

The book is an anthology covering the concept of paradiplomacy and other forms of diplomacy in 10 chapters focusing on the North America and Russian Arctic with some example cases also from Scotland and China. The introductory chapter is a typical state-of-the-art chapter going through the literature in the field of Arctic paradiplomacy and is setting the stage for the rest of the book. The book is divided into three overall sections, where the first section is focused on the Arctic subnational governments or administrations. The second section is focusing on the Arctic civil society and Indigenous Peoples and the third section seeks to highlight how paradiplomacy can serve global actors in redefining Arctic governance. The last chapter in the book is a concluding chapter with some future perspectives.

The book is overall a good contribution to the debate about paradiplomacy and is covering interesting case studies, which normally would not be covered in an anthology of Arctic relations. The cases are scattered from Québec, Yakutsk to Arctic cities, Greenland, Indigenous Peoples, Scotland, China, and Bering Strait. The book tries to give a holistic view of the complex relationships between various actors involved in Arctic governance. However, in doing that it might lose its coherent structure and sometimes the reader finds himself/herself a little bit confused over what kind of paradiplomacy that the authors actually are trying to investigate. In the first chapter for instance the authors Payette and Roussel is using the concept of “identity paradiplomacy” and in the second chapter the authors are using “transborder regional microdiplomacy” and in other chapters we are introduced to “public diplomacy” and so on. It would have been better if the authors would have used a clear definition of which kind of paradiplomacy that the book is trying to illustrate. The various theoretical concepts and theories which are introduced in various chapters make maybe sense for the case study as such, but not for the overall framework. It would have been better if the authors would have agreed to a definition about Arctic paradiplomacy in the beginning and then framing the case studies according to that or outlining in the end how we can understand Arctic paradiplomacy. Another critical point is that a few chapters are more directed towards the national level and not the subnational level, which paradiplomacy is about. Here the chapter by Minkova about the cooperation between Canada and Russia illustrate this example and the chapter by Meek and Lovecraft focusing on the Bering Strait can also be seen as such an example. The chapter by Payette and Sun focusing on China’s role in the Arctic is also seen merely from a national, top-down view.

Mathieu Landriault, Jean-François Payette and Stéphane Roussel
(eds.), Mapping Arctic Paradiplomacy – Limits and Opportunities for
Sub-National Actors in Arctic Governance (Abingdon and New York:
Routledge, 2022) | 2

The multilevel approach by using various actors on different levels of government illustrates, of course, the complex reality of Arctic governance, but sometimes it is hard to get grips on which relationships that the authors are referring to. The relationships between the national and regional levels down to the local levels are not clearly outlined in each chapter.

The book gives a good overview of current developments in the Arctic and is therefore a valuable contribution to researchers, teachers, and students of Arctic politics, international relations, comparative politics and foreign policy and governance. The book could be used as literature at universities where Arctic relations and Arctic studies are in focus.

Share this:

Share