

Russia's Arctic policy in the twenty-first century: National and international dimensions. Maria L. Lagutina. 2019. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. 201 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-49855-157-1. €69.

In *Russia's Arctic Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, Maria L. Lagutina delineates a chronological and spatial map on the axis of Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), aiming at conducting a comprehensive and systematic study on Russian national and international Arctic policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the biggest Arctic power and a key stakeholder, Russia's development is bound up with the development of Arctic, especially in the new global context. This monograph highlights the geopolitical position and strategic significance of the Arctic to Russia, as well as Russia's interests and priorities in the AZRF. At the international level, Lagutina delves into the interactions and cooperation between Russia and Arctic states, non-Arctic states and organisations in the Arctic.

Lagutina structures her exposé mainly in three chapters—Russia in the Arctic, Russian Arctic policy in national and international dimension—which are subdivided into nine sections. The author inadvertently reveals the inheritance and development of Russian Arctic history which ensures the modern Russia holds “trump cards” (p. 1) and redevelops in the new global political game. The analysis from the perspective of historical development runs through the whole book. In this book, Russia's pragmatic principle and priorities in Arctic policy-making are highlighted, together with its mover advantages and opportunities to develop the territories and resources for the benefit of the state at large. Meanwhile, the author illustrates Russia's “home-grown” problems and challenges in the AZRF.

The first chapter opens with the four main stages of Russia's presence in the Arctic which are respectively the initial period, the imperial period, the Soviet period and the present stage. Chronologically, Russian Arctic actions evolve from the initial disorganised and spontaneous economic activities, to later reactive and unsystematic explorations, and finally to systemic and strategic military, academic and industrial presence. This evolution not only reflects changes in policy preferences, but also reflects changes in Russia's national interests in the AZRF. The author particularly emphasises the foundation laid by the achievements in Soviet period for the current strategy of Arctic exploration and present Russia's Arctic policy-making.

By comparing different diversity of definitions for Russia's northern territories, Lagutina defines and clarifies meticulously the AZRF. And in this process, the specific features of AZRF are just emerging. Labelled as the largest part of the Arctic territory, AZRF has large mineral resources. The reader may also be surprised at its ethnic diversity, low population density, uneven settlement and high degree of urbanisation. These peculiarities demonstrate the development potential of the AZRF, as well as the difficulties and contradictions in this region.

Chapter Two—Russian Arctic Policy (national dimension)—sheds light on the domestic dimensions of the Russian Arctic policy, including Russia's national interests, strategies and institutions in the Arctic. Firstly, Lagutina analyses in detail the documents defining the current Russia's policy and national interests in the Arctic. From the author's view, the State Policy-2008 becomes a watershed which articulates Russia's national interests in the Arctic, compared to those documents before 2008 with ambiguous and uncomprehensive characters. However, the readers are easily lost in the various documents and policies elaborated by the author in this part. What is more, just as Lagutina points out, the many policies and projects carried out by different departments slow down the work and lead to inefficient and unsystematic implementation.

Secondly, the institutions that implement the Russian Arctic policy are introduced in this section. Russia pursues its national interests in the Arctic using institutions of the state and institutions of civil society. The author stresses the role of the State Commission for the development of the Arctic in coordinating activities at the federal level, and its inability in coordinating the interactions of various agencies at different levels. In particular, both at the federal level and regional level, coordination and efficiency issues of the Russian Arctic governance system are yet to be solved. However, the readers would have a more thorough understanding of these governing bodies if Lagutina could keep an eye open on the interactions and conflicts between them and compare their functions rather than just introducing their respective missions.

Thirdly, this section contains several specific areas of Russia's domestic policy in the Arctic: resource base, social and economic development, transport system, military and environmental

issues. (1) Hydrocarbon is the main focus of the Arctic resource, but its development and exploitation are faced with many challenges. (2) Lagutina affirms that the AZRF's socio-economic development is presently a priority and she introduces some topics that are worthy of consideration and may also be of interest to the readers, such as how to stop the out-migration from the northern region, how to preserve and enhance the livelihoods of the indigenous minorities of the North. (3) The Northern Sea Route (NSR), as AZRF's key transport artery, is discussed in this section. In this book, the imperative for transport system is to build a sufficiently efficient transport network, and modernise the NSR and other transport infrastructure. (4) Russia's military deployment, which also corresponds to Russia's national interests and security of the AZRF, causes negative responses from Western countries. The author stresses that the increased activities of NATO prompted Russian military deployment in the Arctic but nevertheless neglect to further elaborate the role of NATO in this process. So, one may be entangled between NATO's stimulus and Moscow's strategic interest when considering the root cause of Russian military redeployment in the Arctic. (5) The author concludes that the Arctic has transformed from the "resource base" of Russia into a sustainable development zone which indicates the stance of Russia on the environmental issue in this region.

Fourthly, regarding the prospects of the AZRF, the author proposes the concept of fulcrum zones, which is a territorial approach aimed at bridging the internal gap between the Arctic regions of the AZRF. The author distinguishes the formula of fulcrum zones from the so-called sectoral approach. According to Lagutina, fulcrum zones are highly valued and treated as pilot projects with scientific and technological solutions to develop the AZRF.

In the last chapter—Russian Arctic Policy (international dimension)—the reader gets to know Russia's operations at various levels in the Arctic based on its interactions with Arctic and non-Arctic states and international organisations. Similarly, Russia's foreign policies regarding the Arctic are listed and analysed chronologically. Yet, the readers may be somewhat confused about the Russia's foreign policies here and Russia's policies in the Arctic mentioned in Chapter Two as they have similar geopolitical background and priorities which are focused on Russia's national interests.

After introducing Russia's institutional endeavours in the Arctic regional organisations, especially the Arctic Council (AC) and Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the author describes thoroughly Russia's inter-states cooperation with other "Arctic Eight". It shows that Russia has more successful and active cooperation with Norway, Canada and Finland than other Arctic states. Later, 12 non-Arctic states with the observer status in the AC

are discussed. Lagutina believes that Russia's position on the seven European states and five Asian states in the AZRF is ambiguous while Russia's cooperation with them can be characterised as pragmatic. In this section, the author occasionally mentions the negative impacts of the 2014 Ukraine Crisis on Russia's cooperation with other states in the Arctic. At some points, however, the readers may want to know more about that as Ukraine Crisis has become a turning point in the deterioration of relations between Russia and most EU countries. In addition, one could possibly regret that there is no description of cooperation or interaction between Russia and EU in the Arctic.

With the advent of globalisation, the "globalisation" of the Arctic cooperation begins, accompanied by the new concepts and approaches for the study of the Arctic. The challenge here is how to find a comprehensive approach. In this context, Lagutina points out that Russia's foreign policy in the Arctic has to seek an equilibrium between strictly state-centric policy and a softer version, and to make a choice between "self-flowing" and self-adapting to global trends.

The readers may be impressed by the historical and chronological narrative and detailed policy analysis under concise structure which develops from national and international dimensions in this book. Unfortunately, the loopholes in the structure are also obvious. That is, the author ignores the interactions between the national and international levels: how does the Russian Arctic policy affects its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Arctic states, non-Arctic states and organisations in the Arctic? And vice versa. At the same time, it is difficult to ignore the systemic analysis that the author used to offer a comprehensive research of all levels and all aspects of the modern Russia's Arctic policy, and the author knows how to avoid the situation "bite off more than one can chew". However, this book still has room for improvement in the in-depth analysis of Russian Arctic policy, not only answering "what is Russian Arctic policy", but "why is this Russian Arctic policy". This reviewer also finds that duplicate contents appear from time to time in this book, such as "ethnic diversity" and "high level of urbanization" are mentioned in Chapters 1.2 and 2.3.2, and "fulcrum zones" is described in detail in Chapters 2.1 and 2.4. Finally, as Lagutina puts, "Russian Arctic policy . . . is rarely analyzed in depth in English-language publications" (p. 3), this book definitely will be welcomed by students, scholars and policy-makers who are interested in Russian Arctic policy. (Haiyu Xie, Center for Global Politics, Free University of Berlin, Garystrasse 55, 14195 Berlin, Germany (haiyuxie@zedat.fu-berlin.de)).

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