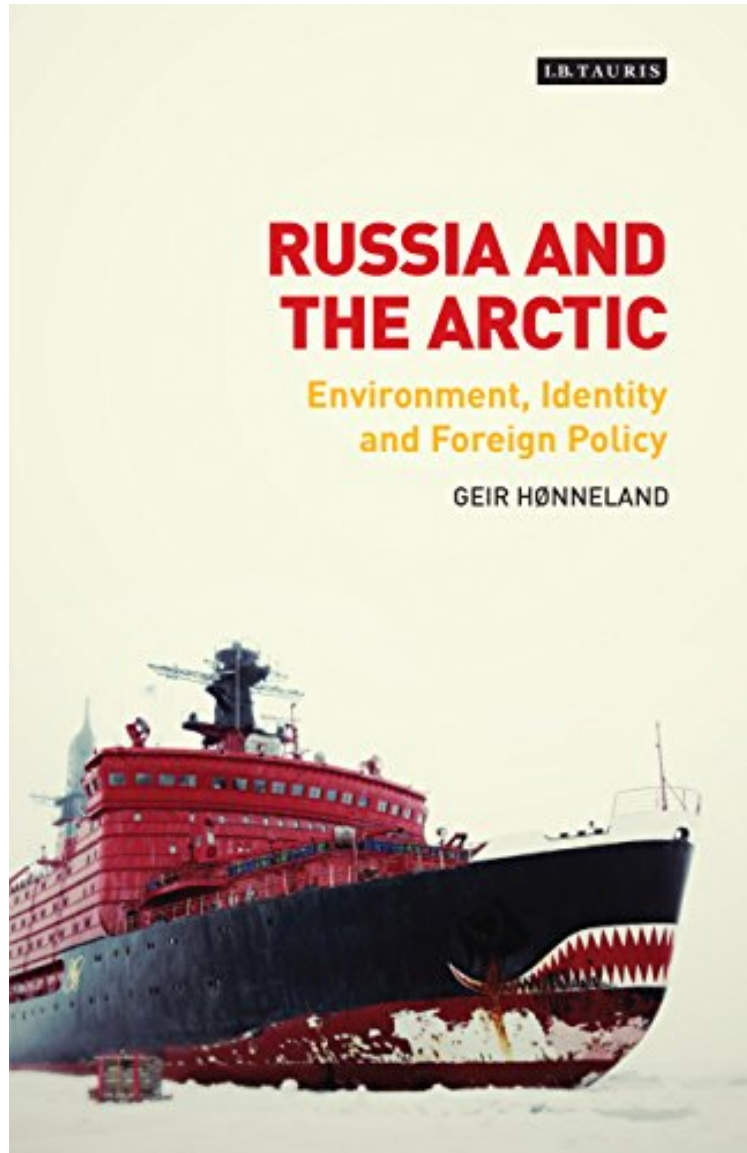


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# Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy

*Geir Hnneland*

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**Geir Hnneland : Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy:

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The world is currently witnessing an Arctic Scrambleas the major powers compete to demarcate and occupy Arctic

territory. The region is known to be home to large gas and oil reserves, and its position at the top of the globe holds significant trading and military advantages. Yet the territorial boundaries of the region remain ill-defined and Russia, under the increasingly bold foreign policy of Vladimir Putin, has emerged as a forceful power in the region. Geir Hnneland investigates the political contexts and international tensions surrounding Russias actions, focusing especially on the disputes which have emerged in the Barents Seawhere European and Russian interests compete directly. Skillfully delineating Russian policy in the region, and analyzing the mineral and environmental consequences of the recent treaty agreements, *Russia and the Arctic* is a crucial addition to our understanding of contemporary International Relations concerning the Polar North.

'Honneland vividly contextualises different narratives of suspicion, hope and self-perception with broader frameworks of identity and Russianness. His personal tone, vast empirical data and the strong theoretical underpinning provide *Russia and the Arctic* with an identity itself. Apart from the ground-breaking knowledge that his book holds, it is also incredibly fun to read!' - Nikolas Sellheim, University of Lapland, and book editor 'Polar Record', University of Cambridge, 'Geir Honneland's book explores the narrative environment in which Russian foreign policy is elaborated, and gives us unique insight on how sensitive Arctic issues are talked about in Russia. He also convincingly demonstrates the gap between narrative and action, and between the different actors in charge of Arctic affairs in Russia. A must-read book for all those wanting to go beyond the usual, confrontational Arctic buzz and comprehend Russia's policy.' - Professor Marlene Laruelle, George Washington University, author of *Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North* (M.E. Sharpe, 2014), 'Honneland brings depth to debates on Russia's role in the Arctic. His almost uncanny ability to put us in Russians' shoes is the most remarkable achievement of this oeuvre. As he unravels, page by page, layer by layer, the rich cultural fabric underpinning current Russian narratives of the Arctic, he takes the wind out of the sails of Arctic warmongers and doomsayers. As with all great books, the last paragraph is where to start reading.' - Professor Martin Muller, University of Zurich, author of *Making Great Power Identities in Russia* (Lit Verlag, 2010), '*Russia and the Arctic* is a timely read. For those of us interested in the Arctic region and the role of the world's largest Arctic state, this is more than a reliable guide. It offers an intimate portrait of how Russians newspapers and public culture more generally engage with the 'their Arctic' and 'their interests', and how we need to better understand in the West. Geir Honneland shows us how Russia's policies and practices towards the Arctic are part of what we might consider a 'demanding geopolitics' without demonising Russia itself. The take-away message for me was that Russia's voice will be heard and Russia presence will be felt in the contemporary Arctic and beyond. - Professor Klaus Dodds, Royal Holloway, University of London, co-author of *The Scramble for the Poles: The Contemporary Geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic* (Polity, 2015) About the Author Geir Hnneland is Research Director at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the Arctic University in Norway. He has published widely in Norwegian and in English on territory disputes and environmental factors in the Polar North. He gained his PhD from the University of Oslo in 2000 and is one of the most respected commentators in the field of Arctic Studies.