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ARCTIC STUDIES IN RUSSIA[1]

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Introduction

The Arctic became a subject of study in Russian IR relatively recently – in the late 2000s. Before that, the Arctic was the subject of attention mainly from the natural sciences, which studied such problems as climate change and its consequences for Arctic ecosystems, the dynamics of polar ice, the state of the permafrost, prospects for the development of natural resources in the region, conservation of biodiversity, etc. Soviet and Russian social sciences and humanities did not show much interest in the international aspects of the development of the Russian Arctic and mainly focused on the problems of its socio-economic development and the indigenous peoples of the North.

The situation changed radically at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, when Moscow announced its return to the Arctic, and not only to its sector but also to the region as a whole. Moscow has stepped up its policy within the framework of international institutions dealing with the Arctic, including the Arctic Council and Barents-Euro-Arctic Council. Russia has made efforts to modernize its armed forces stationed in the region and severely degraded in the 1990s, and it has also increased its military presence in the Arctic, including the resumption of regular military exercises, as well as air and sea patrols.

In this regard, it was necessary to develop an international component of the Russian strategy in the Far North, including its foreign economic, diplomatic, scientific, educational, environmental, cultural, and military aspects. The Russian academic and expert communities have tried to meet this need by initiating discussions about Russian national interests in the Arctic, existing and potential threats and opportunities for international cooperation in this region, and the main directions of foreign policy and military strategy in the Far North. The Arctic problematique has firmly established itself in the research agendas of many Russian universities, academic institutes, think tanks, and public policy centers.

The research objectives of this chapter are to examine how Arctic studies are structured in Russia, which schools exist, and what the main problematique of Arctic research is. Let's start by examining how Arctic research is organized institutionally.

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Mapping Arctic Studies

The history of Arctic research in Russia stretches back more than a hundred years. However, as already noted, these were mostly natural science studies. The network of academic institutions engaged in Arctic international studies only began to take shape in the late 2000s. Currently, four types of organizations are engaged in international Arctic studies: 1) universities, 2) institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), 3) research institutes belonging to governmental agencies, and 4) independent think tanks and public policy centers.

Universities. Among Russian universities, St. Petersburg State University (SPSU) occupies a leading position in the field of international Arctic studies. In the works of its scholars, there is a thorough analysis of the full range of international problems of the Arctic: strategies of Arctic and non-Arctic states in the Far North; international transport corridors, including Arctic shipping; hard and soft security; international cooperation in such areas as climate change, ecology, science, education, culture, indigenous peoples, and so on.

Since 2012, SPSU has been a member of the network-type University of the Arctic (UArctic), which unites more than 200 universities and research centers in Europe, Russia, the USA, Canada, and non-Arctic states. In 2016, the 1st World Congress of the University of the Arctic was held on the basis of SPSU. In 2019, the Center for Arctic Research was established at the university, which coordinates both scholarly activities and international contacts. In 2021, the Arctic Project Office was created at SPSU to coordinate its project activities.[2]

The Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU) (Arkhangelsk), which was established by merging several local universities in 2010–11, is another leader in IR-related Arctic studies. NArFU scholars pay special attention to problems such as the priorities of Russia's Arctic strategy, the Northern Sea Route's (NSR) development as an international transport route, international educational and scientific cooperation, etc. The UArctic Research Office was opened at NArFU in September 2011, during the second Arctic international forum The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue. Together with UArctic administrative offices located in North America and Europe, the research office at NArFU is aimed at networking and developing international cooperation.

The following activities of the research office were identified as priorities:

- To support cooperation between Russian, European, and North American members of the UArctic
- To spread information about UArctic activities, including projects and events organized by the Russian members of the consortium
- To participate in the preparation and submission of research applications for funding from private and public funds
- To promote the integration and exchange of knowledge obtained by Russian and international researchers in the global context of the Arctic science development[3]

Since 2012, an innovative research and educational project – the Arctic Floating University (AFU) – has been implemented by the NArFU with the support of the Russian Geographical Society and the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring. The expedition/AFU takes place every summer (except 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic). Although the AFU is mainly devoted to the natural science problematique, a number of international issues, including soft and hard security problems, are also studied within the summer university framework.[4]

In 2013, the Arctic Center for Strategic Studies was established at NArFU, which is responsible for the coordination of Arctic research projects, the organization of the AFU on the annual basis, and publishing a bilingual professional journal, *The Arctic and the North*.[5]

The other universities and academic institutes located in Murmansk, St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk, Ekaterinburg, Yakutsk, Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, etc. conduct research on political, social, and economic problems and international cooperation and develop corresponding educational programs focused on Arctic. Most of them cooperate with the of University of the Arctic, which promotes international collaboration.

Think tanks and government institutions. The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit academic and diplomatic think tank that was established as a link between the state, expert community, business, and civil society. It publishes on social, economic, diplomatic, and security issues. The Valdai Discussion Club provides an international forum for more than 1,000 experts from about 71 states. Valdai's mission is to tell the world about Russian policy in Arctic along with the other topics.

The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) pays significant attention to Arctic studies. Experts from this institution are oriented on the neorealist (state-centric) vision of international politics, which stresses national interests as a first priority. The RISS was established by the president to serve as independent analytical center to provide information support to the Administration of the President, the Federation Council, the State Duma, and the Security Council as well as to government offices, ministries, and departments. The Carnegie Moscow Center, being affiliated with the Carnegie Foundation (USA), is an example of neoliberal expertise in Russia that emphasizes international cooperation in the Arctic.

The Institute of Military History of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation publishes widely on the history of Arctic exploration during two last centuries, as well as on the modern problems of Arctic policy including defense, international shipping, building shore infrastructure, technology implementation, and sustainable development. The institute engages both military and academic experts, providing balanced and complex analysis while expertise is clearly neorealist oriented.

Public organizations and forums. The Project Office for the Development of the Arctic has the goal of raising the knowledge of the Russian public on the Arctic, providing grant research programs, conferences, and foreign investment, as well as supporting best practices to improve living standards in the Arctic. The Russian Association of Indigenous People (RAIPON) concentrates on legal issues in the interests of indigenous peoples. RAIPON actively interacts with the Russian Parliament and ministers to prepare bills that do not infringe on the rights of aboriginal nations to improve regional policy and local self-governance instruments. RAIPON monitors the important events in AZRF and distributes expertise in media and professional journals. One important dimension of RAIPON's activity is international cooperation with different institutions, including the Arctic Council, the Saami Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Arctic Atabaskian Council, and Gwich'in Council International.

Russia's Unofficial Discourse

Based on different theoretical approaches, it is possible to identify two main paradigms in the post-Soviet Russian discourse on the Arctic: rationalist/scientific and eclectic/intuitivist. While the first paradigm is based on various scientific approaches to the discussion of Arctic issues, the second is not often bothered by any rational argumentation and prefers to simply postulate its vision of the Arctic problems. However, since both paradigms affect Russia's Arctic discourse

and – subsequently – Moscow's decision making on regional policies, they both should be paid due attention.

The rationalist paradigm. This paradigm includes three schools with clear identities – neorealism, neoliberalism, and globalism – and numerous ones of a "hybrid" nature. Three former schools are based on classical international relations (IR) theories; the latter try to combine various research approaches in a rather pragmatic way. The "hybrid" schools, however – being sometimes rather eclectic – retain their rationalist/scientific character.

Neorealism. The neorealist Arctic doctrine is based on the assumption that the world is state centric, and, for this reason, states are key actors in international politics. In forging their Arctic strategies, the Russian neorealists prefer Kenneth Waltz's interpretation of sovereignty, which is based on the assumption that a state is sovereign when "it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them."[6] This approach assumes that states should be the only legitimate force of national power within their own borders.

Russian neorealism's vision of Moscow's policies in the Arctic is based on the following principles:

- "National interests" are a key category. Among them, economic and strategic interests are most important ones.
- Russia needs to ascertain her sovereignty over the Arctic territories, natural resources, and maritime routes.
- International law is mostly seen as an instrument to resist any foreign "encroachments" on Russian sovereign rights in the region and keep control over Arctic spaces, resources, and transport communications.
- A regional governance regime is only possible as a temporary compromise between the major (coastal) Arctic powers (A5) – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States.[7]

According to the neorealist perspective, Russia's principal interest is to turn the Arctic into its main "strategic resource base," and other policy considerations should be subordinated to this overarching goal. Both Russian domestic policies in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and Moscow's international strategy should be oriented towards the protection of its national interests in the region (Alexandrov 2009; Oreshenkov 2010; Voronkov 2012; Konyshev and Sergunin 2012). Against this background, it is especially important to secure Russia's economic interests in the Arctic.

The neorealists tend to see every Arctic problem from the national security point of view – be it ecological problems and fisheries or territorial disputes and control over sea routes. For example, the 2013 Russian Arctic strategy is partially designed in such an alarmist/securitized way by focusing on hard and soft security threats and challenges to the AZRF.[8] Even the very title of the document – "The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and Ensuring National Security for the Period up to 2020" – reflects such a securitized approach.[9]

A variety of instruments, ranging from diplomacy and international arbitration to a modest military build-up and creation of capabilities to effectively prevent poaching and smuggling, are suggested. In contrast with the neoliberals, the neorealists are quite pragmatic as regards international institutions such as the UN, the Arctic Council (AC), and the Barents-Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). They do not believe that these international fora are the components of a global or regional governance system, whose existence is sharply denied by them. They suggest

using these bodies first and foremost to protect Russia's national interests in the region (like other member-states do) rather than to promote some abstract universal/cosmopolitan values.

The radical version of the neorealist school views the Arctic as a manifestation of the perennial geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West. The neorealists believe that, in contrast with the past, the West prefers economic rather than military instruments for putting pressure on Russia. However, the aim of the Western policies remains expansionist and boils down to securing Russia's status as the West's "younger partner" and a source of cheap natural resources and a labor force. Contrary to what has been stated in the Russian official security doctrines about Moscow's Western partners' international behavior, the perception of the US and NATO as the main threats to Russia's security is still alive in large parts of the Russian political, military, and expert establishment. Military and diplomatic activities by the US and NATO in the High North are routinely perceived as being of an "offensive character."

Neoliberalism. The neoliberal school represents a rather radical departure from the Soviet-time Marxist-Leninist foreign policy doctrine. According to present-day Russian neoliberals, territorial sovereignty as the ordering principle for world politics has been redefined and, in some ways, transcended by networks of interaction that involve actors of many different kinds and at many different levels. The state is often a player in these networks, but it does not necessarily control them and is increasingly intertwined with them.[10]

According to the neoliberals, sovereignty is still a very important mode of power within the global polity, but it is not the only one. There is also another mode of power: namely, governmentality that orders world politics in a different way. Governmentality does not challenge or undermine sovereignty but rather steps in to give it a new form. The main challenge to international players is how to combine these two modes of power to make the world both governable and secure.

According to this approach, the Arctic (particularly its natural resources and sea routes) is a common humankind heritage that should be exploited with other countries and in a very careful way.[11] International law and institutions should be the focus of Arctic politics and the basis of an emerging regional governance regime. The neoliberals believe that sub-regional institutions such as the AC and BEAC are parts of the global and regional governance systems and should be designed and function accordingly. For them, the AC and BEAC should avoid discussion of security issues; rather, environmental issues and the "human dimension" (indigenous people and other residents of the Arctic regions) should be their main priorities.

The proponents of the neoliberal approach point out that the military significance of the Russian North has dramatically decreased in the post–Cold War period. The region is, in their view, unable to play the role of Russian military outpost. The neoliberals hope that the Arctic will be further opened up for international cooperation to become a Russian "gateway" region that could help Russia gradually integrate into the European and world multilateral institutions. They believe that, due to its unique geo-economic location, the AZRF has a chance to be a "pilot" Russian region to be included in the regional and sub-regional cooperation. Priority should be given to the issues that unite rather than divide regional players – trade, cross-border cooperation, transport, environment, health care, Arctic research, indigenous people, people-to-people contacts, and so on. In this respect, they view the Northern Dimension partnerships as well as AC's, BEAC's, and Nordic institutions' programs as a helpful framework for such cooperation.[12]

The Northern Dimension was initially launched as an EU program for Brussels's cooperation with neighboring non-EU countries, including Russia.[13] In 2007, it was redesigned into a system of partnerships between the EU and Iceland, Norway, and Russia. In contrast with their opponents from the neorealist "camp," the proponents of the neoliberal approach believe that

most of the Arctic problems can be solved through negotiation and compromise. The work on this technical level has a consolatory effect on the conflicting parties and creates an interdependency mechanism that contributes to the problem-solving process.

The Russian neoliberals insist on the need to develop a sound arms control regime in the High North that covers not only land but also the Arctic seas. They also suggest introducing some confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) to ameliorate the regional environment and increase trust between the regional players. They stress that it is very important to guarantee that the Arctic players interact with each other on the basis of the following principles:

- Preserving peace, predictability, and stability in the Arctic region
- Ensuring sustainable management and development of natural resources
- International cooperation to meet common challenges in the Arctic
- Developing national and international legal mechanisms to promote Arctic governance

Globalism. The Russian globalists go further than neoliberals in terms of Russia's possible participation in international cooperation in the High North. They believe that globalization and regionalization are worldwide processes, and Russia cannot avoid them. According to this school, the Arctic is a place where these two tendencies are intertwined.[14] On the one hand, the Arctic is the subject of a dialogue between different regional and global players. On the other hand, there is a clear tendency to create a new international or even global region in the Arctic where Russia could find a mission of its own. The globalists think that Moscow should promote cooperative concepts and ideas of global scale and significance.

The globalists support most of the neoliberal ideas, such as the vision of the Arctic as a humankind "asset" or "treasury," development of a governance mechanism in the region, conflict prevention and resolution on the basis of the international law, protection of indigenous peoples, climate change mitigation, sustainable development strategies, establishment of regional arms control regime and CSBMs, etc.

Most radical globalist versions believe that an international legal regime similar to the Antarctic Treaty should be established, and a comprehensive agreement should be concluded on the Arctic to make it a "region of peace and cooperation."[15] Similar to the Antarctic legal system, a proposed new Arctic regime should prohibit any economic and military activities in the region. Only the subsistence economies of indigenous peoples of the North and research activities should be allowed in the High North. Some globalists suggest establishing a UN-based governance regime in the Arctic to replace the existing national sovereignty–oriented model.[16]

This globalist sub-school tends to ignore the fact that, for many Arctic countries (especially Russia), this region is of growing economic importance and a home for many industrial centers that produce up to 20 percent of the entire Russian GDP – even if only about 1.6 percent of the country's population lives there.[17]

"Hybrid" theories. Along with the two extremes – neorealism and neoliberalism/globalism – there are numerous "hybrid"/moderate schools in the Russian academic community. Differing in their specific theoretical postulates, these schools, however, share some common principles with regard to the existing and emerging Arctic legal system.[18]

The moderates believe that Russia should be a responsible international actor that behaves in the international arena in line with international law principles and commitments. According to this school, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); the Ilulissat Declaration (2008); AC-sponsored agreements, particularly on search and rescue (SAR) operations (2011), oil spill response (2013), and Arctic science cooperation (2017), and directions and recommendations; the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Polar Code, etc. should be the

legal basis for Russia's Arctic strategy. On the other hand, Russia should be firm in defending its legitimate rights and national interests in the region, including the definition and expansion of the outer limits of the Russian continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean, control over the maritime routes, fighting poaching and smuggling in the AZRF, modernization of the armed forces deployed in the High North, etc.

The moderates do not share the neoliberal/globalist view of the Arctic as humankind's "common treasury," and they do not believe that it is realistic to establish an Antarctic Treaty–type legal regime in the High North (even in the distant future). The moderates point out that statements that mention the Arctic's deep seabed (or Area), continental shelves, and high seas in the same breath as the common heritage of mankind carry the risk of confusion. Deliberately or not, failing to distinguish thoroughly between the different maritime zones may create the impression that the whole (marine) Arctic is considered a common heritage of mankind. However, the moderates favor creating a flexible regional governance system in the Arctic based on the pragmatic combination of hard and soft law. The moderates do not even oppose establishing some elements of supranational governance in the region, like, for example, in the case of the Central Arctic Ocean (Area), which is currently beyond the national sovereignty jurisdiction and where any economic activity – be it extraction of hydrocarbons or fishery – is presently impossible while the local environment is extremely fragile and vulnerable. For instance, under the moderates' pressure, the Russian government agreed to sign first a declaration on a fishing ban around the North Pole in 2015 and, later, a binding agreement on this issue in 2017.

Similar to the neoliberals and globalists, the moderates suggest making full use of the existing international institutions engaged in Arctic affairs – the UN (and its specialized bodies, such as the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf [CLCS], IMO, UN Environmental Program [UNEP)], etc.), AC, and BEAC. However, they do not believe that these institutions will be able to exercise real supranational governance in the region in the foreseeable future. The moderates, however, think that some institutional reforms are possible. For example, they suggest empowering the AC with more rights, including the right to conclude binding agreements (similar to the SAR's oil spills response and science cooperation documents) and further institutionalization of the council with the aim of transforming it from a discussion forum to a full-fledged international intergovernmental organization.[19]

According to the moderates, there should be harmony between the economic, ecological, humanitarian, and military-strategic aspects of Russia's Arctic policies, which is only possible if Moscow builds its strategy on the basis of international law principles and norms.

To sum up the Russian theoretical/rationalist debate on the Arctic, it should be noted that, regardless of its strong polarization (neoliberal-neorealist/globalist dichotomy), compromise/moderate schools have emerged that formed a mainstream of the Russian foreign policy thought. This mainstream has managed to avoid xenophobic/extremist views on the Arctic international relations system and develop more or less moderate and well-balanced concepts.

Irrational/intuitivist paradigm. Along with the rationalist paradigm, there are various Russian schools that never had the ambition of adhering to the principles of rigorous science. Their views of the Arctic and Russia's role in the region quite often represent an eclectic mixture of different philosophic, historical, cultural, and even religious approaches rather than theories in the classical sense. No surprise that many of these ideological doctrines simply degenerate to wishful thinking and do not correspond to the realities of the modern world.

Hyperboreans. In ancient Greek mythology, the Hyperboreans were mythical people who lived "beyond the North Wind." The Greeks thought that Boreas, the god of the North Wind, lived in Thrace, and therefore, Hyperborea indicates a region that lies far to the north of Thrace. Later, Roman and Byzantine sources continued to change the location of Hyperborea, pointing

to Britain, the Alps, Central Asia, the Urals, Siberia, etc. However, all these sources agreed these were all in the far north of Greece or southern Europe.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, there were numerous pseudo-academic and esoteric schools that claimed the Hyperborean origin of the Indo-European culture or believed that Hyperborea was the Golden Age polar center of civilization and spirituality. For example, the Dutch-German interwar philosopher and historian Herman Wirth placed the origins of European civilization on the mythological island of Atlantis, which he thought had been located in the North Atlantic, connecting North America and Europe. Its inhabitants supposedly were pure Aryans, influencing the cultures not just of Europeans but also of the natives of North America and the wider "Old World" beyond Europe.[20]

The Hyperborean school emerged in Russia in the early 1990s, led by Alexander Dugin, a well-known conservative philosopher and geopolitician. Following Wirth, Dugin believes that there was a continent called Atlantis or Hyperborea that gave birth to the Arians, the real heir of which is the Russian nation, not the Germans, as Wirth believed.[21] This romantic-nationalistic school believes that the Russians are modern Hyperboreans who differ from Western people with their materialistic/consumerist/individualist culture in spirituality, high moral standards, and patriotism.[22] According to this thinker, "Russia is a country of polar archetypes, the place where the ancestors came from – the founders of ancient South-Eurasian civilizations."[23]

Dugin underlines that in modern Eurasia, a new political and spiritual continent (space) Arctogeya emerges, led by Russia: "Russia traditionally fulfills the geopolitical mission of the Hyperborean, unifying force."[24] He believes that Siberia and the Far North are a modern "paradisiacal empire," fulfilling a special role:

> [A] special role falls to the lands of Siberia. Indeed, if the centre of Tradition is located somewhere in the East, and initially it was at the North Pole, then it is Siberia that is the connecting space between these two sacral regions. This feature of the Siberian lands, perhaps, determines the specific mystery that surrounds everything connected with the history of this part of the continent.[25]

For the "Hyperboreans," the Far North is a means of spiritual revival for Russia, a way of realizing the "cosmic destiny" of Russia, after which the growth of its influence in the world – geopolitical and spiritual – will inevitably follow.

In its perception of the Arctic problems, this school quite easily combines the spiritual-mystical interpretation of the Far North with modern geopolitical theories. Dugin himself and his followers believe that currently, the "geopolitics of territories" has been replaced by the "geopolitics of resources." Now, the "maritime" or "Atlantic" powers seek control not over the territory of the Heartland (Halford Mackinder) or Rimland (Nicholas Spykman), which includes the Arctic, but over the hydrocarbons located there.[26]

However, international competition for natural resources does not exclude the possibility of armed conflict and even war because the stakes are so high. In the struggle for these resources, Russia will inevitably confront the other coastal Arctic states. In the worst-case scenario, Russia can lose not only the Arctic shelf but also the Northern Sea Route to the "internationalization" for which the Americans are already calling.[27] Dugin believes that Russia should lead the coalition of countries that hold energy resources and should confront the expansionist plans of the "Atlanticists" by their own "Eurasian energy project," based on the principles of asymmetry.

> Russia (Eurasia) can act as an energy dispatcher in the new model of the Eurasian energy complex, offering an alternative to the Atlanticist algorithm, Dugin maintains.

> For this, Russia has every reason – its own mineral deposits and central spatial location, which is a key for the organization of transport networks, special relations with the CIS countries, and even with some countries that are considered "rogue states" (Iran, Iraq, Libya), as well as certain skills in energy production and a serious intellectual and logistical potential. What is fatally missing is finance.[28]

The "Hyperboreans" reacted positively to the fact that, in the last decade, Russia began to pay more attention to the Arctic by implementing programs of socio-economic development, strengthening the military infrastructure in the AZRF, and actively advocating its international legal positions in the region. Dugin believes that these can be considered constructive steps toward the multipolar model of the world.[29]

Russian Orthodox neo-communists. It is interesting to note that some neo-communist thinkers were unable to avoid the temptation to develop an esoteric-mystical and messianic interpretation of Russia's mission in the Far North. For instance, the famous Russian pro-communist writer Alexander Prokhanov tends to agree with his conservative "antipode" Dugin on the existence of Russia's special historical and spiritual mission, specifically in the Arctic and – more generally – in the world.

According to the writer,

> [T]he Russians are a messianic people. The Lord created them to fulfil their universal mission. . . . The Russians got a mandate to explore and cultivate the virgin, untrodden and unsuitable for the habitation lands: permafrost, impassable swamps and thickets, the Arctic Ocean rim. For centuries, the Russians have created a unique northern civilization: paved roads, built cities, discovered mineral deposits. And today . . . [Russia] supplies half the planet with hydrocarbons and ensures the prosperity of the world machine civilization"[30]

For Prokhanov, the Arctic is both a natural habitat for the Russian people and a space on which Russia has a chance to take historic revenge for the defeat and lost territories after the Cold War. In one of his numerous interviews, Prokhanov said:

> [T]he Russians are being pushed to the north. It's terrible, but it's not fatal because the Russians are the Nordic people, they are the people of the polar lights and the Polar Star. And we explored this Arctic from the very beginning.[31]

AuQ21

Prokhanov believes that Russia's return to the Arctic can serve as a new national idea. Commenting on the expedition of Arthur Chilingarov to the North Pole in August 2007, during which one of the Russian bathyscaphes placed the Russian titanium flag on the ocean floor, the writer prophesies: "The Arctic is once again becoming a source of Russian power. . . . The long-awaited 'idea of Development,' the technocratic leap, the 'philosophy of the future' breathe in this Arctic raid."[32] Therefore, the Arctic is seen by the "Orthodox Communists" as the last defensive line, "which should not be ceded to the Western rivals. Given the Western expansion in the region."[33] In unison with the Hyperboreans, Prokhanov predicts a new war for the Arctic's re-division: "The ships are being built, military ships of the Arctic projects are being built, icebreakers are being built, new nuclear submarines are going there. . . . This is a fight for the Arctic. The war for the Arctic began."[34]

AuQ22

For the neo-communist version of imperial thinking, the Arctic Ocean is the "inner sea of Russia," in which it must reign supreme. To prevent Russia's "northern march" from drowning,

the country should mobilize its forces and intellect and make the development of the Far North and ensuring its security top priorities of its domestic and foreign policies. "Our imperial move to the Pole will not be an easy walk," Prokhanov writes. "We are followed by America's satellites. The enemy submarines are darting in the icy waters. The diplomatic war began when the sea polynya had not yet closed in the place where the bathyscaphes submerged." However, the writer is optimistic:

> Russia is ready to rebuff – intellectually, diplomatically and militarily. . . . The Russian spirit has not dried up, the victorious nation has not forgotten its great victories. A new generation of passionaries, handymen and visionaries has come to replace the polar explorers of the past.[35]

The Russian post-positivism. Along with the imperial-messianic strands, the irrational-intuitivist paradigm includes a number of post-positivist schools, primarily social constructivism and post-colonialism.

Social constructivists consider the Arctic problems mainly through the prism of identity and how the Far North is perceived by individuals, social groups, and states. For example, the constructivists note that in the post-Soviet period, the old discourses, such as "conquering the North," "struggling with the forces of nature," and "glorification of polar explorers" are being gradually replaced by pragmatic and/or environmentally-oriented discourses: the Arctic as Russia's "strategic resource base," the need for the AZRF's sustainable development, the Arctic as a "region of peace and cooperation," etc.[36]

According to the constructivists, these new discourses better serve the current needs of Russia's Arctic policy. The region is no longer perceived as a hostile object that should be "conquered" or the place that is unsuitable for comfortable living and where it is possible to work only on a rotational basis. The modern Russian mentality is increasingly oriented towards a careful attitude about the Arctic: the need to exploit its resources in a sustainable way, taking into account the possible negative consequences for the fragile northern ecology and the indigenous peoples' traditional way of life. Now, priority is given to the creation of comfortable and attractive conditions for working and living in the AZRF. The aim is to eliminate the psychology of a "seasonal worker," and attract and consolidate human resources in the Russian Arctic.[37] At the same time, the constructivists are interested in explaining why the imperial, nationalistic, and alarmist discourses are persistent and periodically reproduced in post-Soviet Russia during the last quarter of a century.[38] Supporters of this school consider the sustainability of confrontational stereotypes in the mentality of Russian politicians and the broad public as a serious obstacle to Russia's constructive policy in the Arctic and transformation of this area into a "region of peace and cooperation" (a concept officially declared in Moscow's Arctic doctrinal documents).

One of the explanations for this "imperial syndrome" suggested by the constructivists is the so-called "status theory." This theory focuses on the emotional and subconscious rather than the rationalist aspects of the Russian Arctic discourse. According to this theory, the main motive of Russia's Arctic strategy is to ascertain its great power status that should be respected by other regional and global players. Russia's reluctant withdrawal from the Arctic and the overall decline in the country's international prestige in the 1990s have resulted in serious psychological trauma for both the Russian elites and society. Recovering from this trauma is painful and accompanied by the imperialist and nationalist aberrations in the public consciousness as well as by distortions and zigzags in the foreign policy course.[39] It takes some time and requires a favorable international environment for the Russian public discourse to get rid of the imperialist, revanchist, and messianic concepts and replace them with more creative and cooperative ideas.

As for the "post-colonialists," this school is only making the first steps in Arctic studies. The theory was borrowed from the Western post-positivists. It is rather popular among indigenous peoples' organizations of Greenland, Alaska, Canada, and Northern Europe, as well as among researchers who sympathize with these ethnic groups. Following their Western "colleagues," Russian "post-colonialists" argue that the Russian Arctic is undergoing transformation from an "internal colony" to a "normal" territory.[40] According to this school, since the time of the Russian Empire, the attitude towards the Far North has been purely consumerist; the entire policy of both tsarist and Soviet Russia was aimed at the exploitation of the Arctic natural resources. The Russian/Soviet industrialists relentlessly pumped out national resources without thinking about the long-term environmental consequences. The indigenous peoples were not given due attention, and this led to their dying out, assimilation, and the loss of ethnic identity and original culture.

Only in the post-Soviet period – specifically, under the Putin administration -– have the federal center's policies begun to change. Moscow's socio-economic and ecological strategies in the AZRF are now based on the sustainable development concept, albeit largely on a declarative basis. The environmental and social consequences of the AZRF natural resources exploitation are now taken into account. The federal programs were adopted to protect the indigenous peoples' interests. However, as the "post-colonialists" emphasize, Russia still has a long way to go to get rid of the "imperial" or "colonialist syndrome" and develop an adequate policy in the Arctic region.[41]

Conclusion: Tendencies and Perspectives in Developing Arctic Studies

The unofficial Arctic discourse is dominated by two main paradigms – rationalist and emotional/intuitivist. The rationalist discourse is inspired by ideas coming from neorealism, neoliberalism, and globalism, with their focus on thinking about the Arctic in terms of power, cooperation, and global challenges. There are numerous "hybrid" schools that try to pragmatically combine these theories in order to develop Russia's sound Arctic strategy.

The second strand of unofficial Russian thinking on the Arctic is dominated by "Hyperboreans" (led by conservative utopian thinker Alexander Dugin), "Russian Orthodox neo-communists" (Alexander Prokhanov), and post-positivists. Differences in their philosophical and ideological underpinnings notwithstanding, these three schools share a common view on the North's unique place in the Russian mentality and Moscow's "special mission" in this region.

It should be noted that there are not only differences between various Russian IR schools but also some consensus between them. For instance, they tend to agree on the growing significance of the Arctic, both for Russia and for the world at large. They also agree that Russia has to have a coherent and sound Arctic strategy that should clearly describe its national interests and policy priorities in the region, including both opportunities for and the limits of international cooperation. The Russian theorists would like to have a flexible Arctic strategy that makes a distinction between Russia's long-, mid-, and short-term goals in the region and is able to quickly adapt to change.

As a whole, the Russian discourse on the Arctic cannot be reduced to the neorealist paradigm, although it is still dominant in Russian foreign policy thinking. This discourse has gradually grown diverse and creative. Now, in terms of expertise, the Russian political leadership faces diversity rather than uniformity and has the option of choosing among different views and options. For example, Putin's decision to emphasize the soft power instruments in his Arctic policy demonstrates that not only the neorealist but also the liberal/globalist argumentation has been heard by the Kremlin.

The emerging Russian Arctic policy consensus is based on the assumption that the Arctic cooperative agenda could include the following areas: climate change mitigation, environmental protection, emergency situations, air and maritime safety (including Polar Code implementation, charting safe maritime routes, and cartography), search and rescue operations, Arctic research, indigenous peoples, cross- and transborder cooperative projects, culture, etc.

In order to prevent potential conflicts, avoid misunderstandings, and facilitate regional cooperation, Russian decision makers and the expert community suggest that the Arctic states should be clear about their military policies and doctrines and should include arms control initiatives and confidence- and security-building measures in their bilateral or multilateral relations in the Arctic. To materialize this ambitious agenda, solid institutional support is needed. For this reason, the regional (the AC, BEAC, Nordic political and economic organizations) and global (IMO, UNEP, UN Development Program, etc.) governance institutions, which slowed down their activities in the Arctic because of the recent tensions between Russia and the West, should be revived.

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