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Arctic Partnerships: Geopolitics of the Forming Power Blocs in the Far North

The Arctic has been a geopolitical afterthought for much of human history, being too remote and

climatically hostile for anything but the most rudimentary economic development and human

settlement. The 21 st century has seen the Arctic enter a state of evolution due to climate change, with

melting ice and permafrost presenting new opportunities for global shipping and resource extraction.

Simultaneously, this evolution opens a new geopolitical theater in the High North. A budding balance of

power between NATO and a Sino-Russian partnership will shape the region in the coming decades

alongside climate change as these global powers place increasing influence in the Arctic economically

and politically. Using the world-systems analysis methodology, this thesis fills in gaps in the present

understanding of the geo-political Arctic region, such as the dynamics of inter- and inner-bloc relations,

their impact on Arctic economics and environmental stewardship, and identifying points of contention

between the power blocs which could become flashpoints in the near or medium-term future.