

Arktisches Monopoly

Peter Arbo, June 2011

1. Project/publication	<p>Seidler, C. (2009): <i>Arktisches Monopoly. Der Kampf um die Rohstoffe der Polarregion</i>. München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 288 pages.</p> <p>http://shop.spiegel.de/shop/action/productDetails/7964200/christoph_seidler_arktisches_monopoly_3421044155.html?aUrl=90009999</p>
2. Initiator	<p>The author is a journalist, educated in international relations. He is the research director at Spiegel Online. This book was written as a continuation and elaboration of articles in Der Spiegel.</p>
3. Objective	<p>The book attempts to describe and analyze the developments in the Arctic related to a growing interest in oil and gas and other natural resources, as well as in melting ice, new territorial demands and the run-up to a new cold war.</p>
4. Geographical delimitation	<p>The book covers the entire Arctic and all Arctic states.</p>
5. Time horizon	<p>It mostly focuses on recent events. The time horizon is not specified.</p>
6. Thematic focus	<p>This is a holistic study, with emphasis on economics and politics. The book starts with historical expeditions to the Arctic 100 years ago, which are described as the first race for the Arctic. The planting of the Russian flag on the bottom of the ocean under the North Pole in August 2007 is presented as the introduction to the second big race.</p> <p>The title of the next chapter is “An explosive mixture of geography and international law”. This chapter focuses on ocean law, the rights of the coastal states, and the work of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). After this, the book discusses climate change (melting ice, thawing permafrost, retreating glaciers, changing animal and plant life). Subsequently, the book discusses regional developments (oil and gas, new shipping routes), after which the author discusses the actors playing a role in the Arctic monopoly game and their interests and strategies (USA, Canada, Greenland/Denmark, Norway, Russia, the Inuits, the Arctic Council, Germany, the European Union and China). Finally, the author reflects upon the ways in which this game is likely to continue.</p>
7. Images of the future	<p>The book is not a scenario study, but it elaborates strongly on developments and driving forces. It emphasizes that Russia has the trump cards when it comes to defining the future of the Arctic. The effects of climate change are ambivalent, especially for Russia. If Moscow wants to exploit oil and gas resources through megaprojects in the North, it is dependent on western partners and investors. For this reason, the recent shift from cooperation to confrontation in Russia’s foreign policy is problematic, according to the author. For Norway, much is dependent upon the relation with Russia. The Norwegian petroleum economy is currently changing, but increased activity in the Barents Sea as well as a clarification of marine boundaries and an agreement on the interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty can cause a new upturn.</p> <p>Finally, the author points at the fact that future studies about the Arctic are popular nowadays. He refers to Econ Pöyry’s study “Arctic Shipping 2030” and mentions its three scenarios (Arctic Great Game, From Russia with Oil, Stormy Passage). Furthermore, the author draws upon the four scenarios for Arctic shipping, which the American advisory firm Global Business Network carried out for the Arctic Council. He also refers to military experts in the British journal Jane’s Intelligence Review. Simultaneously, he cites Indra Øverland (NUPI) and Arild Moe (FNI), who warn against alarmism.</p> <p>The author himself argues that there are four reasons for the situation in the north to be</p>

	risky: 1) This is a situation without any historical precedent; 2) the existing laws and political instruments are inadequate for conflict resolution; 3) all states are fighting for their own rights; 4) inadequate political means tend to militarize conflicts. To conclude, there is much at stake and the Arctic requires better diplomacy.
8. Key driving forces	The main elements are resource demand, climate change, international law, and national policies.
9. Uncertainties/wildcards	Political choices play a central role and can cause surprises in various ways.
10. Accomplishment and collaboration	The study is based on journalistic research.
11. Method	The book has a qualitative character.
12. Sources of information	Most important sources of information are books, journals, newspapers, the internet, press releases, official publications, and a series of interviews.
13. Strengths	The book is a result of competent and elaborate journalism. The book presents interesting information and reflections. The part about the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf is instructive.
14. Weaknesses	The main picture drawn up in the book represents an Arctic race and rivalry. It is assumed that several states' policies will be increasingly aggressive. Augmented tension and armament seem to be taken for granted.
15. Attention and significance	Der Spiegel and Spiegel Online have published a large part of the book in the form of articles. Spiegel is an important source of information in Germany, and it can be believed that this work has codetermined the German and European agenda relating to the Arctic.
16. Relevance for the Fram Centre	This is a relevant book among many new books about the Arctic.