

Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Articulations of the Arctic: Towards Multidimensional Spatiality?

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In this article we discuss how the Arctic is defined as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space through an analysis of Arctic strategy documents of Sweden and Norway. By positioning our analysis in relation to research that has discussed the relations between geopolitics, geoeconomics and geoeconomization, we approach geopolitics and geoeconomics as distinct, yet intertwined geostrategic discourses that emphasize political relations and (national) security, and economic relations and economic growth, respectively. We argue that the Arctic region is defined – or articulated – through these discourses in spatially distinctive ways: the geopolitical discourse emphasizes territorial and bounded character of space, while the relational and networked “soft” spatial vocabulary is emphasized in the geoeconomic discourse. However, we also show that this distinction is not always so clear-cut, and these discourses can draw on multidimensional spatial vocabularies that constitute the Arctic as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space. We further assess the relations between the geopolitical and geoeconomic articulations of the Arctic, and argue that there has been a shift in which geoeconomization – the increasing prevalence of economic hopefulness – has been partially replaced by a renewed emphasis on geopolitical fears that are attached to transforming global security dynamics. The analysis of geopolitical and geoeconomic articulations of the Arctic can help us understand how these articulations not only reflect, but also constitute the Arctic as a political and economic space, which enables the foregrounding of the repercussions this has for political and economic practices associated with the region.

Introduction

During the past two decades it has become commonplace to start academic articles on the Arctic by iterating the now familiar narrative on climate change, its effects on the Arctic environment, and the challenges and opportunities this change brings. In social science literature the changes in the Arctic have been approached through interpretations of the economic opportunities and geopolitical challenges they generate, or vice versa (see Dittmer, Moisio, Ingram & Dodds, 2011). Of course, these acts of defining the Arctic are not limited to the work of scientists, but different journalists, pundits, activists and politicians continuously interpret the changing Arctic from the

perspective of its political and economic effects. Analytically speaking, the “speech acts” through which the Arctic region is being defined are relevant especially if one adopts the position that regional definitions are not comprehensive and accurate representations of reality but contribute to its making. This is to say that regional definitions have effects and that these effects extend beyond the mere sphere of imagination. This is why studying the definitions of the Arctic is also important: definitions make, reflect and solidify power relations. They are manifestations of different political practices as well as the outcomes of discourses that constitute the interpretative lenses through which we make the Arctic region knowable. Thus, the ways in which the Arctic is being defined as a political and/or economic space has practical consequences as well.

The relationship between political and economic definitions of the Arctic is interesting, because it resonates with literature in political geography and International Relations (IR) that has focused on the concepts of geopolitics, geoeconomics and geoeconomization. These concepts have been distinguished from each other in multiple ways, simultaneously as the distinction itself has been brought under question from different angles. In other words, the contested interplay of geopolitics and geoeconomics has been recently widely studied (Agnew, 2020; Cowen & Smith, 2009; Moisiu, 2019; Moisiu & Paasi, 2013; Sparke, 2018; Sum, 2019; Vihma, 2018). In this article we position our approach in relation to this literature and distinguish geopolitics and geoeconomics as distinct discourses that frame the world through different vocabularies (Sparke, 2007). Further, we take geoeconomization as a contextually manifesting, and reversable, process in which the vocabulary of economics becomes dominant. By drawing on this approach we illustrate how an analysis on these discourses can help us understand various definitions of Arctic that have been produced recently by different actors. We call these definitions articulations of the Arctic. Thus, our key aim is to interpret how the Arctic is articulated through these discourses as a political and economic space.

Our approach is connected to existing research on the Arctic in multiple ways. First, the political importance of the processes through which the Arctic region is defined has been of key concern to scholars. This has been analyzed especially in the context of the Arctic Council and the wider Arctic cooperation (Dodds, 2013; Exner-Pirot, 2020; Keskitalo, 2004; Pincus & Ali, 2016; Väättänen & Zimmerbauer, 2020). Simultaneously, the political implications of the ways in which the Arctic has been seen and defined in specific national (Bennett, 2015, 2018; Khrushcheva & Poberezhskaya, 2016; Smith, 2010) and subnational (Landriault, Payette & Roussel, 2021; Väättänen, 2019) contexts has also been analyzed. Even as the political aspects of Arctic definitions have been of focal interest to scholars, the connections between economic modes of thinking and Arctic policies and cooperation have attained some interest as well (Nicol, 2018; Väättänen, 2021). There is thus a diverse body of research that focuses on the ways the Arctic is articulated as a political and economic space.

In order to contribute to this work, we utilize the concepts of geopolitics and geoeconomics to discuss very specific kinds of articulations of the Arctic region, that is, its spatial articulations. Spatial articulations are important not least because they reflect in quite a profound manner what we understand ‘the region’ to be. This connects our approach to theoretical work in human geography that has focused on the question as to “what are regions”, and more precisely to the work that has considered this question from the perspective of their spatiality (see Varró & Lagendijk, 2013). Some have highlighted the territorial and bounded character of regions (e.g.

Jones, 2009) while others have argued that they should be approached from a relational spatial perspective that highlights their networked aspects and connections that cross any regional boundaries (Amin, 2004; Massey, 2005). Simultaneously, approaches have been developed that have highlighted the complementary nature of the territorial and relational character of regions (Painter, 2010; Zimmerbauer, 2014). Fundamentally, by focusing on the spatial articulations of the Arctic we are interested in how different actors define the Arctic region as a relatively closed and bounded space or as an open space that is connected to relations that cross its boundaries. Additionally, existing work that has approached geopolitics and geoeconomics as distinct discourses has explicitly highlighted the spatial imaginaries and vocabularies inherent in them (Sparke, 2007). This common ground between regional theory and theorizations of geopolitics and geoeconomics acts as the starting point for our analysis.

This article proceeds as follows. First, we provide a short overview of the literature on geopolitics and geoeconomics, which also positions our analysis in relation to existing approaches. We then proceed to discuss the spatial vocabularies that have been attached to geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses. Through this discussion, we construct our hypothesis that we put to test in our empirical analysis. The hypothesis is that geopolitical discourse draws on territorial spatial vocabulary, while geoeconomic discourse accentuates the relational spatiality of networks and flows. The following section focuses on our empirical analysis in which we discuss – by taking a look at the first and latest Arctic strategy documents of Sweden and Norway – how the Arctic is spatially defined through the geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses. The selection of Sweden and Norway provides us with an opportunity to construct a comparative framework for our analysis that includes two neighboring Nordic states. Concurrently, the selection of the first and latest strategy documents enables a temporal perspective on how the relation between geoeconomic and geopolitical discourses has transformed. In the final section, we draw our results together and reflect on the importance of analyzing spatial definitions of regions generally, but especially in the Arctic context from the perspective of geopolitics and geoeconomics.

Geopolitics, geoeconomics and geoeconomization

Geopolitics, geoeconomics and geoeconomization are concepts which have attained increasing attention recently in political geographic and IR literature. The concept of geopolitics has its origins in the late 19th century, when a Swedish politician and scientist Rudolf Kjellén, inspired by Friedrich Ratzel, embraced an organic state theory and promoted the concept. The concept of geoeconomics was first developed in the work of Edward Luttwak (1990) to describe the shift that had arguably taken place in the logics and tools of interstate conflict. Reflecting the realist school of IR thinkers, Luttwak (1990) argues that an epochal shift is taking place from geopolitics to geoeconomics, in which the methods of commerce are replacing military methods as the key tools of interstate rivalry. The concept of geoeconomics gained popularity particularly in the post-Cold War geopolitical situation simultaneously with the rise of major new economic powers such as China and India. In addition to the more recent readings of geoeconomics in IR that have taken their inspiration from Luttwak's original thesis (e.g. Vihma, 2018), geoeconomics is a term that has found its way to political geographic research in which it has attained different meanings. A key distinction in the way in which geoeconomics has been understood in political geographic literature when reflected with IR research is that in political geography of key concern has been to critically

evaluate the strategic repercussions and origins of economic thinking rather than to develop tools through which economic strategies can be pursued (see Sparke, 2018).

The 1990s saw an initial emergence of research in political geography that articulated its approach explicitly in terms of geoeconomics. This complemented the closely related work that sought to analyze the “geopolitical economy” (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995). The most prominent example of the emerging attention to geoeconomics from this period is Matthew Sparke (1998), who seeks to question the state-centric definition of geoeconomics promoted by Luttwak to underscore how cross-border regions become increasingly promotionally positioned in the context of free trade to attract investment and other economic flows. Through this perspective, geoeconomics thus denotes a historical shift from geopolitically oriented thinking towards geoeconomic modes of reasoning, and of central importance is how these modes of geoeconomic thinking permeate cross-border governance initiatives and practices. A similar shift, although from a slightly different angle, is the centerpiece of the reading of geoeconomics by Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith (2009), as they suggest that geopolitical social forms are being replaced by geoeconomic ones. Put briefly, Cowen and Smith argue that through this process “the state becomes an entrepreneur in its own right, a player in the market first and foremost rather than a regulator of the market’s ‘excesses’” (2009: 41). From the perspective of Cowen and Smith’s (2009) argument, geoeconomization can be understood as a process through which this transformation of the state into an entrepreneur occurs.

A focal point of contestation has been the treatment of geopolitics and geoeconomics as distinct historical eras, as has been presumed in most of the literature discussed above (e.g. Cowen & Smith 2009; Luttwak, 1990; Sparke, 1998). This historical division is being argued against by those who underscore the impossibility of dividing politics and the economy as somehow distinct spheres of thought and action (Moisio, 2019; Sparke, 2018). Similar criticism is presented by those who provide historical analyses of the interplay between geopolitics and geoeconomics long before the division was made by scholars (e.g. Domosh, 2013). Indeed, while the utilization of the term geoeconomization risks reproducing the historical division that implies that geoeconomics somehow comes after geopolitics as a historical era, we see that by treating geopolitics and geoeconomics as distinct discourses that come together to legitimize specific policy choices, geoeconomization can be approached as a process to be analyzed contextually. In this sense, we follow the approach to geoeconomics building on critical geopolitics and crystallized by Sparke, who insists that he does not suggest that

geopolitics and geoeconomics describe distinct geo-strategic periods of interstate policy that have led from nuclear stockpile competition to commercial expansion competition in a clear-cut chronological progression. Instead, I am arguing that geopolitics and geoeconomics are better understood as geostrategic discourses (2007: 340; see also Essex, 2013).

As geostrategic discourses, geopolitics and geoeconomics can be seen as two sides of the same coin, meaning that the representations they draw on and (re)produce can be intertwined. These representations can incorporate projections of geopolitical fears and geoeconomic hopes, which act as justifications for specific strategic choices (Sparke, 2007). Concurrently, it is important to bear in mind that while the arguments accompanying some state strategies may transform from ones emphasizing military security, great power politics and international relations to ones

accentuating economic opportunity, international competitiveness and free trade thus indicating the process of geoeconomization, this shift can also happen the other way around. The back-and-forth relationship between such representations highlights that geoeconomization does not necessarily refer to a historical shift per se, but rather to the shift in the relations between geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses.

Put together, the approaching of geopolitics and geoeconomics as geostrategic discourses allows us to interpret the interplay between these discourses in the Arctic strategies of our selected states. Before we turn to the analysis itself it is important to discuss how the discourses of geopolitics and geoeconomics have been approached from an explicitly spatial perspective, and how the emphasis on the spatial aspects of these discourses can help us to unpack the importance of the spatial definitions of the Arctic region from the perspective of geopolitics and geoeconomics.

Spatialities of geopolitics and geoeconomics: Discussing territoriality and relationality

The previous section illustrated how geopolitics and geoeconomics are deeply intertwined, although according to several scholars, particularly in IR and political geography, a certain shift toward geoeconomics can be witnessed. Before discussing what this means in terms of the Arctic region and its possible change, we need to open up the spatial manifestations of geopolitics and geoeconomics, and geoeconomization in particular. This is important in order to be able to understand better the processes through which the Arctic becomes de- and re-territorialized through multiple spatial idea(l)s. These include various processes that entail vocabularies of relatively closed and open spaces, as well as bounded territories and permeable networks. These sometimes competing spatial manifestations of the interplay of geopolitics and geoeconomics have remained less studied, and even less in a supranational context.

In the current neoliberal world organized through both borders and connections across them (cf. Harrison & Grove, 2014; Larner & Walters, 2002), scholars have debated for some time whether regions should be conceptualized primarily as porous, fluid and relational or as bounded, more fixed and territorial (MacLeod & Jones, 2007; Paasi, 2011). This resonates much with the idea of geoeconomization, as porosity, fluidity and relationality have been associated with fuzzily bounded *regional spaces* (in contrast to *spaces of regionalism*, see Jones & MacLeod, 2004), characterized typically as new “soft” economic spaces “prospering to reconfigure the geographical complexion of a globalizing economy” (Jones & MacLeod, 2004: 435). Following this idea, Zimmerbauer – referring to Allmendinger and Haughton (2010) and to Metzger and Schmitt (2012) – states: “The transformation from geopolitics towards geoeconomics is parallel to the shift from territorial to more relational discourse in planning. This new economization of planning vocabulary entails the idea of ‘new soft spaces of governance’ with ‘fuzzy boundaries’ where form follows function in the sense that scales are socially produced rather than pregiven, and soft spaces become constituted increasingly through networks” (2014: 2725). In short, this is to say that spatiality in geoeconomics means that regions are approached and understood as increasingly open and networked.

Geoeconomization of supranational co-operation, or as Healey (2007) more generally formulates, the new geography of connectivity and relational complexity, has obviously brought large numbers of new actors with greater economic aspirations into the tables of Arctic cooperation. Perhaps what is most striking is that this has been seen in processes related to the Arctic Council and

negotiations around the observer status criteria (Väättänen & Zimmerbauer, 2020). States typically not regarded as Arctic, such as France, Japan or China, have actively tried to become members of the Arctic community through various speech acts that emphasize connections to the Arctic, such as scientific co-operation with research stations in the far north (Bennett, 2015; Väättänen & Zimmerbauer, 2020). This policy of stretching the Arctic can be seen as one manifestation of “relationalization” of supranational space. Although not merely by economic interests, geoeconomization and especially a possible opportunity to benefit from the natural resources, planned forthcoming transportation routes etc. is one of the driving forces of such articulations of the Arctic. Generally, geoeconomization has introduced more business and trade-oriented actors – such as chamber of commerce and other trade and business organizations – to co-operation networks.

The above notions point out that geoeconomization has its spatial form. It can be seen to lean on the ideology of soft, fuzzily bounded spaces that loosely “frame” networks typical for globalized economic activities. Thus, it can be argued that geoeconomization entails a vocabulary of connectivity and connections, movement, fluidity and openness. Geopolitics, on the other hand has been argued to build more on boundedness and thus on closure. Taking this idea further, it can be hypothesized that while often simultaneously present, geoeconomics stems from relational approaches on space, whereas geopolitics is based more on territorial notions on spatiality, and they thereby fundamentally utilize different spatial ontology and are thus at least partially incommensurable. This hypothesis is put to test later in this article, as we analyze how the Arctic becomes articulated and approached in the Arctic strategy documents of Sweden and Norway and how this de- and re-territorializes the Arctic. The hypothesized spatial dimensions of geopolitics and geoeconomics are presented in Table 1. It is to illustrate how spatiality, borders, aims of co-operation and typical actors differ between the two discourses based on existing literature.

Table 1. Differences between geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses in selected features.

	Geopolitics	Geoeconomics
Spatial form	Territorial, delineated, “container-type”, hard	Relational, networked, fluid, open, soft
Boundaries	Visible, strict, determine co-operation	Fuzzy, diminished, frame co-operation
Aims of co-operation	Political, reduce tensions, increase stability	Economical, increase competitiveness, support trade
Typical actors	Nation states, (central) governments	Sub-national regions, business and trade organizations

Related to Table 1, it needs to be emphasized that even though the shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics has increased the building of multilevel governance through networks, territoriality still plays an important part, although in new forms. In fact, some scholars have argued that despite the increasing emphasis on networks and soft spaces, borders are now “dispersed a little

everywhere” (Balibar, 2004). Thus, the purpose of Table 1 is to make an analytical distinction between geopolitics and geoeconomics in terms of spatial approaches and “forms” of co-operation, at the same time acknowledging that the categories are very much intertwined in many practices and territories and networks overlap. This is to say that the de- and re-territorializing practices happen to a large extent through the interplay of geopolitics and geoeconomics, even though geoeconomics has arguably gained more weight recently. Next, we will discuss how these spatial dimensions of geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses can be seen in the context of the Arctic region through our empirical material, and whether the empirical material supports the hypothesis that geopolitical discourse draws on territorial spatial vocabulary, and geoeconomic discourses rather than from a relational one.

Territorial and relational articulations of the Arctic as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space

Sweden’s Arctic strategy: from geoeconomization to geopolitization?

The first Arctic strategy document of Sweden was published in 2011. This coincided with the beginning of the Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and much emphasis is placed in the document on articulating the relationship between Sweden and the Arctic. The Swedish priorities regarding the Arctic are defined as: 1) Climate and the environment; 2) Economic development; and 3) The human dimension. When it comes to the meaning attributed to the Arctic region and its spatiality, the familiar territorial definition of the Arctic as the area above the Arctic Circle is provided. However, as one digs a little deeper, it becomes apparent that the understanding of the Arctic as a changing region has been adopted in Sweden, and it is interpreted through an explicitly geoeconomic vocabulary:

The Arctic region is in a process of far-reaching change. Climate change is creating new challenges, but also opportunities, on which Sweden must take a position and exert an influence. New conditions are emerging for shipping, hunting, fishing, trade and energy extraction, and alongside this, new needs are arising for an efficient infrastructure. New types of cross-border flows will develop. This will lead state and commercial actors to increase their presence, which will result in new relationships (Sweden, 2011: 4).

The emphasis on new cross-border flows and new relationships between state and commercial actors illustrates the extent to which geoeconomic discourse draws on relational conceptions of spatiality. This conception also acts as the basis for anticipatory visioning related to what these economic flows and relations could offer for Sweden and the Swedish economy:

Sweden’s growth and competitiveness can be promoted by means of greater free trade and proactive efforts to combat technical trade barriers in the Arctic region (Sweden, 2011: 30).

The relational spatial vocabulary which highlights the importance of cross-border activities and economic flows both within, and across the borders of the Arctic region is thus a key component of the Swedish 2011 strategy document. The geoeconomic vocabulary is accompanied with assertions that downplay the perspectives that have highlighted the geopolitical challenges associated with the changing Arctic, while strongly emphasizing that it is cooperation, not conflict, that defines the region:

It should be stressed, however, that extraction under Arctic conditions already takes place on a large scale, not least in Russia. The development alluded to here has however led to the focus shifting further and further northwards and towards the inner Arctic Ocean. The public debate some-times gives the impression that this is a kind of “gold rush”, a fight over resources that inevitably leads to a higher level of conflict in the region. This picture is incorrect. The area is characterised by a high level of cooperation and a low level of conflict. Overlapping claims must be dealt with according to international law (Sweden, 2011: 37).

The document highlights that international law provides the tools to resolve the potential for disorder, which could threaten free trade and economic activities. The emphasis on territorial order based on international law speaks to how territorial idea(l)s are connected to geoeconomic thinking. The 2011 Swedish strategy document is thus a good example of the geoeconomization dynamics associated with the Arctic, because its key focus is on economic opportunity, while the central security issues that are identified are not in most part connected to geopolitical perspectives. As put in the document: “The current security policy challenges in the Arctic are not of a military nature” (Sweden, 2011: 14).

In the 2020 strategy document some clear shifts are identifiable. The priorities for Swedish Arctic policy are articulated as: 1) International collaboration in the Arctic; 2) Security and stability; 3) Climate and the environment; 4) Polar research and environmental monitoring; 5) Sustainable economic development and business sector interests; and 6) Ensuring good living conditions. Notable here is that security and stability have garnered a much bigger role than in the 2011 document. As in the 2011 document security was discussed mostly through a broad conception of security and through assertions regarding the low risks in terms of military security in the Arctic, in the 2020 document military security and the associated geopolitical spatial vocabulary play a crucial role. When compared to the 2011 document, Arctic change is in the 2020 document articulated not so much through a perspective of geoeconomic promise, but through the perspective of geopolitical threats. In terms of this paper the most notable issue is, however, that the geopolitical threats feared to be manifesting in the region are seen to be coming from both inside and outside of the boundaries of the Arctic.

The threats coming from inside the region are articulated in territorial terms concerning security dynamics between territorial states. There are two key threats identified in this regard: competing territorial claims in sea areas accompanied by the restriction of free movement, and “increased Russian activity and military build-up to defend Russian territory” (Sweden, 2020: 23). The second threat is then tied together with developments occurring beyond the Arctic, as it is stated that

developments in the Arctic are also affected by the global security policy situation, which is characterised by instability and unpredictability. The military strategic importance of the Arctic has increased, and, as in the Cold War, the Arctic is a dividing line between western countries and Russia (Sweden, 2020: 23).

This return to Cold War geopolitical imagination regarding the Arctic as a dividing line between western countries and Russia provides a stark contrast to the 2011 document, in which these divisions were projected as obsolete. This “outside-in” logic of geopolitical threats also encompasses non-Arctic states, and especially China. The notion that “China’s increased global ambitions are also expressed in the Arctic” (Sweden, 2020: 23) further highlights the intertwined

character of the global and the regional in the new geopolitical discourse on the Arctic. Put together, the way in which the Arctic is envisioned as a geopolitical space in the 2020 Swedish strategy document is summarized in the following statement:

The rapid climate change has made the Arctic's natural resources more accessible and interesting to commercial actors and has created expectations of greater navigability in marine fairways. As the region's importance has increased, in strategic and in economic terms, for both Arctic and non-Arctic states, tensions in the region may rise. The military presence and activity in the Arctic have grown, partly as a result of deteriorating relations at global level. This also increases the risk of an arms race and incidents in the region. Strained relations at global level can have repercussions at regional level in the Arctic (Sweden, 2020: 22).

Such ideas of a “global” origin of regional geopolitical threats illustrates that within Sweden's 2020 Arctic strategy document the Arctic is envisioned as a geopolitical space through a partially relational spatial vocabulary. This challenges our original hypotheses regarding the exclusively territorial character of geopolitical spatial imagination and its articulations. Concurrently, it still needs to be noted that the 2020 Swedish document also addresses the Arctic through a geoeconomic perspective drawing on similar relational spatial vocabularies as the 2011 document. The analyzed Swedish documents still show that the relation between geoeconomic and geopolitical articulations of the Arctic have changed: the 2011 document exemplified the logics of geoeconomization by forwarding geoeconomic vocabulary while downplaying geopolitical ones, and the 2020 document characterizes the logics of what could be called geopolitization, in which the emphasis on geopolitics is greater.

Norway's northern strategy: from the High North to the Arctic

Norway published its first comprehensive northern strategy in 2006 under the geographical framework of the High North. It has subsequently published multiple strategy documents focusing on first, the High North and later, the Arctic. This shift is an interesting issue in itself, as we will discuss later. The 2006 strategy document is constructed around ten parts that discuss issues from knowledge generation, competence building and the environment to petroleum activities and business development. In broad terms the document's focus is mainly on economic development issues and on political cooperation, especially in relation to Russia. The economic prospects are articulated in terms of the national, as well as sub-national regional economies, and they reflect the long-standing importance of natural resources for the Norwegian economy.

In the Norwegian strategy, the emphasis on economic development and thus the geoeconomic discourse is mainly associated with northern Norway. While there are clear examples in the Swedish documents of how northern Sweden is addressed in relation to “Arctic” economy, such as through the mining industry located there, it is evident that the Norwegian strategy focuses explicitly on the sub-national level when discussing economic issues. This emphasis on sub-state territories is accompanied by a relationally articulated depiction of how the economic flows emanating from northern Norway accentuate – together with other issues – the importance of the High North for others beyond regional and national boundaries:

During the course of the past year, the High North has been placed firmly on the map of Europe. Decision makers in other countries have become aware that the

High North has significance that extends far beyond Norway's borders. Take, for example, the living marine resources that are provided to European consumers from a unique and vulnerable natural environment. Or global climate change, which is becoming so clearly obvious in the Arctic. The High North also has international significance because of the Norwegian and Russian petroleum resources in the Barents Sea and future opportunities for transporting energy resources. In addition, the Norwegian-Russian cooperation in the High North has developed into an important channel for European dialogue (Norway, 2006: 5).

For Norway, economic opportunity in the Arctic is thus seen through an "inside-out" relational spatial logic – as an issue concerning value creation within the northern parts of the national territory, which is realized as economic growth through economic flows that radiate outwards. As a contrast, for Sweden the economic opportunity of the Arctic concerns in most parts the value chains seen to be emerging within the wider Arctic region that do not originate in Sweden itself. In this sense, the Swedish strategy is based on an "outside-in" spatial logic, in which economic actors operate beyond national boundaries in the Arctic while bringing in profits. These differences, at least to some extent, can be attributed to Norway being an Arctic Ocean coastal state, and Sweden lacking Arctic Ocean coastline.

However, what the Norwegian and Swedish documents have in common is that they both draw on relational spatial vocabulary that accentuates cross-border economic flows. Concurrently, however, they treat the political-territorial order based on international law as the prerequisite for the liberation of such flows. Especially the delimitation of continental shelves is foregrounded:

Agreement on a delimitation line will thus make it possible to establish the predictable framework that is necessary for economic and other actors, and also for cross-border cooperation schemes in the petroleum sector (Norway, 2006: 16–17).

Territorialization thus becomes the enabler of deterritorialization (cf. Moisiso, 2019), and both of these processes become constituted through spatial vocabularies that articulate the Arctic as a territorial and relational space. The importance of territorialization is also evident in the Swedish strategy documents, as it is stated that "Sweden has no territorial claim to the Arctic Ocean but establishment of the coastal states' continental shelves in accordance with the Convention on the Law of the Sea is very much in Sweden's interest" (Sweden, 2011: 22).

The 2021 Norwegian document follows the same principles as the 2006 document in many respects. Especially when considered from the geoeconomic perspective, the emphasis is even more clearly on northern Norway. The 2021 document also exhibits similar spatial economic thinking as the 2006 document, even though the emphasis on the knowledge-based economy is even clearer. The emphasis on knowledge as an economic factor illustrates the extent to which the spatial imaginaries associated with the knowledge-based economy have found their way to the Arctic context as well (cf. Moisiso, 2019; Väättänen, 2021). It further shows how such geoeconomic thinking foregrounds the importance of sub-national regions as the engines of national economic growth.

While in terms of geoeconomics, the spatial focus has remained relatively uniform in Norway's strategy documents from 2006 to 2021, when it comes to geopolitics, the most evident

transformation in geographical terms is the replacement of the term High North with that of the Arctic. In this respect it is noticeable that while the High North was mainly utilized as a geographical context in which Norway's relations with Russia were focused on, the utilization of the geographical context of the Arctic in the 2021 strategy document has extended the spatial scope through which geopolitics related to the north are being discussed:

The stability of the Arctic has long remained relatively unaffected by conflicts in other areas of the world. However, current global trends are leading to growing international interest in the region and a greater focus on Norway's strategic location. The changing security policy landscape in recent years and the melting of the ice in the Arctic Ocean are also playing a part. Nor can the possibility be ruled out that increased tensions in other places will affect the situation in the Arctic (Norway, 2021: 15).

The transformation in the geographical terms used reflects the spatial shift from an emphasis on the "internal" security dynamics of the region to how the "internal" and "external" dynamics have become intertwined, as was also discussed in the context of Sweden. Even as the indetermined nature of the territorial structure *within* the Arctic is still cast as the key "threat" for the economic development prospects of the region, the "external" aspect has grown even more prominent also in the Norwegian strategy documents.

The response to this perceived challenge to Arctic security from outside the boundaries of the region has led to two kinds of responses that exhibit somewhat contradictory spatial logics. First, the participation of "non-Arctic" actors has been facilitated in negotiations over Arctic governance structures. A notable example is that China, the European Union, Japan and South Korea were signatories to the 2018 "Agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean", alongside Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia and the United States. The inclusion of "non-Arctic" states and actors illustrates the political dynamics through which the Arctic is simultaneously politically territorialized through such agreements, and de-territorialized through the participation of the representatives of states beyond the purported boundaries of the Arctic region in negotiations over the agreements.

The second response to the perceived threat of a "spillover" of geopolitical juxtaposition from outside the region into the Arctic has been a clearer emphasis on the Arctic as a territorial and more or less bounded region. This territorial understanding of the wider Arctic region becomes evident in how the role of "non-Arctic" states is reflected upon:

The Arctic is sometimes portrayed as an unregulated or even lawless region. The impacts of the melting of the Arctic ice on countries outside the region are cited by some as a reason to view developments in the Arctic as a shared global concern ('what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic'). This is being used as an argument for giving non-Arctic states a general right to participate in the management of the Arctic. The rights, interests and options available to non-Arctic states vary depending on what they are seeking to achieve in the different areas of jurisdiction. There is consensus among the members of the Arctic Council that international law applies in the Arctic (Norway, 2021: 8).

Thus, even though the participation of “non-Arctic” states in discussions over Arctic issues is facilitated in order to construct rule-based territorial governance structures, their arguments for inclusion are simultaneously downplayed through an emphasis on their “non-Arcticness” and the boundaries of the region (cf. Väättänen & Zimmerbauer, 2020).

Spaces of geopolitical and geoeconomic hopes and fears

In the analysis above, we have shown how the relations between geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses on the Arctic have been articulated through the Swedish and Norwegian Arctic strategies. In broad terms it can be argued that there has been a shift in the relations between these discourses, and in how they are articulated spatially. In the first strategies of both Norway and Sweden unregulated economic activities within the Arctic region were cast as the clearest factors that can cause political instability within the region. Disorder and internal incoherence were thus cast as the biggest threats to the region. The solution to this potential instability was seen to be political territorialization within the region especially through the delimitation of continental shelves. Additionally, the “internal” political territorialization of the Arctic as a “space of states” through this delimitation process was projected as the enabler of cross-border economic flows and relations. For Sweden the liberation of these flows meant an opportunity to tap into them beyond the Swedish territory, while for Norway it meant an opportunity to be the source of these flows.

In the most recent strategy documents the relationship between geopolitical and geoeconomic articulations of the Arctic has transformed and now the potential political instability outside of the Arctic region is cast as a threat to both political and economic relations within the region. This also means that even though the role of international law – and especially the Law of the Sea as the basis for territorial delimitation – is still highlighted, now the key solution to potential geopolitical instability is spatially more wide-ranging and diffuse political cooperation which enables the dissolution of the identified threats. We can thus identify an interplay between geopolitical and geoeconomic fears and hopes that exhibit distinct spatial dimensions and are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Geopolitical and geoeconomic fears and hopes regarding the Arctic, and their spatial aspects.

	Geopolitical	Geoeconomic
Fears	Political/territorial disorder and weak (leaking) boundaries both within and “at the edge” of the region	Unregulated economic activities, territorial competition for natural resources and the potential blocking of cross-border economic flows both within and crossing regional boundaries
Hopes	Political/territorial order that enables and is enabled by cross-	Territorially manifesting economic growth (either at sub-state or state

	border cooperation, clear boundaries both within and “at the edge” of the region	level) through smooth cross-border economic flows and free trade
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Perhaps it is then misleading to talk merely about the geoeconomization of the Arctic as it would imply that economic geographical vocabulary as well as economic imperatives for cooperation would be replacing and backgrounding geopolitical ones. Indeed, we can witness a kind of “return to geopolitics” rhetoric within the most recent strategy documents analyzed here. As it has become evident through our analysis of the Arctic strategies of Sweden and Norway, and in terms of how they have transformed in a decade or so, geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses are nevertheless at least partially intertwined and their relations vary. Simultaneously, they foreground different aspects of spatiality. This becomes apparent in how the fears attached to political and territorial disorder are transformed into hopes of order that itself is seen to enable territorially manifesting economic growth – growth that still relies on cross-border economic flows within and beyond the region.

Conclusions

Our analysis partially confirms the hypothesis that geopolitical discourse draws on territorial spatial vocabulary, while geoeconomic discourse accentuates relational spatiality. However, it is also apparent that territorial idea(l)s are also incorporated into geoeconomic modes of thinking, and relational spatial vocabularies have their place in geopolitical discourse. This indicates that the analytical distinction of two seemingly distant or opposite discourses deserves to be elaborated further. The key aim of this paper has been to contribute to this work. By looking at Arctic strategies on Sweden and Norway, we have outlined that the Arctic region not only is defined as a territorial, bounded space or as fluid relational space, but also as “space of territories” and “relational space constitutes by cross-border relations”. This is to say that approaching the Arctic region simply as either territorial or relational space is not enough: more refined variations need to be recognized. Accordingly, while it is completely fine to understand relational and territorial approaches on space as “two sides of the same coin” (Varró & Lagendijk, 2013), we should also acknowledge that relational and territorial vocabularies, attached to geoeconomics and geopolitics, are nevertheless partly incommensurable. Thus, although deeply intertwined in many practices, geopolitics and geoeconomics (when seen through the prism of territoriality and relationality), often exhibit distinctive spatial logics.

To conclude, we argue that we need go beyond the much debated relational-territorial divide, but not in a way that dispels the divide and states simply that they are intertwined and the debate has actually been a “non-debate”. They are intertwined, but not totally and not in all practices. This is to say that the spatiality of regions, such as the Arctic, has different meanings depending on if it is articulated through a geopolitical or geoeconomic discourse. What this means in terms of our understanding of Arctic is that it appears in many spatial forms through these discourses: as a multidimensional space. It can be approached as a territorial space with relatively fixed boundaries or as an internally coherent space of territories. Furthermore, understanding the Arctic as a relational space connected to, and constituted by, relations that cross its boundaries, or as an internally fluid space of relational complexity is at times equally eligible. It is crucial to understand

how these spatial dimensions are articulated by different actors and how they are connected to different definitions of the Arctic as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space. This is important because spatial articulations of the Arctic are not innocent representations of reality, but they are constituent parts of practices through which specific strategic courses of action are legitimated.

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