

Introduction

In recent history, the world has become increasingly more aware of the phenomenon that is global warming and its drastic effects on our planet's climate. The Arctic region receives the most negative consequences from said change, and unfortunately is an area often forgotten by many of us who are not situated close geographically. Interestingly enough, an intact and functioning Arctic environment protects our entire planet, and therefore its preservation is vital to our own wellbeing. Each Arctic state plus relevant international actors need to be prepared to define their geopolitical interests in the region. At a time where climate change is disrupting our weather patterns and creating a chain reaction of problems in our world, environmental protection of this region will be of key importance.

The object of this research study is to examine the Arctic region and its very relevant and current significance in international relations. With the rising threat of climate change slowly pushing international scientists, governments, and ordinary citizens to act, the question remains when the entire world will start to listen. While the international community has constructed forums, councils, and even binding agreements related to climate change and by extension Arctic protection, individual states or countries must decide where they stand on the issue, because climate change has no borders and affects us all. By examining the Arctic's significance in chapter 1, the international community efforts to protect the climate and Arctic in chapter 2, and additionally two grand international actors of the European Union in chapter 3 and the United States in chapter 4, we will begin to see the variance of styles in approaching the topics of climate change and Arctic policy. The ultimate point of this analysis is to examine which actors currently dedicate and will dedicate more efforts towards environmental protection, preservation, and sustainable development in the Arctic environment for future generations. Therefore, which international actor, between the EU and U.S., will play leading roles in future environmental protection and preservation of the Arctic against the increasing threat of global climate change?

The hypothesis I have proposed is such that the European Union will rise to become an international player in the Arctic and promote its climate and environmental values in the region, surpassing the actions of the United States in future Arctic protection endeavors.

The method of analyzing the works here was to collect a vast accumulation of detail from books, online scientific statistics, reports, treaties, policy documents, oral interviews, email correspondence, and online surveys. I tried my hardest to be dynamic in the process, searching for ways to collect information not solely from a book or online, since this issue is most certainly very relevant in international relations today. Many of my primary sources are personal interviews or policy, and my survey is a unique examination of U.S. public opinion conducted online. Difficulties arose when emails correspondence was not achieved, or literature tended to focus more on security. After the examination, a deductive process was carried out to arrive to conclusions suspected about the future of the Arctic with respect to the EU and U.S. policy.