

The Scramble for the Arctic

Peter Arbo, October 2011

1. Project / publication	Sale, R. and Potapov, E. (2010): <i>The Scramble for the Arctic: Ownership, Exploration and Conflict in the Far North</i> . London: Frances Lincoln http://www.franceslincoln.co.uk/en/C/0/Book/1628/The_Scramble_for_the_Arctic.html
2. Initiator	The two authors of the book have written extensively on polar history and Arctic wildlife. Sale is a professional glaciologist and Potapov a biologist and professor at Bryn Athyn College, Pennsylvania, USA. In 2006 they were awarded the US Wildlife Society's Book of the Year for their joint publication <i>The Gyrfalcon</i> .
3. Objective	In the introduction, the authors refer to Confucius and claim that to define the future we must study the past. Hence, the book explores the way in which ownership and exploitation has developed in the Arctic and the conflicts that each of them have brought about. It then looks at the position of the Arctic in international law. Finally it considers the impacts of climate change and increasing exploitation of the area's mineral resources.
4. Geographical delimitation	The book is covering the entire Arctic region.
5. Time horizon	The historical overview goes back to the first human settlement of the Arctic, while the future is vaguely defined with no timeframe indicated.
6. Thematic focus	The book has a comprehensive approach. It describes two waves of exploitation of the Arctic's resources – the first one targeted at Arctic species, and the second one at the mineral wealth.
7. Images of the future	The authors present a general pessimistic view of the future. However, the future state of the Arctic is not elaborated and alternative scenarios are not provided.
8. Key driving forces	The main driving forces are climate change and the scramble for the Arctic oil and gas.
9. Uncertainties/wildcards	The gloomy prospects are regarded as quite inevitable.
10. Accomplishment and collaboration	The book is written independently by the authors. Except from three appendices containing the Svalbard Treaty (1920), the Antarctic Treaty (1959) and the International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears and Their Habitat (1976), there are no references, although the authors cite some books and reports in the text.
11. Method	The book is a broad account of the history of the region, its exploration, the exploitation of resources, the current state of ownership, and the legal status of the Arctic and its waters.
12. Sources of information	It mainly draws on historical sources but contains no bibliography.
13. Strengths	The strength of the book is the overall presentation of the human settlement story, the rivalry for ownership, the wildlife of the region, and international law in the Arctic. The book includes all the Arctic states.
14. Weaknesses	The main weakness is the coverage of current developments and the discussion of the future of the Arctic. The title of the book and the cover page underscores today's powerplays and what is at stake both politically and ecologically, but the book just takes it for granted that the hunt for the region's mineral resources will exacerbate the problems of climate change, that the unique cultures and wildlife of the region will be destroyed, and that the scramble for the Arctic will result in a new Cold War, which

	may threaten world peace.
15. Attention and significance	The book has been reviewed in several newspapers and journals, but its influence and importance is hard to assess.
16. Relevance for the Fram Centre	The book provides a lot of interesting and useful background information. Nevertheless, for the study of the future of the Arctic it is of limited relevance.