



Luc Ampleman¹

HIGH NORTH GEOPOLITICS BEYOND SCALES

Abstract

In both the popular media and academic circles, the concept of ‘geopolitics’ remains essentially related to spectacular conflicts in the sphere of international relations while local political conflicts are often labelled as sociological/political ‘case studies’. This situation is particularly true for the Arctic region. This paradigm impedes the development of a relevant theoretical frame of analysis which would permit a sound understanding of the geopolitical relationships between political actors (individual and collective) involved (or not) at all levels of governance within variable geographical contexts covering all scales and types of region. Drawing on the recent French geopolitical approach of ‘local geopolitics’, and particularly the work of Subra, the present paper offers an original insight concerning political barriers, tensions and conflicts related to geopolitics as a discipline interested in ‘space(s)’ considered as ‘(geo)political issue(s)’. The paper advocates the better mapping of current geopolitical tensions faced by local actors in the High North.

Keywords

Arctic; High North; geopolitics; conflict; local governance

Introduction: readdressing Arctic geopolitics (...again!)

The nature and the forms of both political/economic conflicts and cooperation in the High North, and more precisely in the Arctic region(s), have been the subject of several studies and analyses over the last two decades². Perhaps for methodological

¹ Luc Ampleman, Ph.D., Jan Kochanowski University.

² For a good overview of the discussions touching upon the conceptions of Arctic geopolitics in both academic circles and in popular media, see the following recent works: J.M. Bruun, I.A. Medby, *Theorising the Thaw: Geopolitics in a Changing Arctic*, “Geography Compass” 2014 (8), No 12, pp. 915-929; Ø. Østerud, G. Hønneland, *Geopolitics and International Governance in the Arctic*, “Arctic Review on Law and Politics” 2014, (5), No 2, 156-176; E. Wilson Rowe, *A dangerous space? unpacking state and media discourses on the arctic*, “Polar Geography” 2013 (36), No 3, pp. 232-244 and also L. Heininen, *Geopolitics of a changing North. Position Paper for the 5th of the Northern Research*

reasons but also as they have been problem oriented-based, these analyses have been and remain undertaken at various scales. Also, it is hardly controversial to assert that there is within these analyses a persistent, if not important division between the conflicts/ cooperation arrangement considered at the local level and those considered within global dimensions. In this respect, in both the popular media and the academic sphere, the concept of ‘geopolitics’ remains essentially related to spectacular conflicts in the sphere of international relations (IR)³. On the other hand, local political conflicts related to land-use (for instance) are often labelled as sociological/political ‘case studies’ and simply not associated with geopolitics⁴. Despite this divide, one must recognise that both situations are related to the fundamental question of the relation between power and space. One may then ask if ‘geopolitics’ as a discipline has failed to provide commonly adopted instruments which are able to account for the deep relationship between the (Arctic) space and (Arctic) politics⁵.

In this paper, I intend to answer this question by arguing that one can rescue the concept of ‘geopolitics’ for the benefit of ‘Arctic geopolitics’. Indeed, as a subdiscipline of politics or geography, geopolitics can offer a reflexive tool which is able to give a holistic account of the complex [geo/political] relationship between space and power.⁶ Moreover, the paper undertakes to see how the Arctic as a specific ‘area’ can offer an opportunity to better understand the main task of geopolitics as a subdiscipline. The achievement of these tasks involves two implications:

- One needs to free geopolitics from the monopoly of IR and its association with spectacular mediatic conflicts. This means that if one wants to rely on a reflecting tool able to take account of the relation between geography and politics, one should stop placing the focus on the term (geopolitics) itself, and rather focus on the problem of questioning ‘spaces’ as ‘political issues’;
- This problematisation and focus should be multiscale, allowing the analyses to move from the local to the global while being inclusive of all types of actors (single or collective) at all levels of governance. These inclusive multiscale investigations should question how, why and to what extent spatial positions become ‘political issues’ (wherever it is) and how actors (whoever they are) engage in these geopolitical situations.

Forum Open Assembly, September 24th-27th 2008, [online:] https://www.rha.is/static/files/NRF/OpenAssemblies/Anchorage2008/heinenen_5thnrf_position_paper_session1.pdf, (25.09.2017).

³ R. Tamnes, R. K. Offerdal, *Introduction*, [in:] R. Tamnes, K. Offerdal, K. (eds.), *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamic in a Global World*, Routledge, New York 2014, p. 6.

⁴ See the works of Philippe Subra, notably: P. Subra, *Géopolitique de l'aménagement du territoire*, Armand Colin, Paris 2007 and P. Subra, *La géopolitique locale. Territoires, acteurs, conflits*, Armand Colin, Paris 2016.

⁵ The current present paper constitutes an attempt to respond to two concerns formulated within the framework of the 9th International Conference of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS IX) that took place in Umeå (Sweden) in June 2017. The first comes from the original call for papers (CFP) related to an abandoned session “What means ‘Geopolitical’ anyway? To Rescue or to Relegate the Concept from Arctic Politics” (cf. Annex I) and the second entitled “Arctic ‘exceptionalism’? Northern Contributions to International Relations (IR) (cf. Annex II)”. Since they can no longer be retrieved online, both summaries and CFP are reproduced in the annexes of this article.

⁶ Ibidem. Annex I: “[the concepts of geopolitics] fails to specify underlying theoretical propositions and falls short of expounding causal mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact.”

In the following sections, I first and briefly expose how scholars have generally discussed Arctic conflicts and cooperation arrangements. Secondly, I return to the assumption according to which geopolitics seems to have failed to provide commonly adopted instruments which are able to account for the deep relationship between the (Arctic) space and politics. Thirdly, I address the question about the capacity of geopolitics to reconnect with the fundamental relation between space and politics, which involves overcoming the quasi-monopoly of the IR dimension/global politics in the academic field of geopolitics, notably by welcoming the idea of ‘local geopolitics’ as introduced in the ‘French approach’⁷. Fourthly, the paper undertakes to provide some illustrations of past and present conflicts in the Arctic region(s) whose geopolitical nature can be grouped into three categories proposed after Subra. The paper concludes by returning to the idea of ‘Arctic exceptionalism’, exposing why and how the Arctic region offers an ideal opportunity to geopolitical analyses, allowing them to move beyond scales while being inclusive of all types of actors for whom ‘space is a political issue’. The paper advocates making an inventory of the Arctic geopolitical conflicts faced by actors at the local level of governance. Such an inventory would provide Arctic local actors with a better understanding of the nature and amplitude of these conflicts and some information about the best practices to deal with them.

Global vs. Local geopolitics of the High North: continuum or divide?

So far, the strategic importance of the High North and its geo-economic significance at the global level have been extensively discussed in the literature over the last two decades. It is not possible, and surely not the objective of this paper, to offer here a literature review of global Arctic geopolitics and IR. However, it is worth mentioning that the main scope of analyses usually includes works on pan-Arctic governance, national sovereignty and maritime arrangements⁸; military capacity and defence systems⁹; climate change and environmental risks¹⁰ and their impact on

⁷ See for instance: B. Giblin, *Hérodote, une géographie géopolitique*, “Cahiers de géographie du Québec” 1985 (29), No. 77, pp. 283-294. B. Giblin, *La région : enjeux de pouvoirs*, “Quaderni” 2005 (59), No 1, pp. 97-108; S. Rosière, *Géographie politique, géopolitique et géostratégie: distinctions*, “L’information géographique” 2001 (65), No 1, pp. 33-42; P. Subra, *Géopolitique de l’aménagement du territoire*; P. Subra, *La géopolitique locale...*

⁸ See some recent publications on this topic: A. Dahl, P. Järvenpää, *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic-Baltic strategic influence in a post-unipolar world*, Routledge, New York 2014; L. Heininen, *The End of the Post-Cold War in the Arctic*, “Nordica Geographical Publications”, 2011 (40), No 4, pp. 31-42; L.C. Jensen, *Norwegian petroleum extraction in Arctic waters to save the environment: introducing ‘discourse co-optation’ as a new analytical term*, “Critical Discourse Studies” 2012 (9), No 1, pp. 29-38; J. M. Shadian, *The Politics of Arctic Sovereignty: Oil, ice, and Inuit Governance*, Routledge, New York 2014. M. Scopelliti, E. Conde Pérez, *Defining Security in a Changing Arctic: Helping to Prevent an Arctic Security Dilemma*, “Polar Record” 2016 (52), No 6, pp. 672-679; E. Wilson Rowe, *A dangerous space...*

⁹ See for instance: A. Dahl, P. Järvenpää, *Northern Security and Global Politics*; Y. Kim, S. Blank, *The Arctic: A New Issue on Asia’s Security Agenda*, “Korean Journal of Defense Analysis” 2011 (23), No 3, pp. 303-320.

¹⁰ See notably: J. M. Bruun, I. A. Medby, *Theorising the Thaw: Geopolitics in a Changing Arctic...*; S. Dalby, *The geopolitics of climate change*, “Political Geography” 2013 (37), pp. 38-47; D. Wehrmann,

maritime trade tensions¹¹; issues related to the extraction industry and international geo-economics¹², some of these concerns being more specifically related to energy security¹³. For more than a decade, the political influence of the EU on High North policies¹⁴ and more recently the emerging role of non-Arctic countries (and notably China and South Korea)¹⁵ have been the subject of in-depth analyses.

In parallel, one should observe that valuable studies have been undertaken to deepen our understanding of the spatial politics and economics of the Arctic communities at the local level. There has been, perhaps not without reason, a significant amount of attention devoted to the importance of political local governance and notably on the self-governance of Arctic First Nations¹⁶. There are, of course, some prominent issues that allow one to envisage more clearly the overlap of global and local geopolitics. One of them is related to the widespread pan-Arctic conflicts linked to the extraction industry as the Arctic States, some major

The Polar Regions as "Barometers" in the Anthropocene: Towards a New Significance of Non-State Actors in International Cooperation?, "Polar Journal" 2016 (6), No 2, pp. 379-397; H. Gerhardt, P. E. Steinberg, J. Tasch, S. J. Fabiano and R. Shields, *Contested Sovereignty in a Changing Arctic*, "Annals of the Association of American Geographers" 2010 (100), No 4, pp. 992-1002.

¹¹ For instance: M. Blunden, *Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route*, "International Affairs" 2012 (88), No 1, pp. 115-129; L.W. Brigham, *The Challenges and Security Issues of Arctic Marine Transport* [in:] J. Kraska (ed.), *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2011, pp. 20-32; K. Eliasson, G. F. Ulfarsson, T. Valsson and S. M. Gardarsson, *Identification of development areas in a warming Arctic with respect to natural resources, transportation, protected areas, and geography*, "Futures" 2017 (85), pp. 14-29; T. Lee, H. J. Kim, *Barriers of voyaging on the Northern Sea Route: A perspective from shipping Companies*, "Marine Policy" 2015 (62), pp. 264-270.

¹² On these issues: S. G. Cole, G. Kinell, T. Söderqvist and al., *Arctic games: An analytical framework for identifying options for sustainable natural resource governance*, "Polar Journal" 2016 (6), No 1, pp. 30-50; L.C. Jensen, *Norwegian petroleum extraction...*; G. Parente, *Assessing the role of resource extraction companies in Arctic decision-making: A new methodological approach*, "Polar Geography" 2015 (38), No 3, pp. 228-232.

¹³ S. R. Dadwal, *Arctic: The Next Great Game in Energy Geopolitics?* "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6, pp. 812-824; J. M. Shadian, *The politics of Arctic sovereignty...*

¹⁴ S. M. R. Balão, *The European Union's Arctic Strategy(ies): The good and/or the evil?* [in:] L. Heininen (ed.), *Security and Sovereignty in the North Atlantic*, Palgrave Pivot, London 2014, pp. 100-123; A. Østhaugen, *Utenrikspolitisk entreprenørskap – EU og utviklingen av en Arktis-politikk*, "Internasjonal Politikk" 2011 (69), No 1, pp. 7-35. N. Wegge, *The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making*, "Arctic Review on Law and Politics" 2012 (3), No 1, pp. 6-29.

¹⁵ See notably the special issue of "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6, following the conference "Geopolitics of the Arctic: Commerce, Governance and Policy" that took place at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in New Delhi in September 2013, and more precisely: T. Røseth, *Russia's China policy in the Arctic*, "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6, pp. 841-859. O. S. Stokke, *Asian stakes and Arctic governance*, "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6, pp. 770-783. See also: O. V. Alexeeva, F. Lasserre, *The snow dragon: China's strategies in the Arctic*, "China Perspectives" 2012, No 3, pp. 61-68; M. M. Bennett, *How China sees the Arctic: Reading between extraregional and intraregional narratives*, "Geopolitics" 2015 (20), No 3, pp. 645-668; H. J. Kim, *Success in heading North?: South Korea's master plan for Arctic policy*, "Marine Policy" 2015, No 61, pp. 264-272; Y. Kim., S. Blank, *The Arctic: A New Issue on Asia's Security Agenda...*; J. Peng, N. Wegge, *China's bilateral diplomacy in the Arctic*, "Polar Geography", 2015 (38) No 3, pp. 233-249.

¹⁶ E. S. Cameron, *Securing indigenous politics: A critique of the vulnerability and adaptation approach to the human dimensions of climate change in the Canadian Arctic*, "Global Environmental Change" 2012 (22), No 1, pp. 103-114; D. Castro, K. Hossain, C. Tytelman, *Arctic ontologies: Reframing the relationship between humans and rangifer*, "Polar Geography" 2016 (39), No 2, pp. 98-112; J. M. Shadian, *The Politics of Arctic Sovereignty*.

corporations and local communities clash on the norms, modus operandi, outgrowths and sometimes the legitimacy of the exploration and exploitation of resources¹⁷.

As suggested in the introduction, one should note that in many cases, when referring to those global issues, the casual use of 'geopolitics/geopolitical' in the [geopolitical] discourse has often become an indicator of doom-laden conflictual relations between states, civilisations or international actors about global security¹⁸. Several works have undertaken to expose the extravagant, ferocious, conflictual and strategic character of the region with spectacular titles referring to the concepts of 'war' 'thread' or 'game'. Other scholars have expressed some distance toward what they consider as some stylish exaggerations or as "overdrawn caricatures of the Arctic as either a zone of intense geopolitical" urging for a deeper understanding of actors' political concerns about the Arctic oecumene and its peaceful and stable character.¹⁹ In any case, the "the vague or ambiguous conceptualisations of the term [geopolitics]" seems to 'fail to specify underlying theoretical propositions and falls short of expounding causal mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact'²⁰ at least for the Arctic region. Concurrently, the most prevalent conception of the discourse in Arctic geopolitics would be limited to the mundane and popular connotation: Arctic geopolitics = sovereignty and security issues between States in the High North. Has 'geopolitics' really failed in its task?

Why Does Geopolitics Seem to Have Failed in Its Task?

While it is perhaps precarious to assert that geopolitics is 'failing' in the mentioned task, one can, however, provide some reasons behind the vague or ambiguous conceptualisations of the term 'geopolitics'. These reasons have been discussed profusely in the literature, in several monographs and geopolitics handbooks. A first reason that could be evoked would be the multitude of paradigm shifts of the approach of geopolitics as a (sub)discipline during its relatively short history (120 years). Geopolitics has undergone distinct phases and while these paradigm shifts could overlap, or be subdivided in numerous ways, many authors agree on the existence of structuring milestones²¹.

¹⁷ For a good overview about the geopolitical tensions between stakeholders and on policy issues related to the extraction industries, see: G. M. Aruda, *Arctic governance regime: the last frontier for hydrocarbons exploitation*, "International Journal of Law and Management" 2015 (57), No 5, pp. 498-521; E. S. Cameron, *Securing indigenous politics...*, N. Yakovleva, *Oil pipeline construction in Eastern Siberia: Implications for indigenous people*, "Geoforum" 2011(42). No 6, pp. 708-719.

¹⁸ Cf. Annex I. I quote: "After almost ten years of debate and expansive evidence to the contrary, what is left of Arctic geopolitical discourse is the connotation of the Arctic with alarmist predictions of conflict and the emergence of a new security hot spot in East-West relations".

¹⁹ E. Wilson Rowe, *A dangerous space?*, p. 241. See also the article of L. Heininen, *The End of the Post-Cold War in the Arctic...*

²⁰ I am quoting here the CfP mentioned previously, Cf. Annex I.

²¹ These milestones usually include i) an initial emergence, in the turn of the 19th/20th century, of a *vitalistic* approach of political geography in Germany; ii) a fertile period of influential works by major Anglo-Saxon theoreticians before the Second World War; iii) a purgatory interlude attesting to a certain abandonment of geopolitics as an academic field after the Second World War; iv) a renaissance period in the mid-1970s and early 1980s with the advent of two prevailing conceptions: the French methodological and multiscale approach and the Anglo-Saxon approach rather concerned with informing

While the multitude of the historical approaches of geopolitics makes the concept difficult to embrace, its recuperation and circulation in the popular media, evening news and fashionable magazines may have simplified its general understanding, from a scholar subdiscipline to a substitute for ‘global interstate conflict’, a potential second reason behind the *vague or ambiguous conceptualisations* of the term. Already in the early 1990s, Foucher in his colossal work on borders, exposes the three dimensions covered by the term ‘geopolitics’: a) geopolitics as a ‘representation’ which include the narratives and other elements of visual semiotics supporting the understanding by different groups of the politically conflictual relations in specific spaces; b) geopolitics as a ‘practice’ related to political initiatives, agenda and programs of decision-makers to control spaces in the midst of political conflicts; c) geopolitics as a ‘method’, which is related to the scientific and cognitive effort needed to analyse the relations between power and space²².

A third reason that may contribute to the feeling of a ‘failure of geopolitics as method’ may be linked to cultural traditions. While not totally ignoring each other, it seems that the dialogues between strong traditions in geopolitics remain far from being convincing. This is certainly the case, for instance, between the French and Anglo-Saxon approaches, where French geopoliticians tend to quote their Anglo-Americans colleagues very reluctantly and vice-versa. Hepple has notably qualified the difference between the methodological French school (‘Lacoste-Herodote’s geopolitics’) and the new Anglo-American critical geopolitics as “intriguing and substantial”, despite both sharing “similar critical engagement”²³. From the French Lacostian perspective, the Anglo-American approach to geopolitics remains far from geography and limited to a subfield of IR studies²⁴.

Finally, a fourth reason that could be evoked to explicate a certain failure of geopolitics to establish itself as a methodologically capable corpus providing

interventions in the field of IR; v) the surfacing of a critical turn in political geography contemporary of the ‘New Cultural Geography’ in the late 80s/early 90s which also coincided with the dissemination of geopolitics to a wider audience as well as the application of geopolitics to new terrains (in the literal and figurative sense) Cf. for instance: M. Blacksell, *Political Geography*, Routledge, New York 2006. G. Dussouy, *Les théories géopolitiques. Traité de Relations internationales (I)*, L’Harmattan, Paris 2006; M. Foucher, *Fronts et frontières. Un tour du monde géopolitique*, Fayard, Paris 1991. G. Ó Tuathail. S. Dalby, *Rethinking Geopolitics*, Routledge, New York 1998.

²² M. Foucher, *Fronts et frontières*, pp.33-35. It is interesting to notice that supporters of the critical geopolitics, willing to deconstruct the dominant (figuratively and literally) realistic and cornerstone discourse of the Anglo-Saxon tradition on inter-state conflicts, propose a similar nomenclature. In this respect, Dodds’s taxonomy includes: a) a ‘practical geopolitics’ referring to “the policy-orientated geographical templates used by political leaders [...] to represent global politics”; b) a ‘formal geopolitics’ as a meta-discourse deliberately undertaking to analyse and report on geopolitical practices; c) a ‘popular geopolitics’ emerging from media and popular culture and which allows citizens to frame their understanding of political events taking place. K. Dodds, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, pp. 45-47.

²³ L.W. Hepple, *Géopolitique de gauche, Yves Lacoste, Herodote and French radical Geopolitics* [in:] K. J. Dodds, K. D. Atkinson (eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought*, Routledge, London/New York 2000, p. 289.

²⁴ “The Anglo-Saxons talk about International Relations problems [...] and the geographers, are little involved, because they have no great schools of geography either in England or in the United States”. Y. Lacoste, *La géopolitique et le géographe. Entretiens avec Pascal Lorot*. Choiseul Editions, Paris 2010, p.140. [My translation].

analytical tools to clarify space-politics relations, can perhaps be related to an abuse of the term in the literature, which provokes more than a little indignation among scholars²⁵. Remarkably, the term ‘geopolitics’, appears to have passed from some sort of anathema after the Second World War to attaining something of an exuberant fashionability in recent times.

In the end, the potential ineffectiveness of geopolitics to account for the relation between politics and space has perhaps not much to do with the incapacity of geopolitics (in plural) to provide the relevant theoretical tools and rather more to do with its fertility. The succession of paradigms, the multiplication of geopolitical approaches, the fragmentation of geopolitics into various cultural traditions, its over-representation and over-presence (to which this paper perhaps contributes to at this very moment) may have given geopolitics a sense of inability to establish itself as a structured discipline capable of reflecting the links between space and politics, including those in the Arctic region. The term ‘geopolitics’ has become a catch-all that distracts us from focusing on one task, providing a framework for understanding which is able to account for the relationships between space and political actors.

In this respect, if one wants to address efficiently the question about the ‘mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact’ in the Arctic and not limit Arctic geopolitics to a ‘flag planting war’, one should straightforwardly operate a distinction between IR and geopolitics. This does not mean that geopolitics cannot be interested in IR, but rather that from the outset the idea of IR should be bracketed out to give the primary place to a fundamental question: Under which circumstances can ‘geographical spaces’ – regardless of their location and of their scale – be the subject of political conflicts, tensions, appropriations, intrigues between actors, whoever they are?

Geopolitics Beyond Scales: Space as a Political Issue

Among the myriad of definitions put forward to circumscribe geopolitics (as a discipline), the one offered by Rosière provides a genuine direction to the task of accounting for the ‘mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact’. However, to ensure a better grasp on its object of study, Rosière introduces beforehand a significant supplementary distinction between political geography (“geographical description of the political frame, at any scale”) and geopolitics ([the study of] “space envisaged as a political issue”)²⁶.

Rosière’s definition of geopolitics is advantageous for many reasons. Beside the fact that it captures an important idea in a few words, the definition sets us a clear, primary task: to understand why, how and to what extent a specific space can be envisaged as a political issue. His definition brackets out as a starting point, the specificity of actors involved whoever they are or can be (individual or collective; States, cities, communities, elites, workers, protesting groups, NGOs, children, Mr.

²⁵ See the introduction of F. P. Sempa, *Geopolitics: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey 2002, p. 3. Also, Y. Lacoste, *La géopolitique et le géographe...*, p. 6. Finally, it is perhaps difficult not to think of the review by Øyvind Østerud three decades ago: Ø. Østerud, *Review: The Uses and Abuses of Geopolitics*, “Journal of Peace Research” 1988 (25), No 2, pp. 191-199.

²⁶ S. Rosière, *Géographie politique...*, p. 37. [My translation].

Smith). The definition is inclusive of all scopes or levels of analysis (International scene, country level, pan-regional area, city district). The geopolitical task simply deals with any political actants for whom the place is a 'political issue'. The assignment remains open to the idea that the 'mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact' – because space is an issue for the actants – can be based on constructed representations/narratives or 'realistic' physical assets. The definition is inclusive of IR or local case studies. Moreover, if the definition avoids limiting geopolitics to IR, it also helps reduce the danger of confusing geopolitics with the more general interdisciplinary areas of 'conflict studies' since the definition is not focusing on conflicts; indeed, some conflicts are not related to 'space as a political issue' and 'study of space as a political issue' may not be limited to spatial conflicts, but also to other forms of dealings.

One may observe that this approach to geopolitics (as a discipline) remains strongly coherent with the French methodological approach. In recent years, French geopoliticians have intensified their research on local geopolitics. Philippe Subra has perhaps been the most efficient geopolitician in establishing methodologically the theoretical framework and terminology of this local geopolitics. Drawing on the previous work of Beatrice Giblin, a co-founder of the geopolitics journal *Herodote*, Subra argues that:

1. For several years, questions related to land use [*aménagement du territoire*] have been given over to the technocratic approach [*approche technicienne*] which is more engaged in evaluating geographical, economic and demographic parameters to inform decisions, but neglects the political dimension which shows how actors clash over spaces²⁷. While for a long time large territorial projects seemed to have had little opposition within society, the issue of the social acceptability of projects has become increasingly more complex. Now, rivalries over land use come from multiple directions and groups;
2. Despite their less spectacular nature and their tendency not to constitute breaking news, these political local and spatial rivalries are no less geopolitical than those at the global level of those involving actors at the highest level of governance. In all cases, geopolitics deals with power rivalries in specific territories. The modality of those rivalries can be analysed under the same frame(s) of analysis. Nothing prevents geopoliticians from including and defending a 'scale of intensity' to evaluate the strength of the rivalry in their own analyses²⁸;
3. Geopolitics should not be limited to the question of territorial conflicts, since the apparent absence of conflict may also be an opportunity to question power relations in a specific territory. The absence of conflict can (i) hide the resignation of actors from engaging in conflict because of the power imbalance or (ii) it could be the result of a pooling of efforts to negotiate the use of territory²⁹.
4. When conflicts or tensions around the use of the territory occur, they belong to one of the three following kinds (which Subra labelled 'conflicting logics' [*logiques conflictuelles*])³⁰.

²⁷ P. Subra, *La géopolitique locale...*, pp. 6-9.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 308. Also, P. Subra, *Géopolitique de l'aménagement...*, p. 33.

²⁹ P. Subra, *La géopolitique locale...*, p. 8.

³⁰ Ibidem, pp. 42-36. Also, P. Subra, *Géopolitique de l'aménagement...*, pp. 66-68.

- threatened development [Aménagement menacé] which occurs when actors in a position of control decide to abandon a usage, infrastructure or service that other local actors wish to preserve (e.g. closure of a park or of a local company).
- coveted development [aménagement convoité] which occurs when diverse groups of actors compete for the development or maintenance of divergent projects affecting land use (e.g. a nature reserve vs. forestry exploitation).
- rejected development [Aménagement rejeté] which occurs when local actors oppose projects associated with negative externalities (the passage of a new pipeline development or a private resort near a public river, etc.).

In his efforts to provide instruments capable of accounting for geopolitical rivalries at the local level, Subra has offered a representation tool (the typical schema of actors [*schéma d'acteurs type*]) which permits the visualization of relations of i) opposition, ii) support and iii) alliance between active actors at various levels of governance (Figure 1). This scale can, of course, I believe, be adapted to any level of conflict (local-global) to qualify the nature of the concerns and engagement of the actors where 'space is a political issue'.

The advent of the 'local geopolitics' affords geopoliticians the opportunity to reflect on geopolitics by moving back and forth on different scales to capture the nature of the relations between space, political actors and political control. It offers the chance to negate the quasi-monopoly IR has on geopolitics and invite the geopolitician to announce their scope of analysis around key questions: in a situation 'S₁' or 'S₂' or S_k' – How, why and to what extent does a specific space become an issue of political control?

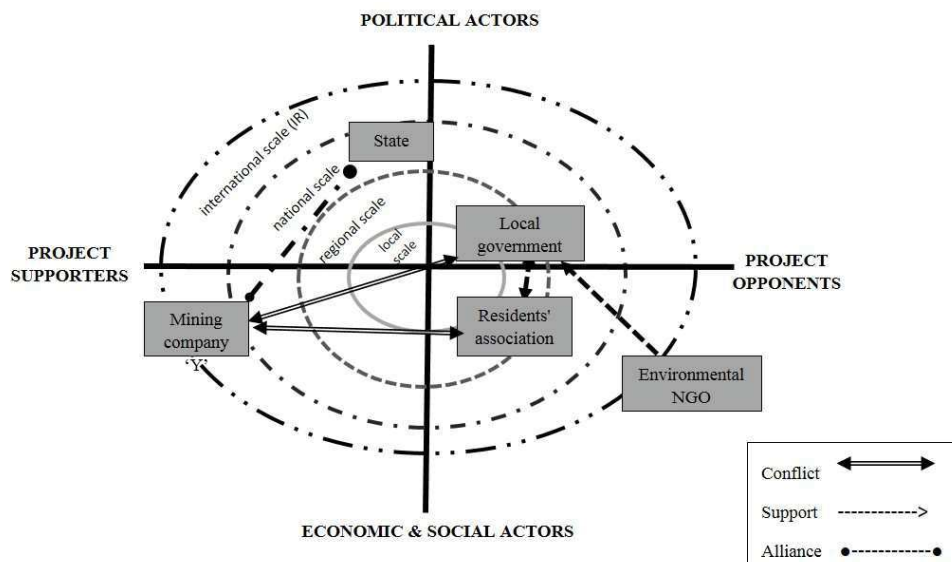


Figure 1: Illustration of a typical schema of actors – adapted from P. Subra (2016).

In this effort, to assign the task of delivering answers to this multi-level question to geopoliticians, something remains, however, still blurred, namely the ‘political’ nature of these issues. What can be considered a ‘political issue’? After all, isn’t everything ‘political’? At what point does the political dimension manifest itself? The nature of what politics means within geopolitics uncovers a question that can hardly be discussed extensively within the scope of this paper. However, there is one (political) dimension that appears primary and not simply residual here. This dimension is related to two concomitant and fundamental political acts: the ‘authorisation’ and the ‘interdiction’ to occupy or maintain a position within (geographical) space or to intervene on this position.³¹ At this point, one may ask how does the ‘conflicting logics’ translate in the Arctic region. The following section will briefly depict a few illustrations of the three kinds of geopolitical conflicts related to spaces which may be considered a political issue.

Back to the Arctic... Geopolitics

Conflicts come in different forms and those associated with politicized spaces are no exception. Each conflict is articulated according to the visions, representations, and motivations of the political actors involved and the amplitude of these conflicts (their intensity) may also vary according to the nature of the stakes. On this matter, geopolitics as an episteme need not be limited to conflicts themselves. The ‘non-conflictual’ nature of an extremely politicized space and situation can itself be the subject of an analysis. It is possible to say that, to date, there has been little or no inventory of geopolitical conflicts, at least regarding non-violent geopolitical conflicts involving local actors. This situation is particularly true for the High North. One may think that such an inventory would be helpful to better understand the patterns and dynamics involved in these geopolitical setups, as well as detecting some potential best practices to deal with them. Following the categories previously described, how can one illustrate the three types of conflicting logic?

The fears of small communities about losing access to essential services (healthcare centres, schools, post office) or services that have a major impact on the quality of life of residents (cultural centres, local radio stations, etc.) may be numbered among the most exemplary illustrations of conflicts around threatened development. In many cases, local actors have mobilised around their representatives to convince sub-national or national decision-makers to maintain existing services. The closing of important firms having an impact on local employment may also represent a stress perceived and felt by local actors. In an article prepared for Maclean’s Magazine, Scott Gilmore offered a good illustration of the negative impact faced by remote northern communities after the closure of the Port of Churchill in Northern Manitoba, Canada³². It is relevant to notice that the mobilisation of actors in the case of

³¹ This fundamental aspect has been largely analysed by structural geography and more especially by the *School of Quebec*, whose difficult works remain oft-overlooked and have only received somewhat diffident attention outside Francophone geography circles. See the works of G. Ritchot and Gaetan Desmarais, notably: G. Desmarais, G. Ritchot, *La géographie structurale*, L’Harmattan. Paris 2000.

³² S. Gilmore, *How Ottawa abandoned our only Arctic port*, “Maclean’s” 2016, [online:] <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/abandoned-churchill/>, (18.08.2016).

threatened development may come from outside the Arctic region. This notably happened in 2012, after the Canadian government announced it would shut down the research station of Eureka in Nunavut³³.

Conflicts around coveted development are those which occur when there are diverse groups of actors competing for the development or maintenance of divergent projects. Northern communities and local authorities have in the past often advocated the implementation of projects that are slow to come to fruition or are simply never implemented. Several of these projects do not find the political or financial support from the State or major enterprises. Some projects are the subject of rivalry between communities, each of them hoping to get the benefits from a new investment. Some projects depend on a more global perspective and the position of other political actors. Transportation in remote areas often offers a good example of potential conflicts around coveted development. Sometimes local communities wait years or even decades before seeing the expansion of a landing strip, the asphaltting of gravel roads or the development of a deep-water port. Funders are sometimes reluctant to engage in such projects knowing that they may also embark in a conflict around rejected development as any major infrastructural project may compete with other uses of the land by local actors, notably hunters, fishers or reindeer herders. As an illustration, in recent years the discussions surrounding the Arctic Railway Plan have fuelled numerous discussions highlighting the difficulties and complexity associated with such large-scale projects³⁴.

There are many regional examples of conflicts that could be related to rejected development. Among the most popular historical case in the Arctic regions, one may recall the spectacular protests by the Natives from the late 1960s to the early 1980s regarding the development of largescale infrastructure related to the energy sector. One after another, the prospect of oil extraction in the extreme north of Alaska³⁵, the James Bay Hydroelectric Project in the Nord-du-Québec (Canada)³⁶ and the Alta controversy linked to the hydropower project in North Norway³⁷ have exacerbated the territorial tensions on land ownership between the governmental authorities and the

³³ *High Arctic research station forced to close.*, [online:] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/high-arctic-research-station-forced-to-close-1.1171728>, (28.02.2012)

³⁴ On this example, see: Devonshire-Ellis, C. *Finland and Baltics Gear Up Rail and Arctic Infrastructure Projects to Connect With China, Russia, and EU OBOR Trade*, "Silk Road Briefing", [online:] <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2017/08/17/finland-baltics-gear-up-rail-arctic-infrastructure-projects-connect-with-china-russia-eu-obor-trade>, (25.09.2017); *Norway positive to Finland's Arctic railway plan*, [online:] <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2017/04/norway-positive-finlands-arctic-railway-plan>, (12.04.2017). One can also consult the Barents Transport Plan: BEAC, *Joint Barents Transport Plan, Proposals for development of transport corridors for further studies*, 2013, [online], https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Joint_Barents_Transport_Plan_2013.pdf, (26.09.2017).

³⁵ R. M. Huhndorf, S. M. Huhndorf, *Alaska Native Politics since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*, "South Atlantic Quarterly" 2011(110), No 2, pp. 385-401; M. E. Thomas, *The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Conflict and Controversy*, "Polar Record" 1986 (23), No 142, pp. 27-36; M. E. Thomas, *The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: An update*, "Polar Record" 1988 (24), No 151, pp. 328-329.

³⁶ G. Mercier, G. Ritchot, *La Baie James: Les dessous d'une rencontre que la bureaucratie n'avait pas prévue*, "Cahiers De Géographie du Québec" 1997 (41), No 113, pp. 137-169.

³⁷ S. S. Andersen, A. Midttun, *Conflict and local mobilization: The Alta hydropower project 1*, "Acta Sociologica" 1985 (28), No 4, pp. 317-335; Ø. Dalland, *The Alta case: Learning from the errors made in a human ecological conflict in Norway*, "Geoforum" 1983 (14), No 2, pp. 193-203.

Aboriginal communities, the latter often being joined by environmentalists. These conflicts led to new legal arrangements (for instance the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement) and changed the governance dynamics of the current local geopolitics. Nowadays, the issues surrounding the development of the mining industry remain largely present in almost all Arctic regions³⁸. This is a situation that has recently led to a series of initiatives involving academic researchers, government agencies and representatives of local and indigenous communities³⁹.

These few illustrations do not pretend to be exhaustive, but they provide some good examples of the nature of the geopolitical issues faced by local actors which, far from making the breaking news of the *Time* (magazine) or provoking a seminal debate on the front page of the Foreign Affairs journal, nonetheless remain related to 'space as a political issue'. The examples provided epitomise the diversity of the political actors involved in the Arctic region(s). Perhaps more so than in many southern areas, the Arctic region may quickly come to expose the multi-level governance dimension of these conflicts, precluding geopolitics from being limited to IR.

Conclusion: Local Governance and the Mapping of Arctic Conflicts

The present paper aimed to address two main concerns. Firstly, the paper undertook to see if one can rescue the concept of 'geopolitics' from its ambiguous nature to tackle questions linked to spatial conflicts in the Arctic region. Secondly, the paper sought to see how 'Arctic exceptionalism' can contribute to the central debates, concepts and theories of IR and global governance.

The reflections undertaken in this paper show that it does not matter so much to save 'geopolitics' as a 'buzz word' as it does to save the relevance of a question addressing the relationship between space, politics and actors for whom the use of space is a finality. The question and sub-questions addressing this triple relationship do not belong solely to IR or global geopolitics, as they must include all scales of analysis. Can the mediatic and popular channels of communication interested in 'spectacular' geopolitics catch up with this task of the geopolitics as a discipline? This question is perhaps more related to the marketing capacity of geopolitics as a (sub)discipline rather than to its spectacular treatment by the media.

Furthermore, the paper has defended the idea that while focusing on a specific scale of analysis, the geopolitician must remain open to moving beyond scales. She/he must be able to account for the different mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact. Even if the popular understanding of geopolitics seems to involve national states or global political actors, the nature of conflicts (or non-conflicts) between those actors should be analysed in relation to their interest (or

³⁸ E. Wilson, F. Stammer, *Beyond extractivism and alternative cosmologies-Arctic communities and extractive industries in uncertain times*, "The Extractive Industries and Society" 2016 (3), pp. 1-8.

³⁹ Cf. for instance the project and research network of the UArctic on People and the Arctic Extractive Industries, [online], <http://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/research/Projects-and-Research-Networks/networks/UArctic-extractive-industries>, (25.09.2017) and the REXSAC project (2016-2020), [online], <https://www.rexsac.org>, (25.09.2017).

disinterest) and capacity (incapacity) to occupy, maintain or abandon a specific or several (localised) position(s).

In this respect, the Arctic region offers a special advantage. The development of the Northern Circumpolar area has transpired relatively rapidly in the last 50 years. The number of political actors involved and for whom space is an issue has increased quickly and the Arctic region remains one regional area where the multiscale relation between local and global actors seems the most illustrative of the geopolitical complexity at hand. Conflicts and non-conflicts between Arctic states, between non-Arctic states and Arctic States, between central government and local residents, between reindeer herders and energy companies, between ecological NGOs and rich international travellers, all these geopolitical narratives allow geopoliticians to 'expound the causal mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact at different scale involving different actors'.

How many conflicts are currently taking place in the Northern Circumpolar region? What is the nature of these conflicts (coveted, threatened, rejected development)? How do local actors deal with them? What strategies do they use to ensure the sustainable development of their living space? There is currently no inventory as to the number, character, and magnitude of these conflicts taking place in the High North. This inventory, or even a simple portrait, would deserve its own research agenda. In the transport sector alone, the number of conflicts between local, regional and international actors deserves special attention.

In this respect, Arctic geopolitics can provide enough specific illustrations i) taking place at different scales and ii) involving evidently different types of actors iii) from different level of governance in order to contribute to the central debates, concepts and theories of IR and global governance as well as the so called local geopolitics.

Acknowledgments

A first non-published and exploratory version of this paper under the title "The geopolitics of access and trajectories: A holistic approach to understanding local and global geopolitics in the High North" was the subject of a presentation at the 9th International Conference of Arctic Social Science (ICASS IX) on June 12th, 2017 in Umeå (Sweden). The current paper takes up the terms of the first three sections of the presented draft version and one part of the conclusion. I am sincerely grateful to the organisers of the session "Arctic 'exceptionalism'? Northern Contributions to International Relations (IR)", especially Sebastian Knecht for his constructive comments. I wish to express my gratitude to the U.S. National Science Foundation, Arctic Social Sciences Arctic Social Sciences Program (PLR # 1703634) for their financial support. The stipend was made available through an award to the University of Northern Iowa (ARCTICenter). I am also thankful to my colleague and friend Dr Aeddan Shaw, from the Ignatianum University in Kraków, for his revision and precious feedback on the draft conference paper. It goes without saying that I, nevertheless, take all responsibility for any remaining errors and inadequacies in the present paper.

Annexes

Annexe I: Call for papers at the ICASS IX (June 2017, Umeå, Sweden) for the abandoned session (initially #09.04) entitled: “What means ‘Geopolitical’ anyway? To Rescue or to Relegate the Concept from Arctic Politics Discourse”. Session proposed by Sebastian Knecht

Over the past decade, the Arctic region has emerged as a prominent example for the resurrected concept of geopolitics in international affairs. Often used implicitly to describe a state of crisis in Arctic affairs with regard to inter-state territorial disputes or rivalry for resources, the concept has proliferated as much as it has been stretched. Yet, much research relies on vague or ambiguous conceptualisations of the term, fails to specify underlying theoretical propositions and falls short of expounding causal mechanisms through which geographical and political variables interact. After almost ten years of debate and expansive evidence to the contrary, what is left of Arctic geopolitical discourse is the connotation of the Arctic with alarmist predictions of conflict and the emergence of a new security hot spot in East-West relations.

This session intends to critically reassess the theoretical core and empirical utility of the concept of geopolitics for the study of Arctic international relations. To this end, we welcome both (a) innovative papers which explicate their theoretical understanding of geopolitics, systematically derive respective cause-effect relationships, and test their theoretical claims empirically, and (b) those that critically discuss the concept and its use in Arctic international relations research.

Annex II: Summary of the session (#09.03) “*Arctic ‘exceptionalism’? Northern Contributions to International Relations (IR) Research*” that took place at the ICASS IX (June 12th 2017 Umeå, Sweden). Session chaired by Sebastian Knecht and Mathias Albert.

The Arctic region was for a long time considered to be of marginal importance for international relations (IR) research due to what is framed as “Arctic exceptionalism”. Because of the region’s special ecology and placid political relationships, the High North was generally seen as detached from global political dynamics and hence un compelling or unsuitable for IR theory and analysis. With few analytical tools at hand, many studies in Arctic political science have remained overly descriptive and a-theoretical. It is only since the “new age of the Arctic” has received wider academic and political attention that the region has become more and more attractive as a testing site for the application of traditional concepts and theories from across the field of IR research. This session approaches the Arctic’s distinctiveness as a promising point of departure rather than an inhibiting factor for bringing innovative thinking to world politics at the intersection of environmental, resource and security governance issues, and from both Western and non-Western IR perspectives. Accordingly, the session asks how Arctic studies can contribute to central debates, concepts and theories of international relations and global governance in a wider sense, and thereby strongly favours papers with a focus on concept formation and theory building. Issues to be addressed may include, but are not limited to, questions of sovereignty, security,

borders and boundaries, conflict and cooperation, power and authority, geopolitics, and state-society relationships.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Alexeeva O. V., Lasserre F., *The Snow Dragon: China's Strategies in the Arctic*, "China Perspectives", 2012, No 3.
2. Andersen S. S., Midttun A., *Conflict and local mobilization: The Alta hydropower project I*, "Acta Sociologica" 1985 (28), No 4.
3. Aruda G. M., *Arctic governance regime: the last frontier for hydrocarbons exploitation*, "International Journal of Law and Management" 2015 (57), No 5.
4. Balão S. M. R., *The European Union's Arctic Strategy(ies): The good and/or the evil?* [in:] L. Heininen (ed.), *Security and Sovereignty in the North Atlantic*, Palgrave Pivot, London 2014.
5. BEAC, *Joint Barents Transport Plan, Proposals for development of transport corridors for further studies*, N.P., 2013 (September), [online:] https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Joint_Barents_Transport_Plan_2013.pdf, (26.09.2017).
6. Bennett M. M., *How China Sees the Arctic: Reading between Extraregional and Intraregional Narratives*, "Geopolitics" 2015 (20), No 3.
7. Blacksell M., *Political Geography*, Routledge, New York 2006.
8. Blunden M., *Geopolitics and the Northern Sea Route*, "International Affairs" 2012 (88), No 1.
9. Brigham L. W., *The Challenges and Security Issues of Arctic Marine Transport* [in:] J. Kraska (ed.), *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2011.
10. Bruun J. M., Medby I. A., *Theorising the Thaw: Geopolitics in a Changing Arctic*, "Geography Compass" 2014 (8), No 12.
11. Cameron E. S., *Securing indigenous politics: A critique of the vulnerability and adaptation approach to the human dimensions of climate change in the Canadian Arctic*, "Global Environmental Change" 2012 (22), No 1.
12. Castro D., Hossain K., Tytelman C., *Arctic ontologies: Reframing the relationship between humans and rangifer*, "Polar Geography" 2016, (39), No 2.
13. Cole S. G., Kinell G., Söderqvist T., Håkansson C., Hasselström L., Izmailkov S., Mikkelsen E., Noring M., Sandberg A., Sjöberg E., Soutukorva Å, Franzén F., Khaleeva Y., *Arctic games: An analytical framework for identifying options for sustainable natural resource governance*, "Polar Journal" 2016 (6). No 1.
14. Dalland Ø., *The Alta case: Learning from the errors made in a human ecological conflict in Norway*, "Geoforum" 1983 (14), No 2.
15. Dadwal S. R., *Arctic: The Next Great Game in Energy Geopolitics?* "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6.
16. Dahl A., Järvenpää P., *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic-Baltic strategic influence in a post-unipolar world*, Routledge, New York 2014.
17. Dalby S., *The geopolitics of climate change*, "Political Geography" 2013 (37).
18. Desmarais G., Ritchot G., *La géographie structurale*, L'Harmattan, Paris 2000.
19. Devonshire-Ellis C., *Finland and Baltics Gear Up Rail and Arctic Infrastructure Projects to Connect With China, Russia, and EU OBOR Trade*, "Silk Road

- Briefing”, [online:] <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2017/08/17/finland-baltics-gear-up-rail-arctic-infrastructure-projects-connect-with-china-russia-eu-obor-trade>, (25.09.2017).
20. Dodds K., *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007.
 21. Dussouy G., *Les théories géopolitiques. Traité de Relations internationales (I)*, L’Harmattan, Paris 2006.
 22. Eliasson K., Ulfarsson G. F., Valsson T., Gardarsson S. M., *Identification of development areas in a warming Arctic with respect to natural resources, transportation, protected areas, and geography*, “Futures” 2017 (85).
 23. Gerhardt H., Steinberg P. E., Tasch J., Fabiano S. J., Shields R., *Contested Sovereignty in a Changing Arctic*, “Annals of the Association of American Geographers” 2010 (100), No 4.
 24. Giblin B., *Hérodote, une géographie géopolitique*, “Cahiers de géographie du Québec” 1985 (29), No 77.
 25. Giblin B., *La région : enjeux de pouvoirs*, “Quaderni” 2005 (59), No 1.
 26. Gilmore S., *How Ottawa abandoned our only Arctic port*, “Maclean’s” 2016, [online:], <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/abandoned-churchill/>, (18.08.2016).
 27. Hepple L.W., *Géopolitique de gauche, Yves Lacoste, Herodote and French radical Geopolitics* [in:] K. J. Dodds, K. D. Atkinson (eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought*, Routledge, London/New York 2000.
 28. Heininen L., *Geopolitics of a changing North. Position Paper for the 5th of the Northern Research Forum (NRF) Open Assembly, September 24th-27th 2008*, Anchorage, Alaska, USA, [online:], https://www.rha.is/static/files/NRF/OpenAssemblies/Anchorage2008/heininen_5thnrf_position_paper_session1.pdf, (25.09.2017).
 29. Heininen L., *The end of the post-Cold War in the Arctic*, “Nordica Geographical Publications”, 2011 (40), No 4.
 30. *High Arctic research station forced to close*, [online:] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/high-arctic-research-station-forced-to-close-1.1171728>, (28.02.2012).
 31. Huhndorf R. M., Huhndorf S. M., *Alaska Native Politics since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*, “South Atlantic Quarterly” 2011(110), No 2.
 32. Jensen L. C., *Norwegian petroleum extraction in Arctic waters to Save the environment: introducing ‘discourse co-optation’ as a new analytical term*, “Critical Discourse Studies” 2012 (9), No 1.
 33. Kim H. J., *Success in heading North?: South Korea’s master plan for Arctic policy*, “Marine Policy” 2015, No 61.
 34. Kim Y., Blank S., *The Arctic: A New Issue on Asia’s Security Agenda*, “Korean Journal of Defense Analysis” 2011 (23), No 3.
 35. Lee T., Kim H. J., *Barriers of voyaging on the Northern Sea Route: A perspective from shipping Companies*, “Marine Policy” 2015 (62).
 36. Mercier G., Ritchot G., *La Baie James: Les dessous d’une rencontre que la bureaucratie n’avait pas prévue*, “Cahiers De Géographie du Québec” 1997 (41), No113.

37. The Barents Observers, *Norway positive to Finland's Arctic railway plan*, [online:] <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2017/04/norway-positive-finland-s-arctic-railway-plan>, (25.09.2017).
38. Ó Tuathail G., Dalby S., *Rethinking Geopolitics*, Routledge, New York 1998.
39. Østerud, Ø., Review: The Uses and Abuses of Geopolitics, "Journal of Peace Research" 1988 (25), No. 2.
40. Østerud Ø., Hønneland G., *Geopolitics and International Governance in the Arctic*, "Arctic Review on Law and Politics" 2014, (5), No 2.
41. Østhagen A., *Utenrikspolitisk entreprenørskap – EU og utviklingen av en Arktis-politikk*, "Internasjonal Politikk" 2011 (69) No 1.
42. Parente G., *Assessing the role of resource extraction companies in Arctic decision-making: A new methodological approach*, "Polar Geography" 2015 (38), No 3.
43. Peng J., Wegge N., *China's bilateral diplomacy in the Arctic*, "Polar Geography" 2015, 38, No 3.
44. Rosière S., *Géographie politique, géopolitique et géostratégie: distinctions*, "L'information géographique" 2001 (65), No 1.
45. Røseth T., *Russia's China policy in the Arctic*, "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6.
46. Scopelliti M., Conde Pérez E., *Defining Security in a Changing Arctic: Helping to Prevent an Arctic Security Dilemma*, "Polar Record" 2016 (52), No 6.
47. Sempa F. P., *Geopolitics: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey 2002.
48. Shadian J. M., *The Politics of Arctic Sovereignty: Oil, Ice, and Inuit Governance*, Routledge, New York 2014.
49. Stokke O. S., *Asian stakes and Arctic governance*, "Strategic Analysis" 2014 (38), No 6.
50. Subra P., *Géopolitique de l'aménagement du territoire*, Armand Colin, Paris 2007.
51. Subra P., *La géopolitique locale. Territoires, acteurs, conflits*, Armand Colin, Paris 2016.
52. Tamnes R., Offerdal K., *Introduction* [in:] R. Tamnes, K. Offerdal, K. (eds.), *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamic in a Global World*, Routledge, New York 2014.
53. Thomas M. E., *The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Conflict and Controversy*, "Polar Record" 1986 (23), No 142.
54. Thomas, M. E. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: An update, "Polar Record" 1988 (24), No. 151.
55. Wegge N., *The EU and the Arctic: European foreign policy in the making*, "Arctic Review on Law and Politics" 2012 (3), No 1.
56. Wehrmann D., *The Polar Regions as "Barometers" in the Anthropocene: Towards a New Significance of Non-State Actors in International Cooperation?*, "Polar Journal" 2016 (6), No 2.
57. Wilson E., Stammeler F., *Beyond extractivism and alternative cosmologies-Arctic communities and extractive industries in uncertain times*, "The Extractive Industries and Society" 2016 (3).

58. Wilson Rowe E., *A dangerous space? Unpacking state and media discourses on the Arctic*, "Polar Geography" 2013 (36), No 3.
59. Yakovleva N., *Oil pipeline construction in Eastern Siberia: Implications for Indigenous People*, "Geoforum" 2011(42), No 6.

Streszczenie

W zarówno w kręgach mediów masowych, jak i środowiskach akademickich, koncepcja „geopolityki” zasadniczo jest wiązana ze spektakularnymi konfliktami w sferze stosunków międzynarodowych, podczas gdy lokalne konflikty polityczne są często oznaczane mianem socjologiczno-politycznego studium przypadku. Ta sytuacja ma szczególne znaczenie dla regionu arktycznego. Powyższy paradygmat utrudnia opracowanie odpowiedniej teoretycznej ramy analizy, która umożliwiłaby zrozumienie stosunków geopolitycznych między podmiotami politycznymi (indywidualnymi i zbiorowymi) zaangażowanymi (lub nie) na wszystkich szczeblach zarządzania w obliczu zmiennych kontekstów geograficznych, obejmujących regiony każdego typu i skali. W oparciu o niedawne francuskie podejście geopolityczne „geopolityki lokalnej”, a w szczególności pracy Subra, niniejszy artykuł przedstawia oryginalny wgląd w kwestie politycznych barier, napięć i konfliktów związanych z geopolityką jako dyscypliną zainteresowanej „przestrzenią” uznawaną za „kwestię (geo)polityczną”. Artykuł proponuje lepsze odwzorowanie obecnych napięć geopolitycznych napotykanych przez lokalnych aktorów na wysokiej Północy.

Geopolityka Dalekiej Północy w ujęciu globalnym

Słowa kluczowe

Arktyka; Daleka Północ; geopolityka; konflikt; lokalne zarządzanie

Luc Ampleman, Ph.D, Transport researcher, polar and social scientist, political geographer by training and former governmental advisor, Luc is an assistant professor at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. His key research interests include local geopolitics, transport diplomacy, mobility policies in remote areas and planning theories. He loves travelling by train and listening to extreme death-doom metal music. He is currently contemplating the idea of writing a book about the geopolitics of Rock.