Canada and the New Geopolitics of the North Pacific Rim

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Abstract

This paper traces the development of a new geopolitical assessment of the North Pacific "North" in relation to evolving models of Eurasian dominance and World Order. In it we explore the changing geopolitical perspectives which have been influential in this process and assess their impact upon the construction of Canadian northern and Foreign policies. The question is posed that if the end of the Cold War and the return to peace within the circumpolar region encouraged a number of decision-makers to define "the north" or "the Arctic" (terms which, despite some obvious differences in definition, are used as synonyms in this discourse) as a coherent region, do these historical geopolitical theories continue to have relevance today in terms of structuring an understanding of the relations and connections between Eurasia, and North America? Where does the North Pacific region fit in?

This article looks at the relationship between Canada and the North Pacific from the point of view of the circumpolar North. It argues that the Canadian circumpolar North is an important part of what traditional geo-politicians have called the world's Rimlands-a strategic area in context of the balance of power and access to industrial resources on a global scale, and that Canadian foreign and northern policies must orient themselves to this perspective. We begin with discussion of the fact that in the early 20th century the North American North Pacific area located next to what Mackinder called the "Eurasian Heartland", was considered peripheral to the global power struggle. This calculation was to change as the 20th century progressed.

Today the North Pacific Rimland is keenly strategic, and includes the nation states of North Pacific, Canada, USA, Russia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and China, meaning that the region encompasses two continents (North America and Eurasia) and part of one distinctive geographical region (the circumpolar North). Indeed, the contemporary Pacific area, and particularly the northern Rimland of the Pacific region, is considered to be one of the most dynamic regions in the world from an economic point of view. It includes on one hand, countries

like the U.S. and Japan, with the largest economies in the world, or countries like China, with large and fast growing economies. On the other hand, the region contains a large number of rapidly growing cities and sub-regions with flourishing economies, such as Vancouver, Soul and coastal areas of China. It also includes areas with rich energy resources like Alaska and the Russian Far East. In addition, and equally important, the region also contains strong political, as well as military, powers such as the U.S., Russia and China. It is on the northern edge of this region that our focus, the North pacific and the circumpolar North is situated.

Part of the reason why a change in the geopolitical status has occurred in the region is that a significant shift in emphasis has occurred from what were very clearly 19th and early 20th century geopolitical goals. This shift signals a gradual move away from a focus upon the perceived need for controlling "Central Eurasia", or indeed controlling and containing Eurasia itself, to a perceived need for achieving the new "containment of Eurasia" by controlling the regions surrounded or adjacent to central Eurasia, to the role of the region in the global economy and its geo-economic potential. The North American North Pacific has experienced the effects of this shift. And while it was considered somewhat strategic in the late 19th and early 20th century in military terms (a result of the quest for the Northwest Passage and the changing configuration of Canada's sovereign territory in the High Arctic), it gained considerably more attention as a strategic place during the Cold War Era. Since then, however, the calculation for the geopolitical significance of the North Pacific region has changed. It has moved from an emphasis upon hard military security to a more broadly defined security in terms of economic development and resources access, to comprehensive security (including health and education), and environmental security as global warming and global pollution become major issues in the circumpolar North. All of these shifts opened opportunities for a new discussion about the circumpolar North, northern geopolitics, regional governance and sustainable development.

In writing about the North Pacific region in this article, and in using the terminology of traditional geopolitics, we are not arguing that there is an essential or predetermined role for the region, standing as a timeless "Rimland" to the concerns of empire, as earlier geo-politicians might have done. Rather, we are arguing that as the geopolitical assessment of the region has changed over the past century or so, geopolitical goals and perspectives for the region have responded accordingly, so that the calculation of the importance of the region, and more specifically the relationship between the Canadian North and the region, has changed

substantially from the early, mid, or even late 20th century perspective. New ways of identifying threat, power, and security, new technologies and new critical assessments concerning international relations, environment and economic development have influenced our geopolitical perceptions of the region.

Thus, if the circumpolar North is now a Rimland, then it is a Rimland because it has developed a new and critical relationship to other regions, and not just because of its location vis-à-vis Eurasia. As such, the importance of the circumpolar North, and specifically the Canadian North in the North Pacific region, can be understood in terms of the changing global significance of the North itself. Whereas in previous decades this region was often perceived of as a marginal or frozen wasteland, today it plays a potentially important role in bridging the gap between Canada and the other North Pacific countries, particularly Russia.

Geopolitical Fundamentals: An Historical Assessment

Just over a hundred years ago, Sir Halford Mackinder (1904) presented "The Geographical Pivot of History" to the Royal Geographical Society. In it, he made the argument that the heartland of Euro-Asia was pivotal for global balance, and that its control and containment meant power and control over the globe. While, as Flint (2006) notes, "Mackinder's contribution is a good illustration of ... a limited and dubious Western-centric theory of history to claim a neutral and informed intellectual basis for what is in fact a very biased or situated view", it is nonetheless true that this assessment had profound influence on subsequent political definitions of world order because Mackinder drew upon what were considered profound, if not accurate truths of the late Victorian era and which continue to the present (see Venier 2004). In Mackinder's Britain, Eurasia was the strategic center of the world, or the World Island, while on either side lay strategic inner and outer crescents which were instrumental to containment (Figure 1). In this context the Eurasian Pacific Rim was more strategic than the North Pacific Rim, and the potential for balance of power lay in the European crescent and Atlantic area. Mackinder's ideas were representative of the political culture of early 20th century Britain, where Venier argues, Imperial Russia was historically seen as a more present danger than Germany (ibid). Indeed, some still perceive that there is an inherent historical threat from Eurasia: "in the political imagery, the word [Eurasia] resonates with geopolitics and history. It is a birthplace of great civilizations that

have united some of the territory. It has also been a place of contestation and c1ash" (Invitation to Eurasia Brainstorming Meeting 2005).

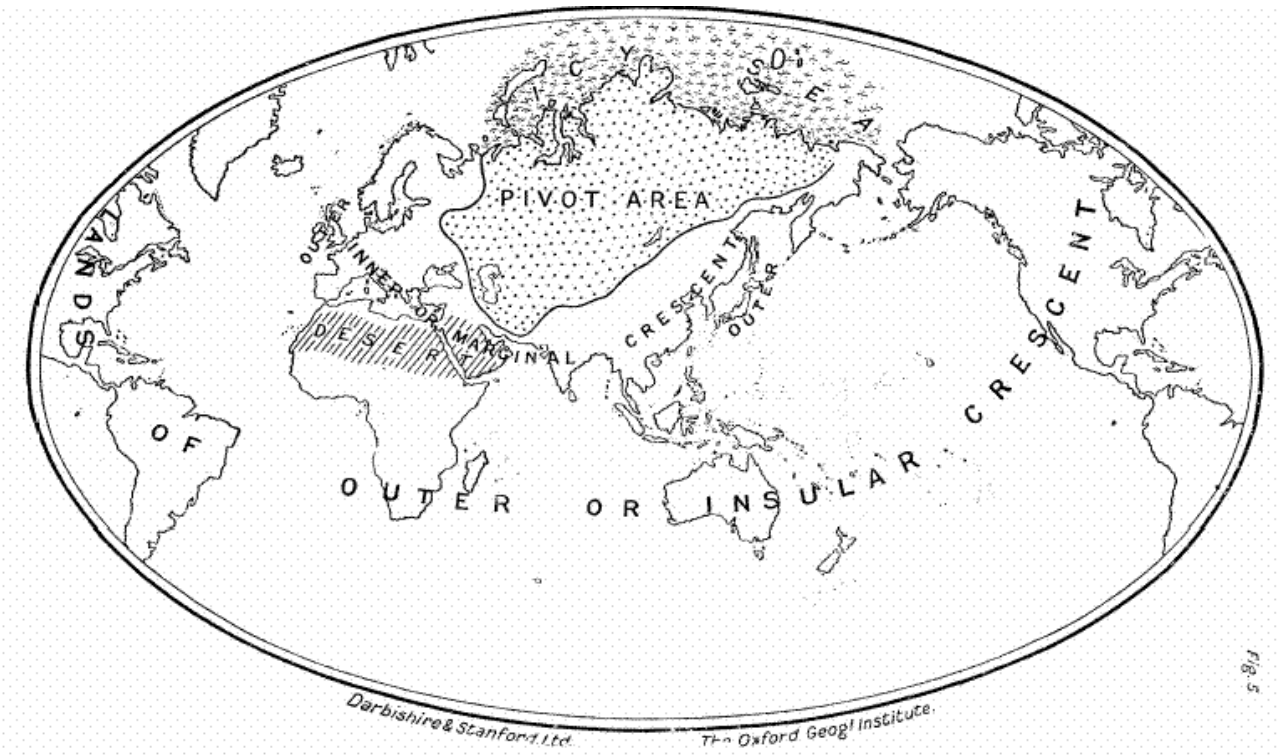

Figure 1 Mackinder's Geopolitical Assessment of Heartland
Source: H.J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History', The Geographical Journal, vol. 24, no. 4, 1904, p. 435.

While Mackinder was a British imperialist, and as such saw this region in terms of its strategic relationship to Britain itself, his theories have since that time taken on a broader perspective. The Cold War, for example, saw the Soviet Union as a modern day manifestation of "heartland", and Eastern Europe as a containment or buffer zone, in which Europe and the U.S. could not give ground for fear of losing their position of containment.

Subsequent geopoliticians such as Mahan, Spykman (Figure 2) and de Severesky (Figure 3) also positioned the margins of Eurasia and the North American continent into this strategic world map. Since then, watershed changes to scholarship and academics have since the Cold War if not earlier-exposed the weakness of geopolitical determinism, and indeed the "realpolitik" that Mackinder and his colleagues practiced during the first half of the 20th century has fallen into

disrepute. Even Mackinder refined his original World Island Theory recognizing that the rising power of the U.S. would compromise his original theory in a strict sense. Significantly,

> "*In 1943, four years before his death, Mackinder offered the readers of Foreign Affairs an "interim estimate" of his timeless formula. He envisioned the global balance of the twenty-first century, wherein the heartland (Russia) and the mid-Atlantic nations (America, France, and Britain) would combine to balance (not necessarily against) China and India. Mackinder thought that the mid-Atlantic should be "pledged together" with Russia in case "any breach of the peace is threatened," anticipating NATO and its expansion eastward, along with the EU*." (Seiple 2004)

But yet, what is interesting in this geopolitical assessment which spans a period of nearly a decade, is that while it saw the development of an understanding about the strategic position of the Eurasia North, and the North Pacific Rim (in the Pivot Area and Inner Crescent), there was a complete lack of conceptualization of how this region fit within a broader geographical or circumpolar- zone, even as the USA and North America entered into geopolitical equations in ways not seen previously. Indeed, towards the mid-20th century, geopolitical theories made much more explicit the role of the USA and the Atlantic, or most specifically the mid-Atlantic as the forum for maintaining global balance, but had little to say about the North.

While as we have seen, Mackinder and subsequent geo-politicians revised his original formula, of interest to this paper is the fact that until he did so, the concept of geopolitics and strategic interests represented a way of thinking about a global balance in which much of northern Europe and Northern North America, namely the Canada Arctic, was absent. Such thinking was not really to occur until the late 20th and early 21st century. This is because, as Klare (2003) observes, the strategists of the turn of the twentieth century saw two ways through which global dominance could arise. The first, was in the form of the emergence of a continental power (or powers) which might potentially dominate Eurasia and gain global hegemony in this way, and it was precisely this fear-that a "German controlled continental Europe and Russia, together with a Japanese-dominated China and Southeast Asia, would merge into a vast continental power and dominate the Eurasian heartland, thereby reducing the United States to a

marginal power-that galvanized American leaders at the onset of the Second World War. Franklin D. Roosevelt was deeply steeped in this mode of analysis, and it is this ideological-strategic view that triggered U.S. intervention in the Second World War." (ibid)

Klare goes on to observe the continuing relevance of these geopolitical assessments, particularly in terms of their role in positioning the North Pacific Rim. He notes that the other approach to global dominance perceived by early twentieth century geopolitical strategists was to control the "Rimlands" of Eurasia-including Western Europe, the Pacific Rim and the Middle East. To do so was to contain an emerging "heartland" power. Containment became particularly important after World War II, when the United States determined that it would in fact maintain a permanent military presence in all of the Rimlands of Eurasia. Klare suggests that this outlook led to the formation of NATO, the Marshall Plan, SEATO, CENTO, and the U.S. military alliances with Japan and Taiwan. Yet, he also notes that for most of the time since the Second World War, the focus was on the eastern and western ends of Eurasia-Europe and the Far East. To that we might add that in doing so, there was commensurate lack of attention to the northern dimensions of the northern Rimland in the North Pacific and the circumpolar North (until Spykman and De Seversky Figure 2 and Figure 3), until the establishment of the D.E.W. line under the Cold War. True, Mackinder added the Russian far north to the pivot area of the Eurasian north in 1919, bringing this whole region into a strategic zone which required containment. But the North American North remained in the outer crescent, a virtual Rim around the more strategic areas. Later theories were to reassess the importance of North America, specifically the U.S. in this equation but not in any way which significantly included the North outside of its relationship to the USSR.

In subsequent versions of the geopolitical map, however, the North Pacific region of North America, and the North American "North" were to emerge as more strategic, and were classified as Rimlands-areas whose relevance was indicated by their position to the Eurasian World Island" itself. These developed from the fact that in 1942, for example, Nicholas Spykman (1942) proposed that Eurasia's Rimland and its coastal areas, was the key to controlling the World Island, the heartland.

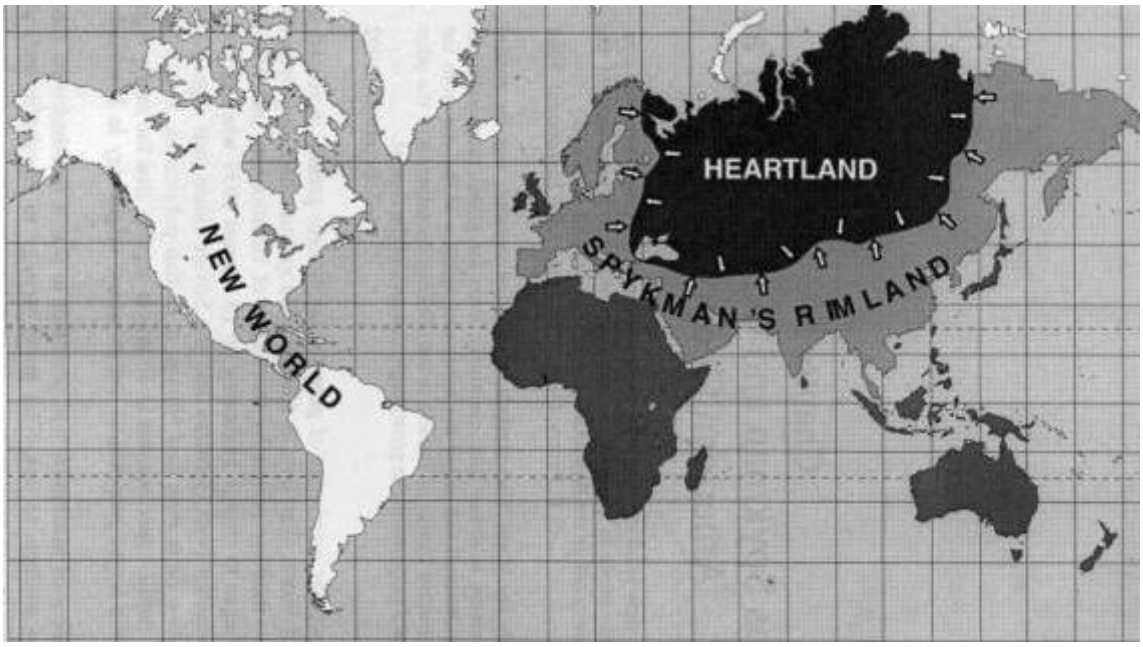

Figure 2: Spykman's Rimlands Model

Source: Mark Polelle, *Raising Cartographic Consciousness* Lexington Books, 1999 p. 118

Rimland Theory originally was meant as a prescription or justification for military control, intervention, control- a conquest of the "Old Eurasian World" as defined by Mackinder. In this sense it was a modification of Heartland Theory, rather than a recalculation of the premises of such theoretical models. While Spykman originally proposed in terms of military potential (Figure 2), however, it is still plausible to suggest that, today, the Rimland metaphor remains useful. While originally Rimlands were assessed in terms of their economic strength and their potential to balance the Heartland of Eurasia, there is an emerging literature which suggests that a new geopolitics within an international North has emerged, in which such strategic calculations are still germane, but they share the stage with broader understandings about economic development, human security and transnational environmental cooperation (Heininen 2004).

Here the point to be made is that not until Rimlands Theory was coined by Spykman, to describe the regions peripheral to the World Island and World Ocean (Atlantic), was there a geopolitical role for the North Pacific, for Canada, or even the circumpolar region, although it was not well articulated until de Seversky. In The Geography of the Peace, Spykman explained that this was the area that Mackinder had formerly called the "inner or marginal crescent" (see Spykman 1942). Klare maintains that the "Rimlands" represented a different strategic concept:

"The other approach to global dominance perceived by early twentieth century geopolitical strategists was to control the "Rimlands" of Eurasia-that is, Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and the Middle East-and thereby contain any emerging "Heartland" power." (Klare 2003) De Seversky (Figure 3) saw the area of decision, in this post-World War II scenario, as lying in the North Pacific and specifically in areas of the north adjacent to the North Pole in Eurasia and North America.

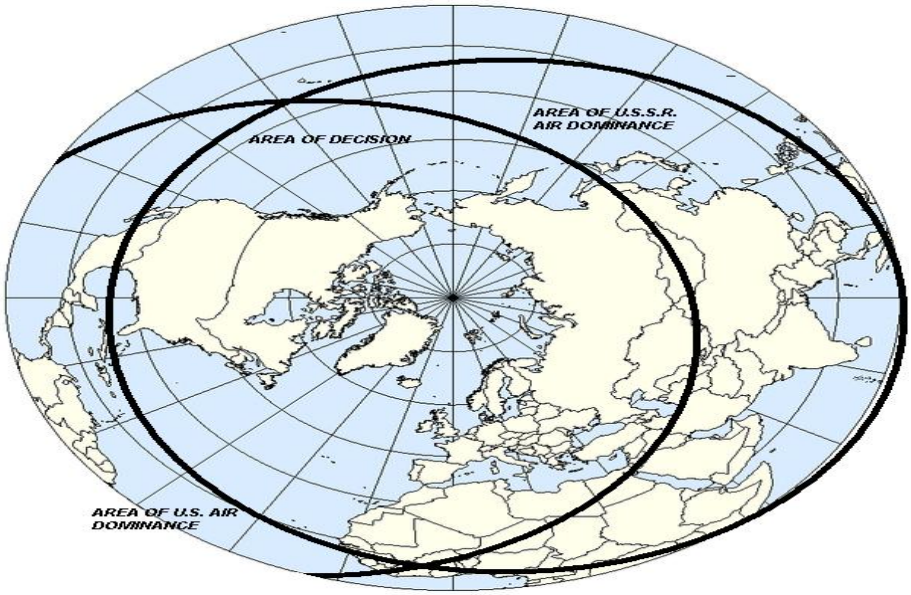

Figure 3: An interpretation of De Seversky's Map

Are these theories viable in the 21st century? Is there really still a concept of Eurasia from which the concept of Rimlands takes its cue? Clearly Eurasia, the biggest continent of the world, can be looked at from different points of view and defined in many ways. For example, "Eurasia and Asia in Russian discourses", or "The Grand Chessboard", "Middle Asia", "Europe in Eurasia, and Russia in between Europe and Asia" and "Eurasia in the Pacific"-any of which would be interesting to discuss further. But the real question concerns the relevance of these theories today and the nature of the relations and connections between Europe and Asia, or within Eurasia, and North America and Asia? There are good reasons to argue that both the Heartland theory and the resource models of geopolitics are still relevant when dealing with Eurasia and the Eurasian North (Heininen 2007).

For example, a large part of the natural resources and raw materials of the earth are in Eurasia, e.g. oil resources in the Middle East and natural gas in the Russian North. Further, this huge landmass also influences the climate of the Northern Hemisphere, and perhaps the whole world. This makes Eurasia a relevant factor in terms of the new environmental security discourse associated with global warming. Correspondingly, the biggest part of the world population lives in Eurasia, since China and India together include about 2.5 billion inhabitants, while in China alone there are 24 cities with over 5 million inhabitants. Moreover, there are other equally relevant factors. The continent represents an important economic power, and most of the nuclear weapon powers and strong military forces are in the region. At the beginning of the 21st century there is competition over natural resources, like those of the Caspian Sea region resulting in what could be considered as hegemony competition between major regional and global powers. There are also civil, ethnic and religious conflicts in areas like the Kashmir and Chechnya, while international crises and negotiations on nuclear weapon and power issues (e.g. the international negotiations on the nuclear weapons of North Korea and the dispute over nuclear power in Iran) continue to create concern. Finally, there are inter-state wars like the Iraq war, which are located on the fringes of Eurasia. Following from this, the North Pacific Rim of Eurasia is also part of the focus on the fight against international terrorism, and so too is at least one member of the rhetorical 'Axis of Evil': North Korea (ibid).

All in all, Eurasia has had, and continues to hold, both great importance and high strategic value in world politics in general. This is especially true because of its huge landmass, "space" and access to two oceans (potentially soon, three); its rich human and natural resources, its economic power, its nuclear weapons and technologies, the strong regional militaries, and following from that, evidence of a keen hegemony competition both regionally and" at times, globally. It has both potential for exercising cooperative and peaceful policies on the basis of economic and political influence, but hegemony competition is never far from the surface even in the 21st century. So in the final analysis, in the post-Cold War era, there remain issues which focus attention and concern within "Eurasia" as a geographical region, and suggest an increased importance for economic and political cooperation with and within Eurasia. It is against this backdrop that we continue to explore the idea that the north as a single physical region has only recently formed the basis of institutional and intergovernmental cooperation, and this co-operation relies heavily upon an international environmental discourse (Keskitalo 2004). Such

change strongly affects the North Pacific Rim meaning in this paper, where Russia, Canada and the U.S.A. meet.

The North Pacific Rimlands in the Circumpolar North: New Rounds of Cooperation and Contestation

The idea of a strategic North in the Pacific Rim area has gained viability in recent years. It first emerged as a very strategic place during the Cold War-as a place of containment for the Soviet Union under conditions of rivalry. Despite continuation of traditional security concerns within the region and the focus of international relations upon military confrontation after the Cold war period, attention slowly begun to shift from militarily strategic security issues which have previously been tantamount to security within the region, such as the creation of the Distant Early Warning system or D.E.W. line, to the broader challenges of achieving human security. Correspondingly, in the 1990s there was a new recognition of and interest in the circumpolar North.

In part, the new environmental agenda has resulted from the recognition of the growing impact of global sources of pollution, global warming, and military contamination upon the circumpolar north. This included a change in to international cooperation in many areas, to facilitate new priorities such as economic development, environmental protection, access to health care, research and higher education. The end result has been that The Arctic Council has overseen the transformation of the north into a region of tremendous international significance-for issues of political cooperation as well as environmental concerns (Figure 4). This new post-war security agenda in the North has been the result of a growing awareness of the need to apply the concepts of sustainable development which developed in the 1980s from forums such as the Brandt Commission (see Center for Globalization Negotiations, Brant 21 Forum). Indeed, the latter is sometimes credited as the first international venue to publicly promote the idea of "comprehensive security" (ibid)[1]. In its discussion of "Common Security", for example, the Commission urged the transformation of traditional military-based notions of security to include a broader focus on "human security" (The Palme Commission 1982). Such transformation would

[1] Olaf Palme, Swedish Prime Minister in the 1980s, was one of the first to coin the phrase "comprehensive security" to describe the comprehensive implications for three types of post-Cold War security needs: economic security, environmental security and human security.

require greater international cooperation, transparency, disarmament, and demilitarization. The impact of 9/11 notwithstanding, this new approach to the definition of security has potential to have a catalytic impact upon the structure of international relations within the circumpolar North, as attention shifts from maintaining strategic control of territory to promoting environmental cooperation and multilateralism (see National Security and International Environmental Cooperation in the Arctic 1999).

Indeed, the relationship between local agency and broader issues and decisions has been reflected in the conception and definition of security, from that of an exclusively state-centered and militarized geopolitical discourse to one that is more humanistic in definition, has become increasing relevant in the 21st century. This is because the agencies responsible for human security have also changed: new regional actors and the new regional dynamic now focus not just upon military-policy security, but also upon other aspects of security such as the challenges and threats posed by long-range, trans-boundary pollution. For example, the recently published scientific assessment of human development within the Circumpolar North, identified three main themes, or trends, in international relations and geopolitics within the circumpolar North at the beginning of the 21st century (Heininen 2004). These were increased circumpolar cooperation by indigenous peoples' organizations and sub-national governments, new efforts towards region-building, with nations as major actors, and the development of a new relationship between the Arctic and the outside world, including consideration of traditional security-policy and threats to the environment and human populations.

This means that while geopolitical discourse on the North has, until quite recently, focused almost exclusively upon either military and defense activities, and the utilization of natural resources, recent changes to definitions of human security now influence not just how security is defined, but also how the component parts of this globalized region relate to each other and to the outside. Moreover, replacing or even parallel to, traditional geopolitical assessments of the region, are new approaches to geopolitical scholarship which have developed over the past two decades. Such approaches are more interested in human-centered themes, like identity politics, or the relationship between geopolitical discourses and hegemonic power. This has changed the nature of concerns within this "Rimland" region, and suggests that new rounds of east-west / north-south geopolitical discourses are on the horizon, in which the circumpolar North figures strategically.

Nonetheless, or even despite significant gains in the human security discourse, at the beginning of the 21st century, security is still largely structured according to the concept of traditional security-policy guaranteed by the military, in spite of the fundamental changes in the international system and the obvious influence of globalization. Indeed, the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) - written under the auspices of the Sustainable Development Working Group or SDWG of the Arctic Council - recently reconfirmed that the Circumpolar North still has a high strategic importance both militarily (especially for the USA and the Russian Federation) and economically. This is due to utilization of, and competition over, the region's rich resource base, especially strategic resources like oil and gas (e.g. Duhaime 2004). Moreover, the appearance of the military and the construction of new infrastructure or training areas remain common within the circumpolar north, even today (e.g. Nelleman 2003).

So, the situation is complicated, and the region is important. Indeed, in reconciling all of these themes, in 2004 the AHDR report identified the following main themes of international relations and geopolitics at the beginning of the 21st century in the circumpolar North: first, the increased circumpolar cooperation by Indigenous peoples' organizations and sub-national governments; second, region-building with nations as major actors; and third, the relationship between the Arctic and the outside world including traditional security-policy, since the North is still highly strategic to the USA and Russia (Heininen 2004).

But as this paper suggests, it is also important to Canadians, and has received new recognition over the past two decades. True, Canadians have always actively engaged with the idea of a northern dimension to Canadian nationhood. The north has always been important, symbolically, to the definition of nationhood, and is embedded within the broader iconography of Canadian nationalism. To a large extent, however, until the end of the Cold War this engagement was focused on strategic considerations based upon the more widespread view of the Arctic as a frontier, sparsely populated by traditional peoples living ancient lifestyles, and outside of the mainstream of Canadian life-as well as a region of rich natural resources such as oil and resources to fuel an industrial economy. This attitude was to change substantially in the 1980s and 1990s, as changing geopolitical concerns and definitions of security, increased attention to environmental issues, and a new sense of the legitimacy of the Arctic as a homeland for traditional societies, replaced Cold War concerns.

In terms of Canada's relationship to the region, however, the Second World War and the Cold War were important. In World War II the U.S., Canada and the Soviet Union were allies and fought against Japan, who had occupied the Korean Peninsula and Northeastern China. After the war in the North Pacific there has been both bilateral cooperation between countries such as the USA and Canada, as well as cooperation between sub-national governments like the state of Alaska and the western Canadian provinces, or Alaska, Hokkaido and South Korea. The period since the 1980s, and especially since the end of the Cold War, has seen a new start of regional cooperation across the Bering Strait between Indigenous peoples, non-governmental and local organizations and sub-national governments. But as we have seen, in the 1990s, a significant change took place in the nature of cooperation in many instances, as cooperative initiatives became more common, particularly in the area of environmental conservation. While the impetus for these developments can be traced originally to North Europe and Russia, Canada has nonetheless played an important role in redefining the strategic value of the Canadian North, its relationship to the global or international North, and its role in a broader globalized context. The process continued during the early 1990s, contributing to the development of a new and focused direction for Arctic geopolitics. Where does the Pacific North figure in this calculation?

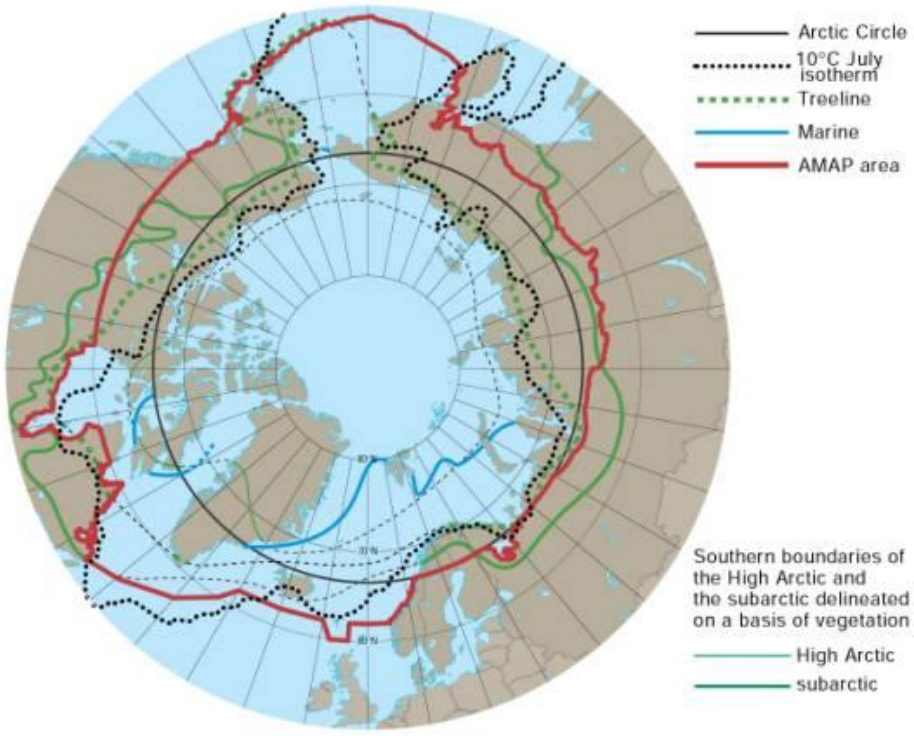

Figure 4: AMAP Definition of the Circumpolar North Region
Source: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, http://www.amap.no 29.9.2006

Figure 4 indicates that under international cooperation regimes and new mapping perspectives (AMAP) of the Arctic Council, the area of the Lower Mackenzie River and Delta, adjacent to the Northern Alaska North Slope area comprises the main region of-~ what is considered the North Pacific North region in North America, in the sense of its interaction in issues which are potentially oriented towards the Pacific, rather than the Atlantic Ocean. This is an area while part and parcel of the circumpolar region in a more general sense, is positioned in unique ways-most importantly in relation to its proximity to Alaska and Russia. It is the region where "Northerness" (e.g. Golovnev 2001) combines with Pacific, to produce "Rimland". As such, the North Pacific Rimland has contributed to a Canadian foreign policy discourse specifically in areas in which sovereignty, east-west (Eurasian/Russian) relations and Canada-U.S. relations are prominent. This fact means that Canada's foreign policy has not only had to consider a northern dimension, but also the close relationship of Canada to the U.S. and Russian "Norths"-both powerful and resource rich regions, and both strategic places for Canada's own national interests.

For example, although in Russia the argument is often made that "Eurasianism is a dead end", as the Russian Federation is not that global power Russia used to be; losing Ukraine consequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Trenin 2002, 14 and 46; also Heininen 2007), Russia has on one hand, very strong strategic and national interests and on the other hand, it faces serious threats in Central Asia and its Far East and the Pacific rim. In Russia there has recently been an academic discourse addressing the importance of redefining the role of the Russian North as more than geo-strategically important resource reserve (e.g. Alekseyev 2001)[2]. Further, the fact that most of the seven federal districts and 89 subjects of the Russian Federation encompass northern regions within them, makes the North important in the Russian context, as it was very important in the modernization project during the Soviet era (Helanterä-Tynkkynen 2003). This makes the Russian north a strategic region, at the same time it makes it more open for cooperation.

These realities mean that policy pertaining to the Canadian North Pacific region must address the proximity of Russia and the new Russian north. At the same time, it must accommodate U.S. approaches to Russia, and northern security. All indications are that the U.S.

[2] President Vladimir Putin proposed this kind of northern policy in the meeting of Russian Security Council in April 2004 in Salechard ("Putin Says Northern Regions Need 'Intelligent Long-term Policy'" ITAR- TASS News Agency, April 28, 2004).

has a rather loosely defined internationally cooperative agenda at the regional level-emanating mainly from the bottom up. In the Bering Strait area, for example, environmental protection was one of the first fields of international cooperation since the presidents of the USA and the Soviet Union announced the establishment of an international park in the Bering Strait area in 1990.

Although the National Park Service's Shared Beringian Heritage Program was established and annual meetings have been held, a formal agreement on an international park has not yet been signed. The 1st Bering Sea Summit in April 2002 organized by environmental organizations had as its main goal that of promoting the sustainability of the Bering Sea. This fit well with initiatives such as those identified by Gorbachev's Murmansk Speech, or the Arctic scientific cooperation which was included in the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in May-June 1988. Both gave a boost to scientific cooperation in the region. There were also several other structures and initiatives which attempted to accomplish the same goals, such as the Barrow Arctic Science Consortium (BASC) to support research infrastructure on both sides, or the many University of Alaska, Anchorage (UAA) activities designed "to marshal Alaska's experience and resources to work" in order to promote the transition of the Russian far east to democracy and free market economy by training entrepreneurs, business managers and government leaders both in Anchorage and several places in the Russian Far East.

Yet at the same time these broad initiatives have been launched, it is clear that Alaska is not positioned to make decisions concerning international cooperation in any formal sense. Indeed, the approach taken by US decision-makers more generally, at least those in Washington, with respect to cooperation across the circumpolar north is generally quite different from that of Canadians, who have invested considerable effort in devolving northern relations and encouraging indigenous participation. At the state level, American policy-makers are less inclined to make policies which promote a formal relationship within the Arctic Circle beyond those which relate to environment and "Arctic science", or which privilege U.S. research institutions and American leadership in environmental science.

The US approach to participation in the Arctic Council, for example, is driven by a number of specific issues, rather than by a sense of geographical regionalism. National security, economic development and scientific research are important U.S. interests in the region. Consequently, it would be fair to say that theoretically, the US position towards the circumpolar region remains based upon a state-centered agenda in which security and national interests are

emphasized, although with recognition of the broader context of globalization. It should be noted that while the North remains a strategic location for military or security, or military structures (like the National Missile Defense system including silos in Alaska) such security is, at present, much less exclusive as in former days. What is more pronounced, however, is the strategic importance of oil and U.S. energy security in the North. As we shall see, this has implications for Canada's role in the region.

Similarly, concern with broad-based human security issues has been less significant to Washington decision-makers than more empirical studies of northern climates and environments. Indeed, Young identifies the propensity for the North to be understood as "The scientific Arctic" and as such suggests that the region has been of greater interest for its research potential to academics (Young and Einarsson 2004). U.S. personnel involved in decision-making at the level of policy for the Arctic Council have often claimed that the most proper area of concern for the federal government is the area of scientific research (presumably Western scholarship style) and data gathering, rather than upon what they consider "less rigorous" scientific themes such as quality of life or maintaining indigenous lifestyles (e.g. ACIA 2004). While the Arctic is indeed an important parameter for the state of the planet, this focus on formal science has differentiated and at times devalued the role of traditional knowledge or traditional society in the North.

This has meant, historically, that as far as the US approach to the North American circumpolar region is concerned, at the state level, there is a tenuous link between the promotion of civil society and human security beyond the context of environmental issues. Indeed, there is no region, and no geopolitical discourse which connects people and place outside of a fairly narrowly and empirically defined environmental agenda. State Department expertise until recently consisted mainly of personnel previously assigned to border security and INS, and State Department interest, and with respect to the work of the Council was limited to concern with scientific, environmental and technical issues which affect the state of Alaska or the US in general. As such, Washington's failure to engage on the level of a circumpolar north has been criticized by Canadians and Europeans, but on the other hand, it has given Canada opportunity to navigate the Arctic Council, to some extent, freed from the confines of a formal and separate bilateral relationship with the US on indigenous issues-particularly in the area of initiatives to strengthen the role of indigenous peoples in regional government. This includes Canadian support

of, and cooperation with trans-national NGOs such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and the Inuit Tapirisat.

On the other hand, it has created an important point of division between Canada and the U.S., particularly in terms of the recent U.S. government push in favor of drilling for oil in the ANWR, proponents of this project claiming that oil from the refuge would lessen dependence on foreign oil, help bring down energy prices, provide jobs and ease the country's growing trade imbalance. But where the U.S. government claims that their indigenous populations are "on board", there may well be significant effects upon quality of life for Gwitch'in on the other side of the nearby Canadian boundary. They fear the decline of the Porcupine Caribou herd upon which they rely as a major food source.

While clearly there is tremendous room for improvement, the Canadian government has found itself more closely aligned with scientific research which supports indigenous knowledge and science which aligns with indigenous interests in certain strategic cases, such as that of the Gwitch'in in Old Crow[3]. A potentially powerful ally, the Government of Canada, has supported the interests of the Vuntut Gwitch'in in ways the U.S. Government would not. At one point it has offered "oil" for "oil"- lucrative compensation for loss of oil revenues and supplies from ANWR lands to be made up from other energy sources in northern Canada such as the Tar sands. The offer was, however, rebuffed.

We should also observe that it is not only land borders which resonate with conflict in this area. The North Pacific Region of the Canadian North is particularly critical in this sense. Sovereignty disputes are predicted to be more pressing as global warming proceeds and the Canadian Arctic becomes a more critical route for global shipping. Disputes between Canada and the U.S. over the status of the Northwest Passage, over the now largely un-demarcated Canada-U.S. maritime border in the Arctic, will be critical within the region. The latter has real potential for dispute because of significant oil interests in the Bering Sea. It also has potential to open

[3] The Vuntut Gwitch'in first Nation live on the Canadian side of the Canada-US land border in the North. They have a longstanding culture and traditions concerning the land that has been passed down over many years, and they fear that their way of life, particularly the caribou hunting tradition, will be destroyed by the oil activities in the ANWR lands. The link between the welfare of the Porcupine Caribou herd and the Vuntut Gwitch"in is particularly intense- and so the Caribou themselves are yet another character in this scenario and are the main source of protein for many groups of both U.S. (Alaskan) and Canadian Indians. The Porcupine Caribou Herd has been important to the Gwitch'in for many generations and, if they have room to continue breeding, or calving, they can continue to be a part of this life process. Hunting these animals is not simply a sport, but a way of life that has endured through the increasing rise in urban destruction and population. Caribou have been described as the most important land-based species for people living in the Arctic.

greater disputes concerning security and control over the continental perimeter, as accessibility to the Arctic Ocean makes the North a potential jumping off point for global terrorists.

"Canada's North Pacific Rimland" and Circumpolar Foreign Policy

The realities of the North Pacific region have had an influence upon Canada's foreign policy response to the circumpolar north and the geopolitics of the Northern Rimlands. Many of the specific protocols and programs of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), initiated by the Arctic Council, were shaped by Canadian concerns: one example is the agreement on The Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora. As we have seen, under the Arctic Council, Canada felt it had assumed a leadership role which suffered from the problem that there was little in the way of foreign policy to fall back on. The Canadian North had never been an arena for the development of international relations, except in reaction to very specific events which saw recognition of the reorganization of Arctic territories[4], yet within a few years Canada had shown strong leadership in developing the concept of an Arctic Council which would be a forum for discussion and environmental cooperation throughout the circumpolar region.

Canada was one of eight countries which signed the AEPS strategy, and as early as the late 1980s Canada found itself actively seeking to establish an international umbrella type political forum for international cooperation in the Arctic （Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2000). Although it took longer to establish than initially expected, in 1996 with the support of the other members of the Arctic Eight the Arctic Council was formed, institutionalizing new attitudes about environmental issues and governance in the Arctic. This signaled the beginning of a Canadian foreign policy approach to the Arctic informed by a new, post-Cold War emphasis upon environment, human security, and sustainability in the circumpolar North, building upon a distinctive Canadian approach to Arctic issues. Canada's 1998 National Forum on international relations, sponsored by the Canadian Center for Foreign Policy Development was to change its traditional focus with Cold War and U.S. military security and

[4] These events included the Alaskan panhandle purchase, Confederation (and its requirements for territorial legitimacy over crown lands and territories), Britain's ceding of the High Arctic Islands to Canada in the late 19th century, the events of the Cold War which prompted closer military alliance with the US in the Arctic and the establishment of the DEW Line, and Canada's ongoing struggle to infer sovereignty over the High Arctic when challenged by the US and other European governments.

broaden the relationship. It focused upon circumpolar relations, and argued for a foreign policy which would translate environmental concerns into a broader set of understandings about the impact of environmental degradation upon the north. The National Forum observed that ideas concerning sustainable development in the Arctic were by nature difficult to define and translate into policies which would prompt concern at the international level. In answering the ultimate question, "just where the circumpolar dimension is supposed to fit in the later scheme of foreign policy?," a consultative process identified a series of issues and recommendations, which were focused upon five key questions. These included among others "Does a northern dimension to foreign policy have relevance for all Canadians?" "Does the creation of an Arctic Council offer opportunities for Pan Arctic relations or does it simply jeopardize bilateral relations with the US?", "Should Canada champion the rights of indigenous peoples, even those outside the Canadian Arctic?", "What is the role for the University of the Arctic?", and "Should geography rather than demography establish the basis for Canada's foreign policy in the North?"

While, in 1999, Canada launched the Northern Dimension of its foreign policy, it is clear that even then, the answers to all of these questions were not necessarily resolved-or if resolved to the satisfaction of Canadian's, would remain important in the sense of bilateral relations with the US. This is a point to which we will return in a moment. In context of Canada's goals, however, the Canadian Government observed that a clearly defined Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy would help to establish "a framework to promote the extension of Canadian interests and values, and will renew the government's commitment to co-operation with our own northern peoples and with our circumpolar neighbors to address shared issues and responsibilities". Moreover, it would "demonstrate that our future security and prosperity are closely linked with our ability to manage complex northern issues" (ibid).

These policy objectives are first, to enhance the security and prosperity of Canadians, especially northerners and Aboriginal peoples, second, to assert and ensure the preservation of Canada's sovereignty in the North, third, to establish the Circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity integrated into a rules-based international system, and fourth, to promote the human security of northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic. Moreover, in connection with the pursuit of these goals, there are also four key initiatives which the Canadian Government intends to pursue. These include the strengthening of the Arctic Council, within a broader circumpolar regionalism, principally in connection with promoting dialogue "among the

eight Arctic states and Indigenous northern peoples as Permanent Participants come together to discuss and decide on matters of common interest" (ibid).

The Canadian government asserted that in promoting its Arctic foreign policy, it was continuing Canada's "long-standing foreign policy tradition" in promoting international cooperation in pursuit of "shared objectives". This was to be accomplished through institution-building and "pragmatic problem solving". In doing so, however, Canada had "taken on, as a new guiding theme, the protection and enhancement of human security." The Northern Dimension of Canada's foreign policy, in other words, had become the gateway for the incorporation of new ideas about the relevancy of human security in context of environment and civil society. It was to be framed in reference to "the northern territories and peoples of Canada, Russia, and the United States, the Nordic countries plus the vast (and mostly ice-covered) waters in between". Here, the Canadian Government asserted that the challenges "mostly take the shape of trans-boundary environmental threats-persistent organic pollutants, climate change, nuclear waste-that are having dangerously increasing impacts on the health and vitality of human beings, northern lands, waters and animal life." (ibid)

But unlike the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in the Bering Strait region, which might be a region comparable in levels of cooperation and multilateralism to that of the North Pacific Rim Arctic region, there is no international body for an institutionalized intergovernmental (Heininen 2004), or regional cooperation which really connects Canadian Northern Dimension Foreign Policy, as yet, to the less formalized international linkages of the Pacific Rim Region. Most efforts along these lines have been undertaken by the US, and these have not been particularly successful. In 1989 a Bering Straits Regional Commission, was established between the governments of the Soviet Union and the U.S., to resolve local incidents such as illegal crossings, or to offer services in cases of emergency, but there has been no real structure or action at a higher level of governance[5]. As such, in the Bering Strait area there are more activities than

[5] While in the Bering Strait area there is a lot of bilateral international and regional cooperation between Alaska and Chukotka and other parts of the Russian Far East, this cooperation is mostly US-Russia oriented and consists of non-governmental, bottom-up cooperation, which deals with political, economic and cultural issues but also includes people-to-people and family connections across the Bering Strait. The first visits were started and the contacts were re-opened by non-governmental actors and local communities. The cooperation was, however, supported by the governments of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union / the Russian Federation, at least in the beginning. One of the basic ideas, at least from the point of view of Alaska, is to promote indigenous communities in Chukotka and their resource management on whaling, polar bears and fishery, and help to collect scientific info for example, on harvesting of whales- all issues relevant for 'sustainability. Although, the heritage of traditional contacts was important, the driving force, at least from the American side, was, however, commercial interests meaning tourism

initiatives or efforts from the top to create an international framework. While on the other hand, there is an intercontinental network for contacts and cooperation, which is flexible and based on bottom-up local and regional activities rooted in indigenous connections, on the Canadian side, however, there are indeed few connections of this type which link to the Russian North (e.g. Krauss 1994; Schweitzer 1997).

In not addressing this lack, Canadian foreign policy has been culpable. In its 2005 review of Canada's NDFP, the Canadian Government noted that while the "northern dimension" of Canada's Foreign Policy has rested upon several policy objectives, the ultimate goals being to enhance Canada's leadership role on the world stage, to establish partnerships within and beyond government, and to "engage in ongoing dialogue with Canadians, especially northerners" (Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2000).

Trans-nationalism and cooperation in the Bering Sea is not a priority for Canadian foreign policy, although Canada retains high rhetorical and strategic interest in maintaining linkages with Russia through its Northern window. Indeed, this is a more general problem with respect to the Pacific North. Canada's Northern Dimension Foreign Policy (NDFP) has been quite limited in building links in this area. The Canadian Government itself notes that while there are numerous examples of bilateral initiatives with Russia and other circumpolar countries, all of these in which Canada was involved have only been loosely tied together and their links to Canada's NDFP's objectives have been tenuous (ibid).

In other words, if the goal is to broaden the northern dimension beyond a policy which deals almost exclusively with environment, the Canadian Government believes that the appropriate venue is the Arctic Council, a circumpolar institution uniquely placed to address not only environmental challenges faced in the circumpolar region, but to go beyond to face the broader challenges of developing new opportunities and enhancing capacity for trade and economic development, "as well as educational opportunities and employment mobility for Canadian youth and children in the circumpolar North" (ibid). It is in this context that the Pacific Rim becomes a critical component in the Canadian circumpolar North. Indeed, the Canadian Government's review of Canada's NDFP observes that with respect to the NDFP,

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and flights between the two continents with a goal to establish again trade ties. The current cooperation is mostly run by indigenous peoples, humanitarian aid and other civil organizations, sub-national governments, and universities.

> *"Russia is not mentioned separately; initiatives with Russia would fall within the bilateral area. Economic opportunities and trade are not explicitly included. Much activity in this regard may be undertaken by other government departments in the context of the new domestic Northern Strategy. Actions deemed relevant to the NDFP related to economic development and trade would be funded either as bilateral initiatives or as multilateral initiatives."*(Summative Evaluation of the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy, May 2005)

Clearly, beyond the issue of building circumpolar relations through the Arctic Council, is the recognition that Canada's foreign policy within the circumpolar north must also be oriented towards Russia, and requires the potential for "developing and expanding opportunities to assist Russia in addressing its northern challenges through strengthened bilateral activities, and by working with our circumpolar partners in various regional forums and in the European Union" (36). These are bilateral issues, according to the FDNP, and in stating it in this way, there is recognition for the development of a separate relationship with Russia and the Eurasian North, independent of the Arctic Council or the U.S. Moreover, there is an explicit understanding that while the "politics" of the Cold War "dictated that the Arctic region be treated as part of a broader strategy of exclusion and confrontation", it is now clear that "the politics of globalization and power diffusion highlight the importance of the circumpolar world as an area for inclusion and cooperation" (ibid).

Yet at the same time, the recent foreign policy review suggested that the circumpolar North is still seen by Canadians in context of traditional geopolitical paradigms. For example, recent review of NDFP in Canada suggests that the Pacific Rim is a priority region, in the sense that Canadians are more concerned with the role of NDFP in strengthening the Arctic Council as an international forum, in its ability to work with Russia to address its northern challenges, or in terms of increasing northern cooperation with the European Union and circumpolar countries, than in promoting sustainable economic opportunities and trade in the North. The new human security paradigms-sustainable economic development and strengthening support for education within the circumpolar North-score lower support, suggesting that the Canadian public and its decision-makers continue to use heuristic devices like the Rimlands Theory to perceptually position the North Pacific region in globally strategic ways, in relation to Eurasian as well as U.S.

relations. This reflects a sense of Canada's positioning in global context, and the continuing relevance of the idea of Eurasian Heartlands to Canadian foreign policy.

Conclusions

In this paper, the point is made that Rimlands are significant heuristic devices because they insert a sense of geographical location and context into more generalized concept of world order and balance of power. We explore Canada's role in the North Pacific Rimlands through the lenses of circumpolar regionalism and its relationship to a broader strategic and globalized geo-economic agenda. We argue that the idea of strategic space and traditional geopolitics and competition, has been modified somewhat by a new paradigm within the Canadian North, in general, and the Pacific North in particular, but that there remain clear traditional security issues.

This paper also speaks to the issue of the relationship between Canada and the North Pacific from the point of view of the circumpolar North. It argues that the Canadian circumpolar North is an important part of what traditional geo-politicians have called the world's Rimlands strategic area in context of the balance of power and access to industrial resources on a global scale. Our lack of attention to the Pacific, and indeed the North Pacific in Northern Dimension Foreign Policy, has resulted from a century of geopolitical formulations which underscore Eurasian centrality-from the European side. While we cannot escape to some extent the notion that Canada and the Pacific Northwest exist on the sidelines as part of a world order focused elsewhere, it has become clear in recent decades that this is not the case.

Indeed, we suggest that Canadian foreign and northern policies must orient themselves to this perspective, and that recent development at the policy level recognize this important fact. Yet in doing so, a new conceptual emphasis upon the Pacific Rim is required, specifically the North Pacific Rim. Such emphasis recognizes the relationship between the North American continent, the circumpolar North and its Pacific, not just Atlantic connections. Canada's recent foreign policy review suggests that in the future the Canadian north will focus more clearly upon building regional linkages with North Pacific rim countries, and that the role of the Canadian North will be critical in this effort.

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