlying assumptions that lays within the problem representations, by studying how the problem is presented in terms of concepts, terms or categorisations. Lastly, a solution to the problem should be identified to understand how the issue(s) is being handled (Bacchi 2009:2-15). Bacchi’s WPR-framework centres the analysis around three essential components, namely, the problem, the causes and the solutions. In doing so she creates a framework to use when conducting discourse analysis (Bacchi 2009:2).
The initial step when using the WPR-framework in discourse analysis will be to identify the security issue(s) and defence threat(s) within the discourse. Then analyse the language used to describe the potential identified defence threat(s) and security issue(s) by studying the terminology such as words used when the Arctic region is mentioned (within the security and defence field). In other words, revealing the underlying of the specific problem representation. The analysis will then be able to search for evidence of securitization or indications or patterns of securitization within the material. Lastly, the framework will enable the analysis to identify the effects of the concerns presented, in other words, the measurements purposed to deal with presented threats in the Arctic region (Becchi 2009:2,3,5,15). The questions as stated by Bacchi that this thesis will use as guidelines in the analysis are as follows, and the customised question for this research is beneath them:

1. “What’s the problem (...) represented to be in a specific policy?” (Bacchi 2009:2).
   - Who/what security issue(s) or defence threat(s) are presented and identified regarding the Arctic region in the Arctic discourse, that concerns Sweden?

2. “What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?” (Bacchi 2009:2).
   - Are the identified issue(s) or threat(s) presented as security concerns? In other words, are they securitized or can patterns of securitization be found?

   - What military and defence countermeasures have been proposed to meet found threats in the Arctic region?

The WPR-approach will be used to help guide the discourse analysis and is not to be considered as the thesis method, nor is the aim to test if the framework is compatible with the Securitization Theory or discourse analysis. Question two in Bacchi’s framework is where this thesis will explore if securitization has occurred or if patterns of it can be found. The second question will help analyse the findings by the criteria presented by the Securitization Theory. As mentioned, securitization is constituted by an established intersubjective view of a threat with a sufficient prominent probability to have significant political effects (Buzan et al. 1998:25). The way to use securitization is by studying political discourses and examining when arguments with distinct rhetorical and semiotic structures create enough effect that the securitizing actor can violate rules that they would normally have to follow (Buzan et al. 1998:25).
1998:25-26). The analysis will study if the rhetoric of such character occurs, if the threats in the Arctic region are presented as existential threats towards Sweden. This thesis will study how the Arctic region is presented in Arctic discourse from first of January 2019 to the 19th of June 2023, interpreting the language in use when presenting the Arctic region and the defence and security concerns connected to the region.

4.4 Material collection strategy

Discourse analysis can be executed on a wide range of material regarding social practices. To create trustworthy results the focus will rest on primary texts such as official reports or policy documents (Hansen 2006:75-6). The empirical material constructing this analysis consists of selected primary sources presented by Arctic discourses regarding the Swedish view of the Arctic. The Arctic discourses will consist of governmental and state agencies' policy documents and reports representing the official Swedish stance on the Arctic. By using the chosen material both the executive and legislative branches of power will be studied. Such material is suitable for analysing discourse as it has been produced within the context of contemporary social practices, representing the Swedish stance.

The first step in collecting material for this study is to choose texts. The search will be conducted by using governmental and state agencies’ websites (regeringen.se, foi.se, forsvarsstaben.se). By using the keywords *Arctic and *Arktis, and limiting the search from first of January 2019 to the 19th of June 2023 the material will be identified. The period from first of January 2019 to the 19th of June 2023 is, as mentioned, chosen since it will cover a timeframe of the present Arctic discourse produced by state agencies and government and this creates a contemporary view on the subject. The chosen date of the 19th of June is, as discussed, also due to the release date of the report from the SDD regarding the security policy development. When selecting the material for the thesis analysis, the aim is to fulfil the following criteria: the material is characterized by clear articulation of statements relevant to the security issue(s), defence threat(s) and potential securitization of the Arctic, and the material constitutes formal authority to rightfully define an official view, interpretation or political position. The official reports produced by FOI are regarded as relevant as they act as foundations of governmental and agency policies and their main function is to aid the government and other state agencies with research and analysis regarding security and
defence. Further, the agency’s research has a majority of the assignments prescribed by the Swedish Government, Swedish Defence Force (SDF) and similar agencies making their research highly relevant when studying defence and security concerns, thus their work is considered relevant when studying Arctic discourse in this thesis. Distinct articulation and what’s written will make it easier to conduct discourse analysis and the formal authority implies the importance of power and status of the producer (Hansen 2006:76). The number of texts chosen after the search, a brief read-through, and assessed as relevant were fourteen.

4.5 Limitations

A limitation of this thesis is that the material analysed and used to disclose the potential securitization of the Arctic region by Sweden might be incomplete. Some materials might not be accessible, and some materials might be insufficient in capturing the phenomena studied, being unable to reveal the true extent of the Swedish securitization of the Arctic region. However, as described below, this thesis does not aim to provide conclusions beyond the context and scope of this study’s delimitation.

When conducting discourse analysis some parts of the text used, are seen as relevant and highlighted while other parts are overlooked, and this is making the process selective. As it’s the researcher who interprets and chooses what to use there is no objective analysed text (Fairclough 2003:14). Texts can be measured in various ways, for example number of words, but those measurements rarely mean anything if the result is not interpreted, if the researcher wants the analysis and results to say more about the texts and their meaning, they need to interpret them (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013:46-49).

The criticism against interpretative research has been targeted to the notion that the conclusions made from the results, rest on the researcher’s interpretations making their scientific meaning questionable. Can results be meaningful if the research could be conducted again, following the same method and procedure, by another researcher, but the conclusion is different due to the researcher’s interpretations? The aim of this thesis and the aim of interpretive research is not to create conclusions based on objectivity regardless of who conducts the research. This thesis aim is to conduct interpretive research which entails research that focuses on understanding contextualised meaning-making (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2013:91). Finding objective results and conclusions, free from meaning-making in a
context and generalizable, is not the intent of the research in this thesis. Rather, it's to understand to what extent the Arctic is presented as a security and defence threat for Sweden, despite the lack of a coastal border to the Arctic, and what measurements are proposed to meet potential threats from the Arctic region. This thesis rests on the notion that the meaning of social reality is assumed to be constructed, the ontological assumption. It would be a contradiction if the research aimed toward finding an objective and independent conclusion. This thesis does not aim to provide generalizable results, rather, the study’s ambition is to contribute with a perspective to the research about the Swedish view on the Arctic. This can contribute to a deeper understanding of the Swedish and Arctic discourse in the limited context provided by this thesis. The conclusions made in this thesis do not claim nor aspire to explain anything apart from the answers to the research questions within the analysed context.

5. Analysis

In the following chapter, the thesis’s analysis will take place. The empirical material from the Swedish government and state agencies regarding the Arctic region, their descriptions and perceptions of the region connected to Swedish security and defence will be interpreted. The focus will be on descriptions, phrases and statements associated with security issues and defence threats in the Arctic discourse, to enable the analysis to study in which way the Arctic region is perceived as a security and defence concern for Sweden. The study can then identify if patterns of securitization or securitization alone can be found in the Arctic discourse. The analysis will be guided by the WPR-framework and divided into three parts. The first part will identify what/who the defence threat(s) or security issue(s) within the Arctic discourse is perceived to be. The second part will connect the analysis with the thesis theory and inquire if securitization alone or if patterns of securitization can be identified. The third part will analyse what countermeasures are presented to meet the identified security and defence concerns.

The thesis research questions the analysis aim to answer:

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As mentioned, referred to as the *Arctic discourse.*
In which way is the Arctic a security and defence concern for Sweden?

- To what extent do the Swedish officials securitize the Arctic region?
- What/who are the presented security issue(s) and/or defence threat(s)?
- What military defence countermeasures have been presented to counter security and defence concerns in the Arctic region?

5.1 Identified defence threats and security issues

The Arctic has previously been described as a region of international cooperation with a low level of tension. The Arctic discourse has been centred around collaboration and cooperation but in the last couple of years another discourse has emerged (Government of Sweden (GoS) 2020b:22, FOI 2019:2, FOI 2022b:10). In the following section, the security issues and defence threats identified in the Arctic region will be described. These are not all presented as a direct threat towards Sweden but are identified as concerning in the Arctic discourse.

The Swedish Arctic discourse is now characterized by change, the Arctic region is perceived to undergo a series of changes which contribute to the decline of the security environment. The negative development in the Arctic region and Sweden’s surroundings is perceived to potentially develop into a threat towards Swedish security. The increased strategic value of the Arctic region for Sweden is frequently mentioned and emphasized in the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020b:5, FOI 2019:2-3, FOI 2022b:10, SDF 2021:4). The negative geopolitical development in the Arctic is not connected to the Arctic in itself, but rather it’s viewed as a consequence of global trial of strength (FOI 2022b:63). The Arctic discourse frequently mentions climate change and geopolitical changes that affect the security environment and enhance the Arctic region’s economic and strategic value for Sweden, the fellow Arctic states and non-Arctic states. The Arctic region is described as a region facing new possibilities and challenges rooted within the growing great power competition and climate change, which leads to complex security- and geostrategic changes in the region. The increased interest in the Arctic region from the great powers is viewed as a concern and the risk of friction occurring among them is described as likely and would affect Sweden (GoS 2020b:5, FOI 2019:2-3, FOI 2022b:10, SDD 2023:28, SDF 2021:5). If a conflict or crisis were to unfold in

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7 Great powers defined as China, Russia and the USA.
the Arctic region it’s considered to “...immediately and strongly affect Sweden...” (FOI 2019:18, my translation).

Geographically the Swedish vicinity includes the Baltic Sea, The North Sea, the northern parts of the North Atlantic, the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea, the latter two are located within the Arctic region. The security in Sweden’s surroundings, consequently also in the Arctic region and Sweden’s territory within the Arctic, is perceived to decline (GoS 2020a:33, SDF 2022:25). The SDD argues that the Swedish territory and location makes it a challenge to protect. The geographical location of Sweden is deemed to play a crucial part in the Swedish defence and security policy and the significant value of the location is seen to grow. This is due to the increased global interest in the Arctic region which Swedish territory is a part of and is in the surrounding vicinity, making it a highly valuable region to monitor in order to defend Sweden. The northern parts of Sweden, The Cap of the North, gain a more prominent role when considering Swedish defence and security (SDD 2019:42, FOI 2022b:61). FOI states that “…climate change, together with defence- and security questions, in different ways contribute to changing northern Sweden to a more important region than before.” (FOI 2022b:61, my translation). Claim over territorial sovereignty in the Arctic could lead to further declining security for the northern parts of Sweden (FOI 2019:19, The Military Intelligence and Security Service (MUST) 2022:16).

Three trends affecting the security environment within the Arctic discourse can be identified.

5.1.1 Climate Change

Climate change has made natural resources more accessible leading to a growing economic interest in the region and it can also experience security policy consequences when competition and claims for resources occur (GoS 2020b:22-23, SDD 2023:45, SDD 2019:50-51, Swedish National Space Agency (SNSA) 2019:6). Climate change is affecting and changing the environment in the Arctic fast, and the melting ice is seen as one of the main contributors to the changes. Climate change’s influence on the developing defence and security policies in the region could occur swiftly and affect Sweden (FOI 2022b:13, GoS 2020a:38). Climate change in the Arctic has led to new conditions for several instances. The reduction of the Arctic ice has contributed to a new open Arctic making it possible for transportation by sea during a longer period of time each year. It also enables new and further

Climate change and the new military dynamic emerging are intertwined, one cannot speak of the former without the latter. Melting ice opens for the establishment of new transportation routes between the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean and results in an open northern coast for Russia to protect. The Swedish Arctic discourse views climate change and what it could lead to for Swedish security as concerning (GoS 2020b:22-23, SDF 2022:14,21).

China’s role in the Arctic region is further described below but their interest in the region is considered to partly originate in their aspirations to establish a presence in regions with strategical natural resources. As natural resources become more accessible with climate change a geopolitical power struggle due to these natural resources is expected to occur between China and other states (SDF 2022:14, FOI 2022a:4, FOI 2022b:10).

5.1.2 Military dynamic

A new military dynamic has emerged in the region creating a negative security policy development. The expanding military activity and presence are viewed as a result of the growing strategic and economic value in the region for both Arctic and non-Arctic states, which in turn are described as having consequences to the security policy. Climate change contributes to the new military dynamic and the transforming military strategy of the Arctic region as changes in the environment create new conditions for military presence (GoS 2020b:22, SDD 2023:45, SDF 2022:14, FOI 2022b:60, MUST 2021:16-17). The growing military activity and presence are described as partly a consequence of the deteriorated security environment on a global level which also affects the regional level in the Arctic. It’s mainly the emerging global dynamic between the USA, China and Russia that affects the Arctic region. Partly it’s due to the sovereignty assessing policy states conduct in the region to secure strategic interest, leading to arms race and territorial and/or recourse claims, worsening the tension. The military activity is described as expected to further grow and with it, the opposition between states in the region, impacting the security environment, which is regarded to be concerning for Sweden in the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020b:22, GoS 2020a:39, 67, SDD 2023:28, 110, FOI 2019:15, SDD 2019:51, MUST 2021:16, SDF 2021:5).
As Sweden has applied for NATO membership the strategic military environment in both the Swedish and Arctic region shifts. With Sweden as a NATO member, the Arctic will be tied closer to the North Atlantic Sea and the Baltic Sea on a strategic level. Swedish territory will gain military strategic value for the alliance but also raise the interest from Russia in Swedish territory. The expansion of NATO is described in terms of leading to an increased risk of militarisation and great power competition in Sweden’s surroundings. In the Arctic discourse, NATO is expected to increase its presence in the region which in turn will affect the dynamic with the other great powers Russia and China, the latter expected to strive towards becoming a major Arctic power, shifting the Arctic dynamic (SDD 2023:195, SDF 2022:21, FOI 2022a:96). Further, the USA along with the Nordic neighbours are turning their focus towards the Arctic region again as it gains value for both NATO and Russia, making it a strategic area to protect. Consequently, the emerging focus and what it can imply for Swedish security in the region is perceived with caution within the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020a:39, SDF 2022:25).

The Russian activity in the region is especially described as prominent within the Arctic discourse. The Russian war against Ukraine is considered a step toward the worsened geopolitical environment in the Arctic region as they are now considered as more military aggressive. Russian military activity is increasing in the Arctic region, including all military branches, rebuilding military infrastructure, capacity and their defence of Russian territory, which is perceived with caution in the Swedish Arctic discourse. Control over the Northeast Passage, an area which is becoming more accessible, is a clear ambition Russia is striving for with their military development, partly concentrated on the Kola Peninsula and the Barents Sea. It’s also to protect Russian territory and military and non-military assets. The rebuilding and new constructions of military bases in the region is also a means to enable power projection against the West. Russia's nuclear-equipped submarines in the region are part of their bastion defence (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:5-6, SDD 2023:96, SDF 2019:45, SDF 2022:21, FOI 2022b:63-65, MUST 2022:17).

Russian military activity and their nuclear-equipped submarine asset in the Arctic is considered to have both an indirect and direct impact on Swedish security. Indirect - their nuclear assets in the Kola Peninsula increase the interest in studying and influencing the Swedish territory and military-strategic in the northern territories (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:5-8, SDD 2023:96, SDF 2022:21, FOI 2022b:63-64, MUST 2022:17, GoS 2020a:39). Direct - Russia has conducted unannounced military exercises in the Arctic region close to
Swedish territory, contributing to the tension in the region and viewed as concerning for Sweden (SDD 2023:115).

Russia is assumed to view the new open Arctic as a strategic region which requires action to ensure control over their territory within the region. The Arctic is further viewed as an important strategic area when it comes to the nuclear balance from both Russia and the West, which raise the security implications for Sweden (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:5-8, FOI 2022b:64, MUST 2021:16).

As Sweden is located in Russia’s vicinity Russia’s actions are regarded as deeply concerning. Russian second strike nuclear underwater abilities and non-nuclear naval abilities are considered a “...severe threat in the North Atlantic operative context.” and their surface combat capability “...focus is mainly on the Barents Sea region and Cap of the North.”, making them a threat towards Sweden (FOI 2022b:64, my translation). Attempts from Russia to disturb Sweden’s air capabilities in the Cap of the North have occurred which is viewed as a risk towards Swedish security. Together the Russian actions are viewed with concern from the Swedish Arctic discourse (FOI 2019:7-8, FOI 2022b:63).

The Swedish Arctic discourse is also sensing a growing concern for arms race in the region from several states and the risk of military clashes would then increase, which would affect Swedish security. Russia’s aim towards control and power in the Arctic region is contributing to a new security environment for the northern parts of Sweden and the northern surroundings. The Arctic’s military-strategic importance is perceived as a barrier and a meeting point for the West and Russia, which increases the tension in the region. As the strategic importance of the Cap of the North increases it leads to security implications for Sweden which is frequently mentioned within the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:15-18, FOI 2022:64, SDD 2019:45, MUST 2021:16). Russian actions during the last couple of years have led to a view of Russia as the largest threat in the region and the biggest contributor to the negative security environment in Swedish vicinity. The Arctic discourse emphasises that the Russian presence in the Arctic region could lead to further tension and close attention is hence necessary to monitor security and defence risks (SDD 2019:45,51, SDF 2022:21, MUST 2023:18).
5.1.3 Growing interest from non-Arctic states

A growing interest in the Arctic region from non-Arctic states is also affecting the security balance in the region and China is especially mentioned as a prominent actor in the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:9, SDD 2023:107, MUST 2021:17). China wants to gain influence in the region which can cause conflicts and even if its military presence is limited, their military development and civil naval infrastructure developments are perceived with caution within the Arctic discourse. There is no clear military threat from China in the Arctic discourse, but they are considered to be a potential future security threat (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:9, SDD 2023:107, SDD 2019:90, SDF 2022:31, FOI 2022b:65, FOI 2022a:25, MUST 2022:16). The Chinese foreign space programs are considered to enhance their military surveillance ability of the Arctic region and as a means to gain strategic influence in the Arctic (FOI 2022a:27).

China is also involved in the Northern Sea Route, an initiative to build a sea route through the Arctic. The initiative is described as a way, for China, to ensure their access to energy and trade but their growing interest in the region are looked upon as concerning (GoS 2020b:23, FOI 2019:9, SDD 2023:28). The development of new transport routes in the Arctic region enhances the strategic importance of the region and it will affect the security of Sweden. If a conflict or crisis would evolve in the Arctic the effect on the Atlantic Sea routes could directly and negatively affect Sweden. The growing engagement from China in the Arctic region is viewed within the Arctic discourse as a concern as for what security and defence implications it might have on the Arctic region and for Sweden (FOI 2019:19-20, FOI 2022a:14). China’s aspirations in the Arctic region are viewed within the Arctic discourse to exploit resources and territories. States are to be influenced to support Chinese ambitions not to oppose them. China’s growing interest in the region will affect Sweden in one way or another according to the Arctic discourse (FOI 2019:10, MUST 2021:26.27, GoS 2020a:52).

The connection between China and Russia and their military collaboration is also described as concerning and could potentially have a negative impact on the Swedish security, especially if it would be concentrated in the Arctic region. A need to pay close attention to their collaboration is identified in the Arctic discourse (GoS 2020b:23, SDD 2023:105,109, SDF 2022:21, FOI 22a:83,90). The connection between China and Russia has several layers but it's not the aim of this thesis to investigate this particular issue, but it's worth mentioning as the Arctic discourse considers it concerning.
5.1.4 Summary of security issues and defence threats

In short, the defence and security concerns identified within the Arctic discourse:

- Climate change resulting in race towards resources, claim over resource-rich territory and new sea routes.
  - Increasing the military and non-military strategic value of the region as it becomes more accessible which adds to the geopolitical tension.
- New military dynamic due to the growing strategic and economic value of the Arctic region, leading to a negative development of the security environment.
  - Sovereignty assessment and arms race due to power balance competition between the great powers.
  - The relevance of Swedish geographical location is considered to grow for security and defence policies as the security environment in the close surrounding, the Arctic region, is declining. This makes the value of the geographical location of Sweden (Cap of the North) increase, considering its strategic importance.
  - Russia’s increasing military capabilities and actions in the Arctic.
- Interest from non-Arctic states further increases the strategic and economic value of the region and raises the tension.
  - China and its interest in the region are shifting the balance as well as the Chinese and Russian potential military and non-military collaborations.

5.2 Identified patterns of Securitization

There are clear identifications of presented security and defence concerns related to the Arctic region as well as the negative development of the security environment in the region, which is distinctly formulated within the Arctic discourse. Both are concerned to have implications for Swedish security. However, the security issues and defence threats are not coherently described within the terms of securitization in the Arctic discourse. There are no clear findings of a securitizing move, case or act. This is because the problems and issues are not distinctly formulated or linguistically addressed in terms of existential threats against Swedish sovereignty, security or population. The security issues and defence threats are
presented within the *politicised sphere*, not in the securitization sphere and not above the norms of normal political procedures but within it. The security issues and defence threats are neither presented in terms of *urgency*. The potential securitizing actors (the Swedish government and state agencies) is *not in an evident manner* securitizing the developments in the Arctic region (Buzan et al. 1998:23-26). Despite this, there are linguistic patterns that indicate that the Swedish Arctic discourse is sensing a growing threat towards Sweden from the developments in the region. Therefore, some rhetoric and statements that occur indicate that Sweden is moving *toward* securitization of the Arctic region, this will further be explained below. First, it’s worth clarifying that it’s not the Arctic in itself that’s described as a security or defence concern but the *developments* in the region.

The development in the Arctic is perceived to lead to increased opposition in the region among states which would impact Swedish security. If a conflict were to occur in the region between other Arctic states, Sweden would be affected. However, the tension presented in the chosen Arctic discourse regarding the region is not deemed to have an *urgent existential* impact on Swedish security and is not securitized (GoS 2020:38, SDF 2021:5). The GoS states “*The military-strategic development in our vicinity shows the value of continuing to strengthen the military abilities in the northern parts of Sweden and the importance of being able to act with these in adjacent territories.*” (GoS 2020:24, my translation). This and similar statements imply that there are concerns regarding the security and defence of Sweden if the development continues in this negative manner, which it’s perceived to do. FOI states “*The development in the Swedish vicinity moves in a negative direction and risks to develop to a threat against Swedish interest and security.*” (FOI 2019:2, my translation). The SDF claims “*The nearby area geopolitical and military-strategic value imply that also other countries than Russia, including China, could constitute a security threat in Swedish vicinity, for example (...) presence in the Arctic.*” (SDF 2022:14, my translation). Even if the description of the decline in the security environment is not phrased within the criteria of being securitized, as it’s not described as *existential* nor *urgent* and no indicators of moving the concerns from politicised to securitized are found, it’s clear that the Arctic discourse senses that what is happening in the Arctic region is a concern with *potential to develop* to a threat towards Swedish security (Buzan et al. 1998:23-25). The criteria for securitization are constituted by an established intersubjective view of a threat with a sufficient prominent probability to have significant political effects. The Arctic region with the connected security
problems could become a threat to Swedish sovereignty if this negative development continues (Buzan et al. 1998:24-25).

The growing militarisation of Russia and their nuclear abilities in the Arctic region is described to affect Sweden both directly and indirectly and it’s perceived to partly contribute to a new security environment for northern Sweden and the northern surroundings. The SDD states that “...the growing Russian emphasis of the country’s interest in the Arctic and the growing military presence from different actors side makes it important to pay attention to tendencies that could lead to growing tension in the region” (SDD 2019:51, my translation). This indicates that the Arctic discourse has identified a clear concern for the future development of the region. The nuclear submarine capabilities Russia possess are deemed to “...constitute a serious threat in the North Atlantic operative context compared to their surface capabilities.” (FOI 2022b:64, my translation). This further implies that it does exist a view of threats even if it’s not specifically said within the terms of securitization. It’s not, as mentioned, removed from conditions of normal politics nor named to constitute an urgent existential threat towards Swedish sovereignty or population (Buzan et al. 1998:25-26). The Russian invasion of Ukraine is perceived to affect the geopolitical environment and security within the Arctic discourse, but it’s not phrased as a securitization problem. It’s only presented as a concern and contributor to the decline of the security environment in the region which needs to be supervised (SDD 2023:129, SDD 2019:45). The DD argues “...Swedish strategic thinking has up until now, to a far too small extent, viewed the security-political and military development in the Arctic and how it affects Sweden” (SDD 2019:50, my translation). This shows that future development of the Arctic strategy is recognised and needed. Securitization is as mentioned an intersubjective process, the sense of threat and security are socially constructed, however, external conditions such as state neighbours with aggressive history, could affect the securitizing process (Buzan et al. 1998:57-58). Arguably, if Sweden shifts its strategic thinking and focuses more on the developments in the Arctic, the previously stated problems could be presented in a securitizing manner. The discourse could use the previous Russian aggression and history as a way to argue for drastic countermeasures and move the security issue from politicised to securitized.

As political and military interests grow it intensifies the tension between the great powers in the region. The Cap of the North increases its defence and security-policy value which increases the strategic value of northern Swedish territory. The intensified interest is perceived to grow which for Sweden would imply a further strategic value of the northern
parts and growing frictions in the Arctic region. This could lead to a potential threat towards Swedish security (FOI 2019:2-3, SDD 2019:42, SDF 2022:31, FOI 2022b:10). Climate change and its implications for resource-claim and new sea routes in Sweden's northern surroundings combined with Russia’s interest to gain power over such route, creates security implications for Sweden. It further contributes to the increasing strategic value of the Cap of the North (FOI 2019:15-18, SDD 2019:50-51, SDF 2022:14, FOI 2022b:10). If the potential threats against the sea routes in the North Atlantic Sea develop, they are claimed to “...very fast create harsh consequences for Sweden...” (FOI 2019:20, my translation), and “The Arctic is also largely affected by climate change, something that eventually will have security-policy effects on Sweden...” (FOI 22b:10, my translation). This suggests traces of securitization rhetoric as it states a threat that urgently would affect Sweden if escalated. Nonetheless, it’s not stated in a manner that enables the securitizing actors to move the problem from the politicised sphere. Nor does the rhetoric imply that there is an aspiration to do so in the discourse. It’s the discursive power of securitization that depends on how successful its rhetoric manages to securitize an issue by presenting it as urgent, existential threatening and breaking free from normal politicised procedures (Buzan et al 1998:25-26, Buzan and Hanzen 2016:213). If the negative development in the Arctic continues and the Arctic discourse uses rhetoric where it uses drastic phrases where the threat is distinctly worded in a manner that presents Swedish security as urgent and existentially threatened, a securitizing move has been made. However, in the contemporary Arctic discourse, there is no evidence of such moves. The SDF states “The development regarding resource extraction and more available Transocean routs will create a considerable implication on the Arctic and the security in Arctic states.” (SDF 2022:21, my translation). This further indicates that the Arctic discourse senses a future security threat from the developments in the region. But it’s not described in terms of being securitized in the analysed discourse as there is no urgency or existential threat sensed in the statements.

Chinese interests in the region are described as concerning but no direct threat towards Swedish security could be identified. Even if Chinese involvement in the Arctic is described with uneasiness and their contribution to the great power tension in the region is viewed to increase the risks from such tension, the security concerns they present originate from other sources than the Arctic region, one example being economical (FOI 2022a:14). If the development of Russian and Chinese collaborations were to extend to military cooperation it would “...get severe consequences for European and global security” (SDD 2023:106, my
There is no clear articulation of defined implications that China constitutes a military threat from the Arctic region towards Sweden. However, the Russian and Chinese collaboration in the Arctic is widely mentioned in the Arctic discourse and this implies that such consequences would affect the Arctic region, but it's not described with securitizing rhetoric (SDD 2023:106, FOI 2022a:92).

Not all security and defence concerns stated in the first section of the analysis are regarded to have direct security implications for Sweden or threaten Swedish security or defence, but there are indicators within the Arctic discourse that the discourse is taking steps toward securitizing. Some patterns and words used indicate that the discourse identifies a growing concern that could, in the future, imply a direct security and defence concern for Sweden. Yet, the security concerns in the Arctic region are not securitized within the Swedish state Arctic discourse. The problems are presented in the politicalised sphere.

### 5.3 Proposed countermeasures

Some proposed countermeasures suggest that the Arctic discourse views the security issues and defence threats in the region as bigger than what they are said to be. This is indicated by traces of securitization emerging regarding the region, even if concerns are not coherently described as securitized in the contemporary Arctic discourse.

Sweden as an Arctic state is perceived to have a responsibility and interest to preserve the peace and stability in the Arctic. The overall proposed countermeasures that are presented to handle the security and defence concerns, even if they are not framed within the terms of securitization, are rooted within cooperation and collaboration with mainly other Western Arctic states. Bilateral and multilateral collaborations as well as cooperation between the Nordics and the USA are highlighted within the Arctic discourse. A military conflict in Swedish surroundings, including the Arctic, is deemed to affect several states making joint military collaborations essential (GoS 2020b:5,17, SDD 2023:128-129, GoS 2020a:67-69, SDF 2021:5). The USA is described as “...central for Swedish security and well-being. This also applies to the Arctic region.” (GoS 2020b:19, my translation). The GoS states that they will “...act towards preserving peace and stability in the region...” and “...Swedish national capacity and foresight are strengthened.” (GoS 2020b:21, my translation). The GoS also states, “The government will further strengthen Swedish military ability to act in the northern
parts of Sweden and adjacent areas.” (GoS 2020b:21, my translation). Deepening and expanding military exercises with other states to ensure joint operative capabilities is illustrated to ensure Swedish security and to avert adversaries. These descriptions are made concerning the Arctic region, which suggests that the discourse recognises that there are security and defence concerns that need to be countered by the Swedish military. Emphasis also lays on deepening and intensifying Nordic and European defence- and security policy development and cooperation, focusing on the Arctic and the Cap of the North. Further, having access to relevant coalition forums where security and defence concerns of the Arctic region are discussed is also presented as a means to handle the declining security environment. The continued work with monitoring security policy developments from other states in the Arctic region, to prevent and detect attempts of destabilisation and influence, are presented as valuable (GoS 2020b:21,25, FOI 2019:20, SDD 2023:129, SDD 2019:297-301, FOI 2022b:14, SDF 2021:6).

If Sweden joins NATO, the military strategic environment in the northern region will fundamentally change, which will affect the capabilities needed. Sweden might need other abilities than what is required due to its location within the Arctic region. Also, as the Swedish northern territory, Cap of the North, gains strategic value it might be used by advancing foreign troops or maintenance to ensure the safety of Sweden’s allies (SDD 2023:131,188, 197). A well-functioning NATO and a good and stable relationship with NATO and the European Union are perceived to enable Sweden with military qualifications to counter or deter the threat Russia poses against Swedish territory and its vicinity (SDF 2022:33). This is described in a manner that indicates that Swedish military capabilities need to meet these changed circumstances.

Deepened defence- and security policy collaboration as well as defence-material development with Canada is especially mentioned as a means that should be looked further into. This is due to Canada’s important posture in the Arctic and its commitment to the security of the North Atlantic Sea (SDD 2019:296).

The Swedish security policy for the Arctic is twofold, one part focusing on the mentioned collaborations to ensure stability, and the other to strengthen national military capabilities. The military capabilities should function both in the northern territory as well as its surroundings. These military capabilities are presented to include air/flight capabilities with high readiness and smaller ground units with high mobility and readiness that possess
airborne ability. Technology to detect and meet threats in the region should be expanded and developed. According to the Arctic discourse the mass of these resources is argued to is grow (GoS 2020b:22,24, FOI 2019:20, GoS 2020a:68, SDF 2021:6). Strengthening the national essential military defence ability and being able to act in “...special Swedish and Nordic environments such as the Arctic and subarctic settings...” is described as critical for the Swedish military to be able to protect Sweden (SDF 2022:34, my translation).

The Swedish Government emphasise that other European states and the USA’s engagement in Arctic security is valid to ensure Swedish security in the region, ensuring their further involvement in the region is recognised as a countermeasure (GoS 2020b:25, FOI 2019:21). When the SDF presents future developments for the military branches, they do not explicit mention the connection to the Arctic region except for the army’s “...increased subarctic abilities...” in the Northern brigade (SDF 2022:56, my translation). They mention strengthening abilities in Norrland which partly is located within the Cap of the North and the Arctic region, this is strengthening military capacity in the region which also is expanding the military capacity in the Arctic region (SDF 2022:57).

A clear operationalisation of how to meet the military threats in the Arctic region is demanded and to accordingly develop the military assets. This concerns both knowledge about the Arctic region and military means used in the region (FOI 2022b:65-66). The SDF states several military developing goals for all branches as well as operative capacity needed in the future, but the Arctic is not explicitly mentioned. Rather an overall rhetoric regarding the protection of Sweden is used (SDF 2021:9-13). This indicates that problems are recognised, but not clearly stated in terms of securitization. There is no evidence found in the Arctic discourse of the Swedish Government nor state agency's attempts to move the found security and defence concerns from politicised to securitized when they present the countermeasures. There is no evidence of attempts to violate or avoid normal procedures or rules when presenting the countermeasures.
6. Conclusion

6.1 Discussion and conclusions

The thesis aimed to study how the Arctic is presented in Swedish Arctic discourse, based on the Copenhagen Schools Securitization Theory. The thesis research questions are:

In which way is the Arctic a security and defence concern for Sweden?

- To what extent do the Swedish officials securitize the Arctic region?
- What/who are the presented security issue(s) and/or defence threat(s)?
- What military defence countermeasures have been presented to counter security and defence concerns in the Arctic region?

According to the research done in the analysis, security and defence concerns regarding the Arctic region are recognised and the negative development in the Arctic is seen as a feasible future threat against Swedish security. But it’s not distinctly presented by the Swedish Government or state agencies in terms of a securitized threat. Consequently, the potential securitizing actors, the Swedish Government and state agencies, do not securitize and can’t properly be defined as securitizing actors (Buzan et al. 1998:36). This is because the defence threats and security issues are not described as existential threats towards Swedish sovereignty or its population, nor are they described as urgent, enabling measurements to depart from normal procedures and rules. Further, no traces of attempts to depart from normal procedures are found. Buzan, Weaver and Wilde argue that a case of securitization occurs when a securitizing actor uses rhetoric when they present the threat as existential and take the issue away from conditions of normal politics. This is not found within this thesis analysis of the contemporary Arctic discourse (Buzan et al. 1998:25-26).

To answer the thesis’s overreaching research question ’In which way is the Arctic a security and defence concern for Sweden?’, this thesis argues that the Arctic discourse views the Arctic region as a region of growing concern for Swedish security and defence. The Arctic region is becoming of greater strategic value, consequently also the Swedish territory within the Arctic and The Cap of The North. This is regarded with great concern in the Arctic discourse. The growing strategic value of the region is repeatedly mentioned and argued to be a prominent part of the security and defence concerns in the Arctic discourse. Evidently, the
Arctic region can be of concern for Sweden despite the lack of a coastal border as Sweden possesses territory within the Arctic region. The concern is therefore due to the Swedish territory within the region and the Arctic’s overall increased strategic value and growing tension, as the Arctic is in Sweden’s direct surroundings. According to the Arctic discourse, the named changes in the Arctic region increase the strategic value of Swedish territory and this is becoming a concern for Sweden to handle and prepare countermeasures for.

The point of the long description of found security issues and defence threats in part 5.1 was to show that the Arctic discourse does indeed recognise and acknowledge several security and defence concerns. But they are not presented by the terms of securitization. The main issues and threats presented and what they imply are within the three themes of climate change, expanding military activity and growing interest from non-Arctic states. Russia, the great power competition, arms race and territorial/recourse claims are particularly mentioned and perceived to have the potential to become a future threat toward Sweden. China is mentioned as a growing concern but there are no indications that they constitute a military threat towards Sweden from the Arctic region. The issues and threats are presented and recognised within the politicised spectrum, not within the securitized and they are not removed from undergoing normal political procedures and discussions (Buzan et al. 1998:23).

Presented countermeasures are centred around bilateral and multilateral cooperations and collaborations with mainly other Western Arctic states and strengthening the national military capacity in the north. Nor the presented countermeasures are described in a manner that indicates urgency neither attempts to abandon established rules and procedures are found when presenting them (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan and Hansen 2016:214). As said, the issues and threats described and likewise the presented countermeasures are illustrated within the politicised spectrum, not in the securitized (Buzan et al. 1998:23).

Even if it has been argued that the Swedish Government and state agencies don’t securitize, traces of securitizing rhetoric can be found in the Arctic discourse, indicating that a beginning of securitization is emerging. Some examples are: “The nearby area geopolitical and military-strategic value imply that also other countries than Russia, including China, could constitute a security threat in Swedish vicinity, for example (...) presence in the Arctic.” (SDF 2022:14, my translation), “The development regarding resource extraction and more available Transocean routs will create a considerable implication on the Arctic and the
security in Arctic states.” (SDF 2022:21, my translation), and a conflict or crisis in the Arctic region is deemed to “...immediately and strongly affect Sweden...” (FOI 2019:18, my translation). These are statements implying that the Arctic discourse in the future could securitize the region if the changes continue the negative development. Security issues are made such by securitization acts, namely by the use of speech acts by the securitizing actor. The securitizing actor declares the referent object as existentially threatened and it’s the utterance of the words that constitute the securitizing act (Weaver 1995:54-55, Buzan et al. 1998:25-26). Traces toward such acts are argued to be found when terms such as ‘constitute a security threat’ and ‘create a considerable implication on the Arctic and the security in Arctic states’ are used in the Arctic discourse. However, the thesis does not argue that these are arguments for claiming that securitization is occurring in the studied Arctic discourse. As it has been argued above, there is no rhetoric found concerning urgency, attempts to depart from normal politicised procedures or existential threats in the contemporary (up until 19th of June 2023) Arctic discourse.

The research conducted in this thesis contributes to the field of War Studies as it has presented a contemporary Swedish Arctic view regarding defence and security concerns in the Arctic region. The thesis has added to the deficient contemporary knowledge, in an understudied context, about the Swedish relationship and perception of the Arctic region concerning security and defence.

6.2 Relation to previous research

The view of the previous research, that the Arctic region is a region of change, with growing militarisation and tension between the West and mainly Russia is also found in the Swedish contemporary Arctic discourse of this study. The point of view presented from Wilson Rowe (2013), and Nilsson and Christensen (2019), that the military presence of Russia raises concerns from the other Arctic states aligns with what is found in this discourse analysis. Åtland’s (2008) conclusion that signs of (re)securitization in the Arctic region could be found partly agrees with the conclusion of this thesis, as it argues that traces of potential future securitization could be found.

This thesis did not compare the Swedish Arctic discourse with other Arctic states’ discourse or with older Swedish Arctic discourse. The thesis can’t conclude exactly how changes have
occurred within the chosen discourse, or if mutual and/or multifaceted securitization occurs where the other part is presented as a threat in all encounters by both sides. However, it does conclude that the Swedish Arctic discourse does not within the contemporary frame (up until 19th of June 2023) securitize the Arctic region and it does not agree with the presented research of Wilhelmsen (2021), Wilhelmsen and Gjerde (2018) and Jensen (2013) who focused on Norway and Russia and claimed that their behaviour had enabled a securitized discourse to emerge. The researcher acknowledges that Russia and Norway share a border, and both have territorial areas within the Arctic Ocean which could change the premises in the state discourse.

Lanteigne’s research (2020), concludes that the Arctic will likely become securitized or further securitized due to resource and territorial claims, aligns with this thesis research, stating that claim over resources and territory is viewed as a contemporary concern with the potential to develop into a security threat. Further, Depledge’s (2020 and 2021) conclusions that Western states’ decisions to prioritise the costly and difficult training within the Arctic region indicates that there exists a concern regarding the security and defence of the region. Considering the research done on the Swedish Arctic discourse, this is visible, as training in the Arctic region with other Western states is seen as a means to counter the growing concerns. Depledge’s notion that you should train where you expect to experience combat or where you have the intention to deter, is also visible within the Swedish Arctic discourse. Sweden is evidently prioritising training in the Arctic region despite the costs and what signal it might send. Sweden is viewing the region with growing concern and sensing the increasing strategic value of the region and Swedish northern territory with uneasiness. That is why Sweden prioritises cooperation with other Arctic states and strengthens the military capacity.

6.3 Limitations of the study and future research

The thesis does not include the voices of indigenous people living in the Arctic which could be viewed as a deficiency. It contributes to the notion of securitization inability to identify the silent security, its discourse-centric, state-centric and racist traits, overseeing minorities and/or favouring an Eurocentric view. This means that there are voices that are not heard when conducting discourse analysis with a focus on official state discourse. The thesis acknowledges this deficiency as it contributes to the notion that the whole picture is not
included in the analysis. There are aspects overseen of the *overall* Arctic discourse. However, the focus and aim of *this thesis* were *not* to study the perceptions or views presented by minorities or indigenous people.

This thesis’s aim and focus was to study how the Arctic is presented within the *official Swedish Arctic discourse* and reveal to what extent the region is securitized, to include such views mentioned above would therefore not contribute to the thesis’s aim. Consequently, regarding the delimitation of this thesis, the research conducted, presents the planned official Swedish Arctic discourse. As the thesis has not analysed the desecuritization of the Arctic, the critique over the theory's ability to de-securitize has not been a subject of this thesis. Future research could benefit the Arctic knowledge by analysing to what extent the indigenous Arctic population securitize the security issues and defence threats presented in this thesis.

Future research could also be aimed to study why the Swedish Government and state agencies don’t securitize the Arctic region when other Arctic states do, as presented in previous research regarding Norway and Russia. This would increase and deepen the knowledge about Swedish Arctic policy and create a broader understanding of the Swedish relation to the Arctic. Research in the future would benefit by studying if a future NATO membership will change the Swedish Arctic policies. This would elaborate the knowledge of both the Swedish contemporary Arctic policy (when/if we join NATO) and reveal the developments Sweden is obligated to conduct as a NATO member. Lastly, including Swedish media as a potential securitizing actor in research might give another view or include other aspects that would expand the overall Arctic discourse.
7. Bibliography

7.1 Literature


### 7.2 Empirical material


