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# Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea Region: Suspicion and Pragmatism

*Geir Hønneland*

# Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea Region

- the political backdrop
  - bilateral fisheries management as example
- the 'cultural' backdrop
  - Russian Arctic discourse as example



# Norway and Russia in the European Arctic

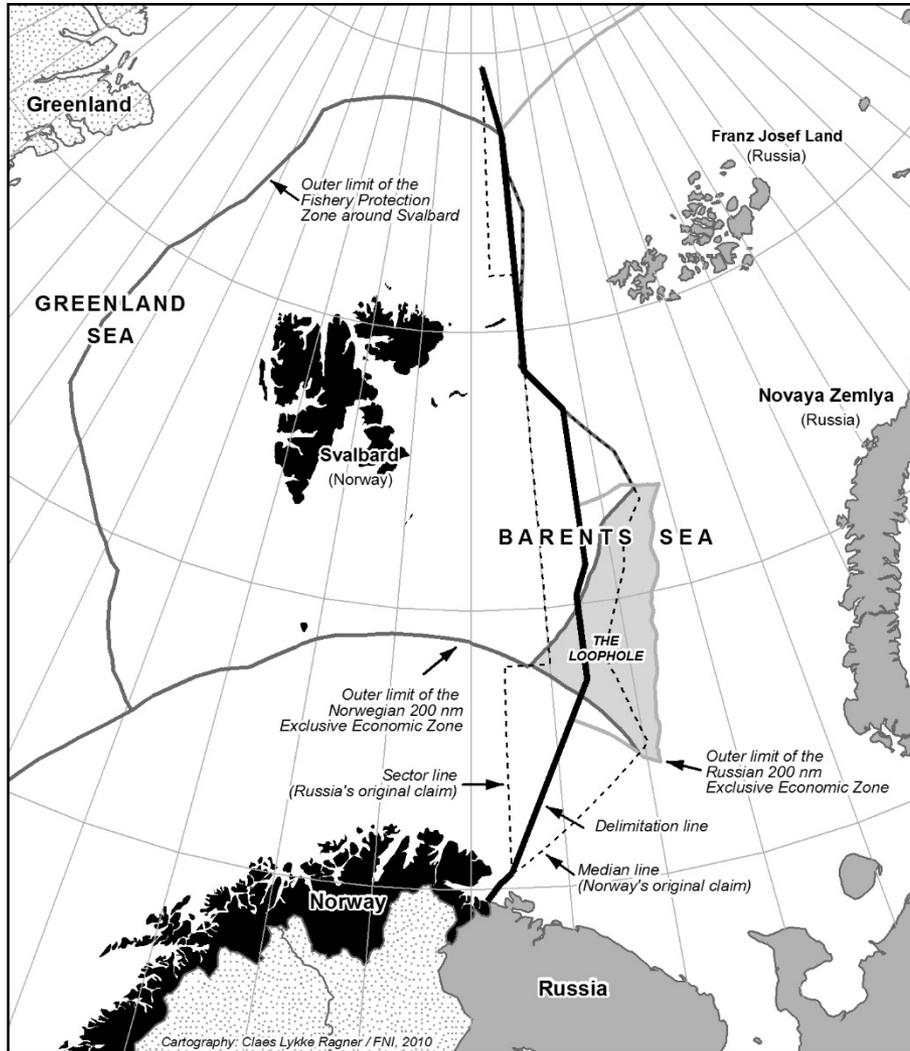
- the political backdrop
  - ‘adversaries’ in security politics
  - ‘northern neighbours’ who have never been at war with each other
  - common, but also competing interests
  - linked in a number of institutionalized cooperation
    - multilateral (Barents Euro-Arctic Region)
    - bilateral (commissions on fisheries, environment, nuclear safety, trade and business)



# Barents Sea Fisheries

- the world's largest cod stock
- Norwegian–Russian management since 1975
- Joint Fisheries Commission sets total quotas
  - most important fish stocks split 50/50





# Russian suspicion

- scientific advice 'rigged'
- politically motivated regulations and arrests
- Svalbard Environmental Act initiated by NATO!
  - the 2010 delimitation line!
- 'the world is out to get us!'
- international politics as a zero-sum game
  - age-old images of Russia & Europe



# Russian pragmatism, compromise

- always agreement on quotas
- gradual harmonization of technical regulations
- joint introduction of new regulatory measures
  - delimitation treaty!
- Russia as a 'civilized' nation that follows international law and other norms for good behaviour



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# RUSSIA AND THE ARCTIC

Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy

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RUSSIA AND THE ARCTIC

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# Main cleavages in Russian identity

- Russia & the West
  - westernism
  - slavophilism
  - eurasianism
- ‘holy Russia’ vs. ‘land of fools & bad roads’



# Russian (Arctic) rhetorics

- Circumpolar level
  - 'the global fight against Canada in the North'
  - the Arctic as a national shrine, a promised land
  - the Russian North as 'rubbish and decay'
- Regional level
  - Norway as a cunning NATO member
  - Norway as the good neighbour
- Individual level
  - Russian 'wide soul' vs. Western 'life in plastic'
  - Russian 'fools & bad roads' vs. Western effectiveness and cunning



- the Janus face of Norwegian–Russian relations in the North:
  - suspicion & pragmatism

